Who should be cleaning communal toilets?

THIS MONTH, ASIVIKELANE SPOKE TO RESIDENTS IN 39 OF KNYSNA’S INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS. Almost all of these residents said that they had enough water and refuse removal, but many are dissatisfied with the sanitation of their communal toilets. Many informal settlement residents in Knysna rely on communal toilets. A single toilet is often shared by more than 8 households and thus requires cleaning several times per week. 78% of these residents said that the municipality has not cleaned their communal toilets in the last 7 days.

Residents are rightfully worried about using dirty toilets. One Happy Valley resident shared, “I really think the toilet is not safe. I got an infection from this toilet”.

87% of the residents that use chemical toilets – the rest use other forms of communal toilets – were happy with the frequency with which the toilets were drained, but they are usually left to clean the chemical toilets themselves, sometimes paying for a cleaner out of their own pockets.

Knysna municipality’s failure to keep communal toilets clean leaves residents with little choice but to use buckets – an undignified and unsafe form of sanitation that national government has vowed to eradicate.

IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS IN KNYSNA:

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<td>22%</td>
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% of residents who said yes

Broken, dirty and unkempt toilets and sinks in Knysna informal settlements are both undignified and unsafe (above, first three photos from left to right); Some residents in Smutsville lock their toilets to minimise people who access them (above, second from right); Councillor Stroebel with an Asivikelane Community Facilitator distributing plastic bags in Rheenendal (above right).

Did you have enough water? Did the municipality clean the communal toilets? Was the waste collected?

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