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South Africa can exceed its target of 6 million work opportunities by 2019 - Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa

By Michael Mokoena



Working together, South Africans can exceed the target of creating 6 million work opportunities by 2019 through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Phase 3, Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa said.

Speaking at the inaugural meeting of the government's Public Employment Programme Inter ministerial Committee (PEP-IMC) held on 22 July 2015 at Orange Farm Skills Centre in Orange Farm, Deputy President Ramaphosa stated that the government "has decided that in this administration we are going to make 6 million of these job opportunities available"

"Already, the number of job opportunities we have created is leading us to the 6 million target. I am confident that we will reach – and even exceed – our target because the experience we have gathered over the past five years has been huge and meaningful," Deputy President Ramaphosa said.

The first year of EPWP Phase 3 (between April 2014 and March 2015) created a total of 1 103 983 work opportunities.

Deputy President Ramaphosa told the media and key government leaders that EPWP was one of the many government initiatives aimed at moving South Africans out of poverty and unemployment towards prosperity.

"Many people (EPWP participants) see EPWP work opportunity not only as a source of income, but as an opportunity to gain experience

(and) the know-how of the world of work. The EPWP participants we spoke to earlier when we toured the centre attest to the fact that they are gaining quite a lot of experience that will stand them in good stead when they finally get permanent employment elsewhere," Deputy President Ramaphosa told the media.

Earlier in the day, Deputy President Ramaphosa together with his team of ministers including Minister and Deputy Minister of Public Works Mr T.W. Nxesi and Mr Jeremy Cronin respectively, the Minister of Public Small Business Development Ms Lindiwe Zulu, the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Mr Pravin Gordhan, the Premier of Gauteng Province Mr David Makhura and other key government leaders toured the centre and interacted with EPWP participants on site.

"Today is a wonderful day not only for us as the EPWP Participants placed at the centre, but for the community of Orange Farm. Hosting Deputy President Ramaphosa and his team of Ministers, Deputy Ministers and the Premier shows that the government is serious about creating work for us all. We are thankful," some of the participants said.

Deputy President Ramaphosa interacted with the participants at the centre's food garden, clothing bank, and at the computer skills centre.

"The work that we are doing through EPWP at the centre benefits the community of Orange Farm. We are teaching the youth and the school children basic computer skills, our food garden is producing food for our community, we also have a clothing bank service that assist the distressed households in the area," Thabo Mokoena said.

Mokoena is an EPWP participant who is managing the centre.

Deputy President Ramaphosa pointed out that the work opportunities have given EPWP participants dignity as they earned monthly stipend from the community developmental work they were doing.

"These opportunities come with training and skills development that stand participants in good stead beyond the life of the particular programmes on which they work," the Deputy President added.

After the tour of the centre and the media briefing, senior Public Works officials briefed Deputy President Ramaphosa and his colleagues on the progress of the EPWP Phase 3 as well as on plans for the years ahead.

One of the key resolutions taken at the PEP-IMC meeting was to have the PEP-IMC to meet three times a year in order to closely monitor the progress in the implementation and achievement of EPWP targets.

EPWP celebrates Mandela Month

By Michael Mokoena



The Seshupo Primary School in Mahikeng was a hive of activity on 30 July 2015 as the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) staff members celebrated the end of the Nelson Mandela Month with the children and educators at the school.

For the entire day the premises of the school were turned into a bright orange colour, as EPWP staff clad in their orange colours honoured uTata Madiba's legacy by working in the school's food garden, painting the school building and preparing nutritious meal for the children at the school.

The EPWP staff members from head office and the regional office in Mmabatho were led by EPWP Deputy Director General (DDG) Mr Stanley Henderson.

"The children are happy that you are all here. In fact our community is humbled and honoured that you travelled all the way from Pretoria and from other parts of South Africa to bring us joy. Thank you for what you have done today. I'm sure that uTata Mandela is happy with what you have done here today," the principal of the school Mr Hendrik Kgobokoe said.

Kgobokoe was so emotional that tears of joy rolled down his cheeks as he spoke.

"No one has ever done such a wonderful thing for us. We thought that we had been forgotten. The presence of EPWP staff members here today has brought hope back into our lives. You have all showed us that we are alive and that the Government loves us too," he added.

Earlier Mr Henderson and the principal had planted a tree at the school as a token of remembrance.

"Ntate H (Mr Henderson) we want you to know that we are going to look after this tree. When you and your staff members come back to our school in the next few years, this tree would have grown and providing shelter to our children," Kgobokoe said.

Mr Henderson thanked the school and the EPWP staff for being part of the event to celebrate the life of former President Nelson Mandela at the school.

"The importance of this event is to honour our father – the father of the nation uTata Mandela by paying through sweat equity to improve the lives of our communities. It was great to see all of us working together in the food garden, painting the school building and cleaning the premises of the school," he said.

Mr Henderson said that Government would continue to use programmes such as EPWP to honour the life and legacy of uTata Madiba.

