

UVA GREEN OFFICE

SEMI- ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21



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01 INTRODUCTION



The UvA Green Office was established in 2016. Since then, the Green Office has continuously increased its output of policy recommendations and projects to accelerate the sustainable transition at the UvA, especially concerning environmental sustainability. The Green Office is a student-run platform integrated into the UvA's institutional structure. Together, four team leaders, two general managers, and a number of voluntary student members work under the supervision of one central staff member (bestuurstaf), Ewout Doorman, and in extension, under the board of directors (College van Bestuur) (CvB) of the UvA.

Over the last ten months, the world has been dealing with the extreme COVID-19 pandemic situation. Unfortunately, topics other than environmental sustainability have been prioritized during these uncertain times. Consequently, with the start of the new academic year, the UvA Green Office team feels that it is more important than ever before to raise awareness about climate change and environmental issues, and to provide a united and welcoming student platform to facilitate connections and teamwork between students stuck at home. At the beginning of the academic year, we welcomed one more core-team member (co-manager) into the core-team to help us with this big task.

01 INTRODUCTION

Due to the consistent corona restrictions in 2020 that will continue into 2021, Green Office operations like pursuing sustainability on campus and physical events have become impossible to realize. Therefore, in the second half of 2020 the resources for these Green Office operations were re-invested into online activities. The team has focused on creating more prominent social-networking solutions, deeper integration into different university areas, better coordination between student associations and staff, and last but not least, the internal communication of the Green Office itself. Thanks to all of these activities, the Green Office was able to strengthen its position within the UvA environment and increase engagement for students and student associations united around environmental sustainability.

SATYAM KATHPALIA AND HANA HEGYIOVA

UVA GREEN OFFICE GENERAL
CO-MANAGERS

Our mission remains unwavered despite the transition to an online office. We strive to make the University of Amsterdam a greener place! This report summarizes the efforts, obstacles, outcomes, and successes of the UvA Green Office between September 2020 and February 2021.



02 STRUCTURE

ROLES

The UvA Green Office has four levels, each with its own role in working on the united vision of making the university a more sustainable place.



i. SUPERVISION

Our supervisor, Ewout Doorman, is the link between the UvA Green Office and the University of Amsterdam. The supervisor supports the Green Office wherever needed and makes sure it performs optimally and sufficiently within the university. Ewout communicates mainly with our managers, and periodically attends the core team meetings to stay updated on the latest happenings..

ii. MANAGEMENT

Our managers, Sat Kathpalia and Hana Hegyiova, are responsible for all the actions of the members of the UvA Green Office and make sure everything goes according to plan. To achieve this, the managers determine the general strategy of the Green Office. In addition to this, the managers monitor the progress of the current projects and the work of the portfolio holders. The managers also decide on the expenses so that the allotted budget is used optimally.



02 STRUCTURE

iii. TEAM LEADERS



Team leaders are an essential part of the Green Office. Together, the four team leaders as part of the core team spend a considerable amount of time devising the long-term strategy, and driving policy change at the UvA. In addition, they manage the Green Office members and their respective projects - sometimes overseeing and facilitating up to 10 unique projects at a time. They motivate members by organizing social events and provide opportunities to develop skills and knowledge through things like workshops, meet-ups, or their weekly or bi-weekly team meetings. You can find more info on each individual team at the start of each team's project list in section 03.

iv. MEMBERS

The Green Office consists mainly of student members in addition to our managers and team leaders. The members work on creating and implementing projects individually or in small teams. As the Green Office aims at increasing its impact and reach throughout the UvA and online, it encourages its members to take on projects themselves. At the start of the academic year we had over 70 applications to become students members and conducted over 50 interviews collectively. We now operate with 47 active student members working on projects in addition to our core team.



