



public works

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EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME

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# Working together to create work opportunities

By Lesego Moretlwe



The Minister of Public Works, Mr Thulas Nxesi, hosted the Non State Sector (NSS) Summit of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) with government departments, business, labour and civil-society organisations on 13 April 2012 at the Birchwood Hotel in Boksburg, Gauteng.

The objectives of the summit were to:

- raise awareness about the work undertaken by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in partnership with government
- partner with the private sector and other role players to ensure the sustainability of the NSS
- review the current NSS implementation model and to get views from other stakeholders on how best the model can be improved.

The EPWP launched the NSS in 2009/10, with the aim of collaborating with non-profit organisations (NPOs) to draw a significant number of the unemployed people into productive work, thereby contributing to the alleviation of unemployment and poverty among

communities according to the EPWP mandate. Since its inception, the NSS has contributed to creating 35 000 work opportunities through the NSS NGOs wage subsidy.

In its fourth year, the NSS, through its successful implementation, has raised increasing interest from various forms of NPOs, business and organised labour.

In his keynote address, Minister Nxesi urged all the role players responsible for the implementation of the NSS to exercise accountability in using the allocated resource and commit to the delivery of quality services to the most vulnerable communities who depend on the EPWP projects to earn a better living. "The most remarkable impact of the NSS NGO Programme is its contribution to the delivery of basic services in highly marginalised communities. In many of the projects visited, the beneficiaries interviewed expressed how the programme has changed their lives", the Minister added.

The chairperson of the Portfolio

Committee on Public Works, Ms Manana Mabuza, offered her support in ensuring that the EPWP becomes a success and also acknowledged that there were challenges in the implementation of the EPWP and was pleased that they were taken into consideration and resolved.

Among the resolutions taken at the summit, the EPWP: NSS committed to:

- forge strategic partnerships with other governmental, developmental and private-sector organisations
- ensure that awareness campaigns are focused on target-group forums and that forums for women, youth and people with disabilities are established
- develop exit strategies for NPOs to address the issue of sustainability after their participation in the EPWP
- provide training to NGOs on the requirements of the NSS Programme
- ensure that EPWP partners with other organisations or departments to increase resources available to create more work opportunities
- ensure capacity-building for NPOs on project management and monitoring & evaluation.

# Bloemfontein – the first city to host the General Security Learnership Programme

By Nkosinathi Eric Mkhunjulwa



The city of Bloemfontein, which was established in 1846, bred and nurtured a number of successful and prominent South Africans, such as famous filmmaker and comedian, Leon Schuster; renowned rugby player, Os du Randt; and JRR Tolkien CBE, who was famous for his fantasy epics. However, unless people know about the contribution of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) in creating work opportunities to unemployed South Africans, this list will never be meaningful.

The first General Security Practice Learnership Programme induction workshop at the Department of Public Works' Bloemfontein Regional Offices was held on 15 May 2012. This social security programme is a pilot project anticipated to provide skills, add value to the youth development and provide work opportunities to the identified beneficiaries.

During the workshop, 22 young people who were recruited by the Department of Public Works' Bloemfontein Regional Office will undergo training as Level Three general security officers and would be deployed as security guards to different sites, such as nurseries, workshops and other government buildings.

The EPWP Bloemfontein Regional Programme Manager, Ms Masego Tshabalala, welcomed the learners. She encouraged the learners to work hard

during their Learnership Programme and urged them never to be afraid to take the initiative to make a success of their lives through this programme. She further said, "Keep on going, never be weary.

"Have perseverance and tomorrow you will reap the results of your hard work." Ms Tshabalala expressed her hopes that this programme would be the kind of an opportunity that will open up doors for all the learners to be able to further their studies and create a better life for themselves.

In her address, the Chief Director of EPWP Operations, Ms Kelebogile Sethibelo, explained why the unemployed youth had to be helped to have a better life. "They are young and should be working, but there is nothing on the South African job market viable for them," she said.

