



**CO-EXIST WITH THE EARTH**

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# About Tzu Chi

## Tzu Chi's 52nd Year in Humanitarian Aid and Development.

### Mission

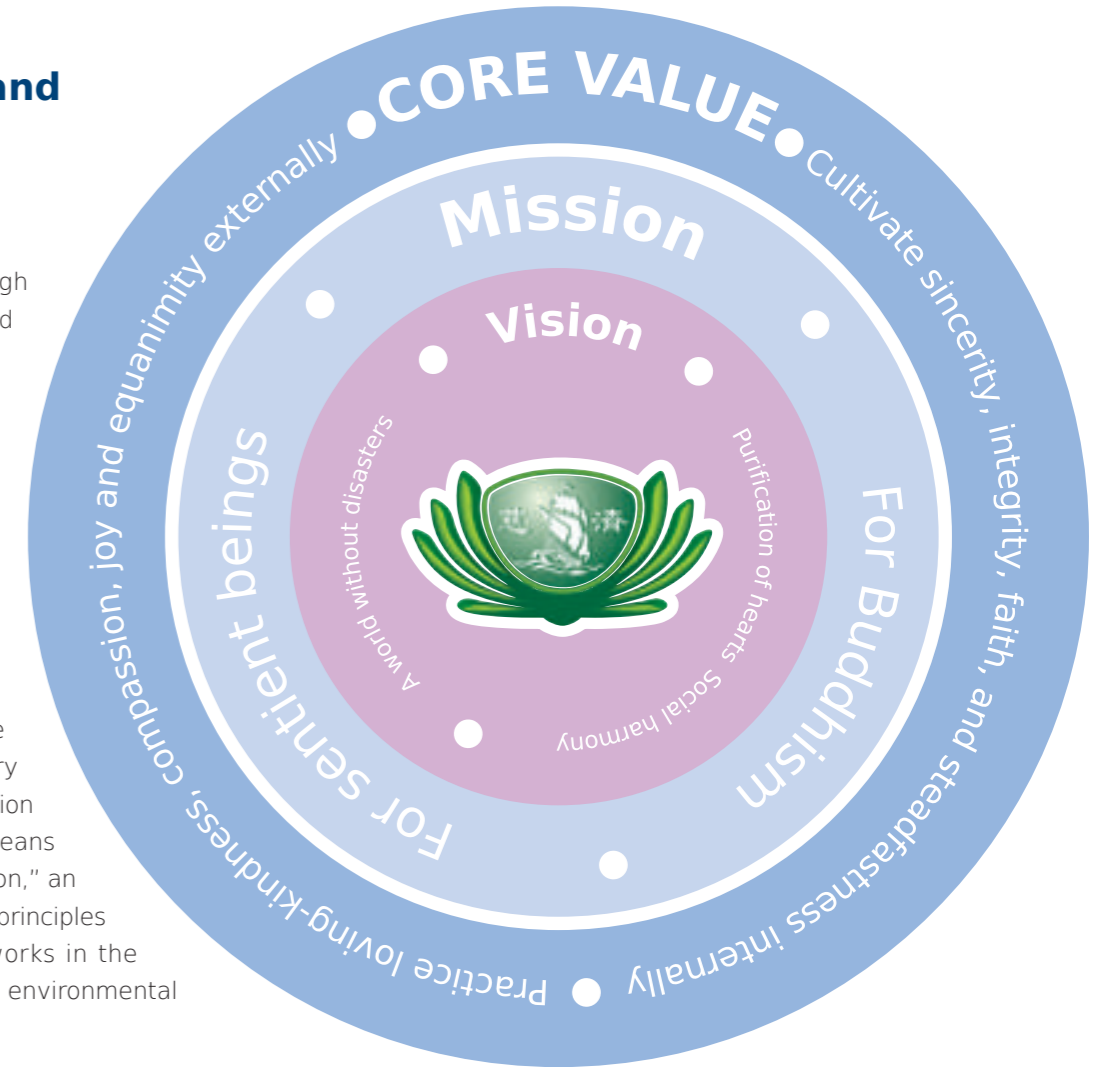
To alleviate the suffering of the most vulnerable in society through humanitarian and charitable assistance, medical care, education, and spiritually inspiring activities, empowering individuals and communities to become self-sustainable.

### Vision

A world in which the vulnerable are empowered and have the capacity to help others in need, creating a cycle of compassion and gratitude.

### Organizational History

The Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation is a non-profit, volunteer-based international non-governmental organization, established in Hualien, Taiwan by a Buddhist nun, Master Cheng Yen in 1966. From a group of 30 female homemakers who saved approximately 2 cents USD from their grocery budget each day to help the needy, Tzu Chi has now grown to over 10 million supporters in 97 countries around the world. "Tzu Chi," which literally means "Compassionate Relief," can also be interpreted as, "to serve with compassion," an act which is held true by all Tzu Chi volunteers---individuals guided by the principles of loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity. The Foundation works in the fields of charity, medicine, education, humanistic culture, disaster relief, environmental protection, bone marrow donor registry, and community volunteerism.





## Charity

Inspiring the rich to help the poor and enlightening the poor to discover their own riches

## Medicine

Patient-centered healthcare that emphasizes utmost respect towards patients

## Education

Teaching children to be moral and upright

## Humanistic Culture

Passing down examples of goodness and integrity for future generations

## Four Missions Of Tzu Chi

**Charity:** Following Tzu Chi founder Master Cheng Yen's call to put "compassion into action," volunteers regularly serve people in need in their local communities, including homeless, elderly, and ailing individuals, as well as low-income families and students. Whenever disaster strikes, at home or abroad, volunteers provide both immediate and long-term relief efforts, always delivering relief goods directly to those in need, with two hands and a deep bow.

**Medicine:** Just like the Medicine Buddha, Tzu Chi's medical volunteers treat the person in whole, not just the disease. Even though, around the world, millions more now have access to medical insurance, many still lack of vision and dental coverage, or have difficulty accessing healthcare due to distance, work schedule, or lack of transportation. Tzu Chi overcomes these barriers through mobile clinics, regular medical outreaches, and multi-day clinics, ensuring that no one is left behind.

**Education:** Believing that tomorrow's leaders should have strong morals as well as academic knowledge, Tzu Chi instills positive values from an early age. At Tzu Chi's accredited preschools, kindergartens, and elementary school, as well as bilingual weekend academies, students are provided opportunities to develop both intelligence and character. Tzu Chi's educational system ensures inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities, adhering to "Education of Virtue, Education of Life, and Education of the entire person."

**Humanistic Culture:** Tzu Chi's mission of Humanistic Culture includes the Da Ai (Great Love) television station, website, and magazine publications, all of which aim to establish virtuous cycles of love and goodness, promoting the social welfare of all regardless of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic status. The calling of this mission is to purify the human mind, to pacify our society, to help those who suffer, and to rectify frenzied and chaotic acts.

To strengthen the implementation of our missions, we collaborate with governments, other NGOs, businesses, and faith communities working in partnership to alleviate the suffering of the most vulnerable and left behind.





## For the Benefit of Our Children and Future Generations

We are currently living with extreme weather patterns due to the rise in average global temperature. Climate change affects everyone all the same, regardless of status, age, and nationality. Look around our community, and you understand that nothing is permanent. Our world is very fragile. Heavy rains bring severe flooding and mudslides, destroying property and forcing people to evacuate. In the aftermath of these disasters, people have to combat infectious diseases and injuries. When forest fires come, violent flames spread far and wide; they scorch the region and pollute the environment with ashes. Suffocating smoke in the region makes breathing difficult. Witnessing all these phenomena is truly terrifying.

We share the same Earth; it constantly rotates. When we feel the extreme heat, we have to remember many forests have been consumed by flames, releasing more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, exacerbating the already worsening crisis. Everyone should be gravely concerned to see the Earth affected by these climate disasters again and again. Our environment has been threatened by climate change and human development for a long time. We have created this karma together and must endure the retribution together. No one shall be spared.

I often encourage Tzu Chi volunteers not to neglect their duty and responsibility to love the Earth with utmost sincerity, even when they themselves are safe and sound. This is their cultivation, their responsibility. The best way to show their love is to protect the environment. I remind them that climate change comes from pollution caused by excessive waste. That is why Tzu Chi has set up recycling education stations to reduce waste and reuse resources. These stations are frequently visited by international groups to learn more ways to deal with the global issue of climate change.

One of our recycled products is the Tzu Chi blanket, from 100% recycled PET

bottles. This blanket is very important in Tzu Chi disaster relief. We go where people are in need as they recover from disasters. Cargos of these blankets are sent with Tzu Chi disaster relief teams around the world to provide warmth for survivors. No matter how rich or poor they were before the disaster, they are in need after they are stripped from their possessions. They find this blanket necessary in their recovery. In this cycle of love, Tzu Chi blankets become the best endorsement to inspire environmental protection among people.

Everyone has an innate pure nature. However, from time to time, affliction pollutes our decisions and causes us to err in our daily life. One false step will take us miles away from our intended destination. The law of karma teaches us that we plant the seeds of karma in our every thought and action. Karma accumulates and produces retribution. What we should do now is to love and protect all living beings and encourage a lifestyle that is vegetarian and environment-friendly. We work hard to inspire the public to do the right thing and to seize the correct course in life.

This plants good seeds of karma for good retribution to come. If we do not dedicate ourselves to save and look after the Earth, our environment will deteriorate faster. Only Tzu Chi working on this cause in our community with our volunteers is not enough. We need more people to join us and give of themselves. Then we can cover every corner of the world with enlightened love and guide everyone in the right direction. The power of love from everyone together is the greatest protection.

