

A Real Solution To Our Biggest Problem



A file photo of a drain in New Delhi. | Photo Credit: PTI

Polluted waterway along a slum in Jakarta



India river pollution. Source: The Independent

A kid living in the garbage hill community in Pier 18 of Manila Port Area, the most depressing district in the city. By Troy EspirituPhoto



INTERVIEW



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Judith Ryan 
One World Filter CEO



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Despite the tremendous advances in technology in recent years, the issue of water instability continues to be a huge global problem in need of a sustainable solution. VoL spoke with Judy Ryan, president of One World Filter Foundation, a US and Canadian NGO with big ambitions to help eradicate one of the most serious concerns facing planet earth.

VoL: One World Filter Foundation aims to help solve the global drinking water crisis of the roughly 840 million less fortunate across our planet and eliminate 50% of the illnesses they

suffer. Can you give our VoL readers a brief overview of how you aim to do so?

Judith Ryan: The key to solving the global drinking water crisis of the roughly 840 million less fortunate across our planet is two-fold: 1) technology and 2) a meticulously planned and executed strategy to engage the world to collaborate with the OWF Foundation in our Water for All Initiative (WFAI) and Water for School Initiative (WFSI).

Technology wise, the ace up our sleeve is the state-of-the-art nano-filtration technology developed for the One World Filter™ (OWF)



Posted by Vento on 4th June 2018 in international news

System by Dr. Evan Koslow, one of the world's most prominent water filtration experts. The OWF System can filter any kind of fresh water – source being municipal, well, river, lake, pond or rainwater – and make it safe for drinking. It is a gravity flow filtration system that produces an average of three litres of safe drinking water per hour, and International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO)-certified to twenty-two National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) standards to remove all microbiological threats and a myriad of chemical and trace metal threats, including microplastics. In addition, it requires no electricity and produces the safest and most affordable drinking water at an annual cost of just \$2.90 per person, assuming three litres of Safe Water Requirement per person per day for 365 days. Safe Water Requirements is the education program of the OWF Foundation and its partners to be deployed so everyone understands safe water is for drinking, making ice, tea, and coffee, brushing teeth, baby drinking water and formula, washing fruits and vegetables, and cooking.

The superior performance and cost effectiveness of the OWF System will be of no use if we cannot deliver the product to the less fortunate. This will require awareness and understanding of the solution and the initiative on a global scale, billions of US dollars in budget, and collaboration and teamwork with partners around the world.

To create awareness and reach throughout the world, we have partnered with Mr. Doug Ivanovich, the lead organizer of Earth Day 50 Live – Climate Crisis Concert (ED50 Live - CCC), which is being organized to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day. Through this partnership, we expect our WFAI and WFSI to be seen and heard throughout the world, which will help us raise millions of US dollars and assist us to find additional potential partners to make this global initiative a success.

VoL: Your initiative aims to accompany the humanitarian kits with “boots on the ground” - could you elaborate on this to give us a clear idea of the kind of support and commitment your foundation and your partner NGOs will provide to those displaced and the less fortunate?

JR: OWF Foundation is new and does not have a global footprint of offices and workers. Hence, we will need to leverage on the existing infrastructure, manpower, and network of our Partner NGOs and foundations. “Boots on the ground” will be our team of partner NGOs and their staff, to help us identify and serve the intended recipients of the OWF Humanitarian Kits.

In the real world, it is not as easy to show up in a poverty-stricken community or refugee camp and offer your product. You've got to contend with red tape, approval processes, etc. The scope of work will mainly

entail education on best sanitation practices and safe drinking water awareness, as well as monitoring of the status and progress of recipient families and children in schools to measure the impact of the OWF Humanitarian Kits on their lives, to ensure our donors want to continue their support. Recipient families will also be eligible to receive an OWF Replacement Kit each year, providing their circumstances have not changed. The poverty cycle is very hard to overcome and as such, the OWF Foundation is dedicated long term to these people in need.

VoL: What has been the feedback on the ground in the developing countries you are planning to begin with? Have you been met with any type of resistance or distrust, as is often the way with deploying a new invention or technology as a humanitarian solution?

JR: Thus far we have been incredibly fortunate, as all potential Partner NGOs we have approached have welcomed the OWF Foundation with open arms as we demonstrate the OWF System with whatever water source they have available and it immediately becomes safe drinking water. The relationship between OWF Foundation and our Partner NGOs is a win-win. We will supply them the OWF Humanitarian Kits and our Partner NGOs already have “boots on the ground” to distribute to the less fortunate. Our current plan is for the initial WFAI deployment to be in a refugee camp in Turkey housing refugees from the Syrian war. Our current

plan is for the initial WFSI deployment to be in northern India.

VoL: How was the close collaboration with the Earth Day 50 Live – Climate Crisis Concert first established? What other strategic collaborations are in the pipeline?

