

MY DISTRICT TODAY



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Outcome 12: An efficient, effective and development-oriented Public Service and an empowered fair and inclusive citizenship

Post-SoPA schools' debate in action

Yolisa Manxiwa – GCIS Eastern Cape

Thirty-five learners competed as finalists of the Post-SoPA competition that started in January this year, by delivering speeches on the seven priorities of the provincial government as reflected in Premier Noxolo Kiviet's State of the Province Address (SoPA). The Post-SoPa schools debate, a competition introduced in 2010, seeks to promote the reconnection of young people with issues of governance and development, while contributing towards fostering research, language, public speaking and leadership competences among learners of grades 10 to 12 in the Eastern Cape.

The competition took place in the Raymond Mhlaba Provincial Legislature Chamber in Bhisho with learners from all districts in the province. Learners praised elements of the Premier's speech, but were also critical of some elements; they made recommendations on what could be done to strengthen government and stakeholder interventions to address challenges such as poverty, unemployment and high levels of inequality.

Giving a motivational talk to the learners, Education MEC Mandla Makupula praised the learners for the quality of their engagement with issues of governance and development. He urged them and their communities to find solutions to various challenges facing government and the society of the Eastern Cape especially in education.

The competition was also attended by over 200 spectators that included learners from surrounding schools, teachers, parents and senior officials of the provincial government. Judges were provided by Eastern Cape institutions of higher learning such as Fort Hare and Walter Sisulu universities of technology. Two learners that

were President Jacob Zuma's special guests during the State of the Nation Address ceremony in Cape Town were also in attendance and shared some words of wisdom with their peers.



Education MEC Makupula addressing the delegates.



Gold Winners of the 2013 Post-SOPA Schools Competition with the guest speaker Mr Mahlubandile Qwase - Acting Superintendent General (SG) of Health (left), and the newly appointed SG of Education Mr Mthunywa Ngonzo (far right). Winners are from left: Sesotho: Rena Goodness Maumo of Lehana SS School in Joe Gabi; IsiXhosa: Lutho Matiwane of Zingisa High School in OR Tambo; English (first additional language): Ayanda Jacobs of KwaKomani High School in Queenstown; Afrikaans: Erika de Coning of Queens Girls High School in Queenstown; English (home language): Phindokuhle Manzana of Royal Academy in Queenstown.



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

Reconstructing the fibre of society

Lihle Nxumalo: GCIS KZN

Umkhanyakude Youth Development Academy – Ndumo/Scabazini Development Centre.

UMkhanyakude District in Kwazulu Natal will now benefit from a lifelong programme that aims to rehabilitate and provide skills training to disadvantaged youth. Beneficiaries include youth who had been released from drug rehabilitation centres, youth leaving the foster care system, and others identified by Operation Sukuma Sakhe ‘war rooms’ who were deemed to have potential to succeed, but who could not progress owing to their circumstances.

The Youth Development Academy is aimed at providing youth with safety nets so that they will not fall back into anti-social behaviour as a result of their unfortunate circumstances. After completing the three-month training programme, they will receive accredited certificates which they can use for further studies, start their own businesses or seek formal employment.

The first phase of Ndumo/Scabazini Development Academy will accommodate 37 youth from all areas of Umkhanyakude. They will be housed at the academy for a period of three months. While the first phase is in progress, the second phase will be funded with R31 million so that the development centre reaches a milestone of 300 students. Construction of the second phase is already underway.

Umkhanyakude District was the first to get a development centre; other centres are still to be launched at Amajuba, UThungulu, and UMGungundlovu districts. The Scabazini Development Academy was piloted on 7 March. The academy is situated in a deep rural area under the Umhlabuyalingna Municipality.

Premier Zweli Mkhize was part of the history in the making and mentioned that the Escabazini Youth Development Academy was aimed at equipping youth with life skills to enable them to become self-sustainable as artisans and entrepreneurs.

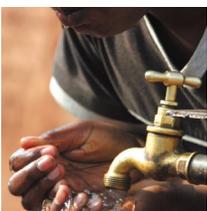
As the project is rolled out, more youth from Umkhanyakude will benefit and obtain skills that will assure them lifelong and sustainable livelihoods. It is also easing the burden of families who can't afford to finance learning for their children. The project is funded by the Department of Social Development, lead by MEC Weziwe Thusi.

“The graduate development programme has made a huge impact in my life by providing training which is relevant to what I studied and thus it has given me the opportunity to fulfill my dream,” says Sihle Ntaka, Graduate Development Programme Trainee in Chemical Engineering.

