NTNU
Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Project report - Team 4

(Ocean's 5)

AM500218 Experts in Teamwork - Creating Value from Waste

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3.0 Abstract

The RECLAIM project investigates strategies to encourage community involvement in marine litter cleanup initiatives, focusing on understanding public awareness, motivations, and barriers. Through an online survey distributed in Ålesund, Gjøvik, Molde, Bergen, and Trondheim, we received 49 responses primarily from young adults aged 25-34, predominantly students and full-time employees residing close to coastal areas. Our findings indicate that while the majority acknowledge marine litter as a significant issue, participation rates in cleanup activities remain low due to limited awareness of events, perceived lack of time, and doubts about the effectiveness of cleanup efforts. Respondents suggest enhancing participation through organised events, increased social incentives, better promotion on social media, educational campaigns, and practical incentives such as prizes or rewards. These insights inform targeted recommendations to foster higher community engagement in sustainable marine conservation practices.

1.1 Introduction

Plastic pollution has emerged as one of the most severe environmental challenges of the 21st century, threatening ecosystems, economies, and human health worldwide (Borrelle et al., 2020; Lau et al., 2020). Recent estimates suggest that between 19 and 23 million metric tons of plastic waste enter aquatic ecosystems annually (Borrelle et al., 2020), with rivers, coastlines, and oceans serving as accumulation zones for debris originating from land-based and maritime sources. If no action is taken, the volume of plastic waste entering the environment could nearly double by 2040, underscoring the urgency of global intervention (Lau et al., 2020). Marine plastic pollution affects a wide range of species through ingestion, entanglement, and habitat degradation, and poses significant risks to human communities through seafood contamination, reduced tourism, and increased economic costs associated with cleanup and waste management (Gall & Thompson, 2015; Jambeck et al., 2015).

Multiple pathways contribute to marine litter, including inefficient waste management systems, inadequate recycling infrastructures, excessive single-use plastic production, and insufficient regulation of plastic disposal (UNEP, 2021). In addition to cleanups, addressing the root causes of marine pollution requires broader systemic measures, such as reducing plastic production, enhancing circular economy models, and improving global waste

governance (Vince & Hardesty, 2017). Recent proposals for solutions emphasise the need for multi-level strategies that integrate local action with policy reforms, innovation in material science, and shifts in consumer behaviour (Borrelle et al., 2020).

In Norway, the issue of marine litter has gained increasing attention. Despite the country's strong environmental reputation, marine debris remains a widespread problem along the Norwegian coastlines. According to Hold Norge Rent's (2023) Rydderapporten, over 1,800 tons of waste were collected through organised efforts in 2023, with plastic items such as fishing gear, packaging, and food containers among the most common types of litter. Sources of marine pollution in Norway are varied, stemming from domestic activities, commercial shipping, fisheries, and international ocean currents. The North Atlantic Current, for example, carries significant amounts of floating plastic debris from other regions to Norway's shores, making the issue a local and a global responsibility.

While national cleanup efforts, public awareness campaigns, and stricter regulations have achieved notable successes, Norwegian marine ecosystems remain vulnerable to ongoing plastic inflows. Thus, while necessary, strategies focusing solely on litter removal are insufficient. Effective long-term solutions must simultaneously focus on upstream interventions, such as limiting plastic production, improving waste management infrastructure, promoting biodegradable alternatives, and fostering a circular economy (UNEP, 2021; Borrelle et al., 2020).

Public engagement is vital in combating marine pollution at the community level. Volunteer-based beach cleanups remove debris, raise awareness, foster stewardship, and create social norms around environmental responsibility (Hartley et al., 2018). However, despite widespread concern about marine litter, participation in organised cleanup activities remains relatively low — a phenomenon commonly referred to as the "attitude–behaviour gap" (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). Understanding the barriers preventing people from taking action and the motivators encouraging participation is critical for designing effective engagement strategies.

To contribute to this field of knowledge, the RECLAIM project was established to investigate how community engagement in marine litter cleanup activities can be increased in Norway. The project seeks to identify what factors influence individual willingness to participate, what barriers inhibit action, and how communication and organisational strategies can be optimised to promote involvement. By emphasising interdisciplinary collaboration and practical

application, RECLAIM aims to bridge the gap between academic research and real-world environmental challenges.

Our study forms part of this initiative, focusing on public attitudes and motivations in five coastal Norwegian cities: Ålesund, Gjøvik, Molde, Bergen, and Trondheim. We collected data on awareness levels, perceived barriers, preferred incentives, and opinions on effective marine pollution solutions by developing and distributing an online survey. In designing the survey, we incorporated insights from previous literature on community resilience, social marketing, and environmental psychology, ensuring a strong theoretical foundation for our analysis (Suryawan, Suhardono, & Lee, 2024; Cialdini, 2003).

This report presents our findings, discusses their implications for future cleanup initiatives, and proposes evidence-based recommendations to foster greater public participation in marine conservation efforts. By addressing the need for cleanups and the underlying behavioural and systemic drivers of marine pollution, our work aims to contribute meaningfully to ongoing efforts toward a cleaner, healthier marine environment in Norway and beyond.

3.0 Methods

Survey creation

Before creating the survey, all group members read up on several research papers and articles on marine litter and cleanups. This was done to understand better what questions would be important to ask the survey participants. One of the papers was a study by Suryawan, Suhardono and Lee (2024) in which they looked at community resilience to participate in beach cleanups using hypothetical scenarios. They found that awareness campaigns, organised involvement, more available equipment and educational activities positively affected involvement. These are hypothetical scenarios we brought with us into our survey to see which kind of factors are more likely to make people participate. The same study also showed that coastal residents were more likely to participate than others. This gave reasoning for asking about participants' proximity to the coastal areas and how often they would take walks or visit the coastline. Suryawan, Suhardono and Lee (2024) also mentioned how perceived relevance and benefits of marine cleanups affected people's interest level on the topic, which led to the focus on what participants believe could be the benefits of marine litter cleanups. These would therefore be relevant questions to know how to better tailor marketing and

events to what was important for the participants regarding the outcome of the marine litter cleanup.

Based on our background research, we drafted some initial questions in week 5 with the help of AI, Chatgpt version 4o for the first phase of the survey creation. The survey questions were developed in response to the following research prompt: *"Help me create survey questions to help understand why people will not participate in picking up marine litter."*
This prompt guided the design of a structured questionnaire to explore barriers to participation in marine litter cleanup activities. The survey sought to capture demographic information, assess environmental awareness and attitudes, identify previous participation behaviours, and investigate perceived obstacles to engagement. Both closed-ended and open-ended questions were incorporated to enable quantitative analysis and capture qualitative insights. However, we had yet to define the overall goal of the survey. Our task from the RECLAIM project manager, Rosemary Aghedo, was to figure out how to engage individuals who have not yet participated in marine cleanup activities and inspire them to do so, but how exactly we would proceed was somewhat unclear. The second phase, therefore, involved an interview with Aghedo to help clear up any questions we had regarding the goal of the task. After the meeting, it was clear that we would focus on engaging individuals to participate in marine litter cleanups through various marketing strategies. Based on this approach, our goal for the survey questions was to understand better where people's concerns and motivations lie regarding marine litter and marine litter cleanup activities, focusing on how it could contribute to communities and social values. Based on our defined goal, the group critically assessed every survey question for its relevance and impact on the research outcomes.

During the last phase of the survey creation, the pilot phase before launch, the initial survey draft underwent a rigorous testing process. We sought and integrated feedback from the Aghedo, RECLAIM project manager, and Paula Rice, our teacher in EIT, ensuring that the content was both comprehensive for participants and not time-consuming to answer and targeted to our primary goal. This was initially done by providing the link and a PDF version of the survey via email to Rice and Aghedo. Their positive feedback allowed us to refine questions we were unsure about and finalise the survey. The survey was further tested among a small group, including friends and family members, with four individuals providing additional feedback. This pilot testing confirmed that the survey was ready for public distribution.

