

Maintenance Programme sets its grip on youth development

Report and images by Vusi Shabalala

Public Works' Southern Region has done it again! On Thursday the 10th of March 2016, Mr Siphon Msomi, represented the region and the department at large, triumphed as he led a provincial delegation from the Department of Public Works, Wildlands Conservation Trust, KZN Department of Education, uMgungundlovu Youth and other stakeholder partners during the Youth Schools Maintenance Programme briefing and contracting session held at Msunduzi City Hall in Pietermaritzburg. He is a public servant who meticulously and professionally led the EPWP and Special Projects Desk whilst stationed at eThekweni Regional Office for the past years. He is now based at the Southern Regional Office and continues leading the same portfolio with zeal and zest.

The Youth Maintenance Programme is one of the sub-programmes of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) which aims to the absorption of youth who will be contracted into the programme. They will be fully and actively involved in the physical maintenance, repairs, site clearance and cleaning of schools targeted at various Wards within the municipalities mentioned below. The programme will also offer various skills transfer to individual participants. As *'an implementing agent of choice'*, the KZN Public Works is set to lead, coordinate and manage the programme. Stakeholder partners on board are the Department of Education being the funder and was represented by Ms Lungile Yeni; Wildlands Conservation Trust also playing its role of resource provisioning, skills transfer, training and development represented by Ms Snenhlanhla Mnyandu, Ms Nonjabulo Njani and Ms Phindile Zondi; Mr Bheki Mzimela, the uMgungundlovu Youth Manager, served as Programme Director for the day's session; Mr Mxolisi Mkhize, Chairperson of the KZN Youth Development and Mr Thembinkosi Zondi the KZN Legislature representative.

In her presentation, Ms Lungile Yeni, a Senior Education Specialist with EPWP being her provincial project portfolio, emphasised more on the youth readiness and dedication when facing new environment with its challenges. Her inspiration was that new beginnings always have their own dilemma and it is up to the incoming youth to be bold and strong to advance towards new frontiers of change. In her address, Lungile also stressed that each individual participant has to establish initiatives in

cultivating strong and positive relations with the principals of schools they will be serving so as to create a healthy working environment and produce positive outcomes of the programme.

As the programme unfolded, Ms Snehlanhla Mnyandu, accompanied by her colleagues (Ms Nonjabulo Njani and Ms Phindile Zondi) from the Wildlands Conservation Trust also had a brief presentation which was more on the provisioning of training and skills transfer to all participant within the programme. According to her, participants will also be provided with all working resources such as the protective clothing and other work gear and will be continuously engaged about the safety measures applicable on sites.



Above are the programme beneficiaries: Ms Nonhlanhla Mnyandu (left) with Ms Nazi Mazibuko (right) both from Mshwathi in Ward 4

A throng of approximately 400 youth (females and males) from various Wards in and around uMgungundlovu District Municipality, Msunduzi Municipality and other local municipalities were formally invited to participate at the briefing and contracting session. The session is a response of the provincial government to its commitment in creating work opportunities for youth, especially those coming from indigent households. These are youth members that have been profiled through Operation Sukuma Sakhe (OSS) War rooms within mostly deprived Wards. Youth in attendance came from municipalities namely; Impendle, Mpofana, Umngeni, Mshwathi, eMkhambathini, Richmond and Msunduzi.

In his keynote address, Mr Msomi clearly outlined all requirements of the programme, the *'do's and don'ts'* that all beneficiaries had to understand and comply with. According to him, the programme will be active for a

period of twelve calendar months, from February 2016 to March 2017. It was also crucial for the youth to note that positive outcomes of the programme will ultimately encourage the provincial administration to continue with the programme for the next financial year.

Mr Mxolisi Mkhize, Chairperson of the KwaZulu-Natal Youth Development also had his fair share on the podium where he explained in detail the role of uMgungundlovu Youth and the KZN Youth Development aiming at advising the youth on the importance of social morals, appreciation of the programmes offered by the provincial administration for their advancement within society, their individual display of positive behavioural attitudes at all government outreach campaigns, portrayal of respect for the rule of law and have their cultural and value systems back on track. In addition, Mr Mkhize warned the participants in beginning to learn how to invest rather than wasting their ordinary stipendiary support that they are to receive through the programme.



Above: KZN Provincial representatives who commit to the effective running of the Youth Maintenance Programme

In closing remarks, Mr Thembinkosi Zondi, the Provincial Legislature representative appraised all youth who made the efforts to commit towards supporting the ideals of the provincial administration and that as a collective, they move South Africa forward, towards the direction where all will enjoy its democracy.

It is evident that in this democracy today, the youth of South Africa have a special place centred at the heart of government's Programme of Action.

Indeed the *'Maintenance Programme sets its grip on youth development'* so as to tell a story.