

A school in Thaba Nchu benefits from the Water for Schools project

Sanitation facilities in rural schools are a pressing problem with pupils enduring sub-standard conditions. At the Ratua Primary School in Thaba Nchu, Free State, 530 learners had access to only two functioning ablution facilities. There were three leaking sewer pipes and a septic tank overflowing into the school yard.

This is one of the schools identified as extremely needy in terms of both water and sanitation challenges as part of the “Water for Schools” project of Coca-Cola’s Replenish Africa Initiative (RAIN) – a plan to bring clean water and improved sanitation to 100 schools around the country.

As beneficiaries of RAIN’s Water for Schools project, The Ratua Primary School now has 12 fully working ablution facilities, flushing boys’ urinals, a new drinking fountain with three additional taps close to class rooms.

They also have a double basin and two taps for their feeding scheme kitchen, an empty septic tank with a soak-away overflow system and two rainwater harvesting tanks that feed a standpipe next to their vegetable garden.

“We do not have enough words to thank Coca-Cola for all the work they have done,” said headmaster, Mr. Diutlwileng. “The management and Governing body take their hats off to the wonderful work Coca-Cola has done to our school. The situation was posing a health hazard – and now we are safe,” concluded Mr. Diutlwileng.

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 that will form part of the project 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 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 saving water 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 William Asiko, President of the Coca-Cola Africa Foundation: "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 behind 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 invest half our CSI budget on water-related programmes in Africa. RAIN is a \$30 million project over five years with the aim of providing over two million people with access to clean water."

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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