

# DPW AWARDS BURSARIES TO 40 DESERVING LEARNERS

By Nolwazi Ndhlovu

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world,” said Public Works Minister T W Nxesi in the words of the late Tata Nelson Mandela.

He was speaking during the annual bursary award ceremony held on Friday, 13 January 2017 in Pretoria, where he awarded 40 bursaries to deserving learners of the Matric class of 2016.

The R130 000 worth of bursary allocation was awarded to each of the 40 learners who are studying for careers in the built and property industries. These learners were selected from schools across seven different provinces that are participating in the DPW’s Schools Programme.

In his address during the event, Minister Nxesi said the Department of Public Works had a clear and strategic long-term interest in, and commitment to, technical and professional training in the built environment – both to rebuild the professional capacity of the Department and to contribute to scarce skills required in the built environment generally.

He said the task of building capacity becomes more urgent as the country embarks on a massive National Infrastructure Plan as part of the National Development Plan. “We need to remind ourselves that the money spent on the education of our children is not simply another expenditure, and therefore a drain on the fiscus. Rather, it must be seen as an investment in the lives of the learners, in the economy, and in the future well-being of the society as a whole,” said the Minister.

The recipients of the bursaries will pursue careers in Engineering, Quantity surveying, Property Valuation, Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Town Planning.

One of shining stars of the class on 2016 is Mr Nyikwa Hlungwani, who comes from the rural township of Limpopo called Giyani. Nyikwa plans to study Mechanical Engineering at the University of Cape-Town. He matriculated from Giyani High School, and received no less than 6 distinctions in Physical Sciences, Mathematics, Life Sciences, Geography, to name a few.

Growing up in Giyani, Limpopo, life was not easy for Nyikwa, as he and his entire family of seven had to depend solely on one salary. His mother (a bus driver), who is a single parent to him and his younger sister, had to adopt four other children who are Nyikwa's cousins who were orphaned with no one to take care of them. As the first child in his family to go to university, Nyikwa says family support kept him going. He says through the passionate support from his educators at Giyani High School, he was able to excel academically. When asked to motivate learners who are starting with their Matric year in 2017, Nyikwa said: "Be very self-motivated. Prevent distractions from obstructing your path and invest a lot of your time in your studies."

According to Minister Nxesi, the DPW's Schools Programme displays the Department's commitment to the development of young people. It also helps the Department in fulfilling its mandate of being the state's handyman that maintains and manages the state's immovable assets and infrastructure. "This investment in the youth will help increase the scarce skills pool and properly equip the youth with resources that will help them become active economic citizens," said Minister Nxesi in his concluding remarks.