

New lease on life

Gugulethu Mpama is a 22-year-old Orange Farm resident. He knows all too well what it feels like to be unemployed. Though he's still young, Mpama says sitting at home for a year doing nothing was depressing. He matriculated in 2008, but spent the whole of 2009 at home because he did not have money to further his studies.

Times were tough just sitting at home, which he shares with his unemployed father. He promised himself that he would find a job so that he could support his household. "I was doing nothing at home. We would just pass time with friends and kept on wishing for good things to happen."

Mpama was fortunate enough to join the Expanded Public Works Programmes' (EPWP) Intsika Skills Project, where people are taught skills such as jewellery making. "I joined the project in 2010 and haven't looked back since. I'm determined to make a success of this opportunity that I've been given."

As breadwinner, he says he has realised that drinking away his stipend will not put food on his household's table. "I use the stipend money to buy food for the house, rather than spending it on useless things."

He adds that he saved money to buy clothes for himself, using the rest for transport cost, so that he can continue with the project. His future looks bright, as he intends to pursue a career as a goldsmith after finishing his time at the project. He says the jewellery industry is very profitable if you're committed to work hard, and that one of the good days he will succeed.

"I'm grateful for the opportunity provided by EPWP to be involved in this project. The project's stipend has been helpful, as without it most of us would be stuck at home. I've gained a lot of skills and now I can make a success of my life one day."