



public works

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Eastern Cape leads in the effective implementation of the EPWP – Deputy President Ramaphosa says

Article by Michael Mokoena

Pictures by Michael Mokoena



The Eastern Cape was one of the biggest generators of Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) work opportunities in the country during the 2016/17 financial year, Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa said earlier this month.

Speaking during the EPWP project site visit in Whittlesea in the Eastern Cape on 09 June 2017, Deputy President Ramaphosa said the province “must be commended for being a leader in the effective implementation of the EPWP.”

“We have thousands of people in the province who are participating in the EPWP. Through the Programme our people are not only gaining work experience and training but they are also contributing in the delivery of socio-economic developmental assets and services. It is also important to highlight the fact that the Eastern Cape has been able to spread the Programme to the poorest of the poor in the most rural parts of the province.” Deputy President Ramaphosa said.

During the 2016/17 financial year, the Eastern Cape created 143, 198 EPWP work opportunities.

Deputy President Ramaphosa explained that community members who are part of the EPWP were engaged in various projects in the four EPWP Sectors.

“One of the most impressive EPWP project is Nomaxabiso White Door Centre of Hope – a Non-Profit Organization (NPO) - which we have visited at the Whittlesea Police Station. This NPO is a shelter for abused women and children. The work they do includes counselling for victims of abuse, creating community awareness around the issue of abuse of women and children. In fact the work they do is at the heart of caring and empowering of the community,” Deputy President said.

He indicated that the government would work hard to ensure that the NGO is provided with proper shelter to house victims of abuse. “We will also try to resolve the challenge of transport that the NGO has raised with us,” Deputy President Ramaphosa added.

The site visit was part of the Public Employment Programme Inter-Ministerial Committee (PEP-IMC) event. The event was attended by a number of senior government leaders including Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Mr Senzeni Zokwana, Deputy Minister of Telecommunications and Postal Services Ms Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams, Deputy Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform Mr Mcebisi Skwatsha as well as Eastern Cape Premier Mr Phumulo Masualle and various MEC from the province.

Deputy President and his delegation also visited Ncedisizwe Home Based Care which deals with HIV and TB support in Whittlesea. The Deputy President and entourage interacted with participants who are doing a number of community developmental activities such, as sewing and beadwork.

Earlier the Deputy President and Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams handed over a cyber-lab at the Zamokuhle Senior Secondary School. The cyber-lab comes complete with mobile tablet devices to allow the learners at the school to participate in the government’s e-learning programme.

Look after these devices and use them to learn as much as you can about the world. You must use education to liberate and develop yourselves and your communities,” Deputy President Ramaphosa told the learners. Deputy Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams said the cyber-lab was another innovative way that government was bringing technology to rural schools.

The learners expressed excitement about the mobile tablets they had received and promised the Deputy President that they would use them to learn as much as they could.

The PEP-IMC was launched in July 2015 and its key objective is to achieve better synergy between the EPWP and the other poverty alleviation, employment, enterprise development and skills development initiatives. The IMC is chaired by the Deputy President.

EPWP participants shine at the Tourism Indaba

Article by Michael Mokoena

Pictures by Michael Mokoena



“ In addition to job creation, tourism also provides opportunities for entrepreneurship. Given the low barriers to entry, it makes it possible for new entrants particularly women and the youth to get into business, President Zuma stated. ”

The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) participants shined at the start of Africa's biggest tourism indaba which kicked off on 16 May 2017 at the Durban International Convention Centre (ICC) in KwaZulu-Natal.

The three- day event, which was opened by Honourable State President Jacob Zuma was attended by a number of high ranking government officials such as the Minister of Tourism, Ms Toko Xasa and her Deputy, Ms Ms Elizabeth Thabethe; Minister of Small Business Development Ms Lindiwe Zulu; Ministers of Tourism from various African countries; senior government leaders from KwaZulu-Natal as well as private sector stakeholders.

A number of participants from the EPWP's Working for Tourism (WfT) programmes lined up at the entrance of the venue to welcome President Zuma and all the dignitaries to the prestigious indaba. The participants came from WfT's four programmes, namely Hospitality, Chef, Coastal and the Wine Making from across KwaZulu-Natal. The WfT programmes are implemented by the Department of Tourism.

“The tourism indaba is a very important event in the Continent because it showcases what we - as Africans - can achieve when we work together through industries such as tourism. Tourism remains an important driver of economic empowerment and job creation in the Continent. Increasing the number of tourists that for instance visit our country contributes to an increased number of people who benefit from our EPWP Tourism Programmes,” the Director for WfT in the Department of Tourism, Ms Lerato Matlakala explained.

