

# R What We Have Done to Make a Sustainable Society -An Action Based Approach to Eliminating Plastics-

W201906-2  
Ritsumeikan High School

## Introduction

Many ecosystems have been destroyed at great expense because we are still pursuing convenience. We became aware of the facts about plastics when we did study trips to Bali and Sweden to learn about the environment.

The fast food industry has been built upon the convenience of plastic. Plastic's reputation fell further in the 1970s and 1980s as anxiety about waste increased. It has become a special target because, while so many plastics are disposable, plastic lasts forever in the environment. Biodiversity is starting to collapse because we are making, using and disposing of so much plastic. It is time to take care of the environment by preserving the beautiful planet for future generations. What must we do to conserve our awesome planet?



## What is the Problem?



Single-use Plastic



Fast fashion

Small pieces of plastic, less than 5mm, are called microplastic. Synthetic fibers, having a diameter less than 10mm are called microfibers. These become toxic because they easily absorb pollution or chemical compositions in water. Moreover, they invade the food chain because marine or avian life cannot recognize if plastic is edible or not. The recycle rate of plastic in Japan is **82%**. however, it's all incinerated. In fact, **only 23%** of plastics are really recycled.



Fish net



Disposal



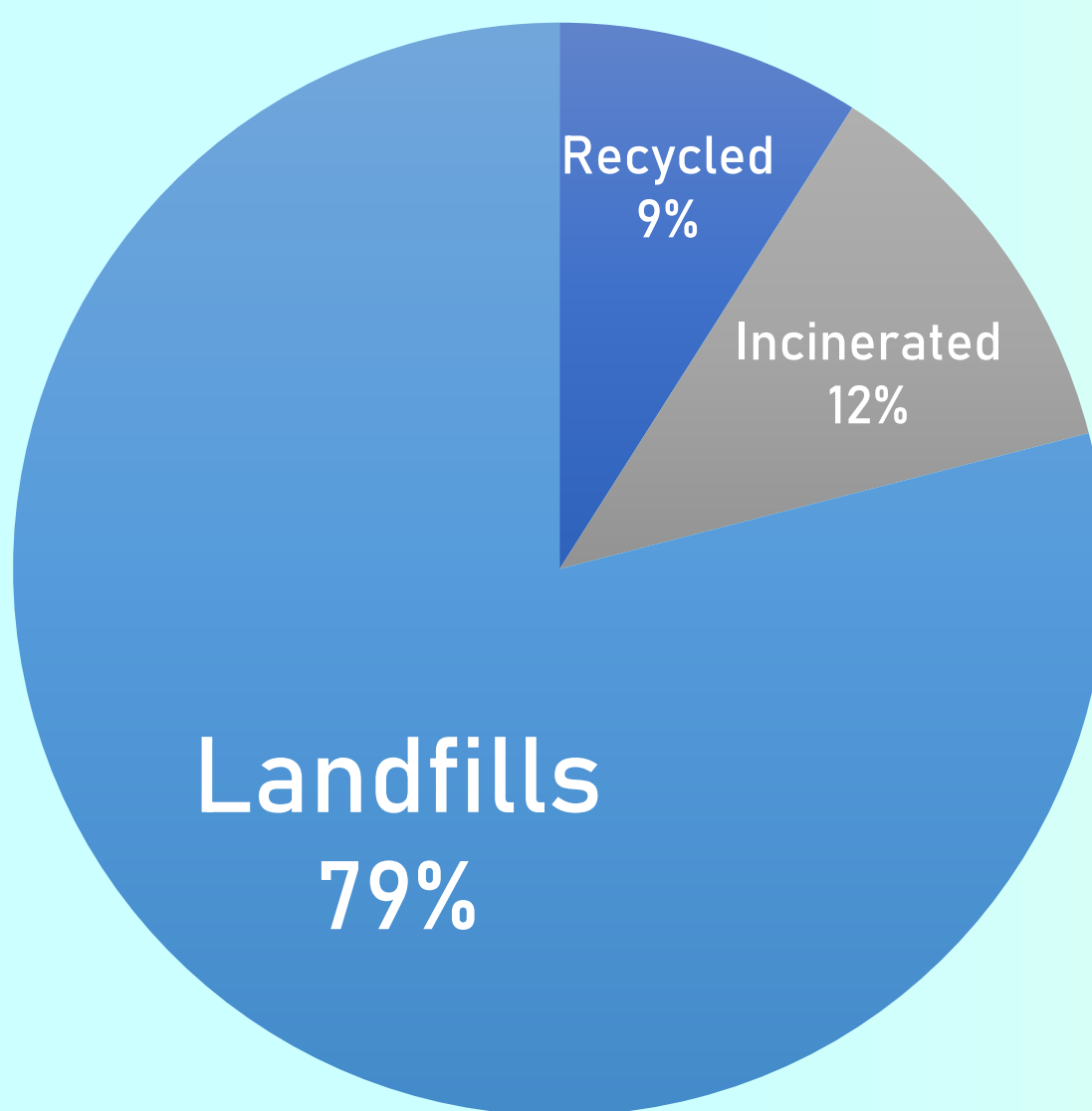
**9 Million Tonnes** of plastic will enter the world ocean in 2019.

