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NATIONAL SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMME ALLEVIATING HUNGER IN SCHOOLS

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The National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) aims to enhance educational experience of needy primary school learners through alleviating hunger by providing healthy meals at schools thereby enhancing their learning capacity. In addition to that, the programme assist in improving concentration and contributing to general healthy development of children. While learners are being provided with nutritious meals, they are also taught to establish and maintain good eating and healthy lifestyle.

Key objectives of the National School Nutrition Programmes (NSNP) are:

- To enhance learning capacity through school feeding
- To promote and support the implementation of food production initiatives in schools
- To strengthen nutritional education for school communities

The Programme employs community members as food handlers to cook and provide food to children from needy families. In KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), EPWP Social Sector has allocated Incentive Grant to the Department of Education to ensure that Chief Food Handlers and data capturers are recruited to provide this essential services to various schools in the province. This initiative did not only help in the alleviation of hunger in schools but has contributed to the creation of work opportunities and improved quality of life of the communities.

The Chief Food Handlers are responsible for providing administration services of the programme in schools which includes among others:

- Supervision of Food Handlers
- Placing and receiving orders from the appointed service providers
- Overseeing and ensuring that all learners receive meals within specified times
- Ensuring cleanliness in the kitchen at all times
- Ensure that Food Handlers sign attendance register daily and feeding registers are up to date and well kept
- Ensure the service providers deliver the correct products

The Department of Education in KZN together with EPWP Social Sector embarked on an evaluation exercise recently at various schools in UThukela and Amajuba Districts to determine the impact made by the Chief Food Handlers in each school. The two districts were chosen because they have a large number of quintile 1-3 schools which are a target for NSNP.

Most principals in all the schools visited reported a positive difference made by the Chief Food Handlers in the programme. They indicated the reduced burden of administration service from the teachers which is performed by Chief Food Handlers who are young, eager to learn and passionate about their work. The schools reported that there has been a huge improvement in the implementation of the programme since the appointment of Chief Food Handlers.

Some of the improvements reported included management of service providers, i.e. ensuring that service providers deliver what has been ordered and that the stipulated menu is adhered to. Principals expressed gratitude to the provincial Department of Education and the EPWP Social Sector for the appointment of Chief Food Handlers. It was evident from these assessment visits that the addition of the Chief Food Handlers into the programme had yielded positive results and added value to the NSNP.

Addressing the media on Tuesday, 19 May 2020, to update on preparations for the re-opening of schools, the Minister of Basic Education, Ms Angie Motshekga said that the School Nutrition Programme will be opened for all learners when Grade 12 and 7 return to schools on 1 June 2020. She said that all Food handlers will be supplied with the required personal protective equipment including gloves, aprons and cloth masks.

"The school nutrition budget will be utilized according to the revised school calendar and where feasible, school meals will also be extended to catch-up programmes for the Grade 12s" Minister said.

COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAMME CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITIES

Article by Kgomotso Mathuloe picture by Karen Mthombeni

Community Work Programme (CWP) is a government initiative aimed at providing an employment safety net to unemployed and underemployed people by providing them with regular and predictable work opportunities and enabling them to earn a monthly wage.

The Participants work two days a week focusing on work needed by communities. CWP has become an instrument of community development by improving the quality of life of poor communities. The Programme is coordinated by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (GOGTA). This Programme is part of the Non-State sector.

To enhance skills of the Participants, Department of Public Works and Infrastructure has trained 25 Participants in

Environmental Practice in Ratanda, Gauteng. The course has assisted Participants to set up and manage the community gardens. This training was facilitated by DPWI's Pretoria Regional Office.

One of the Project Participants, Mr Nhlanelo Nhlapo said that they have learnt a lot from the training Programme, the curriculum covered topics such as Pest control, crop production, soil preparation and irrigation. He said that the knowledge that they acquired will be shared with community especially youth to assist them to start vegetable gardens.

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EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME