



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNET ARTICLE

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Gauteng DWS's Shoki Malepe navigates COVID-19 to hold successful SAYWP Competition

Gauteng Department of Water and Sanitation's (DWS) coordinator for the South African Youth Water Prize (SAYWP) Competition, Shoki Malepe, saw it coming from early in March when the first case of coronavirus was reported.

Her call, and a pioneering one at that, was that the outbreak of the covid-19 was going to negatively impact the hosting of the competition such that she was nudged to come up with some ingenuity for the competition to take place.

The result was to adapt the competition to the prevailing new normal, holding the competition online for the first time since its existence. By so doing, Malepe ensured that learners who participated in the competition were protected from the raging impact of the sweeping and faceless coronavirus.

Under normal circumstances the learners present their papers and innovative water models in front of a panel of adjudicators.

The an annual Science and Technology competition targets learners from the Department of Basic Education's Further Education and Training (FET) Band and is limited to only Grade 10 and 11 learners.

Through the competition, the Department offers tertiary education bursaries and cash prizes to the winner. The competition is a collaboration between the Department and the Stockholm Water Foundation in Sweden.

DWS's Shoki Malepe, the coordinator of the competition in Gauteng, said the outbreak of the COVID-19 presented a threat to holding the competition as they could not gather learners and teachers in the same venue in strict adherence to safety regulations.

Malepe said since the competition provides rare opportunities to many learners who would otherwise not have the means to pursue their dreams in education, this required a change of plans on our part to hold the competition.

She said: "This is a science and technology competition and therefore as organisers we were challenged to come up with other options and think outside the box. We had to tap into available avenues to hold the competition so that there was not black out in as far as the competition is concerned."

Malepe added that the competition was about encouraging innovations to current challenges, saying the COVID-19 was also a challenge of our times that required them to seek solutions to continue to hold the competition.



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To adjudicate the work submitted by learners for the competition, Malepe said the work was distributed to adjudicators and virtual communication between them took place to discuss it and then scored the participants.

Five schools participated in the competition with the following three schools taking the top spots.

Position 1: Sandown High School

Represented by Grade 11 learner Mr Kedumetse Mmako and Ms Mahek Bhala

Their project was an Invention called “Tengiso”

Position 2: Uitsi High School

Represented by Grade 11 learners Ms Dzanga Matodzi and Ms Yoanda Chantal

Their Project was an Invention called “Hydrogenn Alpha Product, Running Dry”

Position 3: Protea Glen Secondary School

Represented by Mr Mohube Vutomi and Mr Kubayi Katekani both in Grade 11

Their Project was an Invention called “SANIPURIFICATION

The Sandown High School learners will represent Gauteng at the national leg of the competition.

Hosia Sithole