



# Minister Sihle Zikalala visits various stakeholders within the Construction and Built Environment Sector in the North West

Article By Michael Mokoena

Pictures by Lerato Mpiwa and Sobatini Mahlasela



The Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI), Honourable Sihle Zikalala, visited various stakeholders within the Construction and Built Environment Sector in the North West. The event took place in Rustenburg on 19 September 2023. This was part of Minister Zikalala's nationwide roadshow that seek to provide stakeholders with information on a range of developmental programmes offered by the Department within the construction and built environment.

Speaking to media houses that attended the event, Minister Zikalala explained that the Department had a plethora of programmes that are aimed at bringing communities into the construction and built environment. "For instance, we have programmes such as the EPWP's Vukuphile Contractor Development Programme whose purpose is to develop emerging contractors throughout the country. We want communities in the North West to participate in such programmes in order to create a better life for themselves and their communities. It is through such programmes that emerging entrepreneurs within the construction sector can take advantage of opportunities that exist within the sector," Minister Zikalala explained.

The session was also aimed at resolving challenges faced by stakeholders within the sector as well as women and youth-

owned enterprises with potential to enter the sector. The engagement came after the Minister was recently briefed by the delegation of the Black Business Council in the Built Environment (BBCBE) in the North West on challenges that confront the built environment practitioners in the province particularly women and youth-owned enterprises.



"We want to work with all stakeholders in the province to resolve challenges they faced in entering and meaningfully participating in the build and construction sector," he stated.

The event was attended by senior government leaders in the province including the, Head of the Department of Public Works and Roads in the North West, Mr. Moses Kgantsi as well as senior officials from various organisations such as SA Women in Construction (SAWIC) and Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB). Emerging entrepreneurs within the construction sectors within the province also attended the event.

One of the officials who spoke at the event was the Director for EPWP Vukuphile Contractor Development Programme, Mr. Thembani Mackaukau who shared information on opportunities that were available for women and youth within the programme. The EPWP Branch was represented by the Acting Deputy Director General of the EPWP, Mr. Ignatius Ariyo, the EPWP Senior Manager in North West, Ms Xoliswa Letsapa as well as DPWI's Chief Director for Professional Services, Rev. Naledi Stemela.

# DPWI Minister, Honourable Sihle Zikalala, kicks off the Department's process to remodel and revamp the EPWP for maximum impact

Article and pictures Michael Mokoena

Pictures by Lerato Mpiwa and Sobatini Mahlasela

As the EPWP is expected to achieve its target of creating 5 million work opportunities by March 2024, the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Honourable Sihle Zikalala, has called on officials who are participating in the implementation of the Programme to move with speed to come up with programmes that respond to service delivery issues. The Minister was addressing the EPWP National Coordinating Committee (NCC) members in a meeting that was recently held in Pretoria. The EPWP NCC meeting is a gathering of senior government officials who are responsible for driving the EPWP across the country.



Kicking off the Department's process to remodel and repackage the Programme for maximum impact, Minister Zikalala made it clear that the EPWP had to be repurposed towards addressing service delivery issues. "While the EPWP has had tremendous success in tackling poverty through the creation of work opportunities for the poor and employed South Africans, the Programme has in recent times experienced challenges such as inadequate training of participants, lack of exit strategies as well as issues of funding. This gathering must find ways to solve these issues and re-energize the Programme to respond to the socio-economic needs of the people," Minister Zikalala said.

The meeting allowed Minister Zikalala to have a frank conversation with the officials on finding solutions that affect the EPWP. "The challenges we face are not above us... We must all work together to make the Programme work. We must recall why the EPWP was formed – it was not only to create work opportunities for the poor and unemployed, it was also aimed at involving communities in the delivery of community-beneficial assets and services. We must therefore tackle challenges such as nepotism and patronage in the Programme."



Minister Zikalala has also called on the strengthening of training provided to participants. "We must look at ways we can partner with TVET colleges to ensure that our EPWP participants are provided with training that can exit them into meaningful jobs or entrepreneurship," he said.

He added that quality training can lead towards impactful EPWP exit strategies.

The Minister also indicated that another EPWP issue that had to be attended to was institutionalisation as well as funding of the Programme.

"By strengthening the institutionalisation of the EPWP, we can properly deal with the issue of monitoring the Programme to ensure that we deal head-on with issues such as ghost workers and inefficiencies in the projects. Strengthening the institutionalisation of the EPWP will also afford us an opportunity to identify EPWP opportunities in our facilities. For instance, we must look at hiring EPWP participants to clean the infrastructure we deliver as a Department. We must look at creating EPWP opportunities at our facilities such as our courts, police stations, clinics, and



others. Our Mthatha Regional Office has already moved in this matter by appointing some of the EPWP participants to clean some of our facilities in the area," Minister Zikalala said.

