

**PLASTIC FREE SEA
FOUNDATION**

IN TIMES OF CRISIS

**AND ALL OUR
ACHIEVEMENTS
IN 2020**



Dear Reader,

This year has been one of agile response and organizational transition. The corona crisis forced us to quickly change our plans. We did so successfully with tangible results.

After being hit by the pandemic, we quickly switched from focusing on festivals & community conferences to online events and a national campaign on plastic waste separation.

Moreover we grew the Plastic Soup Surfer into the current Plastic Soup Surfer organization: just as flexible and creative but more powerful in its punches.

Making a difference is something you do together, I would like to thank my powerful team and the many organizations and companies that gave us their trust and support this year of ever-changing restrictions.

I hope you enjoy this report which hopes to give you an insight into our organizational metamorphosis but also shows our flexibility in changing conditions and our eagerness for tangible change.

Kind regards,

Merijn Tinga

Plastic Soup Surfer
& Executive Chairman of
the Plastic Free Sea Foundation

PLASTIC FREE SEA FOUNDATION

CAMPAIGNS & STORYTELLING

As our span of control grows so do our insights on what is our most effective way of combating the plastic pollution crisis. We have grown to see our throw-away economy as the root cause of the problem. On-the-go single use plastic is the catalyst to this way of living. Our society is designed around disposables and as a result plastic pollution is inherent to the use of plastic. It logically means that this shifts responsibility from merely consumer focus to a combined responsibility in which producers and policy makers have a large role to play

In October 2019 we started to design the Plastic Avengers app. Our goal was a very easy low threshold app we could have people use to take photographs of specific pieces of litter (or other things) for very specific campaigns. An idea that came about after the collaboration with Dirk Groot on the Anta Flu campaign where a small group of litter pickers had made (geo-tagged) photographs of seventeen thousand littered 'Anta Flu' sweets wrappers. Together with a bailiff from my previous deposits campaign we went up to the CEO of Pervasco (the producing company) and confronted him with the photographs of their litter. This sped up the process of changing their wrapping from plastic to wax paper, implemented in the spring of 2020.

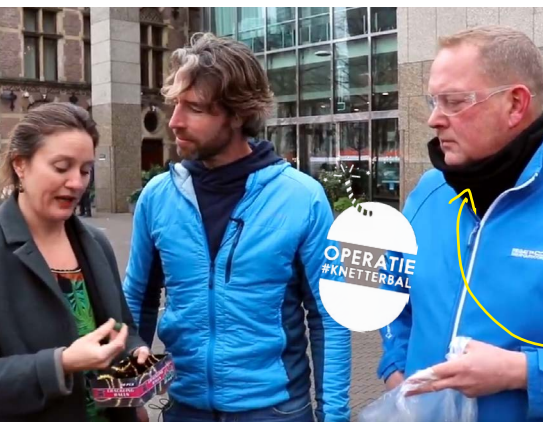
This campaign made us realize that the current apps to monitor data — like Litterati — were far too complicated and had far too many barriers for a broad audience to start using them. I saw a clear demand for a very easy photo app dedicated to one campaign only, giving direct feedback and value to the user. Our app had to be free, not ask for accounts, but register users within the privacy guidelines as well as making it possible to use the data for statistical and campaigning purposes afterwards.

Together with digital service company Incentro, who offered a barter-deal for a live presentation at one of their festivals, we then designed the Plastic Avengers App. Natascha van Neerven from my organization and Dirk Groot were instrumental in getting this app to work. We launched it during the 'Cracklingball (Knetterbal) Campaign' in January of that year.

RESULTS 2020

- Launch of the Plastic Avengers App (low threshold monitoring campaigning app for broad community);
- Recall of plastic-fireworks from major retailers like HEMA & Albert Heijn;
- Resolution to phase out all plastics from fireworks signed by 95% of Dutch retail and majority wholesale;
- Resolution to ban sale of water balloons and plastic confetti signed by 90% of Dutch retail companies (including online retail);
- EU Amendment, together with our Dutch Resolutions, presented to the EU environmental commission as an example for all EU member states;
- Waste separation in schools on the national agenda: resolution adopted in parliament;
- Roll out of Anta Flu wax paper wrappers by sweets company Pervasco after a two year campaign;
- Campaign addressing candybar wrapper litter by MARS company, Mission Mars;
- Decision on bottle deposits final (result of the policy of the Plastic Soup Surfer petition and resolution: adopted by parliament on February 16th 2017).

