

REPORT 4 – THE RECYCLING PROJECT

Date: Saturday, February 16TH, 2019

Venue: Community Market Square, Liati Wote

Present: LIATI WOTE COMMUNITY, CHIEFS AND ELDERS, LIATI WOTE TOURISM BOARD (KEN AGBEZUHLOR) STEPPING STONES FOR AFRICA (CINDY NOORDERMEER-PANOOU, WISDOM KPEGBA, ROB, JACQUELINE)



INTRODUCTION

Liati Wote community had undertaken a needs assessment and prioritization of their development threats in 2017 during a meeting with Stepping Stones for Africa (SSFA) and their partner Jolinaiko Eco Tours. During the meeting, they identified sanitation, tourism development, deforestation, and unemployment as key priority areas of concern. Stepping Stones for Africa (SSFA) proposed a partnership with Liati Wote to tackle these challenges. Plastic waste recycling project was initiated as a way of dealing with some of these threats identified.

COMMUNITY MEETING

On the 16th of February 2019, a community meeting was organized at Liati Wote to introduce the plastic waste recycling project to the community and all the relevant stakeholders. The occasion was also used to announce all the stakeholders connected to the project and what their individual roles will be on the project.

EXPLAINING THE RECYCLING PROJECT

The recycling project was initiated to tackle the plastic waste situation in Liati Wote. The project is a means to addressing the three major challenges of the community; youth unemployment, sanitation, and tourism development. The recycling project will deal with plastic waste generated by the community and tourists and transform it into finished and semi-finished products of economic value. There are three subprojects under the project and they include; community waste collection, recycling using different recycling methods and awareness creation. During the meeting, the different stakeholders took turns to explain the project in detail stating their roles and commitment.

COMMUNITY PLASTIC WASTE COLLECTION



Ken Agbezuhlor, a representative of the Liati Wote tourism management board was present at the meeting to explain the community's role in the recycling project. He mentioned the importance of recycling and the need for Liati Wote to be clean of plastic waste. In addition, Mr. Agbezuhlor spoke about the plastic waste collection. Plastic waste management is the collective efforts of everybody in the community but for the purpose of this project, it is important to put a committee in place to stir the affairs of the project and ensure the collection is done in an orderly manner. It is equally important to have the community's input on all decisions relating to the project. In order to achieve this, an eight (8) member committee was instituted by the community to oversee the project. The committee members are

representatives from different segments of the community, like the schools, women group, tour guide association, the men, and the sanitation committee.

THE ROLE OF STEPPING STONES FOR AFRICA (SSFA)

Stepping Stones for Africa (SSFA) is an NGO committed to grassroots development in West Africa using tourism as a tool. Cindy, the President of SSFA spoke about the plastic waste menace and how it has become a global threat to development and tourism management. She explained SSFA's approach (Participatory rural appraisal) in community development work. She stated, it is an approach which ensures projects are initiated by the community, owned and sustained by them without imposition from people outside the community. She took the time to also remind the community of previous appraisals which actually had led to the initiation of the recycling project. Moving forward, she stressed the importance of the project to the development of tourism and the protection of the environment. In her conclusion, she reaffirms SSFA's support and that of their partner Jolinaiko Eco Tours towards the project and the community as a whole.



Rob and Jacqueline are a Dutch couple who spent three months in the community in 2018. The community recognized their efforts and passion for a clean village, and Rob was consequently made chief of sanitation and development. They returned to Liati Wote this year and expressed their commitment to support the waste management project. Rob is also a board member of the Stepping Stones for Africa.

EXPLAINING THE DIFFERENT RECYCLING METHODS.

The Project Manager, Wisdom Kpegba took his turn to explain in detail, the different recycling methods to be adopted on the project. He started with the Precious Plastic Concept. This concept was developed in the Netherlands by Dave Hakkens where an entire recycling station is set up in a shipping container. The station caters for storage, sorting, shredding, extrusion, and moulding of plastic waste into different products. He also mentioned sewing plastic sachets to make items like bags and shredding of plastic waste to supply to plastic manufacturing companies. Mr. Kpegba added that, in order to successfully undertake this project, there is a need for commitment from all stakeholders especially the youths in Liati Wote. In conclusion, he cited employment, skills development and environmental protection as the direct benefits of the project if it is successfully implemented.



CONCLUSION

The meeting ended with the Chief and elders of Liati Wote expressing their appreciation to Stepping Stones for Africa (SSFA) and all the other partners for their commitment to support the community on this project. He also encouraged community members to be committed to the project so as to make it successful.