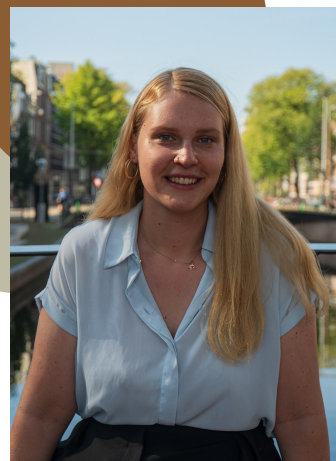
03 OUR PROJECTS

TEAMS

Our projects are divided across four teams: Campus, Community, Research and Education, and Communications. Read on to see the awesome projects each team is working on.

I. CAMPUS TEAM

As COVID-19 regulations remained in place for the first semester, some planned activities of the Campus team, like the Waste Event, were unable to happen in-person. We have had to adapt our plans for this year, as well as our usual in-person meetings to online. This meant that our team was more focussed on projects and tasks that are generally less observable, but just as important. Currently, the Campus team consists of 6 UvA students who are ready to tackle issues on campus. Working on the Coffee Cups project we have Yutika, Alison and Barbora. Roberta is working on finding a partner for e-waste collection as well as organizing DIY workshops. Luisa and Fee are busy with Ecosia on Campus. Fee is also involved in the promotion of Green Commitment and developing our connections with student bodies..



ZITA KOSARAS

CAMPUS TEAM LEADER

I. COFFEE CUPS

We have been working on eliminating (or reducing) single-use cups on campus for multiple years now. The Coffee Cups project is a constant work-in-progress where we try to approach this problem with multiple solutions and connect with other universities to see what possible solutions they have come up with. For the Green Office alone we have recently purchased the sustainable and reusable “Huskup”.



03 OUR PROJECTS

ii. ECOSIA ON CAMPUS

Ecosia is a search engine like Google or Bing, except it uses its profits to plant trees. The goal of this project is to establish a community of tree-planters at the UvA who use Ecosia on their own computers and eventually, to have Ecosia as the default search engine across the computers. Our lovely members Luisa, Fee and Carolien started up this project in the beginning of the academic year. Last month, UvA students searched 4875 times and planted 43 trees! Imagine how many more we could plant if all the UvA computers were using Ecosia!



iii. THE LITTLE BOOK OF GREEN NUDGES

The Little Book of Green Nudges is a framework by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) made specifically for universities and higher educational institutions. A nudge is a little push (i.e. a change in the environment) that aims to guide one's behaviour in a certain direction. Nudges do not push students or staff to adopt new behaviours rapidly that they may be unsustainable in the long-run, but simply make certain choices more difficult while making others seem easy. By participating in this initiative, universities get to choose and implement nudges with the help of UNEP webinars and workshops. The Green Office decided to join as a way of building relationships with other universities and stakeholders, as well as to further implement sustainable solutions across our campuses. This last semester, we have been preparing the implementation by choosing which nudges are most suitable to implement on our campuses.

iv. UvA CAFETERIA

For the last four months we have been involved in trying to improve sustainability in the cafeteria. Together with Facility Services (and others) we discussed things like protein transition, decreasing meat options, and food waste. Unfortunately, discussions have been suspended as of January because the current contract was extended 5 more years.

03 OUR PROJECTS

V. GREEN COMMITMENT

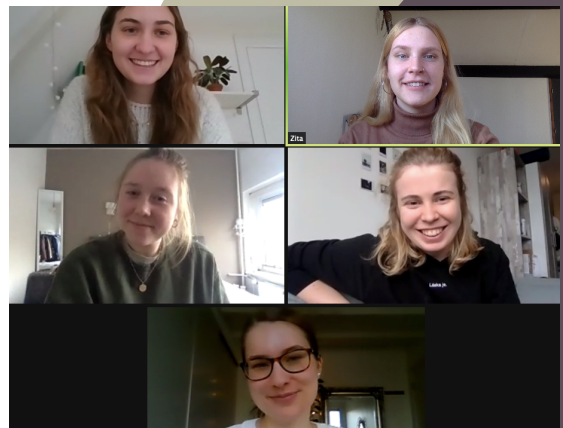
The Green Commitment is a non-binding agreement between the Green Office and any student organisation, association, club or community within the UvA. By signing this agreement student bodies commit to doing their best when it comes to pursuing sustainability within their organisation. The Green Commitment was established last February. Last semester we conducted a short evaluation to see how signees are implementing the guidelines and we also welcomed two new signees to the Green Commitment.