Minister Zikalala emphasised that EPWP remained relevant, especially as the country's unemployment rate continues to increase. "Our people are looking to us to provide leadership and direction on tackling unemployment and poverty. We must ensure that we work together with all stakeholders to continue to make EPWP a success," he added.



The Minister has also announced the resuscitation of the Public Employment Programme – Inter-Ministerial Committee (PEP-IMC) which is led by the Deputy President and whose mandate is to engage all Cabinet Members to drive the EPWP forward.

Minister Zikalala was accompanied by the Acting Director General of the Department, Ms. Nyeleti Makhubele and the Deputy Director General (DDG) of the EPWP, Ms. Carmen-Joy Abrahams. The session was also attended by senior government officials who are participating in the implementation of the EPWP countrywide.

At the start of the meeting, Minister Zikalala and Acting Director General Makhubele received a presentation on the performance of the EPWP as well as a presentation on the ongoing work to create the much-needed EPWP work opportunities going forward. A presentation on the EPWP performance was delivered by the Director for EPWP Reporting & Data Management, Ms.

Thembakazi Maluleke who announced that the EPWP was well on its way to achieving its 5 million work opportunity target by March 2024. "We are currently at 85 percent against our Phase 4 targets of creating 5 million EPWP work opportunities by March 2024. We are certain that we will achieve this target by March 2024," Maluleke said.

A presentation on the 2023/24 plan was delivered by the Director for EPWP - Sustainable Livelihoods, Convergence, and Compliance, Ms. Lindiwe Nkuna who outlined the the government's priority areas for the 2023/24 financial year as follows:

- Road Upgrading/ maintenance - pothole patching and brick paving projects
- Clean Energy- to focus on solar and energy efficiency mechanics in government buildings
- Waste management- to focus on cleaning Towns followed by recycling
- Cleaning of Public Spaces - rivers, wetlands, and streets
- Cleaning of Government Buildings - courts, police stations, and hospitals



# Minister Zikalala visits an EPWP road paving project in Eastern Cape

Article by Kgomotso Mathuloe

Pictures by Maanea Maselesele



The Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Honourable Sihle Zikalala visited the road paving project in Emalahleni Local Municipality in Cacadu, Eastern Cape on 10 August 2023. The project visit was part of the Pre Presidential Imbizo Outreach Programme which was held on 11 August 2023 in Eastern Cape. The project which is funded through the EPWP Integrated Incentive Grant created 30 work opportunities for the unemployed people in the area. The project started in July 2023 and is expected to be completed by June 2024 with a cost of R1.4 million.

Addressing the Participants at the project site, Minister Zikalala encouraged them to use the skills they acquired effectively so that they can improve their livelihoods. The Minister also alluded that the project does not have a clear exit strategy, the EPWP branch should ensure that the participants are assisted to form cooperatives and are able to manufacture the paving brick that they use in this project. The Minister further complimented the Municipality for co funding this community-beneficial project.

One of the EPWP participants working on the project is Ms. Babalwa Nyali who thanked the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) as well as the Emalahleni Local Municipality for affording her the opportunity to participate in the

project. Ms Nyali said that through this project, she was able to acquire crucial skills on how to do paving. Ms. Nyali also said that this project will assist the community, especially the road users who were previously driving on a gravel road. She added that this project has also provided the much-needed work opportunities for the community of Cacadu.



# Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Honourable Bernice Swarts, MP visits Soshanguve Township Magistrates Court to monitor progress and fast-track service delivery

Article by Lesego Moretlwe

Pictures by Maanea Maselesele



Since the construction of this court, young people have been recruited under the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) National Youth Service (NYS) to gain occupational skills necessary to access sustainable livelihood opportunities. This EPWP-NYS programme targeted 100 participants with a total cost of R 5 968 299.91. As of July 2023, the EPWP participants have been trained in trades such as Electrical Engineering, Civil Engineering (bricklaying and plumbing), Mechanical Engineering (diesel and fitting & turner), and Upholstery trade at NQF Level 2 (127 credits).

The Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Honourable Bernice Swarts MP, embarked on the Soshanguve Magistrate Court project site visit to monitor progress in line with the expected completion of the project, thereby fast-tracking service delivery.

Addressing the project team and the stakeholders, the Deputy Minister expressed the importance of an urgent need to complete the court which is situated in the township to allow the community to have easier access to justice services within their vicinity.

