

Hand-Over of Sukuma Sakhe Projects at Mzimkhulu

Mr. Willie Mgcina



New built toilets for the St. Johns Church in Umzimkhulu



Before



After

Tears of joy, a flicker of hope and an elation-filled atmosphere were the order of the day on Sunday 01st July when KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Human Settlements and Public Works Ravi Pillay joined Sisonke and Umzimkhulu Mayors during the hand-over of various Operation Sukuma Sakhe Projects in different Wards of Umzimkhulu Municipality.

MEC Pillay accompanied Sisonke District Municipality Mayor Mluleki Ndobe and Umzimkhulu Local Municipality Mayor M.B. Mpabanga during the official hand-over of Operation Sukuma Sakhe projects in this southern KwaZulu-Natal municipality.

The projects handed over included a grass-cutting machine, food parcels, a new three-bed roomed house, a pre-school and an ablution block and sanitation facility for a local church.

In his capacity as the District Champion of Operation Sukuma Sakhe, MEC Pillay officiated at the handing over of a grass cutting machine, food parcels and school uniforms to the Webster family of White City in Ward 16.

The Webster family was identified as in need of assistance during the Public Service Week of December 2011. The family ekes out an existence by cutting grass for the locals and the only brush cutter they were using to generate income had become inoperable.

The family has also been prioritised amongst the more than 190 beneficiaries for Operation Sukuma Sakhe in the Umzimkhulu Municipality.

Both the District and Local Municipality had also intervened in the continued schooling of the children of the Webster family after they had discontinued attending school in nearby Ixopo because of the lack of money for school transport costs.

Arrangements have been made to have the children enrolled at the nearby DRC Combined School when the new term begins and new uniforms were also bought for the school-going children of the Webster family. The Social Development Department also donated food parcels to the Webster family.

All the other donated goods were bought by both the Umzimkhulu Municipality and Sisonke District Municipality. The MEC, together with the District Mayor and the Local Municipality Mayor also officiated at the hand-over of a three-bed roomed house to the Mjoli family of Kokshill in Ward 13.

The house was built by a local business person, Mchumane Projects, in response to a plea by District Municipality Mayor Cllr Ndobe. Over and above the house, the same business person Mchumane Projects also donated a pre-school at Ward 14.

The total value for both the house and the pre-school is in excess of R160 000. A local building material supplier (A.M Builders) had donated the building blocks for the house.

The beneficiary of the house, Mr. Zwelimgangele Mjoli has been living in a dilapidated rondavel structure which was on the verge of collapsing because of being exposed to rains. Mr. Mjoli's plight was reported to Mayor Ndobe.

Mr. Mjoli was then prioritised in terms of Operation Sukuma Sakhe criteria to get a house but because of the urgent situation

the District Mayor approached local businessman, Mchumane Projects to assist and he responded positively and built the three-bed roomed house in a space of two months. In addition to this, Mchumane Projects also built a pre-school at Ward 14 after a needs assessment was done.

During the hand-over of the new house, several businessmen also pledged to furnish the house with wardrobes and beds for each of the three bed-rooms as well as a television set and lounge suite and kitchen table. These businessmen are Phalafala Construction, Msalela Construction, MaBombo Construction and K & M Security Company.

Even in this gathering, the Honourable Mayor of Umzimkhulu Municipality Cllr. M.B. Mpabanga donated food parcels while the Department of Social Development also donated food parcels to the Mjoli family. The Mayor of Umzimkhulu Municipality Cllr. M.B. Mpabanga also pledged to donate blankets and plant trees around the house. District Mayor Cllr Ndobe also pledged to personally fence the house so that Mr. Mjoli, who works at a local school as a security officer could tend his garden in line with the One Garden One Home campaign as promoted by Premier Zweli Mkhize.

MEC Pillay and the mayoral entourage then proceeded to the St John's Church at Gugwini in Ward 14 where they were given a tumultuous reception by the church elders and the congregants alike with the famous band leading the procession.

After an inspiring church service, MEC Pillay, Mayor Ndobe and Mayor Mpabanga officially handed over a new water-borne block of ablution and sanitation facility for both males and females.

The St John's Church, famously known as Chibini, attracts on any given day more than 100 people who mostly come to be healed. Every first Sunday of the month, more than 5 000 congregants from all over converge on the Gugwini church for a monthly event known as "eThwaseni".

The existing sanitation facilities usually do not cope because of the high volumes of people thus posing a health risk for water-borne diseases, hence the need to augment them with the new ablution and sanitation facility.

Thousands of congregants and the church elders could not hide their elation and gratefulness for the ablution and sanitation facility saying government at different tiers had demonstrated that it was caring and responsive.

The weekend hand-over of the Sukuma Sakhe Projects in Umzimkhulu comes on the eve on the forthcoming Presidential visit to the Sisonke District and the Umzimkhulu Local Municipality by President Jacob Zuma later this month as part of the Presidential Monitoring and Evaluation exercise. The evident and fruitful role played by Government Departments, NGO's and other role players was greatly appreciated and acknowledged in HIV/AIDS and SUKUMA SAKHE PROGRAMMES by the Honourable MEC Ravi Pillay within the Sisonke District Municipality.

For more information please contact: Mr. Willie Mgcina (The Communication Officer of Umzimkhulu Municipality)



From L to R is Mayor Umzimkhulu Municipality Cllr. Mpabanga MEC Pillay Sisonke District Mayor Cllr. Ndobe and St. Joh