



MY DISTRICT TODAY

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Outcome 9: A responsive, accountable, effective and efficient local government system

Community of Prince Albert ready to receive government services

Marlene Hendricks, GCIS Western Cape

The Western Cape's Department of Local Government, in collaboration with Prince Albert Municipality and the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS), launched the Prince Albert Thusong Service Centre – thus effectively advancing the community's access to government services and information.

During the Local Government Budget Vote in the Provincial Legislature earlier this year, MEC Anton Bredell reaffirmed government's promise of delivering at least one fixed Thusong Service Centre in every local municipality by 2014. The official opening of the Prince Albert Thusong Centre reaffirms this commitment.



People getting help at the Thusong Centre

The Prince Albert Thusong Service Centre is the fourth centre to be operationalised in the Beaufort West District Municipality.

A two-day Thusong mobile programme complemented the launch. Various government departments and community organisations drove the programme to ensure that community members receive access to government services and information.

Services rendered are from the departments of social development, home affairs, labour, South African Social Security Agency, Independent Electoral Commission and the local municipality.



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Outcome 4: Decent employment through inclusive growth

Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) helps educate a child

Josephine Sondlana is a widowed mother of four. She matriculated in 1995 in the small village of Elim, near Giyani outside Polokwane. Little did she know then that she would be unemployed for most of her life.

When she received her matric certificate her hopes were high that she would find a decent job, since matric was highly valued back then. Unfortunately, nothing solid came her way.

One of her four children is currently studying at the Tshwane North College in Pretoria. This, she says, would not have happened if it weren't for an EPWP project she joined in 2009.

"The Tivoneleni Bakery Project changed a lot of things in my life. Now I'm proud that my daughter is at a tertiary institution, studying towards a better future. I also picked up valuable skills like food preparation and hygiene, and general baking skills."

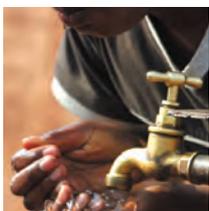
Sondlana says, while other beneficiaries were buying new television sets and fridges, she was saving up for her daughter's education.

"I saved almost all my stipend money for her registration fees. Without the EPWP project she would be staying at home with us, doing nothing. I joined the project with the clear intention of saving

for her education, and I'm grateful that this dream has been realised."

Before the project, she was selling wood in the community just to make ends meet.

"I was also doing temporary jobs for people so my kids could eat. It was difficult, but I survived. I really hope the EPWP can give us more projects, so my daughter can succeed."





Outcome 3: All people in South Africa are and feel safe

Women prioritised in legal issues

Jacob Molete, Gauteng

The Legal Aid Guide that has been approved by Parliament was developed as part of the fulfilment of the legal and constitutional obligations of providing legal assistance to indigent and vulnerable groups such as children and women, when required.

The guide is aimed at improving the quality of life and protecting the fundamental rights of all people in South Africa.

Women from all walks of life attended an estate-planning workshop at East Bank Hall in Alexandra,

which was initiated by Legal Aid South Africa, in conjunction with the City of Johannesburg, the Department of Social Development, Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) and the district and regional magistrates' courts.

The workshop mainly targeted women and focused on wills and estates, what it means to die intestate (that is not having made a will before death), the roles and jurisdiction of the Small Claims Court, Master of the High Court and Executor.

Edward Nathan Sonnenberg gave a presentation on procedures to be followed during the transfer of property, insolvency and domestic violence.



Some of the presenters at the estate planning workshop.



Participants listening attentively to the various presentations.

"We are targeting women to educate them about the functions of the estate office, including disputes arising from deceased estates and the importance of drawing up a will. Almost 99% of black communities do not do that due to lack of knowledge or information".

"We also discovered that most of the people affected by property squabbles are women, and most of the children are thrown out of their parents' estates without their knowledge," Legal Aid South Africa's Tshenolo Masha said.

"This was an eye-opener for me," said Pastor Iris Maliboho. "I did not realise how important it is to have a proper last will and testament before one passes on. I wish more women were here to receive this vital information."

Ms Margaret Madolo, a social worker from the City of Johannesburg, concurred with Pastor Maliboho and lamented the turnout, given the fact that women are by and large the most affected by the late-estate issue.





Outcome 5: A skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth

Agricultural practices create work for unemployed

Mlungisi Dlamini, GCIS KwaZulu-Natal

The development and promotion of cooperative is a key socio-economic agenda item for government, which recognises the potential of cooperatives to improve the economic and social circumstances of citizens. Globally, cooperatives are main players in the economies of many countries.

In South Africa, government is ensuring that a conducive environment is created in which cooperatives are not only promoted but also developed as self sufficient and sustainable business forms.

Cooperatives play a meaningful role in support of the promotion and growth of viable business entities that can contribute meaningfully to the social and economic development of its members.

M&K Cooperative, operating from eMazabekweni in ward 1 of Ubuhlebezwe Municipality, is such a cooperative specialising in farming vegetables. Its crops range from tomatoes, spinach, cabbage and green pepper to other vegetables.

Siyabonga Miya (33) and Sthembiso Khumalo (33) are both former students of Mariathal High School in Ixopo, who opted to seize an opportunity in

agricultural practices. In their personal capacity as business owners they have managed to source big clients such as Fruit and Veg City, companies that supply schools with food, the Department of Health and the Spar group in Ixopo and Pietermaritzburg.

The company has also received aid from the Sisonke District Municipality, which donated vegetable sheds for them to grow tomatoes throughout the year.

They attribute some of their success to the local Department of Agriculture, which sourced and secured a major client for them (namely the Department of Health). "Apart from sourcing this important client for us, Agriculture offered us fencing for 12 hectares. They also offered us special training on plant production," said Siyabonga, chairperson of the cooperative.

Today, they are one of the most successful black small farmers in the Sisonke district.

Siyabonga said that youths should not underestimate the agricultural sector, since it has many economic growth opportunities. "Our future goal is to attract more young people into the

business.

This will increase the production and distribution of agricultural products across KwaZulu-Natal. We will occupy space in Ixopo's new food market once it is completed," he says.

Government is concerned about escalating food prices and thus encourages women, the youth and people with disabilities to participate in agricultural cooperatives in order to ensure food security, job creation, economic growth and poverty alleviation.



Siyabonga Miya and Sthembiso Khumalo showing their crops.

