

ACTING AGAINST
POLLUTION

A photograph showing a young child standing amidst a large, messy pile of trash. The child is wearing a blue and orange shirt and blue jeans. The trash includes several large white sacks, plastic bottles, food containers, and other debris. The scene is set on a paved surface, possibly a street or a public area. The text "GLOBAL ACTION DAYS" is overlaid in large white letters across the center of the image.

GLOBAL
ACTION
DAYS

APRIL 18-28

LITTER LESS
PLUS



Welcome to Global Action Days 2023!

Over the course of 10 days, we will demonstrate and motivate others on how small individual actions can have a significant impact on our own and our Earth's wellbeing.

The 2023 Global Action Days are all about the 5Rs:

- **Refuse**
- **Replace**
- **Reuse**
- **Repurpose**
- **Recycle**

From April 18th to 28th, we encourage participants to implement 5 actions anyone can do to reduce pollution and consume more responsibly.

Schools from all over the world, which are part of the Eco-Schools, LEAF and YRE Network, as well as non-FEE programme schools, are invited to join in.



R for
REFUSE

MEATLESS DAY

1

FACT

The production of red meat, such as beef and lamb can produce up to 250 times more greenhouse gasses per gram of protein than legumes? Also, livestock farming is associated with high emissions of nitrogen into the environment, which disturbs its natural balance and can cause the death of plants and animals.

2

POLLUTION

Did you ever smell a strong odor passing by a fertilized agricultural field? This is due to ammonia, and it's responsible for the large amounts of algae washed on the beach.

3

GOOD TO KNOW

Most countries recommended a maximum intake of 500 g of red meat per week. To put it in perspective, two thin slices of ham are around 40-50 g!



REFUSE IN ACTION

MEATLESS DAY'S PREPARATION

Learning about the relationship between meat consumption, climate change and air pollution. Participants take action to protect nature by changing their food consumption habits to be more sustainable.

BEFORE THE ACTION

- Discuss with your participants the negative impacts of meat production on nature and human health. Also, the issues of animal abuse.
- Discuss also the motivation participants have for changing their meat consumption habits (e.g. pollution, climate change, animal welfare, taste and texture, ethics, love for life forms).

AFTER THE ACTION

- Discuss the changes that participants can make in their meal plans to balance both nutrition and sustainability.
- Explore the option that your school canteen (if you have one) reduces the amount of meat they purchase and/or substitutes it with 'meat-like' products.

USEFUL RESOURCES

[The future of meat production](#)

[Map showing world nitrogen pollution](#)

[How bad is eating \(red\) meat for our health and the environment?](#)

[Cooking plant-based: how to get enough protein](#)

[What is a plant-based diet and does it have any benefits?](#)

[Plant-based protein sources for vegans and vegetarians](#)

[Explore Seasonal Fruit and Vegetables in Europe \(interactive map\)](#)

[Are seasonal fruit and vegetables better for the environment?](#)

REFUSE IN ACTION

MEATLESS DAY'S ACTIVITIES

IN FEW STEPS

- 1 Decide with your family or friends the day of the week you will dedicate only to vegetarian or vegan meals.
- 2 Think of at least one vegetarian or vegan recipe that you like that only contain local and seasonal ingredients. Write them down in a clear way. You can add a photo to your description.
- 3 Exchange the recipes with your friends and make sure that you understand how to follow them.
- 4 Find the necessary ingredients and prepare a meal as instructed. You can choose to cook together with friends.
- 5 Enjoy it with your family and/or friends. Take a photo of your dish and post it on your social media account with the hashtag #litterlessplus.
- 6 Optional: You can organize a tasting in class or with a group of friends.
- 7 Rot any organic leftovers in a compost bin (you can choose to make one with your friends).



R for REPLACE

ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

1

FACT

Many products we daily use (e.g., cleaning products, cosmetics, food packaging) can contain substances harmful to the environment or to human health.

2

POLLUTION

These substances, released into the air or water, are invisible to the naked eye and can travel from one place to another.

Examples of such substances are particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5), nitrogen oxides, PFAS and hormones.

Some of these substances can also react with each other to produce new harmful compounds.

3

GOOD TO KNOW

There might be even microplastics in your toothpaste!



REPLACE IN ACTION

ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCT'S PREPARATION

Participants learn that many household and cosmetic products contain invisible harmful chemicals and get acquainted with eco-labelling. Participants find ways to minimize their use of harmful products by replacing them with environmentally friendly alternatives.

BEFORE THE ACTION

- Ask participants to provide examples of invisible pollutants and introduce them to the topic of eco-labelling. Discuss how these pollutants flow by water, air and soil into the environment and the concept of bio-accumulation.

