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# EPWP social sector united towards poverty alleviation

By: Lesego Moretlwe



The five-day annual 9th EPWP Social Sector Conference, which was co-hosted by the Department of Public Works and the Department of Social Development, resolved and committed to increase service delivery through the EPWP social sector.

The conference was held from 04 - 08 March 2013 at the Mittah Seperepere Convention Centre in Kimberley in the Northern Cape under the theme: **“EPWP Social Sector United in Action towards Socio-Economic Freedom.”**

During her keynote address, the Deputy Minister of Social Development, Mrs Maria Bongi Ntuli announced that the EPWP social sector has from April 2009 to December 2012 (phase 2), created 630 000 work opportunities to unemployed South Africans.

“While we have recorded notable progress in the first and second phase implementation of this programme, we are conscious that success does not come by chance. It is the product of deliberate planning and commitment. And that is what makes this gathering so important,” said Deputy Minister Ntuli.

Among many areas of discussion, inclusion of people with disabilities in the programme was central, with the view of addressing inequality, poverty and unemployment within South African communities. Currently, the prevalence of disability in South Africa is estimated to be

between 5% and 6% with sensory and mental disability being the highest.

Through the different commissions, the conference also discussed the challenges experienced within the programme and paving the way forward to ensure the smooth implementation of the EPWP.

In his closing remarks, Mr Nogwile Kholekile of the Department of Roads and Public Works in the Northern Cape, expressed his appreciation on the progress made since the beginning of the conference. He also urged all the role players to participate in implementing the programme.

**The following are some of the resolutions taken during the EPWP social sector conference:**

- Assist provinces with sustainability guidelines for incentive grant beneficiaries linking with the Medium Term Expenditure Framework allocations.
- Support the process for employment and deployment of data capturers dedicated to the social sector.
- Cascade protocols from premiers to implementing departments.
- Convene a meeting of social sector directors-general to revive and ensure full participation of national and provincial sector departments.

- Advocate EPWP to organisations for people with disabilities.
- Lobby for placement and exit opportunities for EPWP beneficiaries.
- Negotiate and mobilise resources to fund exit plans, including bursaries and learnerships.
- Convene discussions with relevant skills education training authorities to deliberate on fast-tracking access to the National Student Fund to benefit sector beneficiaries.
- Ensure the funding of municipal social sector projects through the Integrated Incentive Grant.
- Ensure the retention of social sector targets in the protocol agreements.
- Facilitate training and provide support to municipalities regarding data collection and reporting systems.
- Assist municipalities with technical design and implementation support.
- Fast track the process of developing a policy framework for the EPWP in line with protocol agreements.
- Identify and select rural municipalities to benefit from the Integrated Incentive Grant for municipalities.
- Share EPWP social sector lessons with other African countries.
- Identify and integrate new programmes into the EPWP social sector.



# Strategies to upscale the EPWP 2014 and beyond

By: Kgomotso Mathuloe



The EPWP hosted a one-day workshop on 1 February 2013 in Pretoria, to come up with mechanisms to upscale the programme beyond 2014. The workshop sought to achieve the following:

- devise plans to upscale EPWP and identify new expansion areas
- strategise on achieving 4,5 million work-opportunity targets
- brainstorm on EPWP Phase 3.

Among the senior management officials who attended the workshop, the presence of the Director-General of Public Works, Mr Mziwonke Dlabantu, the Minister's adviser, Dr Jon Lewis and the Free State Head of Department of Public Works could not go unnoticed.

Addressing the gathering, the EPWP Deputy Director-General, Mr Stanley Henderson said that South Africa is plagued by unacceptable levels of structural unemployment and the situation is worsened by the aftermath of the global economic crisis. He further indicated that the EPWP serves as an opportunity to address the social welfare gap through the employment opportunities it provides.

“In the context of the prevailing economic environment, it is necessary to expand the programme to meet the demand for increased work opportunities. The expansion strategies will be incorporated in the proposal for EPWP Phase 3,” said Mr Henderson.

