

## Nigerian low-tech recycling initiative

### Level 3 • Advanced

#### 1 Warmer

How much do you know about Nigeria? Find out by answering these questions.

1. In what part of Africa is Nigeria – the north, south, east or west?
2. Which gulf lies off its coast?
3. With which four countries does it share borders?
4. What natural resources does it have?
5. What is its official language?
6. What is the capital of Nigeria?
7. What is the biggest city in Nigeria?
8. What is the name of its president?
9. When did it gain independence and from which country?

#### 2 Key words

a. Read the definitions and find the words in the article. The paragraph numbers are given to help you.

b. Mark the stressed syllable on each word and/or draw the stress pattern.

For example: definition; ooOo

1. carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide in the atmosphere, produced by vehicles and industrial processes \_\_\_\_\_ (para 1)
2. used \_\_\_\_\_ (para 3)
3. showed something in a way that attracts attention and emphasizes its good qualities \_\_\_\_\_ (para 3)
4. real \_\_\_\_\_ (para 3)
5. people who invent or begin using new ideas, methods, equipment etc \_\_\_\_\_ (para 3)
6. an important action that is intended to solve a problem \_\_\_\_\_ (para 5)
7. a group of people who judge a competition \_\_\_\_\_ (para 5)
8. treating a waste substance so that it can be used again \_\_\_\_\_ (para 7)
9. belonging to or relating to a place that has its own local government \_\_\_\_\_ (para 7)
10. thought about in a particular way \_\_\_\_\_ (para 8)
11. involving nothing except the person or thing mentioned \_\_\_\_\_ (para 8)
12. progress or development that is becoming faster or stronger \_\_\_\_\_ (para 9)
13. causes \_\_\_\_\_ (para 9)

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#### Nigerian recycling initiative proves it's not all about hi-tech solutions

*Winner of the Sustainia Award 2014, Wecyclers enables low-income communities to make money from waste and, while it's a low-tech innovation, its impact is high*

**Laura Storm, executive director at Sustainia**  
**30 October, 2014**

- 1 When it comes to climate change, we have the bad habit of focusing on the first part of the story, the part about the problem, and forgetting the second part about the many available solutions. These solutions are speeding up recycling, slowing down emissions and providing sustainable alternatives to plastic, air conditioning, smartphones and fast fashion.
- 2 The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recently gathered in Copenhagen to present its latest report on the impacts and pace of climate change. Climate change is now measured on all continents and our efforts to lower emissions must be intensified to avoid it escalating out of control. Along with outlining the risks and challenges, Copenhagen also embraced and focused on the solutions.
- 3 In the spirit of focusing on what can be done, Sustainia Award, chaired by Arnold Schwarzenegger, celebrated ten leading sustainability solutions deployed in 84 countries. From food to fashion, energy to transportation, education to health, the awards showcased an alternative to the grim-future scenarios we are so often presented with and made sustainability tangible to the innovators, investors, consumers and policy makers across sectors and regions.
- 4 From California, we saw how we can now produce plastics from greenhouse gases that are competitive with normal oil-based plastics in price and quality. From Switzerland, we learned how we can recycle and reuse old clothes and shoes more effectively in a recycle system currently deployed in over 60 countries. And from Canada, we learned how smartphones can make bike-sharing more convenient.
- 5 The ten projects presented each offered unique solutions to sustainability challenges but it was the Nigerian initiative, Wecyclers, that won Arnold Schwarzenegger's, and the rest of jury's, vote and took the Sustainia Award 2014.
- 6 Wecyclers enables low-income communities to make money on waste piling up in their streets. By deploying a fleet of cargo bicycles to collect and recycle unmanaged waste in Lagos, Wecyclers lets families exchange garbage for consumer goods via an SMS-based point system.
- 7 Recycling companies purchase Wecyclers' sorted waste for reprocessing into products – they turn it into mattresses, pillows and trash bags. Wecyclers is a response to local waste issues, where it's estimated that only 40% of the city's rubbish is collected. According to the World Bank, only 46% of municipal solid waste in Africa is collected. More than 5,000 households have signed up so far and there are plans to extend the initiative to other cities throughout Nigeria.
- 8 Solutions to combat climate change are often perceived as hi-tech innovations focused on cutting emissions, creating infrastructure or efficiency. However, to successfully solve the variety of challenges, we need variety in our solutions as well. Sustainability is not solely a matter of bringing down emissions; it is also a question of using our natural resources more intelligently and creating healthier lives for ourselves. Initiatives might be low-tech in innovation but high-impact when it comes to creating sustainable change for entire communities.
- 9 With a wide range of solutions addressing the equally wide range of challenges, we must focus more on the important part of the story that creates enthusiasm and momentum, and spurs action for much-needed change.

