



# Empowered Professional Eco Warriors



Empowering Informal Waste Collectors to become Community-Based Impact Leaders in Addressing Plastic Pollution in the Philippines

*"Championing community-based waste segregation and ocean plastics"*





# Our Story

2014 was the year when John Vincent Gastanes (our Founder) decided to give up his American dream and left his life as a food server from Colorado Springs, Colorado. He observed the poverty conditions on our island, despite the increasing opportunities in the tourism industry.

**Poverty was prevalent, and one could notice that most individuals were engaged in the informal waste-picking industry. With the limited resources he had from a \$100 monthly salary, and with the help of some volunteer friends, we started a community-based activity that focused on serving the children of his partner IWC communities. Eventually, it evolved into a weekly feeding activity involving their parents.**



While our team continues to collaborate with our community, we had the opportunity to deepen our relationship with them and have a chance to start a community organization called **Samahan ng Mamamayan ng Jacana** (SMJ). The goal is to co-create opportunities with shared meaning. We tried various methods [business models] -- whether it's livestock or agriculture -- with the leadership of our community as we attempted to find ways to increase access to basic needs.





However, even though there are iterative steps to create business ventures, we notice that our community partners are reverting back to the same industry of waste collecting. But the saddest and most painful observation we made in this IWC community is the reality that many children lost their parents because of complications from health due to the lack of proper waste collecting protocols.



## PROBLEM 1

Unsegregated waste at source affecting island-based communities.



## PROBLEM 2

IWCs are neglected and opportunities are not fully optimized for their welfare

What if we can create a business model that can help improve the well-being of our waste collectors and at the same time, assist the local government in enhancing their implementation of proper segregation, 3Rs/solid waste management?

This calling has lead us to connect with another community we are helping with -- community-based tailors to design the uniforms of our waste collectors. This is also a good start for them to uplift their value and branding.



The USAID Clean Cities, Blue Ocean (CCBO) has discovered our community-based movement and backed us up in positioning our IWCs, PZC, and city as a recognized community-based waste collecting movement.

# OUR PROJECT

The impact of waste collectors (whom we call Eco Warriors) will be the voice of the professionalized waste collecting industry and advocates of waste segregation and ocean plastics.

Following our framework, the partnership with USAID Clean Cities, Blue Ocean has expedited our co-creation approaches. These include designing uniforms by our Eco Warriors themselves through iterative processes, engaging in dialogues with local government, promoting advocacy through social media platforms, designing community-based capacity-building courses, initiating social and behavioral change efforts, and more.



# MEET SOME OF OUR EMPOWERED ECO WARRIORS

The Eco Warriors are poised as leaders and advocates in the professional waste collection industry, driving waste segregation and combatting ocean plastic pollution. Beyond waste management, they serve as educators and leaders, rallying communities for sustainable practices, and safeguarding our oceans from plastic's harmful impact.



**Pacita Madrid**

Nanay Pacita, our 92-year-old Eco-Warrior graduated from the SWM Program of Eco Kolek. She also got her Training Certificate from TESDA which can qualify her to work with establishments needing skilled workers to take care of their solid waste management program.

**Roselyn Gomia**

Roselyn a 35-year-old mother and the Secretary of the Samahan ng mga Mamamayan ng Jacana (SMJ), has taken upon herself to fight plastic pollution in her community. Her dedication and hard work have made her a role model for many in her community and beyond.



**Lydia Casiano**

Lydia, a 55-year-old mother, stands as the leader of the Samahan ng mga Mamamayan ng Jacana (SMJ), spearheading her fellow Eco Warriors in adopting sustainable waste management practices and creating a positive impact in her community.

# OUR PROJECT COMPONENTS



## Social



Change the society's perception about informal waste collectors (IWCs). Make a platform for IWCs that fosters acceptance. Help them raise their self-esteem and self-confidence through capacity building activities like training and empowerment.

## Economics



Increase Eco Warriors' productivity by providing them with adequate tools and equipment that improves collection and increases income generation.

## Environment



Alleviate plastic pollution that deteriorates the environment through an efficient collection system covering SWM orientation, promoting segregation at source, partnerships, and consistent door-to-door collection. Eco Warriors serve as front liners and advocates in combatting plastic waste pollution.

## Governance



Strengthen partnerships and collaboration activities targeting all levels including households, establishments/institutions, barangay, city, and municipality. Increase LGU capacity in ecological solid waste management by providing SWM workshops.

# ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED



## Capacity-building

The Eco Warriors received training in SWM, safety, leadership, entrepreneurship, communication skills, etc.



## Completion Exercises

The Eco Warriors Completion Ceremony marks the 1st graduation of the TESDA-Accredited Solid Waste Management (SWM) Course tailored for grassroots communities.



## Consolidation Hub

Eco Kolek provided consolidation hub to enhance collection activities.



