



IYFR International Operation Plastic Free Waters

Operation PFW, having had an encouraging kind of GO in Hamburg by the RI President, is proceeding at a good pace in all the 3 Areas with different initiatives. The important factor is that the PFW TASK FORCE has kept sailing on the same track.

A Strategic Plan was raised by the PFW BRIDGE and synergies have been sought both within Rotarian and non-Rotarian Organizations who could have something in common with OP PFW's view of this planetary problem.

This is the PFW 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.*

Not being the first and the only Organization to take care of the problem, we have examined what the others in the world have already done and the results achieved, such as THE OCEAN CLEANUP <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/dec/20/great-pacific-garbage-patch-20m-cleanup-fails-to-collect-plastic>. Some, like <https://www.oceanvoyagesinstitute.org/> have done a good job in recovering hundreds of tons of ghost nets in the North Pacific Gyro but, in spite of the efforts and resources, the results are almost negligible when compared to the daily global dumping of 23.000 tons of plastic waste.

IYFR PFW has clearly stated in the strategic plan that

“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.”

Thus, while sharing the vision and most of the ESRAG and WASRAG activities, PFW has maintained a distance between them and other organizations, like End Plastic Soup or similar more business oriented organizations.

Recovering plastic garbage, any kind of it, in the open seas, is an extremely expensive operation that no Nation can reasonably afford. Luckily there are other ways to start to change the status quo. Job one is to stop the rapid growth of the patches, which means using less plastic and recycling more of the plastic we do use. But this will require years if not decades. The quickest solution is to reduce, hopefully to zero, the quantity of plastic garbage entering the lakes and the seas.

Some Fleets and Regions have been particularly interested in this *Service to Humanity* and have grown the consensus towards IYFR by the Rotarians and non-Rotarians (some scientists, oceanographers, teachers have entered Rotary and IYFR thank to a cooperation with IYFORIANS engaged in OP PFW), which has led to a closer engagement between Districts and Fleets and a higher consideration for IYFR by those not knowing anything about RI Fellowships.

Local and international websites have been/are being created to let the awareness for the problem grow. So social media have been implemented with OP PFW activities. Dozens of conferences have been held in schools, clean-up days organized, Rotary Club and District events duly attended by OP PFW most welcomed speakers. Another way to promote IYFR and Rotary.

A tentative Competitive Grant was initiated but the stop to experiments due to the Covid 19 blocked it in March. We are closely following the tests of the SEADS <https://www.seadefencesolutions.com/> river barriers that are being validated <https://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2020/02/21/research-ciliwung-among-the-worlds-most-polluted-rivers.html> on a most polluted river, the Ciliwung, close to Jakarta.

There is of course the fund-raising problem. However, we are confident that the recent decision by the RI to declare the ENVIRONMENT as the new AREA OF FOCUS, the publicity for our activities deriving from the websites and their "DONATE" functions and a closer support by the Districts, Club and Fleets, will help somehow to fill the gap.

I want to close this report with the dream that both Jun and I share... using his words:

"A Global Grant for the acquisition of such machine is a solution for funding if we have the opportunity that our respective Districts and Clubs could become partners to work hand in hand on this to respond not only to real community needs but an actual existing humanity needs to help save our environment, our planet and all humanity. It is timely that RI's new area of focus is supporting the environment."

Activities in the Areas

The major activity seems to have been in Italy where a PFW Bridge was soon formed after Hamburg. We tried to have one or more Governor as a non-iyforian delegate per District, in accordance with the Fleets who also proposed their representatives. And some gave life to a most reactive Group in which we have engineers, chemical professors, scientists, experts in landfills management, chemical engineers, oceanographers, lawyers, designers, environment experts, meteorologists, non-profit environment Associations and recycling power plants experts. These people gave life to a very vital Task Force who examined the situation from any point of view and could produce a Strategic Plan, which can be viewed on the IYFR website. We are moving accordingly.

In the next days some members of the Italian PFW Bridge will take part in ECOMED 2020 in Sicily. This is an important and most attended Mediterranean Meeting in which also the problem of plastic waste will be discussed.

A huge importance was given to communications through social media and to links with other Rotarian and non-Rotarian environment concerned associations worldwide. An International Web Site (English, Italian, Spanish) is being constructed and the link with all the other social media should produce the desired effects in terms of visibility worldwide.

The main problem encountered was the Rotary Clubs and Districts attitude in the will to reach the same significant objective i.e. the creation of sturdy, dependable and sustainable barriers at the mouth of one of the most polluted rivers in the world so that RI can boost the idea worldwide.

The PFW Italian TF examined all the possible/proposed type of barriers and at the end focused the attention on the SEADS solution. Unfortunately, we had not the same level solution in the recycling plants field. Pyrolysis seems to be a possible answer but we are investigating on the cost-effectiveness of the solution. Plants are very expensive and the medium level results do not match at the moment. Burn them and filter the exhaust gases creating clean energy seems to be the most acceptable answer.

ISRAEL. Extensive clean-ups of the Israel beaches have been carried out. A positive cooperation with the PFW Bridge has been established in order to investigate the possibility of setting barriers at the mouth of a Turkish polluting River close to Izmir and at the mouths of the Nile.

The Israel Fleet has also become involved in a School Twinning Programme, 'Rotary Hands Across the Water', which involves educating children about water pollution, using plastic pollution as an example. Details can be seen in the article in the Area 1 section in Rotafloat.

IBERIA. International cleanup between Spain and Morocco in cleaning the African Coast with the cooperation of the diving center

UKRAINE report: "we will start in our D2232 with registration of Rotary Community Corpus and will organize together with IYFR Fleets, RCs and volunteers in July in Cherkasy 9.08 on the bank of the Dniپر river, in Uzhorod 22.08 on Tisza river (a tributary of Dunabu) in August, in Kyiv 10.09, in Mykolaiv 13.09 and in Odessa 20.08 on the bank of Black Sea in September a garbage collection along the coast - as a part of IYFR Plastic Free Water in Ukraine (District project) events for conservation from clogging with plastic the rivers, seas and oceans."

Fleets in Area 2 are also involved in the Plastic Free Waters initiative and details of their activities can be seen in the Area 2 Report.

Fleets in Area 3 are also involved and details of their activities can be seen in the article in the Area 3 section of Rotafloat.

This is Jun's and mine dream. "The possible dream is a real, huge and efficient machinery in the mouth of the river that could filter the flow or totally catch plastics overrunning the trash traps more efficiently to prevent its escape into the bay, that we see from the web but could cost an arm and a leg.

A Global Grant for the acquisition of such machine is a solution for funding if we have the opportunity that our respective Districts and Clubs could become partners to work hand in hand on this to respond not only to real community needs but an actual existing humanity needs to help save our environment, our planet and all humanity. It is timely that RI's new area of focus is supporting the environment."

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The Coordinator

MASSA (IT) July 14 2020



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A. C. S.", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left.