

SEKHUKHUNE WOMEN ON THE RISE: PRIORITISING HEALTH, WELLNESS AND EMPOWERMENT IN THE WORKPLACE



Story by: Ratilwe Maja

Through significant platforms that promote health, leadership, and welfare in the workplace, Sekhukhune District Municipality (SDM) continues to support women empowerment. In celebration of Mental Health and Breast Cancer Awareness month, the municipality hosted an impactful all women employee gathering in Groblersdal Agricultural Wall under the theme: Sekhukhune District's Women Employees Rise: Health and Empowerment Matters. Their tenacity enhances social cohesiveness, local growth, and the provision of municipal services.

Executive Mayor Cllr Minah Bahula led the programme and highlighted the important of unity, support and shared strength among women in the institution. "This event serves as a safe and supportive platform for women to engage in open dialogue around health, wellbeing, and empowerment" she said. She further affirmed the district's commitment to building an inclusive and health-conscious work environment, noting that the event may become an annual programme dedicated to women's empowerment.

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The gathering was also graced by Limpopo MEC for Health, Dieketseng Mashego, who emphasised the importance of early detection, mental health advocacy and access to supportive services for women across the province.

“No women should ever suffer in silence. No women should ever choose between survival and dignity, putting people first mean’s putting women’s wellbeing at the centre of our policies” she noted. “You are the heartbeat of this district, Empowerment is a journey, not an event.”



Senior government officials, members of the Mayoral Committee, SALGA representatives, and speakers from SAPS and health sector echoed a unified message: women must be supported to speak out about mental health challenges, gender – based violence, and social pressures they silently carry. SDM celebrates every mother, daughter, sister, colleague and changemakers who lifts the district forward.



In Commemoration of Long Serving employees in the Municipality: Meet Mr Mapheto Makgalemane

Story by: Ratilwe Maja

Every organization has individuals whose dedication, institutional knowledge, and commitment leave an indelible impression.

Mr. Mapheto Makgalemane, an incumbent of Sekhukhune District Municipality whose career path exemplifies the perseverance of public service as well as the development of the municipality.



Mr. Mapheto joined SDM in May 2006 as Human Resource Officer. In his tenure he promptly observed that municipal government operates differently from provincial and federal government. In addition, he saw substantial variations across payroll and pension fund systems, and has since witnessed notable advancements in standardization, including the 2012 harmonisation of pension subsidies.

Although there were HR policies established when he initially started, they could not be standardized working templates for day-to-day operations. Taking it upon himself, Mr. Mapheto developed easily navigable templates for recruitment and selection, which are still in use today. These developments attracted interest outside of the municipality, and recommendations to implement them in other municipalities were made by SALGA, Treasury, and CoGHSTA.

Mr Mapheto worked with Mr. Sipho Zwane (Senior Manager: Corporate Services) in 2006; the late Mr. Ike Tjebane (Director: Corporate services); Mr. Magomarele Hlakudi (Director: Human Resource Management); Mr. Tax Matlala (Training and Development Officer); Mr.

Jonas Rapotu (Senior Human Resource Officer); Mr. George Mokomane (Human Resource Officer); Mr. Robert Mashitola (Senior Human Resource Practitioner) and Ms. Mary Maboea (Human Resource Officer).

One aspect of Mr Mapheto's tale is the cultural changes that have occurred during his tenure in SDM. Mr Mapheto thinks back to earlier times when division was caused by siloed working practices and poorly run recognition programs. But has since observes a greater sense of belonging, higher morale, and fewer disciplinary cases now that employee sports codes have been implemented and a renewed emphasis on teamwork.

Mr. Mapheto has supervised many people, ranging from interns to permanent staff, in his work as a Senior HR Officer. "Education is your first step to freedom – but true leadership comes from humility, community involvement, and understanding the needs of those you serve," he says bluntly to the next generation of municipal workers.

Beyond his career, Mr. Mapheto's life demonstrates decades of involvement in the community, from sitting on the board of the Sekhukhune Community Radio Station to attending the historic Conference for a Democratic Future in 1989. His zeal was unabated by health issues, and since 2021, he has regained his strength and is prepared to participate in community programs as well as within the municipality.

The devotion, insight, and unwavering service of Mr. Mapheto are examples that long service is not solely measured in years but also in the value created and lives impacted along the way in service delivery.



RISK MANAGEMENT UNIT ADMINISTERS A FRAUD AND CORRUPTION WORKSHOP

Story by: Boitumelo Mokobake

“Corruption isn’t just a crime, it’s a betrayal to the communities we’re meant to serve as public officials, it violates our duties as custodians of public entrustment and wrecks our communities, slowly drowning our people in poverty, poor services and hopelessness.” Those are prudent words by Chief Risk Officer, Mr. Michael Mohlamonyane from the Municipal Manager’s office during the presentation of the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Workshop hosted at the Sekhukhune District Municipal Council Chamber.

