



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### INTERNET ARTICLE

#### **Departmental initiatives to improve the lives of the youth**

28 July 2016

In a country with a population of 54.7 million more than sixty percent of this number is youth. The Department of Water and Sanitation thus recognises the need to develop the youth of South Africa by opening the many opportunities available in the water sector.

The Minister of the department, Ms Nomvula Mokonyane was speaking yesterday at the “step up to start up” event held in Johannesburg and reiterated the need for entrepreneurs in this country.

“The ability to groom and see a rise in the entrepreneurs will be dependent on the types of strategies and approaches that South Africa adopts today and will tell if we as a country will sink or survive,” said Minister Mokonyane.

Furthermore, “the economic growth trajectory of our country requires that we should produce workers with requisite skills and knowledge to match the demands of this knowledge economy era we find ourselves in,” added Minister Mokonyane.

DWS as the custodian of water in our country has realized that the water sector is experiencing critical scarce skills shortages particularly in engineering and sciences. This is due to both an insufficient skills base and fierce competition in the labour market for skilled personnel.

As a result the department took the lead to ensure sufficient scarce skills and competencies in the short, medium and long term through the introduction of the Learning Academy which addresses skills gaps in the overall water supply value chain, plans and build capacity for immediate, medium, and long term needs of DWS and the broader water sector, offers workplace exposure and develops unemployed youth.

The department also has learnerships, internships and bursaries and has partnered with private sector organisations in the endeavour to assist youth in the country in accessing sustainable livelihoods through acquisition of skills for employment, self-employment and further information, education and training opportunities.



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Minister Mokonyane has recently approved a BBBEE policy that will support a target of 30% procurement spend on women, youth and people with disabilities.

In her closing remarks at the event Minister Mokonyane said "The difficulty lies not so much in developing new ideas as in escaping from the old ones."

**Mbali Mabena**