



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

DWS and partners raise canal safety awareness in Oukasie

22 June 2018

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) hosted a canal safety awareness event in partnership with the Department of Education, Madibeng Local Municipality's Disaster Management and Coca-Cola in a bid to curb incidences of drowning in canals.

The campaign was prompted by a spate of drowning among children who met their fate while playing or swimming in the water resources or around water infrastructure.

As a result, the DWS and partners addressed about 500 learners from both Kutlwano Primary and Bothabelo High Schools in Oukasie to raise awareness about the dangers posed by canals.

Themed "**Canals and Inland Waterways' Safety is Everyone's Responsibility**", the awareness campaign aims to promote safety in and around water infrastructure as well as at inland waterways. A greater emphasis is directed towards communities who live close to canals and other types of water infrastructure and inland waterways. The campaign is rolled out across the country, in partnership with various stakeholders.

Addressing the learners Mr Motokwe Motape from DWS highlighted that the latest statistics indicate that at least two children drown in South Africa daily while playing or swimming in the canals. For the moment, however, the tragic incidents appear to be limited to KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, North West and Limpopo.

"It is for this reason that ourselves as DWS together with our partners decided to come here today to raise awareness here at Kutlwano Primary School since the school is situated next to a canal and has in the past been affected by drowning. We would like to appeal to you learners not to use canals as swimming pools or sources of water for any use because that can be dangerous," said Motokwe Motape.

Motokwe also highlighted that drowning is however, not limited to children, as water is a convergence point for many religious practices and many communities also collect water from canals for household use and consumption purposes and this also poses risks.

The canal safety campaign is targeting learners in schools to create awareness about the dangers of canals with a few tips such as not swimming in canals, not collecting water in canals, crossing canals only over bridges. The campaign hopes to save many lives through awareness.

The learners were also exposed to a demonstration by Madibeng Local Municipality's Disaster Management unit of how to act in response to emergency situations, how they operate their truck, and emergency numbers and tips were given to learners to familiarise themselves with what to do in case of emergency.

END.



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