



## PROBLEM



### Living in poverty and large inequalities between people

There are huge gaps between the rich and the poor worldwide. Some people own big companies or houses, while others can't afford even the basics. Poverty means families cannot provide enough food, safe housing, medicine, or schooling for their children. Children from poor families often leave school early to help earn money, which later makes it harder for them to find better-paid work. People in poverty live in constant insecurity—when illness or floods strike, they have no reserves and can easily lose the little they have. This keeps them “trapped” in a cycle of poverty that is very hard to escape.

#### MAIN CAUSES:

- Unemployment and insecure work (e.g., short-term, low-paid jobs)
- Social exclusion and discrimination (e.g., against women or minorities)
- Unequal access to education and healthcare
- Greater vulnerability to disasters and illness
- Unequal distribution of wealth and resources between countries and within societies

#### KEY FACTS:

- Almost 700 million people live on less than USD 2.15 per day.
- 3.5 billion people live on less than USD 6.85 per day in high-cost-of-living countries.
- If nothing changes, up to 575 million people may still live in extreme poverty by 2030.



## PROBLEM



### Food shortages

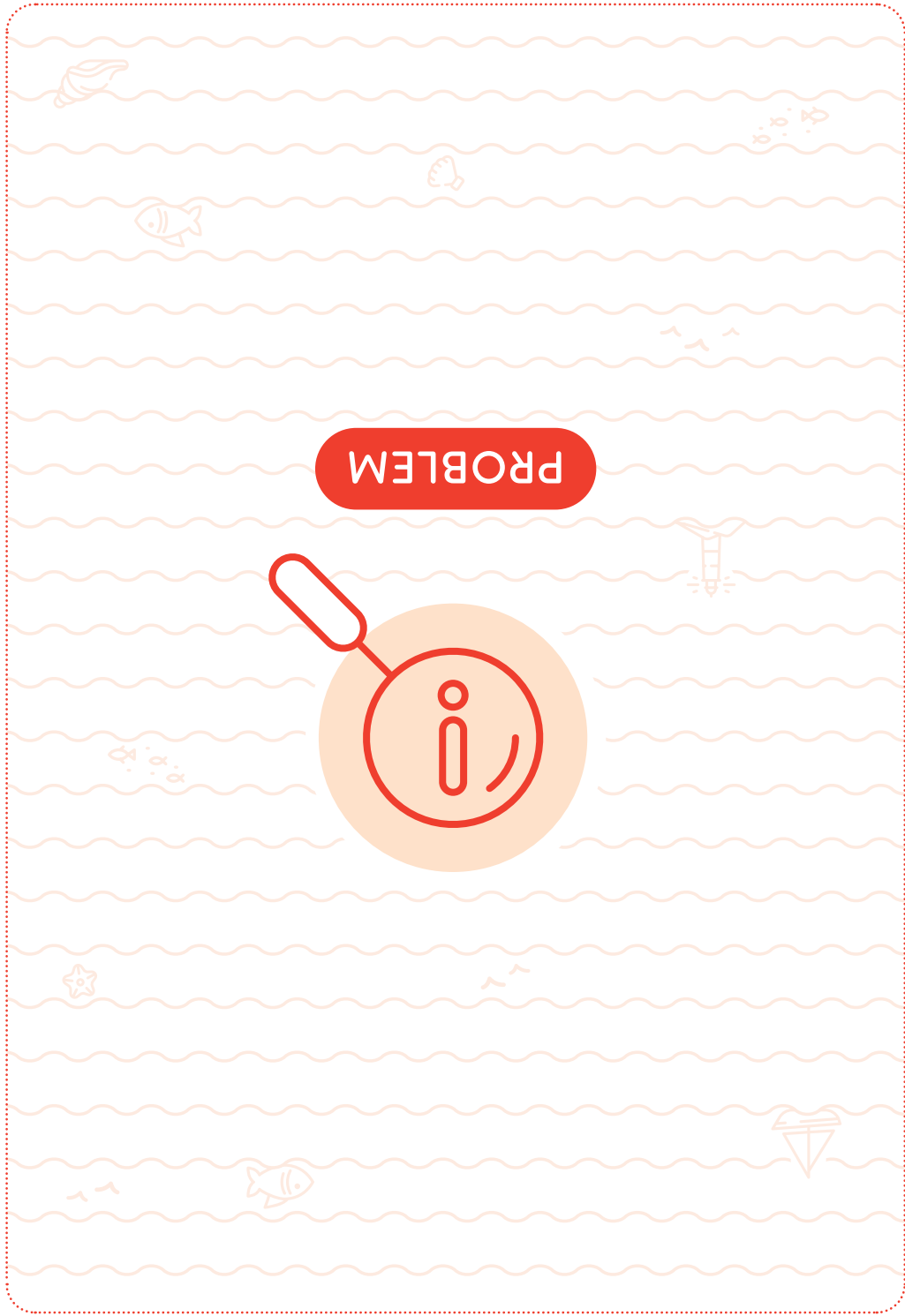
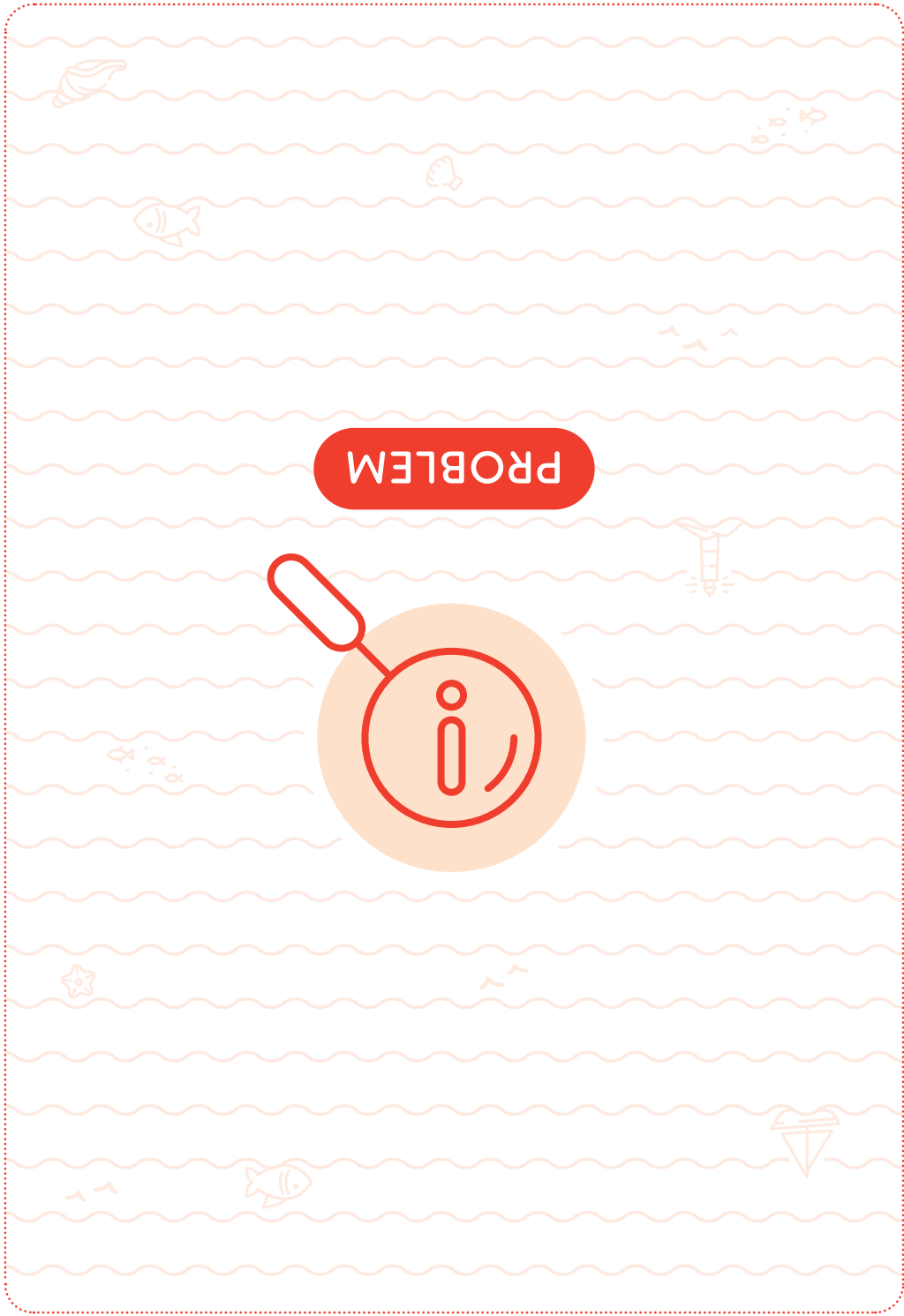
The food we eat every day depends on what farmers grow. In recent years, harvests have often fallen short. Soil is exhausted, the climate brings extremes such as droughts and floods, and farmers lose part of their production. This leads to less food, rising prices, and poorer families being unable to afford it. Millions of children worldwide grow up undernourished, affecting their health and education. Food shortages also create insecurity and force people to leave their homes—farmers move from rural areas to cities to find work, and whole families migrate to other countries in search of survival.