I hope everyone can join our effort and be mindful in bringing forth their pure nature for a clean Earth tomorrow. There is still a long journey ahead, to live in love and harmony with Earth and all living beings. There is so much more for us to do. We are just embarking on this journey. Integrating modern technology into environmental protection is what we are working on now. We have volunteers from all age groups, parents with their children and grandchildren, working together to ensure a healthy Earth. This is for the benefit of our children and future generations to come.

*Shih Cheng Yen*

2018.09.15





## A Global Community of Love and Care

They say every journey starts with a single step: Tzu Chi's origin started from an accumulation of love and kindness. Throughout the past 52 years, as the number of Tzu Chi members and volunteers increased, Tzu Chi gradually spread from its birthplace in Hualien, Taiwan, to all corners of the world. To date, Tzu Chi now has over 50 branch offices around the world, and provides services to 97 countries, creating a community of global citizens, taking action to make the world a better place. Working to help those in need and in turn empower them to help others, Tzu Chi volunteers reach out to the most vulnerable within the community and work to ensure that no one is left behind.





## 1. Co-Exist with the Earth

The insatiable greed of humanity is wreaking irreversible damage on our precious Mother Earth. Without thinking of the future of our children, we gorge on the world's natural resources. The well-being of the world should be everyone's responsibility. How can we create a more sustainable future for all? We can start by disciplining ourselves, controlling our unnecessary desires, and encouraging everyone to, with our own two hands, protect the earth as much as we can from further damage. We should take even the smallest opportunity to do a good deed. When all of those small acts accumulate, a wave of kindness will ripple across the world.





## 2. What is the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation?

Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation is an international humanitarian NGO with special consultative status in the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It is operated by a worldwide network of volunteers and employees, with over 10 million members in 57 countries. Up to the present day, Tzu Chi has delivered relief to those in need in 97 countries. While bringing aid to those regions hit by natural catastrophes, the organization has witnessed the devastating results of climate change around the globe.

Since its inception, Tzu Chi has been encouraging civil society to live in harmony with nature. From 1990, Tzu Chi has been conducting programs in environmental protection. These have enabled it to build up an almost ideal



recycling system. This system aims to enhance environmental protection while offering possibilities and facilities for communities to practice and implement a sustainable lifestyle.

Working with governments, enterprises and civil society, Tzu Chi continuously fosters community awareness, consensus and unified action around the world. As of the end of 2017, there are over 10,000 Tzu Chi recycling stations and points in 16 countries. With the same mission to conserve the environment, millions of people worldwide have already joined the sustainability movement of Tzu Chi to help combat global warming.

Crucially, Tzu Chi links the global issue of climate change to questions of individual lifestyle and ethics. In so doing, it aims to overcome policy dilemmas as well as individual unwillingness to become engaged in the climate movement. If we lead a simpler life, we will help reduce the amount of garbage and protect our environment. This improves the quality of life on Earth. We should have a grateful heart toward our planet; it provides for us and sustains us. It is a simple concept -- if we all put it into practice, the impact can be profound and far-reaching.

Let us inspire more people to join the environmental effort. As everyone takes part, their hearts and minds will also become more clean and beautiful. By protecting our environment, we are helping to make the planet a safer and better place to live.

Always remember: we coexist with Mother Earth.

**An amputee was given the utmost respect by a volunteer, who went down on one knee to present relief goods to him and gave him an affectionate hug.**



**Following Hurricane Haiyan, Tzu Chi promotes a “Cash Relief for Rebuild” program in Tacloban, Philippines. Nearly 300,000 affected people participated, using their own hands to rebuild their own homes.**



### 3. Climate Change - Where We Stand

**Current situation:**

For the first time in several million years, in 2013, CO2 levels in the atmosphere surpassed 400 parts per million. Living in a world with carbon dioxide above 400 ppm has since become the norm, with each following year trending towards higher levels of CO2 than the year before. In April 2017, the Mauna Loa Observatory recorded its first-ever carbon dioxide

reading above 410.28 parts per million. (Source – Climate Central)

**Effects on human life:**

WHO published an updated fact sheet on climate change and health in 2017:

**Basic living conditions:** climate change affects the social and environmental factors that determine health – clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food

and secure shelter.

**Diseases:** between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause approximately 250,000 additional deaths per year. Causes include malnutrition, malaria, diarrhea and heat stress.

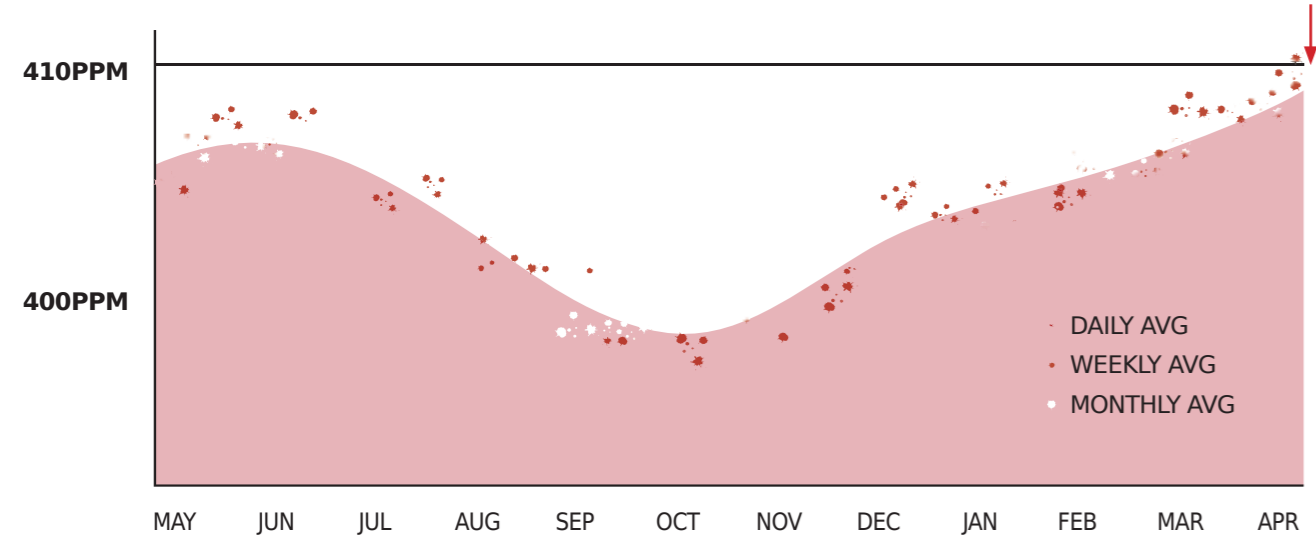
**Financial:** the direct damage costs to health, excluding costs in sectors such as agriculture and water and sanitation, is estimated at between US\$2-4 billion a year by 2030.

**The weak will suffer most:** areas with weak health infrastructure, mostly in developing countries, will be the least able to cope unless they have assistance to prepare and respond.

**Solutions:**

In addition to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases through utilizing better transportation, transforming food systems, and transitioning towards renewable energy, which can lead to improved community health, particularly through lowered air pollutants, recycling and living a simpler lifestyle can also contribute to combating climate change, by empowering individuals to take community based action, and make informed lifestyle decisions.

**A New Milestone: 410PPM** Carbon Dioxide a New High



**Access to clean drinking water has been a longstanding struggle for many; from the search for water, to the journey back home, the daily task to obtain water is fraught with danger and difficulties. We must learn to respect and conserve water.**



## 4. The Bottom-Up Approach Towards Addressing Climate Change: Recycling and Education

The basic advantage of recycling and education is that it involves people themselves in action. As will be shown in later sections of this document, these activities have an enormous potential to bring about the broad-based transformation in attitudes needed to save the planet.

Mitigation and adaptation to climate change can be much more effective if activities by governmental and intergovernmental bodies go hand in hand with a lasting change of attitudes by the broader civil society. Non-Governmental Organizations such as Tzu Chi Foundation can play a key role by facilitating and enhancing this process.

To support and complement governments whose actions alone may be insufficient, we need a broad-based movement rooted at the very base of society.

But the problem is this: even if there is widespread concern about climate change, the issue currently has little potential to mobilize large parts of society. This is because the process of climate change itself is amorphous,



**A Tzu Chi volunteer in Taiwan mindfully cleans and dries plastic bags, ensuring that their contents are fully removed and the bags can find new life again.**

as are its consequences. People fail to relate the abstract process to their daily lives and do not see weather-related natural catastrophes as results of climate change.

Climate change is unrelated to the individual identity of most people. While nationality, class and political affiliation have a powerful influence on individual self-conception and actions, climate change hardly does.

To overcome these hurdles, it is necessary to be active at the very base of society. The aim should be to build institutions for a sustained social effort to counter climate change. Just to have a common understanding is insufficient. To make significant change in tackling the planet's climate change, there is a pressing need for consensus and decisive action. The following sections will show how Tzu Chi's environmental education works to build up environmental awareness in communities and catalyze climate action.

















**A volunteer teaches children how to crush recycled aluminum cans at a Tzu Chi Recycling Station in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**





The following graph showcases the variety and types of materials recycled in Taiwan by the recycling station volunteers in all of 2017. Each of the materials were brought into the recycling stations from the street, cleaned, and then repurposed or recycled.

Total Weight of Recycling (KG)	 Total Weight of PET Bottles	 Total Weight of Papers	 Total Weight of Coppers	 Total Weight of Beverage Cartons
<b>88,242,542</b>	<b>5,090,707</b>	<b>40,924,561</b>	<b>279,849</b>	<b>1,871,792</b>
 Total Weight of Plastics	 Total Weight of Irons	 Total Weight of Aluminum	 Total Weight of Galvanized Irons	 Total Weight of Plastic Bags
<b>6,882,949</b>	<b>8,682,296</b>	<b>972,880</b>	<b>273,317</b>	<b>4,196,612</b>
 Total Weight of Scrap Metals	 Total Weight of Used Clothes	 Total Weight of Glass Bottles	 Total Weight of Batteries	 Others (PS)
<b>776,599</b>	<b>5,045,788</b>	<b>12,541,179</b>	<b>227,266</b>	<b>476,747</b>

◀ **Volunteers and teachers instruct kindergarten students to sort out recyclables in Haikou City, Hainan Province, China.**

▶ **Parents lead children to sort out paper recyclables in Dezhou City, Shandong Province, China.**



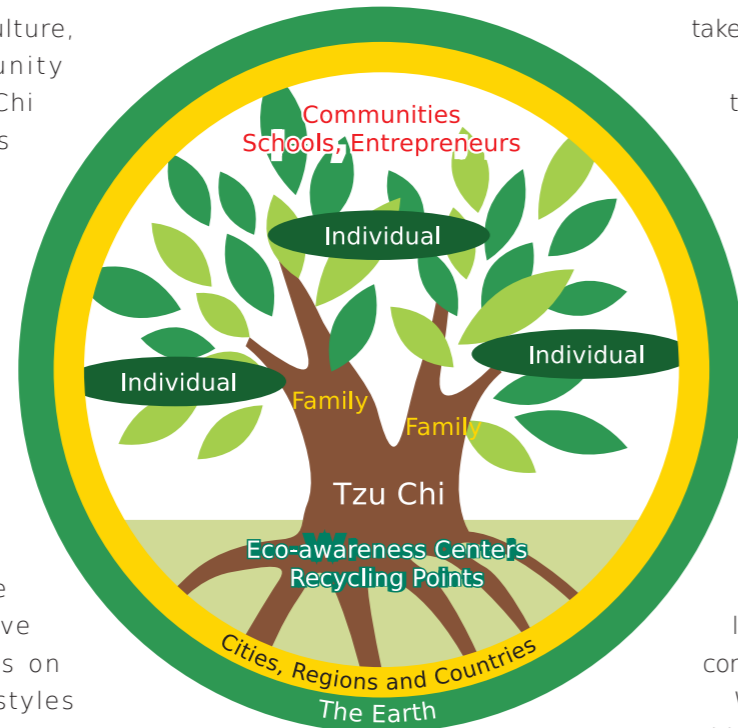


## 4.1. Recycling Activities in the Context of the Missions of Tzu Chi Foundation

Charity, Medical, Education, Humanistic Culture, Environmental Protection and Community Volunteerism are the core missions of Tzu Chi Foundation. These are implemented in several ways on a global scale.

All of these various missions feed into each other and are implemented simultaneously.

Tzu Chi's Recycling Points and Eco-Awareness Recycling Stations are an ideal model to link up any community of residents with environmental protection. Located close to where people live, the stations provide opportunities for direct interactive engagement with recycling to influence locals and change mindsets and behaviors. By engaging in recycling activities, everyone learns to separate materials to help conserve resources. Additionally, it raises awareness on the importance of changing their own lifestyles with the aim of reducing and avoiding waste. Just imagine: each community is like a tree, every family is a branch and every individual is a leaf. Tzu Chi Eco-Awareness Recycling Stations are the tree trunks which transmit environmental awareness to mobilize people to



**Climate change can be stopped when there are more trees to help reducing carbon emissions.**

take climate action to protect the planet.

Metaphorically speaking, once there are enough trees in this world, we can mitigate climate change's devastating effects.

Tzu Chi educates and engages people of all ages in environmental issues and offers occasions and locations for people to practice and experiment when they modify their behavior and adopt environmental-friendly lifestyles.

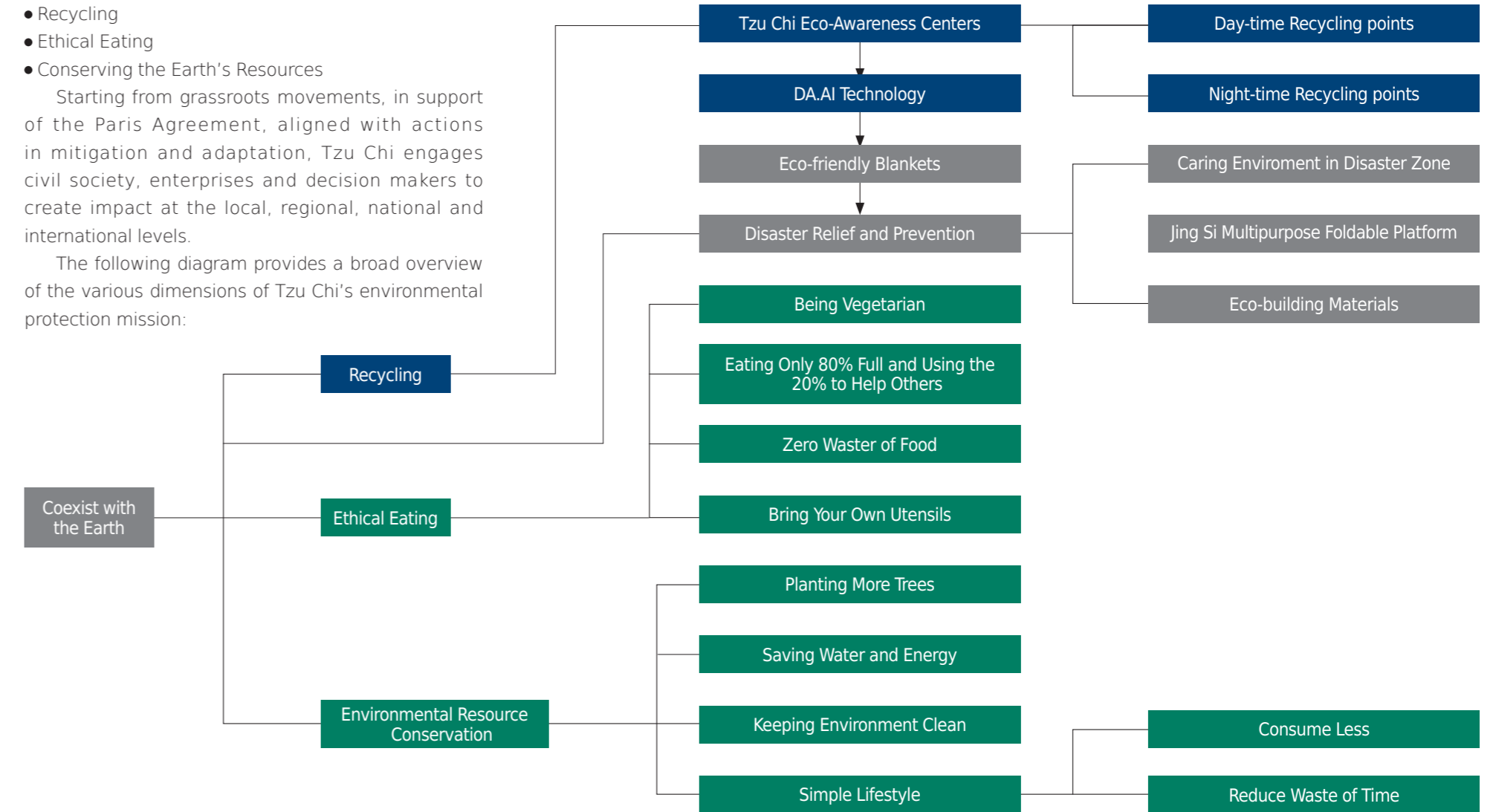
Senior citizens, students from kindergarten to college age, parents, business owners, teachers, and other community members can join together by doing recycling, cleaning up their environments, adopting a vegetarian lifestyle and conserving resources by saving water and energy. Through different activities, people learn to be accommodating, grateful, thoughtful, and considerate to others and the climate.

When we cultivate a healthy mind and spirit, starting with ourselves, our lives will be filled with contentment and the capacity to respect and live in harmony with Mother Earth. In order to pursue its mission of Environmental Protection, Tzu Chi focuses on the following three directions:

- Recycling
- Ethical Eating
- Conserving the Earth's Resources

Starting from grassroots movements, in support of the Paris Agreement, aligned with actions in mitigation and adaptation, Tzu Chi engages civil society, enterprises and decision makers to create impact at the local, regional, national and international levels.

The following diagram provides a broad overview of the various dimensions of Tzu Chi's environmental protection mission:





## 4.2. Tzu Chi's Recycling Infrastructure

During more than two decades of activism, Tzu Chi has managed to build up a worldwide recycling infrastructure that revolves around Recycling Points and Tzu Chi Eco-Awareness Recycling Stations.

Tzu Chi Recycling Points are temporary locations in each neighborhood that the community residents congregate at specific times to collect recyclables. The location can be an empty space in front of a shop, around communal pavilions, activity areas, or parks.

Tzu Chi Eco-Awareness Recycling Stations provide a permanent location for collecting, sorting and storing recyclables. Each recycling center is constructed with consideration to the natural environment it inhabits. Water resources are recycled and reused. Rainwater recycling systems and solar energy systems are applied. In addition, natural lighting and ventilation are incorporated in structural designs of Tzu Chi buildings not only to lessen or avoid the use of air-conditioning system, but also to bring people closer to nature. Recycling Stations also act like day care centers that welcome Tzu Chi volunteers, especially the elderly, to come and contribute their care for environment.