“We continue to work with various public and private stakeholders to rev-up the work opportunities we create through our programmes,” Ms Matlakala said.

She added that the type of training the Department provide to participants “is geared towards empowering participants to find permanent work once they have exited the programmes.”

Participants Testimonies

Ms Zanele Ngwazi a costal steward in the Coastal Programme said the EPWP has changed her life for the better. “The programme has not only provided me with a monthly wage, but it has also given me knowledge and skills in environmental studies. I work at the Lucien Beach in Durban (KwaZulu-Natal) and my work includes providing environmental education to tourists who visit the beach. I also clean the beach area and educate beachgoers on safety at the beach”. Ms Ngwazi works together with three of her colleagues at the beach.

Tourism Indaba

During his address at the Indaba, President Zuma said that a thriving tourism industry will create more jobs and work opportunities for young people in the country.

“In South Africa, on the African continent, and throughout the world, tourism continues to perform strongly, and the forecast for the future is also positive. South Africa experienced a 13% increase in international visitors to South Africa last year. We are happy with this growth because tourism has a substantial potential of changing people's lives for the better, especially during these depressed economic times globally”

“In addition to job creation, tourism also provides opportunities for entrepreneurship. Given the low barriers to entry, it makes it possible for new entrants particularly women and the youth to get into business,” President Zuma stated.

He added that working together as Africans with our global partners, we can open our beautiful continent to further growth in tourism.

Government plans to create over 1.4 million EPWP work opportunities in the 2017/18 financial years, says Minister of Public Works Mr Nathi Nhleko

Article by Michael Mokoena

Pictures by GCIS



Government aims to create over 1.4 million Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) work opportunities for unemployed South Africans during the 2017/18 financial year, the Minister of Public Works, Nathi Nhleko said.

Delivering the Department's 2017/18 Budget Vote in Parliament on 16 May 2017, Minister Nhleko explained that government will disburse the EPWP Integrated Grant worth R 1 billion to eligible public bodies and incentivise Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) among other implementers. "This will also allow the poorest members of society to generate income by providing services to their communities," Minister Nhleko said.

He explained that the government – through the EPWP – is implementing a special programme aimed at providing socio-economic infrastructure to rural communities. "This effort includes the implementation of Rural Bridges Programme in partnership with the Department of Defence and Military Veterans. The project is intended to provide Bailey-type bridges to the needy communities. We piloted the project in the Eastern Cape Province and delivered four (4) bridges bringing to eleven (11) bridges that were under taken during the 2016/17 financial year."

"These bridges are cost effective and highly useful in the rural areas as they connect villages and create access to amenities for socio-economic development. Bridge sites have been identified in Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the Eastern Cape for prioritisation," Minister Nhleko said.

He pointed out that on 14 May 2017, the Department officially unveiled the Cerhu River memorial stone in Bawa Village in Mquma Municipality

in the Eastern Cape in honour of ten (10) women who died when the vehicle they were travelling in was washed away trying to cross the flooded Cerhu River in 1993. "One of the survivors of the tragedy, who also assisted the police in the recovery of bodies, Mr Mhlangabezi Qutu was our special guest at the event. We applaud his bravery in the service of human kind. These bridges will also contribute to safer rural communities and ensure that the tragedy such as the one of Bawa never happens again," Minister Nhleko said.

Delivering the Department's achievements for the 2016/17 financial year, Minister Nhleko stated that the government had created 660 000 EPWP work opportunities for the financial year under review.

"Since the launch of EPWP Phase 3 in March 2014, the government has created a total of 2, 3 million EPWP work opportunities. These work and training opportunities have been created in the EPWP's four sectors, namely the Infrastructure, Social, Environment and Culture, and the Non-State," Minister Nhleko said.

Keeping in line with State President Jacob Zuma's State of the Nation Address, Minister Nhleko added that the government would also use programme such as the EPWP to drive the Government's Economic Transformation policy.

"We will continue to work harder with all sectors of our society to bring in more poor, unemployed and unskilled South Africans into the EPWP with the objective of not only providing financial support to our people, but also to provide them with skills and work experience they need to enter into formal job market," Minister Nhleko added.



Close to 1000 learner contractors to be trained through the Vukuphile Learnership Programme by the end of 2017/18 financial years, says Director of Vukuphile

Article by Michael Mokoena

Pictures by Michael Mokoena



The number of learner contractors to be trained through the Vukuphile Learnership Programme will increase from 666 to 986 during the 2017-18 financial year, the Director for Vuk'uphile Learnership Programme in the Department of Public Works, Mr Themba Mackaukau said.

