



Women In Water Awards



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Issued by: The Department of Water Affairs

27 AUGUST 2010

DEPARTMENT OF WATER AFFAIRS ANNOUNCES 2010 WOMEN IN WATER AWARDS WINNERS

Department of Water Affairs (DWA) Deputy Minister Ms Rejoice Mabudafhasi, today announced the winners of the ninth Women in Water Awards at a ceremony held at Oshabeni, near Port Shepstone, on the Durban South Coast.

With a focus on water-related projects, these awards have in the past become a major element on DWA's women's month calendar. The awards are aimed at recognising, honouring and encouraging women who have played a significant role in water management in South Africa.

Ms Mabudafhasi had this to say about the awards: "We are delighted to be able to continue our involvement with the awards, which speak to our commitment to play a key role in empowering individuals and communities."

The Women in Water Awards were first launched in 2002 when Water Affairs and Forestry still fell under the same ministry.

A significant departure from the past nine years' tradition is in the criteria for the awards recipients, which for the past nine years were bestowed upon individuals, but this year the honour groups and or organisations.

This year's awards received a total of 450 submissions across four categories.

- indigenous (in the field of water),
- education and awareness (in the field of water),
- water conservation (in the field of water),
- community development (in the field of water).

Eleven finalists were shortlisted from the country-wide submissions received. These finalists are:

PROFILES OF FINALISTS

1. LULO MULTIPURPOSE CO-OPERATIVE

Province: Eastern Cape

Category: Community development

Founded in 2007, the Lulo Multipurpose project in Maclear, Eastern Cape, was born out of the necessity to access water when streams and river ran dry and the little available water too dirty for human consumption. To address their water needs, the women in the project identified suitable springs which did not burn out even in winter.

The identified springs were encamped and paved to keep out animals and to prevent littering. Water tanks were subsequently utilised to store water drawn from the springs and this went a long way towards helping the community in accessing water.

The eight-woman initiative is now involved in water purification, water conservation and draught alleviation and is supported by the private sector.

2. DISASTER MANAGEMENT PROJECT

Province: Western Cape

Category: Community Development

When some towns in the Garden Route experienced serious draught in 2009, disaster management became paramount and the Disaster Management Project sprung into action. The project was run by local women in conjunction with the Provincial Disaster Management Centre leading the initiative to embark on a massive public awareness campaign.

Innovative measures and technologies were employed in the project's water conservation activities. This project resulted in significant cuts (30-49 percent) of municipal water consumption as the communities were supportive of the project.

These women raised funds to ensure this excellent initiative's sustainability. Management of the project now comprises inventive measures including installation of a desalination plant and water re-use.

The Disaster Management Project expanded to carry out borehole exploration, reverse osmosis and indirect re-use of effluent.

3. MASIBAMBISANE CO-OPERATIVE

Province: KZN

Category: Indigenous Work

Recognised for their water conservation inventiveness, this KwaZulu-Natal group is a vegetable garden project operating under the name Phuzukuvela co-operative and comprises seven members, (five women and two men).

To conserve water, Masibambisane installed floating steel bails in water tanks to control water flow and prevent spillage since their pumps lack on and off switches. The steel bail serves as a plug to the water outlet hole by floating upward and sealing the hole when the tank is full, thus avoiding water spillage.

This group's vegetables gardens are irrigated by water drawn from a nearby spring via a pipeline and then stored in tanks which have taps. Members connected their own pipe irrigation system using a small pipe and fine sprayer as well as a timer, to promote water conservation.

4. ZAMIMPILO WOMEN'S CLUB

Province: Mpumalanga

Category: Water conservation

To keep hunger at bay, 160 women and 5 men identified arable land and started vegetable gardens. The project grew beyond their imagination and they started selling

their crops to the community. The project is situated at Komatipoort, at a villange called Tonga, in Block C, Loss My Chery.

However, water shortages threatened their source of livelihood and their health, they came up with ways to conserve water and keep their crops alive. They clean the river and use water for vegetable gardens. This is a very good example of Adopt a River project.

5. SKEYKFORTEIN FOOD GARDEN PROJECT

Province: Northern Cape

Category: Water Conservation

Steykfonteyn Food comprises one youth and 10 women. Like most such initiatives, this project began as a vegetable garden to assist the community in fighting poverty. Prevalent water challenges prompted the group into action.

