



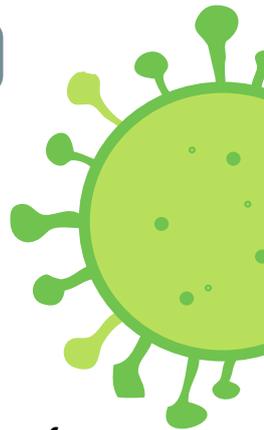
ASIVIKELANE
LET'S PROTECT ONE ANOTHER

ASIVIKELANE

brief 1

20 05
2020

Basic sanitation and Covid-19 in the City of Johannesburg



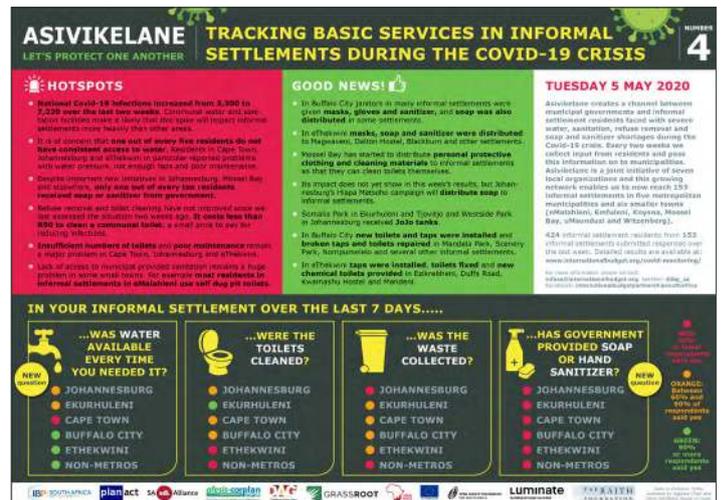
In a nut shell:

Over half a million of Johannesburg's 5.8 million people live in 181 informal settlements.^{1,2} The number of Covid-19 cases in the City increased rapidly from 971 on 6 May to 1,153 on 15 May, a jump of 20 percent in less than two weeks.³ Shared water and toilet facilities make Johannesburg's informal settlement residents extremely vulnerable to infection. Residents participating in the Asivikelane initiative have reported dire water and sanitation problems over the last six weeks. Their efforts to engage with the City have met with a slow response.

ASIVIKELANE – LET'S PROTECT ONE ANOTHER –

asks residents to report on whether their toilets have been cleaned in the last seven days as a measure to assess the health and hygiene risk that they are exposed to. The findings below cover results from four weeks of surveys done via WhatsApp, across informal settlements in the City of Johannesburg during April and May 2020. Learn more about this initiative here:

<https://www.internationalbudget.org/covid-monitoring/>



The spread of Covid-19 in the City of Johannesburg

By 18 May 2020, the Gauteng Province reported a total of 2,343 positive Covid-19 cases.

Of these reported cases, 1,153 or 50 % are in the City of Joburg, making it the epicenter of the disease in the province. The number of cases in the City increased rapidly from 971 on 6 May 2020 to 1,153 on 15 May 2020, an increase of 20% in less than two weeks.⁴

¹ Estimated population as at 2018. Source: UN World Urbanisation Prospects <https://population.un.org/wup/Publications/Files/WUP2018-Report.pdf>

² <https://www.joburg.org.za/media/Newsroom/Pages/2016%20&%202015%20Articles/More-informal-settlements-in-Joburg-get-electricity.aspx>

³ <https://datastudio.google.com/reporting/1b60bdc7-bec7-44c9-ba29-be0e043d8534/page/Z03LB>

⁴ Ibid

Why the spotlight on sanitation?

The communal water and sanitation facilities, the lack of adequate shelter and the poor living conditions mean that informal settlement residents are extremely vulnerable to infection. Many residents living in Johannesburg’s informal settlements share toilets with several other households. These toilets include chemical and Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) toilets, which are usually serviced and cleaned by a service provider appointed by the municipality. When communal or shared toilets are cleaned inadequately or irregularly, they pose a significant health risk to informal settlement residents and this is exacerbated during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Municipalities have sometimes included minimum standards for the frequency of toilet cleaning in the contracts with service providers, but in the context of Covid-19 this standard is likely to be insufficient.

One significant way to mitigate the spread of Covid-19 in these communities is to clean communal toilets more frequently.



Key findings from Asivikelane:

How Joburg informal settlements experience basic sanitation during Covid-19

1. More settlements are voicing their concerns through Asivikelane each week

The number of residents surveyed in Joburg has increased by 71% over the four-week period. The number of participating informal settlements has also grown from just two in the first week to 13 in week four, highlighting the communities’ desire to express their concerns and engage government for improved services at a time when the need is the greatest. Starting with Planact in week one, the participating organizations have grown to include Grassroot and the South African SDI Alliance. Several other organizations are in the process of joining the initiative, which will increase the number of settlements in weeks to come.

	# Settlements
Week 1	2
Week 2	5
Week 3	9
Week 4	13



2. Nearly a quarter of residents' toilets have not been cleaned in the last seven days

The results from Asivikelane show a general downward trend in access to regularly cleaned toilets, over the first three weeks, with a slight improvement in week four. The latest results (submitted on the 30th of April), which show that **23% of residents are using toilets which have not been cleaned in the last seven days** is a serious concern especially given the rapid spread of Covid-19.

