

Local entrepreneur 3D prints cups from biodegradable materials

A biodegradable cup made from sugarcane and corn-starch is set to launch in May this year. Lifestyle brand Red Cup Village, the Cape Town-based company behind the product, is using 3D printing technology to manufacture the drinking cup using a polylactide (PLA) filament, a biodegradable and bioactive thermoplastic aliphatic polyester derived from renewable resources such as sugarcane and corn-starch.



Red Cup Village was founded by young entrepreneur Luvuyo Ndiki, who was born in Eastern Cape's Butterworth but grew up in a small village in Bathurst. He started the company while he was studying towards his product design and communication degree at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology back in 2014, and has been bootstrapping the business since then.

"Red Cup Village was inspired by a story my grandmother told me about a woman back in the 13th century. This African lady united two rival village tribes by inviting them to a gathering where she made them drink from the same wooden cup, and without realising it the two kings started sharing the same cup which made them share their cultures, visions, beliefs and created unity in the village," says Ndiki.



His company reintroduced the red cups into the African market back in 2014, when the company used to brand cups with stickers before they started looking towards more sustainable solutions. They now locally manufacture and retail branded festival cups made from recycled plastics pallets, as well as offer consumer engagement services.

The company has 3 registered design patents with pending international trademarks.

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