

Artisanship for more youth

Phakamile Mabitja apprenticeship programme trains unemployed youth to receive training in boiler making, artisanship and carpentry

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MORE young people are being drawn into the artisan sector through different programmes by the provincial government.

Roads and public works department MEC Mxolisi Sokatsha said his department implemented the Phakamile Mabitja apprenticeship programme to attract young unemployed people to receive training in boiler making, artisanship, carpentry, among others.

He was speaking last week during the graduation ceremony of 16 young people across the province, who are now trained artisans.

Sokatsha urged the young graduates to use their skills to change lives of other people and start their own businesses.

He said since its inception in 2012, more than 50 young people have graduated and were working in different sectors including mining.

"Since we started the programme, a total of 63 youth participated and 59 youth successfully completed the programme."

"I would like to announce that the department is embarking on a fourth Phakamile Mabitja Apprenticeship programme with a total of 25 females who will qualify in various trades. It will start during January 2018," he said.

Sokatsha said the partnership with the private sector was of importance, which was enabling the department to roll out their programmes, especially in rural areas.

"I acknowledge our partners, the four mining houses being Sishen, Kimber-



QUALIFIED ARTISANS: MEC Mxolisi Sokatsha, in red and white striped tie, urged young graduates to use their skills and start their own businesses.

ley mine, Afrisam and Blackrock mine, without your partnership and contribution this programme would not be a success," he said.

Sokatsha used the opportunity to thank the Mabitja family for their con-

tribution and blessing that the department could name the programme after their son.

Phakamile Mabitja was one of the young people who fought against apartheid in the Galeshewe area.

Mabitja died after being thrown out of the sixth floor of the Transvaal police station in 1977.

"To the Mabitja family members, allow yourselves to be proud that in the legacy of Phakamile, young men and women are

becoming economically independent and free through the obtaining of a qualification in an area of scarce skills, making them an asset for the labour market and contributors to the future and the economy of the country," Sokatsha said.

The department in partnership with different mining companies have started the Phakamile Mabitja artisan programme to recruit young people to start a career as artisans.

"In the context of the high unemployment rate, the department in joint venture with Northern Cape mining houses established the Phakamile Mabitja artisanship programme with youth qualification in trades such as electrician, diesel mechanic, millwright, fitting and turning," communications officer Crystal Robertson said.

Statistics South Africa recently reported that the province had previously lost 1000 jobs in mostly the ailing mining sector followed by agriculture.

The labour federation has also called on the Northern Cape provincial government to speed up the process of convening a job summit amid the escalating unemployment.

Provincial secretary of Cosatu Anele Gxoyiya said they were still waiting for provincial government to convene the meetings which they believed would curb the escalating unemployment in the province, which stands at 43% especially among young people.

"After our march last month, the provincial government promised to convene a meeting with us and the mine managers to plan for the convening of the indaba."

"We are waiting for a date for such a meeting," he said.

Gxoyiya said they were also concerned on the increasing number of people who were remaining unemployed.

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