Recycling points and recycling stations are commonly located in high density residential areas. They are organized to open at varied times to enable engagement from different types of participants.

Tzu Chi's Recycling Points and Recycling Stations have a range of benefits:

- Reduce waste and improve recycling quality and rates
- Empower community members to join in sorting recyclable materials
- Spread environmental awareness among the public
- Inspire more people to join the effort to promote environmental protection
- Promote ethical volunteering and charitable acts
- Cherish the elderly and engage seniors in meaningful activities

- Strengthen community responsibilities and neighborhood relationships
- Offer positive free-time activities for families and groups

Why can Tzu Chi's recycling model help in improving mitigation practices? The main asset of Tzu Chi is that individual citizens can personally get involved in recycling work. In a further step, they may often even become grassroots environmental teachers. Many of the volunteers are able to transform profound environmental knowledge into their daily lives. Hence, they are able to share knowledge on environmental protection with others, for example back to the family, to the friends and neighbors.

The citizens who have participated in recycling can understand the importance of conserving earth resources and therefore will also help to promote environmental-friendly lifestyle to the public. Tzu Chi's recycling infrastructure shall be a platform for the whole of society. This is reflected in our organization's close cooperation with enterprises; school teachers and students; as well as residents in the neighborhoods.

In conclusion, Tzu Chi's recycling infrastructure integrates the long-term benefits of environmental protection with the short-term advantages of sociability, encounter and exchange. Individual reluctance to tackle climate change can thus be overcome.

### Change the World -- Change People's Hearts

Do not fail to commit an act of kindness just because it is small in scale; do not do evil just because it appears to be insignificant." - Master Cheng Yen encourages

With long term efforts from over 100,000 recycling volunteers, Tzu Chi has not only changed society's attitude towards garbage, but also facilitated entrepreneurs' promotion of green industries. everyone practice recycling in



**With long term efforts from nearly 200,000 recycling volunteers, not only changed Taiwan people's attitude toward garbage, facilitated entrepreneurs' promotion of green industries and, but also created the Taiwanese's outstanding experience.**



their daily lives. It is not difficult to start a small action. All it needs is to change your thought and believe in your power to protect Mother Nature – everyone can contribute!

Tzu Chi's advocacy of environmental protection began on a summer morning in August 1990. Master Cheng Yen accepted an invitation from the Wu Tsun-Hsien Foundation to give a speech at Shin Min High School in Taichung. While she walked through the streets after a night market, she noticed a large pile of rubbish by the roadside, with plastic bags strewn and paper blown around by the wind. "This is such a beautiful island, but its environment is so dirty!" she thought. This scene made her sad; the Master sighed for the people of Taiwan, who enjoyed a booming economy and a comfortable lifestyle – but had neglected their environment. The end of her speech was followed by continuous applause.

With deep sincerity, she called out to the audience: "Taiwan is a clean, beautiful island. With our effort, we can definitely bring out more of its beauty! This requires the strength of many of us. I appeal to all of you who are clapping now to use the same hands to help sort recyclables."

The Master hoped for everyone to protect the Earth through practical acts. Only then will there be a tangible change to our increasingly polluted environment. She led by example and practiced recycling in her own life. She diligently separates all waste, while maximizing their use. For example, she reuses the blank side of papers discarded by others; she first writes with a pencil and then a pen. Lastly, she will reuse it to practice calligraphy. This greatly reduces the amount of paper needed, by decreasing the number of trees cut for their fiber.

In the Jing Si Abode, except computers and related machinery that require cooling systems, every room is aired only with regular fans even during the hottest days. The farmlands of Tzu Chi does not use chemical fertilizers but rather, utilize organic fertilizers and composts made of leftover fruit peels and vegetables. Such use of the most natural nutrients for the plantations and of washing detergent with the least chemicals has greatly reduced chemical pollutants in the surrounding

environment. These are evidence of Master Cheng Yen's constant reminder to us of the spirit of extending the lifespan of all things and to live in harmony with nature.

Since Master Cheng Yen started advocating the importance of reducing waste and promoting recycling, volunteers from all over Taiwan, regardless of age and background, have begun to practice recycling everywhere they went. Unafraid of mess, dirtiness and physical labor, they humbled themselves to bend down and pick up recyclables tirelessly and selflessly; they wish to do their part for Mother Nature.

In 1996, Tzu Chi organized the first Taiwan Recycling Volunteer Seminar to improve volunteers' knowledge of environmental protection. In the following year, a new Community Volunteer structure was set up; it changed the volunteering network structure from a 'social-connection-based' to one that is 'community-based'. This promoted the idea of environmental protection to everyone in each community and encouraged each neighborhood to practice recycling. The set-up of recycling points and centers in each community were also an effective way to raise awareness and engage people to practice recycling.

Shortly after, Tzu Chi volunteers started to advocate community-based recycling into each family home. The volunteers went house to house to promote recycling. They advised everyone to cook at home and to reduce takeaway packaging when bringing food home. They also taught how to sort household waste and to clean used bottles and cans to keep pests away. This was done to improve waste management; better quality recyclables collected would in turn enhance the potential re-use of these materials.

From an individual to a community, and from a community to each family, Master Cheng Yen believes that, as long as we change our mindset and practice recycling in our lives, cleansing the Earth is not an impossible task. Each new person brings along additional strength and support for this goal!



### As of 2017, the total number of Tzu Chi recycling volunteers, recycling stations, and recycling points around the globe.

Asian			
Country/Region	Recycling Station	Recycling Point	Recycling Volunteer
Taiwan	286	8,626	88,254
Mainland China	38	216	1,300
Malaysia	160	980	12,764
Indonesia	22	-	300
Philippines	4	294	32
Hong Kong	2	10	300
Thailand	1	2	30
Singapore	1	39	1,060
Brunei	1	-	10
Vietnam	-	5	61
<b>Total</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>10,172</b>	<b>104,111</b>



As of 2017, Tzu Chi had 561 recycling stations and 10,267 recycling points in 16 countries and regions around the globe. And there were 106,299 recycling volunteers participated in the recycling mission to safeguard the earth practically.

America			
Country/Region	Recycling Station	Recycling Point	Recycling Volunteer
U.S.A.	39	22	496
Canada	-	20	800
Chile	1	5	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>1,335</b>
Oceania			
Country/Region	Recycling Station	Recycling Point	Recycling Volunteer
Australia	3	4	201
New Zealand	1	1	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>239</b>
Africa			
Country/Region	Recycling Station	Recycling Point	Recycling Volunteer
South Africa	2	43	614
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>614</b>



## 5. Tzu Chi's Recycling Activity and Climate Action - A Second Life

The process of separating recycling materials is not only meticulous, but labor intensive as well. Recycling volunteers must mindfully clean each item as to ensure no foreign debris remains lodged in the recycled item. For many ordinary public and private sector recycling stations, this time consuming process translates to high operating cost and hence low profits.

To recycle waste materials and bring about further GHG emissions savings, economic incentives alone often do not suffice.

Education plays a crucial role in Tzu Chi's recycling model. Tzu Chi educates residents about environmental protection and encourages each family to start the recycling process at home -- separating items such as cans, plastic bottles, papers, cartons from ordinary waste and keeping them clean.

This reduces the burden of the recycling process for Tzu Chi volunteers when these materials are collected, sorted and further processed at Tzu Chi's Recycling Points and Eco-Awareness Recycling Centers.

While many materials, as shown on the right, can be recycled, there are certain items that cannot be recycled at the station. These items include: furniture, mattresses, pillows, undergarments, styrofoam, wood & bamboo products, tires, shoes, and lightbulbs.



Volunteers are learning how to sort out fruit styrofoam nets in Henan Province, China.



## 5.1 The Five R's – Reduce, Refuse, Reuse, Recycle, Rethink

In the face of climate change and the increasing rate of environmental destruction, we must intensify efforts to protect Mother Nature. In advocating for environmental protection, Tzu Chi not only focuses on methods and actions, but also on changing people's mentality and creating awareness of what Mother Nature is telling us.



### Reduce

Tzu Chi actively advocates the practice of bringing your own meal utensils. A cup, bowl, chopsticks and carrier bag are basic things that each volunteer carries in order to reduce the use of single-use utensils. In 2001, Typhoon Nari caused flooding in 19 counties in Taiwan. Tzu Chi volunteers immediately prepared and distributed 660,000 servings of hot meals to the survivors. Even though it was emergency disaster relief, Tzu Chi still maintained the use of reusable utensils. Tzu Chi volunteers were steadfast in upholding the "reuse" practice despite the inconvenience, in order to avoid causing further stress to the environment.

### Refuse

In their daily lives, most Tzu Chi volunteers have very few single-use items. They bring their own water bottles, buy few packaged drinks and seldom eat out. Through such practices, they influence the people around them to follow suit. This not only decreases the creation of waste, but is also in line with Master Cheng Yen's call for us to practice a simple lifestyle. Tzu Chi volunteers are mindful of the need to protect Mother Nature through each and every small action. With self-discipline, they curb their desires and reduce consumption of Earth's resources; with the spirit of 'diligence, frugality

**Disposable utensils may cause garbage issues and ocean pollutions. Therefore, Tzu Chi volunteers, using reusable food utensils, not only can protect our environment, but also could ensure food safety.**



Students and local children are enjoying the hot food provided by Tzu Chi volunteers in Harare, Zimbabwe.





**Recycling volunteers are disassembling an used umbrella into 8 pieces in Luzhu, Taoyuan City.**

and endurance', they reduce consumption of water and electricity, practice vegetarianism, and walk or cycle – so they actively reduce their individual carbon footprint.

