EPWP BULLETIN

VOLUME 2. ISSUE 67 19 November 2026



MPUMALANGA CELEBRATES 250 EPWP NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE GRADUATES

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The Mpumalanga Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport successfully hosted a three-day graduation programme from 28 to 30 October 2026, celebrating 250 young people who completed the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) National Youth Service (NYS).

The graduates completed an 18-month Building and Civil Construction Learnership (NQF Level 3), which provided both theoretical and practical training in bricklaying, plumbing, electrical work, carpentry, glazing, tiling and painting. Of the 250 graduates, 143 were from the Ehlanzeni and Bohlabela districts, 52 from the Gert Sibande District and 55 from the Nkangala District.

The programme was implemented through a partnership between the National Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (NDPWI), the Department of Employment and Labour, the Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA) and the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), reflecting government's commitment to empowering young people through skills development and work opportunities.

Addressing the graduates during the closing ceremony, Mr Isaac Mothapo, EPWP Programme Manager at the Mbombela Regional Office, encouraged participants to use the knowledge and experience gained through the programme to improve their lives and contribute to the development of their communities. "The skills and experience you have acquired through this programme should serve as a solid foundation for your future. Use these skills to create opportunities for yourselves and contribute meaningfully to society."

Mr Mothapo also shared the success story of a former EPWP participant who achieved financial independence after completing the programme, highlighting the positive impact of the initiative.

Representing the Department of Employment and Labour, Ms Rosina Masilo, Deputy Director: Public Employment Services, emphasised the importance of partnerships in advancing skills development and employment opportunities for young people. "Strong partnerships remain critical in empowering young people and creating pathways to meaningful economic participation."

A highlight of the graduation ceremony was the testimony shared by EPWP NYS graduate Ms Nompumelelo Jiyane, who completed the Building and Civil Construction Learnership despite already being qualified as a Foundation Phase teacher. "This programme has equipped me with valuable practical skills and expanded my career possibilities. I encourage other young people to take advantage of opportunities that promote personal growth and skills development."

The graduation programme concluded with a vote of thanks to all stakeholders, implementing partners, government officials and graduates whose contributions ensured the success of the initiative. Graduates were encouraged to utilise their newly acquired skills to create opportunities, uplift their communities and contribute to South Africa's socio-economic development.

The successful graduation of 250 young people marks another important milestone in the implementation of the EPWP National Youth Service Programme and demonstrates government's continued commitment to equipping young people with skills for sustainable livelihoods and economic participation





