

Beiersdorf's 'Care Beyond Skin' brings benefits to Thanda and the Mtwalume community

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Beiersdorf brands, Nivea, Eucerin, Labello, and Elastoplast are well known in South Africa, but perhaps what is not that well known is the partnership that Beiersdorf has with the non-profit community-based organisation, Thanda.



Beiersdorf CEO, Vincent Warnery, overlooks while students from the Empowering Girls Programme at Thanda get to work on the new laptops in the newly unveiled digital classroom at Thanda.

Established in rural KwaZulu-Natal in 2008, Thanda's mission is to empower people to create positive change in individuals and communities through innovative and sustainable solutions.

"Through our partnership with Thanda, we are translating our purpose, 'Care Beyond Skin' into action. For Beiersdorf, caring has always gone beyond our core business; it's a fundamental part of who we are," says Beiersdorf CEO, Vincent Warnery.

"That's why we are thrilled to witness the tangible results of our efforts, and to know that we are making a real difference here in the local community."



L to R: Tyler Howard (founder of Thanda), Ramon A. Mrt (executive board member of Beiersdorf AG), Harish Douglas (senior vice president, Beiersdorf AME), Vincent Warnery (CEO Beiersdorf), Angela Larkin (founder of Thanda), Godwin Harrison (managing director, Beiersdorf Southern Africa), Carla Rowe (head of CSR, Beiersdorf South Africa), Raah Msimango (ops manager, Thanda)

Beiersdorf lists issues such as climate change, sustainable land use, responsible water consumption, and an inclusive society as some of their global commitments.

The Beiersdorf / Thanda relationship dates back to 2015, when Nivea partnered with Thanda to build an early childhood development (ECD) centre, with a view to offering better opportunities for future generations from the underprivileged rural area of Mtwalume. The Thanda ECD Centre was completed in 2017.



Vincent Warnery, Godwin Harrison and Raah Msimango greeting an ECD scholar at the Thanda classroom

The ECD's impact on the community has been significant, with children being educated through ECD programmes, children with disabilities receiving education and therapy support as well as thousands of children aged 7 to 14 participating in after school support programs facilitated by Thanda educators.

In 2020, Beiersdorf also provided financial relief to Thanda, to support the critical local needs of the rural Mtwalume during that devastating time.

The programme that has been developed with Thanda through the partnership and funding, addresses some of the most critical socio-economic crisis areas in South Africa. This includes the lack of early childhood development and education, food and water access, nutrition for early brain development, child protection and safety, mental/physical/social well-being of our youth, and the lack of employment. The program incorporates various environmentally friendly practices, such as the

use of solar power, water-harvesting, biodigester, recycling, and building resilience through soil carbon sequestration, as part of the organic farming initiative.

Ramon A. Mirt, executive board member and responsible for the emerging markets region, states: "Through our partnership with Thanda, we have built a foundation to positively impact a whole community; not just now but for generations to come. This partnership has empowered children and young girls to develop into resilient, positive, and solution-oriented adults."



Ramon A. Mirt, executive board member of Beiersdorf AG, engages with Luanda Njilo from the Thanda Empowering Girls Programme at Thanda

In 2022, Beiersdorf embarked on a unique two year project to uplift and empower girls in vulnerable situations in the rural Thanda Community. Since its inception in February 2022, the lives of over 400 young girls have been positively impacted. Assessment results demonstrate elevated levels of happiness, confidence, and self-esteem, demonstrating how valuable a program like this is in rural areas. Basic digital and computer knowledge is critical, so there is considerable excitement around the fact that by the end of May 2023, the new digital classroom will be open, where the girls will have access to laptops and tablets to embark on their first digital journey.

"We are pleased with the Thanda partnership and their alignment with Beiersdorf Global values, which have been crucial to the success of the programs we have been involved in, including fresh water supply, sustainable agriculture, and immediate short-term access to food," says Godwin Harrison, the local managing director of Beiersdorf.



Vincent Warnery engaging with Asemahe Mbhele from the Empowering Girls Programme at Thanda

For over 140 years, Beiersdorf has been caring for beautiful and healthy skin. By making people feel good in their skin, they get the confidence to reach out to each other and build meaningful connections that are not just skin deep. The essence of 'Care Beyond Skin' is extending care to fellow citizens and to the planet to contribute to more cohesive communities.

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