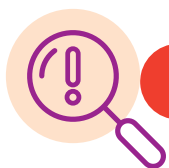
#### MAIN CAUSES:

- Depleted and damaged soil produces lower yields
- Climate change causes extremes—long droughts, heavy floods, shifting seasons
- Deforestation and biodiversity loss weaken nature's ability to regenerate
- Rapid population growth increases demand for food
- Inefficient farming methods and food waste

#### KEY FACTS:

- More than 735 million people worldwide suffer from undernourishment.
- About one-third of all food produced each year is wasted.
- Smallholder farmers produce up to 80% of food but are among the most vulnerable to droughts and soil degradation.





## PROBLEM



### Mental health

More and more people in Europe feel overwhelmed, tired, and stressed. Stress and anxiety affect not only working adults—students increasingly experience them too. Constant pressure for good grades, preparing for entrance or final exams, comparing themselves with classmates, and idealized images on social media all contribute to burnout. People have little time for rest, family, or friends and live in constant tension. If stress is not addressed, it can develop into more serious problems—depression, health issues, or a loss of motivation and joy in life.

#### MAIN CAUSES:

- Too much work or too many obligations and too little time to rest
- Lack of support and recognition from teachers, bosses, or loved ones
- Financial pressure, loneliness, and global uncertainty
- Self-doubt, fear of failure, and pressure to be perfect

#### KEY FACTS:

- 62% of people in the EU say recent crises have worsened their mental health.
- Almost half of people experienced emotional or mental difficulties in the past year.
- 89% of Europeans believe mental health should be as important as physical health—yet access to help is not equal everywhere.



