



# YESPERS

BY Group 13

*Special thanks  
to the people of  
Yespers*





WHO IS



Being the son of a Dutch farmer, Stefan Baecke felt particularly impacted by recent widespread pressure put onto farmers. While the demand for produce is increasing, the willingness to pay for quality and sustainable products is decreasing. This inspired Stefan to take things into his own hands in 2014 and create Yespers which is centered around transparency, fairness, and sustainability.

Rather than employing an extraction-focused model like most other companies, Yespers instead aims to establish a total value model. This, paired with their demand driven system, allows for the company to not only increase their sustainability, but also create a fairer environment for farmers and have more social impact. To achieve this, Yespers focuses on the 3 Ps: people, profit, and the planet.

But let's dive deeper into how Yespers can accomplish this vision. Starting with the produce they use to make their products, Yespers cuts out the middleman in the farming sector and does business directly with the farmers themselves. They also buy the produce from farmers above the market price, leading to a more equal division of profits for the farmers and more security for both parties. Additionally, the products they buy from these farmers is produce that cannot be sold in a supermarket and would instead get wasted due to their aesthetics. Once Yespers is in possession of this produce, it is processed in their own factory located in Den Haag. This includes a wide variety of processes in which all elements of the produce, from its flesh, juice, and pulp, are used to create a wide range of consumable goods. Yespers owns their own waste streams, meaning that they take responsibility for and manage the entire lifecycle of the waste created during their production processes. This allows them to limit overproduction, limit the use of unnecessary products, and limit the overall amount of waste they produce. Additionally, by using all elements of the produce, Yespers further reduces the amount of waste they produce, creating more circular processes.

Another key defining feature that sets Yespers apart is their focus on social sustainability. Within their factories, Yespers employs individuals who have struggled to integrate into the Netherlands. These are frequently people who are marginalized and in need of socialization and work. By doing so, Yespers provides these people with a new opportunity to integrate and become a part of a community.



We chose to create a comic, based on literature that argues that art can play an important role in presenting scientific findings. In this article, it was shown that art can overcome shortcomings in science [1].

[1] Berry-Frith J. (2023), Every science-lab should have an artist on the teams. Here's why, magazine article, The Conversation

# COMIC TO COMMUNICATE TRUE PRICING TO CONSUMERS



While all these elements are crucial in defining Yespers as a company, a central focus within their business is on their true pricing practices. True pricing is a pricing mechanism in which all possible costs of the product, including externalities, are accounted for, and implemented. This means that any potential negative impact, such as pollution, caused at any point during the production process is accounted for. By implementing true pricing strategies, customers avoid paying additional costs due to externalities since they are already accounted for. In turn, this also allows for more transparency between Yespers and the consumer throughout the production process.

## SO, WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

As previously mentioned, Yespers offers products that are sustainably and ethically sourced and produced. This in turn makes the product more expensive as farmers and employees are well paid for their hard work. On top of this, as Yespers employs a true pricing mechanism in which all externalities are accounted for, the price is raised even higher. While paying a higher price for a higher quality product is rational, the problem we have identified is that customers are not aware of how or why the cost of Yespers products are higher in comparison to other brands.

While it is clear for us as researchers why Yespers has a higher cost, this is not the case for the average consumer. We need to effectively communicate as to why customers should be incentivized to spend a little bit more money on Yespers rather than a cheaper yet unsustainable brand. Because why would someone pick a more expensive product over a cheaper one for no understood reason?

This is why we identified the consumers lack of understanding of Yespers true pricing mechanism to be the key problem.

In order for Yespers to continue to grow and create positive impacts, we need to ensure that customers know why they should choose to buy from Yespers. To do so, an interplay of disciplines is needed to effectively inform (potential) consumers of what true pricing is and why it is essential in the sustainable revolution of our food systems.



# PROBLEM TREE

Yespers informed us that there was a lack of cohesion in the effective communication of the companies' true pricing strategy. True Pricing is where the environmental and social cost of production are also included in the price, to contribute to a more sustainable global economy.

