



INTERNET ARTICLE

Reminding the public of the importance of proper sanitation and hygiene practices

31 May 2022

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) Mpumalanga Provincial Office celebrated Sanitation Week through a public education awareness roadshow in primary schools in Umjindi Trust in the City of Mbombela on 27 May 2022.

The roadshow visited Khanyisile and SA Makam primary schools and officials from the DWS engaged learners and staff members on sanitation and hygiene practices education.

Proper sanitation facilities and hygiene practices are key to preventing the spread of diseases. Proper sanitation also preserves human dignity which makes access to proper sanitation critical for all citizens. The educational awareness roadshow focused on sanitation, health and hygiene. As South Africa is a water scarce country, the audience was reminded of the importance of water conservation and wise water use of the available water and the protection of the water resource. The learners were encouraged to be water ambassadors and spread the message of water conservation in their households and were also given water saving tips to share with their friends and families.

Ms Lomina Shongwe and Ms Vongani Mabasa from the Sanitation unit educated the audience about the importance of keeping toilets clean and healthy, and also taught especially the kids about the importance of clean hands.

In her address, Ms Lomina Shongwe encouraged the audience to keep sanitation facilities clean at all times. "Toilets are very important in the lives of human beings as they provide a dignified and safe place to relieve oneself. It is therefore crucial that we take care of them to ensure they continue providing human dignity as the slogan of the Department says - sanitation is dignity. When you use the toilet, make sure that you leave it as clean as you found it so that it will continue to provide dignified service to other people. Also remember to always wash your hands after using the toilet", she said.

Ms Shongwe and Ms Mabasa also demonstrated the steps of proper handwashing to ensure that the audience, especially the learners wash their hands in a proper manner to prevent the spread of germs and diseases. It is said that dirty hands are the highways in the transmission of viruses and diseases therefore it is important to always wash hands properly with soap and water to prevent the spread of diseases. To ensure that the learners grasp the handwashing steps, a few learners were called upon to demonstrate to their peers and become the ambassadors of their schools.

As part of the educational awareness creation, the schools were given soaps, paper towels, all-purpose cleaners, soaps, buckets, and toilet brushes to keep the toilets clean and to ensure that learners wash their hands.

One of the learners who excelled in the handwashing demonstration at Khanyisile Primary School, Cathy Shabangu thanked the DWS for the awareness. "I want to thank the Department for reminding

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us of the importance of handwashing and taking care of our toilets. Now I master the handwashing steps and will teach my friends and family members to ensure that we do not get germs and diseases and always stay safe. I will continue to encourage my friends not to play and make toilets dirty and will report all those who make toilets dirty to the educators to ensure that they clean their mess, and we all keep the toilets clean and healthy for our health", she said.

Themba Khoza

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