



Green&Safe LIFE-styles project is supported by the LIFE programme of the European Union and co-financed by the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture. Project number: ENV GIE HU000622

Clean Home EcoTeams – RESULTS

Updated: 25 Jan, 2021

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Clean Home EcoTeams: the programme and its impact

Clean Home EcoTeams has been realized within the framework of the EcoTeams programme. EcoTeams has been developed and coordinated across the world by the international NGO [Global Action Plan International \(GAP\)](#) since 1990. EcoTeams has reached more than twenty countries, from Scandinavia to the United States and Vietnam. All together millions of people have been prompted to go green in their home worldwide.

Aim of Clean Home EcoTeams is to reduce households' environmental impact and boost social participation via the introduction of green practices in households. In a step-by-step process, participants learn how to make their consumption and lifestyle more sustainable. The team-based approach leads to measurable changes in just a few months.

EcoTeams has been introduced to Hungary in 2010 by [the Association of Conscious Consumers](#). So far, the programme has reached more than 1400 households and dozens of municipalities in Hungary. ACC established the programmes EcoTeams Pantry to promote sustainable food consumption (2016), and Clean Home EcoTeams to encourage environmental-friendly cleaning (2019).

Clean Home EcoTeams was designed to reduce the amount of chemicals used while cleaning the apartment, to promote ecolabelled cleaning products (evaluated by independent experts) and to raise awareness about hazard symbols and pictograms.

Clean Home EcoTeams [in practice](#) means small (5 to 10 members) peer support groups learning, experimenting green habits together. Personal experience is a key drive in the process. Over five weeks, the 5-10 EcoTeam members meet regularly, sharing ideas, learning and trying out green practices. At each meeting, participants decide on the actions they would like to take in their home and, based on their experiences, share ideas about how to achieve their goal. The process is supported by the EcoTeam Coach Training, the Activity Book, and the Newsletter of ACC.

Team members count the number of cleaning products they use at the beginning and at the end of the process. Commercial, ecolabelled and alternative (ex. washing soda, baking soda, vinegar) products are counted separately. During the Measurement members count how many "units" (bottle, package, etc.) they have in their household. The same Measurements are taken six months and 12 months later. By the end of EcoTeams, participants adopt new, „green” behaviours and the tried out practices lead to a new kind of daily routine, which do remain in the long-run. Change is clearly visible: the reduction of chemicals and the increase of ecolabelled products are key elements of EcoTeams' results.



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Clean Home EcoTeams

Testing the programme

Aim of testing: Developing a broad outline of the Activity Book and the Coach Training, as well as the scheme and agenda of EcoTeams.

Number of participants: 9 persons

Who did the testing? Former EcoTeam members, volunteers and staff of ACC with diverse experience and various fields of knowledge, including a chemist, a community organizer, a zero waste expert/ environmentalist promoting and selling green household products, a household manager interested in environmental-friendly cleaning.

Period: Spring 2019

Location: Budapest



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Clean Home EcoTeams, 1st semester

Coach Training

Date and location: 27-28/09/2019, Budapest

Number of participants: 29

Aim of the training: Providing would-be EcoTeam coaches with theoretical and practical knowledge, which helps them coordinate and motivate their team members.

EcoTeams meeting on a national level

Number of teams participating: 21

Number of participants per team: 5-11

Teams participated from: Ajka, Baja, Budapest (multiple teams), Budakalász, Budakeszi, Dombóvár, Páty, Simontornya

Number of households reached: 178

Number of meetings: 5 meetings / team

Average number of attended meetings per participant: 4,15 meetings / member

Tutoring: All leaders received tutoring through email, phone and a Facebook-group created especially for EcoTeam coaches. Coaches shared their knowledge and experience, helped and inspired each other, provided further background material for the programme, etc.

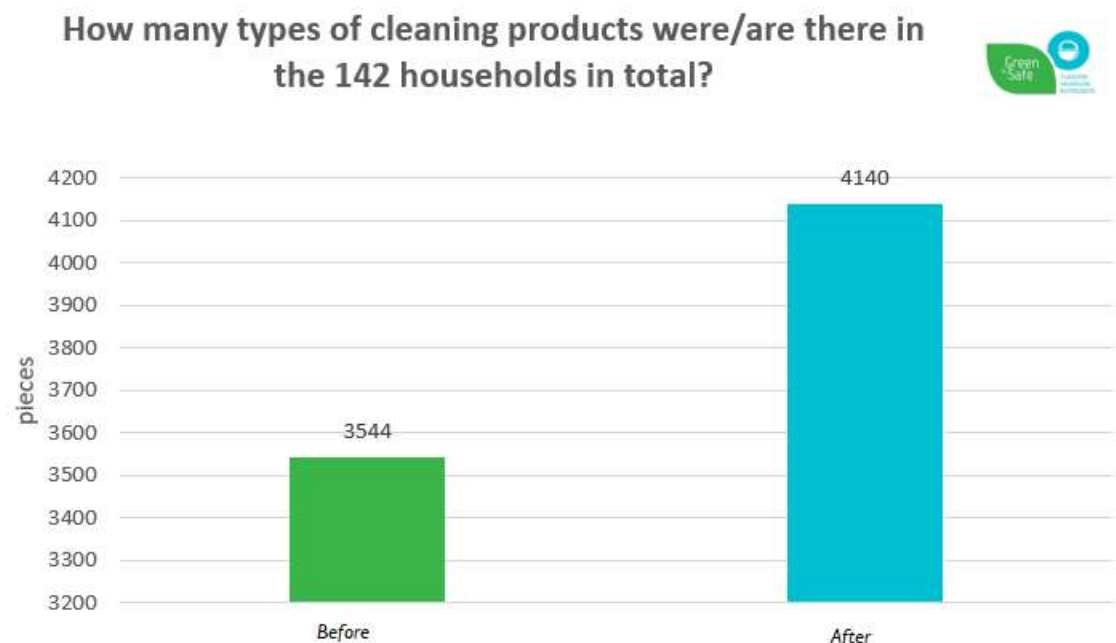
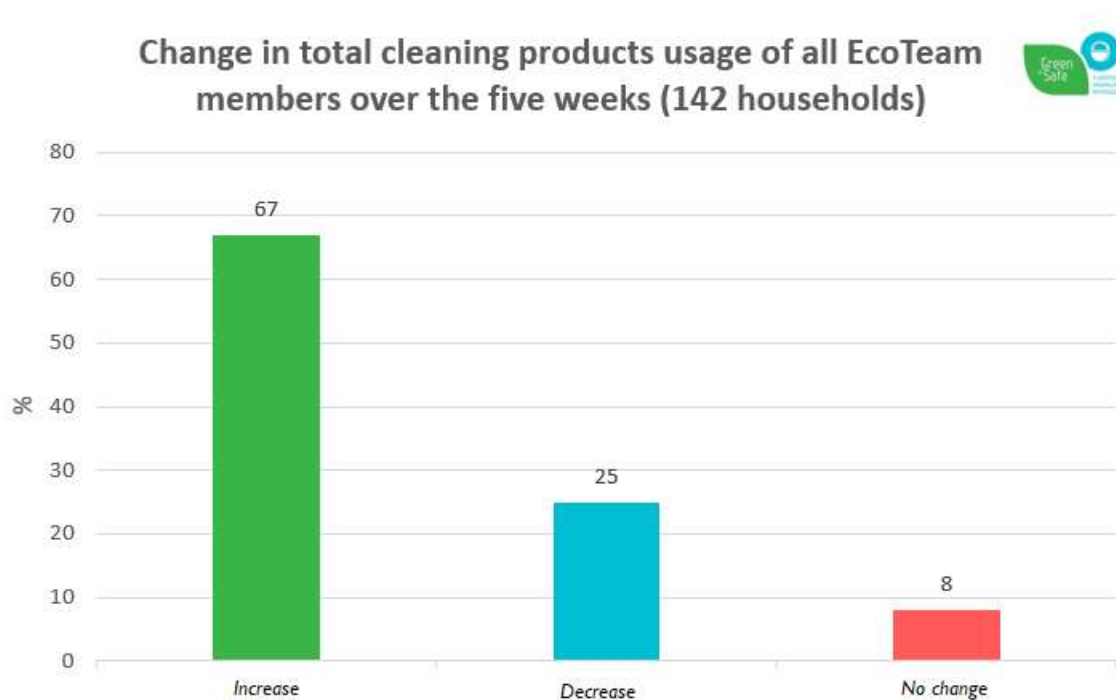
Quantitative results – Measurements at the end of EcoTeam meetings

Form of data collection: At the end of EcoTeams, data is collected by members through an online system. Measurements taken at the beginning and at the end of the EcoTeams are recorded.

