

Clean Technology Hub
Energy Innovation Centre

Plastic-Free Future Campaign Report

July 1st-3rd, 2025

Designed and Implemented by
Clean Technology Hub, Nigeria



Appreciation

I sincerely thank all our strategic partners, sponsors, and participants whose unwavering support and commitment made the Plastic-Free Future Campaign a remarkable success. Your collaboration, generosity, and shared dedication to environmental sustainability were instrumental in bringing this vision to life and extending its impact across communities.

I am especially proud of the young people who actively led and took part in the campaign's activities. Your passion, leadership, and energy reaffirm my confidence in the next generation as powerful stewards of environmental change in Nigeria.

Thank you for walking this journey with us and for contributing to a movement that continues to inspire action toward a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable future.

Ifeoma Malo, CEO, Clean Technology Hub



ABOUT US

[Clean Technology Hub](#) (CTH) is a pioneering hybrid hub based in Abuja, Nigeria, dedicated to advancing clean energy, climate action, and sustainable development across Africa. Established in 2016, CTH functions as a research and advocacy centre, a business incubator, and a provider of technical advisory services. The organisation is committed to developing and supporting clean energy innovations, circular economy solutions, and climate-resilient initiatives that address energy poverty and environmental degradation. Through its diverse programming, CTH nurtures early-stage enterprises, supports climate entrepreneurship, and builds capacity among youth, women, and underserved communities. The Hub also engages in evidence-based research and policy advocacy to inform decision-making, drive systems-level change, and support the just energy transition. At the heart of CTH's mission is the belief in inclusive growth, community empowerment, and building ecosystems that scale impactful, locally driven solutions. By bridging innovation, policy, and practice, Clean Technology Hub continues to play a vital role in shaping a sustainable and climate-resilient future for Nigeria and the African continent.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Plastic-Free Future Campaign, held from July 1–3, 2025, was designed and implemented by Clean Technology Hub, Nigeria, in commemoration of International Plastic Bag Free Day. Through a 3-day programme involving inter-school debates, a national webinar, and a university clean-up sensitisation walk, the campaign aimed to raise awareness about the harmful effects of single-use plastic bags and advocate for sustainable alternatives.

Over 400+ individuals were directly engaged across secondary schools, the University of Abuja, civil society groups, and international partners. The campaign promoted behavioural change, highlighted youth leadership in environmental action, and advanced policy discourse on circular economy solutions.

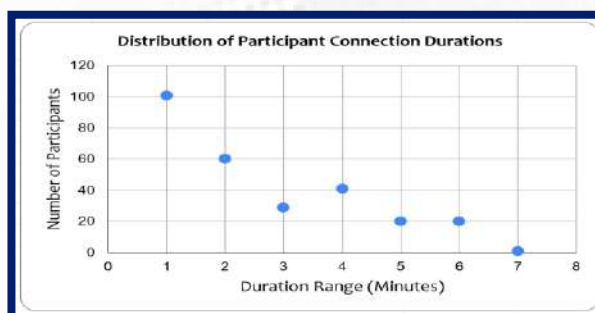


KEY HIGHLIGHTS

PARTICIPATING ENTITIES IN THE INTER SCHOOL DEBATE		
S/N	Name of Organisation	Count of Representative
1	Clean Technology Hub	15
2	Ecobarter	2
3	Save the Children	1
5	Army Day Sec.Sch	5
6	Wema Bank	7
9	NESREA	1
10	ADBN TV	3
12	Chanja Datti	1
13	Susty Vibes	1
14	Looped Innovation	1
15	GSS Karu	5
16	ESAA	1
17	Premiere Academy	5
18	The upcycle Architect	2
TOTAL		50

Inter-School Debate Outcome			
	Army Day Scondary	Premiere	GSS Karu
Average	33	26	24
	32	27	28
	33	33	30
Total	98	86	82
Position	First	Second	Third

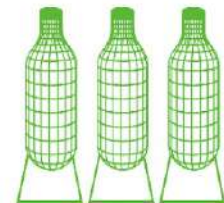
Webinar Statistics	
Participants	272
Total Engagement Time	6,799 mins
Average Duration	25 mins
Median Duration	11.5 mins





**TOTAL WASTE
COLLECTED: 80 KG**

PET BOTTLES SEPARATED: 53 KG



**INSTALLED
RECEPTACLES: 3**

PARTICIPATING ENTITIES IN THE CLEAN CAMPAIGN		
S/N	Name of Organisation	Count of Representative
1	Clean Technology Hub	30
2	University of Abuja (VC Delegates)	10
3	Embassy of Belgium	3
4	British High Commission	9
5	Wema Bank	5
6	SUG	23
7	Ministry of Environment	1
8	Ecobarter	2
9	Chanja Datti	1
10	The Upcycle Architect	5
11	Looped Innovation	2
12	PathShakers	17
13	Youth Movement for SDGs	1
14	Michael Adedotin Oke foundation	1
15	Ecoresearch and resource centre	1
16	Memz Couture	2
17	IITA Abuja Kubwa	1
18	Climate for All	1
19	Go-Green	1
20	NUESA National	1
21	Susty Vibes	2
22	FBRA	1
23	Eco-Friendly Sensitisation and Advocacy	1
24	ADBN TV	3
25	Students	205
26	Volunteers	39
Total		368

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Plastic bags were created as an alternative to paper bags due to their perceived environmental friendliness, which aimed to reduce deforestation while offering convenience for marketing and packaging. However, what began as a practical solution has evolved into a massive environmental challenge. Globally, over five trillion plastic bags are used annually, equivalent to one million bags every minute, yet less than 3% are recycled. Most are discarded after just a few minutes of use, only to remain in the environment for hundreds of years, polluting waterways, clogging drains, and endangering wildlife.

