



# WHY PLASTIC?

## FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **Coca-Cola's Plastic Promises**
  - p. 3 Synopsis
  - p. 4 Key findings and suggestions for questions
- **The Recycling Myth**
  - p. 5 Synopsis
  - p. 6 Key findings and suggestions for questions
- **We The Guinea Pigs**
  - p. 7 Synopsis
  - p. 8 Key findings and suggestions for questions







# COCA-COLA'S PLASTIC PROMISES

DIRECTED BY LAURA MULHOLLAND,  
PRODUCED BY MAX STERN

## LOGLINE:

Is the world's largest soft drinks producer really ready to turn the tide on plastic waste?

## KEY THEMES:

Single-use plastic, environmental justice, soft drinks industry, petrochemical industry, circular economy

## SYNOPSIS:

The soft drinks industry has faced growing criticism of the use of single-use plastic. In 2018 Coca-Cola, the world's largest soft drinks producer, set ambitious targets to reduce the amount of its plastic packaging that ends up in the environment. It said that by 2030 it would collect one bottle or can for every one it sold and make them from 50% recycled material. Coke's plan is to eliminate waste by turning old bottles into new ones. In this film, we investigate Coca-Cola's World Without Waste strategy. Could it be a shining example for the whole beverage industry? Or is Coke's plan to recycle its way out of the problem fundamentally flawed? And how well, after three years, is Coca-Cola doing around the world in meeting the commitments it has made?



## KEY FINDINGS

- Global brand audits reveal Coca-Cola is the world's **top polluter**.
- The company uses more plastic per dollar of sales than any of its competitors.
- As the shift to renewable energy continues, the **petrochemical industry is pushing single-use plastic**. The beverage industry has no intention of moving away from this type of packaging but there is not even the global capacity to recycle its way out of the problem.
- There are now **more drinks containers** (including their caps and lids) **than there are plastic bags** in the oceans. Drinks containers and their caps account for a quarter (24.5%) of ocean litter.
- After years of actively lobbying governments not to regulate single-use plastic, the beverage industry now supports schemes in countries where laws have been passed.

### Suggestions for questions:

- What are big corporations' environmental responsibility versus that of the consumer?
- What do you think is the best to tackle plastic pollution: binding policies or voluntary pledges?
- Is it effective to raise the issue of corporate responsibility, or could it have a counterproductive effect?
- Has this film changed your mind about anything?





# THE RECYCLING MYTH

DIRECTED BY TOM COSTELLO,  
PRODUCED BY TRISTAN CHYTROSCHECK

## LOGLINE:

What really happens to our plastic waste once we put it in the recycling bin?

## KEY THEMES:

Follow-the-money, incineration, waste exports, recycling, organised crime, environmental justice

## SYNOPSIS:

In the last few years the plastic pollution crisis has become an international scandal. But the plastic packaging industry has declared it knows how to solve the problem: recycling. Increasingly, bottles, boxes and sachets are proudly stamped with the words '100% recyclable' as brands compete to reassure consumers that their packaging purchases are guilt-free. But if recycling is really the solution, why is the world pumping out more virgin plastic than ever before? Could recycling really be the ultimate greenwash? We follow the money into an industry that's designed to hide the problem rather than solve it. We track the black-market brokers who hunt for countries to dump our plastic, waste moguls getting rich by burning trash, and the organised criminals for whom waste smuggling is now as lucrative as human trafficking. As we all pick up the bill for a world drowning in plastic, the film asks: who is getting rich?





## KEY FINDINGS

- Only a fraction of the plastic we use is actually recycled. Since the 1950's, **only 9% of plastic has been recycled.**
- Our plastic waste is no longer shipped off to Southeast Asia, since the Basel Directive has banned the export of plastic to developing countries. Instead, a lot of plastic ends up in Eastern Europe and Turkey
- Western and Northern Europe also largely rely on incinerating waste, conveniently labelling it **"Waste to Energy Recovery"**. But, at the end of the day, burning plastic, which is made from fossil fuels, is just like burning coal or oil.
- As our demand for oil and gas goes down, the supply of plastic is planned to go up, especially in emerging markets. It's been estimated that plastic production is expected to **double in the next 20 years.**

### Suggestions for questions:

- Is it better to separate your trash, or doesn't it make a difference?
- What kind of policies can you think of that could better this situation? (Think of having mandatory percentages of recycled plastic in all new packaging, taxing virgin plastic etc)
- What is better: burning plastic domestically, or sending it abroad where there is a chance it will get recycled, but there's also a chance it will end up in illegal dumps or in nature?
- Has this film changed your mind about anything?



# WE THE GUINEA PIGS

DIRECTED BY LOUISE UNMACK KJELDTSEN,  
PRODUCED BY METTE HEIDE

## LOGLINE:

Are we part of the greatest biological experiment in the history of mankind?

## KEY THEMES:

Infertility, cancer, ADHD, endocrine disrupting chemicals, science

## SYNOPSIS:

"We the Guinea Pigs" investigates why we are still constantly - and increasingly - exposed to dangerous chemicals through our plastic use, even though researchers have warned us about the potential adverse health effects for decades. Some of the most cutting edge scientific findings on how plastic harms our health come from Danish researchers. A recent study conducted in Denmark has revealed how endocrine disrupting chemicals affect the female reproductive system. It shows that female rats exposed to endocrine disruptors during early development end up with fewer eggs in their ovaries and are at risk of losing their ability to reproduce at an earlier age. For some time researchers have known that plastic has a negative impact on men's sperm count. Are we involuntary participants in an enormous experiment, threatening the health of millions of people - maybe even mankind as such?





## KEY FINDINGS

- The endocrine disruptive chemicals in plastic have proven adverse effects on human health. **Sperm count and quality have fallen dramatically, girls get their menstruation at an earlier age and cancer and neurological conditions such as ADHD are proliferating.** This could be the effect of our exposure to endocrine disruptive chemicals - although it is notoriously difficult to determine causality.
- Threshold values do not take the chemical **“cocktail effect”** into account, which is when many chemicals interact with each other and can create effects in humans that we have difficulties predicting
- Babies that are born today are born **“pre-polluted”**, which means they have already been exposed to chemicals, passed to them from the mother during pregnancy.

### **Suggestions for questions:**

- Is there reason to worry about the future of mankind?
- What do you think could be done to limit our exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals?
- Who is responsible for the situation we have ended up in: politicians, industry actors or individuals?
- Has this film changed your mind about anything?