## VEHICLE PROVISION

The Eco Warriors received 1 Multicab, 5 Topdowns, and 5 Bicycles with sidecar to increase collection capacity and income.



## PPE Provision

Sixty (60) Eco Warriors have received personal protective equipment, thereby improving their safety during operations.



## SBC Campaign

179 individuals across five puroks in Barangay Bancao-Bancao received education on Ecological Solid Waste Management and segregation through the "Basura-Basura Ba Talaga" SBC Campaigns, backed by the barangay LGU and City ENRO.

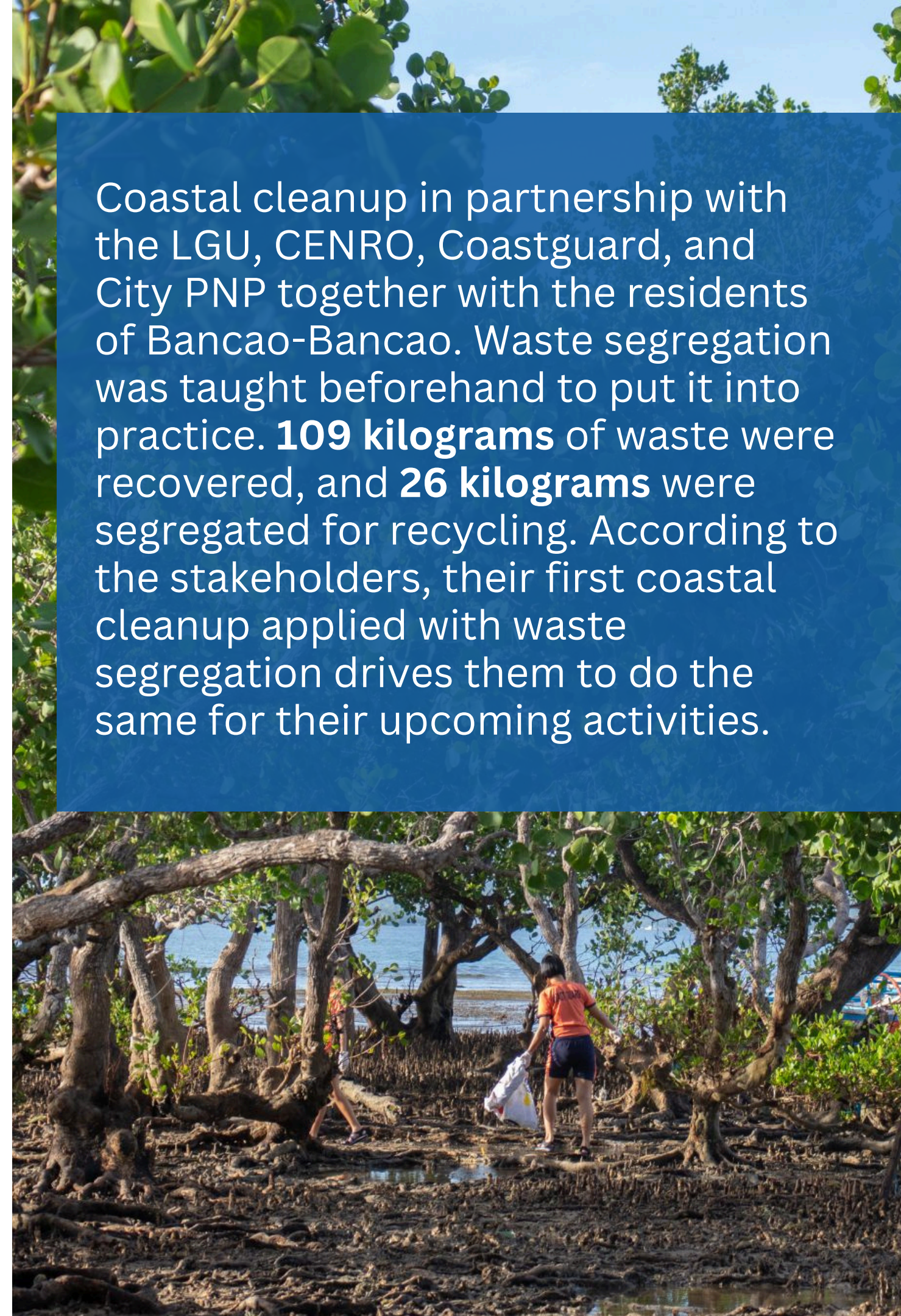


