BSL tool 1: The environmental impact of your actions

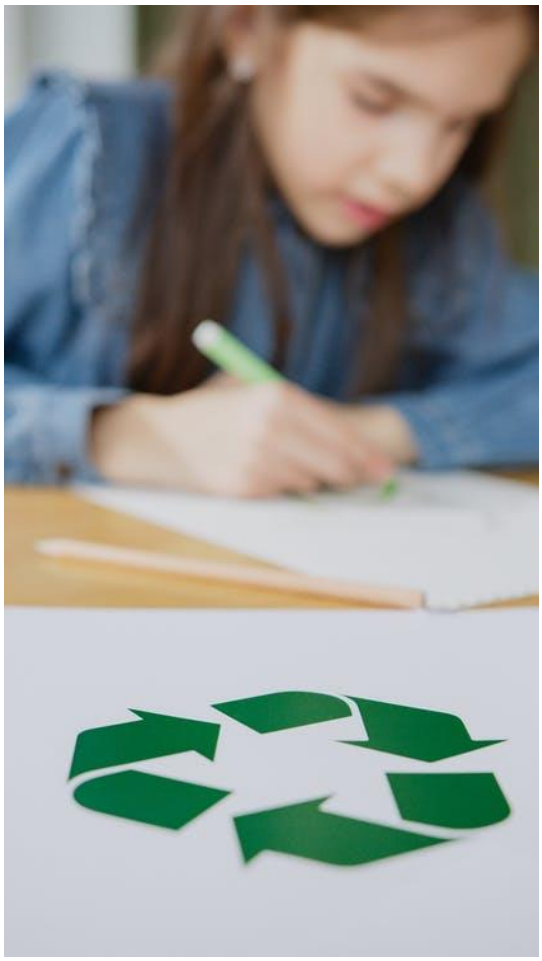
Description

There are some things that we can make in our own homes to fight global warming. But often the problem is that we don't know where to start.

In this activity, the family will reflect on the products we consume on a regular basis and then search for information on their environmental impact to propose some solutions.

Photos and images

https://www.pexels.com/photo/hands-of-people-putting-plastic-bottles-in-garbage-bag-7656748/



https://www.pexels.com/photo/paper-with-green-recycle-logo-on-table-across-a-girl-studying-about-recycling-6990446/

https://www.pexels.com/photo/women-riding-bikes-1850629/

Age range

9 - 15 years

A guide for the guide

During the activity, it could be helpful to keep in mind the learning objectives to guide your children to reach them. The objectives are:

- To reflect on their lifestyle

- To learn that critical thinking can lead to changes that can have a positive impact on our world

- To experience that our intuition is not always enough to understand a complex problem. We need information from experts

Preparation for the activity

There is no need for special knowledge to do this activity.

Keep in mind that your children/grandchildren may point out or criticize some of the things that are done at home, because this is an activity that analyzes the family's lifestyle. Before you begin the activity, you may want to think about some possible answers to suggestions that you do not want or you cannot discuss with them at this time. However, you are not supposed to have an answer for every question - this activity is for the whole family to learn together, so you can start without preparation.

For this activity, we are going to sort out different objects according to their impact on the environment. We will need an object from each of the categories listed below so we can make the list playing with the family. You can collect the objects yourself or ask your children to look for them. If you do not have some of the objects, you can draw them on a piece of paper:

- Fruit and vegetables (For example: one apple)
- Furnishing and carpets (For example: a toy chair)
- Animal products, except dairy (For example: one piece of ham)
- Communication and IT equipment (For example: a mobile phone)
- Dog and cat food
- Postal service
- Grains
- Household equipment
- Clothes
- Dairy
- Motor vehicles
- Gas and petrol (for cooking and heating)
- Public transport
- Flights
- Pharmaceuticals

You could also do this activity as a contest. If so, you would need paper and pen for all the contestants. If you have access to a printer, take a look at the cards at the end of this document.

The activity step-by-step

1) Present the objects and the activity

2) Put the objects on the table and explain to your children that you are going to analyse the environmental impact of the things we consume. Explain that each object represents a general type of product (for example, the apple represents all fruits and vegetables)

3) Arrange all objects in a row so that objects with a higher environmental impact are at one end and those with a lower environmental impact are at the other end. This can be done cooperatively or as a contest.

(Several questions may arise in this section. See the following section to find out how to deal with them).

Let's analyze the products we consume or use at home in our daily life

4) Search for the answer using the Internet. Some keywords that may help you are: carbon footprint, environmental impact of products, life-cycle assessment.

You probably won’t find a list with all the products in the activity. You can choose those you can compare more easily, use one or two sources of information you find interesting, or you can compare some of the products and use different sources to complete the arrangement.

5) Some questions may get no answers. It is not the point to answer all of them, just to understand how difficult the problem is.

6) Compare the results you found on the internet with those you made as a hypothesis in step 3.

7) Make some reflections and conclusions together. (You can find some clues at the end of the document)

Some doubts that may arise

During the activity, some doubts may arise. This is good. We encourage you to let the doubts and mistakes happen and use them for reflection.

- *To make the comparison, should the use of the product or also its production be taken into account?*

It would be interesting to look at both.

- *How can I compare an apple with the use of a car?*

You can agree on which criterion to use. For example, you can compare the amount of vegetables and fruit that the family eats in a year with the use of the car during that same year. Which of the two things do you think has more impact?

- *Should we take into account everything about production, distribution, transport, etc?*

It depends on your criterion. The more complicated it gets, the more difficult the activity will be, but you may also learn more. Either way, it is not important for this part of the activity

Questions for reflection, self-assessment and conclusions

- Was it easy to arrange the objects in line?
- Was it easy to find the information on the Internet?
- Were the answers similar to what you thought? Don't worry if they were different, this happens all the time for a variety of reasons
- If the answers were different, why do you think that might be?
- How can you use your new knowledge to adapt a more sustainable lifestyle in your house? What small action(s) will you take?

Recommendations on how to adapt to different age-groups

For the 9-12 age group, the role of adults should be more involved. For the 13-15 age group, the search for and implementation of the activity can be carried out more autonomously.

References

https://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx

https://climateemergencyeu.org/