



Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure calls for clear exit strategies for EPWP participants

Article By Michael Mokoena

Pictures by Maanea Maselesele



The Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI), Honourable Bernice Swarts (MP) has called for clear exit strategies for all EPWP participants. Speaking in Parliament during the tabling of the Department's Budget Vote, Deputy Minister Swarts emphasised that participants must be given skills they can use to gain formal employment and or venture into private business. "While others will gain important skills as they earn income, others too must be able to start cooperatives and SMMEs that will be supported through our preferential procurement policies so that these enterprises can graduate to become employers, helping the state to tackle poverty and unemployment".



Deputy Minister Swarts also told Parliamentarians that the performance of the EPWP in the 2022/23 financial year provided a clear picture that the Programme was set to achieve its Phase 4 target of creating 5 million work opportunities by April 2023. "By the end of 2022/23 financial year, the government had created 990 686 EPWP work opportunities - this translates to 97% achievement against the target. With the number of work opportunities reported to date since the start of the EPWP Phase IV, the EPWP is currently on track to achieve its 5 year target of 5 million work opportunities," Deputy Minister Swarts said.

The Deputy Minister also pointed out that EPWP in the past financial year was able to contribute over R12 billion in wages to poor households and thus making the positive impact to various communities.



She commended all public bodies that provided training opportunities to participants. "The EPWP is also involved in effort to address the scarce and critical skills required by the economy through training. Some of the skills that were provided by public bodies in the past financial year were the National Certificate in Road Works construction in the Eastern Cape, National Certificate in Landscaping in Mpumalanga, Financial Literacy through the Financial Sector Conduct Authority (FSCA).



The public bodies provided 40 252 training opportunities in the four EPWP sectors," she said.

Deputy Minister Swarts highlighted the work done by DPWI in promoting the development of young people through training and capacitation. "In this regard, 8 250 work opportunities were created for youth through the National Youth Service as implemented by public bodies at different spheres of government. The Vuk'uphile Learnership Programme has provided support to 87 contractors in order to improve their capacity to implement projects through labour-intensive methods," she added.

Turning to policy matters, Deputy Minister Swarts highlighted the work done by the Department in finalising the EPWP Policy. "The Department has developed an EPWP Policy which was approved

by Cabinet in August 2022 for Gazetting and to conduct public consultations. The Department hosted the countrywide EPWP Policy Consultation Roadshows. At these Roadshows, oral submissions were solicited from various stakeholders on how to craft and refine the EPWP of the future. Since December 2022, the EPWP Branch has been working diligently to analyse the inputs received and to incorporate these inputs into the EPWP Policy which is expected to be finalised within this financial year."



Deputy Minister Swarts added that with EPWP Phase IV is coming to an end in March 2023, the Department was currently working with all stakeholders to undertake a Mid-Term Review for the Phase to take corrective actions needed for the EPWP to achieve maximum impact.

Minister and Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure visit Disa Court Building in Cape Town

Article and pictures by Kgomotso Mathuloe

Pictures by Maanea Maselesele

The Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Honourable Sihle Zikalala, MP, together with the Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Honourable Bernice Swarts MP, visited the Disa Court building which is undergoing repairs and renovations to provide conducive working environment to its client department. The building accommodates 230 South African Police Service Crime Intelligence Unit. The aim of the ministerial visit was to assess the progress made regarding these renovations and establish the targeted period of completion. The project is funded by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) Cape Town Regional office and the total cost of the project is R72 million. It is 75% toward completion and expected date for completion in October 2023.



Deputy Minister Bernice Swarts thanked the contractor for absorbing the 14 learners and reiterated that learners should effectively utilise their skills to form SMMEs and be part of the active economy.



The project has created 63 Expanded Public Works Programme - National Youth service work opportunities for the unemployed youth who are partaking in the renovations and repairs of Disa court building. Furthermore, the participants were trained in various Artisan skills such as carpentry, painting and plastering. These critical skills will increase their employability when they exit the Programme.

The contractor has employed 14 NYS participants who are still on site to ensure project completion. Addressing the NYS Participants who attended the event, Minister Zikalala congratulated the learners and encouraged them to further their studies and use the skills they acquired to become entrepreneurs.

Speaking on behalf of the EPWP National Youth Service (NYS) Participants, Mr Leelan Williams thanked the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure for bringing this project to their community. He said that the project has provided hope to the community which is affected by crime and gangsterism. Williams said participating in this project has been a life changing experience.



Government has created close to 1 million EPWP work opportunities during the 2022/23 Financial Year

Article by Michael Mokoena

Pictures by Lerato Mpiwa



As the country continues to deal with high levels of unemployment among its citizenry, the Government – in partnership with all social partners – continues to implement initiatives that create work opportunities for the poor and unemployed South Africans. Through initiatives such as the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), government created 990 686 EPWP work opportunities during the 2022/23 financial year. These work opportunities were created from a total of 13 586 EPWP projects that were implemented by various public bodies across the country.

“We are pleased that over R12 billion was paid out as wages to community members who participated in EPWP projects during this period,” the Deputy Director General of the EPWP in the Department, Ms. Carmen-Joy Abrahams said.

“Since the EPWP recruit people to do useful work in their respective communities, community members who participate in the Programme are likely to spend a substantial amount of their wages in their respective communities, which in turn contributes to the socio-economic improvement of these very communities,” Abrahams added.

She pointed out that during the said period (2022/23 financial year), the participation of women in the EPWP stood at 69% while the young people accounted for 39.95% of the overall number of work opportunities created.

Abrahams emphasised that the impact of the EPWP went beyond work opportunities created and that the Programme also contributed to the delivery of key community assets and services.

“In the said period, EPWP participants contributed in the construction of community assets such as Welisizwe Bridges, police stations, magistrate courts, and roads in various parts of the country. Some of our participants contributed to the delivery of social services such as caring for the elderly in our communities, assisting staff at various health facilities, providing nutritious meals to children in schools, and delivering similar services in their communities,” she said.

Abrahams thanked all stakeholders who are contributing to the successful implementation of the EPWP. “While DPWI is a lead coordinator and facilitator of the EPWP, the real work of creating EPWP work opportunities is driven by various public bodies such as Municipalities, National and Provincial Departments, and State-Owned Enterprises as well as civil society such as NPOs, and private sector organisations. As DPWI, we wish to thank every stakeholder for contributing to the success of the EPWP,” she said.

She also thanked EPWP participants for their selfless contribution to the Programme. “Community members who work in EPWP projects are the heart of the Programme. Because you - EPWP participants - government is able to deliver the vital assets and services that benefit our communities,” Abrahams said.

She also thanked employees in all entities that are implementing the EPWP for ensuring the success of the Programme.

Breakdown of work opportunities per province for 2022/23 financial year:

Projects implemented across all provinces	399355
Eastern Cape	107439
Free State	20991
Gauteng	80528
KwaZulu-Natal	153650
Limpopo	56583
Mpumalanga	35027
Northern Cape	17980
North West	33993
Western Cape	85140



EPWP vital in the socio-economic upliftment of young people - Deputy Minister Swarts

Article by Michael Mokoena and Tiisetso Nkome

Pictures by Khanyisa Moagi



The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) remains crucial in the socio-economic upliftment of young people, says the Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Honourable Bernice Swarts. Speaking during the DPWI Service Delivery Imbizo in Mpumalanga, Deputy Minister Swarts opined that through the EPWP, "government is able to provide short-term relief work through opportunities in a number of sectors to cushion the needy against extreme poverty."

The three-day Imbizo was part of Deputy Minister Swarts' Youth Month community engagement campaign and it was aimed at accelerating service delivery and ensuring community access to critical government services. The service delivery Imbizo kicked off in Mbombela where Deputy Minister Swarts was joined by Presidency's Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Deputy Minister, Honourable Pinky Kekana, the MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport Mandla Ndlovu, the Executive Mayor of Ehlanzeni District Municipality, Honourable Cllr Jesta Sidell as well as the Executive Mayor of City of Mbombela, Honourable Cllr: Sibongile Makushe.

During the Mbombela engagement, Deputy Minister Swarts – together with other dignitaries - took part in various service delivery activities such as planting of trees, cleaning of community spaces as well as patching of potholes.

"Through this DPWI Imbizo, we have shown that by working together as patriots, we can turn our villages and towns, our cities and rural areas into parts of a South Africa that we can be truly proud of. We applaud patriots and communities who participated in our cleaning campaign, patching of potholes, and cleaning the storm water drainage in this community. We also used the day to plant 100 trees at the Park in Stonehenge," Deputy Minister Swarts said.

