

# Collect-a-Can salutes women entrepreneurs who recycle

This Women's Month, Collect-a-Can pays homage to the women of our nation who are investing in social good in their communities and making a sustainable contribution to our local economy and environment through waste management and recycling...

The company actively works within various communities, encouraging citizens from all walks of life to safeguard our environment, while uplifting their families and communities through recycling entrepreneurship initiatives and informal can recycling.



Some of the can collection initiatives

"As women, we have the power to make a difference in communities," says Zimasa Velaphi, public relations and marketing manager of Collect-a-Can. "It is wonderful to see so many women who understand that waste has value and that it creates an opportunity for them to start their own ventures or create an income for themselves and their families."

## Women entrepreneurs explain business model

"It is up to us to make a difference," says Nomkhosi Mashile, a female business owner of New Beginnings Home Loans, who started a second business close to her heart, Recycling Moms.

Recycling Moms' mandate is to empower and create jobs for unemployed mothers who are waste-pickers trying to feed and provide for their families with the money generated out of selling recyclable material.

"Recycling does not only create jobs, boost the South African economy and save energy, but it keeps the environment clean and green for current and future generations," Mashile continues.

The company was founded in September 2014 in Cowies Hill, Pinetown with big dreams to expand and start their own processing plant to process the recyclable materials; making an even bigger contribution to protecting the environment.

Female informal can collector, Lizzie Sicwebu, from Gugulethu in the Cape Flats, is one of many women in South Africa who makes use of the company's Cash for Cans initiative. Last year, after reading a newspaper article about Collect-a-Can, Sicwebu started collecting cans and banking on the initiative as a substitute for a formal income to earn a living and provide for her family.

PWK Waste Management and Recycling was born in 2014 when managing director, Susan Kone conducted research on how to dispose of fluorescent globes. Her curiosity led to a discovery that there are many illegal landfill sites; inspiring Kone to start her own recycling venture in Vuwani, Limpopo, dedicated to recycling all recyclable waste.

PWK has only been operating for a few months, but has achieved great success already. This women-owned and managed recycling venture provides employment for seven permanent employees and three casual staff members.

"We intend to partner with the Department of Environmental Affairs and the Makhado Municipality to educate the local community about the importance of reducing, reusing and recycling," says Kone.

Kone has high aspirational goals for PWK Waste Management and Recycling. Her one-year plan is to see the venture as one of the top five waste management companies in the Vhembe District, specifically managed by women. She also strives to grow her team to ten fulltime employees in the next two years.

These women aim to encourage their communities to start recycling and leave behind a legacy of informed communities dedicated to a clean and green environment. For more information, go to [www.collectacan.co.za](http://www.collectacan.co.za).

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