

Graduate about to realise dream of owning lodge

Hospitality youth training project empowers the youth to create jobs

Shaun Mashimbye is one step closer to fulfilling his dream of owning a lodge and contributing to South Africa's tourism industry.

This was after he graduated from a 12-month programme offered by the Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Education and Training Authority's (Cathsseta's) Hospitality Youth Training Programme.

Mashimbye, 29, was one of 117 youth from Northern Cape who received an accredited national certificate in food and beverages as a result of taking part in the programme.

The programme was sponsored by the Department of Tourism under the Expanded Public Works Programme.

"I am so grateful for being part of the programme. I feel fortunate to have learnt so much about the hospitality industry and how I can contribute to the country's economy by starting my own tourism-related business.

"After graduating, I know that I am one step closer to one day running my own lodge," said Mashimbye.

Shortly after graduating, Mashimbye found a job at a convention centre which specialises in event management and conferencing.

Speaking at the recent graduation ceremony held at the Mit-tah Seperepere International Convention Centre in Kimberley, Northern Cape, Deputy Minister of Tourism Elizabeth Thabethe applauded the learners on their achievements.

Thabethe commended the supportive role played by the hospitality industry in ensuring that the training programme was a success.

"The success of this training programme is shared with industry stakeholders who partnered with us to provide in-house practical training for the learners.

"To them I say thank you for rallying behind this initiative, and for up-skilling the tourism ambassadors that are graduating," said Thabethe.

To the graduates, Thabethe said: "I applaud your efforts in

achieving your Cathsseta-accredited qualification. I urge you to consider advancing yourselves beyond this point to be the future employment creators in our sector."

The Hospitality Youth Training Programme comprises 30% theory and 70% practical training, and learners were afforded an opportunity to gain workplace experience at various hospitality establishments in the province.

Fifteen learners now have permanent employment, while the rest are on contracts.

One of them is 38-year-old Nqubeko Mdubeki, whose experience as a paramedic and his interest in natural skincare products ensured the birth of his business, Umndeni Health.

In his maiden State of the Nation Address, President Cyril Ramaphosa said 2018 was a year of renewal and high expectations for tourism sector.

He tasked the Department of Tourism to grow the tourism market and to double the number of employment opportunities in the sector, with a special focus on skills development.

"Since 2011 our skills development programmes have capacitated over 2 500 young South Africans in the tourism value chain.

"This has created over 60 percent employment opportunities domestically and abroad," Ramaphosa said.

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Shaun Mashimbye received a national certificate in food and beverages after graduating from Hospitality Youth Training Programme. /SUPPLIED

I'm lucky to have learnt so much about hospitality