



public works
& infrastructure

Department:
Public Works and Infrastructure
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



JUNE 2024 EDITION

President Ramaphosa officiates the 20 years Celebration of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and the launch of Phase IV

Article by: Lesego Moretlwe

Pictures by: Maanea Maselesele



President Cyril Ramaphosa officiated the 20 years celebration of EPWP and unveiled the Phase V of the Programme on 24 April 2024 at Buffalo City stadium in East London, Eastern Cape. The event was held under the theme: “EPWP– 20 years of Changing Lives and Building Better Communities”. The EPWP Phase V is set to create 5 million work opportunities by 2029.

Addressing more than 10 000 people, President Ramaphosa said the EPWP is impactful and remains a critical instrument in uplifting the broader society as it provides skills, knowledge and experience to the participants and create enabling environment for them to start their own businesses. “The EPWP is changing lives and transforming communities, and the evidence is there for all to see. “We have seen EPWP beneficiaries who are part of the provincial roads programme hard at work repairing our road infrastructure to make it safer for communities. President Ramaphosa said.

The President and the dignitaries visited the exhibition stalls where different public bodies implementing the EPWP showcased their services to the community. Working on Fire participants welcomed the President and his entourage by demonstrating their drilling capabilities and expertise as a standard practice as one of their activities.

Among others, the event was attended by Premier of Eastern Cape, Honourable Oscar Mabuyane, Minister and Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Honourable Sihle Zikalala and Honourable Bernice Swarts. Also present were other Cabinet Ministers, traditional leaders, EPWP participants as well as community members who are also benefiting from the projects and assets that are being created through the Programme.

Success stories

The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) has for the past twenty years created over 14 million work opportunities across its four sectors and through the 300 Public bodies across all spheres of government and Non Profit organisations. It was a humble experience to witness the beneficiaries/participants giving testimonies about the impact of the EPWP in their lives.

Speaking to the media, one of the participants, Ms Nomaphelo Mntayi participating on Working on Fire (WOF) programme which is an EPWP initiative implemented by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment shared her experience within the Programme. Ms Mntayi was excited to explain that she joined the WOF Programme in April 2013 after an intensive assessment

which included physical fitness. “The WOF provided physical training which is difficult and intense as a requirement to be able to qualify as a fire-fighter. As part of our work, we do push-ups, pull-ups, sit-ups and run 2.4 km in 14 minutes. Ms Mntayi further indicated that she was part of the crew which was deployed to Canada in 2016, 2019 and 2023 to extinguish the veld fires which were ravaging some parts of that country. “I would like to extend my gratitude to the EPWP for this opportunity and today I own a business because of the earning that I receive through this Programme, said Ms Mntayi

MEC of Public Works and Roads in the Eastern Cape, Ms Ntombovuyo Nkopane embarked on the pre-event projects visit in Bhisho and engaged with the Artisan Development Programme participants. The participants shared the experience gained and demonstrated the practical work that they do on-site.

One of the Artisan Development Programme learners, who is being trained on the electrical trade Ms Asanda Nginase showcased her electrical skills... She indicated that she has learned a lot of practical work in this programme and she is able to carry out her daily duties as expected.



North West Province showcases new cohort of EPWP participants during the 20 years celebration and Phase V launch

Article by: Aubrey Motsurupe (Communication North West Department of Public Works and Roads)

Pictures by: Maanea Maselesele and Khanyisa Moagi



Just a week after the National launch, the North West Department of Public Works and Roads under the stewardship of MEC Gaoage Oageng Molapisi showcased over 8000 participants of EPWP during the 20 years celebration of the EPWP and Phase V launch of the Programme held at Brits Sports Grounds in Madibeng Local Municipality.

The launch was hosted by Acting Premier, Nono Maloyi alongside Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Bernice Swarts. EPWP remains government's most single massive employment initiative. It is a nationwide initiative that was launched with the aim of creating job opportunities and providing income support to unemployed community members and those from poor households. Some of the sectors through which government departments and public bodies create work opportunities for the programme include road construction and maintenance; environmental greening and clean-up as well as removal of alien vegetation.

Speaking at the occasion observed as part of the 20 years celebration since inception of EPWP in 2004. MEC Molapisi said his department has committed to contribute over 15 000 job opportunities for the year under review. "The number of 8 326 new recruits that is here at this launch today is an indication

of our commitment to achieve the target and change the lives of our youth and empower our communities through skills development," he said.

