



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNET ARTICLE

DWS's Aqua Enduro programme sharpens young minds for the water and sanitation sector

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The Department of Water and Sanitation's (DWS's) Aqua Enduro programme was so stiff that the top three provinces that made it through were said to have passed through an eye of a needle.

The programme, which was inceptioned in 2008, is an innovation used by the department to attract young people to follow careers to address the scarcity of skills in the scientific and engineering fields within the water and sanitation sector.

Targeting good brains in Mathematics and Physical Science, the competition puts together grade 11 students for five days from across the length and breadth of the country to test their mental stamina by giving them different exercises to do. Individually and collectively students from one province go head to head with groups from other provinces. Each group has six students.

The programme had a number of activities on which students competed including those in Mathematics, Physical Science, Biology and Chemistry as well as Equilibrium that put more emphasis on civil engineering.

The Mpumalanga group proved sophisticated and savvy in the competition, trouncing the other groups to take the coveted position one. The second best prize went to North West, while Gauteng snatched position three.

Finally, the competition will culminate into twenty students being awarded bursaries to pursue studies in the water and sanitation related fields for the academic year 2018. In this regard, the department will monitor the recipients' performance throughout next year and award final bursaries based on their final grade 12 results.

A former recipient of the bursary and now a graduate trainee: Scientist candidate in the department, Ntsika Mtembu, encouraged students to choose their fields of study carefully through doing a thorough research.

"It is a reality that not all of you will be recipients of bursaries but I would like to urge to you that even if you are not one of those who get a bursary, you must still apply to the department for a bursary," Mtembu appealed.

He said the opportunity the department was giving to students is a rare one, adding that the department had professionals who were there to offer their assistance at all times.

"The professionals groom you from soft to hard skills and you get exposure to different skills as you work with different experts from different fields," Mtembu said.

One of the Gauteng group of students, Gift Khoza, from Carlton High School, praised the competition, saying he was inspired by the exercises they had to do as both individuals and groups.



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He said the water and sanitation sector was in dire need of a new generation of professionals to take it forward. He decried the pollution of water resources on daily basis, saying that treating water and making it clean was not an easy task as some people thought.

“We should change our mindset towards saving water because this is a precious resource which we cannot live without,” concluded Khoza.

Hosia Sithole