In Nigeria, the situation is compounded by a population of over 220 million people and a growing informal economy that relies heavily on cheap plastic packaging. Despite the rising plastic consumption, recovery and recycling systems remain inadequate. Improper disposal leads to flooding, soil and water contamination, and the spread of toxic microplastics that harm both ecosystems and public health. Policy efforts exist but are often poorly enforced, and adoption of sustainable alternatives remains low.

In response, Clean Technology Hub launched the Plastic-Free Future Campaign as part of its Circular Economy Portfolio, aligning with International Plastic Free Bag Day. The campaign was designed to inspire behavioural change, engage young people and institutions, and strengthen advocacy for policy innovation and sustainable alternatives. Through community action, education, and stakeholder collaboration, the initiative aimed to promote long-term solutions to plastic pollution and accelerate Nigeria's transition to a circular economy.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- i. Raise awareness about the environmental hazards of single-use plastic bags and mobilise public participation in sustainable alternatives.
- ii. Engage four secondary schools in Abuja in an environmental debate session on the topic: "Are plastic bags a harmful convenience or an irreplaceable necessity?"
- iii. Host a webinar session featuring experts and policymakers to discuss policies supporting plastic waste reduction and sustainable packaging, under the theme:

“Beyond Bans — Unlocking Investment, Policy Innovation, Business R&D, and Citizen Action for a Plastic-Free Nigeria.”

- iv. Reach 1,000 university students in Abuja through a direct cleanup walk and onsite sensitisation activities to raise awareness and inspire action against plastic pollution.
- v. Collect and properly dispose of at least 100 kilograms of plastic waste during the cleanup activities.
- vi. Install 10 waste receptacles in strategic locations within the University of Abuja to encourage responsible waste disposal.
- vii. Recognise and award 10 individuals or organisations that demonstrated exceptional leadership in reducing plastic waste and advancing circular economy solutions.



DAY ONE: PLASTIC FREE FUTURE INTER-SCHOOL DEBATE

The Plastic-Free Future Campaign began with an inter-school debate that set the tone for the three-day program. Held on July 1, 2025, the session brought together secondary school students, environmental stakeholders, and partner organisations to critically explore the central theme: “Are plastic bags a harmful convenience or an irreplaceable necessity?”



Key Highlights

- Number of Participating Schools: 3
- Student Attendance: 12
- Guest Attendance: 42
- Participating Organisations: 8

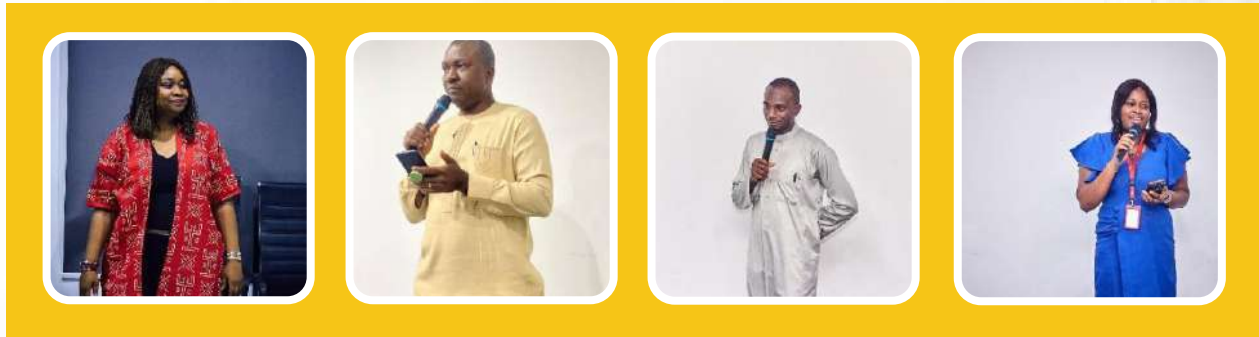
Debate Outcome

- First Place: Army Day Secondary School, Abacha Barracks
- Second Place: Premiere Academy, Lugbe
- Third Place: Government Secondary School, Karu

Opening Session

The Inter School Debate Competition began promptly at 10:00 AM with the registration of participating students, guests, and facilitators, marking the official start of the *Plastic-Free Future Campaign*. The formal programme was opened by Mr. Abel Gaiya, Chief Research Officer at Clean Technology Hub, who delivered a thoughtful welcome address. He emphasised the importance of hosting such a timely and youth-centred dialogue on plastic pollution. In a country grappling with mounting environmental threats, he noted, it was both inspiring and necessary to see secondary school students engaging with boldness, insight, and conviction.

Goodwill Messages



A series of goodwill messages followed from respected environmental advocates. Engr. Chukwudi Nwabuisiaku, Assistant Director, Plastic Pollution Control, National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA), stressed the urgency of nurturing a generation that understands the consequences of plastic dependency and is empowered to influence both public behaviour and policy. He commended the students for their active participation, describing platforms like these as crucial for cultivating responsible citizenship.

Mr. Rotimi Oluseun, representing Wema Bank, spoke on the vital role of financial and corporate institutions in enabling a sustainable future. He encouraged the students to consider environmental innovation as a viable and impactful career path. Ms. Faith Osarenti of Save the Children International celebrated the students' involvement, emphasising the role of youth as both advocates and changemakers.

Debate Session

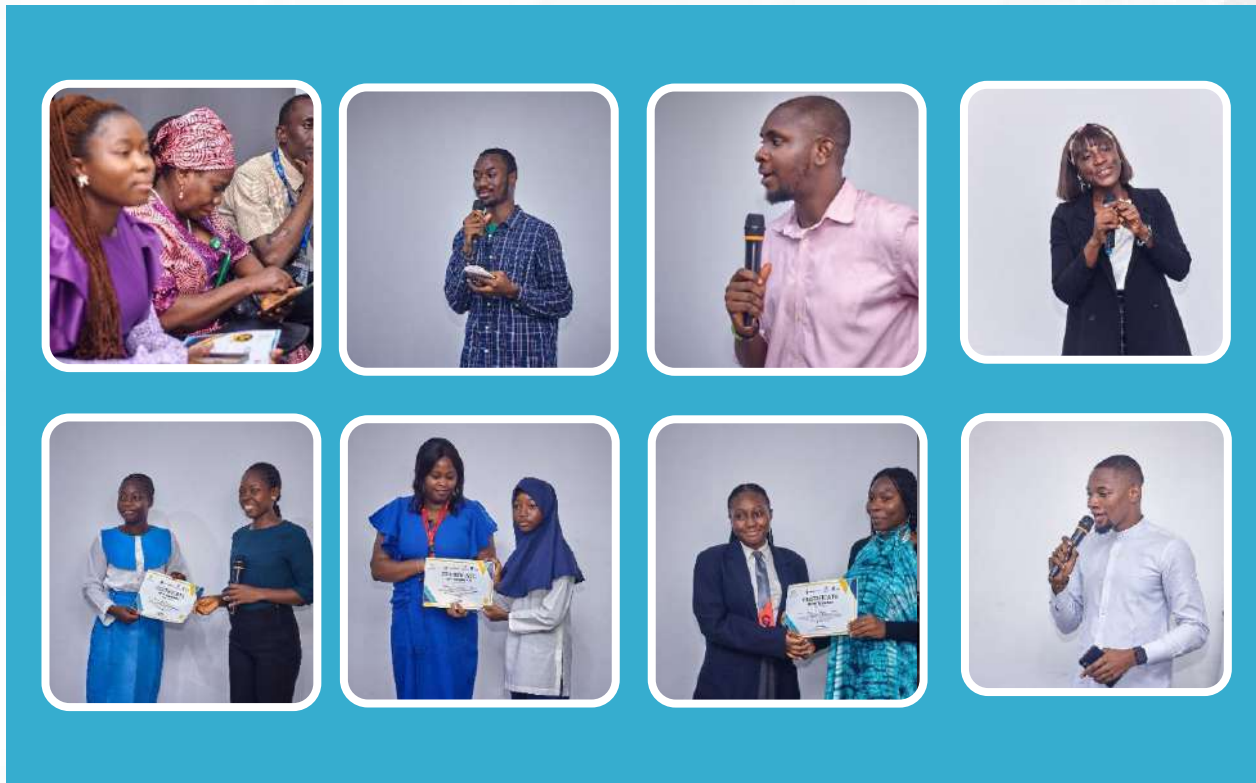
The inter-school debate featured three participating schools: Army Day Secondary School, Government Secondary School, Karu, and Premiere Academy, Lugbe. The panel of judges included Ms. Blessing Ekwere, Abuja Community Manager at Susty Vibes, Mr. Christopher Oluwatosin of Clean Technology Hub, and Ms. Rifkatu Joseph Odeyemi of Eco-Friendly Sensitisation and Advocacy. Each brought expertise in sustainability and youth engagement, contributing both to the facilitation and fair assessment of the contest.

Ahead of the debate, Ms. Blessing Ekwere delivered a pre-event briefing, outlining the competition format, speaking order, timing protocols, and scoring system. She introduced the key assessment criteria: clarity of argument, logical flow, use of evidence, and delivery style, ensuring that both participants and the audience had a clear understanding, with the scorecard projected for reference.

The debate unfolded in two structured rounds, opening statements followed by rebuttals, as teams presented well-reasoned arguments for and against the motion: *“Are plastic bags a harmful convenience or an irreplaceable necessity?”* The exchanges demonstrated not only academic rigour but also a deepening awareness of environmental issues among young people. The session highlighted critical thinking, persuasive delivery, and a healthy spirit of competition that engaged both judges and the audience.



Before the results were announced, participants enjoyed a lively icebreaker session facilitated by Dorcas Samuel, Associate, Enterprise Development, Clean Technology Hub. This activity served to energise the room, foster camaraderie, and celebrate participation beyond the spirit of competition. Following this, Victor Omefe, Project Lead Circular Economy, Clean Technology Hub, delivered an engaging overview of the Plastic-Free Future Campaign, outlining the objectives of the three-day programme and encouraging everyone to remain involved in the movement beyond the event.



