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What is Plogging?

Plogging combines jogging (or walking) with picking up litter. The idea originated in Sweden and quickly spread across the world as a simple way to combine physical activity with environmental action.

The strength of plogging lies in its ability to achieve several goals at the same time. Participants improve their physical health through movement while actively cleaning their surroundings. At the same time, the activity builds awareness about waste, consumption, and the environmental impact of everyday behaviour.

Because plogging requires minimal equipment and can be adapted to different levels of physical ability, it is suitable for a wide range of participants. Some groups prefer jogging, while others organise walking-based cleanups. In this way, plogging can function both as a sport activity and as an educational or community-building initiative.

Through direct action, environmental responsibility becomes visible and tangible. Instead of only discussing environmental problems, participants actively contribute improving their local environment.

Why This Guide Matters?

Welcome to Plogging Essentials.

This guide is designed for both participants and organizers who want to understand not only how to take part in plogging, but also why it matters.

Plogging is more than picking up litter while jogging or walking. It is a practical expression of sustainability and active citizenship. By understanding these foundations, participants become more aware and motivated, and organizers are better equipped to design impactful, inclusive events.



Module 1

Introduction to Sustainability and Active Citizenship

Understanding Sustainability

Sustainability means meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.

It rests on three interconnected pillars:

- Environmental responsibility – protecting natural resources and reducing pollution
- Social inclusion – promoting equality, participation, and community well-being
- Economic responsibility – supporting long-term, responsible development

True sustainability requires action at all levels: individual, community, and institutional. Plogging operates at the intersection of all three pillars by combining environmental action, social engagement, and low-cost community-based activity.

Everyday examples of sustainability

Sustainability is not an abstract concept. It is reflected in daily choices:

- using reusable bags and bottles,
- sorting waste correctly,
- supporting local producers,
- participating in community cleanups,
- choosing walking or cycling over driving short distances.

Plogging connects these everyday decisions into visible collective action.

Key Facts

- According to the United Nations, sustainable development is built on 17 global goals (SDGs).
- The World Health Organization highlights that environmental degradation directly impacts human physical and mental health.
- Small daily actions, when multiplied by millions of people, create a measurable global impact.

Active Citizenship in Practice

Active citizenship means **taking responsibility for shared spaces and collective well-being**. It goes beyond voting or formal participation; it includes daily decisions that influence public spaces.

 When individuals choose to **leave litter behind, public spaces deteriorate.**

 When individuals choose to **clean and care for it, public space improves.**

Communities are shaped by accumulated everyday behaviours.

Plogging transforms passive observation (“There is too much trash here”) into civic action (“Let’s improve this space together”).

