

# FLIPFLOPI PROJECT

## 2021 REPORT



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# INTRODUCTION

Like so many, 2021 was a defining year for The Flipflop Project. As the impact of human planetary destruction and the urgent need for environmental action became omnipresent factors in our lives, we became acutely aware that the time for *'building back better'* – the search for an economic and sustainable recovery - is now.

For Flipflop, the pandemic fuelled a turning point for our operations. We turned our attention from sea to land with the creation of waste management and social enterprise centres in Kenya, gaining new knowledge, infrastructures, talent and social enterprise partners along the way. We focussed on accelerating and scaling up our efforts ever conscious of the world's ever-growing consumption and production of single-use plastic.

While in many low and middle income countries - such as across East Africa -, there is little awareness on the negative environmental and health impacts of plastics. Throughout 2021, Flipflop continued to raise the profile of the harms of plastic pollution while offering practical solutions and pushing for behaviour change within the region and beyond.

In March 2021, we embarked on our second, 'upstream' expedition – circumnavigating Africa's largest freshwater lake - Lake Victoria. Our aim was to bring regional attention to plastic pollution and circular waste solutions to communities in the 3 lake countries of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.



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The Lake Victoria expedition established further proof of concept for Flipflop as a compelling platform for change across East Africa, which led to a decisive adoption of our new 3 pillar strategy and the reinforcement of our new theory of change. [See our Theory of Change.](#)

Our shift in strategy means that rather than focussing only on the expeditions and media campaigns we're now also focussing on the development of community-led closed-loop waste management systems that mirror the Flipflop way. We're supporting the use of creative and innovative solutions to manage and repurpose local plastic waste across East Africa. We know that circular economy models driven and sustained by local communities bring prosperity, jobs and resilience whilst cutting pollution and carbon emissions.

In 2021, we entered into new partnerships with social enterprises in Uganda and Tanzania – Plastik Talks and EMEDO, and continued supporting campaigns geared towards ending single use plastics whilst scaling up Flipflop's own recycling activities in Kisumu and Lamu, Kenya.

The evolution to a long-term sustainable impact plan has led to Flipflop receiving its first major long-term grant from [Sustainable Manufacturing and Environmental Pollution](#) (SMEP) Programme from [UKAID](#). This grant will lead to the creation of a first-in-its-kind closed-loop waste management centre for the Lamu archipelago and the establishment of a heritage boat building training school to scale up plastic-boat building innovation worldwide.

***This year was not an easy ride – from planning expeditions on the Africa's largest lake during a pandemic, to the devastating fire that burned down our Lamu workshop, it was a year of huge challenges, yet huge triumphs too.***



We're incredibly grateful to our supporters, patrons and funders including **UKAid, UNEP, AFD, Corton Hill Trust, Art for Charity Collective, Slaughter and May, Museum for the UN**, among others as well as individuals with whom we fundraised over \$50,000 this year in one-off donations. With these generous donations, we were able to rebuild the Lamu workshop in record time and continue to support the growth of our innovation and education centres across East Africa. In addition, with valuable in-kind support from key partners like **Anjarwalla & Khanna and Slaughter and May**, we have been able to put real weight behind our advocacy programme, with a draft bill calling for a ban of all unnecessary single-use plastics soon to be taken to the East African parliament. We thank you for your continued support and belief in our beautiful multicoloured dhow and the impact it can bring to the world.

Now with the opportunities for long-term support from **UKAid** and the SMEP grant and ongoing support from **UNEP**, our ambitions for beating plastic pollution in East Africa are looking ever more optimistic.





# THE FLIPFLOPI WAY

We employ a full-systems approach to beating plastic pollution. Tackling the problem on multiple fronts - creating and inspiring new models for waste-plastic innovation, education around the impacts of plastic pollution, and influencing policymakers to create legislative change to ban single-use plastics.

Through building the Flipflop dhow and sailing expeditions, we have created a compelling platform for change through policy-maker engagement, for education and media attention, and accelerating and scaling new local circular economy networks across East Africa.

Our ultimate vision is a world without single-use plastic.

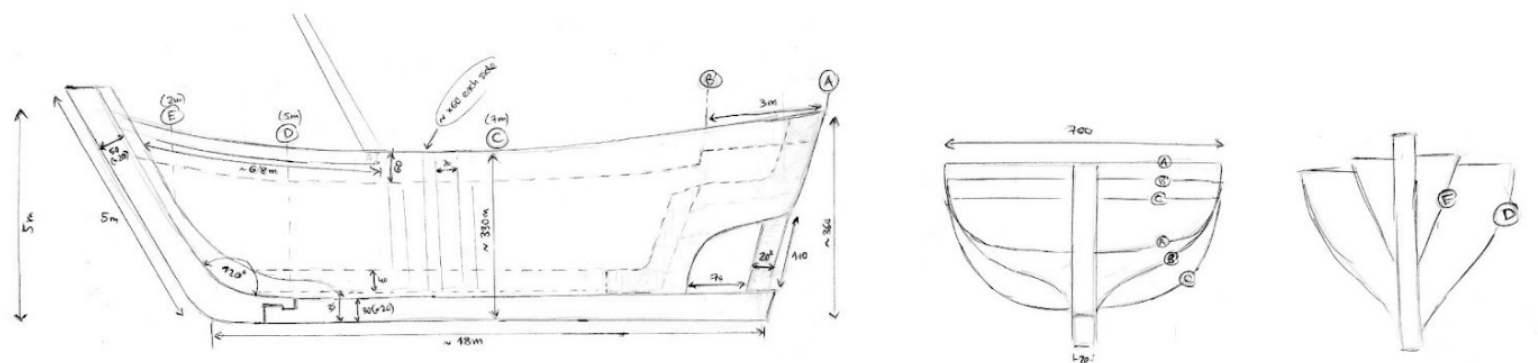


## Innovation

We're creating new solutions for waste-plastic innovation through the establishment of closed-loop waste management centres across East Africa. As a result of a recently-awarded grant from SMEP, these activities are now being planned:

- **Research & Design (R&D) to scale up Flipflop Boat-Building**  
**Innovation:** We're scaling up design and engineering to build different types of vessels, and exploring complementary products that can be developed and sold by the community.

- **Establishing a heritage boat building training centre:** teaching traditional techniques for boat building and modern techniques for working with recycled plastic. It will be a hub for incubating indigenous knowledge and design systems to increase the number of circular economy initiatives around the world.
- **Establishing a sustainable closed-loop waste management centre in Lamu:** a centralised Material Recovery Centre for plastics - the first of its kind in Lamu county, serving a population of 140,000+. To extract existing plastic waste, prevent additional plastic from reaching the ocean and create an appropriate 'closed-loop' waste management system for discarded plastics.



