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PLANS IN PLACE TO CREATE 390 973 EPWP WORK OPPORTUNITIES

Article by SA News, pictures by Communication

As this year marks the 20th anniversary of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), Cabinet says plans are in place to achieve the remaining 390 973 work opportunities by March 2024. The year 2024 marks 20 years of the existence of the EPWP, which represents one of South Africa's success stories of mass public employment programmes and is by far one of the largest poverty alleviation initiatives.

Briefing media on Thursday during a post Cabinet briefing, Minister in the Presidency Khumbudzo Ntshavheni said Cabinet received a briefing on the implementation and achievements of the EPWP, a flagship government programme that has provided millions of work opportunities to unemployed South Africans since its inception.

"Cabinet was informed that 4 609 000 work opportunities were created during the Phase 4 medium-term of the EPWP, which covers the period 2019/2020 – 2022/23. "This figure represents a 92% achievement against the target set by the Sixth Administration to create five million work opportunities. Plans are in place to achieve the remaining 390 973 work opportunities by March 2024," the Minister said.

The EPWP has over the past 20 years created over 14 million work opportunities, making it the largest continuous public employment programme in the world. This milestone was achieved through ongoing partnerships with the private sector and civil society.

"These work opportunities have contributed to skills development for the participants, as they were created under a range of EPWP projects in the tourism, agriculture, infrastructure, social projects and projects led by women," Ntshavheni said.

Of the 4 609 000 work opportunities, the top three provinces where most work opportunities have been created are KwaZulu-Natal, which accounts for 1 064 000 opportunities (23%), followed by the Eastern Cape, with 903 789 (20%) and the Western Cape at 508 954 (11%).

The Minister said while most of these opportunities are short-to medium-term; some have resulted in permanent employment. Figures also indicate that more than 20% of participants obtained employment outside the EPWP.

Many past EPWP participants have successfully completed diplomas in fields such as professional cookery and some are permanently employed in the hospitality industry. In addition to work opportunities, the EPWP also contributes much more in terms of service delivery, and improvements of amenities in communities and a better quality of life.

Over R52 billion has been transferred to the EPWP participants as wages for work done in Phase 4. In addition, over 600 businesses were established through the programme.

EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME (EPWP) PARTICIPANTS ACQUIRE CLOTHING MANUFACTURING SKILLS

Article by Lesego Moretlwe and Jimmy Mbhokota, pictures by Rhoda Moroe

A total of 15 Participants in Morokweng, Kagisano Local Municipality in the North West Province are participating in the Morokweng Community Work Programme (CWP) Sewing Project. This is a clothing manufacturing project which started in April 2023 and scheduled to end in March 2024. While working in the project, the participants have been trained on a Clothing Manufacturing Process NQF level 1 which is a Skills Programme accredited by Fibre Processing & Manufacturing Sector Education and Training Authority (PFMSETA/FP&MSeta).

This Clothing Manufacturing Process bears 39 credits and covered the following unit standards: Garments Making, Materials sourcing, Finish and store pressed and ironed items, Establish customer requirements and sell a garment as well as Costing of a garment.

This initiative started during the Covid 19 period when participants saw an opportunity to use the skills they have acquired to make an extra income from their daily useful work. They started to sew face masks which were a requirement to be worn at all times in public areas and sold them to community members. Additional training offered to these participants included Start Your Business and Cooperative governance training.

These participants were recently awarded certificates of competence in Clothing Manufacturing Process during the graduation ceremony held recently. The graduation ceremony was in partnership with Kagisano Molopo Local Municipality. In attendance was a representative from the Tribal house, Kgosi Lebone and members of different mayoral committees within

the municipality. Councillor Baikgaki made a commitment that Kagisano Local Municipality will continue to provide support to these CWP participants.

This sewing project was a collaboration of Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI)-EPWP Enterprise Development Unit and the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) -CWP. The CWP established an income generating contribution by buying sewing material and machines for the participants while the EPWP Enterprise Development unit identified the participants to undertake training and conducted an assessment which determined the training needs.

During the graduation ceremony, the participants extended gratitude to the EPWP for the training acquired. One of the participants Ms Dimpho Matibako indicated that when they started the training they did not have any idea of using sewing machine, take measurements of clients or cut patterns. As a symbol of competence in sewing, the clothing worn by participants on the day were all produced during training.

The Project has given many people (Young and Old) an opportunity to be part of the working class, by contributing to the development of their own communities through their involvement in the establishment of an income generating Initiative that helps them with entrepreneurial skills. With availability of resources, the project is anticipated to grow further and be self-sustainable.

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