



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

Focus: Recycling

Recycling is an important way to help us achieve better ways of waste management. We can recycle many resources, including: glass, metal, paper and plastic.

When we recycle used materials, they are converted into new products, reducing the need to consume natural resources.

If used materials are not recycled, new products are made by extracting fresh, raw materials from the earth, through mining and forestry. For instance, the extraction of minerals from the mines through either open pit mining or underground mining causes disruption to the habitats of wild animals and often plants, bushes and of course trees.

As mining companies expand their operations they have to clear huge tracts of land through the cutting of trees causing deforestation. Also there is displacement of people.

Recycling helps conserve important raw materials and protects natural habitats for the future.

The Weekly Information Resource Bulletin

The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- Bring listeners in the project area the latest information on natural resources, the environment and agriculture
- Focus on solutions, what works and what people can do
- Encourage listeners to share both their questions and solutions (African solutions for African problems)
- Raise awareness of issues that need to be discussed to affect public policy.
- Bring the latest solutions and practices that have relevance to this region from around the world
- Identify and link other NGOs working in the region share the project interests and goals
- Give the participating journalists guidance and tips on their reporting on these issues

The Benefits of Recycling Waste

Using recycled materials in the manufacturing process uses considerably less energy than required for producing new products from raw materials even when comparing all associated costs including transport.

There are also extra energy savings because more energy is required to extract, refine, transport and process raw materials ready for industry, compared with providing industry-ready recycled materials.

Plastic can be recycled as fleece clothing so that we use less crude oil. Crude oil is a raw material required for plastic and a scarce resource that is running out. Though it can be difficult sorting out plastics for recycling it helps at the end in making sure that it does not end up in dump sites.

Paper is not melted when it is

recycled. Instead, it is broken up into small pieces and re-formed to make new sheets of paper. This takes less energy than making paper from trees. However, paper can only be recycled a few times before its fibres become too short to be useful, and the recycled paper is often only good enough for toilet paper or cardboard. Still, it can be used as a fuel or compost instead.

Recycling of waste material has become a booming business in Lusaka with scores of people rushing to Chunga dumping site where they are collecting empty bottles and used sacks and selling them to manufacturers. Some of the people we interviewed at the site said they were selling empty bottles and sacks to the Chinese who were using them to make clothes and trays. They say they can sell the recyclables and get about one Kwacha kilogram. In other words, they are turning trash into cash!

Activities for Journalists

Plastic is the most common waste that is generated by most households in Zambia. It is interesting to note that there are no proper guidelines on the disposal of this kind of waste.

During the hot season most people drink a lot more water, but many people don't think about what they should do about the empty plastic bottle when they finish. However, the local government in partnership with the road and safety agency wants to make it easier for people by placing waste bins on public transport.

Most shops in the country give out plastic bags for carrying purchases. These plastic bags are not biodegradable and thus become an eyesore in the environment.

It should also be noted that plastic waste, such as bags, are dangerous for wildlife. Many of the plastic materials thrown into rivers and lakes do not decompose and are either eaten up by fish which die or end up in tap water that humans may drink.

There have been initiatives in Zambia to handle plastic waste. One of the initiatives seen as a great innovation was the construction of a Christmas tree using plastic bottles. The tree was displayed at the shopping malls in Lusaka last December. One person who took part in the collecting and making of the Christmas tree said as a group they felt a need to clean the environment and one way was to build a Christmas tree.

The group placed lights on the tree and used various colors of plastic bottles to make the tree colorful. They hope to expand this idea by creating animal images using plastic bottles.

Another way that plastic is being recycled is

through the re-use of plastic water bottles. The urban populations, especially women, are seizing this opportunity and are now selling water using the same bottles. All that they do is collect bottles from the bins wash them in hot water, fill the bottles with water and freeze it, then sell it at ngwee 50 each.

Alternatively, some women and children are collecting bottles and then selling them to those that are in the business of selling water.

Are there any other ways to effectively deal with plastic waste?

Is anyone recycling in your area? What type of recycling are they doing? Interview them!

What more could your local government do to encourage recycling?

Are there trash bins in your community? Do people use them?

Perhaps you could host a community event about various ways to recycle – offering demonstrations – and inviting specialists to demonstrate even more opportunities for recycling products.

Useful Link

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