Despite this challenge, young people should have different opportunities to be able to develop and equip themselves with numerous skills in order to bridge the educational inequality gap, she said. Ms Sethibelo added, "We are here to enhance your skills. We want you to be future entrepreneurs, managers, departmental heads, etc."

Ms Sanny Maluleka, the Deputy Director of the EPWP Social Sector, said that it was of utmost importance that learners showed their commitment during the

Learnership Programme. "We want to see this Social Security Programme being implemented throughout South Africa," she emphasised.

Ms Vangile Manzini and Mr Donald Baikgaki, who are both from the Human Capital Investment Unit of the Department of Public Works, also attended the induction workshop. They explained the terms stipulated in the learners' contracts, the role of the Learnership Programme and facilitated the process of signing the employment contracts.

As so many successful things and people have their roots in Bloemfontein, there is no doubt that the Social Security Programme, which was piloted in Bloemfontein, will succeed too.

# Mpumalanga MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport delivers her Policy and Budget Speech for 2012/13

By Ntjiso Chauke



The officials of the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport as well as Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) beneficiaries gathered at the Mpumalanga Legislature to witness a special provincial Policy and Budget Speech for 2012/13.

The Budget Speech, delivered by the Mpumalanga MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport, Ms Dikeledi Mahlangu, focused more on infrastructure development. In her address, the MEC emphasised, “We have in our province a need to maintain our existing road network and to build new roads.” She went on to say that, the department needed R9,3 billion to bring the paved road network to acceptable standards. She said in the previous financial year, the department completed two road infrastructure projects, which is a road between Acornhoek and the Limpopo provincial boundary and a road between Sibande and Mgobodzi.

The MEC said that during 2012/13, the department would upgrade eight road projects, which include Rolle and Oakley Phase One, Rolle and Oakley Phase Two, Steynsdorp and Ekulindeni, Boschfontein and Magogeni, Daanje and Mpakeni, Marloth Park and Komatiport, Diepdale and Swaziland border.

The MEC said that the Department of Public Works had introduced the EPWP integrated reporting system in the previous financial year, which would help in improving to report on the EPWP projects. The MEC said that during the third quarter of 2011/12, the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport in Mpumalanga created 45 387 work opportunities through the EPWP. These work opportunities were created in various participating sectors such as the Infrastructure, Non-State, Social, and Environment & Culture sectors.

MEC Mahlangu also deliberated on the department’s youth - development initiatives. She said that the Emerging Contractor Development Programme (Sakh’abakhi) would provide great opportunities for the unemployed youth. “Sakh’abakhi is a programme aimed at providing skills to learner contractors and addressing the skills shortage, as well as enhancing the Construction Industry Development Board grading,” she remarked, adding that 40 contractors had been trained under the programme during the financial year. The MEC stated that the recent data from Statistics South Africa demonstrated that 60% of unemployed youth did not have a Grade 12 certificate and that poverty and unemployment were threatening the future of the country.

She encouraged the youth to join the National Youth Service (NYS) Programme to address the skills shortage problem.

“The NYS Programme plays a vital role in instilling skills to young unemployed people. After the completion of the training programme, they are able to take up opportunities in the formal economy or utilise their acquired entrepreneurial skills to enhance their living standards and alleviate poverty within their communities.” She said 500 young people were trained in road maintenance, life skills and construction during the previous financial year and the training was completed in March 2012.

In her closing remarks, the MEC thanked the Head of Department, the management and the entire staff of the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport for their dedication and commitment.

# Early Childhood Development (ECD) Conference

By Khomotso Gosebo

The Department of Public Works, through the Expanded Public Works Programme's (EPWP) Communication Unit, joined the Minister of Social Development, Ms Bathabile Dlamini, as she hosted the national ECD Conference from 27 to 30 March 2012 at the East London International Convention Centre.

The conference that focused on the need to develop a child at an early age was held under the theme: *Tshwaragano Ka Bana* (Working Together for Children).

The purpose of the conference was to provide a platform for policy-makers, donors, development agencies, civil-society organisations and government departments to share lessons and experiences in the ECD field. The conference was also aimed at ensuring coordination and integration among all stakeholders in the implementation of the National Integrated Plan for ECD.

