



PROJECT INSPIRES YOUTHS TO START OWN BUSINESS.

Date: Monday, April 14, 2008

By Kefentse Molotsane

MAFIKENG: Quality skills obtained through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) have inspired a group of previously unemployed young people to start their own business.

This group of twenty youths from the Lehurutshe area, which comprises thirteen females was recruited in September last year to participate in a landscaping project as part of EPWP.

They were taken on a twelve months learnership contract, which included both theoretical and practical sessions conducted by a contracted service provider.

During the first two months of their contract they acquired vital skills in among other things garden design, planting trees and lawn as well as soil experimentation.

They were also trained in starting own businesses and financial management.

Since then, they have been working the backyard and garden of the Ramothsere-Moiloa District Office of the provincial Public Works department.

Plans are underway to get them trained in paving to complete the landscaping on the yard.

The group's supervisor Lebogang Stegling (28) from Dinokana village said they plan to get together and open their own landscaping business when their contracts lapse.

"With the skills we've gained to this end, we plan to start our own business and bid for landscaping contracts," Stegling said.

She said prior to joining the project she had been unemployed since completing matric in 1996.

Another beneficiary, Ndoki Mokopanele (26), from Kunotswane said that he has learnt a lot from the project. "I enjoyed learning about the irrigation system for plants and the part on business and financial management skills," he said.

All beneficiaries will at the end of the programme be awarded with National Qualification Framework accredited certificates.

Beneficiaries receive a monthly stipend, which is aimed at helping them with basic necessities such as transport to and fro work.

EPWP is a nationwide programme that aims to draw significant numbers of the unemployed into productive work accompanied by training in order to increase their capacity to earn an income.

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