The Green Commitment

To strengthen our relationships with student organisations who are currently not party to the Commitment, the Campus team has set up meetings with the associations to learn more about how they integrate sustainability into their organisation. We have gathered valuable insights about the struggles and difficulties associations experience which will help us further assist them, if needed, to make sustainable choices.

THAT'S ALL FROM THE CAMPUS TEAM!



03 OUR PROJECTS

II. COMMUNITY TEAM

The Green Office Community team focuses on building a community of like-minded, sustainable UvA students. However, because of COVID-19, organising team-building activities poses a challenge. So, a main task was to get creative with Zoom and build and maintain a good team spirit in order to work together effectively and achieve our sustainable goals! For example, to end the year we organised a zoom for the core team got together to play joyful games and get to know each other even better. Mulled wine was made, ways and customs of the home countries shared, and videos of Green office members singing in choirs revealed!

The Community team itself has 9 members: Flavia, Marie, Mira, Evanna, Gabriel, Lucie, Sophie, Julia, and Emily. This semester we had a complicated start as there was a change in team leader in October, where Tanja was replaced by current leader Luna. Together we work to organise community building events, guide conversation across UvA domains, and collaborate with external partners because we are convinced that the more people push for a sustainable agenda, the more successful our projects will be.

LUNA HAMANN

COMMUNITY
TEAM LEADER



I. GREEN FASHION GUIDE

Clothing production has almost doubled since 2000, but people on average only keep their clothes for half as long. The immensely negative environmental impact fast fashion has is no secret. That's why the Community team has taken on the project to create a 'Green Fashion guide'. This booklet aims to educate people about fast fashion and ways to avoid it through introducing sustainable brands, thrift stores, clothing swap apps and flea markets in Amsterdam.

03 OUR PROJECTS

ii. PROJECT NAMASTE

In order to bring some movement into our lives in times of COVID-19 and home-office, the community team initiated 'Project Namaste'. Via live stream Ina, a PPLE student, passionate yogi and certified yoga teacher helps us become more Zen. Improved flexibility, increased muscle tone and stress decrease are just a few examples of the many benefits yoga has, in addition to being more mindful about our actions and the environment. The yoga sessions, open to all Green Office members, take place on the last Sunday of every month.



iii. ALUMNI PORTRAITS

We initiated a new project called 'Alumni portraits', where we approach and interview UvA alumni who are currently pursuing a sustainable career. The goal of this project is to inform students at the UvA about sustainable career options they have after graduating. Our first interviewee was Dr. Nadina Galle, an ecological engineer who has enjoyed a distinguished academic record since doing her MSc Earth Sciences at the University of Amsterdam. The interviews are conducted by Community team members and published on our newsletter on a monthly basis. We are looking forward to many more interesting interviews!



THAT'S ALL FROM THE COMMUNITY TEAM!

03 OUR PROJECTS

III. RESEARCH & EDUCATION TEAM

The Research & Education team works to promote sustainability within the university by facilitating interdisciplinary collaboration at the UvA. This includes developing the Green Office Knowledge Hub (a tool to enable collaboration in sustainability-related projects between members of the UvA community), producing Green Talks and podcasts, and undertaking individual research projects overseen by the team leader. This semester has been very busy for the 19 members of the R&E team as they have been working hard on developing a range of new projects!

MILLY WARNER

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION TEAM LEADER



I. FLOATING GARDENS

In collaboration with three students following the UvA placemaking course, Green Office members Tanja and Miléna are working to establish floating gardens at the UvA campus. These will act as a research site for students from across different disciplines, whilst improving water quality, fostering biodiversity and making the UvA even more beautiful!



