



Recycle Not A Waste Initiative : Ghana

Turning plastic waste into well-designed and high-fashion goods

Project description

The Recycle Not A Waste Initiative (RECNOWA) recycles waste plastic and other waste materials into well-designed products for daily use and fashion items. The initiative then promotes and sells the products. This creates employment and income opportunities for disadvantaged young people in the suburbs of Accra.



Business model

RECNOWA employs young people from disadvantaged communities in the suburbs of Accra to collect plastic waste from their neighbourhoods. The discarded plastic waste is washed, disinfected and dried before being sorted by colour and shredded. Young skilled artisans develop individual designs to turn the plastic waste into products such as bags, jewellery and furniture. These products are then sold as eco-friendly, handmade items on national and international markets. RECNOWA plans to replicate the model across Ghana.

Scaling up activities in 2012

- Provide permanent employment for up to 30 street youth
- Increase sales volumes to generate profits of USD 130,000
- Collect 120 tons of plastic waste from the streets of Accra
- Establish partnerships with private companies to obtain their waste materials and in doing so reduce their carbon footprint

Immediate needs

- Financial contributions for equipment and to support the scaling-up process
- Partners and expertise for establishing and positioning the RECNOWA brand and helping to access international markets
- Support with capacity-building and training for artisans
- Help in approaching companies and other investors





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Partnership

- **Recycle Not A Waste Initiative** is the lead partner, responsible for the design and production process as well as the coordination of distribution and sales activities
- **The US Global Partnership** is responsible for marketing the products to the United States and international fair-trade retail outlets
- **Vande Consult** offers management and strategic consultancy services for scaling up the initiative



Social, environmental and economic impacts

Social impact: The initiative will create many job opportunities for disadvantaged and unemployed young people in urban areas. It will also support and train young artisans in “up-cycling” plastic waste, turning it into well-designed products.

Environmental impact: All RECNOWA products are manufactured from post-consumer plastic, reducing the amount of plastic waste on the streets of Accra. By collecting and “up-cycling” waste into well-designed

products, the initiative raises public awareness of plastic as an environmental hazard.

Economic impact: RECNOWA will create stable sources of income for unemployed and disadvantaged young people, employing them as waste collectors and designers. These young people will receive training in business skills to enable them to establish their own small-scale businesses in the future.

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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