

Sensitization, Education and Awareness on Recycling for a Cleaner Habitat

Executive summary

Introduction

The project Sensitization, Education and Awareness on Recycling for a Cleaner Habitat (SEARCH) aimed at raising awareness among school children, teachers, and the larger school community on the issue of waste management. The idea was to encourage young students and teachers to practice the 4Rs – Refuse, Reuse, Reduce, and Recycle in their daily lives and make consumption choices that would ensure the sustainability of the planet in the years to come. Through this programme, a sincere attempt was made to instill a sense of responsibility in the target group, to encourage them to take ownership of the waste generated by them, and make efforts to increase a product's life cycle by recycling it.

Project SEARCH was also an attempt to set up collection centres for post-consumer Tetra Pak cartons and other recyclable materials in the partner schools.. Through this project, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), in partnership with Tetra Pak was working towards making schools 'garbage free zones'.

Project Objectives

- To help students understand the connection between lifestyle, consumption, waste, and the environment;
- To promote respect for nature's resources and make an effort to reduce one's footprint by reusing, reducing, recycling, and refusing;
- To promote a sustainable lifestyle by educating people to become responsible consumers;
- To raise awareness among school students on the environment in general and recycling in specific;
- To instil good waste management practices in children;
- To educate students on the benefits of carton packaging; and
- To help Tetra Pak set-up collection centres in schools for recycling of post consumer Tetra Pak cartons.

Target Group

The project targeted school students from classes 5-12 as well as teachers from 30 select schools in Delhi and Bangalore. The students were divided into two categories-- primary and secondary. The primary and secondary groups comprised students from classes 5-8 and 9-12 respectively. Besides, the project also sensitized members from the school administration and non-teaching staff.



Approach and Methodology

TERI implemented the programme by focusing on the overall concept of ‘Awareness –Analysis – Reflection-Action’. The project was a combination of the following elements:

Research - The project team at TERI conceptualized and designed a 3-part workshop module in consultation with Tetra Pak. The modules were divided into three overarching topics:

- introduction to the key themes,
- contextualizing the problem, and
- the way forward.

The modules combined theoretical knowledge with hands-on activities, simulation exercises, group activities, film screenings, and interactive discussions. The project team also selected appropriate films to be screened during the workshops. The simulation exercises were developed exclusively on the issues pertinent to the project.

Workshops– The workshops were based on the aforementioned modules. Some of the key themes covered during the workshops were, general environmental issues, climate change, waste, waste management, 4Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle and refuse), and recyclability of Tetra Pak cartons among others.

Campaigns – Through this project, the students and school administration were encouraged to undertake action projects on recycling waste. The purpose of the project was to instill a sense of environmental activism and ownership in them.

Competitions – A range of competitions were held during the project duration, like, ‘Kabaad se Jugaad’, ‘Cut, Clean, Collect, and Compete’, and ‘Tetra Pak Ambassadors’ competitions. The ‘Cut, Clean, Collect and Compete’ programme started in October 2009 and the two schools which collected the maximum number of Tetra Pak cartons were awarded a desk made out of aluminum and plastic from Tetra Pak cartons. The idea was not to promote the consumption of Tetra Pak cartons, but to encourage schools to stop disposing the post-consumer cartons in landfills, which is a valuable resource and can be recycled.

Hands-on Demonstration – A demonstration was carried out with the help of a mixer to showcase the process of recycling the Tetra Pak cartons, extraction of paper, and separation of polyethylene and aluminum from the cartons. The idea behind this demonstration was to give a clear understanding of how Tetra Pak cartons are recycled. It was to let the participants know that the products like tissue papers, diaries, note books, etc are made out of the pulp extracted from the carton and roofing sheets are made out of the left over aluminum and plastic.

Total Outreach

The project reached out to approximately 2,500 students and teachers directly, and more than 20,000 indirectly in 60 schools of Delhi and Bangalore.