Data collection

The finalised survey was officially published on February 19, 2025, and was closed on February 28, 2025. To maximise outreach and participation, we leveraged multiple communication methods. Social media significantly spread awareness, including sharing the survey link through Facebook groups, WhatsApp, Discord channels, and Teams. No in-person distribution methods were utilised, as the survey was designed for online completion. After we received the contact information of 3 experts, part of the RECLAIM project stakeholders, we received one answer. This response was included in the total analysis and the rest of the answers, as it was collected after defining our solutions and did not give any extra valuable insights, having no significant impact on our recommendations.

The survey was distributed online through multiple channels, including work colleagues, fellow students from our master's program, the class and the student union's Discord groups. Additionally, family members were invited to participate, ensuring a diverse range of respondents. The survey was shared with an estimated 400 individuals across various platforms. By the time the survey closed, 48 responses had been collected, achieving a reasonable participation rate. In addition to the last expert response, this gave a final total of 49 responses.

Data analysis

After the survey closed, the data was exported from Nettskjema in summary and spreadsheet formats. Python used the raw CSV file for visualisation. Specifically, the panda's library was employed for data handling. Although various interactive methods were explored during the analysis, the final outputs used in the report consisted of selected PNG charts derived from these scripts.

The dataset required cleaning and restructuring, particularly for questions that allowed multiple selections and were split across several columns. These were consolidated into unified categories to enable meaningful aggregation and percentage calculations. For single-answer questions, value counts were used to identify overall trends across variables such as age, occupation, and proximity to the coast.

One of the primary analyses focused on levels of concern about marine litter, separated by distance from the coast. The results were visualised using bar charts, with concern levels sorted from least to most worried. Response categories were relabelled for clarity, and numerical values were added to each bar for ease of interpretation

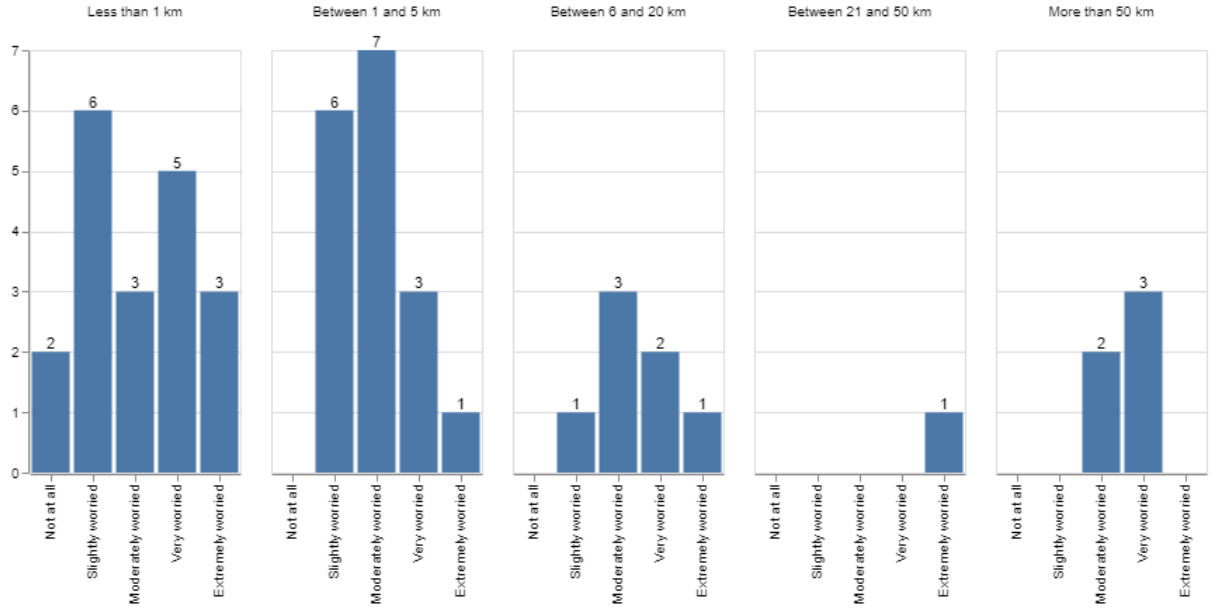

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Figure 1Proximity to the coast and concern about marine pollution

Additional charts were generated to explore barriers to participation in cleanups, such as lack of time, awareness, or interest, as well as potential motivating factors, including organised events, social influence, and school or workplace initiatives. Information sources were also analysed to understand better how respondents typically learn about cleanup activities. The final selection of charts provided a visual foundation for identifying patterns and insights, which informed the development of personas and design concepts later in the project.

Personas

Based on the data analysis, three personas were created to help us in the next phase, brainstorming. The personas are a good help tool for data analysis and create a representative summary of our survey results (Hvidsten et.al., 2021). Persona creation is also a valuable tool when designing with the end user in mind, allowing us to understand better their experiences, behaviours and goals (Dam & Teo, 2025). We created three personas: Mari, a 24-year-old student, Erik, a 29-year-old full-time employee and Magnus, a 50-year-old with a full-time

office job. Mari and Erik represent our main participants: students and young working adults. In contrast, Magnus represents the less-represented group of participants: grown adults. This would allow us to provide an overview of our target audience for tailoring our solutions, and for the work on future solutions by RECLAIM.

Brainstorming & Defining solutions

Brainstorming is an important tool for generating ideas. It allows team members to freely share any idea that comes to mind, thinking freely, without being judged for sporadic ideas. It can be done individually and in groups (Miro, n.d.). Our brainstorming phase began with some individual brainstorming based on the survey results and personas created. A group member presented their ideas, and together, the individual brainstorming was assessed. This helped better define the ideas presented and put forward some new ideas. Before proceeding further, the group contacted the RECLAIM project manager, Rosemary Aghedo, for a meeting to receive feedback and guidance for moving forward. Based on Aghedos' feedback, the group focused on providing several solutions for various occasions instead of refining a single solution. After the meeting, the list of initial ideas was refined and defined before the project's final presentation.

4.0 Results and Findings

Demographics

Based on the survey's demographic questions, the primary age groups we managed to reach were young adults, with 57.1% being in the age group of 25-34, followed by 20.4% in the age group of 18-24. Most respondents were full-time employees (63.3%) while the rest were students (36.7%). As for the respondent's educational level, the highest level achieved was a master's degree (16.3%), with the majority having a bachelor's degree (61.2%). No respondents had a lower education than elementary school (2%). As for the respondents' proximity to coastal areas, 73.5% are close, residing less than 1 km from the sea or within 1-5 km.

