



INTERNET ARTICLE

Water and Sanitation Education Programme launched in Mpumalanga

30 August 2022

The Department of Water and Sanitation officially launched the Water and Sanitation Education Programme (WSEP) at Bukhosibetfu Inclusive Primary School in Driekoppies in Nkomazi Local Municipality, Mpumalanga Province on 26 August 2022.

The Water and Sanitation Education Programme aims to educate learners about water use efficiency, protection of water resources, health and hygiene, invasive alien plants and encourage them to pursue careers in the water sector. It is one of the most important initiatives in ensuring that water and sanitation education is achieved within the public schooling system to encourage water literacy and change the attitudes and behaviour of learners towards wise water use and value water. The WSEP replaces the 2020 Vision for Water and Sanitation Programme (2020 VfWSEP).

The programme engages learners and educators on various educational projects where they identify water and sanitation related challenges in their schools and communities, conduct research, come up with recommendation and implement solutions. The WSEP is implemented through the following projects: Baswa Le Meetse, Aqua Enduro, Public Speaking, Curriculum Support, Intervention Projects, Career Promotion and Celebration of Special Days.

The Water and Sanitation Education Programme responds to the National Water Resource Strategy II (Chapter 15), Strategic Action 15.5.4 and National and Sanitation Master Plan Chapter 11 (Key Action 2.3.8) in that it creates public awareness and teaches water literacy, with a particular focus on efficient water use and management, and it further lays a foundation for the development of critical skills and exposure to emerging innovations in the water sector.

The Programme Manager, Mr Vukani Mtya gave a background of the programme from the years of the 2020 VfWSEP and outlined the different projects and their prizes and the way forward in terms of the new programme. He also stated that National Adjudications are back this year after being affected by the Covid – 19 lockdown.

Ms MT Khoza from the Khulangwane Circuit of the Department of Education appreciated the Department of Water and Sanitation for bringing the launch of such an important programme to Bukhosibetfu Inclusive Primary School. "As a Department, we fully support the initiative of the Department of Water and Sanitation for the water education programme brought to the learners and educators. We hope that the information brought with the launch of the programme in this school will spread to other schools in the circuit, the whole of Nkomazi Local Municipality and the whole of the Mpumalanga Province. We appreciate that the programme will assist learners and educators to understand the importance of water. Learners have already started talking that they cannot live without water but what is more important is that the message must be talked about every day to sink in", she said.

SOUTH AFRICA IS A WATER SCARCE COUNTRY





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Ms Hlengiwe Cele of the Water Research Commission stated that the Impact Assessment Study conducted and completed in 2021 showed that the programme is the best thing that ever happened and encouraged the DWS to ensure it does not go down.

Mr Curtis Mabena from the Department of Water and Sanitation thanked the school and the Mpumalanga Department of Education for hosting the national launch of the programme.

He called on the learners not to play with water, especially on Spring Day. "Learners, I know you have the tendency of pouring each other with water on Spring Day. South Africa is a water scarce country and every drop counts. I am begging you not to play with water. I am pleading with you, Spring Day is coming, please don't play with water.

Mr Mabena also outlined that the programme replaces the 2020 Vision for Water and Sanitation Programme (2020 VfwSEP) as we have now passed the year 2020. He further outlined the key successes of the old programme as a benchmark going forward. "We have mobilised and supported 3500 schools, 800 bursaries have been awarded for learners to pursue careers in the water and sanitation sector, 55 media classrooms were awarded through a partnership with the MTN Foundation for Baswa Le Meetse national winners and in 2015, the Programme was recognised for its achievement by the United Nations and awarded the "Water for Life Best Practice Award", he said.

Philile Mavuso, a Grade 5 learners at Bukhosibetfu Inclusive Primary School thanked the Department for bringing the launch to their school as it reminded them of the importance of using water wisely, taking care of the rivers and taking care of their toilets. "I was reminded that water is life, and we must not waste it. I also learned that South Africa is a dry and water scarce country", she said.

As a token of appreciation for hosting the launch, the school principal, one educator and a member of the school governing body will attend the National Adjudications in Gauteng in October, even if the school does not make the national finals.

Themba Khoza

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