REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

(IT’S ONE SMALL THING YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW TO MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE)
“Suppose there is a fire on the ground floor of an apartment building and the person there calls out for help, a person living on the tenth floor cannot remain idle saying, ‘The fire is in someone else’s apartment, why should I bother?’ The fire could quickly spread to the tenth floor. Likewise, we are all responsible for what is happening and for what will happen.”

Amma

“Amma is truly such an enormous fountain of energy and love and compassion. I think if all of us were to get even a fraction of it within our own beings, there would be only joy in the whole world... Whatever little I can do with her inspiration, I will strive my best to accomplish it.”

— Dr. Rajendra K. Pachauri, Chairman, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007 while Dr. Pachauri served as IPCC Chairman)
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Over the past two decades, Amma has addressed numerous international forums convened to discuss a more peaceful and harmonious world. At each of these forums, Amma has shared her vision of the way humanity can traverse the difficult road ahead — navigating from interreligious discord to harmony; from terrorism to peace; from competition between the sexes to mutual trust and co-operation; from war between nations to a collective war on poverty; and from environmental chaos to ecological balance. Amma’s observations invite each of us to reflect deeply and to get involved in the process of rebuilding a concerned and caring society.

Taken together, Amma’s speeches form a prescription for a humanity in crisis, addressing each of the most pressing issues of our time with clear, practical recommendations for positive change.
AMMA AND THE INDEED CAMPAIGN FOR NATURE

WHAT IS THE INDEED CAMPAIGN FOR NATURE?

Embracing the World’s InDeed Campaign for Nature is an online framework built to support individuals to implement Amma’s practical suggestions about the way we might use the earth’s remaining resources, and the way we interact with the natural world into practice in our own lives and our own communities. It is about accepting that the world’s problems are our problems, and the fact that if we don’t do something about them, we cannot expect anyone else to do it for us. It’s about taking responsibility for the world in which we live, and acting as if we will have to answer to future generations for the state of the world we leave to them. Ultimately, it’s about what each of us can do, right now, in our own backyard, to help restore the lost harmony between humanity and nature.

“We are not isolated islands, but connected like links of the same chain. We are part of the chain of life. Our every action, whether deliberate or not, affects everyone. Without waiting for others to change, if we change ourselves first, that in itself will make a difference… Seeing the change in us, others will naturally begin to change as well.” –Amma

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The total amount of greenhouse gases produced to support everything you consume in your daily life is called your carbon footprint. To understand why you would want to reduce your carbon footprint, you need to understand more about greenhouse gases and how they contribute to global warming. We’ll get to that later in this booklet. For now, suffice it to say that the greenhouse gases in our atmosphere haven’t increased by magic – they have increased as a direct result of the way we humans live. When it comes to reducing our carbon footprint, conserving energy is fundamental – not only because it is the consumption of energy that contributes the lion’s share of our carbon footprint, but because our society depends for most of its energy on limited fossil resources, which get less and less environmentally friendly every day. Read on to learn why.
Science defines energy as that which is necessary to make a change or transformation happen. In our lives, energy is all-pervading. It allows us to cross long distances, to build, heat, and cool our houses, and to produce and transport all of the objects we use on a daily basis. Energy has fuelled the industrial and economic revolutions of the past centuries. In short, energy allows our lives to be as we know them.

Let’s take the example of an average car, whose approximate weight of one ton makes it require a great deal of energy to operate. Its power is equivalent to the power of more than 60 horses. Most of the people living in Western countries have at least one of these cars, which means that they are virtually able to buy the equivalent of a team of more than 60 horses with a few month’s salary. In the past, even lords or noblemen could not afford such commodities. As surprising as it may seem, almost every citizen in a western country is currently consuming as much energy as kings did centuries ago.

From the perspective of energy consumption, every one of us is leading the lifestyle of the kings of olden times. We must be aware of this relatively recent and deeply profound turning point in history when considering some of today’s realities.

