



THE PROBLEM

VIDEO 1: *"The story of our one planet"*

This is a story of our one planet, where amazing things have taken place. Capitalism has harnessed our productivity and our innovation. It has changed the way many of us live our lives for the better.

However, our system also creates inequality and poverty - especially when free of regulation. We know that it's prone to crisis. We have seen boom and bust many times.

Perhaps worst of all, we now know that it is damaging our one planet. Our air, water, and land are all under pressure in a way they have never been before.

Urbanisation and the growth of cities have remade the natural landscape in the image of progress. This progress however is not without its costs, as natural processes are interrupted.

The problem is that capitalism sees nature as outside of our lives - a place to extract resources for us to consume. We've broken the link between ourselves and the planet and it's become difficult to see how totally we depend on the natural processes that support our ways of life.

We need to think more deeply about this relationship - if we don't look after nature, we're endangering our own prosperity, our health, and our future as a species.

We have a dynamic and innovative economic system that can respond to this. As a consumer, we can choose to buy green, recycle and support eco technologies. But these are solutions from inside the system - and are they just more business as usual? You see, capitalism is fundamentally built on ever-compounding growth. Production and consumption are always required by this kind of economy. This means that our use of the earth's resources and space is also growing in a compound way...

But we only have one planet.

We need to change the conversation. We need to build an alternative that allows us to continue to flourish without continuing to consume as we do. By stopping to think about what the economy is doing for us, and what it is doing to nature, we can begin to explore how to live within the limits of our one planet. This is also an opportunity for us to re-think how to end the boom-bust cycle, and increase equality and prosperity for all citizens of the earth.

In looking after our one planet, we're also looking after ourselves and our future. We need to start talking about change.



WAYS OF THINKING

VIDEO 2: "How we think about our economy"

We only have one planet on which to live, and prosper, and flourish.

Yet when we measure our economic activity and think about our prosperity, we use GDP - which doesn't take account of the effect we're having on nature. Growth in GDP is seen as good for society, even in countries like Ireland where austerity has made social problems, like inequality, worse. We might be spending more on private hospitals, because we're worried about worsening public healthcare, but this spending will show up as "positive" GDP. Neither does GDP measure when bad things happen in nature. In fact, detrimental things like unsustainable resource extraction can also add to our GDP.

There are better ways of measuring progress. Ireland can be proud of being top of the *Doing Good Index*. We know how to contribute to making the world better, but we need a system that supports this. The *Social Progress Index* looks beyond GDP, to take account of social and ecological well-being. It measures how well our system supports our human needs, our health, and our spaces for flourishing and opportunity. It takes account of our one planet.

We hear it as good news if our country is returning to economic growth after the crisis. We believe it to mean that the country is recovering. But we need to ask what we're recovering from and what we want now. Is this a recovery of our needs - not just GDP growth, but social progress, health, wellbeing and ecological sustainability?

We need to think about where we get our information about progress. The media and our political system tells us that GDP is the benchmark of success, despite its flaws. We depend enormously on media for our current affairs information, but we need to think critically about how the processes of our economy and the drive to create wealth and growth, can also influence our media and the shape the information we receive. The same people who benefit from growth in consumption also have interests in what news we receive about the economy and the environment.

Our newspapers show us stories from countries affected by climate change, while advertising the latest cars alongside them. Our TV stations depend on product advertising to keep giving us the news. It can be difficult for us to square stories that tell us to consume as usual, with worrying news about the health of our planet.

We must think deeply about who has shaped news that we receive about the economy, and whose interests this serves. We can think about what is not said - news of economic growth and silence on the ecological consequences.

We need to start talking about progress and prosperity that's sensible and sustainable for our one planet.



TAKING ACTION

VIDEO 3: *"Taking action against unsustainable practices"*

When we take positive action we feel great. Doing something good empowers us. We know what to do with a drinks can when we are done with it. We can recycle and know we've done our bit for our one planet.

But, our economic system is based on constant, compound growth – so we need ever more cans to be consumed. The economy needs to keep growing, at about 3% per year. **But 3% year on year quickly adds up, and even if we all recycled, our one planet can't keep up.**

Constant growth in production and consumption depends on massive amounts of materials and natural resources. The economy requires us to create and use endless products that are becoming more like the can – throwaway.

Not a problem, perhaps, because our economic system tells us that we can keep buying so long as we buy green. We can keep business as usual if Black Friday becomes Green Friday.

But the ever-increasing products all need resources, and lots of them. Friendly, organic, and green products still need raw materials and natural resources to come from our one planet – and it can't keep providing for endless growth.

What's more, we now know that we don't get as much joy from consuming as we might think. We get a short-term hit when we buy something, but it doesn't last very long. We measure production and consumption as the important indicators of how well we're doing, but we leave out what might be good for our well-being and our one planet.

We can ask what our economy is doing for us. Are we in control of it, or are we just there to make sure it keeps growing, regardless of the cost? Does it help us live a good life, and do its efficiencies offer us more time to connect with those who matter to us? Does it give us opportunities to explore the many aspects of life beyond consuming? And does it support our one planet?

We can act to change things by thinking differently. We know that recycling our can is not enough, but we rarely get asked why we bought the can in the first place. Instead of just dealing with what we consume, we can think about why our goods were produced, what effect this has - and whether we really needed them all.

We can act to change things by talking differently. We can talk to our elected representatives. We can tell them we don't just need more money to consume more products, but a quality of life beyond endless buying for temporary joy. We are social: we can start conversations and share our critical thinking about changes for the better.

We only have one planet on which to flourish. It's time to talk about how we treat it.