



MY DISTRICT TODAY



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Expanded Public Works Programme - sustainability is the key

Since losing her husband 10 years ago, 56-year-old Ntombi Dlamini from Umzimkhulu Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal has battled to make ends meet. She says after her husband's death, her life became challenging.

"It is difficult when you are used to being supported and suddenly you have to work. When my husband died, I had to find a way to make a living to support my five children."

Her plan was simple: selling vegetables and doing laundry for her neighbours and people in the community. Although she made very little money, she managed to make ends meet for more than six years.

"I was everyone's helper. I didn't have a choice – it was either that or go hungry," she said.

She explained that her situation was made worse by her lack of formal education, as she left school in Grade Four.

"Without any qualifications or skills, I struggled to get a decent job."

Her situation changed considerably when she joined an EPWP Project involving cemetery cleaning and food gardening.

"Since joining this project, my life is good and I have been able to take care of my family. We are no longer worried every day, wondering where our next meal will come from. The stipend that I received enabled me to paint my house and I also used some of the money to buy school uniforms for my children."

Ms Dlamini adds that working for the Food-gardening Project has other benefits too, as she can take home vegetables from the garden to feed her children.

"The project saved my family from poverty and I am so grateful for that. I hope more projects can come our way, so that my older children can also get jobs."

This mother of five believes that people must equip themselves with enough skills to allow them to support themselves. She says that she joined the EPWP when she had nothing and through the programme she has learnt valuable skills

such as growing her own food, which in turn, will help to sustain her family.

The EPWP is one of government's range of programmes, which is aimed at relieving poverty and providing income through temporary work for the unemployed by carrying out socially useful activities.



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Good Samaritans bring joy to the needy community of Kgautswane

GCIS: Sekhukhune District Limpopo

It was joy and ululations as the community of Kgautswane in Greater Tubatse Local Municipality, Limpopo were showered with gifts ranging from blankets and clothes to mattresses donated by good Samaritans from Gauteng. This donation came after tourists from Gauteng visited the village last year. The group also donated six computers, which they have since installed in the centre. Wendy Sefor, from the Academy for Future Science said after they visited the village last year and saw how Clara Masinga, the centre manager and founder of the Kgautswane Thusong Service Centre (TSC) was trying to improve the lives of the locals, they were determined to assist with as much as possible.

“We have since established a small hub for the Kgautswane TSC in Johannesburg and we have been receiving a lot of donations such as clothes, furniture, toys, blankets, knitting machines and bathroom sets. We are proud to associate with a hardworking volunteer such as Clara. We have learned that she is also involved in the Moringa Project and we are willing to assist there as well. We also intend to introduce the Hemp Tree

Project, which is also a very good venture. The plant is known to have important medicinal and nutritional properties. Clara has been attending workshops on how to farm traditional herbs and plants and we are looking forward to a successful project. We appeal to other business people to come on board and sow into this TSC as it has the potential to grow bigger,” Wendy said.

According to Clara Masinga, the donation came at the right time.

“The contents of the consignment will be divided among local crèches, needy and vulnerable children. Winter is around the corner and the blankets, mattresses and clothes arrived just in time. It could not get better than this. It is encouraging and inspiring to know that there are people who notice and acknowledge the small impact we are making in the community. This gives us the courage and motivation to work even harder,” Clara added.

Wendy also started a Hairdressing Developmental Project at the TSC. On 22 April she brought one of the best hairstylists in the country to teach at the centre and 15 local young women will benefit from the three-day hairdressing course.

“We are looking at many ways of how best we can assist the community of Kgautswane,” Wendy added.

The Hippo Water Roller Project donated water roller tanks to the elderly people of Kgautswane. Grant Gibbs, whose company is based in Gauteng, said they chose the Kgautswane TSC



because there are a lot exciting activities at the centre.

Thusong Service Centres, a government programme that was initiated in 1999 as one of the primary vehicles to implement development communication and information and integrate government services into primarily rural communities, addresses historical, social and economic factors, which limits access to information, services and participation by citizens.

Thusong Service Centres are one-stop, integrated community development centres, with community participation and services relevant to people’s needs. They aim to empower the poor and disadvantaged through the access to information, services and resources from government, non-governmental organisations, parastatals and business enabling them to engage in government programmes to improve their lives.



Sisters in fighting poverty: Wendy Sefor and Clara Masinga with some of the blankets and clothes donated to the needy children of Kgautswane

