

1E NEED TO KNOW Climate hand-print and What if scenarios

In 1D we learned that a climate footprint provides a snapshot of the negative impacts on the climate either as a school community or as individuals. This is our mark on the world.

Here we are introducing two concepts:

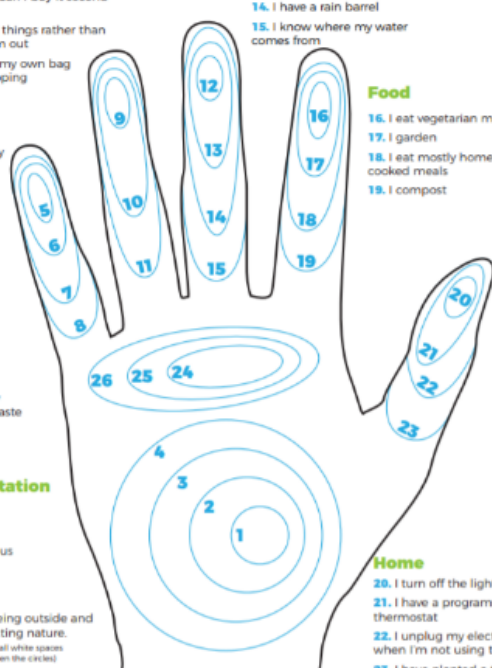
1. Climate handprint - this shows how individuals and organizations can have a positive impact on the climate, by reducing, avoiding, or capturing GHG emissions.
2. What if scenarios –allow us to envision what positive steps we can take to “do good” rather than “do less bad”.

Climate Handprint

If the climate footprint shows us the “bad” we are doing, the climate handprint shows the “good” we can do. Car-sharing is a good example of a solution that reduces emissions. Biking instead of using a car is a good example of how to avoid emissions. Planting trees and practicing regenerative agriculture fixes more carbon than it releases and is a good example of capturing GHG emissions.

ECOLOGICAL HANDPRINT

- For each action you are already doing, shade in the numbered circle on your handprint.
 For each action you would like to do in the future, shade in that circle with a different colour.



Consumption

- 9. Before I buy something new I consider – Do I need it? Can I borrow it? Can I buy it second hand?
- 10. I repair things rather than throw them out
- 11. I bring my own bag when shopping

Water

- 12. I save water
- 13. I drink tap water
- 14. I have a rain barrel
- 15. I know where my water comes from

Food

- 16. I eat vegetarian meals
- 17. I garden
- 18. I eat mostly home cooked meals
- 19. I compost

Community

- 5. I have learned about sustainability in my school
- 6. I talk to my parents about protecting the environment
- 7. I stand up for important issues
- 8. I volunteer

Waste

- 24. I recycle
- 25. I choose a litter-free lunch
- 26. I safely throw out hazardous waste (paint, batteries, electronics, etc.)

Transportation

- 1. I walk
- 2. I cycle
- 3. I take the bus
- 4. I carpool

Home

- 20. I turn off the lights
- 21. I have a programmable thermostat
- 22. I unplug my electronics when I'm not using them
- 23. I have planted a tree

27. I like being outside and protecting nature.
Colour all white spaces between the circles

<https://climatechangeconnection.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Ecological-Handprint-2018.pdf>

You don't have to know your climate footprint to think about your climate handprint. You simply start to make decisions that make a positive difference; essentially you are leaving your handprint behind representing the good you are doing.

Focusing on a handprint rather than a footprint makes more sense when you already have a small climate footprint, or simply want to take climate action quickly. However, a climate footprint helps you understand your starting point. The handprint and what-if represent the path you can follow and where you can go in what timeframe.

What-if scenarios

What-if scenarios allow us to compare different actions we can take. If we know where the most good can come from then we can make those actions a priority.

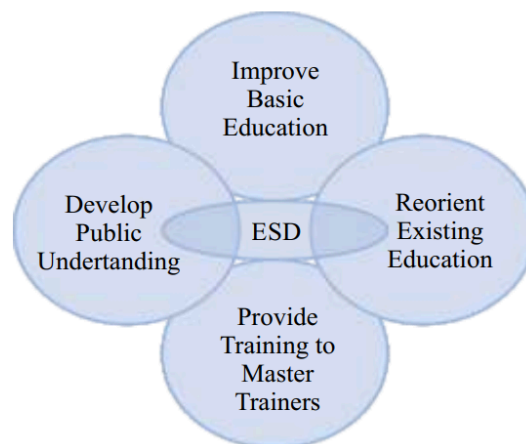
For example, a school that serves many meals with meat could decide to replace half of that meat in one year with plant-based alternatives and half this meat consumption again the following year. Because meat has up to 20 times the climate footprint of a plant-based equivalent, the replacement of meat by plant-based food will make a big difference in a school's climate footprint.

Without reducing the number of meals or quantity of food served, the food climate footprint of can be reduced by 70-80%. The what-if in this scenario is, "What if I reduced my meat consumption by half in the first year of the carbon-free campus program? And what if I halve my meat consumption again in the second year?"

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

One of the best handprints we can leave is passing on our knowledge to someone else who can use it well. We want our positive handprints to cover many, many walls, and we can't do it alone. And we don't want our handprints to be a one-time thing. Education is central to sustainability. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) considers the crucial questions of whether specific changes are locally relevant and culturally appropriate. Components of ESD (pictured below) include:

- Improving Basic Education
- Reorienting Existing Education
- Developing Public Understanding
- Providing Training to Master Trainers



Components of ESD

Source: <https://www.rcenetwork.org/portal/sites/default/files/My%20Carbon%20Footprint%20VS%20Handprint-2.pdf>

Ideally, we as climate custodians become teachers to others. So when we move on, our fellow students are left with our knowledge and they themselves can in turn become teachers to the next generation.