



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNET ARTICLE

Optimistic War on Leaks trainee calls for support for the DWS's programme

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The Department of Water and Sanitation's (DWS's) War on Leaks Programme is gaining a firm hand on water leakages and shining a ray of hope for many unskilled youths who are in dire straits.

Ishmael Mashigo, a 35-year old from Ekangala in Bronkhorstspuit, is one of the youths who had undergone the programme's training and is now doing practical work with the City of Tshwane as a water agent.

Until he joined the programme in 2015, Mashigo's life lurched from uncertainty to near meaninglessness as he was jobless and without skills. To him, the arrival of the programme was a silver lining and he did not think twice about grabbing the training opportunity.

Now oozing with zest for life, Mashigo is a pivotal and familiar face in Ekangala as he stomps the streets of the township fixing leaking taps and burst pipes in an effort to conserve water.

Mashigo's newly found cheerfulness and determination to the cause of water conservation has endeared him to many residents who think water is the lifeblood of the public.

The War on Leaks is a Presidential Programme that was announced by President Jacob Zuma to train 15 000 youths as water agents, plumbers and artisans to curb water losses as a result of leaking taps and burst pipes. The programme has already trained 3 000 youths in its first phase. Currently in its second phase the programme has an intake of 7 000 more trainees.

Talking about the lifeline provided by the programme, Mashigo said his life has changed for the better after going through one struggle after another, reiterating that not having skills stripped him of dignity.

"The programme has provided me with an opportunity to realise that I am someone and can make a difference in my community. Through the skills I have acquired in the programme I am touching so many lives in a way that I have never thought of before," said Mashigo.

He said his work in the community is already bearing fruits, relating the anecdote of how one community member reprimanded children who were abusing water. Satisfied by the impact of his work, the determined Mashigo said he would like to use the entrepreneurial aspect of his training to be a water ambassador to encourage this community to use water sparingly.

He said: "The training on War on Leaks does not only train the youth on technical side but also on the entrepreneurial side of things as well so that we are nudged towards thinking about starting our own businesses in the water sector."

Through the establishment of a non-profit making organisation, said Mashigo, he would like to immerse himself in the business of saving water and making sure that the public was part and parcel of efforts to conserve this depleting resource for future generations.



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Concerned about other youths who have not had practical work, Mashigo called on all stakeholders, including government departments, municipalities and the private sector to play a part in absorbing them.

“The Department of Water and Sanitation is doing a remarkable work in providing the youth with the skills but unfortunately it needs the support of other stakeholders to make sure that these youths gained the necessary practical work,” Mashigo appealed.

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