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EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME

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Expanded Public Works Programme commemorates Human Rights Day

By Khanyisa Mashele and Dorris Maswanganye



As a government initiative the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) participated in the exhibitions held during the Human Rights Day commemoration on 21 March 2012 at Walter Sisulu Square in Kliptown in Soweto.

The main aim of the exhibition was to educate and inform the public about the significant role that the EPWP plays in alleviating poverty and unemployment, thus allowing South Africans their human rights as enshrined in Chapter 2 of the Constitution. Among the exhibitors were the departments of trade and industry, justice and constitutional development, and labour, and the South African Police Service.

Some of the community members who visited the EPWP exhibition stand remarked that they were enrolled in EPWP projects such as early childhood development, infrastructure and pig

farming. They were grateful for the programme's positive impact, which changed their lives for the better, as they are now able to take care of their families with the stipends they receive.

The Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, Mr Jeff Radebe, remarked: "It is with a sense of great honour, humility and privilege that we are gathered here in Kliptown, in Soweto, to celebrate our National Human Rights Day." When he introduced the keynote speaker, President Jacob Zuma, he added: "As we are gathered here today, we are inspired by the role that the people of Soweto played in the struggle for liberation."

Songs of praise were sung as President Zuma greeted the community while walking around Walter Sisulu Square. In his keynote address, the President said that government has done well in changing people's lives in a short space

of time. He further admitted that the struggle continues as many people were still faced with unemployment, poverty and inequality.

Other dignitaries at the event included Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe; leader of the Congress of the People, Mr Mosiua Lekota; the South African Human Rights Commission Deputy Chairperson, Preg Govender; the Deputy Minister of Basic Education, Mr Enver Surty; and the Gauteng Premier, Ms Nomvula Mokonyane.

On a day commemorating fallen heroes and heroines who fought for human rights, the Pan Africanist Congress leader, Mr Robert Sobukwe, who led the Anti-Pass Campaign march, was honoured for his contribution to the liberation struggle.

The Social Sector working towards enhancing service delivery

By Lesego Moretlwe

The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and the Department of Social Development hosted a four-day National Social Sector Conference at Orion Safari Lodge in Rustenburg, North West from 14 to 16 March 2012, with the theme: *Working together to accelerate creation of work opportunities in the Social Sector: contributing towards creation of decent jobs.*

The conference was preceded by a gala event, which was held in memory of millions of South Africans who died of HIV-related illnesses, as well as those who are affected and infected by HIV and AIDS. The delegates lit candles and observed a moment of silence in remembrance of the victims of this pandemic.

The conference brought together the EPWP Social Sector departments, provinces, civil society and other important partners to review progress made by implementing departments, and deliberate on sector strategic policy initiatives. The programmes that are implemented under the umbrella of the EPWP Social Sector to provide basic needs to communities are: Early Childhood Development, Home-Based Community Care, School Nutrition, Community Crime Prevention, School Mass Participation, and the Mass Literacy Campaign.



EPWP beneficiaries giving testimonies

The objective of the conference was to strategise and intensify the creation of work opportunities in the Social Sector. The key subject areas discussed were, among others, the state of EPWP in South Africa; compliance to the ministerial determination for EPWP workers; skills development within the sector; engagement

of municipalities; and the Social Sector Incentive Grant.

The EPWP Deputy Director-General, Mr Stanley Henderson, remarked that the EPWP was working hard towards achieving the set target of creating 4,5 million work opportunities by 2014. He added that the programme was also striving to make a real impact on the socio-economic upliftment of communities.

In his message, the Head of Department for Public Works, Roads and Transport in the North West, Mr Thapelo Makgetha, offered unconditional support to the Department of Social Development as the lead department for the EPWP Social Sector. He emphasised the importance of addressing the social needs of communities as it was still a challenge but also acknowledged the hard work of the sector in improving the lives of ordinary citizens of the country. He further said that the Social Sector in the North West proved to be the best performing sector, as it has exceeded its set job creation targets.



One of the beneficiaries of the programme, Ms Selina Dichabe, who lives in Lomanyaneng Village in Mahikeng told how, after many years of living in poverty, the EPWP changed her life for the better. She worked as a community caregiver for five years before she became a manager in the organisation and an EPWP beneficiary in 2005. "I am a living testimony of the EPWP's success. It gave me the opportunity to maximise my potential and skills," she said. She was identified by the Department of Social Development, Children and People with Disabilities in the North West as a deserving EPWP beneficiary to pursue studies in the Social Sciences with a departmental bursary in 2007. She said that the department contributed to her career advancement, as she is now employed as a social worker in Mahikeng.

