



No. 8 Vyfde Street, Ladybrand, Free State, 9745

Tel/Fax: 051 924 5539 Email: mbonelaphanda@galmail.co.za

Cell: 071 132 4300

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Skills Programme 2010

The new democratic dispensation in South Africa has ushered new developments in the line of skills development for the previously disadvantaged individuals. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa made provision for holistic empowerment of the previously disadvantaged people through appropriate legislations with regard to equity, skills development and affirmative action within the workplace.

The Skills Development Act of 1998 and the Skills Development Levies Act of 1999 made provisions for the Levy Grant Scheme which aims to expand knowledge and competitiveness in the labour force. South Africa in general has a short supply of skilled staff which is an obstacle to the competitiveness of Industries, hence the need to come up with the above mentioned legislations to address issues of skills shortage in South Africa.

The most affected population proportions with regard to skills shortage in South Africa, are women and youths. Amongst the skills in short supply are IT, building (Construction), Life skills, as well as Apprenticeship, to mention a few. Mbonelaphanda Construction cc would like to offer Apprenticeship training with some of the youths who have been identified since the company is already implementing a similar project in the Mantsopa Local Municipality.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PROJECT

Mbonelaphanda Construction cc is implementing a training project with Services Seta in Ladybrand in the Free State (Mantsopa Local Municipality) after doing a training needs assessment of the youth staying in the area. The training programme is focussing on construction and agricultural skills needed in the area. The Local Development Strategy of the Local area is in line with agricultural skills development of the youth in the area.

There are almost 400 young learners who have since been registered with the training and skills development programme. Mbonelaphanda Construction cc has a dedicated and experienced team of accredited trainers who are presently busy with a similar training in the Mantsopa Local Municipality. Mbonelaphanda Construction believes in the notion of creating synergy and leveraging resources in what we do, hence the need to work together with other government ministries in alleviating poverty through training and skills development for the youth. Already the training programme has gained momentum and has sought support with the local municipality. The youth in the area are happy and supportive of the project since it is going to offer them with valuable skills to help them find appropriate employment in the future, hence alleviating poverty.

STRATEGY FOR THE PROJECT

Mbonelaphanda Construction aims to work with other departments and local ministries in the Free State to identify employers who are also willing to absorb the youth who are undergoing the training process with on the job practical training. The aim is to place the youth in the work places for appropriate practical training.

It has been established that most young and unemployed people look up to the state or government for provision with regard to job opportunities. With this project we aim to make sure that the youth are also offered life skills training to make better informed choices about their lives, hence they will be able to start up their own companies and stop looking for jobs with the government.

Contact persons;

Fhumulani Joseph Mutenda	0711324300
Mbebe Nola;	0724401735
NOSIZWE NJEZA;	0738222152
Tell fax	0519245539

Email address;mbonelaphanda@galmail.co.za



MUKUMBA | Resources & Project Management

Company Reg. No. 2006/134956/23 Tax Reg. No. 9332953156

No. 91 Hans van Rensburg
Office 8, Eurasia
Polokwane
0699
Limpopo

Tel: (015) 297 7980
Fax: (015) 297 7297
Cell: 082 634 1981 / 072 761 2313

E-mail: rudzani.mukumba@vodamail.co.za
rudzitiemo@hotmail.com

No. 32 Voortrekker Road
Ladybrand
Free State
9745

Tel: (051) 924 5539
Fax: (051) 924 5539
Cell: 082 634 1981 / 072 761 2313

E-mail: rudzani.mukumba@vodamail.co.za /
rudzitiemo@hotmail.com / Kagiso.mukumba@vodamail.co.za



Tel: 015 297 7980
Fax: 015 297 7297
e-mail: rudzitiemo@hotmail.com
Post: PO Box 4565, Polokwane 0700
Address: Office no.8

Eurasia Building
91 Hans Van Rensburg Street
Polokwane 0699

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Att: Chairperson
National Council of Provinces
Parliament
Cape Town

RE: SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNERSHIP PROGRAMME – MANTSOPA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Dear Sir

This follows our meeting that was held at the Southern Sun Hotel – OR Tambo in Johannesburg recently. This serves to explain what actually happened with the above mentioned programme. The meeting was attended by myself Rudzani Innocent Kgalushi and Joseph Fhumulani Mutenda who co-ordinated the programme.