Certificates of participation were presented to all student debaters by representatives from Ecobarter, The Upcycle Architect (TUPA), and Chanja Datti, acknowledging their dedication and effort. Mr. Kareem Jamiu Atanda announced the results, followed by heartfelt closing remarks from Mr. Kolade Kolawole, who praised the students' performance and left the audience with words of encouragement.

DAY TWO: PLASTIC FREE FUTURE WEBINAR

The Plastic-Free Future Campaign webinar, held on July 2, 2025, marked the second day of the campaign. The session began promptly at 10:00 AM and was moderated by Ms. Tolulope Omoyeni, Lead for Community Development, Administration, and Research at the Circular Economy Innovation Partnership (CEIP). In her opening remarks, she welcomed participants and introduced the theme of the session: “Beyond Bans: Unlocking Investment, Policy Innovation, Business R&D, and Citizen Action for a Plastic-Free Nigeria.”

Key Metrics

- Total number of participants: 272
- Total engagement time: 6,799 minutes
- Average viewing duration: 25 minutes
- Median viewing duration: 11.5 minutes

Opening Remark

The webinar was formally opened with remarks from Ms. Nani Afani, Chief Innovation and Growth Officer at Clean Technology Hub. She urged participants to shift their focus from bans as standalone interventions to broader, systemic enablers that drive lasting change.

“Our theme, ‘Beyond Bans,’ reflects a critical shift in how we must now approach the plastic crisis. Bans alone will not deliver the sustainable, systemic change we seek. We must begin to ask: What lies beyond bans?”

Ms. Afani further emphasised that a plastic-free Nigeria requires a coordinated national effort—one that integrates strategic investment, forward-thinking policies, private sector innovation, and active citizen participation.

“We are here to listen, to learn, and most importantly, to act. Together, we can chart a bold path toward a cleaner, healthier, and plastic-free world.”

Insight from the First Panel Session

The first panel session featured three speakers: Ms. Rita Idehai, CEO of Ecobarter; Ms. Abimbola, Head of Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility at Wema Bank, represented by Olamide Oladele; and Mr. Chukwudi Nwabuisiaku, representative of the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA). Each panellist brought practical experience and sector-specific knowledge to the conversation, unpacking challenges and pathways for Nigeria's transition to a circular plastic economy.



Opening the discussion, Ms. Rita Idehai, CEO of Ecobarter, identified fragmented supply chains, weak end markets, and inconsistent policy support as key reasons why recycling innovations often fail to scale in Nigeria. She emphasised the need to formalise the sector, not only through policy reform but by structuring partnerships between informal and formal waste actors. Ms. Idehai also called for the enforcement of Extended

Producer Responsibility (EPR) policies, investment in reverse logistics, and the strategic use of technology to improve traceability. However, she warned that without public awareness and behavioural change, even the best-designed systems may underperform.

On financing, Ms. Olamide Oladele of Wema Bank called for banks to move beyond traditional credit risk models and integrate sustainability financing into their core operations. She pointed to Wema Bank's initiatives, such as flexible credit for waste enterprises, concessionary loans for companies transitioning to biodegradable products, and revenue-based financing options. She also stressed that financing must be supported by technical assistance to ensure long-term success.





Speaking on regulation, Mr. Chukwudi Nwabuisiaku of NESREA argued that policy bans alone are not enough to drive lasting change. He advocated for regulatory models that combine enforcement with education and behavioural change strategies. Mr. Nwabuisiaku called for NESREA to evolve from a compliance enforcer to a developmental partner that collaborates with industry stakeholders to promote sustainable practices.

Insight from the Second Panel Session

The second panel session continued the webinar's dialogue, this time focusing on how local knowledge, institutional partnerships, and regional equity can advance Nigeria's efforts toward a plastic-free future. Setting the stage, Dr. Martin Calisto Friant, Lead for Circular Economy at the Circle Economy Foundation, addressed the challenge of adapting global circular economy models to Nigeria's local context. He cautioned that frameworks such as doughnut economics and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) cannot simply be transferred into Nigeria's system without careful adaptation. Instead, he advocated for locally tailored solutions driven by partnerships among government, academia, civil society, and the private sector. Dr. Friant also emphasised the need for transparency in the management of EPR funds and the establishment of accountability systems that track both compliance and social impact.



Professor Kafayat Adeyemi of the University of Abuja spoke on the persistent disconnect between academic research and its practical application in policy and industry. She noted that despite a growing body of research on bioplastics and sustainable materials, few findings are translated into market-ready solutions or inform public policy. To close this gap, she recommended targeted funding that collaboration between researchers and policymakers, and a prioritises impact, stronger

deliberate repositioning of universities as hubs for applied innovation that address real-world environmental challenges.

Regional disparities in plastic awareness efforts also came under focus during the session. National campaigns, it was noted, tend to centre around Lagos and Abuja, often sidelining communities in other regions such as the South-East. Addressing this concern, Ms. Ogechi Nwonye-Bernard, Founder of Ecocylers, advocated for decentralised programming, greater visibility for local innovations, and sustained grassroots engagement that recognises and supports leadership within underserved communities.



During the Q&A session, Dr. Friant responded to a question on how to engage innovators from underrepresented regions. He argued that EPR frameworks, if deployed equitably, could be used to establish innovation hubs and educational platforms across Nigeria, ensuring broader inclusion in the plastic-free movement.

