

Danone SA launches first library built with upcycled yoghurt tubs

A first-of-its-kind library built out of 1-million upcycled yoghurt tubs was officially opened at Nageng Primary School in Vosloorus, East of Johannesburg, yesterday, 7 September 2023. The yoghurt tubs were converted to lightweight bricks for the construction as a means of diverting waste from the landfill and forms part of Danone's Impact Journey. The library was awarded to the school as part of NutriDay's Tubs2Classrooms competition.



Supplied image: Tubs2Classrooms - Nageng Primary School Library Launch

"The official opening of this school library is our investment in sustainability, knowing that the longevity of this structure will have a lasting impact and will be benefiting generations to come," says Leanne Kiezer, head of Corporate Affairs at Danone. "Having used sustainable building materials, like Envirolite bricks, we are demonstrating that upcycling solutions for plastic waste can be found. Our hope is that this library will be the first of many innovative sustainable solutions to come."

This project is a realised goal for the NutriDay Tubs2Classrooms initiative, where learners are not only educated around the importance of recycling but encouraged to contribute to the cause by bringing their yoghurt tubs to designated collection points. One hundred schools in Gauteng collected yoghurt tubs and industry partnerships did the rest.

Private sector partnership

"Minister of Education, Angie Motshekga, recently stated that South African schools lack classrooms, and a staggering 70,000 more are required across the country. It will take strong partnerships with the private sector to drive this. This launch today is also proof that we can do things differently and work collaboratively to meet this challenge while protecting our planet, driving sustainability, and serving the community," adds Kiezer.

"It would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the outpouring of support, we have received from the inception of the project that contributed to this successful launch," continues Kiezer. "Imperial & Motus Community Trust turned an empty structure into a well-equipped functioning space. Pick n Pay School Club provided the platform to educate learners about the importance

of recycling. The many donors of books, furniture and funding included Rightway Carpentry, Waltons Bidvest, Interwaste, PolyCo, Alpion, Food Safety Hub, and even the Community Group Firefighter Association who collectively helped us give the library its finishing touches.”

Library resources and operations

The Imperial & Motus Community Trust is privileged to hand over its 72nd fully operational library and resource centre to Nageng Primary School. The Trust’s contribution includes over 4000 brand-new reading books, that were covered and cataloged, teaching aids, laptops, a projector, a screen, and furniture.

To sustain the use of the library, the Trust has employed a full-time librarian who was recruited from the Vosloorus community. The library assistant will manage the centre five days a week from 7.30am-4pm, every alternate Saturday and most school holidays.

Children will be issued a reading card and the librarian together with the educators will work with the Department of Education to try and ensure that every child reads a book every 10 days. Compulsory reading activities will be timetabled to ensure improvement in literacy levels at the school.

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