Incorporating the total value of the product in the price, not just the direct cost of production ensures that there is remediation of any externalities produced along the production chain.

With Yespers products, there are multiple ingredients and processes that go into the making of their products, each having their own social and environmental impacts. This creates complexity which we identified as a root cause of the problem. Complexity of the causes can lead to barriers in the communication between Yespers and the consumer, reducing the effectiveness of conveying the importance of True Pricing. There can be a lot of jargon involved when trying to explain externalities to the everyday consumer, which can create uncertainty among consumers and a feeling like there is a lack of comprehensible information.

Another root cause we identified was the clash of the long-term nature of externalities and the short-term needs and thinking of consumers. This clash highlights the importance of clear communication to create understanding and in turn bridging the gap.

All these causes lead to the core problem that consumers do not understand True Pricing of Yespers products. This leads to unwanted consequences for Yespers. An important consequence, of a lack of understanding, is a lessened feeling of responsibility to choose for the more sustainable option. There is no prioritisation of total value, but instead a focus on getting the most amount of food for their money regardless of negative impacts. This decreases the potential consumer basis of Yespers, there is lower demand which in turn means and therefore limits Yespers positive impact on the food system.

These are key points need to be addressed by Yespers to allow for greater sustainability in the food system and the flourishing of the company.

# ROADMAP OF PRODUCTION PROCESS





# HOW TO VISUALISE AND COMMUNICATE TRUE PRICING

## TO CONSUMERS



Videos about True Pricing



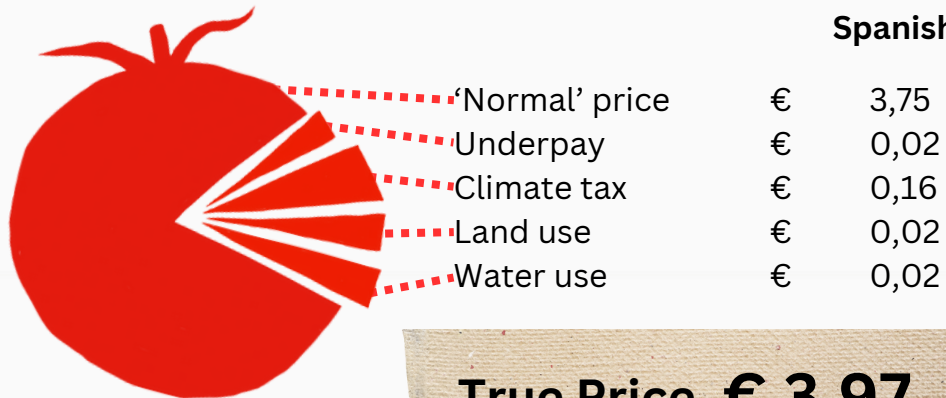
Articles about True Pricing

One way to communicate more transparently to consumers is taking inspiration of how others communicate through videos or articles. Yespers can also add links to articles they find important under a header of “Learn More” for those consumers that need more information. From research it has shown how important stories are in creating bonds between brands and their consumers [1].

Another way to effectively communicate to consumers what their impact can be through True Pricing and choosing Yespers, is through an interactive impact meter. There is already an impact meter on the Yespers website for the granola, we recommend expanding on this. Making it interactive, where the user fills in how many times a week they eat granola and then it calculates how much granola they would eat a year and the corresponding impact they would be helping by choosing Yespers. This way the consumer directly sees how much their choices effect the planet, increasing understanding and therefore creates a more loyal consumer basis. A QR on the granola packaging could link back to this interactive impact meter, which would increase the impact of this activity

## Vine Tomatoes [2]

Spanish



**True Price € 3,97 /kg**

Calculated with the TruePrice method

[1] McCormack, C. (2004). Storying stories: a narrative approach to in-depth interview conversations. International journal of social research methodology, 7(3), 219-236.