LIMITED RESOURCES

On the whole, we now use 20 times more energy than we used one hundred years ago, and most of it is not renewable. About 85% of this energy comes from fossil fuels like oil, gas and coal. (This percentage includes fission nuclear energy, which is a fossil resource as well). A fossil resource is found in the earth’s underground. It is available in a limited supply, since it has been created by natural cycles over very long periods of geological time. Whether we like it or not, we have only so much of these resources. We cannot create fossil resources on demand. Geologists have recently been able to quantify this limited stock in more precise ways.
WHY SAVING ENERGY MATTERS

We are using what Nature has created at an alarming speed, extracting these resources until they no longer exist.

As the world’s supply of fossil resources plateaus and eventually declines, it will be more and more difficult, environmentally harmful, and energy-intensive to extract them. At some point in the future, we may expend as much or more energy to extract these fuels as we gain by burning them. Even before that point is reached, the dependence on fossil resources is problematic, to say the least. In addition to causing the price of these resources to increase, these new extraction methods can also cause significant harm to the environment by polluting oceans and fouling surface and underground water and otherwise harm the ecosystem that humanity needs to survive. The burning of these fuels already causes manmade global warming. Using more and more energy to extract the resources increases the emissions of harmful greenhouse gases.

For most of us, these inconvenient truths are still completely disconnected from the way we act in our daily lives. Most car owners today still turn on their ignition without a care in the world. It seems we are still in the calm before the storm. We still think that we can get away with using energy carelessly. But the reality is, we are quickly rushing toward a future in which not all of us will have the energy we need to continue leading our lives as we are now.

Take a look at your electricity, heating and oil bills. They have probably been on the rise, but this is nothing compared to what is ahead of us.

In fact, if we compare the rise in energy prices with the increase in average purchasing power worldwide, we see that the price of energy has increased much slower than purchasing power globally, making energy easier and easier to use in our lives.

Let’s say your salary increases by 10% and energy costs increase by only 5%. You have more purchasing power and you’ll end up consuming more energy, be it directly (oil at the gas station, for example) or indirectly through other purchases, such as travel expenses and goods that have been transported over long distances.

Relatively speaking, the trend is changing now and energy is becoming more and more expensive. This may turn our economic model – based on inexpensive energy – on its head.

Worldwide, the coming scarcity of fossil fuels is a big issue. Oil represents 35% of the energy used in the world. If it is increasingly more expensive and difficult to extract, we will be forced to use less energy. Indeed, no other renewable energy has the potential to replace oil in a few years. We simply cannot boost renewable energy production from 1% of the world’s production to 35% in just a few years.

Reducing our energy consumption is one way of adapting to living with less energy, or with more costly energy. The more we anticipate changes, the less painful the transition to less energy will be, especially for the more vulnerable people in our societies. The most vulnerable are unfortunately less able to anticipate these changes, since they already struggle to survive day by day.

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GLOBAL WARMING

Global warming is indeed a complex phenomenon, but it can be understood fairly simply. The infrared radiance of the earth is absorbed in part by gases that we call greenhouse gases. The sun’s light that warms the earth passes through these same gases.

Greenhouse gases are essential for life on earth. The average temperature on earth is 15°C (59°F). It would be -18°C (0°F) without them, therefore extinguishing most forms of life.

Greenhouse gases can be compared to a blanket that keeps heat close to your body. When we add a second blanket, more heat is retained and the temperature stabilizes at a higher level than before. That’s what we do when we emit greenhouse gases: we keep piling up blankets that we can’t take off afterwards. One blanket is good, two blankets cozy, but ten may be pretty uncomfortable. Feeling the heat?

When burned, hydrocarbons such as coal, oil, and natural gas release carbon into the atmosphere in the form of carbon dioxide (CO₂). Two critical questions arise:
1. What will happen to our planet’s climate when we release all this extra CO₂ into the atmosphere?
2. If it causes the average temperature of the earth to rise, what will be the consequences?

