

Sacrifices of 1976 have borne fruit

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ON TUESDAY June 16, South Africa will commemorate Youth Day.

In 1976, more than 15 000 students gathered at Orlando West Secondary School with the intention of participating in a peaceful march to the nearby Orlando Stadium. It was planned in protest against the use of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction at schools.

Following the advent of democracy, the government has been instrumental in transforming the lives of the people through programmes implemented by several departments.

As such, the Department of Water and Sanitation, through its 2020 Vision education wing, has made strides in developing young people.

The 2020 Vision for Water and Sanitation Education Programme VFWSEP was initiated in 1996 to stimulate the interest of youth in water, sanitation and environmental education. The programme is being implemented in collaboration with the Department of Basic Education.

Components of the programme include the Curriculum Support, Intervention Projects and Action Projects Aqua Enduro, Baswa le Meetse and the SA Youth Water Prize. In these competitions learners are encouraged to come up with solutions and inventions to solve water and sanitation challenges.

Through its interventions, 2020 vision, close to 30 students have been awarded bursaries since 2008 in the Western Cape. Some are already in the industry working for the department or other organisations. Nomfundo Zondi is testimony of VFWSEP beneficiaries.

Through her school she participated in one of the 2020 vision education programmes. She won and represented South Africa in Stockholm in 2014. Since then she has been working for the department as technician in the water sector regulation unit.

Ayakha Melithafa from COSAT High School in Khayelitsha put South Africa on the map when she delivered a climate talk at the Davos World Economic Forum this year. This won her a bursary from the department to study any water related career in any institution of higher learning. The bursary will also cover study material, meals and fees.

The stories of Ayakha and Nomfundo are among many of how the department has touched and transformed the lives of disadvantaged communities. This is testament to the fact that the sacrifices made by the 1976 youth were not in vain.

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