



Concentratedly the four year old Mika screens sand for smallest particles of plastic. He takes part in the garbage clean-up on the Elbe beach.

Photo: Agnes Forsthuber

Children clean the Elbe beach

OEVELGÖNNE. The four year old Mika is sitting on the beach of the Elbe. In his right hand he is holding a tea strainer full of sand, which he moves slowly back and forth. Concentrated he watches as the sand trickles from the strainer. What looks like a summerly game of fun has a serious background: Mika belongs to the 60 children who collected plastic-garbage from the shore of the Elbe in spite of drizzling rain.

A red headband, gloves, recyclable garbage bag and small strainer: Equipped like this the children spread out from the Himmelsleiter indirection to the Museumshafen.

The sand seemed to be clean on first sight. But if slightly dug over, colored particles, turqois or orange, shine through between the grains of sand, some of them only two millimeter in size. These were splintered microplastic particles. Two volunteers from the organization "Live To Love", which had invited for the clean-up, explained to the children their unexpected discoveries. In addition the young garbage collectors learned why tiny plastic-particles were not only found on the shore but also in food like fishes and honey. This prompts Fiete think: "Then why do grown-ups like to eat mussels so much?", he asks himself. Collectively the children and adolescents collected more than 40 kilograms of garbage on this day, of which 2,3 kilograms of microplastics alone. KI