



Minister of Economic Development, Mr Ebrahim Patel, is surrounded by the delighted children of Luvuyo Youth Care Centre in Soshanguve, where he donated T-shirts and blankets to the institution to mark Mandela Day, on 18 July 2016.

Minister of Economic Development, Mr Ebrahim Patel, provided the much needed hope to the children of an orphanage in Soshanguve during a visit to the institution to mark Mandela Day on Monday, 18 July 2016.

The Luvuyo Youth Care Centre is a home to 33 homeless children, aged between eight months and 22 years old, who have either suffered domestic abuse or are living with the HIV virus.

Since the centre started operating in 2003, it had managed to accommodate 352 children, of which 22 are permanently residing there.

Speaking individually to the children and asking them simple questions about their current studies and envisaged future careers, after a walk-about around the institution, Minister Patel motivated them to acquire as much knowledge as possible so that they could make informed decisions about their future careers.

He particularly encouraged the girls to be committed in their studies so that they can scale new heights in the political and business worlds like other current political and business people.

"Today women are occupying high-level positions in South Africa, leading our society. The national Cabinet has a number of women Ministers. I am proud to say that we have strong and committed women across public life, in the universities and in powerful positions in business and trade unions. You too can bring your skills to the service of our country by studying hard and putting all your efforts into your chosen field," Minister Patel said.

The visibly pleased and motivated children appreciated the Minister's visit, and some put to him some interesting questions about certain careers and the role of government in society, to which the Minister gave concise information and practical examples.

The Minister further committed to provide the children with career guidance and let students know what funding options are available to them. This was warmly welcome by the aspirant professionals.

The Minister then handed out to each child the PICC-branded T-shirts and blankets, much to the delight of the children, who showed their appreciation by being jovial during a photo session with him.

Throughout the day, a group of volunteers from the EDD had been hard at work, with all their sleeves rolled up, cleaning the institution all around. This involved washing of dishes, clothes of the children, cleaning of the walls, packing up loose-lying bricks and stones as well as creating a small vegetable garden, which the EDD officials have committed to monitor and clean it up every three weeks.

The group also donated clothing, cleaning material, food parcels, sanitary products, and other items to the institution.

A delighted owner of the facility, Mrs Lindiwe Nokwali, who started the orphanage with less than 20 children, could not contain her excitement about the visit by the Minister to the institution.

“I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the EDD, particularly the Minister for thinking of us during this special day. You have made so much difference to us as management of the centre, but more so to these special children whose lives will be changed for the better by your gracious gesture,” Mrs Nokwali said.

“We have come a long way to be where we are today. We have been through tough times, but passion and zeal to make a difference in our community has kept us going. I could not find sleep knowing that there were so many hopeless children in our community that needed a parental care and love like all others.”

She added that the demand for other children to be housed at the facility was increasing yearly, and this posed some challenges.

“Firstly, we need land to build more rooms and other facilities as the children are now cramped in the rooms.

Their number increases every year, and we never anticipated this growth. And what complicates matters is that we cannot extend here as we do not own this land. This land is a subject of a dispute as there is someone who is said to own it. At present we are looking for land, which will just be enough to accommodate all the children that are here now, and we can perhaps consider a future intake.”

In addition, she said the institution was doubling up as an after-care ‘which helps working parents’.

“This also assist to generate some income to run the centre.”

And to generate further income to buy the land, the home will have a fund-raising dinner in **Pretoria Central Business District on 8 September 2016**

. Tickets will soon be on sale from R300 to R450, while a table for corporates will be R5 000. For more information on this, she can be contacted on 012 799 1429/082 567 1206 or LNokwali@vodamail.com.

Mrs Nokwali also indicated that the institution was in a dire need of a resource centre (mini library) with computers.

The Minister said he would encourage all employees of the EDD to donate books of the educational levels of the children, as a starting point to resourcing the facility.