After securing funding from their local municipality, Steykfontein Food members installed a water tank (with a tap) for the whole community's benefit.

But this led to another challenge – how to conserve the water they now had if their crops were to keep flourishing. The drip irrigation system, which is a well-known and simple but effective method of not wasting water, was settled upon as a water-wise option of irrigation.

6. BAMBITHUBA WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT

Province: KZN

Category: Education and awareness

This food garden project also plays its role in water conservation and educating the public. To this end, the women, who make use of rain water tanks to irrigate their gardens, embarked on a campaign of training the gardening communities on saving and recycling water.

Furthermore, this organisation have made a valuable contribution in cleaning up polluted water and streams in co-operation with the Ethekewini Municipality.

7: MOTHER OF THE NATION PROJECT

Province: Limpopo

Category: Education and Awareness

A group of the former Sedibeng Bafadzi members could not ignore the problem when most of the rivers were polluted and water was being wasted. To tackle the problem, they embarked on an education and awareness campaign in the province, consulting local chiefs and indunas and local municipalities for buy-in into their project and ideals.

The women started running workshops in conjunction with local municipalities to educate the communities and also initiated river cleaning projects, cleaning two rivers: Tshifokofani River and Tshinwamukumpi River. Their efforts went a long way towards addressing the problem of pollution and educating the general public.

8: IKAGENG GA MASHA CO-OPERATIVE

Province: Limpopo

Category: Community Development

Although this is primarily a crop production project, this initiative stood out for its extensive skills development and training efforts in water management

This project uses river water for irrigation with the aid of a water pump and a floppy irrigation system and has also constructed channels for water diversion. The initiative formed successful partnerships with the municipality, private sector (a mining company) some local provincial structures and the community.

This ten-member group also boasts the participation of 12 youths whom they educated in agriculture. Ikageng Ga-Masha is hailed as an example of success in the province and now serves as a “centre for exposure visits” imparting their water management expertise.

9. REATLEGILE WOMEN'S CLUB

Province: Limpopo

Category: Water Conservation

Reatlegile started educating women and the community on water conservation and put the wasted water to good use. To this end, a vegetable was started and women were encouraged to participate. The project now has 16 members.

They dug up furrows from these taps to catch the wasted water for use in irrigating their community gardens. The group now sells their vegetables to the community and even some to the local markets and are now also engaged in drilling of boreholes, borehole testing, water quality testing, as well as building of steel tanks.

They also facilitate borehole maintenance, water tank installation to assist communities. Have taught water conservation skills and the best irrigation methods. Water from boreholes is then stored in tanks. Reatlegile farms 21 fields which have aided in the alleviation of poverty in the area.

10: BAMBANANI COMMUNITY PROJECT

Province: Mpumalanga

Category: Indigenous work

This vegetable garden project adopted a simple but effective way of conserving water by planting their crops in beds, consequently using less water for irrigation.

An age-old, common sense method of water conversation – mulching – was also employed to bolster their efforts. Mulching the garden is an inexpensive and easy way of preventing moisture from escaping from garden floor, resulting in a much reduced need for frequent watering.

The group are also involved in health education to help prevent the spread of water-borne diseases. They encouraged groundwater use and food garden development.

11: MATSWIDIKANYE PROJECT

Province: Limpopo

Category: Education and awareness

When the women in Limpopo noted how tap water was wasted in their area, members of Matswidikanye Project rose up, thus began their involvement in water conservation education within the community.

The group put measures in place to save water setting buckets under taps to catch excess water flowing out when taps were in use. Instead of going down the sewers, the excess water is now used for irrigation through a canal which have been dug up for this purpose.

In addition, this project implemented a used- water recycling plan, using this would-be wasted water also for irrigation.

THE NOMINATIONS PROCESS

The process commenced with consultative provincial workshops which were aimed at mobilising participation in the awards, clarifying the categories and nominations process to prospective entrants. The entries were then examined by the judges, whittled out until a final of 11 deserving projects remained.

The winners were chosen by a panel of independent adjudicators.

Enquiries:

Ms Tshidi Baloyi

012 336 8281

082 611 1015

Email: baloyim2@dwa.gov.za