Climatologists have been hard at work addressing these questions, especially in the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In the IPCC report issued in 2007 climate scientists concluded, based on an intensive review of a multitude scientific studies from throughout the world, that the rise in annual global mean temperature of the lower atmosphere that began over 150 years ago would not have taken place without the emissions of manmade greenhouse gases and the release of carbon through deforestation.

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Since the 19th century, scientists have understood the greenhouse effect and have anticipated that a change in the atmosphere would lead to climate change. Ironically, the effects that could be anticipated at that time were considered to be quite positive: plants would have more carbon available and would grow better; the rise in temperature would allow humanity to use new agricultural lands. The reasoning was appealing but was not comprehensive. For example, the climatic changes are now happening too fast for many species of life to adapt. Contrary to those early optimistic forecasts, many agricultural lands will in fact become barren and yields will diminish overall.

The consequences of climate change have been thoroughly studied by scientists. They expect the following effects, among others:

- An increase in sea level due to the thermal expansion of oceans and the melting of ice sheets and Alpine glaciers. Coastal areas, inhabited by much of the world’s population will be vulnerable to flooding over time. Many small islands and island nations will be completely submerged.
- More extreme weather events (floods, droughts, etc.) in areas were they were not expected and on scales never seen before.
- New and more intense stress placed on ecosystems. Many plants and animals will disappear and be replaced by rapidly spreading invasive species. This will negatively impact biodiversity and agricultural production.
- An increase in human conflicts linked directly or indirectly with the environment. Whole populations are already being forced to abandon their homeland since they cannot make a living anymore. How would we deal with dozens of millions of climate refugees, victims of the world’s energy consumption habits?

Given these likely consequences, we need to discriminate between what is meant to happen and what could happen. Scientists often work on forecasts of what may happen based on the most likely behavior of societies. If we individually and collectively decide to change, we can change our future. We should not ask what the weather will be, but rather think of what weather we want to create. Our actions today – specifically energy consumption—impact climactic changes tomorrow. The conservation of energy resources will determine the quality of the world that our children, grandchildren and future generations will inhabit.

Embracing the World’s InDeed Campaign for Nature is designed to inspire people to think of what they can do by themselves to positively affect the environment. There are many ways in which we can act, directly or indirectly, to curve energy consumption. It is up to us!
There are many ways for us to reduce our energy consumption at home simply by changing our daily habits. The awareness we put into our daily acts slowly become habits and what first took effort soon becomes part of our routine. Little brooks become great rivers. When look for ways to save energy in the little things we do each day, we can save significant amounts and inspire others by our example.

**DON’T WASTE ELECTRICITY**

Saving energy invites us to reflect on our real needs and evaluate whether our personal consumption habits are really in line with them. For instance, we need some light at night. However, we should avoid using light without any reason. It is a good exercise in awareness to make sure to turn off lights when leaving a room.

There are now low-energy light bulbs that use up to five times less energy than incandescent light bulbs. They help you save money as well, since they usually last six times longer than the incandescent light bulbs for a purchasing price that is only slightly higher. Most people even find the light they produce to be more pleasant. On the other hand, halogen lamps consume 25 to 50 times more energy than low-energy light bulbs.

During the day, make the best use of sunlight by placing your workspace, reading chair or desk close to a window. Saving energy is often a simple matter of good sense. For example, it is best to keep a refrigerator or freezer in a cool place so that less energy is expended to keep the food inside cold.

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We also use a lot of energy in the kitchen. Heaters, refrigerators, electric burners and ovens consume a lot of energy. You can start by covering your pans when cooking. You can switch off electric burners a few minutes before the end of the cooking time to use all the accumulated energy. (This trick can also be used when ironing clothes.)

In a similar vein, it takes less energy to defrost frozen foods at room temperature rather than using a microwave or oven.

**Household appliances**

Do not routinely run washing machines and dishwashers half-empty. The wind and sunlight are much more energy-efficient for drying clothes than an electric clothes dryer. Indoors, your clothes will dry quickly if you hang them close to a heater.

