

# Skills development programme empowers SA youth in hospitality

Youth unemployment remains one of the most pressing challenges in South Africa. To give expression to its mandate of job creation and poverty alleviation, the Department of Tourism approved the training of 500 learners as food safety assurers nationwide. Sixty-five of those learners who successfully participated in the programme received an accredited NQF level 2,3 and 5 qualifications - endorsed by Food and Beverage Seta (Foodbev Seta) - in practices related to the manufacturing, storage and processing of food in the hospitality industry.



olafBroeker via [Pixabay](#).

The learnership programme consists of 30% of theory and 70% of practical training, where learners are placed at various hospitality establishments within the Western Province for experiential learning.

Food safety is a scientific discipline aimed at handling, preparing, and storing food in ways that prevent foodborne illnesses. This includes a number of routines that should be followed to avoid potentially severe health hazards. The programme is one of the priorities identified in the Tourism Sector Human Resource Development Strategy and is aimed at putting into action, the improvement of Visitor Experience pillar of the 10-year National Tourism Sector Strategy 2016-2026.

Deputy Minister of Tourism, Elizabeth Thabethe, acknowledged the role played by host employers in providing training for the learners including permanent work opportunities and appealed to them to continue availing their establishments for the learners to gain practical experience. "We decided to focus on skills development in order to equip the youth with the necessary skills that will assist and empower them in their job seeking initiatives."

Thabethe further urged the learners to utilise opportunities afforded to them by the government in order to improve their lives. "We need you to be change agents in your communities and assist the government in creating more jobs. Now that we have trained you, we rely on you to use the skills we have equipped you in alleviating poverty."

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