



INTERNET ARTICLE

EMPOWERING TOMORROW: DWS SPARKS LEARNER INTEREST IN THE WATER SECTOR DURING NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK

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The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) participated in the National Science Week Exhibition held from 29 July to 02 August 2024 at Mondi Science Centre in Mkhondo Local Municipality in the Mpumalanga Province.

The primary goal of National Science Week is to improve people's understanding of science by showcasing the latest scientific and technological innovations. It also aims to involve the public through interactive activities and motivate students to consider careers in fields related to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

Mr. Jan Rhee Mabena, Ms. Sabo Makgaloa, and Ms. Miriam Chemo engaged learners in the DWS stall and took them through the water and sanitation business chart to highlight the different fields of study and career opportunities in the water sector.

Learners from primary to high school levels, along with out of school youth, attended in large numbers to learn about careers opportunities in the water and sanitation sector. Thousands of learners visited the department's stall throughout the week of the exhibition.

Learners were encouraged to choose science related subjects as this will have a hugely significant impact on their lives, their communities, and the country. "I encourage you to choose science related subjects. The Department of Water and Sanitation offers a comprehensive bursary, this bursary is applicable to students who want to pursue careers in the water sector. One can obtain this bursary through the department's competitions such as the South African Youth Water Prize, Public Speaking and Aqua Enduro for high school learners", stated Ms. Sabo Makgaloa.

Mandisa Nkosi, a grade 10 learner from Mpuluzi Secondary School impressed DWS officials when upon being asked to present what she had learned during the exhibition, detailed every aspect of the Water and Sanitation Business chart. She further stated that she plans to use the knowledge gained to find ways to save water and pursue a career in the water sector. She further committed to be a water ambassador and preach the gospel of water conservation and resource protection in her school and community. The water and sanitation business chart illustrates the entire water value chain.

The presenters provided valuable information on careers ranging from scientist, environmentalists, engineers and process controllers to researchers and policy makers. The

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exhibition not only offered career guidance but also emphasized the importance of innovation and commitment in tackling global water and sanitation issues. Many students left with a newfound appreciation for these fields and a potential interest in pursuing related career.

The exhibition not only provided career guidance but also fostered an understanding of the broader context of water scarcity in South Africa. The learners learned about the impact of climate change and water shortages on communities and the environment, and how they can contribute to alleviating this through simple everyday actions in terms of water conservation and protecting and preventing the pollution of water resources.

The learners and other participants were also provided with water saving tips pamphlets to promote water conservation and the fixing of leaks within communities. Given South Africa's status as a water-stressed country, the DWS officials underscored the importance of water conservation. They discussed various strategies for saving water, such as fixing leaks, using water efficient appliances and implementing rainwater harvesting systems. The discussions aimed to instil a sense of responsibility and proactive engagement in the learners and the public at large.

Miriam Chemo

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