## Influence

Our influence pillar focusses on advocating at governmental, private sector and public level for the end of unnecessary single-use plastics in the East African region

In 2021 we scaled up advocacy efforts:

- The petition we launched for a regional ban of unnecessary SUP in the East Africa region gathered more than 10,000 signatures.
- Together with Kenya's leading law firm, Anjarwalla and Khanna, we drafted a Bill to ban the specific unnecessary single use plastics to be taken to the East African parliament.
- Co-created a policy document to uncover the state of legislation of single-use plastics across the East African region to inform our long-term advocacy strategy.



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## Education

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Through our international team, global platforms and partnerships we educate youth and communities around the issue of single-use plastic and its impact on health and the environment.

In 2021, we accelerated all our educational initiatives including visual and musical artist collaborations, films and storytelling, international platforms, supporting new educational centres across East Africa, and educational activities on expedition.



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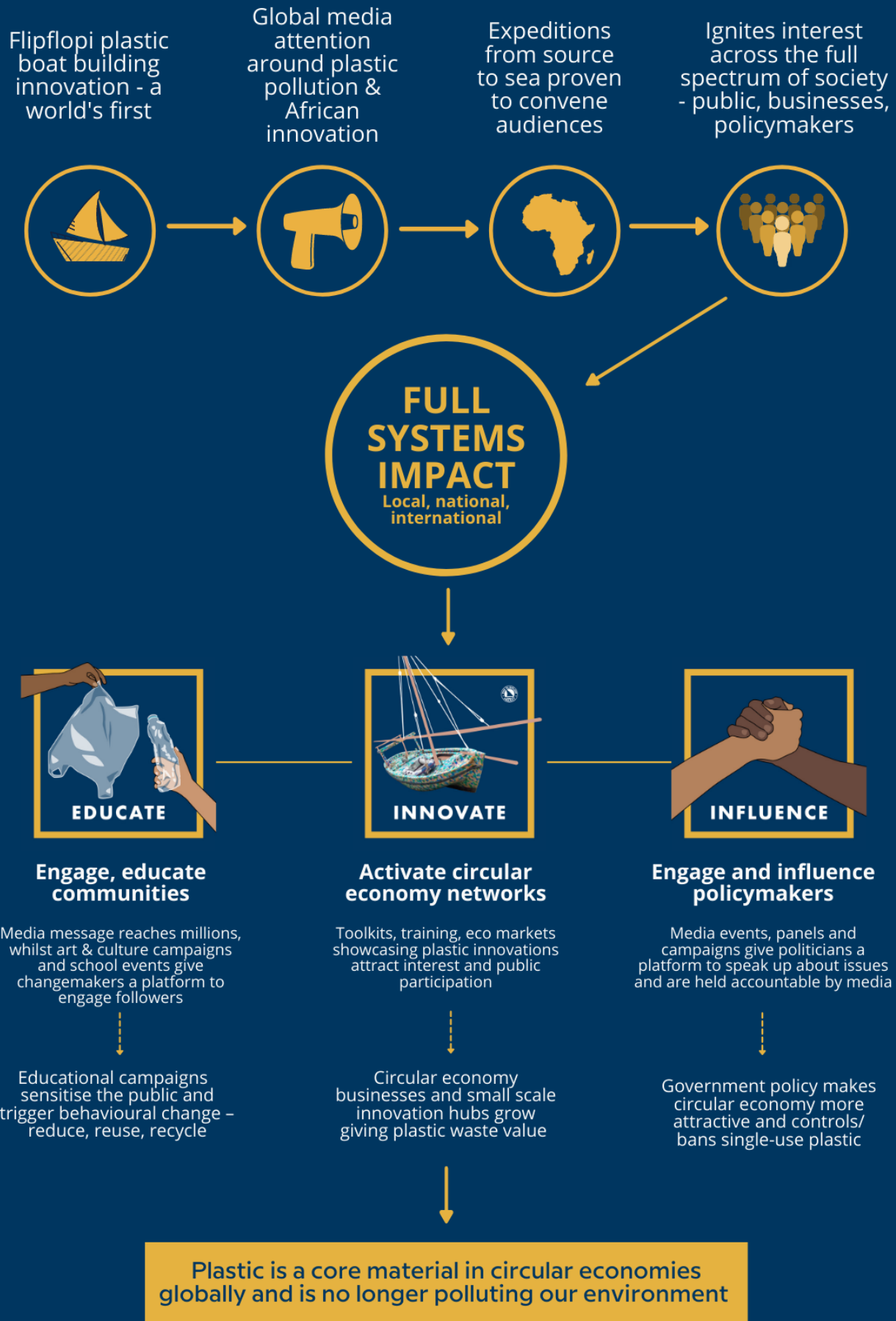
## Introducing our Theory of Change

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These pillars work together to create our full systems approach to align with our newly formed Theory of Change.



# OUR THEORY OF CHANGE





# 2021 HIGHLIGHTS





# Plastic Innovation in Lamu

*Establishing a self-sustaining waste management system and plastic boat building centre in the dhow-building centre of Lamu, Kenya*

The Lamu archipelago contains 65% of Kenya's mangroves and is home to some of the world's most precious ecosystems and heritage sites, making it one of the most critical ocean habitats on the Kenya coastline. It's also the birthplace of The Flipflop where Flipflop Ndogo, our prototype dhow, was created using local knowledge and skills.

Since 2020, Flipflop has been supporting Takataka Heroes (TTH), a community-based organisation co-founded by Captain Ali Skanda with ambitions of creating a functional waste-management system in Lamu island. In 2021, TTH has collected over 35 tonnes of plastics, created widespread community awareness and partnered with local organisations to build the capacity of community waste collections.

## Local Hero Profile

### *Abdulkadir Aboud Baabad - Takataka Heroes*

Abdul co-founded Takataka Heroes on Lamu Island in 2019.

The desire to do something about the problem of waste in Lamu was founded on the frustration of the vast environmental injustices that humans are responsible for in Lamu and beyond. Abdul believes that the environment is something we should work to protect not destroy.

TTH has been working hard to set an example of how waste management systems can be created with the right strategy and zeal.





Since 2021, TTH has been holding regular plastic buyouts from the community. During these collections, TTH not only buys plastic that would otherwise end up in landfills and oceans but also sensitise the community on why they should embrace the concept of reducing plastic use.

TTH advocate for the 3Rs: Refuse, Reuse and Recycle.

Through their community awareness programmes, TTH is working to engage with stakeholders to reduce plastic use in businesses and encourage leaders to introduce proper legislation to help us conserve our environment.