Number of respondents: 142

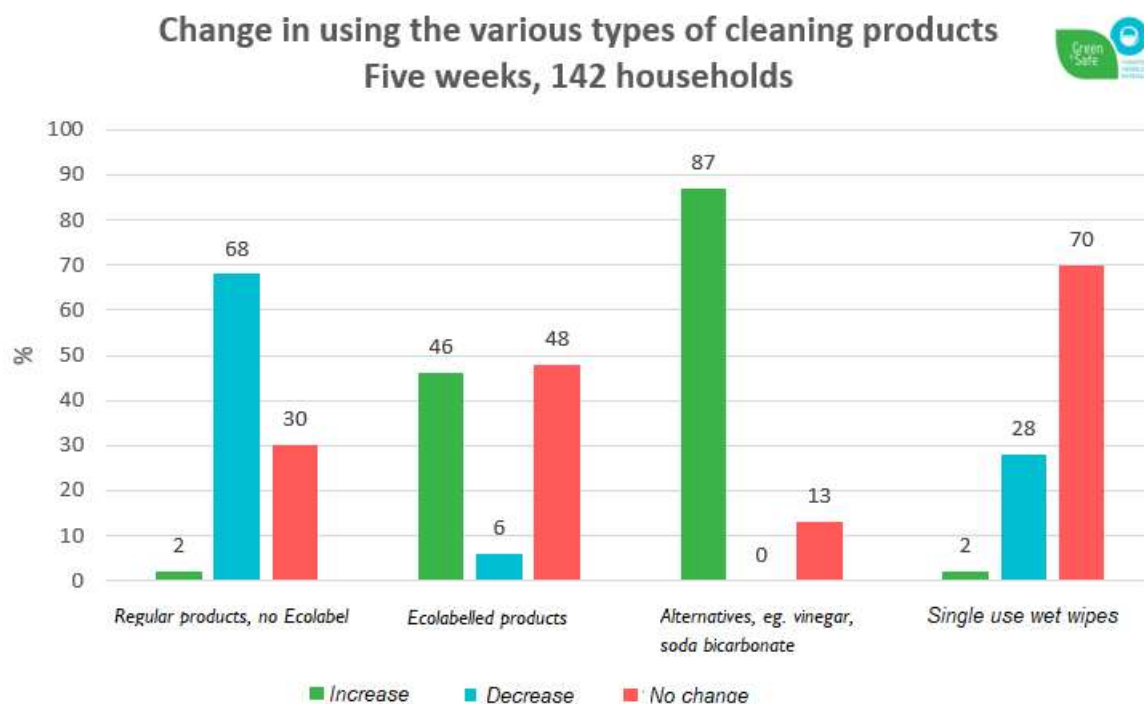
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Results

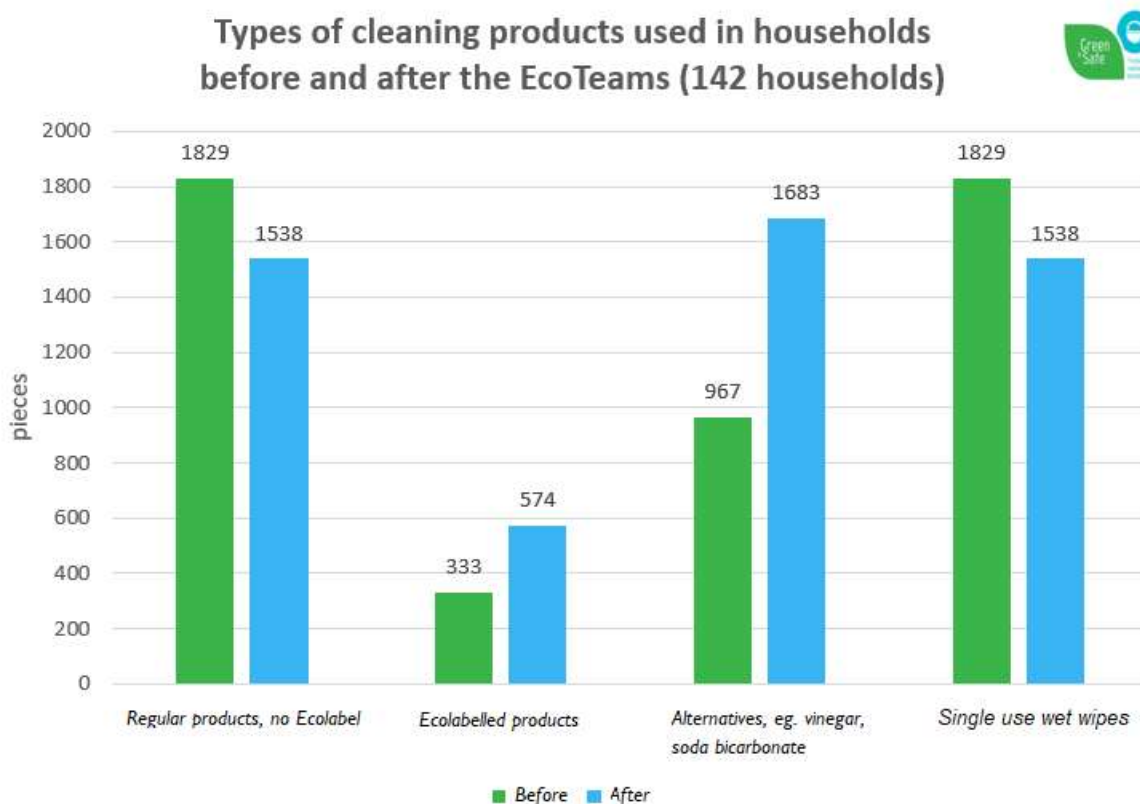


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Although the graph above suggests that 67% of households saw an increase in the number of (types of) cleaning products used and the amount of cleaning products used also increased by the end of the fifth week, the picture is rather positive. The following two graphs show the reason why.



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Participants purchased and tried out ecolabelled products (evaluated by independent experts) and alternative detergents (washing soda, baking soda, vinegar, etc.) during the programme, which explains the increase in the number of cleaning products in total. At the same time the members did not run out of their traditional (commercial) cleaning products over the five weeks, so they were using them and the new, green products simultaneously. Therefore the number of products used in total did not change.



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Quantitative results – Measurements 6 months after EcoTeams

Form of data collection: 6 months after EcoTeams, data is collected by members through an online system.

Period of data collection: June, 2020

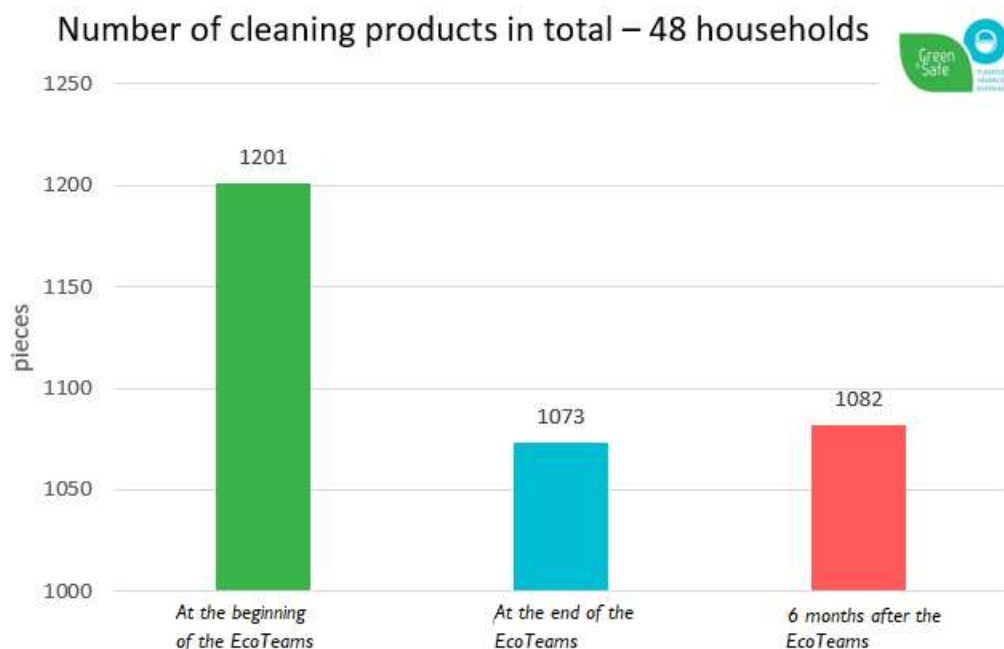
Number of respondents: 48, that is, 34% of respondents from Autumn 2019 (Measurements at the end of EcoTeams)

Results:

6 months after the EcoTeam meetings participants were asked to measure the quantity of their cleaning products in their household. We wanted to find out whether the former EcoTeam members kept going with their new, eco-friendly routines – which they had started in the course of EcoTeams. At the end of EcoTeams 142 participants filled out the Measurements. 6 months later 34% of them, 48 ex-members, sent their responses in. Our data request coincided with the COVID-19 epidemic home-office, home-learning period: families were overwhelmed with online information and communication, so it was difficult to get them to do an extra online task.

The figure below shows that in the respondents' households, the amount of all cleaning agents did not change practically during the 6 months following EcoTeams. All together in the 48 households there were a total of 9 products more (ie 0.18 units per household) compared to the end of the programme. We consider this definitely as a positive result in the shadow of COVID 19. Due to the epidemic the demand for cleaning agents and disinfectants has increased dramatically in Hungary and other countries as well. According to the Nielsen survey, there was a period during the epidemic when retailers' sales of detergents and soaps quadrupled compared to the same period last year.

