



GAFREH Plastic Bag Recycling Centre : Burkina Faso

Producing eco-friendly items from recycled plastic bags

Project description

Founded in 2003 by GAFREH, an association of women artisans, the recycling centre makes eco-friendly fashion goods and decorative handicraft products out of used plastic bags. The initiative provides an innovative solution to pollution caused by plastic waste in Burkina Faso, whilst encouraging women to become commercially autonomous.



Business model

The women collect plastic bags from the streets then transform them using various craft techniques (weaving, knitting, melting, casting) at the recycling centre. The centre currently creates jobs for more than 85 women. It offers technical support in designing and developing products and suggests financing opportunities for these self-employed women.

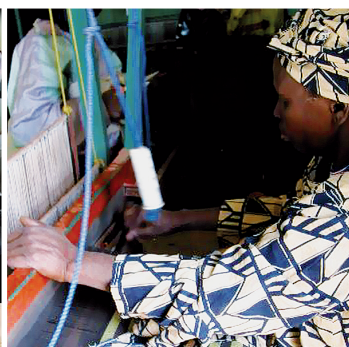
The products are sold through fair trade distribution channels on domestic and international markets, in boutiques and at events such as fairs.

Scaling up activities in 2012

- Introduce a new marketing policy to acquire new customers
- Expand the recycling centre by building new sheds, allowing more women to be involved in the initiative
- Diversify products, especially decorative pieces produced by melting or casting
- Identify new financial partners for the launch of a mineral water distribution centre and the purchase of a boutique in Ouagadougou

Immediate needs

- Financial support for purchasing additional production equipment (for melted / cast objects and weaving) and for providing the new base with electricity
- Financial support for developing new projects aimed at creating income-generating activities for women (e.g. sale of mineral water)
- Acquisition of new customers through a better marketing approach, particularly on the international market
- Management training for the initiative's managers and design training for women





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Partnership

- ❶ **GAFREH – Groupe d'Action des Femmes pour la Relance Economique du Houet** is the majority partner and leads the management of the initiative
- ❷ **The Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI)** provides technical and financial support
- ❸ **The Ministry of Environment of Burkina Faso (Ministère de l'Environnement et du Cadre de Vie)** provides technical and financial support
- ❹ **The Ministry of Women's Affairs (Ministère de la Promotion de la Femme)** provides technical and financial support



Social, environmental and economic impacts

Social impact: The recycling centre offers women and young girls an income-generating activity and encourages them to be financially autonomous. Some 85 women from disadvantaged areas receive substantial incomes and full-time work. They also benefit from technical and managerial training and financing opportunities. The initiative's profits are reinvested in new social actions (insurance, schooling, etc.).

Environmental impact: By recycling used plastic bags, the initiative is contributing to sanitation and helping combat pollution in Burkina Faso, as well as promoting

better waste management awareness amongst the local population. In 2010, 14,112 tonnes of plastic bags were recycled. The centre is also involved in various tree-planting projects.

Economic impact: The initiative contributes to the socio-economic development of the country and to raising the value of handicraft products from Burkina Faso on the international market. At a local level, the recycling centre also attracts tourists, which has a direct impact on the local economy.

Contact

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SEED Partners

SEED's founding partners are the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) and SEED is hosted by UNEP-WCMC. Other current partners are the governments of Germany, India, the Netherlands, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States of America; the European Union; Conservation International; and SEED's corporate partner, Hisense.

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

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