

R551m job creation projects launched in KZN

Employment and Labour Minister, Thulas Nxesi, has launched training programmes worth R551m aimed at creating jobs, developing skills and supporting entrepreneurship.



Image source: © raw pixel – [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

The programmes launched on Friday at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Glenwood, Durban are aimed at creating jobs in the fibre optics, food handling and mixed farming sectors were as a result of the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF), entering into a partnership agreement with the Fuze Institute for Humanitarian Praxis.

The department said the UIF, through its Labour Activation Programmes (LAP), has set aside R551m for the three projects for 19,921 beneficiaries – 70% of which are former UIF contributors who lost their jobs to undergo training in the following skills disciplines:

- 14,771 beneficiaries as chief food handlers
- 5,000 beneficiaries in enterprise development (mixed farming) and
- 150 beneficiaries as fibre optic technicians.

Addressing the launch Nxesi said all efforts to create employment in South Africa should be strongly welcomed considering the high levels of unemployment in the country.

"In light of the added "Employment" mandate to our Department, we are urging the private sector and all potential stakeholders to partner with us to reduce and end unemployment in the country, partnerships are key to creating jobs. Therefore, all UIF training projects must be linked to employment creation because we do not want learners to idle at home upon completion of training," he said.

Speaking at the launch, FUZE Chief Executive Officer, Thandi Ngcobo, revealed that 14,771 beneficiaries have been employed by the Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal after completing their training.

She said the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs in KwaZulu-Natal has pledged to support the 5,000 learners' co-operatives by purchasing their farming produce while Link Africa has committed to employing the 150 beneficiaries as fibre optic technicians upon completion of training.

Ngcobo added that the mixed farming learners focus on poultry, piggery, vegetables, eggs and smoothies.

The Director-General of Employment and Labour, Thobile Lamati, said the department is committed to playing its role in job creation.

"We are worried about the growing unemployment in the country. However, we pledge to play our role in projects such as this launch, which includes jobs, especially for young people. To the learners, I urge you not to waste this opportunity because it comes once in a while," Lamati said.

Beneficiaries of the UIF training programmes also attended the launch and shared their experiences.

Bayanda Zaca, one of the beneficiaries related that he often worked odd construction jobs before starting the UIF training.

"Today, I am head chef at a top restaurant in Durban after undergoing the UIF culinary training. I am also helping the new trainees at the food-processing centre in Ndwedwe. I am truly grateful to the UIF for turning my life around," he said.

Lethabo Tsonope, who was funded by the UIF, revealed that she was a commercial pilot for FlySafair, flying a Boeing 783-800.

"I never thought in my wildest dreams that I would become a pilot because it was so expensive and affordability was a problem. I am grateful to be where I am today and urge young girls to put God first to succeed," she said.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>