The Municipal Finance management, code of conduct, policy and treasury were earnestly discussed over the presentation of fraud and corruption earning SDM staff excellent information. Mr. Michael Mohlamonyane spoke the staff through Factors that may influence Corruption in their personal lives such as feeling unrecognized at work, feeling or being underpaid, unusually high personal debts and living beyond one’s personal means. “It is a responsibility of each and every one of us to ensure we leave this Institution better than we’ve found it. And to the youth in this workshop today, you are pioneers of the future of this governance, secure a

progressive Institution with your daily acts so that this Municipality may not regress from what we’ve worked hard to build”

Different aspects and dimensions of Corruption e.g. Bribery, Embezzlement, Abuse of Power, Favouritism and Nepotism were highlighted and the staff of SDM was ensured that no acts go unseen and that policies should be abided at all times.

Finance Secretary, Mr. Elvis Mahlong advised fellow colleagues to do work with diligence and honesty. “I encourage you to be truthful in your daily duties. Do not let pressures and or expectations stray you from the purpose you’re meant to fulfil in the Municipality. Do regular self-introspection and constantly remind yourself why you were entrusted with the position you behold in this Institution today.” The Risk Management Unit grants access to whistle-blowers to communicate their matters and ensured their safety as per the Protection Disclosure Act, 26 of 2000.



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SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY NEW APPOINTMENTS

Story by: Ratilwe Maja



Sekhukhune District Municipality is proud to welcome a dynamic group of eleven (11) new employees who have joined various departments across the institution namely Aluwani Mudau – Design Engineer (IWS), Caroline Maleka – Human Resources Officer, Phaahla Thobejane – Acquisition Officer (Finance), Basetsana Mathebe – Reporting Clerk (Finance), Lebo Manaso – Admin Clerk (PMU), Mahlatse Sepogwane – Data Capture (EPWP Unit), Tiego Phaladi – Payroll Clerk (Budget & Treasury Office), Doctor Digauto – Admin Clerk (IWS), Mologadi Mashabela – Logistic Clerk (Budget & Treasury Office), Chester Mokgero – Human Resources Clerk and Millicent Themane – Youth Officer (OEM). Each individual brings unique skills, passion, and fresh perspectives that will strengthen the commitment to service delivery and community development.

Meet Lebo Manaso – Admin Clerk, under the Project Management Unit (PMU) a Bachelor of Science graduate in Community Water Services and Sanitation from the University of Limpopo, she also holds a certificate of competence in Developing and promoting Labour-Intensive Construction strategies as well as strong computer literacy skills which have supported her in the administrative and project coordination work at the municipality. Her role as Admin Clerk, involves handling administrative tasks, maintaining project records, assisting with documentation and coordination of service delivery and infrastructure projects. She is excited to bring her attention to detail, organisational capabilities, and professionalism to the team. Her goal is

to expand her knowledge in project management and financial reporting to enhance her contribution. Outside of work, Lebo enjoys a quiet time at home, reading, and helping with small tasks to unwind. Her message to prospective employees is that “Serve your community with passion and integrity, every task makes a difference”.

Doctor Digauto, Admin Clerk in the Infrastructure and Water Services who completed his N4 in Information Technology & Computer Science at Tshwane North TVET College. Doctor’s role involves document management, data capturing, and supporting administrative functions within the IWS unit. He looks forward to applying his technical computing skills and help sculpt a better system for service delivery for the communities under the Sekhukhune District. A multi – talented individual, he relaxes by producing, mixing, mastering, and writing music and he is also an anime enthusiast. “Always be willing to learn and be taught. Be flexible, but firm in your form” asserted Doctor.

Millicent Themane is a passionate youth development advocate with a BA Honours in Public Management and Governance from the University of Johannesburg. She joins the Office of the Executive Mayor as a Youth Officer. Focusing on empowering young people and supporting initiatives that combat unemployment. She brings strong strategic thinking and community

SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

NEW APPOINTMENTS

engagement skills to her role. Outside work, Millicent enjoys music and journaling as a way to unwind. A little-known fact: She is the founder of a youth foundation that helps learner's transitions into higher education. Millicent aims to strengthen leadership, communication, and policy implementation as part of her professional growth. She stated that, public servants should "serve with purpose – public service is about making a meaningful impact".

Mahlatse Sepogwane learned from a young age the importance of community and perseverance. He holds a degree in Public Administration in Local Government from the University of Limpopo. As an EPWP Data Capturer, he is responsible for collecting, managing and analysing data in support of municipal programmes. Mahlatse is eager to apply his data management skills and deepen his knowledge in project management and municipal planning. He

enjoys spending time with loved ones and playing sports.