Since its inception, Flipflop's captain and master dhow-builder, Ali Skanda, had long dreamed of creating a Heritage Boat Building Centre: a place where the traditional skills and craftsmanship of dhow building could be developed and passed on to future generations. In 2021, we realised the vast opportunity of leveraging Flipflop boat building innovation to rekindle these skills within the community. We could continue the centuries-long tradition of dhow building using ocean-bound waste plastic as the core material.





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Many traditional practices have circular economy principles at their heart whether it is from a design perspective or regenerative methods when it comes to use of natural resources.

In 2021, we ploughed our attention, knowledge, resources and skills into Lamu. Unfortunately, we had a major setback in March 2021 after an accidental fire devastated Ali's workshop. With support from funders and generous response to crowdfunding campaigns from us and TTH, we have built back the workshop better than before. This is now a space fit for purpose, specifically designed as a space for waste to be collected, sorted, shredded and recycled into brand new materials.

In November we received a grant from the Sustainable Manufacturing and Environmental Pollution (SMEP) programme established by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) in partnership with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

With this grant, we'll be scaling up efforts to set up a self-sustaining closed-loop waste management centre in Lamu. The centre will bring Flipflopi recycled plastic boat building to the world and bring sustainable employment and training opportunities in Lamu, Kenya.

With large scale industrial machinery also arriving from South Africa any day, Lamu may soon well become the most advanced of its kind in Kenya.





# Scaling up Flipflop boat building innovation - 'Building Kubwa'



Flipflop Ndogo was our proof of concept - that it is possible to build sailing dhows from recycled plastics. In the two years of taking it on expeditions we've gained experience about the material and stability of this recycled plastic boat, while witnessing its impact and potential for multi-stakeholder engagement around plastic pollution.

Now that Flipflop Ndogo has returned home after its long journey around the seas and lakes of East Africa, we are focussing on scaling up our research and development (R&D) efforts to build an large ocean-faring recycled plastic dhow - 'Kubwa' means 'large' in Kiswahili. This dhow will be big enough to take the message across the oceans to the world!



This dhow will be 24m long and requires more research and development around manufacturing processes. Larger parts come with larger technical challenges, and we need to make sure the dhow will be a safe and durable vessel to sail the turbulent oceans in.

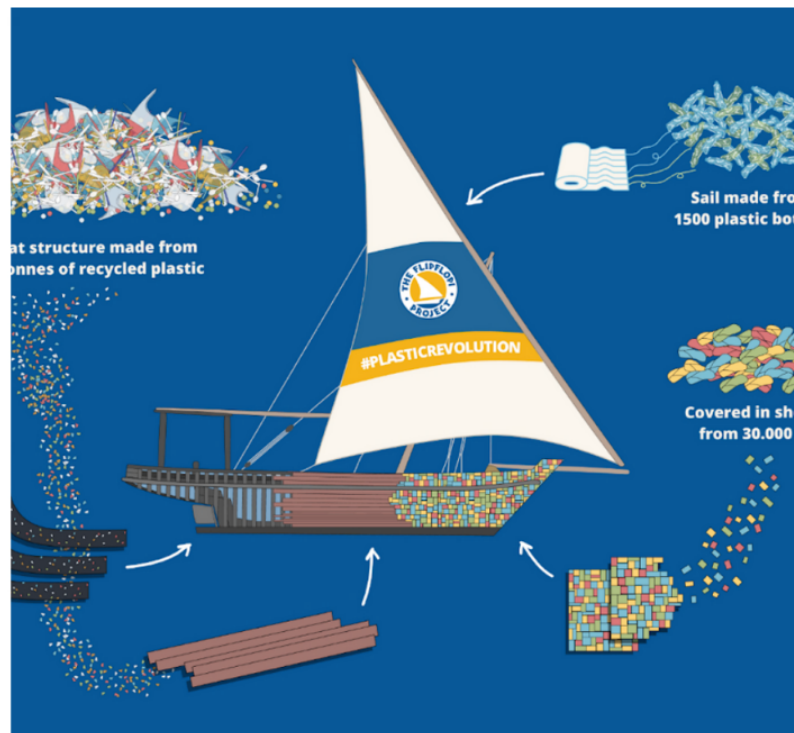
In 2021, we kickstarted our R&D work with our small design and engineering team in Lamu.

Despite major setbacks to our workspace with the fire earlier this year, we were able to make great progress this year:



# Achievements

- Creation of an open-source Boatbuilding Toolkit with the processes and learnings for building the Flipflop Ndogo, and published this together with a supporting video about the process.
- We defined the main challenges and process concepts for the big boat.
- We designed and built a modified version of a Trough Collector (Parabolic Solar mirror) and two exchangeable moulds for different sizes of boat parts.
- We produced recycled plastic parts utilising the energy of the sun.
- We made miniature models of the boat for planning and naval architectural tests.
- We improved and refined the 3D model and created a parts list of the boat which will serve for analysis, calculations, planning and manufacturing processes.



***This R&D phase resulted in valuable learnings to evaluate the potential of using solar energy as a clean energy resource for our recycling processes, and to get a clearer direction for the design of the boat and what steps to pursue next.***

## Collaborators

- We kicked off a long term partnership with the Red Cross Innovation Lab LOMe 005 (in Hindi, Lamu) by collaborating on the manufacturing of the parts for the Trough Collector as well as the miniature models.
- And huge thanks to Prof. Simon Benson and his students at the Newcastle University (UK) for the naval architectural tests and insights they contributed, and for becoming a partner and expert on our design and engineering team.

## Next Steps

Going forward, Flipflop Kubwa will remain a primary area of our R&D work. However, we will also aim to work out products and services that can help to sustain the Lamu collection and recycling activities in the long term including manufacturing different types of traditional boats for small scale enterprise and sustainable blue economy.

In the near future we will be:

- Testing and finalising the boat geometry/design
- Setting up the machinery to have a fully functional production workspace
- Working out the best moulding process with this machinery
- Manufacturing moulds and start producing parts for the boat
- Documenting the processes with written reports and videos

## Learn More on our You Tube Channel

Building Flipflop Kubwa ▶ [PLAY ALL](#)



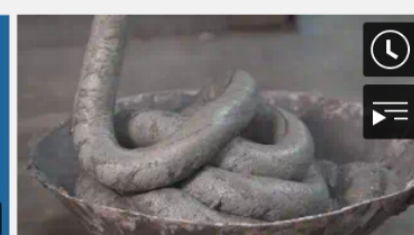
We're building possibly the biggest recycled plastic...

