

# **Youth Impact Communication**

## **Plastic Is Inelastic: The Potential Danger In Our Daily Life**

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# Summary

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Our project is based on the environment problem. Among the multiple environment problems, the most salient one is the plastic problem. We utilize TRC (a plogging group which combines picking with jogging) as the main propagation media to impact people to do environment protection. Besides, we also use the TRC-correlated media like Tiktok, WeChat Official Account, and Weibo as supplementary media. Our work are also reported by lots of media like CCTV, CGTN, Shandong TV Station, Qilu Evening Newspaper.

# Identify the Topic

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## | Topic Description

Abundant plastics, contaminated water, polluted air, dead sparrows, mutilated forests, hysterical farmland, human have given the Earth so much opportunity to wail. Every year, every month, every day, even every hour when every human action tries to reform every piece of land, ourselves are actually in the great danger for a long time. Among those environmental problems, the most touchable one to us is the numerous plastics. Although all of us in this team are living in the downtown of our city, it is still obvious to see littering. Everyone know that 1 gram of plastic may be more harmful than 1 grams of the chemical inside the battery. So, we want to mainly focus on the plastic pollution, and we also want to do our best to make people aware of the serious plastic pollution today. As for the call for action of the environment protection, we have long believed that there must be many teams want to do this since this is a much-talked-about topic. However, we one special path to enlarge our impact. As the leader of this work, I am also the leader of TRC (Trash Running in China; our nonprofit organization first established in Shanghai, and it has diffused to 12 cities in China) in Jinan, Shandong. We combined 2 crucial things together—picking and jogging—to form a new type of sport: plogging. Every Saturday night, we jog about 5 kilometers and pick the trash along the way. We often collect 4 or 5 bags of garbage in total after ending one such activity. The most abundant component of the garbage is plastic production. Thus, we can make a good access to our topic through the plogging team. We just want our community, our city to be cleaner. We just want citizens can be more aware of this topic, more devoted to our community, our city.

## | Why it is important

With the popularity of take-out food, the environmental issue, especially the overuse of plastic products, should be regarded considerably. Generally, the plastic pollution will harm agriculture, water resource, animals and other things that we must rely on. For apparent reasons, surprising amount of plastic are consumed every day. If human do not pay attention to the plastic pollution, the communities, cities, nations and even the world will be filled with garbage. For more latent reasons, the degradation of plastic will take a lot of time and expenses and the

natural decomposition may be take more than 200 years. As we meeting those serious problems, we think it is extraordinary necessary for us to do something for the whole society. So, we begin this project, begin to beautify the circumstance.

## **| Project Objective**

We are devoted to make people aware about the nowadays severe environment problem. We want to use the TRC team and auxiliary media to set examples to the public.

# Identify the Target Audience

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## | Who Are They?

Our audiences can be divided into two parts, and they are gradually attained. The first part of people is our TRC group members, and the second part, which is much larger, is the whole citizens in Jinan.

## | Why Are They?

There are two main reasons. First, they are relatively more accessible. We can communicate with our group members face to face or on the WeChat group. Moreover, we are familiar with each others, thus it will be easier to talk to them. More importantly, since we are living in Jinan, the citizen part is approachable. Secondly, this kind of audience set can ensure best propaganda effect. If the circle we drew is too large, it will take us too much time to finish our goal, thus a bad propagating effect; if we draw this domain too small, like just in our activity group, this will have little impact.

## | What is your scope?

To be more specific, influencing to people who like running is a relatively applicable plan. Since we are a group established on the combination of running and environmental protection, it will be easier to influence the joggers or runners, but our terminated goal is the citizens.

## | How to reach them?

After every activities, we always discuss our results in the process of plogging, and we, the team leaders, will conclude each activities in the perspective of environmental protection. Since we are in a WeChat group, it is easier to access to them. For the citizen part, that is what we are doing now. We have two approach. First, propagating our tenet in the process of each plogging; the second one is to

update the WeChat Public Platform. Through subscription and re-send, this will be known to more people.

# Identify the Key Message

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## | The Key Message

Save plastics, save the world

## | The Tactics Behind

We just analyze and show the opposite sides of the plastics. The only way to get the positive result is to control the use of plastics and alleviate the problems. So the slogan can encourage people to do the right way to solve the environmental problems which plastics will cause. The strategy can also attract people to pay more attention about the issue which we focus. In that case, our slogan will be more influential.

