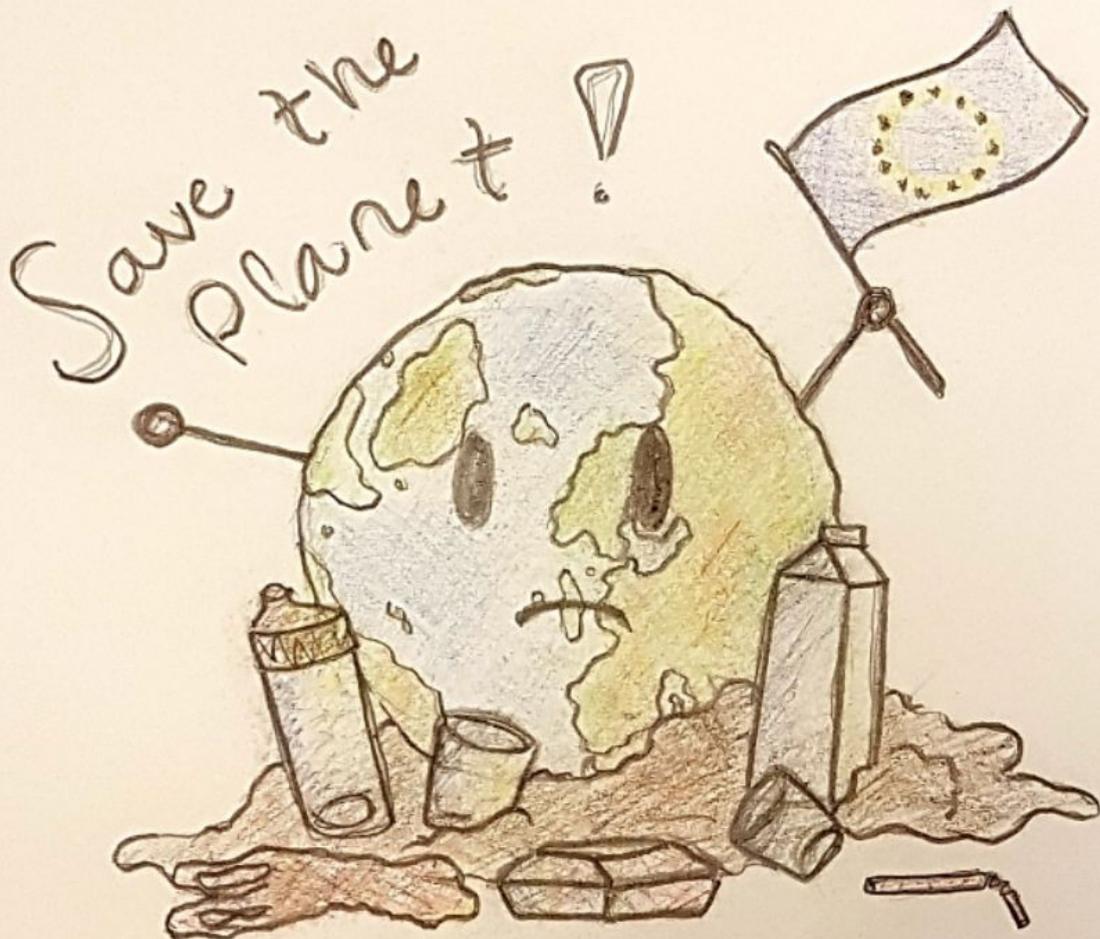


euRRRRope!

reduce, replace, reuse, recycle...

ISSUE #3

**"Plastic is not that
fantastic"**



editor in chief: Noren Nabi

A big company called “Saarioinen” replaces most of its black plastic with red plastic and most of it is recycled!

Author: Inari Kallio

Black plastic causes a lot of waste and problems since they can't be replaced and/or recycled. That's why Saarioinen changed the colour to red.

Red plastic is still plastic but Saarioinen has reduced plastic use as much as possible by making the packaging thinner. Some of the plastic is also replaced with cardboard!

Due to hygiene reasons and the health code, all plastic can't be replaced in food packaging - yet. However, Saarioinen made the choice to use plastic that is 50-80% recycled! Saarioinen also adds instructions on how to recycle plastic nowadays.