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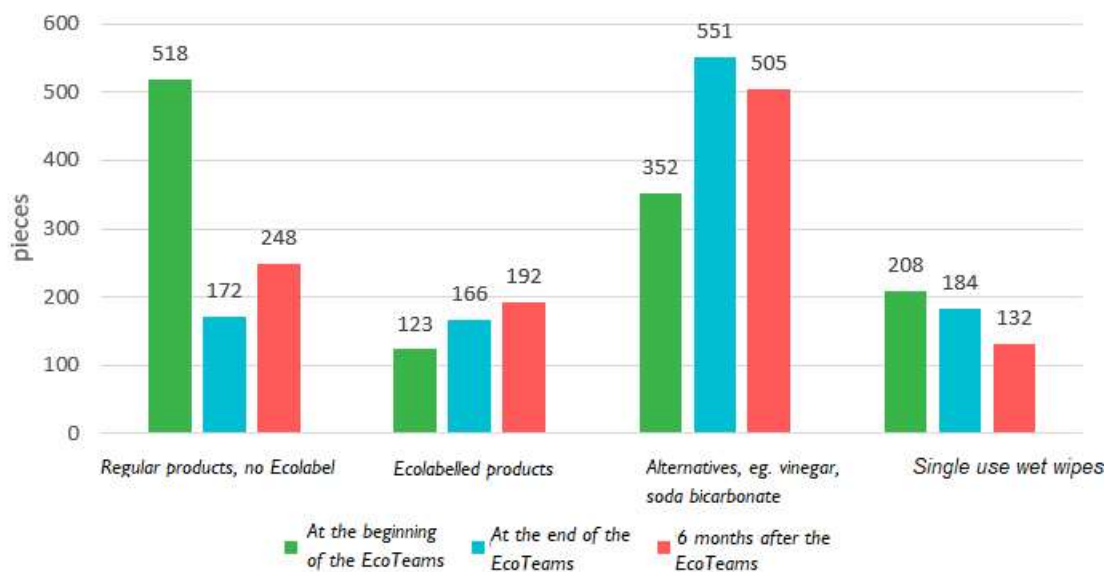


Former EcoTeam members did not increase their detergent use – not even during the virus. The proportions in detergent use, however, have shifted slightly in favor of the “traditional” chemicals.

As the figure below shows, the number of independent eco-certified products in the households of respondents increased by about 16% 6 months after the EcoTeams (compared to the last meeting), the number of NON-eco-certified items went up by more than 41%. The number of alternative detergents, however, decreased by 10%. Good news is that the amount of single-use wet wipes decreased by 25% – and this declining trend is ongoing since the beginning of EcoTeams. All this means practically no change in the number of units, as we are talking about a total increase of 9 units at the level of the households participating in the measurement.

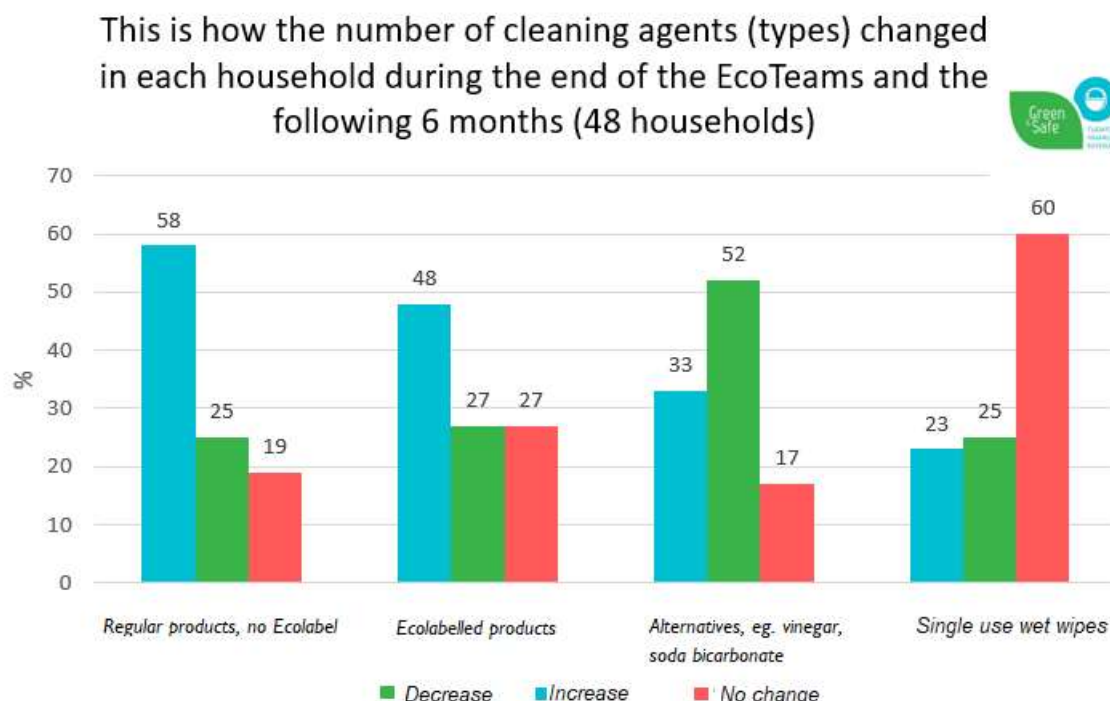
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Change in the usage of detergents – in the beginning and at the end of EcoTeams and 6 months on (48 households)



The graph shows that compared to the situation measured at the beginning of the EcoTeams, the number of non-certified ecolabelled cleaning products and the number of single-use wet wipes were cut half 6 months on. In contrast, the number of ecolabelled agents almost doubled and the number of alternative detergents increased too by about 25% over the same period.

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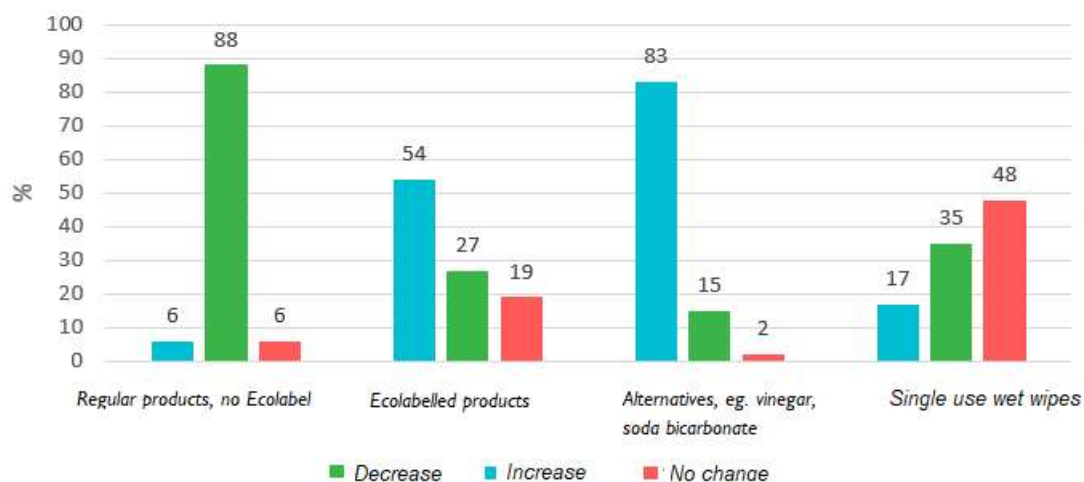


As we sum up, we must highlight the fact that the Measurements were made among very special circumstances. The fear caused by the pandemic superseded so many rational decisions but still: the eco-friendly attitude developed during EcoTeams changed only a little bit with time.

The following graph helps us see how participants changed by the 6th month after finishing EcoTeams. What we see is that about 90% of the responding households saw a decrease in the number of non-eco-certified agents during the EcoTeams and 6 months later. More than half of the households preferred to buy ecolabelled cleaning detergents and more than 80% of them tried out alternative agents. Although single-use wet wipes are still used by nearly 50% of the respondents, 30% of the households reduced its use during the EcoTeams and in the 6th month thereafter.

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This is how the number of cleaning agents (types) changed in each household during the end of the EcoTeams and the following 6 months (48 households)





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Clean Home EcoTeams, 2nd semester

Coach Training

Date and location: 31/01/2020 – 02/01/2020, Budapest

Number of participants: 34

EcoTeams meeting on a national level

Number of teams participating: 23

Number of participants per team: 5-13

Teams participated from: Alsómocsolád, Budapest (multiple teams), Budakeszi, Dunavarsány, Kesztlőc, Romonya, Szárliget, Szabadbattyán, Szeged, Tatabánya, Tel Aviv, Veszprém

Number of households reached: 189

Number of meetings: 5 meetings / team

Average number of attended meetings per participant: 4,6 meetings / member

Quantitative results – Measurements at the end of EcoTeam meetings

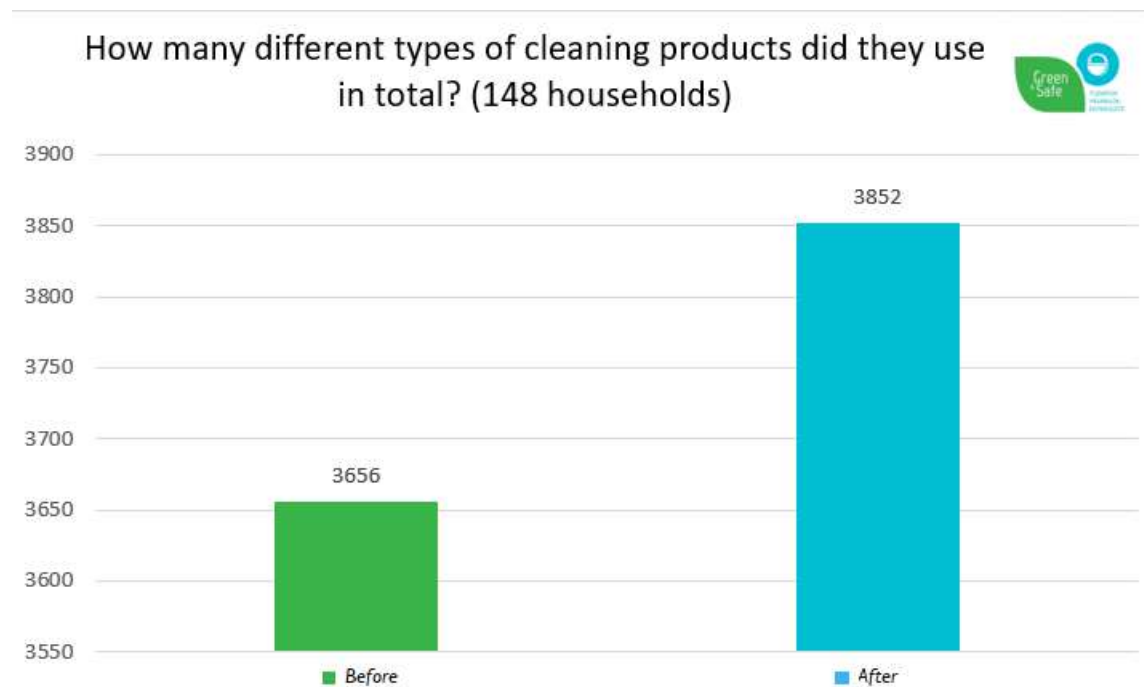
Form of data collection: At the end of EcoTeams, data is collected by members through an online system. Measurements taken at the beginning and at the end of the EcoTeams are recorded.

