

Collaboration provides upcycled toys for 12,500 children on Mandela Day

This Mandela Day, the Do More Foundation, in collaboration with over 800 employees from 20 RCL Foods sites nationwide, have joined forces to create upcycled toys for approximately 12,500 children in under-resourced communities.



Supplied image

This initiative called “Built to Play” aligns in particular with the climate aspect of the official theme of Mandela Day 2023, “Climate, Food, and Solidarity.”

Iris Naidoo, partnerships manager at the Foundation, explains that the campaign name, ‘Built to Play,’ draws attention to the integral role of play in our development and learning, from early childhood to adulthood.

“This initiative aligns with the Foundation’s purpose and also its commitment to fostering a child-centred climate adaptation and resilience approach. Prioritising children’s well-being in climate action serves as a pathway to sustainable development on a long-term scale,” she states.

"Children who experience nurturing care and a conducive environment during their early years enjoy improved lifelong health outcomes, foster stronger relationships, exhibit heightened resilience, and are more likely to become positive contributors to their communities and the country's economic growth."

The campaign aims to distribute play packs containing toys made from upcycled household materials to 255 early childhood development centres in under-resourced communities. These play packs include items such as puppets made from socks, colourful characters created from plastic bottle tops, and counting fish crafted from cardboard packaging. Singakwenza, a non-profit organisation that trains caregivers, designed these toys to support the facilitation of fun and educational play, enabling young children to develop essential foundational skills through recycling-based resources.



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The selection of play pack contents is intentional, targeting various areas of early child development, including gross motor coordination, fine motor and visual coordination, cognitive and executive functioning, and more. These areas are particularly crucial as a significant percentage of South African children face challenges in these domains. Statistics from the Thrive by Five Index 2022 indicate that more than half of South African children aged 4 and 5 years attending Early Learning Programs struggle to meet expected learning tasks for their age group.

Through play, children learn to draw conclusions, reason, generate creative ideas, and develop patience. Play also helps children understand and process their emotions, teaching them valuable skills in managing anger, sadness, and grief. Additionally, playing fosters confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of identity in children.

Some of the participating RCL Foods sites include Sunbake in Rustenburg, Rainbow Farms in Worcester, and RCL Foods Head Office in Durban.

"Let's inspire individuals to actively engage in upcycling waste and creating toys for children not only on Mandela Day but throughout the year. The essence of play lies not in the price of toys but in the imagination they foster," concludes Naidoo.

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