



LIMPOPO  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC WORKS, ROADS & INFRASTRUCTURE

# LIMPOPO EPWP NEWSLETTER 1<sup>ST</sup> EDITION



EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME



International  
Labour  
Organization



**MEC: Nkakareng Rakgoale**  
Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads & Infrastructure

## FOREWORD BY THE MEC

It is with great pleasure that we launch this inaugural Limpopo Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Newsletter!

We are continuing with the fight against the triple challenge of unemployment, poverty and inequality. Unemployment among the youth is disproportionately high, however government has come up with several initiatives to counter these challenges and the EPWP is one of them.

Since its inception in April 2004, the programme has made significant strides in creating temporary work opportunities for the unskilled and semi-skilled in the Infrastructure, Social, Environment & Culture and Non-State sectors.

The programme has injected significant resources and investments into our communities in the form of wages (cash), as well as skills and infrastructure development. This has made our people more resilient to socio-economic shocks and more socially secure. The EPWP remains a robust tool that can, in the interim, empower our communities.

Over and above the direct jobs for the unskilled and semi-skilled, there are indirect and induced jobs created by the EPWP across the various value chains. Furthermore, business opportunities for Entrepreneurs, Cooperatives and Community groups are available with women, youth and people with disabilities also benefiting.

My vision is to see equity in EPWP sector value chains as this will create sustainable businesses at local level with resultant local economic development. I need to see more participation of Limpopo's people in construction upstream activities such as manufacturing, wholesaling and retailing of construction materials. As the department, we encourage our communities to take control of their environments and get involved in projects that protect their environs and mitigate against Climate Change.

More people should be capacitated in skills related to Early Childhood Development, Home Community-Based Care and other initiatives that can help mitigate contemporary social challenges and make our communities safer.

Community-based organisations can also play an active role and identify development projects that will benefit their localities under the Non-State Sector. Youths should take advantage of these opportunities including learnerships that lead to Professional and Artisan certification.

The department will be tracking good practices, lessons learned and stories of success in the EPWP to document and disseminate them in the newsletters in order to encourage the Community and EPWP Managers to facilitate learning in the programme and those who are yet to enter this initiative.

The publications will also profile some of our EPWP participants who have excelled within or after exiting the programme. We have heard some positive stories of lives that have been touched in some way through their involvement with the EPWP. Many of them viewed the opportunities as an investment and used this enterprisingly as a stepping-stone for their future endeavours.

We believe that an intervention such as EPWP can be a springboard that opens other doors for participants that include young people and other groups that are left vulnerable due to difficult circumstances.

EPWP can only succeed if our communities can join hands with government to ensure the development of our province and our country at large. We appreciate your continued participation, and hope you will be as encouraged, as we are, by the inspiring stories contained in this publication.





**HOD: Dikgole Seroka**  
Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads & Infrastructure

## WELCOME FROM THE HOD

Dear Valued Stakeholders,

To echo the sentiments of the MEC of the Limpopo Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure (LDPWRI), Ms. Nkakareng Rakgoale, I am equally excited to be part of the launch of this Provincial EPWP inaugural newsletter.

Through this quarterly publication, stakeholders will vividly appreciate the improvement of livelihoods of the participants through their participation in EPWP and appreciate the achievements made by various implementing bodies (IBs) in EPWP thereby encouraging a culture of excellence and continuous improvement in service delivery.

For the first time stakeholders and IBs in particular are reminded (through these publications) of some of the resolutions from the EPWP Provincial Summit held earlier this year in the following areas:

- Trainings (by TVET and FET Colleges amongst others) to address skills gaps in the SEZs and the Province in general;
- Implementing Bodies to increase Labour Intensities in the Infrastructure Sector of the EPWP gradually from the current baseline of 6% to 20% by the end of Phase 4 of the EPWP;
- Support Mechanism enhanced to improve access to finance, markets, land for emerging entrepreneurs (SMMEs);
- Development of SLAs by government entities with private sector interested in infrastructure delivery to address the challenge of infrastructure backlog;
- Develop awareness programmes at local government level on the involvement of the youth, people with disabilities (PWD) and other vulnerable groups to ensure participation of these groups in the programme;
- Training of the youths in new and emerging technologies to be encouraged and rolled out;
- Reform procurement policies and processes in order to increase participation of youth and other marginalised groups; and
- PWD targets in EPWP should be increased gradually from the current 2% to 7% by 2030.