JR: Collaboration with Mr. Doug Ivanovich and ED50 Live – CCC came about through an introduction by our dear friend and supporter Mr. Adam Berns. Through initial meetings and discussions with Doug, we realized that OWF Foundation and ED50 Live – CCC share the same mission and cause. As a result, we have decided to form a partnership to help promote each other's projects and initiatives. In particular, OWF Foundation is introducing ED50 Live – CCC broadcast partners to Doug and team to organize ED50 Live – CCC in Manila, Jakarta, Mumbai, UAE, Istanbul, Dublin and Lagos. Doug and team on the other hand, will promote OWF Foundation, WFAI, and WFSI in the run-up to and during the ED50 Live – CCC.

Another partnership we recently formed through the help of our dear friend and supporter, Inder Sharma, is with the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA), one of the largest interfaith institutions in India headquartered at Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh. GIWA was founded at the UNICEF headquarters in New York as the world's first alliance bringing the faiths together for clean water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). >>





Thai "garbage island" is approaching tourist resorts. Source: Reuters.



A group of garbage collectors are collecting cloth, coins, woven materials and reusable objects on the banks of Lake Jawahar Lal Nehru after the completion of a religious ceremony to erase the statue of Ganesh god on September 8, 2014 di Bhopal, India. EPA/SANHEEV GUPTA



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GIWA works on the “grand” level of massive outreach and awareness programs and advocacy with key government officials from the local to federal levels, as well as on the “ground” level of WASH education, community-led total sanitation programs, constructing toilets and handwashing stations, and implementing small- and large-scale water filtration systems. GIWA is headed by Founder and Chair H.H. Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, one of India’s most revered spiritual leaders, and Secretary-General Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, Ph.D. GIWA has partnered with the United Nations, WSSCC, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Swarovski, and many other organizations. OWF Foundation is excited to begin its partnership with GIWA to harness and channel the power of faith to bring about access to clean water for the less fortunate in India.

VoL: Sustainability is a very important topic worldwide right now, be it in energy, recycling, reusing, good business practices etc. Could you tell us how the OWF Foundation will help contribute to a sustainable future?

JR: First of all, water-related diseases are the largest cause of human illness in the world. In fact, the World Health Organization estimates that around 3.4 million people, mostly children, die annually from water-related diseases.

By helping eradicate illness and disease at its most basic source – water – OWF Foundation will contribute

to a healthier, more productive workforce, which is the basic building block of a sustainable society.

Second, the planet is literally choking on plastic trash with plastic bottles being the largest culprit. For instance, China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam contribute 60% of the plastic waste that enters the world’s oceans and by 2025, the world’s oceans will have one ton of plastic waste for every three-tons of fish. The OWF Foundation will help solve the global plastic pollution epidemic by helping reduce the use of single-use plastic products and packaging through its educational campaigns of the use of the OWF System. For instance, an OWF System for a family of six keeps up to 16,800 plastic 500cc bottles a year out of landfills and oceans.

OWF System dispensers are 100% recyclable. At the moment, OWF System Filters are 70% biodegradable and Dr. Evan Koslow is working to eventually make the OWF System Filters 100% biodegradable.

Third, to be sustainable, the humanitarian initiatives must be cost effective. We accomplish this by utilizing the best and least expensive water filtration technology. With a team of Partner NGOs, we can effectively deploy the solution to the global drinking water crisis.

Lastly, ethics and good business practices are essential for sustainability. For instance, we chose the OWF System technology because it is very affordable, requires no electricity, and filters out all

of the nasty stuff that make people sick. We have put in a lot of thought to help the less fortunate as they come first when designing, planning, and implementing our initiatives.

VoL: During her talk at Slush Conference 2018, Finnish company Sulapac CEO Suvi Haimi concluded saying: “The choices we make today form the heritage we leave for our children”. What legacy would you like to leave behind from your work at OWF Foundation?

JR: My personal goal is to one day be able to say to all of our supporters, “together we solved the global drinking crisis and eliminated 50% of the illness suffered by the less fortunate on our planet”. As a single mother of 4 sons, I often wonder what kind of world I am leaving behind for my kids, and what I would be remembered for. For many years, my passion has been

towards creating a lasting impact on the lives of women and children as they are the most vulnerable and, statistically, a high percentage of whom live in poverty. As women, we play a very important role in society.

Having come across this amazing and affordable water solution years ago, it was natural to want to ensure this got out to the masses, as it’s a life or death situation for many everyday. The loss of life is not necessary and can be prevented if those compromised regions get access to the right sustainable solutions. Our mission is to make it a staple for everyone despite their socio-economic background. I hope one day with the help of all our supporters we can say, “together we made an impact on the lives of so many and helped solved one of the world’s most pressing crisis by raising the bar for the world when it comes to accessing affordable, clean drinking water”. ●



India Wells running dry. Child fetching dirty water inside a well in Maharashtra, Karnataka, India. Source: DNA India.