



reducing the  
ecological footprint  
through eco-awareness

# HOW DO YOU PLAN A SUSTAINABILITY CAMP?

WITH THE REFE GUIDE,  
IT IS VERY SIMPLE.



Supported by:



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[refeproject.eu](http://refeproject.eu)

# WHAT IS REFE?

REFE is a project that aims to deepen the knowledge of young people about the long-term consequences of climate change and to provide practical examples of a sustainable lifestyle. Surrounded by unspoiled nature, in Breb, Maramures, 20 young people from two Romanian cities were able to learn how they can reduce their ecological footprint in their everyday lives.

Furthermore, a theatre play on the topic of the environment, a film, a guide for teachers, teaching materials and an e-learning platform were produced.

All results of the project are published on the website [refeproject.eu](http://refeproject.eu) as well as on the corresponding social media channels and made available to the general public.

## REDUCING THE ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT THROUGH ECO-AWARENESS





# WHAT SHOULD A SUSTAINABILITY CAMP INSPIRE TO?



TO TAKING THE TOPIC OF CLIMATE CHANGE SERIOUSLY AND TREATING IT CREATIVELY



TO RECOGNIZING INDIVIDUAL POSSIBILITIES AND TO FINDING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS



TO MAKING PEOPLE AWARE OF THEIR EMISSIONS AND TO MEASURING THE PERSONAL "ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT"



TO TRYING OUT ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLES AND SAVING RESOURCES



TO LIVING IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

## OFFER THEM AN ALTERNATIVE!



### **A CAMP IS A BEAUTIFUL CHILDHOOD MEMORY.**

A 2-week camp in a setting where learning about the environment is combined with fun and games in nature can heighten the students' awareness of sustainability and, in the best case, lead to a change of heart. This guide aims to help with the planning of a sustainability camp.

It seeks to encourage the conduction of an experiment which fosters creativity, creates knowledge, and additionally provides young people with an unforgettable experience.

# WHAT IS THE IDEAL PLACE FOR THE CAMP?

SOMEWHERE FAR AWAY FROM CITIES AND INDUSTRY

EASILY ACCESSIBLE BY BUS OR TRAIN

A HOUSE IN NATURE WITH ABUNDANT SPACE AND A LARGE GARDEN

AN ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH PUPILS CAN RELAX AND LEARN

A VILLAGE WHERE REGIONAL CRAFTS ARE STILL A LIVING PART OF THE CULTURE

A COMMUNITY WHERE AGRICULTURE IS PRACTICED ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF BIODIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

A PIECE OF NATURE WHERE MAN IS PART OF A SYSTEM AND NOT AS ITS EXPLOITER (ECOLOGICAL BALANCE)



## **SUSTAINABILITY CAMPS - ALL YEAR ROUND!**

The goal of a sustainability camp is to firmly establish a mindful approach to nature and its resources in the consciousness of the young generation and a sustainable integration of this into everyday life.

A sustainability camp should not only take place in the summer, on the contrary! It can provide vivid impulses of how the ecological footprint can be reduced, at any time of the year.

Autumn could focus on „organic food storage“, a camp in winter on “alternative heating“, a spring camp on “principle of sustainability in the field and garden”...

Sustainability has no season, sustainability is always relevant!

# SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH AND THROUGH!

THE PLANNING OF A SUSTAINABILITY CAMP DIFFERS FROM THAT OF A REGULAR SUMMER CAMP.

STARTING WITH THE PREPARATION (FINDING ACCOMMODATION, TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS, ETC.) EVERYTHING SHOULD BE CENTERED AROUND SUSTAINABILITY AND THE RESPONSIBLE USE OF RESOURCES.

THIS MEANS: A FUNCTIONAL FACILITY, NATURAL MATERIALS, "GREEN" ENERGY SUPPLY, ECONOMICAL USE OF CONSUMPTION OF ELECTRICITY AND WATER, REGIONAL FOOD, REDUCED MEAT CONSUMPTION, FRUIT INSTEAD OF SWEETS, ETC.

THE MORE VISIBLE THESE ASPECTS ARE IN THE DAILY LIFE OF THE CAMP, THE MORE COMPREHENSIBLE THE EFFECTS ON THE RESULTS OF THE FOOTPRINT CALCULATOR WILL BE.



