

INTERNET ARTICLE

Mpumalanga learners become environment ambassadors

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Learners from Zwelisha Primary School in Mbombela rolled their sleeves and got their hands dirty in a river clean up spearheaded by the Department of Water and Sanitation, Mpumalanga Office, as part of its Water Month activities.

The activity of the day involved the cleaning up the river separating Zwelisha and Clau Clau in the City of Mbombela Local Municipality on Wednesday, 02 March 2022. The purpose of the cleaning campaign was to highlight the negative impact of pollution on water resources and to encourage the community to adopt the river and ensure it is always clean and healthy.

The National Water Month, March, is a critical month in the calendar of the Department of Water and Sanitation. It affords the Department, and its water sector partners and stakeholders the platform to heighten awareness creation on the importance of water conservation, resource protection, the impact of climate change and mitigation and the effects of pollution on water resources.

This year the month is celebrated under the theme **“Groundwater – making the invisible, visible”** taken from the 2022 World Water Day theme. World Water Day is celebrated internationally on 22 March which falls in the National Water Week which runs from 21 to 27 March 2022. The theme is so fitting for South Africa as a water scarce country which needs all available sources of water to ensure supply security.

Addressing the learners and community members, Mr Themba Khoza from DWS called for the community to adopt the river and protect it from becoming a dumping site.

“As we were busy cleaning the section of the river and the surrounding areas, we have collected all kinds of waste including disposable nappies. This has a negatively affects the quality of water in the watercourses. South Africa is a water scarce country, and we can’t afford to lose more valuable water through the pollution of our rivers, streams and other watercourses”, he said.

He further reminded the community that climate change is a reality and encouraged them to conserve water.

“Climate change is upon us and is negatively impacting our water resources. If you look at this river, you can see that it has shrunk. You are lucky that it is flowing as other rivers and streams in other areas have dried up. We need to use the available water wisely and sparingly to ensure water security for our current and future generations. Let us also remember that water has no substitute”.

The learners were so excited about the information they received in relation to the protection of water resources and vowed to share with their friends and families to protect their watercourses and keep

WATER IS LIFE – SANITATION IS DIGNITY

SOUTH AFRICA IS A WATER SCARCE COUNTRY



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them clean and healthy for reliable safe water supply. “Water is important because it is life. We need water to stay healthy and without water many people will die. We need to protect our rivers as they give water which is life. We can see that some people are using rivers as trash bins where they dump all sorts of waste, including disposable nappies, dead animals and old clothes which causes water pollution. We need to clean keep our rivers clean to prevent the spread of diseases and stay healthy”, said one of the Grade 6 learners, Khensane Cele.

Local resident, Mr Shabangu who collects and recycle plastic bottles thanked the Department for reminding the community of the importance of keeping the environment, especially the water resources clean and healthy. “It is a good thing that you are involving the kids in such a campaign so that they understand the importance of environmental health. I collect plastic bottles and use the bottle caps to decorate my wire cars, and this shows we can always re-use and recycle products”, he said pointing to his colourful wire car.

As we celebrate the National Water Month, let us remember that South Africa is a water scarce country and always use the available water wisely and sparingly.

Themba Khoza