



## Urban Agenda Platform

The global platform for sharing progress, action and knowledge on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve sustainable urban development.

# PUBLIC AWARENESS

**Award Scheme**

**Themes**

**Sustainable Development Goals**

**Others**

**Waste Management**

**Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**

## Summary

Public awareness campaigns that engage and educate local communities on plastic waste can spur community action and affect consumer choices.

**TARGET USERS:** Individuals, Businesses, Industry, Government **KEY CONSIDERATIONS:** The aim is to increase public understanding and shape community perceptions on the dangers of plastic pollution and available solutions, thereby empowering more people and organizations to take action.

## Background and Objective

Every day, plastic waste negatively impacts the ecosystem, habitats, human health and sustainable development across the world. Despite the vast scale of the problem, the general public and other important stakeholders have not been adequately engaged and educated on how they can become part of the solution.

## Actions and Implementation

Broad public awareness can help to change the way that plastic is viewed, used and managed as waste. Education and engagement can be part of a city's strategic action plan, and can include consumer awareness campaigns, business awareness campaigns, documentary films, school initiatives and cleanup activities, among others. The aim is to increase public understanding and shape community perceptions on the dangers of plastic pollution and available solutions, thereby empowering more people and organizations to take action. Community actions can include changes in individual attitudes and purchasing habits, increased sorting and recycling behavior, responsible business processes and practices, among others.

## Outcomes and Impacts

**CASE STUDY EXAMPLES**

**Parley Ocean School** Parley Ocean School takes an immersive approach to environmental education with the goal of inspiring marine conservation and empowering its next generation of leaders: Ocean Guardians. Parley Ocean School youth programs simplify complex marine threats through engaging materials developed with a global network of educators. Our lessons balance local and global issues, connect big-picture thinking with immediate impacts, and instill in each individual a sense of place and agency within the movement to end today's biggest marine threats. Initiatives are led in collaboration with local schools, NGOs and governments. Our programs are tailored to support existing curriculum and introduce new and exciting experiences in the marine environment, as well as through the power of sports. Since piloting in the Maldives in 2015, the Parley Ocean School program has expanded around the world in collaboration with educators, NGOs, brands and governments, focusing especially on coastal communities most affected by marine plastic pollution. "Parley AIR" (Avoid, Intercept, Redesign) lessons, workshops and plastic interception points are active in over 70 schools, with the ambition to roll out these initiatives across all 217 schools in the Maldives by 2020. A forthcoming digital platform will make lessons, activities and tools available to students, activists and educators worldwide. See <https://www.parley.tv/updates/parleyoceanschool> for more information.

**Plastic Clever Schools** With over 951 registered schools across the UK, the Plastic Clever Schools Program is committed to helping schools succeed in their efforts to fight single-use plastic. Becoming a Plastic Clever School requires a school to take appropriate action needed to reduce their use of single-use plastic, including the BIG 4 plastic polluters (cups + lids, straws, bottles and bags), plus cutlery and crockery. See <https://www.kidsagainstplastic.co.uk/do/plasticcleverschools/> for more information.

**Plastic Disclosure Project** The Plastic Disclosure Project enables manufacturers, businesses and municipalities to manage and reduce their plastic waste by measuring, understanding, and communicating their plastic footprint. See <https://www.plasticdisclosure.org/> for more information.

**The Story of Plastic** The Story of Plastic is presented by The Story of Stuff Project, a nonprofit dedicated to changing the way that we make, use, and throw away Stuff so that it is more sustainable, healthy, and fair. Since 2007 the nonprofit's nine award-winning animated movies have garnered more than 50 million online views around the world and inspired a million-member global community to take action for systemic change. To learn more, visit [storyofstuff.org](http://storyofstuff.org)

**#breakfreefromplastic** The #breakfreefromplastic Movement is a global movement envisioning a future free from plastic pollution. Since its launch in 2016, more than 11,000 organizations and individual supporters from across the world have joined the movement to demand massive reductions in single-use plastics and to push for lasting solutions to the plastic pollution crisis. BFFP member organizations and individuals share the common values of environmental protection and social justice, and work together through a



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holistic approach in order to bring about systemic change under the #breakfreefromplastic core pillars. This means tackling plastic pollution across the whole plastics value chain - from extraction to disposal – focusing on prevention rather than cure and providing effective solutions. See <https://www.breakfreefromplastic.org/> to learn more. My Little Plastic Footprint My Little Plastic Footprint is an app that helps individuals reduce their plastic consumption by going on a "plastic diet". To calculate one's plastic footprint, the app uses the Plastic Mass Index (PMI). The PMI is a measure to calculate one's contribution to plastic pollution; the closer your PMI number gets to zero, the less pollution you contribute; the closer your PMI gets to 100, the more you contribute. By going on a plastic diet, you will reduce your PMI and thereby reduce your contribution to plastic pollution. See <https://mylittleplasticfootprint.org/> for more information. Vietnam - MONRE Vietnam's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) cooperated with various community stakeholders to organize workshops that raise public awareness of the adverse impacts of the use of plastic bags in the community. MONRE implemented a number of communication solutions on the harmful effects of plastic waste, such as the emulation movement themed "Take action to reduce plastic and nylon pollution", calling on all officials and employees of the environmental sector, as well as their families and relatives, to "say no to single-use plastics and nylon bags". The ministry also coordinated with many localities from across the country to organize campaigns collecting and recycling plastic waste and nylon bags from markets, supermarkets, trade centers and residential areas, aiming to encourage consumers to minimize the use of single-use plastic products and non-degradable nylon bags, and give up the habit of littering indiscriminately. Most recently, the MONRE collaborated with the Hanoi People's Committee and the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union Central Committee to launch the national movement, "Combating plastic waste 2019", which was enthusiastically acted upon through the central to local levels with practical actions and deeds. Plastic Free July Plastic Free July is a global movement that helps millions of people be part of the solution to plastic pollution. Plastic Free July participants reduce their household waste and recycling by 21 kilos per person per year and contribute to a total savings of 940 million kilos of plastic waste each year. With over 326 million participants worldwide in 2020, the movement has taken 900 Million kilos of plastic out of nature, including millions of single-use drink bottles, coffee cups, packaging, straws and plastic bags. See <https://www.plasticfreejuly.org/about-us/> for more information.

## Conclusion

**ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS** Community-based Waste Management Community-based waste management programs are collaborations between NGO's, government agencies and impacted communities, to provide the equipment, resources and training necessary to establish an effective waste management program, and to run the program independently. Youth-led Initiatives Youth-led organizations prove effective in raising awareness of the dangers of plastics to our environment by offering local community engagement workshops, organizing beach clean-ups, promoting plastic-free products, lobbying with local and national governments, and speaking at public events and in schools.