

Jesse Laitinen, Khulisa Strategic Partnerships Manager



Streetscapes' projects show that there are simple things we can all do to help to protect the earth. In this issue you can read of the various surprising ways we have been able to reduce, reuse, and recycle ranging from invasive alien vegetation to old clothes. Sustainability must also include caring and investing in people, in their skills, confidence and opportunities just as Fiona's story reminds us.

On April 22 we will celebrate the 53rd Earth Day. I hope you all find your way of honouring the planet. My resolution is to walk more and drive less. Maybe you can also give your car a break, turn off the tap or come do a load of laundry at Streetscapes off-grid laundromat!

Hope to see you soon...

Jesse

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Whilst we hope you will enjoy our monthly newsletter to you, we also welcome your feedback on:

Facebook : facebook.com/streetscapescp/

Instagram : [streetscapes_urban_farms](https://instagram.com/streetscapes_urban_farms)

YouTube : [streetscapes videos](https://youtube.com/streetscapes_videos)

Streetscapes Green Revolution

At Streetscapes, we're all about being green - in more ways than one. Our organic veggies and fruits are grown without pesticides, and we produce our own seedlings, compost, and fertilizer made from chicken manure. Plus, we've got **South Africa's first off-grid laundromat**, which is both eco-friendly and affordable at just R20 per kilogram.



Our water treatment and recycling system, expertly designed by our Swiss university partner ZHAW, is solar-powered and tested twice daily to ensure safety. And, with our naturally eco-friendly washing detergents and soaps, we're doing our part to protect the planet.

We're not just growing crops, either - we've also introduced **beehives** to our project. With 120,000 little farmers buzzing around, we're producing fresh honey while promoting pollination. And, with the support of experienced beekeepers, we recently landed a spot at the Honey Festival in Paarl.



But we're not stopping there - our latest green endeavour is the development of **28 new homes at Kuilsriver farm**. Partnering with 'Natural Homes,' we're using net carbon-negative building materials made from alien invasive species. With a 3-hour fire rating and great insulation, these cost-effective slabs are half the weight of conventional concrete.

These two-story homes will be naturally powered by solar and will use purified well water for drinking, while grey and black water will be treated and recycled for irrigation. With the help of the Stellenbosch University Water Institute team, we're evaluating the social and environmental impact of the project and hope to replicate our model in housing projects throughout the city. At Streetscapes, we're proud to be green - and we're just getting started.

The healing power of connection: Fiona's journey

"This is a place of therapy for most of us," Fiona says of the Streetscapes programme. "You can become you again. It's a huge change in your life." Once living on the streets and battling a substance abuse problem, Fiona's life changed when she entered the Streetscapes program in 2019.



Fiona's journey with Streetscapes started in the Vredehoek gardens. At first, she found it difficult to adjust her lifestyle to the program, but she soon realized that it was the best thing she could have ever done for herself. "It took the strain off using drugs for that period of time. I wasn't using while I was there," she said. **"Being on this program was the best thing I could ever do, and I would advise anyone who is destitute, struggling with addiction, and on the street to take the time to come onto a program like this."**

Following the pandemic, Fiona made her way to Chester House, where she transitioned from resident to coordinator and house mother. Her role was pivotal in creating structure and a supportive environment for others on their path to recovery. Fiona's experience in this role has been transformative, building her skills and confidence, and inspiring others to progress in their own recovery. "Being on this programme was the best thing I could ever do," she said. **"It doesn't matter how rock bottom you are. It works, no matter what drug you were using."**

As time passed, Fiona's confidence grew. "Your self-esteem grows again," she said. "When you're living on the streets, it disappears."

Now, Fiona is a house coordinator at the YMCA, and she credits the program with helping her turn her life around. "Most people that I know here have improved so much," she said. "It doesn't matter how rock bottom you are. It works."

The people at Streetscapes mean everything to Fiona. "It builds me up even more as a human being who once felt so worthless," she said. **"If a large percentage of the people of Cape Town can get involved, it would be so much better."**

For Fiona, the program is more than just a job. "Every day is a wonderful day at this program," she said. "You spend your time trying to motivate others when you can see they need motivation. Part of what you do at Streetscapes, besides working in the garden, is being there for others. That brings meaning to my life."

Refashion Lab at Streetscapes: Rethinking Fashion Waste



In a world where fast fashion and textile waste continue to plague the environment, initiatives that aim to address these issues are more crucial than ever. Enter Refashion Lab at Streetscapes, a collaboration between Twyg and AFRI to rethink fashion and textile waste with temporarily unhoused people in Cape Town.

The project diverts textile waste from landfills and **teaches critical entrepreneurial and crafting skills** to participants. The textiles are sorted, repaired, remade, and recycled, with some items resold at the monthly Streetscapes market.

Through the Refashion Lab, participants **learn about the circular economy** and practice repairing and upcycling ideas. Co-hosts share their creative skills with participants, including crochet and block printing. LaundReCycle, an off-grid eco-laundromat on-site, washes the donated clothes, creating another circular ecosystem.



Participants benefit from the project by gaining new skills and feeling valued. The Refashion Lab bridges the gap between vulnerable communities and the fashion industry, offering a space for sharing skills and dialogues.

Jackie May, Twyg founder, highlights the importance of practicing circularity to support small-scale activations, invest in large-scale solutions, and **improve design and materials for a sustainable fashion system**. The Refashion Lab provides an opportunity for clothes and textile waste to have another life and directs waste away from landfills.

Thembi's seasonal gardening tip

Our urban gardens have the hardy seedlings you need to thrive in the chillier months. Check out what we offer:



- Cabbage
- Swiss chard
- Spring onion
- Leeks
- Green feast peas
- Lettuce
- Green peppers
- Cayenne pepper
- Beetroot
- Plain parsley
- Brinjal

Add some vibrancy to your outdoor space with these stunning winter blooms:



- Marigold
- Alyssum
- African daisy
- Poppy
- Cosmos

Reaching new heights: Support S'bu's Dream



Streetscapes client S'bu found a new purpose and passion for helping others in need. Now, he's looking to take his skills to the next level by becoming an Auxiliary Social Worker. But to do so, he needs your help.

With a deposit of R8500, S'bu can secure his seat at Cefa's Social Auxiliary Worker Level 5 course and start his journey towards transformative support for those who need it most. **Your donation will make a real difference** in the life of someone who is truly committed to **making a change in the world**. Click the link below to contribute.

Please help S'bu achieve his dream!

Here's his [crowdfunding page](#).