## A SUSTAINABILITY CAMP BRINGS YOUNG PEOPLE TOGETHER.

Ideally, participants are already introduced to the topics of ecological footprint and sustainability in a preparatory phase. Concrete impulses can be found on the website [refeproject.eu](https://refeproject.eu), in the auxiliary workbook, and in the teaching materials - available online from autumn 2022.

Setting a topical focus (such as „avoiding waste“, „biodiversity and the ecosystem,“ „digital consumption and its share in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions“) is helpful; this focus can be chosen together with the participants beforehand.



# HOW DO YOU CALCULATE THE ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT?

THE FOOTPRINT CALCULATOR IS THE CENTRAL TOOL OF ANY SUSTAINABILITY CAMP.

LINKS TO MULTIPLE VIABLE FOOTPRINT CALCULATORS:

> [FOOTPRINT.WWF.ORG.UK/#/](https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/)

> [FOOTPRINTCALCULATOR.ORG/HOME/EN](https://footprintcalculator.org/home/en)

IT PROVIDES MEASUREMENTS BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE CAMP.

IT SHOWS POSSIBLE ADJUSTMENT SCREWS IN EVERYDAY LIFE THAT CAN LEAD TO A CHANGE IN BEHAVIOUR.

IT AIMS AT A MORE ECONOMICAL CONSUMPTION OF RESOURCES.



## RETHINKING AND BREAKING HABITS!

Reducing one's ecological footprint does not mean giving up life as it used to be. Rather, it is about seeing sustainability as an opportunity - for an increase in personal quality of life.

This can happen by using reusable packaging and - if waste cannot be avoided - through recycling. The menu becomes more „sustainable“ by reducing the consumption of meat and a renunciation of vegetables and fruits that do not come from the region. Furthermore, a switch to renewable energies and the final phase-out of all fossil fuel use play a major role.

The Footprint calculator clearly illustrates the global impact of individual behaviour and vice versa, the extent to which the use of resources directly impacts the personal Footprint.

# WHAT DOES A SUSTAINABILITY CAMP OFFER?

SHAPING THE DAILY LIFE OF THE CAMP  
TOGETHER (GARDEN, KITCHEN, ...)

## WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS:

HANDICRAFT (CARPENTRY, POTTERY, WEAVING, ...)

MOVEMENT (HIKING, RUNNING, BIKING, ...)

LANGUAGE (THEATRE)

## THEMATIC LECTURES AND EXERCISES:

“DAY OF REDUCTION”, OUTINGS AND EXCURSIONS

FREE TIME WITH GAMES AND EXERCISE



## **EVERYTHING IS MORE FUN IN A TEAM!**

For the participants, a sustainability camp means experiencing community life with all its tasks. This can also include small jobs in the kitchen, in the garden, or elsewhere.

This will show that sustainability extends into all areas of our daily lives. Doing things together - even if the tasks may seem “trivial” at first glance - is always a pleasure, that teamwork means recognizing the talents of others and that valuing their differences is another central aspect of a sustainability camp.



## WORKSHOPS

The direct relationship with the material from which an object is made and the experience of things taking shape through one's own hand(s), allow participants to perceive their own everyday life in a new way. From now on these objects will be judged with regard to their function and under the aspect of long-lasting quality. Simple things suddenly become "precious". On the other hand, a lot of things that come from industrial mass production seem "cheap". The connection between "resource-saving" and "sustainability" becomes clear. If you do not throw things away, you protect the environment in two ways: not only by reducing waste, but also by preserving raw materials.

Coming in contact with a traditional artisan or agricultural business (baker, cobbler, carpenter, gardener or farmer) can be an excellent way to raise this awareness, to experience proven knowledge, to apply it, and to think about it further.

## LECTURES AND EXERCISES

The goal of the lectures and related exercises is to transfer profound knowledge about the general ecological crisis. However, it is important not to overwhelm the participants with too much content that is too complex. The direct connection to the real life of the participants is the basis for any successful communication. The content of the presentations should be linked to the participants' previous knowledge.

If it is not possible to invite external speakers, participants can prepare presentations on individual topics using selected literature and materials. The use of computer-based research should only take place in a reduced form.