"Together we can build a better future and leave a lasting legacy for our communities" noted Mahlatse. A surprising fact about him is that he is an avid reader who enjoys learning about diverse cultures and histories.

Sekhukhune District Municipality celebrates the arrival of the dedicated professionals. Their commitment, energy and expertise will undoubtedly contribute to improving service delivery and advancing the municipality's development agenda. SDM looks forward to the positive impact each will make in the institution and the communities that will be served.

5th
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To improve the quality of life for all communities through:

- Provision of a democratic and accountable government;
- Promotion of inclusive and egalitarian economic transformation
 - Promotion of a safe and healthy environment
- Fostering of community involvement and stakeholder engagement
 - Strengthening institutional capacity
 - Promotion of social cohesion

Enhancing Workplace Safety Through Medical Surveillance: The Role of the EAP OHS Programme



By ensuring that working conditions are not adversely affecting employees physical or mental health, monitoring employee's health and well-being are critical function of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and its subunit Occupational Health and Safety (OHS). One of the fundamental principles of this endeavour is medical surveillance, a proactive approach that help protect and monitor workers health.

The aim of conducting medical surveillance is to verify that workers are mentally and physically capable of carrying out work and satisfy the health standards required by their jobs, guard against adverse consequences brought on by the work environment or its surroundings and create baseline medical records for those who are subjected to risks related to their health at work. Furthermore, employing this preventative strategy enables the municipality to identify early indicators of occupational illnesses and take action before they

worsen and become major health problems for the workers.

Among the responsibilities of the OHS under EAP team is to identify workplace dangers, establishing control measures in place and doing risk assessments, training and awareness programs, as well as ensuring adherence to safety and occupational health regulations.

Medical Examinations Covered

Employees go through several exams, which include among others: X-rays; general observations; sputum testing; vision tests; blood tests; audiometry (hearing tests); and spirometry (lung function tests). A comprehensive evaluation of employee health is ensured by these rigorous checks, especially for individuals who are exposed to work hazards.



Medical surveillance is carried out annually, moreover, upon an employee's departure due to illness, notifications are sent, documentations are updated, and risk analyses are conducted to ascertain whether more supervision is required while they are away.

Upon returning to work, employees must update their medical surveillance records, gain medical clearance, receive the required personal protective equipment (PPE), and go through a safe reintegration process.

Confidentiality and Consent

Although it is mandatory to participate in medical monitoring, employees must sign a consent form. By formally stating their consent or disinterest, this guarantees openness and respect for individual liberties. The EAP OHS programme has proven efficacy in identifying detrimental health impacts, modifying control measures as needed, and guaranteeing the timely implementation of corrective actions and follow-ups.

Employees receive feedback on their health status both individually and on-site. This ensures employees

remain informed and proactive about their health and workplace safety. One-on-one consultations and safety awareness programs are two ways that training on recognizing and disclosing early occupational health concerns are provided. Workshops are another way to raise awareness, ensuring that employees are proactive and knowledgeable about their health and safety at work.

Looking ahead, the EAP aims to regularly launching health and safety initiatives, ascertain that OHS representatives, evacuation marshals, and first responders are properly appointed by law. Moreover, offering stress support services, trauma management, and counselling, encourage programs that promote physical wellness and discuss managing and preventing substance misuse. In addition to promoting compliance, the EAP strives to promote a proactive safe culture in order to make workplaces safer and more resilient.



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Story by: Boitumelo Mokobake

The Independent Municipal Allied Trade Union (IMATU) is a politically non-aligned registered trade union operating mainly in local government. It aims to provide outstanding professional service to its members by protecting their office bearers, interests, as well as the dignity of the individual. IMATU is committed to the development of office bearers, the promotion of enabling shop stewards and members to realise their full potential in an environment as well as providing equal opportunities for all.

To date, the Union has over 107,000 national memberships and is the largest politically independent trade union in the local government sector. With a total of thirteen (13) regional offices, IMATU encourages members to become actively involved in the structures of the union and maximize membership statistics to substantiate the protection that the South African Constitution provides. In championing for workers' rights, IMATU gives innumerable benefits to its members as well becoming the voice of formal representation as a progressive union that protects and advance the interests of its members. Some of IMATU's benefits include representation during grievances, salary negotiations, and disciplinary hearings up to the level of the Constitutional Court.

IMATU negotiates improvements in working conditions along with safe working environments and ensures that interests of members are protected in respect of pension funds, medical aid funds, housing schemes subsidies and travel allowances.

Additionally, IMATU provides access to company benefits and resources, assist members to ensure their posts are correctly evaluated and ensure employers obey labour laws. Furthermore, IMATU offers IMATU loans, bursary schemes, ex-gratia payments and training and development opportunities.