Mr Virgil Seafield of the Department of Labour expressed the need for the EPWP to comply with the Unemployment Insurance Act, as well as the Compensation, Injuries and Disease Act as determined by the Ministerial Determination Policy with a view of giving the EPWP beneficiaries their right to benefits such as unemployment, illness, maternity, adoption and dependant benefits.

In her keynote address, the Minister of Social Development, Ms Bathabile Dlamini, urged the attendees to look for solutions to address the social needs of most South African communities who are characterised by hunger, destitution and vulnerability. She emphasised the importance of the EPWP as the Government's initiative to reduce poverty and enhance economic growth by providing work opportunities.

Minister Dlamini described inequality, poverty and unemployment as challenges facing the country. She added that, as articulated by President Zuma in his 2012 State of the Nation Address, these challenges needed urgent intervention and said that the Social Sector had a significant role to play in addressing these challenges. "The National Development Plan declares that it is possible to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. In support of this vision, the Social Sector is at the forefront of ensuring the successful implementation of the EPWP as an anti-poverty mechanism. As a country, we are encouraged that in a year that was themed: *The Year of Job Creation*, unemployment recorded a decline during the fourth quarter of 2011, from 25% to 23,9%."

Minister launches Operation Rea Hloekisa in Matatiele

By Reggie Ngcobo



The Minister of Public Works, Mr Thulas Nxesi, took to the dusty roads of KwaPhalane Village in Matatiele in the Eastern Cape on 27 January 2012, to launch a clean-up and solid-waste campaign called Operation Rea Hloekisa.

Minister Nxesi, who was joined by Eastern Cape MEC for Public Works, Ms Thandi Marawu, the Matatiele municipal leadership and traditional leaders, led the community of KwaPhalane in traditional Xhosa songs and dances before getting to the business of the day.

In his opening remarks, the Minister allayed fears that he was launching this campaign in Matatiele because the area is his hometown and assured the community that similar projects are being rolled out in hundreds of municipalities across the country.

"The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) is a flagship programme of the Department of Public Works and of government. It seeks to address the greatest challenges facing this country today: unemployment and poverty," said Minister Nxesi.

He reminded community members that President Jacob Zuma has declared combating unemployment and promoting job creation national priorities.

Minister Nxesi emphasised that the Department of Public Works leads the EPWP, but municipalities and provinces play an implementing role.

"I am confident that our municipalities can play a critical role in drawing significant numbers of the unemployed into productive work, particularly because of

the municipalities' strategic positioning at the coalface of service delivery."

Minister Nxesi also reminded the gathering that the Matatiele Waste Collection Programme seeks to keep the environment clean and as green as possible while contributing to the wider goal of saving the planet.

"This programme seeks to employ local people to clean their surroundings, which include the cleaning of community halls and schools, grass cutting around all the community halls and any other areas identified by the municipality," explained the Minister.

He assured members of the community that bread-and-butter issues cannot be ignored and that the EPWP is succeeding in adhering to its mandate of alleviating



poverty through the provision of work opportunities to the unemployed.

Minister Nxesi also highlighted some of the resolutions taken at the EPWP Municipal Summit held last year, at Gallagher Estate in Midrand. He said the summit agreed that all outstanding protocols would be signed by 31 March 2012 and that labour-intensive methods

were to be used in the delivery of projects to promote the creation of work opportunities.

“I am pleased to see the Matatiele Local Municipality taking ownership of the EPWP and adding value to the lives of the communities in Matatiele and surrounding areas. The Department of Public Works commits itself to provide the

municipalities with continued support by developing and making available implementation manuals on EPWP.”

The Minister concluded by urging authorities and all stakeholders to ensure that corruption and nepotism does not spoil the smooth running of this initiative.

Expanded Public Works Programme impacts positively on people’s lives

By Khomotso Gosebo



Pheko Ka Kopanelo Community Development Centre, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Phuthaditjhaba in Qwaqwa, 35 km from Clarens in the Free State, has become synonymous with bringing meaningful change to the lives of ordinary people in the area.

Among other things, this EPWP Non-State Sector Project focuses on creating homestead gardens for food security, thus improving the nutritional status of the community by providing canned vegetables; taking care of terminally ill community members through a hospice, and

creating work opportunities for unemployed people in the Maluti A Phofung Local Municipality area. These services are provided in Kestell and Qwaqwa villages such as Maboleta, Tseki and Tsheseng.

More than 300 work opportunities were created, of which 183 were for the youth, 204 for women and five for people with disabilities.

The founder of this organisation, Pastor Mary Crockett, has been working with the community of Qwaqwa since 2003, focusing on social issues such as skills

development and health standards, including the HIV and AIDS pandemic and physical standards. Pastor Crockett, a true philanthropist and a former teacher, is known in her area for providing authentic training, research and skills development to previously disadvantaged communities through the project.

