

H2OWATCH OUTREACH IN JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA.

NWAD has spread its wings and introduced the young generation of Johannesburg to the importance of analysing water with an amazing outreach activity.

Sanja Potgieter-Vermaak, the current chair of NWAD, visited South Africa in August 2016 and during her visit hosted an outreach activity under NWAD and Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) banners. With the assistance of Professor Herman Potgieter, representing MMU and the University of the Witwatersrand, an event was held at a school aftercare centre located in suburban Johannesburg.

This school aftercare centre (Emthonjeni) was established and is maintained by a church (Mosaiek - <http://www.mosaiek.com/bedieninge/missional/emthonjeni/>) and, after attending the nearby primary school, 7 - 13 year old children visit the centre where they are given a hot meal and assisted with their homework by volunteers from the church.

The 40 eager children participating in the H2OWatch activity were 10 - 12 years old. Following a presentation describing the different tests and the significance of water quality, which was developed by Sam Watkins during a summer studentship supervised by Megan McLean at MMU, the children were divided into smaller groups and given an opportunity to perform the tests for themselves.

Sanja reported that: *“For most of these children, it was the first time that they had seen or touched laboratory glassware and their eagerness was astonishing”*. Water from the local stream as well as the borehole water used on the premises were subjected to the tests. The local stream water quality was surprisingly within normal limits [i.e. temperature, turbidity, pH, total hardness (480 ppm CaCO₃) and nitrate levels] but, although softer than the stream water (220 ppm CaCO₃), the borehole water had a turbidity reading of 80 and elevated nitrate levels (10 - 25 ppm).

The plan is to continue developing this outreach activity in South Africa and hopefully expand it to other informal settlements in greater Johannesburg and to secondary schools in the area.