Number of respondents: 148

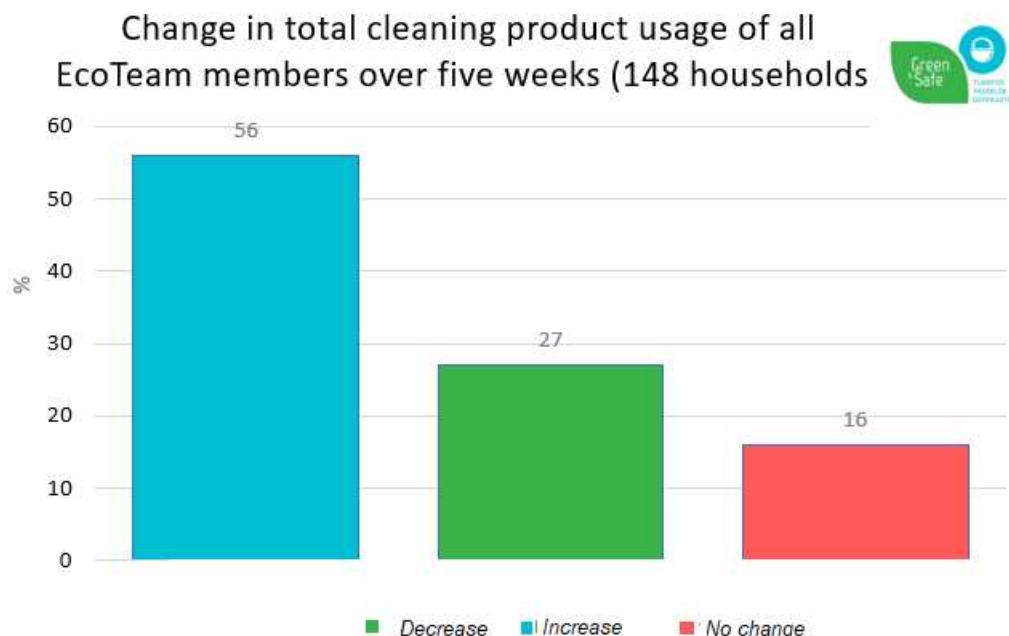
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Results:

Change in total cleaning product usage of all EcoTeam members by the end of the five weeks (148 persons)

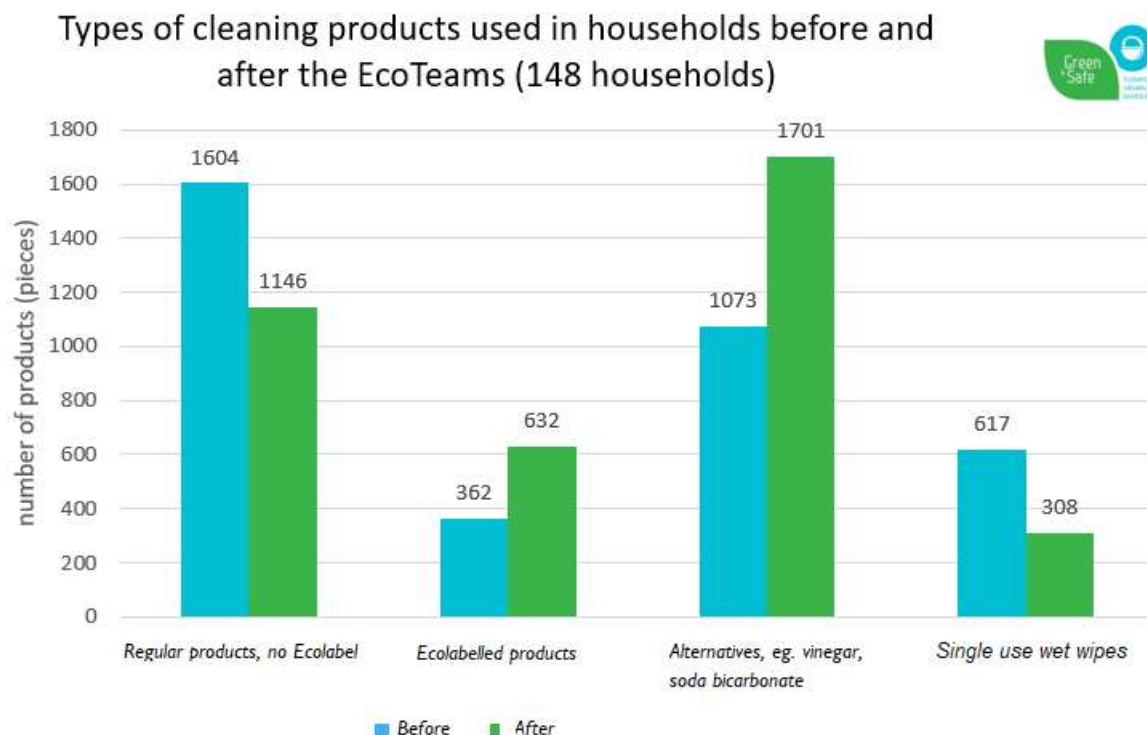


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The graph above suggests that 56% of participants saw an increase while 27% saw a decrease in the number of cleaning products used by the end of the fifth week. Participants purchased and tried out ecolabelled products (evaluated by independent experts) and alternative detergents (washing soda, baking soda, vinegar, etc.) during the programme, which explains the increase in the number of cleaning products in total. At the same time the members did not run out of their traditional (commercial) cleaning products over the five weeks, so they were using them and the new, green products simultaneously. Therefore the number of products used in total did not change.

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As you can see it on the graph, at the beginning of EcoTeams the vast majority of households used non-ecolabelled cleaning products, but there was also a significant amount of alternative products. The number of single-use wet wipes went down in the households. Ecolabelled agents were the least popular. Nonetheless the number of non-ecolabelled products fell by 29% and that of the single-use wet wipes dropped by 50%. However, the number of alternative cleaning products and ecolabelled detergents has more than doubled compared to the value measured at the beginning of the EcoTeams.

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The change was not just the result of measurements from a few very enthusiastic participants. As shown in the figure above, more than 70% of EcoTeam members reduced the usage of their non-ecolabelled cleaning products in their homes. The usage of single-use wet wipes declined too, albeit to a lesser extent: only 25% of participants reported having fewer of these products in their home by the end of the EcoTeams. This can be explained by the fact that about half of the participants did not have single-use wet wipes at the beginning of EcoTeams. As a result of the knowledge and positive impulses gained during EcoTeams, after the group meetings, the participants were encouraged to try out alternative cleaning agents, so the number of washing soda, baking soda and other alternative agents increased in their homes. This is also indicated by the figure above: more than 80% of the participants invested in at least one new alternative cleaning agent by the end of the group meetings. At a slightly lower rate, but still more than half of the participants tried out an independent eco-certified cleaning agent.

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Quantitative results – Measurements 6 months after EcoTeams

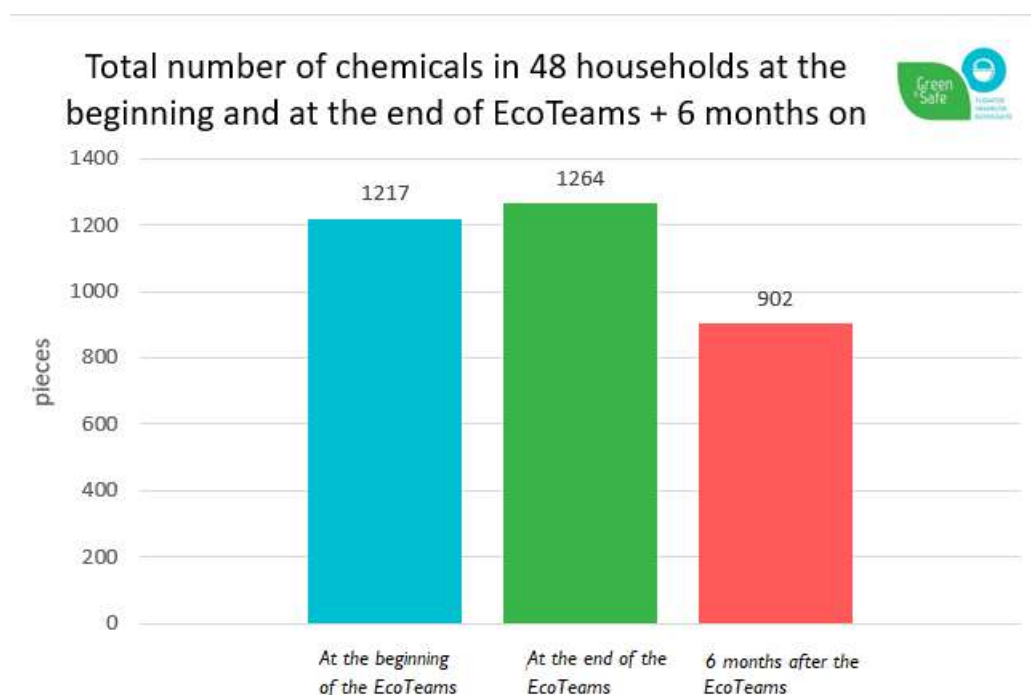
Form of data collection: 6 months after EcoTeams, data is collected by members through an online system.

