



Sustainable Life at Home

IKEA-WWF Project Brief

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WWF IKEA Partnership

IKEA and WWF share common interests, particularly in seeing the considerate, efficient, long-term economically sound use of natural resources and ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable.

The Partnership, started in 2002, is founded on each partner's unique competencies and we now work together in 16 countries around the world to promote responsible and sustainable use of resources. The partnership focuses on three areas; climate change, cotton and forest.

In addition to working together in projects, WWF and IKEA want to inspire other companies and networks to address environmental challenges and make people's lives at home more sustainable.

By working together we accomplish more!

1. WWF IKEA CLIMATE PROJECTS

IKEA and WWF have identified climate change as one of the major global challenges and started cooperating to tackle this in 2007.

The partnership has worked together in six joint climate projects to identify barriers and develop tools and innovative solutions to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG).

The aim of the climate projects has been to find market transformation opportunities, identify low-carbon solutions that can contribute to reducing GHG emissions in society, and engage stakeholders throughout the IKEA value chain. This is why the projects have covered a wide range of aspects, including product development, supplier operations, transportation, customer behaviour and recycling.

As part of the climate projects, calculations were made to estimate how much positive impact IKEA could have, mainly by introducing new innovative products and by inspiring customers to live a more sustainable life at home. Since IKEA has a large number of customers, even small individual changes have a large total impact – for example when people reduce their food waste, move towards vegetarian food, start using energy switches and LED lighting, etc.

Why is it important to inspire people to live more sustainably at home?

There are billions of people who want to live more sustainably and consume in a more sustainable way. Many want to contribute to a better future but may find it hard to know how to live with as little impact on the environment as possible. At the same time, many people are not willing to sacrifice their everyday comfort. So ideally, sustainability should not affect daily life, cost more or take extra time. These restrictions make it relevant to ask if it is really possible to find ways to live more sustainably? And is it possible for the individual to make a difference with small means and actually contribute to a better environment?

According to WWF's Living Planet Report 2012¹, the immediate focus must be on drastically shrinking the ecological footprint of high-income populations – particularly their carbon footprint. It is important to identify how the individual can contribute to this big picture and it is important for decision makers and companies to provide conditions for people to do so.

Around one quarter of the total carbon footprint from the IKEA value chain comes from the use of its products in customers' homes. This is why it is important for IKEA to enable its customers to reduce their carbon emissions by providing inspiring information and solutions that can help them. In addition to this, IKEA is committed to developing more sustainable products, moving towards energy and resource independence and contributing to a better life for people and communities. (You can read more about this in People & Planet Positive, the IKEA Group sustainability direction for 2020, which can be found on IKEA.com.)

With this background, IKEA and WWF decided to collaborate in a project with the objective to find ways of helping and inspiring people to live a more sustainable life at home and thereby reduce their environmental impact – and do this without compromising too much with everyday routines, and without adding extra costs and time.

The Ecoration blog became the information hub for the project. Here the general public and people interested in the issues could follow the families throughout the project and get inspired by their engagement and solutions.



¹ Please see www.panda.org

2. SUSTAINABLE LIFE AT HOME

Over a six-month period, IKEA and WWF supported nine families – Ecoration families – in Kalmar, Sweden, to test out a wide variety of solutions to save energy and water

and minimise waste that together with changed behaviours would enable customers to live a more sustainable life at home.



The nine selected households come from different backgrounds and represent a wide range of family constellations, living- and housing situations – reflecting modern society in Sweden. Their level of knowledge of environmental issues varied, but they all shared an interest in learning more about sustainable living.

The goals with the project were to:

- Identify the relevant family needs and challenges, find solutions and methods to enable them to live more sustainably, and measure the effect
- Find ways to spread the families' experiences and insights and thereby inspire other customers to live a more sustainable life at home.
- Based on the families' input, spark ideas to future product development



The cooperation with the families ended in June, 2012. This report presents the main results and findings, and summarises how IKEA and WWF can use the lessons learned.



PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- 8 home visits per family, including implementation of home furnishing solutions for a more sustainable life at home
- In-store seminars for the families on relevant topics
- Online communication through the blog IKEA.se/ecoration, Facebook, livethemma.se and WWF.se
- In-store communication using the families' testimonials together with IKEA solutions
- Tests of tools to measure the effect of avoided waste, saved energy, saved water and the families' overall feeling of well-being
- Distribution of inspirational images and stories to home furnishing bloggers and journalists
- 4 press releases to journalists
- Seminar for journalists, bloggers and opinion leaders within sustainable life style, home furnishing and design

OPPORTUNITIES

In 2011, a study performed by the research company Lippincott showed that 72% of consumers in Sweden care about sustainability and 43% say they could do more. According to the study, IKEA customers want IKEA to help them to make sustainable choices, without compromising on quality or paying more. This shows that there is a demand for information, products, services and solutions that help people live a more sustainable life and reduce their environmental impact.

