

SCHOOL ROAD SAFETY INITIATIVE BY BAKWENA AIMED AT PROTECTING CHILDREN

Children travelling to and from school will be safer in several communities adjacent to the N4 highway. This is because the safety of children on roads around schools is at the heart of Bakwena's Safe to School project.

Bakwena's Charmaine van Wyk says the Safe to School pilot project is just one of many community corporate social investment (CSI) projects initiated by Bakwena within communities along its toll routes. "With the Safe to School project, we are committed to ensuring the safety of children in the Bapong, Modderspruit and Majakaneng communities, which are located adjacent to the N4."

Amongst its objectives, the Safe to School project intends to reduce the speed of vehicles on roads around the schools; improve the safety of children crossing roads near to schools; encourage children who walk or cycle to school to use safe routes; improve the safety around school entrances so that children can be dropped off and picked up safely; and improve the safety of children being driven to school.

Van Wyk says in addition to making life safer for the children, Bakwena aims to create general awareness on the importance of road safety. "The first phase of the project – which includes training of the project staff, sharing the project concept with schools, training of Disaster Team and Road Safety Officers using Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP) Safe to School Safe to Home, and data collection will be complete by end of June 2017.

Phase 2 of the project will commence after the July School holidays, with education activities for learners and the community as well as enforcement activities and infrastructure provision and maintenance.

Van Wyk says a Steering Committee comprising school and community members as well as other stakeholders was established on 10 May. "Once the data collection is complete, community workshops will be held to share the information and get feedback from the communities with a view to drafting a business plan.

"This is aimed at facilitating stakeholder participation and focus throughout the process. Through these initiatives, we hope that learners and teachers will improve their road safety knowledge, behaviour and attitudes.

"We also hope to see improved driving skills and significantly improved road behaviour by taxi drivers and scholar transport drivers. In addition, enhanced infrastructure around the school routes will contribute towards children's safety and ultimately reduce accidents and injuries," says concludes van Wyk.