

Kylemore seamstresses pivot from mascots to masks

Tourism has been devastated by Covid-19, and it is not just the obviously affected lodges, guides, tour operators and safari companies that are impacted, but also many communities whose income has suddenly come to a standstill. For a group of women sewing in the tiny settlement of Kylemore, in the Western Cape, it has meant almost their entire earnings have dried up.



The ladies sew 'mascots' for Community Conservation Funds Africa (CCFA), a registered NPC which is both a fundraising and grant-giving organisation, focusing on active education and empowerment in local communities. Through a partnership with Baby Cuddles, they design and produce the CCFA animal mascots. This project had created permanent employment for six women and continues to grow.

Department of Health guidelines followed

Without tourism though, there is no demand for the mascots, so the team of seamstresses had to adapt and change their core business. They decided to make masks, according to the Department of Health guidelines, using the Shweshwe cotton used for the mascots.



Melanie Laing of Baby Cuddles says, "I am blessed to have been given the opportunity to work with a team of very talented, wonderful women who are always happy and full of smiles, no matter what life throws at them. This time life threw them a pandemic but, as with so many South Africans, we have turned this situation around and are now making mascots into masks."

"There will be three of us sewing for this project, myself and two of the ladies all working from home, and we aim to make at least 600 masks a week. The work will bring in an income to help fund and assist all nine of us in the company and our families during this Covid-19 crisis."

For more information, [click here](#).

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