The Deputy Minister also used her visit to call on communities to assist in tackling illegal dumping. "We call on all the municipalities of Mpumalanga and our country to mobilise citizens to end littering and illegal dumping. Together, we must address the dangers of plastic pollution, which is harming our river systems and coastal ecosystem. Small efforts like stopping to use plastic bags or at least re-use them will go far in reducing plastic pollution. We must also educate communities about the value of recycling plastic and other forms of litter," she urged.

Deputy Minister Swarts pointed out that planting of trees will contribute immensely in the reduction of the country's carbon footprint. "As communities and municipalities, we must play our part in reducing the carbon footprint to protect the environment





From Mbombela, Deputy Minister Swarts also visited communities in Ermelo and Emalahleni where she once more planted trees, assisted in the pothole patching and took part in cleaning of community spaces. The Deputy Minister also engaged with community members at both Ermelo and Emalahleni.

During the entire three days, Deputy Minister Swarts accompanied by senior officials from both DPWI and Mpumalanga Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport. The DPWI EPWP Branch was led by the Deputy Director General (DDG) of EPWP, Ms. Carmen-Joy Abrahams and her team of senior officials.

Deputy Minister Swarts was well received by the communities she visited in Mpumalanga.

and mitigate the threats presented by climate change. We hope that the youth, working with communities, will continue to plant trees to green our world and protect our only home, the earth," she added.

Deputy Minister Swarts encouraged communities to start recycling companies so they could benefit from the green economy.

"There is immense potential of the green economy, about how we can start sustainable enterprises by viewing waste as an economic resource. These cleaning and anti-pollution campaigns must help us in our efforts aimed at the restoration of dignity of individuals who are involved in recycling," she said.



Premier Lesufi launches a successful EPWP project in Soweto

Article by Kgomotso Mathuloe

Pictures by Khanyisa Moagi



The Premier of Gauteng, Mr Panyazi Lesufi successfully launched the Expanded Public Works Programme Bontle ke Botho project in Soweto, Gauteng in May 2023. This EPWP Environment and Culture project has created 6000 work opportunities for unemployed people in the province.

Addressing thousands of attendees at the launch of the project at Dobsonville stadium in Soweto, Gauteng, Premier Lesufi said that residents cannot live in dirty areas when many people are unemployed, he said that the project will ensure that the townships are clean. Premier Lesufi also promised to extend the contract of participants for another six month if they do their work diligently.

The Bontle ke Botho project is aimed at responding to the commitment made during the Presidential District Development Model Imbizo held in Sedibeng District Municipality in Gauteng on the 12 August 2022 where the Gauteng Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment (GDARDE) was tasked to massify the cleaning projects to address the problem of littering and illegal dumping in various areas across Gauteng. The project include planting of trees and waste recycling.



One of the 6000 participants, Ms Semakalang Ramashite said that this project has changed her life for the better, she was unemployed and the stipend she will get will help her to put the food on the table. She said that as participants of this project, they will ensure that their community is clean and also educate the community members about the importance of preventing littering.



EPWP-NYS graduates from the Eastern Cape find new home in GVK Construction

Article by Michael Mokoena and Sobatini Mahlasela

Pictures by Sobatini Mahlasela



Six young people who recently participated in the EPWP National Youth Service (NYS) programme have been absorbed by a construction company that is building the Hankey Police Station in the Eastern Cape. The six young people are part of the 138 NYS learners who were appointed in 2021 and 2022 on a 12-month contract to assist in the construction of the police station. The learners were recruited as follows:

- Group 1 - from January 2021 to December 2022 - a total of 61 learners were recruited.
- Group 2 - from January 2022 to December 2022 - a total of 23 learners were recruited.
- Group 3 - from March 2022 to April 2023 - a total of 54 learners were recruited.

The Port Elizabeth Regional Office of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) recently hosted a graduation ceremony for the learners where it was also announced that the six young people have been absorbed by GVK Construction - the construction company building the police station. The graduation ceremony was for the learners who were recruited during Phase 3.

The Eastern Cape Manager for the EPWP, Mr. Mziwabantu Ntese congratulated the learners for their appointment. "We must commend GVK Construction for appointing our learners. It is through such partnerships that we can continue to create opportunities for our youths. We also wish to commend all our graduates for participating in and completing the NYS programme...DPWI is proud of your accomplishment," Ntese said.

