

EPWP trained over 900 emerging contractors

Article by Lesego Moretlwe
Pictures by Emmanuel Jiyane



The National Department of Public Works through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) hosted a two-day Vuk'uphile Stakeholder workshop on 23-24 August 2018 at Destiny Hotel and Conference Centre in Kempton Park, Gauteng.

Speaking during the seminar, the Deputy Minister of Public Works, Mr Jeremy Cronin emphasised the necessity of fair recruitment of participants into the EPWP and the role played by Vuk'uphile Programme in contributing significantly towards the construction industry by providing training to more than 900 emerging contractors since 2004.

"Vuk'uphile Learnership Programme is an intervention by government to ensure the transformation of the construction industry which is highly concentrated and dominated by big companies. Women and youth benefit extensively from this programme and as a result, establish their own businesses. It is therefore important for the public bodies to adhere to the recently launched EPWP Recruitment Guidelines which stand for fair, transparent and equitable recruitment of participants into the Programme" said Deputy Minister Jeremy Cronin.

The aim of the two-day workshop was to assess the progress in the implementation of the Vuk'uphile Learnership Programme since its inception, explore ways to expand the participation of various public bodies in the Programme, assess the impact of the skills development among women contractors, and find solutions to the challenges that are plaguing the Programme.



The Vuk'uphile contractors have thus far completed over 1900 infrastructure projects country wide. These projects include construction of low-volume roads, pavements/ sidewalks, school buildings, water pipelines etc. The value of assets that have been constructed through the Programme is estimated at R2.6 billion with over 63 000 number of EPWP work opportunities created through this Programme.

This developmental programme is intended to develop emerging contractors into fully-fledged contractors at National Qualification Framework (NQF) level 4. Among others, the workshop was attended by the Deputy Minister of Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) Mr Andries Nel as well as other senior government officials from all spheres of government.

Vuk'uphile Learnership Programme is located within the EPWP Infrastructure Sector and implemented by the Department of Public Works (DPW) in collaboration with a number of national and provincial government departments, municipalities, as well as State Owned Entities (SOEs). Government also works with private sector entities such as Nedbank in the implementation of this programme.



The following resolutions were adopted by all public bodies for implementation:

Financial Support

- Review Director's Agreement to include performance assessment of learners.
- Review Director's Agreement to address learners working for 2 employers, Public Body or any other employer and Learner Contracting Company
- Explore provision financial guarantees and advance payments by Public Body. Involvement of National Treasury to ensure that all policies comply with regulations of the National Treasury.

Training support

- Policies to improve Public Body Political Buy-In and Executive Management commitment to the programme.
- Explore how to deal with Non-Compliance by Public Bodies.
- Assessment of training needs per learner.

Exit support

- Establish Functionality Criteria that encourages implementation of exit strategy.
- Develop Exit Strategy to guide Public Bodies on implementation of Exit Support. Public Body Exit Strategy must be developed at conception of the programme.
- Continuous development of businesses and business owners.

Mentorship support

- SACPCMP engaged to shorten Construction Mentor Registration.
- No payments to mentors when there are no projects.
- MOA must include project list as an annexure signed off by the accounting officer.

The recruitment of community members into the EPWP must be fair and transparent, says Minister Nxesi

Article by Michael Mokoena

Pictures by Emmanuel Jiyane



The recruitment of community members into the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) must be fair, transparent, equitable and accountable, the Minister of Public Works Mr TW Nxesi said.

Launching the EPWP Recruitment Guidelines in Port Shepstone in KwaZulu-Natal on 28 June 2018, Minister Nxesi pointed out that the guidelines will go a long way in addressing fraud and corruption in the recruitment of community members into the EPWP.

“The recruitment guidelines aim to streamline and standardize the recruitment process into the EPWP. The guidelines provide a clear guide in the process that must be followed in the recruitment of our people into the Programme – the guidelines stipulates that there must be fairness, transparency, equity and accountability in the process followed to recruit community members into the EPWP,” Minister Nxesi explained.

In recent years, allegations have emerged from various parts of the country about serious challenges in the recruitment of community members into the EPWP, with some allegations of political interference, alleged selling of EPWP posts, hiring of ghost employees, payment of participants for the work not done and other such allegations.

Minister Nxesi assured the public that the EPWP Recruitment Guidelines will eliminate any opportunities of corruption and fraud in the recruitment of participants in the Programme.