The Pheko Ka Kopanelo Community Development Centre volunteered its services in capacity-building to the community-based organisations upon request in its locality as a plough-back gesture.

This organisation has also changed many lives for good, which is evident from the following interviews with beneficiaries:

Theresia Mmakoetepe

How did the EPWP change your life?

The EPWP has had a huge impact on my life. It gives me the means to be able to provide for my family. The project also provides for people living with HIV and AIDS and is a home for children with disabilities. The centre provides these children with much-needed support and also supply them with fresh, nutritious vegetables.

What were you doing before you participated in this project?

I had nothing to do at home so a few of us women decided to form a cooperative. The Independent Development Trust, as the implementing agent of the EPWP, assisted us in succeeding on this project.

What project challenges do you face?

We have insufficient funds to maintain the project; we do not have enough equipment; we also do not have enough protective

clothing; and we need labelling stickers for our products.

What does the project entail?

We are farming for sustainable and commercial purposes with the assistance of the youth in the community. We also do sewing.

When did this project commence?

The project started in 2007.

What is the way forward for the project?

I wish that this project could be sustained, and I plead with government not to discontinue the project and to provide us with more land for farming and farming equipment.

Ntshala Phakiso

How did EPWP change your life?

Working on the EPWP project means a lot to me. I get a stipend of R60 per day for 11 days a month, which enables me to contribute financially at home. My parents work on a farm and cannot afford to meet all our everyday needs. I am also able to pay school fees for my siblings and

have also managed to pay for my learner's licence.

What experience did you gain from this project?

I received computer literacy training, and training on farming and life skills. I value the farming experience that I gained from the project, as it has given me an opportunity to explore means of food security.

What were you doing before you participated in this project?

I was unemployed. After joining the organisation, my life changed for the better and I am now a project manager. I underwent a two-month training course on home- and community-based care and counselling through the Department of Health. I am so happy because I can impart the knowledge and the skills to other community members.

What project challenges do you face?

Some of the villages where we do farming lack water, and there is shortage of farming skills among community members who we recruit for the project.



City of Tshwane intensifies the fight against poverty through the Expanded Public Works Programme

By Kgomotso Mathuloe

The Executive Mayor of Tshwane, Mr Kgosisentsho Ramokgopa launched the Expanded Public Works (EPWP) Infrastructure Project on 16 March 2012 at the Pilditch Stadium in Pretoria.

The project is implemented by the Energy and Electricity Department within the Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality and entails the trimming of trees to avoid power interruptions, maintenance of electric infrastructure and servitude clearance.



Over 548 beneficiaries were employed in the following nine electricity depots throughout the city:

- Centurion
- Waltloo/Mamelodi
- Atteridgeville
- Fortsig
- Pretorius Park
- Soshanguve
- Rosslyn
- Motsweding
- Wonderboom.

Addressing the project's beneficiaries, Mr Ramokgopa said the high levels of unemployment remain an issue of grave concern in the country, and the debate is continuing on how to address this situation effectively. He said that through the support of the Department of Public Works, the city will be

in a better position to fight poverty and unemployment, adding that the work opportunities created through the EPWP will help people put food on the table.

"The city is committed to fighting poverty and unemployment. So far, more than 38 000 work opportunities have been created." He also said that a new EPWP project that will entail the cleaning of cemeteries and streets will be introduced before the end of March 2012 and will employ 3 000 people.

The mayor further added that skills development remains the priority of the city, hence more than R12 million is set aside for bursaries in 2012/13. He encouraged beneficiaries working on the project to take their work seriously and report for duty every day.



The Expanded Public Works Programme makes a difference in the North West

By Lesego Moretwe



In January 2012, ululation and songs signalled the joy that filled the Taletso Further Education and Training (FET) College's Lehurutshe Campus, North West during the graduation ceremony of 847 Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) beneficiaries.

The graduates received certificates of competency and attendance in different courses under the four EPWP sectors, namely, Infrastructure, Social, Environment and Culture, and Non-State sectors.

Accredited courses included Occupational Health and Safety; Eradication of Intruder Plants; the Combating of Soil Erosion; the Fundamentals of Project Management; the Handling and Disposal of Waste; Preparing Planting Site Using Hand Tools; Fertile Soil and Attending to Basic Plant Nutrition; Bricklaying; and the Understanding of Cultivation and Control of Weeds.

Speaking during the ceremony, the EPWP Programme Manager in the North West,

Ms Xoliswa Letsapa, said she observed with enthusiasm the partnership between the training providers and project management team as they progressed towards the realisation of providing the learners with the skills they were so dedicated to attain in building their careers.

She expressed her gratitude to all the role players for their hard work and commitment in overcoming their challenges and ensuring that the initiative provided a meaningful contribution in

uplifting the socio-economic status of the communities.