Period of data collection: November–December, 2020

Number of respondents: 48, that is, 32% of respondents from Spring 2020 (Measurements at the end of EcoTeams)

Results:

In the 2nd semester, 48 people measured the number of cleaning products in their household 6 months after EcoTeams. This measurement was done during the second wave of COVID. As we had explained, the number of chemicals used in households increased during the 5 weeks of EcoTeams because participants bought and tried out new environmentally friendly products, but the 5 weeks were still not enough to run out of the “old”, commercial cleaners they still had in their homes. However, as the figure below shows, a significant drop in household chemical stocks can be observed just half a year after EcoTeams. The total number of detergents was reduced to about 70% of the amount measured at the beginning and end of EcoTeams.

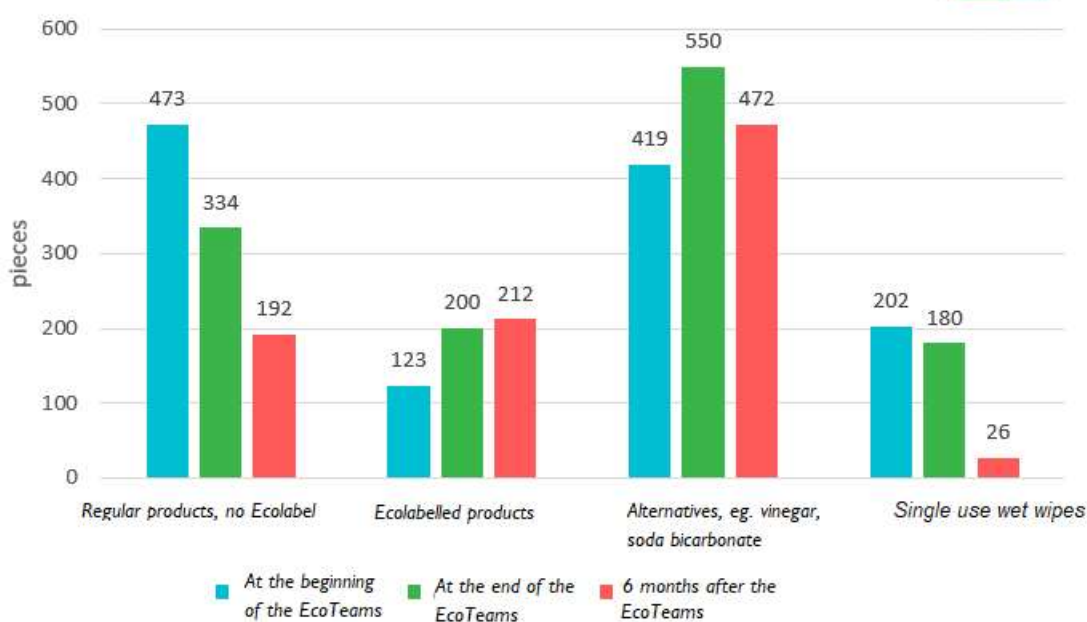


The decrease is due to a drastic reduction in non-ecolabelled cleaning products and single-use wet wipes. While the number of non-ecolabelled chemicals more than halved from the value measured at

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the beginning of EcoTeams, the number of single-use wet wipes fell even more, to about 13% of the initial value in just half a year. Good news is that the change isn't just due to a few very committed participants. 70% of those who submitted the measurement decided to buy less "traditional" cleaning agents in the future – as a result of EcoTeams.

Amount of individual cleaning agents in 48 households at the beginning and at the end of EcoTeams + 6 months on

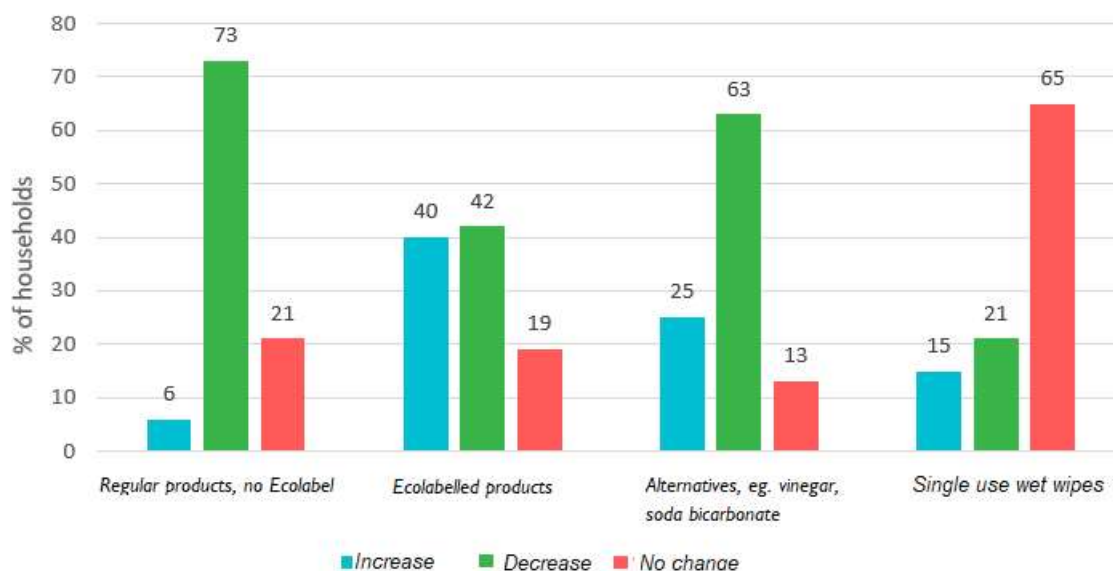


By contrast, the number of environmentally friendly cleaning products grew significantly, but not only during the five weeks of EcoTeams. Also during the following six months: more than 50% of participants preferred to use green detergents instead of their commercial, harmful counterparts.

During EcoTeams, participants learned about the independent eco-certified cleaning products and many of them tried them out, which is clearly visible in the number of eco-labelled chemicals used. While the number of ecolabelled products almost doubled over the five weeks of EcoTeams, their number went up by a further 12% six months later.

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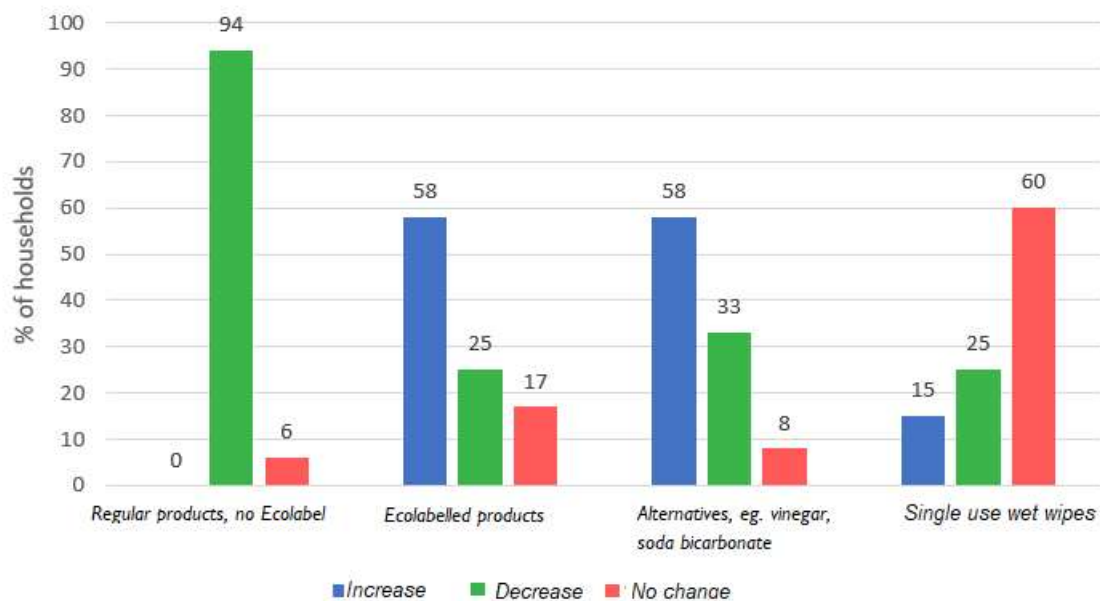
This is how the number of cleaning agents (types) changed in each household during the end of the EcoTeams and the following 6 months (48 households)



Alternative cleaning agents also seem to be popular in the long run. During the five weeks of EcoTeams many members tried out soda, baking soda or vinegar, among other things, so the amount of alternative cleaning products grew by about 25% by the end of the fifth week. Over the next six months, however, their numbers declined as not all chemicals were likely to work for everyone, but even so, participants went on using more environmentally friendly alternatives than at the beginning of the EcoTeams.

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This is how the number of cleaning agents (types) changed in each household during the end of the EcoTeams and the following 6 months (48 households)





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Clean Home EcoTeams, 3rd semester

Coach Training

Date and location: 18-19/09/2020, Budapest

Number of participants: 24

EcoTeam meetings on a national level

Number of teams participating: 14

Number of participants per team: 5-12

Teams participated from: Budakeszi, Budapest, Gödöllő, Isaszeg, Kecskemét, Kulcs, Pécs, Pilis, Pilisborosjenő, Szentendre, Zalaegerszeg

Number of households reached: 101

Number of meetings: 5 meetings / team

Average number of attended meetings per participant: 4,3 meetings / member

Quantitative results – Measurements at the end of EcoTeam meetings

Form of data collection: At the end of EcoTeams, data is collected by members through an online system. Measurements taken at the beginning and at the end of the EcoTeams are recorded.