He pointed out that the appointment of the learners meant that the NYS was working. "The NYS - as an EPWP project - offers short-term opportunities to young people to work and gain skills in the built environment. The objective of the programme is three-fold - we hope to give you skills you can use to get a construction job. We also hope that the skills and the support you obtain from the programme can assist you to set up small businesses so you can assist in the creation of opportunities for yourself and for the people. Lastly, we hope the knowledge you gain from NYS can attract you to pursue a career in construction," Ntese explained.

The graduation ceremony was attended by senior officials from various organisations including both the DPWI, GVK, National Youth Development Agency as well as SVA International. Addressing the graduates, the Director for NYS, Ms. Lefentse Ratsela expressed discomfort about the high dropout rate of young people from the Hankey SAPS project.

"As the harvesting season started in this area, most of the learners from this project dropped out and found work in the fields as wages were better. We need to have a discussion on how we can match NYS wages to wages paid within the area where the project is," Ratsela said.





The Deputy Director for NYS at the national office, Ms. Lungile Zulu, encouraged the graduates to continuously look for opportunities on various government digital platforms such as SAYouth.mobi.

"What we are going to do as a Department, is to register you on the SAYouth.mobi portal so that you can access youth-related opportunities offered by the government as well as the private sector. The portal advertises a host of opportunities such as vacancies as well as internships. We urge you to take advantage of this portal and other digital platforms that offer opportunities to young people," Zulu stated.



The DPWI's Workshop Manager, Mr. Zuko Mashiyane urged the graduating learners to never stop learning. "By continuously learning you are shaping your skills and broadening your knowledge. One day we want to meet you in the highest offices in the land...we want to see you being managers and owners of these big construction companies. But that journey starts today... never give up! Work hard and dream big!" he said.

The NYDA was also represented at the graduation ceremony. "The NYDA offers a range of youth empowerment services such as grants to start businesses, training on entrepreneurship and training on job interviews. We also assist you to draft CVs and we also provide training on job readiness. We encourage all of you to visit the NYDA's digital platforms to see the various types of services we offer to you as young people," Ms. Nosidimo Maneli said.



She urged young people who joined the Programme to try and complete the training. "When we appoint a certain number of NYS learners on a site, the training provider charges the government for each learner. When you drop out of the Programme, the government loses money because we still have to pay the training provider for the total number of learners we had appointed...we have to pay for people who have also dropped out," Ratsela explained.



Ratsela said that when there are savings from the NYS budget, the Department had to explore the possibility of assisting committed learners to register for further studies with Tvet colleges.

The NYS Manager for the regional office, Mr. Malusi Noruwana motivated the graduates, especially those who have not yet found work. "You are all exiting the Programme today...some of you already have jobs with GVK Construction while some of you are yet to find employment. We appeal to all of you who are not yet working to remain positive...you will eventually find something. Those of you will be receiving toolboxes today, we want you to use them to create opportunities for yourselves," Noruwana said.

The DPWI Manager for the Hankey SAPS project, Ms. Nomzamo Mngqumevu provided learners with information on careers that were available within the construction and built environment. "If you decide to pursue a career within the construction and built environment you can choose from a plethora of trades such as Civil Engineering, Architecture, Quantity Surveying, and many more careers within this field. You can pursue your studies with various institutions of higher learning," she said.

The site agent for GVK Construction - Ms. Natalie Williams - congratulated the learners for completing the training. "The learners were exposed to different trades within the construction and built environment. The training entailed both theoretical and on-the-job training. We are pleased with the work they carried out while on site," Williams said.

The SVA International - the company that designed the Hankey SAPS - was represented by its architect, Ms. Greta Teltschik who also congratulated the graduates. In her speech, she praised DPWI for prioritising women in the NYS project. "It is exciting to see more young women enter the construction and built environment. I wish you all well for the future," Teltschik said.

Participants' Testimonials

Ms. Margot Peters, who was trained in bricklaying and plastering, is one of the learners who have been absorbed by GVK Construction. "I have been appointed by the company as a safety officer. What is interesting is that growing up I wanted to be a nurse and today I am responsible for the safety of the workers on site...it is very exciting!" Peters said.

Ms. Amphiwe Mgadi - who was also trained in bricklaying and plastering - explained that participating in the NYS created opportunities in the construction industry. "Before participating in this Programme, many of us knew nothing about the construction sector and the career opportunities it had. I do believe that the skills we have acquired from the NYS will assist us to find employment as we exit the Programme," she said.



