



MEDIA RELEASE

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Nkulo Trust hands over modern facilities to replace asbestos at Mphephethe Primary School

The Nkulo Community Partnership Trust ("Nkulo Trust" or "the Trust"), in collaboration with the Mpumalanga Department of Education, has officially handed over modern classrooms and ablution facilities at Mphephethe Primary School in KwaZamokuhle, Hendrina. The handover marks an important milestone for the Trust in providing learners and educators with a safer and more conducive learning environment.

The R22.5 million infrastructure investment has replaced the previous aged asbestos structures, which had been in use since 1992, with modern brick-and-mortar facilities. The upgrade includes 20 new classrooms, dedicated Early Childhood Development facilities for Grade R learners and 38 modern ablution facilities. This will go a long way in enhancing learning for more than 1,200 learners and educators.

Speaking at the handover ceremony, Mpumi Sithole, Nkulo Trust's Founder Appointed Trustee, emphasised the importance of public-private collaboration in creating dignity and safety in local schools. She said: "Education is fundamental to the long-term development of communities and improving access to safe learning facilities is an important step towards empowering future generations. Through this project, we have eliminated health and safety risks posed by deteriorating asbestos and created a space where learners and educators can thrive."

Beyond educational outcomes, the project drove tangible local economic transformation. Led by a black female-owned SMME, this project delivered meaningful local economic benefits, with approximately R7 million spent on subcontractors, while creating employment opportunities for 53 community members.

Lindi Masina, MEC for the Mpumalanga Department of Education, said: "The improvements at Mphephethe Primary School demonstrate the positive impact and value that targeted investments in educational infrastructure can have on learners and communities. We commend the Nkulo Community Partnership Trust for its support, which is helping to enhance learning outcomes and advance the long-term growth, well-being and prosperity of the community."

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Notes for editor:

The Nkulo Community Partnership Trust was established by Thungela in 2021 to drive sustainable socio-economic development in its host communities and labour-sending areas. Meaning "growth of the people", Nkulo invests in initiatives that create lasting impact through education and skills development, health and social wellbeing, and the growth of alternative livelihoods. Guided by community needs and focused on long-term value creation, the Trust aims to help build resilient, self-reliant communities that can thrive for generations.