For all appliances, use energy-saving programs as much as possible. In some countries, you will find energy tags on most household appliances. They help you choose energy-saving models. Keep in mind that you will use these machines for years: it’s always worth investing a bit to have an energy-thrifty machine. In the long run, light gains make for a heavy purse.

Most appliances have standby systems. Switching them off when not in use is a good way to save electricity. This habit can help you to save up to 7% of your overall electricity consumption.
HEATING AND COOLING

Depending on the climate we live in, we often need to warm or cool our homes and work places. Good sense advises us to cope with the season as best we can and accept some change according to the external conditions. In western countries, people often heat their flat to 20°C (68°F) or even higher in winter and cool it down to the same in summer. By artificially compensating for all natural variations, we cut ourselves off from Nature and become overly sensitive to any kind of external disturbance.

Amma reminds us that “life becomes fulfilled when humankind and Nature move together, hand in hand, in harmony.” One way of seeking this harmony is to stay close to seasonal changes. Keeping the heater a little lower in winter can be a rewarding personal challenge. As always, what seems challenging at the beginning will soon become a habit and you’ll soon be indifferent to small discomforts. Your heating bill will reflect Nature’s gratitude!

When airing out a room, it is better open windows or doors wide for a few minutes than to let a trickle of fresh air in for three hours. Don’t forget to switch off the heating or air conditioner beforehand.

In most cases, you can set different temperatures for different rooms. You can also lower the temperature at night. With warm blankets, your sleep will only be better. Most heating systems can be programmed to restart a couple hours before you wake up.

You don’t need to let yourself shiver with cold! Just be aware that reducing the thermostat by 1°C can save up to 7% of your energy bill. Get your sweaters out of the closet!

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Windows are an important source of energy wastage. When badly insulated, they let heat flow out freely. Installing double or triple glazing can help you save up to 10% of your energy bill. Beware of roofs and walls as well: when not properly insulated, they lead to energy waste. Many buildings from the sixties, seventies and eighties have been destroyed and rebuilt from scratch only because their energy consumption was so high. Those were times when we thought oil was nearly free, and insulation was in many cases hardly taken into account when planning. By investing in better insulation, you will get your money back rather quickly. Many governments have created financial incentives for home insulation. When examining insulation, don’t forget to consider other ecological building techniques.

Solar water heaters have proven to be the most efficient domestic energy-saving technique. Most contractors are qualified to set up these kinds of systems.

Regular maintenance to your boiler is also a good way of cutting your energy bill. Bad settings (badly insulated roofs or windows, etc.) can lead to serious loss of both energy and money.

Maximize the use of sunlight as a source of light and heat. Opening curtains on windows exposed to the sun provides a simple, pleasant and free heating source. Closing them at night or in winter will keep the heat in.

That’s a lot to remember. What’s a good rule of thumb?

Awareness and good sense are the best friends of both our budget and our environment. The carelessness born of an overabundance of cheap energy has engraved destructive habits in us. Changing these habits is a rewarding and worthwhile challenge, and a gift to future generations.

Let’s take two simple steps to get things right:

• Let’s take a look around our living or workspace and think: what can I do differently to consume less energy? The fridge may be next to the heater, the desk in the darkest place of the room, the curtains always opened in winter.

• Make a list of the changes to be made and make them happen. Make it a personal challenge to come back to your checklist every evening and track your behavior during the day. Perseverance is the mother of virtues: you’ll gradually gain confidence.
Awareness helps us not to be wasteful in our daily use of energy. The other primary way we can reduce our overall energy consumption is to limit our indirect consumption of energy by buying energy-efficient goods. Actually, our energy footprint is the sum of our direct consumption of energy and the energy that has been used to produce all the goods and services that we use—this is referred to as “grey” energy. We must not only reduce our electricity, heat and gas bills, but also the amount of grey energy that we purchase.