[2] De Aanzet supermarket, <https://www.de-aanzet.nl/debiologischsupermarkt>.



# IMPORTANT STAKEHOLDERS

## Outlets

Yespers collaborates with supermarkets and other food-providing companies to sell their products to people. That way, Yespers provides outlets with sustainable products, expanding their assortment, and the outlets provide Yespers with an expanded customer base. In the context of the problem, supermarkets and other food-providing companies can play an important role in encouraging customers to buy Yespers' products, working as a mediator between Yespers and the customers.

## Government

Due to their focus on a demand driven product chain, Yespers needs to have as much investors as possible. That is why governments can play an important role, as they hold a lot of purchasing power. Furthermore, there is a two-way relation, as Yespers can help governments go through their green transitions, by providing alternatives and by being a frontrunner, and governments can help spread Yespers' principles throughout the economy.

## Consumers

Eventually they are the most important stakeholders for our problem statement, as they are the ones that need to buy Yespers' products. For now, the relation between them and Yespers is characterised by a communication problem, in which Yespers finds it hard to convince customers of the positive effects of buying their products. This is the main thing we will focus on for a solution.

## Workers

Yespers has a special connection with their workers, as they try to employ people who have a hard time integrating into society. This special relationship could be used as a motivation for consumers to buy their products. Furthermore, the company has a couple of UVA students working for them that focus on the same problem as we are, but from a more economic perspective. They are relevant as well, as they provide the company with new insights, and Yespers provides them with a case to work on. In that sense we take on the same role and relation.

## Farmers Cooperative

This group of farmers is the primary provider of produce for Yespers. The relation that the company has with it is thus rather dependent, but in return Yespers pays more for produce than other companies. Yespers is also willing to buy the produce that is of a lower quality. That way, the farmers themselves also gain from this connection. This help towards farmers might be a reason for customers to buy the products of Yespers, which makes the work of the company extremely relevant.

## Private Investors

Due to the demand-oriented product model, it is important for Yespers to have as many investors as possible. Furthermore, as a relatively small company, they need investors to grow.

## Community

Yespers employs people from their near surroundings, focusing on people who have difficulty integrating. That way, these people are given a chance to integrate further, and Yespers is provided with employees.

## Supporting Organizations

Organizations such as MVO Nederland and Stichting Doen work in different ways to support upcoming sustainable companies, one of which is Yespers. By providing these different types of support, they play an important role in the popularity of the company, and the consumer base Yespers has.

## Other Businesses

Yespers sells a lot of products that are a side-effect of their primary production to third-party businesses, so they can use them to create other products.



## THEORY OF CHANGE

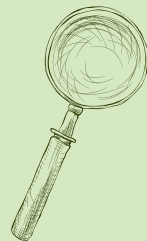
A Theory of Change is a great tool to illustrate how and why a desired change is expected to happen. We conducted our Theory of Change starting from the Vision Yespers is working towards, going backwards to our (Apple-) Core Problem.

Yespers **Vision** is to change the food system into a more sustainable and inclusive one. Yespers is striving to become a pioneer in this transformation to challenge and influence other competitors to follow their lead.

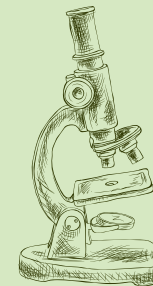
As a **long-term outcome**, Yespers is working towards a larger consumer base that chooses sustainably produced products over regular ones. As Yespers is constantly developing their product range depending on the demand they see, having a loyal and secure consumer base that is interested in buying sustainably produced products is crucial.

To reach this, consumer need to see the benefits Yespers products offer. As a **short-term outcome** consumer need to be better informed about externalities and true pricing to understand the impact Yespers is having. To increase Yespers influence, a constant development of new and even more sustainable methods of production is needed as well as an increase in outlets.