Some where in February and March 2010 I (Rudzani Innocent Kgalushi) was given a call by Mr. Philemon Chalale from the Mantsopa Local Municipality – Local Economic Development Section. He asked me if I know of the learnership programme Fhumulani Mutenda is initiating within the municipality. I told Mr. Chalale that I am not aware of the programme. I was then assisting the Department of Education in Pretoria with policy and strategy development within their Gender Directorate.

I then travelled to Ladybrand – Mantsopa Local municipality to get full information from Fhumulani Mutenda and the rest. The reason I did this was because my company Mukumba Resources and Project Management was implementing an Extended Public Works Programme (Lekgalong La Mantsopa project) under the then Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism – before the split), and that Fhumulani Mutenda was under my care and supervision. I was mentoring and empowering him to learn business and project management since he owned a company himself. I wanted to get the full story and facts.

I learnt that Fhumulani Mutenda did a presentation to council about the programme and council deemed it as a good programme. The problem is that Fhumulani Mutenda did not wait for council to give him a go ahead, so that it would give council to check and verify everything before the programme could start. The other challenge was that Fhumulani's company was not accredited with any Services Seta.

Members: **Kgalushi Rudzani Innocent**: [MA Gender and Development; Sussex University; IDS; England, UK; BA Ed, BA Hons-Geo & Envir Sc., Venda University, RSA]

Khalushi Maria Ndivhuwo [N4 Road Construction, Vhembe FET, RSA]

I then advised Fhumulani Mutenda to stop with the programme immediately. The programme was going to enlist 400 learners i.e. 200 learners enlisting for agriculture and 200 learners enlisting for construction. By then things have already gone too far. Fhumulani Mutenda had already partnered with Lebo Hlabana of Lihlomo guest house. Fhumulani told me that Lebo Hlabana asked him to take over catering as well as supply of stationery etc for the project. I also advised Lebo Hlabana that she should stop getting involved in the programme because Fhumulani Mutenda did not follow the right procedures and processes for the programme to get going, and that his company is not accredited. I knew Fhumulani well and that Fhumulani still need to be properly supervised before he could take on a project. There was not even a contract or Service Level Agreement with the Seta concerned.

Both Fhumulani Mutenda and Lebo Hlabana did not take my advice of stopping with the programme immediately. They told me they have been advised by Ntakuseni (Sakie) Nengwenani who was then employed by Services Seta in Bloemfontein – Provincial Manager for Services Seta – Free State, that there is money available and he would do everything in his power to get the money as well as the Service Level Agreement and they should not stop.

Seeing this, I then requested the municipality to give me a go ahead to assist in this matter in order to contain the situation. I then with the assistance of my colleague Kagiso Pilane took over and went to see Ntakuseni Nengwenani in Bloemfontein. We met on several occasions with Ntakuseni Nengwenani at the Provincial Services Seta offices in Bloemfontein. Ntakuseni assured us that a submission has been done with the Services Seta and that a Services Level Agreement is coming and the money would be made available to the tune of R20 million.

We then reported this back to the municipality and learners who were now angry citing that Mukumba Resources and Project Management is behind the project and that Fhumulani Mutenda is a front. These were accusations from angry learners, and we took them in a mature spirit because we were trying to help and intervene on behalf of a mess Fhumulani made. We kept making follow up with Ntakuseni Nengwenani, and he kept promising us things are fine.

The last time we went to check at the offices Ntakuseni Nengwenani was no longer working with the Services Seta and nobody knew where he went. We were told he resigned. His phone was off all the time. That is when we tried to see if we could get help politically. We tried all avenues to no avail.


Since there was a road paving contract we won with the municipality we agreed with the municipality that we could take 75 learners in the Tladi road paving project and give them a stipend of R1500 per learner each month. Another 75 learners were taken up in the nearby road paving project in town won by another contractor the name I could not remember. This was to help alleviate the problem, especially the dashed hopes of poor learners.

We then took 75 learners as agreed on a project worth R5,1 million. The learners stipend was not budgeted for, and our company made a loss on the project, even though we managed to finish the project. All that profit went to the learners because we wanted to help the situation, even our lives were now in danger.

We hope the above meets with your requirements

Faithfully yours

Rudzani Kgalushi



Managing Director

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