"The court is being brought to the people and it is important that this court is situated in the township where the services are needed because our people need justice and justice delayed is justice denied. We want this project to be accelerated and that the project should be finished within the timeframes that have been put, which is December 2023," Deputy Minister said.

This project was awarded in 2019 with a budget of over R300 million. It is implemented by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure and it is expected to provide the much-needed accommodation to the client department, which is the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development. The Deputy Minister together with the stakeholders and the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) project team which comprises of professionals in the Construction Industry discussed the challenges in the implementation of the project as well as paving a way forward in fast-tracking service delivery.



# All hands on deck as DPWI heeds Minister Zikalala's call to roll out EPWP pothole patching programme

Article by Michael Mokoena  
Pictures by Sobatini Mahlasela

The Nelspruit Regional Office of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) has heeded Minister Sihle Zikalala's call to use EPWP to roll out EPWP pothole patching programme. Minister Zikalala recently tasked EPWP officials with the job of using the EPWP to deliver vital road maintenance projects such as pothole patching and general road maintenance work. In response to the Minister's directive, the Department has partnered with the Mpumalanga Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta), the Dr. JS Moroka Local Municipality as well as the Thembisile Hani Local Municipality to train EPWP participants on Road Maintenance skills. The 15-day training exposed the learners to both theoretical and practical work of Pothole Patching, Painting road signs and symbols, and Applying Health and Safety in the Road Construction work area. The (33) learners who are being trained through this programme were recruited from the two municipality's EPWP projects and from Cogta's Community Work Programme (CWP).



According to the DPWI EPWP Training Manager for Mpumalanga, Ms. Fela Mashaba, the training does not only respond to the issue of skilling EPWP participants but also "affords the government with an opportunity to use the EPWP to contribute to service delivery issues".

"This programme has placed the EPWP at the center of service delivery in our communities. Through this programme EPWP learners are contributing to the delivery and maintenance of vital community assets," Mashaba said.

Providing more information about the training, she pointed out that DPWI had contracted Eduhouse South Africa to deliver the training. "In essence, the training aims to ensure that EPWP participants are given skills they can use to enter the job market after exiting the Programme. The participants who have undergone this training can also work together to form small businesses and look for road maintenance work with various government entities across the country. The training will serve as an effective exit strategy for EPWP," Mashaba added.

Mashaba also indicated that the Department remained committed to working with other municipalities, government departments, TVETs, and other institutions in the province to expand the EPWP training initiatives. The Nelspruit Regional Office recently took the EPWP News team to Siyabuswa – in the DR JS Moroka Local Municipality – where the learners were performing practical work as part of their workplace training. During this activity, the learners practically applied the knowledge and skills they gained during classroom training. They executed a range of tasks such as fixing potholes and painting road signs and symbols. The participants showcased the complex process of calculating and mixing materials for road patching and painting.

The EPWP Training Coordinator in DPWI Nelspruit Regional Office, Mr. Lesley Nthangeni, commended the learners for effectively executing their tasks. "The speed and efficiency at which the learners are executing their task shows that they understood the process of patching potholes and painting road signs and symbols. We are pleased with how the learners are executing their work," Nthangeni said.

The workplace training of the learners was also attended by the MMC for Infrastructure at Dr. JS Moroka Local Municipality, Councillor Charles Madyibi as well as the Nkangala District-CWP Manager, Mr. Fanie Mhlabane.

Councillor Madyibi welcomed the training of the EPWP learners. "The work executed by the EPWP learners here today contributes to our service delivery mandate. The work they are doing here - patching potholes and painting road signs and symbols- will allow the public transport to move our people to and from work with ease. This project will also contribute to increased economic activities in the area," Councillor Madyibi added.

Echoing Mashaba's sentiments, Mhlabane said that Cogta too looked at the training as an exit strategy for CWP participants. "We believe that the skills the learners have obtained in this programme will assist them to find economic opportunities after exiting the Programme".



# EPWP Artisan Learners in the Free State undergo trade testing at Flavius Mareka TVET College in Kroonstad

Article and pictures by Michael Mokoena



Young people who are being trained through the EPWP-AgriSETA Artisan Development Programme in the Free State recently underwent trade testing at Flavius Mareka TVET College in Kroonstad. The six EPWP-AgriSETA Artisan Development Programme learners are part of the 29 young people who are currently being trained on the same programme in the province. The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) is currently training a total of 309 EPWP learners country-wide through this Programme (EPWP-AgriSETA Artisan Development Programme).

The trade testing was an intense two-day assessment that aimed at determining the competency of the learners in the trade.