As IMATU aims for stronger more effective local government, representatives in Sekhukhune District Municipality (SDM) are on par with the union's core values and mission statement. When asked about the impact of IMATU in Sekhukhune as a district, Ms Ntombizanele Vasi, SDM Shop steward and Regional IMATU member announced that "IMATU has fought tooth and nail to re-instate one of the Makhuduthamaga employees, an IMATU member back at work after the matter was taken to Constitutional Court and the employer lost the case."

She added, "IMATU is an organised labour union, our target plan is to proceed to strengthen local government through unionisms, thusly, we are looking forward to working with management to bridge the gap where members feel unrepresented and assist in increasing service delivery and fill vacant positions."

SDM is working closely with IMATU representatives on the matter of salary increment together with other issues involving the staff of the whole district. "Members are encouraged to continue to work hard and to start looking for possible representatives that make certain that their interests are sort after." Concluded Ms Vasi.

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SOLIDARITY FOREVER: SAMWU IN SEKHUKHUNE

Story by: Ratilwe Maja

The South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU) is the significant trade union that organizes and promotes the rights of workers in South African municipalities, such as those employed by water boards and associated services. Its main goal is to use collective bargaining agreements with the appropriate authorities to secure improved pay, benefits, and working conditions for these municipal employees. SAMWU was founded in 1987, as a coalition of trade unions coming together to establish the union, a militant, worker-controlled institution that is untainted by racism and sexism. All workers who are directly or indirectly engaged in the sectors are eligible to become members of the union.

SAMWU marks another chapter in Sekhukhune District as the union acknowledges every member of Sekhukhune for standing with the union through all its adversities. The Union's steadfast dedication to maintaining its relevance and influence today is marked by fighting mass terminations, unjust labour practices, and worker victimization while defending workers' rights. SAMWU has 427 members as of February 2025 within Sekhukhune District, with ongoing recruitments.

As part of SAMWU's unification and rebuilding, the union welcomed new Local Shop Stewards Council (LSSC) on November 11, 2024, from the local Labour Party. Lesiba Ramphisa, Thandi Masemula, Prince Mahlangu, Lucy Lethuba, Elvis

Mahlong, Patrick Aphane, and Kgetjepe Maredi will be representing the union at the Local Labour Forum (LLF). Essentially, the committees aim to be transparent in their operations, responsive to the demands of the members, and dedicated to furthering the interests of all employees. In addition, the union intends to make sure shop stewards are aware of their duties and accountability, which include appropriately representing workers, managing funds, providing frequent updates, and keeping members updated on the union's accomplishments.

Given that SAMWU is dedicated to helping its members both on and off the work, the union is thrilled to showcase the social benefits and resources—like SAMWUMED, SAMWU SACCO, and SAMWU Funeral Plan—that are accessible to members and their families.

The difficulties that Municipal Workers Retirement Fund (MWRF) members encounter have been observed by SAMWU with concern. Since then, members have received a notification from the provincial office advising them to write to the Pension Fund Adjudicators for mediation. Affected members may also provide their names of shop stewards so that the union committee can collaborate with them to address their issues.

The Sekhukhune Local shop Stewards Committee and Constituencies representation is as follows and in each COSATU local the union representatives as a district municipality will be those on the list below. The committee's term of office ends in 2029.



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LOCAL OFFICE BEARERS	
Chairperson	Kgetjepe Maredi
Deputy Chairperson	Bella Skosana
Secretary	Elvis Mahlong
ELIAS MOTSOLEDI	
Cde	Patrick Aphane
Cde	Kgetjepe Maredi
Cde	Elvis Mahlong
Cde	Lucy Lethuba
Cde	Thandi Masemula
Cde	Prince Mahlangu
EPHRAIM MOGALE	
Cde	Bella Skhosana
Cde	Lesiba Ramphisa
MAKHUDUTHAMAGA	
Cde	Semang Marishane
Cde	Mogomontlha Mogohloane
FETHAKGOMO TUBATSE	
Cde	Jabulani Maila
Cde	Mathale Ranta

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Council Speaker
Cllr Chego Kgwediebotse



Executive Mayor
Cllr Maitula Bahula



Chief Whip
Cllr Machipa Aron



MMC: Infrastructure Water Services
Cllr Mabatane Mathale



MMC: Infrastructure Water Services
maintenance
Cllr Sefala "Kukie" Raesetja



MMC: Infrastructure Water Services Dept
Cllr Mathipa Moffet



MMC: Infrastructure Water Services Dept
Cllr Ngobeni Carpos



MMC: Planning & Economic Development
Cllr Matlala Alfred



MMC: Budget & Treasury
Cllr Leshaba Baetseba



MMC: OEM Women & children
Cllr Leokana "Kanana" Mogabi



MMC: Corporate Services
Cllr Nkosi Samson



MMC: Community Services
Cllr Mafefe Orginia

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 - Promotion of social cohesion



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