## PROBLEM



### Education does not meet labor market needs

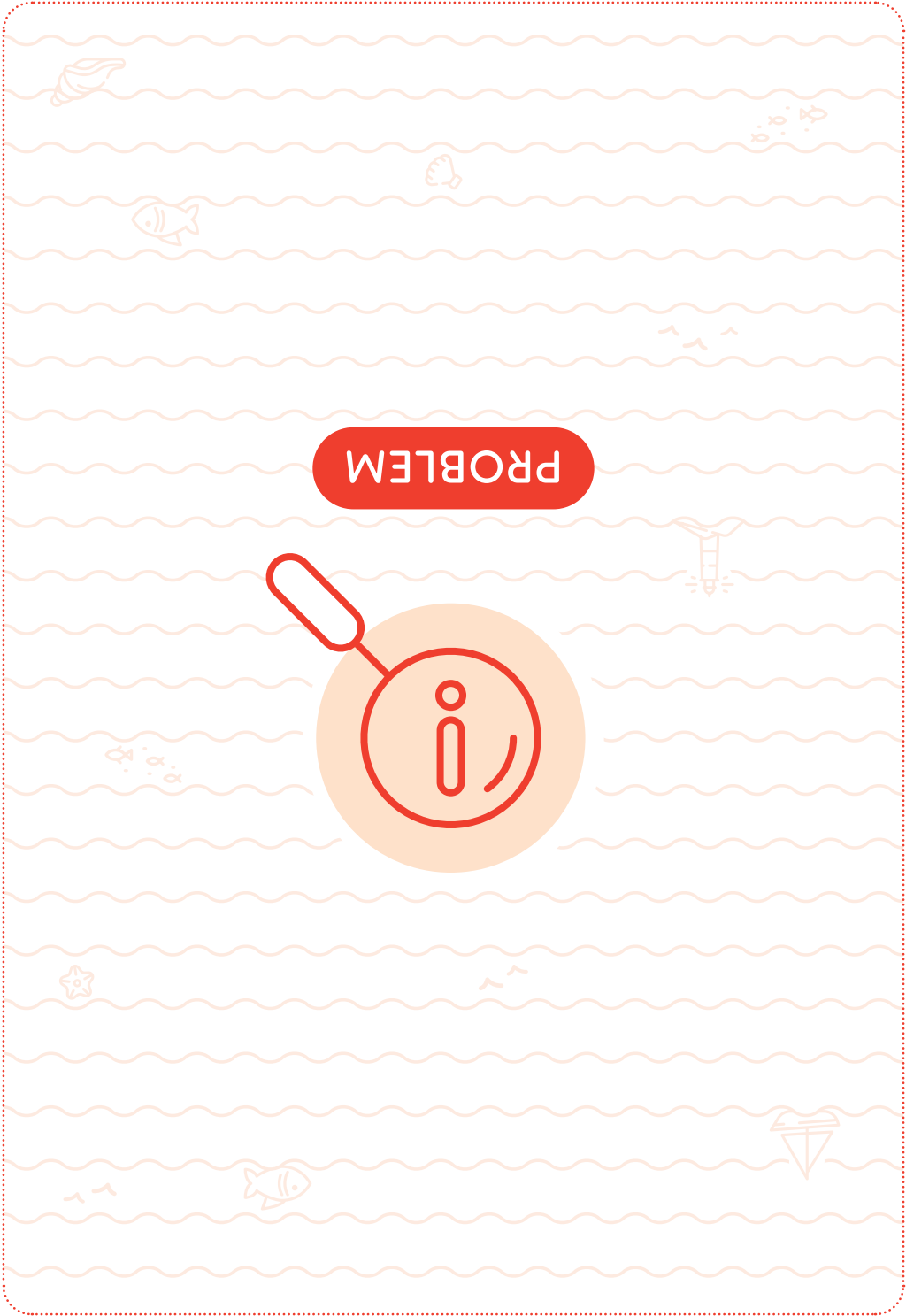
Many young people finish school or university but still can't find a job that matches what they studied. Some study fields with too many graduates and too few jobs; others leave school without the practical skills employers require. Meanwhile, companies seek skills schools often don't teach—such as digital, technical, or green (environmental) skills. This leads to frustration: young people feel their years of study are wasted, while employers complain they can't find suitable workers. The result is rising youth unemployment and lost opportunities for society and the economy.

#### MAIN CAUSES:

- Curricula do not keep up with rapid changes in the labor market
- Lack of practical, digital, and “soft” skills (e.g., teamwork, communication)
- Too few internship opportunities and weak career counseling
- Excessive focus on theory instead of practical experience

#### KEY FACTS:

- Over 40% of employers in the EU struggle to fill vacancies.
- In some countries, up to a quarter of young people are neither studying, working, nor in training.
- Demand for digital and green skills is growing rapidly, but these are taught only marginally in schools.





## PROBLEM



### Low representation of women and minorities in leadership

Company boards, schools, political parties, and institutions are mostly led by men. Women and minorities find it much harder to reach leadership positions. This means a narrow group makes key decisions and diverse experiences and perspectives are missing. Without women in leadership, issues like family needs, education, or healthcare often get less attention. Without young people or minorities, their concerns go unheard. This slows down the progress and society loses ideas and solutions that diverse teams can bring.

#### MAIN CAUSES:

- Persistent stereotypes (e.g., the idea that a leader should be a man)
- Fewer opportunities for women and minorities to access support, mentors, or networks
- Difficulty balancing work and family; heavier caregiving burdens
- Lack of policies such as flexible work or fair parental leave

#### KEY FACTS:

- Only 1 in 3 managers in the EU are women.
- Women hold just 10% of top executive positions in large companies.
- On average, only 33% of members of EU parliaments are women.