"We will continue to use EPWP to provide work and training opportunities for our unemployed people. Using programmes such as the school nutrition programmes to provide daily nutritious meals to our children in schools, we are contributing to both work opportunity creation and to the development of our communities. These are things that the great man – uTata Mandela has taught us," he added.

The Nelson Mandela Month is commemorated as a result of the United Nation (UN) General Assembly, which in November 2009 declared 18 July "Nelson Mandela International Day" in recognition of the former South African President's contribution to the culture of peace and freedom.

Former President Mandela was born on 18 July 1918 and passed away on 05 December 2013.

South Africa however, celebrates Nelson Mandela's life for the whole of July. This gives everyone the opportunity to heed the call to action for people to recognise their individual power to make an imprint and change the world around them.

As each person acts, they fuel momentum toward global positive change, raising awareness and expanding the reach of Mr Mandela's values – fighting injustice, helping people in need and practicing reconciliation.

Meanwhile there was also a handover of certificates to the North West Food Security and Empowerment Cooperative Ltd, a food security cooperative that is operating in the area of Mahikeng.

EPWP provided finance training to members of the cooperative.

EPWP contribute to food security and employment creation in the North West Province

By Michael Mokoena



A mass vegetable production project that is receiving assistance from the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) is fighting hunger and joblessness in the North West Province.

“We believe that no one must go to bed with a hungry tummy. That is why we are working harder every day to assist poor families, orphanages, clinics, schools and other Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) with food parcels and helping them to set up their own sustainable food gardens. We believe that if each poor household and the aforementioned institutions have food gardens, no one will go to bed hungry in the Province,” said Mr Oupa Ishmael Mbele, a founder and chairman of the North West Food Security and Empowerment Cooperative Ltd.

The project, which started in 2013, is currently operating on a farm in the Ramatlabama village in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality. The project is producing a variety of vegetables for the Province’s food security purposes. The vegetables produced by the 18 community members who work on the land include spinach, cabbage, onion, carrots, beetroot, pumpkin and potatoes. During summer the project also plant lettuce, watermelon and green beans.

The project uses the organic way of production.

“We do not use fertilisers and pesticides. Instead we do the original soil and we also do crop rotation. So our produce are 100 percent organic. This not only locks in all the nutrients in the food itself but it also ensures that the food has a longer shelf life,” Mbele explained.

The North West Food Security and Empowerment Cooperation is one of the many successful EPWP Social Sector projects implemented nationwide. Its main aim is to address the issue of food security and create work opportunities for the people of North West Province.

Mr Mbele explained that they produced for both commercial and community consumption.

“We do not only sell our produce to the market for profit, but we also donate the food to the poor and vulnerable people and to institutions that care for children in the area,” he said.

Mr Mbele pointed out that currently, the project was selling its produce to businesses such as Spur Restaurant in Mahikeng, Pick n Pay store in Mahikeng, Boxer Superstore as well as to the hawkers in Mahikeng and Zeerust.

“Any surplus is then donated to charity for public good,” he added. EPWP element in the project

“We have received a lot of assistance from EPWP including the monthly stipend and the training that the institution has given us since last year. The type of training include tender processes, pricing strategies and bookkeeping. The EPWP training that we have received has assisted us a lot in moving our project forward. We will forever remain appreciative of what EPWP has done for our project,” Mr Mbele said.

He added that their EPWP training they have received will assist the cooperation on its vision to become a fully-fledged agriculture production company.

“We do not want to receive stipends forever that is why we are already working on our exit strategy from EPWP. We are using the EPWP training to create a fully-fledged and sustainable business. We want to give other people an opportunity to receive the assistance that we have received from EPWP,” he added.

Organisational background

The project started in 2013 when a group of young men and women were given agricultural land by the Province’s Department of Agriculture.

“When we started the project we were 18 and as time went on, others left the programme to seek greener pastures. By the time we registered a cooperative in 2014 we were 13, and at this point (July 2015) only 10 of us are left in the project,” Mr Mbele said.

The project is shining example of the good that can be achieved when various Government Departments and the community work together to tackle social issues.

“The Agricultural Department assisted us with the land, the National Department of Public Works through EPWP is providing us with monthly stipend and financial training while the Provincial Department of Health has also ensured that we have first aid kits,” Mbele stated.

He added that they also assisted a local clinic with a food garden. “The food that is produced by clinic’s food garden benefit the patients who most of them have chronic illnesses and need nutritious food,” Mr Mbele explained that once they were given the land, they



contributed R10 each to buy a tin of spinach to plant. “We started the project with R198 but today we are an organisation that is making a monthly profit of thousands of rands. I’m happy that the Government did not give us everything that we required at the time to get the project running. We had to sweat to put the project where it is today,” he smiled.

The project is using borehole pump to water the food it produces. “We have also constructed net tunnels for some of the vegetables to ensure that we don’t use too much water when watering. The net tunnels also provide shelter to the plants to ensure that the soil does not get dry quickly,” he added.

is alive with possibilities,” he said.

Ms Alina Khalane said that she was humbled by the experience she has received working in the project.

