



School challenge

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What can you do?

- Set up awareness program at schools to reduce plastic, implement plastic waste separation.
- Ensure education and awareness actions for the children.
- Organize a 'School Challenge' with a formal kickoff, final, honor and award for the school. Cover the full cycle including reduction and waste separation, involve the cleaners, staff, local authorities and the waste management company.
- Focus is on publicity and awareness. It starts with awareness for the general public, stop to use single-use plastics¹, reduce plastics and keeping plastic out of our environment.
- Children are our future and via our children we can connect to all adults. These include parents and possibly also neighbors and family.
- Education can be combined with themes regarding other environment themes.
- For secondary schools, higher and professional education it can be integrated into training regarding the circular economy to rethink the process, redesign products and recycling. Demonstrations and solutions regarding cleaning and recycling can also be included.

How to start?

- Investigate what schools in your community already have a policy and implementation regarding plastic reduction. What schools are already taking action but still need some help and what schools want to participate; start with the 'willing'.
- What concerns and questions do they have, what ideas do they propose?
- Make an inventory of current waste collection costs, start with one primary and one secondary school and consider a collaboration with all schools in your city to get cheaper rates and better conditions.
- The school should embrace the challenge. Lessons can be done by the school, Rotarians or other volunteers.
- Share experiences and give room for ideas of the schools and the teachers.
- Make an inventory of needed waste baskets and containers per school required for waste separation.
- Look for funds available in your community, at the city government, or willingness of waste collection companies to invest in our future.
- Reach out to the general public to ask for volunteers and support. Rotary does not have to do this all by themselves: let us do it Together with the school, the teachers, parents and volunteers in your community.
- Ensure publicity before, during and after including pictures and announcement of the results.

Materials

- Rotary EndPlasticSoup Education materials on [our website](#).
- Education materials are already made available by several NGOs e.g.
 - The Netherlands (Dutch language): the Plastic Soup Foundation, <https://www.plasticsoupfoundation.org/en/psf-junior/>
 - In Asia and Africa education material from Happy Green World <https://www.happygreenworld.org>
 - Several countries: material from World Wildlife Fund, e.g. <https://www.wwf.nl/jeugd/educatie/toekomstkunde>
 - More info via WWF <http://www.wwf.org>
 - And via the UN Clean Seas program, Back to School education package: <https://www.cleanseas.org/back-school>.
 - Also check your country's environmental education organizations, e.g. in The Netherlands the NME <http://www.nmegooivechtstreek.nl>

¹ Examples are straws, snack wrappers, ear sticks, cigarette filters, caps on coffee cups, balloons, snack wrappers, all decoration and stickers on presents, plastic plates, (ice cream) spoons, forks, knives, tooth picks and all plastic packaging.

- Possibly you can get waste baskets or containers as part of the costs for waste collection.
- Materials for special actions e.g. plastic picking may be borrowed from your local authorities or used in cooperation with local Cleaning NGOs, or shared with other schools or sport clubs.
- In several countries funds from local governments might be available.

Other tips

- Ensure communication to the parents.
- Include the full cycle, including the way of working and training of the cleaners at the school.
- Ensure continuous awareness actions, not just during the lesson. E.g. ask the youngsters to collect plastic in the rooms of older children: this will surely create an impact.
- Education and actions can be done by the teachers, by local Rotarians or even by parents. Involving parents might create new connections.
- Use Local newspapers, Websites and Social Media to create publicity. Share your information with the sites and social media of other organizations and friends and ask them to share and publish the information as well.
- Promote the App 'Mylittleplasticfootprint': tips to reduce plastic and know your PMI (Plastic Mass Index): <https://www.plasticsoupfoundation.org/en/psf-in-action/plastic-footprint-2/>
- Ask a (local) celebrity to kick off the event or announce the winner.
- Seriously consider a challenge per school, not just a lesson or a centralized process. Make it specific for the individual school, easier to organize. Ask the school for ideas, e.g. a piece of art from plastic waste, or the best ideas to avoid single use plastics (balloons, bottles, straws, bags...). Ensure a minimum of administration overhead to keep track of the challenge results!
- Make a start in the new school year or in the new calendar year or combine it with a specific event at the school.