03 OUR PROJECTS

ii. GREENTALKS

This semester we continued holding the GreenTalks interviews online and developed the initial idea into a successful, regular online series. We interview people working in the sustainability sphere with the ambition of illuminating the transition from studying to professional life for fellow students. In the past few months we have spoken with a wide range of different organisations.

Our member Lina chatted to the community-led food waste organisation Taste Before You Waste, Miléna discussed the interlinkages of social and environmental justice with Fair Tourism, and Suzie spoke with Amber from the Student Hotel and Marlot from Ace and Tate about corporate sustainability.



iii. SUSTAINABLE COURSE INVENTORY



In order to help students with their course selection, Green Office members Lindi, Olivia and Gabriella updated our inventory of sustainability-related courses for the second semester of 2020-21 academic year. This included any courses which contained the terms “sustainability”, “circular”, “climate”, “environment” and “green” in both English and Dutch. The comprehensive guide includes course descriptions, blocks, and credit value, alongside being hyperlinked to the official UvA Course Catalogue.

03 OUR PROJECTS

iv. PODCAST (COMMUNICATIONS TEAM COLLABORATION)

The Research and Education Team's latest project has been the launch of a new podcast series: The UvA Green Office Podcast! Created in collaboration between Research and Education members Lina and Sakhi, and Communications members Nefeli and Julia, the first episode was inspired by the Netflix documentary Chasing Coral, which was produced by Jeff Orlowski and brings to light some shocking truths about rising ocean temperatures and how this is harmful to corals. Lina and Sakhi take forward a conversation around corals; how they are the most fascinating underwater organisms, why they are important and how our actions are posing a threat to their future.

The first episode will be released at the end of January on Spotify. Stay tuned for more episodes and a new series!



v. IIS COLLABORATION

The Green Office has taken on an advisory role in the creation of the new IIS (Institute for Interdisciplinary Sciences) Sustainability Minor programme. By creating resources such as the course inventory, the Research and Education Team has assisted in analysing the courses which already exist and may feature on the Minor programme. We look forward to continuing working with the IIS in the design of this new programme.

03 OUR PROJECTS

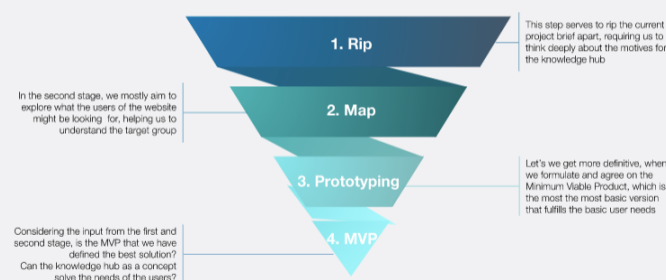
vi. KNOWLEDGE HUB

The Green Office is regularly approached by students and staff who are interested in interdisciplinary collaboration in sustainability-related work and research. Being unaware of what projects are being undertaken in different faculties, and what opportunities for cooperation might exist presents a challenge for the UvA community.

The Knowledge Hub Team, consisting of Nina, Sorch, Zeynep, Julia and Milly, created a survey which was sent out to people across the UvA community to further understand how the Green Office can facilitate collaboration. Based on the data from this survey, we are developing the “Green Office Knowledge Hub”, an online platform which acts as a tool to facilitate collaboration between various members of the UvA community working on sustainability-related projects. The Knowledge Hub will provide an interactive space for collaboration and connection which currently does not exist within the UvA.

Ideation & Prototyping Workshop

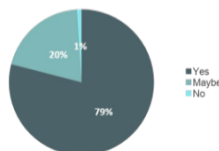
The ideation workshop will be split into 4 steps. Each step will be time-boxed and guided by a framework



Survey Results

64	Total replies
47%	Bachelor students
36%	Master students
17%	University staff & other

Would you generally be interested in using a university-wide Sustainability Network?

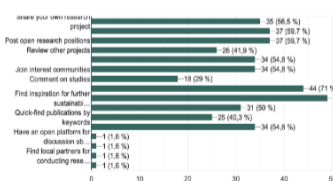


What are the top three obstacles to interdisciplinary research?

