

## Waste management debate

***TOK: Science is the father of knowledge, but opinion breeds ignorance.” Hippocrates***

- Students will need to take on the role of a stakeholder below. Although you can create generalized roles, I have chosen Hong Kong local roles because of the immediacy of the problem.
- Students can start off by selecting or being allocated on of the roles below. Students should be given the opportunity to read up on Hong Kong’s waste management problem, the solutions proposed and research the solutions available worldwide.
- Students should be reminded that a sound argument here will require examples from other countries. These examples will also provide students with more exam related material.

The objective of the class is to come up with a proposal to which everyone agrees. Advise the students that this will be difficult because everyone has different objectives. However, a plan needs to be proposed none the less.

### **Management roles:**

- One person needs to be the secretary and write down the minutes of the meeting.
- One person needs to be the chairperson to oversee the committee and write up the proposal.

### **Stakeholder roles:**

#### **Residents of Tseung Kwan O**

- You have been living next to the largest landfill in Hong Kong for the past 10 years.
- The government was planning to close the landfill but now plans to expand it.
- You must push for a solution as an alternative to increasing the landfill.

#### **Environmental secretary**

- Landfills will be full by 2015
- Locations on outlying islands, Tsuen Mun and Tseung Kwan O are against the expansion of landfills or creation of incinerators
- You must push for an alternative solution or convince the residents that expansion is necessary or that incinerators are safe

#### **Friends of the Earth member**

- You understand the need for waste disposal but disagree with the governments methods
- You believe that more sustainable methods must be used like recycling.
- The government is not pushing for more sustainable methods enough.
- You must push for a solution that everyone agrees that is strongly environmentally sustainable. You will likely reach opposition.

#### **Restaurant owner**

- Your restaurant creates 5-6 buckets of waste each day.
- The government wants to tax you for your waste but you feel that this is unfair as waste is caused by Hong Kong’s wasteful eating habits and lack of waste recovery programs.
- You must push for a solution that will not hurt your business.

**City's super owner**

- Your shop creates 100 tonnes of waste food each day.
- The government wants to tax you for your waste but you feel that this is unfair as waste is caused by Hong Kong's desire for fresh goods, prepackaged foods and lack of waste recovery programs.
- You must push for a solution that will not hurt your business.

**Foodbank coordinator**

- Restaurants and shops create 1000's of tonnes of food waste every day yet people in Hong Kong are starving.
- You must come up with a solution for organic waste that will benefit everyone.

**Council of sustainable development**

- You must balance the needs of the economy and the environment. The council attempts to address the needs of the future population without hurting the economic growth but improving the quality of life in Hong Kong.
- You must find a solution that will improve the quality of life in Hong Kong, not cost the economic growth but keep waste out of the landfill.

**Labour secretary**

- You have the opportunity to create thousands of jobs through the creation of industries around recycling and waste management.
- You need to prevent the loss of jobs caused by pushing businesses to adopt environmentally sustainable practices.

**Secretary of finance**

- Pushing businesses and companies to adopt environmental practices or face taxes on waste will hurt the economic growth of Hong Kong.
- Hong Kong has a history of tax free business. If taxes on waste are imposed, what will happen next?
- You are against imposing taxes on waste production and must consider a solution which will not cost Hong Kong too much money or become a long term burden without costing businesses.

**Resident of Kowloon**

- You live in tower in Kowloon and understand the problem of waste management. You want to help but there are no recycling programs in your building because of the limited space available.
- Now the government wants to tax the amount of rubbish produced or tax the building as a whole to cover the costs of waste management.
- You find this unfair as your family tries not to make much waste and your limited income will be hurt by having to pay another cost.
- You must think of a solution that will not become too difficult for residents like you.