The Minister also appealed to members of the public to expose those who were interfering in the recruitment of participants into the EPWP. Minister Nxesi was accompanied by Deputy Minister of Public Works, Mr Jeremy Cronin as well as senior provincial and national government leaders. Deputy Minister Cronin said challenges in the recruitment of participants into the Programme posed a reputational danger for the EPWP.

Commenting at the event, Deputy Minister Cronin reminded community members that the EPWP is a world renowned that must not be tainted by corruption in its recruitment of participants. “We therefore appeal to all implementing bodies to apply these recruitment guidelines when recruiting people into the Programme,” Deputy Minister Cronin said.

The EPWP Recruitment Guidelines were developed by the Department of Public Works (DPW) after consultation with various stakeholders and were endorsed by the Department of Labour in December 2017. EPWP Sustainable Livelihood, Convergence and Compliance Chief Directorate was at the forefront of the development of these Recruitment Guidelines.



The Department of Public Works kick-starts the EPWP Recruitment Provincial Roadshows

Article by Michael Mokoena and Faith Nonyana
Michael Mokoena and Maanea Maselesele



Subsequent to the launch of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Recruitment guidelines by Minister TW Nxesi in June 2018, the EPWP has embarked on provincial roadshows to communicate and popularize these Recruitment Guidelines. On 23 August 2018, the acting Chief Director for EPWP Sustainable, Convergence and Compliance Ms Lindiwe Nkuna presented the EPWP Recruitment Guidelines to various Mayors, Municipal Councillors and senior municipal and provincial government staff at a roadshow held in Bela Bela, Limpopo.

Ms Nkuna explained that it was vital for public bodies that are implementing the EPWP to recruit participants in a manner that is fair, transparent, ethical and accountable. "It is important to note that the EPWP is a government programme that alleviate poverty through the creation of work opportunities for the poor and the unemployed. Poverty knows no colour, gender nor political affiliation. It is therefore vital that people are recruited into the EPWP in a fair, transparent, ethical, equitable and accountable manner," Ms Nkuna stated.

The senior government officials who attended the event welcomed the EPWP Recruitment Guidelines.

"It is important that the recruitment of participants in the EPWP is fair and transparent so that all our people will have a fair chance and opportunity to participate and benefit from the Programme. In fact the EPWP Recruitment Guidelines are more like the government's Batho Pele Principle, where we are urged as officials to place our people first in the work we do, and in this instance it is about the EPWP," councilor Phahlana Masimula of ward 19 in Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality in the Sekhukhune District said.

Some of the government entities that made presentations at the meeting included the Polokwane Metropolitan Municipality, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), and Independent Development Trust (IDT).

The roadshow in Bela Bela followed a similar meeting that was led by the Deputy Director General (DDG) of the EPWP Mr Stanley Henderson in Cape Town on 22 August 2018.

During his presentation at roadshow in Cape Town, DDG Henderson emphasized the importance of building confidence in Public Employment Programmes (PEPs).

"Poor people should know that selection to participate in programmes and projects is based on a fair and transparent process. If we can do this, the PEPs will help to build social cohesion in our communities. The EPWP Recruitment Guidelines should go a long way to assist in achieving these aims," he added.

Free State and Mpumalanga Provincial governments also hosted their EPWP Recruitment Guidelines roadshows recently.

Are Semeleleng contributes in the development of Warrenton in the Northern Cape

Article by Michael Mokoena
Pictures by Michael Mokoena



A group of women who are working under the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) in Warrenton in the Northern Cape are managing their own clothing manufacturing cooperative and are contributing to the development of their small town. The cooperative, called Are Semeleleng Primary Cooperative, is providing low cost clothing to various communities in the Province.

“One of the most important achievements in our work of developing our communities is the production of school uniform for poor children at various schools in the Province through a contract that we were recently awarded by the South African Social Security Agency (Sassa),” the manager of the cooperative Ms Constance Magau said.

Although the SASSA contract that Ms Magau is referring to has ended, it (the contract) played an important role in the promotion and marketing of the cooperative to various public entities.

The cooperative is operated by a team of 12 women and it is funded by the Northern Cape Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (COGHSTA). Some of the products that

the women have produced include church uniforms for one of the local churches in the area.

“We have also in the past received a contract from the Department of Social Development to produce hats for the local young people who participated in the Youth Camp that was held recently in the province,” Ms Magau said.

