



merSETA

MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING
AND RELATED SERVICES SETA

The merSETA: Press Release

Attention: Business Editors; Education and Training Editors; Labour Editors

Eastern Cape --- reclaiming its place in the skills development revolution

For immediate release,

Celebrations around the Mandela Day resonated strongly in the Eastern Cape, where the East London Industrial Zone (ELIDZ) held a glittering graduation ceremony for 72 learners.

The Eastern Cape Strategic Skills Project, which is coordinated by the province's Office of the Premier, is funded by the National Skills Fund and runs in partnership with district municipalities, IDZs, SETAs, FET colleges and various provincial departments.

Aimed at making a strategic economic contribution to the Eastern Cape Provincial Gross Domestic Product (PGDP) by developing critical and scarce skills among the youth, the project provides effective work-based training and learning within industry.

The project yielded fruit recently when learners graduated in the following trades: National Certificate: Welding Application and practice NQF L2-12; National Certificate: Welding Application and practice NQF L3-12; National Certificate: Automotive Component Manufacturing and Assembly NQF L2-12; National Certificate: Automotive Component Manufacturing and Assembly NQF L3-18; National Certificate: Mechatronics NQF L2-8 and National Certificate: Fitting and Machining NQF L3-8.

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Speaking at the graduation ceremony, merSETA Chief Operations Officer Mr Wayne Adams said it was inspirational that during the week of the Mandela Day celebrations, the 72 graduates were receiving their certificates.

Flanked by their parents and family members, graduates were in high spirits as Mr Adams pointed out: “As has been said, there is no passion to be found playing small – in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living.

A man who devoted 67 years of his life to public service, Madiba sets the standard for service worldwide, whether we are students, shopkeepers or farmers, cabinet ministers or presidents. He calls on us to serve our fellow human beings, and better our communities.”

Mr Adams pointed out that the merSETA is known as the artisan and engineering hub.

“We’re known as this hub because of our stakeholders and the role they play in the well-being of the merSETA. The field of engineering, whether we are referring to the trades, technicians, engineers or research and development in this context, means that we have to ensure there is a continuous supply of qualified people for this skills pipeline.

“It also means that there are ample opportunities for our learners in career development, as well as lifelong learning. However, we can only do this and provide these skills development opportunities if we work together. These initiatives would also not be possible without the employers and industry. We celebrate the success of our learners as a family of collaborative partners and merSETA is proud to be of support in this partnership.”

MEC for Education in Eastern Cape Mr Mandla Makupula said the graduation was the culmination of work begun in 2007.

“South Africa is part of the constantly changing world.... 2008-2009 saw massive job losses in the manufacturing sector as a result of the economic meltdown. The 2009 Ford survey indicated that three million young people between 18-24 years are unemployed in South Africa or have no formal education.”

Mr Makupula urged young people to make use of education and training opportunities to make a better life for themselves and their communities.



Ecstatic about his achievement, Automotive Component graduate Mr Wanda Ntwana said his training had opened a new vista in his chosen discipline.

“It was never easy -- there were challenges along the way. The theory we learned at college as well as the practicals we were doing at the plant were not the same. Practical are more intense, whilst theory makes things look easier.” He pointed out that he would use his acquired skills to fulfil his childhood dream.

Ms Nondumiso Ntlongweni, who graduated in fitting and machine level 4, said being a woman and disabled made no difference to her dream. “I never doubted my abilities and potential as a person. As a woman, especially a disabled person, you need to have a thick skin.

I told myself that I am not going to let anyone discourage me. As a person, you don't need people feeling sorry for you - you need to make things happen. I am standing here today proud of what I have achieved; it's a wonderful feeling to know that I can now operate a machine.” As merSETA we join in congratulating the graduates. We call on them to make South Africa a better country by using their skills in a meaningful manner. They resemble the embodiment of hope and a brighter South Africa.

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