



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNET ARTICLE

War on leaks programme a huge success in assisting youths in their careers and personal development

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South Africa's youths are grateful to the Department of Water and Sanitation for affording them an opportunity to train as plumbers and water agents through the War on Leaks (WoL) programme

Spanning three years, the programme has trained thousands of unemployed and unskilled youths from across the country – some of whom are now working for their respective municipalities to fix leaking taps and pipes. Among these are young girls who had no hope of being employed before joining the WoL.

The programme was launched by former President Jacob Zuma in August 2015 in Port Elizabeth. In the first phase, an intake of 3000 youths benefitted from the programme while 6 842 intake followed in the second phase in 2016. The programme is currently on its third and final phase through which it is planned to provide employment to 5000 more youths.

DWS pays each trainee a stipend of R2 500 through Rand Water, which was appointed as an implementing agent

An excited trainee, Lucy Dlamini, said of the programme: "We are already busy at work in our local communities fixing water related problems, such as leaking toilets and taps. I was happy to hear about the announcement that the department is proceeding with the project and I believe that this is proof that there is a concerted effort to focus on jobs. This will address the problem of youth unemployment head on. This project is aimed at eradicating water leaks, training youth in entrepreneurial skills and making us water wise education campaigners."

Thandi Maduna joined the WoL programme after realising that the municipality in her township was occasionally flooded with water and sometimes effluent coming from burst pipes.

"I yearned to be trained as a plumber so that I could help my municipality to deal with the problem. I'm grateful to the department for affording me the opportunity of being trained in my dream career."

Ntaoleng Sehatsoane is as excited to participate in the training programme. She is a trainee artisan who quit school after matriculating because of financial problems. She heard about WoL through a friend and the next day they successfully applied for the programme.

"Since then I've never looked back. I work hard in school to make sure that I don't fail. This is a golden opportunity I cannot afford to lose."

Like her friend, Thandi, Ntaoleng can't wait to invest her skills back to her community in Sebokeng

DWS has put a number of initiatives in place to ensure that when the trainees graduate from the programme they will have employment opportunities and become entrepreneurs .The



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programme is aligned to the National Development Plan (NDP) which is aimed at achieving an average reduction in water demand of 15%. Qualifying learners can also position themselves by doing voluntary work in their communities.

The Department is committed to improve the lives of youths with special emphasis on women. Since 1999 the Department has been offering bursaries to various learners who want to pursue a career in the water sector. The Department of Water and Sanitation through the Learning Academy, has successfully managed to empower South African graduates and undergraduates over the years.

The Learning Academy has managed to afford learners an invaluable opportunity for them to gain practical work experience, while in the process acquiring formal education. The program has unearthed a number of gems through the years who have gone through the programme and went on to exceed expectations.

I spoke to a number of learners who are participating in the War on Leaks programme and are carrying out voluntary work in their communities.

Water Agents study both theory and practicals for a Water Reticulation and Wastewater Diploma (NQF4). The Artisans and Plumbers undertake three year qualifications N-courses and will specialize as fitters and turners; welders, instrument mechanics and electricians.

Thabang Molai