

CONNECTING CLASSROOMS



How can we reduce waste in our communities?

Sustainable Development Goal 11 – Sustainable Cities & Communities

HOW CAN WE REDUCE WASTE IN OUR COMMUNITIES?

Sustainable Development Goal 11 – Sustainable Cities & Communities

INTRODUCTION

Do you ever think about how much rubbish you throw away every single day or what happens to it? This theme focuses on questions like these and the progress that has been made in countries around the world in waste reduction and processing. Pupils can investigate and discuss examples of people taking action at a personal, local and global level and design and implement mini-projects to help reduce their carbon footprints by designing waste management solutions in their schools and communities. Even small actions can help to reduce the impact of climate change.

CHALLENGE 2

Share pictures and examples of some of the world's waste problems and discuss the different ways that people can reuse and recycle items that are no longer needed. Ask your pupils to observe and think about waste in their own community. How does it affect people, who does it affect the most, and why?

Share the data from 20 countries on waste and recycling on the activity sheet. The first chart from Waste Atlas (<http://www.atlas.d-waste.com>) shows the amount of waste generated by the top 20 waste producing countries in the world. Encourage your pupils to discuss the following questions with a partner:

- Which five countries produce the most waste? Why do you think this is?
- Can you locate these countries on a world map?
- Does anything surprise you about this list?
- Do you think the geography of the country might have anything to do with waste disposal?

The second chart looks at the top 20 countries, which are better at recycling.

- Discuss which countries appear on both charts?
- Are there countries, which appear on the recycling chart but not on the waste chart?

Learning objectives: To learn about the issue of waste, discover how organisations and schools are tackling this problem and design a campaign to tackle a waste issue in their school or community.

Core skills: Collaboration, citizenship and digital literacy.

Subject links: English, Geography, Science, Citizenship, Personal, Social and Health Education

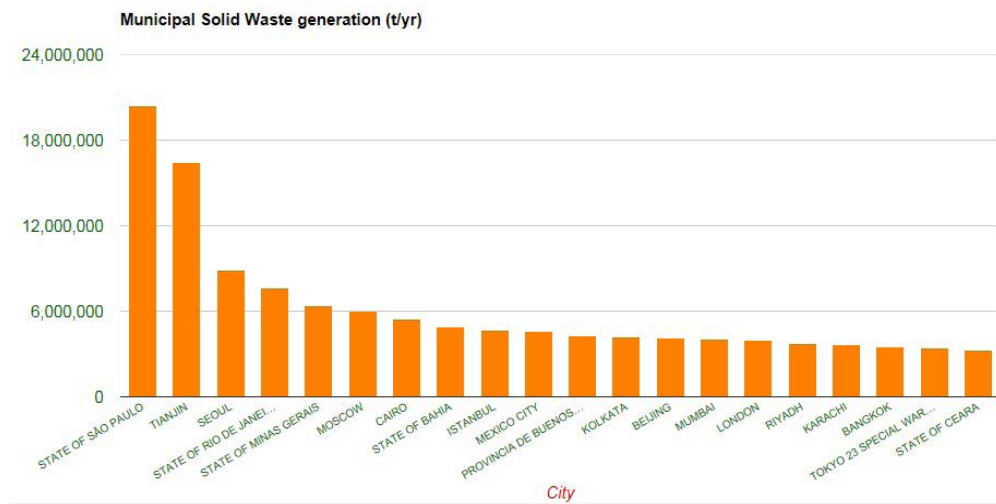
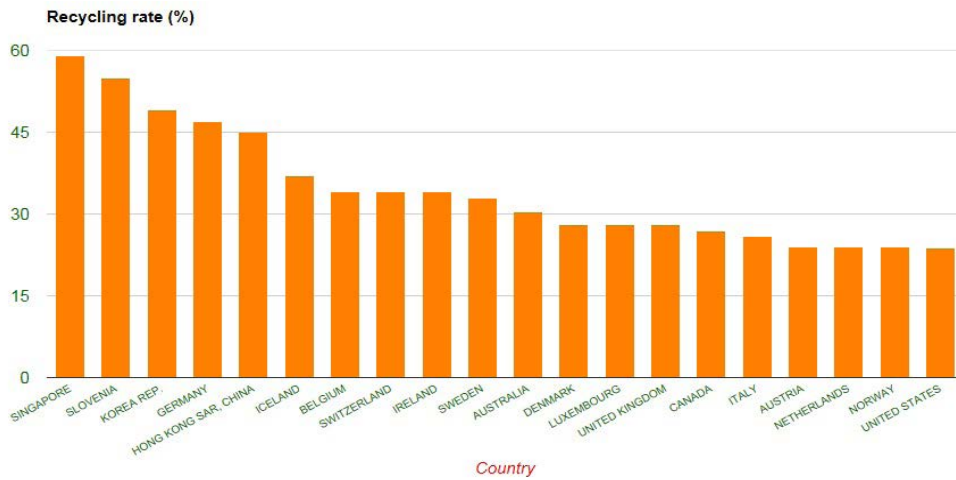
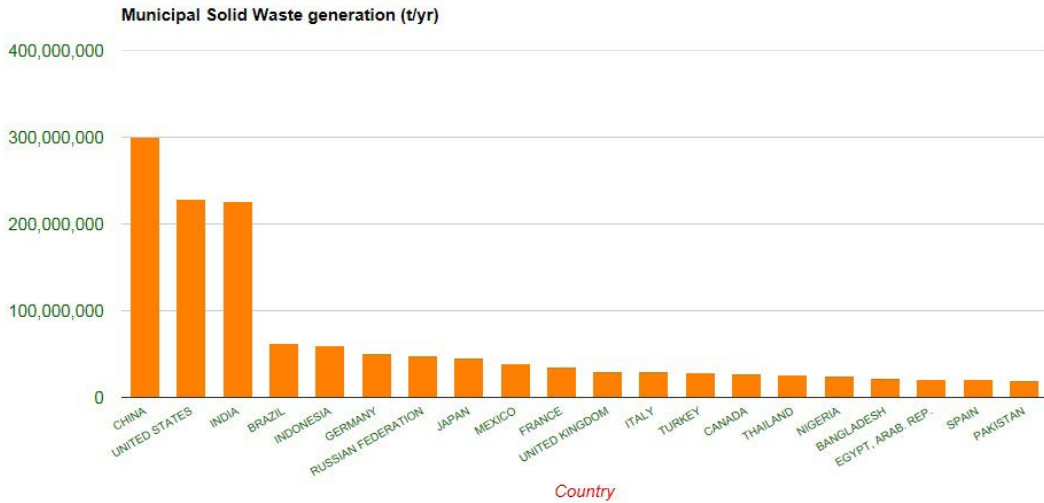
The third chart looks at the top 20 cities which have the highest levels of waste generation.

