



# COMMON DESTINATION:

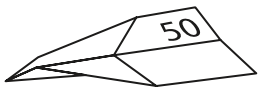
**New narratives to reframe aviation, ensure a safe landing and lay the tracks towards a fair planet.**

The narratives we believe in profoundly influence how we make sense of the world around us. This is also true for aviation. We need distinct ways for talking about aviation and our transformative journey towards a grounded future. This is why Stay Grounded has developed five narratives which can serve as foundations for powerful messaging that can be applied to

concrete struggles, campaigns and the communication around aviation. We intentionally created open narratives that are adaptable to and can be further developed for different contexts. While each narrative is unique, they also overlap and inform each other. Together the five narratives reveal the realities of aviation along with inviting people to imagine alternatives to it.

# NARRATIVES

Our five narratives capture key problems with the aviation industry and spark ideas for laying the tracks for a fair planet:



## PLANE GREEDY

A narrative about how the aviation industry puts itself above the needs of the many, how it ‘free rides’ at the expense of people, nature and communities, all while taking profits for itself and passing on the damage and costs to others.



## COMMON DESTINATION

A narrative about how a liveable planet is our only, viable, common destination. The narrative also conveys the reasons why, on our shared planetary home, we don’t need more air traffic and tourism to thrive. A major obstacle for the journey to a common destination is a wealthy minority of the world’s population flying regularly, with just a handful of these wealthy individuals capturing the profits.



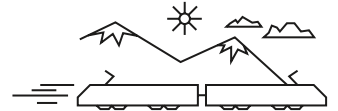
## GREEN MEANS GROUNDED

A narrative about why industry promises of change are greenwash and how mobility can become truly sustainable. The only way to lay tracks for ecologically and socially viable systems is to reduce air traffic and foster alternatives.



## SAFE LANDING

A narrative about how times are changing and the aviation industry needs to face reality and find a safe landing for the people working within it. Climate breakdown, cultural shifts, the rise of virtual meetings, pressures on fuel and responses to the pandemic all mean change is inevitable and will happen by design or disaster.

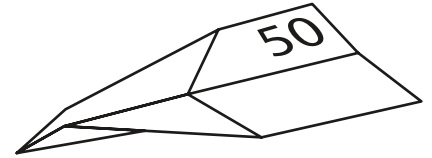


## ENJOY THE JOURNEY

A narrative about alternatives to aviation, and how other modes of travelling enable us to enjoy both our lives and journeys while forging a shared path towards a more just and sustainable society.

On the next pages you will find descriptions of all narratives. You can read more details about them, as well as facts about aviation, communication tips and tools in our guide “Common Destination” on the website <https://reframeaviation.stay-grounded.org>.

# PLANE GREEDY



## WHEN TO USE THIS NARRATIVE?

Plane Greedy focuses on scandalous and nefarious practices of the aviation industry and seeks to spark rightful indignation. It can also be used to challenge economic arguments made by the industry. This narrative frames the industry as a drain on resources, the public and the planet that we cannot afford.

- The aviation industry pollutes at the expense of all: the industry feels entitled to more than their fair share of the shrinking amount of the pollution the climate can handle.
- Airports and airlines are bad neighbours – they're making money from keeping communities awake at night and pumping out toxic fumes: the mental and physical health impacts of airport operations fall heavily and unequally on local communities and aviation workers.

## THE NARRATIVE

The aviation industry is a polluting and plane greedy engine of self-interest, ripping-off people and the planet, even though it has lobbied hard to convince us that it brings big economic benefits. Bringing the aviation industry back down to earth from its privileged economic treatment will be vital in building a fair economy. But to achieve this, it will not be enough to appeal nicely to politicians and industry managers – we have to stand up against their excesses and business as usual, be loud and put pressure on them.

We can't afford airlines being plane greedy when a fair economy needs companies to work for people, nature and the climate, not against them. Airlines have avoided accountability on reducing pollution, yet, governments continue to prop-up and support them, putting the financial burden of their subsidised existence onto the taxpayer.

