BeMed Community Rendez-Vous report

RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS: SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

26/06/2024

Goals of the Rendez-Vous:
Discover projects run by members of the community to raise awareness, and discuss the difficulties they have encountered and the solutions they have implemented.

Philippos Drousiotis
drousiotisp@gmail.com

Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative (CSTI)
(website)

Keep our sand and sea plastic free, Beachfluencers, Bring your cup : collaborative projects between CSTI, the Municipality of Ayia Napa and the Cyprus Environment Foundation

CSTI has been launching projects to combat plastic pollution since 2010, with the aim of reducing the use of single-use plastics.

BEACHFLUENCERS

Goal: People can sign up to the initiative and organize clean-up campaigns whenever and wherever they want.

They have T-shirts and caps promoting the initiative, without CSTI having to organize the campaign. They are influencers and can help reach a wider, more varied audience to promote behavior change.

Marielan Makri, a Cypriot athlete qualified for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games and the 2024 Paris Olympic Games, is also a young CSTI ambassador.

BRING YOUR CUP

Goal : An initiative aimed specifically at young people, encouraging them to bring their own mugs to coffeeshops and to use reusable cups at festivals.

Influencers were able to take part in promoting Bring your cup. They also promoted the initiative to Cyprus universities, youth clubs and companies.

For the latter, they organized meetings with coffee shop owners and managers. They were then able to conduct surveys to determine whether the initiative had been positive for the coffee shops and whether they were satisfied.

Panagiota Koutsofta
p.koutsofta@sandseaplasticfree.org

Municipality of Ayia Napa
(website)

KEEP OUR SAND AND SEA PLASTIC FREE

The aim of the project is to encourage tourists, tourism professionals and local residents to limit their consumption of single-use plastic in coastal areas. The project is run jointly by the Municipality of Ayia Napa, CSTI and the TUI Care Foundation.

First phase
The first phase focused on raising awareness among the general public, with the creation of an awareness program and a video distributed in hotels, airports, on billboards, etc. The video was made in collaboration with TUI Care Foundation, and does not mention Cyprus. The video was made in collaboration with TUI Care Foundation, and does not mention Cyprus in order to be more generic and suitable for use in other countries.
By committing themselves, the various project partners **have reduced their consumption of single-use plastic by the equivalent of the weight of 23 Boeing 737-800 aircraft**.

Second phase
The second phase was aimed more at private stakeholders and covered the whole of Cyprus. They had **259 partners** who met for webinars informing tourism professionals of new regulations prohibiting the use of certain PUUs..

- To limit the use of plastic water bottles, **water fountains have been installed near beaches**.
- They have a mascot, "Harrys", and work with schoolchildren to create artworks using plastic bottles and glasses.
- A scientist helps them
- They organized an event with local players (ministers, students, etc.).
- Eight beaches, including Ayia Napa, are certified "plastic free".

Magda Cebrián
magda@gozerowaste.app

Go Zero Waste App
(website)

GO ZERO WASTE APP

Project launched with Plastic free Menorca to reduce plastic in Menorca using a fun, educational application.

The application is available worldwide and is collaborative. It is therefore possible to map local stores offering plastic-free alternatives. In the Balearic Islands, there are around 50 local shops listed.

In the USA, there is an application developed by Commons. This application is broader in scope, however, since it addresses the issue of sustainable consumption and recycling, and not just the reduction of plastic consumption.

HOW THE APPLICATION WORKS :

Goal: The app aims to help locals and tourists take action and raise awareness of plastic pollution issues. Registrants' progress is tracked through photos taken by them.

