

Project Brief



Green Action Week 21 **Raising Consumer Awareness on Plastic Waste Reduction Measures**



Introduction and Rationale

In 2015, world leaders agreed to 17 Global Goals (officially known as the Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs). These goals wield the power to create a better world by 2030, by ending poverty, fighting inequality, and addressing the urgency of climate change. Within the frame of the SDGs, world leaders have agreed on tackling the unsustainable consumption and production patterns, thereby leading to a significant reduction in waste pollution and encourage community sharing. By minimising the use of natural resources and the emissions of waste and pollutants, the goal is to ensure everyone's right to a healthy environment and a better quality of life is achieved.

One way of improving people's access to goods and services without increasing the stress on the environment is to share. By 'Sharing' we can reduce waste and improve resource efficiency. Sharing is, in other words, a concrete example of more sustainable consumption culture.



In Ghana, plastic usage and its disposals have not only become an environmental threat but also financial as people have to understand that plastics materials are not re-usable and this has caused people to always having to buy plastic bags when they go shopping. In some cases, shops and businesses surcharge customers who ask for polythene or other plastic bags. This comes at a cost to the consumer. Additionally, the government of Ghana during its 2021 tax measures has imposed a consumption tax on fuel called “plastic levy.” The essence of the levy is to help the state mobilize revenues to clean the constant pile-up of plastic menace which has become more of a problem than a solution.

Fiscal measures are not the best as the poor pays the same amount of tax as the rich and as to whether the taxes being realized can be deployed to keep the cities and communities out of the plastic waste, there is no guarantee on this. Evidence suggests that a responsible usage of plastics through re-usage helps, in the long run, to reduce the amount of waste that it is generated and at the same reduces the overexposure of the poor and the marginalized to taxes and additional surcharges.

It is in this context that, CUTS Accra with funding support from Consumers International and Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) is collaborating during the ***‘Green Action Week Campaign 2021’*** to ignite the culture of ***‘Community Sharing’***. This project also seeks to engage in enhanced advocacy aimed at causing a behavioural change on waste disposal and reduction measures.

Project Goal

The principal goal of the campaign is to reduce the use of plastic bags and plastic waste in Accra. To achieve this, the project seeks to raise consumer awareness of the bad effects of plastic on the environment. It also seeks to promote the habit of sharing

resources among the community to get people to use fewer plastic bags or buy bags that are made of bio-degradable products such as paper or jute.



Project Objectives

The Project seeks to:

- deepen understanding of unsustainable social trends and irresponsible use of plastic bags, their negative impacts and actions needed to curb this trend among the people of Accra.
- encourage dialogue among different segments of the society such as school students, college students, teachers, urban residents, restaurants, civil societies, government officials and media on how to replace plastic bags gradually.
- explore different digital technologies and creative collaborative actions needed to reduce plastic waste.
- conduct media advocacy on bad impacts of plastic consumption

Project Activities

The proposed activities can be split into three namely; Community Sensitization Workshop, Advocacy, and Media Outreach

Community/Policy Makers Sensitization Workshop

Two outreach programs on the theme “Sharing Community” shall be organised in Kasoa on the last day of Green Action Week. The engagement shall aim to advocate for behavioural changes in adopting best waste disposal and reduction practices. More than 200 representatives from students, teachers, civil society/consumer organisations, farmers’ groups, restaurant owners, and media and government departments shall participate. The event will be covered in local media in both English and local language.



Advocacy

Three community sensitization meetings with women groups, One University students’ engagement and three market campaigns shall be organized. These activities aim to sensitize these groups on reducing plastic pollution, disposal and its usage. In total, 500 school children, 20 teachers and 1000 market women will be engaged.

Media Outreach

The media shall be used as a tool to disseminate messages as well as inform and educate the public on the dire effects of the unsustainable use of plastics on the environment. The same will be used to sensitize the people of Accra and Kasoa on sustainable ways of waste disposal and reduction measures. Feature articles, press releases, TV and radio appearances shall be employed to stimulate discussions and debates towards reforms. CUTS social media handles, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Linked In and YouTube shall also be deployed to reach a wider audience.

Project Outcomes

- Enhanced understanding of different stakeholders regarding the negative impact of plastic usage on the environment and public health
- Improved awareness of different stakeholders on the importance and various practical ways to replace plastic usage
- Increased and more substantive participation from media and local people for reducing and replacing plastic usage
- Policymakers will become aware of the importance of replacing plastic and policy choices for the reduction of unnecessary plastic consumption
- Improvement in environmental condition and public health
- Identification of the potential source of revenue by minimizing plastic waste while enhancing quality of life