### PLANE GREEDY CAN BE USED TO COUNTER THE OLD NARRATIVE 'ECONOMIC EXAGGERATION'

The story told by the industry is that air transport is one of the most important drivers for the economy and accessible to all. They would love us to believe that aviation is only responsible for a very small part of global emissions and that nevertheless, the industry has already done and continues to do a lot to become more climate-friendly. Aviation lobbyists argue with straight faces and no obvious irony that for the industry to become even greener, burdens such as a kerosene tax, carbon prices or harsh regulations must be avoided: only then can airlines and the rest of the industry invest in 'sustainable aviation fuels', electric aircraft and hydrogen - with financial support from governments, of course.

## MESSAGES TO COMMUNICATE THE 'PLANE GREEDY' NARRATIVE

- The aviation industry is 'plane' greedy, out for itself and ripping us off. It gets a free ride at others' expense: for decades it has dodged paying its way and respecting the environmental rules that others comply with to protect people and nature.
- The industry is flying away with public money and always first in line for public bailouts, while laying off workers and draining the economy, leaving more accessible and less polluting ways to travel underfunded and overshadowed.



# COMMON DESTINATION

## WHEN TO USE THIS NARRATIVE?

Common Destination can be used to give a realistic global context on the aviation industry by highlighting the injustice and disparity of its impacts, especially concerning people and communities in the Global South. It unites by showing that a future of less aviation is for humanity's common benefit.

## THE NARRATIVE

Our common destination is a fair world not trapped in climate breakdown, where we all can thrive. This means we must lay the tracks for a fair and sustainable economy with mobility for all. For this we need less polluting travel by a minority of the world's population and new development directions for tourism-dependent low-income countries. Transport infrastructure should be designed to meet local needs and ensure affordable mobility to support local livelihoods, not those of a wealthy, global elite. Let's prioritise the needs, desires and livelihoods of all people, and recognise that the current aviation industry and its expansion costs us all and hurts especially marginalised communities around the world.

The change we need will only come if we work together: Only by standing shoulder to shoulder, can we solve global crises.

## MESSAGES TO COMMUNICATE THE 'COMMON DESTINATION' NARRATIVE

- Transport choices should be shaped by the communities who need and use them: rather than being imposed, like airports and motorways, communities should be able to participate in the co-creation of transport systems that meet and respect their needs.
  - The global majority suffer for the profit-driven aviation expansion and privileged flying of the few: the disturbance, pollution and climate upheaval caused by aviation hurts most those who fly least.
  - False solutions put more pressure on the poorest: green-wash projects like offsets and agrofuels often have negative consequences for local communities in the poorest countries, especially for indigenous peoples, like taking land needed to grow food.
- ### COMMON DESTINATION CAN BE USED TO COUNTER THE OLD NARRATIVE 'DEVELOPMENT DECEPTION'

The industry claims that air transport is a catalyst for sustainable development and essential especially for countries in 'growing markets' in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This argument rests on the idea that economic growth spurred by aviation will create prosperity and unlock the potential of regions where many people cannot fly yet. It claims that for communities around the world with no or poor road infrastructure, or remote island states, air transport has a role to play. Their position is that even if not all people have the possibility to fly yet, this will change. Rather than a plaything of rich elites, they argue that aviation is becoming democratised. They will use this to defend expansion in other regions, and also say that the benefits of connectivity must be protected by subsidies from governments if the aviation sector is to realise its potential as a connector for people, trade and tourism and be a driver for sustainable development - without ever mentioning the grave environmental and social damages air traffic causes.
- Our common destination is a world we can all thrive in: aviation expansion means expensive infrastructure that doesn't meet local priorities. Worse still, it damages the natural world and the health and livelihoods of surrounding communities.
  - Cutting back aviation creates new opportunities: less flying opens possibilities and frees resources to imagine and design transport to meet the needs of local people and livelihoods.

# GREEN MEANS GROUNDED



## WHEN TO USE THIS NARRATIVE?

Green Means Grounded can be used to counter the green-wash propaganda that air traffic can soon become environmentally and socially sustainable. The narrative also shows how grounded alternatives are the only way to make mobility sustainable and how we can achieve the necessary transformation.

