

# Less waste, more life in our cities

Practical tips for a more sustainable and cleaner Belize



**80%**

of the total garbage found in the Wider Caribbean corresponds to thousands of **plastic fragments**.

**9%**

corresponds to plastic waste (PET and rigid plastic) recoverable for recycling, approximately **287,658 tons per year**.



**320,000**

tons of waste accumulate and remain in the Caribbean each year.

Between **\$350 million and \$870 million** a year is the estimated loss of income for the Caribbean region due to the degradation of coral reefs, a phenomenon closely related to marine pollution. Plastic debris can injure and even kill animals, especially birds and fish.

Plastics dissolve in **microplastics**, which are detected in the air, water and food we consume, **threatening our health**.

**50%**

is the rate of food and green waste reported in low- and middle-income countries. Garden and park waste, which contains nutrients, could be returned to the soil as a natural fertilizer.

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Households are the main producer of food waste with a rate of over **50%**. Fruits and vegetables are the main type of waste that is irrationally wasted.



It is estimated that **1/3 of food waste** generated by each inhabitant annually could be avoided.

**US\$310 billion** represents food loss and waste in developing countries and **US\$680 billion** in developed countries. These figures translate into a carbon footprint of approximately 3.3 billion tons of **CO<sub>2</sub>**, equivalent to 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

This represents an enormous **environmental and social** impact, as well as a financial loss for the households themselves, without forgetting that there are significant levels of malnutrition.

## What can we do?

### Plastic waste

- Fill a thermos or glass bottle** with tap water or our own refreshment.
- Take food boxes and cutlery for multiple use.**
- Ask for coffee to be served in our own cup.**
- Avoid products with multiple packaging**, e.g. toothpaste or glass jar with extra paper or plastic.
- Avoid using straws or choose reusable ones.** (Think whether it is really needed).
- Support local recycling initiatives and beach cleanups.**
- Use shopping bags for multiple use.**
- Choose large packs** with less packaging material.
- Buy bulk products in our own jar/container** (e.g. legumes, nuts, fruit, vegetables).
- Use wax cloths or paper for food protection/transfer**, instead of plastic wrap.

### Organic waste (food and green waste)

- Plan our grocery shopping better**, use a shopping list (we buy what we really need, in the right quantities, paying attention to the expiration dates).
- Improve food storage and preservation, e.g. use the freezer** (avoid spoilage, know what is stored and where).
- Be mindful on how to store products and adjust the menu** (consume products before they expire).
- Dispose of leftover organic waste** (e.g. food scraps or green waste from our plants) in your home compost or in the appropriate garbage can according to your municipality's separation program. Remember that through composting, these materials become fertilizers and other useful products.
- Dispose of used cooking oil in the appropriate collection** containers, as they are used for the production of biodiesel and soaps. Inquire about the separation program in your municipality.

### Electric and electronic devices, light bulbs, batteries

These items contain highly toxic materials for the environment and our health, but also have great value.

#### We do not throw them in the residual bin.

- Choose electric and electronic devices with a **long-life cycle** and the possibility of **future repairs or upgrades**. Thus, we also save money.
- Get devices from **second-hand or upgrade** shops.
- Donate** devices you do not use anymore to others who need them.
- Use **rechargeable batteries** and **long-life lamps**.

### Printer paper and ink cartridges

Their production consumes valuable resources, while they have significant value after use.

#### We do not throw them in the residual bin.

- Reduce printing**, prefer digital format.
- Keep files and records in digital format.**
- Print on both paper sides.**
- Use the **back side of printed paper** for notes.
- Buy recycled paper.**
- Use **refillable ink cartridges** and toners, whenever it is technically applicable.

### Items we don't use anymore

Most items still have value, as products or as secondary materials.

