

H&M SA's 'Suitably Dressed' initiative aims to empower job seekers

Community upliftment is key to H&M South Africa's sustainability strategy, and the 'Suitably Dressed' initiative enables the fashion retailer to tackle one of the country's most pressing socio-economic challenges: unemployment.



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Many South Africans face the hurdle of inadequate access to professional clothing, potentially hindering their employment prospects. By channeling pre-loved workwear to those in need, the Suitably Dressed initiative aims to bolster the confidence of job seekers and help them leave a positive impression on potential employers.

H&M is inviting South Africans to contribute to this cause by donating good quality, gently worn suits and workwear of any brand. The donation drive will run between 12-26 October, and donations can be dropped off at any H&M store across South Africa. For each bag of workwear, donors will receive two 15% off 'thank you' vouchers to use towards their next H&M purchases.

"At H&M we want to enable our customers to look good, feel good and do good, and the Suitably Dressed campaign perfectly embodies this philosophy. By leveraging pre-loved fashion as a valuable resource, we can collectively drive positive change, empower job seekers and transform lives," says Caroline Nelson, H&M South Africa's country manager.

The project is made possible through H&M's collaboration with local non-for-profit social enterprises Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator and Clothes to Good, as well as the accomplished entrepreneur and changemaker, Miles Kubheka, who recently participated as a panelist, judge and mentor in the H&M Foundation's Global Change Awards.

Donations gathered at H&M will be collected and sorted by Clothes to Good, while the distribution of the garments to job seekers will be managed by Harambee.

Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator is an organisation that collaborates with various partners to address the challenges preventing millions of young South Africans from accessing employment opportunities. Through its dedicated efforts, it has created pathways to employment for hundreds of thousands of job seekers across South Africa.

"I am excited about this collaboration with H&M through 'Suitably Dressed' as it expands on Harambee's existing SmartWorks project, which seeks to enable young job seekers to approach their initial interviews and jobs with newfound confidence. Launched eight years ago, the initiative has supported countless youth with gently worn work attire, thanks to the generous contributions from our ecosystem partners," explained Harambee's chief communications officer, Zengeziwe Msimang.

Beyond its impact on employment barriers, the Suitably Dressed initiative aligns with H&M's mission to foster a sustainable circular fashion industry that reuses and repurposes textiles before eventual recycling.

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