## THE NARRATIVE

Flying is the fastest way to fry the planet. Taking one long-haul flight generates more carbon emissions than many people around the world emit in an entire year. Technologies like the ones touted by airline executives and politicians alike are not enough to solve aviation's pollution problem. Offsetting, being used to lure increasingly climate-conscious people back to flying, is neither reliable nor as effective as the industry pretends it to be.

"Becoming green" means getting air traffic volumes down from their high-altitude, pollution-filled flight and bringing sustainable alternatives back on track.

To create a fair mobility system within an economy that works for people and planet, a single strategy will not be enough. Instead, we need various measures like ending harmful fossil subsidies and the industry's privileges, create a fair tax system, introduce regulations and bans and foster alternatives. This all needs to be part of a larger societal shift to create affordable, green and grounded mobility.

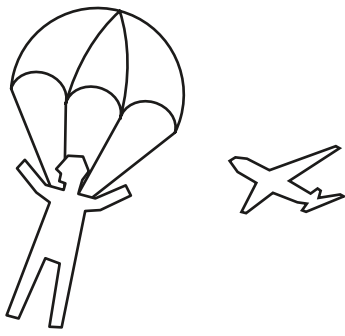
## MESSAGES TO COMMUNICATE THE 'GREEN MEANS GROUNDED' NARRATIVE

- The only green plane is one that stays on the ground. Commercial scale flying takes a huge amount of energy and resources. Grounded alternatives are more efficient and sustainable.
- Offsets are a licence to pollute. They legitimise business as usual, don't work, may actually increase global emissions and lead to new injustices.

- Fossil fuels substitutes are just drops in a fossil fuel ocean of aviation pollution. It is unlikely that they will cut pollution from air traffic in any meaningful way, regardless of industry hype which distracts from the need to reduce flights now.
- Hydrogen planes are like unicorns. Much discussed but mythical, notorious and the subject mostly of industry fairy tales. The reality is that they are unlikely to happen in time or at any kind of scale able to deliver substantial cuts to pollution.
- Renewable energy is scarce and should not be wasted for excessive flying. We will need all the renewable electricity we can get to decarbonise the grid and provide sustainable grounded transport for all. We should not waste it for inefficient e-fuels so that a few privileged ones can continue to fly as before.
- To reduce air traffic and make mobility fair and green, we need a diverse approach. Taxes and market measures are important, but will not be enough. We need limits and bans on flights, as well as an end to the expansion of flight infrastructure and airports – and a cultural shift.

### GREEN MEANS GROUNDED CAN BE USED TO COUNTER THE OLD NARRATIVE 'THE GREEN LIE'

The industry would like you to believe their propaganda that aviation has been leading the way with efforts to improve its environmental performance. It says it was one of the first industries to set ambitious global targets and develop a strategy to reduce its impact on the climate. It also claims that this is bearing fruit, asserting that for decades now, air transport has been becoming increasingly efficient, something that is only accelerating. This will happen according to the industry because new technologies are being developed at a rapid pace and will soon mean that we can all fly climate-neutrally and with a clear conscience.



# SAFE LANDING

## WHEN TO USE THIS NARRATIVE?

Use this narrative both as a response to impossible industry expansion or to shape the debate around the aviation industry's future, its need for managed shrinkage, and to plan for workers, within and outside of the industry. It will support demands for a plan from government and industry for conversion and to protect workers and the planet.

## THE NARRATIVE

Changes are already happening that are only the beginning of a larger social, cultural and economic transformation. The most important question, especially for people working in aviation, is whether it will be through design or disaster, whether the industry will crash or make a safe landing. This makes a just transition for people working in aviation absolutely vital. But we have much to win: The transformation can bring us a clean environment, a fair economy and a livable future - and in fact better and more secure jobs.

But to ensure this we need a just transition that is targeted, led by working people, democratic, and part of a society-wide push to put us on track for a fair economy.

- We bailed out the airlines from our own pockets, now it's their turn to pay back with action – to lay the foundations for a just transition for their workers, coughing up the cash for re-training programmes and pivoting their business models away from its fossil-fuel addiction.
- The first stage of transition is putting the brakes on expansion – both in terms of the size of the aviation industry and its workforce. Those workers that have just joined the industry must be supported in finding fulfilling work elsewhere, as a long and enduring career in the industry is not possible.

