

Time Out

Beirut



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Spotlight Zero Waste Act



It hardly comes as a surprise that Lebanon isn't at the top of any world listing of recycling giants. That doesn't mean though that people are not making an effort, or a difference. One such group is Contra International. Since October 2011 they've been working with schools and companies across Lebanon with their Zero Waste campaign. Yvonne El Hajj, environmental advisor for the campaign, says the response has been

amazing. 'People are open to it. We were going to just go with 10 to 15 schools to start but already we have 50 schools and 10 companies engaged in the campaign.'

El Hajj says there are as many as 700 open dump sites in Lebanon, some legal, some illegal; either way they're a threat to our health and habitat. 'The one in Daoura has so much methane in it that it's become like a bomb, just waiting to explode.' Situations

such as these are a catalyst for environmental companies such as Contra to act. 'Sort at the source is one of the solutions,' says El Hajj. 'We're building a culture of segregating waste.' Bins are supplied to schools throughout Beirut and the more waste they collect the more points the schools get. 'At the end of the year the points become money and the schools can do as they wish with it, whether it be buying new equipment or a covering a student's scholastic fees.'

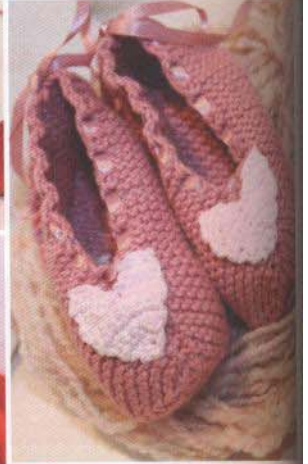
But what about the sceptics? 'People had a bad experience with Sukleen and so they can be reluctant, but people are open to recycling. We're slowly changing their minds.' As part of the campaign, Zero Waste is launching a competition for schools to create pieces of art out of

items that cannot be recycled. So take note, schools: sign the students up now and help secure their future.

www.zerowasteact.com



Around Town & Kids



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