

James Roszel | Text Transcript | 3MT® CSAHS College Heat 2021

This is a text transcript for James Roszel's Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) presentation, titled "Influences of Cultural Pedagogies and Activism on Environmental Policy Change in Vanuatu."

Transcript:

James Roszel:

Have you seen the television commercial with the surfers who went to Bali, Indonesia? They were compelled to change their lives and tackle the problem of plastic waste. And sell us bracelets.

If not, maybe you have seen news stories about single use plastics causing marine life to suffer or the devastating images of plastic polluting picturesque beaches in our favourite vacation destinations? I know I have.

Around the world national governments have also taken notice. Many have attempted bans on plastic bags or straws with little success often facing resistance from people and corporations.

An outlier in the world highlighted by a 2019 United Nations report is the archipelago of Vanuatu. With a population under 300,000 people, spread across 83 islands they have rapidly become recognized as a world leader.

There a single use plastic ban was introduced in 2018, with a second phase implemented since. Further evolutions of this policy are expected in the coming months and years. I want to know how this policy has been successful and why! My ethnographic work will explore the intersection of policy and environmental ethics in Vanuatu. Contributing to a current gap in academic literature.

Why is this important? Well, with over 380 million tonnes of plastic waste being generated per year and only 9% being recycled, we have a problem.

In 2019, I was fortunate to participate in a plastic recycling conference, this included a circular economy tour that focused on plastic drinking bottles. With over 15 years working in the recycling industry, for me, some things, well, they just didn't quite add up.

It appeared that various stakeholders including multiple NGO's and corporations were developing ad-hoc projects that didn't solve the plastic waste problem. Merely conformed to policies. So, with my curiosity roused I started researching plastic waste solutions. I found that policy-based solutions are challenging and often not successful.

However, in Vanuatu, the national newspaper reports that a grass-roots organization may be a significant contributor to the success of these policies. This group has introduced educational programs along with other activities to engage the population.

With the European Union introducing single use plastic policies in 2021, and Canada following soon after, this research is designed to better understand the role of community partners in policy change to engage people like you and I towards a more environmentally passionate future. Thank you.

On-screen content:

There is a slide included in the presentation, shown at various times throughout the video. There is text across the top of the slide, "Influences of Cultural Pedagogies and Activism on Environmental Policy Change in Vanuatu."

On the left side of the slide, text includes "Global Public Issue: 380+ million tons of plastic waste generated per annum" with a blue circular graphic located directly underneath noting that currently only 9% of plastic gets recycled. In the middle, there is a photo of a turtle caught in a plastic bag, with an orange graphic to the right with text in capital letters: "NO PLASTIK BAGPLIS."

Under this is text is included "World Leading Policy: 2018 Single-use Plastic Ban; Cause: Social Activism." On the right side of the slide, there is text "Gap in Academic Literature: Ni-Vanuatu People's Relationship with their Environment; Solution: Ethnographic Research" above a photo of plastic bottles in water with people swimming in water and trees in background.

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