The Flipflop  
788 views • 7 months ago



How we built the world's first recycled plastic sailing dhow

The Flipflop  
416 views • 6 months ago



Challenges & concepts to build a big boat from plastic...

The Flipflop  
239 views • 6 months ago



Building our solar unit to recycle plastic with the sun

The Flipflop  
345 views • 5 months ago



# Taking the message upstream: Lake Victoria Expedition

*Turning attention upstream to the source of the plastic problem and bringing regional attention to the world's second-largest freshwater lake and the source of the Nile.*

Lake Victoria is Africa's largest freshwater lake, supporting the lives and livelihoods of 40 million East Africans. Yet it is one of the most polluted water bodies in the world and suffers from a myriad of climate and environmental related problems. Our expedition in March 2021 was designed to bring regional attention to the lake, highlighting that the plastic problem begins upstream and needs to be tackled at the source in a concerted effort by the lake countries of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

Our second expedition was intended to be of larger scale and complexity, circumnavigating the lake and running a 4-week event series along the way to engage communities and change mindsets about plastic waste.



## Over the 4-week expedition we...

- Sailed 1000 km, running 10+ events, around Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania
- Convened 10,000+ people: schoolchildren, artists, activists, policymakers, and the media through community events
- Captured the attention of the international media with more than 100 articles including CGTN, CNN, AFP, Xinhua, the British Government and All Africa.

- Formed media partnerships with Infonile and BBC Media Action increasing capacity in regionally led environment-related reporting to wider populations in Lake Victoria
- Influenced 2 Kenyan County Governors and one of Uganda's most influential leaders, the Queen of Buganda to make commitments to tackle plastic pollution
- Drafted a Bill to present to the East African Legislative Assembly to enforce the prohibition of manufacturing, importation, use and sale of unnecessary single-use plastics across the East African Community - Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and South Sudan
- Undertook the first surface to deepwater analysis of microplastic presence in Lake Victoria
- Created new networks with social enterprise partners, influencers and campaigners across Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya, supporting those best placed to drive sustainable change in their communities.
- 3 months following the expedition, Uganda's Minister of the Environment who had attended the expedition announced nationwide enforcement of a plastic bag ban

**You can read the full impact of our Lake Victoria expedition in our online report here.**

The Lake Victoria expedition proved that Flipflop boat building innovation is not only a compelling platform for behavioural change, media attention and policy engagement, but can also accelerate and scale up community-led waste management and recycling projects.

## Organisational Profile - InfoNile



InfoNile based in Kampala, Uganda are a cross-border group of geojournalists reporting on water and the environment in the 11 countries of the Nile Basin. They use data journalism and geojournalism techniques such as interactive maps, drone video and satellite imagery to tell their multimedia stories. InfoNile support journalists to produce in-depth stories and mentor them in data and science journalism.



In 2021, they supported and mentored 12 female journalists from the 4 countries around Lake Victoria to report in-depth stories about plastic pollution. The journalists produced videos, podcasts, print and online stories investigating the impacts of plastic pollution around the lake. They also reported about local solutions, community-based plastic recycling and reuse initiatives. At the end of the project, we produced a magazine containing all of their stories where the cover was made out of recycled plastic kaveera (plastic bags) from Masaka, Uganda.

InfoNile's videographer, Megan S. Lee also travelled with the Flipflop expedition, producing an original documentary film about the boat's journey and its greater mission. So far InfoNile has organised three screenings of the film in partnership with Flipflop and #EndPlasticPollution in Lamu, Nairobi, and Mbarara.

[Watch the film here](#)

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Here are just some of the stories done by their journalists:

- [New app to help Kenyan youth collect and recycle plastic waste along lakeshores](#)
- [Plastic Pollution of Lake Victoria in Uganda: Who is to Blame?](#)
- ['We are in trouble,' Lake Victoria fishers cry out as plastics accumulate in the lake](#)
- [Mwanza City embarks on a strategic plan to stop plastic waste leakage in Lake Victoria](#)

InfoNile are a key partner to Flipflop as they work together to raise more awareness of the harms of plastic pollution. InfoNile are honoured to be part of this grassroots initiative of activists, educators, boat-builders, community leaders and communicators who are determined to innovate and bring people together to end single use plastic across the world. InfoNile have worked to tell the Flipflop story through media reports and documentaries and has opened their eyes to new ways of creating awareness and inspiring action on issues like plastic pollution through creating coalitions around innovative campaigns.

InfoNile hopes that together we can eventually totally move away from the use of single-use plastics, to using alternative sustainable materials. Though in the meantime, InfoNile hopes the recycling infrastructure improves and recycling plastic becomes much more common rather than disposal.

# Advocating for SUP Legislation Change



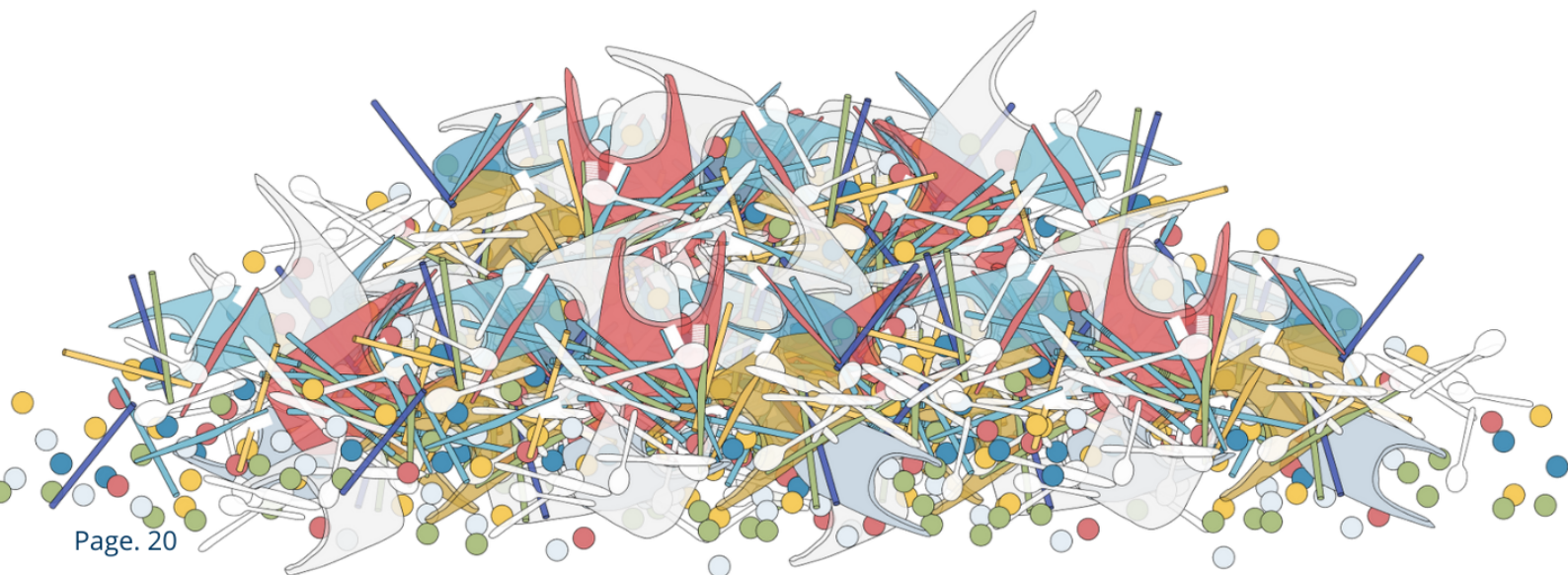
## *Accelerating our campaign for a ban to single-use plastics across East Africa*

