
The story...

Tackling the sea of plastic

Learn language related to...

Recycling

Need-to-know language

dumped – (verb) thrown away carelessly

collections – occasions when items are gathered and taken away

sustainable materials – (noun) substances that last a long time and cause little damage to the environment

break down – (verb) divide into smaller particles

micro level – extremely small level

Answer this...

Can only people living in coastal communities solve the problem of plastic waste?

Transcript

Reducing the eight million tons of plastic **dumped** in the world's oceans every year is now a priority around the globe and closing the loop by recycling is one answer.

These are deposit return-or-reverse vending machines. You put used plastic bottles in and they pay out. It scans the bar code on the label and offers the chance to make a donation to charity or credit in this supermarket. **Collections** are made across Sweden and brought here to this plant 90 minutes south of Stockholm. They handle plastic and glass bottles as well as aluminium cans. The Swedes have been using this type of system since the mid-eighties.

But the country is no stranger to the scourge of plastic pollution, especially in the sea. It's a major problem here but one the environment minister insists is solvable.

Karolina Skog - Swedish Environment Minister

“There are many interesting new materials coming up from research and innovation and I see that once we have knowledge on really **sustainable materials** we can enter them into market rather quickly because there is a public demand and we have legal tools to use if needed. So yes, I am optimistic if we work together policy and industry.”

And people too. As plastics **break down** to **micro level** and enter the food chain in our oceans, it's not just an issue for coastal communities. It's a problem that affects all of us and can only be solved by all of us.

Did you get it?

Can only people living in coastal communities solve the problem of plastic waste?

The answer:

No. It's not just an issue for coastal communities - it's a problem that affects all of us and can only be solved by all of us.

Did you know?

US scientists have calculated the total amount of plastic ever made and put the number at 8.3 billion tonnes. That is as heavy as 25,000 Empire State Buildings in New York, or a billion elephants.