Planet Heroes – From Crowdfunding to Global Impact

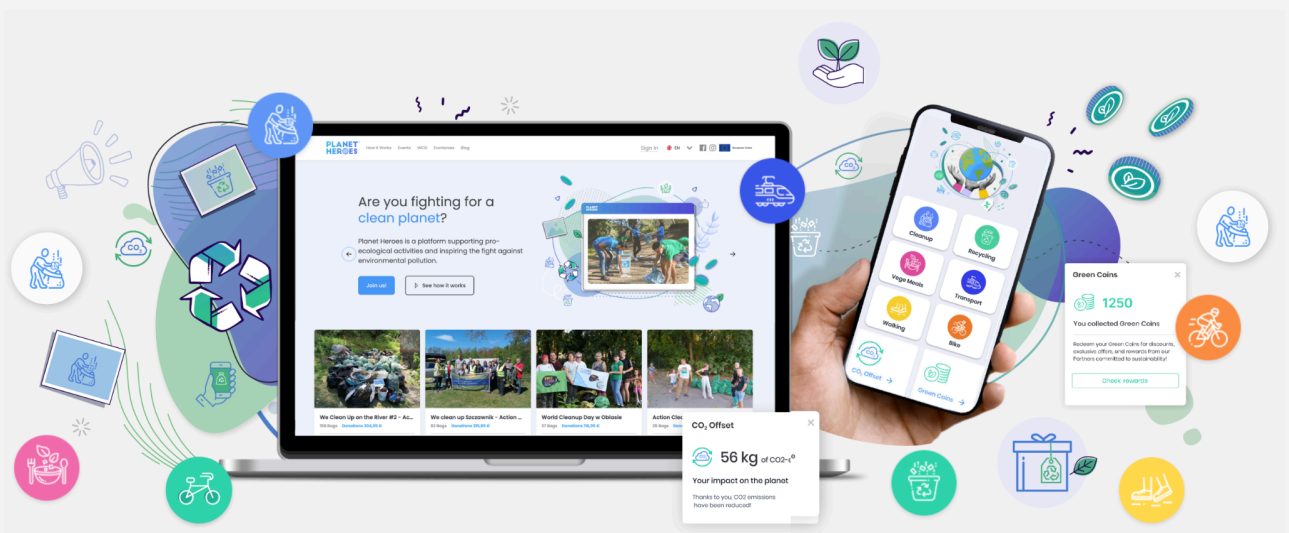


One practical example of a tool that turns this idea into action is Planet Heroes a platform designed to empower people through small everyday activities, healthy habits, and active citizenship.

Planet Heroes started as a crowdfunding platform supporting local environmental initiatives. Over time, it evolved into a global movement focused on building sustainable habits through everyday action. The creation of the Planet Heroes app <https://www.planetheroes.app>

allowed participants to track their activities, record cleanups, and see the measurable impact of their efforts, turning one-time volunteering into long-term engagement.

Today, participants connect not only through regular neighbourhood initiatives and plogging sessions, but also during global moments such as World Cleanup Day, when communities act simultaneously across continents.



The Planet Heroes demonstrates how active citizenship can scale when digital tools and a strong sense of community support local action. By combining movement, measurable impact, and global connection, the initiative shows that small, consistent actions can lead to significant environmental and social change.

Lessons learned:

- **Technology can support sustainability habits**
Tracking progress increases consistency and motivation.
- **Small actions scale when connected globally**
Local cleanups become powerful when part of an international movement.
- **Community is key**
People stay engaged when they feel part of something bigger.
- **Visible impact builds agency.**
Measuring results transforms abstract environmental concern into concrete achievement.

Good practice: Neighbourhood Green Patrols

On Wielka Wyspa in Wrocław, a green district surrounded by branches of the Odra River, Mr. Marek and Mrs. Gosia, a married couple who have been living in this neighbourhood for several decades, have turned their daily routine into a simple form of active citizenship. Together with their dog Dina, they regularly walk and cycle through their neighbourhood. Noticing litter along the river paths, they decided to act. Equipped with gloves, bags, and a bicycle with a small trailer, they collect waste during their everyday “patrol” of local green areas. There is no formal organization, just consistency and care for the place they live. Their example shows that good practice does not always require large events. Small, regular actions integrated into daily life can protect the environment, strengthen local responsibility, and inspire others to do the same.

Mini-exercise:

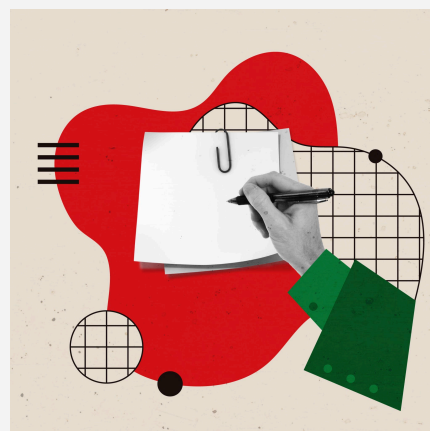
Map your local Eco-Challenges

For participants and organizers:

1. Identify three environmental challenges in your local area (e.g., litter hotspots, lack of recycling bins, unsafe green spaces).
2. Discuss possible causes.
3. Identify one small action that could be implemented within one month.
4. Facilitate discussion and encourage practical thinking. The goal is not to solve everything, but to shift perspective from complaint to solution-oriented action!

Active Citizenship for Body and Mind

Active citizenship through plogging is not only an environmental act but also a powerful mental health intervention and a meaningful way to strengthen physical health and social well-being.



Why?

