YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD: AN ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILE

TOPIC:

Producing an Environmental Profile of Your Neighborhood

INTRODUCTION:

The quality of our environment affects the quality of our lives. The problem is, how do we measure the quality? It is easy enough to look around and say "My street is noisy" or "These trash cans need emptying more regularly"; it is more difficult to produce an overall picture by measuring all the environmental factors. In this qualitative investigation you will do just that. You will investigate and rate ten different aspects of your local environment to create an environmental profile based on your perceptions. This profile will provide you, and other people, with a measure of how good or bad your environment is and will suggest, possibly, what steps can be taken to improve it.

TIME NEEDED:

1 ½ hours—½ hour each in the morning, early afternoon, and evening

MATERIALS:

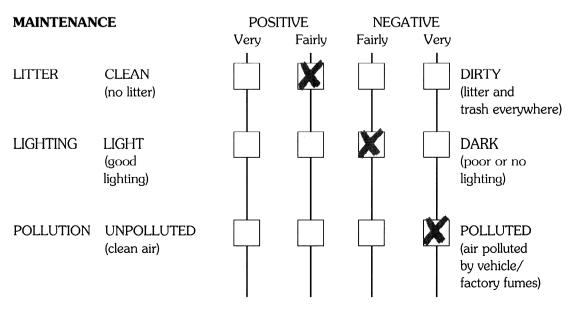3 photocopies of Environmental Profile   clipboard
    Chart   colored pens or pencils
pen and pencil

PROCEDURE:

1. Look at the Environmental Profile Chart. Read it carefully, noting all the factors you will be measuring.

2. In the morning, go outdoors, into the area around your home, and fill in one copy of the chart. For each factor, fill in the box on the line you feel is most appropriate. For example, if your street is fairly clean, fairly dark, and very polluted, your chart will look like this as you fill it in:

3. Take a second copy of the chart outdoors with you in early afternoon. Again, fill in a cross for each factor on the sheet.

4. Repeat step 3 in early evening with the third copy of the chart.
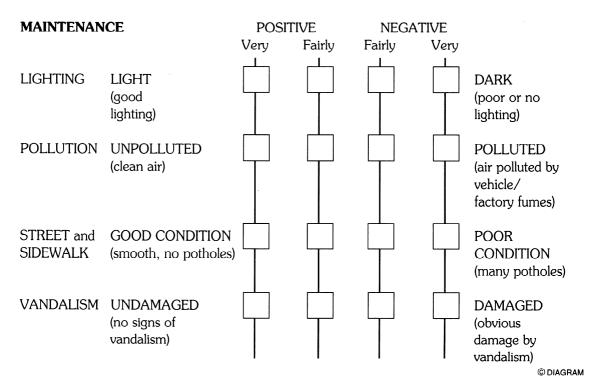
ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILE CHART

Name: Location: Time:

From the pairs of opposites below, give your impression of your street by making a cross on ONE of the lines for each category.

ECOLOGY

		POSITIVE		NEGATIVE		
		Very	Fairly	Fairly	Very	
LITTER	CLEAN (no litter)	☐	☐	☐	☐	DIRTY (litter and trash everywhere)
NOISE	QUIET (pleasant, relaxing sounds)	☐	☐	☐	☐	NOISY (loud sounds, very disturbing)
SMELL	PLEASANT (smells fresh, "natural")	☐	☐	☐	☐	UNPLEASANT (smells of exhaust, garbage)
DIRT*	LITTLE DIRT (tissue test is fairly clean)	☐	☐	☐	☐	MUCH DIRT (tissue test is dirty)
PLANTS	"GREEN" (plentiful trees/shrubs; healthy grass)	☐	☐	☐	☐	"GRAY" (few trees/ shrubs; little grass)

*To do a tissue test, wipe an average area of the sidewalk with a clean white tissue. Observe how dark the tissue becomes with dirt.

MAINTENANCE

		POSITIVE		NEGATIVE		
		Very	Fairly	Fairly	Very	
LIGHTING	LIGHT (good lighting)	☐	☐	☐	☐	DARK (poor or no lighting)
POLLUTION	UNPOLLUTED (clean air)	☐	☐	☐	☐	POLLUTED (air polluted by vehicle/ factory fumes)
STREET and SIDEWALK	GOOD CONDITION (smooth, no potholes)	☐	☐	☐	☐	POOR CONDITION (many potholes)
VANDALISM	UNDAMAGED (no signs of vandalism)	☐	☐	☐	☐	DAMAGED (obvious damage by vandalism)

ANALYSIS:

1. Connect up the points on each chart to produce visual profiles of your neighborhood at three different times of day.

2. Are the profiles different? If so, why?

3. Is each profile mainly to the left of the chart, or mainly to the right? Do you think your neighborhood is a good-quality environment or a poor-quality environment?

4. Write down five lines or sentences that sum up the appearance, changing or otherwise, of your neighborhood.

5. Look at those Ecology factors you have marked as negative on the right-hand sides of all three profiles. How could they be improved? Would it be expensive to improve them?

6. Answer the same questions for those Maintenance factors you have marked as negative in the right-hand sides of all three profiles.

7. To extend this project further, interview local residents using the Environmental Profile Chart as a questionnaire. Do they agree with your assessment of your neighborhood? How do they think the area could be improved?

OUR FINDINGS:

See Section X.

Our Findings

VIII. ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY PROJECTS

8.001 Your Neighborhood: An Environmental Profile

   1.–7. Results will vary.