

Mother Baby and Child Middle East | October's Green Goddesses – Mummies Janine Sheard and Jo Marengo | Aims to empower mums from all walks of life –

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Mums and wives, expatriated and guardians – these two ladies have proven why they deserve to be our first 'duo feature' for our People of the Month. Sixteen years ago, the British Zimbabwe-born Janine and Tanzania-born Jo found themselves in the Middle East – the United Arab Emirates to be exact. Even back in those days, Janine noticed



how the social culture here revolves around sharing meals and going to the desert and valleys. Unfortunately, part of this also is the substantial amount of leftovers and trash. "Simultaneously, the landfills were becoming overfull with the corresponding associated environmental impacts," says.

"Why don't we recycle in the UAE?" "Why can't something be done with leftover food?" Both questions kept nagging her. The latter posed even more gravity to her as a result of growing up in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Either places value food like diamonds. Several years passed and one of her children began attending a university in Australia... Janine

continued, "Enter Bokashi! As a 'uni' student living in a flat in Australia, my daughter started using a Bokashi bin. I was extremely interested as I noticed that it was eco friendly. It dealt with the issue of what to do with leftover food and was easy to do and reasonably priced!"

So how does Bokashi exactly work? First, start with a specially designed bin and Bokashi probiotics. This is an easy-to-use composting system utilising all food waste via an anaerobic fermentation process. It then converts the waste to compost in a matter of 4 weeks from the time it comes in contact with soil. "It's a case of getting good bacteria to outnumber the bad bacteria before they can even get a hold," Janine explains. It reduces the volume that landfills have to contain, whilst providing a sustainable cycle which fertilises soil for gardens and agriculture. What makes it even friendlier is that it does not accumulate pests or develop foul odours – a perfect waste management system for home and commercial use.

Jo, unlike Janine who moved to the UAE with her children, had her young kids here. As they began schooling, Jo started to look for a means not only to earn some but also to make a difference. "I became an Enjo consultant when my son was 9 months old. Enjo is an Australian based company that produces specially designed fibres for different areas which enable one to clean your entire home using cold water only. Janine hosted an Enjo demonstration in her home and then approached me with regards to Bokashi. The two products are very synergistic. Bokashi deals with ALL food waste, raw and cooked, which save the landfills producing methane gases. Whilst Enjo saves 100s of chemical containers being through on the landfill yearly, plus ones uses 50

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percent less water when cleaning,” she relates. She likewise adds that research shows that the home is often more toxic because of its harmful cleaning products in contrast to the external environment. These chemicals leave lasting effects such as worsened skin conditions and asthma.

Both women have aggressively taken on a responsibility – to reinvent how residents in the UAE dispose of their food waste. It sounds pretty petty but taking into consideration all the natural disasters being suffered all over the world, isn't this one way to contribute in reducing factors that result to climate change? Jo and Janine encourage nurseries and schools to put up organic gardens and prod a 'green' mindset to young kids. At home, parents can start a recycling system and have their children understand its importance. “It is very easy. In fact, I have two and a half years of recycled food waste in my garden,” attests Janine. Given our busy schedules, mothers can start with Bokashi and Enjo and simply live an effortless eco-living. As parting words, they would like to share the following quote:

“We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors. We borrow it from our children...”