"Although the assessment was nerve-racking as one had to be meticulous when carrying out the tasks given to us, we also had to complete the tasks within the allocated time. The process was also fascinating and exciting knowing that all that we have learned during the past three years culminates in this important assessment (trade testing)," Mr. Samuel Folotsi (33) said.

Folotsi is one of the six learners who went through trade testing

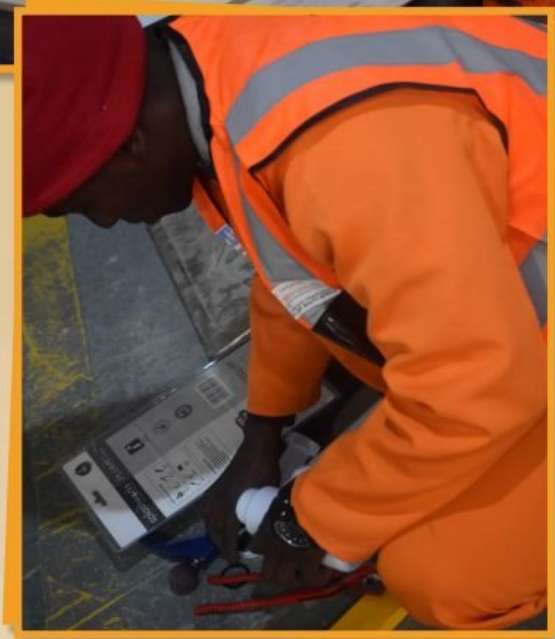
through the Programme. Another learner – Ms. Seipati Green (34) – also said that she was certain that she would pass the assessment.

Before participating in the EPWP-AgriSETA Artisan Development Programme, Ms. Lerato Liphoko (30), had participated in the EPWP-NYS programme. "I can attest to the fact that the EPWP provides a plethora of developmental programmes to young people – I have a first-hand experience of this. I therefore encourage, other young people to take advantage of opportunities offered through the EPWP," Liphoko said.

Ms. Sophy Kekane (30), thanked the DPWI for providing her with an opportunity to participate in the Programme. "Through the skills I have acquired from this Programme, I am certain that I will find employment within the construction sector. I plan to further my artisan studies and to one day open a company that will employ other young people in my community," she added.

The learners have spent three years at the college where they have acquired both theoretical and practical training in plumbing. During this time, learners were placed at CC Chickens – a private company - in Kroonstad where they were placed to participate on-the-job training.

The Manager for Humanisation at CC Chickens, Mr. Stephan Du Preez, praised the EPWP learners for excellent performance



while undergoing on-the-job training at the company. "We are proud of the EPWP learners...they have continued to perform well while they were on-site in the company," Du Preez said.

The Plumbing Facilitator at Flavius Mareka TVET College, Mr. Gert Smith explained that during the three-year training, learners first underwent eight months of theoretical and practical training at the college. "After completing the training at the college, we then deployed the learners to CC Chickens for on-the-job training. Once at CC Chickens, the learners were expected to complete tasks given to them by the company. CC Chickens had to ensure that learners' log books were completed after every task," Smith said.

Turning towards trade testing, Smith explained that the learners had to complete a range of tasks during the assessment. "They must complete these tasks within an allocated timeline. Before undergoing trade testing, the learners had to also do trade testing preparation – revision – where we took them to various projects where construction work is happening. In this case, we took them to a housing project in one of the localities in the area," Smith said.

He added that upon successful completion of the trade testing, learners will go on to receive their Read Seal Certificates.

The DPWI official responsible for this training – Mr. Aubrey Rampeta, said the Department was pleased with the progress in the implementation of the EPWP-AgriSETA Artisan Development Programme. "The trade testing of these learners is a good indicator that the Programme is progressing well. It must be noted that – through this Programme - we still have other young people that we are currently training in Boiler Making and Hairdressing Artisan skills," Rampeta added.



# Durban Regional Office links NYS with Artisan and Business Training in order to facilitate sustainable livelihoods

Article and pictures by Sduduzo Simelane and Veli Jiyane



The EPWP unit of the Durban Regional Office of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) has embarked on a pilot project to integrate apprenticeship training in major construction developments as one exit avenue for participants recruited through the National Youth Service (NYS) programme. The objective of this initiative, currently being implemented at the Durban High Court project, is the development of the apprentices into qualified artisans.

In 2021 the Durban Regional Office of the DPWI commenced the implementation to upgrade the Durban High Court with a value of close to a billion rand. The EPWP Unit in the Durban Regional Office took an advantage of a sheer size of the project to recruit 319 National Youth Service (NYS) learners who received theoretical and practical training on a range of Built Environment Trades.