Speaking to the EPWP News, Mr Mackaukau said: "The number of the learner contractors who are currently receiving training through the Programme stands at 666. By the end of this current financial year, we would have increased this number by an additional 320 learner contractors".

He pointed out that the Vuk'uphile programme contributed to the government's socio-economic transformation agenda. "Vuk'uphile Learnership Programme is one of many government programmes we are using to transform the civil construction sector. The aim of the programme is not only to capacitate emerging contractors but the programme is also about providing public assets that contribute and lead to socio-economic development in our communities," Mr Mackaukau said.

The type of public assets delivered through the Programme includes construction of VIP toilets, road paving, water reticulation, road rehabilitation and pipeline installation.

"Through the built of these public assets, the Vukuphile Programme contributes in the government's work to deliver basic services such as water and sanitation to our people. Our work in the road paving contributes to the economic development and growth of our communities and also improves our people's access to public and private amenities. The sidewalk construction work we do also contributes to safer roads for our people," Mr Mackaukau said.

Mr Mackaukau added that despite the fact that the Vuk'uphile Programme was a successful initiative contributing towards the EPWP 6 million work opportunities target by 2019, it (Vuk'uphile) experienced challenges around securing of work for contracts after completion of training.

"One of the things we are doing to resolve this challenge is to link the contractors with other training programmes to further their pricing skills as well as link contractors with bodies such as Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) and other such bodies," he added.

The Deputy Director for Vukuphile in the Department of Public Works, Mr Osborne Neluvhalani said that the Programme currently had participants in various provinces across the country.

He also congratulated the 34 learner contractors who graduated from the Programme in the 2016-17 financial year.

"In the 2016-17 financial year we graduated 24 learner contractors from the Gauteng Department of Roads and Transport as well as 10 learner contractors from Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality in the Free State.

We would like to congratulate these learner contractors and we wish them well as they go out to compete for the construction work in the formal sector," Mr Neluvhalani said.



Free State Department of Public Works and Infrastructure to create 500 National Youth Service work opportunities during the 2017-18 financial year

Article by Michael Mokoena

Pictures by Michael Mokoena



The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure in the Free State plans to create a total of 500 work opportunities through the National Youth Service (NYS) programme during the 2017-18 financial year. The Deputy Director responsible for the NYS in the department, Mr Abel Majola stated that despite the province only managing to train 46 young people in the Department's NYS Electrical Apprenticeship Programme since 2013, "we remain committed in accelerate the numbers of work opportunities we created through the programme."

"As it is now we are already talking about over 200 work opportunities which we will create through the NYS programmes that we have already identified for implementation in the current financial year," Mr Majola explained.

NYS Electrical Apprentice Programme

Elaborating on the Department's NYS Electrical Apprentice Programme, Mr Majola explained that they have been working with the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality – through the municipality's power utility Centlec – to train the NYS participants.

"When we started with the programme in 2013, we divided the participants into a three groups and sent them to Centlec Training and Development Centre at different intervals for training. That is why some of the participants have already graduated from the programme," Mr Majola said.

He explained that the Department worked with various community structures in all the districts in the Province and also used the local media to recruit participants into the programme.

"The participants are paid a monthly wage of R2 200 and work from Monday to Friday from 08:00am to 16:00pm," Mr Majola said.

He explained that the electrical apprentice course was accredited by the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LgSETA) and is also recognised by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). "The participants graduate with apprentice qualification: National Occupation Certificate: Electricity," Mr Majola said.

He added that the Centlec Training and Development Centre was appointed as a service provider for training of NYS Electrical Apprentices because the majority of its training material, facilities and staff are accredited by both Energy SETA and Local Government SETA.

Centlec is a power distribution utility that is wholly owned by the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality. The manager of the training centre Mr Pieter Grobbelaar explained that the NYS participants were trained for duration of three years.

"The electrical apprentice course is divided into (3) phases and runs for a period of three years, ending with learners undergoing a trade test. The participants do both theoretical and practical training. Some of the modules they do during the theoretical phase study includes wireways and wiring, fault finding, health, safety, quality and legislation," Mr Grobbelaar said.

He indicated that for practical training, participants had to do in-service training.

"Embarking on a training programme enables apprentices to develop experience on a wide range of jobs and acquire a broad understanding of Electrical Engineering activities outside their own branch. The training also offers participants an opportunity to experience the work of different sectors such as the mining and other related industries," Mr Grobbelaar stated.

Mr Grobbelaar added that the participants may only be exited from the programme once they have successfully completed their trade test.

