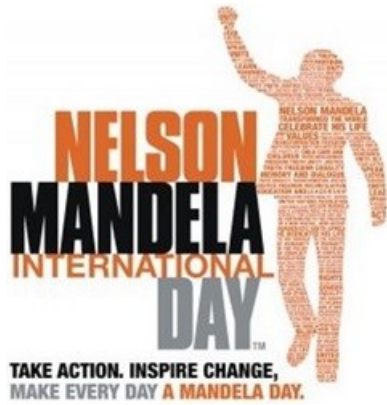


Trek4Mandela in association with Lil-lets: climbing for dignity

It is hard to believe that the majority of girls in Africa miss up to 50 days of schooling each year because they don't have access to a basic need: sanitary towels.



Summitting the highest peak in Africa on 18 July for the third year running is what two social entrepreneurs are doing to fulfil the ethos of Mandela Day: 'Take Action, Inspire Change. Make every day a Mandela Day'.

Philanthropist Richard Mabaso of the Imbumba Foundation and visionary founder of Caring4Girls started the Trek4Mandela expedition to inspire change, create awareness and raise money for sanitary towels and a menstrual hygiene programme for underprivileged girls in rural communities.

Caring4Girls not only provides this basic need but also teaches young women life orientation through ongoing mentorship and leadership. Mabaso has a passion for working with rural communities and breaking the current inevitable cycle of poverty. Having grown up in a poor family in a village in Mpumalanga, he understands the reality of their situation.

All the right ingredients

The expedition has all the right ingredients - celebrating 20 years of democracy, eight participants (of varying ages) two social entrepreneurs, 20 beneficiary schools from four African countries and an unwavering purpose.

Mabaso together with Sibusiso Vilane and two of Mzansi's celebrities - Tebogo "ProVerb" Thekisho and Mpumi Mbethe - along with other young people, will head up the journey through Africa to the top of Kilimanjaro to help young girls in impoverished rural areas regain their self-esteem and dignity.

For a third consecutive year, Mabaso will head off on the Trek4Mandela expedition where, together with Sibusiso Vilane - the first black African to conquer the three poles (Everest and the North and South Pole) - they will head up a drive-and-climb from South Africa through Botswana, Zambia and Tanzania (democracies pivotal to shaping South Africa's freedom). Both these men, who summited Kilimanjaro for charity in 2012 and 2013, aim to reach the peak on Friday, 18 July - Mandela Day.

Mabaso believes the trip emulates Mandela's long walk to freedom - the steady and determined overcoming of obstacles and reaching your goal. He believes in Mandela's words, "After climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb," and knows that it is through the provision of menstrual education, demystifying puberty and the passage into womanhood, along with providing young girls with their basic needs, that will give them confidence to overcome their current circumstances and future challenges.

Vilane, who overcame his own poverty with the help of mentors who believed in him, now helps raise funds by conquering extreme challenges. He also believes in paying it forward: "Self-esteem is the most fundamental characteristic that every young girl needs when young and growing up. That way, they can walk tall and face any challenge around them. The Trek4Mandela expedition strives to instil and nurture that in as many girls as possible in our country!"

Supported by the Nelson Mandela Foundation and endorsed by Madiba himself

The project is actively supported by the Nelson Mandela Foundation and was endorsed by Madiba in 2012 when he said, "We applaud this awesome team of South Africans who have achieved this incredible feat. We want to thank the Trek4Mandela team for driving the change as community advocates." In her first public appearance since Madiba's death, Graca Michel, on behalf of the Foundation, will wish the intrepid travellers well as they head off on 7 July 2014 for a project she personally endorses.

Money raised during the Trek4Mandela will continue to support Caring4Girls, providing puberty and menstrual hygiene education for young girls in rural areas as well as access to sanitary pads. Over the past two years they have donated 130,000 packets of sanitary pads within these communities with 40,000 girls in South Africa supported in this way.

Lil-lets' involvement in the initiative



Reaching the highest peak in Africa to raise money for the Caring4Girls initiative.

Over the past year, Lil-lets has donated more than R2m worth of sanitary pads, through this program, to girls in poor rural communities. With the help of The Banking Association of South Africa and the endorsement of the Mpumalanga Education Department, a booklet has been printed with the aim of educating young girls about puberty and menstrual hygiene. To date, over 100,000 copies have been distributed.

In South Africa (particularly in rural areas) access to advice and sanitary protection is often limited. The onset of puberty can be a particularly frightening time because there are no official programs in schools, young girls do not have access to basic

sanitary protection and parents are often ill-equipped or simply do not have the means to provide basic sanitary products for themselves or their daughters. As a result, many girls have no idea what is happening to their bodies and feelings of guilt and despair abound. One of the Caring4Girls objectives is to demystify menstruation and enable the girls to become more empowered.

Darlene Smith, Marketing Director of Lil-lets says, "When Richard approached us and shared his Caring4Girls initiative, we were really excited to work with him as it is a wonderful opportunity to make a difference in the lives of thousands of young girls through our *We are Women* campaign. Collaborating with someone as sincere as Richard to bring sanitary protection to the young women of South Africa and to get women to share their experiences, and remind them they are not alone, allows us to bring back the respect and dignity they deserve. Having a period is a very normal part of being a woman. It need not be a time of additional stress and anxiety and our hope is to encourage young women to talk, share and learn from one another."

To support this initiative or follow the progress of the Trek4Mandela expedition, which includes celebrities such as ProVerb and Mpumi Mbethe as part of the summit team, go to www.trek4mandela.com or www.imbumbafoundation.org.

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