



INTERNET ARTICLE

Learners determined to seize opportunities the 1976 education guard has afforded them

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Loads of determination for knowledge, hunger to solve water-related problems and success are motivating factors for participants of the Aqua Enduro competition that is currently taking place in Pretoria.

A total of 54 Maths and Science learners from the nine provinces across the country – six learners from each province - have converged at the Department of Water and Sanitation's Roodeplaat Dam. The educational programme exposes the learners to water resources, science and engineering aspects. This year the focus and theme of the activities are on water use efficiency, as a response to the drought that is currently ravaging the country.

This year's group comprising of Grade 12 learners is highly motivated than ever since the learners are on the doorstep of tertiary education. The participants are vying for the 20 top places that will ensure entry into tertiary institutions of their choices, to undertake water-related career studies. Aqua Enduro project leader Solomon Makate said "participants are excited for the exposure to practical school work" and are having fun while learning.

Karen Mpholoane says when a teacher at her school informed them about the competition at the beginning of last year while she was in Grade 11, she did a research on water-related careers. "In the end I entered the competition and hope to win a bursary to realise my ambition of doing Environmental Science studies after Matric," Mpholoane stated in high spirits.

The North West (NW) team comprising Molebogeng Mokone, Onkabetse Modisakeng, Thoriso Selebano, Sphiwe Matone, Itumeleng Mompoti and BonoloMahuma had nothing but good things to say about the competition. They said its activities are fun and enjoyable. They said: "the Aqua Enduro competition is challenging and makes one think out of the box; a great experience for learning new things; improves problem solving and people skills in addition promotes interest in physical activeness."

Team NW added that the cherry on top concerning the competition is the substantial number of bursaries that the competition offers. A message of encouragement to other learners who are interested in entering the competition and generally concerning education by the NW team is that "the sooner you realise the importance of education the better because there are people who died for education in 1976. There is no time for lazing around and being sluggish, seize the many opportunities that are available today. Work hard and have positive attitude towards your bright future and opportunity to develop our country, the 1976 learners have paved a way for our current vast opportunities," they advised.



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Another motivational factor for this year's competitors of Aqua Enduro is that most of the adjudicators are former participants of the competition. Among them, Head Judge Margo Tamzon Adonis was a participant in the inaugural competition in 2008. As one of the bursary winners she went on to study Environmental Management and is currently in her third year as a Graduate Trainee at the Western Cape regional office of the department.

Adonis has been an Aqua Enduro judge since 2013. With a few days away from her honours graduation, Adonis urges other women to "make use of available learning opportunities and never limit themselves. Being a judge in this year's competition is part of my celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the 1976 youth uprisings. I am also giving back by tutoring Grade 11 and Matric learners Maths, Physics and Biology in the area where I live." Women are ruling the roost this year with six female and only two male judges.

Aqua Enduro is usually held in December every year, the 2015 leg was however postponed due to unforeseen circumstances. The five-day national level competition commenced on Monday 28 March and will end on Friday 01 April 2016. The programme for the week includes excursions at the Roodeplaat Dam, visits to water and waste water treatment plants, treasure hunts, presentations, building models and team building activities. The 20 bursary winners will be announced in two weeks' time.

The 2016 event is expected to take place in December this year at the same venue.

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