

## WORLDWIDE

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### Plastic Free July

The international Plastic Free July campaign, spearheaded by the Plastic Free Foundation since 2011, has seen over 89 million individuals participate, with the 2023 edition marking another milestone in its mission to eliminate single-use plastics worldwide. Businesses, organizations, NGOs, and governments worldwide have united in the Plastic Free July movement, achieving an impressive reduction of 240 million kilograms in plastic consumption. This collective effort underscores the increasing public demand for leadership to combat plastic pollution.

Participation in the campaign is customizable, allowing individuals to pledge for a day, a week, the entire month, or even commit to lifelong changes. Participants can choose to go fully plastic-free or focus on specific areas such as reducing plastic bag and bottle usage.

The campaign transcends individual actions by encouraging schools, workplaces, and other institutions to participate. Many businesses, nonprofits, and community groups have also joined the initiative, promoting positive changes across various sectors. Local governments around the world embraced the Plastic Free July campaign as a key initiative in their waste education and reduction strategies.

In 2023, global events aimed at raising awareness about plastic-free initiatives included:

- UAE: A gathering of more than 50 artists for a morning tea, combining artistry with a campaign to promote plastic-free living.
- Water New Zealand: The organization tackled the challenge of enjoying food without plastic packaging, committing to a transition from plastic to glass milk bottles.
- NSW EPA: The agency marked the single-use plastics ban with a plastic-free morning tea, emphasizing the importance of sustainability.
- London: An event at Embankment Gardens featured a plastic-free picnic, serving as a hub for change-makers to connect and exchange sustainable practices.

According to the Plastic Free Foundation, 84% of participants have successfully adopted at least one new habit, highlighting the campaign's effectiveness in fostering lasting change.



Source: Plastic Free July



## IMPACTS – 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

- 89 million individuals participated globally, in over 190 countries.
- Workplaces (14,224), communities and schools (7,248), and cafes and retail stores (5,835) actively participated.
- 87% of participants made at least one lasting change.
- In 2023, participants reduced their households': Non-recoverable waste by 900 million kg; Recyclable waste by 700 million kg; Plastic consumption by 240 million kg.
- Participants were 25% more likely to adopt plastic-reducing practices than the global average.
- Strong public support for plastic reduction policies was evident, with 85% backing such initiatives.
- The top 6 countries in participation were China, India, USA, South Korea, Italy, and Brazil.
- The website saw over half a million unique visits.
- 250,000 followers on Facebook and Instagram.
- Over the last 5 years, participants have collectively avoided 10 billion kgs of waste, including 1.4 billion kgs of plastic. An average reduction of 18 kg in waste and recycling per person per year has been achieved.



Source: Plastic Free July



Source: Plastic Free July

## STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

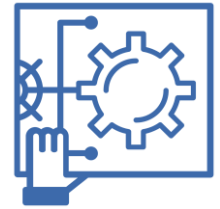


During the Plastic Free July initiative worldwide, stakeholder involvement has been pivotal in shaping its success. Partnerships with businesses, NGOs, government bodies, and local communities have contributed to the global reach and impact of this initiative. Businesses have played a significant role by adopting plastic-free practices and encouraging their employees and customers to do the same. Nonprofit organizations have organized events and campaigns to raise awareness and promote behavior change. Governments have implemented policies to reduce plastic usage and support sustainable alternatives. Local communities have organized cleanup drives, educational workshops, and other activities to engage citizens in the movement. The collective efforts of these stakeholders have contributed to the widespread adoption of plastic-free practices and a growing awareness of the need to reduce plastic pollution.

## PLANNING & MONITORING



The ongoing success of Plastic Free July is underpinned by a rigorous monitoring and evaluation process that involves thorough research and data collection. This includes conducting participant behavior change surveys and analyzing global trends. By partnering with Ipsos in 2018 and 2021 for comprehensive surveys, the campaign has been able to gather valuable insights into the impact of the initiative. Additionally, the annual measurements allow for tracking of progress over time and identify areas for improvement. This data-driven approach is crucial for understanding the effectiveness of Plastic Free July and informing future strategies to promote sustainable living and reduce plastic waste.



## PLASTIC FREE JULY EXAMPLES AROUND THE WORLD

The "Kuha sa Tingi" initiative in Manila, a partnership between Greenpeace Philippines and Impact Hub, aims to establish refill stations in "sari sari" stores for common household cleaning and personal care products. This initiative aims to provide a sustainable community alternative to single-use sachets.

Meanwhile, El Nido Resorts in Palawan has made a significant commitment to eliminate single-use plastic, resulting in major operational changes and setting a benchmark for the tourism industry's role in protecting key biodiversity areas.

Resources have been created in Tagalog (and one poster in Bisaya) to share Plastic Free July with friends, family and colleagues in the Philippines and help end plastic waste.



Sari-sari store in the Philippines

Source: Plastic Free July



Plastic Free July at Kikuchi City Library

Source: Plastic Free July

In 2021, Kikuchi City Library in Japan participated in the Plastic Free July initiative, showcasing ideas for reducing plastic consumption. The library continued its commitment in 2022 by hosting workshops, a market, and displays featuring plastic-free items and educational resources. Utilizing the Kikuchi Disaster Prevention Navi app, the library collaborated with the Kikuchi City Office to promote these events.

Library staff shared popular ideas and switches through workshops, starting with a beeswax wrap-making workshop along with informative discussions about the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as initiatives from other countries.

The library also hosted a Japanese traditional bamboo fan making workshop (来民渋うちわ Kutami-shibu uchiwa) attended by young people through to seniors.

Kikuchi City Library organised a plastic-free Eco Market where patrons were encouraged to 'BYO containers, cups and cutlery'.

The Western Metropolitan Regional Council (WMRC) in Western Australia is responsible for managing waste and recycling on behalf of five member councils. Recognizing the importance of waste prevention, education, and community engagement, the council has been a pioneer in promoting sustainability initiatives. In 2011, staff from the council initiated the first Plastic Free July challenge, encouraging volunteers and residents to reduce their plastic consumption. The council began by organizing educational events on low-waste living and gradually expanded its efforts to make community events plastic-free. The council targeted disposable coffee cups, giveaways, and vendor practices, resulting in significant waste reduction and cost savings. The initiative not only raised awareness about plastic pollution but also demonstrated the positive impact of collective action in reducing waste.

After successfully avoiding single-use plastic during Plastic Free July, WMRC continued the initiative the following years and expanded its reach within the community. They organized a series of events, including talks, cooking workshops aimed at empowering individuals to create their own products and reduce reliance on single-use items, and movie nights. According to Amy, the WMRC's Waste Education Officer, "One of the most successful events was a low-waste cooking workshop where Jude Blereau, a sustainable food expert from Perth, demonstrated how to cook wholesome meals without generating plastic waste." The WMRC also launched Plastic Free July at the local farmer's market, further spreading awareness. This success led to other local councils joining the initiative, promoting the low-waste message not only within their communities but also among their staff.



Plastic free July initiative by Western Metropolitan Regional Council

Source: Plastic Free July



## SOURCES

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- Carbon Neutral Copy – <https://www.carbonneutralcopy.com/plastic-free-july-recap-2022/>



UN-HABITAT

P.O. Box 30030, Nairobi 00100, Kenya  
T: +254-20-76263120  
E: [unhabitat-info@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-info@un.org)



**Andre Dzikus,**  
Chief Urban Basic Services Section

[accp@un.org](mailto:accp@un.org)  
[#AfricanCleanCities](https://twitter.com/AfricanCleanCities)

