



# LESSON: SOLUTIONS TO PLASTIC POLLUTION

## Activity 2: Groups for Solutions

### OVERVIEW

In this activity, participants will be introduced to the importance of diverse collaborations by learning about the different groups of people involved in building solutions to plastic pollution.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

After completing this activity, participants will be able to:

- Describe the different levels where action on plastic pollution can take place (individual, community, government, companies).
- Understand the importance of having different groups working together to implement solutions for plastic pollution.

### SETUP AND MATERIALS

This activity takes approximately 15 minutes.

- Print a copy of the worksheet (or recreate your own on scrap paper) and grab a pen or pencil.
- Open the **Group Interactions Poster**.
- 4 pieces of scrap paper to make signs or print out each of the four **Group Sign Templates**.
  - On each paper print one of four words: INDIVIDUALS, COMMUNITY, COMPANIES, GOVERNMENT.

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Provide participants with a copy of the worksheet.

#### 1. Introduce the groups and their role in plastic pollution solutions.

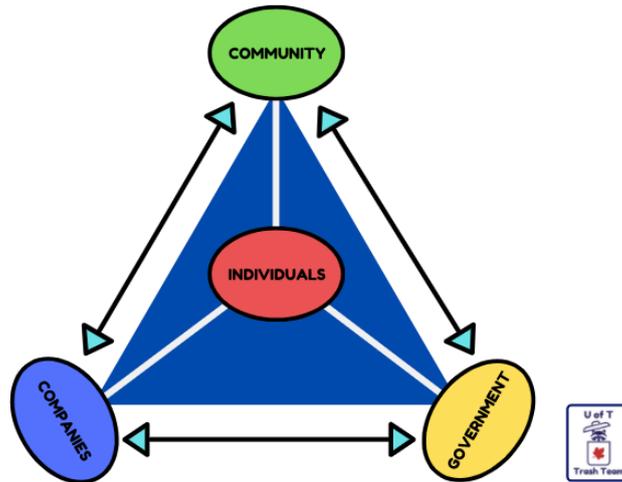
- Explain that solutions for plastic pollution are most successful when carried out by various groups working together and we're going to learn more about these different groups.
- Tell participants there can be many different examples of groups and today we are going to learn about four main examples of groups involved with plastic pollution solutions.
- Share each of the below group descriptions with them as you hold up or display the corresponding sign.
  - **INDIVIDUALS:** People like you and me. We can take individual actions in our daily lives to reduce plastic pollution and share ideas with others to spread awareness. *Examples: You, your classmates, teacher friends, principal, family members, anyone!*
  - **COMMUNITY:** Groups of people that work together to reduce plastic pollution in the community, such as cleanups or waste reduction fairs. *Examples local non-profits, grassroots groups like neighbourhood associations, school clubs.*
  - **COMPANIES:** Businesses that either make products or sell them and can help change how products are made and sold to reduce extra waste. *Examples: grocery store, coffee shop, toy store.*
  - **GOVERNMENT:** A group of people that help create laws for individuals and communities. New laws can help ensure a long-lasting reduction in plastic pollution. *Examples: Can happen at different levels, from your city, province to the entire country.*

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### INSTRUCTIONS (CONTINUED)

- Explain that while these are 4 different groups, they will often interact with each other. Each of these groups plays a role and shares a common interest in the same topic but approaches the topic with different perspectives.
- Hold up the **Group Interactions Poster** which visualizes this relationship, with individuals as the common link between all four groups.



- Now that we have learned about the groups, we'll think about one common plastic product, a plastic bottle, and how these groups might interact to create a solution.
- Ask participants to imagine how each group might interact to reduce the plastic pollution of this item.
  - Suggested responses:
    - **Individuals** can choose not to use plastic bottles.
    - **Community** can organize cleanups to remove littered plastic bottles.
    - **Companies** can redesign the plastic bottle to use fewer materials/reuse materials or sell in a different way that encourages reuse.
    - **Government** can ban plastic bottles, or add deposits to the purchase of bottle that encourages returning them for refund when done.
- It is now time to review the concepts learned. Ask participants to list go to page 1 of their worksheet and think how each group might interact to reduce plastic pollution of the granola bar wrapper and write this on the table included.

### 2. Play a game to match the plastic pollution solutions to the group involved.

- Explain to participants we're going to play a quick game to match some examples of plastic pollution solutions to the correct group they think is involved.
- Explain to participants we're going to put each of the different group signs in a different area of the room and then read out some examples of plastic pollution solutions. After they hear each solution, they will walk towards the group sign that best matches who is involved. (Tell them if they aren't sure of the answer to simply pick one of the groups and that we'll discuss their answers.)
- Place each of the four group signs in a different area of the room (you should have a different sign in each area) then one at a time, read out each example of plastic pollution solutions for participants to match.
- Before moving to the next example, ask participants to share why they chose the groups they did and then discuss if anyone had different answers, and why.



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## Activity 2: Stakeholders for Solutions

### INSTRUCTIONS (CONTINUED)

#### Start with an example that fits in only ONE group:

- **Microbeads banned in Canada:** In 2018 the Government of Canada announced a ban on adding microbeads to products like body wash and toothpaste.
- **ANSWER: GOVERNMENT** (optional: you could discuss that for the ban to happen and for products to be changed, there were multiple groups involved).

#### Next share an example that can fit ALL groups:

- **Local litter cleanup:** A litter cleanup is organized at a local park on Earth Day.
- **ANSWER: ALL FOUR GROUPS!** Talk about how each of them would be involved (eg. Individual volunteers at a cleanup, Community organizes the event, Companies donate supplies for the cleanup or organize their own employee event, Government provides funding and support for cleanups to happen).

**More examples to try:** There is no one correct answer. The goal is to provide participants with the opportunity to describe their rationale and understand that solutions often involve more than one group).

- **Food packaging re-designed to last longer**
- **A grocery store provides reused empty boxes instead of plastic shopping bags**
- **A sculpture is created by plastic litter to raise awareness**
- **A washing machine filter is installed to trap microfibers**
- **Coffee shop only accepting reusable cups**
- Think back to the examples shared and ask participants to share if they had a difficult time selecting just one group. Remind them that some solutions involve many different groups working together and that this often means a much stronger solution.

### FINAL REFLECTION

Now that you have completed all parts of the activity, it's time to reflect back on what participants have learned.

- Have participants return to the last page of their worksheet to answer the questions below.
  - Remind participants that each group is important and plays a different role in the solution to plastic waste. Ask them to think of some different examples of plastic pollution solutions and to list the groups that might be involved with them.
  - Ask participants if they think groups can have a stronger impact by working together or working on their own and to explain their answer (eg. The microbead ban was a strong impact and it came about through individual, community and industry awareness, ultimately leading to formal legislation by the government).

**Coming up next:** We'll think about a local plastic pollution concern and think of our very own solution in Activity 3: Design Your Own Plastic Pollution Solution!