




MY DISTRICT TODAY



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OUTCOME I: IMPROVED QUALITY OF BASIC EDUCATION

Deputy Minister of Communications reaches out to schools

By *Lwando Helesi: GCIS, Eastern Cape*

The Department of Communications (DoC) continues to make a difference in previously disadvantaged schools. The Deputy Minister of Communications, Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams, handed over information and communication technologies to Douglas Mbopha High School and Chatty Senior Secondary School in the Eastern Cape. Through collaborative efforts with Vodacom, the DoC has donated 26 tablets to each school, a laptop, two printers and an interactive white board to ensure that teachers and learners have access to information.

"We value the partnerships with the private sector because it is not only government's responsibility to build our nation, but it rests upon all of us," said the Deputy Minister.

The two schools are based in areas where there is a high rate of learners who drop out of school. To attract and motivate them, teaching and learning has to be more interactive.

President Jacob Zuma, in his State of the Nation Address, talked about a nine-point plan to revitalise the economy and help alleviate poverty. Deputy Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams said the sharing of information will help the public understand services and opportunities that are offered by government and how they can access them.

The DoC recently launched the South African Government and *Vuk'uzenzele* applications that the public can use to access government information. "We are giving you an opportunity to voice out your views by challenging government. We want you to tell your own stories and we encourage people to be part of the solution," said the Deputy Minister.

She also cautioned learners to be vigilant when using social media and not visit sites that might expose them to negative things like cyber bullying.



Nazlie Chan King said:

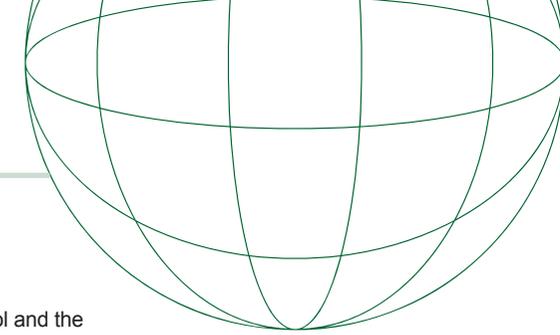
"This initiative has opened up new possibilities for our learners. For years, learners went to universities and joined the corporate world without having touched a computer. These technologies are going to make teaching easier because now you can tell learners to go and conduct a research on a specific subject. The initiative has also re-energised the school community and will inspire the learners as many of them come from disadvantaged backgrounds. I am very excited."



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Cedric Frank said:

“We embrace this cyber lab initiative because we need it as the school and the community. We know it will benefit our learners and make them more interested in their education, introduce them to technology and make computer more accessible to them. Most of them do not have access to the Internet, Wi-Fi, etc. This will go a long way in inspiring them to do better in their exams. We hope all the classrooms will be fitted with the interactive white boards.”



Burton Van Rooyen said:

“This cyber lab will help us to do research. It features a lot of textbooks that we can get information from. We will also share the information with other members of the community.”



Lizelle Smith said:

“This initiative will make our learning more convenient and easy. It will help us as we plan to study further because everything is based on technology these days.”



Farren Steenberg said:

“This initiative will boost our confidence, considering that we are a progressive school. I am just sad that it is my last year here.”



Dezmaine Moss said:

“This development will help our learners to improve on their studies considering that some areas do not have libraries for learners to access information from.”



OUTCOME 2: A LONG AND HEALTHY LIFE FOR ALL SOUTH AFRICANS

Fight against drug and substance abuse intensified

By Itumeleng Bogatsu: GCIS, Gauteng

Young people from sections around Tembisa were entertained by the Ama-Foundation Drum-Majorette and Art Youth Group during the Sports against Drugs campaign on 14 March in Exubeni section.

The campaign was aimed at educating young people that sports can help them stay away from drug and substance abuse. The initiative is set to continue to all the wards within Tembisa.

Vivian Mathime, organiser and member of the Local Drug Action Committee, said that for government to win the fight against drug and substance abuse, it needs the assistance of all communities. “Our former President Nelson Mandela once said that sports is a way to unite the nation, when you talk sports you cut against all religions and political affiliations, and across race, people respond positively to sport initiatives as they have no barriers, so this is the best method to mobilise the youth of Tembisa to fight against drug and substance abuse and engage in positive initiatives that will build them and their future,” she said.

“We also request parents and guardians to play their part in the fight against drugs by participating in such campaigns, not forgetting that they are the ones who have first-hand experience of the problems faced in their respective communities because of drugs, so they are the right people to assist government in this fight. We want to do more but it has to be driven from the local ground, communities should be the ones who push these organisations to say this is how we want to address drugs in our area,” continued Vivian.