44%	40%	35%
Finding Funding	Accessing resources	Time constraints

Most wanted features?

1. "Finding inspiration for further sustainability research" (79%)
2. "Learning about other research projects" (71%)



03 OUR PROJECTS

vii. INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH PROJECTS

Within the Research and Education Team there are a group of members working on individual research projects. One project is looking into possible retailers who have high standards of environmental and social sustainability to provide the CSR's new merchandise range, led by Olivia and Beatriz. A second project is run by Chris, who is creating a computational model in order to analyse the energy consumption and emissions of the UvA buildings. Third, research is being done by Dora into the opportunities to reduce the carbon footprint and food miles of the UvA canteen in order to be prepared for our advisory role when the caterers contract is up for renewal. Last but not least, Sungmin is looking into the debate between veganism and regenerative agriculture, and researching the difference in climate-impact and how accessible these diets are within the city of Amsterdam.



**THAT'S ALL FROM
THE RESEARCH AND
EDUCATION TEAM!**

03 OUR PROJECTS

IV. COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

The communications team are the mouthpiece for the work of the UvA Green Office! While other teams pursue new individual projects on campus or online, the communications team focus their hard work on improving visibility on these projects and spreading the word of the Green Office as far as possible. This means managing a host of social media platforms, keeping the website up-to-date, connecting the UvA central communications team to the Green Office, and expanding our reach as far as possible by pursuing new ways of getting content to new types of followers.

Given that this academic year has been entirely online so far, our role has become even more crucial as we manage the bulk of the Green Office online presence and have facilitated the online transition via our ever-expanding selection of platforms. The fantastic team of 13 members in the first semester consisted of Hanni (blog manager), Julia Dalibor (newsletter manager), Aiden Whitfield, Patricia Haggblom and Julia Holst (public relations team), Vivi Tews and Rhoda Elies (video editors and graphic designers), Julia Wolska and Nefeli Syriopoulou (podcast team), Diana Tavaréz (Youtube manager), LeeAnn Wyatt (Green Guide manager), Chloe Youn (internal communications), and Sofia Hedberg (social media manager).



LUCY UPTON

COMMUNICATIONS
TEAM LEADER

i. PODCAST (RESEARCH & EDUCATION TEAM COLLABORATION)

See the Research and Education summary of our new podcast project. Communications members Nefeli and Julia Wolska have been an essential part of developing and editing the podcast, and our member Vivi designed the fantastic logo. We selected a distribution platform and are in the process of confirming and promoting our Spotify.

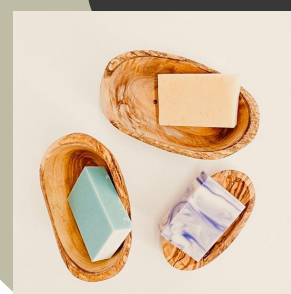
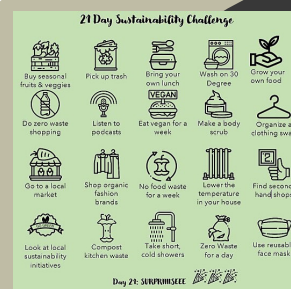