Grey energy also contributes significantly to our carbon footprint; the impact of what we buy varies according to the energy that has been used to produce the goods. Carbon is emitted when burning fuels such as oil, gas, and coal. Using renewable energies could help us address global warming.

Some countries already put carbon labels on goods in supermarkets to give consumers information about the carbon footprint of a particular product and help them shop with awareness.
REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

REDUCING CONSUMPTION

THE IMPACT OF WHAT WE BUY

Since every single item that we buy requires energy to be produced, buying eco-products and reducing our needs saves energy and reduces our carbon footprint.

To understand the impact of the goods we use, let’s take the example of something that has become very common in our society: a computer with a flat screen. To produce the computer’s components, silicon and other ores are extracted in mines in Africa or Asia. The mining industry uses huge machines that consume lots of energy. Once extracted, these minerals must be transported to processing and manufacturing facilities. There, the materials are transformed into chipsets and printed circuits. Once produced, the products are then shipped to countries for distribution to warehouses and then to retail stores. All of these processes use a lot of energy, electricity produced with coal in Asian countries, and lots of chemicals that are very polluting and also require energy to be produced and petroleum used in each step from extraction to consumption.

A carbon footprint can be calculated in different ways, but the most accurate way is to consider all emissions that are necessary. It wouldn’t be right not to consider the energy used in the extraction of silicon when calculating the carbon footprint of a computer.

Taking everything into account, we can determine how many kilograms of oil, coal and natural gas has been burned to build a computer with a flat screen. A 2004 research paper concluded that more than 1,200 kg of CO2 were emitted in the atmosphere to produce one single computer. This is about two-thirds of the 1,800 kg of CO2 that is thought to be the limit each individual can emit annually and still preserve a stable climate for the future. The limit on “allowable” pollution has been calculated as being the same for every person on Earth; people living in fully developed countries have more work to do to cut their emissions down to a sustainable level.

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Here are just a few examples of the carbon footprint generated by the objects we buy and use:

- The carbon footprint of a bicycle made with aluminum is about 50 kg of CO$_2$. This is the equivalent of riding 300 kilometers (180 miles) in a small car. This means it’s very energy-efficient to invest in a bicycle and start using it!
- Traveling 100 km (60 miles) has a very different impact depending on our means of transportation. Without considering the construction of the vehicle, it can be between 1 and 10 kg of CO$_2$ by train (depending if the electricity is produced by coal, nuclear or renewable energies), 25 kg of CO$_2$ by plane and 22 kg by car - if you are alone in the car. Obviously, carpooling is a great way to reduce the carbon footprint created by driving.
- The carbon footprint of a good office chair is about 100 kg of CO$_2$ and that of a good office table is about 50 kg of CO$_2$. This means it is very worthwhile to find second-hand furniture.
- The carbon footprint of manufacturing a clothes washing machine is more than 240 kg of CO$_2$.
- The carbon footprint of building a mobile phone is more than 30 kg of CO$_2$ (more than driving 200 km in a car).
- The carbon footprint of producing a tire is about 23 kg of CO$_2$.

To reduce our carbon footprint, let’s think about how to make our goods last longer. Let’s think about our needs. Let’s look for second-hand materials and goods. More and more websites promote the exchange or sale of used products. This is a good way to save energy and money at the same time.

For many years, Amma has been encouraging people to reduce the number of new outfits they buy each year to three. Amma points out that the money we save in this way can be used to help serve those in need. It will also help to reduce our carbon footprint!

The carbon footprint of our diet is significant because agriculture is responsible for most of the emissions of methane and nitrous oxide, the two main greenhouse gases after CO$_2$. Methane is emitted by paddy fields and livestock digestion, most particularly by ruminants. Nitrous oxide is emitted when nitrogen fertilizers are used in fields. A chemical reaction causes the emission of this gas, which is much more powerful than CO$_2$. The global warming potential (GWP) is a relative measure of how much heat a greenhouse gas traps in the atmosphere. A GWP is calculated over a specific time interval, most commonly 100 years. For example, the 100-year GWP of nitrous oxide is 298, which means that if the same mass of nitrous oxide and carbon dioxide were introduced into the atmosphere, nitrous dioxide will trap 298 times more heat than the carbon dioxide over the next 100 years.

