



END PLASTIC POLLUTION - UGANDA

Community Zero Waste Implementation Guide



Waste Segregation & Management for Local Communities in Uganda

Reduce

Reuse

Recover

Recycle

What This Guide Covers

A step-by-step framework for Zero Waste communities

01

Understanding Waste in your community

The challenge, causes & impact on communities

03

Household Waste Segregation

The 5-bin system & what goes where

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Material Recovery Facility (MRF)

Processing, composting, recycling & livelihoods

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Identifying and separating plastic by type

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GHG reduction, jobs, health & resilience outcomes

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The Zero Waste Model

Principles, pillars & what it means in practice

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Community Collection & Transport

How sorted waste moves from home to recovery

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Organic Waste & Composting

Turning food waste into soil-saving fertiliser

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Hazardous & Special Waste

Safe handling of batteries, chemicals & e-waste

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Action Plan & Next Steps

What you can do today — at home and in your community

01 Understanding Waste in your community

The scale of the challenge — and why it matters

Waste Generation and Habits

- **What** are the most common types of waste your household and community produce?
- **How** much waste does your household generate weekly?
- **Do** you regularly buy single-use products, and how can you reduce them?
- **What** factors contribute to littering or illegal dumping in your neighborhood?

Collection and Infrastructure

- **How** often is your household waste (garbage, recyclables, organic waste) collected?
- **Is** there a dedicated, accessible, and free (or affordable) recycling or composting drop-off in your area?
- **Are** there special collection services for electronics, household hazardous waste, or bulky items?
- **How** many households and businesses in your community have access to proper sanitation and waste management services?

Waste segregation and Disposal

- **Do** you sort your waste? **How** are you sorting your waste?
- **What** items are actually accepted in your local recycling program, and what causes the most contamination (e.g., plastic bags)?
- **What** happens to your waste after it is picked up? Does it stay in your community, or is it taken elsewhere? (landfill, incineration)?
- **How** long does your local dumpsite or landfill take before it reaches capacity?

Policies and Community Action

- **How** informed are you about local, district, or national waste regulations?
- **Does** your local government provide enough educational material on proper waste disposal?
- **What** is your community's waste diversion rate (percentage of waste kept out of landfills)?
- **What** are the biggest challenges local authorities face regarding waste management?

Our Community Zero Waste Model Flow

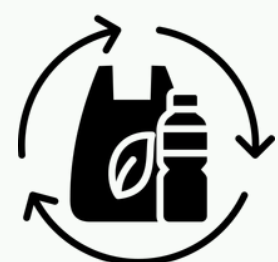
HOUSEHOLD WASTE GENERATION



Residuals



Organics



Recyclables



Hazardous



COMMUNITY WASTE COLLECTION



MATERIAL RECOVERY FACILITY (MRF)



Waste Pickers working in local communities
Our Zero Waste Model promotes waste segregation at source and proper waste recovery at while creating opportunity to transform waste or re-enter materials into the local economy.

OUTPUTS & OUTCOMES

Compost



BSF



Food



Recyclables



Livelihoods



The 5-Bin Household System



GREEN BIN



Organic Waste

- Food leftovers & peels
- Matooke & banana skins
- Garden leaves & grass
- Eggshells, tea bags

BLUE BIN



Recyclables

- Plastic bottles (rinsed)
- Cardboard & paper
- Glass jars & bottles
- Tins & metal cans

YELLOW BIN



Hard to Recycle

- Plastic bags & sachets
- Water sachets (jets)
- Snack wrappers
- Bubble wrap & film

RED BIN



Hazardous Waste

- Batteries & electronics
- Medicines & chemicals
- Pesticide containers
- Broken light bulbs

BROWN BIN



Residual Waste

- Soiled diapers/pads
- Broken ceramics
- Ash & sweepings
- Soiled food wrappers

Tip: Rinse recyclables before sorting · Never mix organic with dry waste

06 Organic Waste & Composting

Turning kitchen and garden waste into gold — free fertiliser for your crops

What to Compost

✓ Fruit & vegetable peels	✓ Cooked/raw food leftovers
✓ Matooke & banana skins	✓ Coffee grounds & tea bags
✓ Eggshells	✓ Garden leaves & grass clippings
✓ Soft plant stems	✓ Crop residues & husks

Do NOT Compost

✗ Meat, fish & bones	✗ Dairy products (milk, cheese)
✗ Oily or greasy food	✗ Diseased plants
✗ Pet faeces	✗ Plastic, glass or metal

Simple Home Composting Steps

- 1

Choose a compost spot
A shaded corner in your compound — a pit, pile, or container all work
- 2

Layer green & brown
Alternate kitchen scraps (green/wet) with dry leaves/cardboard (brown/dry) 1:1 ratio
- 3

Keep it moist
Add water if the pile is too dry — it should feel like a wrung-out sponge
- 4

Turn regularly
Turn the pile every week to add oxygen and speed up decomposition
- 5

Ready in 4–8 weeks
Finished compost is dark, crumbly and smells like earth — spread on your garden!



60% of household waste is organic — composting it halves your bin waste overnight!