Recruiting and training NYS learners to receive a stipend while working under the supervision of the contractor is usually all that the EPWP team focuses on in DPWI projects. Not this time. The team went on to recruit 30 artisan learners from the ranks of the 319 NYS intake who are now being exited through further learning as artisans in the field of electrical works and plumbing.

The recruited artisan learners were inducted on 02 May 2023 and have since commenced with a 36-month training programme which involves three strategic points: (i) classroom phase training; (ii) workplace (on-site) experience at the Durban High Court project site and (iii) trade testing. Under the accomplished tutelage/guidance of the training provider, Small Business Academy (SBA), the learners have completed the first three-month phase training block. As of the 31 July 2023, they got deployed on site for the first bite of practical training for a duration of nine months within the first block of workplace exposure. The theory-and-practical training cycles over 36 months will lead to learners being ready to undergo trade test

preparations in order to qualify as artisans. They will throughout this period receive a stipend of R3850.00 a month.

It has also been planned that the learners receive an intermediary Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) entrepreneurial business training. The idea of putting the apprentices through entrepreneurial business training is aimed at equipping them with the knowledge to start their own businesses once they qualify as artisans. A support package has been put in place that consists of laptops and toolboxes.

According to Mr. Veli Jiyane, an EPWP official in charge of the artisan development component at the Durban High Court, 'linking artisan development and business training is what we will seek to do in all our NYS projects. It is all aimed at creating someone who, upon exiting the programme, can be in a position to forge his or her own sustainable livelihood without having to depend on the EPWP.



# DPWI visits EPWP Chef Students Bellville in the Western Cape

Article by Maanea Maselesele  
Pictures by Thami Ngqula



The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure recently visited eleven (11) occupational chef students at G&D guesthouse in Bellville, Western Cape to monitor the progress, challenges, and successes of the training.

The Occupational Chef programme is graded at QCTO NQF level 5 and funded by the Department of Higher Education and Training. The programme consists of 24 theory Knowledge Modules and 18-month workplace training. Upon the completion of the theoretical and practical training, participants will undergo a 3 months training in preparation for trade test.

During the visit, the students showcased their cooking, baking, and hospitality skills under the supervision of the three qualified chefs; namely: Lucian Beukes, Alister Du Toit, and Zahir Isaacs from Feedem group. The qualified chefs/mentors gave positive feedback regarding the skills the learners exhibited during the session at G&D guesthouse where they are doing their practical training.

The hard work, dedication, and passion of the students was displayed throughout the session and the results thereof were faultless.

During the visit, Mr. Thamsanqa Ngqula the EPWP training Coordinator in Western Cape regional office emphasised that the pride taken by the students in their work was not only

evident in the taste of their food but also demonstrated in the professionalism of their presentation. It is without a doubt that the students are prepared and ready to take on their much anticipated trade test in the upcoming year.

Those in attendance included: EPWP Training Officials from DPWI, Management- From different institutions, student coordinators, facilitators, and mentors from Feedem Group and G&D Guesthouse. The attendees who came to witness the progress of the chefs showed absolute satisfaction with progress made as they even asked for recipes afterwards.

This apprenticeship was an initiative of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure in partnership with other stakeholders like Agriseta, G&D, Feedem, and the Department of Employment and Labour. The participants were recruited by sourcing CV's from various EPWP public bodies.

The three year-long training started on 06 April 2021 and will end in March 2024 where participants will be awarded certificates of competency and red seal certificates.

## Success story

Mr. Daine; Skills Coordinator at Feedem Group confirmed that the company will employ all 7 chefs to their workplace sites after successful completion of the programme.

# EPWP-CWP participants open a brickmaking cooperative in Limpopo

Article by Michael Mokoena  
Pictures by Sobatini Mahlasela

As part of assisting to create sustainable livelihoods for community members who participate in the EPWP's Community Work Programme (EPWP-CWP), the Limpopo Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA) has assisted a group of women who are participating in the Programme (EPWP-CWP) in Marble Hall to start a brickmaking cooperative.

The Basadi Bathari Brickmaking Cooperative consists of five women who are producing bricks for the villages around Marble Hall and sell them at a reasonable price. Members of the cooperative are currently part of the CWP and are placed at the Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality where they are involved in community work in the villages of Matseding in Marble Hall.

According to CoGHSTA's Deputy Director for CWP and LED in the Sekhukhune District, Mr. Elphy Shikuhele, as a way of exiting the women from CWP, the Department assisted them in setting up the cooperative.

"Through our exit strategies, we want to see CWP participants exit the Programme and go on to become entrepreneurs. In essence, through cooperatives like Basadi Bathari, we want to see participants move from the second layer of the economy into the mainstream," Shikuhele explained.

