

Campaign to clean up the environment gains momentum

Volunteers came out in numbers to take part in cleanups facilitated by the Shoprite Group on World Cleanup Day (15 September 2018). Some 250 cleanup events took place in eight countries across Africa.

This cleanup drive comes on the back of the retail group staging Africa's biggest cleanup July 2018, in which 12 000 volunteers participated in 465 cleanup events in 12 countries.

"Our objective is clear: we want to start a movement in which volunteers commit to regularly cleaning their environment. World Cleanup Day was a great initiative to rally around to give further momentum to this movement, kick-started by Africa's biggest cleanup," says Lunga Schoeman, CSI spokesperson for the Shoprite Group.

One such cleanup champion is Refilwe Mofokeng, a staunch environmentalist, who organises monthly coastal cleanups in the Durban area. World Cleanup Day is also International Coastal Cleanup Day, which prompted Refilwe to organise a cleanup of the Durban Harbour.

She founded NGO Refilwe Matlotlo (Refilwe's treasure) to educate people of the importance of keeping our oceans clean. "For this cleanup I partnered with Girls and Boys Town and also enlisted the help of students from UKZN," says this marine biology PhD student, adding that "volunteers received training before the cleanup while Durban Solid Waste ensured that all recyclables are recycled so that as little as possible goes to landfill."

In Cape Town Shoprite's top brass cleaned up the city centre in the single biggest cleanup (in terms of the number of participants) organised by the retailer so far. No fewer than 335 managers attending the Group's annual Christmas Expo, some coming from as far afield as Ghana and Nigeria, got their hands dirty to keep the Mother City clean.

Every Shoprite, Checkers and USAVE store in the Free State and parts of the Northern Cape organised a cleanup of its local area. Their efforts alone saw some 120 local communities benefiting from a cleaner, friendlier environment.

"With our footprint in South Africa and the rest of Africa there is no shortage of volunteers from our stores. However, our aim is to encourage ordinary people partner with us and that is why the Group developed www.actforchange.africa - the digital platform enables anyone to join an existing cleanup or to organise their own community cleanup anywhere and at any time," concludes Schoeman.

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