

D9. COLLECTION OF IDEAS HUNGARY



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In recent years, the concept of a circular economy has gained significant traction as societies around the world grapple with the challenges posed by climate change and environmental degradation. Hungary, nestled in the heart of Europe, has not been immune to these concerns. As citizens become increasingly aware of the need for sustainable practices, a growing interest in the circular economy has emerged.

The scope of the “Problem solving event” was to investigate and discuss what Hungarian citizens, especially young people, know about the circular economy and their aspirations for greater engagement in green practices.

Hungarian citizens, like many others globally, are becoming more cognizant of the impact of their daily choices on the environment. Awareness of the circular economy is growing, with an increasing number of people understanding the importance of minimizing waste, reusing materials, and recycling. The Hungarian government has also played a role in promoting awareness through educational initiatives, campaigns, and policy frameworks aimed at fostering sustainability.

However, there is still room for improvement in terms of public knowledge about the circular economy's intricacies. While many Hungarians are familiar with basic recycling practices, a deeper understanding of concepts such as product life cycles, extended producer responsibility, and closed-loop systems could further empower citizens to make informed decisions.

The desire to contribute to a more sustainable future is palpable among Hungarian citizens. Many express a genuine interest in adopting green practices and incorporating circular economy principles into their daily lives.

We-DEMOCRACY survey reveal a range of aspirations and preferences for engagement:

- 1. Waste Reduction and Recycling:** A common theme among citizens is the aspiration to reduce personal waste and embrace recycling more effectively. Many express a desire to sort their waste diligently and support initiatives that promote responsible waste management.
- 2. Support for Local and Sustainable Products:** Hungarian citizens are increasingly interested in supporting local businesses and purchasing products with minimal environmental impact. This includes a preference for products with eco-friendly packaging, reduced carbon footprints, and sustainable sourcing.
- 3. Community Involvement:** There is a growing interest in community-driven initiatives aimed at promoting the circular economy. Citizens express a desire to participate in neighborhood clean-ups, local recycling programs, and community gardens, fostering a sense of shared responsibility for the environment.
- 4. Educational Initiatives:** Many Hungarians express a need for more educational resources and workshops on the circular economy. They believe that a deeper understanding of sustainable practices will empower them to make more environmentally conscious choices.

- 5. Advocacy and Policy Engagement:** Some citizens express a desire to actively participate in advocating for stronger environmental policies. They see themselves as potential agents of change, pushing for regulations that promote sustainability and hold businesses accountable for their environmental impact.

The discussions occurred during the 2 Problem Solving events brought to the following conclusions and recommendations:

I. What participants do as their already existing practices:

These can be grouped in topics: household, consumption, energy and resources.

Household

- Selective waste collection
- Reducing waste
- Composting
- Use of chemical-free cleaning products
- Use of water purification equipment

Consumption

- Buying second-hand clothes
- Using environmentally friendly packaging or Zero-waste packaging
- Clothing donation and recycling
- Buying care products with eco-friendly ingredients and packaging
- Beauty care without gas
- Buying vegan products
- Not buying machines with a built-in defect
- local exchange and recycling
- Baking self-made bread
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Energy and resources

- Use of rechargeable batteries
- Using LED lights
- Rainwater collection and using water for more purposes, like washing machine water used again in the toilet
- Using compost toilet

We also collected and have had some fruitful discussions on what can be still done online/offline that are still not actively used practices.

II. What opportunities are there to contribute to the Circular Economy online:

- Awareness raising, education, social media posts, ideas on sustainability, encouraging people online
- Ordering less, or from a place where we know they pack plastic-free, buying second hand stuff
- Becoming more informed about sustainability

- Follow organizations that are active in the field
- Showing what I do for the environment in my real life, showing real actions that are useful and make sense
- Roundtable discussions, podcasts, publishing and summarising articles

And offline:

- Buying good quality materials and products that are long-lasting
- Litter picking in the nature and cities
- Having lots of discussions about sustainability, being a rolemodel
- Grow your small garden, buy local products & support local retailers, adopt more sustainable shopping habits
- Signing petitions
- Restrictions on plastics companies
- Companies could support a more people-oriented circular economy
- Pressure on companies, e.g. on VAT, organic products should have a lower VAT

III. What are the obstacles that we counter when practicing circular economy?

On a personal level and in our families:

- Our habits
- We don't want to step out of our comfort zones
- Laziness
- Lack of information
- Not using our joined forces

In our communities and country

- Positive incentives
- The virtual world
- Lack of information
- Relation between high politics and small communities
- Lack of infrastructure
- Power struggles and personal conflicts
- The trend
- Laws and regulations
- Lack of natural resources
- Lack of support

Conclusion

Hungarian citizens are increasingly recognizing the importance of the circular economy and are eager to play an active role in fostering sustainability. While awareness has grown, there is a need for continued education and outreach to deepen understanding and engagement. As Hungary continues its journey toward a more sustainable future, the

collaboration between citizens, businesses, and policymakers will be crucial in realizing the full potential of the circular economy. By fostering a culture of environmental responsibility and supporting citizen initiatives, Hungary can contribute to a global movement toward a more sustainable and circular way of life.