It is said that **at least 100,000 marine mammals and 1,000,000 sea birds** are killed each year from plastic pollution.

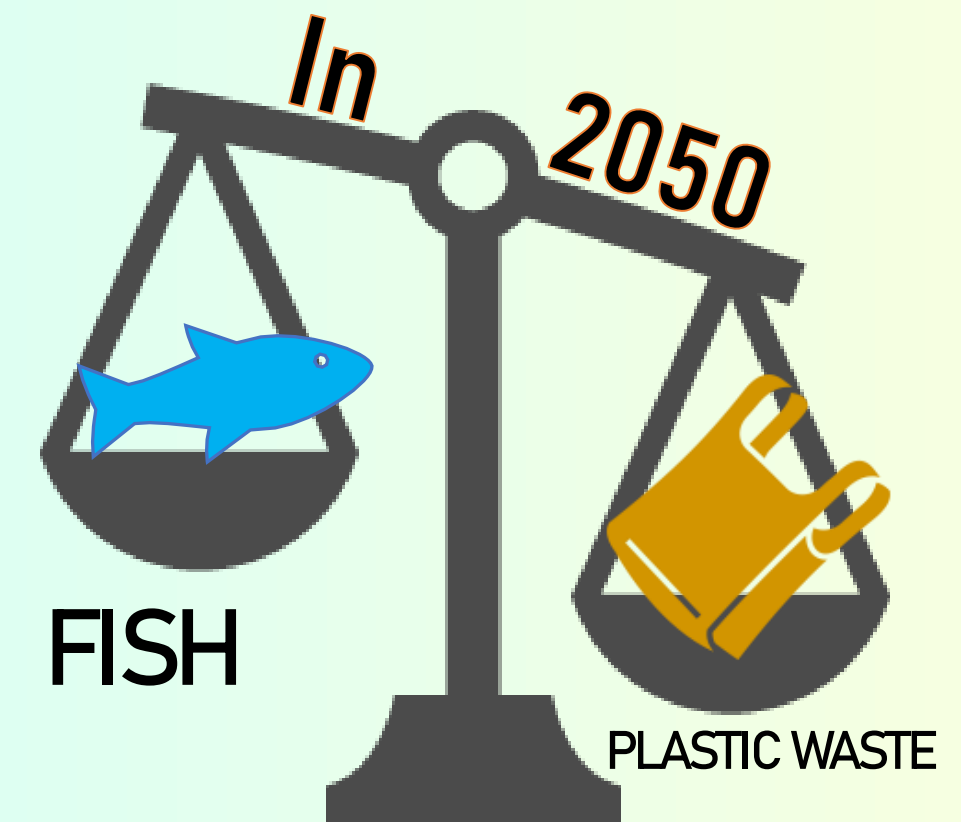


About **2 million** plastic bags are used **every minute**.