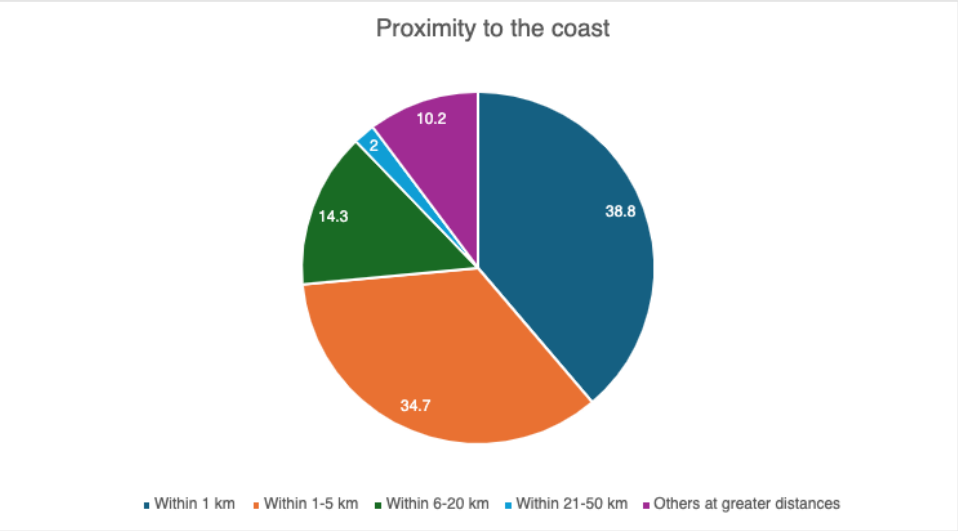

Figure 2Proximity to the coast

Awareness and Attitudes toward Marine Litter

Most respondents express some level of concern regarding marine litter. While 30.6% are moderately concerned, 26.5% are very concerned, and 12.2% are highly concerned. However, 26.5% reported being only slightly concerned, and 4.1% were not concerned. When asked whether litter cleanup efforts significantly reduce marine pollution, 65.3% of respondents believe they do, 14.3% disagree, and 20.4% are uncertain. However, only 2% of respondents visit the coast daily, 8.2% weekly, and 18.4% monthly. Most (61.2%) visit rarely, less than once a month, while 10.2% never visit coastal areas.

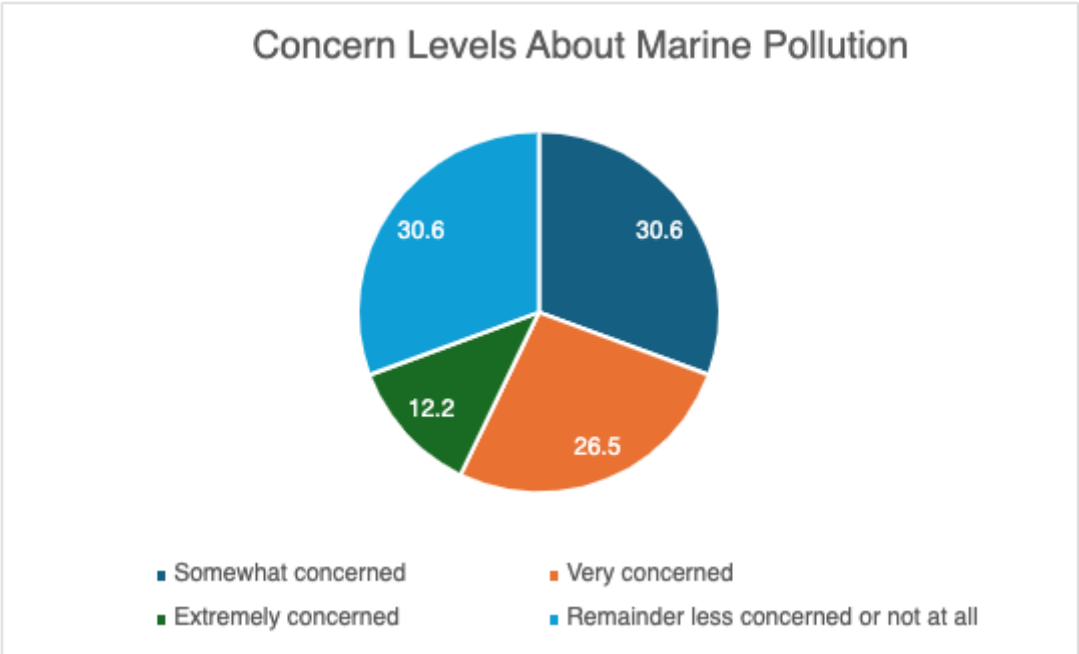

Figure 3Concern Levels About Marine Pollution

Participation and barriers

Out of our 49 submissions, only 11 participants have previously participated in beach or marine cleanup events. Key motivations for these 11 people were organised events (72.7%), personal commitment to the environment (63.6%) and workplace/school efforts (45.5%). One participant also mentioned having organised an event as a social event during the pandemic, when one could not meet inside.

Figure 4: Motivations for participation by people who have previously participated in marine cleanup events

As for the other 38 participants who had not previously participated in beach/marine cleanups the main reasons were lack of awareness of events (55.3%), lack of time (31.6%), lack of interest (28.9%), not knowing how to get involved (26.3%) and lack of fun (18.4%). For the 38 participants who had not previously participated, key factors that could increase their likelihood of participating in the future were more awareness (47.4%), organised group events (39.5%), if it were a part of work or school activity (39.5%) and receiving incentives (36.8%). A few (23.7%) also said that seeing a greater impact of the cleanup efforts could make them more likely to participate in marine cleanup events.

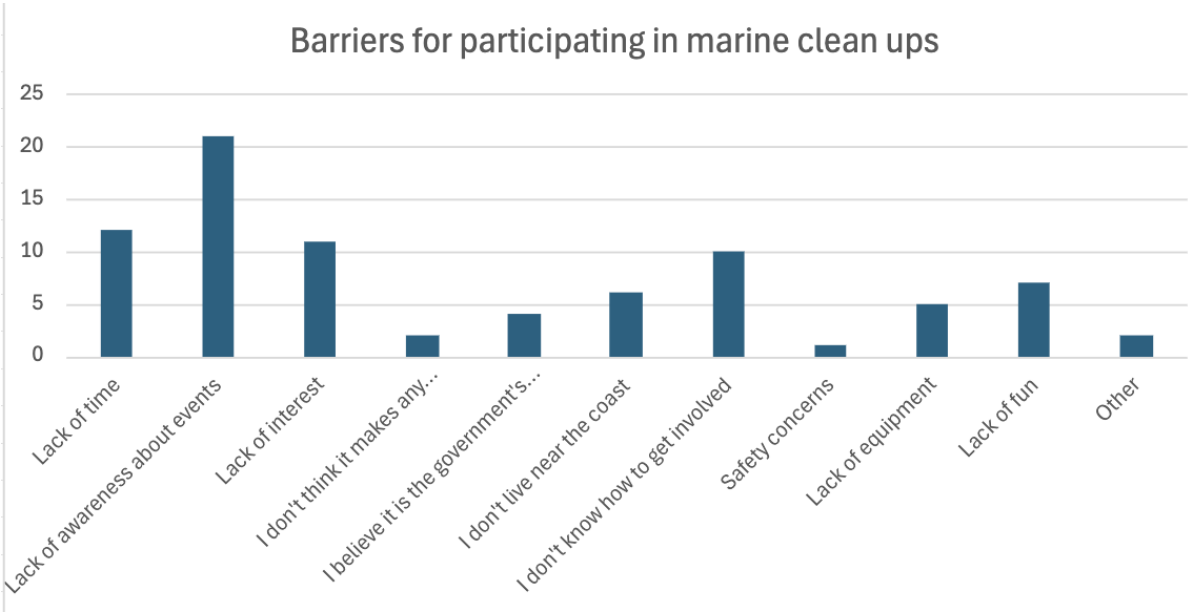

Figure 5: Barriers to participating in marine cleanup events for people who have not previously participated

Social and community aspects

Most participants who have previously participated in marine litter cleanups prefer to clean up marine litter as part of a group. Our survey shows that 63.6% of people like to join cleanup activities with organisations or at events. Only 18.2% prefer to clean up alone, and another 18.2% choose to do it with friends or family. When all 49 participants were asked about the benefits of marine cleanup within their communities, the most significant benefit (67.3%) was having cleaner, more comfortable beaches. An equal amount (67.3%) values the positive impact on local environments and ecosystems. About half the respondents (49%) appreciate that cleanups encourage physical activity through walking outdoors. Many (38.8%) also value cleanup events as a way for community members to meet and talk.