Furthermore, the National EPWP Policy consultations are ongoing in the month of December 2022, and all stakeholders are requested to comment on the draft policy to make it more wholesome and representative.

Last but not least, a number of IBs have a backlog in meeting the Phase 4 targets of the EPWP. The IBs are encouraged to take strides to meet these targets by amongst others identifying and prioritising programmes of high potential for employment creation such as infrastructure maintenance programmes and streamlining EPWP in all project planning, design, tender documentation and evaluations; implementation and ensuring that all work opportunities created are reported in the EPWP reporting system. The LDPWRI is ready and willing (on request) to assist all IBs in this regard through various capacity building initiatives.

**A parting shot:** Enjoy reading the impactful EPWP stories in this publication. Out there, there are many more stories that EPWP participants would like to share with you. I am sure you will join us in the next edition of this quarterly publication.

As our slogan always entails: **Re a Šoma! Ha Tirha! Ri kho u Shuma!**



## INFRASTRUCTURE SECTOR

### VHEMBE DISTRICT

#### QUALIFIED ARTISAN'S UNIQUE DESIGNS ARE HIS MOST EFFECTIVE MARKETING TOOL



Vusi Munyai heard about the EPWP National Youth Service's welding learnership at a tribal council in Vuwani village, in Vhembe District Municipality. He knew instantly that he wanted to apply, as he had always been fascinated by his uncle's welding work as a child. At this point he had also been struggling to support his wife and four children while attending a three-year marketing course at a local college. He had felt he had no choice but to study further as his job-hunting efforts were proving fruitless. He was not able to find a job after matric, nor after completing a three-year course in agriculture, so he had become discouraged and desperate. In his own words: "I tried everything and felt like giving up".

He was thrilled when he got the call to say he had been accepted on the learnership. The six-year journey was not without challenges and uncertainty, but Vusi says it was worthwhile because it opened a crucial door to start his own business.

The goals of the EPWP's NYS pilot project in artisan-related trades were to provide additional capacity for predominantly Public Works programmes and assist youth to gain work-related skills to enable access to sustainable livelihood opportunities. Local municipalities conduct the marketing on behalf of the EPWP since they are the closest contact to communities. The training began in 2015 with 100 welding learners from all districts of the province. The Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (merSETA) joined the project to assist as a funding and network partner. As it was a pilot project, numerous obstacles which were mostly funding- and work placement-related had to be surmounted to support the learners to the finish line: the trade test. In December 2020 a total of 32 learners successfully passed the trade test and are now qualified welders.

The NYS programme gave its learners their own welding equipment which they could keep, so on weekends when he was not at college or on a work placement Vusi took on piece jobs for members of his community. His first 'workshop' was under a tree in his back yard. These jobs provided some much-needed income for his family to survive, but what he didn't expect was the demand they would create without using any of the typical marketing efforts. It was a graveyard stand that first caught the attention of the market, as it is completely different to any of the other stands.

*"I love being creative and designing something unique. When I'm alone I always think about a new design I can make. Some people have copied my work."*

Word-of-mouth for Vusi's creations have spread as far as Tzaneen, so he is saving up to fix an old truck which will make deliveries of his products cheaper. He employs one lady as a casual labourer, and when he's under pressure for a customer there are two others he calls on. His dream is to build his own workshop, manage a few workshops across the province, and ensure his unique designs remain a key differentiator to his competitors. One day he would like to buy computerised equipment which can read his designs from a laptop as that will mean he can produce finished products within a quicker turnaround time.

*"The EPWP programme was a blessing because it has brought life back in me. Even the challenges taught me how to problem-solve, and that things aren't meant to come easy."*



Vusi (and customer) with his unique graveyard stand



A gate Vusi designed and made

### CAPRICORN DISTRICT

#### DISABILITY NO HINDRANCE FOR HARD-WORKING SHOP OWNER



Thapelo Sebola, who has congenital clubfoot, was 17 years old when she lost her mother in 2014, who had the same disability. Thapelo did not have a father figure so found herself suddenly needing to look after herself. She began using a portion of her disability grant to buy stock so that she could open a spaza shop in the township of Seshego where she lives, in Capricorn district. Her only challenge was suitable premises, which she eventually secured when a fellow resident offered to rent his garage to her.