## PROBLEM



### Lack of access to clean water

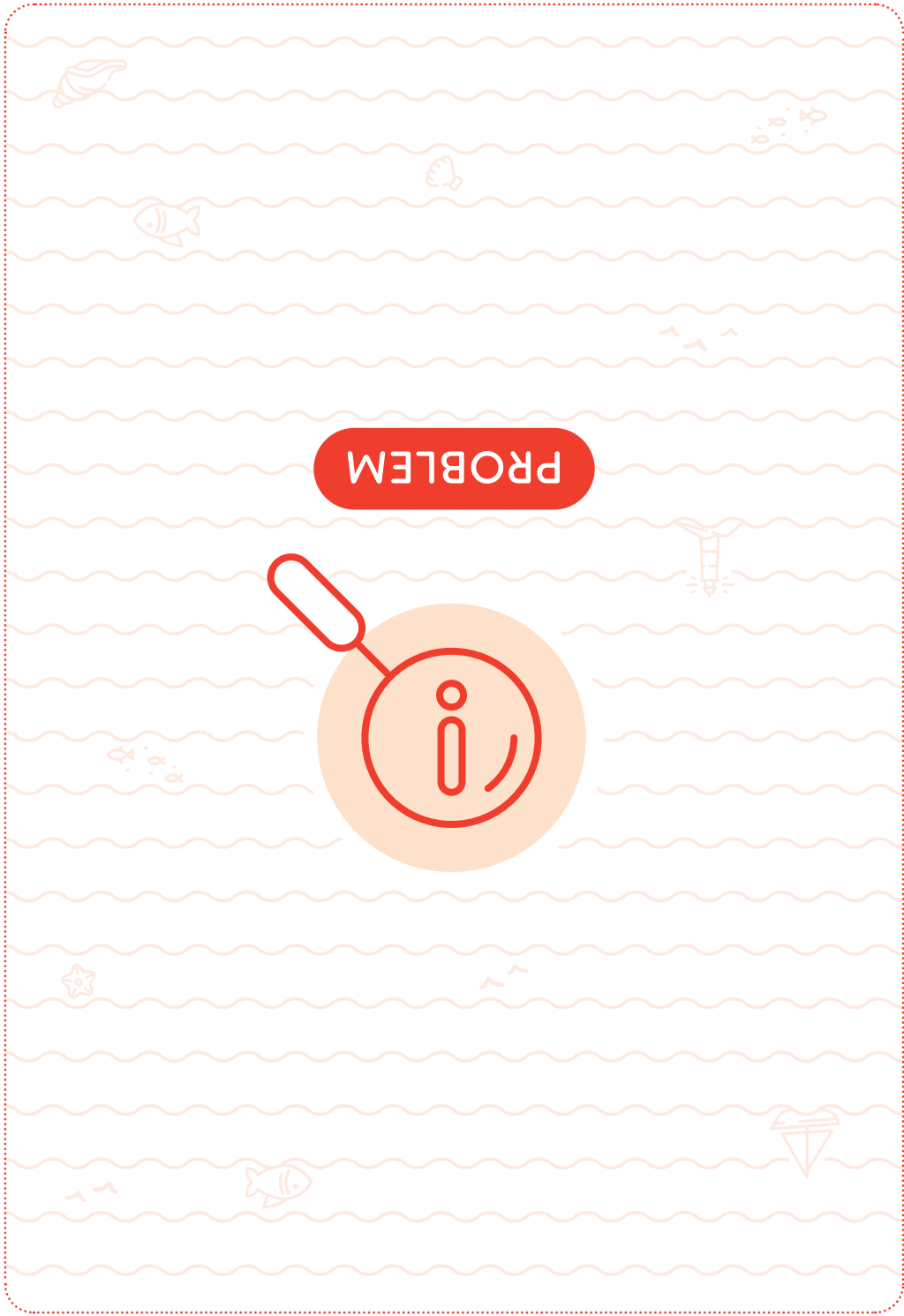
Many people and communities around the world do not always have enough clean, safe water. People then must buy expensive bottled water or risk illness from unsafe sources. Lack of water also affects schools and households, where it becomes impossible to provide safe drinking water or basic hygiene. In some countries, women and children spend hours every day fetching water instead of going to school or work.

#### MAIN CAUSES:

- Climate change brings more frequent droughts and reduces available water
- Water is often polluted with chemicals, waste, or agricultural fertilizers
- Overuse of water sources causes wells and rivers to dry up
- Many communities lack filters, pipelines, or systems for storing and treating water

#### KEY FACTS:

- 1 in 4 people worldwide lacks access to safe drinking water.
- More than 80% of wastewater is discharged untreated, polluting rivers and lakes.
- In some countries, women and children spend several hours daily carrying water, preventing them from studying or working.





## PROBLEM



### High energy bills and wasted resources

Many households and schools spend a lot on energy because they use outdated appliances, waste electricity or heating, and lack access to cheaper, cleaner solutions. High bills mean families have less money for other essentials, and schools have fewer resources for education. At the same time, the environment suffers since much of the energy still comes from fossil fuels.

#### MAIN CAUSES:

- High upfront costs of efficient or renewable technologies
- Lack of information about saving energy
- Old buildings and appliances that consume a lot of energy
- Unequal access to subsidies and support programs

#### KEY FACTS:

- More than 35 million Europeans live in energy poverty.
- In some regions, over 70% of energy still comes from fossil fuels.
- Effective efficiency measures can reduce household and school energy bills by up to 30%.



