

Women and Youth Resort to Recycling for a Livelihood

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Recycling is not only a way to protect the environment and keep communities clean, for many women and young people in Bathurst, but it is also a means of survival.

With high unemployment, rising food prices, and deepening poverty, many residents in Bathurst, a small rural village in the Ndlambe municipality of the Eastern Cape, have turned to collecting recyclable materials to earn an income and support their families.

Residents in this area voted for and elected leaders, trusting they would bring change to this small community, but the situation has not changed at all.

Many of the women and youth who work the dumpsite fall sick because they do not have protective clothing. Women often bring their children to help them collect the recyclables. During school holidays, children join their parents and spend the whole day working at the dumpsite.

Anesipho Tokwe, a recycler from the village, said that at the dumpsite she has seen both young and old people feed themselves and gather recyclables as a source of income. She says people working in the dumpsite are helpless because there is nothing better to do.

Isikhalo Women's Movement offers business workshops to provide skills and has offered to donate gloves and face masks to recyclers to reduce health risks when collecting recyclables.

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