These results were also reflected in the suggestions made by our survey participants on how to get more people involved in marine cleanup. People suggested showing the positive effects of marine cleanup through before-and-after pictures on social media or a social gathering after the cleanup to take in the results of their efforts. Several respondents also put weight on the social benefits and thought people would be more likely to join if cleanup events felt like social gatherings. It was suggested that cleanup events be made more fun by offering food and drinks or having competitions with small prizes. One specific suggestion was a competition for collecting the most trash, where the winner receives a prize.

Working with businesses and organisations was also suggested. Businesses could sponsor cleanup events, and joining with organisations could bring in more volunteers. It was also a suggestion to include it as a workplace activity, or inform about the benefits of volunteering, and putting it on their resume. One person shared that learning about microplastics at a conference had made them more careful about marine pollution.

Marketing and awareness channels

The most common source of information about organised marine cleanup events is social media (38.8%), where Facebook and Instagram were the most dominant platforms, with TikTok, Snapchat and LinkedIn being mentioned. The second most common source of information was online news articles (34.7%). This shows that digital marketing is the most valuable and effective platform for spreading awareness. However, 32.7% had not heard about marine cleanup events, showing a slight lack of outreach. The remaining answers were information through friends or family (18.4%) and physical newspapers (8.2%). Information through school or university was also mentioned (14.3%), especially among the younger participants.

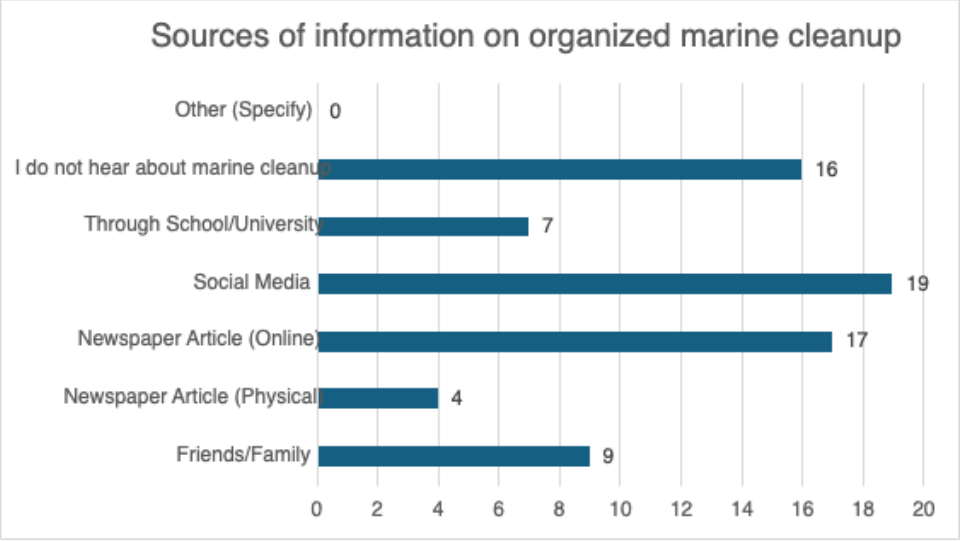

Figure 6: familiar sources of information about marine cleanup events

Regarding the organisations respondents had been exposed to through marketing, names such as Hold Norge Rent, DNT Ung, Natur og Ungdom, Plastfritt Hav, and others were mentioned. It is worth noting that no organisation was mentioned more than once across all responses.

Proposed solutions and policy insights

The survey also included a brief part about reducing marine littering. We asked the participants what they believe is the most effective way to reduce marine littering, giving them a few prewritten options and a chance to add their opinions. The most dominant of our suggestions was “stricter regulations and penalties”, with 58.3% of the respondents feeling that stricter laws and penalties would effectively reduce marine pollution. “Improved waste management systems” and “reduction in plastic production and use” were also some of our suggestions, with a high response rate (58.3%), closely followed by “more public awareness campaigns” (54.2%). 18.8% also answered “more organised cleanup events” to effectively reduce marine littering.

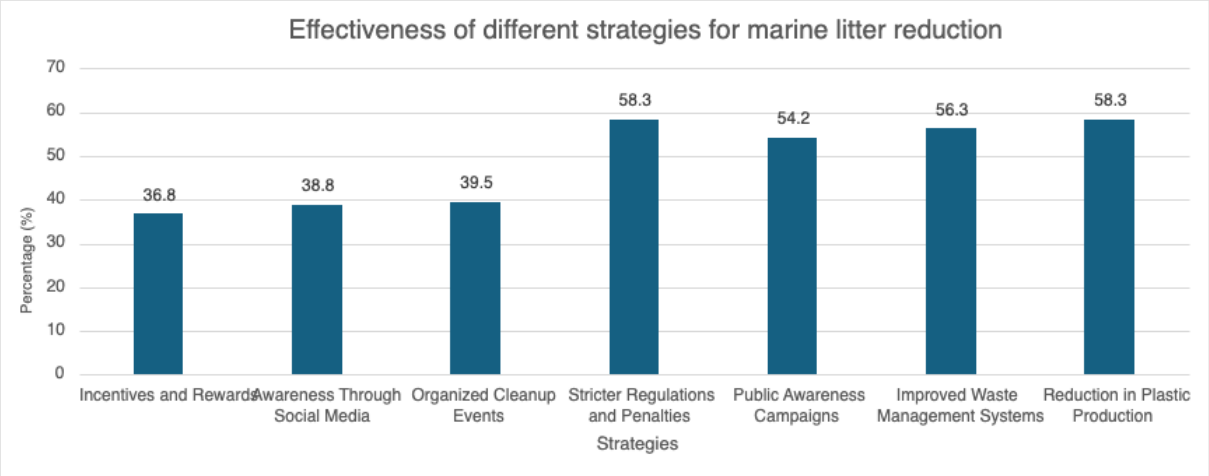

Figure 7: Participants' thoughts on the most effective ways to reduce marine littering.

Participants were also able to give their own thoughts on what they thought would be the most efficient way to reduce marine littering in an optional, open-ended question. Nine answers were received here, three of which were related to better waste management. Answers also included raised awareness (2) and stricter laws and policies (3). Other suggested efforts were more recycling, stricter laws regarding fishing waste management, smarter packaging, and reducing unnecessary consumption through a more circular economy.

Final remarks

It is worth noting that the final survey was faulty. One of the questions had the wording wrong, which unfortunately went unnoticed by the group. The question was only changed for

the last response by the person with greater expertise within the survey topic. The questions were: "På hvilken måte ønsker du at marin forsøpling kan bidra til ditt lokalsamfunn?" (English: "In which way do you wish marine littering to contribute to your local community?") and "På hvilken andre måte ønsker du at marin forsøpling kan bidra til ditt lokalsamfunn?" (English: "In which other ways do you wish marine littering to contribute to your local community?"). "Marin forsøpling" (English: "Marine littering"), was meant to be "Marin søppelopprydding" (English: "Marine littering cleanups").

We did not receive any messages from any respondents, except for two answers to the second open-ended question, which mentioned it was an odd question. Considering this with the formulation of the suggested answers, we do not believe it considerably affected the responses, although it cannot be ruled out. However, it might have prevented respondents from leaving suggestions in other ways.

5.0 Discussion

5.1 Demographic representation

The demographic results suggest that the survey primarily reached an educated audience, which may influence awareness levels and perspectives on environmental issues. Most respondents also live near coastal areas, suggesting that a significant portion of respondents may directly witness marine litter, potentially influencing their concern and engagement in cleanup activities. Overall, there is a lack of responses from older adults and individuals in diverse occupational backgrounds, likely due to the primary channels in which the survey was sent out (university group channels). Future studies could benefit from targeting these underrepresented groups to ensure a more inclusive outreach. To approach more grown adults and the elderly, higher use of channels such as Facebook or solutions that require fewer digital skills could be good options.