East Africa already stands as a leader in addressing plastic pollution, with tough legislation across the region to combat the swelling tide of discarded single-use plastics (SUPs).

Countries like Kenya have gone a step further, banning the use of single-use plastic products in protected areas - or in the case of Rwanda, enforcing a countrywide ban.

However, there are still disparities in the enforcement of legislation and our environment is suffering. Plastic pollution knows no borders. Discarded waste plastic is carried across our oceans, seas and lakes, from country to country, blown by one gust of wind from one region to another. That is why it's so important to push for collaborative and coordinated action to achieve full success in tackling plastic pollution.

Since 2019, we have been campaigning to influence policy change, partnering with Slaughter and May and Anjarwalla and Khanna (A&K) - a leading law firm in Kenya - to draft legislation to take to the East African Community to see a ban of unnecessary single-use plastics across the whole region.





Working alongside governments is critical to effective policy change. Since our inception, Flipflop has been embraced from the county to the national level across Kenya and now East Africa.

The Lake Victoria expedition was testimony to the importance that key political leaders place on tackling plastic pollution. This was illustrated by the County of Kisumu officially hosting the launch of the expedition and two Governors present, all the way to the Ministry of Environment in Uganda formally incorporating the expedition into their most important environmental campaign, “World Water Week”, and finally from being received by the Mwanza County Council who hosted the end of our expedition.

## Organisation Profile - Anjarwalla & Khanna

ALN Kenya | Anjarwalla & Khanna (A&K) is East Africa’s largest full-service law firm. A&K are a key partner to Flipflop and has supported The Flipflop Project since its inception through the provision of pro bono legal assistance to help the organisation set up and run its operations, including tax, employment, real estate, and compliance advice.



Currently, A&K has partnered with Flipflop to champion the legislative agenda at an East African Community (EAC) level through the drafting and introduction of legislation to ban the use of single-use plastics in the EAC. To do this A&K have drafted a single-use plastics bill to be presented before the EAC Legislative Assembly for consideration. We have also assisted Flipflop with the preparation of a report that summarises all environmental laws within the EAC to showcase the progress that has been made over the years.

A&K aim to bring the bill to the East African Legislative Assembly to push for regional consensus on the issue. With this law in place, EAC member states will be required to adopt and enforce legislation to ban certain specified single-use plastic products and promote sustainable and non-toxic re-usable products and re-use systems in place of single-use plastic products, to reduce the quantity of waste generated in the community

Through this partnership with Flipflop, A&K are tackling the effects of single-use plastic through educating current and future generations in Africa and beyond. Together the impact of plastic pollution can be increased to change people’s daily habits by eliminating and reducing waste from single-use plastic products.

When we have better legislation and policies we can create an enabling environment to tackle single-use plastic pollution. A&K is driving the sustainable development agenda in partnership with Flipflop through advocacy for legislative change to curb the use of single-use plastic across the East Africa region.

The work they do with Flipflop has inspired A&K to reduce its use of single-use plastic too. One such measure is replacing single-use plastic with reusable glass and aluminium/steel bottles and containers for our client meetings and events.

To gain public consensus behind this legislation we created a petition that asked members of the East African Community to call on their governments to ban certain items like straws, styrofoam, crisp packets and many other unnecessary forms of single-use packaging.

By December, the petition had received 10,000 signatures. This is a significant milestone which means we are now gaining further momentum behind the legislation. If and when the legislation is passed, outcomes will be:

- Implementation of a regional ban on certain single-use plastic items, specifically those that are non-essential and impossible to recycle or cannot be fully recycled
- Provision of incentives to businesses to manufacture affordable and environmentally-friendly alternatives to the banned items.
- Investment in waste management infrastructure, ensuring that products are properly disposed of and given a second life
- Producers to be held accountable for their waste.

You can still sign and share our petition to gather more names and more momentum. [Click here for the link.](#)





# Catalysing plastic campaigns across East Africa



*Flipflop adds fuel to existing plastic revolutionary campaign groups, accelerating local action on the ground*

Flipflop Expeditions have been successful at convening multiple stakeholders who together have the power to turn the tide on plastic. From artists to politicians, waste entrepreneurs to teachers, school children to activists, people can come together to share ideas on plastic waste solutions. Often the platform gained by the media coverage of the expedition often provides further traction for these campaigns.

In 2021, we were fortunate enough to meet some incredible community groups and activists across Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, each tackling their community waste problem in distinct and locally-relevant ways. We are now actively supporting several new groups and existing campaigns with mentoring, skill-sharing and funding who share Flipflop values of educating, influencing and innovating to end plastic pollution.

Examples of impact include:

- EMEDO partnership: New education centre opened in Mwanza, Tanzania
- Plastik Talks & End Plastic Pollution campaign: Plastic recycling and education centre in Kampala and ongoing campaigns across Uganda
- Arts and Culture centre activated in Kisumu, Kenya with Dunga Hill Camp and Naam Festival
- Activist led campaigns tackling waste management at the household level in Mukuru in collaboration with MuYI, Amusha Youth Group, Naam Festival and University of Portsmouth





## Organisation Profile - EMEDO

The community organization Environmental Management and Economic Development Organisation (EMEDO) has been working in Mwanza for many years to highlight the importance of women in the fisheries sector. EMEDO became involved in the plastic revolution in April 2021 during the Flipflop's Lake Victoria Expedition.

The plastic awareness campaign in Mwanza brought various national and local partners together. The campaign engaged youth through art and innovation activities, including workshops, art installations, and setting up plastic waste recycling centres to serve the citizens of the lake. Key stakeholders and officials were brought together to discuss what can be done to beat plastic pollution.