He added that exiting participants into sustainable opportunities would also create space for other community members to enter the CWP.

Turning to talk about Basadi Bathari Cooperative, Shikuhele explained that CoGHSTA worked with the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) and the Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality to assist the five women in setting up the cooperative. "We also ensured that the women have the required machinery to get the project moving. In deed we are pleased with the work that the women are doing in this cooperative," he said.

The DPWI is providing a range of enterprise development support to Basadi Bathari Cooperative. The Manager for EPWP Enterprise Development in Limpopo, Ms. Victoria Mphahlele explains. "The enterprise development support that we give to the cooperative includes working with them to ensure that all their administrative documentation is in order and comply with the law. We also engage them to ensure that they are encouraged to do the work efficiently," Mphahlele said.

Basadi Bathari Cooperative is also supported by Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality. The municipality's CWP Administrator, Mr. Frans Madisha, explained that they (the municipality) have assisted the women on a range of administrative and legal issues that were required to register the cooperative. "We also ensured that the participants acquired brickmaking training," Madisha said.

## Participants' Testimonials

The Chairperson of the cooperative, Ms. Tiny Tshehla, explained that they decided to set up a cooperative after identifying a gap in the market. "We realised that many residents in the area are building and they required bricks to carry out the construction of their houses. Immediately after opening the cooperative and producing the bricks, we started seeing some of the community members coming through to buy from us. That gave us motivation to work even harder to ensure that we produce quality material," Tshehla said.

The Secretary for the cooperative, Ms. Pheldah Moshidi, said that the organisation has given them an opportunity to earn a decent income. "We are able to provide for our families with the wages we earn from this cooperative," she said.



# Mthatha Regional Office for DPWI hosts EPWP-NYS graduation ceremony

Article by Michael Mokoena and Lerato Mpiwa

Pictures by Lerato Mpiwa



The Mthatha Regional Office of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure recently hosted a graduation ceremony for EPWP-NYS learners. The 26 learners who graduated participated in the renovations and repair of the Ngangelizwe Police Station in Mthatha, Eastern Cape.

According to the manager for EPWP in the regional office, Mr. Diaho Moso, the learners were placed for a duration of 12 months and were trained in paving and plumbing.

It emerged during the graduation ceremony that, three of the learners – Chuma Ngqongwa, Zimasa, and Azola Madyi – have been absorbed by several subcontractors who are working on this project. A representative for Motheo Construction Group hinted that they would look at the possibility of employing some of the learners in an event where they get more construction projects in the area in the future.



Moso was assisted by his team which included Ms. Nonhlanhla Ntuli-Mahlikihla, Mr. Ndaba Sobuce, Ms. Nomfusi Pantshwa, and Sanele Williams.

The graduation ceremony was attended by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure's Provincial Manager for EPWP, Mr. Mziwabantu Ntese as well as senior officials from Mthatha Regional Office.

In his presentation, Ntese encouraged the learners to consider pursuing careers in the construction and built environment. "Through this Programme, our wish is to introduce you to the world of construction. We hope that you will use the knowledge and skills you have acquired from the programme to study further in this field. We also hope that you will use the toolboxes we are giving you to look for economic opportunities in your communities and within the province," Ntese said.



The toolboxes the graduates received will allow them to look for maintenance and construction projects in their communities. Also in attendance were several councillors from the King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality. Speaking on behalf of the municipality, Councillor Ndabezintle Gwebani congratulated the graduates and wished them well for the future.

"The government has given you skills through this programme... you have also been given toolboxes and the tools to do the work you have been trained for. It is now up to you to use the skills and the tools of trades to look for opportunities and create a better life for yourselves," Councillor Gwebani told graduates.

Councillor Gwebani also thanked DPWI and all stakeholders who contributed to the success of the Ngangelizwe Police Station project.

Some of the stakeholders that attended the event included the officials from KSD TVET College, the Department of Employment and Labour, Lindamahle Innovation Centre, and FurnTech.

Ms. Nontsikelelo Qegu from the Department of Employment and Labour provided the graduates with information on the services offered by the Department.

"We will also request you to register yourselves in our database which will provide you with an opportunity to access all services that we offer as a Department...the services that we offer include information on jobs that are available in your community or in your stream of learning," Qegu said.

Ms. Makasi Linda from KSD TVET College also shared information about the academic programmes that are offered by the institution.

Representatives from the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) also attended the ceremony.