#### **Reuse**

Each Tzu Chi recycling-educational center has a variety of recyclables and other items, like an ordinary shop. The difference is that the items displayed at the "Treasure Station" are not new but have been used before. While sorting through recyclables, volunteers put aside cups, bowls, clothes, books or home items that are still usable and in good condition. With some cleaning and touching up, these items can be given to those in need. Apart from reducing waste, this is also a way to extend the life of those items. For example, volunteers remove the frame of an old, broken umbrella and use the fabric to make waterproof carrier bags. Doing that reduces the need for plastic bags and creates reuse value for the umbrella.

#### **Recycle**

Also, at the recycling centers, the volunteers sort papers according to their colors and materials, such as white papers and near-white papers. Volunteers also rely on their touch and hearing to distinguish between different types of plastic materials. Their efforts help to increase the quality of recycling and reduce the amount of rubbish.

#### **Rethink**

Master Cheng Yen always asks us to think before consuming and buying things in order to ensure we only buy what we 'need', and not what we 'want'. A simple lifestyle stems from reducing desires in one's heart. If we want to have healthy lives and peace in the world, we must start by working on our own spirit and heart. By practicing recycling in our daily lives and being more mindful, we will be able to protect Mother Nature!



**Volunteers are introducing handicrafts made from recyclables in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.**



## 5.2. Tzu Chi's Journey of Environmental Protection

### Save the Earth — Just Do It!

Climate change has caused an increase of severity in extreme weather patterns. Rising temperatures are the result of excess consumerism and uncontrolled development on the environment. Over 200 years of industrialization have depleted the world's fossil fuels and other natural resources, while generating enormous amounts of greenhouse gases. As the Earth heats up, glaciers are melting much faster and ecosystems are endangered around the world.

How do we mitigate these weather-related disasters? What can we do to protect our environment and bequeath a clean planet to our grandchildren? A prevailing solution to climate change is to practice environmental protection. To transform our environment, we need to start by transforming the mindset of humans. Professor Peter B. Clarke of Oxford University said that the environment can only be transformed by a change in people's perspective and that, because climate change is "human-induced", human beings will be able to cause a change, starting with each individual.

### Environmental Efforts Driven by Concern over Waste

In March 1991, the Tzu Chi Foundation in Taiwan collaborated with the King Car Cultural and Education Foundation to carry out a campaign to purify human minds and correct negative influences in society. The following year, they started working with Taiwan's Environmental Protection Administration and civil groups to promote environmental protection among the public. Their efforts included tree-planting, recycling, and other green practices and activities that could be implemented in daily life.

The nationwide campaign not only raised environmental awareness among the public. It also helped to spread and deepen environmental concepts and

practices throughout Taiwan. Since it began this mission in the beginning of 1990s, Tzu Chi has gradually become a key organization in promoting and implementing environmental sustainability in Taiwan. It regularly organizes the clean-up of beaches and mountains. In addition, it has set up numerous recycling stations in communities across the island, to encourage ordinary people to help protect and care for the environment.

### Environmental Protection Combines Concept and Action

Since Master Cheng Yen started appealing to the public to reduce waste and start recycling, Tzu Chi volunteers from all walks of life have become actively involved in collecting and sorting trash for recycling. Inspiring real life stories of human compassion and goodness.

In this way, the Foundation aims to create a "pure stream" that serves to cleanse human minds around the world. After much active campaigning by the Foundation, there are now over 100,000 recycling volunteers in 16 countries and regions who have responded to the call; they have set up more than 10,000 recycling points and stations.

Tzu Chi's ongoing environmental efforts have been recognized by the United Nations. In 2005, during World Environment Day, Tzu Chi was invited to share its experience in environmental protection with delegates from around the world.

The small actions of each individual can significantly impact the world, like The Butterfly Effect. Master Cheng Yen said: "To save the world, we must first save the hearts and minds of people. If we wish to influence the world, we must first transform people's minds."

Everyone hopes for good health and a world free of disasters. To achieve that, we must start by cultivating the right mindset in ourselves and translate



On routine community recycling day, volunteers collaborated to carry sorted recyclables.





Tzu Chi volunteers led local people to clean up a beach in the Philippines.

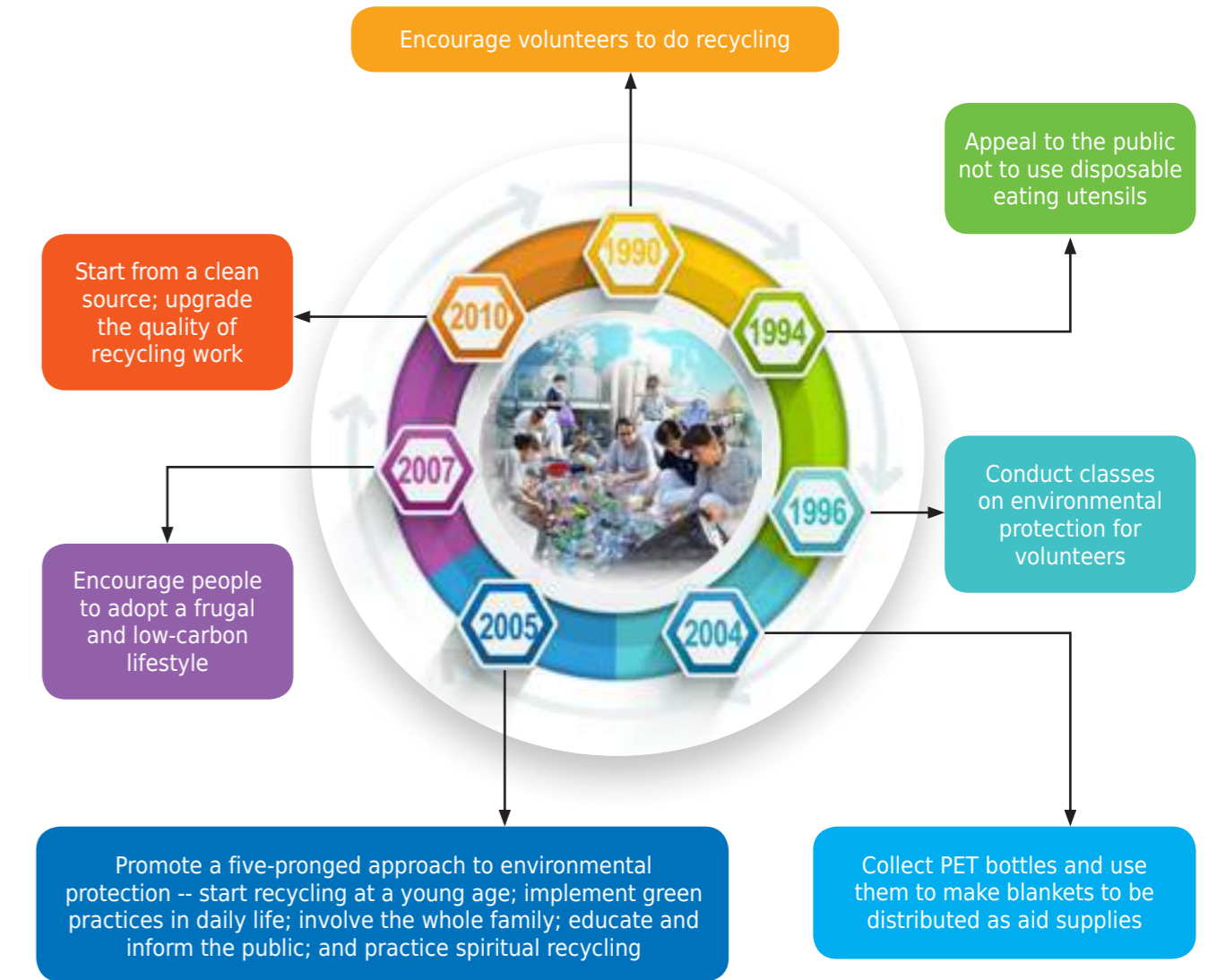
it into prompt actions that conserve the environment. Then we will be able to transform the world into a Pure Land where humanity coexists in harmony with Nature.

**Environmental Conservation is a Global Movement**

The Tzu Chi environmental protection movement has flourished not only in Taiwan, but globally as well. The foundation's offices overseas have expanded their environmental efforts at the community level.

Volunteers in Malaysia hold monthly recycling activities; those in the United States sort trash for recycling in their home garages and those in South Africa make rice sacks into reusable carrier bags. All these practices came from Tzu Chi's environmental efforts in Taiwan.

In 2004, the Tzu Chi started making blankets from PET bottles collected by its volunteers across Taiwan; it distributes them as aid supplies during disaster relief. Proceeds from the sale of recyclables island-wide are used to fund its Da Ai (Great Love) TV; a network dedicated to producing programs which spread the message of environmental protection and share stories of Tzu Chi's work around the world.





## 6. The World's Recycling Challenges: a Global Platform to Share Innovation and Drive Action

Recycling occupies a unique position in the Tzu Chi Environmental movement, since it is one of the environmental practices with the longest tradition within the organization.

Recycling has a double meaning to Tzu Chi members. On the one hand, recycling is seen as the best way to solve the global climate change due to the greenhouse effect.

Scientific knowledge is used to prove that, in order to reduce energy consumption, a disciplined lifestyle is necessary. Recycling is the core of this lifestyle, in which people should cherish the items they use.

On the other hand, recycling has a religious meaning. Recycling helps to obscure the social boundaries of gender, occupation, wealth and age, and therefore encourage group integration.