To expand the programme, the following will be taken into account:

- Labour-intensity of the programmes needs to be optimised.
- The programme needs to receive sufficient funding to create more work opportunities.
- There has to be an adequate capacity to oversee and manage the expansion of the programme.

- Reporting on the work opportunities that were created must be increased.

Ms Kgomotso Zantsi, Director: EPWP Evaluation, presented the EPWP Progress Report against the five-year set targets. She highlighted that the programme has achieved 2 690 009 work opportunities from 2009/10 to December 2012 towards achieving its goal of creating 4,5 million work opportunities by 2014. The report also indicated that the social sector is over achieving on its target to create 750 000, because by September 2012 it had already created 615 119 work opportunities. This amounts to 82% of its overall target.

Lead provincial departments were also given the opportunity to present their expansion plans. The identified key expansion areas included the following:

- energy efficiency (solar and retro-fitting)
- maintenance projects
- pharmaceutical assistance
- water leakage
- safe guarding state-owned properties
- green projects.

The role of training in the EPWP Phase 3 was intensively discussed. The following key factors were identified:

- decentralising training
- focusing on scarce skills such as pharmacist assistance
- dealing with procurement constraints.



# EPWP exhibits at the Department of Labour career guidance expo

By: Khomotso Gosebo



The EPWP, as one of government's poverty alleviation strategies, participated in the Department of Labour's annual career guidance programme with an information sharing session and exhibition with the youth as the main target. The session was held in Vereeniging, Gauteng in February 2013, in the banquet hall of the Sedibeng Local Municipality.

This comes after the call from President Jacob Zuma to tackle the issue of youth unemployment that has risen to 30% and is still growing. Tackling unemployment, particularly among the youth, is part of the National Development Plan that was presented to the Parliament by the National Planning Commission stating the vision of the country in the next 20 years.

During his State of the Nation Address on 14 February 2013, President Jacob Zuma indicated that the EPWP and the Community Works Programme needed to absorb the youth into employment.

Approximately 300 youth attended this career exhibition, which included various organisations such as the National Youth Development Agency, the Banking Sector Education and Training Authority and the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration. The exhibitors made presentations on the available job

opportunities in their organisations. Different Further Education and Training colleges also exhibited at the event.

The well-known motivational speaker, Dr David Molefe, encouraged the youth to plan properly and to create the culmination of their destination in their minds. He told the packed hall that they should dream big, believe in themselves, visualise and be more focused on their future plans.

Mr Mike Makena, the Regional Manager for the Vanderbijlpark Labour Centre, expressed his gratitude and acknowledged everyone who attended the session as well as the stakeholders who participated in the information-sharing initiative to assist the youth to explore all possible avenues in finding jobs.



# Dedicated beneficiaries make EPWP a success

By: Siyabonga Mhlanga



Working for Wetlands, which is a sub-programme of EPWP Environment and Culture Sector and implemented by the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), celebrated the second runner up position of Working for Wetlands Best Project Awards on 13 December 2012 at the Golden Gate national Park in Clarens, Free State.

The Golden Gate Wetland Rehabilitation Project is implemented by SANParks. The project consists of 42 beneficiaries including people with disabilities who were sourced from the local community. These beneficiaries received certificates that served to confirm their active participation in rehabilitation work. Among the attendees were ward councilors from Dihlabeng and Maluti-A-Phofung local municipalities and community members from Kestell and Phuthaditshaba.

“Sanbi gets return on investment through partnership with SANParks. The institute will continue to contribute to biodiversity, conservation and job creation. We must make sure that we create sustainable work opportunities. We should do so in partnership with municipalities and all stakeholders in the area creating space for absorption of beneficiaries outside the programme. Congratulations SANParks, you are doing a great job,” said Mr Conride Mhlari, Social Development and Training Manager of Sanbi.

