



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNET ARTICLE

Gauteng DWS and stakeholder's champions door-to-door campaign for water conservation

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On 24 March 2021, the community of Diepsloot in the North of Johannesburg participated in water conservation awareness campaign headed by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) in Gauteng, together with Johannesburg Water, Johannesburg City Park, Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and Diepsloot Water and Sanitation Community Forum. The door-to-door awareness campaign is part of the Water Month celebration.

The campaign took place under the theme for the World Water Day 2021 '*valuing water*', which aims to understand how people value water whether it is economically, socially, culturally or in other ways as well as the significance of water in their lives.

Ms Reshoketswe Malape of Gauteng DWS's Water Services Support said the need for improved water and sanitation services remains a huge challenge across South Africa, particularly for those living in informal settlements. She said there are great vulnerabilities within these marginalised areas due to poverty or non-existent basic social service provision. Ms Malepe also mentioned that inadequate water and sanitation services in those poor areas deprive residents of adequate health and very importantly, their personal dignity.

"These challenges are acutely evident in Diepsloot, an informal settlement with the most densely populated area. The extreme density in Extension 1 make it essential to limit the 'down time' (loss of service) of any water supply, toilet or wastewater facility, with the result that the services need constant repair. There is ongoing public maintenance and repair programme to ensure that the toilets and taps remain in good working order. The Department and a community-based organization are filling this gap," said Ms Malepe.

Ms Malepe further explained that the water conservation campaign is of particular importance in the community as residents need to understand the water challenges that are facing their area and the country as a whole.

Mr Obert Kekae, a member of the Water and Sanitation Community Forum in Diepsloot said the door-to-door campaign will sensitise the community about the importance of conserving water, and to make sure that they use available water sparingly. He also said that his forum is also responsible to repair malfunctioning toilets and leaking pipes.

"Sometimes toilets and taps are not working for months, and if we don't fix them no one will. The maintenance of toilets and of water points is the most basic step required to preserve water and to ensure good hygiene and dignity of life among residents. The location of the toilets and their lack of maintenance has resulted in not only public health problems but also safety issues for women and children, emphasised Mr Kekae"

Mr Kekae also echoed Ms Malape sentiments by saying that the Water Month commemoration and the awareness campaign should be used to encourage the community to reflect on the way they relate to water resources, they should also do their part to save water.

“This is where we live, our families are here, we work here, our children play and go to school here, Therefore, we need to take care of this place ourselves. We have witnessed people getting sick, and we cannot be bystanders and do nothing as our community suffer.” He concluded.

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