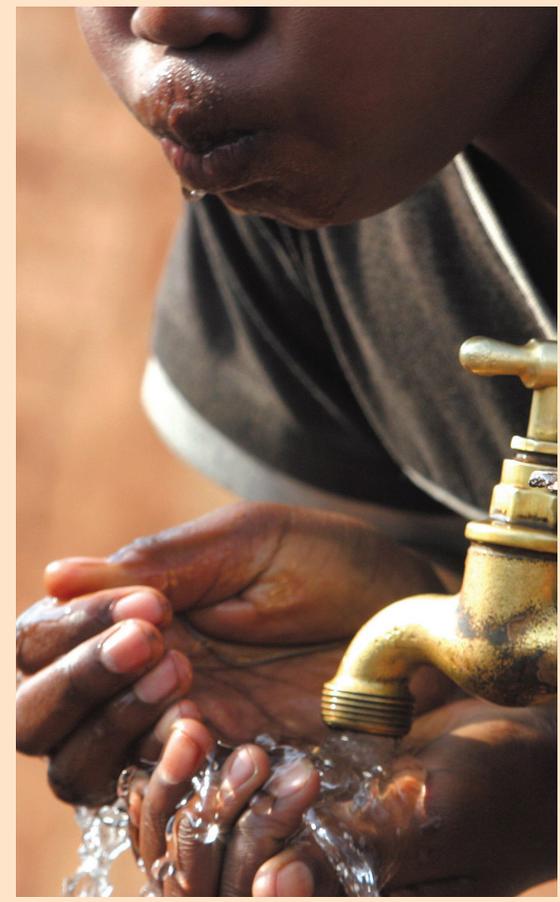
“To other graduates who would like to join, I recommend it as a good programme to develop professional skills in different areas; our country needs more professionals to help it develop faster. To learners who are still looking for a career path to choose, I will recommend engineering as a good choice since our government has well-structured programmes that help to develop professionals after completion of their studies,” Ntaka added.



KZN Premier Zweli Mkhize and DSD MEC Weziwe Thusi, at the official launch of a pilot project. Looking on is the Umkhanyakude District Mayor Jeff Vilane.



Outcome 10: Environmental assets and natural resources that are well protected and continually enhanced



Water Month kicks off with R18 million Mukula Water Supply Project handover

Sithembele Sakati: GCIS, Eastern Cape

The Deputy Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs Rejoice Mabudafhasi, handed over the R18 million Mukula Water Supply Project to the jubilant Chief Takalani and the Mukula community as part of the Water Month activities in Mukula village, Limpopo.

During 2010, Chief Takalani approached the Deputy Minister saying that the village had no access to water because the boreholes had dried up. This necessitated a more sustainable water supply system; hence, the intervention by the deputy minister.

“Government has a great track record in delivering clean water to the people. For many South Africans under apartheid, the lack of access to water had an outrageous effect on their health, their development and their dignity,” Mabudafhasi said.

Subsequent to the Deputy Minister’s visit to Mukula village to determine the extent of the water shortage, the Department of Water Affairs and Vhembe District Municipality contributed the R18 million for the Mukula Water Supply Project. Meanwhile, boreholes were rehabilitated and water was delivered by water tanks as a short-term solution.

The Mukula Water Supply Project was then conceptualised and the Xikundu Water Treatment Works identified to supply drinking water to 17 sub-villages. The project consists of a 1,8 Mℓ reservoir and a 15,4 -km long bulk pipeline. In total, 45 temporary jobs were created during the implementation phase.

Speaking at the official handover, Mabudafhasi emphasised that “the indigenous knowledge of our communities is key to sustainable development. Without their input we would have considered other water sources and incurred unnecessary costs. This milestone should be recorded in the history books of our country. Despite the extent of the water shortage challenges, the Mukula community never resorted to illegal protests and vandalism.”

Chief Takalani said the community was delighted with the project because they had no access to clean water for a long time and had to resort to polluted springs and rivers, causing water-borne diseases such as cholera. “This project heralds a new era in our community as the water shortages and outbreaks will now be a thing of the past,” he said.

Water is life – respect it, conserve it and enjoy it.



Outcome 7: Vibrant, equitable and sustainable rural communities and food security for all.

Mine 'extends olive branch' and bears the fruit

by Dr Marebane: GCIS Limpopo

The olive tree is said to be one of the most important trees in the Bible. It is mentioned in Genesis 8:11 when the dove returned to Noah's ark after heavy floods carrying an olive branch in its beak. This is perceived to symbolise peace and we often hear the expression, "extending an olive branch" as a desire for peace.

The community of Masha-gosebo in Limpopo was forcefully evicted from their land in 1948. However, 55 years later, in 2003, their land was finally given back to them.

While the country celebrates 100 years of the Native Land Act of 1913, which was replaced by the Land Restitution Land Act in 1994, the community of Masha-gosebo has something to cheer about. After getting their land back they have started a successful olive-tree project.

According to Ruth Tau, one of the project members, the project started in 2009 with 16 members, mostly women. "The local mine extended its hand

by fencing off 50 ha of the farm. They also helped train some community members and have given us monthly stipends," she said.

In total, 15 000 olive trees have been planted and it is expected that the first harvests could be in a year or two. "We would like to thank the Dwarsrivier Mine for their efforts; without them the project would not be where it is today.

"We are looking forward to producing olive soaps, oil, wine, perfumes, body lotions and other olive ingredients. As soon as the project bears fruit, some of the money will go into the Communal Property Association's account which will in turn be used to develop the village, while some will be used to pay for salaries and other expenditures," she said.

Masha-gosebo Olive Farm Project members are the proud beneficiaries of this successful farm and are looking forward to a brighter future.

