

Comparison Briefing: Consumer Information Programme & Sustainable Lifestyles and Education Programme **Connections and Differences**



Consumer Information Programme (CI-SCP)

A global platform supporting the provision of quality sustainability information on goods and services, to engage and assist consumers in sustainable consumption.

[oneplanetnetwork.org/
consumer-information-scp](http://oneplanetnetwork.org/consumer-information-scp)



Sustainable Lifestyles and Education Programme (SLE)

Envisions a world where sustainable lifestyles are desirable, beneficial and accessible for everyone, enabled, supported and encouraged by all sectors of society, including governments, the business sector and civil society.

[oneplanetnetwork.org/
sustainable-lifestyles-and-education](http://oneplanetnetwork.org/sustainable-lifestyles-and-education)



Comparison Briefing

This briefing is part of a series comparing the One Planet network programmes to inform national governments and SCP practitioners.

The purpose is to showcase common approaches and methods that the programmes engage to promote sustainable consumption and production, whilst also highlighting the ways that these programmes diverge and differ.

The **One Planet network** was formed to implement the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, which supports the global shift to sustainable consumption and production (SCP) and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12.

It is a multi-stakeholder partnership composed of six programmes of action to implement the One Planet strategy.¹

Acknowledgements

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¹ One Planet network (2018) One Plan for One Planet: www.oneplanetnetwork.org/resource/one-plan-one-planet.

Overlaps & Connections

There are a number of commonalities across the Consumer Information and Sustainable Lifestyles and Education Programmes.

Accelerating the shift toward sustainable consumption and production is the central commitment of all Programmes in the One Planet network.

- **CI-SCP and SLE emphasize communication, education and capacity building.**
They are interested in educating, inspiring and equipping people with an understanding of the environmental and climate impacts of their everyday lives and of their consumption patterns.
- **The programmes emphasize the diversity and dynamic nature of daily living and consumption.**
How people live their lives and the consumption choices they make differ across geographies, demographics and social stratification, across time (including life stages). They are influenced by diverse cultural backgrounds and are subject to change.
- **CI-SCP and SLE take a life cycle perspective.**
They consider impact and solutions along the whole value chain, including the use of goods and services and disposal.
- **The programmes promote products and services that enable sustainable living and that have a low environmental impact.**
This includes supporting long-lasting, repairable, reusable, circular, responsibly sourced, low carbon, energy efficient and quality products and services. It is important to note that CI is focused on wiser consumption of products, while SLE not only focuses on better products and services but also directly challenges excessive consumption and seeks sustainable ways of living.
- **Both programmes support a science-based approach and are concerned about green washing and false claims.**
They seek to improve product information in the market to be clear, accessible, reliable, relevant and transparent.
- **CI-SCP and SLE adopt a systems approach.**
They recognize that individual purchasing and daily living choices are enabled or constrained by actions taken by government and business. The burden of making sustainable choices is not solely placed on individuals, but instead arises from the interaction between individual practices and the enabling or constraining effects of infrastructure, policy, market, business, financial, media and cultural systems. Increasingly both programmes recognize and work to overcome the structural discrimination, systems of oppression and persistent injustices inherent in these systems.

Key Differences

Although the Consumer Information and Sustainable Lifestyles and Education Programmes both focus on advancing sustainable consumption and production, they place different emphases on aspects of this challenge. The table in the next page highlights the key differences that are useful to consider when using their outputs and when contributing to these programmes.

Consumer Information

Sustainable Lifestyles & Education

- Originated out of movements to defend, protect and promote consumer rights and freedoms, and safeguard buyers of goods and services from unfair or harmful practices in the marketplace

- Originated from the need for responsible and equitable stewardship of the Earth's resources, and as a response to the harmful impacts of consumer societies encouraging excessive materialism and waste

- Emphasis on **quality** of products
- What is the sustainable choice?
- How durable / repairable is a product?
- What are the impacts of a product's production on people and on the planet?

- Emphasis on **quality** and on an appropriate sustainable **quantity** of products and services
- What do we need and value?
- How much is enough?
- How do we simultaneously reduce overconsumption and increase consumption among those who are not yet meeting their basic needs?