“The project has afforded me an opportunity not to only learn about food production but also to contribute in the improvement of the lives of the vulnerable and needy in our neighbourhood. We are also able to provide our local centre for people with disabilities. Being part of this project has been life changing,” Ms Khalane said.

She pointed out that at a personal level, “working in this garden has brought joy in my life”.



“There’s something joyful and fulfilling about working in a vegetable garden. Working in an office would give me lots of stress but working out here (she points around the garden) feels my heart with joy,” she stated.

She added that the monthly stipend has given her dignity in her community.

“With the stipend I receive I am able to provide for my family which include sending my children to school, I have also managed to save a bit of money for myself to survive the rainy days. The stipend has also equipped me with financial management skills,” Ms Khalane added.

Another EPWP participant Pule Tlahale thanked EPWP for assisting the project.

EPWP Participants

For Mr Mbele, the project has brought hope and dignity in his life. “I understand that there are problems of jobs in South Africa, but as young people we cannot fold our arms and wait for government to create jobs. We must do something for ourselves because South Africa

“I’m today able to look after my family and to contribute something when we are having family gatherings at home by using part of the stipend. EPWP has changed my life for the better,” he added.



EPWP plays a role in the empowerment of the youth of Western Cape

By Michael Mokoena



The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) is playing a vital role in the assistance and empowerment of vulnerable youth in the Western Cape. By partnering with institutions such as Chrysalis Academy in Tokai, the EPWP participants placed at the Academy are contributing to the betterment of the lives of vulnerable youth in the Province.

Chrysalis Academy is a social crime prevention and youth development organization that provides holistic development, support and empowerment of vulnerable youths in the Western Cape. Its mission is "To unleash the potential of youth through mental, physical, emotional and spiritual empowerment, enabling them to become positive role models and productive citizens of South Africa" The academy uses a regimented and structured approach based on discipline, order and predictability to achieve its objectives. The Academy's services are targeted at youth in the age group 18 to 25.

Chrysalis Academy is currently home to 180 students who are receiving life coaching and skills training (such as Fire Fighting; Public Safety; Basic Cookery; Child & Youth Care; Office Administration and Sports Coaching) from the Academy. These youth come from various parts of Western Cape including Winelands, Overberg, West Coast, Central Karoo and Eden districts.

The Academy has been a consistent EPWP placement institution since 2013 and currently hosts 9 of its own graduates, who are now EPWP interns placed within various components. These EPWP interns are being exposed to various aspects of the work environment at Chrysalis Academy, whilst gaining substantial experience in Office Administration, Asset Management, Procurement, Logistics, Facilities Maintenance, and Psychosocial Development & Mentoring.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Chrysalis Academy, Ms Lucille Meyer, explained that the Academy has three educational groups per year-2 male and 1 female. Since the Academy offers a regimented style programmes, the three educational groups are named ALPHA, BRAVO, and – CHARLIE. Each educational group is also assigned a number indicating the year they are formed, i.e. in 2014 the academy trained 14 ALPHA, 14 BRAVO and 14 CHARLIE

"Our work is to ensure that we provide hope and empower these youths so that they can build a better life for themselves and their

families. Our approach to human development is a holistic one whereby we believe that people are more than their physical bodies. We must therefore work at the spiritual, emotional, mental, physical and energetic levels in order to access the power within and release that deep-seated inner potential," Meyer said.

Meyer hailed the work done by the National Department of Public Works through EPWP, the Western Cape Provincial Government as well as all institutions and community members who contribute to the success of the academy.

"By working with all stakeholders, we are not only tackling poverty in the province by providing work and training opportunities for our youth, but we contribute in the development of all the Province's vulnerable youths," Ms Meyer added.

EPWP Participants

Ms Nonkosinathi Novukela and Ms Siphosethu Ndude are currently placed in the Academy's Community Liaison Component where they assist with data capturing, filing and archiving of student documents as well as telephonic queries pertaining to recruitment and placement of students and graduates. The two participants were placed at the Academy in 2014.

"We are happy with the work that we are doing at the Academy. We are also learning a lot in terms of office administration. We thank the Academy and the Government for this opportunity and we believe that once the project has come to an end we will be employable because of the EPWP training we are receiving" Ms Novukela and Ms Ndude said.

These two participants also assist with telephonic monitoring and tracking of graduates as well as coordinating visitations to specific placement institutions.

Mr Vuyiwe Mgijima and Mr. Ridaa Davids are placed in the Academy's Training department where they assist with issuing of toiletries to students, setting up of venues, asset management, capturing of curriculum and provide general support to the Training staff.

"The monthly stipend we are receiving from EPWP has assisted us a lot as individuals. Since we are currently not employed, we are using the stipend to look for permanent employment and to care for our loved ones. We also thank the Academy and the Government for this life changing programme," Davids said.

Another EPWP participant Mr Imran Mohedeen, is placed as an assistant to the Life Coach at the Academy and he is responsible for assisting with the logistical arrangements for student's family workshops, all therapeutic care sessions and testing events.