# Choose the Platform

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## | The Platform Chosen

The platform we choose TRC group propagation, which might be a little bit special. Most of the traditional media are substantial or common item like poster, passage, photo, video, WeChat Account, exhibition, and Website. Our media, however, is our action. When we are doing plogging, we do not fancy how much garbage we can pick, but what we cared is how much people pay attention to us; that is reason we combine jogging into the traditional cleaning process. Many people will feel ashamed when they see we are picking the trash, and this can ignite their environment protection willingness.

## | The Alternative Platforms

WeChat Public Account: as soon as we collect sufficient photos, we will show part of them on the Public Account first before the start of the exhibition. To do this, we can attract more people to engage in this photo-collection activity. And it will also get people know how dangerous we are under piles of trash.

Qilu Yidian: this is a local media app in our province and we have already gotten the communication to the article-publisher who can post the official column article at this platform. We will incorporate the usage of WeChat Public Account and this app to enlarge our audience.

The offline propagation: This is combined with the TRC project. When we are doing our plogging, we need to meet different people in this process; they pay attention to us, so our creed can be conveyed.

## | The Criteria to Evaluate

We will use these platforms mentioned above at the same time to maximize the impact, and this is the basic rule.

At the first time we chose our platform, we have considered 2 main factors:



1. how large the influence of each platform:

At first, we just want to propagate this theme of protection in our campus by a "campus photograph competition", but we still think if we can have a larger place to exhibit our notion, that is definitely great. So we want to exhibit photos in the public--the exhibition hall. At the same time, the purpose we use the app to enlarge of influence is the same: this is a faster method to influence people.

2. the time each platform can endure:

We do not want to just create a throwaway influence, but we want to use some platforms that can endure longer. If we just hold one photo exhibition, that will be not impressive to the public. So we add the app and Public Account publicity method, and we can post information, photos, and ideas from time to time, which is a long-run process. After the foreshadowing online, the exhibition will be more impressive at that day. Our notion can also be propagated further.

## | The Rating Sheet

 [Rating Sheet](#)

# Set the Agenda

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## | Set the Agenda

### AGENDA

- ① The roughly percentage of plastic out of the whole garbage
- ② How to pick while jogging.
- ③ Where to plog.
- ④ When to plog.
- ⑤ How to grab people' s attention and let them know the significance.
- ⑥ The evaluation of plogging.

### Explanation:

Our key topic is "Save plastics, save the world" , and to reach this target, we develop a series of relevant sub-topics which are knotted in parallel and mutually influenced.

Our sub-topics do not copy our To-do list, or the execution plan. What we do is break down the main topic and make it easier to communicate and be understood.

One think must be clarified here: our main topic itself is a detailed topic or message. The environment problem is of great significant which need to be considered by human-beings, but the problems are innumerable various: water pollution, air pollution, soil contamination, wildlife extinction, food unhealth, and the recycling difficulties. We concern all of the contamination and environment problems, but the most salient and live-closest one is the plastic problems. Thus, we take "plastic" as the main body of our main body.

We will illustrate our agenda throughout 4 aspects below:

1. The significant damage and the relationship between plastic damage and the world contamination.
2. Our observations, thoughts towards the cause to the fatal problem.
3. Our action.
4. The relationship between our key message and our impact-creating action.

First is about the huge contamination of plastics. The percentage of plastic trash produced annually to the yearly total production of the trash all of the world is not an amazing number, but the weight of plastic garbage is shocking: three hundred

million tons. Despite these huge numbers, the underlying effects of plastic production is much more detrimental. To this generation of us, seeing the natural degeneration of even a 1 dm<sup>3</sup> plastic sheet is impossible, not to mention the 3 hundred million tons of plastic garbage annual. Although many of the plastic garbage is subcutaneous and water-flowed, people can still meet plastic in their everyday life. Either in developed countries or developing countries, we can easily see the arbitrary plastic garbage like milk shake bottles, plastic bags, even some boxes. This fact is of great relevant to our main strategy used in the impact-creating process, which will be talked later.

To find the causes, which will be beneficial to the future work, wo did a lot of work too. We observed the people' s behaviors in crossings for several hours; we did many literature reviews; we also studied courses about the environment protection and asked teachers for help. Through months long-term observations and learning, we found that that this fact is produced by people' s unawareness and irresponsibility. When people find one thing that has little to do with them, they will definitely show indifference.

