



SOUTH AFRICA
WINNER 2014



All Women Recycling

Empowering women in South Africa
through plastic recycling



SEED

promoting entrepreneurship
for sustainable development

Founding Partners



About SEED

SEED strengthens the capacity of small grassroots enterprises in developing countries to enhance their social, environmental, and economic benefits, builds bridges between entrepreneurs and policy makers and stimulates exchange and partnership building.

SEED was founded by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg and is hosted by adelphi research gGmbH, based in Berlin, Germany.

adelphi research (AR) is a leading think-and-do tank for policy analysis and strategy consulting. The institution offers creative solutions and services regarding global environment and development challenges for policy, business, and civil society communities.



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Creating innovative solutions to local challenges

LOCAL CHALLENGES

Unemployment

The first quarter of 2016 indicates one of the highest unemployment rates in South Africa on records since 2008. The official figure stands at 26.7%, a rate that is reported to rise to nearly 40% for those under 34¹. Statistics also point out that unemployment is highest amongst the black population (30,1%)². Finally, unemployment also has a gender dimension. Government statistics clearly show that women are less likely than men to be employed or economically active and they represent a large proportion of those doing unpaid work³.

While Cape Town shows one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country (20.9%), the above evidence strongly suggests that young black women are particularly vulnerable when it comes to unemployment and as a result they represent a large proportion of those living under the food poverty line.

Plastic waste pollution

Due to its ever increasing quantities and complexity, plastic waste is a major problem. The South Africa Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) reported that nearly 1,5 million tonnes of plastic was generated in South Africa in 2012, of which only 18%⁴ was recycled. Failing to recycle plastic waste results in littered cities, destroys wildlife and chokes drainage systems causing floods and health problems. In terms of resources conservation, much energy and raw material is lost instead of being recycled. Finally, as landfills fill up rapidly, many poor households resort to burning waste, generating toxic fumes from the plastics.

While the plastic recycling rates in South Africa have increased to 22% in 2014, and PET is in the top four most recycled materials⁵, plastic waste still remains problematic.

HOW THE BUSINESS WORKS

All Women Recycling (AWR) is a small business, based in the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town, that has created a unique product to address local social and environmental challenges. The enterprise recycles discarded plastic 2-litre PET bottles, which they source from dumpsites, community centres and schools, into greeting cards and into **kliketyklikboxes™**. The **kliketyklikbox™**, a unique versatile and trendy eco-friendly gift box; is now sold all around the world through agents and distributors.

By recruiting and training young black women that have been unemployed for 2 years or more, AWR not only addresses plastic waste pollution, but also tackles unemployment amongst one of the most vulnerable groups of South Africa's society.

Key Facts:

Location: Cape Town, South Africa
Founded: 2009
Annual turnover: USD 68,300
Annual profit: USD 8,200
Workers: 14
Female workforce: 100%
Avg salary: USD 2,700 p/y



Watch how we do it!



” Empowering unemployed young black women through income creation, skill development and training in upcycling PET bottles into versatile and useful crafts. “



¹ www.brookings.edu/blogs/the-avenue/posts/2015/12/18-johannesburg-unemployment-parilla

² www.fin24.com/Economy/double-trouble-for-sa-over-soaring-unemployment-20160510

³ www.statssa.gov.za/publications/Report-03-10-05/Report-03-10-052011.pdf

⁴ <http://sawic.environment.gov.za/documents/1880.pdf>

⁵ www.plasticsinfo.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Executive-Summary-May-2015.pdf

The power of partnerships



National Consultancy

Fetola, a South African enterprise development specialist, started to support AWR under their ETU Programme, an accelerator project funded by the Finnish Government. Their support consists of advice on management and strategy and they mentor the staff on quality control and pricing. In addition, Fetola is also actively profiling AWR through various media channels. Based on AWR's success during the ETU Programme, they accepted AWR in their Alumni Programme through which they continue to offer guidance pro bono or at reduced rates.

In turn, Fetola derives benefits from the partnership by showcasing AWR's progress as a testimony to the success of their methodology, which increases their credibility amongst donors.



International retailers

Contigo, a fair trade business from Germany, and **Syabonga**, a Dutch retailer, are two of the 35 international retailers that AWR works with. Their partnership goes far beyond a commercial one; aside from providing access to European markets, they also provide assistance with networking, mentorship with marketing and business development, and have been instrumental in finding sponsorships and in fundraising.

In turn, the retailers benefit from the partnership which enables them to offer a unique product range that is truly produced at the grassroots and fulfils their objectives of bringing social and environmental change.



