

EPWP improves North West youth's job prospects

The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) training programme has thrown a lifeline to unemployed young people in the North West.



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A total of 146 EPWP participants have successfully completed a course in Environmental Practice -- National Qualification Framework (NQF) level 2 -- and they have been awarded certificates for their efforts.

Programme participant Cathrine Links (27) said the course has taught them how to take care of the environment and prevent fires, and take care of people with HIV and Aids and prevent HIV infection.

“I am happy that I have completed the training and now am going to look for a job with a certificate in my hands,” Links told SAnews.

Links said she is going to encourage other young people to take part in the EPWP programmes as this will help them to acquire the necessary skills needed in the workplace.

Another programme participant, Robert Mabe (25), said he is happy with the training EPWP provided because it improves their chances in the job market.

“Without training or qualifications, it’s difficult to get employed, companies are looking for people with qualifications.”

Mabe said what he liked most about the training was being taught how to take care of the environment.

“I’m now going to look for a job. This time is going to be easier with training and a certificate,” he said.

Before the training, Links and Mabe were regular participants in the local EPWP programmes in their areas.

Working for change

EPWP aims to assist unemployed youth to acquire work based skills and workplace experience.

“The EPWP is one of government’s medium to long term strategies to reduce unemployment and alleviate poverty through the creation of work opportunities using labour-intensive methods,” said Public Works Deputy Minister Jeremy Cronin.

Speaking at the Environmental Practice graduation ceremony in Mafikeng in the North West, Cronin said between 2009 and 2014, government implemented the second Phase of the EPWP, which for the period created more than four million work opportunities against a target of 4.5 million work opportunities.

“The success of the programme led the government to introduce the current phase of the EPWP, which is Phase 3 and also increased the work opportunity targets to six million by 2019. The programme has thus far reported just over 3.5 million of its target.

“We therefore continue to appeal to all implementing bodies to report work opportunities and Public Works will continue to provide support,” Cronin said.

Cronin said many EPWP implementing bodies have been working very well with government in driving the EPWP.

“I truly thank every stakeholder in the EPWP for their continued hard work, commitment and dedication towards the successful implementation of the programme. I must state that our partnership in the implementation of the EPWP is the glue that holds this programme together,” Cronin said.

Because of the collaborative work of all role players in the programme, government has since the launch of the EPWP in 2004 to date, created more than eight million work opportunities.

EPWP implementing bodies include all spheres on government, civil society and the private sector. In the North West, some of the implementing bodies include the Angels of Tomorrow Community Support Centre (ATCSC), Wolmaransstad MOWCS Hospice Centre, Tsaya Boswa Non-Profit Organisation, Ratlou Non-Profit Organisation and Itireleng Non-Profit Organisation.

EPWP is implemented in four sectors namely infrastructure, social, environment and culture and non-State.

All spheres of government and State-owned entities are expected to implement the programme.

EPWP participants work in different projects like Community Work Programme (CWP), Early Childhood Development programmes, home community based care programmes, extra school support programmes, Working on Fire, Working for Water and roads maintenance projects.

Through the various skills and training that the participants receive from EPWP, the participants stand a better chance to

enter the formal job market or become entrepreneurs.

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