



Collection

Collecting plastic is one of the four main cornerstones of the project. The collection process has many benefits and can be carried out in any number of different ways in an almost infinite number of locations.

By encouraging a hands on approach to the collection process and physically measuring and demonstrating the volume of plastic collected over a set period of time, it engages participants as they can see first hand the volume of waste collected or created by the group.

Consider: Talking about 1 billion nurdles in the ocean or 6.9 billion tons of plastic waste created is an impossible thing to accurately visualise, especially for younger participants who are just learning to visualise numbers. Generally such descriptions are impact statements, which are great for news headlines, but not so great for getting people to accurately visualise what is being discussed. Such statements sensationalise the volume of plastic waste, which in turn desensitises people to it as they cannot directly relate to it. It also makes people think that their own contribution to the problem is so small as to be insignificant.

Talking about the large pile of plastic waste collected in the classroom creates a connection between the participants and the larger problem. It helps participants visualise the amount of waste created. Parallels can then easily be drawn between the pile of collected waste and the volumes discussed in those larger impact statements.

Examples:

- Measure the area of waste collected by the group, multiply it by the school or town or countries population, calculate the resultant area as being equivalent to X number of school playing fields or classrooms or assembly halls.
- Measure the length of waste lined up end to end, calculate how far it would stretch or how tall it would be.

Creating this connection is important as it engages participants and helps them create an understanding their involvement in the wider plastics lifecycle.

Think of other ways that participants can be engaged in the collection process

Foundation

- Plastic waste is collected separate to other recyclable waste.



- Waste is not segregated or separated by plastic type but collected all-together.
- Washing of dirty / food wastes before storing is encouraged
- Analyse where does plastic come from / how is it used / what properties it has
- Measure volume of plastic waste collected

Elaborations

- Discuss the impact statements, get students to try and describe / draw / calculate the volumes discussed (can be done pre-collection as a comparison)
- Measure / count how much waste is collected in one day / week / month / per participant / per area
- Calculate how much waste would be created by a larger subject group
- Calculate how much room this waste would take up or how far it would stretch
- Encourage participants to increase yield by collecting litter / promoting the project
- For subsequent collection periods encourage positive behaviours to reduce single use plastics.
- Spread the news - How can we promote more / better recycling behaviours

Outcomes

- Understanding of plastic, it's origin and uses
- Collect plastic waste (needed for the next stage of the project)
- Demonstrate / identify / calculate volume of plastic waste created per capita / per participant.
- Engage participants in plastics lifecycle
- Raise awareness and engage others