

Turning waste into plastic pavers



A group of environmentalists known as Kasanvu Environmentalists Group in Kisugu have come up with a way to involve residents in collecting rubbish and turning it into plastic pavers.

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"Inessentials can be turned into essentials," is the theme you see along the streets of Kisugu, in the go-down railway area. Here, a group of natives known as the "Kasanvu Environmentalists Group," has conserved the environment for the last 11 years. This team collects trash and turns it into plastic pavers.

"In 2006, KCCA entrusted me with this area to work together with natives and ensure proper disposal of garbage. After an environmental sustainability training from Hope for a Child, a non-profitable organisation under the initiative of KCCA, I discovered a way to make plastic pavers out of the rubbish," recounts Alex Tumulanye, the group chairperson and KCCA worker.

The process

After listing the necessary materials needed to make the plastic pavers such as polythene paper, soil and plastic bottles, Faridah Nakirya, a group member, explains the process: "We put the polythene in fire pan and heat it until it turns into a liquid. We then mix soil into this liquid and stir until the mixture turns solid. The mixture is then poured into paver shapers and covered for two minutes. The end product is 10 removed and left to cool for 15 minutes."

Shapes.

According to Nakirya, there are various shapes and sizes of the pavers available at the site. "We have pentagon, rectangular and double T shapes. We also paint them a range of colours including white, orange and black depending on the client's choice," she says.



Cost

The team is able to sell plastic pavers to clients at an affordable price and still promote environmental sustainability. Away from concrete pavers which are a bit costly at about Shs50,000 per square metre, plastic pavers are quite affordable. They cost Shs1,500 per paver.

Benefits.

"For the homeowner, recycled plastic paving stones offer several benefits. The stones are durable. They will not split, break, or deteriorate, making them virtually indestructible. Also, a patio or sidewalk made with plastic paving stones allows water to permeate into the ground. This effect slows water and helps prevent runoff," Nakirya says.

Paul Kato, a resident of Muyenga, testifies to the advantages of using plastic pavers. He says: "For the past 16 years, I have struggled with renovating and replacing cracked concrete pavers. But when a friend introduced me to plastic pavers, I decided to opt for them too. I have not been disappointed and to add to that, they are pocket-friendly."

CHALLENGES

These home-made pavers also have a number of short-comings. Alex Tumulanye, the group chairperson and KCCA worker, says apart from the other easily accessible materials from waste products, processing machines are expensive.

"The major challenge apart from a lack in the market for the product, since few people are knowledgeable about them is the cost and purchase of all the necessary tools such as mixers, crushers and a cooking drum, among others. The shaping machine costs about Shs20m."

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