"Along with his passion to pursue a career in Social Work, Mohedeen actively conducts counselling interventions for students and parents and co-facilitates classes pertaining to Interpersonal relationships, communication and silence," the Academy's Community Liaison Manager Liane Langeveld explained.

Mr Damian Van der Merwe, is placed in the Academy's laundry where he assists with the sorting and washing of students' clothes.

EPWP security project contributes to a safer society

By Michael Mokoena

General criminal activities such as the theft and vandalism of municipal assets in the town of Carnarvon, in the Northern Cape is dropping as a result of the intervention of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Social Sector Security Project that is implemented by the Kareeberg Local Municipality.

The above statement has been made by community leaders in the town, Mrs Gertroedh Saal and Mr Floris Fritz.

Saal, a long standing community leader and former Member of Parliament (MP) in the town stated that the security project has contributed in the safeguarding municipal assets and ensuring that service rendering is not affected in the area.

“Before the implementation of this project, we used to experience theft of electricity cable from the municipality’s old power station. Although the power station is no longer working, it still remains a very important asset for the municipality and the community and therefore its safeguarding is very important. However since the EPWP deployed its participants to safeguard this asset, we have seen a decrease in the stripping and theft of the power station,” Saal explained.

The EPWP Social Sector Security Project that is implemented by the municipality has seen the appointment of 30 community members to guard the municipal asserts such as the power station, library, community swimming pool, community public toilets in the town and the municipality’s vehicle testing centre. Other participants also work at the municipal offices where they are responsible for access control and general security work at the municipality. This programme is one of the EPWP Community Crime Prevention Programme that is aimed at encouraging community members by employing volunteers in EPWP projects to be active in helping to identify community safety priorities for their neighbour hoods.

“The participants are also highly involved in our Community Policing Forum (CPF) and have consistently played a role in working with the police to tackle crime in the town. This project has contributed in creating a safer society for the residents of Carnarvon,” Fritz said. He (Fritz), is involved in the community’s CPF and in the local School Governing Body (SGB).

“This project has been very helpful to the police in the area too. We request EPWP to explore expanding this project to ensure that we have EPWP security personnel who work afterhours and on weekends. This will help in the total elimination of criminal activities in our town because there are still those people who commit crime at night or on weekend when these participants are not at work,” he added.

The participants work eight hours a day during weekdays.

The Municipal Manager of Kareeberg Local Municipality Mr Willem de Bruyn explained that the participants were appointed in 2014 on a 12 month contract.

“The community played a role in the appointment of the participants. As a criteria to recruit the participants, we looked at a number of things including gender, age, poverty levels and responsibility. For instance we focused at the poorest of the poor in the community who have responsibility to look after their loved ones,” De Bruyn said.

Eighteen of the 30 participants are young people while 20 of the participants are women.

De Bruyn explained that the EPWP Social Sector Security Project was being managed through the R1million incentive grant that the municipality received from the EPWP in 2014.

“We have decided to split the grant between the security project and the infrastructure project to extend the municipal offices. In fact we are pleased to state that we are getting more value from the security project because we are spending the big chunk of the money on participants and their contracts are also for a longer duration on this project,” he added.

Mr De Bruyn indicated EPWP training as an important element of the Programme.

“The issue of training cannot be further emphasised. We need to ensure that once the participants have received training and have qualified, we work on a sustainable exist strategy to ensure that they can survive post their lifespan in the project. We should look at assisting them to form cooperatives so that they can look at ways to apply for security projects in big organisations,” he said.

The Deputy Director of EPWP Social Sector in the Northern Cape Ms Winnie Swartz indicated that the participants were being paid a stipend of R100 per day – R2500 per month.

“All the participants are registered with the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF). We deduct a percentage of their monthly earnings to contribute to UIF,” she said.

Swartz also said that it was vital EPWP to partner with other Government institutions such as the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) to offer the participants various types of soft skills such as finance management.

Participants

The participants in the projects expressed their appreciation of the opportunity they have been given by EPWP to not only earn a stipend but to also contribute in the protection of the community assets.

“We are passionate about our work as security officers under EPWP. We request that Government provide us with training so that we can become qualified security guards,” Cathleen Fiona van Schalkwyke and her colleague Andries Jafhta said.

“EPWP has made my life better. I was unemployed for over three years and life was tough for me, my children and my parents. Today however my life has changed in a way that I cannot explain. It is just wonderful. I thank the Government for the hope they have brought into my life,” Yvette Pieterse said.

Another participant, Ausanna Meintjies said that the stipend she was receiving had helped her send her child to college.



Hundreds of children benefit from EPWP centre in Free State

by Michael Mokoena



Hundreds of school children in Frankfort in the Mafube Local Municipality in the Free State Province are receiving holistic care from a community centre that is supported by the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). The children, many of whom come from poor families, are being offered daily nutritious meals, assisted with their homework and also provided with psychological and physical wellbeing by being exposed to educational and recreational games at the centre.

The Ivy Cassaburi Soup Kitchen, which is supported by the Free State Social Development and the Mafube Local Municipality, has been running this EPWP Social Sector project since 2014. The centre is located in Namahadi Township in Frankfort.