City of Cape Town hosts the 3rd Annual EPWP Awards

Article by Maanea Maselesele and Lerato Mpiwa
Pictures by Lerato Mpiwa



The City of Cape Town hosted the third annual EPWP awards at the Cape Town Civic Centre on the 02 June 2023. The jovial event was opened by the Mayor of Cape Town, Cllr Geordin Hill-Lewis, who thanked DPWI for the support in implementing the EPWP in the City of Cape Town. "To our colleagues from the national office of DPWI, through EPWP it is an honor to have you here, we are grateful for your support" said Mayor Lewis on his remarks. He further added the city is honored to roll out the EPWP because it played an important part in tackling poverty and creating work opportunities for the unemployed.

The purpose of the awards was to celebrate and acknowledge the exemplary work executed by public bodies and to showcase the progress, impact and success in implementing EPWP within the City of Cape Town.



Also in attendance were officials from all spheres of the government and the EPWP participants. The winners of the City of Cape Town Awards 2022/23 are as follows:

CATEGORIES	WINNERS
1. Best EPWP Social Sector Project	Women Empowerment Programme
2. Best EPWP Infrastructure Project	Servicing and Management of Portable Flush Toilets
3. Best EPWP Environmental and Culture Project	Kader Asmal Project
4. Best EPWP Support Team	HR Training And Development
5. EPWP Project Implementation Team	City Health Epwp Unit
6. Most Innovative Project	Youth Literacy and Life Skills
7. Certified Public Employment and Skills Development Project	Chandre Rhode
8. Public Employment and Skills Development Most Improved Implementer	Youth Literacy and Life Skills
9. Public Employment and Skills Development Best Exit Strategy	Law Enforcement Auxiliary Expansion Programme
10. Public Employment and Skills Development Best Project Manager	Mfundo Tafeni
11. Public Employment and Skills Development, Benchmark Project of the Year	Kader Asmal Skills Development Programme
12. Top Achiever: Generic Management NQF 4	Jean Jephta
13. Top Achiever: Generic Management NQF 5	Natasha van Kolver
14. Highest contributor to EPWP Performance	Waste Services : EPWP unit
15. Recognition of Excellence	Michelle Kleynhans

Expanded Public Works Programme venture into performing arts

Article and pictures by Lesego Moretlwe



In an effort to contribute to the development of young people, Moses Kotane Local Municipality (MKLM) in Rustenburg, North West has through the Expanded Public Works Programme Social Sector in the province embarked on a setwork performance training for the EPWP Social Sector participants. The purpose of the training was to develop the participants' artistic skills through the educational literature drama play. The participants performed a drama play which is based on Grade 12 Setswana literature book-Ga se Lorato. The performance preview session was coordinated for government officials across different departments including the Department of Arts and Culture. During the session, the delegates made significant inputs towards the advancement of the participants' performance.

Beyond the preview sessions, the participants performed the play at different high schools within the jurisdiction of MKLM with the view of contributing to a better understanding of the literature by learners. This project was one of the innovative projects under the North West EPWP Social Sector which is led by the Department of Social Development in the province. The project was funded through the integrated funding by Moses Kotane Local Municipality.

One of the participants who benefitted from the project is Ms. Mpho Pelego, a 30 year old woman from Mabele a Pudi in Rustenburg. Pelego joined the EPWP Social Sector in MKLM in October 2022 and she is grateful for an opportunity to be in the performing arts. "I motivate the Grade 12 learners and those who have post matric qualifications to lookout for the EPWP training and work opportunities."

Another participant who is grateful for the EPWP opportunity is a 44-year-old Mr. Vusi Makgale who hails from Ledig in Rustenburg. Makgale joined the EPWP in 2022.

These two participants were both lead actors in the play and have displayed passion and enthusiasm for their work.

Mr Jonny Moloto Deputy Director; EPWP Social Sector in the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure said "The Setwork project is one of the innovative project under the North West EPWP Social Sector that is performed by mostly youth. This project is funded by Moses Kotane Local Municipality under the integrated grant. As the project is coming to an end, we wish all participants success in their artistic endeavours," Moloto concluded.

Another Delivery by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure - Expanded Public Works Programme

Article and pictures by Khanyisa Moagi

In December 2019, the extension of the existing Soshanguve Magistrate Court was officially handed over to the Contractor and the planned date for completion of the project was December 2022. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the construction experienced extensive project delays. The project is implemented through the Expanded Public Works Programme's the National Youth Service (NYS) programme.