Civil Society Organisations (CSO)

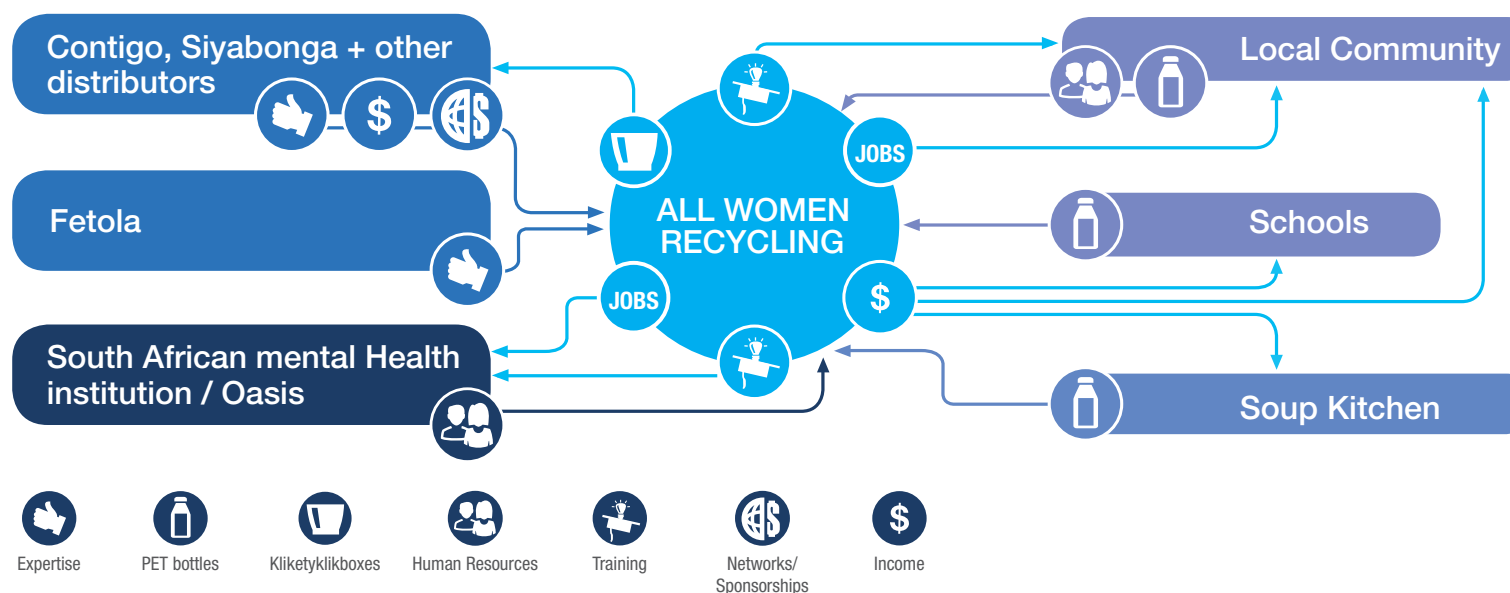
AWR is partnering with various CSOs. They have an informal partnership with the **soup kitchen** in Lavender Hill, one of the poorest areas in Cape Town. The organisation encourages surrounding communities to collect PET bottles and to deliver those at the soup kitchen in exchange for a hamper. The PET bottles are then sold to AWR. This arrangement generates mutual benefits for all: AWR increases its influx of PET bottles, the soup kitchen generates more income and the poor communities' access to food is improved.

AWR has also been working with **Oasis**, an institution for mentally ill women. In South Africa, most people with a mental illness are still excluded from the job market and by training those women in manufacturing greeting cards from recycled PET, AWR offers them a way to generate an income. AWR is currently also looking to partner with the **South African Mental Health Institution** to reach another 400 women and men. By expanding its portfolio, AWR empowers more marginalised segments of the community and increases its impact.

Learn more about the partnership!



PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE



“ Partnership management is an on-going learning process. But it is paramount to have the same objectives, ethos and for partners to add value beyond financial benefits. ”

Creating impact



SOCIAL IMPACT

AWR aims to provide marginalised groups in society with new opportunities to improve their lives. Their main target group consists of young black women, often single mothers, who have not been employed for 2 years or more. While many of them have a low education at the outset, AWR's extensive training helps them develop a wide range of transferable skills, which has enabled women to move on to further education or other employment. Moreover, with the stable income they now earn, the young women can support their families. AWR has also started working with elderly women and mentally challenged men and women. These isolated segments of society are now empowered and can actively take part in society.

