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KZN Public Works MEC Sipho 'KK' Nkosi (left) hands a certificate to one of the student who successfully completed the department's Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) furniture manufacturing course. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

KZN youth acquire furniture manufacturing skills

CLIVE NDOU

The KZN Department of Public Work's course on furniture manufacturing not only creates employment, but its new furniture-making plant will enable the government to save millions on furniture procurement.

Speaking at the graduation of students from the department's 12-month furniture manufacturing training course, KwaZulu-Natal Public Works MEC Sipho "KK" Nkosi said the course was proof that the provincial government is committed to empowering the province's youth.

Nkosi said apart from being able to generate an income for themselves and their

families, the graduates will also be able to create work opportunities for other unemployed youth.

"The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Public Works mobilised stakeholders to be involved in ensuring that the participants of the programme realised sustainable livelihoods beyond their participation in this programme," Nkosi said.

The course was part of the department's Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). Departments and entities who provided support in the training of the EPWP students included the KZN Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environment, the National Youth Development Agency, the Small Enterprise

Financial Agency and the Department of Trade and Industry.

The KZN government has been spending millions on the procurement of furniture from the private sector. The department, which has established a furniture manufacturing plant, will now be able to produce the furniture required by provincial department and other government entities in KZN.

"The province, through the Department of Education, will recycle old and broken school furniture using the EPWP participants to create work opportunities," Nkosi said.

The department has already registered the graduates as part of a co-operative. clive.ndou@witness.co.za