



MY DISTRICT TODAY

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OUTCOME 1: IMPROVED QUALITY OF BASIC EDUCATION

Rural Nhangwini community treasures gift of computers

By Nomzamo Zondi: GCIS, KwaZulu-Natal



From Left: KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Finance, Ina Cronjé, Treasury Head, Simiso Magagula, Phungashe Education Centre Manager, Sifiso Dlamini, and Mqhakama High Learner, Nokukhanya Gumede.

There was ululating and whistling at Nhangwini village in Highflats when KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Finance, Ina Cronjé, and Treasury Head, Simiso Magagula, donated computers to the rural Phungashe Education Centre on 13 February 2014.

The aim of the centre is to improve education among the youth and the community as a whole. The provincial Department of Education established the centre with the intention of

it serving as the central hub of knowledge, information and learning.

It does this by reaching out to local communities and school children with library services, science laboratories, information technology and many other programmes intended for previously marginalised communities.

Manager of the centre, Mr Sifiso Dlamini said, "The donated computers will help our centre to

fulfil its vision of becoming a centre of excellence in information and technology. The computers will allow us, working with our partners, to introduce advanced teaching methods and to provide our schools and our disadvantaged communities with an opportunity to equip themselves with the knowledge for a successful future."

MEC Cronjé reminded the centre's management not to forget the initial reason why these institutions were erected in the first place. "Very few schools in rural areas had electricity, which made it difficult to connect computers into those schools.

In a bid to bring access to libraries, computers, laboratories and many other services within reach of our schools, the concept of the education centres was born, where all these services were made available to schools. Access to these facilities was also extended to local communities," she said.

Mr Magagula was thrilled to see the centre functioning properly in such a remote rural village.

"We are here to donate 10 computers to the centre. Computers will be accessible to school-going youth as well as out-of-school youth and even adults in general as this facility is open to everyone. We are delighted to hear that the centre has already hired computer trainers to assist communities with computer skills."



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The new laboratory.

OUTCOME 1: IMPROVED QUALITY OF BASIC EDUCATION

The sol plaatje university, more than expected

By Willem Van Dalen and Masego Motshidisi: GCIS, Northern Cape



The main entrance to the Sol Plaatje University in Kimberley



Students relaxing between classes.

During their first week first-year students at the Sol Plaatje University in the Northern Cape said the institution was much more than what they expected.

Although away from home, they said the tertiary institute was an anchor of surety and a place they were excited to be. Hailing from the North West and a Retail Business Management student, Gomolemo Mokwatjibi said she chose the Sol Plaatje University to get away from home and to experience the campus lifestyle.

“For a new university, all the necessary equipment is available and our lecturers are highly experienced,” said Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) students Tshelang Mapoo, of Hartswater and Makeno Mohokare from Taung in the Northern Cape.

They said that they were looking forward to completing their studies, graduating and returning to their communities to plough back what they have learnt.

The university is a diverse mix of students from Limpopo, Gauteng and the Western Cape while lecturers come from as far as Zimbabwe.

Academic programmes offered include diplomas in Applications Development and Retail Management and a B.Ed. Future programmes are still under discussion.

According to management, educational courses were determined in terms of skills shortages in the province.

Classes started on 17 February and a total of 120 students registered. Learners academically strong in mathematics, science and technology can still apply as the institution has space for about 20 students in these fields of study.

The university’s Registrar said that successful applicants will be eligible for financial aid support in the form of Fundza Lushaka bursaries for teacher education studies and NSFAS loans for any other area of study.

Classes are currently presented at the NIHE building and laboratories are being built at the old William Pescod School.



OUTCOME 1: IMPROVED QUALITY OF BASIC EDUCATION

The official opening of the University of Mpumalanga's Nelspruit Campus

By Lungile Mdluli: GCIS, Mpumalanga



Left to right: First-year students Wandisa Mabila and Douglas Nyathi, registered for Diploma in Hospitality Management and Joseph Mashale registered for Bachelor of Agriculture.



Dignitaries and students attending the opening of the university.



The Deputy Minister of Higher Education Mr Mduzisi Manana delivering the key message.

The Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training, Mr Mduzisi Manana officially opened the Mpumalanga University on 19 February 2014. The event was held in the hall of the University of Mpumalanga at the Lowveld Agriculture College where the university is situated and was attended by 400 people.

