

SiyakhaKaBusha, Proctor & Gamble fulfils promise made to 5 KZN schools!

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P&G helps thousands of learners resume normal schooling.



[Proctor & Gamble](#) has rescued the school year for thousands of learners in KwaZulu-Natal. They have been without proper facilities since July last year, when about 130 schools in the province were vandalised, looted and even torched during the unrest. At the time, the Basic Education Department said it did not have the budget to fix the schools, or to provide mobile classrooms. Siphosethu Primary School Principal, Themba Sokhabase, who was visibly shaken by what had happened said at the time: "It is really sad that we find ourselves where we are today, given how hard we worked to ensure we provide safe and decent infrastructure to our learners." He added: "Now everything we worked hard for and were proud to have achieved is destroyed, the learners' records, the teachers' and school records, they are all gone."

P&G was deeply moved by those sentiments and stepped in to remedy the sad situation. Vilo Trska, senior vice president and general manager for P&G sub-Saharan Africa, says: "P&G cares deeply about the communities it serves and their most pressing needs. We were aware that if we didn't act immediately, it would become even more difficult to recover. So, we quickly committed to tackling the mammoth task, and together with our esteemed partners, we were able to assist and reach out to a number of KZN schools in the shortest amount of time." The company has been working hard with the United Nations Children's Fund, Unicef, to restore and rebuild some of the schools affected by the devastating riots in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng. In December 2021, P&G launched the SiyakhaKabusha Initiative, which means 'we are rebuilding', to ensure that thousands of children were able to resume normal schooling as soon as possible this year.

Together with Unicef, the National Education Collaboration Trust and the Department of Basic Education, the campaign identified five priority schools for repair. These were Okumhlophe Secondary School, Elora Primary School and Margot Fonteyn High in Umlazi, and Golden Steps School and Siphosethu Primary School in Pinetown. P&G initially pledged R7m to kickstart the initiative. The good news is that the first phase of the programme is now complete, and the rebuilt schools were ready to be handed over at an event on Wednesday, 19 October, at Siphosethu Primary School. Siphosethu has also been adopted by the P&G Always Keeping Girls in School programme.



Today, thousands of parents and learners are thrilled that they again have a haven of education to go to. With the SiyakhaKabusha Initiative, P&G has helped Sokhabase, and other principals, to restore what was lost.

P&G's Vilo Trska will be joined by all partners at the handover event. Trska explains the motivation behind the SiyakhaKabusha Initiative: "Our education system has been tested to the limit in recent times, but as a nation, we have demonstrated time and time again how strong and united we are when confronted with pressing challenges. We can face them head on if we come together and work towards healing and rebuilding our country, by ensuring that the majority, if not all of the affected schools, are restored to their former glory. Through our brands such as Always, Vicks, Head & Shoulders, and Pantene, we have been able to raise funds and launch the SiyakhaKabusha Initiative."

P&G has long recognised that schools do not exist in isolation but are part of the communities they serve. And in order for them to function optimally, schools need to work together with diverse stakeholders, individuals and structures in the immediate environment, including the private sector. That is why P&G recognises the importance of community participation in education.

P&G also recognises the value that schools provide to society, beyond just education. According to Tska: "Our schools aren't only places of learning, but also play other crucial roles, such as regularly providing nutritious food to children in need, which benefits their physical and mental well-being, assisting them to realise their full potential. We need to work together as communities, government and the private sector to ensure our children are not only afforded the basic human right to learning, but are treated fairly, equally, and with dignity."

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