PLASTIC CHANGE
ANNUAL REVIEW 2017
There is no doubt that plastic has become one of the great problems of our time. As opposed to other environmental challenges such as, for example, climate change, the problem of plastic is very conspicuous and has therefore attracted much attention. We are seeing a widespread desire to do something about it soon, before we all drown in plastic.

The problem of plastic has really made its way onto the political and media agenda. Not a day goes by without us seeing and hearing concern being voiced as to the environmental impact of plastic. And we are proud about the fact that Plastic Change is a big part of the reason why so many people in Denmark have now become aware of the issue.

We see it every day with the many people who reach out to us – students, associations, businesses, politicians, and others, who want to know more or help us in our work. In November, we received a solid grant from VELUX FONDEN and VILLUM FONDEN, which, together with a grant from Tuborgfondet, lays the secure foundations for the next couple of years, while we develop the organisation and find steady sources of income. It gives us strength and backbone to influence the population, politicians, and industry to take responsibility for ensuring that plastic pollution will not destroy the planet and its resources. The grants also make it possible to motivate and engage even greater numbers of dedicated enthusiasts in the fight against plastic waste and foster new projects to extend our reach even further and make it even more effective.
OUR DOCUMENTATION
OUR DOCUMENTATION

MICROPLASTICS IN DRINKING WATER
Plastic Change has long called for more research into the prevalence and impact of microplastics in the environment – a call that was suddenly heard late in the summer when a study published by CPH Business, a partner of Plastic Change, found microplastics in Danish drinking water. In response, Plastic Change launched the “Microplastic-free drinking water – yes, please!” campaign.

At the same time, we set out to gather signatures to call for more research in this area. After the first day, we had the first 1,000 signatures. Already after a few days, the Danish Minister for the Environment announced his plans for a study of drinking water in the entire country. This was a victory for us, but we are still pressing for more research into plastic pollution.

EXPEDITION PLASTIC SETS SAILS AGAIN
Plastic Change does not rely on second-hand reports. We prefer to set sails and see for ourselves. On 3rd of December, the S/Y Christianshavn, our expedition vessel, sailed on another mission – this time headed for French Polynesia. Again, water samples were taken using a special trawl developed by the 5Gyres Institute where the contents of the trawl are washed through a sieve. Halfway between Hawaii and French Polynesia we saw, for the first time since the beginning of the first expedition in 2015, two whole samples with no visible plastic particles.
OUR SOLUTIONS
An important part of our objects is to identify and devise methods that may contribute to illustrating and resolving the problem of plastic. In 2017, the work involved in finding solutions was very much anchored in Project Plastic-Free Ocean (formerly, Oceans of Opportunity); a 3-year project carried out in cooperation with the Danish Ecological Council and the Danish Plastics Federation, with a total of DKK 8.9 million in financial support from VELUX FONDEN and VILLUM FONDEN. The four sub-projects of the project, which are described below, started in 2016. The last sub-projects will be completed in 2019. In 2017 we executed the main part of the projects, with a total budget of DKK 4 million.

**PLASTIC-FREE ROSKILDE FJORD**

The purpose of this project is to map the scale of plastic pollution in the southern part of Roskilde Fjord, identify the sources, and find solutions to the problem in a joint effort with the local community. During the year, we mounted an exhibition on plastic in the local community and held meetings and two successful workshops on how to tackle plastics in and around the fiord. Nine groups of local citizens have been set up with the purpose of looking into themes such as microplastics, raising awareness, and behaviour.

During the spring, students of Roskilde Gymnasium carried out beach monitoring with 13 stations around the lower part of the fjord. Over the course of the year, samples were taken of water, bed and organisms and showed, among other things, an increased content of microplastics near sewage discharge points.

60 local citizens and politicians and a group of experts participated in a debate meeting on plastic in the autumn, which was organised in cooperation with Project Plastic-Free Ocean. The meeting sparked new political cooperation with plastic on the agenda, involving different parties and municipalities around the fiord, and the aim is to make Roskilde Fjord the leading pioneer of sustainable plastic use and solutions to plastic pollution.
RECYCLING OF PLASTICS AND MICROPLASTICS

BENCH & LITTER BUCKET
This project is about collecting and recycling plastic along the western coast of Denmark. Currently, the project is challenged by the fact that 80% of the waste collected must be discarded as it is not suitable for recycling, for example, because it is too dirty, the type of plastic is unsuitable for recycling, or the waste is not plastic but metal and iron. Even so, we managed in 2016-17 to collect a total of 4 tons of plastic along the western coast that we could use for our purposes. The company Aage Vestergård Larsen has now processed the plastic waste into powder, and the company Dansk Rotationsplast has made test moulds for chairs and litter buckets. In addition, models of the bench and litter bucket have been produced and they are used to raise awareness of the project.

So far, four municipalities have informed us that they will join us to collect and sort plastic in 2018

BEAT THE MICROBEAD
Denmark is still waiting for a European ban on microplastics in personal care products. In the meantime, the Beat the Microbead app is available for download to check specific personal care products to see if they contain microplastics. The database underlying the app was updated in the autumn with the assistance of our many volunteers. We also developed the “Your Plastic Face” campaign where celebrities’ reaction to microplastics in personal care products was filmed and shared on social media sites. The various clips will be made into a movie, which will be submitted to the Environmental Committee of the Danish Parliament together with a call for a Danish ban on microplastics in personal care products. A ban on microplastics in personal care products is only one of several specific proposals to how the Danish Parliament may draw up an action plan to start us out on the path for less plastic pollution.
PLASTIC EVERYWHERE

PLASTIC STRIPS FROM POSTERS GONE WILD
Nowadays, campaign posters for political elections are mounted with plastic strips. A very handy solution when mounting the posters, but not so much afterwards when they litter the streets. Thousands of loose plastic strips made Plastic Change launch an emergency campaign to gather plastic strips in Copenhagen and in connection with our Roskilde Fjord project. The campaign was picked up by TV and written media. We will make sure to bring a reminder at the next election.

BEACH CLEANINGS
On 6th of May, Plastic Change organised beach cleanings along the western coast of Denmark at Løkken, Hirtshals, Klitmøller and Hvide Sande, in cooperation with KIMO (the Local Authorities International Environmental Organisation) and a large number of volunteers. We also organised beach cleanings at the lakes of Copenhagen and several beaches north of Copenhagen. Hundreds of volunteers joined us to clean the beaches, collecting several tons of plastic.
OUR SOLUTIONS

POLITICIANS HAVE LISTENED
At Plastic Change we threw a celebration when - backed by a unanimous Parliament - Minister for the Environment and Food Esben Lunde Larsen sent a letter to the European Commission in early December with a list of wishes and concerns in relation to the EU plastics strategy, which was published in January 2018.

We are very pleased to see a unanimous Danish Parliament sending a strong signal to the European Commission that the EU must develop an ambitious plastics strategy for a future without plastic waste in the environment. With the new EU strategy, the way has been paved for a Danish action plan. Plastic Change is in continuous dialogue with Danish politicians and will hold them to their ambitious position.

PACKAGING BREAKTHROUGH
32% of plastic packaging worldwide ends up in nature. Only 5% of plastic packaging is recycled, and billions of Danish kroner are therefore lost. This is the reason why Plastic Change has joined forces with the company Naturli’, which uses trays composed of at least 50% recycled plastic for its new and very popular “Naturli’ Hakket” product. One step on the way towards a sustainable solution.
OUR AWARENESS RAISING ACTIVITIES

The problems with plastic and our work must be communicated externally – not just once in a while, but every single day. We have decided to focus our effort on social media, and so far, this has been a success which has enabled us to communicate our message to the target groups.

However, we also spend some resources on building and maintaining media relations and engaging directly with various target groups through speeches, exhibitions and finally contact with children and students who would like to know more about plastic.
VIDEO HAS GONE VIRAL

“Poseidon”, our small animation video, has 51 million viewings on Facebook. The video is one of six films made by the Animation Workshop in Viborg for Plastic Change, free of charge. The videos have spawned a lot of new contacts around the world, and thanks to “Poseidon” in particular, a great number of people worldwide have now heard of Plastic Change.

The small video is a major reason why at year-end, we had more than 200,000 followers on our international Facebook profile and 30,000 on our Danish profile, compared to 6,000 followers on the international and 18,000 followers on the Danish Facebook profile in early 2017.

This success has meant that people from all over the world have contacted us to praise our work, to collaborate or share videos and photos.

On our other social media sites, our following is growing too. At present, we have 1,214 followers on Twitter, 2,966 on Instagram and 933 on LinkedIn. We have elected to make an effort on the social media sites, constantly working to develop our potential there – among other things on LinkedIn, which over time is envisaged to help us forge closer ties to the business sector.

Obviously, we will not forget the traditional media, regularly appearing on the radio, TV and in newspapers – on a par with previous years.

FACEBOOK

Followers of Plastic Change International

| 1 JAN 2017:  | 6000 |
| 31 DEC 2017: | 214.124 |

Followers of Plastic Change (Danish)

| 1 JAN 2017:  | 18.833 |
| 31 DEC 2017: | 30.891 |
EXHIBITION, EVENTS AND LEARNING MATERIALS

EXHIBITION AND EVENTS

Plastic Change is committed to visiting all parts of the country and meeting those who know nothing about plastic, those who are concerned, those who are sceptical, and those who support us wholeheartedly.

In the summer season we were busy organising exhibitions, debates, and other events at a number of festivals, rallies, etc., including: Nature Meeting, Young Research Scientists, the People’s Political Festival, Lifestyle Days at Ledreborg, Lynex Cup, Unleash in Aarhus, Aarhus Festival, Kulturhavn Festival Copenhagen, SUP World Championship in Copenhagen and Vorupør, Agenda 21 at the Rødovre Centre and various beach cleaning events.

“An Ocean Free of Plastic” – our exhibition which has been developed and presented in collaboration with the National Aquarium Denmark, supported financially by the US Embassy in Denmark and the EU – toured around Europe in 2017, visiting Tallinn, Lisbon, Malta and Genoa to raise awareness of the challenges posed by plastic and to call for immediate action.

LEARNING MATERIALS

In late spring, publishers Gyldendal published the first part of our “A World of Plastic” learning materials envisaged to be used for Natural Geography at high school level. The materials were well received and by the end of the year, students from 80 different institutions had downloaded the materials. Consisting of a number of small videos and other components, the materials can be used by everybody who would like to know more about plastic. A set of learning materials for Biology will be launched in the spring of 2018.
OUR ORGANISATION
OUR ORGANISATION

In early 2017, our focus was on existing projects. Development of new activities as well as communication, membership activities and other organisational and secretariat backup activities were left to our volunteers and a few part-time employees with a much too heavy workload. The secretariat was based in the CEO’s basement, working at dining tables on dining chairs and their own PCs.

However, on 1st of August, with the promise of financial support from initially Tuborgfondet and later also VELUX FONDEN and VILLUM FONDEN, we relocated and moved into shared offices at Langebrogade offering a professional setting and the facilities to host meetings and events ourselves.

In addition, we were able to secure expertise, professionalism, and continuity in the secretariat by hiring four of those who had helped us out on a more casual basis and supplementing those resources with new and necessary colleagues.

In late 2017, the secretariat went full throttle on business development/fundraising, development of administrative systems as well as the membership management and accounting system. Income-generating activities largely took precedence over other activities.
STRATEGY AND AGENTS

STRATEGY IN PLACE
By late 2017, we had drawn up an overall strategy for the next 10 years. The overall focus is obviously still on our priority of passing an ocean – free of plastic – on to the next generations. In this connection, Plastic Change is committed to:

💡 Using its knowledge and insight to influence the industry, politicians, and individuals to get involved in the fight against plastic pollution

📣 Strengthening the voluntary commitment and the movement which Plastic Change intends to build

🎯 Creating results which show that we can reduce the many sources of pollution and reduce plastic waste

💧 Maintaining our position as the go-to NGO which has the greatest knowledge and insight and is an attractive partner in the fight against plastic pollution

PLASTIC CHANGE AGENTS
Around 30 people showed up one November evening for an event which was the first step in involving and educating local enthusiasts of all ages in Denmark to become Plastic Change Agents - to help us raise awareness and reverse the trend of increasing plastic pollution. The ambition behind the Agents initiative is to start a national movement and seize the momentum we are currently experiencing with a lot of people wanting to play an active part in our cause. Everyone can make a difference, especially if we stand together.
NEWS

MOGENS LYKKETOFT JOINS OUR ADVISORY NETWORK
We are very pleased and proud to announce that Mogens Lykketoft – former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chairman of the UN General Assembly – has accepted our invitation to join the advisory network. This has further strengthened our strong network, which includes research scientists, politicians, business figures and others who advise us on our work, strategies, and the problem with plastic.

MEMBERSHIP DATABASE AND NEWSLETTER SITUATION IMPROVING
We have had serious problems with our membership database and newsletter subscription service, which has been a source of irritation to our members and us alike. We have therefore purchased a new system, which will hopefully work.

One of the problems with the former membership management system was that the automatic recording payment of membership fees did not work. As a result, we drew a line in the month of October, and from that date it became easier for members to pay – and easy for us to record payment and thus to see how many active members we have. By the end of 2017, we had around 700 members and we are ready for many more to join. The fee is only DKK 200, and it is easy to register on our website.
OUR BUSINESS

Early in the year, we put the final touch to the plan to develop the organisation Plastic Change to ensure a sustainable economy and a stable platform into the future. In an organisation and business development plan, we identified a need for DKK 30 million, which in five years’ time will make Plastic Change an organisationally strong spearhead with sustainable economy and resources to step up the work to find solutions and organise local community projects and to engage more members and volunteers in the fight against plastic pollution. Out of the DKK 30 million, we identified a need for grants worth a total of DKK 14.6 million via the business plan.

DKK 4 MILLION FROM TUBORG
Just before the summer holidays, we were very pleased to receive a DKK 4 million grant from Tuborgfondet for the development project. This injection of funds created optimism in the organisation and made it possible to start implementing the new business plan.

