



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNET ARTICLE

Hammanskraal women tackle pipe leakages to keep water crisis at bay

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A group of women of a small town of Hammanskraal in Gauteng, the Amandebele BaLebolo, are not just paying lip-service to conserving water resources but are unflinchingly determined to do their bit to stave-off a potential water crisis that is facing their community.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Minister of Water and Sanitation, Ms Nomvula Mokanyane's Women's Dialogue recently, the two representatives of the group Maria Sithole and Lorato Ditlopo said their aim was to avoid riots and violent service delivery protests in their area.

Sithole said: "Everywhere you look there are service delivery protests and water issues are at the heart of those protests. As a group we want to avoid these protests in our area by playing a big role in making sure that we save the resources we have. As a community we have a duty not to misuse the water that we have but rather to save every drop of it."

Ditlopo said it was ironic that it was common to see leaking pipes when there were areas without water, stressing that government cannot be blamed if the community was not taking care of resources that were at their disposal.

She cited incidents of water meters being burned as a result of people recklessly burning grass without regard for the infrastructure, saying that communities should and must protect infrastructure.

Although the group is still in its infancy, having been in existence for only two months, the two women said they have built a reputation in the community as the eyes and ears of local councillors.

"Councillors cannot see and hear everything that is happening in the area. So, as a group we play a major role in making sure that we bring issues of water cuts, meter and pipe leakages to their attention. This allows for these issues to be quickly dealt with without losing a lot of water because we cannot afford to lose this precious resource", said the energetic women foot-soldiers.

The duo hoped that their work in the community would also help to curb the spread of malaria to their area which has had a negative impact in neighbouring Warmbaths in Limpopo.

They said, "Having water shortages and diseases such as malaria could prove to be very serious for our community. So, we are working hard to sensitise our community about this disease so that they keep themselves clean as well as save every little drop of water."

Besides their vision of preventing violent service delivery protests in their area, the two said they wanted to involve different stakeholders, including businesses, to ensure that water consumption was limited to the barest minimum and that it was only used for essential services.

"This is only the beginning for our group. We need to spread the message of saving water throughout our community. Our next step is to give talks at schools so that learners are educated about the importance of saving water," the pair concluded.



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Hosia Sithole