

Skills transfer

“People must be willing to learn – learning does not end; stay up to date and grab the opportunities that come your way,” says 43-year-old Lebalelo Mzibedi from the North West, who matriculated in 1998. Lebalelo, who has a 17-year-old daughter, says his life has taken more twists and turns than he could’ve ever imagined.

“After I completed my Matric, I was desperate to earn an income. I got a job as a petrol attendant in 1999, but left after a year. I then found work at the local mine as an electrician, but eventually lost that job too.”

In 2009, he joined the Expanded Public Works Programme’s Philani Project as a data capture. “When I joined the project, I was happy that I was going to learn and at the same time get paid. The project has really been helpful to me; I’ve managed to study for short courses such as project management, among others.”

The Philani Project dealt with cleaning parks, rehabilitating dumping areas and home-based care around the North West communities.

He says the other important thing he received from the project was an income.

“Before I became involved with the project, life was difficult; I was unemployed and poverty was a reality for my family. The money I received couldn’t buy me a house, but it has helped me to support my family, especially my teenage daughter. I’ve also been able to buy house appliances. The money made a lot of difference; I’m grateful for that.

“I’m hoping that more projects like this can be made available in our communities to assist in transferring skills to communities for long-term sustainability. Before the project, I’d been unemployed for a long time and that can be depressing. I hope more young people can get involved in projects that will teach them skills at an early age.”