



INTERNET ARTICLE

DWS held a three-day Public Education programme in three Gauteng municipalities to increase awareness

17 February 2024

The Gauteng Department of Water and Sanitation partnered with the Departments of Basic Education and Health, Rand Water, Friends of Toloane Community Forum, Etwatwa Water and Sanitation Community Forum, and the Cities of Tshwane, Ekurhuleni, and Johannesburg, to conduct a three-day Public Education program in three municipalities in Gauteng.

The programme, which took place from 13 - 15 February 2024, aimed to educate communities about water conservation, and health and hygiene practices. It was a collaborative effort to raise awareness and empower the public to make informed decisions regarding water usage and hygiene.

The activations began at Modiselle Primary School, where DWS officials engaged with students and educators to emphasize the importance of water conservation and healthy lifestyles. The programme then moved to the Usave Shopping Centre in Ga-Rankuwa, City of Tshwane, where members of the public learned about water-saving techniques and hygiene practices.

On the second day of the activations, the DWS team and partners continued their efforts at Drake Kota Primary School and then moved to the Kaalfontein Local Taxi Rank in Midrand, City of Johannesburg, where commuters and taxi operators were educated on the importance of water conservation and proper hygiene.

The final day of the activations took place at Dan Pharasi Primary School, where students and educators were further educated on water conservation and health and hygiene practices. The programme then concluded at the local taxi rank in Las Vegas taxi rank, City of Ekurhuleni, where the DWS team engaged with commuters and taxi operators to increase awareness and promote responsible water usage and hygiene.

The decision to conduct this Public Education programme was influenced by the global Covid-19 pandemic, which highlighted the importance of proper hand washing as a preventive measure against the spread of the virus and other communicable diseases. In response to this, the DWS collaborated with various departments and stakeholders to educate Gauteng residents on water conservation, good hygiene practices, and healthy lifestyles.

With water being a finite resource, individuals and communities need to understand the importance of sustainable water usage. The DWS aimed to empower Gauteng residents by providing them with knowledge and tools to make informed decisions about water

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conservation and hygiene. By partnering with schools, shopping centers, and taxi ranks, to reach a wide range of individuals, ensuring maximum impact in raising awareness.

During the informative presentation, Rhee Mabena from the Water Use Efficiency Directorate of the DWS shared valuable water-saving tips with the audience. Mabena highlighted the importance of efficient ways to wash hands and provided insights on how to take a proper bath or shower without wasting water. She engaged the audience by asking questions, ensuring that the message was clear and well-understood.

In addition to water-saving tips, Osca Bungeni, another representative from the DWS, announced various opportunities available to schools and the community through the department. Bungeni explained how the DWS organizes a water and sanitation competition, which provides dedicated learners with study opportunities of a lifetime. Furthermore, free bursaries are offered to individuals who wish to pursue water and sanitation-related career paths such as geology and environmental officers.

As a result of being chosen to participate in the Public Education drive, the principals of the visited schools, shopping centers, and taxi ranks expressed their joy and lauded the effect of the programs.

Tebogo Kunene and his classmate, Amanda Sebesho, who are both 12 years old and in grade 7 at Dan Pharasi Primary School, said they learned a lot from the presentations. Their biggest takeaways were closing tabs when they are not in use and taking a five-minute shower instead of a longer one to conserve water.

Mashile Tshigofatso, the Gauteng Communication officer from the Department of Water and Sanitation, expressed his gratitude for the warm reception from all the areas visited within the three municipalities of the province. The positive response from the schools and communities reinforces the importance of such public education initiatives in increasing awareness and promoting responsible water usage.

In conclusion, the three-day Public Education programme held by the Department of Water and Sanitation in three Gauteng municipalities was a resounding success. Through informative presentations, engagement with the audience, and the announcement of various opportunities, the DWS effectively increased awareness about water conservation and sanitation practices.

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