

Urban school in Western Cape to benefit from the Water for Schools project.

Western Cape rural schools generally fare better in terms of water and sanitation challenges compared to the rest of the country.

This emerged in a nationwide campaign to provide clean water and sanitation facilities to needy rural schools as part of the “Water for Schools” project of the Coca-Cola Replenish Africa Initiative (RAIN) to bring clean water and improved sanitation to 100 schools.

But project managers identified an urban rather than a rural school as the neediest in the province – the Homba Primary School in Khayelitsha.

“Although the Homba Primary School was a vulnerable school in terms of poverty levels – pupils are on a feeding scheme – its problems didn’t compare to other schools which require comprehensive interventions to improve water and sanitation services such as boreholes, piping and improved toilets,” said William Asiko, President of the Coca-Cola Africa Foundation.

“We needed to do leak repairs, install a rain water harvesting tank and a drinking fountain and we also focused on improving the existing infrastructure – replacing broken taps, ablution facilities and plumbing infrastructure and also installing push button taps to eliminate wastage.

“The installed rain water harvesting tanks will also allow the school to reinstate and rejuvenate a vegetable garden which had been neglected due to water shortages.

“We also provided training in health, hygiene and water saving tips as well as practical advice such as the importance of reporting leaks and broken plumbing fittings in the community and at school,” explained Asiko.

This project supports and complements the Department of Education’s (DOE) plans to eradicate the water and sanitation backlog in schools by 2014. The schools were chosen in partnership with the DOE.

RAIN is a \$30 million project to provide over two million people with access to clean water over a five year period. Water for Schools is a project of RAIN and The Coca-Cola Company's legacy project for the 2010 FIFA World Cup™.

While the RAIN Water for Schools project began in October 2009, The Coca-Cola Company has been involved in numerous water projects over the years. In Africa, through The Coca-Cola Africa Foundation (TCCAF), it has completed 34 projects in 19 countries between 2005 and 2009.

In South Africa, TCCAF has been implementing water projects since 2005. One such project, the Leak Repair project, was designed to improve the efficiency of the municipal water supply services in former townships and schools while simultaneously improving cost-recovery of the municipality for the provision of basic services.

In October 2009, Coca-Cola launched the Colosa Rural Water Supply project in the Eastern Cape and Tzaneen Rural Water Supply project in Limpopo province through a partnership with the respective District Municipalities, Mvula Trust and USAID and Family Health International. A total of nearly 16,400 people will benefit from the water supply projects.

The Leak Repair project, completed at 4 725 households and in 33 schools, also helped to raise awareness of the importance of water-saving and increased knowledge of what constitutes energy wastage. This led to a more than 30% reduction in the total amount of water wasted and up to R34 000 savings per school in water bills.

Said Asiko: "Coca-Cola's commitment to the 2010 FIFA World Cup™ is all about bringing the celebratory aspect of the tournament to as many South Africans as possible and while we wanted to focus on that, we also wanted to leave a legacy that would bring a more lasting joy.

"Our business relies heavily on water – and we are therefore mindful of our responsibility towards a shared resource," says Asiko,

"We have invested half our Corporate Social Investment (CSI) budget on water-related programmes in Africa. Coca-Cola will also launch healthy watershed and sustainable community water access, sanitation and hygiene programs across Africa and contribute to the sustainability of water resources for communities across Africa.

"Across Africa and around the world, some school children are gaining access to clean drinking water for the first time. Access to water helps children grow up healthy - men and women can start small businesses, crops can flourish and communities can thrive," he says.

While RAIN Water for Schools has started with a pilot of nine schools, it will continue until 2012 during which time, a total of 100 schools will benefit.

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