DAY THREE: CLEANUP WALK AND SENSITISATION

The concluding day of the Plastic-Free Future Campaign featured a strategic Cleanup Walk and Sensitisation Programme at the University of Abuja, convening students, volunteers, partner organisations, and diplomatic representatives. Designed as a civic engagement effort, the exercise aimed to raise awareness of plastic pollution while encouraging practical community action within the university setting.



Key Metrics

- Number of Student Participants: 143
- Number of Volunteers: 27
- Number of Participating Entities: 24
- Total Waste Collected: 80 kg
- Plastic Waste Separated (Post-Sorting): 53 kg
- Number of Receptacles Installed on Campus: 2



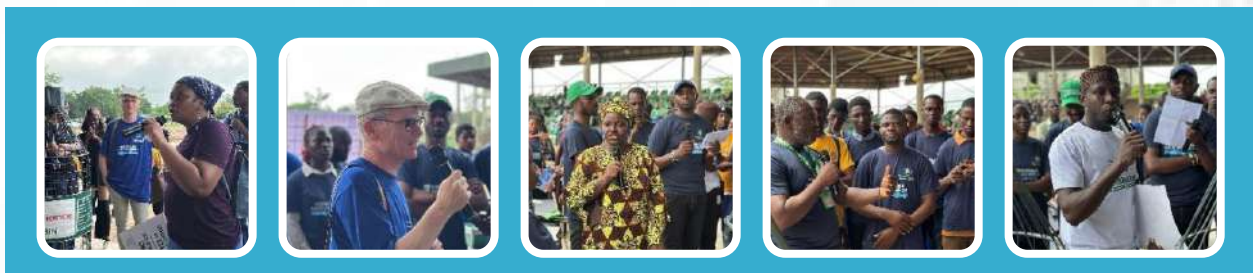
Cleanup Walk and Sensitisation

Registration began at 7:00 AM at the Convocation Ground, where participants signed in and received cleanup kits, gloves, collection sacks, and branded campaign shirts. The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to Nigeria, H.E. Pieter Leenknecht, arrived in the company of his deputy, Ms. Véronique Bernard. Both engaged with volunteers, affirming their support for grassroots environmental initiatives and underscoring the importance of community-led action in addressing global sustainability challenges.

The programme was formally opened by Dr. Sako from the Centre of Environmental Studies, who welcomed participants and emphasised the critical role of grassroots mobilisation in advancing sustainable environmental practices.

The cleanup followed a designated route through key areas of the university campus, including the Faculty of Agriculture, Faculty of Engineering, Department of Veterinary Medicine, and the Education Trust Fund, before concluding at the Convocation Ground. Along the way, participants collected waste while engaging students, faculty members, and traders on responsible plastic use. Campaign placards bearing messages such as “Plastic-Free Future Starts with Me,” “Invest in Solutions, Not Pollution,” “Don’t Trash the Future,” and “Policies with Enforcement” heightened visibility and sparked meaningful conversations within the university community.

Goodwill Messages



Following the walk, participants convened for a stakeholder engagement session featuring reflections from key partners and supporters. Ifeoma Malo, Chief Executive Officer of Clean Technology Hub, opened the session by framing the campaign as more than an anti-plastic initiative. She positioned it as a platform for promoting innovation, systems thinking, and grassroots ownership. Highlighting that this was the organisation’s fourth major cleanup initiative and notably the first hosted on a Nigerian university campus, she announced plans for a community-based recycling facility to be developed in partnership with local stakeholders. Ms. Malo urged participants, particularly the youth, to see themselves as active agents in shaping Nigeria’s sustainable future.

Ambassador Leenknecht praised the campaign’s local ownership and the leadership role of youth in environmental action. He commended the initiative’s purpose-driven approach and reaffirmed Belgium’s support for community-led sustainability efforts. His presence, alongside Ms. Bernard, reflected a broader commitment to international cooperation in addressing environmental challenges.

Representing the Vice Chancellor of the University of Abuja, Dr. Edwina Opara, acknowledged the campaign's alignment with the university's sustainability goals. She highlighted the institution's commitment to integrating environmental consciousness into academic programmes, campus operations, and student activities, pledging ongoing support for similar initiatives.

Alhaji Adam, representing the British High Commission, underscored the alignment of the cleanup initiative with the objectives of the university's Green Committee. He affirmed the Commission's support for Nigeria's transition to a circular economy and commended the campaign's practical, community-driven approach.

Sector representatives also shared key messages. Ms. Juliet Aina of Chanja Datti emphasised the potential of community recycling models, encouraging students to adopt sustainable habits. Ms. Blessing Omokhafa of Susty Vibes urged participants to integrate climate action into daily life, while Mr. Jonathan Aje, Executive Director of Pathshakers Foundation, challenged students to translate advocacy into active leadership roles.

CLOSE OUT EVENT

The final event of the Plastic-Free Future Campaign was hosted at the residence of the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to Nigeria, serving as a formal closing reception for campaign partners, supporters, and key stakeholders. The gathering brought together representatives from diplomatic missions, government agencies, development partners, civil society organisations, and the private sector.

Notable among the attending partners were Ms. Ibironke Olubamise, the National Coordinator of the UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme; Inga Stefanowicz, Head of Green and Digital Economy at the European Union Delegation; Mrs. Adeola Omotunde, Director at the Federal Ministry of Environment; Bilkisu Garba, Founder of The Upcycle Architect (TUPA); and Rashidat Sanusi, Programme Officer at the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Foundation.