Of the residents whose toilets had been cleaned in the last seven days, some commented that **cleaning typically happens three times per week**. In the context of Covid-19 this is considered insufficient and Joburg should increase the frequency of cleaning toilets across informal settlements.

Were the toilets cleaned in the last 7 days?				
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
<i>in percentage terms:</i>				
● YES	87%	82%	74%	77%
● NO	13%	13%	26%	23%
<i>in number terms:⁵</i>				
● YES	33	37	35	50
● NO	5	6	12	15
Total	38	45	47	65

The chart below shows the percentage of 'Yes' and 'No' responses over four weeks of Asivikelane's question on whether toilets had been cleaned in the last seven days, across informal settlements in Johannesburg.



The chart shows a marginal improvement in access to cleaned toilets from week three to week four. When doing a comparison between data from just week four and week one however, the results show that residents are increasingly likely to report that their toilets are not being cleaned, which is a significant concern for Johannesburg.

⁵ Note: In week two, two residents indicated "don't know", for this reason the sum of 'yes' and 'no' responses is therefore slightly less than the total.



3. Some informal settlements have no toilets or insufficient numbers of toilets

The following informal settlements have **consistently** (at least two weeks in a row) indicated they do not have enough toilets or no toilets at all. In these places, residents use buckets or an open field

- **Protea South** – residents use a bucket or open field
- **Westside Park** – residents use a bucket or open field
- **Steve Biko Park** – settlement has no toilets at all

4. Other settlements have reported broken/poorly maintained toilets

The following informal settlements have consistently expressed concern about broken or poorly maintained toilets:

- **Holomisa**
- **Ivory Park 960KA**
- **Tshepisoong**

Several residents in Tshepisoong expressed concerns about the health risk they face having to use pit toilets during Covid-19.

While the focus of this brief is access to adequate sanitation, the three points below confirm that access to soap and hand sanitizer and access to sufficient water remain a big concern in these settlements.

5. There is a significant shortage of soap and hand sanitizer across informal settlements

Most residents, with the exception of those who reside in Westside Park-Polokong, Tjovitjo-Phase 2, Marikana Block D ext. and Lawley Station indicated that they did not receive soap or hand sanitizers from the government.

A respondent from Tshepisoong-West-Rand specifically mentioned that government should provide each household with hand sanitisers because the condition of their shared toilets poses a danger to their health.

Has government provided soap or hand sanitizer to you in the last 7 days?	
 YES	4.5%
 NO	75.8%
 I DON'T KNOW	19.7%



6. Water access was inconsistent over the first three weeks

The table below shows that water access levels dropped in week two before increasing in week three, some of this due to the provision of Jojo tanks across several settlements by government.

Is there clean water available in your settlement?			
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Total residents	38	45	47
YES	92%	87%	91%
NO	3%	2%	4%

7. When asked about reliability of water supply in week four, 17% of residents indicated that they did not have access to clean water every time they needed it

In week four, when the question about access to water was adapted to gauge whether residents had access to water whenever they needed it, the results show that reliable water supply remains a need in several areas.

Was water available every time that you needed it over the last week?		Week 4
Total residents		65
YES		83%
NO		17%

Residents in the following informal settlements indicated they did not have water every time that they needed it:

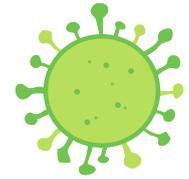
- **Holomisa**
- **Steve Biko Park**
- **Tjovitjo (Phase 1 and 2)**
- **Mountain View (Matjotjombeni)**
- **Marikana**
- **Lawley Station**
- **Thembelihle**

The City of Joburg has made some interventions to improve basic services during Covid-19

Despite the serious challenges reported above, we've seen significant improvements in service levels and communities. **The interventions highlighted by residents include:**

- Residents from **Tjovitjo, Phase 2** reported that the municipality has provided Jojo tanks and delivers water three times a day. Residents from **Tjovitjo Phase 1**, reported that they were provided with Jojo tanks on each street (a total of 17 tanks).
- Residents from **Tjovitjo, Phase 2** also reported that cleaners were hired by the service provider to clean and sanitize toilets every two days.
- Residents from **Mountainview in Ivory Park** reported that their communal taps were fixed, and the broken ones replaced.
- Residents from **Westside Park, Polokong** indicated that the municipality provided them with Jojo tanks which adequately supply the community with water.
- Residents from **Kliptown Block, Freedom Charter** reported that in addition to the communal taps which they have, they were also provided with Jojo tanks.
- Residents from **Westside Park, Polokong** indicated that new toilets were added to the settlement.
- Residents from **Kliptown Block, Freedom Charter** reported that toilets are now cleaned weekly.





Recommendations:

significantly more needs to be done to ensure that every informal settlement has access to clean, functional toilets and reliable water and soap supplies.

- **Every informal settlement should have toilet access – the fact that there is one area in our network where residents say they don't have toilets is one too many.**
- **Every informal settlement should receive a regular, adequate toilet cleaning service, at least five times per week.**
- **Broken and blocked toilets should be repaired.**
- **The safety of toilets needs to be prioritized.**
- **Soap and hand sanitiser should be provided to all residents of informal settlements.**
- **Water supply needs to be regular and reliable for every informal settlement resident.**
- **Transparency and participation matter now more than ever – residents should have reliable channels of communication with City of Joburg and the municipality should engage residents on its Covid-19 relief efforts.**



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