In the first phase of the recruitment drive, a total number of 35 learners were recruited and were trained in Electrical, Civil (bricklaying and plumbing), and Mechanical Engineering (diesel and fitting and turner) and exited the learnership in August 2022.

The EPWP training unit expanded the training with the second intake of 26 learners who were trained in the Upholstery Trade. The learners obtained theoretical training for a duration of twelve months and one month in assimilation training in a workshop and three months work based training. The learners will be exiting the learnership in June 2023 after successfully being assessed and declared competent in the Upholstery Trade NQF Level 2.

Ms. Kwazikwenkosi Ndima, one of the learners who was appointed as a bricklayer, expressed the gratitude as she is also gaining experience in the plumbing trade as most of the construction is nearing completion. Ms Ndima said she is very thankful that they get to be trained in various trades which is giving them great exposure to venture into different trades after they exit the Programme.

The third intake of the learnership started in May 2022 and participants are still on site at the Soshanguve Magistrate Court, which is another world class delivery of infrastructure by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure.



KwaZulu-Natal hosts a graduation ceremony for EPWP participants who have completed training in Plant Production

Article by Maanea Maselesele and Lerato Mpiwa

Pictures by Lerato Mpiwa



The Durban Regional Office of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) in partnership with Greater Kokstad Municipality (GKM) hosted a successful graduation ceremony to award certificates to the twenty-two (22) participants who have successfully completed a National certificates in Plant Production (hydroponic) at NQF level 2. The ceremony was held recently at Kokstad Town Hall in KwaZulu-Natal.

This great initiative was an effort by government to empower youth with sustainable skills and alleviate poverty. Participants were recruited from GKM local communities and were placed under a twelve months Learnership Programme. They were provided with five months of theoretical and seven months practical skills in plant production under the appointed training provider: Nokusho M Consultancy & Trading (PTY) Ltd.



The ceremony was officiated by the Deputy Mayor Ms. Karen Walker who congratulated participants for their major milestones. "We congratulate you in making it this far, this is one of our best training programme we have ever produce in agriculture, and we hope that you use it to combat poverty and create more employment in GKM."

In his message of support, Mr. Sduduzo Simelane, the EPWP Programme Manager based in DPWI Durban Regional Office said, as part of the exit strategy EPWP Enterprise Development unit and the GKM will integrate participants with other exciting cooperatives links and provide training that will assist them to establish businesses.

Participants were receiving monthly stipends, which according to Mr Slindile Lindokuhle Melane, was very helpful to ensure that participants take care of their needs. He thanked all the role-players on behalf of his fellow colleagues (participants) "we did not join the learnership just to receive stipends, it was about learning and we truly learned! We are grateful, for the stipends assisted us to pay for our monthly expenses." said Melane. He further added that the training that they received will assist them to create and transfer skills to their communities particularly youth.



EPWP participants must use training received from Programme to set up businesses and assist in the creation of work opportunities.

Article by Michael Mokoena and Lerato Mpiwa

Pictures by Lerato Mpiwa



The EPWP participants should use the training they receive from the programme to set up businesses and contribute to the creation of opportunities for other members of the public. This was said by the Executive Mayor of Thaba Chweu Local Municipality, Councillor M.F. Nkadameng during the graduation ceremony of EPWP participants who completed training in landscaping. The 20 learners (participants) were responsible for the upkeep, beautification, and maintenance of parks and cemeteries around the Thaba Chweu Local Municipality.

"Now that you have the skills from this training, we want you to look beyond employment...we want you to see yourselves as business owners who can contribute to the creation of work for other people," Executive Mayor Nkadameng said.

She pointed out that once they have set up businesses, participants can look for cleaning projects with various state and private entities.

Turning to talk about the cleaning work performed by participants at the municipality, Mayor Nkadameng hailed participants for assisting to keep the municipality clean. She added that the work performed by participants contributed to local tourism as participants were instrumental in the cleaning, beautification, and upkeep of municipal facilities such as parks, and cemeteries.

Executive Mayor Nkadameng congratulated all participants for completing the training.

"You have all made us proud and I wish you well for the future," she added.

Earlier during the graduation, Executive Mayor Nkadameng together with the MMC for Technical and Finance Services, Councillor P. B. Lawrence, joined the learners in song and dance to celebrate the learners' academic achievement. Executive Mayor Nkadameng and MMC P.B. Lawrence also handed over certificates of competence to the graduating participants.

