



**public works**

Department:  
Public Works  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

# **ELWANDLE LOCATION: YOUTH TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

**Input by:**

**T.W. Nxesi MP, Minister of Public Works**

- Programme Director
- Ladies and gentlemen
- Comrades

I came here – to Elwandle - three weeks ago on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February – with the Minister of Water Affairs and Sanitation and the Deputy Minister of COGTA. Our purpose was to encourage comrades and members of the public to attend the People’s Budget Vote Rally in Cape Town – to drum up support for the ANC.

But while I was here, members of the community said, quite loudly and clearly – ‘political leaders, ministers, they come here for our support – and then we never see them again.’ I said at the time that it was up to you – the people – to hold elected leaders to account for their actions. And I said that it was my job to get results and deliver services. I also said I would return.

While I was here, last time, three weeks ago, community members also told us that the pressing problems here in Elwandle were those of youth unemployment. Even those young people who had worked hard to finish their matric, were now sitting around with nothing to do. That is why I sent my officials to Elwandle earlier this week – on Monday – to meet with the community to see if there was any way in which we could assist.

What could be more important than the youth of our country – facing many challenges. My job then is to inform them as to the opportunities that exist in employment, education and training.

But, right now, we know that the Youth is bearing the brunt of high levels of unemployment. This is the result of deep-rooted structural weaknesses in the economy – made worse by the international economic crisis following the financial crash of 2008. So we have to take action now to address this challenge. Government has responded with a number of initiatives:

- Incentives for businesses to employ young people.
- We are also encouraging young people to become entrepreneurs. The Industrial Development Corporation in partnership with the NYDA (National Youth Development Agency) and the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) have ring-fenced 2,7 billion rand over the period of this government for young people to take up opportunities in business.
- As well as providing finance and training, government supports young entrepreneurs through a mentorship programme – where they can be guided and advised by established entrepreneurs.
- The National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC) provides skills in fields such as construction and agriculture.

- The successful Expanded Public Works Programme also provides opportunities of training and short-term employment for young people.
- Government departments are also providing various training and development programmes that they offer nationally and provincially, as well as in municipalities throughout the country.

To the youth I say: the opportunities are there – take them

The President closed his June 16<sup>th</sup> speech in 2015 with these words:

*“While government and business can provide the opportunities, young people themselves must take the initiative to develop themselves and those around them.”*

Above all else today, that is the point that I want to make: the opportunities are there – where once, as black youth, you were excluded – now the doors of education and training have been opened – but you must walk through those doors of learning – and that means discipline and commitment to study and to work for your goals.

Let me tell you what I know – let me speak about the training and employment opportunities we have established in the Department of Public Works.

Let me begin with the EPWP (Expanded Public Works Programme). Government is committed to creating 6 million work opportunities between 2014 and 2019 – with increased focus on youth and training. These work opportunities are created by public bodies across the three spheres of government – national, provincial and municipal.

Let me give practical examples of the training offered:

- The National Youth Service, part of EPWP Infrastructure is currently training 3,600 young people as artisans in trades like carpentry, building and plumbing.
- In the Environment and Culture sector we have a number of programmes addressing skills shortages in the tourism and hospitality industry:
  - To date, 1,760 unemployed youth were enrolled in the Chefs Training Programme – some of the graduates are now working overseas, others have started their own businesses;
  - In 2014-15, 3,434 unemployed youth passed through the Tourism Training Programme. Graduates of this programme have a high subsequent employment rate in the tourism industry.
  - The Working on Fire Programme to train Fire Fighters.
- In the EPWP Social Sector there are a number of training programmes for: Early Childhood Development practitioners; teaching assistants; Home Community Based Carers; Primary

Health Counsellors; Youth Workers; Pharmacy and Nursing Assistants; and Sports Administrators.

