



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNET ARTICLE

Gauteng Sanitation Month Campaign propels communities to practice hygiene

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The Gauteng Provincial Office's Sanitation Campaign, which swept communities into action and was aimed at changing behaviours around health and hygiene issues, has been a resounding success.

The campaign was held in conjunction with municipalities and various other stakeholders in different parts of the province. The theme for this year was 'sanitation for health & dignity', which was based on government's commitment towards bringing dignity to the people through the provision of alternative sanitation services.

Amongst the issues addressed during the campaign were sewer spillages, hand washing, keeping toilets clean and water conservation. These issues are central to building healthy and progressing communities.

Deputy Director of Sanitation Services, Fikile Mokonoto, says the campaign has been an eye opener to many members of the public, emphasising that messages were aimed at encouraging them to take responsibility for their health and that of their families.

Mokonoto says the theme for this year's campaign was dovetailed very well with the efforts of the department to ensure that the public's dignity is restored.

"The message that we pushed forward this year was that the dignity of the public is paramount. There cannot be any loss of life because of a lack of proper and adequate sanitation coupled with the cleanliness of toilets," Mokonoto says.

She says the response the public showed during the campaign was a sure sign that the message of sanitation was taken to heart and that they were eager to go back to their homes and practise what they were taught.

Mokonoto says that a lot of illnesses can be prevented if the public viewed their toilets in a different perspective, reiterating that uncleanliness of these facilities accounted for a vast number of ailments that can be prevented in the first place.

"To build healthy communities, the department is continually encouraging the public to adapt to the culture of keeping their toilets clean. Issues like hand washing are taken lightly but the impact of not washing one's hands becomes profound. Although we are dedicating May to issues of sanitation, we are working with communities to ensure that this happens throughout the year and all the time," Mokonoto stresses.

The campaign kicked off in Tembisa in the City of Ekurhuleni, where two campaigns were held before moving to Daveyton. The campaign was also taken to Sci-Bono in Newtown, Johannesburg, where officials interacted with learners from various schools on health and hygiene education. The Department of Basic Education allowed 16 secondary school learners to participate in this exhibition and around two thousand learners were reached.



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The seriousness that we attach to water conservation, says Mokonoto, is one that we could not leave behind seeing that our country is water stressed and that our Gauteng relies on other provinces and neighbouring countries, like Lesotho, for water.

“A call was made to the public to continue using water sparingly. One gets the sense that people are beginning to realise that water has not substitute and therefore they should be doing their bit by save as much as possible,” says Mokonoto.

Hosia Sithole