

The Weekly

TWEELING YOUTH CENTRE TO CREATE JOBS

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Youth development partnership ... Social development minister, Bathabile Dlamini and Free State department of social development, Sisi Ntombela, open the centre

The centre will cater for about 17 000 youth in Tweeling, the majority of whom are unemployed and unskilled

The minister of social development, Bathabile Dlamini, and the MEC for social development, Sisi Ntombela, opened a Youth Centre in Tweeling last week.

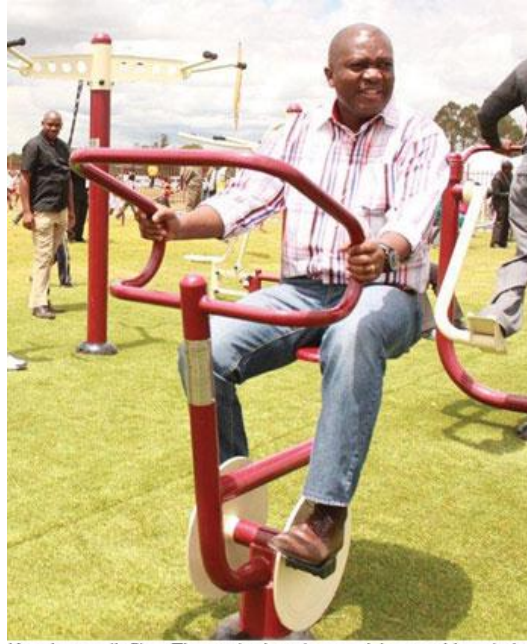
The new centre is expected to address the high levels of unemployment in the area. It is a multi-purpose facility that will provide training and skills development, community service, sports and recreation, information technology and government services.

It will cater for about 17 000 youth in Tweeling; the majority of whom are unemployed and unskilled. The idea of a youth centre started out with a group of 13 young people who were brought together by a desire to change their lives. They received training under the child and youth care learnership programme in 2010, after which they conceived an idea of setting up a youth centre.

Dlamini commended the vision of the centre, stating that it would create an environment for that will be conducive for young people to discover and hone their talents. "Young people need to be encouraged to develop into responsible and productive citizens, so it is our hope that this centre will help them take advantage of opportunities created by our government, and translate them into a life of productivity."

She said the centre will keep the youth in the area away from drugs and peer pressure. "I believe that this (centre) will keep the youth off the streets and negative risky behaviour. This centre is an exciting example of a government that cherishes young people and understands the necessity to encourage them to become active participants in society. We hope other provinces will learn from this positive initiative."

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Keeping youth fit ... The centre boasts exercising machines to be used by youth

The centre's board chairperson, Tshepo Mofokeng, thanked the provincial government for building the centre in the community.

"Most of us were unemployed, but because of this centre, we will be able to generate some income. We do not have a tertiary education and two of the 13 members of the board had actually failed their Grade 12. Life can be very difficult for a young person if you do not have the skills that the job market needs.

"But our government has stepped in and made us feel very important and valued. Running the centre will equip us with skills such as project and financial management. This will enable us to use the centre for the benefit of our community and our families," Mofokeng told The Weekly.

He also revealed that the provincial social development department had funded the youth with over R200 000 to run the centre.

For her part, Ntombela was confident that the youth centre will have a lasting and positive effect on the young people.

"We built this centre to help curb the challenges of unemployment, teenage pregnancies and drug abuse that are rife in the area. We hope the young people of this area use it wisely. Young people are the future of this country and we must invest in them," she said.

[Source: www.theweekly.co.za]