The 2014 start-up programmes for the University of Mpumalanga are Bachelor of Education (Foundation Phase), Bachelor of Agriculture, and Diploma in Hospitality Management. As the years progress and the university develops so will its academic programmes to encompass degrees in Life Science,

Business Economics and Management Studies, Communication and Health. The Bachelor of Education will accommodate 100 students, while the Bachelor of Agriculture will accommodate 20 students and the Diploma in Hospitality Management an extra 20 students. The university aims to satisfy the long-term academic and economic ambitions of the people of Mpumalanga. The university also aims to be comprehended as a centre for people from across South Africa and the continent as a whole. Some of the students interviewed by the GCIS said: "We are very happy and excited to finally start studying at the university. We are surely going to study hard and make ourselves and the university proud because

this is a dream come true." One of the students, Ms Moyane said the university will bring required skills, employment and improved economy to the province. In encouraging the students, Professor Ramaranka Mogotlane, the interim head of the university said students should write down the list of things they need to do, in order to get to that eventuality. He said "The university will be a place of work, hard word for the upliftment of yourselves and our country; and a place of play." He advocated compassion, commitment and a good reputation.



Nearly 5 000 farms have been transferred to black people, benefitting over 200 000 families.

OUTCOME 7: VIBRANT, EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE RURAL COMMUNITIES AND FOOD SECURITY FOR ALL

The miracle tree of Moringa's farm
By Ephraim Malema: GCIS, North West



Mr Lekau Mokoene shows off his Moringa trees at his farm in Legonyane village outside Brits, North West.

Mr Lekau Mokoene's love for farming is paying dividends. The 65-year-old Mr Mokoene has planted more than 2 000 Moringa trees at Legonyane village, near Brits, in the Madibeng Local Municipality.

He now employs 10 people at his Moringa farm. "I have created employment for the local community and they now have an income. The people I have employed here are able to buy food for their families," says Mokoene.

He started his Moringa farm in 2012 after seeing the "miracle tree" during a visit to Limpopo. "This is a wonderful tree because it can cure many diseases. In fact, it has been proved by scientists that Moringa can cure more than 300 diseases. Traditional cultures in various parts of the world have long used Moringa in their herbal medicine repertoire for ailments ranging from gout to various inflammations and fevers. Every part of the Moringa tree has been used effectively against varying ailments," says Mr Mokoene.

According to him the Moringa has an impressive range of medicinal uses with high nutritional value. The different parts of this plant contain important minerals, and are a good source of protein and vitamins. "You can even give Moringa to goats or chickens. It is good because a goat will give birth to triplets," says Mr Mokoene.

Because his products are in great demand both locally and overseas, particularly in Canada, he plans to market his Moringa products abroad.



Matric pass rate has gone up from around 61% in 2009 to 78%.



OUTCOME 8: SUSTAINABLE HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND AN IMPROVED QUALITY OF HOUSEHOLD LIFE

Life continues to change for the better

By Willem van Dalen: GCIS, Northern Cape



Mr Muggel, a beneficiary of government programmes, motivates community members to use the opportunities made available by government.



Mr Danster Muggel of Erf 4110, 7de Laan, Prieska, in front of his new house provided by Siyathemba Municipality.

Early in 2008, newly wed Mr Danster Muggel and his wife moved into the corrugated iron shanty in the back yard of her parent's home. They had dreams and aspirations for the future, but they were not in a position to help themselves.

When Mr Muggel watched the State of the Nation Address (SoNA) in 2008 he learnt that the South African Government planned to build a large number of houses to enable people like him to move out of shanties and live a respectable life.

He decided to take action and early the next morning went to Siyathemba Municipality to have his details added to the database of people

applying for housing. According to him, it was very easy to register.

During 2010, the private company he was working for retrenched Mr Muggel.

Fortunately the municipality had a vacancy for security guards at some of its premises at that same time and appointed Mr Muggel.

"One must support the Government and have confidence in the people in government, what they promise, they deliver. One must just remember that Rome was not built in one day. If one believes in the Lord and the Government, one

stands to be surprised," said Mr Muggel during his motivational speech before the delivery of the 2014 SoNA.

During 2013, he was informed that one of the houses being built in "7de Laan" was to be his. The Siyathemba Municipality had been given three years in which to complete the project, but within two years the people earmarked for houses were informed that they could start moving in. Late in 2013, the contractor working on the electrification of the suburb finished with his task and the people of 7de Laan's homes had electricity.