

Life Out Of Plastic - L.O.O.P.

Lima, PeruLima, Peru



Irene Hofmeijer



Year Founded:
2011

Organization type:

for profit

Project Stage:

Growth

Budget:

\$10,000 - \$50,000

Website:

<http://www.lifeoutofplastic.com>

Twitter:

http://www.twitter.com/l_o_o_p

Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/lifeoutofplastic>

 SHARE

- [Social enterprise](#)
- [Eco Products](#)
- [Recycling](#)
- [Conscious consumerism](#)

Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

By 2025 for every 3 tons of fish in the ocean there will be 1 ton of plastics. Consumer habits must change for this reality to change. L.O.O.P. is a women led Peruvian social enterprise that raises awareness about plastic pollution by selling recycled PET products and organizing awareness campaigns.

WHAT IF - Inspiration: Write one sentence that describes a way that your project dares to ask, "WHAT IF?"

What if the word "waste" became a word of the past since consumers demanded products made of upcycled used materials?

About Project

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

Plastic waste and its impact on the marine ecosystem is one of the world's emerging environmental issues, affecting populations worldwide and with limited known solutions. Plastic is a petrochemical and therefore never disappears. With time it breaks down into microscopic pieces that pollute the marine ecosystem and potentially present a threat to human health. In parallel, global plastics recycling rate is a mere 5% of global production.

Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!

L.O.O.P. targets plastic pollution by creating a market for products made from recycled plastic waste (up-cycled PET). To date the L.O.O.P. value chain has transformed 1.3million PET plastic bottles into rPET fabric. End products are mainly tote bags sold as merchandising for corporations. L.O.O.P. targets the retail sector to motivate shoppers to replace single-use plastic bag with the L.O.O.P. reusable totes. Sales profits allow the company to organize awareness campaigns aimed at influencing youth consumer habits by promoting sustainable lifestyles. In summary, L.O.O.P. tackles plastic pollution at three levels: commercializing up-cycled products; providing alternatives to single-use plastics; and sparking consumer behavior change.

Awards

PREMIO CEMEX-TEC 2015; TIC AMERICA 2015; Historias del Cambio Climatico 2014; 10,000 women Goldman Sachs 2013; Protagonistas del Cambio UPC 2013; SEED Awards for Entrepreneurs in Sustainable Development 2013

Impact: How does it Work

Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.

First, L.O.O.P. makes a difference by providing employment. At the L.O.O.P. 5 women are employed full-time working on the companies commercial and social activities. Indirect employment is generated along the product value chain at the certified confection workshop and the textile company. Second, L.O.O.P. bags are made from waste, hence they contribute to mitigating climate change and promote a circular economy. Third, L.O.O.P. organizes highly visible awareness campaigns such as art shows and beach cleanups to promote lifestyles free of disposable plastics.; mobilizing consumers to take action against plastic pollution.

Impact: What is the impact of the work to date? Also describe the projected future impact for the coming years.

In four years, L.O.O.P. has up-cycled 1.3 million single-use PET bottle into rPET fabric through a local value chain. Through its activities, it has also created a demand for a product previously unknown in the local market (and also seen competitors appear in the process). Through its awareness activities, over 90 metric tons of marine debris have been removed from the Peruvian coastline, involving over 28K volunteers directly. Beyond figures, L.O.O.P. is a national movement emblematic of responsible consumerism, recycling and ocean care. With over 20K follower on social media, its considered a national opinion leader in sustainability. Future impacts aim to strengthen the upcycling capacity of its value chain by expanding product offer. If product sales increase, all the other impacts will grow too.

Spread Strategies: Moving forward, what are the main strategies for scaling impact?

L.O.O.P. is a platform for sustainable consumption, especially focused on promoting alternatives to disposable plastics and the opportunities in the circular economy. Moving forward we aim to strengthen our platform both virtually and physically. Our vision for L.O.O.P. is that it can become a hub to showcase initiatives upcycling plastics through their products. The physical space is a concept store/gallery/lab acting both as an information center and sales centre. L.O.O.P. aims to become a Latin American brand that validates product ethics and sustainability.

Sustainability

Financial Sustainability Plan: What is this solution's plan to ensure financial sustainability?

L.O.O.P. is a for profit business model. It was founded with a USD 3,000 investment made by its founders. Its annual budget is based on sales. Hence company growth has been subject to sales capacity. Future investments would be used for textile R&D with different fiber mixtures in order to expand product offer beyond bags. The ROI will be determined according to projected sales.

Marketplace: Who else is addressing the problem outlined here? How does the proposed project differ from these approaches?

Plastic pollution is traditionally addressed via improving solid waste management systems; NGO awareness activities; or government initiatives due to international treaties. Locally in Peru, and also regionally in South America, L.O.O.P. is one of the few (if not the only) brand that addresses plastic pollution through a product offer. Unlike local competitors simply commercializing rPET fiber products, the L.O.O.P. model integrates sales; awareness; and advocacy. Products sales is used as a medium to reach the final goal, rather than being the goal itself.

Team

Founding Story

Irene worked in research in the Amazon, spending long hours on canoe boat rides, surrounded by discarded plastics. Nadia worked in research the Pacific, spending long hours fishing boat rides, where she was repeatedly shocked at how plastics were indiscriminately discarded into the ocean. Irene had returned recently from Canada and saw a lack of environmental awareness campaigns being held at the consumer level. She organized a beach cleanup, the first L.O.O.P. artshow, and met Nadia. Together they decided that these activities had to continue but there was a lack of funding opportunities. They looked into local market opportunities and saw a potential in rPET fiber: L.O.O.P. was born.

Team

Alejandra, Brigitte, Maria Pia, Nadia and Irene are the current full-time L.O.O.P. team. Nadia (biologist) and Irene (environmentalist) are the directors in charge of general admin, finances, product supervision, PR, and new product development. Brigitte (administrator) oversees accounting, billing, store inventories, and logistics. Maria Pia (engineer) is in charge of corporate clients and product production. Alejandra (communicator) organizes awareness campaigns, manages social media and the volunteer program. She is currently on maternity leave. The company has an external account and pro-bono legal assessment. In the coming year, a logistical support will be hired for the sales area under Maria Pia's supervision. Campaign coordinators are hired on a temporal basis for each campaign. By 2020 L.O.O.P. aims to have four clear department: general admin, commercial, campaigns, and communications. Each department will have a department head and 2-3 employees for specific departmental tasks. The team will always works in an integrated manner.

File attachments:

 [2015_c.v.-loop.pdf](#)

Background

Please confirm how you heard about the Unilever Awards:

Via email

Please confirm your role in the initiative (eg Founder/co-Founder) and your organisational title:

Founder and Director

Which of the 8 UN Global Goals (Sustainable Development Goals) pre-selected for this competition does your solution relate most closely to? [select all that apply]

Gender Equality, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action.

Leadership and the Unilever Awards

Please provide examples of any previous entrepreneurial initiatives you have pioneered.

I began my entrepreneurial activities at age 16, selling cookies at my local market. We did with a group of friends, fundraiser for a humanitarian trip we were taking to Tanzania. That was definitely my first taste of setting up a production and sales model! I did not however truly engage in any entrepreneurial activities until I founded L.O.O.P. at age 21.

Beyond your existing team, who else are you working with to achieve your objectives, eg partners, advisors, mentors?

L.O.O.P. partners with local NGOs for all of its awareness campaigns. The company has a small advisory board, made up of two close contacts who give regular feedback on the company's progress.

Source URL: <https://www.changemakers.com/globalgoals2015/entries/life-out-plastic-loop>