Thapelo heard about the EPWP's General Maintenance programme in 2018 through a ward councillor who spread the news to residents. She applied immediately, knowing the extra income would be helpful with expenses and to expand her service offerings to customers. She was accepted onto the

programme as an office cleaner at the Department of Public Works, and is still part of the programme today. Those that she works with describe her as hard-working and responsible.

The Capricorn General Maintenance programme aims to alleviate poverty by providing work opportunities (W/Os) to unemployed people from poor communities through the cleaning and landscaping of public buildings and grounds. For the 2020/21 financial year it achieved its target to create 120 work opportunities, which included 71 women, 38 youth and 3 people with disabilities. The project began in 2014 and has created a total of 3,650 work opportunities. A new project for cleaning and landscaping was introduced at various schools and clinics which generated an additional 50 work opportunities in the 2022/23 financial year.

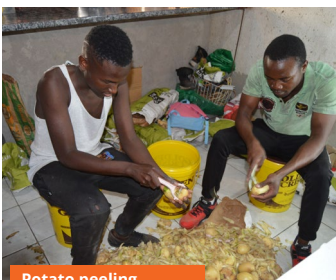
The early Covid 19 period was tough for Thapelo, as she was expected to continue paying rent even though she was not earning business income. She started saving a bigger portion of her disability grant and EPWP stipend to buy materials with which to build a garage to adjoin her home. It took her one year to complete, and she moved her spaza shop into the new space immediately. One of her regular customers had this to say about her takeaway food: "She makes the best *kotas*. We wouldn't go anywhere else to buy them."

Thapelo offers her customers a delivery service, at R5 per trip, and employs casual labour to make the bicycle trips for her. She also pays for their assistance with potato peeling and chopping because she sells a lot of chips. Her boyfriend, John, takes care of the shop while she is at work for the EPWP. Her next goal is to provide a patio and furniture where her customers can sit down to eat. Another dream is to start a drop-in centre for kids, also on her property.

*I am grateful for the EPWP's inclusion of people with disabilities in their programmes because many can perform the tasks as well as able-bodied people.*



In her spare time she loves to dance and act, proving further that she is unhindered by her disability.



Potato peeling creates jobs



Spaza shop built adjoining Thapelo's home

## CAPRICORN DISTRICT LOW-LEVEL BRIDGE CREATES CONVENIENCE & COMFORT

A low-level bridge in the Capricorn village of Christina had been built in 2010 connecting the local community to the main road, schools and the city of Polokwane. Poor construction led to it being washed away twice, creating the need for villagers to take a much longer route to their destinations, making taxi travel more expensive. The EPWP began its construction of a wider and stronger bridge in 2021, employing 24 people from the village.



The EPWP's low-level bridge programme began in 2014/15, with the main objective being to provide reliable crossover bridges to rural villages, as most of the communities were struggling to cross rivers during rainy seasons. There were several drownings reported owing to roads being washed away or cut off from villages because of the lack of reliable bridges. Another objective is the creation of work opportunities for the communities surrounding the construction of a bridge. In 7 of the 9 years that the project has been running, the targets have been considerably over-achieved, meaning that more W/Os were created than targeted.

Another positive impact is that the EPWP has made it possible for the Department of Public Works to catch up on its back-log of bridge constructions in the province. The EPWP supplemented the department's internal projects already in progress.

Six of the 24 workers on the Christina bridge site were interviewed, all of whom expressed gratitude for the work. All of them were supporting family members in some way, which in some cases included parents, children, grandchildren and siblings. Five of them have been using their EPWP stipend to either build their first home, or to extend their current RDP houses. Three have purchased some additional comforts, such as stoves, furniture and music equipment. Two of the men reported animatedly that they had finally, after many years, been able to pay lobola for their partners, and were now saving up for the wedding day.

A 24-year old man, Jack Galane, stood out as having intentionally used the work opportunity as an investment for his future and that of his family. He has started a successful poultry farm which he leaves his parents to run while he's at work, through which they earn an income; he is assisting his younger sisters with their school needs; and has saved enough money to attend Capricorn TVET College next year. He dreams of starting his own company oneday, and says:



*"I have a mind for business, but not yet for the support functions of business such as office administration, so I believe the course will increase my knowledge and prepare me."*



Participants' involvement is limited to the time it takes to build the bridge, as a subsequent construction site will then employ workers from the local community there. However, the hope is that the in-house training given to the EPWP participants in brick-laying, concrete shuttering, steel fixing, setting out and financial management basics, as well as the work experience, will increase their employability and job prospects beyond the EPWP project. It has also been shown to afford participants the ability to purchase some lifestyle comforts not previously possible for them, while for others it was used as a springboard for their next season.