5.2 Awareness-Action Gap

Most respondents live close to the coastal areas (73.5%). However, very few said they visit the coast regularly (2% daily, 8.2% weekly), with the majority visiting rarely (61.2% less than

a month). Regular exposure to coastal areas could influence people's concern for marine litter, as discussed in Suryawan, Suhardono, and Lees' study (2024). However, the results show that although the majority do not visit the coast regularly, over half of the respondents are moderately or more concerned about marine litter.

These results indicate that while most people acknowledge the issue, there is still a need to raise awareness among those less concerned. This suggests that while the majority see cleanup as beneficial, a notable percentage are either sceptical or unaware of its impact, highlighting the need for educational initiatives to demonstrate the effectiveness of such efforts. This limited exposure might contribute to lower engagement in cleanup activities, as people who rarely visit these environments may not fully perceive the issue’s severity.

Lack of awareness was the most significant factor that could increase the likelihood of participation, showing an overall lack of awareness. Additionally, there seems to be a lack of interest and fun surrounding marine cleanups, which affects people's interest in participating in such events.

As for awareness, one respondent mentioned that a conference presentation on microplastics had made them more careful about marine pollution, suggesting that education could also help raise awareness and become a motivating factor for participating in the fight against marine pollution. This aligns with the results of Suryawan, Suhardono, and Lees' study (2024), which found that educational activities that tied litter management to local culture strongly affected people's willingness to participate in marine litter cleanups.

5.3 Social aspect of marine litter cleanup

The most significant gap in our survey would be the respondents' participation, where many respondents have not previously participated in marine cleanups. However, the survey results show that the social part of cleanup activities is important to most participants in both groups. Out of those who have participated, the key motivation was organised events; it did not need to be with friends or family, while for those who had not participated, organised group events were the second most significant factor that could increase their likelihood of participating. This shows that organised events, either through organisations or work/school, indicate that social factors motivate people to participate.

6.0 Potential solutions

The data collected through our survey has offered critical insight into how individuals perceive marine litter and what factors encourage or discourage their participation in cleanup efforts. These insights are crucial in our overarching project goal: to explore which initiatives and strategies can successfully mobilise the public to engage in marine litter cleanups. In this section, we reflect on our results, discuss how interdisciplinary teamwork contributed to the project, and assess the strengths and limitations of our work, while offering evidence-based solutions.

6.1 Reflection on Results concerning Project Goals

Our survey revealed that although concern about marine litter is relatively high, participation in cleanup activities is low. The most cited barriers were lack of awareness of organised events (55.3%), lack of time (31.6%), lack of interest (28.9%), and uncertainty about how to get involved (26.3%). These findings point to a gap between environmental concern and individual action, often called the "attitude–behaviour gap" (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002).

Our findings suggest several solutions to address these barriers. First, increasing awareness through digital platforms, mainly social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram), is essential. 38.8% of respondents identified these channels as their primary source of information. Second, organising cleanup events as engaging and social experiences may boost attendance. Respondents mentioned offering food, drinks, competitions, or small rewards could enhance participation. Making these events feel less like chores and more like community celebrations aligns with research showing that social influence and enjoyment are strong motivators for pro-environmental behaviour (Cialdini, 2003).

In addition, embedding cleanup activities into school and workplace settings could help reduce the burden of "finding time," another significant barrier. This strategy supports findings by Fielding et al. (2008), who note that convenience and integration into existing routines are key to sustained participation in environmental action. Finally, respondents expressed that seeing tangible results (e.g., before-and-after images) and understanding the impact of their efforts could increase their sense of purpose and involvement - something that can be facilitated through regular reporting and visual documentation of cleanup outcomes.

6.2 Influence of Interdisciplinary Teamwork

One of this project's most impactful elements was our team's interdisciplinary nature. Our group included economics, finance, communication, and environmental studies students, each contributing unique perspectives and strengths.

With his computer science and software development background, Marcello contributed heavily to structuring our survey logic and organising technical tasks such as data collection and analysis. With her experience in textile engineering and current studies in Industrial Ecology, Tania brought a valuable sustainability perspective, particularly when discussing environmental impact and lifecycle thinking. Karen, who studies Interaction Design and has experience in cybersecurity and creative content production, played an important role in visual communication, digital tools, brainstorming and structuring materials for outreach. Coming from a background in economics and as a consultant, Morten contributed a practical approach to project structure, finance, and stakeholder logic, primarily when we discussed execution strategies and organisational aspects. With her professional experience in public sector project management and sustainability innovation, Daniela connected the academic work to real-world municipal contexts. She often took the lead in structure and planning.

This diversity enhanced the depth and creativity of our discussions, particularly during the brainstorming and persona creation phases, and allowed us to approach the issue of marine litter from both a behavioural and strategic standpoint. For example, while one team member focused on survey design and data analysis, another considered marketing strategies and contributed insight into environmental policy and sustainability. Research supports the value of interdisciplinary collaboration in problem-solving, particularly in addressing complex social and environmental issues (Bracken & Oughton, 2006). By combining our fields of knowledge, we produced more practical, inclusive, and innovative recommendations than we would have in a single-discipline group.

6.3 Strengths, Weaknesses, and Improvements

Our project's strong foundation in community-based data is a significant strength. Our survey allowed us to gather honest opinions from a relatively diverse population, with respondents ranging from students to full-time professionals living close to coastal areas. Combining quantitative and qualitative data enabled a more nuanced understanding of the issue.

However, one limitation is the relatively small sample size of 49 respondents, which may affect the generalizability of our conclusions. Additionally, the digital nature of our survey may have excluded individuals less active on social media or digital platforms, such as older adults or people from other areas that are not coastal. This digital divide is a common challenge in community research (van Dijk, 2005).

To improve, future iterations of the project could include more targeted outreach to underrepresented demographics. Collaborations with schools, retirement centres, and local NGOS could help expand the range of perspectives in future surveys. Moreover, implementing pilot programs, such as organising an actual cleanup event with various incentive models, could provide practical evidence of the most effective strategies.

6.4 Proposed Solutions Summary and Future Work

Based on the survey results and personas created, we have created a list with six solutions in a mixture of marketing and event suggestions:

- Use social media campaigns and local influencers to increase awareness of cleanup events.
    - For example, Surfers Against Sewage's social media campaign "Return to Offender" was done during lockdown in 2020. During the campaign, people were encouraged to collect litter during their exercise, take a picture of it, and share it on social media, calling out businesses' contribution to plastic waste (Surfers Against Sewage, n.d.).
- Create fun, social, and rewarding events, including food, music, and games.
- Partner with workplaces and schools to integrate cleanup activities into existing routines.
    - For example, talk with universities and student unions about organising events connected to Fadderuka or other events throughout the semesters.
- Use visual storytelling (e.g., before-and-after photos) to communicate impact and to motivate.
- Collaborate with local businesses for sponsorship and volunteer incentives.
    - For example, Copenhagen initiated CopenPay, a summer initiative that rewards people with anything from a free lunch to museum tickets for making climate-friendly actions. Actions include using public transport, biking, and helping to

maintain the city (VisitCopenhagen, n.d.). One way to maintain could be to use the Green Kayak, a free Kayak rental that expects you to collect litter along your journey and share the experience on social media (GreenKayak, n.d).

- Develop educational materials to increase understanding of marine litter's consequences and the value of community action.

