

Kimberly-Clark Continues Crucial Work Amidst Pandemic To Address The Global Sanitation Crisis

Through the Kimberly-Clark Foundation, the 'Toilets Change Lives' program supported sanitation solutions in 10 countries this year



DALLAS, Nov. 18, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- As the pandemic has unfolded, many people focused on access to essential products such as toilet paper. Yet over 2 billion people – or 1 in 4 – around the world – continue to lack access to basic sanitation, including a toilet. Additionally, 785 million – or 1 in 10 – do not have clean water close to home.

Kimberly-Clark and several of its trusted brands, including Andrex, [Neve](#), [Scott](#), [Suave](#) and [Baby Soft](#), responded to the global sanitation crisis and have engaged consumers through the 'Toilets Change Lives' program over the

last six years. Supported by the Kimberly-Clark Foundation, the company launched the program in 2014 initially with its [Andrex](#) brand, and it has since provided critical resources in 12 countries and impacted 5 million lives.

The United Nations General Assembly officially designated [World Toilet Day](#) in 2013 to raise awareness and inspire efforts to bring solutions to the more than 2 billion people who lack access to basic sanitation. This crisis often leads to children dying from preventable diseases, women lacking a safe place to relieve themselves, or missing school and work because they are unable to manage their periods.

"The need for access to clean water and sustainable sanitation has never been more urgent," said **Jenny Lewis, Vice President of the Kimberly-Clark Foundation**. "While the sanitation crisis existed long before the pandemic, the public health crisis combined with the impacts of climate change have only magnified the issue and the need for solutions. There is still a lot of work to do, and our Toilets Change Lives program is helping to accelerate it."

According to the [World Health Organization](#), climate change exacerbates the risk of infectious disease by increasing the existing pressure on clean water and sanitation systems.

Toilets Change Lives focuses on 10 countries in 2020

This year, the program provided resources in 10 countries, including Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru and South Africa, in partnership with Kimberly-Clark's customers as well as NGOs including [Water For People](#), [WaterAid](#) and [Plan International](#).

Kimberly-Clark and its Andrex brand have partnered since 2017 with WaterAid on an initiative known as '[Improving Community Toilets to Increase Dignity and Public Health](#)' to transform public sanitation services through the construction and management of inclusive public toilets across three cities in Bangladesh, which benefit pedestrians and commuters – particularly those from low-income communities.

This year, the program completed five new public toilets in Dhaka, Chattogram and Khulna as an expansion of the four toilet blocks that were built during the first phase of the project (April 2017 to March 2018). The nine public toilets in this program have generated over 1.6 million uses since 2017, which is more than double the projected impact.

Watch the [story of Sanjida and her family](#) in Bangladesh and learn more about the impact that toilets provide for communities around the globe.

Creating new jobs in the sanitation economy

As part of its commitment to sustainable solutions to the global sanitation crisis, Kimberly-Clark has supported the creation of new business models across the sanitation economy.

In alignment with one of the program's objectives to create sustainable new jobs for sanipreneurs, WaterAid coordinated training for 26 local women across three cities in Bangladesh to oversee the operation and maintenance of public toilets and ensure high standards of cleanliness. These female employees increase the confidence of other women and encourage them to use the toilets, changing the perception that public toilets are unpleasant, unsafe and unhygienic.

"We know that without the very basic human essentials such as clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene, people can't stay healthy and families become more vulnerable to disease. This results in children missing out on education and parents often becoming too ill to work, putting livelihoods at risk," said **Tim Wainwright, Chief Executive of WaterAid UK**.

"Through our initiative with Kimberly Clark, with support from Andrex and their customers, our project was

successful in influencing local governments to realize the demand for public sanitation services and improve public health in three major cities in Bangladesh. As a result, the Kimberly Clark program has become a model which is now widely recognized and used in future sanitation planning. This initiative has ignited an unprecedented systemic change in public toilet facilities in Bangladesh, with a particular focus on women and people with disabilities."

Wainwright added, "Together, we have created a program that will continue to improve the dignity and enforce the sanitation rights of the most marginalized within Bangladesh's densely populated cities, creating long-lasting change."

Delivering Sanitation Solutions and Menstrual Hygiene Education in South Africa

In South Africa, one of the leading causes of illness and death for children is diarrhea resulting from poor water quality and sanitation. In response, Kimberly-Clark and WaterAid recently completed their first sanitation program in the country. Together, they delivered sanitation facilities to five schools by building four inclusive toilet blocks and rehabilitating 19 standpipes to increase water and sanitation access to 1,200 students and 5,000 community members in the Vhembe District of Limpopo. In 2021, the program will expand to another four schools to ensure that an additional 2,700 students and two surrounding communities gain access to these vital services.