Number of respondents: 90

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Results:

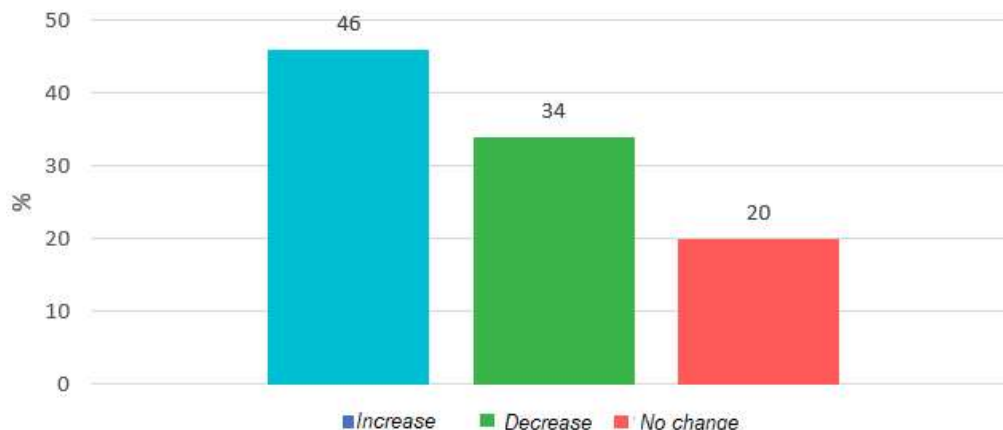
Change in total cleaning product usage of all EcoTeam members by the end of the five weeks (90 persons)

How many different types of cleaning products they use in total? (90 households)



As opposed to the participants of the first two semesters of Clean Home EcoTeams, the number of all detergents in the participating households reduced slightly in the third semester.

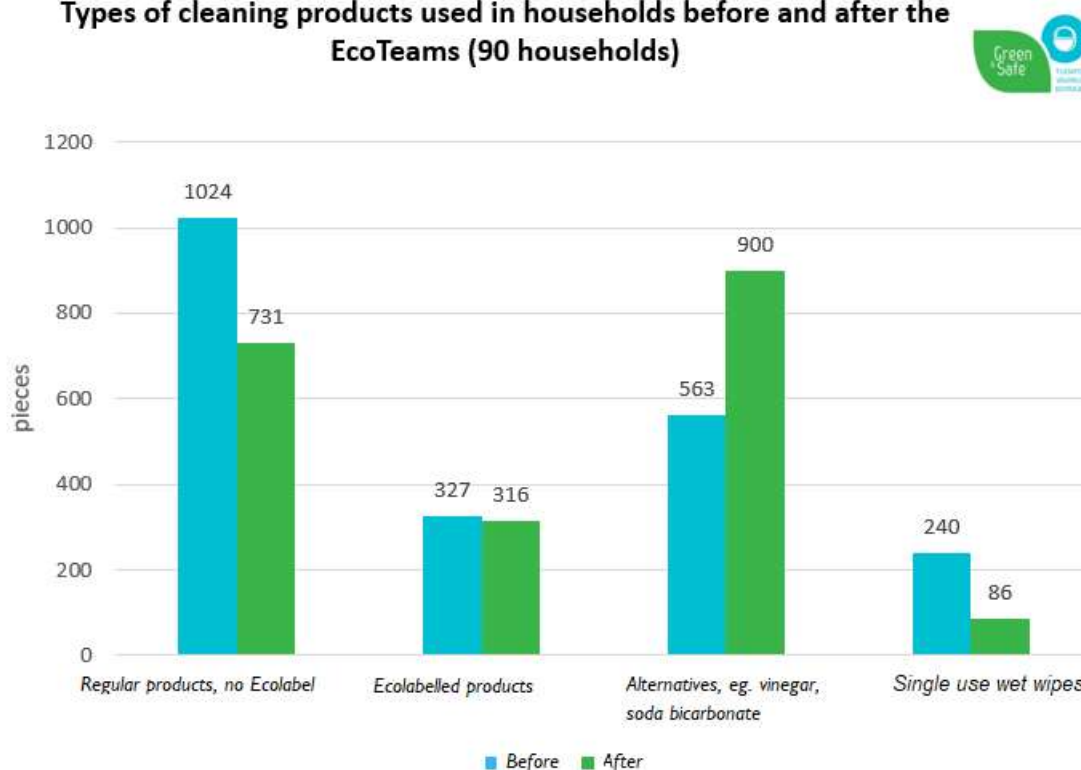
Change in total cleaning products usage of all EcoTeam members over the five weeks (90 households)



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The graph above suggests that 46% of participants saw an increase while 34% saw a decrease in the number of cleaning products used by the end of the fifth week. Participants purchased and tried out ecolabelled products (evaluated by independent experts) and alternative detergents (washing soda, baking soda, vinegar, etc.) during the programme, for this reason we can see only a slight increase in the number of cleaning products in total. At the same time the members did not run out of their traditional (commercial) cleaning products over the five weeks, so they were using them and the new, green products simultaneously. Therefore the number of products used in total did not change.

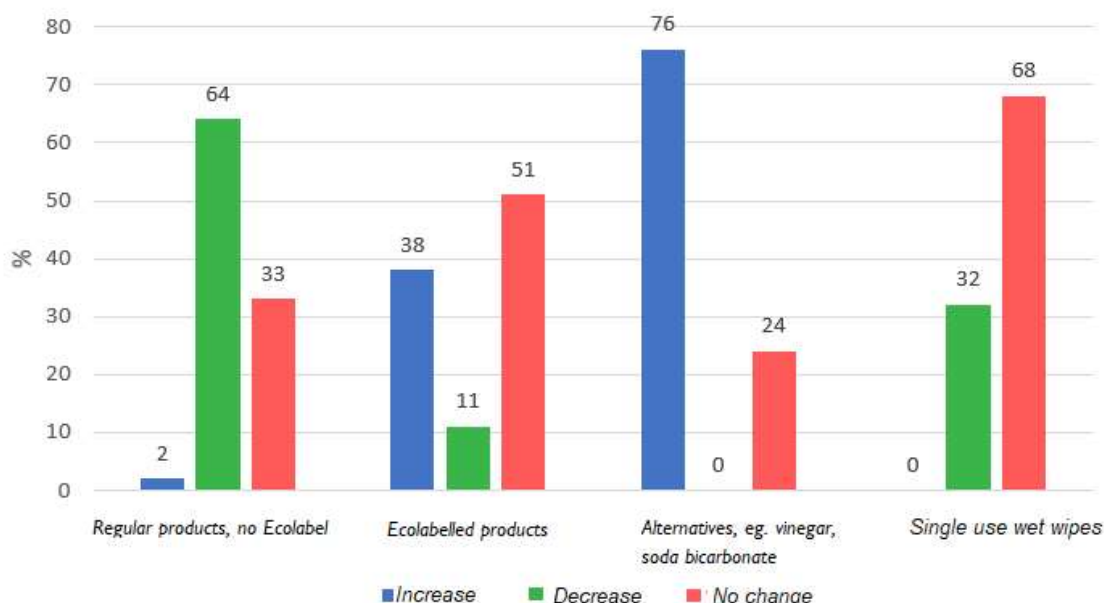
Types of cleaning products used in households before and after the EcoTeams (90 households)



As you can see it on the graph above, at the beginning of EcoTeams the vast majority of households used non-ecolabelled cleaning products. And even though the number of alternative products was just 50% of the non-ecolabelled ones, they stood out from other products. There were far fewer ecolabelled products and even fewer single-use wet wipes. Nonetheless the number of non-ecolabelled products fell by 29% and that of the single-use wet wipes dropped by 66,6%. The number of alternative cleaning products nearly doubled, while the number of ecolabelled detergents did not change compared to the value measured at the beginning of the EcoTeams.

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This is how the use of individual cleaning products changed over the five weeks of EcoTeams (90 households)



In the majority of the households there was a change. As shown in the figure above, 64% of EcoTeam members reduced the usage of their non-ecolabelled cleaning products in their homes. The usage of single-use wet wipes declined too, albeit to a lesser extent: only 32% of participants reported having fewer of these products in their home by the end of the EcoTeams. This can be explained by the fact that about half of the participants did not have single-use wet wipes at the beginning of EcoTeams.

As a result of the knowledge and positive impulses gained during EcoTeams, after the group meetings, the participants were encouraged to try out alternative cleaning agents. As a result, in 76% of the households the quantity of washing soda, baking soda and other alternative agents increased. At a slightly lower rate, but still 38% of the participants tried out an independent eco-certified cleaning agent.