**Tzu Chi Volunteers lead local people of Free State community to do recycling work in South Africa.**





Local volunteers are carrying recyclables in recycling station of Marikina in the Philippines.



Recycling volunteers crush the PET bottles in Baisha Township, Penghu.



## 6.1. Tzu Chi's Approach in Recycling Plastic Bags

When doing recycling, it is important not only to focus on the profit gained from selling the recycled products but to also take the whole present and future environmental impact of the deed into account.

Plastic bags and single use packaging are icons of the convenience culture that permeates modern society. Such a culture, however, has become an increasing existential threat to the environment. These bags, while inexpensive, lightweight, and durable, are made of plastics which do not readily biodegrade. Much of the plastic made still exists in this world.

Worldwide, as many as one trillion plastic bags are used each year and less than 5 percent of plastic is recycled. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, over 380 billion plastic bags and wraps are used in the USA each year. To make them requires 12 million barrels of oil.

The vast majority of the non-biodegradable bags are simply thrown away. When buried, they block drainage systems and waterways and impede the flow of underground water. When incinerated, PVC plastic packaging materials release highly toxic carcinogens, such as dioxins, into the air.

Plastic waste is harmful not only to the environment but to humans as well. To address this issue, Tzu Chi has put a lot of effort in recycling plastic bags. Rather than throw plastic bags away, Tzu Chi volunteers take the time to hand wash and then line dry each individual plastic bag, ensuring that the plastic bags can find a second life.

Tzu Chi does not do recycling for economic profit. We do it for the benefit of Mother Nature, for the natural environment, mankind and all living beings on this planet.

**To promote the concept of "purity begins at source", volunteers from Xiufeng recycling station invited local community people to sort plastic bags in Xizhi, New Taipei City.**





## 6.2. A Recycling Center in Each Community

Tzu Chi Foundation Malaysia adopted the Environmental Protection Mission in 1995, starting in the state of Malacca. In January the following year, the Tzu Chi Kuala Lumpur & Selangor Branch established an Environmental Protection Division, in order to implement the recycling mission in more communities throughout Malaysia.

Since 1996, the Environmental Protection Division of Tzu Chi Kuala Lumpur & Selangor Branch has been actively promoting and engaging local communities to play their part through environmental awareness educational campaigns and initiatives. In 2010, Echo Chien, CEO of Tzu Chi Kuala Lumpur & Selangor Branch, visited various Tzu Chi communities; leading the Branch members in a mission to “set up a recycling center in each community”, starting from 2011. This officially raised the Branch’s Environmental Protection Mission to a new height. With systematic plans and enormous effort, Tzu Chi’s Environmental Protection Mission won the Malaysian government’s recognition and award in 2012: an affirmation of Tzu Chi’s contribution in this field.

In retrospect, Tzu Chi volunteers had begun to spread the concept of environmental protection by curbing one’s desires and reducing consumption long before the Malaysian government launched its initiatives to raise public awareness of recycling. Tzu Chi volunteers had been going door-to-door to encourage the public to reduce waste and not to discard items that could be reused or recycled.

**Tzu Chi volunteers and Tzu Chi University students are doing recycling works in Pulau Ketam, Malaysia.**





Also, they set up several small-scale recycling points in the communities to encourage local residents to practice recycling by depositing their reusable and recyclable items there. These were the initial community outreach initiatives of the Branch in its Environmental Protection Mission; it was driven by the volunteers' sense of mission to protect Mother Earth and reduce pollution.

The establishment of the Environmental Protection Mission in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor was driven by a Tzu Chi volunteer, Tang Shook Lin. Her curiosity after spotting a poster on recycling led her into a mission with a far-reaching impact that eventually changed the lifestyle and mindset of the local community. "Master Cheng Yen is most concerned about climate change. Hence, in addition to individual effort, we must also encourage our family members and people in our neighborhood to participate in recycling. We should hold on to our initial aspiration, do it willingly and joyfully, and overcome any difficulties we may face hand in hand," she said.

Shook Lin faced many hurdles, such as inadequate storage and lack of manpower. When she first started to promote recycling, she had neither a truck nor a driver. Despite many sleepless nights, she remained steadfast in her mission. She took up the challenges, acquired a truck driving license, negotiated with recycling vendors to solve storage problems, and borrowed a truck from her neighbor to transport the recyclables. With her positive attitude and commitment, supported by equally inspired and determined fellow volunteers, the recycling mission slowly gained momentum. With support from the local authorities, Tzu Chi's Environmental Protection Mission eventually gained widespread recognition. Many recycling points were set up one after another, thus enabling many people in the community to contribute their efforts to protect Mother Earth.

There is no prerequisite to participate in recycling work. Anyone who is willing can contribute, and with love, our endangered Earth will be saved and cleaned.

In 1996, Tzu Chi's Environmental Protection Mission commenced in Klang. Tan Lay Choo, together with other local volunteers, started a recycling center in

a small wooden house in the back alley of a residential area to collect, sort and store recyclables. However, due to a manpower shortage, the volunteers were unable to effectively sort the recyclables and widely promote the practice of recycling. The huge volume of recyclables overfilled the storage space; it caused some to be exposed to sun and rain. This resulted in hygiene issues which led to constant complaints from the residents nearby. Subsequently, to remedy these issues, the Klang volunteers decided to follow the successful blueprint of the Kuala Lumpur & Selangor Branch. This meant starting a recycling point; this requires same-day transportation and storage by buyers after recyclable collection and sorting has been done. As the recycling momentum and culture began to spread, a Tzu Chi recycling and educational center was finally set up at Taman Meru in Klang, in 2011. In addition to collecting recyclables, it also serves to raise the local community's awareness and knowledge of environmental protection.

From humble beginnings of only seven recycling points, Tzu Chi Kuala Lumpur & Selangor Branch has, as of June 2018, 85 recycling centers and 270 recycling points. This is an achievement realized by the collective effort of recycling volunteers; they work diligently in manning their respective community recycling centers and collection points, giving their best to create a clean Planet Earth. Regardless of social status or age groups, these committed volunteers come together with one heart and one mission – to protect Mother Earth, a place we all call Home.

**Tzu Chings invited some college students to upload all recyclables onto fishing boats for transporting them to Port Klang in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.**





### 6.3. Changing the Environment Starts from the Dining Table

Over 1,776 animals are slaughtered each second and served to satisfy human's insatiable desires. This makes human stomachs the largest animal burial ground in the world. A vegetarian diet can improve health, protect the environment and cultivate compassion. Through vegetarianism, you can minimize the harmful threats to health, reduce the waste of precious resources, like water, needed for animal farming, and more importantly, respect the sanctity of life.

According to research, production of one kilogram of beef emits 60 to 70 times

more greenhouse gases than one kilogram of fruits and vegetables. Furthermore, animal and feed farming consumes a lot of water, pesticides, fertilizers and energy. For example, it takes 9,000 liters of water to produce one kilogram of corn and 3,000 liters of water to produce one kilogram of rice. But production of one kilogram of beef requires 15,500 liters of water.

Experts at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization have suggested that vegetarianism is the most effective way to control the greenhouse effect. If a person eats three vegetarian meals a day, he can reduce carbon dioxide emissions by more than two kilograms, equivalent to the amount of carbon dioxide absorbed by 66 trees per day (a tree absorbs about 0.03 kilograms of carbon dioxide per day).

Tzu Chi is steadfast in promoting vegetarianism. Only vegetarian meals are served on all occasions, including during disaster relief, when our in-house developed dehydrated instant rice can be conveniently served by soaking in water. The staff meals provided by Tzu Chi Foundation offices, Tzu Chi schools and Tzu Chi hospitals are all vegetarian. The six Tzu Chi hospitals in Taiwan serve more than 2.54 million vegetarian meals a year; this reduces carbon dioxide emissions by nearly 2.43 million kilograms. Healthy, nutritious and delicious vegetarian food is not only good for the body, it also protects the Earth.

Master Cheng Yen urges everyone to empathize with the pain, distress and fear which animals experience when they are being slaughtered. Cultivating compassion and adopting a vegetarian lifestyle not only reduces the grief and hatred felt by the animals, it also cleanses one's mind and brings peace within. To achieve mental and physical health and maintain a harmonious environment, try to start from the dining table. Every vegetarian meal contributes to the protection of our environment.



**Tzu Chi kindergarten students put on cartoon outfit and enjoy space meals in Kedah, Malaysia.**



## 7. Da Ai Technology Innovation: Charity and Eco-Enterprise

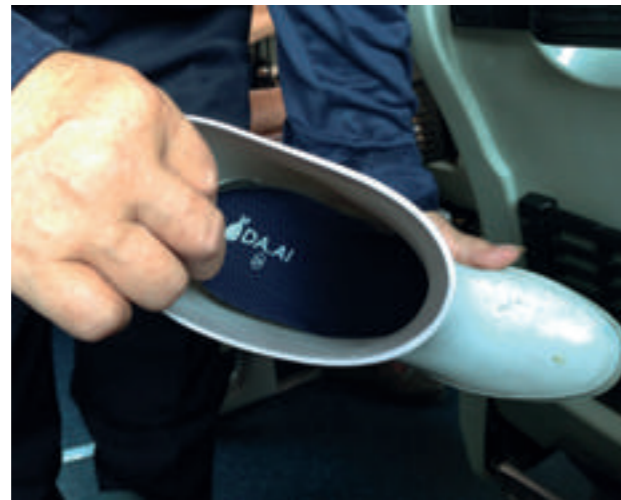
### Eco-friendly Innovations of Da-Ai Technology

On the afternoon on August 23, 2018, a tropical depression hit the southwestern part of Taiwan. It brought long-lasting and very heavy rainfall over a wide area. In just two days, it caused major devastation in several places and flooded coastal regions for almost a week. The death toll was seven people, with two missing and 148 injured. Some 8,492 residents were displaced and 624 schools damaged. Although the tropical depression did not reach typhoon level, it was the most serious disaster in terms of rain in Taiwan since the Morakot disaster of 2009.

