



## INTERNET ARTICLE

### **Handwashing awareness to prevent the spread of diseases and unnecessary deaths**

30 October 2018

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), Ehlanzeni District Municipality, Department of Health, Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs and the Tribal Authority engaged the community of Msogwaba in the City of Mbombela for an informative and educational awareness campaign to remind the community of the importance of washing hands, especially with soap.

Handwashing is important to prevent the spread of diseases and untimely deaths, especially in relation to diarrheal cases in children. As part of the prioritization of health and hygiene in continuing the awareness around Global Handwashing Day that is celebrated on 15 October, the community of Msogwaba was educated on the importance of handwashing, waterborne diseases, food safety and the movement of bacteria. The awareness campaign was celebrated under the theme **“Clean hands – a recipe for health”** which focuses on the links between handwashing and food including food hygiene and nutrition. Handwashing at critical times, especially before cooking, eating or feeding others is one of the most important ways to keep food clean and safe, prevent diseases and help children grow strong. Connecting handwashing to an existing habit like a meal is a great way to form proper handwashing habits. The theme is basically a reminder to everyone to make handwashing a part of every meal.

Officials from Msogwaba clinic led by Ms Joyce Nkosi, presented a health talk focusing on the importance of handwashing as the cheapest and effective way of preventing the spread of bacteria and diseases and unwanted deaths. They also did a demonstration of the correct ways and steps of washing hands.

Ms Victoria Sikhonde, a community member committed to spread the message and information received during the session and also to educate her family and neighbours to foster a healthy community. She also demonstrated handwashing steps and promised to share the handwashing method with his family and friends.



## water & sanitation

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In his address, MMC Shongwe encouraged the community members to take and use the information from the session for their benefit and also share with other members of the community for the benefit of all. “People are dying because of the lack of information. Today, information has been brought to us to help prevent the spread of diseases and unnecessary deaths. We have learnt that we must always wash our hands after using the toilet, before preparing food and after changing baby’s nappies. Those preparing food must always be clean and hygienic and always keep their hands clean so as to prevent the spread of germs and the contamination of the food being prepared. Water is sometimes a challenge here, but it is not an excuse for not washing and keeping your hands clean and healthy. Lastly, I urge each and everyone here to go and teach at least one person of the importance of handwashing and share educational material you have received to ensure a healthy community”, he said.

**Themba Khoza**