The program also delivered menstrual hygiene education training to teachers on Menstrual Hygiene Day in May 2019 at two schools, reaching students and staff with key messages on menstrual hygiene management and raising awareness about the many stigmas and taboos surrounding menstruation. In addition, 44 male students received information about how they can support their female peers. Taboos and lack of access to sanitation makes it very challenging for young women to safely and effectively manage their periods, which this program aims to address through awareness-raising activities and sanitation access.

Making lives better across Latin America

More than 80 million Latin Americans do not have access to at least basic sanitation, and our Toilets Change Lives program provided critical sanitation-related resources this year in numerous countries, including Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia and Brazil. Since its launch in Latin America in 2015, the Toilets Change Lives program – with support from our Scott, Suave and Neve brands – has impacted over 270,000 lives in the region.

Our partnership with Plan International through Toilets Change Lives ensured that families in the Andean highlands community in Ecuador have access to essential hygiene products. The program recently delivered 120 hygiene kits filled with Scott brand toilet paper, soap, sanitary pads and more to families in the community to help prevent disease and ensure safer living conditions.

"Our work with Toilets Change Lives plays a critical role in delivering on our global goal of advancing the well-being of 1 billion people in underserved communities around the globe by 2030. This ambition supports three of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, including improving access to clean water and sanitation," said **Gonzalo Uribe, President of Kimberly-Clark's Latin America Consumer Business**.

"Installing a toilet in a community truly changes the life trajectory of everyone in that community for generations to come. It enables children to attend school and continue their education, obtain living wage jobs, support healthy, thriving families of their own, and ultimately strengthen their communities. It all comes full circle," said Uribe.

See how our [Neve brand is making a difference across Brazil](#).

Kimberly-Clark and Toilet Board Coalition Launch Female-Focused Innovation Lab

Last month, Kimberly-Clark and its Kotex brand launched the Women in the Sanitation Economy Innovation Lab in partnership with the [Toilet Board Coalition](#), which it co-founded in 2014. This initiative will cultivate and catalyze early stage ideas and businesses within the sanitation economy that are either women-led and/or women's health-focused.

"As a sanitation entrepreneur myself who works at the intersection of innovation and inclusion, I was thrilled for the opportunity to launch the Women in the Sanitation Economy program with Kimberly-Clark as our first Innovation Lab at the Toilet Board Coalition," said **Jasmine Burton, Sanitation Economy Accelerator and Innovation Lab Manager at the Toilet Board Coalition**. "I am looking forward to continued learnings and growth with this inspiring team from Kimberly-Clark as we grow and evolve the program and its impact over time."

The Innovation Lab initiative features five women-led businesses from Kenya, the U.S. and the UK and expands the reach of the Toilet Board Coalition's current [Sanitation Economy Accelerator Program](#). Kimberly-Clark is providing mentorship from its employees around the globe to support these female entrepreneurs as they aim to tackle some of their unique business challenges and positively contribute to some of the world's most pressing sanitation issues. The Innovation Lab started in October 2020 and will run through April 2021.

Kimberly-Clark's 2030 Ambitions

In July 2020, Kimberly-Clark announced its 2030 sustainability strategy and goals, aimed at addressing the social and environmental challenges of the next decade with commitments to improve the lives and well-being of 1 billion people in underserved communities around the world with the smallest environmental footprint.

This ambition will create positive social outcomes by creating shared value in areas that support three of the [UN's Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDG):

- Caring for the health and well-being of people at all stages of life (SDG 3);
- Challenging stigmas and championing the progress of women everywhere (SDG 5); and
- Championing a world where all enjoy access to clean water and sanitation (SDG 6).

Kimberly-Clark understands that a strong and enduring focus on the [smallest environmental footprint](#) is just as essential to helping people live a better life, and the company also is focused on the areas where it can make the biggest difference – climate, forests, water and plastics.

For more information about Kimberly-Clark's 2030 ambitions, visit kimberly-clark.com/sustainability.

About Kimberly-Clark


Kimberly-Clark (NYSE:[KMB](#)) and its trusted brands are an indispensable part of life for people in more than 175 countries. Fueled by ingenuity, creativity, and an understanding of people's most essential needs, we create products that help individuals experience more of what's important to them. Our portfolio of brands, including Huggies, Kleenex, Scott, Kotex, Cottonelle, Poise, Depend, Andrex, Pull-Ups, GoodNites, Intimus, Neve, Plenitud, Viva and WypAll, hold the No. 1 or No. 2 share position in 80 countries. We use sustainable practices that support a healthy planet, build stronger communities, and ensure our business thrives for decades to come. To keep up with the latest news and to learn more about the company's 148-year history of innovation, [visit kimberly-clark.com](#).

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