

The National Development Plan (NDP) enjoins the state and stakeholders to work together to tackle the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequality that confronts South Africa. The level of youth challenges dictates that all sectors must come together to fight the scourge of youth unemployment, government alone cannot win this battle. One of the best lessons we got from the battle with Covid 19, is the effectiveness of collaborations of different role players using their different and unique strategies, capabilities and resources. Partnerships between government, civil society organisations and the private sector can be an effective alternative model of service provision.

It is initiatives like these that restores hope and changes the narrative that government alone must bring solutions to our country's challenges. I am really honoured to be part of this prodigious initiative. I applaud your achievements and I believe that indeed your initiatives **“positively impacts the socio-economic future of the youth”**.

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, is the custodian of the Construction and Property Industry, and thus oversees the Infrastructure development as well as the country's landlord. As you may know that, the South African government has placed infrastructure development at the centre of economic recovery and job creation.

Given the dearth of critical skills in an important sector like construction, infrastructure development, and facilities management, it is important that DPWI contributes in building the skills of the future which will grow and sustain the construction and property sector. A properly conceptualised skills development programme by DPWI to address the skills gap in the built environment sector is key in the effective tackling of unemployment and creating sustainable decent jobs especially for the youth.

It is against this background that I and the minister of DPWI, have prioritised skills development in the department to ensure that youth are given the requisite skills to enable them to participate in the economic recovery of this country through Infrastructure development. DPWI Skills Development Programmes focus on scarce and critical list that are categorised as scarce and critical skills to unlock the infrastructure economy

- i. Engineering (Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, Hydrology & Chemical, Cost Engineers);
- ii. Construction;

- iii. Quantity Surveying or Construction Economics;
- iv. Real Estate;
- v. Property Management (Real Estate, Property Valuers, Property Law, Asset Managers, Leasing, Investment Analysis, Actuarial Science;
- vi. Maritime Skills ;
- vii. Facilities Management;
- viii. Landscape Architecture;
- ix. Architecture
- x. Horticulture
- xi. Geographical Information System Specialists (GIS)
- xii. Construction Artisan trades (Welding, Plumbing, Welding, Fitter & Turner, Electrical, Mechanical, Carpentry)
- xiii. Environmental Sciences
- xiv. Water Sciences
- xv. Urban & Town Regional Planning

In this regard, let me highlight some of the skills development opportunities that are available within the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI).

In the 2023/2024 Financial Year, DPWI will be implementing the following:

- awarding 100 Bursaries valued at R16-million across all Provinces for youth who will study built Environment qualifications. (Mentioned earlier)
- Water saving and renewable energy program targeting 200 beneficiaries - graduating from TVET Colleges, University of Technology and Universities.
- Ocean Skills development program targeting 200 young people- skills water and related services in the KZN, Eastern Cape, Western and Northern Cape provinces.
- Work Integrate Learning program targeting - Technical Vocational Training colleges (TVET Colleges) and University of Technology for their Nated program and P1 & P2 respectively For 1500 beneficiaries national.
- Internship program for both graduates from TVET Colleges, University of Technology and Universities (and 50 beneficiaries for KZN province).i
- Water Care Program - targeting both University of Technology and Universities graduates. This will also include technical Learnership program targeting matriculates (For 500 beneficiaries national)

- Artisan Development/Apprenticeship program target TVET Colleges students to be qualified artisans (Trade test and red seal certificate). For 2500 beneficiaries national)
- The Young professional/Candidacy program target University graduates in the Built Environment and Property sector.(For 79 beneficiaries national)
- Welisize bridges program targeting 130 beneficiaries, Building 96 bridges nationally in partnership South African National Defence Force
- Within DPWI's Young Professional Programme, a total number of 70 candidates (36 Females, 34 Males) - are participating on the structure mentorship programme towards professional registration within the built environment fields (Construction Project Management, Quantity Surveying, Architecture, Civil, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering, Landscape Architecture, Town Planning and Property Valuations).
- Under the Skills Massification Programme, DPWI in partnership with BankSETA and the Provincial Public Works employed 994 youth under the Graduates Internship Programme during 2022/23 financial year. The partnership continues this year.
- DPWI in partnership with Services SETA, Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) CETA and CIDB, will embark on Massification of Skills Development Programme by appointing and training 2 500 youth within the Artisans Trades (Carpentry, Electrical, Bricklaying, Painting, Welding, Mechanical, Lift Specialisation, Electrical and Plumbing) as a contribution to the Artisan Development as stipulated by His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa during the State of the Nation Address (SONA).
- The Professional Services Branch working with the Department of Basic Education Circuit office, through their approved processes, have identified a school which will be adopted into the departmental Schools Programme. This school is the highest performing in Maths and science in the District. The Schools Programme provides interventions aimed at: Creating awareness of built environment professions (Career Expos, Camps, Maths & Science Workshops, Role Modelling, Job Shadowing) to strengthen the learning of Mathematics and Science to create a feeder for built environment careers.

- In this school, 8 students, from Grade 9-12, will be identified by the school, the department journey with them until Grade 12 where they will be awarded bursaries to study Built Environment. The journey continues until finally the students are professionally registered and employed by the department.

In the Mpumalanga province, the Department has already adopted the following schools:

- Emakhazeni Boarding School (04 Grade 12 Learners) Nkangala District
 - Steve Tshwete Boarding School (05 Grade 10 Learners) Nkangala District
 - Nkunzi Secondary school (03 Grade 12 Learners) Ehlanzeni District
 - Mapala Combined School (10 Grade 09 Learners) and 04 Grade 11 learners (Nkangala District)
- There is a DPWI career exhibition outside explaining everything I have said here and how to access the opportunities within the department.
 - DPWI has created an ICT platform that allows youth who are seeking employment to register on DPWI Unemployed database Skills for Infrastructure available at DPWI website under Programmes. You can be assisted to register in the database.