## „TAG DER REDUKTION“

The "Reduction Day" is a special day on which the participants learn what it takes to reduce their Ecological Footprint to a minimum. The goal is to use as few resources as possible. This applies to our personal energy consumption as well as the food we eat.

The participants calculate their own "footprint" - and use it to illustrate the "adjustment screws" in their own consumption habits that participants can always turn to make their everyday lives more sustainable without having to sacrifice comfort or convenience.



## TRIPS AND EXCURSIONS

Excursions into the surrounding area also strengthen the relationship to nature. During a hike, for example, the highly sensitive ecosystem of the forest can be explained. The students can be made aware of the effects of climate change as a result of human overexploitation of nature. Likewise, the agricultural cycle can be shown, according to which organic farmers in the area work. It is always a matter of perceiving the environment as a habitat not only for humans, but also for a fascinating world of plants and animals. Accordingly, for an organic farmer, careful management of natural resources means not only protecting one's own soil and survival, but also the coexistence of diverse life forms. Participants who experience such principles first-hand during a field trip will understand them more quickly.



## OTHER ACTIVITIES

Current debates about the consequences of the destruction of nature and the environment are being conducted by scientists from a wide range of disciplines. A sustainability camp can play a significant role in generating interest in science and its research fields, for example, by offering science activities, simple experiments, and small research assignments (e.g., „What plants grow in a natural meadow compared to a patch of grass?“).

## THEATRE PLAY ON THE TOPIC OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Rehearsing scenes or a theatre play on the topic of the environment is a good way to reinforce the contents of the lectures, exercises,

excursions etc. in a playful way. Through the role of a character who, for example, is struggling with the consequences of a reckless consumption of resources, the urgency of this problem can be experienced directly, so to speak.

The fact that the play can then possibly be performed as part of a final performance is an additional incentive. All participants should take part in this. Those who do not like acting can work as assistants backstage, as prompters or as set and costume designers, etc.; they can still be part of the production team. Of course, the play can also be rehearsed in parts or as a loose collage, however it is suitable for the respective composition of the camp.

# HOW DOES THE CAMP END? WHAT HAPPENS AFTERWARDS?

## A RENEWED MEASURING WITH THE FOOTPRINT CALCULATOR

### ANALYSIS:

DID REDUCING RESOURCE CONSUMPTION THROUGH

LIVING IN HARMONY WITH NATURE WORK?

DID IT LEAD TO A MORE UNCOMFORTABLE LIFESTYLE?

CAN THESE PRINCIPLES BE APPLIED IN EVERYDAY

LIFE IN THE CITY?

## FINAL MEASUREMENT AFTER 3 MONTHS

### COMPARISON OF THE RESULTS

### REVIEW:

WHAT HAS BEEN A PERMANENT CHANGE IN

MY DAILY ROUTINE AS A RESULT OF THE CAMP?

"A positive change in my son's behavior after he returned from summer camp was certainly his awareness of the limited nature of resources. He seems more thoughtful and more receptive to environmental issues. Separating waste and avoiding it are now more natural to him now, and he is more frugal when it comes to using water and electricity."

*Parent of a camp participant*

"As expected, food and transportation contribute to a large portion of the environmental footprint. Children tested were shown to consume about 4 Earths with their current lifestyles, which is about the same as the consumption in densely populated urban areas (this is the number of Earths that would be needed if the entire population of our planet had that participant's ecological footprint). We expect a significant reduction in footprint over the longer term, if respondents implement some of the ways of thinking they learned at the Sustainability Camp. Any reduction due to choices the children make in their usual lifestyles contributes to a global reduction of the ecological footprint."

*Carmen Postolache, Dean of the Faculty of Biology, Bucharest*

"We have taught the children, at a high intellectual and practical level, about a natural and responsible attitude to the future – spiced up with sports, games and good food. Most likely, however, a neighbour with his minimalist way of life impressed them the most."

*Sylvia Rotter, director of the Vienna Children's Theatre and initiator of the REFE project.*

"More children should benefit from the sustainability camp, it could be offered everywhere! The results are, for us parents, impressive!"

*Mother of a participant*

„It helped me to see where I could cut back. For example, it already helps a lot if you only take a short shower. Because heating water takes a lot of energy."

*Alexander Rotter*



