

COP17 legacy for children

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A number of social legacy projects were built into the South African Climate Change Response Expo (CCR Expo) hosted at COP17 in Durban last year - including the recent opening of the Maphephetheni Children's Playground.



Climate change often focuses on environmental issues, but empowering communities and addressing social issues goes hand-in-hand with bringing about climate smart behaviour. This was why social legacy projects were an important part of the CCR Expo.

The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) contracted Scan Interactive, a JV between event designers, Interactive Africa, and exhibition specialists, Scan Display, to design, build and manage the CCR Expo, and to do so in such a way as to impart as many direct benefits to the local Durban community as possible.

Over 4 000 indigenous plants, a mix of shrubs, grasses and trees, were procured to beautify the CCR Expo, and also to educate visitors about KwaZulu-Natal's natural habitat. When the event ended, DEA and Scan Interactive donated these plants to one of eThekweni Municipality's reforestation and ecosystem restoration projects in the Inanda Mountain area. The project is being managed by the Wildlands Conservation Trust as part of their 'greenpreneur' programme.



The greenpreneur programme is about creating jobs by giving people the opportunity to make money from growing trees and food, and collecting waste for recycling. It is currently funded by the provincial government through the Premier's office, and at present their funding is secure for five years, with indications that this will be continued for at least another five years thereafter.

It was agreed that the best use for the donated plants was a new community park in Inanda, as there is a lack of facilities for the community living there. In consultation with the local tribal chief, induna and ward councillor, suitable land was identified for the park and the plants were planted earlier this year.

"The donation of these indigenous plants is in keeping with the Department's commitment to greening the country while at the same time providing opportunities for communities to learn about and appreciate the natural environment. The Department is pleased to know that the legacy of COP17 is alive in KwaZulu-Natal," said Albi Modise, DEA spokesperson.

Servest, who partnered with Scan Interactive to design and create the Greenscape at the CCR Expo, also assisted with identifying and facilitating the park project, relocating the plants to site, and in addition donated children's playground equipment and a new lawn.

A number of local community members have been appointed to look after the park, creating some much-needed employment.



Justin Hawes, MD of Scan Display, says: "It is fantastic that the Maphephetheni Children's Playground exists as a green space for the children in this area to grow up with, so they can learn to appreciate the natural environment. This was what the CCR Expo was about."

Some of the other social legacy projects that Scan Interactive initiated from the CCR Expo include the donation of carpets, benches, a worm farm, food gardens and recycling bins to a mix of community projects like orphanages, schools and nurseries, old age homes and housing projects.

For more information about Scan Interactive and the CCR Expo project, contact Justin Hawes on +27 11 447 4777 or justin@scandisplay.co.za or Dale Cupido on +27 21 465 9966 or dale@interactiveafrica.co.za.

For more information on eThekweni Municipality's biodiversity and climate projects, contact Jo Boule at boullej@durban.gov.za.

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