



Green Fence, Green Steps, Global Waste Revolution Montana Meeker, May 2020

Intellectual
Achievement
& Research

SUMMARY

GREEN FENCE

The Asia-Pacific region generates more waste than any other corner of the globe, per data provided by the World Bank in 2018. When Mainland China instituted the National Sword policy limiting the recycled materials they accepted from abroad, they removed roughly 30% of recycling end markets in Texas. I was part of the team charged to update the City of San Antonio's waste diversion methods in response. After working on this problem locally, I moved to Shanghai, China for 5 months to research the issue while studying abroad.



"Plogging", verb. To run in urban areas and clean up trash. – Trash Running China + me in Lujiazui

GREEN STEPS

While studying in Shanghai, I had the opportunity to intern with a local startup called Green Steps, whose goal was to take community environmental education from the city to the suburbs of Qingpu and Baoshan, where the effects of illegal dumping, consumption culture, and environmental mismanagement were apparent. However, innovation was everywhere too- there was culture of sustainable activism, supported by groups like Trash Running China, who get people together to run through crowded central city streets and clean up litter.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

GLOBAL WASTE REVOLUTION

In the future, municipal efforts should be concentrated on front-end-prevention of waste rather than middle management. We cannot keep passing the bill for materials indefinitely, and as municipalities develop new end markets, decreasing the sheer quantity of materials requiring a home will reduce the strain on end of pipe strategy. The struggles solid waste faces in the United States as a result of these positive global shifts should be embraced as an indication of the world's collective movement towards more sustainable use of capacity.

Transformation occurs through the intersection of civic, public, and private business engagement in sustainable behavior, and massive strides are underway in the Mainland.

IMPACT

IN CONCLUSION

The Asia-Pacific is under immense pressure to create the sustainable societies of tomorrow, and innovation in this region is necessary to achieve the global goal of a waste-free future. This project resulted in cross-cultural communication and the development of multilingual operations manuals, sustainability curriculum, and the outdoor education of more than 200 adults and children in the Shanghai Metro area.

The kids helping clean up the wetlands.



ADVICE

Initiative is lacking in the world- if you are bold enough to ask for an opportunity, you will be equipped to take advantage of it- whether that's working for a cause you love or moving to a country where you don't speak the language.



My bosses and I with a group of participants in Qingpu

SPICES