

## **DIGNITY OF THE COMMUNITY OF JAMES VILLAGE IS SLOWLY BUT SURELY BEEN RESTORED.**

Judy Ngoloyi

( Pictures taken by Akhona Ngqinambi )

**JAMES VILLAGE:** The dignity of the community of James Village outside Dimbaza in the Eastern Cape has been restored. This comes after the handing over of sanitation facilities to the residents of the village recently. James Village lies some 35 kilometers outside King Williams' Town and is inhabited by over 280 households, the majority of whom are unemployed.

African Bank invested more than one million rand as part of its corporate social investment in developing sanitation facilities in the village in association with the Mvula Trust as an implementing agent. During the ceremony held at the village on 20 September 2007, about 186 ventilated toilets were handed over to the community.

James Village community member, Thelma Mayoli said for so many years they had been exposed to a number of diseases such as TB and cholera. "Because we did not have proper sanitation we used buckets and others had to go to the nearby bushes. Toilets now are currently being erected and all those hectic challenges will be a thing of the past," said Mayoli.

Poverty and unemployment are rife in the area but local people have been trained and are part of the staff that are building toilets for the community. Addressing the community of James Village, the Director of African Bank, Tami Sokutu said their main objective is to improve the quality of life and address the social and economic backlog in our country.

"It would be naïve to say that this particular intervention marks the end of the challenges at James Village, in fact it marks the beginning of a very long journey," said Sokutu.

He said the decision to support this sanitation project is a deliberate strategy by the bank to align its investment in community projects to the country's transformational and socio-economic agenda as led by the government.

By the end of 2007 South Africa is set to eradicate the remaining 45 000 bucket toilets countrywide and provide adequate sanitation.

Sanitation Manager of the department of Water Affairs in the Eastern Cape, Amanda Machimana, said currently sanitation progress is at 28%. We still have a lot of work to do to meet our target in 2010. As a province we are sitting at 29%. But on the bucket eradicating programme, we have 13 000 buckets to remove between now and December 2007.

Delivering her key note address Local Government MEC in the province, Thokozile Xasa, said government alone cannot reach all the areas similar to this village in this province. She thus saw this an opportunity and urged the private sector to come on board.

“We have a mandate to deliver free basic services but unfortunately this area has not been in the IDP of the municipality which means that it was not going to benefit immediately. We are grateful that African Bank has come to the rescue because we’ve been calling business partners to come in to assist us in the delivery of free basic services,” Xasa said.  
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