Their presence underscored the campaign's multi-stakeholder approach and its success in fostering collaboration across sectors. The closeout event marked a reflective conclusion to a campaign that engaged diverse audiences and reinforced collective action for environmental sustainability.



The evening's proceedings were anchored by Mr. Oluwatosin Christopher, who set a collegial and relaxed atmosphere. He welcomed guests, encouraged reflection on the shared experiences of the campaign, and guided participants through the evening's engagements. His light but purposeful moderation underscored the campaign's spirit of collaboration and community.

Ambassador's Remarks

In his address, H.E. Pieter Leenknecht, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to Nigeria, expressed appreciation for the partnerships forged throughout the campaign. He reflected on his personal experience during the cleanup walk at the University of Abuja, highlighting the active involvement of the Belgian delegation and students. The Ambassador also drew on Belgium's global leadership in recycling practices, connecting national experience with the importance of local action in Nigeria. He emphasised that while Belgium has one of the highest recycling rates globally, continuous effort and community engagement remain critical everywhere.

Goodwill Message from Clean Technology Hub

Ms. Ifeoma Malo, Chief Executive Officer of Clean Technology Hub, delivered a goodwill message that framed the evening in the broader context of the Hub's nearly decade-long work in sustainability, women's empowerment, and community development. She spoke passionately about the Hub's commitment to building cooperative business models within local communities and using innovation to drive environmental action. Ms. Malo reiterated that the *Plastic-Free Future Campaign* exemplifies how partnerships, grassroots mobilisation, and knowledge-sharing can amplify impact at scale.

Goodwill Messages:

- Dr Medina Umar Osuma, Director of European Studies at the University of Abuja, representing the Vice Chancellor, underscored the university's support for the campaign and its ongoing commitment to sustainability and student-led initiatives.
- Representing the Honourable Minister of Environment, Mrs. Adeola Omotunde, affirmed the ministry's alignment with initiatives promoting circular economy principles and community engagement.
- Ms. Ibironke Olubamise, National Coordinator of the GEF Small Grants Programme, reflected on the significance of seeing organisations supported by GEF grow into impactful platforms, commending Clean Technology Hub for its sustained leadership in environmental advocacy.

Recognition Awards Presentation

As part of the evening's highlight, Recognition Awards were presented to eleven organisations and individuals whose contributions significantly shaped the success of the campaign. The awardees were:



From left to right: Embassy of the Kingdom of Belgium, Ms. Ifeoma Malo (Clean Technology Hub), Wema Bank, The Upcycle Architect, Ecobarter, Chanja Datti, Susty Vibes, Memz Culture, Save the Children, Looped Innovation, and Professor Kafayat Adeyemi (University of Abuja)

Campaign Reflections and Way Forward

Victor Omefe, Lead for the Circular Economy Portfolio at Clean Technology Hub, presented an overview of the Plastic-Free Future Campaign, articulating its objectives, the rationale behind the three-day structure, and the long-term vision. He highlighted key milestones:

- Inter-School Debate, fostering critical thinking among youth.
- Virtual Webinar, which convened sector experts on solutions beyond plastic bans.
- Campus Cleanup Walk, demonstrating practical environmental action and community mobilisation.

He emphasised that the campaign is part of a growing movement that aims to foster behavioural change, build community partnerships, engage youth leadership, and advance policy advocacy towards a plastic-free Nigeria.

The event concluded with a short closing by Jacquelyn Mando, Chief Operating Officer, Clean Technology Hub. She thanked participants for their engagement and encouraged continued networking.

HIGHLIGHTED PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS FROM THE PLASTIC-FREE FUTURE CAMPAIGN

- **Chimezie Bright Chimezie:** “Seeing how passionate and informed young people were about environmental issues made me realise that change truly begins with individual actions. The clean-up exercises and interactive sessions opened my eyes to the seriousness of plastic pollution. This campaign didn’t just raise awareness, it empowered us to take responsibility in practical ways.”

Rating: 5/5

Suggestion: Involve more faculty and offer reusable kits to sustain impact.

- **Ugwuanyi Udoka Perpetual:** “We achieved what we came out for, removing waste materials and working hard together. The campaign proved that collective action brings real change.”

Rating: 4/5

Suggestion: Expand the campaign to primary schools and enhance media sensitisation.

- **Oghenegaga Ese Joy:** “Engaging with community members and helping them understand the harmful effects of plastic bags was very impactful. Seeing genuine interest from people to switch to reusable bags was truly inspiring.”

Rating: 5/5

Suggestion: Include interactive demonstrations and provide eco-friendly incentives in future campaigns.

- **Abah Goodness Ojonoma:** “Helping to clean the school environment with friends made me feel part of a greater cause. The motivating messages from the organisers added so much meaning to the experience.”

Rating: 4/5

Suggestion: Increase publicity to reach more students.

- **Rahila Yunana:** “The campaign deepened my commitment to environmental action. The shared energy, passion, and collective vision demonstrated throughout the activities left a lasting impression.”

Rating: 4/5

Suggestion: Maintain strong coordination and enhance participant welfare at future events.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADVANCING A PLASTIC-FREE FUTURE IN NIGERIA

To deepen the outcomes of the Plastic-Free Future Campaign and catalyse broader systems change, the following strategic recommendations are proposed. These are structured around key intervention pillars: investment, synergy, localisation, enforcement, infrastructure, and youth engagement.