The **activities** we would recommend for this are mostly targeting Yespers communication towards consumer. As we observed, increased transparency towards consumers is important to facilitate trust in Yespers as a brand. To effectively inform consumer, the complexity of externalities and true pricing needs to be broken down as much as possible. For that, we recommend employing more non-traditional communication methods like videos or comics on Yespers website. Taking the true price communication of De Aanzet supermarkets as inspiration, additional costs through true pricing can be more easily displayed. Increasing marketing through social media (e.g., Instagram, TikTok), could also be an effective method to spread short videos in which these concepts are explained in easy words. In general, we recommend making the social media profiles of Yespers more accessible by, for example, also including English captions. To increase transparency we recommend publishing the true-price-report as well as a simplified explanation of Yespers supply chain and true pricing in general. To increase the amount of consumer finding their way to Yespers website we recommend handing out vouchers that can be used in the webshop. To foster a feeling of community, we also recommend making the impact meter that already exists on Yespers website more interactive.



## STAKEHOLDER INSIGHTS



"A large number of people in the Netherlands are willing to pay the true price of products"

"Consumers partially understand how the mechanism of true pricing works, however true pricing is complex"

"Transparency is key"

What should Yespers consider regarding their consumers from the point of view of their stakeholders?



We will focus on the core values of consumers and engage them through social media



Marketing



"It's not that sustainable products are too expensive but that non-sustainable ones are too cheap"

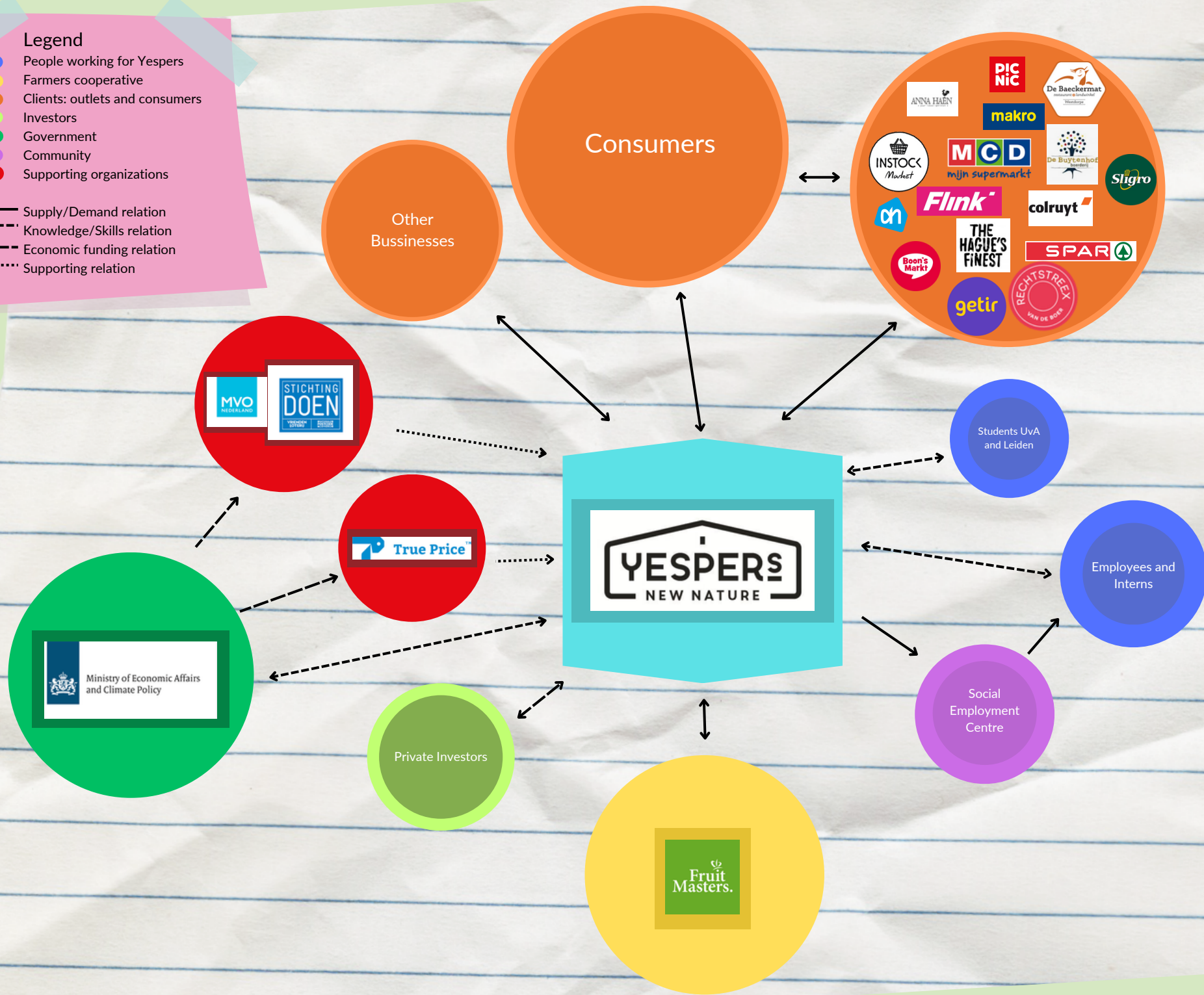
"We present succinct information and consumers also have the opportunity to learn more from the Yespers website"