EPWP staff and participants at Christina bridge.

## MOPANI DISTRICT

### ANTICIPATED WATER SUPPLY BRINGS JOBS (AND RELIEF) TO LOCALS



A bulk water supply project in Mopani district was rolled out by the EPWP in February this year. Phase 1 is being implemented in the greater Tzaneen area, which will see 25 villages being supplied with a formal system of reticulated water for the first time. Every home will receive its own stand pipe. As part of the EPWP's broader aim of local capacitation is the requirement that 30% of the project's value must be allocated to subcontractors and suppliers from the villages being impacted. Furthermore, the project had a target to create 100 work opportunities for residents of those villages, which has been over-achieved by 69.



A stand pipe ready to provide water to this home

In the next few weeks, the taps will turn on for three villages: Tours, Songwane and Masoma. Currently, there is a largescale network of illegal connections that criss-cross most of the pavements. One resident can barely wait for the imminent water supply. He runs a spaza shop that sells takeaway food so it's important to keep his kitchen clean. He says:

*"These illegal connections don't help much because I usually only get a bit of water from them once a week, and the pressure is very low from so many people sharing the line. So I need to buy water which is R170 at a time and only lasts a few days."*



One of the project's local subcontractors, Patricia Mashabele, whose company is responsible for installing steel tanks and laying down concrete slabs, used the injection of profit income to develop land her family owns to farm beans and maize which will be sold to local communities. She has employed four people full-time to plough and sow seed.

One of the EPWP participants responsible for laying pipes, Matome Maatshehla, owns a small spaza shop but was not doing well enough to make ends meet. He's disabled and was using his grant to buy stock, but he could only afford a few basic items such as snacks and sweets. He is grateful for the EPWP work as he was able to diversify his product offerings which successfully increased demand. He was also able to build a one-room house for his family, and hopes to extend it one day.

Another EPWP participant, Solly Rakgoale, has been eking out a living in his village by selling Tupperware, but often found himself with insufficient funds for marketing. The much-needed extra income from the project has enabled him to afford some advertising which has led to an increase in sales. Solly has also been trying to build a house for his family since 2000, but as he never had enough money to finish it they remained in a shack. Thanks to this work opportunity he was able to put a roof over two of the rooms a few months ago, which meant they could finally move in. In his own words:

*"We didn't struggle as much with the cold this winter."*



Solly and Matome are grateful workers



Mandatory local participation creates non-EPWP jobs too



## NON-STATE SECTOR



### MOPANI DISTRICT

The Independent Development Trust (IDT) is a public entity and development agency that supports government in programme implementation, and is responsible for delivering the EPWP's Non-State Sector (NSS) Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) programme. This is done by partnering with existing NPOs to enhance public goods and community services, while providing work opportunities to unemployed women, youth and people with disabilities. The IDT's funding of participants to serve as additional ground staff enables NPOs to expand their operations and reach considerably. Supported programmes include HIV/TB testing & awareness, lay counselling, caregiving, poultry farming and brick-making. The IDT in Limpopo has over-achieved in all EPWP targets each year, and has a target to create 11,022 work opportunities in 2022/23.

### SMALL VILLAGE PRODUCES BIG DREAM

Karabo Mabulana was one such participant, a field supporter for Ramotshinyadi who worked on educating the community about HIV and gender-based violence, and also made home visits to the sick and elderly. Her ex-colleagues describe her as a non-conformist, a hard worker with steely focus and determination. Karabo was the youngest of 8 children, and while both her parents had jobs there was still not much income. In 2019, when in grade 11, life changed dramatically for her when her mother passed away. It was a big blow and she struggled emotionally through her matric year, and although she still got good marks that earned a university exemption she was not in a good place to think about any post-school options. She felt very lost until the day she received a call from Ramotshinyadi about an EPWP opportunity. Her mother had worked for the NPO some years before so the staff knew Karabo and the position she was in. Karabo explains that this filled her with hope and instantly knew she would travel the following year, so used her very first payment to buy a luggage bag. She enjoyed the programme and said she could see the value of the work in the elderly she visited, who were lonely and needed company.



