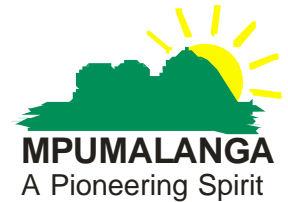




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PROVINCIAL CRDP COORDINATOR SELLS COMPREHENSIVE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) in Mpumalanga has grown in leaps and bounds since its inception in Mkhondo Municipality in 2009, thanks mainly to the tireless efforts of a dedicated coordinating team ably marshalled by Ms Nelisiwe Sithole who heads the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Administration in Mpumalanga.

According to the Medium Term Strategic Framework which sets out priorities that underpin the strategic direction of SA's government, CRDP is a strategic intervention that is aimed at improving the quality of life of about 10-15 million South Africans whose socio economic profile is characterised by poverty and under development.

Statistical analysis of the socio economic profile of the 18 municipalities in Mpumalanga dictated that priority in terms of rural development would be given to 7 of the poorest municipalities in the province. Concerted efforts from various quarters within Dipaleseng Municipality calling for the declaration of the municipality as an eight CRDP site finally came to fruition as Mpumalanga Cabinet ultimately proclaimed Dipaleseng as a CRDP municipality.

Ms Sithole, the driving force behind the success of the programme, indicated that the programme was first launched and piloted in Mkhondo Municipality in 2009. In 2010 the programme was rolled out to all 19 wards in Mkhondo and to six other municipalities which are Nkomazi, Bushbuckridge, and Chief Albert Luthuli, Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme, Dr JS Moroka and Thembisile Hani.

The HOD highlighted that the same variables which led to the declaration of the 7 CRDP municipalities in Mpumalanga were prevalent in Dipaliseng and this was revealed in her presentation on the 11th April 2013 which reflected on the extent of the level of poverty, unemployment, income per capita to name but a few social ills that the municipality was still battling with.

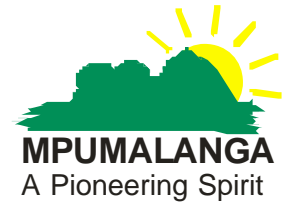
She further said that the province of Mpumalanga has shortages of skills and as a result it was not getting the best skilled graduates due to the fact that the province was generally poor with 65 percent of it being rural. Therefore educated people preferred other provinces which were better developed than Mpumalanga province.

According to Ms Sithole, the CRDP concept enables rural areas to provide what one can get in Sandton that is better schools, clinics, recreational facilities and roads. CRDP is there to improve the lives of the people not to completely change how they live and every municipality should have a change agent whether in the form of a cooperative, education, health and grant that will in the end creates equitable, vibrant and sustainable livelihoods.



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The good thing about CRDP is that it is people-centred and involves people in all stages of development.

Mr Manda Dagada, CRDP coordinator in the province, made a presentation to stakeholders in the Dipaleseng Municipality on the CRDP business plan which is in accordance with budget allocations from various departments committing to their CRDP interventions in the 2013/14 financial year.