“The children are given food after school every day of the week. After eating, those who need assistance with homework are assisted by our aftercare workers (EPWP participants). The centre also has a play area where children can interact with one another and play. The types of games they play develops their bodies, both physically and psychologically,” the centre manager Mpuse Mofokeng said.

The soup kitchen, has evolved into a centre and it services close to four hundred children every day of the week.

The Ivy Cassaburi Soup Kitchen has a total of 30 EPWP participants who do different activities.

“We have 4 aftercare practitioners, 6 gardeners, 4 cooks, 6 cleaners, 5 participants who do household profiling and one assistant officer. All of them receive monthly stipend from the project,” Mofokeng explained.

The 6 gardeners work in the centre’s food garden. “The food that we cook for the children come from the garden. We ensure that the children eat different types of food every day so they can get all the vitamins and nutrients they need for their physical and mental development,” Mofokeng added.

She explained that the aftercare participants assisted children in various subjects including English, Afrikaans and Mathematics. All participants work Mondays to Fridays and each work for eight hours a day.

“Our selection criteria for the participants included identifying and appointing people who come from very poor households. The participants who are assisting children with homework had to have either Grade 11 or Grade 12,” Mofokeng explained.

She urged EPWP to provide the participants with training. “We need training for all our participants, especially those who are assisting children with their homework,” she added.

Ms Mofokeng added that the centre operate even on school holidays. “The community development aspect of the centre and EPWP extend beyond the normal services that we offer. During school holidays children are kept busy and away from bad influence by coming to the centre to play, learn and eat,” she stated.

Participants

Sonto Gumede joined the project in 2014 as a homework assistant. “The project has been very great but we need training, especially in the care of children. We need to know how to administer first aid to children and other such important things. Such training will help us to also have more understanding on how children are and to also look for work for ourselves when the project ends,” she said.

She explained that she does not only provide homework assistance but also did a range of things at the centre including cleaning and dishing up for children.

“Passion for children is what is in common with all of us at the centre. We love children that is why we are here,” Ms Mphakiseng Mokoena said.

Ms Mokoena is another participant at the centre. “The work that we do at the centre touches the lives of all people of Frankfort. For instance during the Nelson Mandela International Day (18 July 2015), we went out as participants to visit a home for senior citizens in the area where we cleaned for them. We also participate in the cleaning of our municipality’s streets. These examples are proof that EPWP does contribute to the development of Frankfort,” she added.



EPWP to train hundreds of young artisans

by Michael Mokoena



In a commitment to develop scarce skills in South Africa, the National Department of Public Works (NDPW) through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) will train a total of 330 young people across South Africa in various artisan trades.

The four-year multimillion rand EPWP Artisan Development Programme is an initiative of the NDPW, National Department of Higher Education and Training (NDHET), the Mechanic, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (merSETA) as well as 30 private sector companies.

The Artisan Development Programme is one of the key EPWP (programmes) aimed at skilling the youth and providing them with better employment prospects.

The Minister of Public Works, TW Nxesi launched this programme in June 2015 as part of the Government's Programme to work with the youth and the private sector to move South Africa forward.

During the launch, Minister Nxesi explained that the youth of all Provinces will benefit from this programme.

"The success of our people, especially our youth, remains in the hands of public private partnerships such as this one. In fact private companies are very important in the growth of our economy and in our drive to deal with unemployment and skills development," the Minister said.

The Minister urged young people to seize opportunities that were offered by both the Government and the Private Sector.

"Every young person must take responsibility for their own development and for the path towards economic freedom. While Government and the business community can provide these opportunities, young people themselves must take the initiative to develop themselves and those around them. We urge you to play a role in building a better, stronger and united nation," he added.

Delving deeper into the EPWP Artisan Development Programme, Minister Nxesi explained that the Programme was aimed at assisting the youth to obtain Artisan qualifications.

The Programme is jointly funded by the National Department of Higher Education and Training through the National Skills Fund, and the merSETA"

He pointed out that the National Department of Public Works, through EPWP entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with the MerSETA to project manage the training and placement of the learners in the MerSETA registered companies for apprenticeship training.

"The wages (stipend) of the learners are paid by the registered employers as per the relevant Bargaining Council rates," Minister Nxesi said.

He indicated that EPWP Participants (artisan trainees) were recruited from the present and past EPWP projects such as the National Youth Service, Working on Fire, as well as from EPWP sectors including Social, Environment and Culture, and Non-state Sectors.

"Preference was given to fully qualified candidates who met the minimum entry requirements for the trades as laid out by MerSETA and its companies. Some of the requirements include Matric Certificate with Maths, English and Physical Science or N2 qualifications relevant to the trades," the Minister said.

He elaborated that the EPWP Participants will spend 3 to 4 years in the apprentice programme and that they will be exposed to both theoretical and practical training.