The campaign was accompanied by the installation of a fish sculpture, a recycled plastic bottle visitor centre and a mural painting to highlight the risks of plastic to the Lake and in return the impacts of plastic on the livelihoods sought from the Lake.

The campaign is ongoing at the environmental resource center (ERC) located at EMEDO offices. Youth, women and community leaders are trained on various topics with relevance to them all linked to environment, plastic pollution, circular economy, climate change and leadership among others





Youth are given opportunities to transform plastic wastes to other products. They can try out their innovative ideas until when they get something meaningful. A good example is the youth from the nearby university through their environmental association, they were supported by the ERC to make products including décor flowers, rubbish bins, and a flag of Tanzania. The flag gave us an opportunity to penetrate the plastic agenda to the Regional Commissioner of Mwanza, who committed to call for an environmental stakeholders meeting in early 2022 to discuss environmental problems facing the area including plastic pollution.

## Organisation Profile - Amusha Youth Group

Amusha Youth Organisation (AYO) is working on waste segregation at the source level and other recycling initiatives in Mukuru, Nairobi. AYO is sensitising community members on how to separate their waste into different waste streams thus ensuring better recycling at the next stage in the process. Waste is collected twice a week. The aim is to shred and use recyclable materials to make new products at the recycling plant.

AYO is best placed to work within this environment as they have been working within community waste management and cleanups for many years. They have built a good partnership with the community and have land to hold a fully equipped recycling plant. Many of the members have undertaken training on waste segregation so can further educate communities.

The group began working with Flipflop through the Revolution Plastics Program at University of Portsmouth in mid-2021 to further their work. Since then, the knowledge shared has helped them to understand more about waste management and especially plastic waste. AYO's ultimate goal is to have a social enterprise model in the area of waste management within Mukuru.

Through the partnership with Flipflop, we can play a critical role in creating this. Through continuing education with the community and further technical support from Flipflop AYO believe they can make this a reality!

# The Power of Artivism

*Leveraging the power of local art and culture to engage young people in the plastic revolution*

The Flipflopi dhow combines the ancient tradition of dhow-building with the modern-day innovation of plastic recycling. It's a cultural symbol that East Africans and ocean-dwelling communities connect deeply too, as well as being a beautiful art piece covered in thousands of colourful flip-flops. We understand the power of combining art, visual storytelling and culture to create engagement and behavioural change.

One of our core strategies is to continually support and partner with artists and activists ("artivists") who can create change within their own communities.

In 2021, we expanded our network of activist partners across East Africa, including:

- Construction of several plastic-waste installations around the shores of Lake Victoria including a series of 'Nile Perch' sculptures with Ugandan artist Arinitwe Peter and Naam festival. These gained local media coverage, highlighting the significant attraction of visual art to engage the public
- Creation of environmentally-themed Music video with Ugandan artist Sandra Suubi
- Partnership with art and culture festival Naam festival that engaged hundreds of people in Kenya in recycling activities and workshops





## Local Hero Profile - Arinitwe Peter

Arinitwe lives in Kampala, Uganda and is an artist whose work is created in response to his local environment. Arinitwe has seen his environment degrade and is creating artwork to highlight the degradation and inspire behavioural change. His tireless work spearheaded a movement in Uganda and is now working to create lasting change in Uganda.

Arinitwe founded Plastik Talks, a group of artists, musicians, engineers and teachers who have come together to sensitize the community to beat plastic pollution in Kampala by showing people how to reduce, reuse and recycle their rubbish.

The team has worked to construct a waste management and education centre in Kabuma LC1 (Makindye Ssabagabo), where people are shown how to responsibly dump and separate their different types of waste while teaching the importance of environmental preservation, and equipping the unemployed youth with new skills.

The education centre is run by local residents for the local community with a mission to leave the streets cleaner, and young people more engaged with their community and environment.

They are teaching classes on how people can reuse plastic from the environment to create products that they can sell or use to make beautiful art/homeware.





## Local Hero Profile - Sandra Suubi

Sandra Suubi is a visual and performing artist based in Kampala, Uganda. To Sandra, our environment is a precious gift full of different elements that come together to allow for life in its fullness in every way. This love for the environment led Sandra to begin working to raise more awareness of the harms of plastic pollution.

As a sculptor and eco-activist, Sandra works with found objects like recycled plastics and natural Ugandan materials to explore themes around environmental sustainability. Her work centres around the themes of standing against single-use of plastic and overconsumption

As a musician and performing artist, Sandra creates music focussing on climate justice coupled with wearable art made from found objects to further bring awareness to climate justice. Sandra used this to great effect when she worked with Flipflop to create the video to her song Kiragala while the Flipflop was on expedition in Uganda.

This pivotal moment brought together so many key contributors on this crucial matter of climate justice that allowed for a concerted effort. It is Sandra's hope that we will find alternatives to plastic while creating complete awareness to the masses of the harms of single-use plastics. As the key consumers, they do not fully know yet how much harm this material is causing to our environment, however, with knowledge comes power - the power to change behaviour and make better decisions.





***“The activist (artist + activist) uses her artistic talents to fight and struggle against injustice and oppression—by any medium necessary. The activist merges commitment to freedom and justice with the pen, the lens, the brush, the voice, the body, and the imagination. The activist knows that to make an observation is to have an obligation.” - M. K. Asante***

Digital storytelling is a key tenet of our campaigning ability. In 2021, we continued to create more short films showcasing the work of Flipflop and the message of the plastic revolution.

‘Pieces of Us’ by Routes Adventure and UNEP offers a new vision for the future of tourism as we head towards a cleaner, more resilient planet.

## **Watch the Film**



While one of our fan favourites: 'The Wonderful Story of Flipflopi - the world's first recycled plastic boat' made in collaboration with John Sibi Okumu, Apes in Space Animation and UNEP has been on tour to international film awards Annecy and British Film Institute picking up acclaim as one of the best animated shorts!

## **Watch the Film**



Finally, a short documentary made by InfoNile reporter Megan S. Lee captured the Flipflopi sailing 1000km around Lake Victoria to bring together communities in the fight against plastic pollution.

## **Watch the Film**



# Growing Our Global Team

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*As Flipflopi grows, we have brought in talented change-makers to join our team*

If we want to find innovative ways of tackling plastic pollution, we need to convene the most innovative minds to create solutions. That's why in 2021, we have been focussed on creating partnerships with new experts and welcoming volunteers to Lamu.

We need to expand our knowledge in many areas, including plastic recycling and processing, naval engineering, product design and so so much more!