## PROBLEM



### Travel that harms nature

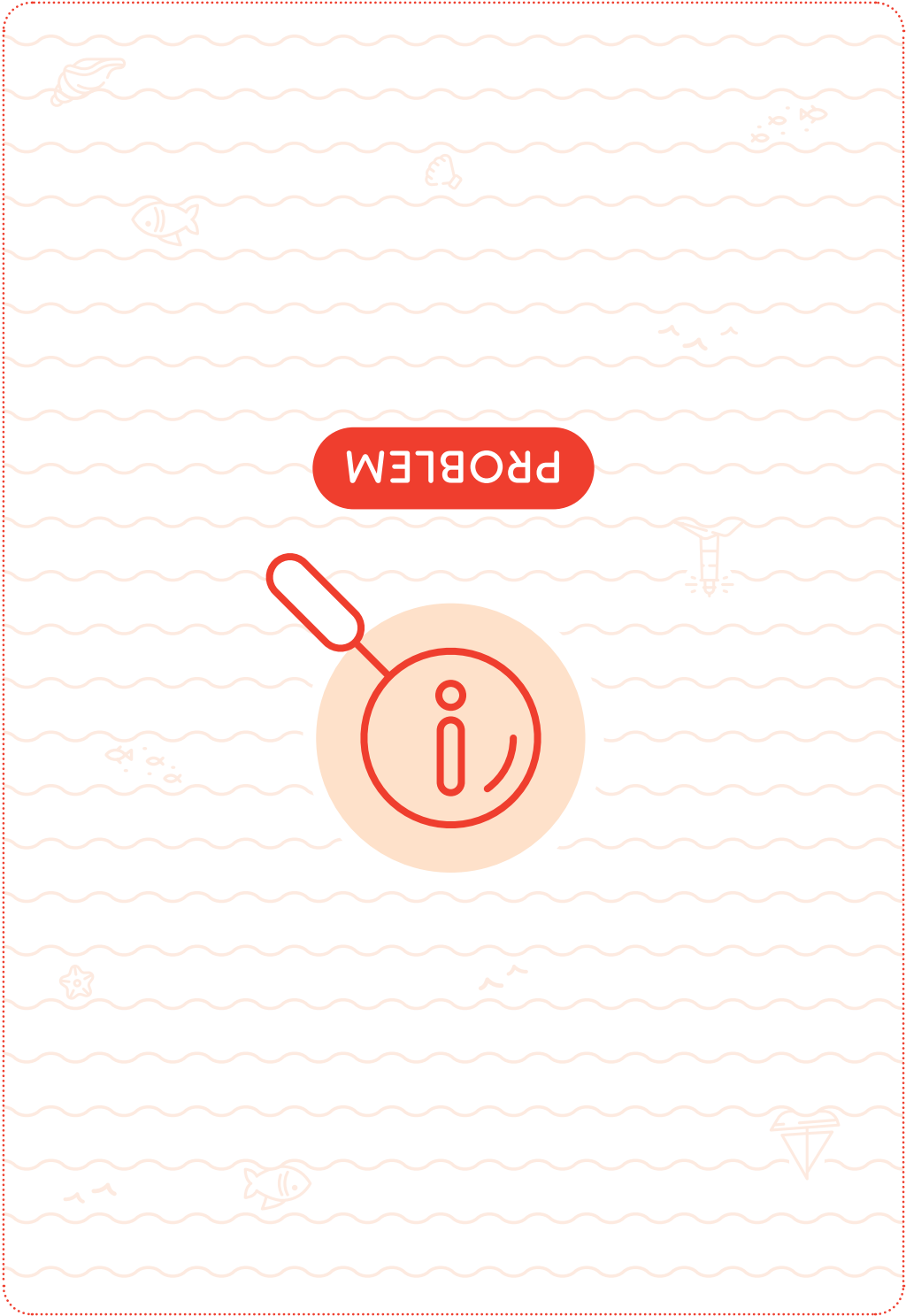
Travel brings joy and new experiences, but when too many tourists crowd into one place, it can cause more harm than good. Cities become overcrowded, housing prices rise, and locals can no longer afford to live in the city center. In natural areas, greenery is destroyed, waste increases, and animals lose their habitats. Instead of supporting the local community, money often ends up in big hotels or foreign travel companies, while local tourism entrepreneurs earn very little.

#### MAIN CAUSES:

- Too many tourists in small areas without good planning
- Cities and countries dependent solely on tourism income
- Lack of information about responsible, nature-friendly travel
- Little support for small local businesses compared with large travel corporations

#### KEY FACTS:

- The European sustainable travel market reached USD 55.9 billion in 2023 and is growing rapidly.
- 80% of travelers say they care about sustainable travel.
- In some cities, tourism causes overcrowding, housing shortages, and higher prices for locals.







## PROBLEM



### A difficult start for entrepreneurship and finding good jobs

Many young people and women have ideas that could create new jobs but often cannot realize them. They face barriers such as lack of money, limited networks, and few opportunities to learn the necessary skills. Even if they want to start a business, bureaucracy, high costs, or low confidence discourage them. For women, balancing business with family responsibilities is even harder. As a result, good ideas often remain on paper and new jobs are not created.

#### MAIN CAUSES:

- Lack of funding and access to expert networks or mentors
- Complicated regulations and high costs of doing business
- Young people often lack the skills companies seek and have little confidence in entrepreneurship
- Women face unequal caregiving burdens, which limit business development

#### KEY FACTS:

- 78% of small businesses in the EU struggle to find qualified workers.
- Almost half of young people in the EU want to become entrepreneurs, but only 9% actually start a business.
- If women had the same opportunities to start businesses as men, GDP could increase by up to 6%.