"On-the-job training is altered with periods of training-centre-based learning. Apprentices also receive on-going mentoring with qualified mentors and tailored development plan to ensure their success in the industry. At the end, the apprentices will undertake a Trade Test to qualify with an Artisan Certificate issued by the Quality Council for Trade and Occupations (OQCTO)," Minister Nxesi added.

He said that the 330 EPWP Participants were being trained in various artisan trades such as Autotronic, Boilermaking, Diesel Mechanic, Automotive Electrician, Fitter & Turner, Motor Mechanic, Auto Electrician, Air-conditioning and Refrigeration.

"The EPWP Artisan Development Programme is based on a partnership between public funders and entities and private companies in which everyone wins. For the youth, - they have been afforded an opportunity for lifelong learning - whilst earning a wage (stipend) - which will dramatically improve their standards of living with a qualification which will empower them to earn an income and even start their own businesses and become employers" the Minister said.

For the private companies the Minister said "the Programme has enabled the companies to upgrade their facilities so that they could meet their accreditation requirements with MerSETA"

"The Programme also helps Government to meet its demand for qualified artisans which is essential to meet the objectives of the National Development Plan. The EPWP Artisan Development Programme demonstrates once again the effectiveness of our approach that - working together we can move South Africa forward!"

Earlier during the event, Minister Nxesi led a high-powered delegation to a company called FLSmidth Buffalo in Emalahleni where some of the EPWP Participants (artisan trainees) are placed. He Nxesi congratulated all participants and all the private sector companies that are working with the Government and MerSETA to implement the R43 million EPWP Artisan Development Programme.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of MerSETA Dr Raymond Patel said that the training of artisans was vital for the development of South Africa.

"In 2014 merSETA trained 15 000 apprentices. In the same year South Africa qualified over 22 000 artisans. We are working.

FLSmidth Buffalo's General Manager Operations Mr Johan Fourie expressed confidence in the EPWP Artisan Development Programme.

The Human Resource Manager at the company Mrs Singh said that the EPWP Participants were working with her a lot.

"The two EPWP Participants were have were appointed in September 2014 and were subjected to an entrance medical to get a red ticket first before they could be part of our company.

Have also gone through induction process, issuing of basic PPE and introduction to the workforce. They've been exposed to electrical panels, wiring and building of the panels for our machines.

"They've also been exposed to operations and maintenance of the generators which are placed on site. The Participants go to Colliery Training College (CTC) here in Emalahleni. They have been through basic training from January till March where they were exposed to a range of activities such as wiring circuits, hand tools, testing circuits, switching and testing of cables motors and induction kits as basics," Singh said.

EPWP Participants (artisan trainees)

"Being part of the EPWP Artisan Development Programme has inspired hope in my family and in my community. I'm the first young woman in my community to receive EPWP training in diesel mechanic," Bridget Khoza said.

Khoza, 26, from Nkowankowa in Tzaneen in the Limpopo Province was recruited into the Programme in September 2014 and she is currently placed at a company called PM Trading Connection in Mokopane in the Limpopo Province.

Other young people who have been empowered through this programme is the 32-year-old Lerato Khasoane from Sebokeng in the Vaal in Gauteng Province.

"Today I have dignity and confidence thanks to EPWP! I am part of a developmental programme that will open the doors of success for me once I've completed. Already I'm able to look after my children with the monthly stipend I'm receiving," Khasoane said.

Khasoane, is currently placed at Genrec Engineering in Wadeville in Gauteng Province.

"We thank the Government, MerSETA and all participating companies for giving us an opportunity to live our dreams! You have all given us hope for a better future and we are grateful. We urge you to extend this hope to more young people in South Africa," Ms Portia Khoza said.

Ms Khoza, 24, from Emalahleni (Witbank) in Mpumalanga Province, is currently placed at FLSmidth Buffalo (Pty) Ltd where she is receiving training in electrical studies. She is one of the two young women placed at the company in this programme.

"As a young women, we have been afforded an opportunity to shine in a workplace that is dominated by men. In our journey in this programme, we have been exposed to more than electricity. We are receiving training in different areas such as assisting in building panels, wiring of machines, manufacturing of feeder breakers and in regular maintenance in the workplace," Khoza added.



Women united in preserving community assets

by Lesego Moretlwe



On 27 August 2015, Women's month celebration gained momentum in Kwa Zulu Natal when the Deputy Minister of Public Works, Jeremy Cronin, together with Deputy Mayor of Ethekwini Municipality Cllr Nomvuso Tshabalala visited Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme in Ward 3 Inanda-Durban which constitutes 100% women representation.

The South African government has declared the 09th August as the National women's day whereby celebrations across the country take place under the umbrella of women's month. The objective of women's month is to commemorate and acknowledge the contribution of women in the upliftment of the socio- economic conditions of the communities across the country.

This year's Women's Day celebration was hosted in Sasolburg in Free State under the theme: Women United in Moving South Africa Forward.

During his visit to the EPWP projects visits, Deputy Minister Jeremy Cronin engaged with EPWP participants on issues pertaining to the social impact of the Programme.

