



## GREEN AGENDA



MAIN: Artisans making the boat in Lamu. They are using plastics and flip flops dumped on the seashore. INSET: Flip flop boat model. RIGHT: (ABOVE) Dipesh Pabari. He is involved in the flip flop boat project. BELOW: Ben Morrison, the founder of FlipFlopi project, the company spearheading the construction of the boat. PHOTOS: HELLEN MUTURI

# Let's sail on flip flop boat

The boat made from recycled plastics will sail 5,250 kms from Lamu to Cape Town in January

by Evelyn Makena  
@eve\_make

Making souvenirs and sculptures are some of the creative ways flip flops littering the Kenyan coast are recycled. Ben Morrison and Dipesh Pabari are, however, taking the efforts of ridding the Kenyan coastline of plastics a notch higher by making a dhow out of recycled plastics and flip flops. Once complete, the dhow, which will be the first of its kind, will sail 5,250 kms from Lamu to Cape Town in January

2018. Morrison, travel industry entrepreneur and founder of FlipFlopi Project, came face-to-face with the gravity of plastics menace while visiting a beach in Lamu two years ago.

"These are beaches where I would be sending many honeymooners on romantic getaways. Yet they were littered with lots of plastics, especially flip flops," he says. Besides the plastic waste being an eyesore, it also posed a huge threat to marine life.

It's while pondering on a solution to the problem that he came across Ocean Sole, a plastic recycling company at the Coast. They had come up with carvings from recycled flip flops and a model dhow was one of them. The model inspired him to make a real life dhow that would sail the African coast.

The boat would serve as a means of navigation from Lamu where the art of dhow-making has existed for

close to two centuries. But most importantly, it would convey a strong message against single plastic use. "There is a lot of plastic we use once and then throw away. Finally, they are washed away into our water bodies," says Morrison. By making a moving vessel, they would not only encourage reuse and recycling of plastic at the coast, but also rural areas like Molo where they went to school. Both studied in St Andrew Academy Turi, near Molo, before Morrison left for the UK for further studies and started a travel company. Pabari who is partnering in the project is also a travel entrepreneur and has been involved in environmental conservation around the Kenyan coast for over 10 years. He introduced an initiative of recycling flip flops to communities around Diani Beach seven years ago. "The initiative that has been operating independently has not only produced millions in turnover, but also made the beaches cleaner," says Pabari. He is also the brain behind a recycled Minke whale in Haller Park and a sea turtle in Nakumatt Diani. The process of constructing the 60 feet dhow is underway in Lamu. "We are relying on expert dhow craftsmen who have been doing this for a really

## EFFECTS OF PLASTICS ON MARINE LIFE

- Plastics form a big part of marine debris which kill fish, sea birds and marine mammals.
- Its negative effects include suffocation, infection, drowning and entanglement.
- By 2050 there will be more plastics in oceans than fish if nothing is done to curb the trend.



long time," says Morrison. Plastics collected around the Kenyan coast are melted and then turned into steel molds in the shapes of big parts of the Dhow. Contrary to the mundane traditional wooden vessels, the exterior of the dhow will have colourful and eye-catching flip flops. Its attractive nature is aimed at catching attention to drive the message of discouraging single plastic use in homes and inspire a plastic revolution.

Traditionally, the people of Lamu have relied on hardwood to make the vessels. The wood is no longer readily available at the coast. Plastics on the other hand, are readily available. They are also non-biodegradable, thus a durable material to work with.

FlipFlopi team is pulling all stops to make vessel more environment-friendly. "We are researching on how we can make the sail from recycled plastics," reveals Dipesh. The team is also considering use of fuel from recycled plastics to power the vessel's engine. Rugs and cushions in the dhow are also made of recycled plastics.

## DIY: CASH IN TRASH

By Sandra Wekesa @AndayiSandra

### Beauty from plastics



Beauty can be created out of the most mundane things. Surprisingly, the end-product can sometimes be really appealing. So, instead of disposing of the used plastic bottles that are in your house, put them into good use by making jewellery.

#### Necklace

You don't need to buy accessories in order to match up to the trend. You could easily take a sling and melt down the cut piece of plastic bottle with a candle to a shape of your choice. Then paint the piece to make it look beautiful. Pin in the pieces into the sling.

#### Bangles

Spray prints can be found in the supermarkets. You could just cut the bottle into cuffs and spray them in order to decorate the bangle into something attractive. Other than that if you really have time, you could paint the bangle and leave it to dry so that it doesn't smudge.

#### Earrings

This is actually simple. You could cut the plastic bottle into straight shapes. Then shape the pieces using candle flame. Then later on combine them to make a good piece of earrings.

#### Jewellery stand

Get bottles according to the amount of partitions you want. Cut the bottom of the bottles and pass the metallic stands through in order to make them firm. This will ensure that the stand can hold the weight of the jewellery.

## News brief

The global human health impact of the diesel emissions scandal has been revealed by new research showing a minimum of 38,000 people a year die early due to the failure of diesel vehicles to meet official limits in real driving conditions.

Researchers have created the first global inventory of the emissions pumped out by cars and

## Diesel emissions testing failures cause thousands of death each year

trucks on the road, over and above the legal limits, which are monitored by lab-based tests. Virtually all diesel cars produce far more toxic nitrogen oxides (NOx) than regulations intend and these excess emissions amounted to 4.6m tonnes in 2015, the team found.

This led to at least 38,000 premature deaths due to heart and lung dis-

ease and strokes. Most of the deaths are in Europe, where highly polluting cars are the main culprit, and in China and India, where dirty trucks cause most of the damage.

The work also shows that, even if diesel cars did meet emissions limits, there would still be 70,000 early deaths per year. Excess NOx emissions are rising, the researchers

found, and strict pollution controls need to be put in place to avoid the death toll rising to 174,000 in 2040.

"The consequences of excess diesel NOx emissions for public health are striking," said Susan Anenberg of Environmental Health Analytics in the US and a member of the team that did the research, published in the *scientific journal Nature*. - The Guardian

