Debunking the myths about nuclear

The class of 2017 must remember and take heed of the example set by the youth of 1976, who understood the importance of education in order to emancipate themselves from the struggle of the day, says the Nuclear Industry Association of South Africa (Niasa).

Knox Msebenzi, CEO of Niasa. *Photo: EE Publishing*

The struggle of 2017 is different. It is about creating transformative and inclusive socio-economic growth through technologies and innovations in the world of science. The nuclear world offers a myriad of possibilities and an economic multiplier effect through the localisation effort when dealing with new build projects.

All of which can only be unlocked through determination and commitment towards Stem (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education. Solutions for the future are not the responsibility of the government alone, but a personal duty and ethos to making a difference to your country using your natural talents,' Knox Msebenzi, managing director of Niasa, says.

Catalyst to solve social challenges

As a people, we have the richness of a young ambitious population. It falls upon the experienced to empower the youth with the right tools, skills and opportunities for them to make the best choices for their lives. As the nuclear industry, we are faced with the challenge of the current generation of nuclear experts retiring from the field and seeking 'greener' pastures abroad. We urge young people, to consider nuclear sciences as a catalyst to solve their social challenges in order to create the many needed jobs which are necessary to improve the credit ratings of the country.

“Many still face the physiological fear of nuclear sciences and don’t realise that nuclear technology is in their everyday lives such as the way it is used to diagnose and treat diseases in safe and painless ways. Examples are the food radiation process of exposing foodstuffs to ionising radiation to preserve food and the production of cheap and environmentally safe electricity, as in the case of the Koeburg Power Station. Let us debunk the myths and focus on using all necessary resources to ensure a sustainable future for the youth,’ adds Msebenzi.

Moreover, the world of nuclear science has unique education opportunities, which are global in nature, due to the stringent international safety standards. An advantage is that organisations such as the Iaea (International Atomic Energy Agency) work to build a talent pipeline of young professionals who will carry the agency’s mandate in the decades to come. Starting at a young age from primary school to university graduates.