We believe communities can be empowered to take meaningful action against marine pollution by applying these solutions. Our interdisciplinary collaboration and community-oriented approach are a strong foundation for continued development in this area.

To continue the work initiated in this project, we recommend piloting some of the proposed solutions in real-world settings. Organising a small-scale cleanup event in collaboration with local universities, businesses, or municipalities would allow for testing different incentive models (e.g., social events, competitions, or sponsored rewards) and measuring their effectiveness in increasing participation. Furthermore, developing a targeted social media campaign using the suggested personas could provide valuable insights into how different messaging strategies resonate with various audience segments. Future research could also expand survey outreach to underrepresented groups, such as older adults or rural communities, to create more inclusive and practical solutions. Lastly, establishing long-term partnerships with local stakeholders would help sustain and grow community engagement, moving from short-term campaigns to embedded cultural practices.

7.0 Conclusion

This project has explored how community engagement in marine litter cleanup activities can be strengthened by understanding the public’s awareness, motivations, and barriers. Our findings indicate that while marine litter is widely recognised as a serious environmental issue, participation in cleanup activities remains relatively low. The key factors that could increase participation are raising awareness through targeted marketing campaigns and enhancing the social value of cleanup events. Social media platforms, particularly Facebook and Instagram, emerged as vital channels for promoting such activities, and incorporating

social incentives such as food, competitions, or community gatherings was identified as a highly effective strategy to encourage involvement.

At the same time, our study reveals important nuances. Although environmental concern is widespread, it is often insufficient to translate into action. Many individuals require additional motivations, such as social connections or tangible incentives, to actively participate. This highlights the complexity of behavioural change in environmental contexts and underlines the importance of designing interventions that address intrinsic and extrinsic motivations.

Reflecting on the project's limitations, it is important to acknowledge the relatively small sample size and the demographic bias toward younger, educated respondents living near the coast. While these insights are valuable, they may not fully capture the perspectives of older adults, rural communities, or those less active on digital platforms. Future studies would benefit from broader outreach strategies, including collaboration with community organisations, schools, and retirement centres, to ensure more diverse participation.

Our interdisciplinary teamwork was a significant strength of the project, allowing us to combine perspectives from environmental science, communication, business, and social sciences. This diversity enriched our approach, from survey design to data interpretation, ensuring that our recommendations were practically grounded and theoretically informed.

The proposed solutions developed in this project—such as social media campaigns, integrated school and workplace cleanups, and local partnerships with businesses—offer actionable pathways for increasing community engagement. Pilot-testing these initiatives could provide important feedback on their effectiveness, enabling further refinement and scaling. Moreover, addressing systemic issues such as plastic production and waste management infrastructure remains essential for achieving long-term progress against marine pollution.

In the broader context, mobilising communities for marine cleanups is not only about removing litter from beaches; it is about fostering a more profound cultural shift towards environmental stewardship. As plastic pollution escalates globally, local actions must catalyse larger societal change. Empowering individuals to cooperate can contribute to healthier ecosystems, stronger communities, and a more sustainable future.

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9.0 Appendix

A: Personas

B: Survey responses

ABOUT: Mari Kjellbeck

Mari Kjellbeck is a Norwegian student at NTNU Ålesund. She is active in the student communities partaking in social events during the weekend, and occasionally during the week. She occasionally enjoy hiking in the nearby mountains and goes on social walks with her friends. She has not, however, partaken in any beach cleanup efforts.

NEEDS: For Mari her friends and her degree are important. She wants to nourish her friendships while also doing well in university. She looks up to her peers, who seem motivated and hardworking. She experience mastery and flow usually a little late minute before deadlines, or when she is fixated on a personal project.
She gets excited to spend time with her friends during events that give her a break from university assignments.
A perfect day would be one that was efficient during core hours – leaving room to relax or have fun in the evening.

FRUSTRATIONS: Her biggest challenge is making time to relax. She worries about deadlines and the future. Not being able to reduce her plastic use.

PERSONALITY:
Motivational – Loving – Pessimistic – Good listener

KEY MOTIVATIONS:
Free food – Socializing – Student community

THINK AND FEEL: Worry about small things: assignments, but also big situations: climate change, war, pollution. She would like to pick up litter but are not sure how to get started.

HEAR: Her friends' personal problems: assignments and relationships. Hears about climate change through influencers and artists online.

SEE: She sees litter on her walks. Instagram reels. Student union events on Instagram stories. Facebook events near her.

SAY AND DO: Go to student events. Attempts to use less plastic.

PAINS: Struggles with motivation. She is busy with university tasks and struggle to find time to do more of what she wants to on her free time. Worried about not having enough time or money for activities.

GAINS: Wants to finish her degree and have a stable future where she can feel like her actions matter and contribute to the greater good. Her goal is to go on more walks and hikes.

Image source:
https://www.dreamstime.com/stock-photo-female-college-student-happy-girl-european-university-scholarship-uni-image91749887

AGE: 24

OCCUPATION: Student

STATUS: Single

LOCATION: Ålesund

SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY:
Primarily Instagram.
Occasionally Facebook.

ABOUT: Erik Solberg

Erik is a 29-year-old marketing specialist working full-time at a digital marketing agency in Bergen. Living about 4 km from the coast, he often visits the beach during weekends for jogging and relaxing. Erik has a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Bergen, which makes him organized and goal-oriented.

NEEDS: Seeks practical ways to contribute to environmental protection.
Wants more awareness of local cleanup events.
Prefers structured, time-efficient volunteering opportunities.

FRUSTRATIONS: Believes individual efforts make little impact compared to systemic change.
Finds it hard to balance work, social life, and volunteering.
Thinks cleanup initiatives need better organization and visibility.

PERSONALITY: Erik is an environmentally conscious professional who values sustainability and innovation. He enjoys outdoor activities such as hiking, kayaking, and cycling. While he follows climate issues and marine conservation efforts, he has never actively participated in cleanup activities.

KEY MOTIVATIONS: Wants to see tangible environmental improvements. Would be more likely to participate in cleanups with friends or colleagues. Encouraged by incentives like community recognition or workplace initiatives.

THINK AND FEEL: Concerned about marine pollution but unsure how to help.
Thinks Norway should take stronger action on waste management.

HEAR: Conversations about environmental issues at work.
News about marine pollution and cleanup projects.

SEE: Litter on coastal hiking trails. Social media campaigns about sustainability. Workplace discussions about eco-friendly initiatives.

SAY AND DO: Advocates for waste reduction and recycling. Shares environmental articles with colleagues.
Would consider joining a cleanup if it was well-organized and aligned with his schedule.

PAINS: Lack of time to participate in volunteer activities.
Limited knowledge of effective cleanup initiatives.

GAINS: Would feel more connected to the community through environmental action. Would appreciate networking opportunities with like-minded people.

Image source:

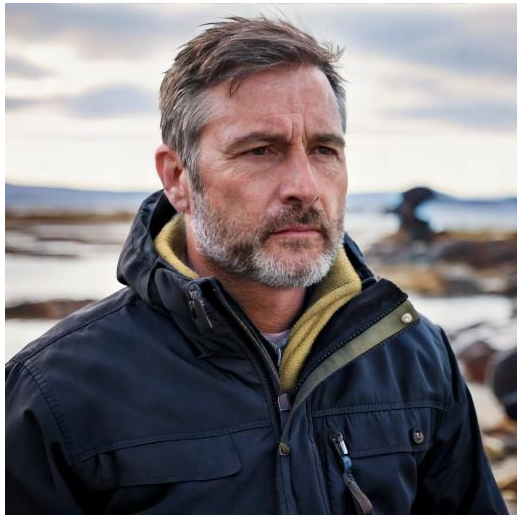
AGE: 29
OCCUPATION: Full-time Employee
STATUS: Single
LOCATION: Bergen, Norway (lives 4 km from the nearest beach)

SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY:
Facebook, Instgram

ABOUT: Magnus Thorsen

Represents an engaged segment of the community, deeply concerned about marine pollution and active in initiatives that produce noticeable environmental improvements. Committed to participate in impactful activities.

