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<p>Tiivistelmä - Referat - Abstract</p> <p>The aim of this study is to find out what meanings households give to environmentally responsible behaviour and what is the meaning of environmental issues in their everyday life. Previous research show that personal relationship to nature affects the environmental behaviour as does constructive learning about environment. My research focuses on how participation in the FIN-MIPS project affects environmental thoughts and actions of the households.</p> <p>This study is part of a project called FIN-MIPS households. The FIN-MIPS household research recruited 27 households in South-Middle Finland that were interested in measuring their own ecological rucksacks in a period of six weeks in 2007. The aim of the whole project is to find new options for the dematerialisation of household activities. MIPS (material input per service unit) is a tool developed for calculating eco-efficiency and use of natural resources. This study uses the MIPS results of the project.</p> <p>This is a descriptive, qualitative research, even though a quantitative questionnaire was used to collect data in addition to focus group interviews and open questions in the questionnaire. The members of households filled in the questionnaire in the beginning (N=36) of the six-week period while they measured their household's consumption. The same questionnaire was filled in the final meetings after households had got the MIPS-information (N=31). In the focus group interviews the learning process and conceptions about ecologically sound lifestyle were discussed. Qualitative content analysis was used to analyse the data from focus-group interviews. The SPSS-program was used to analyse the questionnaires. The classifications were made first from the data and then based on literature and theory.</p> <p>The main conclusion is that households' environmental attitudes do not have direct influence on the use of natural resources. Instead a household's MIPS correlates with the incomes, size of the apartment and the number of cars. In their attitudes the households are fairly homogenous, whereas in their use of natural resources there is a lot of variation. It is much easier to a person to change attitudes to be more socially acceptable than it is to bias the MIPS-results. The difference between attitudes and the real use of materials tells about gap between willingness to act and real action. The members of the research households found participating in the project meaningful, and they considered the information gained important. The participation also changed their preconceptions about ecological lifestyle towards a more holistic approach.</p> <p>The study inspired the participants to continue the field study of their own household's use of natural resources. Following such self-inspired extension of the research would give answers to if and how practices in the households have changed towards more environmentally sound lifestyle in the longer time of period. In the future the method could be developed towards action research, and through that the participating households could be empowered to change. This study shows that the experience of participating in the research had influence on thinking by creating cracks in earlier constructions of environmental responsibility in terms of critique and mixed feelings about sustainable lifestyle.</p>			
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