

Publication: Herald, The - Main

Title: Interns empowered to lead own construction projects

Publish date: 25 Jun 2025

Page: 5

Reach: 10949

AVE: R 13811.42

Author: Staff Reporter

Interns empowered to lead own construction projects

The Eastern Cape department of public works and infrastructure is committed to empowering its artisans, such as Sinayo Lurwengu.

The department assigned Lurwengu, the department's former bursary holder, as its intern project manager.

The Phuthaditjhaba Technical High School workshop stands fully furnished thanks to the department's commitment to empowering its artisans by assigning them to project manage in-house projects.

Lurwengu has an advanced diploma in quantity surveying from Nelson Mandela University and was thrown in the deep end while doing her internship to lead the project and deliver it within seven months.

The project was announced by Alfred Mfene to the Sibi Village community in May 2024.

Mfene described the department's investment in this school as a turning point for would-be artisans in the area, as the school will accommodate pupils from grades 8-12 in fully equipped technical classrooms.

Lurwengu led her team to the construction site in May 20 the required quality standards.

Lurwengu is driven to make a mark in the built environment.

"This journey has been fuelled by determination, support and belief in my purpose. As a DPWI bursary recipient, I'm proud to represent what's possible when hard work meets opportunity," Lurwengu said.

The department funded Lurwengu from 2020-2022, from her third year to her advanced diploma, to the value of R500,000.

Mfene said the successful completion of the project reflected positively on the project management skills of Lurwengu and her team's dedication to delivering quality results.

Mfene said having such a school in the area would also bring economic opportunities for matriculants from the school, who would be

equipped enough to start businesses such as plumbing.

"This investment would also assist in improving infrastructure in the region as the pupils would graduate from high school knowing how to fix several defects related to plumbing, electrification and other related built learning areas," Mfene said.

For the 2025/2026 financial year, the department has set aside R6.3m for bursary beneficiaries to pursue careers in the built environment and property sector in civil,

mechanical and electrical engineering, architecture, quantity surveying, town and urban planning, real estate and construction management.

MEC Siphokazi Lusithi said the programme took a holistic approach in taking care of beneficiaries.

"It is worth noting that once these bursary holders attain their qualifications, as part of their contractual obligation, they will be appointed in the department as graduate technical interns for

them to serve their bursary obligations.

"The bursary programme will contribute to a vigorous provincial skills pipeline in the built environment and property sector," Lusithi said.

As part of building state capacity and contributing to the provincial skills pipeline, the department will develop, co-ordinate and implement a graduate recruitment scheme strategy that will attract Eastern Cape graduates in the built environment and property sector to register as professionals in their professional councils and the programme will take a duration of four years.

As part of piloting the programme, the department will appoint 20 graduates across all provincial districts.

In 2024/2025, the department appointed 110 young people in graduate internships, 86 opportunities were created for youth in preserving training and 30 on structured development programmes.



SINAYO LURWENGU