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## [Government of South Africa \(Pretoria\)](#)

# **South Africa: Public Works On EPWP Women's Contribution in the Fight Against the Abuse of Women and Children**

press release

*EPWP women contribute in the fight against the abuse of women and children*

As the country observe Women's month and celebrate the role of women in uniting and moving South Africa forward, it is also important to honour and celebrate women who through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) lead in the fight against social injustice and the abuse of women and children. The women we are talking about here include those who work with the Nomaxabiso White Door Centre of Hope - a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) - in Whittlesea in the Eastern Cape.

Some of these NGO women who we honour and celebrate are Ms Ngwenela Vabuhlungu, Ms Zoleka Mtshiselwa and Ms Daniswa Ndanda who work as abuse survivor counsellors. The NGO works with local communities and the police in the fight against the abuse of women and children in the villages around Whittlesea in the Eastern Cape. These women are one of the leading and uniting examples within their communities through their fight against the abuse of women and children. They emulate women leaders like Charlotte Maxeke, Lillian Ngoyi, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Bertha Gxowa, Rahima Moosa, Sister Bernard Ncube and thousands of women who fought against social injustice and for the freedom we enjoy today.

"We work with community structures such as community policing forum, ward committees and faith based organisations to get members of the public to be active participants in this fight against the abuse of women and children. We have also

established support groups for both men and women to mobilise communities around this challenge," Ms Vabuhlungu says.

The Minister of Public Works Mr Nathi Nhleko emphasises that the EPWP's contribution to the betterment of societies goes beyond the target of creating over 6 million work opportunities by 2019. "In fact what is equally important is the Programme's ability to better the lives of our people through the services and assets delivered. Through partnerships with NGOs such as Nomaxabiso, the EPWP is able to afford women with opportunities to lead in the development of our communities," Minister Nhleko says.

Part of the NGO daily activities is to provide counselling to survivors of abuse before they open police cases. Counselling has already been provided to hundreds of women and children who have been raped, physically and emotionally abused. When dealing with survivors, it is important to make them feel comfortable to talk about their ordeal. Once a survivor is comfortable and has been able to unburden, we link them with the police to report their cases. Counselling for survivors is important because it contributes to the building-up of a strong case against the alleged perpetrator," Ms Vabuhlungu explains.

She adds that once they have counselled the survivors, they refer them to the Department of Social Development (DSD) for further professional attendance and support.

The manager of the NGO Mr Zamikhaya Twane - who is also an EPWP participant - says that the monthly wage they were receiving from the Department of Public Works has assisted them (participants) to provide for their loved ones.

Delivering his 2017 Women's Day speech in Kimberley on 09 August, President Jacob Zuma praised women for leading the fight for equality, justice, freedom and democracy. He also made it clear that those who abuse women and children must not be allowed to buy their way of going to prison.

There are thousands of EPWP projects and programmes countrywide that contribute in the empowerment and protection of women and children. These programmes

include food gardening projects where rural women assist in the nutritional support of poor households in their communities; school support projects where women are assisting school children with homework and also cook for them. There are also EPWP projects where women are looking after the elderly, sickly and orphanages in their communities.

The role of women in the EPWP contributes immensely in the protection and upliftment of millions of our people, particularly women and children. The EPWP will continue to work with women in our communities to change lives for the better.

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