



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### INTERNET ARTICLE

#### **Gauteng War on Leaks trainees beat the odds to become water conservationists**

24 April 2017

The Department of Water and Sanitation's (DWS's) War on Leaks Programme is continuing to produce a new generation of water conservationists as two of its Gauteng trainees have become a force behind ending water woes caused by leaking taps and burst pipes.

The two trainees, who have been placed in Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, became a breed apart from other youths by choosing to throw their lot with the department's efforts to save water in their communities.

One of the trainees, 31-year old Elijah Mohale, who holds an N5 in civil engineering from the Central Johannesburg College, said finding a job was not a walk in the park as he had previously thought. He said time and time again he would apply for jobs but his attempts failed dismally.

Elijah said it was most frustrating for him to go to school but find it difficult to secure a proper job, resulting in him having to fall on doing odd jobs to make ends meet.

The War on Leaks Programme is the brainchild of President Jacob Zuma, the aim of which is to train 15 000 youths across the country as water agents, plumbers and artisans to help curtail water wastages.

Likening his attempts at finding a job to flogging a dead horse, Elijah finally changed his tact when he saw the War on Leaks Programme.

"When I saw the advert for the youth to apply for the training, I applied to train as a water agent. I saw this as an opportunity to further develop myself and hoped to make it to the first phase of the training," said Elijah.

Despite studying civil engineering, Elijah said he has find his training as a water agent and his civil engineering studies to have some commonality and therefore does not regret being part to the programme.

Elijah credits the programme for giving him skills which he hopes to combine with his civil engineering knowledge to make mark in the water sector, saying the water sector needed more skills to make a lasting impact in the face of serious water shortages.

Another trainee, Nthabiseng Maphakane, a 26-year old University of Limpopo graduate with a degree in Community Water and Sanitation, shared a similar experience with Elijah as she also fell flat in her attempts to get a job.

Nthabiseng expressed her disappointment at knocking on every door in a bid to get employment without any positive response. Her luck came when she applied to the programme to train as a water agent, where she is now making a difference by applying the skills she acquired during her university studies.



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“Before the War on Leaks training I was really frustrated with no hope at all. The programme has made a good change in my life as I was not able to find even an internship from different places I had applied to,” said Nthabiseng.

Both trainees appealed to other youths who are graduates but without employment to take advantage of every opportunity that comes their way, reiterating that sitting on their hands and not pursuing available opportunities would not help to better their lives.

**Hosia Sithole**