

Education Abroad, Personal Travel, and Carbon Offsets



SUNY CIE Sustainability Committee



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WHAT'S A CARBON OFFSET?

- Allows individuals a practical way to address climate change and encourage sustainable practices
- This is done by counteracting your personal carbon emissions, or carbon footprint, to reduce the environmental harm that comes from certain activities, such as international travel
- A way to achieve carbon neutrality is by paying a small fee that can help to improve the environment

CARBON INSETTING

- WHAT IS CARBON INSETTING?

- ESSENTIALLY AN IN-HOUSE OR ON-SITE VERSION OF CARBON OFFSETTING.
 - MAKING AN IMPACT AT THE LOCATION YOU ARE ACTUALLY VISITING RATHER THAN A THIRD LOCATION.
 - USING YOUR TIME/ENERGY/RESOURCES ON AN OFFSETTING PROJECT THAT YOU CAN CONTROL RATHER THAN ONE THAT IS OUTSIDE YOUR PURVIEW.
- CHALLENGES: TIME-INTENSIVE AND REQUIRES COMMITMENT.



RECOMMENDED CARBON OFFSET CALCULATORS

SUSTAINABLE
TRAVEL
INTERNATIONAL
CALCULATOR

GLOBAL
FOOTPRINT
NETWORK

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL INTERNATIONAL CALCULATOR

- Simple to use
- Carbon emissions and carbon offsets are estimates given in a dollar amount
- Great resource for study abroad students to gain a quick understanding of their carbon footprint
- Potential resource for study abroad students who may travel independently

How many flights would you like to offset?

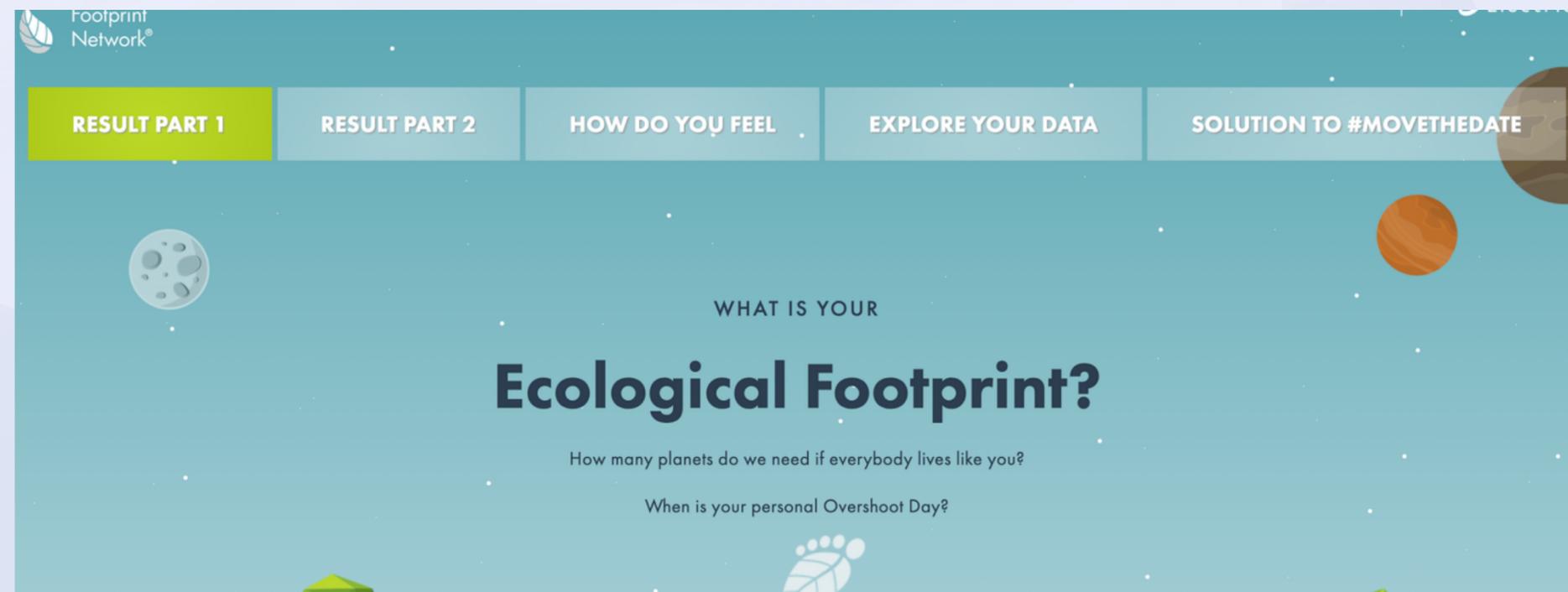
Enter the number of **round-trip** flights that you would like to offset

