



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNET ARTICLE

Hard work and passion in the water sector keep Nomvula going

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Ms Nomvula Maselela was born in 1960 in Mamelodi Township. She is a single mother of three children. She loves empowering people and is making a difference in her community.

“Women’s month for me is a month that has been set aside not only to commemorate the women who marched to Union Buildings on 9 August 1956 but also to pay tribute and celebrate women who took that stick and continued to fight against all forms of injustice against women and children abuse”, said Maselela.

According to Maselela, the project leader of Umkariso women in water cooperative, the project started operating in May 2014 and currently the project has a group of 12 women and 6 males.

The objective of the project is river cleaning and conducting health and hygiene awareness campaigns at schools and in the Mamelodi community. They also organize counselling for substance abuse around the area.

The project adopted Umkariso River to ensure that it is kept clean. The community was using the river as a dumping spot before, which was causing health hazards for people living around the area.

“Even though it was difficult at first to keep the stream clean because community members were continuing dumping rubbish even after we had cleaned the river. We then took a decision to speak to them and explain the importance of keeping the stream clean, thus allowing free water flow”, explains Maselela.

They later developed a food garden near the stream to demonstrate to the community that it is possible to have a healthy, clean stream.

Maselela said that in January 2015, they adopted three schools – Ramahlale Primary School, Bajabulile Primary School and Bula Dikgoro Primary School. They

clean the schools toilets and children’s playgrounds every Friday. They also report to school principals any leakage of pipes or taps to avoid unnecessary water wastage.

“As most of our project members are women, we also voluntarily clean and cook for disadvantaged elderly in our community once a week”, added Maselela.



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Some of the challenges that the project is facing include shortage of resources and equipment. Crime has also become a problem, as vegetables grown in the food garden get stolen by some community members.

One of the project's great achievements was in 2014 when the business won the 2nd prize in women in water sector award from the Department of Water and Sanitation.

Maselela said that "As the project leader of Umkariso women in water cooperative, I would love to encourage Mamelodi residents to join hands with us in keeping our environment clean by stopping illegal dumping and in saving water by fixing leaking pipes", concluded Maselela.

Emmah Maluleke