As Public Works, our other programmes include the following

- Providing assistance to students from FET and Higher Education Institutions with workplace experiential training and internships to meet the requirements of their qualifications enabling them to become employable;
- Learnerships - which offer unemployed matriculants a training opportunity whilst also giving them access to employment opportunities. Areas of training include:
  - Office Administration
  - Public Sector Accounting
  - Customer Management
  - Information Technology
  - General Security Services
- Technical Internships in the engineering and construction fields as well as internships in support services such as Communications, Public Relations, Human Resource Management, Office Administration etc.

- Artisan Trainee Programme - including: Electrical, Mechanical, Plumbing, Carpentry, Bricklaying, Fitter and Turner, and Boiler Maker
- The Young Professionals /Candidacy Programme - is aimed at creating a flow of professionals into the construction and property sectors. Upon completion and attainment of Professional registration, these candidates are absorbed into permanent posts.

I was speaking about what I know in Public Works – but there are many other Departments and services, as well as the private sector – all require skilled and motivated employees.

## **INTERVENTION IN ELWANDLE**

That brings me to our planned intervention here in Elwandle: the Expanded Public Works Programme together with the Independent Development Trust has been successful in sourcing initial funding to appoint 30 local youth participants as part of the Non State Sector programme. The youth – to be identified by the community - will be placed in Police Station, Clinics, Schools and Libraries where they are going to assist in administration, writing statements in police stations and assist in dispatching medication in clinics.

Those who are interested in the Built Environment (construction) will be placed in local construction sites to gain skills such as carpentry, glazing, tiling, painting, brick laying and electrical engineering.

The implementation programme is as follows:

- Phase 1: 6<sup>th</sup> March 2017 to 17<sup>th</sup> March 2017: Discussions to be held with Councillor Mfecane and an agreement reached on how we will be assisting the 30 unemployed youth. Cllr Mfecane indicated that they are looking for opportunities to improve their skills.
- Phase 2: 17<sup>th</sup> May 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018: We have committed to working with the 30 youth and to assist to identify a Non-Profit Organisation in the area that will be responsible and contract with the IDT. In the interim we have requested an existing NPO from Gugulethu which is well established to provide mentorship. If finding a suitable NPO organisation is not feasible, we will assist the same participants to form their own NPO which can commence youth development in the area. The mentor /coach NPO can play a very critical role in this process.
- A further phase is due to start in May 2017, with up to 100 youth participants to be enrolled. I am working with the EPWP and IDT to achieve these plans

My message to all of you is: Find out what is available; find out what you are interested in; work and study hard – and you will get there.

Let me conclude with a quotation from the Bible: *Proverbs* chapter 16, verse 16:

*"How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding rather ... than silver!"*

That has certainly been my experience in life: education and study bring knowledge and understanding – and hopefully the beginnings of wisdom. An education will also provide you with a livelihood and the means to acquire the things you need to live.

By the way, the Bible has a lot more to say about Youth – mostly about obeying and honouring your parents and elders – which is good advice if you want to stay out of trouble. But the Bible also defends the Youth. Quoting from 1 *Timothy* chapter 4, verse 12:

*"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers - in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity."*

So the Bible is saying 'As Youth, you have rights – don't let anyone look down on you', but also the Bible implies that: 'as Youth, you also have responsibilities – and you will earn respect by your conduct and your behaviour.'

Let me end on a serious note. I am very aware of the many pressures that are brought to bear on our young people – and I am aware that young people sometimes succumb to temptation. I want to say to young people that if you do get into some kind of trouble, it is not the end of the world. There are people who can help you – no matter how

big the problem seems to you. Speak to someone about it: a parent, a family member or friend, your pastor, a teacher, a counsellor – but don't bottle it up in side.

And I will end by giving the same advice to parents – communicate with your children. If they seem to behave badly, at one level it is a cry for help. Answer that cry. Above all else, don't burn your bridges with your children. Encourage them and remind them, that if they can get past the immediate problem that seems insurmountable at the time, then there is a world of opportunity out there, and that you are there – by their side – to help them.

Thank you.