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## Ecology

What is an ecological gesture? They are simple actions of everyday life such as cooking, going to work, shopping, which allow you to reduce your environmental impact.

Making an ecological gesture means taking into account the fundamental values of sustainable development, the protection of our environment, social equity, solidarity and the principles of individual responsibility.

Becoming aware of the social and environmental consequences of our actions is the start of changing our habits.

These approaches can be applied to the Personal Services Sector (SAP), which in addition to providing care, can have an educational role.

Why make SAP staff aware of ecological gestures? For the protection of the environment.

What is ecology? It is the study of the interactions between human societies and their environment. By studying these behaviours, we can minimise our impact on ecosystems, which are our life support!

Ecology is an ancient discipline! For the past 20 years or so, we have been experiencing a boom in the use of this concept. However, it is not entirely new.

Did you know that the concept dates back to the 19th century? It was coined in 1866 by the German biologist Ernst Haeckel. And when we think of the second half of the 19th century, we also think of the industrial revolution. The sudden development of our societies already raised questions about the sustainability of this new model. With the concept of ecology, the scientific community already in the 19th century began to reflect on the livability of a post-industrial revolution planet

How did we go from a purely scientific term to this key word that we find everywhere? It began to be used massively more than a century later, in response to social concerns that emerged during the Stockholm and especially Rio Summits in 1992. Run by the United Nations (UN), the Rio summit launched a global programme to combat climate change, deforestation and the use of toxic products. Since then, the concept of ecology has been linked to international government policies.

The growth in its use is almost simultaneous with the emergence of the concepts of sustainable development and biodiversity, which originated in the 1980s and have been in use ever since.

Why do we need to protect our ecosystems? We are currently experiencing two main ecological crises: the erosion of biodiversity and the accelerating rise in temperatures, which threaten the planet's livability.

There have been phases of climate cooling and warming in history. We are currently facing the latter. Today, the exploitation of fossil fuels by human activities leads to the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, which in turn accentuate this global warming. And the more the planet's temperature increases, the more there will be impacts on its livability. Among others, there could be recurring climate catastrophes and drinking water shortages. The scarcity of resources, such as water, brings us to our second problem: the preservation of biodiversity.

Species diversity is essential to maintain enough resources for everyone to live. For example, insect diversity ensures that plants are pollinated and soils are fertile. Furthermore, plant diversity ensures natural filtration of rainwater and is a source of oxygen and medicines. Deforestation, among other things, endangers biodiversity by destroying the natural habitats of plants and animals. Reforestation actions are underway to protect them!

Here is all the interest of ecology in ensuring the livability of our planet and sufficient resources for everyone to live on!

### The ecological transition to green growth

The ecological transition is one of the main ideas. It consists of rethinking our ways of consuming, producing and living together with a view to sustainable development in order to respond effectively to today's environmental challenges. This involves a transition to a new economic and social model. For example, the current energy system must be able to change its economic model to reduce its environmental impact. The transformation of economic and social models will enable the development of green growth, which links economic growth with respect for the environment. We all stand to gain!

Reducing one's ecological imprint Perhaps you have heard of 'overshoot day'? Well, it is calculated every year by the ecological imprint.

On 22 August, man's pressure on his environment exceeded the Earth's capacity for the year 2020. This means the planet's capacity to regenerate its resources in one year. For example, man has cut down more trees in one year than nature produces. And also the planet's capacity to capture carbon and heat in one year. On 22 August, greenhouse gas emissions exceeded the capacity of forests and oceans to absorb them.

Last year, overshoot day was 23 June, which means we are using the Earth's resources at a much faster rate than the planet can renew them.

Reducing our ecological imprint means changing our consumption habits, seeking more sustainable ways of living and working. This can include choices such as using renewable energy, reducing meat consumption, recycling waste and using water resources wisely.

Preserving the environment is a commitment that requires everyone's participation. Each of us can do our part through small daily gestures that, taken together, can have a significant impact on our planet. I hope this information will help and inspire you to adopt more sustainable practices in your everyday life.