1. **It strengthens your body.**
Regular movement improves cardiovascular health, builds endurance, and increases overall physical fitness.
2. **It reduces stress**
Activity in green spaces improves mood, lowers stress levels, and restores mental energy.
3. **It builds a sense of purpose.**
Taking action transforms worry into empowerment. Small visible results strengthen the belief that your actions matter.
4. **It strengthens the social bond.**
Working together reduces loneliness, builds trust, and creates a sense of belonging.
5. **It reinforces positive identity.**
You begin to see yourself as responsible, active, and engaged – which increases motivation and self-esteem.

**Plogging connects movement, meaning, and community
– showing that caring for the planet also means caring for yourself.**

👉 Mini-exercise: Reflect and connect

Ask yourself:

- How do you feel after spending time outdoors helping others?
- Do you notice differences in your mood before and after physical activity?
- What emotions arise when you take action instead of only reading about problems?

Write down three words describing your emotions after your next plogging session.



From Awareness to Action

Understanding sustainability and active citizenship is the first step. The next step is practical engagement. **Plogging represents a simple but powerful model:**

Small individual actions + Collective coordination = Visible community impact.

As participants, you contribute directly to environmental improvement and community cohesion. As organizers, you create safe, inclusive spaces where civic responsibility becomes tangible.

In the following chapters, we will move from conceptual foundations to practical tools for organizing safe, inclusive, and impactful plogging events.

Module 2

Waste Management and Recycling

Introduction to Waste Management in Plogging

Plogging combines physical activity with environmental responsibility.

Its real impact comes from correctly sorting and delivering collected waste to the right facilities, supporting the circular economy.

The process relies on three key steps:

- Safe collection
- Careful sorting
- Responsible disposal

When applied properly, plogging becomes not only a clean-up activity but also an educational practice on sustainability.



Phase 1: Trash Pickup Rules and Safety Protocols

Personal Protective Equipment

Public spaces may contain sharp, contaminated, or hazardous objects. Participants must wear gloves to prevent cuts and contact with contaminants. Litter grabbers reduce strain and risk.

Basic rules:

- Always wear gloves
- Do not touch your face
- Sanitize hands after finishing



Participants must stay alert, especially near roads. Items not to be collected:

- Heavy or unstable objects
- Chemical containers
- Needles or medical waste
- Weapons
- Suspicious or toxic items

These should be marked and reported to the authorities.

Post-Collection Hygiene

Proper handwashing, safe glove removal, and avoiding food before cleaning help prevent contamination.

Phase 2: Understanding Waste Fractions

Effective recycling depends on correct sorting. Common fractions include:

- **Plastic & Metal** – Clean and dry packaging, bottles, caps, cans. Flatten when possible.
- **Glass** – Bottles and jars kept clean and separate.
- **Paper & Cardboard** – Dry and clean; flatten boxes; remove plastic windows.

● **Residual Waste** – Non-recyclables such as contaminated plastics, Styrofoam, ceramics.

Local rules may vary and should be checked before the event!

Phase 3: Practical Sorting Methods

Sorting methods depend on group size:

Method 1:

Individual Sorting – Each participant uses multiple bags. Highly educational but requires more equipment.

Method 2:

Team-Based Collection – Each team collects one waste category. Works for medium groups but needs coordination.

Method 3:

Central Sorting Stations – Participants collect everything and sort afterwards. Ideal for large-scale events.

Waste Transport and Disposal – Event organizers must confirm accepted materials, facility requirements, hours, and potential fees. Waste should be transported securely to avoid spills.

Documentation and Impact Tracking

Record:

- Total waste collected (number of bags collected)
- Weight per fraction (if possible)
- Number of participants
- Repeat participation

This data helps evaluate environmental impact, motivate volunteers, and support environmental reporting.



Module 3

Reducing Plastic Use and Finding Sustainable Alternatives

Plastic a major burden on the environment

Plastic is one of the biggest environmental problems of our time. Pollution is already created during its production. Large amounts of greenhouse gases are released, which contribute to climate change.

Many types of plastic also contain harmful substances, such as plasticisers. These can migrate into food and endanger the health of humans and animals.

Plastic waste is particularly problematic. Plastic hardly decomposes in nature. A large portion ends up in rivers, lakes, and oceans. There, it pollutes the water and destroys valuable habitats.