Then, we wanted to find an approach to gradually solve and propagate negative side of this affair. Introducing the TRC to Jinan, our city, is an excellent good idea. We can be the ad-cards, and we can also solve this problem little by little by simply picking the trash up.

All of the affairs happened are in sequence; our agenda is also in sequence. The different sub-topics are also the symbol of different discoveries. Our impact-creating process will focus more on the TRC propagation, because it has double benefits and we can tell this damaging fact to the public in a relaxing way.

 [\\_Agenda](#)

# Design the Packages

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# Create and Track the Impact

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## | The Execution Plan

### Executive Plan

Our overall plan is divided into three steps and each step is related to each other. Several steps, however, are simultaneous and each step is inspired by the previous work. We keep updating our plan to be creative and feasible.

#### -Plogging

-Leader: Yijie Zhang

-Date: July.19.2019

We introduced TRC (Trash Running in China, which is an organization established in Shanghai, and it has now spread into 11 cities already.) in Jinan in July. Every weekend, we jog about 5 kilometers and pick up the trash along the way. The combination of "jogging" and "picking" is called "plogging". After one plogging activity, the whole bags of garbage collected are about 4 to 5.

#### -Data Analysis (academic things)

-Leader: Jiayi Li, Yifan Xing, Xiaohan Zhou

-Date: Dec. 31.2019

The Plogging experience is not persuasive enough to encourage more and more people to be aware of the severe problem and join our plogging. Through plogging, we find that the plastic bottle is among the most important factor of pollution. Thus, we focus on the issue of plastic pollution. We collect the data and analyze the plastic recycling rate. In addition, we use regression analysis to analyze the growth rate of plastic pollution. Two simple parts of our academic analysis add more strength to our propaganda.

#### -Propaganda (the new one: by WeChat public platform operation)

-Leader: Yijie Zhang, Jiayi Li

-Date: March. 11. 2020

\*Because of the novel coronavirus outbreak, our plan changed online. We take the backup plan, propaganda on WeChat public platform, to replace the original plan of propaganda including photography exhibition. The photography work that have already been taken by us and collected through public will also be shown on the

platform.

To make people aware of the seriousness of environmental problems, especially plastic and take-out packaging, the two major garbage problems in today's society, as well as the significance and effectiveness of pick-and-run activities, we take the advantage of new media - WeChat public platform- to publish articles. Our articles are all based on the experience getting from plogging. The main topic of article included thoughts getting from plogging, interviews with environmental advocates, and tips of daily household waste disposal.

By using the WeChat public platform, we can let more people make acquaintance to this emergent problem.

 [Execution Plan](#)

## | Impact Statistics

As we execute our plan, we record the outcome impact statistics through two main ways.

First, we measure increment of the participants in our plogging group (TRC Jinan). Second, the number of viewers, subscriptions, thump-ups, reading or watch number, and the re-post number are all crucial indicator to our impact.

For the process indicator, we also have two ways.

The first is the frequency of our activities are held and the people attended.

The second one is the passage we totally send out.

Till now, we have 83 core team members in total in TRC-Jinan; more than 30 media reported us (including the television station, broadcasting station, newspaper, WeChat Public Account, and others) and the most famous and influential are CCTV and CGTN.

## | Collect Feedback

For now, though our plogging activities have already paused for a period of time, according to our previous feedback, we found that we have already owned a acceptable result. From the August in 2019 to now, we have held almost 20 plogging activities. Every time we are plogging, there are spectators and pedestrians notice us. As we pause to communicate with them, they all give us a really positive evaluation. Thus, our group, in Jinan, is acclaimed by many people. At

Jan.1 in 2020, we were also be reported by CCTV and more than 7 other local TVs program, newspaper, medias, and radio station, and this really prompted the development of our group: more people know us, and more join us. They all agree that we are doing a very valuable work.

# Review and Reflections

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## | Overall Self Check

*This part is absent or not available temporarily.*

## | What Are Successful

In terms of the method in creating impact, we believe that the induction of TRC plogging group is a critical step that leads to our success.

First of all, we are given the opportunity to clean the roads with our group members. As thus, we can do things in our modest to beautify our city, which is what we've always wanted to do. Though there are several TRC sub-groups have already existed in China, but all of the leaders of those sub-groups are adults. As a teenager, we take up this huge work. From four people at the beginning to the 83 core members, we indeed do a lot.

