

# GECKO Program Overview



Greenovate Environmental Challenge for Kids Outreach [www.greenovate.org](http://www.greenovate.org)

Greenovate is a **social business** providing environmental concepts that contribute to the **quality of life** in China. As a group of international environmental consultants we recognized the environmental awareness challenges in China and decided to actively participate in a positive change. We established Greenovate Foundation to offer **free educational program GECKO** inspiring kids to become **environmental ambassadors** to their communities.

GECKO program was developed by Greenovate team based on our own experiences in China. All content is localized and bilingual. The program itself is going beyond traditional educational models and challenges young people to carry on the message of environmental responsibility not only to other generations at home, but also to future employers. We teach and deliver the program ourselves keeping in touch with the students and teachers after the modules are over. GECKO idea started as a small initiative at the end of 2007 and its been growing since. We educated 1500 kids in 2008 and this year we are targeting another 5000 students. We fund the program with support from companies and individuals. For more information please contact [mihela.hladin@gmail.com](mailto:mihela.hladin@gmail.com)

## GECKO MODULE 1: Environmental Footprints



**BRIEF:** The impact of human activities on the planet can be represented as a footprint on the environment. We show how our habits cause our

environmental footprint and how we contribute as individuals so that we can identify ways in our personal lives to reduce our own footprint. Students learn that the causes and solutions to environmental challenges belong not only to government and industry, but that each individual can make a difference.

**Workshop:** Students identify what actions in their daily lives contribute to their personal footprint. We identify a “green team” of students who show



special interest in environmental topics to spearhead future green activities in the school. They choose one green commitment that they will observe

from then on. **Homework:** Students create a “green diary”, choosing specific actions that they can take to reduce their environmental footprint for one week. During the following week, they note on which days they achieved their targets and their observations on the process. Green team members present their observations at the next session.

## GECKO MODULE 2: Sustainability

**BRIEF:** Sustainability means meeting our needs without limiting the ability of future generations to meet their needs. We explore unsustainable societies in the past and compare their actions with our present situation to identify areas where improvements are needed. We demonstrate how natural systems operate without creating waste – through cycles in which the waste of one organism provides food for another.

# GECKO Program Overview



Greenovate Environmental Challenge for Kids Outreach [www.greenovate.org](http://www.greenovate.org)

Students learn how humans can emulate natural systems of cycling materials and eliminating waste by recycling. **Workshop :** Students construct recycling bins so that they can begin separating their school's waste into metal and glass, paper, and plastic. The bins that they make will be placed in

their classrooms so that they can maximize the amount of waste that gets recycled.

**Homework:** To demonstrate that beautiful and useful things can be made

from the things that we normally throw away, students are taught how to weave plastic bags into crafts, such as ornaments, pencil holders, belts and accessories. A competition for best craft is held at the next session with prizes awarded.

## GECKO MODULE 3: Population and Energy

**BRIEF:** We trace the course of population growth in the past to project how it will shape the future. This module explores the limiting factors of population growth and how we can face these challenges through smart use of resources. By acting out an over harvesting scenario, students examine how renewable resources decline if we take them faster than their re-growth rates. As populations grow, demand for all resources is increasing, especially demand for energy. We take a deep look at the energy trends that are shaping our future and what we can do today. Students learn how the greenest energy is the energy saved and how they can reduce the environmental footprint caused by their energy use. We also take a look at

renewable sources of energy that are starting to appear and how their use will expand in the future.

**Workshop:** To help students understand what it means to live in a world of limited resources, we present an imaginary scenario where their school area is cut off from the outside world. Students must devise ways that they would use the limited space and resources of the school grounds in order to meet the needs of all students. **Homework:** Students build solar oven using simple materials of umbrella, coat hanger and tinfoil and explore the intensity of solar energy by cooking a pot of rice in one hour using their own solar ovens.

## GECKO MODULE 4: Green products and innovations



**BRIEF:** We talk about the green heroes in China and around the world and explore future career opportunities. We review and summarize the

concepts from the whole GECKO program and present best projects. Students learn the wide range of opportunities that are appearing to work in fields that benefit the environment. **Workshop:** Students are given an everyday situation where they must innovate to create a green solution. They must apply all of the environmental knowledge they have learned to one specific situation. **Homework:** Students research environmental role models and write a short essay on the actions of their hero and what they can learn from his or her story.