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### Food waste in cities

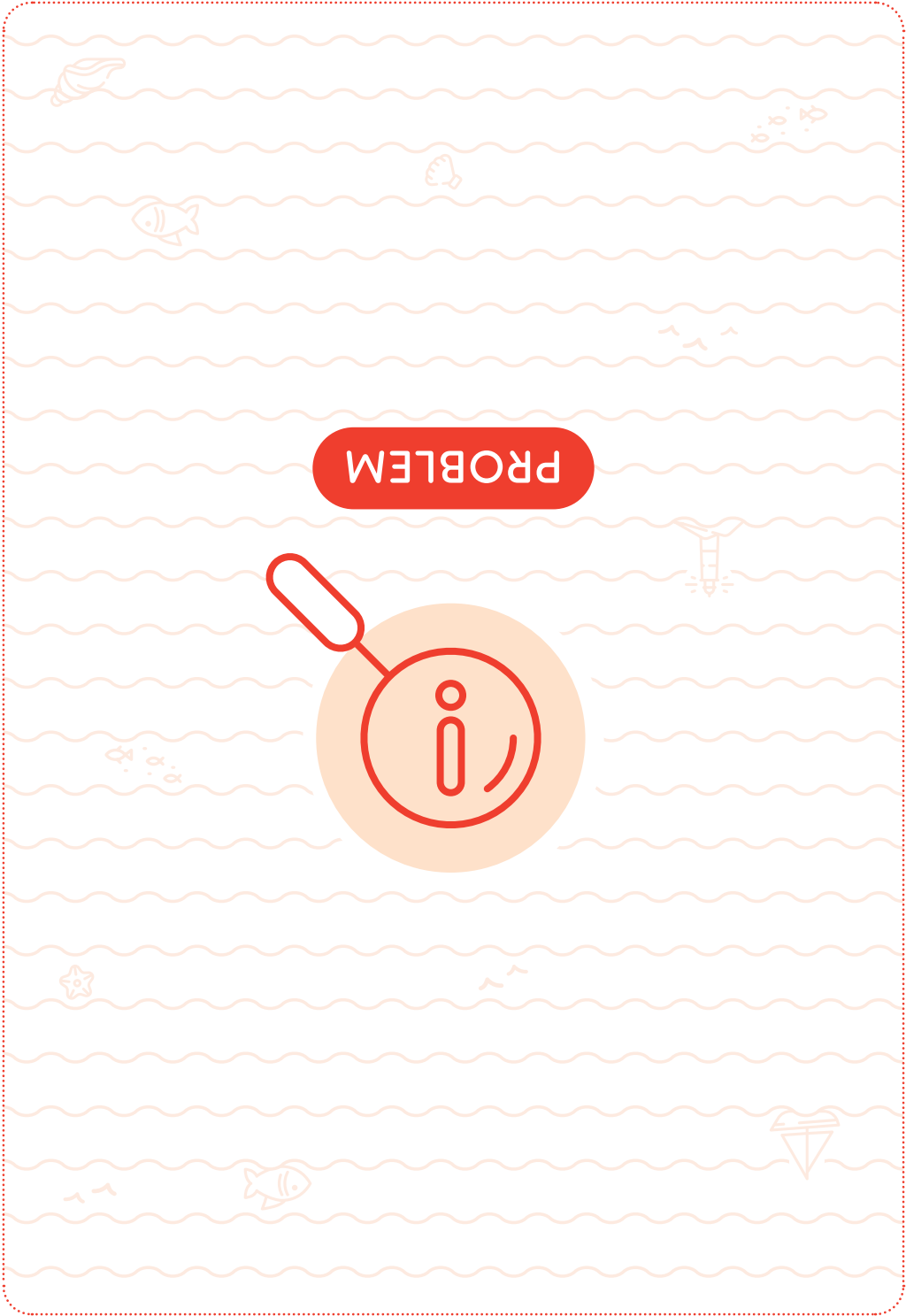
Every day, tons of edible food are thrown away in cities. While some people don't have enough to eat, supermarkets discard food because it doesn't look "perfect" or is nearing its sell-by date. Restaurants cook more than is consumed, and households often buy more than they can eat. This waste is not only unfair but also harmful—water, energy, and labor invested in food production are squandered. Discarded food in landfills also produces greenhouse gases, worsening the climate crisis.

#### MAIN CAUSES:

- Shops and restaurants throw away food close to expiry or unsold
- People at home buy more than they consume, and much ends up in the bin
- Food often spoils in transit due to poor logistics or storage

#### KEY FACTS:

- Up to 40% of supermarket food is discarded because it "doesn't look good" or is near expiry.
- Households account for up to 61% of all food waste, mainly due to poor planning of shopping and cooking.
- Saving just a quarter of wasted food could feed 870 million hungry people worldwide.





## PROBLEM



### Electronic waste and short tech lifespans

Every year, millions of phones, laptops, and TVs are discarded even though they could still be used or repaired. This waste often ends up in landfills or is exported to poorer countries, harming both people and nature. In cities, e-waste is piling up, and people often don't know how to recycle it properly.

#### MAIN CAUSES:

- Rapid obsolescence and pressure to keep buying new devices
- Limited repair options or high repair costs
- Low awareness of e-waste recycling
- Poor recycling conditions in some countries

#### KEY FACTS:

- The world produces over 50 million tons of e-waste annually.
- Only 20% of electronics are recycled properly.
- The average phone is used for only 2–3 years, even though it could last longer.