Deputy Minister Swarts indicated that during the new phase, the core focus of EPWP should gravitate towards crafting pathways of continuous growth, learning and empowerment. She said 16 of the 50 Technological Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges who have committed to partner with EPWP for the next three years through signed Service Level Agreements. She added that these institutions will provide accredited training in skills programmes and learnerships to approximately 30 000 participants country wide.

Three former participants of the programme also gave testimonies on how it benefitted them. These included Sibusiso Digwamaje, employed by Public Works and Roads as a Tradesman Aid at Job Shimankana Tabane Provincial Hospital in Rustenburg worker, Montgomery Selemela, a business owner who is part of the department's contractor development programme and Daphne Morgan, employed by Madibeng Local Municipality as a general worker.

Acting Premier Maloyi said the programme has had a huge impact on poverty alleviation and has contributed to skills development becoming a springboard for new sustainable opportunities while also providing work experience and promoting social and economic inclusion.

"We are using the programme to provide job opportunities in our communities while ensuring that we deliver infrastructure. Women, youth, and people with disabilities continues to be at the receiving end of high unemployment rates. I am hopeful that through this programme these groupings will gain additional skills and enjoy longer employment prospects," said Maloyi.

The Acting Premier applauded the envisaged absorption of 15 000 beneficiaries into this programme in the province, saying it will go a long way in fighting the scourge of unemployment in communities, particularly those in townships and rural areas.



KwaZulu-Natal hosts the 20 years celebration of Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and launches Phase V of the Programme

Story and Pictures by Maanea Maselesele and Tumelo Sekwele



The KwaZulu-Natal province hosted a successful 20 years celebration of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and launched Phase V of the Programme. The event was held on the 24 May 2024 at Harry Gwala Stadium in Durban.

The Launch was officiated by the Premier of Kwa Zulu Natal Nomusa Dube-Ncube together with Minister Sihle Zikalala. The Premier applauded the progress and the impact that Programme has made as far as equipping the youth with both technical and business skills which will play a crucial role in boosting both employment and business opportunities.

The goal of Phase V is to reinvigorate Public Bodies, ensuring they perform well in implementing and reporting EPWP projects and ensuring that KwaZulu-Natal Province meets the set target

of creating 794 737 work opportunities in the current Phase. The launch and celebration also aimed at inspiring Public Bodies to create innovative projects and training programs that provide meaningful and sustainable impacts for EPWP participants, contributing to the EPWP Exit Strategy.

In his keynote address, Minister of Public works and infrastructure Hon. Sihle Zikalala urged the province to collaborate and work together to tackle the challenges of poverty and unemployment. Minister Zikalala further emphasised that the EPWP implementers must ensure longer duration of work opportunities created through the Programme.

The focus areas during the implementation of EPWP Phase V in KZN will include Clean Energy, Waste Management, Road Maintenance, Refurbishment/Renovations of Government buildings, and Community Safety.

Success story

One of the EPWP participants, Ms Ayanda Ngcobo said “I am very happy to be standing here today as one of participants of EPWP. The Programme has helped me a lot, as I am currently employed as an Attorney at High court in Pretoria. I urge young people not to underestimate EPWP, when opportunities are presented to you grab them with two hands and maximise it.

The event was celebrated under the theme “20 years of EPWP – changing lives, building better communities” and was attended by the KZN MECs, Mayors, Deputy Director Generals, Head of Departments, Public Officials and EPWP participants.



Premier of Northern Cape launched the EPWP Phase V and officiated the graduation ceremony of EPWP Participants who were trained in Apprenticeship Programme

Article by Kgomotso Mathuloe

Pictures by: Brian Dlamini



The Premier of Northern Cape, Dr Zamani Saul together with the MEC responsible for the Department of Roads and Public Works, Ms Fufe Makatong launch the Phase V of EPWP and handed over certificates to learners who were trained in Artisan Development Programme in Kimberley, Northern Cape on the 23 May 2024.

Addressing the attendees, the Premier said in the context of addressing unemployment rate and the shortage of critical skills, government will continue to provide opportunities for youth to

be able to obtain formal qualification and actively contribute to the economy in the Province. This three years training Programme was implemented in partnership with the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector and Education Training Authority (MerSETA) and Phakamile Mabija training provider.

The Premier also said that the objective of the Phase V of EPWP in the Province is to create 112 000 work opportunities by 2029 and emphasised that the Province is confident that it will achieve the set targets.



