

## KZN Integrated Greening Programme changing people's lives in uMkhanyakude writes Sibongile Dlangalala

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**Public Works Operations team at the nursery in Mtubatuba**

Since its inception in 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011, the “greening programme” has gained prominence, prestige and accolades in KwaZulu-Natal province. It is quite remarkable to note that the more the programme extends the more community participation it attracts. The Communications team together with the Public Works Operations team recently visited the beneficiaries of the KZN Integrated Greening Programme at Mkhanyakude Municipality, North Coast of KwaZulu-Natal.

This programme is a Private Public Partnership initiative led by the Office of the Premier involving KZN Public Works as a coordinating department, Wildlands Conservation Trust, the Departments of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs & Rural Development, Economic Development and Tourism, Human Settlements and Municipalities. It aims at harnessing the collective energy of partnership to develop and implement a wide range of community-based greening activities. These will stimulate the local economic development whilst nurturing the establishment of vibrant, self motivated communities that are clean, green and driven by inspired “green-preneurs”. Tree-preneurs, waste-preneurs and food-preneurs (collectively called ‘green-preneurs’) grow indigenous trees, collect recyclable waste and grow vegetables at their homesteads. The beneficiaries can barter these for goods they need such as food, bicycles, building materials, water tanks, as well as education support in the form of school and university fees, school uniforms and stationery. These activities have created at least tangible income and livelihood for 1 269 local community members, including 100 full time green-preneur facilitators and recycling staff.

Another aspect of interest is that in uMkhanyakude District alone there are 14 green-preneur facilitators and 774 active tree-preneurs.



**Mkhoyisile Mngomezulu flanked by the Public Works Operations and Wildlands Trust team**



**Super-grower Mkhoyisile Mngomezulu**

Ms Mkhoyisile Mngomezulu, a 64 year old dedicated mother who lives at the Khula Village in the outskirts of Mtubatuba, in uMkhanyakude District has had a share of her smile. She became part of this project in the year 2009 and has since traded more than 3000 trees. Before joining the project pension grant was her main income which she used to support her 8 grandchildren. She has managed to pay R8 200 towards driving lesson fees for 3 of her grandchildren and also buy groceries through the Integrated Greening Programme. Her future plans are to trade more trees in order to be able to pay for University fees for one of her grandchildren. "I am so grateful for this project", she says. "The trees give me life and a purpose to live".



**Lucia Masango with Public Works Operations team and Wildlands Trust team**



**Super-grower Lucia Masango**

Lucia Masango also from Mtubatuba is one of the old beneficiaries under the Greening Programme. She is a Tree-preneur and a Food-preneur, she started planting trees in 2007. She is unemployed but manages to support her three children through the Greening Programme. To date she has traded more than 7000 trees to the value of R35 000. It is through the Integrated Greening Programme that she has been able to build an eight roomed house which is almost complete. She has also managed to pay for her daughter's school fees and also buy groceries. "Owning a house has always been my dream and now through the Greening Programme I am now living my dream", she says.



**Operations team, Wildlands team at the tree plantation sit in uMkhanyakude**

93 471 of the trees grown by Treepreneurs were planted back into the degraded areas associated with these communities. For every hectare a farmer secures Wildlands Trust donates 1 500 Indigenous trees and covers the cost of planting and caring for these trees for 3 years.