



OPINION PIECE

There's hope for South African youth in the water sector

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It is such an overwhelming sight to witness young people, especially from disadvantaged and remote communities get up and do things for themselves. When I heard that three young learners from Mitlhari High School in Limpopo had won a prestigious trip to Sweden, I was beyond excited. It felt like I was the one who had won.

Instead of sitting around complaining about shortage or lack of resources in their school and community, they made do with what they had and produced a world class scientific project that not only earned them an opportunity to represent our country in Sweden, but also study bursaries from the Department of Water and Sanitation to pursue careers of their choice within the sector.

Their project entails the use of a cellphone to control the flow of water in households and community taps and reservoirs, without being physically present.

From the dusty village of Shikwambana, the youngsters beat the odds by achieving what many would usually expect from the prominent schools in the suburbs. They won the National South African Youth Water Prize competition run by the Department of Water and Sanitation, beating learners from eight other provinces.

What is more inspirational is to see the interest they have on water conservation and the protection of water resources at such a young age. While their peers are more fascinated with gadgets and spending time on social media, they choose to spend their time looking for innovative ways to conserve water to ensure that their school and community do not suffer the effects of living in a dry and water stressed country.

This just shows that there is ample hope on the possibility of a nation with youth that's more concerned about the serious issues that the country is facing, whilst also willing to act on them without waiting for government to provide solutions.

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