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### Lack of affordable housing in cities

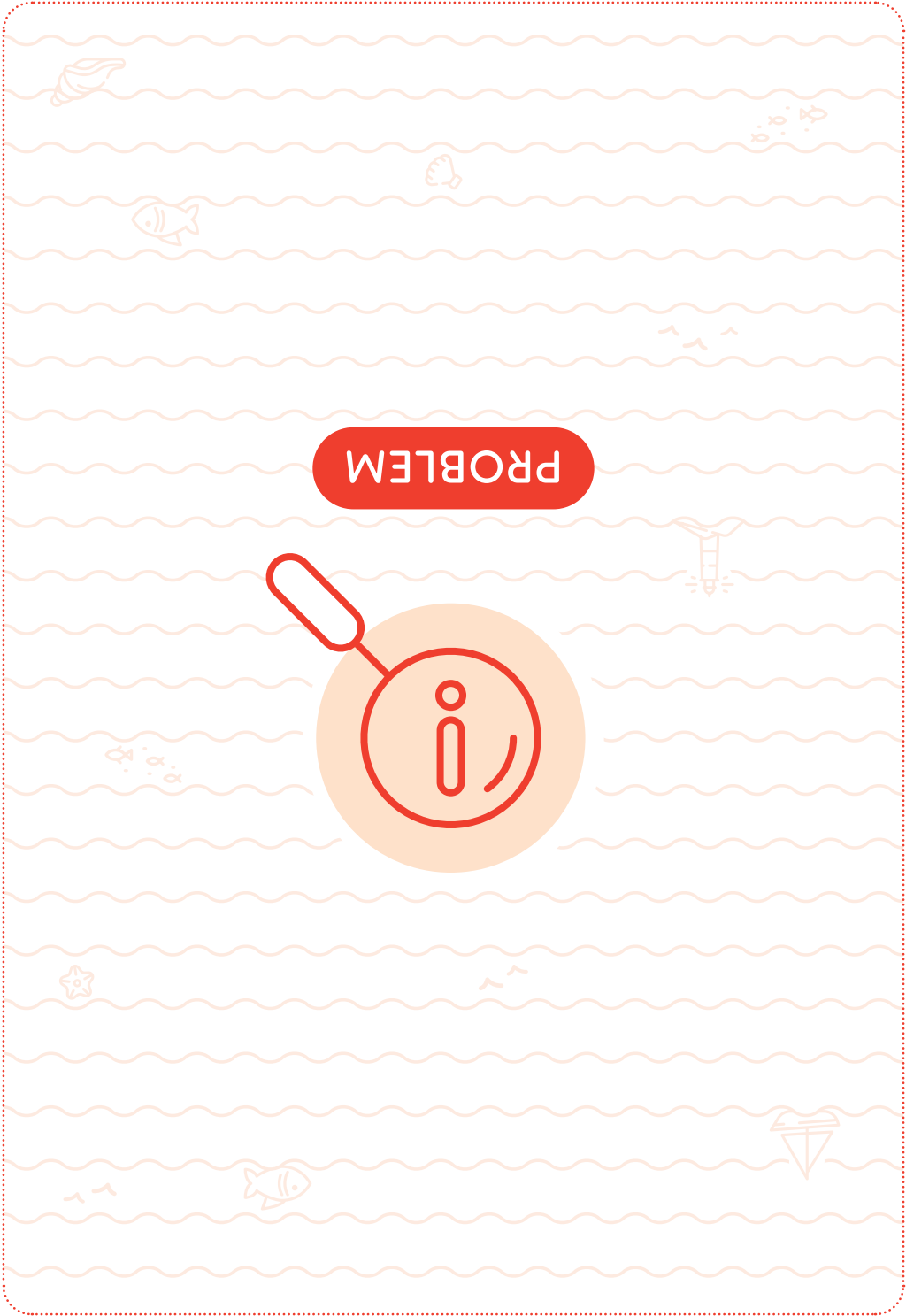
Housing is becoming increasingly expensive in many cities. People with average incomes often cannot afford rent or to buy an apartment. This leads to young people staying longer with their parents or living in overcrowded flats. The shortage of affordable housing increases inequality and slows young people's path to independence.

#### MAIN CAUSES:

- Rapid growth in real estate prices and rents
- Speculative purchases of apartments as investments
- Lack of new housing in affordable price ranges
- Low support for rental housing

#### KEY FACTS:

- In some European cities, more than 40% of household income goes to housing.
- Young people delay leaving home until around age 28–30 on average.
- More than 150 million people worldwide are homeless.





## PROBLEM



### Lack of quality care for seniors

The population is aging, and more people need help with daily life. Many families cannot afford quality services or must provide care at the expense of their own work. Seniors are often lonely and isolated, which negatively affects their health and well-being.

#### MAIN CAUSES:

- Lack of available services and facilities for seniors
- Limited financial resources for families to secure paid care
- Shortage of workers in social services
- Low social support for older people

#### KEY FACTS:

- By 2050, 1 in 5 people worldwide will be over 60 years old.
- More than one-third of seniors report loneliness.
- A shortage of caregivers is one of the biggest problems in Europe's social systems.



