

Project "Beautiful Waste": Fostering Creativity and Community Responsibility among Students of Natural Resource and Environmental Management at DNC

The "Beautiful Waste" project, created by students from the Department of Natural Resource and Environmental Management within the Faculty of Architecture, Construction, and Environment at Nam Can Tho University (DNC), showcases the students' creativity and social responsibility towards society and the community. As part of their curriculum at DNC, students specializing in Natural Resource and Environmental Management are not only equipped with knowledge and skills, but also instilled with ethics and a sense of responsibility towards society and the community. Through courses on waste management and treatment, and driven by their passion for the field, the group of students developed and expanded the idea of "reviving plastic and paper waste," ultimately winning second prize in the Vinh Long Province Startup Idea Contest in 2020.

Building upon their previous success, the group has established the "Beautiful Waste" project, which has been actively operating ever since. The project's main mission is to recycle waste and transform it into handcrafted products and office supplies. The primary goals of this project are to raise awareness about recycling and promote sustainable practices in order to reduce plastic waste. This is achieved through two main approaches: "exchanging waste for gifts" and selling recycled products. The "exchange waste for gifts" method aims to increase awareness and encourage the collection of plastic and office paper waste.

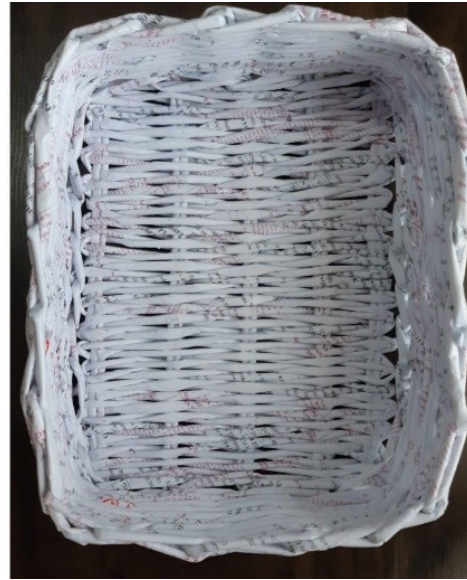
This not only helps to reduce waste, but also provides materials for recycling. The gifts offered in exchange are the project's own recycled products. The business model includes a wide promotion strategy through social media and workshops, as well as offering products such as trays and paper baskets to supermarkets for packaging their goods, such as holiday gift baskets.



Handcrafted products recycled from paper:



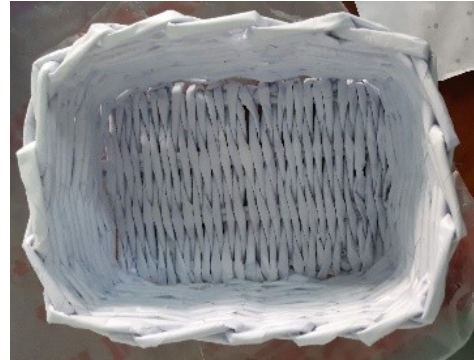
Paper baskets with handles 25x22x35 cm



Square paper baskets 35x26x12 cm



Paper baskets with handles 20x12x18 cm



Square paper baskets 25x15x10 cm

Products made from recycled nylon wrapping:



Water bottle holders



Various types of keychains



Baskets recycled from nylon wrapping and old raincoats

The benefits of these products include saving raw material resources used in producing similar items, reducing waste, and creating unique products that are well-received by the community. The project promotes its offerings through various sales channels and social media platforms such as Facebook, Zalo, Shopee, Lazada, Sendo, and Chợ Tốt, while gathering feedback from customer reviews. It also connects with stationery stores, souvenir shops, flower shops, supermarkets, and convenience stores for sales, and implements promotional programs to attract customers, gather consumer feedback, and retrieve raw materials (e.g., clean plastic bags, A4 paper, and old raincoats) in exchange for products. Customer service is provided through phone and text messaging.

Currently, the "Beautiful Waste" project is thriving and expanding. The students have organized numerous "exchange waste for gifts" events, which have received enthusiastic support from the surrounding community. In addition, customers from various

provinces have been contacting us through social media channels to place orders and purchase our products. Thanks to the support from the university, faculty members from the Department of Natural Resource and Environmental Management at DNC have been sharing these recycled products at conferences and seminars to spread the message of our project.



Images from “Exchange Waste for Gifts” events and displays at Conferences

As a result, in addition to their business activities, the students at DNC have effectively managed a significant amount of waste from nylon wrapping and paper, making a valuable contribution to waste reduction and environmental protection. Moving forward, the project aims to partner with disability organizations to provide training in recycling plastic and paper waste, expanding the project's impact to the wider community. The resulting products will be marketed at environmental events, holidays, and tourist destinations, generating additional income for the disability organizations.