On the very next day, Tzu Chi volunteers set up disaster relief coordination centers in several counties and cities and sent hot meals to those impacted, and the first responders. On subsequent days, volunteered expanded hot meal distributions to areas where the floods had subsided. They also helped residents to clean up their homes, provide clothing and multipurpose folding beds, and conducted free clinics in many affected areas. At the end of the operation on September 19, Tzu Chi had mobilized over 10,300 volunteers and offered care to 9,457 affected households.

Residents of the coastal areas are mostly engaged

in aquaculture. Due to land subsidence, the area is prone to flooding. So the residents were hit with a double blow, because the heavy rainfall coincided with a full moon spring tide. Hence, it was difficult for the water to subside; the affected people in the inundated areas had trouble receiving even one meal per day. The Tzu Chi volunteers waded through water to bring hot food to those affected and assess their needs. After the water had subsided, volunteers brought much needed clothing, dry food and even beds to replace those destroyed by the floods. In addition, they provided emotional and spiritual



support to the elderly and encouraged those who were affected; they cheered them up with sincere and comforting words.

### Introduction of equipment developed by Da-Ai technology

**Cut-resistant gloves:** While assisting in disaster areas, a person runs the risk of being cut or injured and being exposed to dirty water and the risk of infection. Protective clothing is therefore a necessity. Gloves developed by Da-Ai Technology are puncture-proof, waterproof, lightweight, breathable and very convenient to use.

**Puncture-resistant insoles:** Da-Ai Technology carried out research and development to reduce the health risks of volunteers by preventing sharp objects like nails from penetrating their shoes in disaster areas. The insole material is anti-odor and antibacterial, reusable after cleaning, and suitable to wear with a variety of shoe types. The insoles were given to volunteers to insert in their boots while they worked in flood-stricken areas during post-disaster assessment and clean-up activities. Together with the cut-resistant gloves, the insoles were also given to members of the national army carrying out recovery work in disaster areas.



▲ **Volunteers were sending lunch boxes to those affected people by floods.**

◀ **The puncture free insoles produced by Da-Ai Technology Co. can protect volunteers' safety while they are cleaning the affected houses.**



## 7.1. Photo and Description of the Water Treatment System in the Laos Flood.

A hydropower dam under construction in the Sanamxay District of Attapeu Province in southeast Laos collapsed on the evening of July 23, 2018. It was believed that a sudden downpour caused the water level to rise and the unbearable load caused the dam, uncompleted, to collapse. This triggered flooding in several villages downstream. Among them, six villages were inundated. Heavy casualties were reported, with more than 100 people missing and more than 6,000



made homeless.

Tzu Chi headquarter in Hualien formed a disaster relief team of volunteers and staff from Thailand, Taiwan, and other countries. These volunteers carried out two relief missions to the affected areas in Laos in the middle and at the end of August. They distributed eco-blankets and multi-purpose folding beds to survivors from 500 households who sought shelters at evacuation centers around Sanamxay District. The Foundation also entrusted the municipal government of Sanamxay District to deliver 1.2 metric tons of dehydrated instant rice and 3,000 sets of reusable lunch boxes and eating utensils to evacuation centers in mountainous areas by helicopters. To meet medical needs at the disaster areas, Tzu Chi also donated dengue test kits, as well as blood-drawing apparatuses, a centrifuge and other medical supplies for Rickettsia test for use by those in the rescue operation.

Additionally, Taiwan Water Corporation and the Industrial Technology Research Institute offered two sets of mobile and energy-saving water treatment system to the Tzu Chi disaster relief team to provide safe drinking water to the affected people. The two sets of equipment were dismantled and fitted into eight 28-inch hard suitcases and brought to the disaster sites. They were re-assembled and set up in a village 12kms away from Sanamxay District. They allowed residents from over 100 households to enjoy clean water, starting from August 28. By September 1, the day the disaster relief team left the area, the system had supplied over 3,000 liters of clean drinking water.

**Portable water purification system could provide safe drinking water in the flood affected area.**



**Tzu Chi volunteers instructed the affected people how to operate the portable and energy-saving water purification system after the severe flood in Attapeu province, Laos.**



## 7.2. Dehydrated Instant Rice, Multipurpose Folding Bed and Eco-blanket.

The revelation that the soft, warm blankets are made from hard, creaky PET bottles always arouses a reaction of wonder and admiration. Through their combined efforts, Tzu Chi Humanitarian Aid Association (TIHAA) and Tzu Chi recycling volunteers have given new life to recycled bottles and kept needy people warm -- rather than the earth.

For the last four decades, the world has been through several petroleum



and energy crises. It took a million years to form oil underground -- but only a century for humans to deplete almost all of it. Oil consumption discharges carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, trapping heat and warming the Earth to alarmingly unsafe levels. Tapping the collective strength of Tzu Chi recycling volunteers in Taiwan, TIHAA is doing its part to reverse this dangerous trend. PET bottles are byproducts of oil -- they are made from polyester extracted from petroleum. Polyester can also be used to make textiles. Consequently, when melted, PET bottles have characteristics very similar to those of textiles.

Tzu Chi volunteers separate PET bottles by color, remove caps and cap rings, flatten and bag the bottles. The bottles are then delivered to factories where they are shredded, rinsed, and made into polyester resin. This is then spun into yarn and woven into cloth from which light, soft, warm blankets are made.

So far the blankets have been used in Tzu Chi winter distributions and during disaster relief efforts all over the world. If not recycled, PET bottles create garbage that pollutes for millenia. If they are recycled, the bottles become useful again and can create positive values.

**Tzu Chi volunteers distributed multipurpose foldable beds to the affected people after the severe flood in Attapeu Province, Laos.**



**Tzu Chi volunteers distributed hot instant rice to affected people after Typhoon Haiyan in Leyte Province of the Philippines.**



## 7.3, The Latest Tzu Chi Aid Relief in Ecuador, Mexico, and Hurricane Harvey

### Ecuador

Ecuador, a Catholic country in South America, was rocked by a very shallow earthquake with a magnitude of 7.8 on April 16, 2016. It was the strongest earthquake to hit the country since 1979. It claimed over 600 lives, destroyed over 7,000 houses, and affected more than 200,000 people.

With no local representation, Tzu Chi had to turn to Taiwanese businessmen



and the Commercial Office of Taipei in Ecuador for assistance, in order to carry out disaster assessments in the hardest-hit areas along the coast of Manabi Province. The team subsequently visited Manta, Portoviejo, San Vicente, Pedernales, and other places. They talked to government officials and a disaster recovery unit, in order to understand the most critical needs of the survivors.

The volunteers carried out a cash-for-relief program for about 40 days across five cities, with 34,000 local participants. Volunteers led residents to clean up their streets and to restore their communities in the spirit of neighborhood volunteering and mutual help. Tzu Chi also distributed nutritional infant supplements and daily necessities to 1,000 households, as well as 1,500 multipurpose folding beds and over 5,000 eco-blankets, benefiting a total of at least 8,000 people.

Then, in early April 2017, Ecuador was struck by another disaster – a torrential rain which damaged the homes of 120,000 people in seven provinces. Tzu Chi again launched a cash-for-relief program, with over 17,000 local participants. A delegation of 36 Tzu Chi volunteers from seven countries and 21 local volunteers led local residents to help clean up the streets and six schools over nine days. This helped the residents resume their lives.

Tzu Chi also helped to rebuild the Canoa Church, in order to provide spiritual solace for the affected residents. Universal love and compassion once again prevailed despite national and religious differences.

### Mexico

On September 19, 2017, just hours after an emergency drill following the 32nd Anniversary of the 1985 Mexico earthquake, the state of Puebla in Central Mexico



**Tzu Chi volunteers distributed blankets and cash cards to the survivors to purchase necessary supplies and conducted free clinics in Morelos, Mexico.**



was devastated by a 7.1-magnitude earthquake. The quake also shook the capital, Mexico City, about 120kms from the epicenter of the powerful tremor, and claimed over 200 lives.

Tzu Chi volunteers and staff from Taiwan and the US immediately set off to conduct disaster assessments in Jojutla in the state of Morelos and San Gregorio in Xochimilco Borough, Mexico City. There were damaged buildings and roads everywhere. Tzu Chi volunteers met with the survivors, and visited members of the military, municipal government and civil society organizations; they expressed their intention to help and asked for a list of residents affected by the catastrophe. A large amount of relief supplies had already been delivered to the affected areas, despite safety concerns. So the Tzu Chi volunteers decided to distribute cash cards to the survivors to purchase what they needed.

There were many hurdles that Tzu Chi volunteers had to overcome. These included customs clearance and remittance, listing of beneficiaries, and venues for distribution. Patiently they cleared all hurdles and presented the cash cards and eco-blankets to survivors before Christmas. This enabled them to purchase their daily and medical supplies, as well as furniture and building materials for their homes. The emergency aid mission concluded on January 13, 2018, with ten relief distributions held in the affected areas; they benefited 10,846 households.

During this period, members of Tzu Chi International Medical Association (TIMA) also joined hands with local medical professionals to provide over 5,000 patient visits in nine free clinics.

Tzu Chi's care for the Mexico earthquake survivors is still ongoing. Volunteers continue to organize free clinics and volunteer training sessions for local residents. They encourage them to sow the seeds of kindness in their communities and to inspire the love of everyone to help those who are suffering.

