

ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTER TO BE AVERTED...

Wednesday 21 October, 2015

Recently the refugees and migrants who have been landing on Lesbos have discarded thousands of lifejackets purchased for their perilous journey.

Some have been collected by the local government but even more are lying on beaches and floating in the sea and now there are literally 10's of thousands of life jackets piled high.

The local mayor indicated he was not sure what to do other than back fill them, even though they contained materials which would not deteriorate and it possibly illegal under EU regulations.

Adrian Brewer, CEO The Rotb Trust, a charity working with impoverished families in sub Saharan Africa helping with water and sanitation realised that he could use all these lifejackets in Africa.

For 18 months Adrian has been endeavouring to establish a life jacket co-op in Uganda and other locations on Lake Victoria where 5,000 fishermen a year are drowned.

The weather there changes in a blink of an eye and fishermen who cannot afford the luxury of a lifejacket drown at the rate of nearly 100 a week.

Adrian, a Rotarian from the Isle of Wight contacted the mayor of Lesbos who agreed to donate the lifejackets. Adrian, with fellow Rotarians is now putting together a plan to visit Lesbos and take a lifejacket expert from the Island, fellow Rotarian Jeremy Dale of Sea Safe Ltd and a small team of trained inspectors to check each jacket to ensure it is suitable for reuse.

Jeremy Dale has indicated that from photographic evidence 99% will be recyclable.

Once the jackets have been sorted they will be sent to Lake Victoria as a gift from the people of Lesbos.

'This is a major undertaking', explained Adrian, 'there are possibly two or three hundred thousand lifejackets and buoyancy aids in and around the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas. We could be looking at an environmental disaster as well as a human catastrophe'.

Funding for the project has already come from donors and organisations but Adrian added 'Funding a project of this scale requires urgent action from governments and NGO's to cover the costs of shipping'.

Further details from Adrian Brewer
www.rotb.co.uk
07809 456 247

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[The Roll Out the barrel trust](#)

T. 07809456247

E. adrian@rotb.co.uk

W. <http://www.rotb.co.uk>

Additional Contact(s):

info@rotb.co.uk

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