

Hippo.co.za brings mascot to life, Covid-19 relief to local seamstresses

Hippo.co.za has launched a community-base initiative that has enabled a small local business and a team of five out-of-work seamstresses to support their families through the extended Covid-19 lockdown. Based in Mitchells Plain in Cape Town, the seamstresses have been handcrafting plush toys based on the company's hippo mascot.



“The Covid-19 lockdowns have impacted us severely,” says Francois De Flamingh, founder of local design studio Creatarium, which contracted the seamstresses to work on the project. “It was especially hard on the seamstresses who were completely dependent on the film industry for income. This project was incredibly welcome as it enabled the seamstresses to work, and to work safely from home.”



Hippo Toy Project: Hazel Adams and Maragret Dooling

Lead seamstress Hazel Adams describes the project as “a very, very big help” to the seamstresses and their families. “It made a huge difference,” she says. “These little hippos really put food on our tables. Four of us are pensioners who work in the movie industry, and the fifth lady is a private nurse, so when everything closed down, there was no money coming in. When we got this work, it helped us a lot.”



Hippo Toy Project: Hazel Adams and Margaret Constant

Adams, like many South Africans, was personally impacted by the pandemic. She tested positive for Covid-19 during South Africa’s initial outbreak and was hospitalised for five weeks. “I thought I was going to die,” she says. “I went into a coma three times. But I got through it, and now I’m making these hippo toys.”

“This project is part of a much bigger brand purpose for Hippo.co.za,” says Hippo.co.za CEO Bradley Du Chenne. “We want to encourage good decision-making, and, ultimately, this translates to empowering people to take charge of their lives, improving not only their financial standing, but also themselves. The project allows us to do that, not only for consumers, but also for small businesses and the seamstresses who have been impacted by Covid-19.”



The first production run of 1,000 toys will be used in a brand campaign for Hippo.co.za's online comparison platform. The #MyHippo campaign is set to launch in February 2021.

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