Expanded Public Works Programme participants exit into clear career pathways

Article by: Lesego Moretlwe and Kgomotso Mathuloe

Pictures by: Khanyisa Moagi

The Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Honourable Bernice Swarts, has recently officiated the graduation ceremony of Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) participants who completed the 3-year Artisan Development Programme. During the ceremony, the Deputy Minister handed over the certificates to 47 learners who have successfully completed this training programme specialising in various artisan trades such as electrical, welding, plumbing, fitting and turning etc.

The ceremony was hosted at South West Gauteng Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College at Molapo Campus in Soweto- Johannesburg. These young people were recruited from Tshwane District Municipality, Ekurhuleni District Municipality, Johannesburg District Municipality and Sedibeng District Municipality in the Gauteng province.

Deputy Minister Swarts applauded the Agricultural Sector Education Training Authority (AgriSETA) and all relevant stakeholders for partnering with the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure and successfully training young people in this scarce and critical skills. The Deputy Minister further said that through this kind of partnerships, EPWP made a positive impact in the lives of young people who participate in the EPWP. These participants had an opportunity of a lifelong learning, which will significantly improve their standard of living with a recognised qualification and empower them to earn a regular income or even to start their own businesses and become employers themselves.



The EPWP Artisan Development Programme responds to the National Development Plan (NDP) where the country should produce 30 000 artisans per year by 2030. This training seeks to provide skills for participants to enter work-based training by acquiring knowledge and skills in a trade, thereby addressing the dilemma of critical skills shortage in the country and promote economic growth.

This training intervention is one of the exit strategies of EPWP Beneficiary Training and EPWP National Youth Services Programme (NYS) which offer clear pathways into the job market and entrepreneurship, thereby alleviating poverty and unemployment, promoting skills development and contributing to economic growth.

Success stories

One of the participants of the Programme, testified that the Programme has assisted her to gain a qualification in the plumbing trade and now she is a water trainee technician.

Another participant, Ms Lebogang Masenamela said her vision is to have her own engineering company. She said the EPWP Artisan training Development Programme has helped her achieve her dream of becoming an engineer.



The Expanded Public Works Programme equips 40 participants with the skills and knowledge through environmental practice training

Article and Pictures by Maanea Maselesele and Thembele Sehlapelo



The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure in partnership with the Mossel Bay Local Municipality joined hands in ensuring that forty (40) EPWP participants were capacitated with knowledge and skills in environmental practice training.

The objective of this training was to enhance employability of these participants in the mainstream economy by deploying them in the areas of Garden Route District Municipality, which includes Mossel Bay Local municipality, George Local Municipality and Bitou Local Municipality. Successful completion of this training will assist these municipalities in obtaining competent youth and women to assist in executing the mandate of the municipalities in these areas.

The Participants were recruited under Mosel bay Local Municipality for the illegal Dumping project and were placed in KwanoNqaba Township in Mossel Bay. The project mainly focusses on informal settlements where the municipal refuse compactor trucks are not able to collect refuse from households.

The 40 participants who underwent a 44-day training with 35 credits were working at an illegal Dumping Project in Mossel Local Municipality. The project started on 01 July 2023 and it is anticipated to end on 30 June 2024. The participants' demographics were represents as 85% of women, 50% of youth and 3% of persons with disabilities. The training was conducted by Umbuso Training Services and consisted of 13 days of theoretical training and 31 days of workplace training. The training was accredited by Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LGSETA) at NQF Level 2.

This training is one of the Department of Higher Education (DHET)- National Skills Fund (NSF) funded Programmes and consisted of 35 credits with four unit standards as follows:

- Use tools and operate equipment in an environmental responsible manner
- Separate, handle, store, treat and transport waste
- Keep the working area safe and productive

- Perform routine maintenance

The Training Coordinator in the Western Cape, Mr Thamsanqa Ngqula said the EPWP training is aimed at ensuring that the participants gain skills while they work on EPWP projects with the goal of enhancing their chances of being placed on other viable programmes and to start their own businesses upon exit from EPWP projects.

Participant's testimonial

One of the Participants, Mr Themba James Khoza reflected on how the EPWP project changed his life. The training that he went through in Environmental Practice gave him a sense of purpose. The stipend that he received monthly assisted him to start his own small business.

"I would like to express my appreciation to EPWP for giving me this opportunity, I have learned a lot about waste and clean environment. I was able to use my savings from the stipend that I earned from the Programme to start my own small business where I sell sweets and fat cakes". Mr Khoza further stated that he will venture into recycling business to top up his income.



EPWP Gallery

EPWP - Building Better communities



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