Another major issue is microplastics. These are tiny plastic particles that are created, for example, when plastic waste breaks down or when washing synthetic clothing. Microplastics enter water bodies and have now even been detected in the bodies of humans and animals. This shows how serious the problem is.



10 tips for reducing personal plastic consumption

1. Reusable instead of disposable

Use products that can be reused. For example, bring your own coffee cup or carry a small metal cutlery set. This helps avoid single-use items.

2. Avoid plastic packaging

Choose products with less packaging when shopping. Cloth bags, shopping bags or reusable containers help reduce unnecessary plastic waste.

3. Cosmetics without microplastics

When buying cosmetics, make sure the products do not contain microplastics.

4. Use environmentally friendly cleaning products

Many cleaning products are available as refills – this reduces packaging waste. Homemade cleaners using vinegar or baking soda are also effective and environmentally friendly.



5. Drink tap water

Fill tap water into reusable bottles instead of buying water in plastic bottles.

6. Glass bottles instead of plastic bottles

Drinks and dairy products are often available in glass bottles. Glass is easy to recycle and is a sustainable alternative.

7. Eat mindfully when on the go

Choose paper packaging or bring your own containers that can be filled with food.

8. Use packaging multiple times

Groceries can be carried in backpacks, bags or baskets. Many types of packaging, such as bags or shipping envelopes, can be reused several times.

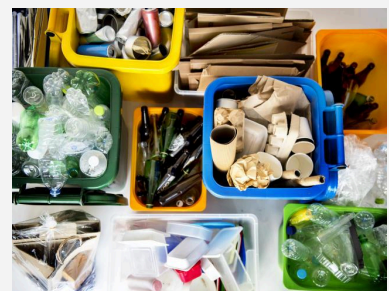
9. Pass things on instead of throwing them away

Plastic products such as toys, cups, kitchen utensils or pens can be sold or donated when no longer needed.

10. Use recycled products

Paper products made from recycled paper – such as printer paper, toilet paper or paper towels – conserve resources and help reduce waste.

💡 Every small change counts. Anyone who uses less plastic helps protect the environment and contributes to a livable future for generations to come.



Module 4

Plogging – Concept and Implementation

Planning a Plogging Event

1. Choosing the location

The first step is selecting a suitable location. Parks, riverbanks, neighbourhood paths, and green corridors often work well because they are accessible and usually show visible signs of litter accumulation. The route should be safe and easy to navigate, avoiding heavy traffic areas or unstable terrain. Circular routes between two and five kilometres are usually ideal for beginner participants.

2. Preparing Equipment

Organizers should also prepare basic equipment. Essential items include protective gloves and waste bags. When possible, collected waste should be separated according to basic recycling categories such as plastic and metal, glass, paper, and mixed waste.

3. Group size and coordination

The recommended group size for a plogging event is between 5 and 20 participants. Larger groups are possible but may require additional coordinators to ensure safety and coordination.

4. Accessibility and Inclusion

Accessibility is an important aspect of inclusive plogging. Organizers should consider offering walking options, choosing routes suitable for different fitness levels, and using clear instructions that are easy to understand for participants from diverse backgrounds.

5. Briefing and event organization

Before starting the activity, participants should receive a short briefing explaining the route, expected duration, and basic safety rules. A clearly defined meeting point and final gathering point help ensure that collected waste can be properly managed after the event.

✓ Quick Organiser Checklist

Before the event, check that you have:

- chosen a safe and accessible route
- prepared gloves and waste bags
- planned waste sorting categories
- defined meeting and finishing points
- prepared a short safety briefing
- assigned a person responsible for coordination

Using the Planet Heroes App – Step by Step

The **Planet Heroes app** can be used to document plogging activities, measure environmental impact, and inspire others to take action. By reporting your cleanup through the app, participants can visualize the positive effect of their actions and contribute to a growing global community of Planet Heroes.

How to Report Your Action

1 Download the app

Create an account on the Planet Heroes app and join the community.

2 Find a location to clean

Choose an area that needs attention, such as a park, riverside, forest path, or street.

3 Take a “before” photo

Show the condition of the area before cleanup.

