

# All eyes on all-female class

**Boipelo Mere**

A total of 25 learners, who are all women from historically disadvantaged communities, are expected to graduate from the 2018 Phakamile Mabija Artisan-ship Programme, which was started in January by the Northern Cape Department of Roads and Public Works.

Coming from all five districts, these learners are part of the fourth intake since the programme's inception. They started their training in various trades in January this year and will graduate in November 2020.

This year's programme, which the department lauds as a successful national directive of taking youth development very seriously, highlights the uniqueness of having all-female learners. The programme has produced qualified artisans, both male and female, throughout the province.

Since inception, 63 youths have participated, with 59 (92%) successfully completing the programme. Of these, 41% were women.

On 17 October 2017 the department received the Public Sector Trainers' Forum (PSTF) Achievers Excellence Award for excellence in youth development training.

This programme is applauded for having provided proven sustainable employment and a brighter future to youth coming from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

It is one of government's initiatives to alleviate the triple burden of poverty, inequality and unemployment, and to bring about transformation.

Since its inception, the programme has formed partnerships with different mining houses, namely the Sishen Mine, Kimberley Mine, Afrisam Blackrock Mine and the De Beers Technical Training Campus in Kimberley.

Five learners of the latest intake are from the Namakwa District, four from ZF Mgcawu, five from Frances Baard, two from Pixley Ka Seme and nine from the John Taolo Gaetsewe District.

In a statement, Crystal Robertson, spokesperson of the department, elaborated that two of the learners were enrolled as boilermakers, two as millwrights, nine as electricians, six as diesel mechanics and six as fitter and turners.

"Some of them reside in poverty-stricken villages such as Batlharos, Camden, Maipeng, Kagung Village and Magojaneng Village in Kuruman, and Garies and Okiep in Namaqua, to name but a few," Robertson added.

Upon the successful completion of their trade test, the learners will receive a national and international accredited Red Seal Certificate issued in accordance with the standards recognised by the National Skills Authority, issued under Section 26 (D)(4) of the Skills Development Act of 1998.

Robertson said that these learners were easily absorbed in the formal labour market, especially at the mining houses in the province due to the huge demand for qualified artisans.