

# Recycling Paper in the Learning Environment

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The use of stationery in education has remained constant even though newer technologies have been introduced into the learning environment. At any level of education, a separate book is usually used to write notes on a particular subject. I identified that on aggregate, more than half of the paper from notebooks goes unused after learning is completed.

The United Nations Goals for Sustainable Development are a set of global objectives which are aimed at globally achieving a better and more sustainable future for all. *Responsible Consumption and production* (goal 12) can be done by ensuring sustainable consumption and products patterns throughout all countries, taking into account the development and capabilities of developing countries. Taking the initiative to recycle paper in this way is a simple but practical method to consume products responsibly.

Sustainability is a mindset, and necessity is the mother of invention. Sustainable design in a nutshell is about creating, executing or constructing according to a plan that reduces the consumption of non-renewable resources and minimises waste. A few years ago, I started recycling unused stationery material by making new books instead of buying them. When I took my books to my university, many of my colleagues became interested in them, and I shared with them other creative recycling ideas to minimise wastage and save money.

This simple act has the potential to change the mindsets of individuals who regard the concept of sustainability as far-off and complex. What started as a solution to a personal problem grew into a plan to reduce overdependency on external sources for resources which are available internally. Exploring the resources I had led me to selling books made completely from recycled material and offering the service of recycling paper into books. Currently several students have opted to recycle their books instead of buying new ones.

The impact of this initiative includes the reduction in educational expenses (making it more affordable), but more importantly the personal engagement of an individual's innovation and creativity to address needs. There is great innovation and untapped potential in the minds of Africans, and sustainable design in Africa requires the participation of each individual. The simple act of recycling inspired the people in the local community to do the same, indicating a direct change in behaviour. Everyone can live sustainably by taking simple steps towards responsible consumption and production.

As a sustainability enthusiast I am interested in joining the ICED21 Conference and the AFRICA-DESIGN workshop.