



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNET ARTICLE

DWS schools' public speaking competition seeks fresh ideas to water and sanitation

30 May 2018

Various schools in Gauteng took part in the Department of Water and Sanitation's (DWSs) Provincial Public Speaking Competition that involved finding fresh and innovative solutions to challenges that face the water and sanitation sector.

The competition took place at Zwartkopjies Rand Water Pump Station in Glenvista, South of Johannesburg, on Wednesday, 30 May 2018.

The competition, which forms part of the Department's 2020 Vision Water and Sanitation Education Programme, is the main driver of community-based water literacy initiatives. The programme targets grade 10 and 11 learners to transmit the messages of water and sanitation related issues.

Mr Glen Mohlomi, the Gauteng Department of Basic Education's Deputy Chief Education Specialist, said the competition gave the learners rare opportunities that were not widely available before, reiterating that the learners should take this opportunity with both hands.

Mr Mohlomi said: "We want to thank you profusely for being part of this competition as you could have been at school preparing for the exams as this time is most crucial," adding that the competition was meant to lessen financial burden on the participants's parents when these learners went to tertiary institutions.

The programme seeks to tap on high schools around the country to induce learners to follow careers in the water and sanitation sector by encouraging them to be active and responsible citizens that will be driven by Water Literacy initiatives.

The topic of the competition was, "Access to water and sanitation to some communities is severely limited due to socio-economic status".

First up was the RW Fick Senior Secondary School from Bosmond whose learners advanced the argument that the previously disadvantaged areas were not receiving adequate water mainly because of their socio-economic status. They said informal areas were still struggling with receiving proper sanitation and this posed risks to their health, leading to what are known as poor people's diseases.

Lethukuthula Secondary School argued that the government was aware of the conditions of the poor, especially the lack of water and sanitation, emphasising that there was a need to challenge the government to provide these services to all the people irrespective of who they were.

From Diepkloof, Soweto, Diepdale Secondary School learners singled out the constitution as a supreme document that enjoined the government to provide water and proper sanitation to the people. The basis for their argument was that there should be a duty of care on the part the government in the provision of basic services.



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The team from Westbury Secondary School, questioned whether the lack of services to poor areas was because they did not contribute as much as the more affluent communities to the paying of rates. They contended that the difference in the provision of services was unfair, attributing this on income levels and education status. They said government has a responsibility to provide fresh water to every household.

The Leondale Secondary School team said the Lindelani Informal Settlement in Ekurhuleni does not have sufficient water supply and adequate sanitation, saying the lack of these basic services were severely affecting the children. They said the source of illnesses that afflicted this community was because of lack of these services. Women, they argued, were most affected by this situation, especially girls who had to miss school because of menstrual hygiene. They argued that lack of water and sanitation was responsible for loss of most lives.

The team from Leondale Secondary School got the thumbs up as they went on to win the competition. The school will represent Gauteng in the National Public Speaking Competition, which will take place during the youth month.

Westbury and Diepdale Secondary Schools took position two and three respectively.

Ms Shoky Malepe, the Provincial Coordinator of the competition in Gauteng, said the competition was growing in leaps and bounds as shown by the level of the research the learners had done. She said this was an indication that more learners were taking more interest in the subject of water and sanitation.

Ms Malepe thanked the teachers for doing their best in preparing the learners and making them grapple with the challenges in the water and sanitation sector.

Ms Malepe said: "Our sector is facing a myriad of challenges and these learners taking part in the competition are critical for providing solutions to these challenges. It is our vision that they follow careers in the sector because we do not have many learners choosing careers in this sector."

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