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Eastern Cape Premier Masualle and Tourism Deputy Minister Elizabeth Thabethe celebrates the conclusion of Youth Month with a commitment to accelerate Youth job creation

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Today, 28th June, the Deputy of Tourism Ms Elizabeth Thabethe together with Eastern Cape Premier, Phumulo Masualle visited the Cecil Makwane Hospital, in East London Mdantsane to assess the impact of the nationwide youth hospitality skills initiative.

The initiative which has witnessed the training and employment youth as chefs, energy efficiency officers, food safety assurer and tour guides nationwide, was conceived in 2011 by the department after it had prioritised interventions geared towards investment in the tourism workforce development.

The programme, was initially aimed addressing specific skills gaps exclusively for the tourism sector by empowering youth through enhancing their inclusion in sustainable economic activities and the employability.

Due to seasonal low in-take for chefs and food safety assurers in the traditional dining and food industry particularly in rural and township set-ups, the programme was seen an opportunity for other agencies in the public services where food safety and nutrition are critical, with a priority for health sector due the fact that costs of food remains one of the highest cost drivers and areas of wastage.

The 2017 cohort of youth trainees were enrolled in September 2017, with 44 Eastern cape based youth graduating in National Youth Chef and Food Safety Programme. In June this year during their graduation, the department impressed upon the local businesses and public entities to create employment opportunities the graduates, thus resulting with Cecilia Makwane Hospital heeding the call and ultimately employing forty (40) of the graduates, twenty (20) Chefs and 20 food safety quality assurers and placing them multi-disciplinary occupation know as Ward Hostesses in the health facilities.

The benefits which been accrued since the appointment of these learners has realised multiple benefits for the hospital, including a great improvement in the delivery and serving of patient food, tremendous drops in foot wasted, and savings of up to 80% in the hospital food expenditure.

"This initiative is a prime example of how we can work together towards creating employment opportunities for the South African youth, but importantly coordinating the work of government which improves efficiency and eradicates duplication in work" said Premier Masualle

"These graduates are available to any partner who may requires their skills and will ensure that our cadet programme is the first port of call for anyone requiring these ready-made skills". "We are finalising the recruitment and training a new cohort of graduates particular in those non-core but highly need services like customer care and front-line service, energy efficiency monitors and will equally avail them to hospitals and other health care facilities to support them in alleviating challenges such as queueing delays for admissions amongst others "said Thabethe.

"We are equally excited that the 2018 national celebration of World Tourism Day will be hosted in Mthatha. We promise that as province we will showcase the best epitome of destination South Africa during the entire September Tourism Month campaign we will focus on, marketing, tourism development, and transformation and legacy projects in Eastern Cape province "said Masualle

The Deputy Minister and Premier further committed to prioritising the operationalisation of the Cecilia Makiwane Museum, also located in the hospital complex to ensure that its draws in the required audiences as one of the iconic heritage based tourism offerings in the province.

The hospital will further serve as a host employer during the training of twenty young people in resource efficiency programme and further will assist the hospital to save energy with a commitment to redirect such savings to invest further in the employment and training of young people in the area.

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