### Legend

- People working for Yespers
- Farmers cooperative
- Clients: outlets and consumers
- Investors
- Government
- Community
- Supporting organizations

- Supply/Demand relation
- Knowledge/Skills relation
- Economic funding relation
- Supporting relation



## VISION

Yespers as a pioneer in changing food system towards more sustainability

### LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

- Having a large stable consumer basis choosing more sustainable products
- Having functional demand driven product system

### SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

- more informed consumers about externalities and true pricing
- continue developing new methods of sustainable product creation
- increase in outlets that sell Yespers' products

### ACTIVITIES

- Employing non-traditional communication methods like videos/comics to inform and be more personable with customers
- Increased marketing strategies (through social media)
- Increase accessibility on social media (include English captions)
- simplifying true price of product (example by De Aanzet)
- Handing out vouchers to be used in the online shop
- Increase transparency to consumer (e.g. simplified explanation of the supply chain and true pricing, publishing the true pricing report, etc.)
- Interactive (granola) impact calculator to foster a feeling of community

### RESOURCES

- Report and TruePrice organisation
  - Website
  - Instagram
  - Marketing team
- Input from distributor about consumer behaviour

### NEEDS

- Increased customer interaction
- More demand and attention for their products and brand
- New ways of conveying information and increased transparency

### CORE PROBLEM

CONSUMERS DO NOT UNDERSTAND TRUE PRICING OF YESPERS PRODUCTS







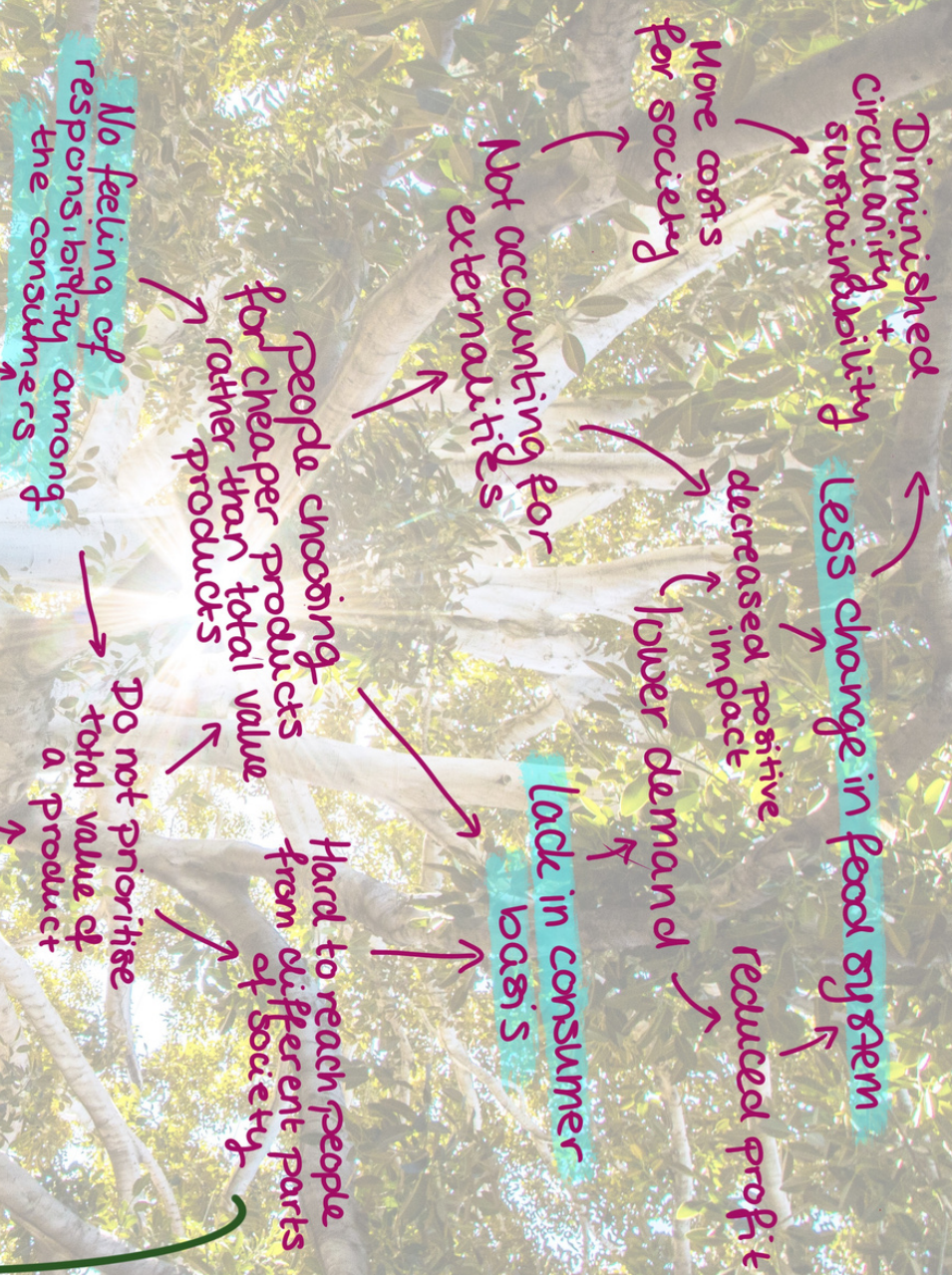
Significant **resources** Yespers can use here are their website as well as social media channels. As most of our recommended activities involve communication and marketing, Yespers marketing team plays a crucial role. Looking at followers of Yespers on the social media platform Instagram, we believe there is a need for English content. Informational resources are the relationship with the TruePrice organisation as well as the true-pricing-report. Relevant insights on consumer behaviour can be obtained from social media or distributors.

With all of this, Yespers addresses the **need** for more demand and attention for their products and their brand as well as the need for more customer interaction. Through finding new ways of conveying information and increased transparency, the **core problem** of consumers lacking the understanding of true pricing, will be addressed.

