October 15, 2012

Dear Educators:

We invite you to join an innovative new program that allows students to confront the challenging issue of climate change. The International Student Carbon Footprint Challenge (ISCFC) fosters communication among students across the globe and can spark visionary solutions to global environmental problems. The purpose of this letter is to ask your help to introduce the ISCFC to science educators and the science community worldwide. The ISCFC is also appropriate for and has been used in English language classes by some of our partner teachers across the globe.

In the ISCFC, secondary school students from around the world first measure the impact of their transportation, home energy, food, and personal purchase choices using our student-centered Carbon Footprint Calculator, with results calibrated for every country in the world. ISCFC teachers then share class data with students from over 30 countries around the globe and use a new communications tool, the Einztein social learning network, to engage students in meaningful and in-depth international conversations about carbon footprints and possible solutions to shared environmental problems. All of the tools in the ISCFC are always free to access on the web.

The magic of the discussions lies in the opportunity for meaningful and in-depth interactions among learners worldwide, facilitated by the innovative design of the Einztein social learning network. As students scrutinize their own carbon production they look for ways to minimize their impact. Through the Einztein site they share their own ideas and information that they've researched on the Internet and elsewhere:

I am happy that I have joined this project because it connects me with so many people who sincerely care for our planet! … I have already started turning off the lights before leaving the room and turning off television when I no longer watch it. I will have to think over some other habits as well, such as taking long showers or not recycling or not reusing things enough (plastic bottles and plastic bags included). If I try hard and manage to change at least a part of my lifestyle, it will be worthwhile because the Earth will become a better place to live. And it is, as Maja said our (my and your) only home.

-Iva J, student from Croatia (Nov. 20 2011)

The International Carbon Footprint Challenge website (http://footprint.stanford.edu) provides support for teachers with detailed instructions, lesson plans, additional classroom resources, links and data from all participating classes from each country. At the present time, all of our materials and supported conversations are in English. Interested teachers need to return the participation form prior to October 25.


We ask for your help in spreading the word about this exciting opportunity for English-proficient students, and hope to see participation from your community in the ISCFC! The next ISCFC session begins November 5.

Please feel free to contact us for additional information, and for the entire ISCFC team, we wish you a healthy, happy, peaceful and productive 2012-2013 school year.

Sincerely,

Pam Miller (Stanford University, USA)  Geraldine Fauville (University of Gothenburg, Sweden)
ISFC Curriculum Coordinator  ISFC Project Manager
pam.miller@stanford.edu  geraldine.fauville@loven.gu.se
+1 831-238-7555  +46 (0) 523 18507
Example high school student posts:

Erin G, USA: "When I calculated my carbon footprint, I was surprised to see that my home produced more carbon than my transportation, food, and personal purchases did put together. ...then I started becoming aware of all the things my family does that really increase the size of our carbon footprint."

Alex A, USA: "As a part of this project...[since] our neighborhood doesn't recycle...I've set up a laundry basket [at home] to hold all the paper we aren't using, and I'm going to take it to school to recycle...if I recycled only twenty inches of paper a week, my family would be saving all of this each year: 17.7 trees, 2 tons of coal, 4,903 miles driven in a car, 4.3 cubic yards of trash in a landfill, 7,228 gallons in water, 4,264 Kilowatt hours, and ten dollars for recycling. Think if more than one household did that..."

Elizabeth R, Croatia: "Big advertisement companies affect on our desires... We don't need the latest computer...cell phone...two or more TVs in house. ...In all that technology we're losing sense for each other and...good judgment. We're losing our humanity...becoming blind for those who are really in need."

Audrey B, USA: "If families are trying to be more economically friendly wouldn't it make sense to have less people per family that way there is less waste, water, and electricity used?"

Ana Maria S, Romania: "More than 80% of the Earth's forests have been destroyed -by the man. However,at least, we are beginning to understand that the key role which forests play in keeping us alive...I just hope it's not too late."

Liza R, USA: "It blows my mind that businesses that can afford private jets to send their CEOs on vacations do not take the initiative to put up windmills or solar panels on their buildings. ...I think more 'green' education among the wealthy could benefit the world in countless ways."

Taku Y, Japan: "As a Japanese, and since I study at school in States, I have noticed a lot of governmental propaganda whenever I go back home. Somehow, Japan does not like the information about how serious the nuclear radiation to leak out of the country, and also to the Japanese people..."

Example high school teacher posts:

Dubravka Cokrlic, Croatia: "My pupils (those who are not taking part in this project) asked me today why I was so happy...I decided to show them...[the] literally hundreds of beautiful messages...and heartfelt pledges [of your students*]! ...I am even more pleased because I am sure that (fortunately) they have many soul-mates in this discussion forum! Their messages are so inspiring and comforting and show us that young generation is ready to think, research and look for...solutions to environmental (and many other) problems that are interwoven. ...you have done great job as their teacher, too. Congratulations!"

Irena Lauzadiene, Lithuania: "Students who participated in the project for the second time and did calculations of the test were pleasantly surprised that their amount of carbon emissions has decreased...little changes in their lifestyles influenced their results...cutting down on meat, walking more ...using ecological bags for shopping...or simply turning [off] lights...They say that it is very important to involve more and more people in our societies to perform these calculations which would make them change themselves."

Marie Christine and Patrick Osmond Nicolas, France: "Our students [were] able to connect to a site of Stanford University in the United States to compare their results ...[to] those students participating in the world, to propose radical changes and thus reduce their carbon footprint. ... The health of our planet depends on it. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry did he not say: 'We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children?'"

Birsen Arisu, Turkey: "[My students] are pleased and proud to be a part of an international project. It helped them use their English and learn many new words which makes me happy as an English teacher. This project also taught them to be more aware of environmental issues and more careful in their life-styles."

Kim Scoville, USA: "Through participation in the International Student Carbon Footprint Challenge, my students were transformed. They went from viewing themselves as unlucky inheritors of an insurmountable global problem to a community of individuals whose actions matter and who can make a difference in tackling the problems of climate change. In sharing data and exchanging ideas with students from around the world, my students began to envision a future for our planet characterized by cooperation and stewardship."