- Are there any cities here, which appear on both the country waste generation and the recycling charts?
- Why might some cities be listed as the worst offenders, when the countries they are in do not appear on the country waste chart?
- What other questions might you ask about the 3 graphs?

Ask your pupils to record their thoughts and responses and share them with their partner school. How do they tackle waste reduction in their school and community? What things are the same and what are different? Upload some examples with comments from both schools to [Twitter](#), using the hashtag **#sustainabilitychallenge2**. You can post text, pictures, or both.



ACTIVITY SHEET



Source: Waste Atlas (<http://www.atlas.d-waste.com>)

CHALLENGE 3

Design and carry out a mini community-based project that could make a difference to your environment or community.

Show your pupils the short Ecobricks film which demonstrates an innovative approach to tackling waste in the Philippines, and ask pupils to think about waste in their own community and how the strategies of reduce, reuse, recycle could be used in a waste reduction project.

Help your pupils to choose an aspect linked to waste reduction that your pupils could investigate as a mini-project. In order to do this, you could carry out an environmental review of local waste issues in your school or community and then create your own action plan. This should include the necessary tasks to be carried out, the people who will be responsible, and time frame for actions in order to achieve your goals or targets. Make your action plan SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound).

Share your plans, actions and outcomes with your partner school at the different stages of your project. Discuss what worked well, any challenges you encountered and how you dealt with them.

As part of a similar Zero Waste project pupils at one school decided to find out how much waste their school produced. They put on plastic gloves and helped the school caretaker collect the bags of waste that the school produced in one day. They weighed them with spring balances and calculated approximately how much waste the school would produce over a week, a term and a year. They were astonished at the amount. They then sorted through the rubbish and were surprised to find how much could be recycled or reused if they reorganised sorting and collection. The pupils suggested the school introduced different coloured bins to help them to recycle efficiently and set up compost bins in the school grounds.



At the end of term they repeated the weighing exercise and carried out questionnaires amongst staff and pupils to see if their campaign to raise awareness and change behaviours had been successful. They were pleased to see that they had made a real difference. The amount of rubbish going to the landfill sites was dramatically reduced and both staff and pupils said they had changed their behaviour and recycled or reused materials much more frequently.

Other schools worked with their partner school to create bags for life, cushions and mobile phone holders from discarded clothes and materials and another created a greenhouse from old drinks bottles.

What could you do?

Post photographs and documents from your pupils, which illustrate your mini project showing what you did, why you did it and how you communicated with your partner school on [Twitter](#), using the hashtag **#sustainabilitychallenge3**.

To see the full materials of this collaborative unit go to: <https://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org>