<p>Short Flights (less than 3 hours)</p> <input type="text" value="0"/> <p>1,100 pounds CO2</p>	<p>Medium Flights (3-6 hours)</p> <input type="text" value="0"/> <p>1,535 pounds CO2</p>
<p>Long Flights (6+ hours)</p> <input type="text" value="0"/> <p>4,406 pounds CO2</p>	

[Calculate My Footprint](#)

GLOBAL FOOTPRINT CALCULATOR

- Far more extensive carbon offset calculator
 - Requires more data and time
- Aims to estimate a more complete carbon footprint based upon travel, lifestyle, diet, energy output and more
- Great resource to expand understanding of your carbon footprint



DIFFERENT STUDENTS, DIFFERENT OUTPUTS

STUDENT A:

- Packed two bags at the weight limit, a backpack, and a laptop bag
- Drove to JFK with a parent; their sibling met them there
- Threw out their water bottle as they went through TSA
- Purchased a bottle of water while waiting
- Purchased a bagel and an overpriced banana
- Purchased a meal on the plane and a water bottle once they landed
- Took a solo taxi to the University

STUDENT B:

- Packed one bag several pounds under the weight limit, and a backpack
- Took the AirTrain
- Packed a reusable water bottle
- Refilled their water bottle after they passed TSA
- Enjoyed some snacks from home
- Enjoyed a homemade sandwich on the plane
- Shared a cab with Student C whom they met at their Pre-Departure Orientation

CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE TRANSIT OPTIONS

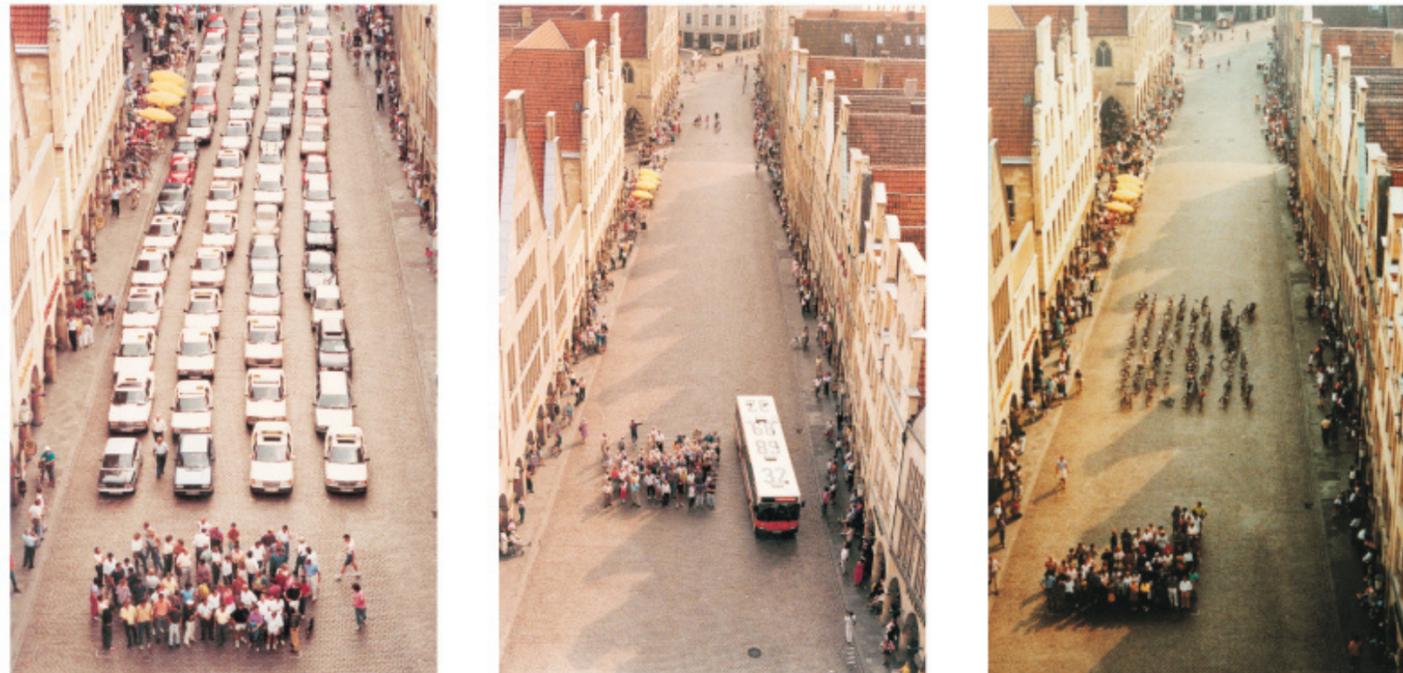
- Reduce frequency of travel
- Travel longer and less to reduce flights
- Take direct, non-stop flights
- Fly coach, not first class
- Public or shared transportation whenever possible



CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE TRANSIT OPTIONS

- Walk if you can!
- Bicycle sharing programs
- Carpooling / Ride-sharing
- Travel by land instead of air if possible

Figure 2.6 Amount of space required to transport the same number of passengers by car, bus or bicycle. (Poster in city of Muenster Planning Office, August 2001)



Credit: Press-Office City of
Münster, Germany



LOCAL, REUSABLE, AND RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION

- Pack Strategically
 - Pack light! Every ounce on a flight increases your carbon footprint.
 - Ditch the plastic! Bring reusable items such as a water bottle, coffee mug, utensils, jar, or straw.
 - Pack your own toiletries and avoid half-used toiletry containers or high-plastic hotel options.
 - Hand sanitizer too!
- Bring your own reusable backpack.

LOCAL, REUSABLE, AND RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION

- Sustainable Eating
 - Locally produced food!
 - Foods that are in season.
 - Organic and vegetarian options.
 - Avoid wasteful pre-packaged goods when possible. Even on flights!



LOCAL, REUSABLE, AND RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION

- **Water Usage**
- Recognize the appropriate amount of water usage in a given region.
- Reflect on showers, teeth brushing, dishes, toilets, and more.
- Respect regional/cultural norms (flushing toilet paper; flush it down; etc.)

- **Purchases**
- Avoid mass produced souvenirs
- Ask where a product comes from.
- Don't buy products made from endangered species or cultural/historical artifacts.

BRING YOUR EXPERIENCES BACK HOME WITH YOU

- Keep a reflection journal to better understand how a given country might approach sustainability.
 - Ask questions about sustainability while traveling.
 - What do your hosts do differently than you?
 - What impact is your presence having?
- What did you learn that you can bring back home with you?
- What practices can you change in your own lifestyle that you experienced abroad?

CARBON OFFSET GUIDE

- Review of carbon offset calculator examples with an overview of when to use each one
- Simple definitions of key terms such as Carbon Offset, Carbon Neutrality, Carbon Emissions, etc.
- Will be emailed to all attendees of this session.