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Sources:

<https://www.saarioinen.fi/uutishuone/tiedote/2019/saarioinen-luopuu-mustan-muovin-kaytosta-valmisruokapakkausissaan/>

¹ Picture: Inari Kallio, Food: Noren Nabi

Indonesian inventor's seaweed plastic

Author: Essi Virmanen

What if there was an eco-friendly alternative to plastic? An alternative so good you could literally eat it? Soon there might be; and it's made of seaweed.

[BBC's article](#)² "Plastics Watch: Could seaweed replace plastic packaging?" (2.10.2018) shares the story of a 24-year-old Indonesian inventor who has come up with a solution that could help reduce the use of plastic. A plastic-like material made from seaweed could - if improved further - replace the plastic used in food packaging.

Not only is seaweed good for packaging but it could also help with climate change, for seaweed beds are natural carbon sinks. It also protects shorelines and can also be used in biofuel production, according to a scientific article published [here](#)³.



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Of course creating reusable plastic is not entirely trouble-free and there is still a lot of research to be done. But who knows, maybe this could be the key to a more sustainable economy.

² Sources:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/science-environment-45711720/plastics-watch-could-seaweed-replace-plastic-packaging>

³

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmars.2017.00100/full>

⁴ Picture source:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/iloasiapacific/30978432110/in/photolist-4EmbFg-7voaGv-ZoJQEP-ZoJQMn-PxkCyU-PcsyAs-breCJP-NvoW3h-PcswA5-NvoWNq-PGsk3E-NvoXnw-Pcswim-NvoZtA-PxkBTq-PzUT2T-PxkrR1-PcsxoY-PxkxvY-PGSshE-NvoX6u-bfFLPD-PGskwW-Pxkuku-PGSTi1-PGskBW-bb5UwV-NvoWhW-PzUQRv-PGSSJ5-Nvpq9C-21EdSJq-NvqcZq-PzVGyX-PzVGfR-PzVG3B-PzVFSg-PzVB9t-PctFVN-g5jHGm-NvqcB1-PzVDRx-Dumasw-21xe7j3-21xe7W5-NvqcjC-ZwZoD1-ArNZuQ-3MsU6W-21xe8k1>

The Netherlands has a lot of plastic, but they have some solutions to make recycling easier!

Author: Pleun Heijnen

There are too many foods and products packaged in plastic. 26 billion food packages a year actually. Plastic is convenient, preserves the food well and keeps the food sterile. But now, companies have started to replace dyed plastic with white plastic, which makes the plastic easier to recycle and are reducing the wrapping around small products and exchanging wrappings to cardboard boxes.

In the Netherlands there are certain places called "milieustraatje" where you can put plastic so that it is collected.

The plastic is separated so that every type of plastic is properly recycled. This leaves as little as possible behind and everything is reused.

In addition to recycling plastic, the Netherlands is also investing money to start new projects against plastic in nature and the sea.



Portugal: The Bam&Boo toothbrush project

Author: Mariana Barros

The Bam&Boo toothbrush is an organization that started in August 2017. It sells and exports products like dental floss, cotton buds, straws, travel cases, cotton bags, stands and, of course, bamboo toothbrushes. This company intends to bring a sustainable option to the plastic made toothbrushes of which, according to some sources, 10% are recycled, 15% incinerated and 10% end up in the ocean.

The bamboo toothbrushes are 95% biodegradable (this includes the packaging and the bag), and cost around 4,99€, with free shipping worldwide and with the possibility of being delivered every x months.

This is a sustainable alternative to plastic since bamboo has a fast growth (approximately 60 days), it is 100% biodegradable and it is naturally antibacterial, which means there is no need for pesticides or fertilizer.



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Sources:

<https://thebamandboo.com/pages/about-us>

<https://lewisbamboo.com/how-bamboo-grows/>

⁵ Picture source:

<https://ccsearch.creativecommons.org/photos/6e363750-442b-4558-8064-a2dc0974ad57>

Sweden: The more waste, the better!

Author: Emma Åkesson

Sweden is one of the best countries in the world at sorting and recycling their waste and because of this Sweden doesn't have enough waste. This might evoke the question: how can a country "not have enough waste"? The answer to this is that the vast majority of the Swedish heat and power stations use the energy from burning up waste to heat up households. According to the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, Sweden imported 2,63 millions tonnes of waste in 2015, mainly from The United Kingdom and Norway.

