



**SEED** | 10 YEARS OF  
SEED AWARDS  
2005-2015  
promoting entrepreneurship  
for sustainable development

Founding Partners



**SOUTH AFRICA  
WINNER 2015**

By turning rubbish into building materials, the EcoBrick Exchange tackles plastic pollution on the streets, teaches environmental awareness, generates community participation, and assists in building education centres.



## EcoBrick Exchange, South Africa

### BUSINESS MODEL

EcoBrick Exchange educates local communities on the making of simple, reusable building bricks – done by filling PET bottles with rubbish – to construct early childhood centres and other community buildings. The enterprise engages with local businesses, schools and NGOs to train participants, offering second hand household items and clothing in exchange for bricks.

EcoBrick Exchange has developed a construction technique that is at least 20 % cheaper than standard construction, and when the enterprise works with communities on new projects, it earns a 50 % commission on any savings achieved above the initial 20 %.

### ENTERPRISE FAST FACTS:

Location	Port Elizabeth, South Africa
Year founded	2013
Sector	Green Solutions
Product/Service	Construction bricks

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### Social impacts:

- Empowering communities by actively involving them into the process of construction, and teaching them how to produce their own building materials from plastic waste.
- Improving early childhood development due to enhanced learning environments built by EcoBricks.

### Environmental impacts:

- Saving approximately 0.3 cubic metres of packed garbage from streets and landfill, or three kg of carbon emissions from burning garbage, with the production of each brick.
- Educating already 5,000 participants on environmental awareness and conscious living practices such as recycling, up-cycling and organic waste management.

### Economic impacts:

- Offering a low-cost building alternative that is easy to erect, while reducing heating and cooling needs through high insulating properties.
- Providing an opportunity for community members to produce bricks in exchange for used clothing and toys, or receiving a 10 % discount at certain stores.
- Generating income for communities' projects through brick sales.

” With its partners, EcoBrick Exchange has developed a manner of packaging EcoBricks into a wall that is highly insulated, fire resistant, and entirely recyclable.

### Scaling up activities:

- Work with developers, constructors, municipalities and NGOs to spread the technique and increase the number of new buildings, aiming to recycle hundreds of tons of plastic pollutants.
- Generate an additional revenue stream from selling EcoBricks to the construction industry.
- Reduce the enterprise' role in construction, with majority of fundraising handled by recipient NGOs, allowing several projects to be undertaken simultaneously.
- Implement training in development studies for the enterprise team to increase the skills transfer and job creation with the recipient communities, and further expand the range of training courses offered to staff.
- Commissioning the construction of bricks to build infrastructure, parks and other buildings that will benefit the community.



” Buildings constructed with EcoBricks provide high quality learning environments for previously disadvantaged youth.



### Partnership

- The non-governmental organisation **EcoBrick Exchange** facilitates training and community development to build childhood education centres with EcoBricks.
- **Wildlands** assists EcoBrick Exchange with the organising and quality management of bricks, as well as collection, and training the community on brick usage.
- **Masifunde** provides EcoBrick Exchange with a platform to test ideas and offers space and student assistants.
- **Greencycle** collects bricks and assists with their transportation.
- **Penguins Play and Learn Centre** is the first recipient township preschool which will receive a new building built from EcoBrick materials.
- The **SAB Foundation** awarded the EcoBrick Exchange with a Social Innovation Award, and has provided funding and advice.



The 2015 SEED Awards in South Africa are largely supported by the European Union, which is made up of 28 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Additional support is from **Hisense**

### About SEED

SEED identifies and supports promising small scale social and environmental enterprises around the globe, enterprises who while working towards a greener economy also tackle poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion. SEED provides these enterprises with know-how and networks, taking the lessons learnt at local level up to decision-makers to promote evidence-based policy making. For more information please write to [info@seed.uno](mailto:info@seed.uno) or visit:

[www.seed.uno](http://www.seed.uno)

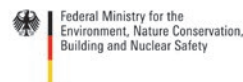
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