

Restoring dignity in our schools - World Toilet Day 2020

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World Toilet Day (WTD) is an official United Nations International Observance Day on 19 November. Raising awareness about the 4.2 billion people living without access to safely-managed sanitation, this Observance Day aims to inspire action to tackle the global sanitation crisis. In South Africa, many schools lack appropriate sanitation, especially in rural and informal communities.



This year's World Toilet Day theme is "Sustainable Sanitation and Climate Change". Sustainable sanitation begins with a toilet that effectively captures human waste in a safe, accessible, and dignified setting.

Banyana Mohajane, Executive: Programmes for Adopt-a-School Foundation says that the rapid spread of the Covid-19 pandemic exposed inequality in our communities and highlighted the importance of sustainable sanitation, alongside clean water and handwashing facilities. The challenges facing many schools in South Africa include inadequate infrastructure and a lack of resources, sanitation.

For many years, learners have had to go through school without dignified ablution facilities. Mud schools and unsafe pit latrines are the norm in thousands of schools across the country. These conditions were spotlighted after the tragic deaths of Michael Komape and Viwe Jali in 2014, and more recently five-year-old Lumka Mkhethwa who fell into a school pit toilet and died in March 2018.

In 2018, President Cyril Ramaphosa, together with Department of Basic Education Minister, Angie Motshekga, launched the Sanitation Appropriate for Education (SAFE) programme. The programme mobilises funding through partnerships with the private sector to eradicate pit latrines in about 4000 schools across South Africa.

Soon after the launch of the SAFE initiative, President Cyril Ramaphosa committed 70% of all proceeds raised from the annual Presidential Golf Challenge towards the national campaign to eradicate pit latrines at schools. This was done through the Cyril Ramaphosa Foundation and its partner entity, Adopt-a-School Foundation. To date, Adopt-a-School Foundation has built and renovated ablutions facilities in 87 schools across the country since inception.

"The Adopt-a-School Foundation's vision since its establishment in 2002 has been to create a dynamic, transformed and accessible schooling environment that produces capable global citizens to meet the developmental needs of Southern

Africa,” Steven Lebere, the CEO of Adopt-a-School Foundation said. “This alludes to the building of structures that restore dignity to learners, teachers and people of the many historically disadvantaged communities we serve,” he said.

Adopt-a-School Foundation is committed to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the development of quality education.

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Adopt-a-School Foundation is a non-profit organisation that supports the creation and enhancement of a conducive learning and teaching environment in disadvantaged schools.

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