The ultimate answer for anyone who has ever asked “how can I make a difference?”, this ingenious handbook suggests one action for every day of the year – some are intriguing, many are unusual, a few involve fundraising, almost all can be planned or done from your home or computer, most will be fun, all are achievable, including:

- Support trade justice: buy three footballs
- Avoid landfills by freecycling
- Create a lifeline for remote African villages with wind-up radio
- Sow the seeds of a green revolution with guerrilla gardening
- Organise a fundraising event: speed dating for safer childbirth
- Get out of debt: join the Church of Stop Shopping
- Fight child slavery with fairtrade chocolate
- Influence the world media: become a blogger

Michael Norton, OBE, changed the face of charity in the UK. Founder of the Directory of Social Change, the UK’s lead agency for voluntary organizations, and the Centre for Innovation in Voluntary Action, he has set up street-children’s banks in South Asia and, with Childline, a network of phone help lines for street children in India.
Do you live in the depths of the country and frequently have to drive off-road? If not, then you have little need to drive an SUV (Sport Utility Vehicle) or 4x4. Nevertheless, these huge cars are becoming very popular, despite being dangerous both for pedestrians and the environment. One in four vehicles sold in the USA is an SUV, and the proportion continues to rise. The same trend is now apparent in Europe.

The SUV is seen as a passport to freedom and the great outdoors. TV commercials depict them climbing snow-capped mountains, or tearing through desert sand dunes. In reality, the only off-road action most of these vehicles are likely to see is when they are accidentally driven across a grass verge!

SUVs are the most polluting form of passenger transport available. Every gallon of petrol burned emits more than 12 kg of carbon dioxide, and SUVs have gargantuan appetites. Some SUVs do as little as 13 miles per gallon in town, and not a great deal more on the open road. This makes them a major contributor to climate change. Their enormous engines spew out twice as much carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons and nitrogen dioxide as ‘greener’ passenger cars. These chemicals cause ozone and other pollutants to build up around cities, leading to poor air quality, which in turn causes people to suffer from headaches, eye and throat irritation and, in the long term, lung damage.

...get the off-roads off the road

Take action by tagging SUVs with a bumper sticker. The best place to stick them so as not to cause any damage is at the bottom of the rear window. Download your bumper stickers from www.changingtheclimate.com/bumpersticker.html

Download fake parking tickets for some of the London boroughs and for use elsewhere in the UK. Put these under the windscreen wipers of SUVs. They will give the owner a real shock. The information they contain will show everything that’s wrong with an SUV. Download your tickets from www.wastemonsters.org.uk

Buy a cleaner car

When you choose your next car, do some research. There is a huge range of different models and they vary enormously in their environmental impact. Pay attention to fuel-emission ratings, miles per gallon in the city and on the highway. Cars powered by non-carbon fuels are gaining in popularity, with rising petrol prices and fears of global warming. Consider buying an electric car or a hybrid. Use a carpool whenever possible. www.eta.co.uk/news/car-buyers-guide.asp will help you choose the ‘greenest car’ for your needs.

Alliance Against Urban 4x4s: www.stopurban4x4s.org.uk
The USA Friends of the Earth website dedicated to SUVs www.suv.org

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