4 Clean the area

Collect litter during your plogging activity and sort waste when possible.

5 Take an “after” photo

Capture the cleaned space to show the impact of your action.

6 Dispose of waste properly

Place collected waste in the correct recycling or waste bins and document it if possible.

7 Publish your action in the app

Upload photos and details of your cleanup. Your action will appear on the community map and contribute to the collective environmental impact.

Why Use the App?




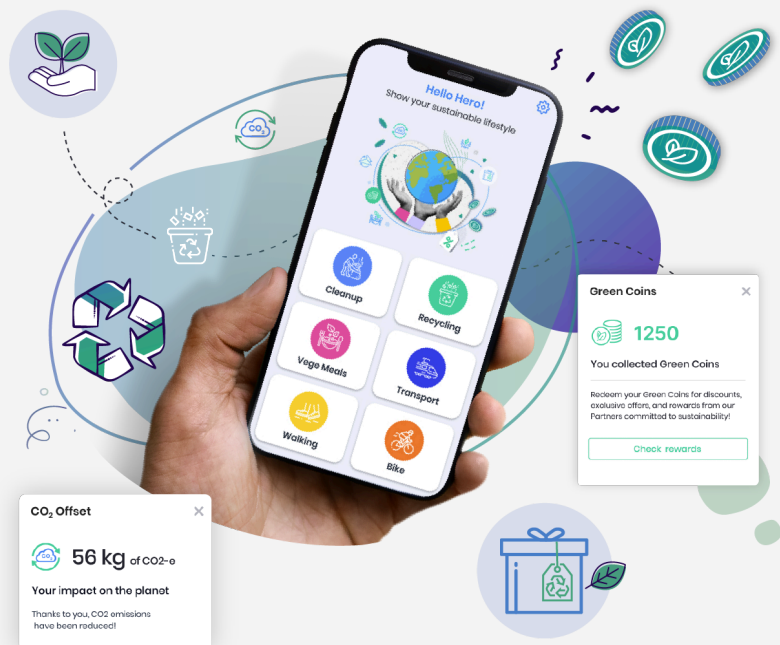
The Planet Heroes app supports both **environmental action and personal wellbeing**. By joining plogging activities, participants not only help clean the planet, but also improve their health, fitness, and mental wellbeing through movement, fresh air, and community connection.

Scan this code and download and become Planet Hero!

With the app, participants and organizers can:

- publish cleanup results on the community map,
- track environmental impact, steps, and activity progress,
- improve wellbeing through outdoor community action,
- receive rewards and recognition for their efforts.

 The app transforms everyday plogging into a visible, measurable, and rewarding activity that benefits both the planet and the people taking part.



Module 5

Events - Inclusion and Community Engagement

More Than Cleaning: Why Plogging Brings People Together

Plogging is more than collecting litter while moving outdoors. It combines physical activity, environmental action, and community building. A plogging event can help people feel connected to their local environment and to each other.



An inclusive event means creating conditions where different people can participate comfortably and meaningfully. Participants may have different ages, fitness levels, cultural backgrounds, languages, experiences, or access needs. A good plogging event does not expect everyone to participate in the same way. Instead, it offers flexible roles, accessible routes, and a supportive atmosphere.

Community engagement grows when people feel welcome, safe, and appreciated. For many participants, the social experience is just as important as the environmental impact. Organizers should therefore focus not only on collecting waste, but also on creating positive shared experiences.

Simple Ways to Build Community Spirit

- create mixed teams with different ages and abilities,
- encourage participants to join at their own pace,
- celebrate small achievements,
- include moments for conversation and reflection,
- end the activity with a group discussion or photo,
- invite participants to help organize future events.

Partnerships with schools, sports clubs, NGOs, local authorities, or neighborhood groups can also help build long-term community involvement.

Making Plogging Accessible for Everyone

Inclusive plogging means making the activity accessible for people with different abilities and needs. Accessibility should be considered from the beginning when planning the event.

Small adaptations can make a big difference:

- choose safe and easy-to-follow routes,
- offer both walking and running options,
- provide shorter routes and rest breaks,
- use clear and simple instructions,
- share route information in advance,
- choose meeting points accessible by public transport,
- provide gloves and waste bags,
- encourage participants to choose roles that suit their abilities and comfort levels.