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Overall results by the end of the 3rd semester

Number of trained coaches: 87

Number of households reached (number of EcoTeam members): 468

Participants came from: Ajka, Alsómocsolád, Baja, Budapest több csoport, Budakalász, Budakeszi, Dombóvár, Dunavarsány, Gödöllő, Isaszeg, Kecskemét, Keszthely, Kulcs, Páty, Pécs, Pilisborosjenő, Romonya, Simontornya, Szárliget, Szabadbattyán, Szeged, Szentendre, Tatabánya, Tel-Aviv, Veszprém, Zalaegerszeg

Number of participants who submitted the Measurements at the end of EcoTeams: 380

Number of meetings: 5 meetings / team

Average number of attended meetings per participant: 4,4 meetings / member

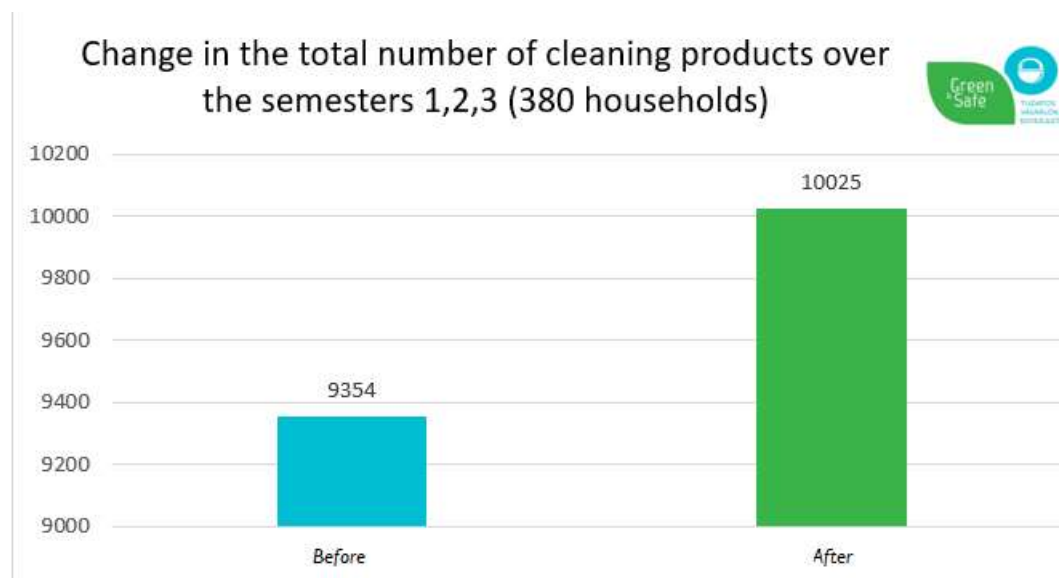
Overall results:

During the 3 semesters of EcoTeams, we organized 3 coach trainings. A total of 87 new coaches were trained. After the training, each coach started their own teams, having online or face-to-face meetings. Participants came from all over the country, from a total of 27 municipalities – some of the towns saw multiple teams. A total of 468 people attended the 5 EcoTeam meetings. EcoTeam members typically attended 4 or 5 meetings (4,3 meetings/person on average).

Participants measured how much of the cleaning products they used at the beginning and at the end of EcoTeams. The data submitted by the 380 persons were compiled by TVE. As the figures below show, during the programme participants learned new environmentally friendly practices, developing new habits that helped them reduce their impact on the environment resulting from reducing the chemicals that they use in their households.

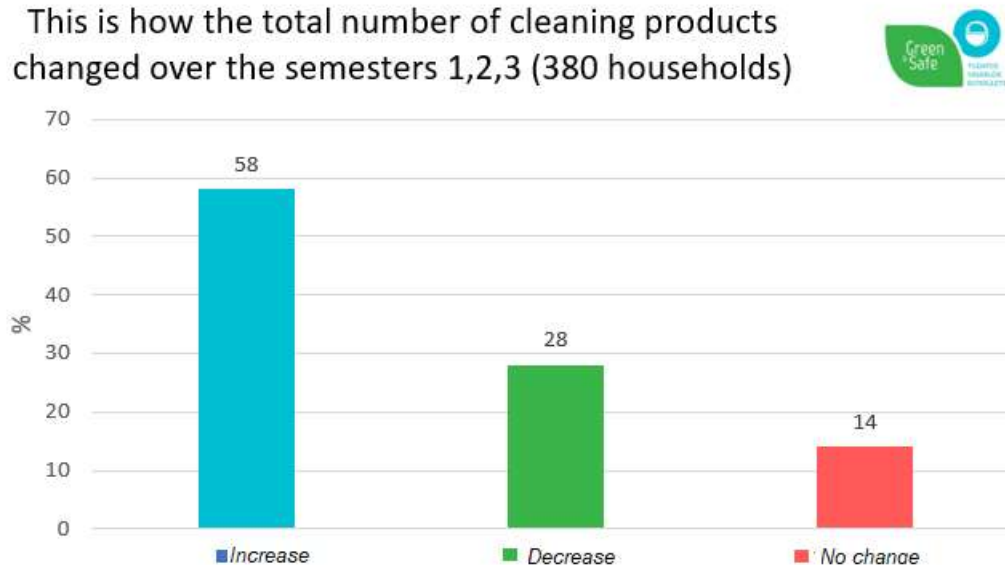
Six months on, EcoTeam members counted the number of detergents in their household again. The Measurements demonstrated that, as a result of EcoTeams, participants used much less chemicals – compared to the beginning of EcoTeams. The increase in independently certified ecolabelled products and alternative agents (such as washing soda, baking soda, vinegar, citric acid) is clearly visible. By contrast, compared to the pre-EcoTeams period, participants purchased much less non-green and non-ecolabelled products and single-use wet wipes. These data clearly indicate that EcoTeams not only has an incentive effect on environmentally friendly behavior during the 5 weeks of the program, but also results in lasting, positive change in the long run.

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At first glance, it may seem misleading that while at the beginning of EcoTeams there were a total of 9354 cleaning products in the households, by the end of EcoTeams there were 10025 pieces. So, despite the learning process, EcoTeam members became *less green*...is this right? This can be explained by the fact that precisely because of the green approach, participants purchased new, environmentally friendly cleaning products during the EcoTeams, but the 5 weeks were not enough to run out of the chemicals the members had purchased earlier.

This is how the total number of cleaning products changed over the semesters 1,2,3 (380 households)



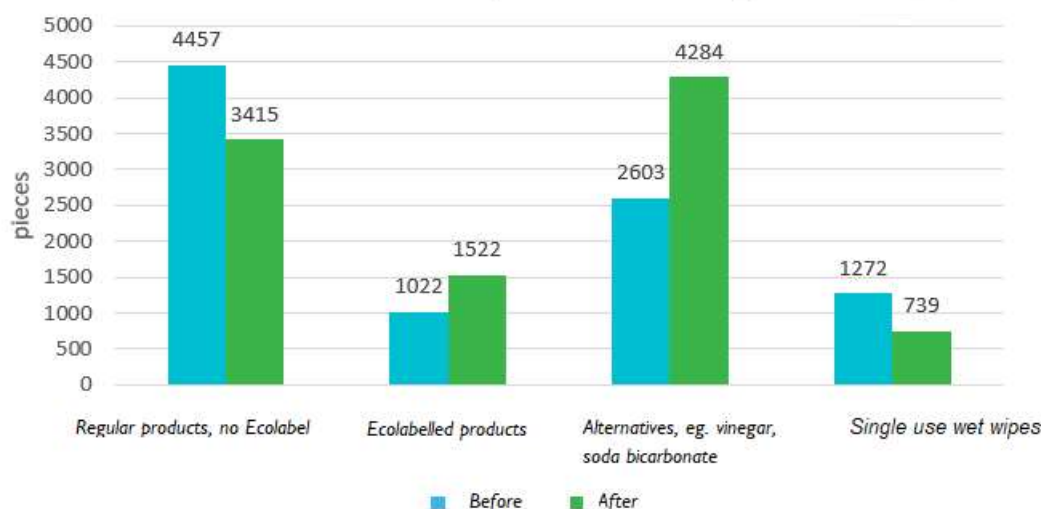
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The green trend is indicated by the fact that at the beginning of the EcoTeams most of the products were non-ecolabelled: a total of 4457 units were counted in 380 households. By the end of the five weeks, this figure went down by 25%. It is important to note that this change was not caused by a radical change of a few very committed participants, but 70% of the participants reduced their usage of the non-ecolabelled cleaners to some extent.

An even greater reduction can be seen in the case of single-use wet wipes. The total number of 1272 wet wipes (counted when starting EcoTeams) was halved by the end of the programme, although this affected far fewer households, as many had never used single-use wet wipes.

As a result of the information and team support obtained in EcoTeams, many people not only reduced the amount of “traditional” cleaning products, but also tried out environmentally friendly alternatives. In the 380 households the number of independently certified ecolabelled cleaning products increased by 50%. The alternative products such as washing soda, baking soda and vinegar increased by more than 60% by the end of the programme.

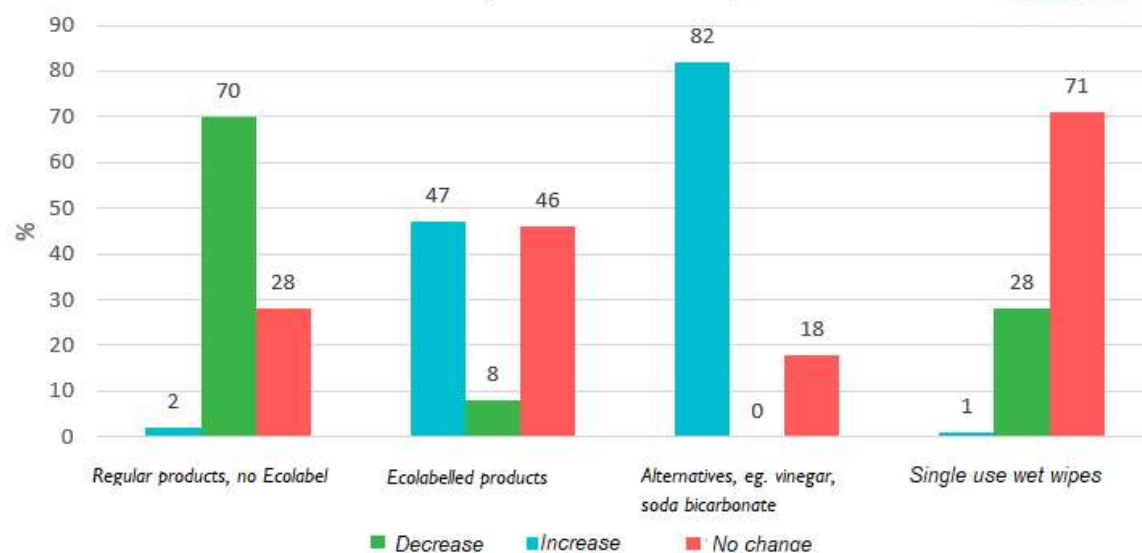
Types of cleaning products used in households before and after semesters 1,2,3 (380 households)



Again, the large-scale change was not the result of the activity of only a few participants. Namely, while 50% of the participants decided to try out ecolabelled cleaning products and introduced them into their household, alternative products were even more popular: 82% of EcoTeam members purchased and tried out at least one of those over the 5 weeks.