# SAVE THE PUERTO PRINCESA BAYS

# SWM ROADSHOW



# COASTAL CLEAN UP

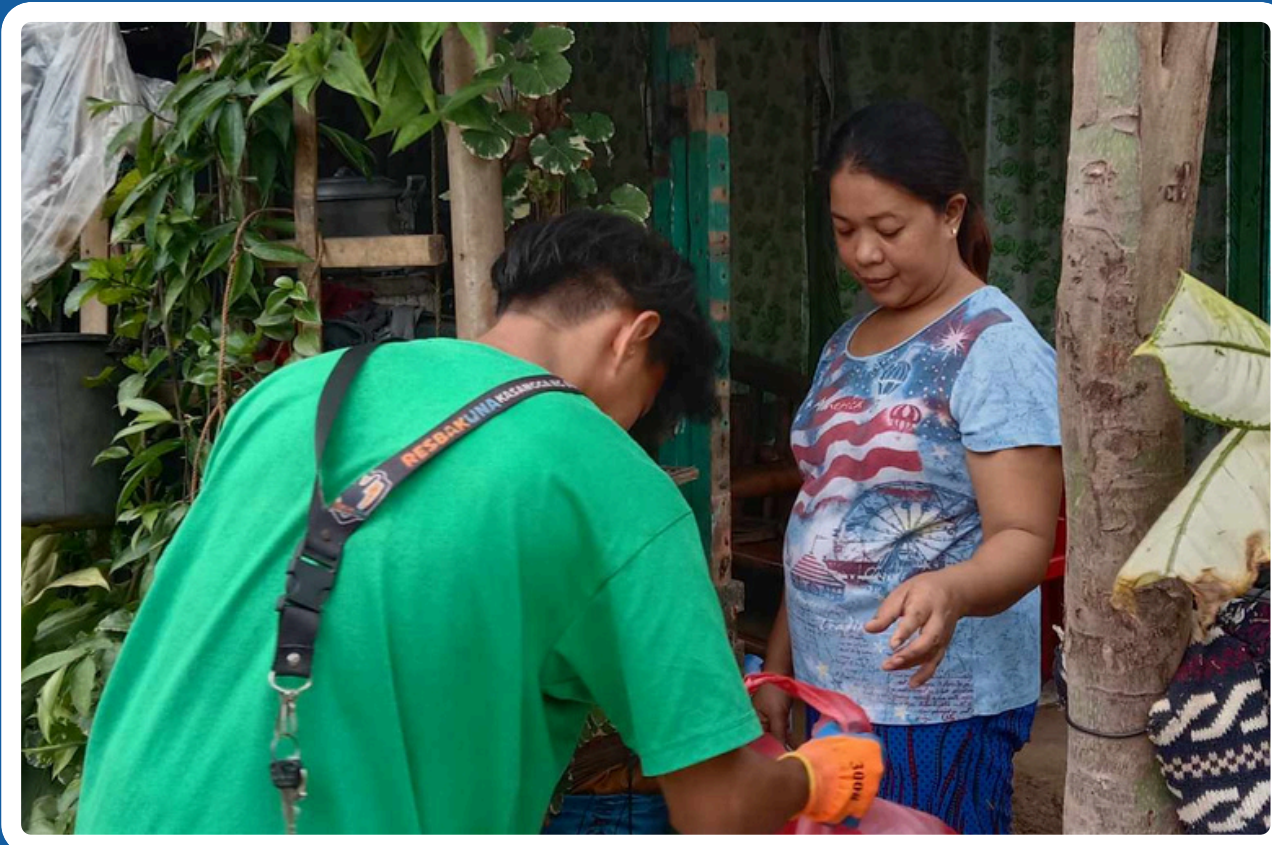


Coastal cleanup in partnership with the LGU, CENRO, Coastguard, and City PNP together with the residents of Bancao-Bancao. Waste segregation was taught beforehand to put it into practice. **109 kilograms** of waste were recovered, and **26 kilograms** were segregated for recycling. According to the stakeholders, their first coastal cleanup applied with waste segregation drives them to do the same for their upcoming activities.

