



# PROTECT THE PLANET

## Suggestions for Plastic Reduction at Centres



### Respect, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

The following guide has suggestions on how Sai Centres can reduce their plastic consumption:

#### 1. Audit current plastic use and identify issues

- Use of disposable plastic/Styrofoam products, for e.g., disposable plastic or Styrofoam plates, cups, bowls, plastic cutlery, plastic take-out containers, bottled water, etc.
- Use of plastic/Styrofoam products for Narayan Seva
- Use of plastic grocery bags for transport of food and other materials
- Absence of waste/recyclables segregation and proper disposal



#### 2. Inventory needs & type of initiative/activity

- Form a Go-Green Service Team or similar, which should include Green Champion(s) and a Service Coordinator
- Undertake an inventory of products required for serving meals onsite or distributing take-away items for a specific event or rather year-long needs, procuring items in bulk
- Undertake an inventory of products required for serving food at Narayan Seva

#### 3. Check local regulations, event venue and assess feasibility

- When selecting a venue for an event, assess: alternatives to wash reusable items in kitchen area, access to drinking water, and availability of waste segregation, recycling and composting stream
- Assess what types of recyclables are acceptable by the local township where the event is being hosted. Create a waste management plan based on local regulation; in the event all types of plastics are not accepted by the local township, plan an alternative for these to be recycled through other localities that accept such recyclables or through a recycling centre
- When performing Narayan Seva at a soup kitchen, check different soup kitchen settings on how waste management is implemented (recycling and composting)

#### 4. Take Action & Inspire

Segregate trash/recyclables during Sai events. Implement **Respect, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle** (5Rs) practices

- Replace Styrofoam/plastic plates, cups, silverware with compostable/biodegradable ones at Centre/Regional/larger events; even better, stop using compostable items, and start using reusable products. Go-Green Team could identify willing volunteers in advance and assign the responsibility to clean-up the items by using a dishwasher, if available at the venue, or by setting up a cleaning station. Interested volunteers can be put in charge to transport and store the reusable products for this effort
- Recycle bottles and cans at Sai events. Recycling bins can be purchased, or regular trash cans can be labelled with a recycling sign. Educate all participants, before and during the event, that all of their cans and bottles (and glass if used) should be placed in specially-marked containers. Go-Green Team/Service Coordinator should ensure that somebody has agreed ahead of time to take the recycled items to the recycling centre or to their home for recycling in their localities, if this service is not available at the event venue
- Purchase plain canvas bags and decorate (possible SSE activity). Use these instead of plastic or paper bags when shopping. Plastic bags begin their lives as natural gas or other petrochemical substances, which are finite, polluting, and increasingly expensive resources. Aside from the enormous energy costs to produce paper bags, millions of trees are cut down annually to manufacture billions of paper grocery bags. Canvas bags are strong and reliable, do not tip over, hold more than plastic bags and are good for the environment
- Prior to an event, send a reminder to or give a presentation (awareness) on 'Bring your own (BYO) Sai Green Kit' for meal to the events where food is served. An example Sai Green Kit (SGK) consists of: tupperware or ceramic or stainless steel plate, soup bowl, spoon and fork, Bisphenol A (BPA) free water bottle, coffee mug, cloth napkin and a cloth bag to carry the above items. Refer to this webpage for further details/illustrations on SGK:

<https://iammotherearth.wordpress.com/nature-friendly-sai/sai-green-kit/>



- Consider using goodie bags made of 100% recycled paper
- Consider the following options when distributing Vibhuti:
  - o use paper packets instead of plastic ones
  - o use salt shakers that can be passed around
  - o place a bowl of Vibhuti with a spoon at the entrance or exit
- Aim to adopt as much of a 'Zero Waste' policy as possible. Start by collecting and reviewing your waste, especially plastic waste and monitoring how the bulk of it is being accumulated. Then put in place some measures to reduce this as much as possible, or aim to locate more recycling centres for some of the waste

