

World Water Day March in Matatiele

At the mention of the word “march”, an image that is likely to come to mind is that of an aggressive or rowdy crowd. But, a group marching to raise water conservation awareness proved the latter totally wrong when they chose to conduct a peaceful march along the streets of Matatiele, making noise with only their placards.



Organised by the Umzimvubu Catchment Partnership Programme (UCPP), which comprises the Matatiele Local Municipality, Lima and other local partners, the 1 kilometre march took place on 17 March, ahead of World Water Day on 22 March.

The purpose of the demonstration, according to former Lima Environmental Facilitator Lumko Mboyi, was twofold: raising awareness around the current water crisis facing the country and promoting public participation in activities geared towards conserving this essential resource.

The organising team invited selected local primary and high schools to participate in the march, giving the learners the task of creating posters with informative messages around water conservation. With much vigour, the learners took to their paint and brushes, showing up with the most creative placards on the day. The colours blue and green were dominant in most of the designs as these were the theme colours for the march, representing water and healthy catchments, respectively. The event hosted more than 500 learners and was assisted by the Traffic



and Ambulance Services to maintain safety during the march. The Endangered Wildlife Trust also assisted in providing a very colourful and exciting Event Vehicle, full of water droplets...

Various slogans were displayed, that demonstrated the feeling and understanding that learners have around water related issues. These included; "Amanzi Ngawethu; No Water, No Future; Filthy water can't be washed"

But the posters were more than just about their appearance; the messages the learners conveyed through these were strong and indicative of the learners' understanding of the water crisis. A point which most of them highlighted was that of lives being threatened by the scarcity of water. Being the future themselves, this point was both pertinent and poignant.



The day ended on a less serious note with a prize giving session for learners with outstanding poster designs, a water awareness challenge and other fun activities at King Edward High School Sports Grounds. Prizes, including fishing rods, portable radios and many others, were donated by various local businesses and the Department of Water and Sanitation that are in support of the cause of the day. This demonstrates a town that is united for the security of their water resources, from NGO collaborations, Municipality services, Youth and Schools and Private Companies. The day was fun filled and a pleasant way to end off the school term for the schools involved.

