



MY DISTRICT TODAY



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Expanded Public Works Programme, a life changer

Thirty-nine-year-old Sophie Ntsomela from Limpopo was a well-known vegetable vendor in her community. She never liked her job, but had to do it because she had to make ends meet.

Ntsomela has two kids in school, one in Grade 10 and the other in Grade Two. Although she herself never finished school, their education is important to her. "I was never a bright person in school and dropped out, but I know that education is important and I want to empower my kids."

After realising she couldn't pass Matric and faced with the reality of how difficult it is to find a job, she decided to become a vendor to feed her family. She struggled at times, but she couldn't give up. For five years, she relied on tomatoes to support her children.

"In 2009, a friend told me about an Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) project and I wasted no time in becoming part of it. The project saved me from poverty. I joined the Tivoneleni Bakery Project, which changed my life. I was paid a monthly stipend and the money helped me a lot. I bought a television set for my children with my first stipend."

Once she became used to having a regular income, she decided to save money to renovate

her house. "I managed to save enough money to buy a fridge, finish building our house and put up a fence around the yard."

Ntsomela says she is grateful that an opportunity like this came along and changed her life. Although the project has ended, its benefits will last forever.

"I was really struggling before I joined the project and it changed my life. I'm sad that it has ended as it made a huge difference in my life."

The EPWP is one of an array of government programmes aimed at providing income and relieving poverty through temporary work for the unemployed to carry out socially useful activities.



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Opportunities for emerging contractors, youth and women

By Andile Duka

In his speech at the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission (PICC) Provincial and Local Government Conference, Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe said, “Infrastructure drives growth and development. It lays the foundation on which the industrial activities of the nation take place. The experience of fast-growing economies is that their planning horizon is longer than one electoral cycle, and that they invest heavily in infrastructure.”

He added, “Infrastructure will allow us to ensure better financial mobilisation; provide greater certainty to the construction industry; give educational institutions a framework around which to plan their skills-development strategies; and provide a roadmap for investors and communities.”

“The PICC developed an Infrastructure Plan with 17 strategic integrated projects, covering more than 150 specific infrastructure interventions. These cover all the key platforms: rail, road and port; dams, irrigation systems and sanitation; new energy-generation plants, transmission lines and distribution of electricity to households; communication and broadband infrastructure; social infrastructure in the form of hospitals, schools and universities; and regional infrastructure.”

The South African National Roads Agency Ltd has started an 18-month project that will see the Tombo community in the Eastern Cape benefiting from the revitalisation of the R61 route between Tombo and Port St Johns. The plan is to increase the number of lanes from two to four, with street lights separating the lanes.

Commenting on this development, Nokuthula Mtuku, the councillor of Ward Four, believes that the initiative will not only bring about infrastructure development to the impoverished



Tombo community members working on the project.

community, but also will contribute to employment, skills development and crime reduction in the area – more people will be working, and at the end of this project, there will be streets lights.

This programme is not only going to bring about infrastructure development in Tombo area, but employment opportunities to unemployed people and economic spinoffs to emerging contractors. Ongoing training for both emerging contractors and supervisors is taking place at the Tombo Thusong Service Centre.

The 14 emerging contractors and supervisors who are being trained comprise mainly young



Construction site for the R61 Road revitalisation project.

people and women coming from Tombo and surrounding wards. This training is conducted by consultants from Tjeka Training Matters. The project intends to employ close to 100 people from Tombo and its surrounding areas. Currently, 30 people have been employed and are working on this project.