The graduation ceremony was attended by senior government officials from various entities such as the Nelspruit Regional Office of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI).

The Nelspruit Regional Office of DPWI was represented by the Manager for Training, Ms. Fela Mashaba, the Manager for EPWP Environmental and Culture Sector, Mr. Isaac Mothapo as well as the Assistant Director for EPWP Training, Mr. Lesley Nthangeni.

In her presentation, Ms. Mashaba thanked the municipality for partnering with the Department to implement the project. She indicated that the training was accredited by the Agriculture Sector Education and Training Authority at NQF Level 3. The participants were trained by JNV Landscaping and Training.



"During training, learners received theoretical, practical, and on-the-job training," Mashaba said.

She detailed that the Certificate in Landscaping training covered a range of modules such as:

- Mowing and dethatching of grass
- The safe way of cutting grass using different and appropriate equipment
- Pruning shrubs and trees
- Applying biological and chemical control of alien invader plants. (This training also focused on how to identify and control alien invader plants as well as how to identify indigent plants to replace invasive plants.)
- Health and safety in horticulture.



"What is great about this training is that the learners' records will be registered on the SAQA national learner database. This will enable them to progress with their studies should they wish to," Mashaba said.

Ms. Mashaba indicated that the training was funded by the Department of Higher Education and Training through the National Skills Fund. "While on training, the learners received a daily allowance of R102 to cover food and transportation - this is in addition to the monthly stipend they are receiving from the municipality," she stated.



Concluding her presentation, Mashaba echoed Executive Mayor Nkadameng's statement that the participants can use the training to start their own landscaping businesses.

The Acting Director for Corporate Affairs at the Municipality, Ms. Magagula, encouraged participants to further their studies to become experts in their field. "We wish for you to use this training as a foundation for your academic journey. It might not be easy, you need to push your way to the top. As a municipality, we congratulate you for your achievement today," Magagula said.

In his message of support, Mr. Mothapo told participants that they were now members of the EPWP family. "You are now our colleagues and we wish for you to be good ambassadors of the EPWP. DPWI is indeed proud of your academic achievement," he said.

The Managing Director for JNV Landscaping and Training, Mr. Vhutshilo Madzunya commended the learners for performing well during training.

"Through this training, we have given you a skill that you can use to provide for yourselves. As the Executive Mayor Nkadameng's pointed out - go out there and make something of yourselves. Use this training to enter the business sector and create opportunities for fellow citizens," Madzunya said.

He added that as a training provider, they remained committed to working with both DPWI and the municipality to train more EPWP learners in the future.

Participants' Testimonials

Ms. Lerato Mnisi who spoke on behalf of the learners, thanked all the role players who assisted them with both the training and the work opportunity.

"We wish to thank the municipality for providing us with an opportunity to be part of the EPWP. To both DPWI and JNV Landscaping and Training, we are thankful for the skills you have given us through this training," she stated.

She added that "the training has given us skills that we can use both in the workplace and at home. The skills we have acquired from the training will help us to make money for ourselves," she added.

Another learner - Mr. Goodman Malope - said that he has used part of the wages he received from the programme to buy landscaping equipment for himself.

"The lawn mower and pruning equipment I bought will assist me to set up a small landscaping business for myself," he said. Malope appealed to the government to continue to use the EPWP to provide hope and opportunities to many unemployed South Africans.

Members of EPWP funded cooperative work together to produce food for the community of Groot Marico in the North West

Article and Michael Mokoena and Sobatini Mahlasela

Pictures by Sobatini Mahlasela



Community members in Groot Marico in the North West have subscribed to the government's maxim of Vuk'uzenzele by working together to produce food for themselves and their communities. The 26 community members are all part of Rata Temo Agricultural Cooperative which is supported by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure through its Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

The objective of the cooperative is to club together community members who can work to produce vegetables and sell them at an affordable price to communities in the area. These community members are paid wages by the EPWP.

The manager of the cooperative, who is also a participant in the EPWP, Mr. Rapula Sekgalo provided information about the organisation: "The cooperative addresses food security by involving members of the community to access land at Groot Marico for the purposes of undertaking primary agriculture. The project identifies participants in the programme that have passion in agriculture. Our focus is on the production of vegetable and cattle fodder (Lucerne). In essence, this is a poverty alleviation project," he said.

The project currently operates from site PJ 258 Wonderfontein in Groot Marico. The project is holding a title deed of 17 hectares of land. The aim of the project is to:

- Reduce poverty and unemployment within the communities;
- Produce future commercial farmers and business owners from among the participants.