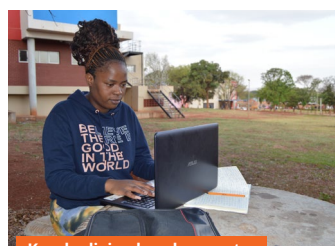
Staff of IDT & Ramotshinyadi

Ramotshinyadi is one of the IDT's NPO partners, based in a small village of the same name. The village struggles with widespread alcohol abuse, and there are very few jobs besides the seasonal harvesting opportunities at the farms. The NPO was founded in 2000 by Fhatuwani Nemalamangwa and initially focused on HIV awareness and home-based care for those already ill, but it began to address the community's abject poverty levels and social issues by introducing training in skills and micro business development.

The EPWP partnership has allowed Ramotshinyadi to grow and it now runs active programmes in 21 other villages. Participants are involved in creating HIV/TB awareness, cleaning clinics and schools, school administration, assisting teachers of creches, visiting the sick and elderly, drug awareness, gardening and chicken rearing. Ramotshinyadi has found that developing household profiles to understand which families are the most vulnerable in communities has been an effective method to ensure that each year the work opportunities are distributed in a way which includes the poorest. Staff are encouraged when they meet participants who use the opportunity as an investment for their future.

It had always been her dream to study at the University of Venda, so her next goal was to buy a laptop and save up for the registration fee. The staff at Ramotshinyadi assisted with her application form, and in January this year received an sms notification that she had been accepted to her chosen course: Bachelor in Language Practice. "I was at work and started crying! Everyone celebrated with me. Much of where I am is because of them, I don't know how to thank them. God helped me through them." Shortly afterwards she got a message from NSFAS that her application for the funding of her studies and residence had been approved too. Karabo is passionate about languages and she looks forward to her first job as a language teacher, and to being able to afford buying her father and siblings a more spacious home. Her dream is to one day complete a PhD.

*"I can't wait to be a doctor!"*



Karabo living her dream at the University of Venda





## DIGNITY GETS RESTORED

Daphne Nkuna grew up in a home with both parents and five siblings, with her father working as a builder in Johannesburg and her mother selling chickens. When her father fell ill and passed away when she was still quite young, the family started to struggle financially, living off the child grants. In grade 11 she looked for a job to earn an income, but didn't find anything except for some occasional work on the farms during harvest season. She explained though that women sometimes face indignities at the farms, as some of the decision-makers responsible for hiring labourers look for favours in return for work.

Daphne was 26 years old when she heard about the EPWP opportunities at Ramotshinyadi. At this point she was living off the grants for her two children, so was relieved when she was accepted as the work would help to make ends meet. Her first job was in 2018 as a cleaner at the local primary school, with her work ethic impressing the NPO staff so much that she was offered a more permanent position as a field supporter the following year. As with Karabo, Daphne enjoys what she does because people are grateful for her service. Some who she tests

for HIV and find out are positive, have benefited from her ability to provide immediate counsel.

Daphne explains that, besides the opportunities provided by Ramotshinyadi, there are no other jobs in the village at all, so people try to start small businesses such as selling Tupperware or vegetables. Some just live on child grants. Many people, even youngsters, spend any income they have in one of the numerous taverns which line the main street. With the consistent income Daphne has been able to start building a house of her own, living with her children in one of the finished rooms. She says that the EPWP work has made it easier to survive and even make a life.

*"It has given us dignity."*



Daphne at work as an HIV tester



Daphne with family at her home-in-progress



## ENVIRONMENT & CULTURE SECTOR

### CAPRICORN DISTRICT

It had always been difficult for Polokwane Municipality to source indigenous plants for its revegetation projects. So in 1980, to address this issue, a group of propagators under Environmental Management began to use a small area in the CBD to create a nursery. It had humble beginnings: a few foam boxes, some forestry tubes and watering by hand. In 2009, a bigger site was chosen in Asbes Road.

The nursery became a partner to the EPWP in 2014 and is now known as Polokwane Municipality IG Nursery Management. Its main goals are to restore urban forests, greening the city, as well as reduce unemployment and improve livelihoods. Participants are involved in plant propagation, tree planting, grass cutting, landscaping, parks maintenance and vegetation control. The work opportunity targets have on average been 50 per year, and in most years have either been met or over-achieved. Propagation of its own plants instead of procuring them has saved the municipality some costs.

