



## INTERNET ARTICLE

### **Baswa Le Meetse Competition puts spotlight on water and sanitation issues in Gauteng**

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Learners from various schools in Gauteng took part in the Department of Water and Sanitation's (DWS) Baswa le Meetse Provincial Competition that was held at Birchwood Hotel in Boksburg from 28 – 29 July 2022.

The competition seeks to find fresh and innovative solutions to challenges that face the water and sanitation sector.

The schools were crowned as winners in different categories of the competition, including art, drama, music, poetry, praise poetry, public speaking and poster.

The competition, which forms part of the Department's 2020 Vision Water and Sanitation Education Programme, is the main driver of community-based water literacy initiatives. The programme targets grade 10 and 11 learners to transmit the messages of water and sanitation related issues.

Mr Oscar Bungeni, the Gauteng DWS's Programme Coordinator, said the competition gave the learners rare opportunities that were not widely available before, reiterating that the learners should take this opportunity with both hands.

Mr Bungeni said: "We want to thank you profusely for being part of this competition as you could have been at school preparing for your next exams in September as this time is most crucial," adding that the competition was meant to lessen financial burden on the participants' parents when these learners went to tertiary institutions..

The programme seeks to tap on high schools around the country to induce learners to follow careers in the water and sanitation sector by encouraging them to be active and responsible citizens that will be driven by Water Literacy initiatives.

The schools that impressed the judges and walked away with the top prizes in public speaking were:

Position 1: General Smuts High School

Position 2: Supero Combined School

Position 3: Leandale Secondary School

The winners from General Smuts High School whose learners advanced the argument that the previously disadvantaged areas were not receiving adequate water mainly because of their socio-economic status. They said informal areas were still struggling with receiving proper sanitation and this posed risks to their health, leading to what are known as poor people's diseases.

Leandale Secondary School argued that the government was aware of the conditions of the poor, especially the lack of water and sanitation, emphasising that there was a need to challenge the government to provide the services to all the people irrespective of who they were.



## water & sanitation

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The team from General Smuts High School got the thumbs up as they went on to win the competition. The school will represent Gauteng in the National Public Speaking Competition, which will take place in October.

Ms Reshoketswe Malepe, the Provincial Programme Manager of the competition in Gauteng, said the competition was growing in leaps and bounds as shown by the level of the research the learners had done. She said this was an indication that more learners were taking more interest in the subject of water and sanitation.

Ms Malepe thanked the teachers for doing their best in preparing the learners and making them grapple with the challenges in the water and sanitation sector.

“Our sector is facing a myriad of challenges and these learners taking part in the competition are critical for providing solutions to these challenges. It is our vision that they follow careers in the sector because we do not have many learners choosing careers in this sector,” she concluded.

**KHULEKANI NGCOBO**

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