



## INTERNET ARTICLE

### FIRST LEG OF DWS NW PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME KICKS OFF IN POTCHEFSTROOM

22 February 2024

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) in partnership with JB Marks Local Municipality and the Department of Education kicked off its three days Public Education Awareness Campaign on the 21 February 2024 in Potchefstroom, North West Province

The Public Education Programme campaign was aimed at promoting water use efficiency while changing human behaviour towards water usage, advancing the protection of the water infrastructure and health and hygiene.

The campaign which targeted school learners, commenced in Tlokwe Secondary School, Ikageng in Potchefstroom and later proceeded to Fikadibeng Primary School, a farm school kilometres away from Potchefstroom.

The Deputy Principal of Tlokwe High School, Mokgatle Ralengole said that his school appreciated the Department's efforts and highlighted that his school will henceforth apply water conservation methods such as water storage and rain water harvesting. "This way, the school will not stop learners' education by returning them back home when there is no water in the school, he said

The local councillor of ward 16, Cllr David Tshepiso Charity Moalusi also attended the activations and emphasised that communities must change their behaviour towards water use including protecting the water infrastructure. He said that that communities must stop with vandalising the water infrastructure such as closing the valves to boost water tankering in his ward, which has become rife hence the continuous water cuts. He told school learners that everyone must play their part in conserving water because he is also playing his part in his own home by also saving water is life.

Emphasis and demonstration of the correct seven hand wash steps by the North West Departmental Community Development Officer, Tieho Ntja to school learners created more excitement as they were made to understand that water should always flow when you wash your hands with soap and not wash in a bucket or container as the germs will remain in the water, hence flowing water is critical.

With the mood of the day '**Splash is a water hero**', Splash the departmental mascot entertained the crowd with learners and even educators dancing to the water tune. The Departmental Water Use Efficiency team, Mr Rhee Mabena and Ms Irene Molepo also educated learners about the

**WATER IS LIFE – SANITATION IS DIGNITY**

**SOUTH AFRICA IS A WATER-SCARCE COUNTRY**

importance of water conservation measures such as employing rain water harvesting, closing taps when brushing their teeth, reporting water leaks and among others, using a bucket instead of a hose when washing a car.

During the Public Education Programme, different presentations were conducted followed by a hyped interactive question and answers session where learners won goodies such as pencils cases, school bags, buckets, squeeze bottles, hats and many more.

With a Setswana idiom that says “lore lo ojwa le sale metsi” which means that it’s better to teach a child who can be easily moulded instead of an older person, school learners were given a task to start practising saving water in their schools, homes and communities in general and to spread the message of conserving water as South Africa is one of the driest countries in the world.

**Katlego Bolokang**