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After successfully completing the basic plumbing course participants proudly show their certificates. With them are representatives of DWS, TWK and Lixil. Photo: Mitzi Buys

# Youth learn plumbing skills

Mitzi Buys

The access to “sufficient water” is considered a fundamental human right within the Bill of Rights of the South African Constitution, but it is equally important to curb water wastage which often occurs through leaking taps and toilets in residences.

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), in partnership with the Theewaterskloof Municipality (TWKM) and Lixil, recently offered a week-long basic plumbing course for unemployed youth of the Caledon area.

Zoliwe Simawo, Western Cape Head of Capacity Building and Support at DWS, says: “We have identified TWKM as contributing to high non-revenue water (high water losses) in the Western Cape. This programme aims to address water wastage by equipping local youth with the knowledge and expertise to repair leaks and tackle basic plumbing challenges. The initiative is designed to create a “water conservation army”, a skilled group of individuals who can help prevent water loss and support the municipality in maintaining water efficiency.”

Participants were trained in various plumbing techniques, including the repair of old and new cisterns. Igshaan Hugo of Lixil said: “We assist municipalities with their socio-economic challenges such as unemployment and skills development. This is our way of

giving back. The participants are skilled-up for preventative maintenance which makes them eligible for EPWP (Expanded Public Works Programme) employment.”

Almost half the participants were young women. *Hermanus Times* spoke to Asandisa Ncethani after the completion of the course. “I have been wanting to do such a course, plumbing or electrical work, for a long time. I wanted to learn a trade and was very excited about the course. Two days ago I was able to fix my leaking toilet from what I learnt here, so I am very happy and also very proud.”

Elmarie Adendorf said: “I attended this course because I wanted to make a difference by being able to help people with basic plumbing problems. I really enjoyed the course.” The course concluded with the handing of certificates to those who completed it.

After receiving their certificates, Alfonso Bull, who also completed the programme, addressed the participants and the programme presenters: “I am grateful for the time and sacrifice of everybody that presented this course. How we take this further is now up to each one of us.”

Simawo mentioned that initially they wanted to present the course to participants from other TWK towns together with those from Caledon, but due to travel constraints this was not possible and they will in the near future present the course in Grabouw and Villiersdorp as well.