

Anna Charalampous

I am Anna Charalampous from Kalamata, Greece. I am an individual whose personal aim is social impact in the local community, through sustainability, youth work and other similar initiatives. I value the engagement of youth and the community, social action and impact, and sustainability in all its inter-related aspects.

Since 2016, I have been involved in programmes aimed at sustainability, youth engagement and community action. I was part of a volunteer environmental team that led local youth and European volunteers through an educational recycling programme. From 2020, I enhanced my involvement with youth work through a local youth organization, wherein I learned to understand the needs and tendencies of the youth. Now I am equipped with experience in environmental projects and implementation, as well as my knowledge in design and creative background.

I believe that sustainable fashion is highly important and involves different levels of implementation, with the 5 R's: reduce, rewear, recycle, repair and resell. First, we purposely aim for conscious spending, with a reduction of our consumerism and therefore, of resources used. Personally, I have been challenging myself to live a more conscious, minimalist lifestyle for the past few years. Aside from this, I translate my creativity through the transformation of clothing pieces. Not only do I insist on repairs or restructuring of clothes, but I also create art and other home items from reused fabric. Alternatively, some items can go directly to those with specific needs, donated to a larger cause, or brought directly to families in need within the community. There are also local groups such as the (local community) Marketplace or a Buy Nothing group in the area. With the Buy Nothing Group, items are given freely to those who truly want them and will make use of them. It is a movement that not only promotes sustainable fashion, but also the gift economy and a growth of the community spirit.

There have been various challenges in the implementation of programmes and the involvement of the local community. This was mainly due to the lack of resources and personnel, as well as inadequate support from schools and local authorities. However, we still pursue our initiatives and continue searching for the right people to support our network.

Sustainable fashion is an important part of the diverse circle of sustainability, and has a scope of impact that is much more expansive than what most people believe. Now, more than ever, it is imperative that the youth and local communities engage in sustainability efforts. Now, it is our duty. Each one of us should be involved, and I wish to take part in whatever way I can.