Toilets are so dirty, residents would rather use the bush

The 6th Western Cape Asivikelane release shows that the frequency of municipal cleaning of toilets has worsened across municipalities, with more than 50% of residents reporting that their municipality did not clean their toilet in the last seven days.

The lack of toilet cleaning and maintenance continues to put residents across the province’s informal settlements at risk.

Residents report that doors and seats of toilets are missing, they are afraid of contracting diseases when using communal toilets and some would rather use the bushes than the municipal provided toilets. A functional janitorial and maintenance program must be implemented to restore dignity and protect residents.

Water availability is relatively high, but not easily accessible as many residents walk long distances to water sources. Residents of Die Gaatjie informal settlement in Tulbagh walk to adjacent communities to access water as they have no taps. In addition, insufficient taps (41%), broken taps and pipes (34%), low water pressure, and empty water tanks are a consistent reality in most informal settlements.

On a positive note, Stellenbosch has seen a significant reported increase in toilet cleaning since the start of the Asivikelane Western Cape campaign. Residents from Tulbagh informal settlements also reported that the Witzenberg municipality installed 13 brand new chemical toilets while also fixing all three broken taps in Klein Begin. Residents from Tulbagh informal settlements reported that the municipality installed 13 brand new chemical toilets while also fixing all three broken taps in Klein Begin.