



## Colombia, Mocoa, in the administrative region of Putumayo 'Manufacture of ecological bricks'

Making eco-bricks to build a 'model' house is a good example of the sustainable development action of the Mocoa group of AIC-Colombia. The project encourages the creation of useful materials from rubbish and highlights the need to develop innovative ideas. In addition, the process emphasises the importance of ongoing community initiatives.



### Analysis of the current situation

Putumayo is a rural economy in historical terms, but in the last twenty years it has undergone a transformation caused by the forced displacement of thousands of people to urban centres, linked to armed conflict and drug trafficking. This situation has caused a rise in unemployment and casual work, the creation of belts of destitution around water sources, a growing sense of rootlessness among people living in new areas, and cultural practices which harm the environment. Institutions and the State do not have the capacity to deal with these phenomena.

## **Beneficiaries**

Elderly people, young people, children and single mothers who contribute to the development of the various elements of the project through their own individual and community commitment.

## **Objective**

To contribute through daily actions to raising sustained awareness of the duty and the need to care for our Common Home and to encourage the recycling of non-biodegradable waste, in a pilot experiment which other communities may be encouraged to copy.

## **Activities undertaken**

Manufacture of ecological bricks to create a model house. More specifically:

1. Raising awareness and delivering training to help generate a culture of recycling: writing to educational establishments and/or organised groups to invite them to join in the development of the project; conversations with young people and children to make them aware of the need to recycle; visits to shops and businesses to encourage them to undertake to separate, store and clean all plastic waste and containers so they can be used in the production of eco-bricks.
2. Generating new occupational and therapeutic spaces by making eco-bricks: collection and storage of materials at the local AIC centre – making eco-bricks with the senior citizens living in the St Vincent de Paul Home and mothers and children from the community.
3. Building institutional and community synergy to help support the project: voluntary involvement of people and family groups who help to manufacture the eco-bricks at home; architectural design services donated by a professional to support the voluntary initiative.

## **Future projects**

Building a 'model house' with the stored eco-bricks, with the aim of encouraging the development of similar experiments linked to the use of recycled materials. It's a good example of sustainable development action, helping to improve the quality of life for the participating communities.

The initiative helps in understanding the impact of collecting and processing the waste materials that are used to make the eco-bricks. The project encourages the creation of useful materials from rubbish and highlights the need to develop innovative ideas. In addition, the process emphasises the importance of ongoing community initiatives.

The project is also in keeping with the words of the Holy Father Pope Francis, who urges us to care for our Common Home, avoid consumerism and be aware of our individual human responsibility.