What you'll find in the application:
- A collaborative map of businesses committed to reducing plastic pollution.
- Challenges with 30 actions that can be carried out.
- Progress tracking with photo upload and customization

This application not only offers a new way of getting involved, but also promotes the local economy through a system of rewards. For each action taken, a photo is taken, and the app shows how many kilos of waste have been avoided. **The app is available in English all over the world, so download it now!**

Clean-up actions and awareness-raising workshops for children are also organized.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

- **Low participation rate (34 people)**
- **Limited collaboration with stakeholders**
- **Little communication and therefore little media visibility**, a point on which they are working to improve communication.
  - Collaboration with Menorca Preservation also helps to promote the application.
- **Difficult to reach people who are not already aware of plastic issues and who are not already advanced in the process.**

To include the oldest and youngest, posters and cards have been created and distributed. But more needs to be done to reach the various stores. Maybe we need a bigger team on site. A digital tool isn't for everyone, and we need to find other ways of reaching a wider audience.

Pierre-Ange GIUDICELLI
contact@mare-vivu.org

Mare Vivu
(website)

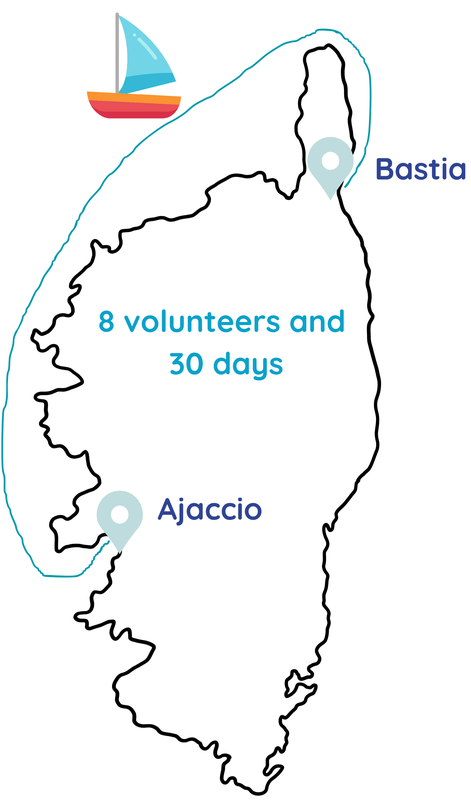
CorSeaCare Mission

Association created in 2016 organizing **annual expeditions in small trimarans** (kayaks with floats and pedals). The expeditions involve sailing along Corsica with volunteers **to study plastic pollution in Corsica, carry out participatory science protocols and communicate to reach the general public**.

Goal: Create a buzz around plastic pollution to reach as many people as possible. There's a strong communication dimension, since the two trimarans appeal to the public through their atypical structure and sporting dimension.
=> The mission's format makes it a very interesting tool for social networks, the press and television (e.g. national coverage).

MISSION ASSETS

- **The originality and effectiveness of the concept raise questions and arouse curiosity.** The trimarans facilitate exchanges with people, and the approach is perceived as positive. The mission is based on benevolence, since all questions are welcome and there is no criticism of individual positions.
- **The cost is low:** The trimarans clamber all around Corsica (but with travel and weather constraints, logistics can be complicated).
- The mission is as zero-waste as possible, with local sourcing: By accumulating all these constraints linked to the nomadic nature of the mission, everyone can be 0 waste.
- **Training is fast:** Unlike sailing expeditions, which are more costly and accessible, trimarans require only a week's training.
- **The mission format makes it easier for young people to get involved in the fight against plastic pollution:** They will learn a great deal about sailing, organizing educational workshops, speaking at conferences, following scientific protocols, and interacting with a large number of people. They can gain in skills and experience.
- **Small numbers for big impact:** They manage to make a big impact in the field and on social networks, with lots of reactions and interactions with people.
- **An easily replicable format:** The mission has already been exported to Martinique and Brittany (France).



MISSION CHALLENGES

- **Recruitment of local young people:** The mission enjoys a high profile, but paradoxically few young Corsicans take part (due to summer employment, for example).
- **Dependence on the weather:** Historically, the mission took place in July/August, but now it takes place in June to avoid the heat and be more comfortable during the operation.
- **Minor equipment problems:** This was quickly overcome by providing equipment in advance that could be installed on site. These worries can also be very instructive for the team.
- **Constraints due to scientific protocols** (counting marine mammals, etc.) **but also to the lack of protocols for microplastics on the water surface.**
- **The mission format is therefore less suited to local authorities and more suited to young people and the general public:** Although they can meet with local representatives to interest them in plastic pollution issues, working with local authorities requires a long-term commitment.

