

Call For Ideas

Topic A: How to reduce waste at my student dorm?

Firstly, I have chosen this topic because I live in a WG and I see the potential to reduce our waste in our student dorm.

Most of the waste we get disposed comes from the food packaging (the plastic/packaging waste) and food waste. In order to deal with these, I will be using the 5 R's of waste management.

1. Refuse
2. Reduce
3. Reuse
4. Recycle
5. Rot

1. **Refuse:** In order to deal with the plastic waste produced by the food packaging, people should either choose the items which are not packed or buy stuff from a bulk store. In either of the cases it is going to be expensive and there are not many bulk stores as compared to discounted super markets.

So why would someone opt for a bulk store when he has a discounted super mart within his reach?

Going to a bulk store is more about reducing packaging waste than getting better quality. Providing some kind of discount might work for a certain time but is not the effective way.

To tackle this issue, I suggest that we work together with disc stores and anchorage them to have more unpacked sections available in their stores. For example we can start off by providing eggs, sugar and flour as unpacked goods and later expand to other products. This would save material and energy put into packaging and is a win-win situation for the super market and the waste problem.

Educational campaigns on why bulk stores are important and the impact they are making should also be done to create awareness and educate moral values which has a real impact.

And in any case I would also like to bring up two more points.

- As most of the plastic waste we dispose is dry, I don't think it is necessary to use an extra bag for the bin (yellow bag), instead we can have a single cover inside the big containers and people can dispose the waste by carrying the bins to the container. At least in the student dorm's.
- Secondly, I come from an Asian country and I've also talked to people from other Asian countries as well regarding this. We mostly don't use toilet papers in our toilets. Instead we have bidet in our toilets. It makes sense for me to have toilet papers in a country like Dubai as they have problems with water, but here we have enough water for our needs. So using a bidet in toilets makes

Call For Ideas

more sense and reduces unnecessary consumption of paper. I also understand this might be difficult for the people to shift completely but I think it is worth a chance.

2. **Reduce:** As we have more than 1 shelf per person in our kitchen, we tend to buy more stuff than we need in a week and sometimes they either expire or go bad. A flatmate of mine has a shelf rack half of my size and she doesn't have any problem with space as she does shopping on weekly bases.

So reducing the amount of shelves in a WG restricts people from getting more stuff and reducing the waste that comes from food gone bad.

3. **Reuse:** People tend to buy more bags in the supermarket just because they forget to carry one from home. So, instead of having big bags in the counter, introducing nylon bags which when folded fit in your palms can be carried easily just by attaching them to your backpack or keychain and doesn't occupy much space when folded.

4. **Recycle:** I don't have much to say about this as the term speaks for itself.

5. **Rot:** Talking about the food waste produced in the student dorms, I live in Handel dorm and we have a small garden where we can grow plants during the summer. People have planted and taken care of the plants they planted. I'm sure if we would have more space, people would have planted more. So instead of throwing away the food waste in the bins, we can have a compost bin or worm bin instead where food waste except meat and fish products can be used to make compost. And after degradation, this compost can be used in our garden or community gardens which improve the quality of soil.

Thank you for considering my report.