- **Strengthen Investment in Technology and Research for Locally Relevant Solutions**

Plastic pollution in Nigeria requires more than cleanups and bans; it demands a robust pipeline of local innovation. There must be deliberate and sustained investment in technologies and R&D that offer scalable, affordable, and locally adapted solutions to plastic waste. Government agencies, donor institutions, and private investors should fund the development of biodegradable materials suited to Nigerian climates and markets, while also supporting applied research into recycling innovations, traceability tools, and data systems for waste monitoring. Universities should be equipped to serve as knowledge production hubs, with support for field trials, product incubation, and cross-disciplinary research linking science, business, and environmental governance. Without local R&D capacity, imported solutions will continue to fall short.

- **Activate Synergy within the Nigeria Circular Economy Working Group (NCEWG) and Related Institutions**

Nigeria does not need new structures but must optimise existing ones like the NCEWG, which already convenes multiple actors working on the circular economy. Government regulators, CSOs, academic institutions, and private sector players must commit to integrated programming under this framework. This means aligning on timelines, resource mobilisation, indicators of success, and learning systems. NCEWG should evolve into a more action-oriented platform, not only for discussion but for collective delivery of circular economy goals, such as reducing single-use plastics and advancing alternatives. Clear role delineation, shared ownership of targets, and regular accountability check-ins will help maximise its potential and reduce duplication across agencies.

- **Localise and Decentralise Plastic Action Plans**

A one-size-fits-all approach will not work in a country as diverse as Nigeria. National strategies should be translated into decentralised action plans that reflect state and local dynamics, economic behaviours, cultural beliefs, and waste realities. States and local governments should be supported to adapt existing policies like the National Policy on Plastic Waste Management into locally owned programmes. Similarly, campaigns and interventions should deliberately include underrepresented regions outside Abuja and Lagos, where awareness remains low. Local champions, indigenous innovation, and traditional reuse culture can serve as strong levers for sustainable behaviour change if recognised and resourced properly.

- **Enforce Existing Policies with Emphasis on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)**

Nigeria has made notable policy progress, but enforcement remains a major challenge. Regulatory agencies like NESREA need to move beyond reactive enforcement and adopt structured, ongoing compliance strategies. The EPR framework, which requires producers to manage their products' end-of-life, must be fully implemented across the entire plastic value chain. This involves transparent reporting systems, clear financial responsibilities for

producers, and strict penalties for non-compliance. EPR funds should be allocated not only for recycling but also for public education and innovation grants. Compliance data should be publicly accessible to foster transparency, benchmarking, and civil society oversight.

- **Build a Functioning Reverse Logistics System for Plastic Recovery**

Reverse logistics, the process of moving post-consumer plastics back into reuse or recycling loops, is the most underdeveloped link in Nigeria's waste management chain. To change this, government and private sector actors should co-invest in infrastructure and incentives that make recovery economically viable. This includes supporting aggregation centres in cities and rural clusters, subsidising the operations of informal collectors, and investing in digital tools for mapping waste collection routes. Partnering with campus communities, SMEs, and cooperatives can create a distributed system that collects, sorts, and channels plastic waste back into the formal economy. Without such a backbone, recycling markets will remain fragmented and unscalable.

- **Institutionalise Youth and Student Leadership in Environmental Governance**

Youth were central to the success of this campaign, and they must remain central to future strategies. Their role should go beyond participation; they should be embedded in the design, delivery, and monitoring of environmental initiatives. Schools and universities should integrate circular economy education into their curricula, while student green clubs should be formally recognised, funded, and linked to national campaigns. Government ministries and donor agencies must reserve seats for youth in policy consultations, while providing small innovation grants to student-led sustainability initiatives. By investing in young leaders today, Nigeria builds the foundation for a long-term, home-grown environmental movement.

KEY LESSONS FROM THE PLASTIC FREE FUTURE CAMPAIGN

The Plastic-Free Future Campaign successfully met its objectives, but like any real-world intervention, it presented opportunities to adapt and learn in real time. The following reflections highlight key areas we navigated and what they taught us.

- **Adapting to the Academic Calendar in the Inter-School Debate**

The inter-school debate featuring four secondary schools was a cornerstone of the Plastic-Free Future Campaign, designed to spark critical thinking and environmental awareness among young students. While confirmations were secured from all participating schools and the relevant education authority during the project design phase, an unexpected shift in the examination timetable caused one school to withdraw at the last minute. To ensure the integrity and flow of the debate was not disrupted, a contingency debate format had been thoughtfully prepared in advance. This proactive planning allowed the session to proceed seamlessly, maintaining both competitiveness and learning outcomes.

- **Coordinating and Maximising Student Participation**

Upon publicising the campus cleanup walk, student enthusiasm was notably high, reflecting widespread interest in environmental action. However, to harness this momentum effectively, a significant amount of targeted engagement was required. The Clean Technology Hub team worked closely with the Student Union Government (SUG), departmental and faculty associations, and key university units such as the Centre for Environmental Studies to ensure coordinated outreach and mobilisation.

To optimise turnout, the date of the cleanup walk was strategically moved to Thursday, July 3rd, following consultations with student leaders and university staff. This adjustment ensured the activity aligned better with academic schedules and student availability. The result was a well-attended event that not only showcased the strength of campus-based environmental advocacy but also validated the decision to adopt a participatory planning approach.

