

THE NEW AGE

[22 July 2011]

WOMEN GRAB CHANCE

Getrude Makhafola

Nontsokolo Skwet, who is unemployed, is part of a group of women who are learning how to do construction work as they embark on the building of 100 houses in Brandfort.

Under the supervision and guidance of qualified builders, Skwet and other volunteers will be trained to lay bricks, plaster and build foundations of the houses during Women's Month in August.

The more than 100 women volunteers from Masilonyana municipality will start the construction work today to mark the beginning of Women's Build, an annual event organised to commemorate the historic 1956 women's march to the Union Buildings in Pretoria.

Volunteers from government, private, nongovernment organisations and civil society are participating in the construction of houses to benefit poor communities.

Skwet, 26, and her group had already laid foundations of four houses yesterday. "I am interested in the construction industry and I am looking forward to continuing with this work after this project.

"Maybe I can start my own business one day," she said.

The mother of one is hoping to gain valuable experience from the project. She saw an opportunity when local officials called on women to register and learn how to build.

"It is difficult to get employment if you do not have any experience and this will open opportunities for me," said Skwet.

Of the 100 houses, 55 will be handed over on August 18.

One of the houses will be handed over to a child-headed household of three young siblings whose mother and grandmother died.

Women's Build is held annually in one or two provinces, with women in the home building industry coming together to build houses for the elderly, people with disabilities and child-headed families.

[source: http://www.thenewage.co.za/23654-1018-53-Women_grab_chance]