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W.I.F.E.S – WINNING INITIATIVES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

W.I.F.E.S was started by Green Waters Netherlands in March 2009 as the foundations' second project. The intention is to create environmental sustainability projects within the Rotterdam-IJsselmonde community. The first initiative to be created under W.I.F.E.S was creative recycling of household materials.

The execution of the project for the year 2011 has been 60% successful.

The strong points of the project are:

Quantitative

- 80 people had the opportunity to be part of W.I.F.E.S workshops in 2011.
- 800+ people were able to hear about project W.I.F.E.S
- 40% of the workshops attendants are young people from age 4-10.

Qualitative

- The target groups learnt not only the skills of creative recycling but also how they can save or make money by recycling. i.e by the creative workshops of Hats pimping, Clothes pimping, and creative recycling of boxes.
- By using i.e the creatively recycled bottle of values, young people are able to develop positive values that are useful in society.
- Those who attended the workshops were enthusiastic to learn new skills.
- The groups were able to add their own creativity to the products
- The workshops focused on household materials and therefore those who learnt can easily use the knowledge at home.

The weak points of the project are:

Quantitative

- Only 1 artist worked for the project in 2011
- Lack of financial aid limits workshops implementation.
- Available limited funding was only for workshops in IJsselmonde Rotterdam.

Qualitative

- The workshops need more diversity of skills so that people can learn how to recycle a variety of different materials successfully from home.
- More artists are needed to give these workshops.
- This requires more funding.

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The Short term goals for project WIFES have been realized by 60%.

1. For the target groups which attended the courses in 2011, we have managed to raise environmental awareness.
2. We have also given the target groups some useful points on how to save money and how to develop positive values.
3. Project W.I.F.E.S is established in IJsselmonde Rotterdam and the community is aware of our project.
4. We managed to raise awareness during Africa day event in den Haag
5. We managed to sell some of the products created under W.I.F.E.S
6. We have managed to combine the environment, the social and the economics within our project workshops.
7. It is possible to buy W.I.F.E.S products from Green Waters webshop.



The remaining 40% of the goals that project W.I.F.E.S have failed to realize include:

1. We have not managed to establish product lines
2. We have not managed to find sustainable outlets for the creative recycled products.
3. We have not been able to expand project W.I.F.E.S
4. We have not managed to create other environmental initiatives under W.I.F.E.S
5. We have not been able to expand the project further than Rotterdam IJsselmonde.

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Our long term goals are not yet realized. This includes:

1. The establishment of recycling Centres or waste collection centres that will also provide opportunities for internships, entrepreneurship and employment in sectors such as cleaning and sorting of waste, recycling art workshops, awareness workshops, production.
2. Having environmental sustainability awareness workshops that will offer various knowledge in environmental management.

Other results have come to light since the establishment of project W.I.F.E.S.

1. We now understand that in order for the creative recycling project to be sustainable, we need to have outlets for the products that are created by the target groups.
2. We also understand that there are many within community who are not established professional artists, but are blessed with creativity of which they would be happy to use in this recycling project if they can earn an income from it.
3. We understand that with right venue and committed partnership assistance, this project can be the backbone of the community especially during economic crisis.

Most activities for project WIFES 2011 were implemented as planned. We started the project with the idea that we can work with artists to implement creative recycling workshops in the community and this has been successful when artists are involved.

The strategy that has proven to be the most successful is that we let artists decide the type of workshop they want to give, and then offer the list of workshops to different target groups and they select according to their interest, available material and capabilities.

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Workshops 2011

1. Kleiding pimpen (pimping clothes)
2. Petjes Pimpen (pimping hats)
3. Creative recycling of juice boxes
4. Creative recycling of the bottle of values.



Project external challenges

1. Limited amount of Artists:

Most artists in the community are already busy on their personal projects during daytime.

2. Costs:

We don't have enough funding to arrange workshops for more target groups.

3. Target group:

The target group at De Kubus primary school require more workshops to understand why the environment is important and how recycling can benefit the environment.

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Internal factors that have had a positive influence

Products development:

Products created under W.I.F.E.S, i.e recycled paper necklaces, can now be sold to raise funds for capacity building projects.

Green Waters team:

Green Waters reputation in development work has grown and our team has expanded.

New artist 2011:

Melissa Yvonne Tesha

Project W.I.F.E.S activities in 2011:

- On September 19th, we participated at the Mondiaal event organised by Perspect organisation in IJsselmonde Rotterdam. Two of the workshops given at our stand include were “*How to ‘pimp’ T-shirts by using ready made patterns and beads*” and “*How to ‘pimp’ hats by making flower patterns using old materials*”.
The event attracted a big crowd from within IJsselmonde because it was also on the same day as the ‘Kunst route’.
- On October 29th, we were able to promote project W.I.F.E.S at the Africa day event which was organized by Stichting Evertmeer at Haagse Hogeschool Den Haag. Many people who visited our stand were informed about W.I.F.E.S and they were happy to buy our creatively recycled paper necklaces as their contribution towards our capacity building projects in Tanzania.
- On 20th November, two more workshops were given at De Kubus basic school. Both workshops were attended by children from group ¾ and their teacher was also included.

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Workshop types

Creating a bottle of wisdom

The importance of this workshop was not only to show the children how they can creatively decorate glass bottles, but also how they can develop their positive values. Once the bottle was creatively decorated, the workshop team wrote down a number of positive values on pieces of paper. These included; politeness, respect, gratitude, silence; helpfulness, obedient and others. At the beginning of the week, the teacher will allow a chosen student to pick one value from the bottle and explain what it means. For the remainder of the week the class have to work to develop that value.



Creative recycling of Juice boxes

Being that the workshop was near the festive holidays, the children were taught how to cut and decorate Juice boxes in such a way that they turn into attractive gift boxes. The idea was appealing to the target group and they became very creative.

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For project evaluation, we make sure that there is a representative of Green Waters when the workshop is being given. This helps us to evaluate the skills of the artists and to judge the mood of the workshop recipients. The target groups who attend the skills workshops are also asked for their feedback directly after the workshop is finished.

From what we have come to understand, more workshops are needed to raise environmental awareness. Target groups need to be challenged with more activities such as environmental ideas competition (ideen wedstrijds).

More attention in the future will be given on acquiring funding and getting more artists involved in the project. We aim to find a central working place and outlets for the products that are made by our target groups so as to ensure sustainability. In order to achieve sustainability we will require cooperation from our partners. Financial support given to us by SBAW has been very helpful.

The direct number of people we reached for the year 2011 is around 800, including the promotion during Africa day event.

W.I.F.E.S has empowered the target group with creative recycling skills of which they can use to create products at low costs. The products can be used or sold to create an additional income.

We encourage our groups not to view recycling as an additional burden, but rather as a way of saving money and making money in a way that also benefits the environment.

Environmental awareness is continually being raised under W.I.F.E.S and we look forward to working with current and new partners to develop yet more environmental initiatives under project W.I.F.E.S.

We appreciate all your support and contributions past, present and in the future.

Green Waters Management team

Stella Evelyne Tesha and Bianka Wettin

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