DKK 10.6 MILLION FROM VELUX FONDEN AND VILLUM FONDEN
At the end of the year, VELUX FONDEN and VILLUM FONDEN stepped in, each with a grant of DKK 5.3 million, which meant that the remaining DKK 10.6 million for the development project was in place. It was a very special day when we received the news. With those grants we are now in a situation where we are able to move on at full speed developing our organisation, structures and economy – to do even more to fight plastic pollution.
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Strategic partnerships are an umbrella term for the businesses and organisations we work particularly closely with. An example of this is where Plastic Change receives a donation for every product sold or where we collaborate on a specific project. Some of our strategic partnerships which were initiated in 2017 are described below.

GOODWINGS APS
In early 2017, Plastic Change reinforced its partnership with the hotel booking site Goodwings. Unlike its competitors, Goodwings do not spend money on marketing and advertising. Instead, they donate part of their profit to one of a number of specific projects. Which project will receive the donation is for their customers to decide and, fortunately, in 2017 and early 2018 a good deal of Goodwings customers wanted to support Plastic Change projects.

NATURLI’ FOODS A/S
On 2nd of January 2018, food manufacturer Naturli’ Foods A/S launched a vegan meat-like product called “Naturli’ hakket”. The launch was preceded by a long period of cooperation to develop the right packaging for the product. This resulted in the use of at least 50% recycled plastic and a decision against a black plastic tray in favour of using a green one. As part of the partnership, Plastic Change receives DKK 0.2 for every tray sold in 2018. The tray also carries our logo and a notice prepared by Plastic Change.
OUR FINANCES
OUR FINANCES

We end 2017 with a profit of DKK 335,189, and DKK 160,389 of that amount is project related, including a major movement in expenses in the large Project Plastic-Free Ocean (formerly, Oceans of Opportunity), and the deficit incurred in 2016 on this project – due to movements in the other direction – has thus been recovered. The completion of Project Plastic-Free Ocean is included in the budget, see the activity plan, and the result is expected to balance.

With this year’s profit, we substantially improved our negative equity situation and are now just below DKK -169,000, compared with the previous year’s DKK -504,000. We expect, as a minimum, to achieve the budgeted profit in 2018 and the equity capital will then become positive.

The audited financial statements for 2017 (and previous years) are available on our website.

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2017 was a landmark year for Plastic Change. A quick look back on our history will put a perspective on things. Plastic Change was established in the spring of 2014 and depended, until the end of 2015, almost exclusively on volunteers, supported by a few paying members. At the end of 2015, we – and two partners – landed DKK 8.9 million for Project Plastic-Free Ocean, which began in 2016 and ends in 2019, with VELUX FONDEN and VILLUM FONDEN as sponsors. A huge step forward for the organisation, which has really helped to put plastic pollution on the agenda in Denmark.

In connection with our effort to formulate a long-term strategy for Plastic Change, we realised in 2016 that we needed funds to hire some full-time resources for the secretariat to anchor our work in a professional setting. We had to do this before even applying for additional grants and funds to execute the projects that are at the core of our activities.

The goal for 2017 was therefore to raise funds to finance Plastic Change’s operations for the next three years. This was the first strategic priority described in the annual review for 2016.

We are very pleased and proud to say that we have now delivered on that priority. VELUX FONDEN and VILLUM FONDEN decided, together with Tuborgfondet, to support Plastic Change with a total grant of DKK 14.6 million over five years, starting in early summer 2017. This is an exciting milestone in our history. We have now hired employees and, as a result, we are not forced to the same extent as before to rely on volunteers who are naturally unable to devote all their time and skill to our cause.

The three grants amount to about 50% of our budgeted expenditure over the next five years – so we are not quite there yet. The first two years our focus is centred on two things:

1. executing our strategic ambitions and the projects underpinning those ambitions
2. creating a platform to allow us to stand on our own feet financially.

So, going forward, you will hear a lot more about our initiatives to fight plastic pollution locally and globally. You will also see us forging new partnerships to secure our foundations into the future.

In conclusion, we would like to say a warm thank you to all of our volunteers, members and sponsors who have brought us safely through the first four years of our life – and particularly the core group of employees who have kept Plastic Change going in the cross field between volunteer and paid work. A very warm thank you also to VELUX FONDEN, VILLUM FONDEN and Tuborgfondet for the trust they have put in us with their grants which help us in our important work to fight plastic pollution.

We look forward with renewed enthusiasm to 2018, where we intend to really step up the level of activity.

The Plastic Change Board of Directors are unpaid volunteers. Our task is to set the framework for the organisation’s activities to enable us to meet the expectations which are formed by the general meeting and set out in our Articles of Association.