The families in Kalmar have proved that there are no major barriers for people to start living more sustainably, but they need guidance on how to take the first steps. If a big company like IKEA provided its customers with solutions and inspired them to change their behaviour, many would be able to reduce their environmental impact. And when made by many people, even small changes can have a substantial, global impact.

The study IKEA's opportunities to influence CO₂ emissions in society, conducted by IKEA and WWF in 2010-11, examined several different scenarios. For example; if 25% of all IKEA customers worldwide reduced their food waste by just 14%,¹ it could reduce CO₂ emissions by 6 million tonnes – equivalent to taking around 3.5 million cars off the road (a conservative estimate is that an average car in Sweden emits about 1.7 tonnes CO₂/year). And if 25 % of all IKEA customers would eat vegetarian food just one day a week, it would correspond to a reduction of 12 million tonnes of CO₂ per year. If 50% of IKEA customers started using stand-by switches for TVs, computers and the like, it could cut CO₂ emissions by 28 million tonnes per year – equivalent to taking around 16.5 million cars off the road.

Customer interest and the above examples of how small but important changes made by many people can create a big impact show the great potential in inspiring IKEA and more companies to engage with their customers to live a more sustainable life at home. There are many opportunities to make a difference within the areas of waste, energy and water – the three areas that the project focused on – and our joint efforts have been limited to direct activities in the home where IKEA and WWF can provide knowledge, solutions and products.

MEASURED RESULTS

The nine families measured their waste and electricity reductions over a five-month period. They also measured their total carbon emission when the project started and when the project ended. Saving water was another focus area, but the project did not find a simple way to measure how much water each household was able to save. Through qualitative interviews and blogs, the families shared how this way of living affected their feeling of well-being, their behaviour and attitudes towards environmental issues and consumption in general.

¹ UK-based WRAP (www.wrap.org.uk) estimates that this 14% waste reduction can be done "fairly easily"

Well-being

The overall feeling of well-being families reported was boosted by the satisfaction of actually doing something concrete to reduce their environmental impact, and by being good examples for children and thereby introducing a way of living that will become a natural part of their adulthood. Another motivator was to take responsibility for the future and future generations. It was also a relief for many of the families to get organised and to discover attractive, functional and effective solutions for recycling, cooking, drying washing, etc. These motivators were highly important to the families and can be summarised in a few quotes:

- "It's my duty to do something for myself and for my children."
- "I have the possibility to influence my children's behaviour – something they will keep throughout their life."
- "It's more fun to recycle with nice solutions."
- "With increased knowledge, I can share my experiences with others."

Reductions – non-recyclable waste

Some families reduced their non-recyclable waste with as much as 70% and others with 15%. Some of the families had very small amounts of non-recyclable waste already from the beginning, but the average waste reduction at the end of the project still amounted to approximately 30%.



The good result is mainly due to the fact that the families were supported with recycling solutions that were completely adapted to their individual needs, enabling them to recycle everything possible. Another factor behind the result was that some families did not sort everything before the project started as Kalmar municipality does not offer full recycling as part of their regular waste management service to households. As a result of the project, one family now takes recycled waste in small bags on their bicycles to the municipal recycling station instead of using large bins that would need to be transported by car. And with recycling solutions that are very easy to handle for children, a male single parent that took part in the project now has good help from his sons and a new behaviour has been established in the family.

All families have become conscious not to throw food away, and some families tested a solution for indoor composting. One family reduced foodwaste with more than 40%. The reduced amount of food waste significantly reduced the overall amount of unsorted (non-recyclable) waste generated by the families.

Reductions - Electricity

The nine households' average electricity consumption fell by 30 % over the project period from January to March. When comparing consumption year on year (March 2012/2011), the average electricity use decreased by 20%, not taking temperature differences between the two periods into account. Results were measured with the help of an energy visualisation tool and an independent energy consultant.

A main contributor to the decrease was the change to LED bulbs throughout the families' homes. One project family member, working at Kalmar Energy, did his own calculation; If 30 000 households in Kalmar changed their traditional incandescent 40W bulbs to 5W LED bulbs, the savings would be enough to provide 400 villas in Kalmar with household electricity during a whole year. And every household would save 45 SEK/year on each light source that is changed to LED, based on three hours use per day.