Participants' Testimonies

For Mr Tankiso Francis Lebaka from Botshabelo, said that joining the programme was not an easy decision.

"At the time when I got accepted into the programme I had already started a new job which was paying me a monthly income of R10 000. Having to choose between a stable monthly income that supported my family and a monthly wage of R1 200 was not an easy thing. But because experience had taught me that without a formal qualification,



one can be exploited and replaced easily in the workplace, I decided to resign from my full-time job and joined this training programme,” Mr Lebaka explained.

At the time (in 2013) Mr Lebaka only had matric and was a university drop-out. “When I graduated from the programme in 2015, I managed to register my company and in 2016 my company got a sub-contracting work to install electricity at the Botshabelo Mall,” Mr Lebaka added.

The EPWP NYS Programme was launched in 2007 to train youth in artisan skills within the build environment. This skills development programme comprises of theoretical and practical training which include amongst other bricklaying, painting, plumbing and carpentry.

“The electrical apprentice course is divided into (3) phases and runs for a period of three years, ending with learners undergoing a trade test. The participants do both theoretical and practical training. Some of the modules they do during the theoretical phase study includes wireways and wiring, fault finding, health, safety, quality and legislation,” Mr Grobbelaar said.



Gauteng province plans to create over 600 000 EPWP work opportunities by 2019

Article by Michael Mokoena
Pictures by Emmanuel Jiyane



The Gauteng province plans to create over 600 000 Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) work opportunities by March 2019, the Gauteng MEC for Department of Infrastructure Development (DID), Mr Jacob Mamabolo said on 11 May 2017.

Speaking at the provincial government's first EPWP Summit held at Saint George's Hotel and Conference Centre in Irene, outside Pretoria, MEC Mamabolo tasked the delegates to re-engineer the way the Province was driving the EPWP.

"We have under-performed in terms of the creation of the EPWP work opportunities in the province. It is therefore vital for the summit to come up with a turnaround strategy to increase the number of people who participate in the Programme. This summit must come up with a turnaround plan to create over 600 000 work opportunities for the poor by March 2019. In fact the 600 000 work opportunities target will be rolled out as a project in the Department," MEC Mamabolo said.

The province has created 569 900 EPWP work opportunities since 2014.

MEC Mamabolo, who was accompanied by the Province's MEC for Education, Mr Panyaza Lesufi, explained that the EPWP remained the hope for the poor and that "we must dare not fail them".

"There are many families in the Province who go to bed on empty stomach - picture how these poor family live. These families have placed their hopes of a better life on our programmes such as the EPWP. This summit must therefore come up with ways to increase the uptake of more than 600 000 poor people into the programme by March 2019," the MEC said.

Providing contexts to the under-performance of the province in the EPWP implementation since 2015, MEC Mamabolo pointed out that challenges such as the under-reporting of work opportunities by public bodies was a worrying factor for the performance of the Programme.

"We have also paid attention to strengthening the capacity of our EPWP office in the Department by appointing managers who will efficiently manage the Programme," MEC Mamabolo said.

He added that as part of turning around the Department's implementation of the EPWP, the department plans to train EPWP

participants before they (participants) are deployed to various public bodies to execute their duties.

"We will look at ways to work more closely with the Gauteng Department of Education, various Technical Vocational Training (TVET) Colleges and Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) to train participants before they are deployed to do their work," MEC Mamabolo added.

MEC Lesufi said his department remained committed to creating EPWP work and training opportunities for the poorest residents of the Province.

"We have opportunities for our people to provide cleaning services at all our schools in the Province. We remain ready to appoint EPWP participants to do this function at our schools. As the Department, we have good relations with TVET and SETAs, so we remain ready to provide training to EPWP participants," he said.

The summit was attended by government officials who are responsible for the implementation of the EPWP in all spheres of government in the Province.

The official from Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) revealed that women were more likely to participate in EPWP or other government work opportunity programmes and those persons with lower levels of education were likely to participate in the EPWP and other such programmes.

The Chief Director: Monitoring and Evaluation in the Department of Public Works, Dr Eric Musekene stated that the department has created an EPWP Reporting System (EPWP RS) to ensure that checks and balances are in place to account for the work opportunities created.

EPWP Summit Resolutions

Some of the key summit resolutions are:

- The EPWP must be led by political office bearers across all municipalities and departments in the Province.
- Municipalities and Provinces must improve their communication of EPWP good stories through the media.
- The Provincial government must launch the EPWP 600 000 programme as a campaign.