#### USA

Hurricane Harvey was the strongest hurricane to make landfall in the U.S. since

Hurricane Katrina in 2005. It caused the greatest damage of any natural disaster in U.S. history, with economic losses estimated to surpass those of Katrina.

Tzu Chi volunteers in the U.S. were alert and prepared for the hurricane a day before it struck. They began disaster relief work as soon as the situation stabilized. In upholding the spirit of "helping the helpers", Tzu Chi volunteers were quick to prioritize the cash card distribution to those on the front line, such as policemen and rescuers; they also extended aid to those impacted by the hurricane.

After the disaster, life became even harder for the poor. This was especially so for undocumented immigrants who could not turn to external sources for help due to their immigration status. The cash cards provided by Tzu Chi had a modest value of US\$200 to US\$800; they helped to ease the financial predicament of many survivors.

Together with the eco-blankets, dehydrated instant rice and first aid kits, these distributions in cash and in kind goods carried with them, blessings from people around the world together with their best wishes for recovery.

The imbalance of Nature's elements has caused frequent catastrophes. Since late August, the U.S., for example, was hit by several hurricanes in succession – after Hurricane Harvey wreaked havoc in Texas, Hurricanes Irma, Maria and Nate devastated the Caribbean Islands and southern U.S. Tzu Chi volunteers had to adapt and re-adjust their plans to dispatch resources to Texas and Mexico, before they could complete an earlier disaster relief mission.

The Foundation recorded about 1,500 volunteers participating in the relief work in Texas and Florida after Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Other than the U.S. volunteers, there were volunteers from Canada who crossed the national borders to provide help. As of October 10th, the volunteers provided relief aid to more than 12,600 households. During the course of the relief mission, Tzu Chi USA registered a record high in number of households to benefit from a single disaster aid distribution and the number of volunteers mobilized for a disaster relief.



**Tzu Chi volunteers distributed blankets and greeting cards filled with love and care to each shelter cot following the devastation wreaked by Hurricane Harvey.**



## 8. Successful Stories

In this section, we want to give the reader further examples of the positive impact of Tzu Chi's efforts in environmental protection and recycling.

### a) Productive Golden Years

Many Tzu Chi recycling volunteers are elderly. These stewards of the Earth give of themselves cheerfully and make good use of their retirement by collecting and reclaiming reusable resources. Their work reduces garbage and pollution and fills their lives with a strong sense of value and purpose. A better, cleaner world for the future generations will be their enduring legacy.

### b) All Ages Are Welcome!

Protecting our environment is not just the responsibility of the elders. The youths are capable of protecting the Earth and should also be responsible. The younger generations will spend a longer time on earth; so they should put more effort into protecting the environment.

### c) Recycling Points in Singapore: A Positive Effect on the Local Community

Since the Redhill Recycling Station was established in 2007, more than 30 local residents come together every month to do their part for the environment. Tzu Chi volunteers will also share the information of environmental protection to promote ecological awareness.

### d) Philippines City Signs Recycling Agreement with Tzu Chi

The city of Marikina in the Philippines signed an agreement with Tzu Chi to promote recycling across the city. A visitor at the Manila North Cemetery says Tzu

Chi's environmental protection campaign in cemeteries every year has taught the public to become more conscious of discarding their trash properly

### e) Environmental Care in Disaster-Affected Areas

After Typhoon Urduja, Tzu Chi launched a cash-for-work program, mobilizing local residents in Ormoc, Philippines, to clean up their community. The program hastened the clean-up efforts and prevented the spread of diseases.

In 2013 Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda), one of the strongest tropical cyclones ever recorded, swept across the Philippines. Tzu Chi provided relief to the survivors and saved the residents of Tacloban City from being left behind in the aftermath.

Today the lives of residents in Tacloban are back to normal. They dedicate their time and energy to help mitigate climate change. Tzu Chi encourages people to do recycling and to protect the environment in order to reduce disasters in our world. Even a small act can contribute a lot in helping our environment and assisting people in need, and those who are affected by disasters.

### f) Tzu Chi organized cleanup activity and returned nature to its original beauty

A few decades ago, public environmental awareness was not as high as today. Visitors tossed their litter down the slopes of Guanyin Mountain hiking trails. The site was completely covered by garbage of all kinds. The soil was buried under layers upon layers of rubbish so deep that no grass could grow. If not removed, the environment might have been damaged irreparably.

Removing the garbage from the area involved an enormous effort. The area was accessible by foot only. All the garbage on the mountain that was collected had to be carried down by hand. The walk took 30 minutes and each bag of



**Tzu Chi volunteers and many local climbers held a mountain cleaning activity in North coast and Guanyinshan National Scenic Area.**



garbage weighed five kilograms. The age of the participants ranged from 10 to over 90. Some hikers also spontaneously joined in on the spot. Together, they filled and removed 4,000 garbage bags.

**g) Between Tradition and Environmental Protection**

For Hindus, Thaipusam is the biggest festival after Diwali. In Malaysia, celebrations take place on a grand scale at the Batu Caves and attract millions of devotees and tourists each year. As you can imagine, such large crowds create large amounts of garbage. Hence, since 2010, at the request of the Selayang municipal council, Tzu Chi has been spreading the practice of recycling at the event.

**h) Tzu Chi invokes greener Seventh Lunar Month amid global warming**

In Chinese tradition, people usually burn incense and joss paper money during the 'Ghost Month'. For over 30 years, Tzu Chi has been encouraging people to give alternative offerings, such as doing charitable deeds, during the seventh Lunar Month. For Buddhists, the seventh Lunar Month is an auspicious month for giving thanks, filial piety and joy.

This is a good example of adapting religious practices to new circumstances. Burning incense and joss paper causes negative environmental and health impacts. It should not be considered as trivial and without consequences. Sometimes, it is necessary to make reforms, in this case in line with eco-consciousness, for the good of all. Furthermore, Tzu Chi promotes a vegetarian diet to protect life and our environment.

**In early summer, Tzu Chi volunteers wear bamboo hats to do recycling work as if they were spiritual farmers babysitting the Earth.**





## 9. Taking Action Beyond Recycling


With environmental protection at the heart of its operations, Tzu Chi relentlessly seeks new ways to reduce its carbon footprint. Although government action for mitigation and adaptation is crucial for our future, Tzu Chi's approach to climate change mitigation targets the individual, helping countries reach the Nationally Determined Contributions from the bottom-up. Through education on carbon-reducing lifestyle changes and demonstrating the impact of individual action on the environment, Tzu Chi catalyzes collective climate action in the communities it serves, inspiring and empowering individuals to move from apathy to action. It is not only the responsibility of governments to take action but also the obligation of all people, as global citizens, to take action to combat climate change.

Tzu Chi recognizes the intrinsic link between food systems and climate change. Agricultural practices, from the razing of land to the raising of cattle, contribute to over 20% of global GHG emissions; inefficient use of water and other resources for raising livestock, methane and nitrous oxide from livestock waste, significant loss of carbon sinks through the clearing of forests for farmland, and methane release from microbes found in rice paddies all contribute significantly to our changing climate. In turn, climate

change, in the form of droughts, wildfires, and other natural disasters, jeopardize crop yields and threaten food security worldwide. In seeking a viable holistic solution to this crisis, current methods of food production must be transformed.

To bring awareness to this link, as well as to empower and shift the consumption habits of individuals towards a more climate friendly alternative, Tzu Chi launched Ethical Eating Day, a movement which mobilizes individuals to commit to a meat-free, climate-friendly diet, starting from one day, January 11th. Since 2014, the movement has grown to have over 1.3 million supporters each year committing to creating a more sustainable community, starting from themselves, through mindful consumption of food.

Recognizing the need for more collective action, Tzu Chi committed, during the Global Climate Action Summit, to double the number of global citizens engaged in Ethical Eating Day to 3 million by 2020, sparking conversations and dialogues on climate change in communities all over the world, exploring what it means to lead a sustainable life, one step at a time. We invite you to join us on this journey, by pledging at [www.tzuchi.us/ethicaleatingday](http://www.tzuchi.us/ethicaleatingday)



**Only by seeing where your food comes from can you cherish, respect and honor the food you eat, transforming apathy into action.**





## 10. Concluding Remarks


To overcome the limits of current policies, awareness of climate change as one of the most urgent challenges to mankind has to take root in society. Tzu Chi puts forth that education and community-based recycling should play a vital role in nurturing such awareness.

Environmentalists aside, many people today are reluctant to reduce their consumption or use their own time to combat climate change. This is because climate change seems an abstract, remote problem. In response, Tzu Chi links climate action to immediate personal benefits -- vegetarianism promotes individual health and reduces greenhouse gas emissions; community-based recycling limits emissions and brings social interaction; recycling and environmentalism can give individuals an invaluable sense of purpose. These are just to name a few.

As an international charity organization, Tzu Chi puts special emphasis on environmentalism during its humanitarian missions. Not only are most of the materials and technology used on these missions eco-friendly, Tzu Chi also helps to rebuild communities struck by natural disaster in a way that makes environmental awareness become a central part of daily life. In addition to curbing climate change, such awareness is often essential to the long-term ability of these communities to cope with disaster.

As Master Cheng Yen once remarked: "Saving the world means protecting the environment." But there are more dimensions to this than we usually think: "protecting the spiritual environment, the social environment and the environment of the whole globe."





**Everything, from protecting the Earth to doing  
good for humankind, begins with ourselves**

Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen



**May all heart be purified;  
May all societies be in harmony;  
May the world be free of all disasters.**

*— Master Cheng Yen*

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