The message of the day was made clear as the young people gathered at the sports field and shouted: “Ke moja, I’m fine without drugs”.

Former drug addicts and founders of the Ku Ruff-Ku-Wrong Youth Group, William and Jabu, said that the only way to keep young people away from drugs and crime is to introduce positive activities such as sports and arts.

“It is difficult to promote positive activities if you do not have access to resources, for instance here in Tembisa we have to pay to use sports facilities. We request government to help groups like ours to implement activities such as sports, drama and singing,” said Jabu.

“Anyone who thinks drugs are “cool” is wrong because these things destroy lives. People who take drugs steal from their communities, families and friends and also hurt people they love just to satisfy their addiction. I started taking drugs in 2008 and I regret some of the things I did when I was still an addict. I could not finish my studies due to my drug addiction. My mother sent me to rehab in 2010 because she feared for my life and I have been clean since then and I work with young people in the Ku-Ruff-Ku-Wrong Youth Group to help them avoid the same mistakes I made,” said William.

Various local sports groups competed in soccer and netball matches and were entertained by the Ama-Foundation Drum-Majorette and Art Youth Group.



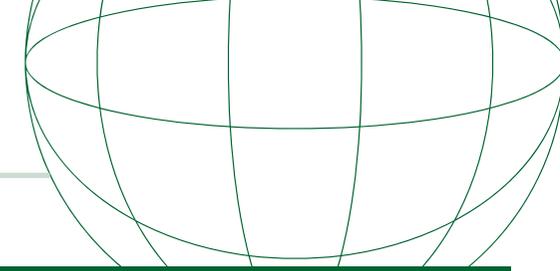
The Ama-Foundation Drum-Majorette entertaining the crowd.



Vivian speaks about the Sports against Drugs campaign.



Former drug addicts, Jabu (left) and William (right) motivated the crowd.



OUTCOME 3: ALL PEOPLE IN SOUTH AFRICA ARE AND FEEL SAFE

A successful roadblock campaign

By Ntandokazi Kukuma: GCIS, Western Cape

The Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) partnered with the Department of Water and Environmental Affairs to conduct a roadblock campaign aimed at encouraging people to save water. The campaign also popularised Water Week key messages and also educated the public about the importance of saving water. More than 200 motorists were given road-safety tips in a space of three hours.



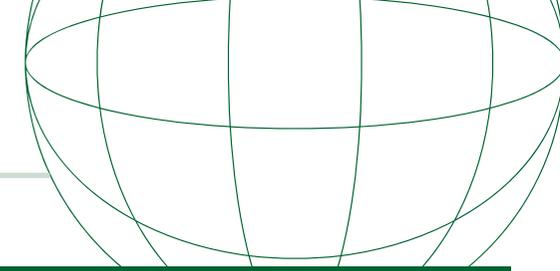
Traffic officers and GCIS official engaging with motorists.



Cars were inspected and information was shared during the campaign.



Officials sharing information with motorists while traffic officers inspect cars.



Phethedi said:

“We thank our government and the mines for organising this event as it exposes our learners to lots of information.”



Doris Mapea said:

“I am very happy to be here celebrating Water Week as we are also taught many things that we were not aware of before we came to De Hoop Dam.”

OUTCOME 12: AN EFFICIENT, EFFECTIVE AND DEVELOPMENT ORIENTED PUBLIC SERVICE AND AN EMPOWERED, FAIR AND INCLUSIVE CITIZENSHIP

Sekhukhune celebrates Water Week

By Nkopodi Mokgoma: GCIS, Limpopo



Learners who attended the event holding copies of *Vuk'uzenzele*.

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), in partnership with the Sekhukhune District Municipality and Dwarsrivier Mine, celebrated Water Week on 24 March at De Hoop Dam in the Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality.

The De Hoop Dam project was started in 2007 to address water challenges in many parts of Sekhukhune District and also the high demand of water caused by the establishment of mines. Water Week was celebrated under the theme: “Water is Life, Sanitation is Dignity”.

The Senior General Manager of Dwarsrivier Mine appreciated their long-standing partnership with Sekhukhune District Municipality, DWS and Sekhukhune Community Radio Station in delivering the service to communities.

In his keynote address, Councillor Mathale Mokhulwane expressed his excitement. “We are here to witness a dream becomes a reality,” he said. He also appealed to community members to be patient as there are still some work to be done before they can drink water from the dam.



Councillor Mokhulwane giving a keynote address.



Dwarsrivier Mine official addressing the audience.