She pointed out that the cooperative also sell some of its products to members of the public. “We sell our products at the local social grant pay-points as well as at our store,” Ms Magau added.

Ms Magau explained that the work they did contributed to the development of local youth. “We are developing and nurturing young women in the area by recruiting them into the cooperative. We have recruited one young woman (Ms Mapaseka Montsabatho), whom we are training in sewing and garments production,” she said.

Ms Montsabatho said she has learned a lot from the women in the cooperative. “Being part of this cooperative has taught me that the contribution of the EPWP is not only limited to the participants, but that it trickles into the lives of ordinary community members like myself.”

Stakeholders in the cooperative include the Department of Public Works (DPW); COGHSTA; SASSA; Magareng Local Municipality; National Development Agency (NDA) and the Northern Cape Small Enterprise Development Agency (Seda).

The DPW, through the EPWP Enterprise Development Unit assisted the cooperative with enterprise development skills.

The EPWP Enterprise Development Officer in the Northern Cape, Ms Nomazulu Sibanda said: “As the department we linked the cooperative with various government entities that provided them (cooperative) with a number of things such as machinery for sewing and training on the production of quality of clothing,” she said.

Ms Sibanda involved the Fibre Processing and Manufacturing Sector Education and Training Authority (FP&MSeta) to provide the women with training on the production of quality clothing.

The Northern Cape SEDA was also brought-in to assist with the development model of the cooperative. “We provided the women with training in basic business management. This training is helping them in the management of the business,” Seda’s Matsidi Malebatso said.

The NDA is also a partner in the work that the cooperative is doing. “We assisted the cooperative with new sewing machines and we also provided the women with training on the usage of these particular machines,” the NDA’s Masabata Taole said.

The Magareng Local Municipality has assisted the cooperative with premises on which the cooperative is located.

Department of Public Works improve capacity of 231 government officials in the effective implementation of the EPWP

Article by Michael Mokoena

Pictures by Emmanuel Jiyane



In a bid to improve efficiency in the implementation of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), the EPWP Chief Directorate Partnership & Support spearheaded the recent training of 231 officials from various public bodies across the country in the effective implementation of the EPWP. The officials attended the training for five (5) days at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Sunnyside in Pretoria. These officials represented various municipalities, national and provincial government departments as well as civil society. On 27 July 2018, the attendees received certificates after successfully completing a five-day EPWP Learning Programme.

The Deputy Director for EPWP Training, Mr Reuben Komana explained that the training will assist the officials to successfully implement the Programme in their respective entities. "The training that these officials have successfully completed will assist public bodies in their work of creating work opportunities for our people, as well as in the general administrative work of the EPWP," Mr Komana said.

Most of the officials who attended and successfully completed the training are working as EPWP champions, coordinators as well as data capturers in their respective entities.

Deputy Minister of Public Works commemorates the Nelson Mandela Month with learners in Mpumalanga

Article by Emmanuel Jiyane
Pictures by Emmanuel Jiyane



The Deputy Minister of Public Works, Mr Jeremy Cronin, commemorated the Nelson Mandela Month with learners of Mnyamana Primary School in KwaMhlanga Mpumalanga on Wednesday, 25 July 2018. The event was held under the 2018 Nelson Mandela theme: “Be The Legacy!” As part of his 67 minutes for Nelson Mandela, Deputy Minister Cronin handed over some of the items that the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) officials donated to the school, and these included sanitary towels for girls, food items, cosmetics as well as school uniform. He also assisted with the preparation and dish up of food for the learners. During his interaction with the learners, Deputy Minister Cronin also highlighted the importance of the Nelson Mandela Month.

“The importance of today is to spend the day with you, the children of Mnyamana Primary School, to listen to you and see how we can work with you to resolve some of the issues that you might be having here at your school and in your community and thereby contributing towards uTata Madiba’s call to “make of the world a better place.”

Deputy Minister Cronin told the learners that the Department will find ways to work with the management of the school to resolve some of the challenges raised such as blocked toilets.

In an effort to strengthen the Department’s relationship with the school, Deputy Minister Cronin planted a tree on the school premises. The principal of the school Ms Lorna Mahlangu thanked the Department for spending the Nelson Mandela Month at the school.

The event was attended by the local councillor Ms Maria Mnguni, the local Chief Mr Mahlangu as well as official from the Department’s EPWP Branch and those from the Mpumalanga provincial government.