The campaigns above were done in close collaboration with 'litter analyst' **Dirk Groot (Zwerfinator).**



OUR ACTIVITIES IN 2020

JANUARY/FEBRUARY

We got to use our Plastic Avengers app for the first time for our **‘Knetterballen (Cracklingball) campaign’**. Crackling balls are fireworks in the shape of a plastic ball, meant for use outside by children. Dutch litter pickers, street-combers and enthusiasts photographed over sixty thousand plastic shards and remnants left behind after the use of the crackling balls. With our preliminary results we had big retailers like HEMA and Albert Heijn recall the product from their stores before Christmas, the traditional start of the fireworks season. This campaign resulted in a national agreement by all retail and wholesale to phase out plastics from their fireworks, an amazing result!

MARCH

As many, we were hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic and lock-down:

Our plans for a second Plastic Avengers Conference, after the huge success of 2019 that brought together the whole active community of plastic activists, NGO's, policymakers and scientists in the plastics field, had to be cancelled. Instead we focused on other, online activities.

During the lockdown we started making podcasts (in Dutch). Heavily based on

storytelling techniques we launched a podcast channel with issues related to plastic pollution, its solutions and the new narrative needed to tackle the plastic pollution problem.

We recorded and uploaded 35 tracks to soundcloud which were played 900 times within the first two months of 2020, May and June.

And we spent many hours preparing **the ‘Lets Talk Plastic’ Talks** starting in 2021.

Our plans and arrangements to recruit more Plastic Avengers and to promote reusable cups (using deposits as an instrument) at several festivals in cooperation with GreenEvents and Leids Glas were cancelled because all festivals were canceled.

When the lockdown eased a little bit after a few months, we started a new campaign to understand the new PPE litter (facemasks and gloves), resulting from COVID-19, together with Dirk ‘Zwerfinator’ Groot. Together we made several short videos in English and Dutch, for social media to call on people to download the plastic avengers app and take photographs. We made videos when passing 2k, 3k, and 4k photographs. In total 6347 pictures were taken by approximately two hundred people. They showed that corona litter was predominantly found around supermarkets and that it has the same ‘behavioral pattern’ as ‘normal single

use on the go litter'. Also we found that even though it was totally new as litter it only amounted to less than 1% of regular litter. (Unexpectedly we had a second and a third wave of corona in the Netherlands. From September onward masks became mandatory in supermarkets and public transport. This also led to a new wave of facemask-litter.)

APRIL 2020

At the beginning of April the wonderful news was announced that deposits on small plastic bottles would come into effect starting July 2021. A huge success. It was our 2017 petition and 'Plastic Soup Surfer resolution' which is widely regarded as the 'political breakthrough' leading finally to this now definite political decision.

MAY/JUNE 2020

We continued the podcast series and started the INSTA-live interview series - since our YouTube channel dedicated to the Plastic Avengers Community had come to a standstill because of travel restrictions and the 1.5 m distance restrictions. The topic of the interviews was the strictest single use plastic ban in the world. These interviews would spark the idea for the 'Let's Talk Plastic' talkshows later that year.

May 12th, 2020

We interviewed EU vice president **Frans Timmermans** on deposits and the SUP. [Watch on YouTube](#)

June 9th, 2020

We interviewed State Secretary Stientje van Veldhoven. [Watch on YouTube](#)

July 8th, 2020

We interviewed Dr. Ayub Macharia from the ministry of Environment about the extended plastic ban in Kenya. [Watch on YouTube](#)

We also started the **Splash Plastic Campaign** against water balloons: plastic filled with water designed to be thrown on the streets and very hard to clean up afterwards. This campaign was yet again in collaboration with Dirk Groot.

