



INTERNET ARTICLE

Profiling Bursary Beneficiary Recipient

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Passion for working in the water sector resulted in the young, 25-year-old Welkom, Free State girl achieving her dream when she was awarded a bursary by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) to study hydrology.

Nthabiseng Nooe is happily furthering her studies as a Graduate Trainee: Scientific in geohydrology.

Born and raised in Welkom, in the Free State “with a lot of influences mostly pushing me towards earning a living through creative writing – I was reading a lot, mostly hoping to work on my own skills to one day write for audiences and find my work in libraries and bookshops. Science chose me because it was something that the smart children were doing; so it seemed fitting,” says Nooe.

But, her continued desires and aspirations to work in the water sector remained her priority in life. Her patience soon paid dividends. “In my Grade 9 year, in 2006, I came across information from a classmate about a competition called South African Youth Water Prize (SAYWP) by the then Department of Water Affairs and Forestry. Both she and I decided to enter, without any guidance and came 3rd in the provincial leg.”

It was through this competition that she first interacted with the Department. “I then entered SAYWP two more times before I applied to go on another departmental programme called Aqua Enduro in 2008, where I won a bursary for my studies in university,” she notes.

She adds: “It has been a long journey of trying to figure out where science meets public service and learning the context in which I live and the people I hope my work will benefit. I have also had to think a few times where I fit into science, as someone who never known or heard of other Black women who were scientist.”

This worried her because she wanted to learn from their experiences on how to tackle what she was about to embark on.

But Nooe is full of praise for DWS in aiding and helping her attain her cherished ambition.

She said: “My first interaction with programmes such as SAYWP and Aqua Enduro helped in understanding the basics in water supply and also to equip us with practical skills and make us inquisitive about our surroundings.

“My biggest highlight, though, would be how the programmes ended up allowing me to be able to go to university hassle free. I was a hardworking child, but hard work can only get you to a certain point. After that you need opportunity to intersect with your desire to access spaces and achieve your goals.

“I took the opportunity presented with both hands and ran with it and I am happy that the opportunity was given by the State. This programmes work wonderfully to build capacity in young people so that the water sector has skills, especially from people who need more representation in science and engineering,” Nooe added.

She describes her experience with both SAYWP and Aqua Enduro as seamless, adding that “the communication with Learning Academy was always open. I am also very independent, so I managed



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to get through university mostly on my own. However, I discovered another bursary holder who was in her first year when I was in my third year and I managed to help her with some work. I think what would be wonderful would be to connect bursary holders in the same institution so that the older ones can act as resources for the younger ones,' she concluded with a smile.

Nooe studied Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Geology and BSc (Hons) Engineering and Environmental Geology: Hydrogeology.

Ike Motsapi