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LEARNERS FROM THABANG PRIMARY SCHOOL IN FREE STATE BENEFITS FROM THE NATIONAL SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMME (NSNP)

Article and pictures by Masego Maselwanyane

Thabang Primary School is one of the schools in the Free State that are benefiting from the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP). The school has appointed Assistant Coordinator and Food Handlers to provide nutritious meals to the poorest learners on a daily basis, thereby improving their health, nutritional status and learning capacity. According to the school principal, Ms. Sejake, the appointment of the Assistant Coordinator has made a huge difference in the implementation of the NSNP in the school. Ms Sejake has further acknowledged that the Assistant Coordinator has alleviated her workload.

The Assistant Coordinator is responsible for supervising Food Handlers, control stock – reconciling accounts and receiving stock, compiling monthly reports, managing attendance of Food Handlers, managing the feeding of learners, ensuring that all NSNP records are up-to-date and are properly kept. She also ensures that food shortages are minimised, the kitchen is kept clean at all times, proper food preparation, and Food Handlers are neat and wearing proper uniform and also manages food orders and suppliers. The school has a total of six Food Handlers earning a stipend of R1640.

The NSNP is one of the EPWP Social Sector programmes implemented and reported by the Department of Basic Education. Since its implementation in different areas in the province, the programme has shown to improve punctuality, regular school attendance, level of concentration and the general wellbeing of participating learners.

Schools are also encouraged to establish food gardens from which they can obtain fresh produce (vegetables/fruit) to supplement the menu in line with the South African Food Based Dietary Guidelines. Learners, teachers and parents are provided with skills to grow their own food contributing towards long-term household food security. The gardens are also used as a teaching and learning resource and to beautify the environment.

Thabang Primary School has an established garden which is maintained by the EPWP participants and learners. Parents are also actively involved in this school Project.

Thabang Primary School was voted as one of the best NSNP schools in Free State and received an award in 2021. The school received a price money worth R700 000 to be used for the constructed a new kitchen. The construction of new kitchen in the school is nearing the completion and will assist in improving the NSNP in the school.

NSNP is implemented through appointment of Food Handlers in various schools in the province. Through the EPWP Social Sector Incentive Grant, the province was able to appoint 120 Assistant Programme Coordinators to provide supervision to the Food Handlers at various schools.



COMMUNITY NUTRITION CENTRE IN KOPELA PROVIDES DAILY, HEALTHY MEAL TO VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS IN THE COMMUNITIES

Article and pictures by Kgomotso Mathuloe

The Community Nutrition and Development Centre (CNDC) called Divine project in Kopela, North West provides daily healthy meal to vulnerable individuals in the communities living below the poverty line.

While providing this essential service, the project was able to create 20 EPWP work opportunities for unemployed community members. Participants perform various duties at the centre such as cooking, cleaning, gardening and others assist with administration work.

The 25 year old Maria Dintwe joined this project in 2020 as a volunteer and assists with cleaning, gardening and administration services. Before joining this project she was unemployed and she is currently studying towards completing her Grade 12. The stipend that she gets

assist in taking care of her children, paying school fees and buying school uniform. Her dream is to start her own business which will provide essential goods and services to communities in Kopela and neighbouring villages.

Another participant, Barnard Setlhabi, is supervising the garden staff, he also joined the programme in 2020. "The skills he have acquired will assist me to start my own vegetable garden."

According to the Project Manager, Siphon Mazibuko the centre provide lunch to more than 200 community members from Monday to Friday. The private sector companies have also joined hands to support this project.

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