Secondly, as we mentioned in our WeChat public platform, the simple picking action will not produce a huge impact in the crowds. However, since we are a plogging group, which combines picking and jogging, we have our prominence. We exceed the normal jogging groups in environment protection; we also surpass the road cleaning groups in the creative movability (the running process). We can absolutely grab pedestrians' attention, and that is the creation. We do not long for the huge quantity of trash we picked, but we care about people's attention. You can understand us as the "moving ad-cards". This is of great effective since we can ignite people's shame and their awareness of inappropriate deed as we passing by.

This is just our success in impact-creating method. Despite this, we believe we also have some valuable quantities: persistence, enthusiasm, and collaboration. From July in 2019 to now, we have persisted in this program for about 10 months. During this time, we held numerous times of plogging, picked considerable bags of trash, and, most significantly, we gradually influence the public. Although our statistics or data are not very favorable compared to other groups, all of the facts and results are authentic and true. Many people do not care about environment protection, so they won't join us or look or propagation. However, that is exactly why we should



do this in our city: to gradually enlighten more people to do protection. We are reported by CCTV, Shandong Television station, Qilu Evening News, Jinan Broadcasting and Television station, and nearly 30 other local media outlets. We published articles every week since February in 2020. The article published on our WeChat reached the highest of more than 600 times browse for one article. All of these accomplishment owe to our persistence and collaboration. The power that pulls us forward is our love to the city and the beautiful environment. This competition is coming to an end, but our program will never come to the end till Jinan does not need us anymore, when people have accommodated environment protection.

## | What to Improve

Since there are only 4 members in our YIC group, assigning tasks is a problem. When we are all very busy with our school homework or other competition, completing the YIC platform in time is difficult for us. Thus, we still need to improve our efficiency, and we also need to schedule our time and tasks in a more proper way. The other difficult is the public inaction. Many people nowadays still do not want to participate in the environment protection, so it is a hard task to influence the public. This is of great disparate from our original thought. One method to persuade them is by publishing more attractive materials and passage and increasing the frequency of posting.

## | Summarize Learnings

The first part is about our team.

We understand the power of the teamwork. Some thing can be solved easily by the team members' cooperation. More importantly, every team members can assume their own responsibility and persist their own work.

The next part is about the environment.

We are more interesting in the environment protection and this project also gives us the reason to persist in. During this time, we not only learn how to influence others, but we also learnt many knowledge about environment protection in this process. We observed environment phenomenon, human behaviors, and learnt other organizations' ideas which is about environment protection. This impact program indeed gives us an excellent opportunity to explore the huge world.

# Team Credits

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Zhang Yijie

As the team leader of both the YIC team and the TRC group, Zhang Yijie assume huge responsibility. He held every plogging activity offline for months, did further edited for every passage that are sent into the WeChat Public Platform account, was interviewed by media, contacted with the TRC team members to produce a more favorable activity environment.

Credits: 9/10

Li Jiayi

Li Jiayi is mainly responsible for the WeChat Public Account. She designed all of the WeChat passage, wrote the passage, helped with the photo collection in this project, prepared for the previous photograph exhibition, and contacted with the people who can help us in propagation process.

Credits: 8.5/10

Zhou Xiaohan

Zhou Xiaohan wrote most of the text in the YIC platform and the WeChat Public Account, and helped with the management of the TRC group which includes the activity record, short summary, team members record, and the preparation of the activity.

Credits:8.5/10

Xing Yifan

Xing Yifan main audited the text in the YIC platform, which is a really big task. He also did something that is trivial but crucial like the material preparation of the communication package, TRC activity preparation, and some interview and contact preparation.

Credits: 8.5/10

 [Credits](#)

# Judge Comments

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" The target audience for this project is really interesting, because in a sense you don't need to convince that group about the importance of the issue. However, in terms of gathering data and perhaps using that group as an example that others can emulate, it seems like a very apt place to start. The fact that your work has been picked up by so many professional media outlets is a great example of how you can spread your message to wider audiences through offline activities. You also seem to have skilled photographers helping to document your own work, which really does help in terms of creating interesting visuals to grab people's attention on social media. It would be nice to see a more direct tie-in between your work with the plogging group and the very specific concerns about plastic usage. While waste management is certainly part of the discussion, it seems in your introduction that you focus much more on the creation of plastics as its own harmful practice. It's unclear in this project how ploggers will help develop a solution for that. "