

## Nozipho ready to dazzle the world

**A 26-year-old Nozipho Gumbi from Eshowe in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) is ready to dazzle the audience and the judges with her engaging talk on water filtration using carbon nanotubes. She will be competing against her peers from 27 countries on a world stage at The Times Cheltenham Science Festival in the United Kingdom on 8 June 2016.**



“I have realised that, just like in the previous national rounds, the ultimate test of my readiness will be the moment I set foot on stage. Before my name is called up, I am always in a panic and frantic state, but I always try to calm myself, take a few breaths in and out, then I’m ready to go. So as it stands, while I’ve gone over my talk several times, I will be “ready” on the day of the semis,” she says.

“I am having mixed feelings. Some days it’s the feeling of excitement and awe that I have made it this far and will be going there to represent my country, South Africa, and other days, I feel nervous just thinking about the magnitude of the international FameLab. The realisation that this now is a worldwide event is enough to make me shake in my boots. Nonetheless, I am looking forward to new experiences in the U.K. and the challenges that come with them.”

She scooped the FameLab South Africa award at the finals in front of a capacity audience at the glittering Cape Town International Convention Centre, at the Going Global conference on 4 May 2016.

Gumbi’s PhD research at the University of South Africa (UNISA) looks at ways of improving water purification using membrane filters. She says the types of pollutants finding their way into our water resources are constantly changing, so newer treatment methods need to be put into place.

FameLab is not just about fame however; this comes at a time when the importance of public engagement and discourse in science and technology is better recognised, as evidenced by the Department of Science and Technology’s Science Engagement Strategy.

Science should serve society and can only do so if the public is able to engage with it. Unfortunately, scientific concepts and findings are not always communicated effectively to the public. This is what FameLab strives to address.

Through FameLab, diverse young scientists have been provided with the opportunity to improve their communications skills or discover their talent for communicating science, and engage with public audiences on varied science topics.

The format of the FameLab competition requires participants to present a scientific topic or concept to a panel of expert judges in a time of no more than three minutes. Talks are judged on content, clarity and charisma. The challenge is that talks should be accurate and informative but also entertaining and original, all while making sure the public audience understands.

FameLab is an international competition and training programme designed to inspire, motivate and develop young scientists and engineers to actively engage with the public.

FameLab in South Africa is made possible by a partnership between the British Council, the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement and Jive Media Africa.

**Nozipho's profile link below**

<http://www2.saasta.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Nozipho-Gumbi.pdf>

**Nozipho's semi-finals YouTube video below**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBSZgjUGYWY>

**/END**