

Case Study

Partnering with Marathons to Reduce Waste

Standard Chartered Run
Padang
3 December 2017

The 2017 Singapore Standard Chartered Marathon that took place on 3rd December at Padang, saw the involvement of ground-up initiative **Green Run Ambassadors (GRA)**, in addressing sustainability efforts at the event. Through persistent requests by GRA to the organisers of the marathon, they were able to secure a meeting to address sustainability measures in place for the annual run. Despite having only 1 month left to the marathon, IRONMAN Asia, organisers of the marathon, still worked with GRA in trying to accommodate their requests for sustainable measures to be in place.

After 2 meetings with IRONMAN Asia (organisers), and with the cooperation of Veolia (waste collection service provider), GRA came up with some ways to tackle waste sustainably. Volunteers were recruited with the help of **Journey to Zero Waste Life in Singapore & Better Trails**, with other forms of support from **Kampung Senang** and **Public Hygiene Council**.

Composting – Bananas were given out to runners, so GRA put in place composting bins to collect back the skins so they can be composted at community gardens. Since it was expected that runners would not eat their bananas upon receiving it, GRA strategically placed their compost bins where it was likely to be consumed – see photos. An estimated **350kg of banana** peels were collected.

- Eng Kong Cheng Soon garden (at Eng Kong Cheng Soon estate)
- Hillview Connections garden (located between forest and a hard court at Hillview area)
- Pavilion's edible garden (at Pavilion Park estate)
- Garden of Bees and Blooms (at Woodlands Zone 2 HDB estate)



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1. 6 bins with clear labels for banana peels so as to avoid that other kinds of waste, were put in place.
2. All bins were manned by GRA volunteers. A banana mascot was on-site to draw attention to the banana peel collection.
3. As the marathon extended to East Coast Park, GRA had volunteers positioned there with cardboard boxes to collect the peels. Volunteers would run up and down with the runners, carrying the boxes with them so they could collect the peels – talk about dedication!



*Banana Mascot & Banana Marshals working hard to get runners to bin correctly!
Collected banana peels were sent for composting at various community gardens.*



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Learning Points

xhebit was on site at the Standard Chartered marathon and based on observations, these are a few learning points.

1. People still need to be educated on throwing recyclables correctly. Correct recycling, recyclable contamination, not recycling were very evident at the marathon (see photos). There is still a lot of apathy when it comes to recycling efforts on the part of runners.
2. Organisers, as in the case of IRONMAN Asia, are open to being more environmentally responsible. It helps to contact them early so that sustainability can be well-integrated into the overall design. **GRA will be working with IRONMAN Asia again next year, and have mutually agreed to start early – thumbs up!**



Immense amounts of Recyclables that are not properly segregated by runners. Because of contamination from other trash, these recyclables often do not end up being recycled.



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Organisers can engage runners better by

- Placing emphasis on the importance of recycling during the registration process so that runners get attuned to what is expected of them.
- Ensure the registration website carries the message of sustainability clearly and prominently, so that the message is re-iterated.
- Encourage alternatives to bottled water e.g. water-refill points.
- Being selective about giveaways, sponsors and goodie bags to minimise unwanted waste.
 - Select sponsors or request that sponsors provide products or giveaways that are more environmentally friendly (e.g. reduce packaging).
 - Reducing giveaways helps reduce costs and these savings can be transferred onto registration fees.
 - Alternatively, during registration give runners the option of saying **NO** to goodie bags. Even if 10-15% of environmentally aware runners say NO to goodie bags, that is a form of cost savings and helps minimise waste – a win-win situation.
- Have an on-site booth that addresses sustainability so as to further re-iterate the point.



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About Green Run Ambassadors

Green Run Ambassadors group was formed by Tyre Lady (aka Rima) and Cuifen Pui with a focus on mass runs, and how runners and non-runners alike can make these events fun and sustainable.

“We are a collective of some 40 runners (local and international) and non-runners, who choose to do what we can with limited resources except for the passion, determination and skills of people who want to do more by standing for the cause. Through our interventions, we made being responsible runners fun, rescued an estimated 350kg of banana skins, and ensured that bottles were recycled. And we inspired one another to want to do more.” – Green Run Ambassadors

*“Every volunteer came away with our own learnings and inspiration for how to do better. Our best sharing come when we have different volunteers sharing and highlighting what they saw and learnt, when we sat around the table.
– Cuifen Pui, GRA Organiser/Volunteer*



The dedicated volunteers of Green Run Ambassadors.

