

## Motherwell Community and Enviro Hub

### Project Overview

The project we are working on is based on facilitating existing community-run initiatives in the Motherwell area. It brings together:

- Motherwell Buy-Back Centre / Noziqhamo Arts and Crafts –
  - Recycling centre in Motherwell, run by 4 women.
  - Started in 1998, with lots of interest and support, especially from the Zwartkops Conservancy who still play a big role
  - Waste is brought to the centre by waste pickers in the surrounding area
  - The women sort the waste, and sell recyclables to recycling companies
  - Non-recyclable waste is made into beautiful crafts on site
  - The women operate from 4 containers, and have no access to services. The containers have been burnt and vandalised, and are rusting.
  - Despite the constraints, they do an excellent job at reducing waste in the community, which would otherwise end up in the stormwater canal system, and into the Swartkops Estuary
- A group of women, with support of the Zwartkops Conservancy, run an Enviro-Education Club for up to 100 children at a time, in Motherwell. They work closely with the BBC, and teach the children crafts, song, and dance; all with an environmental education and awareness perspective. The women mostly run these events from a cul de sac outside their homes, and are in need of safe and weather-proof structures to store their desks and equipment, and from where they can run training and give shows.
- The Hlumani Nande Environmental Ambassadors Group is a community-based environmental group in Nelson Mandela Bay. Vibrant and passionate youth drive the Group, and their focus is environmental sustainability, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and food security. Part of their work is a network of community gardeners, where urban vegetable growing is discussed and facilitated. There is a need for more food gardens and composting areas in Motherwell, especially with the impact of COVID-19 on the economy and hunger.

We had an opportunity to meet with these inspiring people in March last year, and listen to what they do, and what their needs are. Based on this, we wrote a project proposal that addressed the collective challenges and submitted it to various funders. Funding has been received for a project that focuses on:

- Upgrading and expanding the BBC to integrate with an Enviro-Education Facility, food gardens and composting areas.

The fund and project addresses the following key themes:

- Reduce plastic waste to the estuary/sea
- Empower women and children
- Awareness on the impact of waste, and changing perceptions of waste to an item of potential value
- Skills development, and local economic development opportunities

Part of the project entails investigating what waste items we can use to build structures, furniture, walls etc. While there are lots of excellent examples out there of what can be done, we have to see what works at the site – regulations must be met, it must be affordable, and the method used must be easily replicable. The facility will be a pilot plant, and serve as a demonstration centre of what can be done with waste. We hope that tourists and others will be attracted to the facility.

We are working with a great team, and have been busy since October last year talking and planning, and making sure all parties are on board every step of the way.

The team includes:

- Existing 'operators':

- The Motherwell Buy-Back Centre
- The Enviro-Education Club
- The Hlumani Nande Environmental Ambassadors Group
- CEN IEM Unit: Project management and facilitation, and environmental management
- Therese Boule: specialist social facilitator
- Johan Lochner and Matthew Thompson: RBL Architects
- Partners
  - Swartkops Conservancy: the ZC has been involved with the project since its inception, and has a rich understanding of its history. Their Vision is a healthy Swartkops River Ecosystem, by promoting public awareness and participation in caring for the greater ecosystem for the benefit of all. They are involved in a daily basis in working with communities in preventing pollution and promoting social upliftment.
  - Sustainable Seas Trust is an NPO focussed on reducing plastic pollution to the seas of Africa. SST is helping with research to measure the impact of the project, through measuring changes in perceptions by local residents and in street litter loads, before and after the project's implementation.

Project outcomes will be reduced waste, with particular attention to plastic waste, entering the estuary, improved living conditions, and sustainable livelihood opportunities. Focus on plastic waste is due to the pronounced negative environmental impact of plastic waste in marine and other environments particularly in the area of focus of this project. Further, the project will change people's view of waste to an item of value, thereby reducing the act of littering.

Other projects are happening in the metro where waste management and community development are focus areas. Existing partnerships will work together and share knowledge and experiences throughout the project life cycle, adding to sustainability and the positive cumulative impact.

#### What we need:

- Eco-Bricks, designed as per specifications and other waste materials that we can use for building (e.g. bottle tops). If you are an existing Greencycle customer place your eco-bricks in your recycling collection. Alternatively, you can drop off your eco-bricks at Sustainable Seas Trust 222 Main Road, Walmer between 8am-4pm Monday to Friday. All large donations please contact Belinda, Clark directly.  
**NOTE: For information and graphics on how to make Eco-Bricks, please check <https://sst.org.za/news/how-to-make-eco-bricks/>**
- While there is funding, there is substantial need for additional support to achieve the full project outcomes. Type of support includes financial, materials, advisory, hands on, or whatever you feel you can offer. We will be approaching possible sponsors shortly with an overview of material requirements and specifics.

#### For more information

- Please go to Sustainable Seas Trust on Facebook and Instagram
- Or contact:
- Belinda Clark of CEN Integrated Environmental Management Unit for more information on 072 725 6400 / [bclark@telkomsa.net](mailto:bclark@telkomsa.net) or website: <https://environmentcen.co.za/>
- Alternatively, Therese Boule: [boulletherese@gmail.com](mailto:boulletherese@gmail.com)

