



INNOVATIVE LEARNING TOOLKIT

PROJECT TITLE: Global Action Plan's EcoTeam

Tags; sustainability, networking

Overview:

Global Action Plan's EcoTeam programme involves community members meeting in small groups to discuss sustainability issues and what they can do to reduce their impact on the earth. It is a networking and peer support programme that seeks to educate and inform, and bring about deeply considered behaviour changes. Each group sets goals, in terms of energy consumption and waste reduction, and then measures their progress against these goals.

From the website: "EcoTeams are groups of six to eight people who each represent their household. They meet once a month for five months, and are provided with a set of resources to enable them to discuss topics such as the environmental issues of waste and shopping, energy, transport and water. With the help of these materials and their team leaders, participants discuss the issues and map out practical actions they can take to reduce their impact in each area. They are encouraged to share their experiences, local knowledge and ideas for pro-environmental action, and to support each other in making further changes to their households' behaviours."

The main elements of each EcoTeam are that they:

- Are made up of 6-8 individuals, representing their own household
- Come together for five consecutive monthly meetings
- Work with a set of information resources and a facilitator
- Focus on better understanding the environmental impacts of waste and shopping, energy, transport and water use
- Experiment with practical actions at home
- Regularly weigh and measure their rubbish output and energy and water use in order to assess the impacts of the changes being made
- Submit data to a central database allowing for personalised feedback demonstrating improvements over time

One UK study showed a 20% reduction in landfill, 20% reduction in heating energy conservation, and a 15% reduction in water use. Alongside this was an average reduction in annual household bills of £149. Their research suggests that these changes are maintained over time. The small changes that people made consistently, with the help of their peer network, became habitual.

Why is it relevant to PTS?

Is focussed on changing people's behaviour in relation to the environment



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Involves working in local communities/neighbourhoods and peer support networks of residents

Independent research has confirmed its success, both in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom

Ideas and tips for PTS:

Could consider piloting the programme with current PTS volunteers

Use small groups as a mechanism for support and motivation

Getting the groups to measure their own outputs and progress and receiving feedback has been shown to motivate behaviour change

Contact:

www.globalactionplan.org.uk (also has ideas for schools, businesses)

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