AFTER THE ACTION

- Discuss the importance of reading the ingredient list on packaging. Make a list of the sustainable products participants identified and their purpose. Share the list with the participants and on social media.

USEFUL RESOURCES

[Biomagnification and Bioaccumulation](#)

[Bioaccumulation - Wikipedia](#)

[Examples of harmful chemicals from the European Environmental Agency](#)

[TIL: From Fleece Jackets to Your Food](#)

[A video about PFAS](#)

[The Dirty Truth About Toxic Cleaning Products - YouTube](#)

[Invisible air polluting gases revealed by satellite imagery \(unep.org\)](#)

[Air Pollution: Causes, Effects & Solution](#)

REPLACE IN ACTION

ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCT'S ACTIVITIES

IN FEW STEPS

- 1 Watch these videos if you want to know more about invisible pollutants:
[How to claim your right for a life free from chemicals - YouTube](#)
[The Dirty Truth About Toxic Cleaning Products - YouTube.](#)
- 2 Find three products in your home that contain substances that can be harmful to humans, animals, and plants. Which labels indicate that these products can be harmful? Discuss with your friends and family how these chemicals find their way into nature and the reason for them being regarded as harmful.
- 3 Can you find or make less harmful alternative products? For inspiration, you can check out this video: https://youtu.be/ToHirl_a-es
- 4 Find alternative products that are eco-labelled. Discuss with your friends the importance of eco-labelling and the precautionary principle.
- 5 Search and see whether a given substance is banned from use in the European Union here: [Information on Chemicals - ECHA \(europa.eu\)](#)
- 6 Share your ideas for non-toxic products with your friends or on FB/Instagram with the hashtag #litterlessplus.



R for REUSE

BOOK SWAP DAY

1

FACT

Reading books is a wonderful way to acquire knowledge and trigger the imagination. However, their production is associated with substantial environmental consequences.

2

POLLUTION

Did you know that the global average water footprint of one A4 sheet 80 g printing and writing paper is 5.1 litter (1)? Also, when you purchase re-used books through sales in a second-hand market you can save more than twice as much energy than making books from recycled paper (2).

3

GOOD TO KNOW

In Europe, paper waste accounts for 30% of the total municipal waste and about 70% of this paper is recycled.

(1) Joep F. Schyns, Martijn J. Booij, Arjen Y. Hoekstra, The water footprint of wood for lumber, pulp, paper, fuel and firewood, *Advances in Water Resources*, Volume 107, 2017, Pages 490–501, ISSN 0309–1708, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.advwatres.2017.05.013>.

(2) Thomas, Valerie. (2011). The environmental potential of reuse: An application to used books. *Sustainability Science*. 6. 109–116. 10.1007/s11625–010–0115–z.



REUSE IN ACTION

BOOK SWAP DAY'S PREPARATION

Participants learn to extend the life cycle of common products such as books and reduce the purchase of new ones.

BEFORE THE ACTION

- Discuss with the participants the importance of eliminating waste by extending the life cycle of products they buy through re-use or sharing. Discuss the importance of reuse/sharing in relation to waste prevention and recycling using the waste hierarchy and highlight that reducing the impact of waste depends not only on technological solutions but also on consumers adopting a sustainable mindset.

USEFUL RESOURCES

[The 5 R's](#)

Explore [Wastebusters](#)

[A short video about re-use and recycling](#)

AFTER THE ACTION

Collect feedback from your participants and explore the opportunity to:

- Re-do the activity on a fixed day of the year.
- Have a fixed place (e.g. a shelf or room) in your school, work or meeting place for used/read books.
- Organize book (and toys) swapping with other schools or organisations.
- Discuss how many new books/toys were not required?

REUSE IN ACTION

BOOK SWAP DAY'S ACTIVITIES

IN FEW STEPS

- 1 Watch this video on the impact of paper production.
- 2 Decide on a day when you will arrange a book-swapping day. You can include other activities such as story-telling, bookmark making and illustration workshops in the activity.
- 3 Find a book that you enjoyed and that you are willing to swap for another book.
- 4 Present the book that you loved to your friends or family and share the emotions you felt while reading it. You can also post it on social media asking others if they are interested.
- 5 Swap your book(s) with your friends, take a photo of your new books and post it on social media with the hashtag #litterlessplus.
- 6 Enjoy reading your book!
- 7 Optional: You can also extend this activity to include used toys, fashion items or gadgets.



R for
REPURPOSE

GIVE A SECOND LIFE

1

FACT

The global “material footprint” increased by 70% between 2000 and 2017? It is the amount of raw material we use to produce everything we consume and an indicator of the pressure we put on the world’s resources.

2

POLLUTION

We all need to carefully consider our consumption needs and habits to promote a circular rather than a linear, “buy-and-throw-away” culture and minimise our material footprint. You can do this by being creative with stuff you have, so turn your old jeans into a fabric bag, an old shirt into a pillowcase, etc. and at the same time reduce your consumption of new material.

