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EPWP AND WCED EQUIP 60 SCHOOL GARDENERS WITH PRACTICAL GARDENING AND FINANCIAL LITERACY SKILLS

Article and pictures by Tinyiko Mdluli



The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Social Sector, in partnership with the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), conducted theoretical and practical gardening training for 60 school gardeners at Atlantis School of Skills in the Western Cape from 27 to 29 October 2026. The gardeners are appointed for a 12-month period, from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027, to establish and maintain productive food gardens at schools across the province.

The training covered essential gardening skills, including soil preparation, the use of gardening tools and equipment, bed preparation, propagation, planting, watering, pest monitoring, weeding and harvesting. Participants also engaged in practical gardening activities, allowing them to apply their newly acquired knowledge and skills.

In addition to gardening, the EPWP Social Sector Training Unit facilitated a financial literacy session focusing on financial protection. The session aimed to equip participants with knowledge of the importance of protecting their finances, as well as budgeting, financial planning and responsible money management.





Speaking during the training, Mr Simnikiwe Delento from the Department of Education (DOE) acknowledged and appreciated the gardeners' contribution to feeding schoolchildren. He encouraged participants to extend their gardening skills beyond the workplace by establishing food gardens in their own homes.

Ms Sanny Maluleka, EPWP Social Sector Manager, encouraged the gardeners to recognise the broader impact of their work, highlighting how gardening can contribute to personal development and community upliftment. “From Gardener to Game Changers! You are not just growing plants; you are growing skills, confidence, opportunities and hope for a better future,” said Maluleka.

The School Gardeners Project plays an important role in promoting job creation, skills development, local food production and food security within school communities. The gardens provide fresh vegetables that supplement school meals, contributing to a greater variety of nutritious food provided through the National School Nutrition Programme

Participants expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to attend the training, noting that the knowledge and practical skills gained would benefit their work, schools, families and the communities they serve.

At the conclusion of the training, participants received certificates of attendance in garden maintenance, four packets of different vegetable seeds and additional knowledge to support the continued maintenance and productivity of food gardens at their respective schools. Through this partnership, the EPWP Social Sector and WCED continue to demonstrate the value of employment opportunities and practical skills development in strengthening school food gardens and promoting sustainable food security across the Western Cape.