### Participants' Testimonials

Speaking on behalf of the graduates, Ms. Zanele Ncedo thanked the government for the opportunity to participate in the EPWP-NYS programme. "Some of us were unemployed before participating in the programme. We have learned a lot about the field of construction. We appeal to DPWI to continue to provide other young people with opportunities to participate in this programme," Ncedo said.

# DPWI partners with NPOs to create EPWP work opportunities

Article by Michael Mokoena

Pictures by Mosima Ndlanzi



The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) continues to work with community based organisations to tackle challenges of poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment throughout the country. The Department has in the current financial year contracted 496 Non-Profit Organisations to assist with poverty reduction initiatives by creating EPWP work opportunities for the poor and unemployed South Africans. One of the NPOs contracted by the Department is Shomang Sebenzani NPO which is operating in Alexandra in Gauteng. The NPO – whose main mandate is to attend to helping orphaned children and the aged and assist with environmental matters in Alexandra – has created 107 EPWP work opportunities for the unemployed residents in the area.

According to DPWI's Deputy Director for EPWP Non-State Sector, Ms. Mosima Ndlanzi, the EPWP participants who are working in this NPO carry out a range of activities such as:

- River Cleaning - Removing solid waste from the Jukskei River in Alexandra which entails collection of bottles, plastic and paper from the river.
- School Food Gardening – This activity involves planting and maintenance of vegetable gardens established in local schools. The produce from the gardens are offered to the identified orphans, elderly and chronic illness patient from local clinics.
- School educational awareness on water pollution- Eleven (11) schools in Alexandra participate in the school educational awareness programme. Awareness is on how to save water, discouraging illegal dumping and the need to separate waste at source.
- Waste Management - The NPO has a partnership with Pikitup to collect waste in designated areas. Areas designated for collection of waste by Shomang are Morningside, Modderfontein, Sunning Hill and Rivonia.

"The other activity of the NPO include the establishment of food gardens at the local schools (11) in and round Alexandra township and sorting waste for recycling purposes," Ndlanzi said.

She pointed out that the NPO has also formed partnership with various organisations involved in the implementation of the waste management and recycling programmes such as:

- Pikitup contribution consists of the driver, waste collection truck, petrol, and vehicle maintenance. Shomang Sebenza contributes loaders which are EPWP participants
- Nampak collects papers such as cardboards, magazines, common papers and tetrapaks.
- Remade collects polypro i.e. 25 liters plastic bucket, polyester, dark metal scrap i.e. tin, cans and aluminum.
- Neopak collects all types of glass bottles i.e bottles of milk, water, juice etc.
- City of Johannesburg; JHB City Parks; Dept. Water and Sanitation; Dept. Environmental Affairs; Johannesburg Road Agency; Independent Development Trust; Rand water foundation; NLC.

Ndlanzi added that while the NPO was functioning well with the support of DPWI, still the NPO requires intervention such as Proper Shelter for sorting waste, Bailing Machine and Scales to become independent and expand to reach other geographic areas in terms of waste collection within the COJ.



# DPWI provides environmental practice training to EPWP participants at Mkhondo Local Municipality in Mpumalanga

Article and pictures by Sobatini Mahlasela



The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) has provided environmental practice training to 25 EPWP participants who are placed at Mkhondo Local Municipality in Mpumalanga. The participants, are placed at the municipality to provide clearing of illegal dumpsites and carrying out general cleaning of the town of Piet Retief. The DPWI EPWP Training Coordinator for Mpumalanga, Mr. Bongani Matlombe explained that the training covered the following modules:

- Separate, Handling, Store, Treat and transport
- Operate waste disposal facilities
- Keep the work area safe and productive

During the training, participants received a stipend and the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE).

"We are pleased to see that the learners have managed to incorporate what they have learned in class out here in their place of work," Matlombe explained.

Mkhondo Local Municipality's Manager for Environmental Services, Mr. Vusiwe Dube, explained that the municipality

was using the EPWP as one of its strategies to deal with waste management.

He pointed out that the training that the participants received was vital as it assisted them (participants) to execute their work efficiently.

Dube also highlighted that the municipality had several EPWP projects that it was implementing such as solid waste removal, parks and garden services as well as grass cutting.

## Participants' Testimonials

One of the participants, Ms. Nokuthula Mtshali - expressed gratitude towards the DPWI Mkhondo Local Municipality for providing them with an opportunity to participate in the EPWP. "We thank the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure for bringing us a programme that can assist us in taking care of our environment and ensuring we are equipped with certain skills" she excitedly said adding that she is responsible for First Aid amongst her group.

