

World Cleanup Day // Global

World Cleanup Day is a global social event which encourages people to pick up litter on a designated day every year. The simplicity of the idea has inspired thousands of people to take part since the initiative began in 2018.

Over 8,000 employees from Smurfit Kappa came together to take part in World Cleanup Day activities in September 2019. The volunteers, who came from all parts of the business, joined with family and friends to clean designated areas in 28 countries across Europe and the Americas.

As part of a global effort, and in line with its Better Planet Packaging initiative, the Smurfit Kappa Group encouraged employees across the world to support the event in their local communities.

Smurfit Kappa's Better Planet Packaging initiative seeks to reduce packaging waste, and address the challenges of waste and litter that ends up in oceans and landfill, so there was a natural synergy between us and the World Cleanup Day.

'BPP Starts with Me' is an internal campaign which encourages Smurfit Kappa employees to make sustainable changes both at home and in the workplace so there was a huge appetite to get on board with World Cleanup Day.

Almost 20,000 hours were devoted by Smurfit Kappa employees and friends to the World Cleanup Day activities. Volunteers were easily recognisable in brightly coloured World Cleanup Day hats, t-shirts and hi-vis vests.

Over 10,000 bags and boxes of litter were collected from a diverse range of locations including beaches, rivers, parks, streets and woodlands. A group of employees from the UK even took to their kayaks to remove rubbish from the sea.

Some of the more unusual items found on the day included a wig, a bubble-gum dispenser, a doll's head, a message in a bottle, half a pair of spectacles and a passport. In El Salvador, volunteers found a tiny turtle which they safely delivered to the local wildlife centre.

A healthy and clean environment is vital for us all, and we are very proud of Smurfit Kappa's involvement in this important day.

Sustainability is at the core of Smurfit Kappa's business. As industry leaders, we have a responsibility to address the serious environmental challenges facing us today and believe our global participation in World Cleanup Day further demonstrates our commitment to help make packaging waste extinct.

All of us have seen the devastating impact that packaging waste has had on marine life in particular. It was encouraging to see many Smurfit Kappa volunteers making a difference to the locations they were cleaning up.

Many sites rewarded volunteers with meals afterwards or combined it with additional activities including mushroom gathering, tree planting and even trying out a zip wire! Many passers-by stopped to commend people and join in. For example, in Oosterhout in the Netherlands, a local catering service was so impressed by the World Cleanup Day initiative, they spontaneously offered to sponsor lunch on the day.

The feel-good event got an excellent response from Smurfit Kappa employees who gave a lot of positive feedback including that it was 'an ideal combination of business and pleasure' with 'lots of sunshine, lots of litter, lots of humour' and that it encouraged 'great camaraderie between colleagues.'

Bags & boxes of litter collected

10,000

Hours spent volunteering

20,000

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