



IYFR OPERATION PLASTIC FREE WATERS STRATEGIC PLAN

Introduction

Every day human negligence and ignorance directly or by way of rivers, thrust into the seas some 22,000 tons of plastic waste. The floating plastic waste spreads over millions of square meters and the microplastics generated by the natural degradation pollute the waters and the sea floor for hundreds of years. Plankton, fish and seabirds feed with it, and they enter in the whole seafood chain and in the human one.

Due to the major currents and winds, plastic waste has formed two enormous gyres of plastic and four giant vortices of floating or semi-submerged materials that various attempts to retrieve them have not in the least attacked or reduced despite the great profusion of resources.

In 2018, the entire International Coastal Cleanup Program has managed to recover a little more than 1,000 tons from the beaches of the entire world. The equivalent of what arrives into the seas in 63 minutes. Even if the figures are quite discouraging, this is the best action put in being so far in that it prevents tons of waste to go back in the Seas.

Dozens of Districts scattered all over the world and IYFR (International Yachting Fellowship of Rotarians) are active in raising awareness for the problem and to propose solutions that could be taken to help solving this worldwide disaster, by Rotary International, Districts, Clubs and single Rotarians.

Vision

We foresee a world where the plastic is not demonized *but the use of plastic products, when strictly necessary, is most conscious*; in a world where no plastic garbage is left in the environment, and plastic waste does not reach the lakes and the seas. We foresee a world where the plastic garbage is properly dismissed, collected and, if and when possible, recovered and recycled; a world where the so-called "garbage islands" are significantly reduced by intercepting the feeding channels.

Mission

- Create awareness in the Peoples for the danger and damages to the Planet that an improper use and dismissal of plastic objects has already caused until now and could cause in the future.
- Contribute to significantly reduce the amount of plastic waste entering in the canals, rivers and seas by seeking for reliable systems and creating procedures and activities to retrieve, treat and recycle the plastic garbage recovered by the waters.

Objectives

- Create connections with NGOs, Governments and Public Authorities involved in the problem.
- Inform and involve students and, through them, their Families and Communities.
- Use Rotarians know-how to develop, evaluate and promote sound technical solutions.
- Conduct pilot recovery and garbage treatment activities.
- Create visibility through events on the field.

Note: these objectives should be shared by Rotary International at all levels in order to plan and implement effective actions.

Strategy

Not being interested in speculations or making business on this planetary disaster, our aim is to provide independent, disinterested guidance, support and assistance that are based on the know-how and expertise of Rotarians.

The passive systems deployed up to 2019 in the open Pacific Ocean trying to catch drifting plastic trash has demonstrated to be a total failure in spite of the conspicuous financial and technical investments. This has caused disillusion and a loss of confidence among investors and common people.

We are evaluating the effectiveness of the various systems that are able to collect the plastic trash from the rivers and canals (in fresh waters and prior it enters the seas) and convey it into a lifting belt equipped basin. This action is strictly connected with the immediate recycling of the collected plastic garbage. It would have no sense to simply move the garbage from a point to another.

Thus, while the consciousness is rapidly growing up to an “active” level also thanks to our involvement, we plan to act directly and especially in cooperation with Rotary/Rotaract Clubs, Rotary Districts and other Rotarian and non-Rotarian Organizations to:

- Raise funds to support awareness, studies and procedures to reduce the unsustainable single use plastics and to enhance the plastic trash recycling and recovering.
- Have experts from different Countries to prepare information and educational material.
- Prepare and start school actions at least at Zone or Country level
- Identify the most significant polluted local canals, rivers and lakes for an initial and pilot activity and involve local communities and organizations in the project.
- Raise funds to acquire river-barriers demonstrators and to test it on the field. These should be economically sustainable, sturdy, reliable, equipped with lifting belts, selection and recycling systems.
- Boost Rotary International in taking the lead of this planetary enterprise and serving in accordance to the RI directives.
- Unite different Rotary entities already working in the field that share the IYFR PFW Strategic Plan
- Use Rotary International connections and influence to involve the most important Organizations (e.g. UN, WWF) in joining the program.
- Use any media available to spread and extend the information on the mission and on the results achieved

Actions

- Enhance students' sensitization and awareness through direct training in the primary and secondary schools. All the Rotarian Family should be involved.
- Raise funds necessary to provide schools with Rotary marked educative tools: metal flasks, natural fiber bags, plastic free parties/meetings etc, always on a voluntary basis.
- Promote in conjunction with the training activities that will be carried out, both the most conscious and reduced use of plastics, the necessity to recycle and actions towards new generation plastics/materials.
- Contact, in accordance with the District Governors, the competent Ministries, the local Authorities, the owners of the riverside terrain, Basin and river Management, the managers of the local energy sources, to obtain the necessary authorizations, assistance and facilities
- Decide which is the best river- barriers- system that can be: locally built/buildable or easily available, simple, sturdy, tested, reliable, easy to operate, flash flood proof and of a reasonable operative and maintenance cost.
- Contact the plastic recycling industry and syndicates and establish procedures to utilize/transform/recover the collected materials
- Raise funds through TRF Global Grants that involve those Clubs and Districts who are interested in this enterprise in order to put in place an effective demonstrative retrieve and recovery action.
- Launch through Rotary International the operation ONE RIVER PER NATION PER YEAR or similar actions like ADOPT A RIVER that can be implemented also in those Nations with limited capabilities in raising funds, which are generally also the most polluting ones.

Once a valid active system is tested and certified, promote RI action at UN level to get at least a partial financing of the complex enterprise. In the near future this could even be a RI action in the way END POLIO was conceived, organized and conducted.

Rapallo (GE) ITALY, 04 21 2020



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