07 Plastics: Types & Recovery

Not all plastic is the same — knowing the type determines how it is recovered

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
PET	HDPE	PVC	LDPE	PP	PS	Other
Polyethylene Terephthalate	High-Density Polyethylene	Polyvinyl Chloride	Low-Density Polyethylene	Polypropylene	Polystyrene	Multilayer/Mixed Plastics
Water bottles, soft drink bottles, cooking oil containers	Milk jugs, detergent bottles, shampoo bottles, jerry cans	Pipes, flooring, cling wrap, some credit cards, ids	Plastic bags, squeezable bottles, bread bags	Yoghurt containers, bottle caps, straws, rope	Foam cups, food trays, egg cartons, take-away boxes	Water sachets (jets), juice packs, mixed packaging
✓ Recyclable	✓ Recyclable	X Not Recyclable	✓ Recyclable	✓ Recyclable	X Not Recyclable	X Not Recyclable

Most collected & valuable

High demand from recyclers

Difficult — avoid purchasing

Collect separately (Yellow Bin)

Growing recovery market

Avoid — toxic when burned

Hardest to recover — reduce



Tips:



Always rinse

Rinse all plastic before placing in the Blue or Yellow Bin — food residue ruins recyclables.



Check the number

Look for the triangle and number at the base of plastic items — it tells you which stream it belongs to.



Never burn

Burning plastic releases toxic dioxins and furans — illegal in Uganda and dangerous to health.



Reduce first

The best plastic waste is the one not created. Carry reusable bags; refuse unnecessary packaging.

08 Hazardous & Special Waste

Handle with care — these waste types cause serious harm when improperly disposed of



Batteries

⚠️ Risks:

- Leach lead, mercury & cadmium into soil and water
- Damage crops and poison drinking water wells

✓ Take to collection points or electronics retailers for proper disposal.



Medicines & Chemicals

⚠️ Risks:

- Pharmaceutical chemicals contaminate groundwater
- Can cause poisoning if ingested by children or livestock

✓ Return to pharmacy or health centre — never pour down drain or bury.



E-Waste (Electronics)

⚠️ Risks:

- Contain toxic metals: lead, mercury, cadmium, chromium
- Burning e-waste releases carcinogenic gases

✓ Contact authorised e-waste collectors for take-back services.



Agrochemical Containers

⚠️ Risks:

- Pesticide residue contaminates water sources
- Direct health risk to children and livestock

✓ Triple-rinse container, then take to designated agrochemical waste collection site.



Fluorescent Bulbs

⚠️ Risks:

- Contain mercury vapour — dangerous when broken
- Do not put in household bins

✓ Wrap carefully and take to hardware shop or local government collection point.



Motor Oil & Paints

⚠️ Risks:

- One litre of oil can contaminate 1 million litres of water
- Paint chemicals persist in soil for years

✓ Store in sealed container and hand to authorised waste collector or garage.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

These behaviours undermine the zero waste model and harm your community

Never burn waste

Burning plastic and mixed waste releases toxic dioxins, furans and particulates. It causes respiratory disease and is illegal in Uganda.

Never dump in waterways

Plastic in drains causes Kampala's flooding. Waste in rivers reaches Lake Victoria, destroying fisheries that communities depend on.

Never mix organic + plastic

Food waste contaminates recyclables, making entire batches worthless. Keep organic and dry waste in separate containers at all times.

Never litter publicly

Littering creates illegal dumpsites, breeds disease-carrying pests and blocks drainage channels. Every item you sort responsibly counts.

Never pour chemicals down drain

Household chemicals, medicines and motor oil poured down drains contaminate groundwater and rivers — the community's water sources.

Never skip the label/sort

Unsorted recyclables placed in the wrong bin lose their value. One contaminated batch can mean waste pickers earn nothing from the load.

10 Community Action Plan

A practical roadmap — what households, leaders & organisations can do starting today

 Every Household	 Village / LC Leaders	 Organisations & NGOs
1. Set up 3–5 bins in the kitchen and compound	1. Establish community collection points	1. Support construction of community MRFs
2. Compost all food and garden waste	2. Organise weekly waste collection days	2. Train and formalise waste picker groups
3. Rinse recyclables before sorting	3. Partner with waste picker organisations	3. Conduct brand audits to identify top polluters
4. Refuse single-use plastic bags & sachets	4. Advocate for local zero waste by-laws	4. Link farmers to compost & organic fertiliser
5. Teach children the bin system daily	5. Conduct regular community sensitisations	5. Report to national waste policy processes

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09 Climate & Community Benefits

Zero waste is not just about cleanliness — it is a climate and economic solution



Cuts Greenhouse Gases

- ◆ Composting prevents methane from landfills
- ◆ Source reduction avoids production emissions
- ◆ Recycling saves energy vs. virgin materials



Reduces Flooding

- ◆ Cleared drains reduce seasonal flooding in Kampala
- ◆ Plastic-free waterways protect Lake Victoria
- ◆ Communities become more climate-resilient



Creates Livelihoods

- ◆ Jobs for waste pickers, sorters & collectors
- ◆ Income from selling sorted recyclables
- ◆ Compost sold to smallholder farmers



Improves Public Health

- ◆ Less open burning reduces respiratory disease
- ◆ Cleaner water reduces cholera & typhoid
- ◆ Fewer mosquito breeding sites



Boosts Food Security

- ◆ Compost improves soil health & crop yields
- ◆ Organic farming supported by free fertiliser
- ◆ Black Soldier Fly protein as animal feed



Empowers Communities

- ◆ Education & training for youth & women
- ◆ Stronger community organisations
- ◆ Advocacy & policy influence at local level



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