Not everyone needs to collect litter directly. Participants can also contribute by:

- taking photos or documenting the event,
- distributing equipment,
- guiding teams,
- sorting waste,
- helping with communication,
- welcoming participants,
- or supporting event organization.



Inclusion is not about treating everyone the same. It is about giving everyone a real opportunity to participate.


Exercise 1 – Spot the Barriers, Open the Doors

 Work in small groups and discuss the questions below.

1. What might stop someone from joining a plogging event?
2. Which barriers could be:
 - physical,
 - social,
 - communication-related,
 - or emotional?
3. How could you adapt your event for:
 - older adults,
 - children,
 - wheelchair users,
 - participants with low fitness levels,
 - people who do not speak the local language well?
4. Which tasks could participants do besides collecting litter?
5. What helps people feel welcome and comfortable during community activities?

Prepare a short list of three improvements that could make your future plogging event more inclusive.

Exercise 2 – Design Your Own Inclusive Plogging Event

 In pairs or small groups, design a simple plan for an inclusive plogging event.

Include:

- target group,
- meeting point,
- route and accessibility,
- communication methods,
- safety considerations,
- different participant roles,
- and one idea for building community spirit.

Present your plan to the group.

Learn, Share, Reflect

Reflection helps participants think about their experiences, community involvement, and environmental responsibility.

5-Finger Reflection Method

Ask participants to reflect using their hand:

- **Thumb** – What was great today?
- **Index finger** – What did you learn?
- **Middle finger** – What was difficult or frustrating?
- **Ring finger** – What made you feel connected to others?
- **Little finger** – What was missing or could be improved?

Questions for Group Reflection

- How did you experience the combination of movement and environmental action?
- Did everyone have the opportunity to participate in their own way?
- What created a positive atmosphere during the event?
- What could make future activities more accessible and welcoming?
- How can local community actions create positive change?

Plogging can become more than a one-time activity. Inclusive and community-based events help people build stronger social connections, increase environmental awareness, and encourage active participation in local communities.

Module 6

Evaluation and Reflection

Why Evaluation Matters

Evaluation helps organizers understand what worked well and what can be improved in future plogging events. It also encourages participants to reflect on environmental issues, teamwork, and community engagement.

Evaluation does not need to be complicated. Short discussions, surveys, and feedback activities can already provide valuable insights.



The Learning Round

A simple and effective evaluation method is the **Learning Round** — a short reflection session after the activity. It helps participants share experiences, ideas, and suggestions. Use the questions below to guide the discussion.

1. Share the Experience

- What surprised you today?
- What was the most interesting thing you found?
- What moment did you enjoy most?

2. Reflect

- Did this activity change how you see waste in your community?
- What did you learn about teamwork or environmental responsibility?

3. Improve

- What could we do better next time?
- What challenges did you face?

4. Take Action

- What is one small action you can take to reduce waste?
- Would you join another plogging event?

Creating a Safe and Inclusive Space

To encourage honest participation:

- listen without judging,
- respect different opinions,
- allow participants to pass if they do not want to speak,
- offer both spoken and written feedback options,
- value every contribution.

Collecting Feedback

A short post-event survey (5–10 minutes) can help collect useful feedback.

Example questions:

- How would you rate the event? (1–5)
- Did you learn something new?
- Did you feel safe and included?
- Would you participate again?
- What can be improved?

Photos, videos, and informal conversations can also help document participation, teamwork, and community impact.

Always ask for consent before sharing photos or videos.

Learning for the Future

If you organize regular events, tracking participation, litter collected, and participant feedback over time can help show long-term impact and improve future activities.

Evaluation should be a continuous process of listening, learning, and improving together.

LET'S PLOG!

The tools and ideas presented in this guide can be adapted to different groups, communities, and event sizes. What matters most is creating space for people to connect, reflect, learn from each other, and enjoy taking action together.

Plogging is not only about cleaning the environment – it is about sharing experiences, supporting one another, and showing that even small actions can create positive change. Every step, every conversation, and every piece of litter collected makes a difference.

Thank you for being part of the movement.

