

27th July 2020

PRESS RELEASE

Tourism Green Coast Youth Graduate into the Tourism Economy

Four successive graduation ceremonies were held on the Wild Coast, Eastern Cape between the 15th and 24th July 2020, during which 118 youth from the Eastern Cape graduated from the Tourism Green Coast (TGC) Learnership programme. This youth development programme is funded via the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) by the Department of Tourism (DT) and implemented by the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA). Tourism Green Coast is a youth learnership and skills-training programme which has been implemented in 21 Wild Coast communities in the Eastern Cape over the past two years. The TGC Learnership is a component of the Department of Tourism 'Working for Tourism' programmes.

Tourism Green Coast created 120 learnership opportunities in the environmental and sustainable tourism sectors for unemployed, previously disadvantaged youth between the ages of 18 and 35 living in Wild Coast communities. The Green Coast stewards have been hosted by a range of tourism businesses and organisations during the 2 year programme. This enabled them to apply their newly acquired knowledge and skills in the workplace, while being mentored by experienced industry professionals. The comprehensive training programme includes the accredited Tourism Guiding qualification as well as practical modules covering ecological monitoring, environmental education, child protection in the travel and tourism industry, entrepreneurship development and professional development. The programme is designed to increase the employability of youth wishing to enter the tourism economy and to stimulate the development of youth owned community-based tourism enterprises at Green Coast pilot sites. Together with our Green Coast Stewards, it is WESSA's hope that the outcomes of this programme will have positive and far reaching impacts, despite current challenges facing the tourism sector due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The programme commenced in May 2018 and 118 participants have now graduated after 2 years of being placed with a local tourism host organisation gaining marketable skills and work experience. Hosts included: Imonti Tours, Lucolo Palace, Areena Riverside Resort, Buccaneers Lodge and Backpackers, Emerald Vale Brewery, Haga Haga Hotel, Great Kei Local Municipality, Morgan Bay Hotel, Mitford Hotel, Yellowwood Forest, Kei Mouth Guesthouse, Kei Mouth Golf Course, Neptune's Cove, Kei Mouth Revival, Trennerys Hotel, Mazeppa Bay Hotel, Nqabara Eco-Lodge, Dwesa Reserve, Bulungula Lodge, Wild Lubanzi, Hole in the Wall Hotel, White Clay Resort, Coffee Shack Backpackers, Friends Backpackers, Coram Deo, Ocean View Hotel, Mdumbi Backpackers, Freedom O Clock, Hluleka Reserve, Silaka Reserve, Port St John's Tourism Info Centre, Pholela Lodge, Spotted Grunter, Amapondo Backpackers, Bamba Lodge, Outspan Inn and Mbotyi River Lodge.

After 2 years of the TGC learnership, participants are now proud recipients of their graduation certificates of competency. With the high youth unemployment rate in South Africa, which is escalating as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and limited access to skills training, these youth are poised and ready to contribute significantly to the reopening and rebuilding of the Tourism sector in South Africa. WESSA is proud to implement this highly impactful youth development programme together with our stakeholders, DT, municipalities, and our partnering host institutions. This is a programme which supports the Operation Phakisa Coastal and Marine Tourism initiative which together with the Tourism Blue Flag project has created opportunities for 420 learners since 2016 and is deeply aligned towards sustainable development and upliftment of communities.

Ends.

NOTES TO EDITORS AND BROADCASTERS

The TGC Project Manager, Kerry Mclean is available for radio and television interviews.

Images and captions:

[Image 1](#): Amanda Madikane, a graduate from the Tourism Green Coast Learnership from Port St Johns, receives her Tourism Guiding Certificate and will be delivering a Certificate of Participation in the International Eco-school Programme to Caguba SSS. The Stewards in Port St Johns support Caguba SSS to become an Eco-school as part of their Stewardship duties.

[Image 2](#): Aviwe Pitoyi, from Morgan Bay, proudly receives her Tourism Guiding Certificate after successfully completing the 2-year Tourism Green Coast Learnership

[Image 3](#): Ncali Zinzani Mselana, TGC Coordinator, hands out Tourism Guiding Certificates to TGC participants during a series of small graduation ceremonies that took place on the Wild Coast.

[Image 4](#): (Front left to right) TGC Participants: Nokupiwa Sonjani, Lundi Situbeni, (back left to right) Kerry Mclean (WESSA TGC Project Manager), and Ncali Zinzani Mselana (WESSA TGC Project Coordinator) , at the Tourism Green Coast graduation ceremony in the Eastern Cape.

[Image 5](#): TGC Participants (back left to right) Sipho Sigege, Lundi Situbeni, Sihle Mdaniswa, Zinzani Mselana (TGC Project Coordinator), Buntu Gogo, (Middle left to right) Nokupiwa Sonjani, Khanyisa Mtana, Tozama Ratya, Masibulele Thofu, Aviwe Pitoyi, Esethu Gwendala, Kerry Mclean (TGC Project Manager), (bottom left to right) Sinovuyo Lunda, Bamanye Teyise, Olwethu Bhambatha, Siyasanga Yekela and Ntombovuyo Jija receive their Tourism guiding certificates at a small graduation ceremony held on the 24th July 2020 in Chintsa, Eastern Cape

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