Waste management of plastic waste



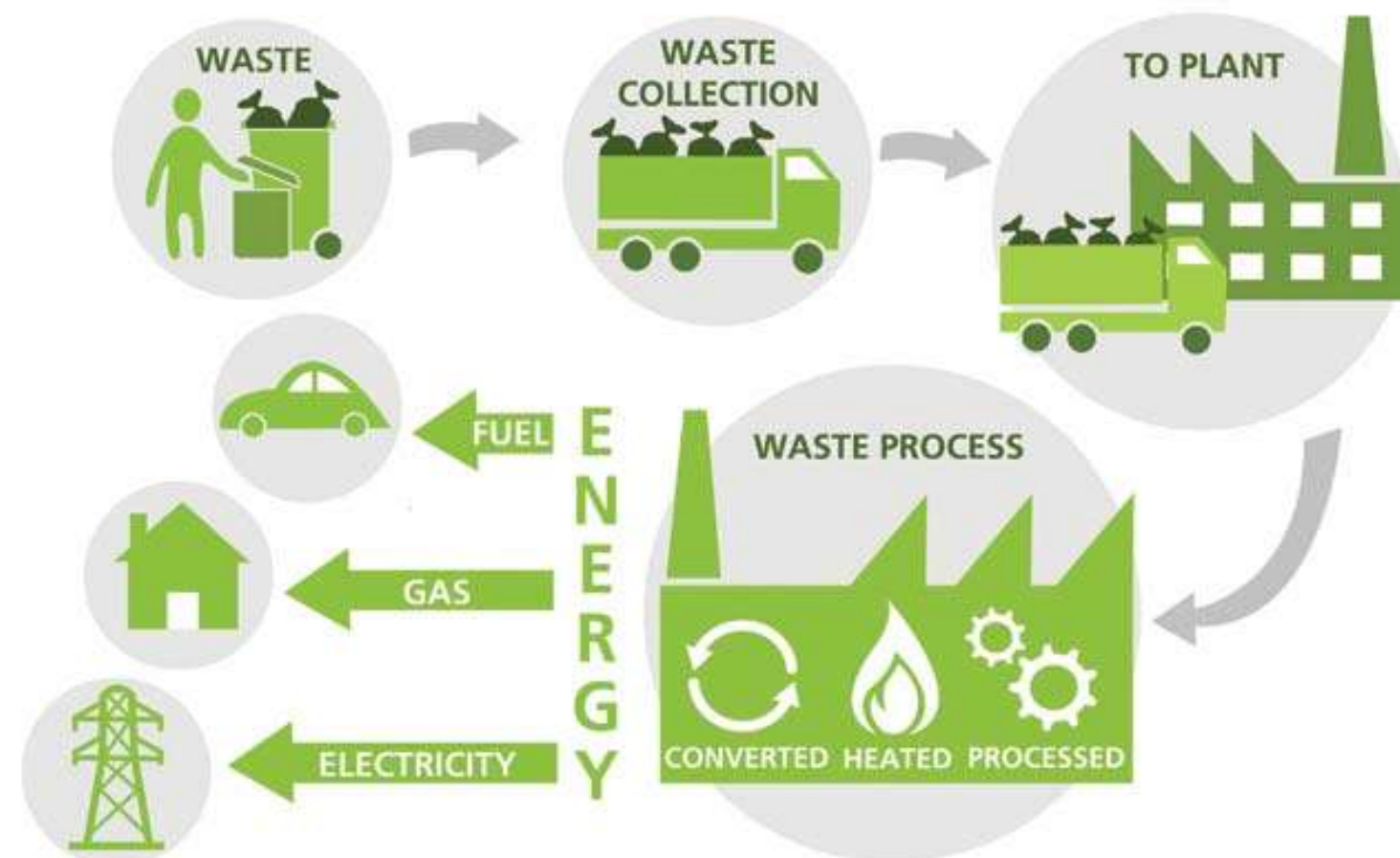
Chances are that if you are **EATING FISH** you are **EATING PLASTIC, TOO.**



## Sweden Study Trip

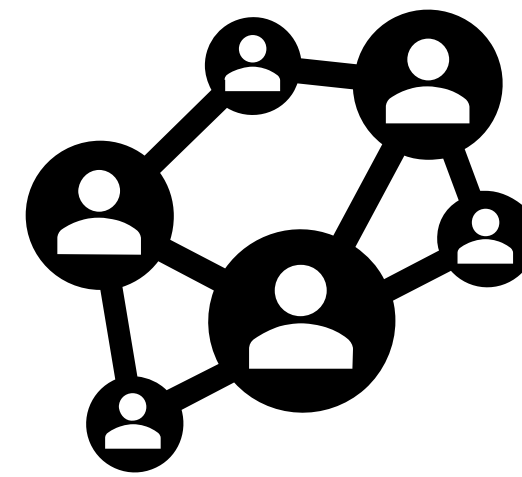


- **Ranks second in achieving SDGs 2030. (2019)**
- **99%** of garbage is recycled.
- Try to live a **"Zero Waste" life**.
- **Import garbage** from other countries to **get energy by recycling**.
- Sort garbage into **12 types**.
- Collect plastic bottles and cans by a **deposit system**.
- Create **eco labels** to recognize how clothes and products are produced.