Through large donations of trees from partners the project managed to capture more than 300 tonnes of CO2. Only provenance (i.e. seeds from the local vegetation) is used for propagation, with a priority placed on maintaining rare and endangered plants. Scientific records are also kept of what is planted. As a result, Polokwane is one of the only municipalities in the province with a well-functioning nursery that is highly regarded by both conservation organisations and the general community.

### EPWP PROGRAMME BEARS FRUIT

Thapelo Mogale's journey with green fingers already has long roots. In 2011, after completing Matric, he completed a one-year learnership in Environmental Management, with his practical component being done at Polokwane's nursery. He then secured a job there for three years planting trees, grass cutting and landscaping. In 2019 he applied for an EPWP role at the nursery and was accepted. An ex colleague described him as very hard-working. She said:

*"If I was put into a team with Thapelo, I knew I'd be working hard that day."*



Thapelo and his fruitful lemon trees

Thapelo lives in the small village of Lonsdale on a fairly large piece of land, so he decided to put his nursery knowledge to use there. He started buying and planting seeds and after three years had a garden full of lemon, mango, plum, pomegranate, naartjie and walnut trees. He also grows strawberries, spinach, onions and grapes. He makes a bit of extra income from selling the produce to the community, but is concerned about the size of the harvest this year owing to the water shortages. He's been buying water when he can but it gets expensive. He also does some gardening work as piece jobs on weekends, and



loves it when customers let him be a topiarist by sculpting their trees into interesting shapes. He says he really enjoys designing so this creative freedom makes him come alive.

The EPWP role assisted him in the purchase of seeds, and afforded him the ability to complete both his learner's and driver's licences. It also revealed to him what he loves doing the most: "It's my dream to become a full-time landscaper."



Some of Thapelo's topiary art

## ORPHAN BECOMES A PARENT ABLE TO PROVIDE FOR CHILD

Lebogang Mahlakwane was orphaned when she was 13 years old and went to live with her grandmother in Solomondale village. Her grandmother was caring towards her but Lebo realises in hindsight that as a cleaner it couldn't have been easy for her to provide financially. Lebo was determined to make a life for herself after finishing matric, and completed a Certificate in Safety in Society (NQF level 4) at Capricorn TVET College between 2009 and 2011. She won the "Best Student" award and used the prize money to get her driver's

licence. She was not able to secure any course-related work so found jobs wherever she could at car washes, a sweet shop and then as a security guard. She continued to upskill herself during this time by completing a core computer skills course.

In 2018 she received a call from SAPS inviting her to complete a one-year internship. Administrators at SAPS had been tasked to go through their database of best performing Safety in Society students for the previous few years in order to offer them practical experience. Lebo says this is where things started to shift positively for her. She had found a piece of land in Motinti village and was now able to afford its sale price.

In 2019 she got accepted into the EPWP programme at Polokwane nursery and was able to buy a fence and lockable gates to secure her land. She then bought a small tin house, ablution facility and water tank so that she and her daughter could finally move there. In months when she had some disposable income she purchased sand and cement and procured a local villager to make her bricks. She now has 80% of the bricks she needs to start building her 9-room house.

*"I am amazed at where I am now."*

During her tenure at the nursery she was also more easily able to afford her daughter's school needs, such as stationery, and provide her with some pocket money.



Lebo and her daughter, Morongwa



Lebo's home one day will have 9 rooms

## SOCIAL SECTOR

### VHEMBE DISTRICT EPWP IN DEEP RURAL VILLAGE PRODUCES A STAR

Sannie Mahlaule is no ordinary lady. She was born in Magangeni in Elim, and in 1991 got married and moved to her husband's village of Bale, situated at one of the northern-most tips of the province. Her husband, Joas, was a security guard at a mine, so Sannie was able to stay at home to look after their children, which grew to 6 in total. When Joas lost his job there were some tough years living off social grants, until Sannie found some work in 2003 as a ticket counter at a farming and packing company.



food to feed the children one meal a day. Parents paid R40 per child per month. Sannie had about 20 children attending the creche, and some months was not able to draw a salary owing to high expenses exceeding the income. She also had to move the creche into a shack because of the initial building no longer being available. When asked why she continued she said: "I love kids." There was some reprieve when NGOs stepped in to help with monthly groceries as well as a better and bigger building.

