



Human Settlements and Public Works MEC Ravi Pillay hosted special guests Ntokozo Madlala, Slindile Nene and Ntokozo Ngcobo at the Provincial Legislature on Friday. They are part of the Expanded Public Works Programme.

Public Works drives job creation

*The department is justifiably proud of the impact made and the empowerment of youth, says **Ravi Pillay***

THE job creation priority of radical socio-economic transformation is ably implemented through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

The department has set targets of 6000 work opportunities and 600 Full Time Equivalents to be completed by the end of 2016/17.

We exceeded that target with 6296 work opportunities created, translating into 873 full-time equivalent jobs.

Public Works took over the provincial co-ordination and monitoring of EPWP in April 2015.

There are 73 public bodies – municipalities and provincial departments – reporting on the programme.

The combined achievements across all departments and municipalities is 141 800 work opportunities created against a target of 167 000 in KwaZulu-Natal.

The budget cuts faced by all public bodies has in one way or the other led to a slight decrease in the creation of employment opportunities.

The allocation of the EPWP Integrated and Social Grant is pro-

viding a measure of relief as more work opportunities are being created using these grants.

One of the most successful elements of EPWP is the R5.5 million Youth Environmental Service programme which is an employment safety net.

The aim of the programme is to instil a sense of pride and community among our youth through training and service delivery within their communities.

Eighty learners were recruited through Operation Sukuma Sakhe, which is the provincial government's anti-poverty programme managed by the Office of the Premier.

They were trained in areas such as personal budgeting, buying on credit, banking products, communication, customer care, health, and hygiene and food preparation. Additional activities included waste collection, street cleaning and maintenance of cemeteries.

The budget was allocated for accredited training for the beneficiaries, with the aim of ensuring sustainable livelihoods beyond the project period.

Having visited Kokstad regular-

ly over the past year, the real social and economic impact that the programme has had on changing the lives of our people is clearly evident.

We are also very pleased with the Community Works Programme, which is an employment safety net.

It is a nationally funded programme implemented at the local municipalities and driven through partnerships between communities, the government and civil society.

The programme offers regular part-time work to participants at a rate of R80 per day as the minimum required by the ministerial determination.

The participants work eight days a month on an ongoing basis.

The province implements the Community Works Programme in local municipalities, including the Metro.

Only 36 municipalities are cur-

rently active, with plans under way to get all on board. I am pleased to report that 2877 beneficiaries have been employed on the KZN programme.

The EPWP Schools Maintenance Programme is a Public Works innovation that was originally conceived to benefit 4000 beneficiaries in five district municipalities in KwaZulu-Natal.

It has since grown. By the end of the 2016/2017 financial year the programme supported more than 5000 beneficiaries in more than 3000 schools across all district municipalities and a metro.

The programme aims to assist poor, non-fee-paying schools with basic maintenance of grounds, premises and buildings to ensure children are able to learn in clean and conducive environments. This is done through the deployment of

youth beneficiaries who perform the maintenance tasks. The programme is implemented in co-operation with the Wildlands Conservation Trust and in partnership with the Department of Education.

The programme was recently visited by the Public Employment Programmes Inter-Ministerial Committee led by Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa. Our team was then invited to present at a formal sitting of the committee. The committee resolved that the KZN EPWP School Maintenance Programme should be replicated throughout the country.

The department is justifiably proud of the accolades received and the impact the programme has had in empowering our youth in the province. In the 2017/2018 financial year, more than 3000 young people will be employed.

The department works in partnership with the Construction Education and Training Authority (Ceta) on a programme that involves training individuals in technical accredited skills to improve their employability.

It provides opportunities for work experience, skills develop-

ment and support to gain access to economic and further learning opportunities.

A total of 570 participants benefit. Public Works contributes R5m from its budget for project management, learner material, facilitation and day-to-day management. This programme represents enormous potential in equipping our youth to take advantage of the opportunities emerging in the construction sector.

Public Works is a key terrain for advancing radical socio-economic transformation. We have ably demonstrated in the past financial year that our programmes empowering our youth in particular are yielding compelling results. The great leap forward is to empower our youth to become job creators rather than job seekers and to take advantage of the enormous entrepreneurship opportunities that have arisen in Public Works and elsewhere.

● Pillay is the MEC for Human Settlements and Public Works in KwaZulu-Natal. This is an edited excerpt from his Public Works budget vote presented in the provincial legislature on Friday.

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– Ravi Pillay
MEC