We were faced with a communication challenge in this campaign, since water balloons are associated with fun and children. We did not want to



come across as a bitter lot that wanted 'everything fun' forbidden and 'taken away', especially from children. So we decided to not use the word 'water balloon', but instead only the word 'splash plastic' (spat plastic). We also decided not to use pictures of children having fun with the balloons in our campaign. Instead we showed the alternatives to water fun (with reusable splash balls or water guns.)

We started the campaign before the summer and expected to have around ten thousand pictures by several hundred people by the end of the summer. We already knew that the same retailers that sold the crackling balls last winter, also sold this 'splash plastic' for sale on their shelves. With our results we went to face the CEO's of these companies and urged them to stop selling this polluting product.



SEPTEMBER 2020

Flexibility and creativity has always been our strongpoint and we changed our plans for the summer straight away when confronted by the COVID-19 restrictions. In September we did our successful 'Bright Binnars (Wakkere Wegwerpers) sup tour.

OCTOBER 2020

'Operation Spatplastic', the campaign we started using again our Plastic Avengers App, came to a close in October when the entire Dutch retail signed a treaty to stop selling water-balloons and plastic confetti. **A huge victory!**

NOVEMBER 2020

An amendment was added to the EU 'Green Deal' using our 'blastic resolution' as well as our 'water balloon resolution' as an example in execution as well as inspiration. Start of #Mission-Mars campaign in which we focussed on littered Mars Brand wrappers - again together with Groot and using the Plastic Avengers App.

DECEMBER 2020

We continued to prepare the series of live online talks for our community. We introduced the new board to be installed at the beginning of January 2021.

MILESTONE DEPOSIT FEE ON SMALL BOTTLES



MOMENT OF ACHIEVEMENT

April 25, 2020

April 25th, 2020 State Secretary Van Veldhoven officially declared that deposits on small plastic bottles will be mandatory from July 1st 2021 onward. A breakthrough decision after more than a twenty-year fight and lobbying by industry.

This decision is a direct result of the ‘Plastic Soup Surfer petition resolution’: the political promise in 2017 to ‘reduce litter caused by plastic bottles by 90% within 3 years with effective measures’.

In the Netherlands over seventy million small plastic bottles are littered in streets, parks and waterways on a yearly basis. Deposits help prevent this.

THE PLASTIC SOUP SURFER RESOLUTION

The adoption of the ‘plastic soup surfer resolution’ was the breakthrough of a political deadlock. A two decade long fight between industry and environmental NGO’s had forced political parties into a trench war with insurmountable principal differences preventing a compromise. Since industry was on the upper hand it managed to delay decision making and jump from parliament to new parliament, keeping the deadlock in place.

SHOCKING

The new approach by the Plastic Soup Surfer surprised the fighting parties. The ‘Plastic Soup Surfer resolution’ (adopted Feb 16th 2017) brought a pragmatic approach: First: it split the battle over beverage containers and narrowed it down to plastic bottles as a first start.

Secondly: it put the result — no plastic pollution — in the center of the discussion instead of the reverse-vending machines, the logistics, and the costs (the means).

State Secretary Dijksma (PvdA) and Van Veldhoven (D66) successively understood the new angle and have used the ‘Plastic Soup Surfer petition resolution’ as the basis for a new policy.

HISTORICAL MOMENT

The ‘Plastic Soup Surfer resolution’ was written by the surfer himself and was adopted by parliament without vote: unique in Dutch parliamentary history!

To attract attention to his petition ‘pro deposits’ Merijn Tinga kite surfed across the North Sea to England (190km) on a surfboard composed of small plastic bottles: a crossing never attempted before in this direction.

HIGHLIGHT COLLABORATION NEDERLAND SCHOON



We collaborated in a press release about corona litter in which our study and the Plastic Avengers app was promoted.

As we were conducting our study we were contacted by Stichting Nederland Schoon (Keep the Netherlands Clean foundation - a foundation funded by the food packaging industry). They were interested in our results.

We collaborated in a press release about corona litter in which our study and the Plastic Avengers app was promoted.