# TREE PLANTING



# DOOR-TO-DOOR COLLECTION SERVICES

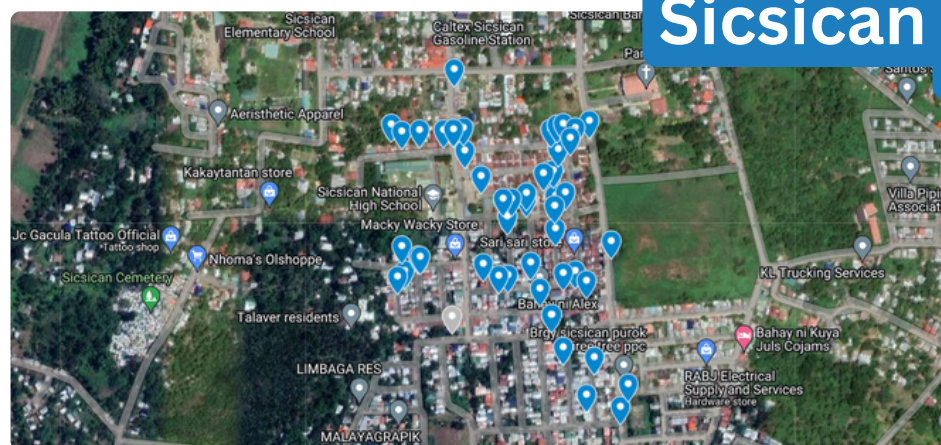


**1,052 HHs**  
**152 Ests.**

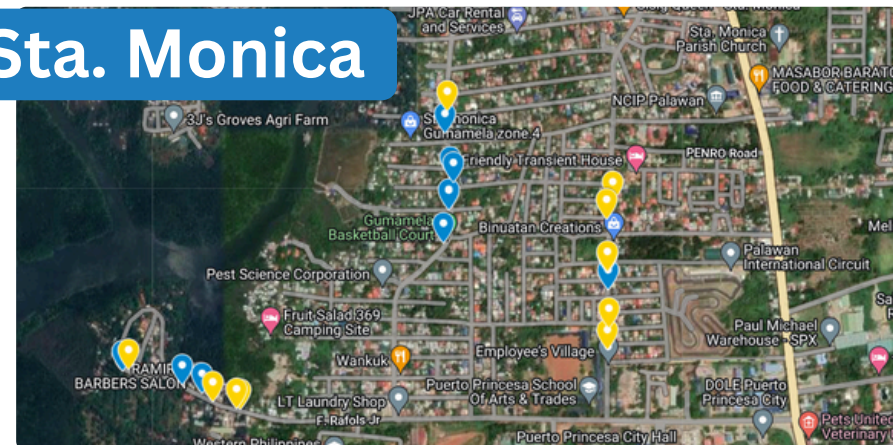
*(Number of partners signed and agreed for waste segregation and collection of recyclables as of December 31, 2023)*

## Barangay Collection points

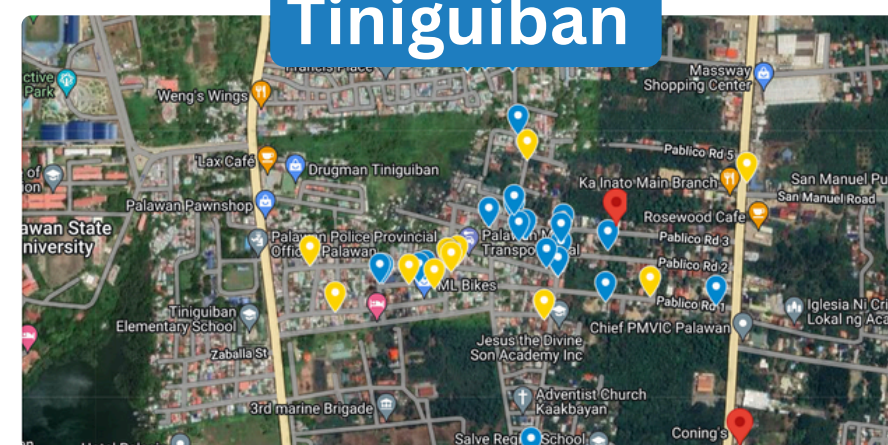
**Sicsican Sta. Monica**



**Tinguiban**



**Bancao-Bancao**



# Eco Kolek FABRIC TRASH BIN



# 2023-2024 COLLECTION

With the support of the LGU, organizations, and partners Eco Kolek diverted **85,911.01 kg** of waste from landfill and ocean.

Month	Total Plastic (kg)	Total Metal (kg)	Total Glass (kg)	Total per Month (kg)
January	1,299.59	469.10	233.22	2,001.91
February	888.00	241.30	167.89	1,297.19
March	981.5	506.8	205.06	1,693.36
April	915.5	241.8	421.33	1,578.63
May	1,144.00	168.45	143.38	1,455.83
June	1,265.00	309.70	194.24	1,768.94
July	2,810.37	1,156.80	862.98	4,830.15
August	2,281.00	754.83	599.25	3,635.08
September	2,196.48	951.40	663.23	3,811.11
October	2,464.20	866.40	932.60	4,263.20
November	3,308.65	847.70	508.81	4,665.16
December	3,351.24	1,403.30	967.54	5,722.08
<b>Grand Total</b>	22,905.52	7,917.58	5,899.53	<b>95,656.29</b>

# TOTAL WASTE DIVERTED

**95,656.29 kg**

Data gathered from 2023 to March 2024



# RECOGNITION | AWARDS

## Environmental Protection Awardee 2023

- Individual level
- Organization level

## Plaque of recognition 2023



PZC Eco Kolek recipient of 2023 Mayor's Award for ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (individual and group category).



Received plaque of recognition for being an active partner of Puerto Princesa LGU.



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WEBSITE

Let's IMPACT COMMUNITIES  
TOGETHER!

“Empowered  
Professional  
Eco Warriors”

