

Heineken Africa Foundation renews efforts to fighting Covid-19 as South Africa's infection and death rate increases

Issued by [Heineken South Africa](#)

28 Jun 2021

As the international community, health experts and governments take stock of the impact of the WHO-led Hand Hygiene for All (HH4A) initiative launched a year ago on 25 June, the private sector has come to the fore by ramping up its support to Covid-19 efforts in developing countries.



The Hand Hygiene for All campaign is aimed at ensuring that people have access to clean water and facilities to wash their hands and prevent infection from Covid-19 and other diseases. To support the initiative, the Heineken Africa Foundation (HAF) through partnership with international NGO WaterAid, has renewed its commitment through additional funding for water, sanitation and hygiene (Wash) projects, targeted at 30 million people across Nigeria, Mozambique, South Africa and Rwanda.

Phase two of the initiative builds on the foundation of the first by increasing access to clean water and handwashing facilities in high-risk areas such as informal settlements, clinics and schools. The 10-month long project commenced this month and will run until April 2022 within Limpopo and Gauteng provinces, with a budget of over R6,7m (€400,000).



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In 2020, the foundation provided over R3m worth of funding for a WaterAid project in South Africa, which saw the provision of sanitary products and the installation of handwashing facilities and other infrastructure, now providing access to clean running water among communities in informal settlements and rural areas.

The project which ran between June to December, enabled the installation of 20 handwashing facilities for people in areas such as Zandspruit, KyaSands, and Kliptown. These communities in Gauteng Province were identified by the Department of Water and Sanitation as being in dire need of this necessity. Up to 10,000 people are now benefiting from the installed facilities.

WaterAid also joined forces with local NGO Tsogang in Limpopo Province, to install water storage tanks and 12 handwashing facilities in Vhembe District. At least 18,000 people in the district are now able to access clean water and decent toilet facilities at home and in schools.

In addition, 4,100 women and girls in Thulamela and Makhado Municipalities in Vhembe and women and children at a refugee camp in the town of Musina also benefited from the HAF Fund through donations of hygiene products including soap, sanitisers and sanitary products.

WaterAid Southern Africa regional programme manager Elijah Adera said: "The strong support and partnership we have with the Heineken Africa Foundation has brought about tremendous transformation to WaterAid's work on the ground. Tackling Covid-19 through the Hand Hygiene for All campaign cannot be a government effort alone and the foundation has shown how effective this work can be when the private sector steps in."

South Africa has the highest number of Covid-19 infections and deaths in Africa, and as the country enters its third wave of the pandemic – which is seeing increased numbers of infections and deaths, the HAF and WaterAid partnership is supporting government efforts in ensuring that the most vulnerable people have the water and hygienic conditions for them to stay safe from infection.

As the HAF support enters its second phase, it is expected to help promote the adoption of good hygiene and handwashing practices as a central part of the Covid-19 response plan, as well as build the capacity of communities to deliver water supply, hygiene promotion and ensure sustainability of services.

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