



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNET ARTICLE

Practicing good hygiene could improve the quality of life

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Deaths associated with poor hygiene continue to be on the rise every day, with 50% of deaths occurring in Africa. Over a million children are dying each year as a result of preventative diseases such as diarrhoea and pneumonia.

Speaking at the Global Handwashing Day celebration event held at Realeboha Primary School in Palmidge, the Department of Water and Sanitation's (DWS) Chief Development Expert, Ms Lungile Zulu, emphasised the importance of washing hands at critical times.

"The focus this year is mostly at schools, as we want to teach the children at an early age and help them make washing hands a habit. Children are very good carriers of messages. We expect them to take the lessons learnt back home and practice it", she said.

The event was held on Friday, 28 October 2015 as a partnership between DWS, the Department of Health, the City of Ekurhuleni and the Department of Education to take the cause of hand washing to everybody, every school child and every community in South Africa.

The partnership is in line with the DWS' vision of improving the quality of life in communities.

"We all know that water is life, sanitation is dignity and the washing of hands is part of sanitation because it talks to issues of health and hygiene," Zulu added.

The event kicked off with a presentation at the local Realeboha Primary School and later followed by a door to door households visits raising awareness of hand washing with soap as a key approach to disease prevention. Communities, households, hospitals, schools and workplaces were mobilised to wash hands with soaps to curb life threatening diseases.

"I have always known that washing hands is very important, but I was not aware that not washing hands could have major consequences such as death. From today going forward I will wash my hands thoroughly and at all critical times", said Simon Zwane, a resident.

Informed communities that can take charge of their own health remained critical in the fight against the high mortality rate. "We are targeting school children and pregnant women who have become ambassadors of hand washing. It is through them that the habits and behaviours can change," the Department of Health's Environmental Health Practitioner, Ms Linda Flatela, said.

This event followed a series of events which were held in different areas in Gauteng province to observe Global Handwashing Day throughout the month of October.

The entire month of October is known as the hand washing month to promote good hygiene practices and behavioural change under the theme "Make Handwashing a Habit".

Lucky Makgarengi