If we also take into account energy-based direct emissions by agricultural equipment and the deforestation caused by the growth of cultivated areas, agriculture is humanity’s largest source of emissions. (27% of global emissions are from agriculture and deforestation.) The choices we make about what we eat have a powerful impact on the environment, climate change and energy conservation.
Actually, if we want a comprehensive measure of greenhouse gas emissions necessary to grow our food, we have to look further than agriculture’s direct emissions. All agriculture, except organic farming, uses synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. They have to be manufactured and this requires fossil energy that generates CO2 emissions. (Synthetic fertilizers are produced from natural gas, meaning that we are eating oil and gas.)

In many developed countries, spending on whole, unprocessed foods, such as fresh fruits or vegetables in bulk, or fresh meat, represent no more than 20% of all what we spend on food. The rest of our expenditures are devoted to processed food products: pastas, canned food, frozen food, readymade dishes, crackers and sweets, drinks, etc. These industries consume energy, and emit greenhouse gases that contribute to the carbon footprint of the products we buy later. In France, 15% of the energy used by industries is related to the food industry. These products are usually packaged. Did you know that the manufacture of packaging material consumes a significant portion of the “basic” material that we produce (steel, aluminum, plastics)? Buying more whole, unprocessed food and cooking them at home will help us greatly decrease our energy consumption.

More than one-third of the trucks on the road are carrying agricultural products—live animals, fodder, milk, frozen food, and so on. Clearly, every time we buy vegetables grown 500 to 1,000 km from the place of purchase, we pay for transport of the products. We can hardly complain later about trucks on the road!

Finally, the storage of processed products in large supermarkets results in additional energy consumption: it requires electricity to keep food cold, and stores need to be heated in winter and air-conditioned in summer. In France, energy for heating and cooling stores represents 1 to 2% of national emissions. Moreover, these large supermarkets, which hold approximately 80% of retail foods that are consumed, are often located on the outskirts of town, requiring a trip by car to shop there.
And at home, we continue to spend energy: for example, electricity consumption related to food in France represents over 20% of domestic kilowatt-hours (kWh). This includes use of refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, ovens and stoves, not to mention small appliances. Packaging ends up in the trash, and again greenhouse gases are emitted from the disposal of the product (even in the case of recycling). Finally, one-quarter of the weight of what we throw away is food waste, and when it goes into landfill this waste leads to methane emissions—and these methane emissions are not negligible. You can cut yours down by composting it at home. For more information, make the InDeed commitment to grow your own veggies in a windowsill garden and receive the InDeed Guide to gardening.

We can see that the way we purchase and cook our food makes a considerable impact on the environment. In many countries, the production and consumption of food alone accounts for more than one-third of all emissions! Cooking unprocessed organic food, purchased locally, significantly reduces our carbon footprint.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF EACH FOOD**

One might also wonder how much energy and greenhouse gas emissions are involved in different diets and then take into account the impact on the environment when choosing food stuffs. By analyzing greenhouse gas emissions “from the oil field to the stomach of the consumer,” we obtain the following approximate results of the carbon footprints of different foods.

This graph shows us that if we want to reduce the carbon footprint of our diet, we need to eat less red meat and less dairy products. A vegetarian is responsible for much fewer greenhouse gas emissions than someone who eats a lot of red meat. Let’s make the effort to harmonize our diet and our ecological values.
REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

REDUCING CONSUMPTION

Huge data centers are used to proceed all our web researches

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

In our society, we are not often aware of the impact of our actions because we don’t perceive the impact tangibly. Something seems to be clean because we don’t see smoke coming out of a chimney or an exhaust pipe. On the contrary, the more we consume information and communication technologies, be it through devices or media, the more energy we use.

Let’s take the examples of sending emails or doing research on the web.