The ECD is part of the EPWP Social Sector that deals with providing work opportunities to unemployed and unskilled people through the delivery of social development-oriented and community-protection services. The national departments of social development, health, education, and sport and recreation spearhead this sector.

In the 2011/12 financial year, President Jacob Zuma made a clarion call for society to protect and care for women and children. In responding to this call, the ECD Campaign was launched in Mpumalanga.

The Department of Social Development is working together with other government departments on the ECD Programme, which seeks to develop and improve the quality of basic education in South Africa.

To that effect, government has committed to increase access to ECD centres for all eligible children while ensuring that no child is deprived of early learning opportunities.

Through ECD centres, government aims to promote and protect the rights of young children between the ages of zero to six years, thus ensuring their growth and development.

Young as it may be, the ECD Campaign has so far made the following strides:

- currently, there are more than 836 000 children benefiting from ECD services in South Africa
- by the end of December 2011, more than 488 000 of these children were benefiting from the subsidy as compared to about 476 000 in March 2011
- by the end of 2011, the number of ECD centres grew from 18 800 to 19 500.

The ECD Conference gave the Minister of Social Development, other social-sector departments and members of the civil society a platform to explore policy options and legislation for building ECD centres, which are suitable for the development and improvement of children.

The EPWP Communication Unit and the Eastern Cape Provincial EPWP gave the Department of Public Works a platform to showcase their mandate through exhibitions, in conjunction with other government departments, private companies, international companies, such as the United Nations Children's Fund and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

On the last day of the conference, the Minister of Social Development, the Deputy Minister, members of executive councils and representatives of civil-society organisations signed a declaration.

The declaration acknowledged that ECD services are an investment in the overall well-being of children and intrinsically related to the promotion of children's rights, poverty eradication, sustainable human-resource development, basic education and health for all as enshrined in the South African Constitution.

Some of the resolutions that the conference adopted were, among other things, to:

- embark on a comprehensive review and policy and legislation harmonisation within the ECD sector in moving towards universal access to the programme
- provide a multisectoral, integrated, coordinated approach to ensure that government, NGOs, civil society and business provide effective ECD services
- strengthen the role of the parents/caregivers, families and communities in providing ECD services
- extend ECD services to children with special needs and children in rural areas
- resource ECD services with adequate infrastructure
- work towards professionalisation, accreditation, improved training and promote the Basic Condition of Employment Act, 1997 in the ECD service sector
- streamline the registration processes and standardise ECD services to improve their quality
- develop a programme of action, in collaboration with civil-society partners, with clear targets and outcomes for each of the identified focus areas by 30 June 2012.

**“Tshwaragano Ka Bana”  
(Working Together for  
Children).**

# Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) beneficiaries succeed through the National Youth Service (NYS)

By Eric Mkhunzulwa, Ntiyiso Chauke and Siyabonga Mhlanga

The EPWP's NYS handed out competency certificates to 18 beneficiaries during a graduation ceremony held at the Department of Public Works' Head Office in Pretoria on 26 April 2012.



The graduation ceremony was another symbol of victory for the EPWP through the NYS. The NYS Programme is aimed at developing youth skills and ensuring an understanding of working within the built environment. It creates work and training opportunities for the unemployed youth and ensures that through the skills they gained, the youth are able to participate in community-service delivery through the EPWP projects. At the same time, the NYS Programme is addressing the shortage of artisan skills in the built environment industry.

These 18 young, energetic, and vibrant beneficiaries did not only receive their competency certificates, they also received toolboxes and on-site safety boots.

Ms Rirhandzu Mthebule, who heads the NYS Programme, congratulated all the beneficiaries for their perseverance, patience, and endurance throughout the project. She further pointed out that there were 50 learners at the beginning of the training programme. "Today, only 18 beneficiaries are graduating because of endurance. You guys were the best group because you were forever focused," she said.

"There were (too) many of us at the beginning of the programme, but the few who stayed are those who are dedicated to succeed in life," Mr Petrus Rampeng, the NYS Programme Director who conducted the NYS graduation ceremony, added.