Meanwhile, on 21 July 2018 officials in the Department of Public Works’ Gender Unit and Durban Regional Office EPWP unit spent their 67 minutes for Nelson Mandela at the Imbalenhle Primary School in Newcastle in KwaZulu-Natal. The event was led by the Chief Director: Gender, Disability and Youth Development in the Department, Reverend Naledi Stemela, who together with the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) manager in the province Mr Sduduzo Simelane handed-over 10 computers to the school.

During the event, the Department also brought in the EPWP National Youth Services (NYS) participants to paint, clean and do general maintenance at the school.

The Gender Unit also partnered with the Methodist Church of South Africa’s Natal West District Young Men’s Guild (YGM) in execution of the successful event. The church donated school uniform to the school.

Western Cape EPWP Social Sector participants receive qualifications in Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Article by Masego Maselwanyane

Pictures by Masego Maselwanyane



The Western Cape Department of Education recently held a graduation ceremony for 247 Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) participants who successfully completed a course in Early Childhood Development (ECD). While 101 of the total number of these participants graduated with a National Qualification Framework (NQF) level 5 qualification, the other 146 of them graduated with a level 4 qualification.



The ECD training was offered by the West Coast College and was accredited by the Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDPSeta).

The graduation ceremony was held in June 2018 in Malmesbury in the Western Cape. In his key note address at the ceremony, the principal of Hoerskool Swartland Mr Justus Schoonraad said children needed to be developed in every way that will help them achieve their full potential. He emphasized that ECD is a programme that need to be made available to all children and their care givers.

Mr Schoonraad indicated that studies show that the first 1000 days of the child's life are a critical window of opportunity which cannot be repeated. "What happens in this window period will influence the child for the rest of his or her life," he pointed out.

He added that world-wide, less than 2 percent of education budget is spent in early childhood development. "This means that investment is missed in the most important phase of education cycle."

The participants who received the NQF level 5 qualification were trained for a duration of 18 months while the participants who completed NQF level 4 qualification attended training for a duration of 12 months.

ECD Provides education and care to children in the temporary absence of their parents or adult caregivers. Services are holistic and include provision of child health, nutrition, education, psychosocial and other needs within the context of the family and the community. Practitioners are provided with skills to increase their capacity to generate an income hence improving care and learning environment

Dirang Batswana Greenery Project

Article by Masego Maselwanyane

Pictures by Masego Maselwanyane



Dirang Batswana Greenery Project is a community based project based in Reagile Township in Koster. Koster is a small farming area within the Kgetleng Local Municipality in Bojanala District, North West. This project was established in 2012 by six community members in response to the high unemployment rate and the excessive poverty levels within the community. The founding members of the project envisioned a fight against poverty and hunger being won while also equipping members of the project with agricultural skills.

The project is a registered Non-Profit Organization (NPO) and operates from Reagile Community Centre. The main aim of the project is to empower unemployed and unskilled people who have an interest in crop production/farming. The project also aims at ensuring food security through raising awareness and inviting community members to participate and establish backyard gardens.

The following are the objectives of this project:

- Support establishment of backyard gardens within the community
- Contribute to improved health and nutrition.
- Share skills and knowledge of farming with interested community members.
- Contribute to decreased unemployment rate in the community.

Project Activities

The project undertakes the following activities on a daily basis: Ploughing, Weed control, Planting, Cultivating, Soil preparation, Irrigation, Pest control as well as support individual households backyard gardens.

Achievements of the Project

Dirang Batswana Greenary Project has managed to achieve the following:

- An allocation of a farm comprising of eight hectares of land from Kgetleng Local Municipality
- A well maintained vegetable garden in the Reagile Community Centre with various vegetables planted and produced.
- About 63 individual households were supported in establishing backyard gardens.
- Three schools were assisted and supported in establishing their own vegetable gardens.
- Participants were offered Learnership in Agriculture and they have completed the course.
- Secured markets (local shops) for selling its products and is able to distribute excess products to local crèches- Early Childhood Development Centres (ECD Centers) and needy households.

Partnerships

The project has managed to establish partnerships with the following stakeholders: Department of Social Development, Department of Rural, Environment and Agricultural Development in North West, Bojanala District Municipality, Kgetleng Local Municipality and Local Businesses in the area.



GALLERY

