



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.

YOUTH-LED INITIATIVES

Award Scheme

Themes

Sustainable Development Goals

Others

Waste Management

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

Summary

Youth-driven community engagement and education initiatives that advocate for no plastic in our world is a powerful means to creating consumer change. **KEY CONSIDERATIONS:** 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.

Background and Objective

Right now, there are 150 million metric tons of plastic in our oceans—and we're releasing an additional 8 million metric tons each year. This shocking amount of plastic greatly impacts ocean wildlife. Sea turtles and other marine wildlife mistakenly eat plastic bags that they confuse with jellyfish. Sea birds, whales, dolphins, and other marine animals often turn up dead with stomachs full of plastic. Even land animals are now forced to live among plastic pollution. Single-use plastic bags are a major contributor to ocean pollution. Because the environmental costs of single-use plastic products like these are largely hidden from the consumer, their consumption continues to grow unabated. We cannot solve a problem that people simply are not aware of.

Actions and Implementation

Youth-led organizations are key mobilizers in the fight against plastic. Bye Bye Plastic Bags, for example, envisions a world free of plastic where young generations are empowered to take action. BBPB was launched in 2013, in Bali, by founders and sisters, Melati and Isabel Wijsen when they were 10 and 12 years old. BBPB raises awareness and educates youth about the harmful impact of plastic on our environment, animals and health while also sharing how to be part of the solution. Having spoken to over 20,000 youth and created two educational booklets aimed for elementary schools in Indonesia, education has a huge place in the role of BBPB. Globally, the BBPB team has spoken to 50,000 students across 22+ countries in 9 different languages. They have become a well-known international movement of inspiration and youth empowerment. In 2016, BBPB went global and has since established 50 new BBPB groups in cities around the world.

Outcomes and Impacts

CASE STUDY EXAMPLES Bye Bye Plastic Bags Bye Bye Plastic Bags envisions a world free of plastic bags and where the young generation are empowered to take action. BBPB raises awareness and educates youth about the harmful impact of plastic on our environment, animals and health while also sharing how to be part of the solution. Having spoken to over 20,000 youth and created 2 educational booklets aimed for elementary schools in Indonesia, education has a huge place in the role of BBPB. BBPB is an NGO that was first launched in 2013, in Bali, by founders and sisters, Melati (18) and Isabel (16) Wijsen when they were 10 & 12 years old. Since then, BBPB in Bali, has grown to include a volunteer team students from local and international schools around the island + changemakers of all ages. The team has spent the last 6+ years raising awareness about the waste problem in Bali through delivering school presentations and workshops, organizing beach clean-ups, providing 35,000+ alternative bags, creating a plastic bag free pilot village, lobbying with local and national governments, and speaking at a variety of local and global events. Globally, the BBPB team has spoken to 50,000 students across 22+ countries in 9 different languages. They have become a well-known international movement of inspiration and youth empowerment. In 2016, BBPB went global and has since established 50 new BBPB groups in cities around the world. Visit <http://www.byebyeplasticbags.org/> to learn more. The POP Ocean Initiative The POP Ocean Initiative, which was launched during the “Perils of Sea Level Rise” session at the Second World Sustainable Development Forum 2020, serves as an innovative new model International Ocean Cleanup Day and Launch of the Youth-Led Ocean Action and Advocacy Workshop for ocean action to stimulate youth-led marine conservation efforts through education and mentorship. The initiative aligns with the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals, specifically SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), SDG 15 (Life on Land), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). As part of POP Ocean’s effort to build capacities of young ocean advocates, it will launch the Youth-Led Ocean Action and Advocacy Workshop on September 19, 2020, which also marks International Ocean Cleanup Day. Visit <https://thepopmovement.org/pop-ocean/youth-led-ocean-action-and-advocacy-workshop/> to learn more. Stow It-Don’t Throw It Welcome to the official



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website for the “Stow It-Don’t Throw It” Project – a youth-driven marine debris prevention and ocean conservation program dedicated to protecting marine environments and their inhabitants while educating others to do the same. The project works to engage youth in combating the dangers of improperly disposed of monofilament fishing line by assembling and distributing personal-sized fishing line recycling bins to anglers and boaters, while educating the public on sustainable fishing practices. See <http://stowitdontthrowitproject.weebly.com/> for more information. Students Take on Plastic (S.T.O.P.) is an initiative born out of the Ban the Bag Conference at the Hewitt School (NY) in 2013 and their follow-up student training on how to talk to lawmakers to encourage them to pass legislation that bans or places a surcharge on single-use plastic bags. For more information, see: <https://www.greenschoolsalliance.org/program/campaigns/stop-plastics>.

Conclusion

ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS Children are susceptible to peer pressure. When single-use plastic becomes socially unacceptable and unpopular, it will be purchased less and less of it will end-up in our oceans. Hosting plastic awareness conferences in youth communities and at schools is a way in which kids and parents alike can become informed. For more information, see <https://www.greenschoolsalliance.org/program/campaigns/stop-plastics>.