

A foothold in the workplace



Unemployed youth given skills to start own businesses

BATLILE PHALADI

IT IS often said that South Africa is not short of jobs, but is a country with a scarcity of skills.

In an effort to address the skills shortage in Pretoria, close to 3 000 residents have enlisted to take part in the GetOn Skills Development Programme.

The programme's centre is housed at the premises of ArcelorMittal and is aimed at transforming the lives of the people from the adjacent townships with meaningful skills.

It looks at residents from Mabopane, Lotrus Gardens, Ga-Rankuwa, Atteridgeville and Soshanguve.

The programme offers different courses and the bulk of the trainees are youth from the area.

Courses include basic computer skills, point of sale, office administration, baking for profit, bar tending, entrepreneurship and job readiness.

Youth are also trained to become cashiers, sales representatives and for general banking positions.

One of the graduates, 32-year-old Anne Moraele, said before she was enlisted she was unemployed and struggling to make a living.

"I did not have a job. I have kids that I could not provide for, but after attending the entrepreneurial course I was able to start my own business."

Moraele has started her own canteen within the centre, selling food to trainees and workers.

"After completing the course, which I did for two weeks, I figured what kind of business I wanted to do."

Moraele was given funding, which allowed her to purchase stock.

Benedict Makoeya, who is a point of sales trainer, said after four weeks of intense training, trainees get to do a two-week internship at any of the stores that have partnered with the programme.

Partners include Foschini Group, Mr Price Group, Pick n Pay and schools around Tshwane.

"We always encourage our trainees to prove themselves to employers during internships, that way most of them get placement after they completed the internship," Makoeya said.

The programme's managing director Brenton Cryer said the aim is to eradicate poverty.

"Most of the trainees were sitting at home without jobs. The programme does not only help them with skills, but also with confidence to face the workplace environment," Cryer said.

"We mainly provide training to disadvantaged youth between the ages of 16 to 30, of whom 100% are black."

Siyabonga Cele, a trainee baker, said his future does not look bleak anymore.

"I had given up in life due to lack of money to pursue my dreams. When I was referred by a friend to this centre, I

realised my dreams," he said.

The course is over eight weeks, and Cele said they were trained to bake and track sales.

"I want to open my own bakery so that I can employ people from my community and some of my family members who don't have jobs."

Trainees who are doing the office administration course believe that their confidence has improved.

Katlego Mzisa said she was hopeful that her life will change for the better.

"We also do quizzes everyday to help us improve our general knowledge."

Mzisa said they visit schools in the city to do practicals, "so far, I know I'm ready to be in a work environment any time the opportunity arises".

Cryer said between March 2015 and February this year the centre trained close to 1 000 people and that 64% of those acquired jobs within three months of completing their courses.

The courses start from R4 000, but students are only required to pay what is called a "commitment fee" of R300 to R400.

"Usually we make students pay that amount so that they show dedication and attend classes," Cryer said.

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ERRATUM

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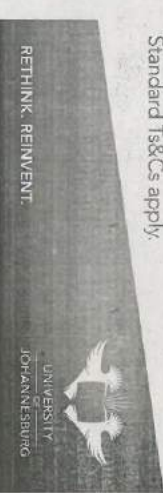
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APPOINTMENTS

PROPERTY expert Guy Gordon has been appointed a full-time consultant at Tongaat Hulett in line with the firm's objective to increase the pace of economic activity in the greater Durban metropolitan region.

His role will see him operating across market sectors the company has identified as having potential within the region, and creating opportunities for new investments in the firm's portfolio.

LAW firm Pinsent Masons has appointed two founding partners to

launch its infrastructure-focused practice in SA.

Rob Morsion joins from Bowman Gilfillan, where he headed construction and is widely regarded as a pre-eminent practitioner in the market.

Shane Voigt also joins from the same firm and is recognised as one of the leading disputes partners in the infrastructure sector.

He has experience with Chinese contractors and infrastructure investors, and is a committee member of the Africa Subcommittee of the China Africa Joint Arbitration Centre.

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