

Township economy remains critical engine of cities' growth

As South Africa continues to experience rapid urbanisation, the township economy has emerged as a critical engine of growth for many cities in the country, says Higher Education, Science and Innovation Minister, Dr Blade Nzimande.



Image credit: 5M2T

The Minister on Tuesday officially opened the South-West Gauteng TVET College Welding Trade Test Centre at Molapo Campus in Soweto.

The state-of-the-art centre is the 35th trade test centre to be opened in South Africa. It is also a historic centre, as it is the first to be opened in Soweto.

The opening of the trade test centre is part of the department's response to upgrade Post-School Education and Training (PSET) infrastructure in order to respond to the skills needs of communities.

The centre will test for knowledge, skills and competence in welding work, which involves theoretical and practical demonstration of knowledge and skill.

This will lead to a Trade Test Certificate award, which employers usually require before they employ or advance trainees and allow them to do work at a certain level.

Nzimande said the centre is rightly situated in a township in order to provide access to education and training, and to help break the cycle of poverty and inequality that has affected many segments of society.

Nzimande underscored a pressing need to invest in skills development and training in order for the township economy to realise its full potential.

"A number of people in the communities lack the necessary education, training and mentorship to capitalise on economic opportunities and create sustainable enterprises.

"As a result, unemployment and poverty remain significant challenges in many townships across our country. This is the reason this centre will be one of the building blocks towards revolutionising skills development here in Molapo and in Soweto as a whole.

"This centre, together with many initiatives launched by government, will ensure that people are capacitated to be self-sustainable and be able to generate the necessary income to support their families," Nzimande said.

Partnerships yield positive results

Nzimande also noted that partnerships between Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges and Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETA) are yielding positive results, with more public colleges entering into strategic relationships with SETAs.

"Our vision is to remain focused on providing an integrated, coordinated and highly articulated Post-School Education and Training System for improved economic participation, skills development and social development of our youth and the entire community in the country.



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"The vision and objective for our public TVET colleges sector is to expand and strengthen the TVET sub-system to provide quality technical and vocational education and training to prepare students for the world of work," Nzimande said.

About 20,000 qualified artisans produced per year

In order to address the shortage of mid-level skills, government has committed to re-establish the artisan training system, targeting to produce 30 000 artisans a year by 2030.

South Africa is currently producing an average of 20 000 qualified artisans per year.

"We therefore need to ensure that the number increases significantly leading up to 2030 for the country to realise the National Development Plan (NDP) target.