



**capacity global**

living in a clean and healthy environment is everyone's right

## One Planet Culture

This month's edition of One Planet Culture highlights the issue of travelling wisely through Bill Bryson's beloved *Notes From A Small Island*. This highly amusing and entertaining book follows Bill as he travels around Britain. This factsheet is just an introduction to the topic; to find out more, visit the Capacity Global website and the links included below.

### Introduction to climate change

Climate change is the greatest environmental challenge facing the world today. Rising temperatures will bring hotter summers and milder winters, more winter rainfall and more frequent storms, rising sea levels and storm surge heights.

The rise in temperature is due mainly to the increase of several gases in our atmosphere, such as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide. Similar to the glass of a greenhouse, these gases trap heat from the sun, creating the conditions for life on Earth. Nature has always been able to keep the right balance of these 'greenhouse gases' in the atmosphere – until now.

Modern human activity such as deforestation and industrial agriculture emit much more quantities of these gases than natural processes can handle. And just as double-glazed windows trap more heat in the greenhouse, the accumulation of these gases makes the Earth hotter.

### Why we all need to travel wisely

Unfortunately, almost everything we do will emit some amount of greenhouse gases – the food we eat, the energy we use, the things we buy. The key is to keep the emissions we're responsible for down to a sustainable level. One way we can reduce the amount of greenhouse gases (or 'carbon emissions') we create is by changing the way we travel.

Most people, especially those in urban areas, have multiple options for getting around: bicycles, buses, trains, boats, cars, etc. The most sustainable method of travelling is, of course, to walk. There are no fuel costs or emissions, and it's a great way to get some exercise too!

How you choose to travel is a decision usually based on convenience, cost, and time. Would it surprise you if it turned out that driving your own car is more frustrating, costs more and takes longer than riding a bicycle? And if you factor in carbon emissions, it's no contest.

The Greater Manchester Cycling Campaign recently organised a 5 mile race between 4 commuters travelling by bicycle, bus, train and car, from Heaton Chapel to Manchester City Centre. The cyclist's journey caused zero carbon emissions, only took 20 minutes and cost an estimated 38.5p, while the car driver emitted 1123g of carbon, took 43 minutes and cost £2.30 plus parking, not to mention the hassle of traffic and finding a parking space.

But by far the most damaging way to travel is by flying. Jet aircraft burn an enormous amount of fuel and since they fly so high in the atmosphere, airplane emissions are much more harmful than those we emit down on the ground. In fact, it's estimated that a return flight for one person from London to New York City produces the same amount of emissions as a year of driving for an average car in the UK!

## How to travel wisely

As an individual and as part of your community, you can change your behaviour and make choices for a more sustainable lifestyle. You can start by changing the way you travel to work, to shop, to play. Here are a few ideas on how to travel more sustainably:

- *Walk or cycle as much as possible.* Not only will you reduce your emissions, but the regular exercise will help keep you fit! [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)
- *Take public transport instead of driving yourself.*
- *Join a car club.* You'll save money on the cost of the car, insurance, fuel, maintenance and the hassle that come with owning a car, but you have the benefit of being able to use a car when you need one. [www.carplus.org.uk](http://www.carplus.org.uk)
- *If you own a car, try lift-sharing.* Organise your trips with family, friends, neighbours and colleagues to minimise your collective carbon emissions. [www.liftshare.com/uk](http://www.liftshare.com/uk)
- *Consider alternatives to flying.* Trains and buses are much more efficient than planes, and if you factor in the time getting to and waiting at airports, they can also be faster! Even cars can be more efficient than flying, if you travel with more than one passenger.
- *Try teleconferencing or videoconferencing.* It's cheaper for your company and you'll avoid the stress of travelling and time away from your family. [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com)
- *If you have to fly, minimise the damage.* Book your business meetings on the same trip to avoid flying there multiple times. Pack light – not only will you need less energy to move your suitcase, so will the plane. Buy carbon offsets to account for your emissions.
- *Tell your family and friends to become more sustainable too!* As individuals, we may not think we can do much good by ourselves, but collectively, we have the power to change the world. Become an Every Action Counts Community Champion and spread the word!

## For more information

If you're interested in learning more about travelling wisely or other actions you can do to save the environment, Capacity Global and the Every Actions Counts (EAC) programme can help. We provide advice and support to individuals and voluntary and community organisations who are looking to reduce their impact on the environment and tackle climate change.

Visit the Capacity Global and Every Action Counts websites:

[www.capacity.org.uk](http://www.capacity.org.uk)

[www.everyactioncounts.org.uk](http://www.everyactioncounts.org.uk)

To find an EAC Community Champion in your area, or to learn more about becoming one, contact Claire Lyon at BTCV on 01302 388 841 or email [c.lyon@btcv.org.uk](mailto:c.lyon@btcv.org.uk).