Key impacts

- Generates 14 direct jobs, with above average income, for unemployed women (20-40yrs)
- Increases access to education, health and food
- Has built skills in production, management and financial administration for 30 young and 15 elderly women



ECONOMIC IMPACT

AWR has developed a new value chain in the waste management sector through creative crafts. Their model links waste collectors from dumpsite, community members from CSOs and women producers and managers directly with international retailers. By increasing the income of all those involved along the value chain, AWR increases the purchase power of people in some of the poorest areas of Cape Town. In addition, each bottle that is recycled saves municipal costs on waste management. The fact that the enterprise is now fully self-sustaining and scales up each year is evidence of their financial viability.

Key impacts

- Produces 350 Klikketyklikboxes per day
- Has increased income, in some cases by over 100%, for over 200 people
- Has generated \$3,500 for waste collectors in 2015



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

AWR's main environmental objective is to reduce plastic waste pollution by cutting the number of PET bottles ending up in landfills or being illegally dumped in the environment.

At the same time, AWR raises awareness on environmental issues and entrepreneurship. They organise information days in schools and through campaigns with the waste collectors, communities centres, and the soup kitchen poor communities are informed about waste management and recycling opportunities.

Key impacts

- Recycled over 450,000 PET bottles; 180,000 in 2015
- Reduced CO₂ emissions by nearly 120 tonnes in 2015
- Raised awareness on environmental issues and recycling in 15 schools, reaching over 12,000 children

CHALLENGES

- Competition from large recycling companies selling PET bottles in bulk to foreign markets
- The lack of infrastructure and security impairs women's mobility, which affects their attendance at work

SUCCESS FACTORS

- Business mentorship and investment in staff skill development
- Partnerships with local, national and international organisations and businesses
- Unique product range with a compelling story behind it
- Direct contact with client that allows AWR to tailor products

FUTURE PLANS

- Recycle 500,000 PET bottles by the end 2016
- Open a training centre to train 100 women per year
- Provide employment to 400 disabled men and women
- Develop new products and expand the international market
- Replicate the model in India

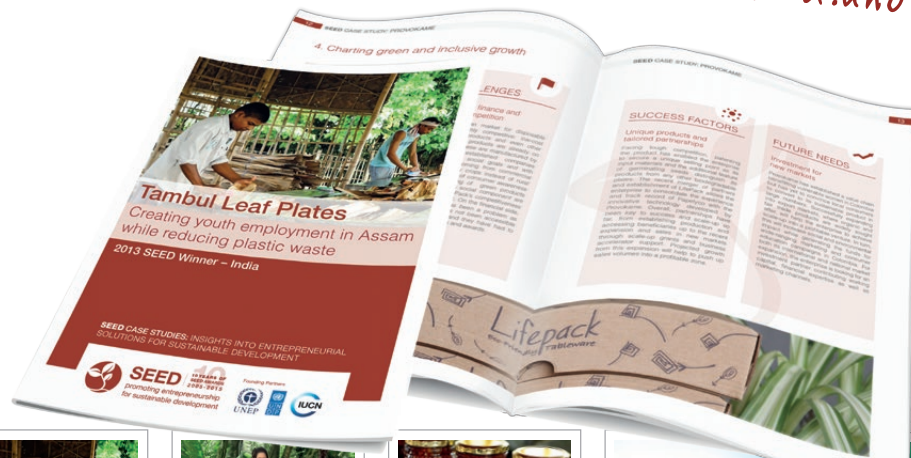
” I never worked before. Now I'm managing the floor, taking orders and managing staff! This is not just a job, but an eye-opener. I can do things I never imagined I could and I can support my family and pay for my children's school fees. – Beneficiary – “

See how we create impact!





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SEED Case Studies Series

Demonstrating Sustainable Development on the Ground through Locally-Driven Eco-Entrepreneurship

Social and environmental entrepreneurship, also known as green and inclusive entrepreneurship or eco-entrepreneurship, has a critical role to play in achieving a global Green Economy. By embracing the added values of social improvement and resource management eco-enterprises that have won a SEED Award are living proof that entrepreneurial partnerships between various stakeholders can create innovative and novel solutions for delivering sustainable development at the grassroots level and be economically sustainable.

Over the last ten years, SEED has awarded over **200 SEED Awards** to eco-enterprises in 37 countries. While the value of eco-entrepreneurship in delivering sustainable development is increasingly recognised and harnessed in the development sphere, there is still very little data available on the triple bottom line impact of these enterprises and their contribution to sustainable development.

The SEED Case Studies are designed to help fill that gap by generating insights for policy and decision-makers on the role of green and inclusive enterprises in achieving sustainable development, and on enabling factors that can help them overcome barriers and reach scale and replicate.





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