### SAFE LANDING CAN BE USED TO COUNTER THE OLD NARRATIVE 'JOBS HYPOCRISY'

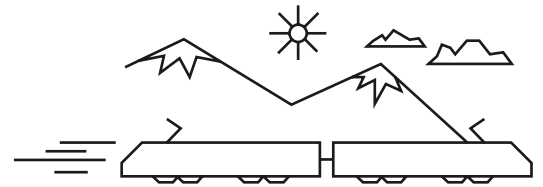
The aviation industry likes to claim that it supports tens of millions of jobs worldwide, although it admits only a fraction of these are people working directly in aviation. The other jobs are said to be employed in the industry's supply chain and in the aviation-based tourism sector, or result from employee spending. The industry also argues for the quality of its jobs saying that they give purpose, fulfilment and offer long-term security. They invoke that for many to become a pilot or stewardess is their dream.

## MESSAGES TO COMMUNICATE THE 'SAFE LANDING' NARRATIVE

- Change will happen by disaster or by design, so let's choose design. Ensuring a safe landing means reducing the industry sustainably – or we risk a crash.
- Delaying change is reckless, exposing working people to growing risks – the longer the industry fails to plan for change the more likely disasters and other things outside its control will force change far more painfully.
- The workers who built the aviation industry of today deserve a prosperous and protected future – that means creating political pressure through the workplace, challenging heel-dragging politicians and organising public protest to ensure alternative opportunities.



# ENJOY THE JOURNEY



## WHEN TO USE THIS NARRATIVE?

Enjoy the Journey should be used to excite, inspire and evoke the desire for different ways of travel as an alternative to flying. It can be used to counter industry advertising around the lifestyle benefits of flying, but can also be used proactively to invite others to think differently about travel, holidays and adventure.

## THE NARRATIVE

The idea of travel presses lots of positive buttons in people: adventure, escape, romance, curiosity, pilgrimage, rejuvenation, refuge, making remote human connections etc. Ever more people want to travel responsibly even if doing things differently is not without challenge: insufficient funding has resulted in alternatives to privileged and artificially cheapened air transport being systematically neglected. Major investments and innovation are needed to make travel that is essential affordable, comfortable and accessible for all. But travelling differently can be less damaging and more enjoyable also for those who would normally currently fly. Enjoying travelling sustainably means travelling differently and in many cases less frequently, but with meaning, purpose and the knowledge that your travel choice – or the reason to forgo travel altogether – is contributing to a safe climate for your community, family and countless others around the world.

## MESSAGES TO COMMUNICATE THE 'ENJOY THE JOURNEY' NARRATIVE

- Travel as if there was a tomorrow – take low-impact journeys that you can enjoy, because it will mean that our children and future generations will also be able to continue travelling and enjoy their journeys.
- Discovery on your doorstep – travelling more locally can open up adventure and discovery on your doorstep, getting to know the varied communities, history, cultures and places around you.

- Moving with meaning – by choosing to travel better, you are safe in the knowledge that your choices are not heating up the planet or supporting an industry that is actively undermining the habitability of our climate.
- Don't travel when you don't want to – if flying was already a burden, something you had to do for work, then not flying by connecting virtually is now easy and common, saving time, energy, cost and pollution.
- It feels better being grounded – travelling overland gives a much greater sense of time and connection, it is more sociable by train, there is time to adapt and arrive in tune with a place, and no jet lag.

### ENJOY THE JOURNEY CAN BE USED TO COUNTER THE OLD NARRATIVE 'FREEDOM FALLACY'

The industry argues that flying is freedom and that airports are our gateway to the world. They say that aviation brings people together like no other mode of transport enabling people to visit friends and family, and experience the world's cultures. According to aviation advocates more and more people have started to fly in recent years and this means that flying is being 'democratised'. This is meant to lead to greater global tolerance and understanding of different cultures, and positive economic effects from globalisation.

This leaflet is part of the Guide “Common Destination”, which was co-authored by Stay Grounded and New Weather Institute. Find the full guide with comprehensive facts and narratives about aviation and climate justice here:  
<https://reframeaviation.stay-grounded.org/>



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