

One of SA's top toilet hygiene brands takes action for women's health!

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Harpic is investing in rebuilding and restoring community toilets, to keep South African women safer.



International Day of Action for Women's Health is observed annually across the globe and aims to raise awareness against the injustices faced by women and how it affects their overall health. This day also acts as a reminder of the importance of ensuring that all South African women live a life of dignity, equality, and freedom. Strides have been made to ensure that basic sanitation is available to all, however, millions of women still find themselves dreading to use public or shared toilets. This is why Harpic is launching a programme aimed at rebuilding and restoring toilets in communities, with the objective of providing better hygiene and sanitation for women and children.

"It is a universal truth that women in South Africa dread using public toilets," says #HarpicHygieneForHer project manager, Masibonge Mkhize. "This truth applies across the entire socio-economic spectrum of women. However, the circumstances of lower income communities are even more severe. Public and shared toilets in these communities can be unhygienic, unsafe and are typically not suited to women's needs," she adds.

Harpic intends to change this and has developed the #HarpicHygieneForHer campaign. The campaign is focused on restoring broken public toilets and, where space allows, building new women-friendly toilets.

"Unisex toilets are often not safe for women and children. Our aim is to ensure that toilet facilities are purpose-built for women, well-lit, secure, and safe, private, provide access to soap and water, include hooks, and are easily accessible," says marketing manager of hygiene, Sarah Ahmed.

She reveals that Harpic will provide cleaning products to keep the toilet facilities hygienic. To further empower the residents, the programme will work with local NPO Arise Community Development, to conduct an educational drive in the community and its surrounding areas. "It is encouraging to see top brands such Harpic invest in improving the health of women in our community. There are high rates of unemployment in Klipfontein, and this has forced many individuals to share a single



Harpic spokesperson, Masibonge Mkhize

yard, which puts a strain on the toilets with the result that many are broken, unhygienic or leaking,” says Chantel de Wee, founder and manager of Arise Community Development

“We have identified five initial sites in Klipfontein, a small community near Midrand Gauteng, where we will be restoring broken toilets and, where possible, building toilets specifically designated for women, rather than unisex facilities, as well as ensuring better security, locks on doors and lighting,” reveals Mkhize.

“What Harpic aims to achieve through this programme is restore dignity to the women in these communities and create #NoDreadToilets in South Africa.” Mkhize further notes that the #HarpicHygieneForHer campaign will, by and large, serve as Harpic’s contribution towards helping government realise the national and international sustainable development goals ([SDGs 6](#)) which aim to [achieve adequate access to equitable sanitation](#) and hygiene for all, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls, as well as those in vulnerable situations, by 2030.

The programme’s contribution towards reaching the [SDGs](#) is centred on bringing dignified sanitation and hygiene services to the country’s most vulnerable communities, so that women and children can grow and learn in a safe environment.”

The programme was first piloted in Zandspruit in 2020. The pilot involved the restoration of a facility which catered for more than 150 people and the construction of an entirely new additional toilet. In addition, the brand provided the community with education on safe cleaning methods, as well as educational materials on sanitation hygiene.

“The pilot was so successful and received such positive feedback from the beneficiaries using these facilities and the community at large, that we decided to build a long-term purpose programme focused around improving sanitation facilities, one community at a time,” concludes Mkhize.

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