"Let us go out there and use the knowledge we have gained through our training," said Ms Kgomotso Mokwela, who is one of the beneficiaries of the NYS training programme. She further encouraged her fellow beneficiaries to grab every opportunity that comes their way.

Mr Gift Mphahlele, who is also a beneficiary, expressed his gratitude and appreciation for the programme and hailed it as a revelation that met his expectations. "I hope and strongly believe that with the skills we acquired during the training, we will be able to establish our own companies in the next few years," he said. The NYS training commenced in January 2012 and the Buzaphi Construction Company offered learners four months of intensive training.

Meanwhile the NYS hosted another graduation ceremony for 27 beneficiaries at the Department of Public Works' Head Office on 2 May 2012. The graduates received competency and attendance certificates in different fields such as carpentry, plumbing, painting and tiling after they completed their six months' intensive training under the theme, *We are Empowered to Empower*.

As part of their training, these beneficiaries embarked on infrastructure renovations at the Central Correctional Centre in Pretoria.

Mr Raymond Mokobodi, one of the NYS beneficiaries, acknowledged the opportunity the EPWP gave them. He added that it was not an easy programme as they were 38 when they started, but the number had gone down to 27, leaving only the most committed EPWP beneficiaries to pursue their goal of completing the training.

Another EPWP beneficiary, Ms Lethabo Kekane from Atteridgeville, Pretoria, was unemployed after completing her film-making course. She was delighted to be part of the NYS Programme. Ms Kekane had this to say, "Thanks to Public Works for giving us this opportunity. We are committed to improving infrastructure in South Africa, and we will be able to apply for available and suitable jobs in the market. Let us go out there and use the skills we have acquired. I'm going to pursue a career in construction and I know there are lots of opportunities out there, especially for women."

Speaking during the ceremony, a representative of the Department of Public Works, Ms Nomfundo Ntofu said, "Our slogan says 'South Africa works because of Public Works'. We have empowered you (the youth) by giving you the skills. I therefore encourage you to take the process forward and make South Africa work. Now is your time to go out there and shine with the skills you have by bringing about change in your communities and by starting your own construction companies."

In his closing remarks during the ceremony, Mr Raashied Conrad of RC Civils – one of the contractors who were involved in the training programme – said, "It was a pleasure working with the youth that showed so much interest in construction. Our doors will always be open for you people and we will take some of you on a permanent basis. Thank you for making EPWP a success."

# Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) beneficiaries' testimonies



## 1. Introduction

- Name of the beneficiary: Nonhle Samantha Mhlana
- Name of the institution: Sesona Sibane – Non-Profit Organisation (NPO)
- Position: Data Capturer – City of Cape Town

## 2. When did you join the NPO?

I joined the NPO in July 2010.

## 3. What did you do with your first pay cheque, and how has the programme changed your life?

The first thing I bought with my pay cheque was groceries for my mother and clothes for me. A lot has changed in my life since I became part of the EPWP, thanks to Sesona Sibane, the Independent Development Trust (IDT), and the EPWP. If it were not for you, I would not be where I am today. The programme has made me a better person because through it, I have learnt to be passionate about life and I am now considerate of other people's way of doing things.

## 4. What skills have you learnt from working on the project?

I learnt skills such as communication, telephone etiquette and customer service. These skills assisted me a lot because



most of the time I am interacting with the public. I also gained experience on monitoring and evaluation, as well as data capturing, on both the Web-Based System and Management Information System. I also had a chance to volunteer at the IDT Western Cape Regional Office where I learnt filing, programme reconciliation and more about development.

Since March 2012, the City of Cape Town has employed me as a data capturer.

## 5. What can be done to improve your life and your community even further?

So far, the IDT and the EPWP have done a lot of improvement in my life. It is now up to me to finish my Diploma in Accounting and Financial Computing, which I did not finish due to financial constraints. I would advise the youth to get involved in the EPWP because the training and experience in this programme can change and improve their lives forever.

# Non State Sector Summit in pictures