In addition to the mission organized once a year, the association raises awareness among schoolchildren and lobbies at local level, in particular to show them alternatives in terms of organizing their communities or preventing plastic pollution.

Mission 2024

The latest mission ran from June 16 to July 12, from Bastia to Ajaccio, stopping every 30 kilometers. In the space of a month, volunteers carry out a wide range of activities :

- **More than 15 waste collections** on the Corsican coast, approximately to achieve
- **Conferences** to welcome and exchange with the public
- **Questionnaires to gauge the level of public interest and concern, what is being done individually and collectively to combat plastic pollution, and what they feel are the most appropriate solutions**.
  - The data collected supports their year-round work, particularly with local public authorities.
- **Awareness-raising workshops**, especially for youngsters, with creative and sporting activities.
- **Collecting data through various participatory science protocols** (macroplastics, microplastics, cetacean tracking, etc.) that will be used at European level to generate European and local advocacy to limit waste leakage.

OPEN QUESTION:
HOW CAN WE REACH PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE CIRCLE OF THOSE WHO ARE CONVINCED? HOW CAN WE SPREAD THE WORD?

- The CSTI example shows that **private sponsors** can play an important role (e.g. TUI Care, a major stakeholder in the tourism industry, has been able to increase the impact of projects, including on an international scale). **A good partner with its own database and social media** is a real asset to a project.

- **Using the services of influencers can be a good way of reaching a wider audience**, not just those who are already convinced or aware. But it's hard to find the right person

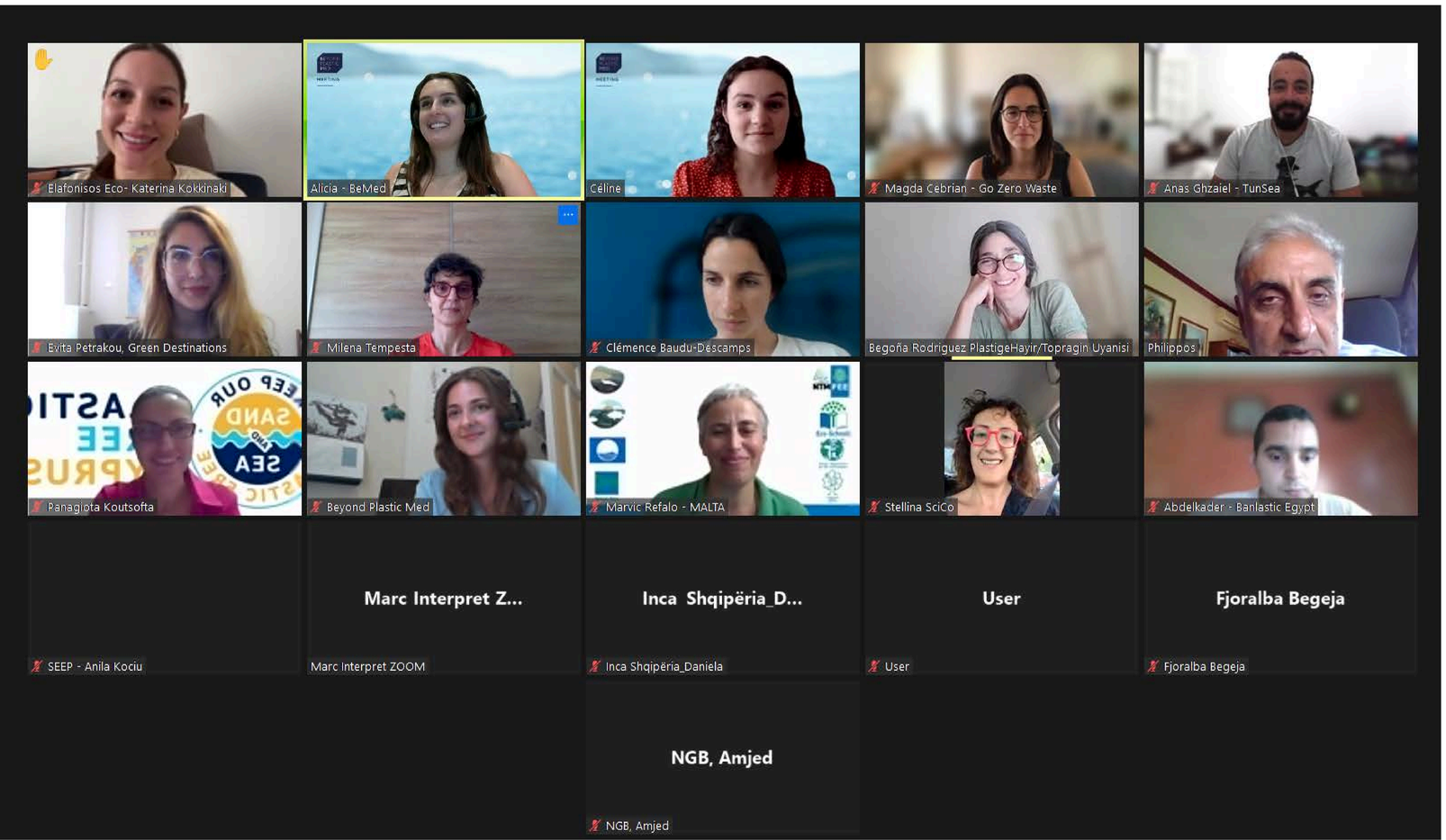
Zoom on influencers : Have any members of the community already used influencers? Have they had a good return on investment ?