We declined a second press release when our results and conclusions were published. We could not endorse their follow-up campaign which focussed on consumers solely in regard to the littered gloves and masks.





FUNDING AND COLLABO- RATIONS

Regarding funding the year 2020 was the first year that we attracted structural financial support from trust funds. With these means at our disposal we started to restructure our organization.

Following the 'charity organization guidelines' we aimed to have a new board, a group of advisers and a partly paid team ready in 2020. Again it was the COVID-19 pandemic and its measures that slowed us down. The lockdown had a severe impact on our financial position. Our regular way of income through paid presentations came to a standstill. Trust funds became nervous and weary. Forecasts were not met. New funding proved difficult to attract.

COLLABORATIONS AND NETWORKS

Collaborations and networks are of growing importance. In our deposits lobby for instance we talked to EU vice president Frans Timmermans and his cabinet in preparation for the InstagramLive interviews we conducted, and got his support for deposits as a means to reach the stated targets. And in our research for what was to be dubbed the 'Bright Binnars (Wakkere Wegwerpers) campaign and the interests, we talked to several parliament members and state secretary Van Veldhoven, top ministry officials, the project managers of private recycling companies as well as the municipal side. We also refreshed our previous contacts within the 'food & beverage' industry.

PARTNERSHIPS

We were invited several times for talks about corporate partnerships with large internationally operating brand owners. We have been working with partners in the field like Dirk 'Zwerfinator' Groot. We have been incorporated into the Schone Rivieren (Clean Rivers) community.

We are part of the International Break Free From Plastic Movement and have regular meetups with them. We have regular meetings with the national 'plastic pollution' NGO's as well namely: Recycling Netwerk, Natuur & Milieu, Plastic Soup Foundation, St. de Noordzee, Greenpeace and World Wildlife Fund.

TEAM PLASTIC SOUP SURFER



The Plastic Soup Surfer (Merijn Tinga) has a loyal team of volunteers and advisors. Without their trust and support none of this would have been possible.

There have been significant changes in our team this year as we gear up to a more structural organizational change.

PAID FORCE

For the first time, we had a paid force: **Hilde van der Vegt**. It is her work and perseverance that opened the doors to several Trust Funds to give us long term financial means to achieve our goals. After attracting the funds—a few months after we started our collaboration—she was promoted to a business partner. This new relationship did not work out as planned. Disappointing financial results—in which the pandemic played a major role—and the subsequent short budget made that we could not afford her any longer. She left on the first of July.

STRATEGIC

We have two strategic advisors added to the team:

Jan Oldenburger, who is senior communications advisor for a large Dutch advertising firm, and **Lisette Heijke** (Community manager for Amsterdam municipal water agency). They aid in organizational transformation and corporate collaborations.

BACK OFFICE

We now have **Natascha van Neerven** (Digital back office) who is fully restructuring the digital environment

to a cloud environment suited for our flexible project-based way of working and our many volunteers.

Christa Joan de Best is pushing online marketing. As part of a '1% project' within Google, we are aided by **Svevo de Weerd** from Google to help us become apt and efficient in reaching out to the public via the Google channels.

PERMANENT STAFF

Kim van den Anker is much valued in her role as the project manager.

Martine Eyzenga is of great importance when it comes to our branding and visual appearance.

BOARD

The board of our foundation is getting ready for a change of seats. We have had **Roland Bouman** (treasurer) and **Noortje Schrauwen** (secretary) for the last four years. They have seen the foundation and the Plastic Soup Surfer grow in its scope and in now in its financial means.

Merijn Tinga (the Plastic Soup Surfer) is the chairman and will stay in that position. In the new organizational model, he will become the executive director as well.

We plan to augment the board of advisors with influential people once the new board is instated.

VISION 2020-2023

Following the theoretical framework that was created during the Plastic Avengers Conference in 2019, this is the year we developed long term strategic goals and a strategy towards these goals.

THE POWER OF THE COMMUNITY

We focused on harnessing the power of the community. The litter-picking community and a broader base of followers and citizens that could help us in getting our narrative on plastic pollution across and in that way accelerating change bottom up as well as top down. Our end goal being the structural reduction of plastic pollution on land, in waterways and at sea.

