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EPWP HAS CREATED OVER 400 000 EPWP WORK OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE DURING 2021/22 FINANCIAL YEAR

Article by Michael Mokoena, pictures by Pelokazi Baliso and Sobatini Mahlasela

As South Africa commemorates Youth Month, the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) is contributing to the socio-economic upliftment of poor communities. The Programme remains steadfast in creating economic opportunities for poor and unemployed people including drawing a significant number of young people into the Programme through the provision of work and training opportunities.

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) recently announced that the EPWP has created 1 016 646 work opportunities in 2021/22 financial year, of which 415 897 were work opportunities for the youth i.e. 18 - 35 years old.

This number constitutes 40.91 percent of the overall total of 1 016 646 work opportunities that were created across all four sectors of the EPWP, namely: Infrastructure, Social, Environment & Culture, and Non-State Sectors. Work and training opportunities for young people were created through a range of EPWP interventions such as the National Youth Service (NYS) Programme, EPWP Artisan Development Programme and Vukuphile Contractor Development Programme.

Currently, a total of 367 young people across the country are participating in the EPWP Artisan Development Programme which is funded by the Department of Higher Education and Training through its National Skills Fund. The DPWI contracted Agricultural Sector Education and Training Authority to implement this training.

The NYS is a sub-programme of the EPWP Infrastructure Sector and has created 9,195 work opportunities for young people during the 2021/22 financial year. NYS learners acquire theoretical learning and are placed at various construction sites throughout the country for experiential training in various artisan trades. The NYS initiative is focused on providing young people (EPWP learners) with skills programme training such as plumbing, painting, paving, welding, and general civil work.

The programme also enhances an understanding and aspirations of working in the built environment. The NYS Programme is implemented through partnerships that include: the DPWI, Provincial Departments of Public Works, National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA), and various private sector companies in the Built Environment Industry.

The Deputy Director General (DDG) of the EPWP Branch in DPWI, Ms. Carmen-Joy Abrahams, in her youth month message, called on municipalities and departments to further expand EPWP sub-programmes that are attractive for the youth, given the high unemployment rate faced by the most vulnerable groups of the society, especially the youth. She indicated that there is a need to apply innovation and strengthen dialogues with the aim of sharing best practice on youth programmes."

This year's Youth Day and Month is celebrated under the theme "Promoting sustainable livelihood and resilience of young people for a better tomorrow".

Participants' Testimonials

Ms. Mapule Mocwaledi is one of the young people who is currently participating and benefiting from the EPWP. She is part of the 367 young people who are being trained as artisans through the Artisan Development Programme. Ms. Mocwaledi is also one of the 10 learners currently placed at the TVA Training Centre in Middleburg where she is being trained in Diesel Mechanic at SG Coal.

She has commended the Artisan Development programme for giving her skills that she can use to provide for herself and her siblings. "Life has been hard for us at home since the passing of our parents. The EPWP has been my lifeline as I am able to use the wages I am receiving from the Programme to put food on the table at home. The Diesel Mechanic skills I am acquiring from this training have given me an opportunity to also open a small business for myself...I am able to earn an additional income by fixing people's cars in my community," Mocwaledi said.

Another participant, Ms. Persia Maphake who is placed at an Artisan Development College in Johannesburg is training as a Lift Mechanic Apprentice. She said that the Artisan Development Programme has not only given her the ability to learn and earn an income but has also given her confidence as a young woman studying one of the rare trades. "It is a wonderful feeling to wake up every morning and come to the centre to learn. I feel part of a society...the EPWP has given me confidence," she added.

DPWI AND ILO HOST IMPROVE YOUR BUSINESS (IYB) WORKSHOP FOR EPWP EMERGING CONTRACTORS

Article and picture by Maanea Maselesele and Lerato Mpiwa

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) in partnership with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) have recently hosted a business training workshop for emerging business contractors who are participating in the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) in Limpopo.

The five-day Improve Your Business (IYB) training workshop was held at Forever Resort in Warmbath and was officiated by DPWI's EPWP Enterprise Development Unit (ED) in the province. According to EPWP Training Manager in Limpopo, Ms. Victoria Mphahlele, some of those who were being trained included contractors in the EPWP's Vuk'uphile Programme.

"The objective of the training was to increase the viability of small-scale enterprises through the application of sound management principles that lead to the creation of employment. This kind of training is provided to the emerging contractors within the province," Mphahlele said.

More than 25 emerging contractors from Waterberg and Sekhukhune District attended this training. The training included the following modules: Marketing, Buying & Stock control, Costing, Records keeping, Business planning and People and productivity

Some of the training facilitators who made presentations at the workshop included the Deputy Director: EPWP Vuk'uphile, Mr. Osborne

Neluvhalani, the Deputy Director of EPWP Enterprise Development, Ms. Yvonne Yuda and the Deputy Director: EPWP Vukuphile, Mr Muzwandile Thwala.

The Provincial Manager from Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) Mr. Eddie Mabelebele presented CIDB contractor registration regulations while Ms. Karabo Sebola from the South African Revenue Service (SARS) made a presentation on Tax Payer Education.

The EPWP Senior Manager in Limpopo, Ms. Phethani Muvhali thanked the trainees for attending the workshop. "For you as business people to take time off and attend the workshop, to be equipped with new business skills is important, these skills will assist you to grow your businesses."

The workshop was also attended by the Director for ILO, Dr. Joni Musabayana who encouraged the attendees to use the information gained from the IYB workshop to improve their businesses.

The IYB programme is a management-training programme developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) with the focus on starting and improving small businesses as a strategy of creating more or better employment for women and men, particularly in emerging economies.



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