

Shop

One Space, Many Ways to Shop Sustainably

Keywords:

sustainability, shop, zero waste, slow fashion, second-hand, local food, repair, reuse, community

Target group:

primary school pupils (ages 6-11)

Objectives:



This activity encourages pupils to explore how shopping can be transformed into a responsible, creative, and community-based action. Pupils will learn about different types of sustainable shops — like zero-waste stores, slow fashion boutiques, second-hand markets, local food shops, and repair spaces — and how each contributes to a healthier planet and fairer society. By the end, pupils will understand the principles of ethical consumption and circular economy, and see how one shop can make a big difference.

General Guideline on Time Allocation:

The duration needed to carry out this activity may vary depending on the specific group of children. Teachers are encouraged to adapt the implementation according to the needs, interests, and dynamics of the group.

In the preparatory phase, teachers may use a variety of activities to introduce and contextualize the chosen topic. These can include discussions, videos, drawings, storytelling, or even a field trip, depending on the age and background knowledge of the children.

The main construction phase, during which children plan and build their urban element using LEGO bricks, should typically not exceed 45 to 60 minutes. However, this phase often stimulates further curiosity and questions among the children, potentially leading to extended engagement or follow-up activities. For more detailed instructions and pedagogical support on how to implement activities of INNO-kids project, please download the Teacher's Methodological Guide.



Materials and Resources Needed:

- LEGO bricks of various types
- Paper, markers, crayons, and coloured pencils, scissors and glue, recycled materials such as plastic bottles, bottle caps, fabric scraps, paper rolls or packaging
- Natural materials: twigs, bark, leaves, small stones
- Signs and labels: “Second-hand”, “Repair Area”, “Swap Shelf”, “Local Goods”, “Slow Fashion”, etc.
- Images of sustainable shops
- Toy coins

Note: Encourage pupils to repurpose available materials creatively. If LEGO bricks are not available, pupils may use basic craft supplies to bring their ideas to life through drawings and handmade models.

Introduction:


Start with a simple question: “What kind of shop helps people and the planet at the same time?” Many shops today sell fast, cheap, overpackaged goods. But some shops are different — they care about where products come from, how long they last, and how much waste they create.

Introduce pupils to different types of sustainable shopping spaces:

- Zero-waste shops where you refill containers
- Slow fashion stores that sell ethical clothing
- Second-hand or swap shops for toys, books, or clothes
- Local food shops selling homemade or locally grown items
- Repair cafés and community workshops where things are fixed, not thrown away

Procedure:

Preparation



Begin by introducing pupils to the idea that not only what a shop sells matters, but how it feels to visit it. Ask:

- Have you ever been to a shop where you felt welcomed and comfortable?
- What made it feel that way — was it the colours, smells, people, music, layout?

Explain that today, each group will choose one specific type of sustainable shop and focus on building a model that reflects both the shop’s mission and its atmosphere. Encourage them to think like shop designers: not just what’s for sale, but how the space helps people feel calm, inspired, respected, or curious.



Construction

Pupils build a detailed model of their chosen type of shop using LEGO, recycled, and/or natural materials. They should consider including:

- A welcoming entrance with name, logo or signage
- A clearly designed interior layout – shelves, refill stations, repair benches, seating
- Specific products or tools, represented with LEGO or small parts
- A human touch – such as friendly shop assistants (made from LEGO or paper figures)
- Optional extras: music, lights, a kids' corner, community noticeboard, story cards, etc.

Encourage each group to think about accessibility (ramps, wide aisles), inclusivity (signs in multiple languages or with symbols), and the sustainability of the materials used.

Details

As the models take shape, encourage pupils to focus on how the shop “feels” as much as how it looks. Ask:

- Would you enjoy spending time in this place?
- What message is this shop sending — about the environment, about people, about products?

Pupils can also add decorative or interactive elements: hand-drawn posters, price tags with messages (“repaired with care,” “local honey from our neighbour’s farm”), or even small “stories” attached to donated items.

The goal is to show not just what sustainability means in terms of what we buy, but also in terms of how we care for each other and our surroundings.

Stories

Invite pupils to invent a story about a person visiting their shop. It could be a regular customer who enjoys chatting with the staff, someone learning to repair their broken headphones, or a child bringing toys to donate. The story might show a small act of kindness, or even a personal change.



Presentation

Each group presents their chosen shop to the class. They explain what kind of shop they created, why they chose this specific type of sustainable business, what makes the shop both functional and welcoming, how their design supports people and the environment.

Encourage other pupils to ask questions, share what they liked.



Tips:

- Encourage pupils to think of their shop not just as a place to buy or fix things, but as a space where people feel respected and welcome. Ask guiding questions like: “What would make someone want to return to your shop?” or “Where would a tired customer sit and rest?”

Additional Considerations:

Differentiation:

Provide additional support or simplified instructions for pupils who may require extra assistance. For advanced pupils, offer extension tasks such as researching further sustainable practices or designing more complex models.

Assessment:

Assess pupils based on their participation and engagement during discussions and hands-on activities. Evaluate the creativity, effort, collaboration, depth of understanding demonstrated in their models, critical thinking, ability to provide constructive feedback and presentation skills.

Extension Activities:

- Design a poster or flyer advertising the shop
- Organise a classroom swap day or pop-up second-hand corner
- Invite someone who runs a local sustainable business

Curriculum Connections:

This activity integrates:

Financial Literacy (*shopping habits, value for money, community-based alternatives, consumerism*)

Social Studies (*responsibility, inclusion, and ethical decision-making*)

Art (*design, creativity, construction*)

Language (*storytelling, discussion, presentation skills*)



SDG Connections:

- **SDG 8:** Decent Work and Economic Growth – Pupils explore how small-scale, ethical shops can support meaningful work, fairness, and local economies.
- **SDG 11:** Sustainable Cities and Communities – Pupils design inclusive, people-friendly commercial spaces that support community wellbeing.
- **SDG 12:** Responsible Consumption and Production – Pupils explore alternatives to mass consumption by designing shops that promote reuse, repair, and minimal waste.
- **SDG 13:** Climate Action – Pupils understand how local, low-waste, and reuse-based shopping reduces emissions and protects natural resources.