- **Receptacle Installation**

A core objective of the Plastic-Free Future Campaign was to install ten waste receptacles in strategic locations on campus to promote sustainable waste disposal. However, due to funding limitations, only three receptacles were secured and installed. This was made possible through the generous support of the Food and Beverage Recycling Alliance (FBRA) and Wema Bank.

These units were placed at high-traffic locations, including the University of Abuja Senate Building and the student market, to ensure maximum visibility and use. While the number of installations fell short of the initial target, the deployment of the three receptacles provided a practical demonstration of shared responsibility and established a foundation for future expansion through additional partnerships and resource mobilisation.

- **Addressing Mobility and Participation Gaps**

The Plastic-Free Future Cleanup Walk and Sensitisation Programme was carefully planned to encourage student-led environmental initiatives and motivate young people to take responsibility for the cleanliness and sustainability of their surroundings. The University of Abuja was purposely selected as the host because of its status as a federal university with a diverse and multicultural student body, providing a strong platform to promote the campaign's message and promote inclusive participation.

However, the university's location in Gwagwalada, some distance from the city centre, created logistical difficulties. Despite many organisations and volunteers showing keen interest in taking part, several were unable to attend due to transportation costs. These issues were worsened by limited funding, as the funds raised did not cover all mobility support and transport stipends specified in the budget.

Nonetheless, the campaign successfully mobilised an energetic student community. The high turnout and lively atmosphere on campus demonstrated a genuine enthusiasm for environmental advocacy within academic environments.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

A Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework has been designed to ensure the long-term impact, sustainability, and effectiveness of the three waste receptacles installed during the Plastic-Free Future Campaign. Beyond simply tracking usage, the framework offers a structured approach to assess behavioural change, inform future interventions, and foster accountability among key stakeholders.

The framework sets out to achieve the following:

Short-Term Objectives

- Monitor the volume and types of plastic waste collected monthly.
- Track usage consistency and identify peak and low disposal periods.
- Assess physical condition and accessibility of the receptacles.
- Identify and address issues related to contamination or misuse.

Long-Term Objectives

- Provide data-driven insights to support policy engagement and advocacy.
- Evaluate the contribution of the receptacles to behavioural change within the university community.
- Generate evidence to support scale-up and replication in other institutions.
- Strengthen collaboration between academic institutions, government agencies, and private sector partners on sustainable waste management.

Monthly collection will be tracked using a tailored Receptacle Collection & Asset Management Tool, which includes waste weight monitoring, contamination levels, and asset condition reporting. The data will be periodically analysed to produce impact briefs, support policy dialogues, and inform the design of future programmes targeting circular economy goals.

By integrating this M&E approach into the broader campaign architecture, the Plastic-Free Future initiative aligns with international best practices on sustainability, continuous learning, and adaptive management.



Clean Technology Hub
Energy Innovation Centre

MONTHLY RECEPTACLE COLLECTION & ASSET MANAGEMENT FORM

Project Title: Plastic-Free Future Campaign
Donated By: Food and Beverage Recycling Alliance (FBRA)
Recipient Institution: University of Abuja
Implementing Partner: Clean Technology Hub (CTH)

Reporting Month: _____
Date of Submission: _____
Report Submitted By: _____

Receptacle Data Log

S/N	Receptacle Code	Location (Building/Zone)	Collection Date	Volume Collected (kg)	Type of Plastic (PET, LDPE, HDPE)	Waste Status (Recyclable/Contaminated)	Last Inspection Date	Next Scheduled Inspection	Visual Condition (Good/Fair/Poor)	Remarks
1	PFFC25/U oIA/FBRA/001									
2	PFFC25/U oIA/FBRA/002									
3	PFFC25/U oIA/FBRA/003									



Clean Technology Hub
Energy Innovation Centre

Monthly Summary (for Reporting Dashboard)

Indicator	Target (kg)	Actual	Status	Comments
Total Waste Collected (kg)				
% Recyclable Waste				
No. of Active Receptacles				
No. of Receptacles Requiring Maintenance				
Engagements Logged (cleanups, events)				

SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

As we build on the success of the Plastic-Free Future Campaign, our next steps are focused on deepening impact through sustained engagement and strategic policy advocacy.

- **Advancing Policy through Publication and Engagement**

One critical outcome of the campaign was the wealth of insights shared during the webinar, particularly on the enforcement of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and the development of sustainable financing models. To ensure these insights translate into action, we will publish a policy brief that synthesises the key recommendations from stakeholders. This brief will serve as an advocacy tool to engage with policymakers, regulators, and private sector actors on strengthening waste management frameworks and driving circular economy adoption in Nigeria.

- **Launching the CTH Campus Climate Fellowship Programme (CCEP)**

To sustain momentum at the grassroots level, we are introducing the CTH Campus Climate Fellowship (CCEP), a pioneering leadership initiative designed to empower young climate champions across Nigerian universities. Unlike one-off events, the CCEP will promote long-term engagement through structured mentorship, project-based learning, and student-led campaign implementation. Fellows will spearhead Plastic-Free Future-inspired initiatives on their campuses, embedding circular economy principles into their advocacy work and building a pipeline of skilled youth leaders aligned with CTH's broader climate agenda.

Together, these next steps represent our commitment to scaling impact by influencing policy at the top and nurturing changemakers at the base.