



INTERNET ARTICLE

Rev SA Nkosi Secondary School reigns supreme as Mpumalanga champions in the water purification model competition

31 March 2021

Learners from Rev. SA Nkosi Secondary School from Fernie in the Northern Usuthu sub-catchment in the Chief Albert Luthuli Local Municipality in the Mpumalanga Province were crowned champions of the National Water Week / Month Science Schools competition after their water purification model attained 95.9% during the Provincial competitions held at the Lowveld Botanical Gardens in Mbombela on 30 March 2021.

For their efforts and innovation, the five learners each received a cash voucher of R5 000 and the educator received a R2 500 voucher.

The second prize went to learners from Takheni High School from Elukwatini, also in the Chief Albert Luthuli Local Municipality with 89.9% and the third prize went to Kurhula High School from Huntington in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality with 85.9%. The learners from Takheni received R3 500 vouchers with their educator receiving a R2 000 voucher and Kurhula learners received R2 000 voucher with their educator receiving a R1 500 voucher.

The competition is meant to raise awareness on Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) and its role in the socio-economic development of the country. This is also intended to spark interest of learners in the field of science and engineering with specific focus on the water sector. As part of the competition, schools are expected to develop a water purification model to treat 5 liters of raw water up to a drinking water standard. The competition also looks at how much water is lost during the purification process to create an awareness on the negative impact of water losses, especially in a water scarce country like South Africa as every drop counts. This also educates learners on cost and efforts invested in providing portable drinking water to households.

Mr Hasani Makhubele from the Inkomati-Usuthu Catchment Management Agency outlined the purpose of the Science Schools competition and encouraged learners to take water related careers to close the skills gap in the sector.





“The Science Schools competition was designed and developed to close the skills gap in the science and technology sectors, especially the water field. We encourage learners who are following science and mathematics to do research and come with innovative methods and ideas in the provision of water services by designing water treatment models. We are encouraging learners to participate in this programme as we are searching for talent and knowledge in the scientific field and responding to the 4th industrial revolution (4IR)”, he said.

He further appreciated the continued support of stakeholders, especially the private sector.

“We appreciate the sustainable partnership that we have consistently maintained with our stakeholders, Silulumanzi, KOBWA, SAPPI, Barberton Mines and others”, he said.

Ms Thandi Ngwenya from the Department of Education thanked the teachers for supporting and assisting the learners and also thanked the organizers and partners for affording the learners the opportunity to be innovative and explore. “In maths, science and technology, we always encourage learners to participate in competitions. We know if you participate in these competitions to come up with a project, you need to sit down and think, you need to put your thinking in a logical sense and you need to look at books and do some research and this will help you as you continue your education into tertiary. As a Department, we appreciate teachers who are willing to assist learners to achieve these goals of achieving the skills that are necessary in life. We also appreciate all the partners for giving these learners the opportunity to explore and develop skills”, she said.

The competition was a serious learning curve for the learners and the educators. Nelisiwe Dlamini from the winning Rev. SA Nkosi Secondary School was so excited with their win and stated that the win motivates her and her team to achieve more.

“I have learned a lot from this project on how to give our community portable drinking water. Water is a very important and precious substance for the community. Future participants should be confident and driven to achieve more”, she said.

Her educator, Mr SML Langa also learned more from the project, such as the operations of a water treatment plant and the different steps water goes through before it is fit for human consumption.





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“As a school, we are happy to obtain the results. The learners were also exposed to such a project and it is a good experience for them, he said.

Themba Khoza



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