03 OUR PROJECTS

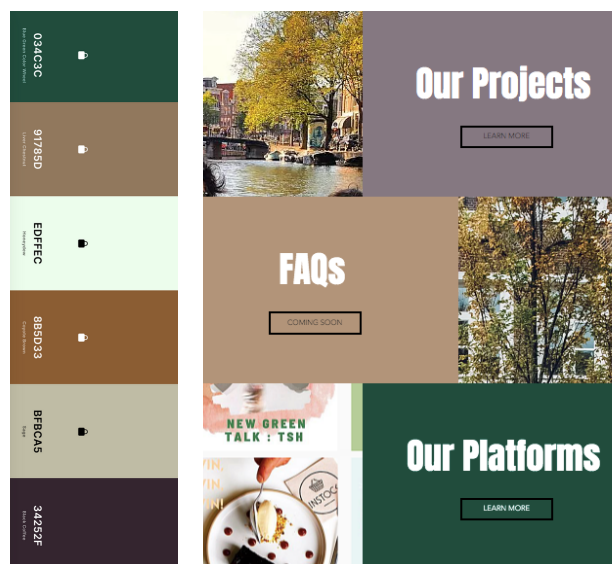
ii. SUSTAINABILITY DAY CHALLENGE

For the Dutch Day of Sustainability on the 10th October the communications, campus, and community teams collaborated to create a 20-day sustainability challenge for our Instagram audience. The Instagram challenge was managed by Lucy and our social media manager Sofia Hedberg. The goal of the challenge was not only to celebrate the day of sustainability and encourage our audience to participate in small environmentally-friendly behaviours, but also to emphasise that it only takes 21 days to form a longer-lasting habit.

(CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY TEAMS COLLABORATION)



We had over 20 participants send us photos and videos for the prize draw, and three lucky winners were awarded €50 vouchers to local student-run business Plastic Free Amsterdam.



iii. NEW LOOK WEBSITE

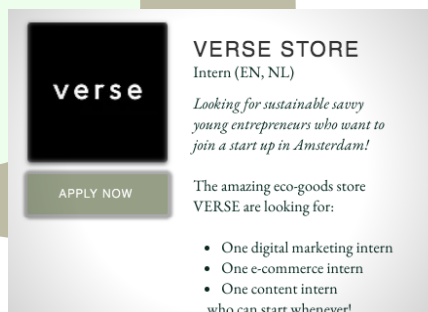
Part of the communications manager's role is to maintain the website. This semester we updated the website with a new font and colour scheme, a "link in bio" landing page for Instagram links, and a new layout that directs users to all of our projects and platforms in one place.

03 OUR PROJECTS

iv. NEWSLETTERS

A. EXTERNAL NEWSLETTER

The Green Office newsletter is a key part of external communication. This year the external newsletter has been managed by Julia Dalibor, who handed over the role to Patricia Haggblom in January 2021. Given that our mailing list is made up of self-subscribed followers who have signed up via our website, we see the external newsletter audience as our “inner-circle” of followers compared to our 2000+ audience reach on social media. The communications team put out the newsletter every month on the 15th via email, with three or four highlights of the month from any team. As of January 2021 we have 558 subscribers to our newsletter.



B. INTERNAL NEWSLETTER

Chloe Youn designed and launched our first-ever Green Office internal newsletter on the 10th Jan 2021. A constant problem with the Green Office has been inter-team and intra-team communication, so this newsletter was a fantastic corona-safe solution. The newsletter gave an intro to the Green Office structure, a “thank you” message from Sat and Hana, updates on each team, their members and their projects, and personalized introductions to each team leader. We delivered it to each of our 52 members, and will put out a new edition on the 10th of every second month.

v. JOBS BOARD

Following high demand from both employers and students to be connected with sustainability-related internships and jobs, we created a “jobs board” on our website. We regularly update this page with green jobs and internships from companies who reach out to us via Instagram or email, with descriptions of the role and how to apply directly. We also promote these opportunities on social media to all of our followers!