Two of the project families that reduced their electricity consumption by 30% and 20% respectively reported that changed behaviour was of great importance. Today, they always switch off the light when leaving a room, they don't use the tumble drier, they cook more efficiently with pressure cookers and steamers and use residual heat on the stove, etc.

The families had LED lights installed. They reduced their electricity consumption and improved the atmosphere of their homes at the same time.



Reductions - Total Carbon Emission

Even if the project focused on activities in the home, the families' growing overall consciousness of sustainable living affected other areas, including transportation, travel, choice of food, reuse, etc. To highlight one example, this increased environmental awareness was reflected in one family's decision to buy a car fuelled by biogas.

To be able to measure improvements, each family calculated their total carbon footprint at the start and at the end of the project. They did this by using an Internet-based tool¹ to measure how a household's consumption affects the environment. The average carbon footprint per person in Sweden is 5.8 tonnes of CO₂ per year. The families' average footprint was below the Swedish average already at the start of

¹ www.ecorunner.industrialecology.se

the project, and when they entered their consumption data into the tool at the end of the project their group average footprint was 4.3 tonnes CO₂ per person per year, with a wide span between different households. The main purpose of measuring the carbon footprint was to get an overall understanding of the environmental impact of the households' consumption.

The CO₂ footprint was divided into four key areas: home & living, household purchases, transportation and leisure. Those with the lowest CO₂ footprint managed to reduce emissions related to leisure activities, transportation and – to a large extent – home & living. Meanwhile, it was the footprint generated from transportation and home & living that boosted the total figure for families with the highest CO₂ footprint.

Time Savings

The most obvious time-saving solutions for families that want to live more sustainably at home are the pressure cooker and the steamer. The families who used the pressure cooker during the project now say they cannot manage without it. They save up to 20 minutes every time they cook rice, potatoes, beans and such, which makes it easier to cook more time consuming meals also on weeknights. A female project family member, a dedicated amateur chef, calculated that she saves 48 hours per year with the pressure cooker.

The families also save time with the help of smart solutions that make it easy to take recycled waste to the recycling station on their way to work – it is no longer a time-consuming effort done twice a month as it often was before.

However, the end result is less about saving time and more about not adding to the overall time needed to do household chores more sustainably – for example air drying the washing instead of using the tumble dryer, reusing water used for rinsing vegetables to water the flowers and composting food waste instead of throwing it in the residual waste. Because the new solutions at home were tailored to each family's individual needs, the families say that these new activities have not required extra time, and that it feels natural to continue with the new and more sustainable habits.

Picture 1: Pressure cookers saved time and money.

Picture 2: Clothes were air dried to save power.



Reduced Costs

Cost savings are an obvious result of significantly reducing the amount of non-recyclable waste and electricity consumption.

Reducing a household's waste with up to 70% means that a family living in a house can subscribe to the waste management company's smaller bins. This represents a cost saving of approximately 900¹ SEK per year.

Reducing the electricity use by around 30% represents a cost saving of approximately 7,500² SEK per year for a household that consumes 25,000 kWh per year at a fixed price of 1.00 SEK/kWh.

Picture 1: One household reduced their waste with 70%. They recycled more and started composting organic waste.

Picture 2: Everyone can create their own waste sorting solution using old as well as new buckets and bins.



¹ www.infomix.se
² www.kalmarenergi.se

3. HIGH LEVEL FINDINGS

The Sustainable life at home project has showed that it is possible for companies like IKEA to contribute to significantly reduced emissions generated by its customers and to look beyond its own operations. In this project, it was done by influencing, inspiring, helping and informing customers to a more sustainable life at home.

In addition, IKEA should continue its work to improve the entire product range. With 190 million customers every year, IKEA has great potential to reduce their downstream emissions from the product range and avoid customer emissions through, for example, changed behaviour.

