

# Waste is our Opportunity

Identifying Waste Sources,  
Strengthening Policies

&

Introducing Circular Solutions in Schools





# Freeing the world's seas from marine litter

## WHO WE ARE

Founded in 2013, Healthy Seas is a global foundation with the mission to remove marine litter from the world's seas and oceans.

We focus on the collection of abandoned fishing nets, with the ultimate goal of creating healthier waters, and the recycling of such marine litter into new products with the help of our partners.







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# Three pillars for cleaner seas and oceans

## WHAT WE DO



### Clean-ups

We partner with volunteer divers from a specialized non-profit called Ghost Diving to recover underwater nets and we organize clean-ups on the shores of beaches, rivers and other natural areas to engage the broader public.



### Education

Along with local partners, we educate children and adults and raise awareness about the problem of marine litter, plastic pollution, climate change, biodiversity and the circular economy.



### Prevention

We work closely with entities in the fishing industry to make sure the sector's waste stream is well managed (harbor authorities, fishing communities/associations, and waste management organizations).



# Deadly marine litter





are regenerated to  
circular products

Circularity





We need specialised divers  
to safely remove ghost nets and  
not further damage the ecosystems



We need educators who are not afraid to  
challenge concepts and contexts  
to drive transformation



# Circularity challenges the current economic model towards a sustainable future

Inspired by nature based solutions, **circular models keep materials at the highest possible value** along the value chain

The entire value chain matters, more than each stage individually

All stakeholders are engaged in changing the system

**Lifecycle thinking** enables the identification of strategic intervention points

**Disconnecting** natural resource use and environmental impacts from economic activity and human well-being is essential

<https://buildingcircularity.org>



# Circularity requires creativity and cooperation among all value chain actors

**Everyone** involved should work together:

- businesses, at all stages (raw material production or extraction, brands, retailers, waste management)
- governments
- research institutions
- finance sector
- civil society
- individuals

**Behavioral change of all** those actors is required to achieve transformation

Create **innovative solutions** throughout the value chain

**Chemicals of concern** need to be kept away or easy-to-separate from recycled streams

Plan the transition to circular business models, ensuring **nobody is left behind**, especially in the informal sector



Underpinned by a transition to renewable energy sources,  
the circular model builds economic, natural, and social capital.



### Triple Planetary Crisis

Climate Crisis

Biodiversity Loss

Plastic Pollution

— and the ocean is at the heart  
of them all

### Circularity

Is the optimal path to a  
sustainable future.

It starts with prevention and  
includes reuse, regeneration, and  
thoughtful design.

Recycling alone is not circularity.

### Three principles

Design out waste and pollution

Keep products and materials in use

Regenerate natural systems



# ***Mapping Waste in Our Institutions***

## **Identify Waste Streams**

Material waste:

- paper
- plastic
- food
- electronics
- furniture

## **Discuss**

Where does waste show up most often in daily routines?

Which waste is accepted as normal in your institution?

What waste is created unintentionally by “the way things have always been done”?



Identify any  
common  
patterns

Who is involved in creating this  
waste?

When and where does it mostly  
occur?

Who is affected by it (students, staff,  
cleaners, community)?



# ***Policies: What Exists, What's Missing, What's Possible***

What policies or guidelines already exist in your institution related to:

- Procurement
- Waste separation
- Food services
- Events and celebrations

Which of these are written, and which are unspoken rules?

Are there any policies that unintentionally create more waste?

Discuss

Where does waste show up most often in daily routines?

Which waste is accepted as normal in your institution?

What waste is created unintentionally by “the way things have always been done”?

Systemic  
problems need  
systemic  
thinking

Are policies clear and accessible to everyone (students, teachers, staff, parents etc.)?

Who was involved in creating them  
- and who wasn't?

If no policy exists, what currently fills that gap?



# *Introducing Circular Solutions in Schools*

*Linear model: Take → Make → Use → Dispose*

*Circular model: Reduce → Reuse → Repair → Share → Rethink*

Shift the mindset from “reducing harm” to **creating value** through circular practices

Is it possible that this type of waste could be prevented in the first place?

What could be reused, shared, repaired, or repurposed?

Who in the school community could contribute ideas or skills?

How could students be meaningfully involved? **not just as helpers, but as decision-makers**

Waste is not just a technical issue — it's cultural, organizational, and educational.

Circular solutions don't require big budgets; they start with awareness and intention.

Circular thinking is a journey not a checklist.

Schools are mini-societies: what happens there shapes lifelong habits.

Change in schools are slow but powerful.

Educators are agents of change and can bring together the whole school community.

Educators are role models - small shifts matter



# Whole-School Approach

A whole-school approach doesn't start with a strategy document—it starts with conversations, curiosity, and consistency.

You can act without needing permission to change everything.

Value chains in this case include the full journey of waste in schools: from what we choose to buy, to how we use things and what happens when they are thrown away. It's not just the bin but all the decisions we make across the whole school.

By understanding the value chain, we can reduce waste at the source, not just manage it at the end.

*What is one small thing I could realistically influence in my role?*

*Who would I need to talk to first to start this conversation?*

*What's one question I could ask my students or colleagues about waste?*

*What would progress look like - not perfection?*

Change happens in just one moment → **when we start to think things from a new perspective.**

A phenomenically small thought or action already brings change and can have a huge impact because

**YOU have caused things to move**



# Reflection

What today's discussions meant to me:

As a person?

As an educator?

As a leader?

As a motivator & changemaker?

Please complete 1 of these sentences:

*"One thing I'm seeing differently now is..."*

*"One action I feel confident taking is..."*

*"One question I want to explore further is..."*

THANK YOU



Protect the Ocean  
Shape the future



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