



EPWP ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT UNIT PROVIDES SUPPORT TO THE FURNITURE MANUFACTURING COOPERATIVE IN KWAZULU-NATAL

Article and Pictures by Maanea Maselesele and Roslyn Mahlaole



The officials from the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) visited Izifiso furniture manufacturing cooperative in Mayville in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) on 20 June 2024. The visit is part of an ongoing EPWP Enterprise Development (ED) support to ensure that newly established cooperatives are provided with necessary business skills and coaching.

Prior to registering this Furniture Manufacturing cooperative, the Participants worked at Izandlazegezana EPWP project and were later enrolled on a 12-month Furniture Manufacturing Learnership. Upon completion of the learnership, the Participants formed and registered a Cooperative in October 2023.

According to Mr Vuli Makhaya, EPWP Enterprise Development Manager at the DPWI Durban Regional Office, the establishment of this cooperative is part of EPWP Exit strategy to encourage participants to start their own business and be able to maintain themselves after they exit the programme. By so doing they will also be able to create work opportunities within their communities particularly for Youth.

Through the assistance from KZN Department of Public Works, the Izifiso Furniture cooperative managed to get a grant funding from SEDA amounting to R79 000 and R50 000 from NYDA. The funding will be utilised to procure machinery, materials and Personal Protective Equipment.

“The EPWP ED unit will ensure that the members of this cooperative are trained on Start your Business, Improve Your Business and Expand Your Business to ensure that their business is sustainable.” Mr Makhaya, said.

The Enterprise Development is a delivery strategy of the EPWP, targeting the development of emerging enterprises including co-operatives to leverage work opportunities. The ED unit provides support to all Sectors and public bodies implementing EPWP. Through this support, ED aims to sustain the growth and development of SMMEs.

