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Plastics



We all live on a PLASTIC PLANET. Plastic use and production have accelerated at breakneck speed, with more than half of all plastics having been manufactured since the year 2000. The benefits of plastic are undeniable – the material is cheap, robust, lightweight and easy to make. At the same time plastic is an eternal plague in many ways because it does not biodegrade.

This exemplar helps students to reflect on some benefits of using plastic, but also on serious consequences that can be seen around the world. In this way critical and systemic thinking are initiated. At the same time the children are encouraged to take handprint action to address a global problem on the local level.



Exemplar on Plastics



The plastic exemplar starts with a start up story about the German 10 year old girl Marie, sharing enthusiastically her experience of a visit from a beverage retailer at her school. She narrates to her family how the beverage retailer used social media for his fight against single use plastics and reached out to many people. Following this, the students are invited to share and discuss their own stories, experiences, and questions. In order to connect the topic with the community level and the daily life of the learning group, the students are encouraged to plan and implement a survey activity (visit grocery shops and check how much plastics is being used in packaging – or alternatives that are more eco-friendly). Teacher can take this activity further by asking students to survey their immediate surrounding including their home and school and encourage them to connect the issue to their own lifestyle. To support children look at the issue through the lens of sustainability and ethics, the teacher can conduct a debate in the classroom on

- Versatility of plastics that has made them central to life-saving initiatives to providing care for those living in extreme conditions – for example: Bottled water save lives in events of water contamination, plastic syringes save lives when infectious diseases break out, plastic toiletries can save lives of people affected during natural disasters.
- Over-use of plastics has caused a lot of problems: Mountains of garbage that are getting bigger and bigger, polluting lakes and oceans and presenting a major threat to marine life and birds. So should Single Use Plastics be banned?

Learners are encouraged to become active themselves and (with teacher support) to decide, plan and implement Handprint actions against plastic, e. g. making the classroom plastic free by avoiding single-use plastics, reducing waste and maximizing recycling; building partnership with a school situated in another part of their country or abroad for working on plastic pollution and fair solutions for people and planet. Such Handprint Actions allow the students to experience self-efficacy and to become change agents.