



United Nations

Framework Convention on Climate Change

Recycle Not a Waste Initiative | Ghana

In the crowded city of Kumasi, Ghana, garbage is a major problem. The government sanitation systems do not reach the slums. But the young people of the [Recycle Not a Waste Initiative](#) (Recnowa) are turning the waste into a low-carbon business opportunity. The social enterprise employs local artisans and street youth in poor urban communities to take recyclable waste out of landfills and off the streets, reducing emissions at the same time.

The problem

Urban poverty is a significant problem in Ghana. Another problem is the thousands of plastic bags and bottles that litter the streets and clog the sewers. The Recnowa Initiative believes that the most important step to ending poverty is to create employment and income opportunities. The initiative does that by engaging and providing opportunities for street youth and other urban poor artisans from slum communities to take recyclable waste out of landfills and off the streets.

By up-cycling waste materials, the initiative reduce the quantities of waste reaching the landfills and dump yards in the city of Kumasi. Dumping waste in dump yards poisons the land, the water bodies connected to it, and the environment around it.

The solution

The Recnowa activity uses plastics and other material waste to produce high quality fashion-driven goods for both the local and international fair trade markets while improving the quality of life of the urban poor in Ghana.

Ten plastic waste mobilization centers, which process between 80 to 100 tonnes of plastic each month, are managed by groups of trained street youth. The plastic collectors earn money for every 50 kg of plastic they remove from the streets, markets and plastic waste bins. By converting waste materials into eco-friendly goods, the initiative has already cut carbon emissions by more than five million kilograms - proving that no effort is too small when it comes to addressing climate change. The *Recnowa Initiative* has also created 30 direct jobs and 100 indirect jobs (plastic waste collectors, sorters and transporters), with workers earning a higher wage than most other Ghanaians in similar industries.

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