EMAILS

On average, 247 billion emails were sent worldwide every day in 2009, including spam. A figure of 507 billion is expected for 2013. By decreasing emails sent by 10%, a 100-employee company saved the equivalent of one ton of CO₂ per year (approximately a one way flight from Paris to New York). In other words, we should be aware that as well as anything else, the use of email is not neutral for the environment and that the storage in our email boxes implies the need for servers that use a lot of energy.

WEB RESEARCH

Another example is overly generalized web surfing. Internet information research contributes to around 10 kg of CO₂ per year per person. We can decrease the number of webpages we consult, and thus do less harm to Nature, by using precise words when using a web search engine. When we are already familiar with a site, we can also enter the site’s address directly on the navigation bar using the keyboard, or using the “favorites” classification. Using these few tips can save the equivalent of many kg of CO₂ per year. In France, these small steps can save the equivalent in CO₂ emissions of a 40 km car trip per person.
REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY

REDISCOVER YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

One the major tenets of sustainable development is to come back to a local scale, to adapt our activities to local realities. The long distances that the products we use must travel generates a lot of energy consumption. More than that, our own relationship to space has also changed. We can say that the space our elders were living in was continuous. This means that the land was connected; it was one continuum. Places were linked. When going to work, they passed some trees they knew, met some neighbours and recognized the land in detail. There was a certain vision of the land and a sense of belonging to a local culture. Today, we have forgotten this relationship to space largely because of the high speed of the transport and the demand for time efficiency. We go to the office, our children’s school, our friends’ homes, but each place is like an isolated island separated from our immediate living environment.

Amma recommends bicycling short distances rather than driving: “If someone only needs to travel one or two kilometres, perhaps he or she could walk or ride a bicycle instead of driving. This is also good exercise. Normally, people sitting at a desk at work do not get much exercise. Walking or riding a bike to the shopping center or to work and back will help prevent a lot of diseases caused by inactivity.” Let’s start to walk or ride a bike and discover our surroundings. You may find a farmer who sells vegetables near your home. The community-supported agriculture (CSA) concept is a very good way to support a local farmer and get fresh, local and generally organic vegetables. The choices we make about how and where we spend our money can become a powerful tool for changing the world. Let’s use this tool with awareness and compassion for Nature.
REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY

Let’s get to know about the heritage of our surroundings and get involved locally. Often, there is no need to go very far in search of nice activities and culture. It’s important to revive and promote local cultures — it is through re-localization and strong, self-reliant, open-minded communities that the world will be able to achieve a more sustainable future.

The best way to reduce our energy consumption is to change our lifestyle, which necessitates acting locally and reviving the feeling of being part of a place.

THE REAL SPEED OF A CAR

Ivan Illich was an economist who enjoyed an interesting calculation. Let’s consider you drive at 100 km/h (60 mph). So it means that after one hour, you ride 100 kilometers (60 miles). But let’s also consider all the time you needed to ride this distance. Let’s consider the time it took to earn the money to buy the car, gas and insurance, and the time you spent for maintaining and cleaning your vehicle. Consider all the actions that you would not have done if you didn’t have a car and if you didn’t drive this distance. Actually, considering all this, speed is very different from how it initially appears. In 1982, when Illich made this calculation, the “real speed” of a car was only 7 km/h (just over 4 mph)! Even a bicycle is faster than that.

This kind of calculation is a good reminder that we don’t take everything into consideration, that our thinking is very limited and sometimes not as rational as we believe it to be. We use lots of time in order to save a little time. Because we live pressed by urgent needs, we choose what appears to be the immediate or fastest way, which is usually not the most efficient way in the long run. Let’s take the time to open our minds and think about how to use energy efficiently, and rebalance our ways of living accordingly.

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“AMMA has a request for each and every person on this planet: to play their part in restoring harmony to nature.”

- AMMA

Embracing the World’s InDeed Campaign for Nature has been officially recognized by UNESCO as a project of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.