The Chief Executive Officer of Taletso FET College, Ms SG Gelderbloem, said the graduation of EPWP beneficiaries at the college was the first of its kind and therefore a historic event for the institution. Ms Gelderbloem acknowledged the milestone achieved by the beneficiaries and all role players, which she said was reason enough for her to be overjoyed and celebrate the day.

Ms Tsholofelo Pooe, Director: EPWP Training Support, explained the role of training as a vehicle for achieving skilled

labour, reducing poverty and avoiding sub-standard work in a workplace. She emphasised that the need to address scarce and critical skills in the country emanated from the Department of Labour's National Skills Development Strategy in view of increasing employability of those who were trained in the identified scarce skills.

She said the journey was not easy, but "it was a good fight". "The Department of Public Works acknowledges and appreciates the efforts and hard work by Taletso College in maximising its capability through the successful training implementation," Ms Pooe remarked.

She further indicated that out of the overall number of registered beneficiaries, there was only a 5% dropout rate, as 95% of the learners made it to the end. She said it was a good indication towards realising the Government's vision of poverty alleviation and skills development.

In conclusion, Ms Pooe said "Remember, it is in the interest of government to make a positive impact on the lives of our communities and improve economic growth through the provision of skills aimed at reducing poverty, which is one of the challenges government is faced with."

EPWP beneficiaries reach their milestones

By Dorris Maswanganye and Londiwe Gcaba



The Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport in Gauteng hosted the graduation ceremony of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) National Youth Service (NYS) at the Victory Theatre in Johannesburg on 16 March 2012. This was to mark the milestone achieved by the EPWP beneficiaries under the EPWP Infrastructure Sector and acknowledge the skills they acquired through the training they received.

The families of 155 EPWP graduates came in numbers to support and witness the celebrations of these successful EPWP learners. The learners

completed the theoretical practical component of their training in electrical engineering, plumbing, carpentry, painting and tiling. The learners completed the practical component of their training at the following state institutions:

- Doornkop Military Base
- Krugersdorp Prison
- Krugersdorp Old Prison
- Diepkloof Prison
- Benoni South African Police Service
- Department of Home Affairs, Sebokeng.

In his opening address, the Johannesburg Regional Manager, Advocate Jeanette

Monare, encouraged the youth to study towards engineering as it is one of the scarce and critical skills in the country. She further highlighted the need for the youth to be motivated from the lower school grades to take Mathematics and Physical Science as major subjects, which will assist them to advance their careers in becoming the engineers and scientists of the future.

The EPWP Deputy Director in the Gauteng Regional Office, Mr William Moeketsi, highlighted the healthy working relationship that he had with the beneficiaries in working towards their skills

development. He also acknowledged the EPWP for upholding its mandate of alleviating poverty through the provision of work opportunities and skills that serve as an exit strategy for beneficiaries, which in turn increase their employability.

Among the attendees, there were stakeholders from the National Youth Development Agency, Further Education and Training colleges, training providers and client departments. All the stakeholders indicated their satisfaction as

they managed to work together in achieving the objective of training EPWP beneficiaries. The service-providers also received achievement certificates.



Hard work pays off for EPWP beneficiaries

By Paleho Motloung



The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) at the Bloemfontein Regional Office recently hosted the National Youth Service (NYS) Graduation Ceremony for EPWP beneficiaries at the Martie Lots Town Hall in Clarens in the Free State.

It was a memorable day for 14 EPWP/NYS beneficiaries who participated in the NYS Programme for the repairs and renovations of buildings and three houses at the Clarens Police Station.

The 14 learners received intensive training under the mentorship of a very knowledgeable and experienced contractor, Mr Sekonyela of Sekonyela Home Builders, who inspired the learners with a motivational speech where he presented each with their own toolbox.

The project was also a Community Incubator Programme Project, as the contractor received his training through mentorship. He shared this knowledge and the skills he acquired in various trades with the learners. The learners were best-performing

and well-disciplined cadres of the youth, who used the opportunities that the Government gave them.

The institutions represented during the ceremony were the Regional Office, EPWP staff, Dihlabeng Local Council as well as community development workers.

In her keynote address, the EPWP Programme Manager, Ms Masego Tshabalala, emphasised how important it was for beneficiaries to participate in a programme. This also provided a platform for showcasing their creativity that can be turned into useful applications that also have a high entrepreneurial potential.

She acknowledged that it had not been easy but praised the beneficiaries as conquerors of the programme. She expressed her gratitude to beneficiaries for having what it takes to contribute towards the country's economic development.

Ms Mashinini, a member of Dihlabeng Local Council, thanked the department for bringing such community development initiatives to Clarens. She encouraged beneficiaries to continue using similar opportunities in the future.