To cater for all these needs, we've looked further afield for like minded individuals whose knowledge will help push us over the line. In Lamu, we've hosted volunteers from Germany, Australia, France and the UK. In late 2021, we had Harry and Sebastien at site.

## Local Hero Profile - Harry Peck

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Harry is a sustainable 3D Designer who specialises in making products from timber and plastic which are designed to have as little impact on the environment as possible. From the start of his design career, Harry has always been interested in finding ways to recycle polystyrene and other materials.

In Lamu, Harry has been working as part of a team doing research and development into making a recycled plastic material strong enough to make Flipflopi Kubwa. As well as doing some repairs to Flipflopi Ndogo ready for the expedition in February.

Since volunteering with us, an amazing opportunity came up to create a to-scale model of Flipflopi Kubwa using recycled plastics. This will be displayed in museums including the V&A. By creating this model more people can see the work Flipflopi are doing and offer up more help.

Harry chose to volunteer to invest his time to actively work on a solution to plastic pollution that could help in putting an end to plastics. Since being in Lamu, Harry has learnt lots about the different plastic and their properties while learning more about Lamu as a specific location and the challenges of working from an island.

Flipflop has helped Harry to realise it's possible to tackle the waste problem and slowly it can make a change. *"I have learned lots from the engineers and the endless possibilities that come from using the waste material of plastic and turning it into an item of value."*



Meanwhile, our creative team grew during the Lake Victoria Expedition as we welcomed UMBER Studio on board as our digital storytellers.

## Organisation Profile - UMBER



UMBER Studio is made up of Louise, Loic and Elian, a group of young passionate filmmakers, photographers and producers. UMBER have a special passion for the environment as a wonderful, powerful and evolving natural system that teaches you so much, especially loving nature and humans.

They use films as positive media to educate and influence about main topics such as plastic pollution. Through their love of adventures, they got involved with the Flipflop and joined the Lake Victoria expedition to further spread the message of environmental protection.

Their hope is that everyone can feel concerned about the protection of our planet. For UMBER, being concerned means "taking action" and they hope everyone will go beyond awareness and take part in the plastic revolution, no matter how small the action is or what their skills are, because we can all act and help each other.



# Commitment to Education

*Supporting education campaigns to engage young people with plastic pollution & innovation*

Engaging the next generation in the issue of single-use plastic and its impact on health and the environment is a fundamental part of Flipflop's strategy. In 2021 we continued our partnerships with global platforms including UNEP as well as developing our own educational materials and supporting local education initiatives across East Africa.

This year, some of our educational highlights included:

- Running workshops with 100s of schoolchildren and community members during Lake Victoria expedition
- Engaging 30,000 schoolchildren via a dedicated Youtube channel created by our french team and ambassador, Eric Loizeau and UMBER studio and our own social media channels
- Multiple workshops and talks across schools in East Africa
- Creation of a circular economy toolkit aimed at small and medium-sized enterprises
- Creation of Information boards and art installations across East Africa - Kisumu, Mwanza, Diani, Nairobi, Lamu - to create awareness on plastic pollution
- Media partnerships with Infonile and BBC media action increasing the capacity of environment-related reporting to wider populations in Lake Victoria.
- Flipflop art workshops with women and youth groups across East Africa
- Launch of 3 new educational centres in Mwanza, Tanzania; Kampala, Uganda and Kisumu, Kenya
- Ongoing campaigns with local communities to organise clean-ups and plastic collections





# WHAT'S NEXT IN 2022



# Lamu Archipelago Expedition

We're setting sail in February 2022 on a scientific discovery to map the extent of undiscovered plastic pollution in the Lamu Archipelago. As the global campaign to beat plastic pollution accelerates, more needs to be done to understand the real impact and extent of plastic damage on our oceans.

Whilst some of the world's oceans have been widely investigated, in many parts of the world, particularly in developing nations, there is limited data on the scale of the problem. Regions like the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) is one such area. The Lamu archipelago contains 65% of Kenya's mangroves and is home to some of the world's most precious ecosystems and heritage sites, making it one of the most critical ocean habitats on the East African coastline.



On this 2-week expedition, we will research the presence of marine plastics and unite communities up and down the coast to work together to tackle this global problem. During the expedition, The Flipflop team and partners will be:

- Conducting scientific research to map the extent of plastics in the ocean and shorelines around the archipelago. We will be visiting some of the most remote beaches where cleaning is not feasible. We want to properly assess the full extent of the damage.
- Convene thousands from remote communities to raise awareness of the plastic pollution problem
- Engage with community organisations working to manage waste and bolster their capacity and identify community solutions to the plastic problem
- Create a robust network of waste management organisations to create a holistic waste management system across the archipelago
- Engage national and international policymakers
- Engage 1 million+ through a multi-media campaign

We'll be kickstarting our campaign with a 2-day festival on Lamu Island and showcasing existing local solutions to plastic pollution as well as running swimming competitions, dhow races and workshops.

Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) to keep up to date.





# The World's First Traditional Boat Building Centre Using Recycled Plastics

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Our aims have always been to create local solutions to the global plastic problem. While we are aware that more needs to be done on a regional and legislative level to deal with plastics, we are also acutely aware of the power that localised closed-loop waste management systems can have in areas under severe pressure from plastic pollution.

Currently, the seas and shores around the Lamu archipelago are highly affected by plastic pollution. Due to the nature of the currents, beach clean-ups collect approximately 35-40 tonnes annually. This is only worsening with a rapidly growing population and increase in single-use plastic products. Waste management is virtually non-existent due to the geographic distance and expense for the appropriate disposal of plastics.

In 2022, thanks to winning our largest grant to date from SMEP, work begins to create a Heritage Boat Building Training Centre to design and construct recycled plastic sailing vessels with local boat builders based on indigenous heritage, knowledge and skills. We will be continuing our work with Takataka Heroes who will be responsible for the collection and sorting of plastics, but we will also create a larger more robust network of waste collectors across the archipelago.

We'll be running skill-sharing workshops and educational outreach programmes to raise awareness of plastic pollution, identify solutions for plastic waste hotspots to reduce its impact on the environment, and collect and repurpose plastic into goods that are useful to local communities.



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The boat building centre will work upon our three pillars.

## Education

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- Social, technical, environmental and economic evaluation of waste on communities across the Lamu archipelago.
- Socio-cultural analysis to understand indigenous knowledge systems that have an impact on the design of the intervention (traditional behaviour systems, role of heritage in environmental protection).

## Influence

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- Engage local and national authorities and communities to support awareness and enforcement of existing legislation and pursue further legislative action towards the elimination of single-use plastics.
- Establish and empower a consortium of community-based organisations across the archipelago.