As an EPWP participant, the Department of Education through the EPWP district coordinators, approached her to complete an Early Childhood Development (ECD) level 4 course in 2010, and she further completed level 5 in 2013.

*"The course made me a better creche teacher. It gave me more knowledge in what to teach and the type of learning materials to buy for the children."*

This job came to an end in 2005 and both Sannie and Joas were without work again, until 2008 when she decided to open a creche in the village. She was able to buy some educational materials and

EPWP started in 2004/5 with ECD and Home-Based Care programmes implemented within the Social Sector in the Department of Education, Health and Social Development. Social sector programmes were later expanded to include other sector departments including Transport and Community Safety, and Sport, Arts & Culture in the province. Expansion programmes included school nutrition, drop-in centres, victim empowerment, substance abuse, HIV/TB awareness and testing, sports hubs, community safety, as well as programmes for support to the elderly, orphans and people with disabilities.

The programmes have historically offered work-related skills training to the EPWP participants funded by the departments. If budget allows there are plans to introduce a basic financial literacy course to capacitate participants on fundamental life skills such as budgeting and saving, as well as in entrepreneurship in the hope that this will reduce the burden on the government and private sector to create jobs.

## EPWP SHARPENS SKILLS FOR POLICEWOMAN-IN-TRAINING

In 2017 the Department of Public Works introduced a system for all EPWP implementing bodies to report on the work opportunities created and training conducted, which is used to measure performance. To this end the Department of Social Development recruited data capturers to assist with data collection from NPOs and to submit the statistics to provincial offices for capturing.

Joyce Nenwedi was one of the first data capturers recruited, based at the Vhembe district office. She had been working for an NPO at a drop-in centre for three years, looking after children, teaching them, assisting with their homework and doing extra-curricular activities. She also had to capture data and complete reports for the NPO, so she stepped into the EPWP role with ease. Staff from the Department of Social Development said the data capturers brought so much value that the roles have been extended indefinitely.

A few years before in 2008, Joyce trained as a police reservist but was not able to pass the psychometric test to qualify as a police officer. She loved the work though and had continued to put in hours for SAPS on weekends to retain the skills she had learned. She brought her sharp mind to the EPWP work and was able to identify root causes to the communities' challenges and assist with solutions. Through this work Joyce developed confidence to address matters and encourage people to work together, and was able to present at meetings on behalf of colleagues when needed.

In 2020 Joyce passed both the psychometric and fitness tests, so was appointed as a Constable in December of that year and now works full-time for SAPS. She says of the EPWP role:

*"It prepared me well for the police force because community engagements in particular are a big part of the job."*



Joyce as a data-capturer for the EPWP before becoming a police officer

In 2014 the Department of Education in partnership with ETDPSETA introduced a funded part-time opportunity to participants who had good matric results and work ethics to study teaching (BEd) at the University of Venda. Sannie was one of only 15 participants from Vhembe district selected. She studied there from 2016 to 2019, and graduated as a qualified teacher in 2020.

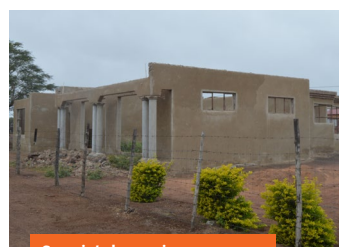
Sannie was eager to start working as a teacher. Even though her dream was to stay in Bale, she knew this was unlikely given how small the village is. An opportunity arose in which trained participants received recognition of their qualifications and skills within the Department and were absorbed as permanent foundation phase teachers. On her 46th birthday in September 2020 she received a phone call that there was a position for her available at the primary school in her village. "I was so happy."

A few months after she began her job as a teacher, her husband and mother both passed away, and she was able to afford their funerals now that she was earning a decent salary.

Sannie is very grateful to EPWP because, at 48 years old, she can now take care of herself and her children much more easily. One of them is now at a private school in Tshilamba. She's also in the middle of building a much bigger house and has built a borehole which helps other community members as well. When asked if she charges people for the water, she smiles gently and says: "Only if they can afford it."



Sannie teaching in her classroom



Sannie's home-in-progress

Limpopo's social sector has had an impressive performance record. Some highlights are:

- Phase 1: won the Kamoso Award for Best Performance in the Social Sector category, for training the most workers of all 9 provinces.
- Phase 2: over-achieved in its work opportunities (W/Os), with a 140% achievement rate.
- Phase 3: over-achieved again with 120% W/Os created.





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