

“Youth Maintenance Programme”... a new leaf for Public Works’ EPWP as the Msinga communities benefit.

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On Wednesday the 29th of August 2012 the Tugela Ferry Education Centre became a centre piece and hub that cuddled the people of Msinga together. It served as a nerve centre of “hope and prosperity” situated right at Msinga, an area in the Midlands of KwaZulu-Natal where a throng of optimistic but “down-to-earth” community members of the area gathered together for a scheduled “Youth Maintenance Programme” briefing session arranged by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Public Works in collaboration with the Department of Education and led by the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) Directorate under the leadership of Mr Xolani Xulu.



The District Manager from the Provincial Department of Education on the word and seated and listening attentively are (ltr) Messrs Xulu and Hadebe from Public Works and Nkosi from Department of Education

The day started with that oomph , excitement and vigour as one would have noticed the professional setup and arrangement of the venue, taking into account the manner in which the guests responded to time management as the venue was full to capacity and ready for action... the briefing session.

As no time was left to waste the Programme Director, Mr Nkosi from the Provincial Department of Education and based in Ladysmith, introduced all key guests and made a detailed elucidation on the purpose of the day’s programme. After the official opening of the session, Mr Majola, the District Manager from the Provincial Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal conducted a warm welcome to all the key presenters, guests, beneficiaries and other members of Msinga and the surrounding areas to the programme in question.



**“The man at the helm in Midlands Region for Works”
Above: Regional Manager for Midlands Region, Mr Hadebe introducing representatives from Public Works**

As the occasion continued, the Regional Manager for Public Works’ Midlands Region, Mr Hadebe was also on board to welcome and specifically introduce all Public Works’ officials who attended the session.

From the remarks by the Programme Director, it was quite understandable that the “Youth Maintenance Programme” is a programme that falls under the auspices of “Operation Sukuma Sakhe”, with specific intention to develop work opportunities for

the poorer amongst the poor. The residents of Msinga were amongst the community groups that were targeted as such in order to realise the existence of the programme.



“The man on top of good things” Above and below: Mr Xolani Xulu, Senior Manager: EPWP from Public Works as he delivered Youth Maintenance Programme presentation



Mr Xolani Xulu, the Senior Manager for Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) from the KZN Public Works based at Head Office in Pietermaritzburg served as a brainchild towards the progress of this new leaf of poverty alleviation and service delivery subject. Much of the briefing session was mainly on Mr Xulu’s presentation and which he conducted with ease and confidence that confirmed and attested the understanding of the subject matter in the eyes and the back of the guests and beneficiaries’ minds. Equally so, no Government initiative will ever show progress if the no one garners the support of the targeted recipients to the initiative.

The massive attendance of communities was a testimony to this assertion.



Some community members and guests during the briefing session

The major thrust and objective of this programme is to develop and benefit the poorer and unemployed community members of Msinga. However, the focus of this initiative is also to make provision of crucial service delivery to identified schools around Msinga area by the appointed candidates. Service delivery projects will be in a form of cleaning of school yards, repairing of dilapidated building infrastructure within the schools, cutting and management of garden and grass lands within identified school yards. This initiative is an effort between the Departments of Public Works and Education respectively, with Public Works being the spearhead of the programme driven and managed by Public Works’ EPWP directorate under the leadership of Mr Xulu. Initially of course this is a brainchild from the Office of the Premier.

“It should be emphasised that this programme is mainly for all those unemployed members of the community” said Mr Xulu. “I further urge you all as the chosen ones that in and with this programme, you will all be provided with the required resources such as appropriate uniform to render the required services” He alluded. “Further incentives will be the financial benefit in

terms of an amount of R80.00 per day per person. You will be expected to render your services specifically only for three days which will be Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays on weekly basis” added Mr Xulu. This remark made an ululation and applauds from the beneficiaries and guests during his presentation. From this presentation, it is observable that the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government has made a commitment and assurance that a cash injection has been made available and committed for the programme. In this instance beneficiaries will be compensated in a form of “stipends”.

As the programme continued, Mr Xulu also stressed the fact that the programme will initially commence at the beginning of September 2012 once all logistical matters such as collating of sizes for uniform and other personal details of candidates have been concluded. Mr Xulu also made a serious emphasis that “all of you will be bound to a contractual obligation including a time sheet that will ascertain that all participating beneficiaries adhere to the agreement” he stressed.

In continuation, Mr S Mkhize, who serve as the Safety Officer from the Midlands Region also had an opportunity to deliver a presentation that reflected more on safety and other precautionary measures for beneficiaries to be knowledgeable and adhered to by all candidates. Mr Mkhize mentioned it explicitly clear and fathomable that all appointed candidates “must refrain from the use of alcohol and substance abuse while in the line of duty” he stressed. People should refrain from engaging themselves and interacting wrongfully with school children as the basis of the contract is the provision of services towards the Msinga area for the benefit of the Msinga communities.” He emphasised.

A presentation on contractual agreement was also delivered by Mr Musa Ngubane within the EPWP Directorate from the Midlands Region. The focus of this presentation was to ensure that all appointees indeed understood the importance of this programme as proffered for by the Provincial Government as championed by Public Works’ EPWP. The manner in which the presentations were structured was so professional in that it could ensure synergy and assurance that all participating candidates clearly understood the contents of the programme and its implications. Mr Ngubane indicated to all candidates that “should a person feel he or she wishes to terminate the contract he or she will be free to indicate and report as such to relevant structures of the programme” he said.

After all presentations were done, attendees were given opportunities for questions and comments. From the questions asked, it was indeed observable that people were really excited in the participation on this programme. In essence, there was an urge on the part of the candidates that this opportunity was indeed a sense of giving hope for the future and betterment of Umsinga and its people. In appreciation, there were positive compliments from some of the beneficiaries who commended Public Works in its efforts to alleviate poverty.

Equally so, all representatives who delivered the presentations were more than prepared to provide satisfactory answers to all. It was very impressive in understanding the explanations that were given by Mr Xulu that related the manner in which the programme has been structured for the provisioning of work opportunities with an emphasis of poverty alleviation. One other crucial element is that all candidates were clearly informed about their respective personal needs and urge in life and that the

onus is on them to honour and respect the programme. This may also assist the programme managers to ensure that the programme could assist all participants to sustain their livelihood. All candidates were even motivated to ensure that they remain committed to the course as this programme qualifies to dealing with the eradication of poverty.



A group photo shoot which included leadership representatives from Government and the beneficiaries



Mrs TC Mdlalose, the Chief Education Specialist (AET & ECD) from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education

Before closure, Mrs TC Mdlalose, the Chief Education Specialist (AET & ECD) from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education in Midlands Region also utilised the opportunity to increase awareness to those attendees who would wish to enrol for adult education and training studies at Msinga and the surrounding areas so as to also benefit the people of Msinga.



Standing: Above and below: The “big-wigs” of the Youth Maintenance Programme as spearheaded by Mr Xolani Xulu (third from the right)



In closure, the Programme Director advised the participating beneficiaries to ensure that for those who do not have at this stage any valid identity document should ensure that they do so as this will minimise a lot of personal complications. The District Manager also emphasised and remarked that the contracts will also affect the school principals so as to ensure that they are content with the progress of the Youth Maintenance Programme. This means that the school principals will be the first point of contact in ensuring that there is indeed

delivery on the part of the Provincial
Government through this programme.



**A pat on the back!!! Passion for what one does at work.....
What next is this man pondering on? Another roject in mind?...
Let us wait and see.. All that is well always ends well...**