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#### 3 Comprehension check

Answer these questions about the article.

1. Where was the winner of the award announced?
2. Who decided which initiative should win the award?
3. What is the name of the winning initiative?
4. In which city do they currently operate?
5. How many households have already signed up to the scheme?
6. How does the scheme work?

#### 4 Word pairs

a. Match the following pairs of opposites, or opposing concepts, from the text. What do they refer to in the article?

- |                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. problem     | a. slowing down |
| 2. speeding up | b. high-impact  |
| 3. low-tech    | c. focus on     |
| 4. forget      | d. solution     |

b. Now, match the following word pairs of similar concepts. What do they refer to in the article?

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. risks      | a. challenges |
| 2. sectors    | b. momentum   |
| 3. recycle    | c. reuse      |
| 4. enthusiasm | d. regions    |

c. Which word pairs from tasks a. and b. involve the use of alliteration? Why might the author have employed the use of alliterative word pairs? What effect does the technique create?

#### 5 Discussion

- Is it important for the media to publish positive stories on the environment? Why? Why not?
- What long-term benefits do you think awards like this can help bring about?
- Should people be rewarded for clearing up other people's rubbish or should people who leave the rubbish be punished instead?

#### 6 Webquest

- Go to [www.sustainia.me](http://www.sustainia.me) and watch the short video entitled 'Sustainia Award Winner 2014'.
- Write a short press release entitled 'We need positive stories'. Announce the winner of the Sustainia Award and explain why it was chosen. Invent any details you do not know.

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#### KEY

##### 1 Warmer

**Teacher's note:** Get students to work in groups and turn this task into a competition.

1. the west
2. the Gulf of Guinea
3. Benin; Cameroon; Chad; Niger
4. natural gas, petroleum, tin, iron ore, coal, limestone, niobium, lead, zinc, arable land
5. English
6. Abuja
7. Lagos
8. Goodluck Jonathan
9. 1st October 1960; from the UK

##### 2 Key words

1. emissions oOo
2. deployed oO
3. showcased Oo
4. tangible Ooo
5. innovators Oooo
6. initiative oOoo
7. jury Oo
8. reprocessing oOoo
9. municipal oOoo
10. perceived oO
11. solely Oo
12. momentum oOo
13. spurs

##### 3 Comprehension check

1. in Copenhagen, Denmark
2. Arnold Schwarzenegger and a jury
3. Wecyclers
4. Lagos, Nigeria
5. more than 5,000
6. A fleet of cargo bicycles collects unmanaged waste. Families exchange garbage for consumer goods via an SMS-based point system. Recycling companies purchase the waste for reprocessing into products.

##### 4 Word pairs

- a.**
1. d (climate change)
  2. a (recycling and emissions)
  3. b (innovation and sustainable change)
  4. c (climate change)
- b.**
1. a (climate change)
  2. d (policy makers)
  3. c (old shoes and clothes; initiatives)
  4. b (for change)

c. speeding up – slowing down; forget – focus on; recycle – reuse

Alliteration is a technique often employed in persuasive writing. The effect can be poetic; it makes the text more pleasant on the ear; repeating the same sound creates emphasis.