The Swedish heat and power stations get money from the other countries, but they also get money from the Swedish people for generating the warmth and electricity, while the exporting country gets rid of their waste instead of it just laying on rubbish dumps leaking out toxic substances. This business deal might seem like a perfect scenario, however, it has also received quite a lot of criticism. The main arguments against Sweden's import of waste is that the transportation contributes to the greenhouse gas emissions and that the countries with a lot of waste should focus on reducing the quantity of waste produced in the first place. There is also the problem with the plastic waste; some have an opinion that the plastic should be recycled or reused, not burned up. Even though it is an opinionated subject, it is cheaper for countries to export their waste rather than build their own recycling stations. Additionally, it is something Sweden benefits from as well.



Sources:

Hagelin, Ulrika. (2019) *Import och export av avfall*

<https://www.naturvardsverket.se/Sa-mar-miljon/Statistik-A-O/Avfall-import-och-export/>

Radio Sweden. (2014) *Sweden imports more and more waste*

<https://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2054&artikel=5788020>

Picture source:

<https://pxhere.com/en/photo/1365482>

Questions of the day: How can I reduce my use of plastic or recycle it better and is there a personal challenge I should take on?

Essi: My amount of plastic waste isn't that high, for I don't live alone, but there is still room for improvement. I could start by choosing my products more carefully when shopping for cosmetics or food, for example. Choosing products with less packaging and wrappers would be a step towards a more sustainable lifestyle, and if I start this habit now it might stay with me throughout my life.

Inari: I use little plastic but I can still reduce my use of plastic by doing little changes, such as changing my electric toothbrush to a wooden one, like a bamboo toothbrush. In the supermarket I can put the groceries in the basket instead of wrapping them in plastic bags. I can also start paying more attention to the products I use, so I won't buy makeup that has microplastics in it.

Mariana: Although me and my family do not consume much things and we recycle them, I think that still we do produce large amounts of litter every day. This happens because there is a policy in Portugal in which, so that products can be protected, safe or consumable, they have to have at least one plastic package. So even if we want to reduce the amount of plastic we waste every day, the policy should be changed and plastic should be substituted by a sustainable material.

I could do something to help: whenever I go to the grocery store, I could take a reusable bag with me, so that we don't always have to buy one.

Also, paying more attention to the hygiene products I use, so that I make sure that it does not contain microplastics in its composition.

I have already stopped asking for plastic straws in fast food restaurants and started buying high quality earphones (they would always stop working on about 2 months of use), since that kind of plastic is not recyclable.

Emma: I would say I am quite skilled at sorting and recycle plastic, but I can be better at sorting and separating waste, for example packages with both plastic and paper. I do buy food with plastic packages or bags which I can try to reduce by buying other bags you can put your vegetables and fruits in instead of the small plastic ones. The hygienic products, my Head and Shoulders shampoo and Nivea deodorant are free of microplastic, however, my toothpaste is not which is something I should research a bit more. The majority of the products are packaged in plastic and I do not recycle those hygiene plastic packaging often enough. I try not to buy products made from cheap plastic since they tend to not be very durable and we have a lot of reusable plastic boxes etc. at home. I do think we should avoid buying new plastic products since we already own enough, additionally there are some better alternatives to plastic now.

Noren: I could recycle better by actually separating the plastic from my medical waste. I can't really reduce my plastic waste because most of it's from my

medical supplies. I also buy some food after school because of my long days and I'm too lazy to cook my own food, but it would be a better alternative to constantly buying food from Lidl.

I do buy some bad quality products (i.e. clothes made from polyester) and I could replace them, but I don't have lot of money. I have started to save money though and buy less clothes that are bad quality.

My shower products (shampoo, body wash and face wash) don't contain microplastics since they are natural products (coconut oil shampoo and african black soap) and I didn't find any information on Sebamed body wash. I own a lot of Jeffree Star's liquid velour lipsticks and they contain microplastic. But otherwise, I don't think my cosmetics have microplastic in them Most of them don't have their original packages though.

Pleun: I buy a lot of cookies, and they have a lot of plastic on them, but I need them for school and there aren't really alternatives to the cookie packages.

I can't check if my products have microplastics because I've thrown out my packages, but I already separate all kinds of waste from each other so the waste (like plastic) can be recycled in the best way possible. I bring bottles to the supermarket and plastic packages to recycling centers and so on.

I think an easy way to be more ecological is to change your temporary drinking bottles to more permanent bottles (like i.e. thermos)