One of the EPWP participants, Ms Mhlongo said "I am a widow and have a responsibility as a mother to uphold the dignity of my family through provision of basic needs. Before I was given an opportunity to participate on Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme, I could not sustain my family. Thank you government for providing us with such good opportunities to sustain our families", she concluded.

Deputy Minister Jeremy Cronin emphasised the EPWP as one of government's initiatives which its mandate is to alleviate poverty through the provision of work opportunities, skills development thereby providing an income support to its participants. He acknowledged that among all EPWP sub-programmes, the Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme offers the most sustainable work opportunities which play a vital role in alleviating poverty, preserving community assets and creating social cohesion. Since the EPWP Phase 3 implementation in 2014, the yearly work

opportunities target for women is 55% and by the end of 2014/15 financial year, the EPWP surpassed the 55 % annual target and created 63 % total of work opportunities.

About 40 000 EPWP participants are employed in the Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme which is a labour intensive programme implemented by the Department of Transport in KwaZulu- Natal (KZN).

Most of the participants come from women headed households and are provided with income support thereby improving the livelihoods, contribute towards poverty alleviation and reduction of unemployment. This programme is recognized as the best practice example of an economically viable labour intensive road maintenance approach.

Amongst other, the following are the objectives of the Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme

- Target the poorest of the poor
- Promotes sustainable livelihoods
- It is a gender empowerment programme
- Promote community involvement in the selection of participants
- Community benefits
- Improved road safety
- Protection of public/ community assets
- Promotes community ownership
- 22000 km of rural road network receiving regular maintenance

The Zibambele Road Maintenance Programme contributes towards maintenance of the existing transport network in KZN with a total budget of R400 million towards infrastructure maintenance for the 2015/ 16 financial year.



Public Works Department tackles fraud and corruption

by Michael Mokoena



The National Department of Public Works (NDPW) has warned the public against fraudsters masquerading as the department officials who fleece businesses of valuable goods.

Addressing the media on 18 August 2015 at the head office of the Department in Pretoria, the department's Director General (DG) Mr Mziwonke Dlabantu warned the public about a wave of scams waged by fraudsters who use fake DPW documents to order expensive goods from unsuspecting suppliers - and then vanish without paying.

"The fraudulent campaign is being perpetrated by a syndicate of sophisticated fraudsters who place orders using fake DPW documents. The fraudulent orders are supplied by people who are unknown to the DPW, but they usually bear names of former or current employees in the Department. They also bear DPW letterheads, but have different contact details," he said.

Flanked by the department's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Mr Cox Mogoro and the Deputy Director General (DDG) for Governance Risk and Compliance Mr Intiaz Fazel, the DG explained that the fraudsters' popular modus operandi was to masquerade as DPW officials and phone the targeted enterprises, claiming that the "Department has awarded them contracts".

"Sometimes they would fax the forged DPW Order Forms to the businesses and request them to deliver the goods to certain addresses. Once the goods are delivered to the appointed addresses, the fraudsters disappear without paying."

He further stated that at times the fraudsters invited unsuspecting companies to "bid to provide equipment to DPW".

"They then request the company to provide the documents such as the Company Registration Certificates; certified Identity Documents of Directors, fingerprints of Directors, and Tax Clearance Certificate. Then the fraudsters would "award the tender to the winning" companies and instruct them to deliver the goods to a specified address before disappearing," he said.

The DG further indicated that the alleged criminals tended to target businesses that supply office items such as laptops, printers toner cartridges, television sets and cell-phones.

"They also focus on businesses that sell building equipment such as disk blades, copper pipes and cutter blades," he said.

The DG continued to say that in 2015, at least two companies lost a total of R2.3 million worth of goods when fraudsters duped them by using fake DPW documents.

"Last month a company delivered R800 000 worth of GPS devices to a fictitious DPW address and did not receive payments. The order was placed by bogus DPW officials. In 2014, a Gauteng business was scammed R183 000 worth of goods after it responded to a fake DPW website advertisement"

"In 2013 two businesses in Gauteng and Limpopo were duped more than R2.3-m worth of goods – including a R2.7-m bulldozer – that were ordered through fake DPW documents. The bulldozer was delivered to a fictitious DPW address and the fraudsters disappeared without paying for it," he added.

The DG pointed out that to date more than 20 companies have fallen prey to the scams and lost more than R26-million worth of goods.

"So far, the biggest losses have been incurred by a computer company that delivered R18millions of worth of laptops to a fictitious DPW address in Mpumalanga. It did not receive any payment for the goods," Mr Dlabantu stated.

He made it clear that "the Department will continue to fight all forms of fraud and corruption, both inside and outside the Department"

"We appeal to suppliers to be extra vigilant so that the scammers do not swindle their businesses. Our message is loud and clear - we urge any suppliers to verify order numbers or contact details with our offices before they can deliver any goods or services," the DG added.

The three officials pointed out that the department was working with the law enforcement authorities to bring the fraudsters to book.

"The Department is working very closely with the police to nab these crooks. A man is facing trial after he was arrested in connection with this fraud. We will also look at working with other government departments to ensure that we strategically and holistically deal with fraud and corruption as the government, the DG said.