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This is how the use of individual cleaning products changed over the five weeks (380 households)



Quantitative results – Measurements 6 months after EcoTeams

Form of data collection: 6 months after EcoTeams, data is collected by members through an online system.

Period of data collection: June 2019, November–December 2020

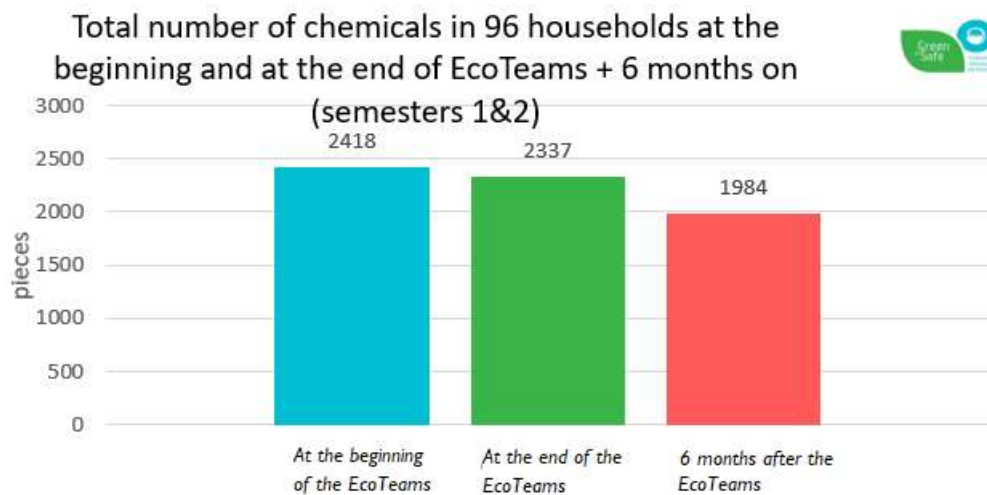
Number of respondents: 96, that is, 33% of respondents from the end of EcoTeam semesters I+2

Not only did participants use fewer but more environmentally friendly cleaning products during the 5 weeks of EcoTeams, but they also maintained this green behavior six months on. Six months after completing EcoTeams, participants kept about 20% fewer chemicals at home than at the beginning of the programme.

The positive change was due to the drastic reduction of the two most harmful cleaning products: they managed to reduce the number of non-ecolabelled cleaning products and single-use wet wipes by more than 50% by the sixth month following the programme. The change was not the result of a few very committed “eco-fighters”, but more than 90% of participants reduced their use of “traditional” chemicals.

Instead of the commercial detergents, EcoTeam members started to use independently certified ecolabelled products and alternative cleaning products (washing soda, baking soda, vinegar, citric acid). Six months after EcoTeams, there were 60% more ecolabelled products and 25% more alternative cleaning products in these households than at the beginning of the programme.

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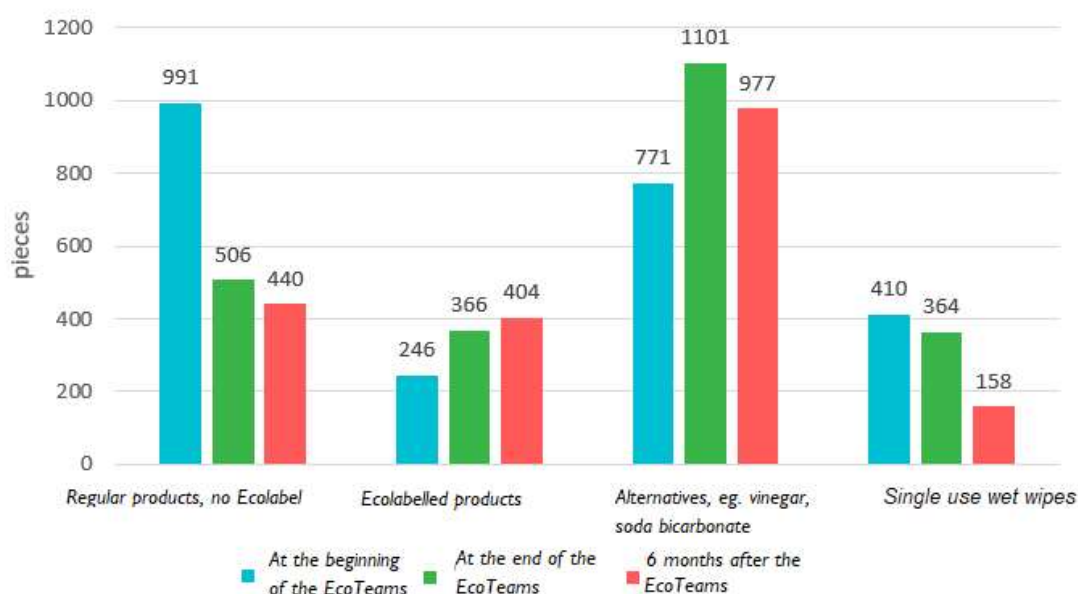


As you can see it in the figure below, non-ecolabelled cleaning products saw the most drastic reduction: the number of these chemicals fell by more than 50% over the five weeks of the programme. Later on, the trend continued and their number decreased by a further 13% in six months.

Single-use wet wipes, too, saw a positive change. They were used 12% less compared to the value measured at the beginning of EcoTeams. In the months to follow, this trend continued. As a result, this product group was used 40% less compared to the figure recorded at the beginning of the programme.

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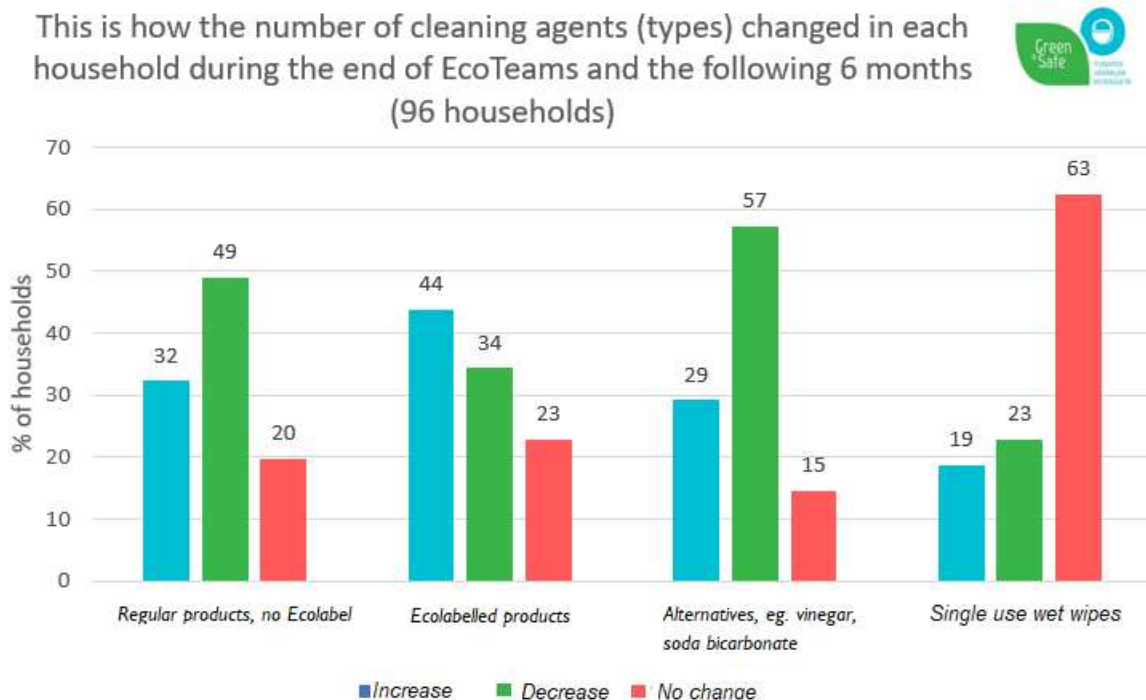
Amount of individual cleaning agents at the beginning and at the end of EcoTeams + 6 months on (96 households)



Ecolabelled substances by contrast enjoy an unwaning popularity. This is because while the number of ecolabelled detergents increased by almost 50% during the 5 weeks of EcoTeams, the participants kept on going for eco-products in the following months, so there were 60% more ecolabelled cleaners in the households 6 months after the programme ended (compared to the value recorded at the beginning of the programme).

EcoTeam members in fact went green: they use(d) not only ecolabelled but also alternative cleaning agents – substituting for the commercial chemicals used earlier. During the 5 weeks of learning together participants used about 40% more alternative cleaning agents than before. Six months on alternative agents declined somewhat, probably because former members quit products that were a bit tricky to use, and yet six months later they had 25% more alternative cleaners than at the beginning of the programme.

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This is how the number of cleaning agents (types) changed in each household during the end of the EcoTeams and the following 6 months (96 households)

