



Reclaiming Livelihoods (Mooi River Waste Reclaiming) : South Africa

Reducing waste, improving livelihoods

Project description

Reclaiming Livelihoods is an initiative of former informal waste pickers. Before founding the initiative, waste pickers worked as individuals in the town of Mooi River. With the assistance of the NGO groundWork, the waste pickers of Mooi River organised themselves into a formal group and now work together.



Business model

The local municipality (Mpofana Municipality) supports the initiative and has granted permission for recycling waste on the landfill. This enables the Reclaiming Livelihoods' waste pickers to collect recyclables such as cardboard, plastic, glass and paper directly on the landfill. The recyclables are then compressed and sold to larger recycling companies.



Scaling up activities in 2011

- Improve the transportation system from the landfill to the recycling company.
- Introduce an IT system.
- Procure urgently needed technical equipment (bailers, weight scales, a forklift, transportation and building material).
- Create additional jobs for waste pickers in Mooi River.

Immediate needs

- Provision of technical equipment (bailers, weight scales, forklift, vans etc.).
- Funds for buildings, including an office.
- Communication equipment (computer, fax machine, etc.).
- Skills development: management and technical training, including in IT.



SEED Awards 2010

for entrepreneurship in sustainable development

WINNER

Partnership

- **groundwork, Friends of the Earth** assisted in formalising the waste pickers and provide protective clothing.
- **Mpofana Municipality** grants permission to reclaim recycling materials on-site.
- **Central Waste Paper** a recycling company, subsidises technical equipment and buys the recyclables.



Social, environmental and economic impacts

Social impact: The initiative provides job opportunities and income to local people and therefore contributes to poverty alleviation. This is especially important in Mooi River because of high unemployment rates.

Environmental impact: With formalised waste reclaiming, the landfill sites are better managed by the constant presence of workers who are 'managers' of the site. This leads to fewer toxic materials being deposited on site, fewer fires, less water pollution, and finally increased recycling rates.

Economic impact: The initiative sells recycled materials to recycling companies and currently employs 25 persons. Prior to this, most employees were working as individuals on the landfill and increased their income by joining the initiative.

Contact

Sbu Dladla

Email: sbugriffiths@gmail.com

SEED Partners

SEED is hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Other current partners are the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature); and the governments of Germany, India, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.



About the SEED Initiative

The SEED Initiative identifies and supports promising small scale social and environmental entrepreneurs around the globe, entrepreneurs that while working towards a greener economy also tackle poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion.

SEED provides these social entrepreneurs with know how and networks, taking the lessons learnt at local level up to decision-makers to promote evidence-based policy making.

More information: www.seedinit.org

SEED Secretariat

info@seedinit.org