Eco-friendly Living

## Indonesia, Bali Study Trip



- Met the NGO, **Bye Bye Plastic Bags**
- Met **Ms. Melati Wijsen**, who is the founder of Bye Bye Plastic Bag and started the movement of banning plastic bags in Bali.
- Learned how plastics have impacted the environment.
- Built a plan for solving social issues which we found in Bali.
- Compared the situation in Bali to Japan for recognizing **social issues**.
- Currently, 35% of the villages in Bali live in poverty.
- Presented each solution in front of social activists who judged which solution was the most innovating.



## RITS SUPER GLOBAL FORUM 2019

(Main Theme) **Towards a Better World:**  
**Reducing Problems Related to Plastic Waste**

At RSGF (Rits Super Global Forum), we host students from 12 different countries or areas to join in cooperation with Ritsumeikan students to discuss, share opinions, and develop practical methods of solving global issues. Through these efforts we will gain a deeper understanding of the gravity of the global situation. For schools in Japan, this RSGF is a rare opportunity for us to cooperate with overseas students. By working together, we can take actual steps towards actions for a better future.

2019  
Overseas schools **12 schools**  
from **11 countries**  
Japanese schools **3 schools**



Yao Recycling Center



Making original eco-bags using used T-shirts



Lecture by Akira Sakano who drives the planning and implementation of Zero Waste policies towards local businesses and governments.

### One Day Field Trip

On the 2nd Day of RSGF, we visited the Yao City Recycling Center. They perform intermediate processing of general waste. We learned about the current situation of waste management in Japan and made eco bags from old T-shirts to help reduce the use of single-use plastic bags which are not able to be recycled.

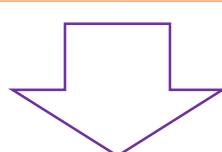
### 5 Topics

All participants were divided into 5 topic areas and had discussions about each one.



### Discussion Flow

- Share the information we have researched in the poster.
- Each SG chooses 1 problem that the SG wants to focus on and thinks about the brief background of it to share at the Mini Plenary Discussion.
- Think about the causes, effects and past actions of the chosen problem with each group.
- Think about two kinds of solutions: "What needs to be done to change the situation?" and "What can we do as high school students?"
- Prepare for the presentation about the problem and solutions which will be the focus in the Plenary Session.
- Presentations by the 5 Mini Plenary groups in the Main Hall.
- Be asked questions and have plenary discussions based on the content of each presentation.
- Declare pledges by each Mini Plenary group to act after the forum.



## Work as *Bye Bye Plastic Bag* Kyoto



**Bye Bye Plastic Bag, (called BBPB)** is an NGO driven by youth to **say NO to plastic bags**, and the mission is to empower people to do what is right through education, campaigns, and political meetings. Start making a difference one bag at a time. BBPB has become a national and international movement, inspiring the masses to act now. BBPB Teams have been launched in over 25 locations across the globe and the founders continue to share their message on stages around the world in front of global leaders. *Ritsumeikan High School, the Global Learning Course is one of the teams.*



**1. Promoting Usage of Eco bags**  
For reducing the amount of single-use plastics, we promote using eco bags for children and even adults. In December 2019, we joined ECO PRO 2019 and did a workshop for making eco bags from T-shirts using only scissors. Also, we presented how plastic bags are bad for the environment in front of Ritsumeikan students and also foreign students who came from various countries. We are trying to enlighten our surrounding community to not only use eco bags but also Bring Your Own, BYO project such as bring My bottle or My straws. At the ECO PRO 2019, most participants said they were satisfied with making eco bags from used T-shirts and said it was easy to do.



**2. Collecting trash nearby school**  
We are planning to work like BBPB Bali and collect plastic waste around school to remind local people to not waste plastics anymore and help them divide trash correctly. However our school has already started collecting trash around school and we believe that action should be expanded more and the range of area should increase. But it is sadly ironic that BBPB Kyoto who collected trash around Biwa Lake had to collect trash with plastic bags due to the local government's law for waste management.



