

INCREASING AWARENESS OF PLASTIC WASTE MANAGEMENT IN VIETNAM

Working in collaboration with PepsiCo, the Center for Education and Development (CED) has created a project to help raise awareness on the growing issue of plastic waste in Vietnam. This program (from January 2020 to December 2022) has worked with schools, universities, business, and government agencies to create systems that can help tackle the growing issue of plastic waste, bringing Vietnam in line with the Law on Environmental Protection 2020.

Background

Vietnam is currently one of Asia’s top ocean polluters, and ranked 17th globally, due to the sheer amount of plastic used. Vietnam currently releases approximately 28–73 million tons of plastic into the ocean each year, contributing 6% of the world’s total volume. To bring attention to this growing issue and implement concrete actions, CED has worked with schools, universities, businesses, recycling companies such as Lagom Joint Stock Company, and government agencies such as the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) over the past three years.

Implementation

In the first phase of the project, CED engaged 264 business staff over three workshops to provide information about the impact of plastic waste, and provided solutions on how to reduce, reuse and recycle disposable single-use plastic products to determine a zero-waste future. At these workshops, businesses were able to speak with government agencies (such as MONRE) to understand how they could participate in a coalition against plastic waste.

CED also recognized the importance of a bottom-up approach to compliment the top-down approach established in the first phase of the project. To do this, CED worked with schools and universities to recruit a group of students, known as “Environmental Youth Leaders (EYL),” to act as

ambassadors for environmental awareness and change. CED selected and trained 78 EYL from six provinces across the country (Hanoi, Da Nang, Nha Trang, Phu Yen, Ho Chi Minh City, Can Tho and An Giang) for this course. These EYL participated in online training, where they became experts on plastic waste, and were then tasked with devising a plan to spread awareness of the issues they had learned.

After this training, and a refresher training, the EYL took to their schools and universities to organize an array of awareness raising activities. Mini games and competitions were organized that attracted many players from across their respective institutions. The EYL were also responsible for updating social media channels to further spread the message about their work.


CED supported the work of the EYL by providing technical guidance, as well as organizing complimentary events. For instance, some events were organized in An Giang and Can Tho, Dong Thap province which collected 96kg of plastic waste. Furthermore, CED worked with the National Economics University (NEU) to implement plastic waste collection points on campus. This allowed students to bring in waste from home, sort it, and dispose of it. From here, Lagom Joint Stock Company would help collect and recycle the waste. As a result of this project, from September–December 2022, more than 5000kg of plastic waste was collected and disposed of properly.




CED has also created various materials for future EYL and teachers/students to refer to. They have also created a variety of videos about collecting and sorting plastic waste, which have been uploaded to YouTube. However, CED has also worked with traditional media platforms to further spread the message around plastic waste. They have created a trailer entitled “End plastic pollution in Vietnam: together, we can!” to launch educational campaigns for students, and have created a 15-minute documentary with television network VOV.

As a result of this project, CED has been able to spread awareness to 47,941 students, 100 teachers and 264 business staff. One of the EYL from Hanoi stated that “This [project] helped me better understand and know how to identify types of plastic, and how to collect and clean them. I use the knowledge that I have learned from this project in my daily life. I also shared it with all members in my family in order to change their awareness of using plastic, classifying, and collecting plastic waste to protect the environment.”

The longevity of the program is key to the success of changing attitudes about plastic waste in Vietnam. Therefore, CED is committed to continuing its work and expand what they have already established with PepsiCo. They hope to raise more funds to be able to further implement their plastic waste collection models in more schools, as well as train more EYL to continue awareness raising activities in their institutions. CED also wishes to expand the project to women-owned business to promote women in Vietnam.

 **03 Workshops for enterprises** in Danang, Quy Nhon, Gia Lai with over 264 participants

 **78 Young environmental leaders** chosen from over 100 candidates from Hanoi, Danang, Nha Trang, HCM, Can Tho, An Giang.

 **47,941 students, 100 teachers** and **264 business staff** increased awareness of plastic waste management.

 More than **5000kg** of plastic waste was collected and disposed of properly

