

Community taking action to clean their streets

When we think of childhood, we think of children running, playing and laughing without a care. But this is not what Mpolokeng Kambule, a social worker and project manager who has been placed at Pretoria based non-profit organisation, New Beginningz, through the Vodacom Change the World initiative, saw when she arrived at the Itireleng settlement.



Mpolokeng Kambule, the Vodacom Change the World volunteer at New Beginningz. Source: [South Africa: The Good News](#).

Instead, she saw the children's play areas brimming with rubbish, forcing them on to the streets, which were flowing with dirty water due to no drainage system. This prompted her to initiate a clean-up campaign. "Children should be able to grow up in a clean and safe environment," says Kambule.

"The community leaders expressed their unhappiness with the state of their neighbourhood. The refuse had not been collected for two months, and while the refuse collection recommenced after a complaint was laid with the municipality, simply collecting rubbish would not be enough to transform this area into a cleaner environment. What was needed was for the members of the community to take responsibility for their surroundings," explains Kambule.

Educating residents

Kambule started the clean-up campaign by inviting the Departments of Waste Management and Water and Sanitation to speak to the community leaders on solutions and means of combating their waste problem. These community leaders are now going door-to-door to educate residents on how to best dispose of their waste. They are being supplied with refuse bags and asked to dig holes to throw their dirty water into. They are also being taught about recycling and requested to take these goods to an informal recycling business that is running in Itireleng.

Says Kambule, "We are not just teaching the community how to dispose of their waste, but also trying to make them understand that it is each individual's responsibility to keep their environment safe and ensure their children are able to play in a safe area."

Although Kambule reports that some residents are not interested in changing their ways, others are responding positively

and are beginning to take ownership of keeping their space clean. "We have only recently started going door-to-door, but hope that once we have reached all the residents of the community, the state of Itireleng will improve."

Next phase

The next phase of the campaign includes clearing an area that has become a dumping ground and turning it into a park. Twenty one community members' names have already been put forward to the municipality to be employed for the construction of the park.

"The children of Itireleng have the right to a childhood and the clean-up campaign will provide them with an opportunity to play in a clean and safe environment," concludes Kambule.

Vodacom Change the World (CtW), is a programme that takes corporate philanthropy in a new direction. CtW, first launched in South Africa in October 2010, is part of the global World of Difference (WOD) initiative, which has successfully launched in 20 Vodafone countries. This initiative enables volunteers to work for the charity/non-profit organisation (NPO) of their choice for a specified period, at no cost to the volunteer and host organisation.

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