The structure was constructed on loamy clay soil using the gabions and has a back-up structure due to an increased water level. The idea

of using gabions was to stop soil erosion and raising the water table in the wetland to allow the free inflow of flood water. Reno-matress and geo-text tile was also used underneath to prevent erosion.

Mr Mphadeni Nthangeni, the SANParks Section Ranger and the former Working for Wetlands Project Manager said, “The project has grown and it will create more work opportunities.” He further said that their main objective is to empower the local communities with skills on rehabilitating the wetlands.

The Wetland Rehabilitation Project is improving the lives of 156 indirect beneficiaries and other communities surrounding Golden Gate. These wetland rehabilitation projects also provide water to South Africa, create work opportunities and skills development.

In his remarks, Mr Dhiraj Nariandas, Conservation Manager of SANParks, said on behalf of the landowners that the Wetland Programme is a tool that can be used to achieve the EPWP goals and provide a better life for all.

“Through this Wetland Rehabilitation Project, we can all live a better life and have sustainable work opportunities. Surrounding communities can reap the benefits because of your commitment and dedication,” he said to the beneficiaries.



# Working for wetlands delivers exceptionally

By: Siyabonga Mhlanga



The Environment and Culture Sector within the EPWP, in partnership with the South African National Biodiversity Institute (Sanbi), home of the Working for Wetlands Programme and the South African National Parks (SANparks) hosted a best project award celebration in Cape Agulhas, Western Cape.

The Duiwenhoks Wetland Rehabilitation Project, run by the Agulhas National Park, won first prize for the best project the third consecutive time. The 48 beneficiaries and contractors received certificates in recognition of their active participation in conducting rehabilitation work.

The EPWP draws unemployed people from communities to do productive work and earn an income. The programme offers them training while they work thereby increasing their capability to earn an income even after the end of the project.

Wetlands rehabilitation projects maximise employment creation; create support for small businesses; and transfer relevant and marketable skills to workers.

The Agulhas plain lends itself to lower impact interventions consisting of different structures namely, rock packing, eco logs, earth construction works, gabion and concrete.

Great success has been achieved by plugging agricultural drainage lines and facilitating water movement. The Agulhas Project falls within the Agulhas plains, a lowland Fynbos and Renosterveld area with a high diversity in habitat types, red-data plant species, wetland ecosystems and local endemics.

The Agulhas Wetland Project received second prize out of 40 projects in the country. Mr John Dini, the Sanbi Freshwater Programme Manager said, "We've seen for ourselves the high quality of work you have achieved under challenging circumstances. I want you to know that the value of your work is known and appreciated by our programme's parent departments."

In her keynote address, the Working for Wetlands Provincial Coordinator of the Western and Northern Cape projects, Ms Heidi Nieuwoudt, said that the project delivers an exceptionally high standard in field operational and administrative compliance. "The Agulhas Project displays discipline and confidence and I congratulate them for all their efforts and contributions to wetlands rehabilitation on the Agulhas plain."

Mr Conrad Mhlari, Social Development and Training Manager of Sanbi, said that the EPWP is about alleviating poverty, which the reason why beneficiaries depend on this programme. "Beneficiaries will now receive training as we focus on creating sustainable work opportunities" he said, acknowledging the contractors' commitment and support for this project.



# Rehabilitation projects maximise employment creation

By: Siyabonga Mhlanga



The Working for Wetlands' mandate is to champion the protection, rehabilitation and sustainable use of South Africa's wetlands cooperative governance and partnership. Cape Nature is the implementing agency for the project. The event was attended by delegates from EPWP, the South African National Biodiversity Institute (Sanbi), Cape Nature and other departments.

The Peat-land Wetlands System will create sustainable work opportunities for the Heidelberg communities.

The EPWP Environment and Culture Sector in partnership with Sanbi on behalf of the departments of Environmental Affairs, Agriculture, Water Affairs and Forestry visited the Working for Wetlands projects in Duiwenhoks, Western Cape and attended the award celebration on the 10 December 2012.

