



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNET ARTICLE

Gauteng DWS teams up with Emaplatini to take hand washing campaign to a Soweto school

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The learners of Mzamo Primary School in Orlando West, Soweto, proved to be every inch willing ambassadors of the Department of Water and Sanitation's Global Hand Washing Campaign.

The Department, working with the Emaplatini Heritage Forum, visited the school on Friday, 26 October 2018, as part of a month long campaign, Sanitation Month, to teach learners about the importance of washing hands and general hygiene.

According to the United Nations' World Health Organisations (WHO), the global mortality rate of children under the age of 5 as a result of diarrhoeal diseases underscores the fact that the importance of hand washing has been underplayed and the most vulnerable of our society are paying a heavy price with their lives.

The WHO puts the number of deaths of children to a staggering 600 000 each year from diarrhoeal disease with about 1 400 of them dying every day.

Ms Lungile Zulu from the Department's Water Sector support gave a presentation on the proper washing of hands and tips on how to save water, emphasising that learners take this messages home to teach their family members.

Urging the learners to spread the message, Ms Zulu said: "There are many diseases that are associated with not washing one's hands and these include diarrhoea and cholera. These can be deadly diseases and the only way to avoid them is washing with soap at critical times."

She urged the learners to wash their hands before eating, after using a toilet so as to prevent themselves from getting sick.

A grade 4 learner at the school, Sanelisiwe Ngobese, expressed her commitment to spread the message of washing hands, saying that a lot of children did not know that not washing hands was causing diseases.

"Today I have learnt so much about washing hands with soap and the steps that must be followed. Many children do not have this information and so we are lucky to have received it. I will be taking this message not only to my family members but to other children in the community," pledged Sanelisiwe.

Another learner, a 12-year old Phakamani Makopo who is in grade 6, said toilets were places that had so many germs and that it was important to wash hands after using the facilities. He said in most cases other learners used toilets but did not wash their hands afterwards, echoing Sanelisiwe's promise to tell them about washing hands with soap to avoid getting diseases such as diarrhoea and cholera.

Mr Nkosinathi Ngcobo of Emaplatini Heritage Forum said the issue of general hygiene and washing of hands was critical to the lives of children because they were the most affected in communities.



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“This is why as part of our activities we have identified this school so that learners could be given information about how to wash hands and keeping themselves clean. When you give this kind of information to learners, chances are that they will in turn give this information to their families and other community members,” said Mr Ngcobo.

Hosia Sithole