Image source: Adobe Firefly



NEEDS:

Prioritizes engaging in impactful environmental activities, valuing tangible results from collective efforts. Emphasizes the importance of cleanliness in public spaces, particularly beaches, understanding its direct effect on community well-being and local ecosystems. Aspires to influence change and increase awareness about marine pollution through active participation and community leadership.

FRUSTRATIONS:

Faces challenges in overcoming the belief that individual actions are inadequate for significant environmental change. Concerned about the long-term effects of marine pollution on natural habitats and future generations.

PERSONALITY:

Passionate – Motivated – Responsible – Skeptical

KEY MOTIVATIONS: Environmental responsibility, community spirit, social interactions, and organized events that make participation easy and rewarding.

THINK AND FEEL: Worried about environmental degradation, feels a strong personal duty to act, but is skeptical about the impact of individual efforts without broader systemic change.

HEAR: Frequently receives information about organized cleanup events through both social media and community networks.

SEE: Regularly notices and is affected by the pollution at local beaches.

SAY AND DO: Advocates for stringent waste management regulations, participates in organized cleanups, and encourages community involvement.

PAINS: Struggles with the lack of broad community engagement and the challenge of balancing work-life commitments with volunteer activities.

GAINS: Seeing tangible results from community clean-up efforts; increased public awareness and participation in environmental protection.

AGE: 50

OCCUPATION:
Employed full-time in an office environment

STATUS: Married

LOCATION: Ålesund

SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY: Actively follows and interacts with marine clean-up content on Facebook / Instagram.

NETTSKJEMA

Report

Marin Søppelopprydding

Contents

Vi er et team på fem studenter fra kurset 'Eksperter i Teamarbeid', som jobber med et prosjekt kalt RECLAIM ved NTNU. Målet med prosjektet vårt er å utforske effektive måter å motivere flere individer og grupper til å delta i opprydding av marin forsøpling. Din deltakelse i denne undersøkelsen vil hjelpe oss i vårt akademiske prosjekt og bidra til å øke bevisstheten og engasjementet i RECLAIM-prosjektet.
Undersøkelsen består av spørsmål om dine synspunkter på marin forsøpling, dine personlige erfaringer med strandrydding, og dine forslag til hvordan man kan forbedre deltakelsen. Det tar omtrent 5 til 10 minutter å fullføre.
Vær oppmerksom på at denne undersøkelsen er helt anonym, og vi lagrer ingen personlige opplysninger.
Takk for at du tar deg tid til å hjelpe oss med dette viktige arbeidet. Vi setter stor pris på dine innspill!

Demografi

Hvor gammel er du?

Number of submissions: **49**

Submissions	Count	% of submissions	Chart
Under 18	1	2%	2%
18-24	10	20.4%	20.4%
25-34	28	57.1%	57.1%
35-44	2	4.1%	4.1%
45-54	5	10.2%	10.2%
55+	3	6.1%	6.1%

Hva er ditt hovedyrke?

Number of submissions: **49**

Submissions	Count	% of submissions	Chart
Student	18	36.7%	36.7%
Heltidsansatt	31	63.3%	63.3%
Deltidsansatt	0	0%	0%
Selvstendig næringsdrivende	0	0%	0%
Pensjonist	0	0%	0%
Arbeidsledig	0	0%	0%

Hva er ditt høyeste oppnådde utdanningsnivå?

Number of submissions: **49**

Submissions	Count	% of submissions	Chart
Ingen formell utdanning	0	0%	0%
Grunnskole	1	2%	2%
Videregående skole	8	16.3%	16.3%
Fagskole	2	4.1%	4.1%
Bachelorgrad	30	61.2%	61.2%
Mastergrad	8	16.3%	16.3%
Doktorgrad	0	0%	0%

Hvor langt er du fra nærmeste strand eller kystlinje?

Number of submissions: **49**

Submissions	Count	% of submissions	Chart
Mindre enn 1 km (Jeg bor veldig nærme havet)	19	38.8%	38.8%
1-5 km (Jeg bor en kort gåtur/kjøretur fra havet)	17	34.7%	34.7%
6-20 km (Jeg bor en fornuftig kjøreavstand fra havet)	7	14.3%	14.3%
21-50 km (jeg bor et stykke unna, men kan besøke innimellom)	1	2%	2%
Mer enn 50km (Jeg bor langt vekke fra havet)	5	10.2%	10.2%

Bevissthet og holdninger

Hvor bekymret er du ovenfor marin forsøpling?

Number of submissions: **49**

Submissions	Count	% of submissions	Chart
Ikke bekymret i det hele tatt	2	4.1%	4.1%
Litt bekymret	13	26.5%	26.5%
Middels bekymret	15	30.6%	30.6%
Veldig bekymret	13	26.5%	26.5%
Ekstremt bekymret	6	12.2%	12.2%

Tror du at søppelplukking har en betydningsfull påvirkning på reduksjonen av marin forsøpling?

Number of submissions: **49**

Submissions	Count	% of submissions	Chart
Ja	32	65.3%	65.3%
Nei	7	14.3%	14.3%
Ikke sikker	10	20.4%	20.4%

Hvor ofte går du på strandturer/fisketurer/m.m. på din fritid?

Number of submissions: **49**

Submissions	Count	% of submissions	Chart
Daglig	1	2%	2%
Ukentlig	4	8.2%	8.2%
Månedlig	9	18.4%	18.4%
Sjeldent (sjeldnere enn månedlig)	30	61.2%	61.2%
Aldri	5	10.2%	10.2%

Deltakelse og barrierer

Har du noen gang deltatt i organisert strand eller marin søppelrydding?

Number of submissions: **49**

Submissions	Count	% of submissions	Chart
Ja	11	22.4%	22.4%
Nei	38	77.6%	77.6%

Hva er hovedgrunnene til at du ikke har deltatt?

Number of submissions: **38**

Submissions	Count	% of submissions	Chart
Mangel på tid	12	31.6%	31.6%
Mangel på bevissthet om arrangementer	21	55.3%	55.3%
Mangel på interesse	11	28.9%	28.9%
Jeg tror ikke det gjør noen forskjell	2	5.3%	5.3%
Jeg mener det er statens ansvar	4	10.5%	10.5%
Jeg bor ikke nær kysten	6	15.8%	15.8%
Jeg vet ikke hvordan jeg skal bli involvert	10	26.3%	26.3%
Sikkerhetshensyn	1	2.6%	2.6%
Mangel på utstyr	5	13.2%	13.2%
Mangel på moro	7	18.4%	18.4%
Annet (spesifiser under)	2	5.3%	5.3%

Hva er hovedgrunnene til at du ikke har deltatt? (Annet)

Number of submissions: **2**

Submissions
Jeg opplever at det er positivt, men at marin opprydding og andre enkeltpersonstiltak for miljøet ikke har effekten jeg ønsker, og vil heller at de som faktisk kan gjøre den forskjellen tar de valgene som fører til verdiskapning
Har ikke fått tilbud om det, eller blitt informert om det før

☑ Hva motiverer deg til å delta?