3

GOOD TO KNOW

Thinking about throwing away an item you don't want or need anymore? Challenge your imagination and get creative instead! Consider transforming your old toys, clothes or other household items into a thoughtful gift, a piece of art or a fashion statement!



REPURPOSE IN ACTION

GIVE A SECOND LIFE'S PREPARATION

Participants learn to repurpose stuff they have and this way extends the life of their belongings and saves resources by reducing their consumption of new things.

BEFORE THE ACTION

- Discuss with participants the link between resource depletion and consumption patterns. Feel free to use the resources below to support the discussion

AFTER THE ACTION

- Collect feedback from the participants on the activity and strengthen the notion that we can all find ways to extend the life of our stuff.
- Discuss what makes it difficult to repurpose/repair things.

USEFUL RESOURCES

[UN Factsheet about sustainable production and consumption](#)

[SDG12](#)

[Lesson Plans about sustainable consumption](#)

[The story of Fairtrade cotton](#)



REPURPOSE IN ACTION

GIVE A SECOND LIFE'S PREPARATION

IN FEW STEPS

- 1 Start with learning the basics about Circular Economy by watching this video: <https://youtu.be/zCRKvDyyHml>.
- 2 Decide on a creative day together with friends or family where you will repurpose old or unused stuff you have.
- 3 Find inspirational online videos showing ideas on how to repurpose stuff we use in our daily life and share them with your friends. Alternatively, you can watch this video.
- 4 Find things in your home that you would like to give new life to. Make sure that you have the necessary tools and materials to do it.
- 5 Be creative with your stuff while trying to avoid producing new waste.
- 6 Share your new creations with your friends or on FB/Instagram with the hashtag #litterlessplus.
- 7 Throw any waste you couldn't avoid producing into the appropriate recycling bin.



R for RECYCLE

LITTER PICK-NIC

1

FACT

By 2050 there will be more plastic than fish in our oceans.

2

POLLUTION

Only 9% of all plastic waste ever produced has been recycled. About 12% has been incinerated, while the rest 79% has accumulated in landfills, dumps or the natural environment.

3

GOOD TO KNOW

Today, we produce nearly 400 million tonnes of plastic waste each year. That's nearly equivalent to the weight of the entire human population – [UNEP](#)



RECYCLE IN ACTION

LITTER PICK-NIC'S PREPARATION

Enforcing the notion of collective effort to protect the environment by taking action on littering, and diverting waste to recycling while using senses to appreciate nature.

BEFORE THE ACTION

- If you conduct the litter-pick-picnic as a school activity follow the security/safety and hygiene protocols of the school.

AFTER THE ACTION

- Collect feedback from participants and their families on the negative effects of littering and the importance of recycling.
- Discuss how we can eliminate the need for litter pick?

USEFUL RESOURCES

[Earth Day tool-kit on plastic pollution](#)

[A YouTube video on plastic pollution by National Geographic](#)

[A YouTube video on the lifecycle of plastics](#)

[A Youtube video about plastic pollution in the ocean](#)

[Lesson Plans on Litter and Waste by Foundation for Environmental Education](#)

RECYCLE IN ACTION

LITTER PICK-NIC'S PREPARATION

IN FEW STEPS

- 1 Choose a time for a litter-pick picnic with your family or friends. Pack a blanket, some food and drinks in a reusable container, as well as gloves/litter-pickers, bags, and hand sanitiser. Walk together to a nice green area of your choice. On your way there, pick up the litter that you might see on the street or path.

Note: You can choose to do this activity voluntarily also on Earth Day Saturday 22nd April. You can find more information about Earth Day as well as useful resources at EARTHDAY.ORG

- 2 Once you arrive, take 10 minutes to pick up any litter in the surrounding area – even the small cigarette butts!
- 3 Throw your waste into the appropriate bin: Plastic waste to plastic recycling bin, glass waste to recycling glass bin, paper waste into a paper recycling bin, etc. If you can't find enough bins to throw your waste in, write a message to your local municipality making them aware of the issue and calling them to install more bins.
- 4 Celebrate your efforts by enjoying the clean nature together and the food you brought. Take a photo of your picnic and of the litter picked and share it on FB/Instagram with the hashtag #litterlessplus.



Last year's Global Action Days saw over 150,000 participants from 73 countries taking action for global biodiversity.

This year, we're hoping to see even more participants taking positive handprint actions!

JOIN US

You can now register for #GlobalActionDays! Mark the dates in your calendar and register your school, hotel, municipality, beach or marina using the form available on our website.

By registering you will make sure to receive the latest updates and resources.

LITTER LESS
PLUS