Focus

- Intervene at moments of purchase (point of sale, point of use of product, recycling / disposal)
- Consider the life cycle of products
- Focus on consumer choice
- Provisioning of goods & services
- Product categories

- Ask why we consume and explore links to wellbeing and quality of life
- Address inequitable consumption patterns and advance social justice
- Shift consumption norms: of people's everyday lives, habits and ways of living and the systems that sustain these
- Focus on high impact domains (food, transport, housing, goods, leisure) and cross-cutting solutions (share, reuse, repair; life transitions and stages...)

People

- People as consumers. Action, impact and change created through intermediaries (retailers, governments, businesses, labelling organisations)

- People-centred: human-centred approach – people not only as consumers but also in multiple roles including citizens, parents, workers, producer, investor, change agents etc.

Target

- Companies, retailers
- Government
- Conscious consumers
- NGOs and civil society, for example consumer associations

- Communities, neighbourhoods, households, individuals
- Policymakers, businesses, civil society, educators, media, advertising / marketing

Origins

Products

Consumer Information

Sustainable Lifestyles & Education

Behaviour Change

- Behaviour change is a consequence of information initiatives and educational campaigns

- Behaviour change alongside systems change is the focus of initiatives and communication, and is supported by educational approaches

Main Approach

- Protecting and informing consumers
- Providing reliable and accessible information to the market

- Enabling and inspiring sustainable ways of living through individual practices and enabling systems (policy, markets, media, communities, education)

Tools & Means

- Standards, labels and claims
- Certification by trusted third party
- Consumer information tools
- Life cycle analysis

- Systemic initiatives aimed at transforming our ways of living to be sustainable
- Redefining progress, prosperity, the 'good life'
- Footprint calculators and programmes Educational programmes and campaigns
- Collective / collaborative actions in communities, schools, workplaces, faith groups, sports clubs, neighbourhoods etc.

Theory of Change

- Rational consumer choice and decisions guided by labels, sustainability information
- Credible sustainability information aligned with the ten principles of the *Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information*
- Third-party certification
- Economics viewpoint: the interaction between supply and demand
- Multi-stakeholder effort is required to achieve objectives

- Adopt a systems and social learning approach to advancing sustainable lifestyles including individual actions and economic, political, cultural changes
- Recognize that people are motivated by a range of motives and values including efficiency, finance, collective responsibility, opinion leadership, inspiration, tradition, eco-friendly living, belonging and having a social connection
- Catalyze the cultural and political movement for sustainable living
- Psychological approach – people are driven not just by rational choice but also anxiety, ambivalence, aspirations
- Responsible living (with less negative impacts) and reliable / secure living
- Cross-sectoral collaboration (e.g. local government & business, schools & host communities) for introducing innovative goods/ services or improving living conditions that enable individuals to avoid harmful behaviours



Insights from One Programme to Another

A CI-SCP lens offers SLE the following:

- Encouraging SLE to shape initiatives with a life cycle perspective (for example, identifying highest ecological impact interventions).
- Focusing on 'rights': the consumer rights to product quality and sustainability (mostly healthy environment), choice and information.
- Seeing consumer choice and purchasing patterns as an opportunity to 'link in' to the web of values and aspirations people hold to change behaviour.

A SLE lens offers CI-SCP the following:

- Adding a focus of 'quantity' within our ecological limits to the discussion of the 'quality' of goods and services. Asking: what do we need for a good life? Consuming less is an important option – not just efficiency and shifting consumption modes – for those who are overconsuming.
- Developing youth-focused programming, for example how to adopt a strong social media presence and engage youth.
- Offering broader context in terms of how people make decisions. Rejecting the economic rational choice approach that assumes people make rational decisions based on price: instead, incorporating how people are largely driven by instinct and emotion and that context (including shifting social norms and lock-in effects) constrains or enable how people live their lives.

Areas for Future Collaboration

There are areas that both programmes need to improve and offer potential future areas to explore and collaborate in the One Planet network.

- **We need to promote sustainable lifestyles that are desirable and attainable by many.**
- **More attention is needed on ensuring social justice and sustainable livelihoods.** Engaging vulnerable groups in society is not only about access to markets, but also about decision-making power. We have much to learn from those living sustainable lives today including from traditional and indigenous practices.
- **We need to accelerate the transition to circular economies** in response to climate and ecological crises including through demand-side solutions and through greater accountability, transparency and traceability across supply webs.
- **Making stronger connections between health and sustainable ways of living is critical,** particularly given global health crises. A focus on health co-benefits also provides opportunities to reach a wider audience beyond green consumers.
- **Adopting a coordinated approach** and working together to transforming whole systems of production and consumption and ways of living.



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