



# MY DISTRICT TODAY

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## CONTACT DETAILS OF THE GCIS PROVINCIAL OFFICES

For more information about similar programmes, which are run across the country, contact one of the following provincial offices:

### EASTERN CAPE

Ndlelantle Pinyana  
043 722 2602 or 076 142 8606  
ndlelantle@gcis.gov.za

### FREE STATE

Trevor Mokeyane  
051 448 4504 or 083 255 0042  
tshenolo@gcis.gov.za

### GAUTENG

Peter Gumede  
011 834 3560 or 083 570 8080  
peterg@gcis.gov.za

### KWAZULU-NATAL

Ndala Mngadi  
031 301 6787 or 082 877 9420  
ndala@gcis.gov.za

## Government fully committed to improving the quality of basic education

By Sabelo Kakaza: GCIS, Eastern Cape

The transformation of South Africa's education system not only requires dedication from teachers and their adherence to non-negotiable requirements, which include being in class on time and teaching; but also the involvement of the broader society, including parents, school governing bodies, the business sector and government.

With this in mind the Eskom Foundation, in partnership with the departments of education and communications, held an Information Communication and Technology (ICT) Career Expo in Mthatha in the King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality.



The Deputy Minister of Communication, Ms Stella Ndabeni, visits a stall at the exhibition

The Deputy Minister of Communication, Ms Stella Ndabeni, addressed learners from two districts, saying, "The Government is in the process of ensuring that this kind of information is reaching the deep rural areas so that learners understand the importance of technology in our time and encouraging them to take Mathematics and Physical Science. This is so that they can pursue studies in ICT at universities, to address the imbalances of the past." The Minister further stated that by 2020, the Department of Communications expects that all the schools in the country will be connected to the Internet, including schools in rural communities.

The head of the Telkom Foundation, Ms Sarah Mthintso, said that the foundation wanted to do more to encourage the learners to take Mathematics and Physical Science in High School. The foundation wants learners to understand the importance of ICT and the opportunities that exist in this direction. The targeted learners were Grade 10s. The aim is to enable them to make well-informed choices in their preparation for tertiary education.



Learners attending the ICT Career Expo in Mthatha in the Eastern Cape

The exhibits exposed learners to various mobile laboratories and other technical equipment showing them the broader horizon of future careers in ICT.

Talking to the Unitra Community Radio Station, one of the learners said that it had been a great opportunity for her to attend the information day because she never had such an experience before. She added: "Before today, when you talked about ICT I only thought of a computer but today I have seen a lot of other things a person can do when she/he pursues a career in ICT. That is why I will encourage other learners to also take Mathematics and Physical Science in High School, as I am doing."



government  
communications

Department:  
Government Communication and Information System  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

#### LIMPOPO

Thanyani Rhavhura  
015 291 4689 or 082 421 3461  
thanyani@gcis.gov.za

#### MPUMALANGA

Tiisetso Ramotse  
013 753 2397 or 072 219 5136  
tiisetso@gcis.gov.za

#### NORTH WEST

Mareka Mofokeng  
018 381 7071 or 083 382 5909  
mareka@gcis.gov.za  
Galebonwe Diokana  
018 381 7071 or 082 559 167  
galebonwe@gcis.gov.za

#### NORTHERN CAPE

Marius Nagel  
053 832 1378/9 or 083 778 9179  
mariusn@gcis.gov.za

#### WESTERN CAPE

Ayanda Hollow  
021 697 0145 or 083 255 7665  
ayanda@gcis.gov.za

## EPWP Igniting fire

Sifiso Shandu, from Umzimkhulu Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal, says he has achieved many things since joining the KwaZulu-Natal Youth Environment Project, an initiative supported by the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). For 29-year-old Shandu, supporting his family has always been a challenge, as he lives with his unemployed mother, three siblings and a cousin.

“I matriculated in 2002 and wanted to study further to become a horticulturist, but didn’t have money to do so. I had to find a way to support my family and got a part-time job at a forestry company, but it didn’t last long.

“In 2010, I joined the KwaZulu-Natal Youth Environment Project, which deals with security and fire management. The project lies close to my heart, as veld fires are disastrous if not managed. I’m involved in fire disaster awareness campaigns and burning firebreaks as a veld-fire reduction strategy.”

The monthly stipend from EPWP he receives as project manager has been very helpful. “Besides helping my family financially, I’ve been able to save money to study further. I haven’t given up on my dream completely.”

He says the project has given hope to him and many people from his neighbourhood. “My dream is for our community to have its own environmental educational centre, fully equipped to cater for our programmes to benefit the poorest of the rural masses, while providing a better life for us all.”

As part of his duties, Shandu teaches people skills to conserve their communal land, while preventing veld fires that kill people and destroy grazing land.

The Expanded Public Works Programme is one of government arrays of programmes aimed at providing poverty and income relief through temporary work for the unemployed to carry out socially useful activities.