#### Please rethink and do not throw them in the residual bin.



Repair | Reconstruct | Reuse | Redesign | Upcycle

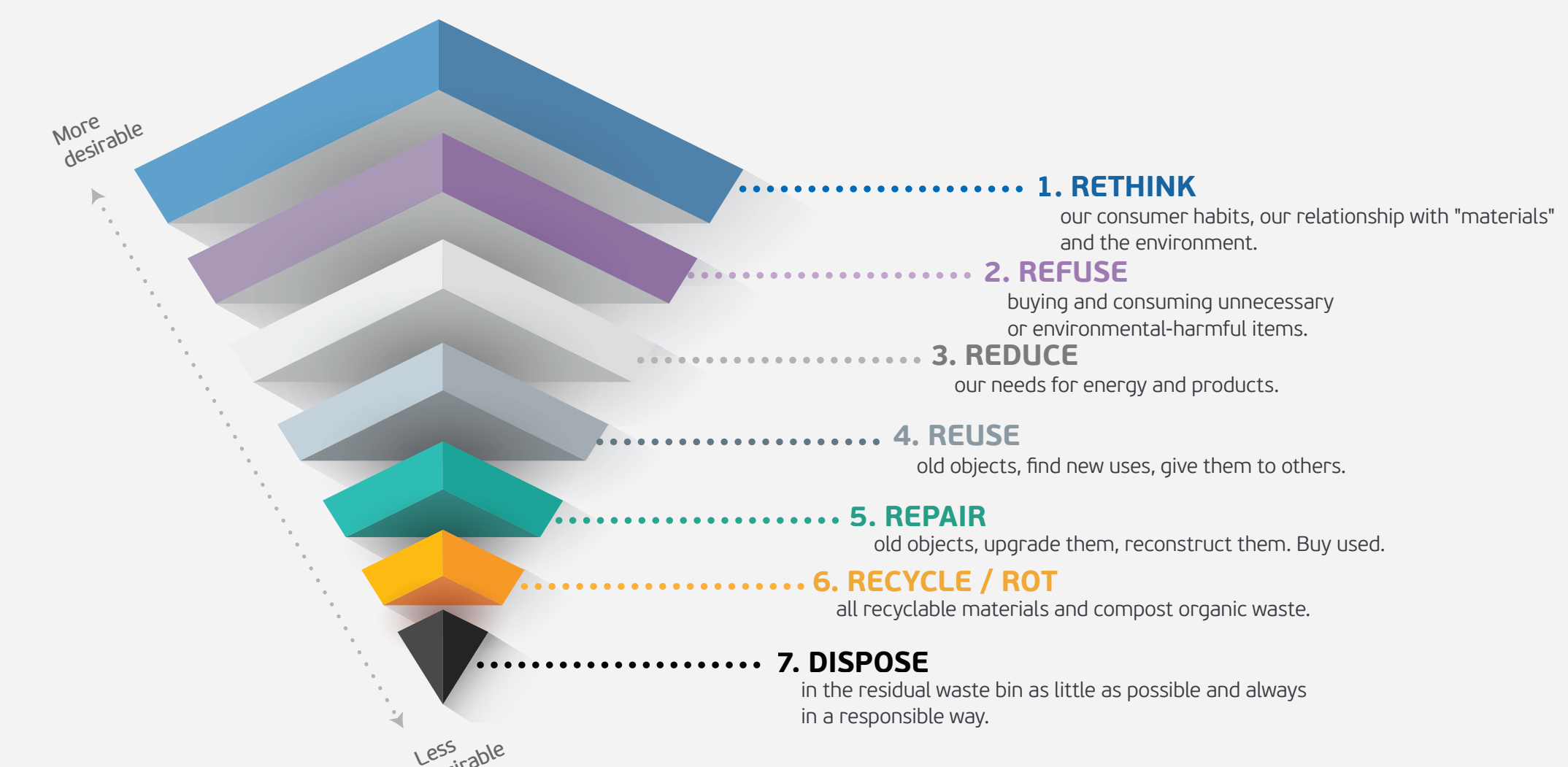
We can also donate them to friends who can use them, or to dedicated spots in our municipality, to be used by others who need them.

## What we can't avoid at all, we recycle! How do we recycle?

- Put **only recyclable materials**, each one in the **dedicated bin**, depending on the waste system in our area.
- Rinse liquid and food leftovers from the packaging.
- Compress packaging as much as possible. **Bulk** in each bin and not in bags.
- Separate at source the **biowaste**, by using biodegradable bags simple paper bags or newspapers to collect them and dispose them properly in the brown bin or directly in our home composter. Plastic bags should be avoided, as they are mixed with the pure organics and deteriorate the quality of the compost produced.
- Dispose **electric and electronic devices, batteries, light bulbs, ink cartridges** only in proper collection points or networks, never in the residual waste bin.



## Taking waste out of our lives, in 7 simple steps



By preventing waste, we save money and contribute to our Belize economy!



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