

Unilever launches Dove Self Esteem Project to boost girls self-worth

Unilever South Africa recently launched the Dove Self Esteem Project, which is set to reach 100,000 girls by the end of 2015 through self-esteem workshops aimed at building body confidence.

Unilever South Africa strives to create a brighter future for all South Africans, with a specific focus on children, communities and farmers. The Dove Self Esteem Project, which focuses on impacting children and communities for the better, ties into the company's social responsibility objectives.



As the Dove brand envisions a world where beauty is a source of confidence and not anxiety, the brand is on a mission to help women raise their self-esteem and realise their full potential with the Dove Self Esteem Project. It is set to reach 100,000 girls by the end of 2015 through hour-long self-esteem workshops aimed at building body confidence.

Taking Unilever's global Dove Self Esteem Project local

Locally, the project reaches young people in both public and private schools and in 2014 the focus is on Gauteng, with the aim to expand to the rest of the country next year.

The project is supported by the selfesteem.dove.co.za website, which provides a host of informative articles and engaging activities for parents, mentors and teachers. "Our website is arming parents with the right tools to help their girls overcome beauty-related anxieties. We want to give girls the tools to build, nurture and protect their self-esteem so that the way they think and look never holds them back from being who they are and achieving what they want in life," says Kate Swan, marketing manager at Dove.

The Dove Self Esteem Project was launched internationally in 2005 and is now being run in 23 countries around the world. Dove's global goal is to reach 15 million young people with self-esteem building programmes by end 2015.

Proof: 6 out of 10 girls have poor body confidence

Dove's global survey, *The Real Truth about Beauty: Revisited*, was released in 2010. It revealed that 6 out of 10 girls avoid participating in activities because of poor body confidence. They're not just avoiding social activities - 23% are avoiding going to the beach or pool and 17% are avoiding physical activity or sport. "With these statistics in mind, the Dove Self Esteem Project was launched to help girls build body confidence and strengthen their sense of self-worth," says Swan.



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The project involves trainer-led one hour self-esteem workshops, where groups explore body image, body confidence, the role of the media and techniques to build self-esteem. It is aimed at girls between the ages of 10 and 15 and accommodates up to 60 learners per workshop. "These workshops also aim to equip teachers, mentors and parents with the resources and tools to deliver this education effectively on our behalf," says Swan.

"Teachers from the schools we have visited confirmed that many of their learners experience poor self-confidence. Girls go through an array of changes during adolescence and their self-esteem can suffer, this is the reason we have reached out to prepubescent and pubescent girls to instil a culture of self-confidence from a young age," she says.

Here are some tips from the selfesteem.dove.co.za website on how mothers or parents can help their children with self-esteem from a young age:

- A healthy conversation about appearance is an important part of nurturing a child's self-esteem. We need to encourage children to embrace their own differences, their changing needs and our diversity as a society. This will enable children to grow up with a balanced outlook about their appearance.
- Help his/her confidence by showing him/her how to stop comparing himself/herself to others, be they people that he/she knows or people that he/she sees in the media.
- Help your child uncover her own sense of self-worth by regularly complimenting and praising her to help her build her confidence and self-esteem. Make sure to not focus too much on her looks but rather focus on other elements such as some of her strengths, good school work and helpfulness around the house.

You can get involved with the Dove Self Esteem Project in a number of ways, from becoming more aware of the day-to-day realities of being a girl to leading self-esteem building workshops in communities. Just starting a conversation about body confidence with a girl can make all the difference.

For more information on the Dove Self Esteem Project and how you can help, visit [the official website](#) or follow the conversation on Facebook at www.facebook.com/dovesouthafrica or on Twitter @Dove_ZA #DoveSelfEsteem.

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