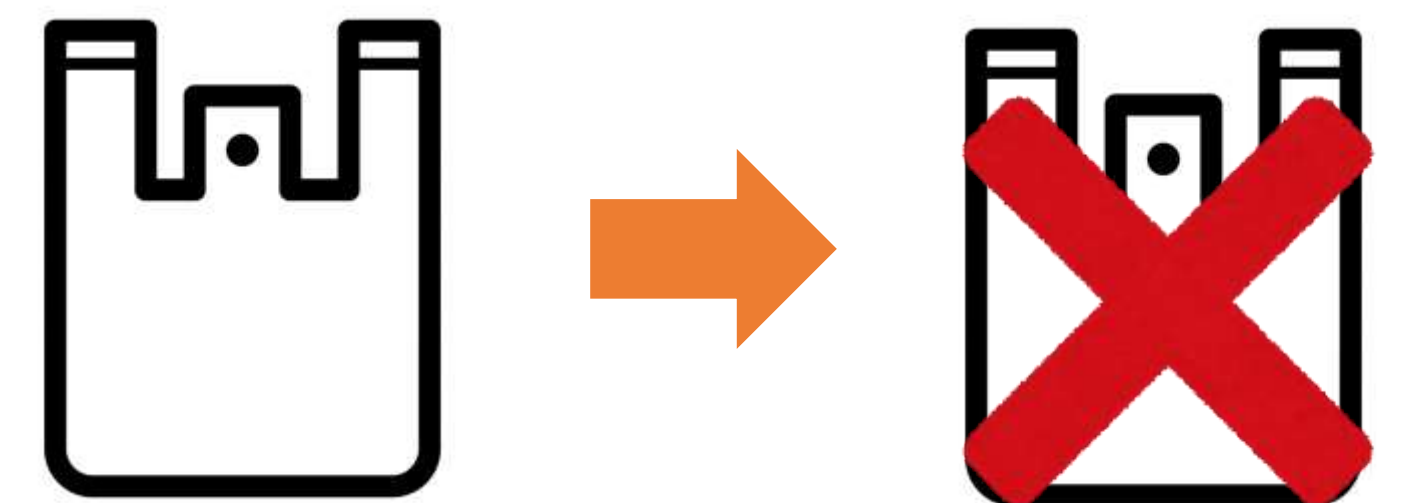
### 3. Take action based on the RSGF PLEDGE 2019

Each Mini Plenary group declared pledges and as a group we decided to take action for reducing plastic waste step by step. For example, promoting Bring Your Own and reduce plastic bottle waste and single-use plastic. In addition, create more ways to separate garbage, for example plastic, combustible rubbish, incombustible rubbish, and recyclable rubbish. When all rubbish is separated, rubbish can be recycled and easily be collected.

## Future Plan



At Ritsumeikan High School's Co-op, they still provide plastic bags for carrying things which students have bought for free. It is estimated that more than 1,000 plastic bags are consumed every week.



In the near future, Ritsumeikan's Global Learning Course wants to ban the use of plastic bags at Ritsumeikan High School.

[STEPS]

1. Introduce our plan in front of all students at the Student Assembly.
2. Plan to ban plastic bags for one week as a trial.
3. After 1 week, the Global Learning Course students will create and conduct a questionnaire investigation based on the number of plastic bags used by Ritsumeikan students.
4. Students, teachers and staff vote to continue or ban the use of plastic bags.

## Conclusion

To conclude, there are a lot of solutions for combatting a non-environmentally friendly society, and we need to recognize it as a consumer who is unintentionally engaged in creating an unsustainable world.

When you are shown the facts, we believe that your way of thinking needs to change, and as one of the teenagers here, we need to be the vehicle of change to help tackle international social issues.

## References

- WHO (2019, August 20) Microplastics in drinking-water Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/20-08-2019-microplastics-in-drinking-water>
- H.A. Leslie, (2014) Review of Microplastics in Cosmetics Scientific background on a potential source of plastic particulate marine litter to support decision-making. IVM Institute for Environmental Studies. Retrieved from <http://www.renkust.se/wp-content/uploads/Plastic-ingredients-in-Cosmetics-07-2014-FINAL.pdf>
- Sarah Gibbens (2019, June 6) You eat thousands of bits of plastic every year. National Geographic. Retrieved from <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2019/06/you-eat-thousands-of-bits-of-plastic-every-year/>
- University of South Florida (USF Innovation) (2019, September 12) Four billion particles of microplastics discovered in major body of water. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/09/190912111819.htm>
- Nick Cuomo, Marco Suter (2019, May 10) The Swedish Deposit Return System – What Could the UK Learn? Anthesis. Retrieved from <https://www.anthesisgroup.com/deposit-return-system-lessons-from-sweden/>