Number of submissions: **11**

Submissions	Count	% of submissions	Chart
Personlig engasjement for miljøet	7	63.6%	63.6%
Sosialt press	2	18.2%	18.2%
Oppmuntring fra venner/familie	1	9.1%	9.1%
Organiserte arrangementer	8	72.7%	72.7%
Arbeidsplass - eller skoletiltak	5	45.5%	45.5%
Annet (spesifiser under)	1	9.1%	9.1%

Hva motiverer deg til å delta? (Annet)

Number of submissions: **1**

Submissions
Har arrangert strandryddig i Bergen to ganger som del av en studentorganisasjon for å gjøre noe sosialt og bra under pandemien når man ikke kunne møtes innendørs

☑ Hva kan gjøre det mer sannsynlig for deg å delta i marin søppelopprydning?

Number of submissions: **38**

Submissions	Count	% of submissions	Chart
Mer bevissthet om hendelser	18	47.4%	47.4%
Mer praktiske steder	8	21.1%	21.1%
Organiserte gruppeaktiviteter	15	39.5%	39.5%
Insentiver eller belønninger (f.eks. rabatter, gratis varer/mat)	14	36.8%	36.8%
Hvis jeg så en større innvirkning fra opprydningsarbeid	9	23.7%	23.7%
Hvis det var en del av en jobb- eller skoleaktivitet	15	39.5%	39.5%
Ingenting, jeg er ikke interessert	5	13.2%	13.2%

Sosiale faktorer

Hvem pleier du å gå sammen med for å rydde marint søppel?

Number of submissions: **11**

Submissions	Count	% of submissions	Chart
Alene	2	18.2%	18.2%
Med venner/familie	2	18.2%	18.2%
Med folk fra organizasjoner /events	7	63.6%	63.6%

På hvilken måte ønsker du at marin søppel opprydding kan bidra til ditt lokalsamfunn?

Number of submissions: **49**

Submissions	Count	% of submissions	Chart
Skaper en sosial plattform (der folk kan møtes og snakke)	19	38.8%	38.8%
Fremmer fysisk aktivitet (ved å gå ut på tur)	24	49%	49%
Ved å ha en positiv innvirkning på miljøet og dets økosystem	33	67.3%	67.3%
Skaper en mer komfortabel strandopplevelse (å ha en renere strand)	33	67.3%	67.3%
Annet (spesifiser)	5	10.2%	10.2%

På hvilken andre måte ønsker du at marin søppel opprydding kan bidra til ditt lokalsamfunn?

Number of submissions: **2**

Submissions
Litt rart spørsmål??
Marin forsøpling bidrar ikke til lokalsamfunnet?

Har du noen forslag til hvordan man kan oppmuntre flere til å delta i marin søppelopprydding?

Number of submissions: **14**

Submissions
1. Organize local cleanup days with incentives like free food or small prizes to encourage participation. 2. Use social media to highlight the impact of marine litter 3. Collaborate with businesses to sponsor cleanups
Informasjon om alvoret om maritim forsøpling og skadane det påfører miljøet på land og sjø/hav.
Sosial fellesskap økter og økt bevisshet i positiviteten fra det.
Lage en dag ut av det. For eks stille med mat og noe varmt og drikke, gi utstyr som hansker å poser. Kanskje en konkurranse der den som fyller posen mest vinner noe? Bruke sosiale medier godt. Før og etter bilde for eks.
Ikke egt, kanskje få det til å høres mer gøy og interresant ut
Ha kampanjer i sodiale medier og bestemte dager med dugnad kombinert med sosiale aktiviteter. Men det viktigste er forebygging
Få med organisasjoner til å delta med flest mulig medlemmer, samt planlegg å bruke strandområde (o.l.) til noe sosialt rett etterpå så man ser effekten av innsatsen man har gjennomført
organize a speech about this. I was alerted regarding the seriousness of this matter at a marine technology conference where a speaker was talking about the catastrophic influences of microplastics in human and natural life. Ever since that day I have been always careful. ~Spyridon
Danne en godt sosial miljø, kanskje informere at det kan være nyttig å være frivillig og at man kan legge det på CV-en sin?
Alt har sin pris, må betale nok bare.
Har ikke ett spesielt ønske
Ha det som en aktivitet på arbeidsplassen, feks 2 timer annenhver måned. Selv om langt fra kysten så blåser /renner mye mot havet uansett etter hvert.
Forsøple meir med å hive ut flaskepostar med tusenlappar i
Mere Clean sounds

Markedsføring

Hvor hører du om organisert marin søppelopprydding?

Number of submissions: **49**

Submissions	Count	% of submissions	Chart
Venner/familie	9	18.4%	18.4%
Nyhetsartikkel (fysisk)	4	8.2%	8.2%
Nyhetsartikkel (online)	17	34.7%	34.7%
Sosiale medier	19	38.8%	38.8%
Gjennom skole/universitet	7	14.3%	14.3%
Jeg hører ikke om opprydding av marin søppel	16	32.7%	32.7%
Annet (spesifiser)	0	0%	0%

Hvilke sosiale medie platformer og innlegg har du sett?

Number of submissions: **17**

Submissions
Ulike sider på fb og instagram.
Facebook og instagram
Facebook arrangementer, Instagram
Facebook og Instagram for det meste
Facebook arrangement og Instagram story
Instagram og TikTok
Facebook, Instagram
Facebook
Lokal facebookside
Facebook
Facebook gruppe for nærmiljø/bygd
Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat
Linkedin
Facebook arrangement
Facebook
Facebook
Facebook

Hvilke andre platformer har du hørt om organisert marin søppelrydding?

Number of submissions: **0**

This question has no answers

Hvilke organisasjoner får du markedsført/hører du om?

Number of submissions: **11**

Submissions
Berekraftsmål for kommunen, i politikken. Norges naturvernforbund, Fremtiden i våre hender, Natur og ungdom ma.
Ingen
Holdt Norge rent, Springbrettet, Sjømat Norge (strandrydding i Songe fjordene)
Hører ikke noe om det
Plastfritt Hav
Husker ikke
Vet ikke direkte navn på organisasjoner, helst bare sett innslag til arbeid
Martin Helseth
In the same boat, DNT, DNT ung, Grønn ungdom, ScaleAQ
Friluftsrådet
Nettverk Marin forsøpling Møre og Romsdal

☑ Hva tror du er den mest effektive måten å redusere marin forsøpling på?

Number of submissions: **48**

Submissions	Count	% of submissions	Chart
Strengere lover og straffer	28	58.3%	58.3%
Flere folkeopplysnings - og bevisstgjøringskampanjer	26	54.2%	54.2%
Flere organiserte oppryddingsarrangementer	9	18.8%	18.8%
Redusere plastproduksjon og forbruk	28	58.3%	58.3%
Forbedre avfallshåndteringssystemer	27	56.3%	56.3%
Annet (spesifiser)	1	2.1%	2.1%

T≡ Hva tror du er den mest effektive måten å redusere marin forsøpling på? (Annet)

Number of submissions: **1**

Submissions
Redusert utslipp fra større aktører (Selskaper, osv.)

T≡ Hva tror du er den mest effektive måten å redusere marin forsøpling på?

Number of submissions: **9**

Submissions
Informasjon og konsekvensforståing.
Økt resirkulering og avfallshåndtering/sortering
Bevisstgjøring, ha søppelkasser tilgjengelig flere steder
Økonomiske insentiver til ikke å forsøple
Strengere lover rundt fiskebåter/fritidsbåter og avfall
Flere tilgjengelige plasse hvor en kaste søppel
Utvidet produsentansvar (EPD) Endre til mer sirkulære forretningsmodeller og mindre engangsprodukter. Smartere emballasje og økodesign på produkter. Generelt redusere unødvendig forbruk og heller gå over til en mer sirkulær økonomi og delingsøkonomi
Kjølhaling av dei som blir tatt i marin forsøpling
Mindre forbruk. At flest mulig folk er med på strandrydding og byrydding er også effektiv fordi det gjør deltagerne mer bevisst på egne handlinger.