We work on creating a strong grass-roots community of intrinsically motivated plastic activists reached through evidence based gathering (tagging litter), local lobbying and advocacy activities with support for positive campaigns and lobbying at national level by the Plastic Soup Surfer.

In our campaigns we aim at changing (local) government policy or having companies replace plastic packaging with environmentally friendly alternatives.

STRONG FOCUS

We chose the targets of our campaign carefully. We focus on packaging, policy or products that symbolize our vision on solutions to the plastic pollution. **Instead of the current narrative (cleaning up and recycling as solution strategies and full consumer responsibility) we want to shift to a collective acceptance that we need to move away from our disposable society.** Reduction and reuse should be facilitated, producers are responsible for what materials and designs they put out on the market, taking into account environmental issues, possible loss and littering.

ENGAGEMENT

Our work is to engage that community of independent intrinsically motivated (grass-roots) plastic soup activists. The main driver for growth is the success of our collective campaigns. An ever larger and more influential community will shift the prevailing narrative (cleaning up and recycling dissolves the plastic soup and the consumer is responsible) towards a more producer based responsibility in regard to the end of life of plastics.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2020

The year 2020 is the first year we had two major trust funds back our work.

Adessium Foundation and the Fred Foundation both made longer term commitments. Adessium agreed to fund us for three years with an amount of €25.000,- annually, the Fred Foundation grants us with €15.000,- per year for two years. We have several smaller corporate funders and one large corporate funder (Tomra) who donates €20.000,- for a two year period. Apart from several smaller corporate sponsorships and funders (10%) these three funds make up the bulk of donations.

Merijn Tinga (Plastic Soup Surfer) never received revenue from his work for the Foundation. Tinga's expenses were paid by fees for his presentations on plastic by corporates and organisations. He was a volunteer for the Plastic Free Sea Foundation. The pandemic stopped short all presentations and thus Tinga's income. This Covid year Tinga was paid for his work for the foundation.

On the costs side the biggest sum is spent on personnel; this amount was paid for the work of the fundraiser and later business partner. Disappointing results and dire financial forecasts had us discontinue her work for us per July 1st 2020. Our visual designer and our project manager, both freelancers, make up the second largest sum on our costs balance.

This is the first year that Merijn Tinga received pay from the foundation for his work during the campaigns. Developments around the pandemic in the foreseeable future give little hope of an income from presentations. He has been paid for his time and work within the campaigns. The external communications costs are still comparatively small. Most of our social media reach has been organic up to now. Office costs are low. We share an office with several other freelancers and our volunteers all work from home.

REVENUE

	INCOME	EXPENSES
BALANCE JANUARY 1ST 2020	71.769	
Donations		
Crowdfunding	4.642	
Donations	5.447	
Sponsors	25.000	
Overhead		
Organisation transition		– 5.500
lobby		– 2.500
operation Blastic (Knalplastic)		– 2.500
operation Water Balloon (Spatplastic)		– 1.000
Ccontent creation social media		– 1.160
Podcasts		– 2.099
Banking/office costs		– 1.826
Plastic avengers community/Conference		– 8.596
Bright Binnens/Wakkere Wegwerpers		– 22.879
Corona litter		– 500
Mission Mars		– 500
Fundraiser personel costs		– 17.157
TOTAL	106.858	– 66.227
BALANCE DECEMBER 31ST 2020	40.631	

The income side does not include the allocated €15.000,— we received from the Fred Foundation and the allocated €20.000,— we received from Tomra for the year 2020 before the start of the financial book year. Adding these amounts would make the balance close with a slight positive sum of €3862,— over the year 2020

Acknowledgements: Thanks!

We are very grateful to the Plastic Soup Surfer team, the board and all our individual — and corporate sponsors. It is because of their help, effort and trust that we can continue our mission. All monetary amounts are stated in Euros. The foundation board approves the financial report.

THE PLASTIC FREE SEA FOUNDATION

President
Merijn Tinga



Secretary
Noortje Schrauwen



Treasurer
Roland Bouman



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