In his opening remarks, Mr Rhett Hiseman of Cape Nature said, "This project is reaching its goals in terms of supplying water and creating work opportunities for the community." The project has created 47 work opportunities and 188 estimated indirect beneficiaries.

Duiwenhoks Wetland Rehabilitation Project was selected as the best project for the third consecutive year, taking the first position since 2011/12. Beneficiaries and contractors received certificates and jackets in recognition of their active participation in conducting rehabilitation work.

"We must use these wetlands to improve our economy, create work opportunities and improve people's lives. You are the winning pioneers and congratulations once again," said Sanbi Chief Executive Officer Dr Tania Abrahams.

The project involves the construction of a gabion structure in the middle of a very sensitive and inaccessible wetland peat-land system. The structure was designed in four layers to control the speed of water and to prevent soil erosion.

Each rock that goes into the gabion wall was collected from the veld and was handled at least five times before it reached its resting place. No serious injuries were recorded in the process. Dr Quentin Espey, Director of Cape Nature Operations said, "This is the best example of on-ground sustainable development I have never seen worldwide and thank you all for making it possible."

In his closing remarks, the Deputy Director of the EPWP environment and culture sector, Mr Madoda Mfene said, "Today we are celebrating our smallest achievement and I hope you [beneficiaries] put more efforts to hold the winning record. Let us be food soldiers and fight poverty with our wetlands." He further acknowledged the existing relationships between the land owners, the municipality and the departments.

**"This project is reaching its goals in terms of supplying water and creating work opportunities for the community."**



# Kimberley commemorates International Day for People with Disabilities

By: Ntiyiso Chauke



On 10 December 2013, the non-state sector in collaboration with the Department of Public Works' Gender Unit, celebrated the International Day for People with Disabilities and Human Rights Day, at the Mittah Seperepere Convention Centre in Kimberley. The non-state sector is one of the four sectors of the EPWP that deals with offering wage subsidies to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations and faith-based organisations.

Various organisations for disabled people in Kimberly attended. There were also delegates from the Independent Development Trust (IDT), the National Youth Development Agency, National Economic Development and Labour Council Community Constituency.

Dr Miranda Mafofo from the Department of Public Works introduced the event by saying, "We are here to commemorate International Day of People with Disabilities and to review the magnitude and scale of the challenges facing people living with disabilities."

Ms Thandiwe Alina Mfulu said in her key note address, "We are honoured to come and celebrate this precious day that is dedicated to us. People with disabilities must not be isolated from other people in terms of service delivery. They should be treated the same as other people." She encouraged people to learn sign language to be able to communicate with deaf people in their communities, work place and wherever they meet them.

During the presentations, Mr Ndivhuwo Mulaudzi from the EPWP non-state sector said, "Non-profit organisations must strive for the equity target of 60% women, 40% youth and 2% people with disabilities."

Ms Olive Miller from Ikhaya' lethu, a non-profit organisation said Ikhaya' lethu was founded in 2010 by the EPWP through the IDT. Since then Ikhaya' lethu has employed 181 beneficiaries in the province. Of these 15% are people with disabilities and come from three Northern Cape districts namely, Siyanda, Francis Baard and Pixley ka Seme.

Ikhaya' lethu has also formed better relationships with local municipalities, and strengthened stakeholder relations with other NGOs. Ikhaya' lethu has also made a significant difference by placing EPWP beneficiaries in several employment sectors. Through this 20% received permanent employment in the mining industry, 7% within the Department of Education, 5% in health, 10% within South African Social Security Agency, 30% at the Department of Social Development and 19% have been employed in retail. This milestone indicated that indeed together we can do more.

The EPWP Operations Chief Director, Ms Kelebogile Sethibelo said that she would like to thank the different disability organisations, departmental representatives and everybody else for their efforts in attending the occasion.



# Social Sector Conference

