

Top Tip Guide for Volunteers

Ways to live environmentally friendly in Nepal

This document is here to act as a forum where volunteers can share ideas into how to live more environmentally friendly within Nepal. The environment is a cross cutting theme for VSO Nepal. This 'live by example guide' provides small but realistic and achievable changes that we can all make in our daily lives to lesson the negative effect we have on the environment. If you have other ideas that are not included here, please let me know and we can share them for others to use.

REDUCE

⇒ **Paper**

- Do not print everything.
- Include in the signature of email message 'Do not print this email unless necessary';
- Use both sides of paper;

⇒ **Power**

- Do not use air-conditioning unless absolutely necessary, this is the WORST! Do not put air con on 30 degrees, wear a sweater/thermos. Do not put air con on cold, open doors and windows and enjoy healthier fresh air instead;
- Use CFL / saving lamps or even better, LED lamps;
- Unplug everything that is not used, especially adapters from mobiles, laptops;
- Turn off lights during daylight;
- Use less TL-lights in 1 box, 1 is enough;
- Use reusable batteries.

⇒ **Gas**

- Cook with the lid on, saves ± 30%, and will also save you money!
- Close windows for heat or fix them;
- Cook together instead of separate;
- Wear thermo underwear or extra sweater instead of using a heater;
- Get a draft stopper to stop the draft coming in under the door (possible livelihood idea for NGO's e.g. local handicraft).

⇒ **Water**

- Turn the shower off while soaping up;
- Turn tap off while brushing your teeth/washing hands with soap;
- If you have a western style toilet, be mindful when you flush it 'if its yellow let it mellow, if its brown flush it down';
- Use a water filter rather than buying bottled water. (Although this may not be suitable in KTM as heavy groundwater could contain heavy metals and other pollutants).

⇒ **Packaging**

- Take tubs that you store lentils/rice in to your local shop to be refilled instead of getting new packaging (But first make sure they're the right size for what you will buy.);
- Buy items with minimal package as if it's not packaged then it may be fresher/tastier;
- Shop at local stores. Items usually have less packaging than bigger stores;
- Go for refill options rather than a new box when buying items such as tea, spices, oil etc.

⇒ **Cleaning**

- Do NOT use chemicals which can be toxic and environmentally harmful, but instead herbal cleaner which are cheap and available everywhere. Examples include lemon, bicarbonate of soda, and white vinegar. A list on these can be provided on request.

⇒ **Shopping**

- Where possible buy locally sourced products. Be mindful of the air miles on purchases;
- Do not use of plastic bags; always carry a material reusable bag instead;
- Buy recyclable products instead of non-recyclable ones. Look for the recycle mark on the package. It usually takes less energy to make a recycled product than to make new ones;
- Buy organic foods/materials because they are biodegradable and are nature friendly.

⇒ **Travel**

- Walk where possible or use a bicycle;
- Before flying consider whether there are other means of transport first;
- Consider whether flying to Kathmandu is really necessary as it's not just cost and discomfort to consider;
- If using a private vehicle consider whether there is public transport already going to your destination first.

⇒ **Waste disposal**

- Make an incinerator to burn garbage properly.

⇒ **Garden**

- Pot planting on roofs is fun and easy and reduces carbon;
- Grow veggies in garden instead of flowers;
- Use natural fertilisers such as animal dung or worm-compost;
- Collect rainwater or waste water instead of using tap water.

REUSE

- Be creative; schools are an ideal place for re using materials to make toys. Empty toilet rolls are great to make things, plastic bottles for music shakers, lids can be used to do maths, old socks can make great puppets for story time, etc;
- Old clothes can be used to make new clothes, if not by yourself than by someone you know with a creative flare;
- Consider clothes swaps with friends, a new wardrobe at no cost!
- Reuse plastic material where possible. Plastic bottles can be used for storing water in. If you buy plastic tubs, use them again to store other things in;
- Plastic bags use them for garbage bags and/or refuse to get them because you carry your own durable bag;
- Use scrap paper for notes;
- Water used for washing dishes or clothes can also be used to flush the drop toilet. Rinsing water for clothes can be used to water flowers;
- While waiting for hot water coming out of the shower, capture the cold water in bucket and use it for flushing your toilet.

RECYCLE

- MAKE COMPOST from organic waste, leaves and garden stuff;
- Collect leaves/garden waste in designated pits □ Make compost;
- Old paper makes good compost;
- Separate all garbage, plastics, paper, organic, metal, glass and hazardous materials like old batteries;
- Make Worm-compost at home. Clean and quick. For 'how to do this' contact us;
- Re used materials such as old tyres can be used for growing veggies in, cut off bottles can be used for growing herbs in. Egg cups can be used for seedlings.

Community

Be active in your community in opening up the debate about environmental issues

- Use Earth day or World Environmental Day as a platform for raising environmental issues. World Environmental Day (established by the UN General Assembly in 1972) on June 5th 2012 is more likely to be celebrated in Nepal than Earth Day which tends to be more North American. Liaise with other local offices and organizations or government agencies that are likely to be celebrating. This year's theme is 'Greening the Blue' in recognition of oceans and water. Share ideas or photos from events with other volunteers;
- If your placement is in schools consider bringing children to nature (for example 15 minutes/day of 'environmental care' time watering trees, caring for plants etc.);
- Remember it is the small things that can make a big difference (clean schools, plant trees, kitchen gardens and school gardens.);
- Grow more fruit trees instead of ornamental trees;
- Consider clean ups of garbage in your local community;
- Talk to you partner organisation about how they can identify environmental issues in the area. Try to fit these with the aims of your organisation. For example WEAFF (Women's Empowerment Action Forum) in Dailekh help women to have environmentally friendly fire ovens fitted in their home (Sudhariyako Chulo). This not only helps the environment through increased efficiency but also helps women's health due to reducing respiratory and eye infections;
- Consider a picnic in the forest (ban bhoj) featuring community forests, and waste management;
- Share this guide with other people in your placement area.