

Legacy of COP17 is alive in KwaZulu-Natal

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.

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, The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) and Scan Interactive donated these plants to a reforestation and ecosystem restoration project in the Inanda Mountain area being managed by the Wildlands Conservation Trust as part of their greenpreneur programme. The greenpreneur programme is about creating jobs by giving people the opportunities make money from growing trees and food, and collecting waste for recycling.

Donation in keeping with commitment

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 our commitment to greening the country while at the same time providing opportunities for communities to learn about and appreciate the natural environment. We are pleased to know that the legacy of CoP17 is alive in KwaZulu-Natal," said Albi Modise, DEA spokesperson.

Playground equipment and lawn

Servest, who assisted with the transportation of the plants to site after the CCR Expo, also donated an array of 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.

Says Justin Hawes, MD of Scan Display: "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 their 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.

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