



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



MEDIA STATEMENT

The Washing of Hands Enhances Health and Hygiene

12 June 2019

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) in partnership with the Gasegonyana Local Municipality (LM) will have a health and hygiene door-to-door awareness campaign in the communities of Kagung and Tsineng on the 19 - 20 June 2019 respectively. The campaign is not limited to the latter only but will extend to various District and Local Municipalities in the Northern Cape.

The communities of Tsineng and Kagung like many other rural communities in South Africa that are making use of the Ventilated Improved Pit known as the (VIP) are experiencing similar challenges.

The VIP toilet is one of the dry sanitation options implemented by Government as part of providing decent sanitation. As long as the toilet pit stays dry, it has no smell. The challenge arises when communities start pouring water into the dry sanitation facility. This then causes an unintended problem as the toilet is meant to stay dry.

Communities are also dumping foreign objects like baby nappies, sanitary pads, human hair, braids and rocks into the toilet pit. Such activities indicate that communities need education and awareness on operation and maintenance of toilet facilities.

Another challenge is that of diseases associated with toilet use. Diarrhoea, which is the 2nd killer of children in the world, can be prevented by the simple washing of hands with soap after using the toilet or having come into contact with human excreta.

It is against this background that the Department of Water and Sanitation in partnership with various Northern Cape Municipalities is embarking on an education and awareness campaign to deal with Sanitation, Health and Hygiene issues.

The provision of sanitation facilities alone does not guarantee good health. Studies suggest that the impact of good hygiene practices have a greater impact on sanitation related diseases than the actual provision of sanitation facilities. Hygiene promotion is therefore an important part of sanitation and is key to maintaining good health.

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For more information contact Sputnik Ratau, Spokesperson for the Department of Water and Sanitation on 082 874 2942 or Amogelang Moholoeng on 082 653 1682

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