Mr Mokgoro explained that the department had not been defrauded any monies as a result of the fraudulent scams. "The problem relates to our potential service providers and suppliers – they are the ones who are at risk of being defrauded by these fraudsters.

I also place it on record that none of the department's internal finance mechanisms have been placed at risk as a result of the fraudulent scams," he pointed out.



Mr Fazel pointed out that the Department had anti-corruption strategies to deal with fraud and corruption in and outside the department.

“One of the pillars of the department’s seven-year Turnaround Strategy that the Minister of Public Works, T W Nxesi launched in 2012 highlighted the eradication of fraud and corruption in and outside the department. This strategy has ensured that the fight against fraud and corruption is institutionalised in the department. We are also working closely with the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) to investigate and tackle fraud and corruption in the department,” Mr Fazel explained.



He indicated that since the department dealt with leasing contracts amounting to billions of rands, the department has started with a process to identify “all the vulnerabilities and fraud risks that could give rise to fraud and corruption” in its daily engagements with its stakeholders.

The DG indicated that the situation was not too gloomy as “not all businesses have fallen victim to the scam”.

“In fact, more than 40 businesses avoided more than R22-million worth of losses - after they approached DPW to verify the authenticity of the orders. This year alone, more than 10 businesses verified with the Department a series of suspicious orders worth more than R3.5-m. We warned the businesses to disregard the orders – and they avoided the heavy financial losses,” he said.



The DG advised service providers to only deliver goods that are destined for the department to its genuine offices.

“Suppliers should not deliver their goods on the basis of orders sent by the so-called ‘DPW officials’. We urge suppliers to be extremely vigilant. When in any doubt, they should verify all relevant details with the Department on these numbers 0800 782 542 or 0800 701701,” the DG emphasised.

He added that the department had clear procurement processes that are transparent and professional. He also advised that suppliers who are not in the database of the Department should not expect to get a tender or contract from the department.

“We only deal with suppliers on our database. The sad fact of life is that DPW cannot be held liable for any fraudulent transactions between the supplier and the perpetrator. We therefore urge suppliers to be extremely vigilant”

The department has taken its fight against fraud and corruption so serious that it has put up notices about the fraudulent scam on its website and placed notices at its buildings across South Africa.

“We will soon go on a national awareness campaign to inform and educate our people on these fraudulent scams and the impact they are having in the lives of our people,” the DG added.

Meanwhile, two alleged fraudsters were recently arrested while trying to collect a delivery of forklifts, ordered using the Department of Public Works’ (DPW) fake documents. This comes barely a week after the department launched its anti-fraud awareness campaign.



Limpopo province to create 700 000 EPWP work opportunities by 2019

by Michael Mokoena



Government's massive public employment programme is set to create a total of 700 000 work opportunities for the people of Limpopo Province, the Premier of the Province, Mr Stanley Mathabatha said.

Speaking at the Limpopo provincial launch of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Phase 3 on 1 September at the Tompi Seleke College of Agriculture in Mable Hall, Premier Mathabatha explained that the Programme is working hard towards creating the set target of work opportunities.

"The success of the first year of EPWP Phase 3 in the Province has not only given hope to hundreds of thousands of our people, but it has given the administration a clear mandate to rigorously push this Programme forward. We will continue to work with all our people, including the private sector and civil society to move our people out of poverty by creating work and training opportunities for them," he said to cheers from EPWP participants and community members who attended the event.

"Halala EPWP halala! Halala EPWP halala!" the public cheered.

Premier Mathabatha reminded members of the public that EPWP was an integral part of the National Development Plan (NDP).

"EPWP is a Programme by our people, for our people. As government, we are working together with our people to lift our communities out of poverty and joblessness towards prosperity. EPWP provides work opportunities and income support to poor and unemployed people by delivering community assets and services that are vital in the development of our communities," Mathabatha explained.

Pointing to some of the developments brought to the Province by the Government through EPWP, Mathabatha said that thousands of children were benefiting from the EPWP school nutrition programme and other early childhood development programmes. "The community development aspect of EPWP is expansive. The lives of our people are being improved daily by EPWP," Mathabatha said.

The Deputy Director General (DDG) of EPWP in the National Department of Public Works, Mr Stanley Henderson thanked the Limpopo Province for its massive contribution to EPWP.

"Halala EPWP halala! Halala EPWP halala!" Olga cheered when she started to give testimony as an EPWP participant.

"EPWP is working for my community in Legolaneng in the Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality. I'm one of the many EPWP caregivers who are caring for the sickly people in the Province. Our work contributes to the health of our people. As EPWP participants we thank the government for providing us with opportunities to contribute to the care of our people," Olga stated.

Premier Mathabatha and his team of senior government officials including the MEC of Agriculture and Rural Development Ms Joy Matshoge, MEC of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism Ms Joyce Mashamba and the mayor of Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality Ms Yvonne Mmakola signed a pledge to commit the province to work towards the achievement of EPWP Phase 3 targets.

Photo Gallery

