



EPWP Bi-Weekly Bulletin

EPWP REFLECTS ON THE “PAST, CURRENT AND FUTURE OF THE PROGRAMME”

Article: by Michael Mokoena, picture by Kgomotso Mathuloe

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) recently hosted a Webinar to reflect on the “Past, Current and Future of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). The Webinar is part of a series of online dialogues intended to engage EPWP implementing bodies on key developments within Programme.

Addressing the Webinar, The EPWP Acting Deputy Director General (DDG), Ms. Carmen-Joy Abrahams explained that “these webinars are not decision-making platforms, however, they are critical in providing EPWP implementing bodies with an opportunity to reflect on key issues faced by the country and the Programme.”

“The webinars contribute to the body of knowledge and through knowledge management will improve the planning processes for the Programme. Once the webinar is done, the matter raised has to be engaged further within the EPWP structures, to consider which items to take forward and by whom,” Ms. Abrahams added.

In the presentation to the Webinar, the Director for EPWP Monitoring and Evaluation, Ms. Kgomotso Zantsi indicated that the EPWP was set to achieve its Phase 4 targets of creating 5 million work opportunities by March 2024. She also pointed out that 22 percent of those that were part of the EPWP in the past 12 months and have exited the Programme are currently employed in the labour market. “A significant number 14 percent of the employed are running or managing businesses. This is despite the increasing unemployment rate in the country,” Ms. Zantsi said.

She stated that the EPWP remained an appropriate policy for unskilled people who have been looking for employment opportunities for a long time. “The Programme brings hope to the hopeless who have been out of the labour market,” she said. Ms. Zantsi pointed out however that more needs to be done to increase participation by youth and people with disabilities in the Programme. She added that through the assets and services, the EPWP has increases investment in the country’s economic and social infrastructure.

The webinar also received a presentation from the Chief Technical Advisor for International Labour Organisation (ILO) Mr. Gamelihle Sibanda who argued that the economic fallout from the pandemic in terms of layoffs and company closures meant that until the active labour market recovers, people who have lost their work in the formal sector may now look to the EPWP for relief. “The big question is whether the EPWP should accommodate them. If yes how? If not, then alternative initiatives need to be created elsewhere,” Mr. Sibanda said.

He stated that since the pandemic has accelerated the transition to the Future of Work by several years, the EPWP has to embrace new technologies in a manner that preserves work opportunities and create more to cater to the evolving profile of participants, especially youth who could easily transform from an unemployment challenge to a security risk.

Mr. Sibanda also used his presentation to highlight a need to put adequate measures to protect the health of EPWP participants from the pandemic since a majority of participants cannot work remotely due to the nature of the work they do in the Programme.

The EPWP Webinar on the Past, Current, and Future of the Programme was opened by DPWI’s Acting Deputy Director General, Mr. Imtiaz Fazel, who urged officials to come up with tangible outcomes that will take the EPWP forward.

“It is programme like the EPWP that continues to shield our people from the effect of these massive job losses and provide hope to the poor and unemployed. Public Employment Programmes (PEPs) are considered an important and widespread social protection tool used during challenges of persistent unemployment and dire poverty, they provide ‘win-win’ policy options through job creation, while ensuring that assets are created and service is delivered,” Acting DG Fazel said.

The webinar was attended by over 230 officials from various government institutions that are responsible for implementing the EPWP.

EASTERN CAPE HOSTS NYS GRADUATION CEREMONIES IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE PROVINCE

Article by Michael Mokoena, picture by Nonhlanhla Ntuli-Mahlilikhla

The Eastern Cape Regional Office of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) recently hosted graduation ceremonies for National Youth Service (NYS) programme learners in the province. The regional office held 3 graduation ceremonies in Idutywa, Ntabankulu and Matatiele respectively.

The graduation ceremonies were officiated by the DPWI’s Eastern Cape Manager for Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), Mr Mziwabantu Ntse and some of ceremonies were attended by local government leaders (Mayor of Mbashe Local Municipality, Councillor Samkelo Nicola Janda). Ntse explained that the aim of the NYS training was to provide local youths with skills they can use to lift themselves out of poverty and joblessness.

The Manager responsible for NYS in the region, Ms Nonhlanhla Ntuli-Mahlilikhla, explained that the regional office exited a total of 44 learners during the three graduation ceremonies.

“In Idutywa we graduated 12 learners who participated in the refurbishment of the local police station...all these learners received a 1 year training in painting. The Matatiele graduation ceremony saw the exiting of 20 learners who took part in the refurbishment of their local police station (Avondale Police Station) and these learners received training in various construction trades such as painting, plumbing, carpentry and general building work”

“We also had a graduation ceremony in Ntabankulu where we exited 12 learners who also received training in painting, plumbing and general building work. These learners had partook in the refurbishment of the local police station,” Ntuli-Mahlilikhla added.

She commended the role played by various government organisations and independent training providers in ensuring that the NYS programme was successfully implemented in the province.

“DPWI partnered with a number of stakeholders such as Coega Development Cooperation, Botani Construction and many other organisations to ensure the successful training of the NYS learners that we have recently exited,” she said.

Learners’ Testimonials

Mr Sibusiso Dodi, who spoke on behalf of the learners who participated in the refurbishment of the Idutywa police station, stated that being part of the NYS has given them skills they can use to make a living for themselves post their participation in the Programme.

Ms Sinovuyo Goso – who represented the learners from Ntabankulu – the training was valuable because it gave them skills they never had before. “Since many of us were unemployed for a very long time, the NYS training has given us hope for a better future. Through this training we have acquired skills such as painting and tiling. As we exit the Programme, we are confident that we will get work in our communities and that our lives will change for better,” she said.

Mr Motobatsi Nthunya – who spoke on behalf of the learners from Matatiele – commended the role played by the NYS in providing the youth with skills. “I wish to also encourage other young people in the NYS and those who are yet to participate in the Programme to learn as much as they can from the programmes. They must not focus much on the stipend but rather on the skills they will learn from the Programme.”

Bulletin issued by
Communications & Marketing



EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME