

## **Rural Community Development Plan**

### Executive Summary

The vision of AnyWay's Rural Community Development Plan (RCDP) is to provide men and women in rural areas with the opportunity to play an active role in the development of their own villages. It offers them access to the appropriate technology, skills and training to empower them to build a brighter, sustainable future for themselves and their community.

The RCDP is premised on the central involvement of the community in the process, as we see this as essential to the sustainability aspect of the program. The local citizens improve their own living environment by constructing more cost-effective and technologically suitable houses, roads, community centres and schools, using the earth they live on and their own labour as the primary equipment. Through their involvement in these labour-intensive processes, technology is transferred to them which empowers these men and women to form their own small and medium-sized enterprises (SME's). These SME's are the community's key to sustainable development and ensure the continuing availability of improved houses, infrastructure and roads. In turn, the improved roads and infrastructure permit all-year accessibility to education, medical services and regional markets.

AnyWay Solid Environmental Solutions, a company that was established to provide comprehensive and advanced soil stabilization solutions for the road infrastructure and building sectors, leads a consortium focused on the implementation of this vision. The groups within this consortium have valuable expertise in the key areas required to initiate the RCDP and other poverty alleviation projects. The three members comprising this consortium are: AnyWay Solid Environmental Solutions, AB Planners and the Auroville Earth Institute.

As the leader of the RCDP, AnyWay delivers the soil stabilization technology and experience for the construction of low-cost housing with stabilized compressed earth blocks (SCEB's) and for the construction of the rural roads that are used to afford basic access. AnyWay's Soil Stabilizer is a technology designed to ensure minimal impact on the environment through stabilization of a broad range of soils, allowing for more cost-effective soil blocks and pavement layers to be constructed.

To ensure the long term sustainability of the new living environment created by the local population, careful planning and preliminary needs analysis are required. The balanced combination of infrastructure (roads, water and sewers) with durable houses and public buildings is achieved through the involvement of AB Planners. The company has vast experience in the development of rural areas, including town planning, regional and local master plans, and public facilities such as learning centers.

The labour-intensive construction methods and technology for the buildings are based on the techniques developed by the Auroville Earth Institute of India, a world leader in the instruction of compressed earth block construction technologies. The Auroville Earth Institute is a UNESCO CHAIR in Earthen Architecture.

The four key components of the RCDP that lay the foundation for the project's continuing sustainability are (i) economy; (ii) information and education; (iii) access to information and services; and (iv) the environment.

***Economy***

The RCDP seeks to facilitate the creation of SME's which enable previously disadvantaged persons (PDP's) and particularly women of African origin to become a force for economic growth for the local community. Emphasis is placed on labour-intensive practices, particularly in developing skills for building capacity and rural transport infrastructure (RTI). A holistic approach that takes into consideration the local factors influencing poverty and its potential alleviation is implemented through this plan by giving the community the reins to steer its own continuing development.

***Information and education***

The transfer of technology and information is a cornerstone of this rural community development plan. Such transfer begins with the teaching of proven labour-intensive practices for the development of rural infrastructure and home building. The transfer of technology and information then expands to encompass the creation of local training centers in the communities. The know-how, skills and information related to these fields (including the training of future instructors) are transferred to members of the local community, creating a long term, sustainable system for the development of SME's by African women and other PDP's, enabling them to become full partners in the economic advancement of their community.

***Access to infrastructure and services***

The environment in which the development of the local rural community takes place is carefully and strategically planned. This planning includes a progressive evolution of the community incorporating not only housing, but all aspects of the community. It also facilitates the implementation of the acquired skills by SME's in building access for the residents to infrastructure and development services such as education and health care. The establishment of the foundations for rural development and poverty alleviation are natural consequences generated by this plan. The skills and

enterprises created by the technology and information transfer are engaged in the construction of roads, schools, health centers and markets for the local community.

### ***Environment***

The protection and preservation of the natural environment is a fundamental priority addressed by each of the technologies and methods implemented in this plan. Careful planning of the rural infrastructure's development to minimize its impact upon the surrounding environment through the use of environmentally certified technologies in the construction of low cost housing and RTI are at the heart of all the activities in this plan. The consortium has always recognized the importance of its environmental responsibility and has created a plan that is not only extremely effective, but also one that does not pose a threat to the environment.

### ***Conclusion***

The need for low cost housing and RTI is enormous, but there is a growing recognition of the fact that simply delivering a series of concrete boxes to an impoverished rural community and moving on does little to facilitate development. The result is a continuous circle of poverty which the people cannot escape and necessitates fresh assistance on a cyclical basis. If true, sustainable development is to take place, there must be an investment of labour, faith and hope by the people themselves. As we have witnessed, when the opportunity to acquire practical, needed skills is presented, and the citizens see the tangible, immediate improvements they can bring to the daily life of their own family using the earth around them and their own labour, there is no limit to the efforts men and women will invest. Our RCDP merely offers these men and women the means and ability to reshape their communities. The development is their own.