# Plant Production Training for CWP participants at Sol Plaatje Municipality in the Northern Cape

Article by Michael Mokoena  
Pictures by Meshack Moduka



Community Work Programme (CWP) participants from Sol Plaatje Local Municipality in Kimberley in the Northern Cape recently received training on Plant Production. The training - National Certificate: Plant Production NQF Level 2 – Skills Programme – was provided by the EPWP Training Unit in the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) in partnership with the Northern Cape Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlement and Traditional Affairs (COGHSTA) and the Sol Plaatje Local Municipality. According to the DPWI's EPWP Training Coordinator, Mr. Meshack Moduka, the training is part of COGHSTA's exit strategy for CWP participants.

"The DPWI's EPWP Training Unit in the Kimberley Regional Office in consultation with COGHSTA recently identified a total number of 25 participants from the Sol Plaatje Local Municipality to attend and receive accredited training in the National Certificate: Plant Production NQF Level 2 – Skills Programme. The training was rolled out over a period of 24 days - from the 14 June to 17 July 2023," Moduka explained.

He pointed out that the participants were all sourced from the municipality's Ward 1, 3,5,69, and 16 of Galeshewe (one of the townships in Kimberley). "As part of the practical component of the training, a food garden was set up by the participants at the Letshego Primary School. The school Principal and COGTA were highly involved in the training project and assisted in approaching the Department of Agriculture Rural Development and Land Reform for additional seedlings. The school has also committed to assist in the maintenance of the food garden," Moduka said.

He stated that the qualification is an entry-level qualification and recognises the key competencies required of agricultural personnel who are able to work in a variety of agricultural contexts.

"After the training, participants will be able to operate mainly in the agricultural sector, and will be better equipped to grow and

maintain their own food gardens which will provide the necessary food security in the poverty-stricken communities which aligns with the objectives of the Community Workers Programme" Moduka said.

He emphasised that the qualification also capacitates persons involved in the agricultural environment to be able to practice the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to operate professionally. "The training also enables the person to appreciate the basic genetic and physiological regulations on plant growth, the impact on the growth of soil, water, nutrients, disease and pest control, and the influence of management processes. It further enhances their career opportunities within the Agricultural environment."

"Once learners have completed this qualification, they will be able to access higher qualifications within the learning pathway, and will be able to choose from specialised fields within the ambit of plant production and food security" Moduka added.

## Participants' Testimonials

The participants expressed excitement about the training and indicated that they would gladly move to the next level of the training programme should the opportunity arise. They further stated that the training has opened doors and enhanced their skills in plant production which will assist them to improve on techniques of how to maximise growth in their own food gardens which will greatly benefit the community. As a result of this training, fifteen (15) of the participants expressed interest in opening businesses.

"We (EPWP Enterprise Development Unit) have already developed an action plan to market Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) training to the 15 potential entrepreneurs," Moduka said.



# Financial training for Tshwane EPWP participants

Article and pictures by Michael Mokoena

Pictures by Julia Mulima and Vincent Ramashau



EPWP participants who are working at Pretoria Regional Court recently received basic training in financial management. The training- Financial Sector Conduct Authority (FSCA) – was delivered by the EPWP Training Unit in the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) and was facilitated by the EPWP Training Manager in the Department’s Pretoria Regional Office. The 22 EPWP participants who received this training provide cleaning services to the regional court. According to the Training Coordinator in the DPWI’s Pretoria Regional Office, Ms. Julia Mulima, the training was aimed at assisting participants to manage their finances better. “The objective of the FSCA training is to assist the EPWP participants to better manage their stipend. This entails assisting them to draw budgets so that they can see where their money goes, avoiding buying things on credit, saving money for rainy days or unexpected events,” Mulima said.

Mulima – together with the EPWP Training Coordinator, Mr. Vincent Ramashau - facilitated the training. “We wanted EPWP participants to also differentiate between investments and pyramid schemes. Most of the participants do not budget and are in debt, they have also been scammed of their money by pyramid schemes. Because of this training, the participants

are now aware that they have to deal with registered Financial Service Providers (FSPs) to avoid being scammed. It was positive to hear participants say that they plan to share the information they have received from the training with their friends, relatives, and community members,” Ramashau said.

## Participants’ Testimonials

Ms. Malebu Makena – one of the participants – said: “The information we have received from the FSCA training will assist us to be able to spend our money wisely. After the training, we will be able to make a budget which will assist us to plan better on how we will use our money. The training will also assist us to avoid unnecessary credits...assist us to save and invest our money for when times are tough, deal with registered FSPs to avoid being scammed,” she said.

Makena said that she wished the training could be rolled out countrywide as it will assist participants in how to better manage their stipends.

# EPWP GALLERY



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