- **It's best if the influencer is already motivated by environmental issues. They can also be levers for approaching certain industries such as tourism or the general public.**
  - For example, Surfrider Foundation Europe worked with a well-known French influencer targeting young people. They organized a megathon to collect cigarette butts. The event went well, and they succeeded in targeting the community, which is younger and less aware of environmental issues. **But the prerequisite was that they were interested in the environment, and that the message was clear, with clear targets. In addition, it's important to talk to the influencer or key ambassadors beforehand to be sure of the message to be conveyed.**
  - Katerina from Elafonisos Eco explains that you shouldn't only look at influencers who are interested in the environment and marine protection, since the people who follow them are already aware. **We also need to target other areas**, such as gastronomy. Stars, like singers, are well known and have an audience, but they also have access to the general public, so it's a good idea to work with them.

- **It's also possible to become an influencer yourself, on your own scale.**
  - An example from TunSea's Anas, with collection missions to get the message across. The aim is to influence consumers, on the ground and through social networks. For them, **influencers are the members of their association**. This avoids spending money if they already have their community of influencers.
  - Pierre-Ange backs this up by explaining that Mare Vivu benefits from an "influencer" side embodied by the mission, and its expedition side: people are curious to know how things are going, and they make vlogs. They themselves are interested in influencers such as the Corsican Miss, who relays their messages. It's a lever to be seized.

- **How can we ensure that influencers continue to convey good practices afterwards?**
  - Milena from Delta shares that they had a project aimed at training young people to act as influencers on good sustainable practices. But once the project was over, the people didn't continue. How can we get them to continue?
  - When the event is recurrent, it's easier to maintain this level of knowledge and interest (e.g. Mare Vivu's CoreSeaCare mission). You need to find influencers with a long-term commitment, and avoid one-shots.

The "Photo souvenir"



WHAT'S NEXT ?

Proposal for next Community of Practice topic :
COMMUNICATION AND INFLUENCE

Want to share your experience or knowledge on the subject? Send me an e-mail at the following address :
crenouard@beyondplasticmed.org