- Develop and nurture the skills of participants in the world of Business management;
- Create short to medium-term employment for the unemployed people in the community.
- Capacitate potential SMME's within the project by facilitating the transfer of sustainable, technical, managerial and financial skills through this programme.

Sekgalo explained that by participating in the cooperative, members have gained a better understanding of agricultural food production

Another participant – Ms. Kgopolang Obakeng – explained that the work she was doing in the cooperative has given her knowledge on the production of vegetables. "I have used part of my wages to buy myself seeds to produce food for myself at home," she said.

DPWI's Manager for EPWP Enterprise Development in Mafikeng Regional Office, Ms. Rhoda Moroe explained that all participants in the cooperative have been trained in the International Labour Organisation's Start Your Business. "The need for a skills programme of National Certificate in Plant Production NQF Level 2 has been identified to improve the quality of the cooperative. This qualification focuses on plant protection, plant nutrition, marketing and principles in agriculture" Moroe said. She added that some of the participants are already equipped with skills to ensure that they can either become commercial farmers, business owners in future or get employment from alternative employers.

The following are some of the highlights of the project:

- Created 25 work opportunities for members of the community
- Assisted EPWP participants to successfully register a co-operative.
- Donating fresh vegetables to needy community members.
- Providing valuable practical work experience to the project participants.
- Improved food security as the local people have access to fresh vegetables from this project.

Some of the activities carried out by participants in the projects include:

- Planting different vegetables
- Training on Agriculture (crop production)
- Selling of the produced products;
- Marketing of farm produce;
- Basic maintenance of centre fence;
- Erection of irrigation system;
- Identification of different markets;
- Harvesting of produce; and
- Land preparation/crop rotation.

DPWI hosts SIYB Training for EPWP implementing bodies

Article by Michael Mokoena and Sobatini Mahlasela

Pictures by Sobatini Mahlasela

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) recently hosted the EPWP Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) Master Trainer course for public bodies that are implementing the EPWP. The two-week training was implemented by the Department's EPWP Enterprise Development (ED) Unit and was attended by officials who are responsible for implementing the EPWP in various public bodies across the country.

According to the Director for EPWP ED, Mr. Malusi Hadebe, the course will assist the officials in the work of training EPWP participants – and those who are exiting the Programme – on entrepreneurship.

"The ultimate goal of this training is to equip EPWP officials (from implementing bodies) to provide entrepreneurship training to participants who are in the EPWP and those who are exiting the Programme. This training forms part of the EPWP exit strategy for participants – we want to exit participants into the world of business," Hadebe explained.

The training was facilitated by various DPWI officials including:

Dr. Nomazulu Sibanda
Ms. Victoria Mphahlele
Mr. Selaocwe Kabelo
Ms. Yvonne Yuda
Mr. Osborne Neluvhalani

The training entails several modules that include:

- SIYB Methodologies
- SIYB Game Module 1
- Marketing the SIYB Presentation
- SIYB Game Module 2
- Evaluating SYB Business Plan

Ms Yuda emphasised that the training will empower EPWP implementers to assist EPWP-created enterprises and EPWP participants to set up and run their businesses.

Speaking on the sideline of the training - Dr. Sibanda – pointed out that "the training assisted EPWP participants to identify business ideas, starting a business and putting systems in place to get their businesses up and running".

Dr. Sibanda expressed gratitude to all officials who attended the training. "We are excited as the Department to have officials from all spheres of government attending this training. The officials come from all sectors of the EPWP. Officials have shown keen interest in the training. They are sharing with us how they will use the training to empower EPWP participants in the projects they are implementing," Dr. Sibanda explained. The training is accredited by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).



Delegates' Testimonials

Ms. Bongeka Maphanga from Msunduzi Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal pointed out that the training will empower them as EPWP implementers to assist participants who want to venture into the business sector.

Mr. Samuel Nhlapo from DPWI's Mafikeng Regional Office - one of the attendees of the training - indicated that the training will unlock the entrepreneurial spirit of participants. "The training will assist us to change the mindset of participants. We want them to create employment for themselves and their communities instead of going out to look for work," he said.

Ms. Michelle Rix an official who advocates for EPWP implementation in the City of Cape Town said that the training will assist them to provide participants who are interested in venturing into business with the right intervention.



EPWP GALLERY