03 OUR PROJECTS

VI. PLATFORMS

A. INSTAGRAM

1622 followers

10,000+ reach

217 posts

B. FACEBOOK

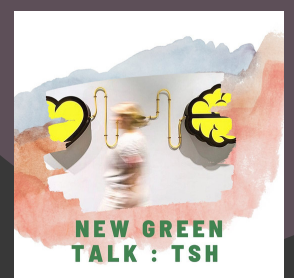
1980 followers

1868 likes

C. BLOG ~60 reads per post



16 subscribers, 125 views

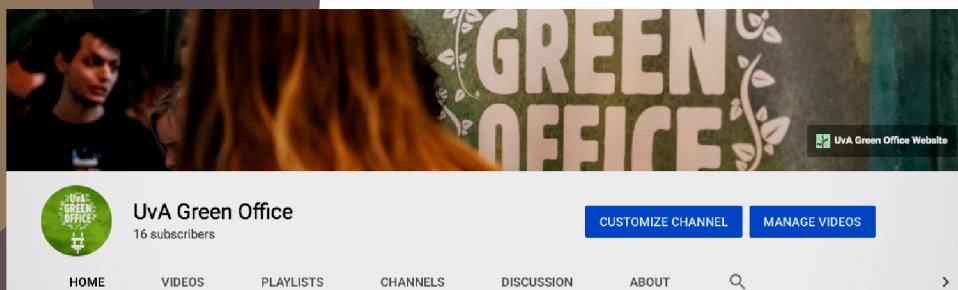


D. WEBSITE

3000+ visits this semester

530 subscriptions

E. NEW! YOUTUBE



03 OUR PROJECTS

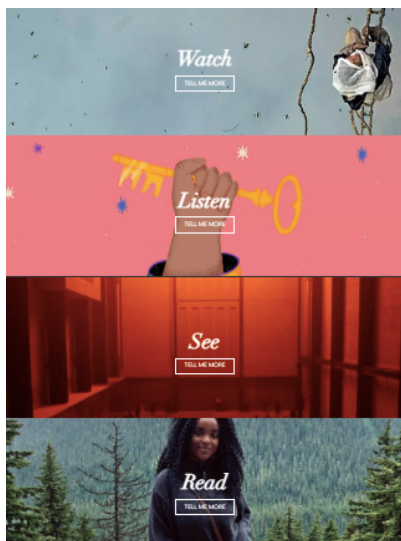
vii. ANALYTICS

Our member Julia Holst downloaded Google Analytics for our website and YouTube. This programme is very useful for insights on our website traffic numbers, location, source and timing.



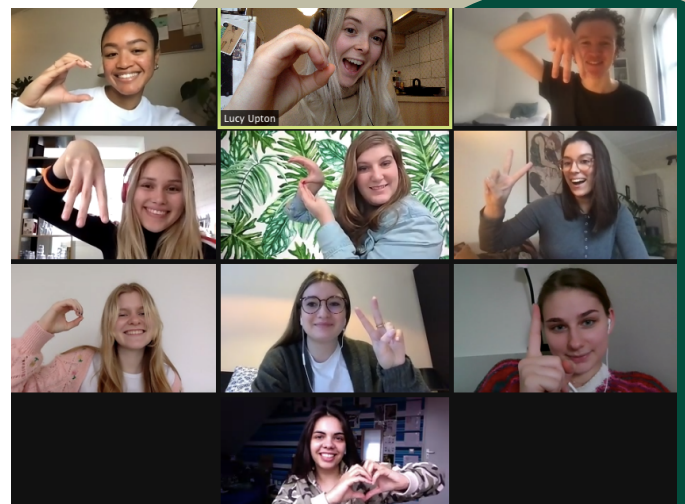
viii. RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

(RESEARCH & EDUCATION TEAM COLLABORATION)



To mark the Day of Sustainability in October, we collaborated with the Research and Education team to build a new “recommended resources” page on the Green Office website. We wanted to build a set of academic and non-academic references where our audience could go to learn more about various sustainability topics, and to support authors and subjects that we as a Green Office endorse. The resources are organised into categories of “watch” (documentaries and videos), “listen” (podcasts), “read” (journal and news articles), “see” (visual art), and “follow” (academic or influencer profiles). All resources are vetted by Lucy and Milly.

THAT'S ALL FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS TEAM!



04 COMING UP

GREEN GUIDE 4.0

COLLABORATION WITH
CENTRAL UvA
COMMUNICATIONS



SPOTIFY
LINKEDIN
KNOWLEDGE HUB LAUNCH

E-WASTE GUIDE
WEBSITE FAQs PAGE

MEDIA CONTENT CREATION STUDIO
INSTAGRAM REELS



TIKTOK

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Facebook: [UvA Green Office](https://www.facebook.com/uvagreenoffice)
Youtube: [UvA Green Office](https://www.youtube.com/uvagreenoffice)

IMPRESSUM

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