

# “Take a girl child to work” It’s Midlands Region all the way

*Story and pictures by Vusi Shabalala*

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It was almost 4:30 on a very breezy morning of Thursday the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2013 when the “Communication Team” official headed and led the way to Bergville, an area on the outer skirts of KwaZulu-Natal as you drive your way through to Harrismith on the N3 freeway.



Above: A view of the two schools around Bergville. Langkloof Primary in yellow colour on top.



Above: School boys walking in an early breezy morning on a dusty road leading to the Langkloof Primary School in Bergville

Let us remind you that South Africa including the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Public Works takes pride to annually regard every last Thursday of May month by celebrating the “Take a girl child to work” campaign. It is a prestige to note the robust engagement

of the entire management and personnel from the Midlands Regional Office as they marked this remarkable day a day to remember indeed.

The day’s event was jam-packed with two sessions. The first session commenced with construction site visit to a KwaZulu-Natal Department of Public Works’ and work exposure to school learners at the Langkloof Primary School in Bergville. As Mr Mokoena, the Deputy Head of Langkloof Primary welcomed us and other guests, one could get a sense by the outlook of the school site, it was quite clear that there was a well-defined construction project underway.



Above (ltr): The Midlands Regional Office Team: Ms Dolly Hlongwane: EHWP; Mr Samkelo Mkhize: Health & Safety Officer and Ms Nosias Ndlovu: Administrative Officer

The Public Works’ Midlands team led by Ms Dolly Hlongwane, responsible for the Midlands Regional Employee Health and Wellness Programme (EHWP) which comprised of Ms Hlongwane, Ms Nosisa Ndlovu (Administrative Officer) and Mr Samkelo Mkhize (Health & Safety

Officer) was at the helm of coordinating of the entire event. It quite a commendable efforts, venture and assignment.

The first session was a construction site briefing by Mr Simon Xaba, a Construction Manager for the BG Sokhulu Construction, which is contracted to the building of the Langkloof Primary School. Mr Xaba took the students from the first phase to the last, i.e. from foundation stages up to the roofing, electrification to lighting, plumbing and ablution facilities to running water, carpentry to protective storage and warehousing.



Above: Mr Simon Xaba (in grey jacket) showing the learners during the briefing session on the construction site.



The completed site included classrooms, a computer laboratory, a kitchen and a tuck-shop, a Grade R building block with its toilet facilities, two administration offices, a media centre as well as two toilets with ablution facilities for both

male and female students. The project commenced in July/ August 2011 and has been complete and due for handover during May/June 2013.

Approximately 39 Grades 10 to 12 students from Bonokuhle and Thokoza High Schools were the important guests of the day. They were all accompanied by their respective educators namely, Ms Siyaka and Ms Matla from Bonokuhle High School as well as Ms Magwaza, Ms Sithole and Ms Mabaso. Thokoza High School is situated in the Bethany Area of Bergville.



Above: State of the Art: The KZN Public Works' Midlands Regional Office. This is where the second part of the programme unfolded

The second session was a programmed briefing session on the entire background information of all Directorates within the Department of Public Works' Midlands Region. The programme was chaired by Mr Sbonelo Mncwango. After a warm opening and welcome by Ms Mpungose, a brief on the purpose of the event was delivered by Ms Fikile Luthuli, Deputy Manager: Human Rights & Service Delivery from Head Office in Pietermaritzburg.



Seen above is Ms Fikile Luthuli: Deputy Manager: Service Delivery. During her delivery keynote address

Presentations were then conducted by respective expertise to equip the students with the knowledge and background on the services rendered by all the sections and directorates. Presentations were henceforth conducted by Mr Sabelo Khuzwayo from the Human Resource Development who delivered more on the consolidated sectional presentation which included amongst others Human Resources, Personnel Utilisation, Personnel Training and Development and other Auxiliary Services. The second presentation was given by Mr Mdingwa Nyathi, the Chief Architect for the Midlands Regional Office. His presentation was more on Programme Management and Professional Services which had more to do with expertise fields in the construction sector such as

Quantity Surveyor, Bricklaying, Welding, Electrician, etc.

The key delivery message was done by Ms Musa Khumalo, an Intern Project Manager who is also part of the KZN Public Works fraternity. Her speech was full of touch, inspiration, influence and motivation that served to proffer a bright direction for the learners. It was indeed a moment where the student guests had to make proper choices in taking a concise and executive decision for the betterment of their careers by choosing the construction industry. It should also be mentioned that Musa is currently attached to the KZN Department of Public Works Internship Programme. She enjoys the fruits of her labour through the Internship Programme after she obtained the bursary through the Department's Human Resource Development. She devoted the moment in urging the students the desire to ply their future career in the construction industry. A *"question and answer"* session which gave a closure of the briefing session was done.



Above is all systems go for the learners during the second session of the event

The most important part of the programme which made the guests students impressed was the handing



over of certificates and gifts sponsored by Cell C Mobile Company, an institution that is highly in support of the *“Take a Girl Child to Work”* campaign and which ensures that the South African Youth students remain the pinnacle of the country’s success. The certificate and gifts handover session was graced by Ms Fikile Luthuli on behalf of the Midlands Regional Manager, Mr Gcina Hadebe who was officially on another urgent official appointment.

As part of the final part of the programme, the two learners Ms Mabongi Mazibuko and Ms Nothando Msibi who represented the Bonokuhle and Thokoza High Schools respectively also had their fair share of pride to err their views and wishes regarding the occasion. Their vibrant but also exhilarating speeches indicated a sense in them that spelt their wish and need to acquire as much more information on Public Works as they could within a spur of a moment. Their analytical views were well applauded by their peers and other guests. In addition, two educators, namely Ms Magwaza (Thokoza High School) and Ms Matla (Bonokuhle High school) did not just leave all to the kids but had a very well thought-of vote of thanks towards their experience on the issues of the day.

Mr Edward Shoji, acting Regional Manager for Midlands Regional Office had the last word and it was his audacity that ensured that “all that is well always ends well”. He positively extended all his complements and thanks for the perfect planning, coordination, management and wrap-up of such a prestigious event.

Take a girl child to work is no child’s play... but a mandate. Is anyone out there listening??...To be continued....



Group photo shoot: All that is well always ends well



Management from the Midlands Regional Office during with the educators and the two profound future leaders in school uniform (in striped jacket is Ms Nothando Msibi: Thokoza High and in maroon colours is Ms Mabongi Mazibuko: Bonokuhle High).

