

## GOVERNING PLASTICS NETWORK - POLICY BRIEF

### COUNTRY: UGANDA

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### Project Information

The Governing Plastics Network is a project jointly created by the University of Nairobi in Kenya and the University of Surrey in the UK.

**Funding partners:** UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) through the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) and the UKRI/GCRF, AHRC, EPSRC and UGPN.

**Project Objectives:** To help national partners to improve plastic pollution governance by identifying best practices on communication strategies and governance structures.

**Key activities:** 1) Map key national stakeholders and identify the most influential. 2) Analyse key stakeholder communication strategies and how they have affected the country's governance. 3) Analyse the country's governance frameworks relating to single-use plastic and identify opportunities for improvement.

### Global Project Results

**Diagnostic:** Despite the advanced legal frameworks in single-use plastic there are two main implementation problems: 1) Cultural adherence 2) Law enforcement.

**Successful cases:** The project identified two types of campaigns that work well: 1) National/regional entrepreneurs that have become key plastic celebrities; 2) international NGOs that define local/global messages focused on refusing plastics and promoting alternative entrepreneurship ideas.

### Implications for policy and recommendations:

- Establish a network of key plastic ambassadors (including NGOs and key entrepreneurs)
- Work on local but unified messages related to refusing plastics, promoting a shift to a circular economy and the possibilities of using alternatives to plastics.
- Support key symbolic material: involve civil society and artists in creating a new anti-plastic symbology.

### National Project Results

**Diagnostic:** The Government of Uganda has shown increasing interest in regulating the importation/manufacture, distribution and use of plastics. Starting with the plastics ban policy in 2009 to the Finance Act of 2009 and the recent National Environmental Management Act of 2019, The Government has put in place a broad policy a legal environment for regulations of the sub-standard plastics in Uganda. Specifically, The National Environment Management Act of 2019 bans the importation/manufacture of plastics bags of less than 30 microns. Institutionally, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) is the lead agency in the enforcement of environmental policies and laws while the Uganda National Bureau of Standard (UNBS) is the lead agency in enforcing standards of manufactured or imported goods including plastics. Several stakeholders both public and private are involved in plastics pollution prevention at national and local levels. Despite all these efforts, plastics pollution remains a great challenge in Uganda with

only about 5% of plastics waste recycles with the rest ending up in dumping sites, burnt or indiscriminately disposed into the environment.

**Successful cases:** Two successful actors were identified;

### 1. Uganda Manufacturers Association (UMA)

Uganda Manufacturers Association (UMA) was established in the 1960s and was later revived in April 1988. UMA currently has a membership of over 1300 companies from a wide range of sectors like Agricultural, Agribusiness, Auto & Auto accessories, Construction, Chemicals, Cosmetics, Electricals, Electronics and Energy Efficiency Products, Foods & Beverages, Foam, Industrial Products, Machinery, Metal Steel & Aluminum, Pharmaceuticals, Packaging, Plastics, Leather, Rubber, Textiles, Vegetable oil & Soap and Wood & Wood products among others.

UMA has engaged in several initiatives that have impacted the plastics pollution governance in Uganda. Together with partners (Coca-Cola), UMA has put up plastic collection centres in the five divisions of Kampala Capital City (of Uganda). UMA has allowed scavengers (waste collectors) to the landfill (in Kiteezi Wakiso district) to collect the plastics that find their way there. In this way, they collect the plastics and sell them (to their preferred buyers (reusers or recyclers)). Have engaged schools in Kampala to separate their waste and plastics are collected by plastic dealers and children earn some income from the plastics collected. UMA has helped small formal groups engaged in plastics collection to access government grants to further support their work. The team at UMA has also continued to preach against the manufacture of plastics without clearly stipulating a recycling or disposal strategy. They have also continuously sensitized the public about the consequences of poor management specifically disposal of plastics.

Through these initiatives, UMA has promoted the growth of the plastics industry specifically the association members; encouraged systematic collection and recycling of waste specifically plastics; and worked with other plastics industry players to plan and embrace recycling or even partner with recyclers.

UMA adopted different channels of communication while engaging with different stakeholders and the public these include Electronic mails (Office Circulars/Memos), PowerPoint presentations, Print (budget proposals and position papers,) Print and Broadcast media (radio and television talk shows, newspaper articles); street Advertising (Talking Billboards, Banners, Fliers, Posters); website: [uma.org.ug](http://uma.org.ug), and an active Twitter handle (@newsUMA)

### 2. ECOAction Uganda

Since 20011, ECOAction has focused on skills development, advocacy and awareness creation regarding plastics management. ECOAction implements its activities with the guidance of the 3 Rs of Solid Waste Management including Reduction, Re-use and Recycling of plastics waste.

Through these initiatives, communities in Banda (a suburb in Kampala) have been sensitized about proper waste management processes like sorting wastes at the point of generation. Also, Tons of plastic waste has been collected and removed from the environment. This has provided livelihood to youth (male and female) and women who engage in waste collection and reusing it. In surrounding schools, ECO Action's initiatives have improved waste management in schools, and school children have been organized into clubs and have been engaged in appropriately collecting, sorting and reusing waste. ECOAction Uganda has also successfully used social Art as a tool for advocacy.

One of the key messages the ECOAction Uganda emphasizes is that Plastic waste is a resource/wealth and that we all need the proper knowledge, attitude, and skills to manage plastics.

During capacity building sessions, direct presentations are often used. Other communication channels adopted by ECOAction Uganda include Print and Broadcast Media (Televisions, radios, press-newspapers etc.), active Twitter handle (@ecoaction), and an active webpage page(<https://ecoactionuganda.wordpress.com/meet-the-team/?share=facebook&nb=1>)

For schools, ECOAction Uganda has developed a training manual on plastic waste reuse in urban farming, arts and crafts as well as the development of educational materials.

ECOAction Uganda engages key stakeholders including the plastics collectors, youths (males and females) and women. In Schools, the schools' administrators, and pupils/learners are key actors engaged.

ECO action has partners supporting these efforts like VIVO Energy, Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE), Stanbic Bank Uganda, and NBS Television among others.

**Implications for policy and recommendations:**

- Recycling plastics to curb environmental degradation and pollution is key for all manufacturers, dealers, users and community members/the public.
- Implementation of policies or Laws directed towards proper management of plastic waste is paramount to ensure that nothing is lost along the way of processes.
- Stakeholder engagement is crucial especially about sustainable policy and law implementation. This calls for continuous sensitization of all the stakeholders including the public about the provisions in the current policy and legal framework. The roles and responsibilities must be spelt out with guidance on how each stakeholder can deliver on their roles and/or responsibilities.
- It is important that the work of plastic manufacturers directly informs the work being done by Policy developers and implementers for us to synchronize and achieve efforts towards the proper collection, sorting, management, disposal, and recycling of plastic waste.
- Advocacy to share hazards as a result of poor plastic waste management and disposal should be enhanced.
- Community engagement (skills development) for proper plastic waste management, disposal and recycling enables the involvement of all, therefore, informing sustainability of processes.