



## 01 ADOPTING A CARROT AND STICK APPROACH TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES IN WASTE MANAGEMENT

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Some photos are provided by the interviewees



### OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE IN ASPECTS OF WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

- PUPIL IN FOCUS
- SCHOOL CULTURE AND ETHOS
- SCHOOL PREMISES AND RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
- MANAGEMENT LEVEL MONITORING AND EVALUATION
- LEARNING AND TEACHING
- INTERACTION WITH COMMUNITY

There are always kids who are picky eaters. Some students at Ma On Shan Ling Liang Primary School used to “hide food under chairs or stuff them into bottles” because they did not like vegetables. Ms. Yuen Sui Wa who is the teacher-in-charge of environmental education said with her eyes opened widely, “They really did try every possible way!” For years, the school has been committed to reducing food waste. Students, however, have been fighting against it every which way. Even parents questioned “Why do they (students) have to finish the food if they are already full?” It all makes promoting environmental education in school challenging. Luckily, school has found a way to convince parents and has begun to gradually incorporate environmental education into school curriculum starting from the junior form students. It seems that the conflicts between stakeholders has now gone. On the contrary, even young teachers in school become familiar with environmental education. “Promoting environmental protection is to teach students not to be selfish.” One of the young teachers said.

On a sunny afternoon at Ma On Shan Ling Liang Primary School, most windows in the staff room were opened, the air conditioning was turned off, and teachers were busy walking in and out reheating their lunches. A young male teacher came in with sweats all over his back. There was no lunchbox in his hand. Here is Mr. Cheung. The interviewee greeted the journalist and sat down next to her. “The most challenging part of practicing environmental protection is the inconvenience caused!” Mr. Cheung used not to paying much attention to the environment before teaching in this school. He shared similar feelings with the students when talking about his experience in contributing to environmental protection.

### RESOLVING INCONVENIENCE

Teacher, Mr. Cheung Kin Pong, has been teaching general studies and physical education for three years. With the implementation of waste management measures in school, what he finds most difficult is to stop distributing bottled waters and drinks on sports day. “There’s a lot of work on sports day. How could I squeeze in time to go over and get water from the water dispenser?” Cheung said. Nonetheless, his thoughts have changed. “My first impression was that it would be really inconvenient but then I could ask students to get water for me if I was too busy...now I always bring along my own bottle for water. I believe inconvenience is something that can be resolved and that environmental education is to teach students unselfishness.

### TO HAVE AN INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE CURRICULUM

Adults find practicing environmental measures difficult; children also do not feel easy. While the school was promoting less food waste, many primary students did not eat vegetables but they could not leave the food behind under the supervision of teachers and “student team leaders”. Hence, some of them stuffed food in water bottles, hid food in their mouth and spat them out outside the classroom or hid them under their chairs...all in all, as Ms. Yuen said “They really did try every possible way.”

However, experienced headmistress and teachers have found their ways to deal with the situation and to enhance students’ awareness. Since

last year, the school has implemented a zero food waste reward scheme. Students who try their best to finish their food and minimise food waste will be rewarded. The school has been also announcing the amount of food waste generated by teachers everyday. It reminds students that it requires everyone’s effort to protect the environment under the goal from “reducing food waste” to “zero food waste”. Together with the implementation of the systematic environmental education, hiding food is no longer common among students.

In terms of curriculum development, Ma On Shan Ling Liang Primary School has integrated knowledge of environmental protection into the curriculum of general studies with a progressive agenda. Curriculum of Primary one to three mainly focus on acknowledging the need of protecting the environment. Students in Primary four learn about ways of environmental protection while those in Primary five and six are responsible to lead others to practice environmental measures. For example, when teaching an unit “A walk at the park”, Primary one student would go to the park and learn about different kinds of plants. When teaching about the use of resources, Primary four students would learn how to manage and compost kitchen waste. Students can also choose to become “green ambassador” and learn about managing energy use at school from senior students.

Moreover, the school has also organised outdoor visits for students to learn about local ecology. Ms. Yuen said, “Correlating knowledge with daily life and outdoor activities are most influential to students. Incorporating environmental education into the curriculum is only the basic step.” However, what subsidised schools lack the most is manpower. Ms. Yuen continued, “WWF is our best help!” WWF’s One Planet Education Programme offers a lot of outdoor activities to schools. WWF staff leads the activities and they helps teachers a lot.

### “PARENTS DISTRIBUTING LUNCHES” WITNESSING THE AMOUNT OF FOOD WASTE

When facing all kinds of challenges, the school has tried every means. Ms. Kwan, a senior teacher who is in charge of school lunch, enlisted parents’ help to distribute lunches and make them understand the situation of food waste at school. Some parents became concerned when the school began advocating for less food waste. They questioned “why do they (students) have to finish the food if they are already full?” “If they don’t want it, let them be.” To help parents realise the excess of food waste at school, the school has asked parents to help distribute lunches so they could see for themselves how much waste could be generated from all of the students in school. Ms. Yuen believed that parents seeing the evidence and having their own reflection is much more convincing than a mere persuasion from school. In fact, the success of the zero food waste reward scheme relies on contributions from all stakeholders. Ms. Kwan and her “student team leaders” are indispensable to the scheme.

To conclude, most parents have not experienced such emphasis on environmental protection when they were students. They do not naturally understand its importance. Therefore, enlisting parents’ help on distribution of lunches is more a positive influence than a convincement. Perhaps there might be some insights for other schools.