- It is possible for companies to reduce emission generated by their customers, i.e. avoided emissions.
- Increased knowledge and understanding is a first step that provides motivation for behavioural change and new solutions. IKEA may play a role in **increasing the demand for more sustainable products and solutions** by involving customers, as it did in in this project.
- **Living a more sustainable life at home is a platform for taking further steps:** A key learning point from the families in Kalmar is that when they have started to live more sustainably in one area, for example recycling, this becomes a motivator to think about sustainability in other areas as well. Several families now shop food when needed instead of once a week, and have reduced their food waste significantly. Some are more conscious about travel and will consider the environmental aspect when buying the next car. Many consider reuse as an alternative to buying new things, and some eat less meat and buy more ecological food.
- **It is important to measure and visualise improvements** in order to motivate changed behaviour. When it comes to recycling, it is obvious that the non-recyclable waste decreases and this is a clear motivator. But when it comes to energy and water, it is not possible to see the everyday reductions unless there is a way to visualise them. The project tested the ELIQ¹ energy display, as a visualisation tool for everyday electricity consumption, and the use was critical in order to encourage changed behaviour -- turning down the heating, switching off the light when not in the room, air-drying the washing instead of using the tumble dryer, using the stove more efficiently, etc. Consultancy services, such as energy audits, are also important to develop an overall understanding of the overall energy use of the house. As the project was not able to measure water reductions, it proved more difficult to motivate the participants to save water.
- **Grandma's behaviour was right and with today's solutions it's easy to do the right thing:** This project has demonstrated that behaviours that were plain common sense 70 years ago need to be highlighted again in combination with new solutions and products. Living more sustainably at home does not have to be high-tech, difficult and expensive. Everyone can start now, in their own home.

¹ www.eliq.se

- **Interaction and sharing with others – “new behaviour x many people = huge impact”:** The possibility to interact, share and discuss with others is critical in order to encourage individuals to contribute with a small part with the purpose to make a big difference together with many others. One success factor in this project was the creation of an online platform (www.IKEA.se/ecoration), a blog where customers interacted with each other and where IKEA together with WWF and other opinion leaders shared knowledge and inspiration for how to live a more sustainable life at home.
- **The right solutions are important enablers for a changed behaviour:** If people are to continue to live more sustainably at home, the solutions at home must fulfil their needs – they must be very simple, easy to begin with, not take extra time and make it possible for the whole family to contribute. When it comes to recycling, this means that it is important to not only think about how to best recycle at home, but also how to transport recyclable waste to the recycling collection point or station. Products are part of a solution that together with insight and motivation will result in changed behaviour.
- **“Customers talking to customers” create credibility in-store and online;** In the IKEA Kalmar store customers could follow the families through testimonials connected to displayed home furnishing solutions for a more sustainable living, based on the solutions in the families’ homes. Online, the families shared their experiences by blogging. From a customer point of view, this creates more credibility than if IKEA was the only source of sustainable home furnishing advice.

CONCLUDING SEMINAR OCTOBER 30, 2012

A seminar was conducted in Stockholm, Sweden on October 30, 2012, to report on the “*Sustainable life at home/Ecoration*” experiment. Approximately 100 journalists, bloggers and opinion leaders attended the seminar to discuss how businesses and consumers together can help reduce the ecological footprint.

The Ecoration project served as the basis for the discussion. IKEA, WWF and representatives from the Kalmar families shared their insights, visions and key learning points. The participants were encouraged to share what they think big companies like IKEA should do to make sustainable living easier. A short workshop was conducted and some comments are summarised in the quotes and the image below:

“We wish big companies like IKEA would ...

... make bad things more expensive (and keep good things cheap).”

... make all products sustainable without me knowing how and why, I do not have to know every detail about the product/service to make a sustainable choice.”

... make it easier to consume less goods and instead use environmentally friendly services.”

... provide transparent information on recyclability, constituents, origin, life-cycle energy-use, footprints, etc.”

... nudge with environmentally smart products ... (easy for the customer to choose).”

... have more vegetarian options than meat options in the store.”



SUSTAINABLE LIFE AT HOME - CHINA PILOT

IKEA and WWF has also worked with IKEA co-workers in Shanghai, China, to learn from them and inspire them to live more a sustainable life at home and at work. Ten co-workers' families were recruited to develop individual improvement plans focused on energy use and an "Eco-house" was created in the IKEA store. This small exhibition displayed the families' results in order to inspire other co-workers, and at the end of the pilot more than 100 pieces of advice (incl. on how to reduce food waste in the staff canteen) had been collected from co-workers for co-workers, engaging them in actions at the workplace to reduce environmental impact. The result from this project is presented separately.

Read more

- Ecoration 2012 brochure – home furnishings and inspiration for a new and green life at home can be found on panda.org/ikea
- Movie from the Ecoration seminar can be found on livethemma.ikea.se/ecoration
- Co-workers handbook and Sustainable life at home toolkit from China project can be found on panda.org/ika

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