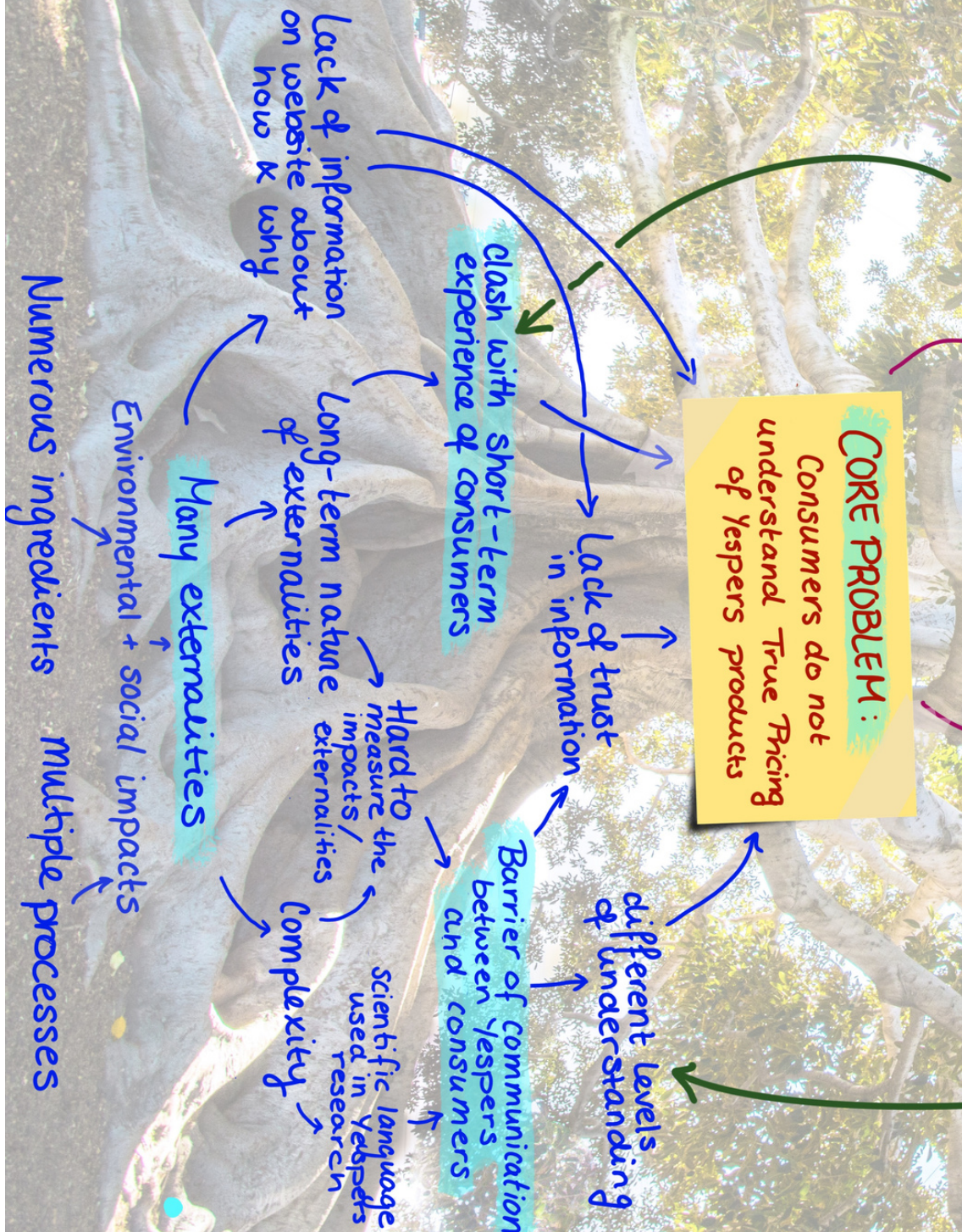
The next pages will further elaborate on these activities, highlighting the importance of transparency to build trust with consumers. We give some examples how Yespers can visually implement these ideas.



# CONSEQUENCES



# CAUSES







### *How did we get there? What was our approach?*

To create our problem tree we worked together with Yespers to discuss what they feel are the causes and consequences to their core problem. Working together towards a joint problem framing, to capture the different elements that are involved around the core problem of this zine.

We refined and added to the factors discussed to create a clear picture for an outsider to understand the current problem of Yespers. We tried to simplify it enough so that it clearly communicates to all no matter the level of previous understanding of the topic. For causes we worked from our core problem backwards, while for consequences we worked forwards.