EPWP addresses the skills gap

Article by Lesego Moretlwe
Pictures by Emmanuel Jiyane



In pursuit to address the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality, the Department of Public Works through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) is in partnership with different role players such as the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), various Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and private sector companies to provide training to EPWP participants. The EPWP training is aimed at not only improving personal development of participants, but is also vital in addressing the skills gap in the country.

Training offered includes Short Courses, Learnership Programmes, Skills Programmes and Artisan Development Programmes. Some of training provided under these programmes are Vuk'uphile Learnership, Artisan Development, Pharmacy Assistance and School Support initiative. In the Artisan Development Programme, the participants receive training in various artisan trades such as, Boiler making, Diesel Mechanic, Automotive, Electrician, Fitter & Turner, Motor Mechanic, Auto Electrician, Air-conditioning etc.

At the end of training, the participants receive competency certificates which reflect training provided and the number of credits awarded. This allows the participants to be able to explore different career opportunities, makes it easy for them to look for formal employment and in other instances to be able to become entrepreneurs.

"We continue to work with South Africans from all walks of life to tackle poverty, unemployment and inequality through creating work and training opportunities for the poor and unskilled South Africans. Partnership with private sector is crucial in building capacity of the young South Africans in addressing the skills gap in this country" said the Deputy Director-General for EPWP Mr Stanley Henderson.

"Since 2010 the government has provided training to a total of 24 647 EPWP participants in various training programmes such as short courses, skills programmes, learnership programmes as well as artisan development programmes," Mr Henderson said.

Breaking down the number of participants trained in each programme, Mr Henderson stated that the government has trained a total of 24 000 participants in short courses and skills programmes while 470 participants have received training through learnership programmes.

He further stated that training was vital in the career pathing of participants. "Since most EPWP projects and programmes run for a particular duration, it remains important for us to provide participants with training that can lead to sustainable livelihoods – we want to see our participants leave the programme with skills that they can use to either find permanent employment or open up their own small businesses," he added.

The Director for EPWP Beneficiary Training, Ms Cinderella Makunike pointed out that training within the EPWP happened in all four sectors of the Programme.

"The EPWP is also working with the Financial Services Board (FSB) to provide financial literacy training to participants with the aim of encouraging participants to use their wages wisely. A total of 5 074 participants in four provinces (Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North West) accessed the financial literacy training in the 2016-17 financial year," Ms Makunike stated.

In addition to that, a total of 7 500 participants will receive financial literacy in the current financial year, training will be conducted in the Free State, KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape.

Ms Makunike indicated that the Department was also working with the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (lgSETA) to provide participants working in this sector with skills programmes that focus on scarce and critical skills. "Our target is to train 1 130 participants in six (6) provinces on various skills development programmes. The skills programmes we are talking about here include environmental practice and other such programmes," she added.



Attending a GIS course in India further capacitates me to do my work effectively, says Gitesh Brijman

Article by Michael Mokoena
Pictures by Michael Mokoena



In an effort to strengthen the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Geographical Information Systems (GIS) directorate's capacity to develop the EPWP GIS interactive dashboard, the directorate (GIS) sent Mr Gitesh Brijman – a Control GIS Technologist – to India to study a short course in Geo-Information Systems. The course, which covered advanced topics such as Advanced Spatial Analysis, Advanced GIS Network and Network Analysis in GIS, will assist Mr Brijman to play a vital role in the unit's work of developing the GIS interactive dashboard.

"The GIS interactive dashboard we are developing will integrate EPWP reporting system data, population statistics and location information. The dashboard will assist in the sustainable planning, development and implementation of EPWP projects. This will have remarkable impact on the efficiency of the EPWP programme," Mr Brijman explained.

The course duration was two months and it was offered by the Indian Institute of Remote Sensing (IIRS) in Dehradun, India. The course was fully sponsored by the Indian government. "I would like to thank the Department for approving the training. I also thank my colleagues Ms Tania Smith (Director-GIS) and Luna Koza (GISc Technologist) for carrying out my duties while I was away," he added.

The Deputy Director- General of the EPWP Branch in the Department of Public Works Mr Stanley Henderson congratulated the Mr Brijman for growing his knowledge base in his field of work. Quoting the former statesman and the world icon, Honourable Nelson Mandela, Mr Henderson encouraged all EPWP staff members to continuously nurture their knowledge and skills in the work that they do: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

Upon completion of the course, Mr Brijman received an attendance certificate in Geo-Infomatics.

"I would like to thank the Department for approving the training. I also thank my colleagues Ms Tania Smith (Director-GIS) and Luna Koza (GISc Technologist) for carrying out my duties while I was away," he added.



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