

## Press Release Material for School Bikes Africa Rotary Ireland 2020

National Launch Rotary School Bikes Africa, Dunmore Civic Amenity Centre, Kilkenny  
7<sup>th</sup> September 2020

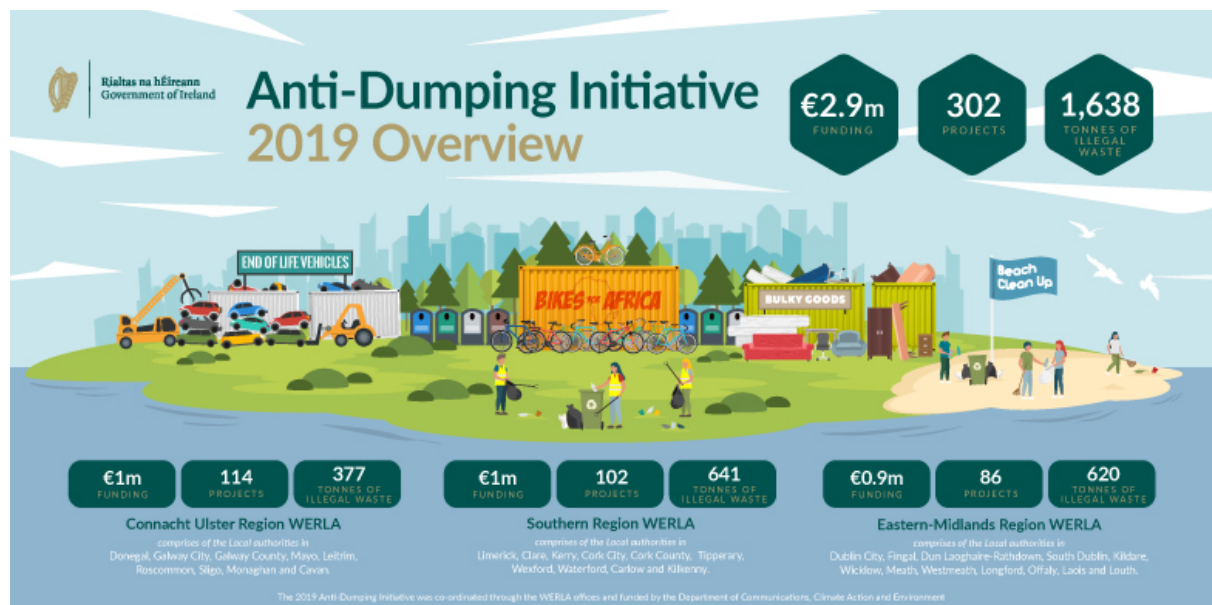
For the past 5 years Rotary Ireland have been collecting unwanted bikes from households around Ireland and sending them to Loughan House Open Prison for repair before shipping them to school children in Gambia to help them get to education. This has worked well but has proved too costly for Rotary (being non-commercial) to continue without a partner and a sustainable funding model.

Following on from a meeting in January this year with Irish Government Department of Communications Climate Action & Environment, Anti-Dumping Initiative funding has been approved recently for 11 Local Authorities totalling €107,000.

It has meant that we have been able to grow and expand the project and will ultimately mean that c. 4000 refurbished bikes will be collected from the Irish public over the next 12 months, sent for repair to now two prison bike workshops, Loughan House in Cavan & Shelton Abbey in Wicklow, before finding their way to school children in Gambia.

Jason Dempsey, Rotary Ireland District International Services Team Lead:

“It is such a rewarding and worthwhile initiative which has seen c. 3000 school children in Gambia supported over the past 5 years. Now with the generous support of the Department of Climate Action, Communications & Environment, we hope to support thousands more into the future.



All of us in Rotary Ireland are really grateful that we have established such a willing partner in the DCCA and by extension the National WERLA offices and the 11 Local Authorities.

We often describe this project as being a WIN WIN WIN

“Win for Climate – “repair & re-use and promoting sustainable transport”

“Win for Inmates – “providing training and rehabilitation”

“Win for Children – “providing better chance for education”

And it is a true example of community collaboration in action between Rotary, Government Departments, WERLA's, Local Authorities, The Prison Service and The Defence Forces.

It's important to keep in mind the huge impact that having a bike can have on these children in Gambia – its means a better chance to achieving a better education and the opportunities from this are obvious.

Below is a picture from a past recipient in Gambia: In providing a bike to him he now does not have to travel on foot up to 10km per day to and from school, in temperatures of c. 35 degrees!! Arriving exhausted to learn!

A bike to us in Ireland is often considered fun and recreational, a bike in Gambia is a route to a better education”

To Summarise – We will have 11 Drop Off points across the country.

**Kilkenny, Meath & Kildare** are existing site locations and have been involved successfully with this project for the past 2 years.

**Carlow, Clare, Cork, Kerry, Sligo, Galway, Leitrim & Wicklow** are now coming on stream

Contact Rotary Ireland Facebook or the various local authorities for further details.



*Drop off Containers in Local Authority Civic Amenity Centres in 11 Counties:*

