

Change Choices Good, Better, Best

Recycling



Stepping Up to Sustainability

Stepping Up to Sustainability – how can we live more sustainably and make positive lifestyle choices?

In 2011, WESSA launched the 'Stepping Up to Sustainability' concept. With the support of various partners, USAID and other funders, eleven 'Sustainability Commons' have been established across South Africa.

Each of these 'Sustainability Commons' practices sustainable living by:

- reducing, sorting and managing waste better,
- installing renewable technologies,
- conserving and teaching about water management, as well as,
- providing experiential courses on biodiversity.

The goal is simple - to put into practice the lifestyle choices we all need to make! These innovative concepts are set to expand as we all 'step up to sustainability' and seek to change our environmental footprints into environmental handprints of practice for a more sustainable future!

Recycling

Recycling turns materials that would otherwise become waste into valuable resources. Collecting used bottles, cans, and newspapers and taking them to the curb or to a collection facility is just the first in a series of steps that generates a host of financial, environmental, and social returns. Some of these benefits accrue locally as well as globally.

Benefits of Recycling:

- Recycling reduces the need for landfilling and incineration.
- Recycling prevents pollution caused by the manufacturing of products from virgin materials.
- Recycling saves energy.
- Recycling decreases emissions of greenhouse gases that contribute to global climate change.
- Recycling conserves natural resources such as timber, water, and minerals.
- Recycling helps sustain the environment for future generations.

This 'Change Choice' pamphlet was developed by Peter Mminakgomo, Colbert Munarini, Tapson Patane and Ben Anthony Zuze during a workshop at the 2012 EEASA 30th Annual Conference and Workshop held in Grahamstown.



Did you know?

Recycling an aluminum can saves enough energy to run a television set for three hours or light a 100 watt bulb for 20 hours.

Did you know?

On average, 16% of the money you spend on a product pays for the packaging, which ultimately ends up as rubbish.

Good Change Choices

Recycling

-  **Pick up litter.** Whether there is one person, your family, the whole class and school or the entire community, picking up litter is a good place to start!
-  **Place bins in appropriate places.** Choose places in and around the school and community where people are likely to dispose of waste.
-  **Sort litter and waste.** Glass, paper, plastic and tins can all be recycled so either fill individual bags with only one item (such as glass) or sort out the bags once you have cleaned up a section of road, river or open area.
-  **Re-use plastic bags** or buy/make your own sturdy material bags which you can use over and over again.
-  **Re-use paper** as scrap paper or packing material. Envelopes can also be re-used.
-  **Use your local library.** Borrow from libraries instead of buying personal books and movies. This saves money, as well as the ink and paper that goes into printing new books.

Did you know?

About half the refuse we throw away each day can be turned into compost, thus reducing waste, recycling valuable resources and enriching the soil.

Better Change Choices

Recycling

-  **Reduce your ecological footprint.** Try reduce the amount of resources you use by purchasing items with minimal packaging.
 -  **Re-use.** Encourage friends, family and colleagues to think before they throw something away. Where possible, re-use a product several times. If you cannot use it again, find someone who can. If products cannot be re-used, then recycle them.
 -  **Make beautiful products from waste.** Photo frames, floor mats, necklaces, rings and flower pots are some of the many items we can make from waste.
- Start a compost heap.** Virtually all plant material will decompose on a compost heap.
-  **Reduce excessive watering by mulching.** Mulching reduces surface evaporation from the soil, moderates soil temperature fluctuations, discourages weed growth and improves soil structure and nutrient availability.

Did you know?

Every plastic bag saved is worth 62.5kg of carbon! And, the 17 trees saved by recycling one ton of paper can absorb a total of 113kg of carbon dioxide out of the air each year!

Best Change Choices

Recycling

-  **Re-use grey water.** Grey water is made up of bath, shower, bathroom sink and washing machine water, it is not advisable to use your kitchen water as this is damaging to plant life because of the fat content.
-  **Use biogas.** Biogas can provide a clean, easily controlled source of renewable energy from organic waste materials, replacing firewood or fossil fuels
-  **Educational campaigns.** Develop an action plan that may start small but escalates into a complete waste management programme, following the principles of refuse, re-think, repair, reduce, re-use and recycle.



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For **environmental resources** to support better lifestyle choices, contact WESSA Share-Net, 033-330 3931 ext 2124 or 2144; e-mail us at sharenet@wessa.co.za or visit our website www.wessa.org.za

Main funding agent of the WESSA 'Stepping Up to Sustainability' project.

Practice the
lifestyle choices
we all have to make!!