

Vocational education needs to meet 21st century demands

Higher Education and Training Deputy Minister Buti Manamela says vocational education in the 21st century requires both head and hand skills, as the increasing use of integrated technologies is less done by hand.



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“We need to increasingly manage machines, devices, programmes and software to do a lot of the work. Motor vehicle diagnostics is an example known to most of us. This way of working will intensify and become more challenging as we operate in the context of the fourth industrial revolution,” Manamela said.

Manamela also highlighted that the nature of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) education is changing to meet the demands of the 21st century and beyond. He challenged South African students to think creatively and stretch their imaginations if they are to book a space in the future of work.

On Wednesday, Manamela launched the 2018 TVET Month at uMfolozi TVET College in KwaZulu-Natal.

Since 2014, all TVET colleges declared the month of August as TVET Month. During the month, colleges are encouraged to organise their own events that focus on skills development, entrepreneurship, industry partnerships and employer engagement.

Potential students are also invited to attend the events with the aim of attracting them to pursue a vocational career path.

During the launch, the department invited the 21 SETAs, as well as KHETHA to offer information to students on career pathways and financial aid.

Trained career guidance experts assist young people in identifying their passion, career interest, and educational pathways. Students are also provided with more information they can take home and read.

Manamela noted that the department launches the TVET Month in August which is also Women's Month, adding that the department wants to see more women enter the male dominated trade landscape.

"There was a time when we regarded the trades and technical vocations such as construction, engineering, welding, fitting and turning as men's work. Those days are gone...they are long over.

"We see thousands upon thousands of young women entering the trades in South Africa. They are changing the male dominated trade landscape and are showing that they can compete with the best. We support and encourage this and want to see even more women enter the trades," the Deputy Minister said.

Trade skills competition

Manamela also encouraged students to participate in trade related skills competitions.

South Africa participates in the bi-annual World Skills Competition which brings together many countries to participate in trade related skills competitions.

The department holds regional and national competitions to select the team to represent South Africa at the next competition to be held in Russia in 2019.

In September, South Africa will be hosting the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) Future Skills Challenge, a competition involving the five BRICS countries.

The Future Skills Challenge will feature manufacturing, digital and transportation skills that are emerging and undergoing transformation as a result of Industry 4.0.

"We need to have these competitions if we are to appreciate and prepare for the future skills that this country will require. South African students have to think creatively and stretch their imaginations if they are to book a space in the future of work," Manamela said.

Stop the scourge of abuse

Meanwhile, Manamela used the occasion to encourage South Africans, especially young women, to emulate the example of Albertina Sisulu.

"Let's walk in her shoes. We must speak out against women and children abuse. We have this responsibility to do so, and I therefore encourage both men and women to take this responsibility seriously and do your part to stop this scourge," the Deputy Minister said.