## Innovation

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- Work with local communities to raise awareness and embed a fully sustainable waste collection system across the archipelago.
- Activate indigenous maritime heritage, local skills, challenges and aspirations to develop workable solutions regarding plastic waste. We will support local communities involved in fishing, tourism and trade to co-create locally embedded designs and uses for local artisanal fishing vessels suited to their needs.
- Establish an innovation centre for plastic reuse technologies and skills that are transferable across the region.



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With the creation of a Heritage Boat Building School on Lamu Island, we will reduce ocean-bound and ocean plastics from the archipelago while creating sustainable employment and training opportunities for communities.

This is the beginning of a plastic revolution. We foresee this Heritage Boat Building School as a solution not only through the Lamu Archipelago, but something that can be replicated throughout global coastal communities to tackle plastic pollution at a local level.

Keep up to date with our progress by [joining our mailing list](#).





# Scaling up the Capacity of Community Hubs



In 2021 we expanded our network of community hubs across East Africa to tackle plastic pollution at a local level. Each of these distinct locations are tackling the problem of plastic pollution in the way that best suits their community needs.

We're now working in...

- Mwanza, Tanzania with EMEDO
- Kampala, Uganda with Plastik Talks and End Plastic Pollution
- Kisumu, Kenya with the Flipflop Kisumu Hub
- Diani, Kenya with the Flipflop Diani Hub
- Lamu, Kenya with Takataka Heroes and establishing our own Flipflop Recycling Centre





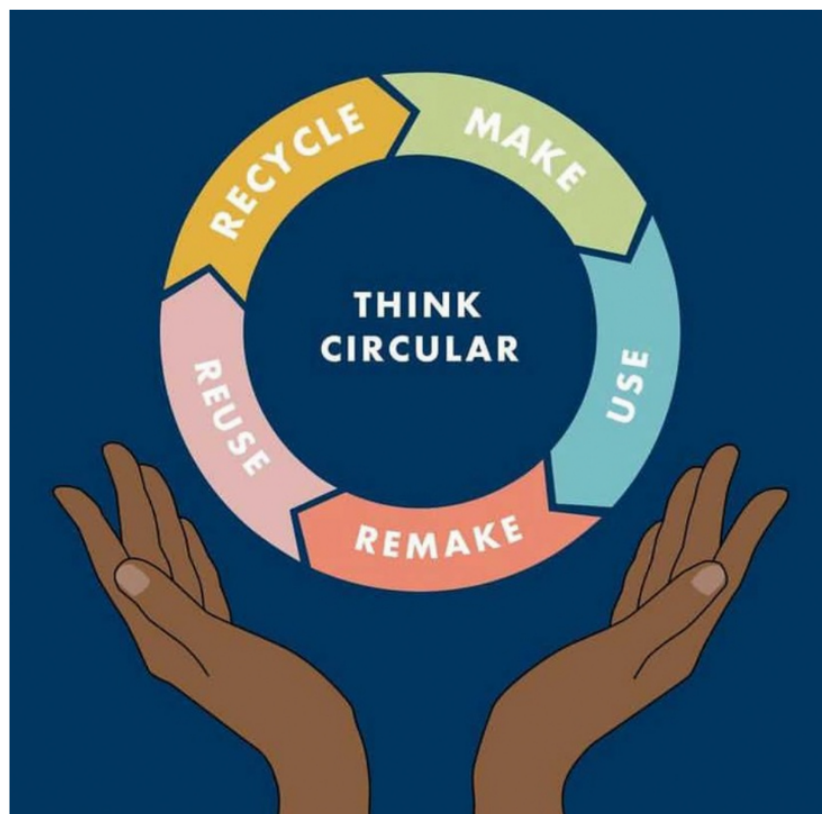
In 2022, we want to keep the fire alight within these organisations and help to grow their capacity and expand their work and reach. To do this we'll be continuing on with our tested strategy of directly supporting these organisations through knowledge sharing, partnership and financial support.

Through our existing partnerships, we've supported one of the riskiest clean-ups in the River Rwizi, Uganda, initiated a waste segregation project in Mukuru, Kenya and are in the process of setting up a fully functioning waste processing centre in Lamu, Kenya.

We want to continue supporting these fledgling organisations through seed funding and partnering on projects. You can help us by becoming a patron and supporting us with a small (or large) amount monthly.

## **SUPPORT US ON PATREON**

When you support us on Patreon, you're helping us to create community-based circular solutions to plastic pollution so that we can begin to clean up our mess and create a plastic-free future.



# Scaling Up our Advocacy Program

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We reached the 10,000 signature milestone on our petition to end unnecessary single-use plastics in November 2021. However, this isn't the end of our work to influence policymakers to bring the use and production of single-use plastics to an end.

In 2022, we will be continuing our work with Kenya's leading law firm Anjarwalla & Khanna to take our draft legislation to the leaders of the East African Community to come to a consensus regarding the production and consumption of plastics.

Expanding our network of local organisations and high profile followers contributes to amplifying the voice of our cause. As more and more individuals, organisations and influencers come on board with our message that single-use plastics don't make sense our influence over policymakers grows.

All of our followers can do their part to show they support the banning of unnecessary single-use plastics. Here are just a few ways how...

- [If you haven't already, sign our petition](#)
- Share our petition with your followers
- Like and share our social media profiles
- [Donate to the Flipflop](#)





# CONCLUSION

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2021 was the year of transformational operational strategy for The Flipflop project and lays the foundations for our scaled-up future.

With our 3rd expedition, the establishment of a first-of-its kind recycling centre in Lamu, and initiation of Flipflop Kubwa R&D, our sights are set on lofty ambitions for 2022:

- Build the world's first heritage boat building centre that will scale to reduce the world's reliance on timber and fiberglass for boat-building, whilst cleaning up plastic from our environment
- Initiate the build of Flipflop Kubwa, that will break world records for being the world's largest object to be made entirely from recycled plastic, built in a low-tech environment in Kenya. A round the world expedition will be planned in the coming years
- Establish the first plastic material recovery centre for the Lamu archipelago and close the loop on ocean bound plastics through recycling and production of new useful products for the region.
- Support and expand Flipflop fundraising and mentoring of East African community centres that are focussing on local plastic innovation, education and advocacy. 2022 we will scale support in Kisumu, and Diani, Kenya as well as Kampala, Uganda and Mwanza, Tanzania
- Accelerate our influence and advocacy programme to call for a ban of unnecessary single-use plastics across the East African community
- Support scientific progress to better understand the impact and extent of macro and microplastics in our water bodies
- Continue to establish creative and positive partnerships and campaigns to educate East Africans about plastic pollution and innovative recycling solutions



# GET IN TOUCH

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