



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### INTERNET ARTICLE

#### **I discarded my love for soccer to become a water agent – trainee recruit Sibusiso Jantjies**

1 September 2015

*It is always difficult to ditch a blossoming career and venture into the unknown terrain in search of reaching your goals.*

*But, for other people – the brave at heart – this process is no concern.*

*This is indeed true in relation to the talented and gifted football dazzler Sibusiso Jantjies (27).*

*Sibusiso never blinked or thought twice when he decided to put aside his dreams of becoming a soccer star by committing himself to become a water agent – ambassador.*

*This decision shocked many people, admirers and supporters who had thought that they will one day watch him play for a top local or international football outfit.*

*This was not to be for this gifted Kwalanga, Uitenhage lad with loads of talent when he quit on the spot.*

*Not only did he quit from playing soccer, but he also surprised his teammates at the top second division Vodacom League foot ball Club, Highlands Park, a team that produced greats such as Stuart Lilley and many others.*

*Before joining Highlands Park he played for the local soccer outfit called Moonlight City.*

*Jantjies, who shares his house with his grandmother and 5 other family members, confessed his liking for soccer and noted that he is now committed to working for the community whom he now teaches the benefits of saving water.*

*Jantjies is among the first 3 000 trainees who are due to commence their training as plumbers, artisans and water agents soon.*

*Government is to train all in all about 15 000 recruits who will be deployed in various municipalities throughout the country. The second phase of intake will involve 5 000 recruits in 2016 and the third and final intake of 7 000 recruits in 2017.*

*“I am an electrician who, after three years of training, will be a professionally-trained water agent,” declared a rather proud and happy Jantjies.*

*He said his new love and commitment to working to educate started after he was introduced to the concept of this process earlier this year and “I loved the idea.”*

*Jantjies explains that he was very excited on being accepted as a trainee water agent after applying for the position to do “my apprenticeship.”*

*One of his most defining moments was when he made that decision to join the ranks of the apprenticeship. “Look,” he said, “This is very simple. Soccer is a good sport but prospects of long-lasting benefits’ generation are limited. However, the opposite is true in terms of being a water ambassador,” he added.*



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*Jantjies pointed out that there are a lot, if not huge benefits, that go with being a water ambassador. Fact is, those people selected to carry out such functions are trained and they gain everlasting skills that make them better persons now and in future. "Once empowered with skills a person is able to grow further from what he learned or gained during training. In football I can break a leg and that will be the end of my career," he noted.*

*"Another factor is that as a water ambassador I am in a position to help my country develop creative ways of stopping this wasteful scourge of water losses through leaks and unaccounted for water".*

*He says it is painful to read in newspapers that more than R7 billion is lost through water leaks in the country every year. "This is a very huge amount of money which can be used to plug challenges such as lack of processes to kick-start youth job creation processes".*

*Jantjies says he is happy that government is now in the driving seat of revitalising the economy to provide for the implementation of youth job creation opportunities. "I do not regret the decision I took and I believe this is for the best for my family and the country", he noted, adding that "I have committed myself to serving my time in the water sector."*

*Fellow trainee Thulani Zondani (33) said he heard about the process during the State of the Nation Address (SONA) by President Jacob Zuma early this year.*

*A married father of three he was unemployed at the time, but the prospects of full-time employed and further skill improvement and development persuaded Zondani to enrol with the project.*

*He said he was happy and proud that he is able now to provide for his family including contributing towards bettering the living conditions by teaching others how to save water.*

*Lisa Andisiwe Ndamase (22) and Ncedisi Jafta (35), both also trainees in this project are over the moon because "we are now doing what we love best," they maintain.*

*Jafta said she is elated because she is progressing well especially that she was studying how to become a fitter and turner while at school. "This is a dream come true because I am now being afforded this opportunity of doing what I enjoy best," she added.*

*Ndamase says she is amazed at how things are working in her favour since enrolling for the course. "This bodes for good luck and I take this opportunity to thank God for putting me in a place where I work to teach my community in saving water," she added.*

*The people who will receive skills training will attend a six-month course, offered by Rand Water at Rand Water Academy. They will also get training on health and safety, machine operation and moving vessels, amongst others. They will become water warriors and assist the city to eradicate water leaks. The training will arm them with a skills development opportunity, which will lead to job creation. Rand Water also pledged its support for the campaign, stressing the need to invest in infrastructure.*

*Water leakages cost South Africa R7 billion per year and this has to stop as the State declares war to end this wastage of the resource. The country has seen a number of protests sparked by water shortages. However, this has not stopped this precious resource from being wasted.*

*Meanwhile, Government, especially DWS, wants to close the gaps caused by the many challenges it faces. These challenges include the country's ageing infrastructure, providing*



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*access to water for rural villages and townships, as well as improved utilities for all South Africans.*

*The rapid growth of South Africa's population was also placing increased pressure on existing ageing infrastructure – particularly owing to the influx of people from rural areas to urban areas in search of better work opportunities.*

**Ike Motsapi**