## PROBLEM



### Lack of exercise and rising obesity among young people

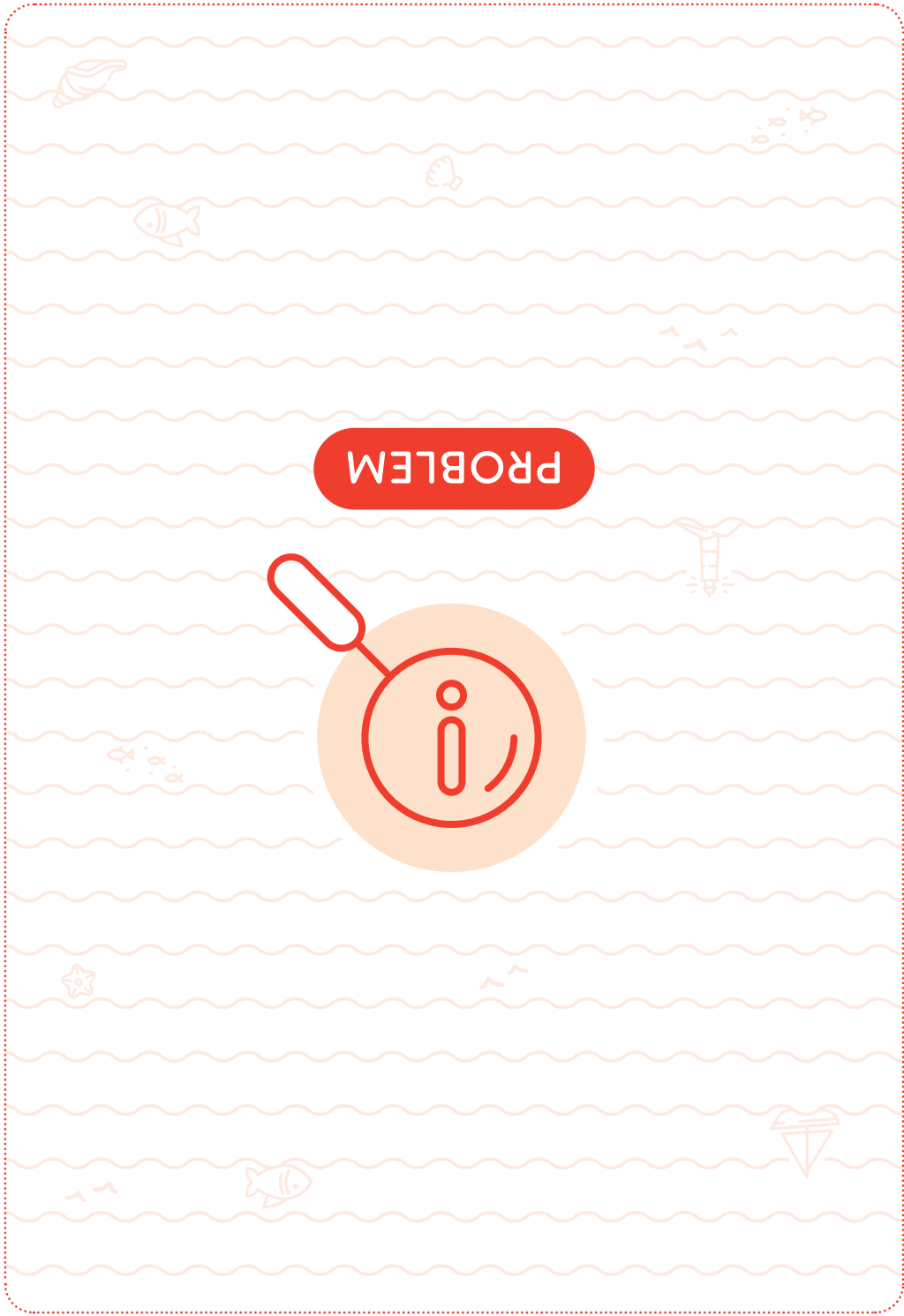
Young people today spend a lot of time in front of screens and too little time being active. This leads to obesity, poor fitness, and health problems at an early age. Mental well-being also suffers, as physical activity improves mood and reduces stress.

#### MAIN CAUSES:

- Excessive use of technology and sedentary lifestyle
- Lack of motivation or opportunities for sports
- Weak habits in families and schools
- Cheap, unhealthy food is often more available than healthy alternatives

#### KEY FACTS:

- More than 1 in 5 teenagers in Europe is overweight or obese.
- Young people spend an average of 6–8 hours a day in front of screens.
- Obesity increases the risk of diabetes, heart disease, and mental health problems.





## PROBLEM



### Fast fashion

People are buying more and more clothes, often worn only a few times before being thrown away. The production of cheap fashion harms the environment and often relies on unethical labor conditions. Young people face pressure from trends and advertising, fueling constant new purchases.

#### MAIN CAUSES:

- Cheap production and marketing by fast-fashion brands
- Low awareness of environmental and ethical impacts
- Lack of options to repair, swap, or recycle clothing
- Social media and trends that drive rapid consumption

#### KEY FACTS:

- The average European buys 26 items of clothing per year but wears half of them rarely.
- The fashion industry produces 10% of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
- Every second, one truckload of textiles is discarded worldwide.



## PROBLEM



### Plastic pollution

Plastic bags, bottles, and packaging are everywhere—and most end up as waste instead of being recycled. Microplastics are already found in water, food, and the human body. Plastic pollution has serious consequences for nature and for our health.

#### MAIN CAUSES:

- Single-use plastics are cheap and widely available
- Weak recycling infrastructure
- Lack of awareness of alternatives
- Strong influence of companies that package products in plastic

#### KEY FACTS:

- Each person ingests about 5 grams of microplastics per year (roughly the weight of a credit card).
- More than 90% of plastics are never recycled.
- The oceans contain 150 million tons of plastic waste, with another 8 million tons added every year.

