

Ms. Ho, age 45, has lived in the Huang Wen Yuan Cun village for 19 years and remembers fish in abundance and clean water for irrigation from the local stream. Now she describes the river as black acrid smelling water. The village is located directly adjacent to the Kingboard Industrial park. Resident farmers are concerned about the pollution found in the nearby streams discharging from the factory. The vegetables produced from this village are considered toxic by the local consumers and therefore the farmers have a hard time selling their produce.

Photo: Greenpeace/
John Novis



Further Working Ideas

For students aged 7+

Here is a selection of creative ideas to inspire your students – from quick tasks at home or in class to longer projects to do together. Don't forget to check out the other background sheets and activity sheets for more resources and ideas.

On Your Feet!

Students vote with their feet. Put up signs saying “yes” and “no” at the front and back of the room. Read out some statements about water, pollution or life in China and students position themselves between the signs to indicate how much they agree with it or not. Then ask them why they have stood in a particular place so they can try to persuade their classmates.

Here are some ideas:

- Toxic pollution is everyone's problem.
- There's nothing I can do about toxic pollution.
- Toxic pollution affects my water supply.
- All industry should be banned in the Pearl River Delta.
- All farming should be banned in the Pearl River Delta.

At home

The Pearl River is sometimes called ‘the world’s factory floor’ because so many of the things we use every day are made there. Students try to find five objects at home which are made in China. They could draw pictures or write a list and compare it with classmates – seeing how many different things they can all find.

Creative writing or filming

Give students the worksheet in this document. Ask them to imagine that they are working for a local newspaper or radio or TV station that has just found out about industrial pollution harming their local river.

Students write an article for the paper, or work together to create a radio broadcast or TV report alerting and informing the local community. They should use some facts about the local area and imagine they’ve interviewed some local people about it and quote what they’ve said (it could be a local farmer, a factory owner, a group of children, or someone else).

Art project

Each student in the class could make a collage of a river that has been polluted, showing how some of the things in the water, on the river banks and people who use it might be affected. Put them up on the board to make one long river. They could do the same imagining a non-polluted river and put it up underneath to show the difference.

Film project

Students watch the Video Diary from Thailand, which shows what one group of Greenpeace campaigners are doing about toxic pollution in their area. Is there a campaign they could do about an issue in their local area? They could think about the things the campaigner in the film did and could use some of those ideas for the campaign or think of their own. They should keep a written, drawn or filmed campaigner diary.

Things to do in your neighbourhood

This is students’ chance to get active! They have probably seen pollution in their local environment. They can be part of the solution and organise the class or friends at home to clean it up. They’ll need to make sure they tell a teacher and someone at home, and make sure they are safe and protected from harm.

Worksheet

Greenpeace Report: Top Dragon Textiles
Prepared by Lai Yun, Toxics Campaigner for
Greenpeace China.

Location: Qingyuan, Pearl River Delta,
China.

Industry: Top Dragon makes denim for
jeans.

Situation: Top Dragon has been using an
underground pipe to release hazardous
chemicals into the river. The pipe goes into a
stream 100 metres from the factory, near
Leyuan Village.

Evidence: Mr Cheng and his family live next
to the factory. He showed Greenpeace the
pipe.

Water quality: acrid smell; smell of rotten
eggs (sulphur); black foam blowing off the
water and into Mr Cheng's house.

Water test: performed at Greenpeace
Laboratories, Exeter University, United
Kingdom.

Pollution found: manganese metal at unsafe
levels, arsenic poison.

Manganese facts: water looks red, brown or
black. Can cause disease similar to
Parkinsons.

As a result of the tests, Top Dragon has been
'blacklisted' by the government. Inspectors
will be going there regularly to see if they
have reduced their pollution levels.

Lai Yun: "I've been to many places that were
severely affected by water pollution. I can't
find the words to express how sorry I am
when I see villages located next to factories
where everyone has bad health. It scares me
when I see them eating food that has been
grown next to the pollution. Without clean
water, we don't have a future"



Top Dragon Textiles



Mr Cheng



Water Test -- A Greenpeace campaigner takes a water sample from the stream.