

## Creating sustainable sutures for KZN youth

2018-07-12 06:00

LAUNCHED in 2010 through the Integrated Greening Program (IGP), the Youth Environmental Services programme (Yes) has seen hundreds of youth participating in the Green Economy in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN).

The Yes programme was designed with a focus on sustainable food gardens, accredited training, cleaning and greening of communities, providing community services and creating sustainable job opportunities.

Over 300 000 youths are currently involved in the national Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP). EPWP is seen as one of government's tools to alleviate poverty and create work opportunities using labour intensive methods. EPWP has created 3,5 million job opportunities which is 58,3% of the target set by government to reach six million by 2019.

Wildlands, together with the National Department of Public Works (EPWP), witnessed over 160 youth graduates in various fields including Sustainable Agriculture and Business Studies yesterday, at the Ugu Sports and Leisure Centre in Port Shepstone.

[</a>](https://pubads.g.doubleclick.net/gampad/jump?iu=0&sz=1&c=234)

To further celebrate Youth Month, the Department of Public Works saw it fitting to also launch the National EPWP Recruitment and Selection Guidelines Programme. This programme was developed by the national Department of Public Works and jointly approved by the Minister of Labour in December 2017, with an aim to ensure uniformity across all sectors when recruiting participants within the EPWP target group.

The national Minister of Public Works, Thulas Nxesi, congratulated the graduates and encouraged them to take full advantage of the opportunity to contribute to the country's economy. He emphasised the importance of launching the Selection and Recruitment Guidelines. "Our President has given all of us a mandate to eliminate and fight corruption. Through these guidelines, the Department of Public Works will be able to give equal opportunities to all. The manipulation and abuse of these guidelines by political parties is unethical and unacceptable. While these opportunities are not permanent, the skills the participants are armed with will allow them to take responsibility of creating more sustainable jobs for themselves and conserve our collective heritage."

Silindile Mgayi, a graduate from the Mzumbe Municipality said: “Thanks to the Yes programme that I know more about invasive alien plants and how it affects our environment. I wish that the programme can be extended for a longer period as it has improved the quality of my family’s life.”

Wildlands’ executive director, Dr Roelie Kloppers said: “The programme encourages young people to play an active role in the social and economic development of their own communities. The focus is on food security and providing young people with the practical skills to grow food, as well as the business skills required to develop sustainable businesses as small-scale farmers.

“With Wildlands’ involvement, a major focus is on climate smart agriculture and the development of techniques that will allow these young farmers to produce crops in radically changing climatic conditions.

The project hopes to channel youth towards the Green Economy and enable their participation in environmentally sustainable development.”