

Global Handwashing Day Bolstered by Collaborative Work in the Eastern Cape

Eastern Cape – October 15, 2021: To exhibit how public-private collaboration addresses sanitation and hygiene, this Global Handwashing Day we're showcasing the results of transformative partnerships in the Eastern Cape that have proven to make a difference in ensuring access to handwashing.

Commemorated annually on 15 October, this year Global Handwashing Day has been themed, "Our Future is at Hand – Let's Move Forward Together." This theme encapsulates the collaborative efforts of the private and public sector in the Eastern Cape, who have for years been working together to save lives through improved hygiene.

While COVID-19 has revealed many truths over the past 18 months, one of the most important is the notion of regular handwashing, an easy, effective and affordable way to prevent diseases and save lives. Despite the necessity of handwashing to improve hygiene as well as public health and safety, safe access to clean water and sanitization remains unattainable for many people.

To improve hand hygiene, the National Business Initiative (NBI) has been working with public and private sector partners to establish foot-operated handwashing facilities and communal standpipes across the Eastern Cape. This work is critical to curbing the spread of COVID-19, by increasing the number of safe, communal hand washing facilities in high-density areas we can help prevent the spread of the virus. Further, studies show that foot-operated facilities are more effective than traditional methods, making this work of critical importance. The facilities have been engineered to be fully foot-operated with their limited surface area preventing contamination, making it an ideal solution during and beyond the COVID 19 pandemic.

A key aspect of this initiative is the replacement of standpipes with foot-operated taps in informal settlements. High-density informal settlements, clinics and schools are at high risk of COVID-19 transmission, given limited hand washing facilities and practical difficulties experienced when social distancing. The provincial Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), as well as Eastern Cape Cooperative Governance & Traditional Affairs (COGTA), have been crucial in identifying locations for the rollout of the handwash facilities and facilitating the rollout in various municipalities across the province.

This initiative in the Eastern Cape is sponsored by PepsiCo, through the PepsiCo Foundation, and Grundfos, through the Grundfos Foundation. The support of these organisations has ensured that access to clean water and sanitation can be addressed at scale, and with combined support, we will be able to give hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries across the Eastern Cape access to hygienic handwashing facilities.

"This initiative is an important part of the PepsiCo Foundation's goal to reach 100 million people with safe water access by 2030, which will be achieved by focusing near-term efforts on water distribution, sanitation and hygiene," according to Devendri Adari, Social Impact & International Grants Lead for South Africa at The PepsiCo Foundation. "While it is true that handwashing and proper hygiene are critical to slowing the spread of COVID-19 and for many other health benefits, a large majority of our people do not have access to water. Access to clean water is not a luxury – it is a human right," Adari said. "The PepsiCo Foundation's partnership with the NBI and local government was vital in working

towards achieving our goal of providing access to families across the Eastern Cape, with this most precious and necessary resource, during this critical time.”

“The availability of water is crucial for drinking, sanitation and irrigation as well as to the survival of people from all walks of life. Grundfos supports Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6), which addresses issues of drinking water, sanitation, hygiene and global water resources,” said Peter Mashaba, Sub Sahara Facilities Supervisor at The Grundfos Foundation.

Global Handwashing Day was founded by the [Global Handwashing Partnership in 2008](#), and is an opportunity to design, test, and replicate creative ways to encourage people to wash their hands during critical times such as the present.

The handwashing facilities sponsored by PepsiCo and Grundfos Foundations are a perfect example of these innovative solutions. The PepsiCo and Grundfos Foundations are delighted to support long-term community solutions, with the unit’s longevity making it suitable for hygiene access at schools, clinics, informal settlements and anywhere where safe public handwashing is needed.

“This initiative is an excellent example of how collaboration between various stakeholders can achieve long-term sanitation and healthcare benefits in communities, showcasing the possibilities inherent in partnerships between business, government and civil society,” said Ruth Troskie, Head of Technical Assistance, Mentorship and Development Programme & Building of State Capacity at the NBI.

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About the National Business Initiative

At the National Business Initiative (NBI), we believe in collective action and collaboration to effect change; building a South African society and economy that is inclusive, resilient, sustainable and based on trust. We are an independent, business movement of around 80 of South Africa’s largest companies and institutions committed to the vision of a thriving country and society. The NBI works with our members to enhance their capacity for change, leverage the power of our collective, build trust in the role of business in society, enable action by business to transform society and create investment opportunities.

About the PepsiCo Foundation

Established in 1962, The PepsiCo Foundation, the philanthropic arm of PepsiCo, invests in the essential elements of a sustainable food system with a mission to support thriving communities. Working with non-profits and experts around the globe, we’re focused on helping communities obtain access to food security, safe water and economic opportunity. We strive for tangible impact in the places where we live and work—collaborating with industry peers, local and international organizations, and our employees to affect large-scale change on the issues that matter to us and are of global importance. Learn more at www.pepsico.com/sustainability/philanthropy.