

Media Release



Creating a Sustainable Tomorrow – Today

Powering Change: Women’s Inspiring Journey into Renewable Energy

17 October 2023, Emalahleni: The partnership between [EWSETA](#) and [Power Africa](#), a US Government-led partnership coordinated by USAID, is celebrating its inaugural group of skilled women in renewable energy at the Emalahleni Civic Centre, at a closing ceremony which marked the learning journey achievement to date of 83 female electricians and artisans and 14 lecturers. Whilst not a graduation, the closing ceremony seeks to acknowledge the commitment, dedication, and progress of all the women in the programme as well as that of key partners and supporting industry.

The programme candidates are now in a far more favourable and empowered position to actively bring solar power solutions to communities, while others have shown interest in taking the lead in employing their fellow learners as solar installers. Once all learners have been successfully verified by EWSETA, the quality assurance authority for the skills programme being undertaken, these ambitions are set to become reality.

The Knowledge Pele Development Institute (KP Dev) delivered a 6-month skills programme which comprises various modules from the full NQF 3 qualification. Learners will receive a Statement of Results once verification of training has been completed.

This programme was delivered through Gert Sibande, Ehlanzeni, and Nkangala Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges in Mpumalanga.

During September 2023, the learners participated in practical sessions on designing, testing, fault-finding, and repairing renewable energy technologies.

Richard Setati, Lead of Business Development at KP Dev, outlined the programme's goal: to enhance South Africa's skills pool and prepare the workforce for a competitive and green future-ready economy.

To ensure the programme's long-term sustainability, TVET college lecturers were also trained to be more capacitated on the learning modules of the programme.

At the launch of this programme in April 2023, Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Honourable Buti Manamela, emphasized the programme's focus on women aligning with the vision of an inclusive economy in collaboration with international development partners, local government and skills development institutions. He said, "Building a capable State requires strong local and international strategic partnerships."

Candice Moodley, EWSETA’s Corporate Services Executive, highlighted the importance of partnerships in addressing the country's skills challenges. She stated, "This programme provides meaningful skills development in renewable energy, which can transform the skills landscape, change lives and grow economic development in the area. However, without the support and partnership with strategic partners such as Power Africa, the impact that such critical programmes can have to both building a capable workforce able to drive the RE strategies of the country and

increasing inclusive economic participation of vulnerable groups like women and youth, remains negligible."

At the closing ceremony, Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy Pretoria, Heather Merritt, reiterated, "The U.S. Government is dedicated to fostering and developing the technical skills required to usher in a new era of renewable energy. By supporting this training program, we are building a skilled workforce for South Africa's renewable energy sector and advancing the objectives of the Just Energy Transition."

Moodley further emphasized that communities must have relevant knowledge and skills to participate in new economies and contribute to building the future.

An example is Palesa Khumalo, a programme participant, who is on the cusp of becoming a verified Renewable Energy Trade Specialist. She credited the Gert Sibande Skills Academy in Standerton, Mpumalanga, for providing excellent guidance and precise information.

The renewable energy programme addresses unemployment and serves as a catalyst for positive change, preparing South Africa's youth for a thriving economy driven by skilled and passionate individuals. EWSETA, Power Africa, the United Nations Development Programme in South Africa and KP Dev are also implementing a strategy for learner work placement once they exit the program. Companies have already expressed an interest in placing the learners to gain workplace experience.

South Africa's evolving energy landscape offers opportunities in the renewable energy sector. This programme, in addition to providing female learners with valuable training, contributes to developing a competent female skills pool.

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About EWSETA

EWSETA is a skills development authority serving the energy and water sectors. It is one of 21 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) established in South Africa in terms of the Skills Development Act of 1998 – amended. It plays a crucial function in ensuring that the National Skills and Development Strategy is executed within the energy and water sectors.

EWSETA focuses primarily on energy, renewable energy, gas and water services sector, as determined by the Honourable Minister of Higher Education and Training in terms of section 9(2) of the SDA, read in conjunction with Government Gazette No 33756, RG 9417, No. R1055 of 11 November 2010.

www.ewseta.org.za

About Power Africa

Power Africa is a U.S. Government-led partnership that harnesses the collective resources of over 200 public and private sector partners to double access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa. Power Africa's goal is to add at least 30,000 megawatts (MW) of cleaner and more reliable electricity generation capacity and 60 million connections by 2030.

www.usaid.gov/powerafrica/

About the Renewable Energy Specialisation Skills Development Programme

The six-month skills programme comprised in-person lectures on energy efficiency, safety, solar water systems, hybrid renewable energy technologies and practical sessions on installing battery storage, fault-finding and repairing a standalone battery-charging wind turbine. During September 2023, the learners presented practical sessions on designing, testing, fault-finding and repairing renewable energy technologies.

In addition to technical learning, the training programme included entrepreneurship and business management component, which was strengthened by the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA).