



DIRECTORATE: CORPORATE COMMUNICATION & ICT

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More young people to receive training in tourist guiding.

By: Lemogang Foke

In the past year the North West Department of Tourism has provided tour guide training to over a 100 students in the province. This is part of an initiative by the department to enhance tourist guiding by recruiting young people annually and equipping them with the necessary skills to flourish in the sector.

Gabriel Dichabe, the Provincial Registrar says significant progress has been made through the tourist guide programme and this year the aim is to improve the training by increasing the number of recruits as well as enhancing the scale of modules.

“Our target is to train 200 young people in culture guiding and 40 more in adventure guiding equitably across all districts. In the future, we hope to make the training more valuable by adding nature guiding. This will essentially contribute to producing tour guides that are active in the economy and are able to create sustainable opportunities for themselves”.

Dichabe says many young people have shown interest in the programme and ultimately this serves as an opportunity to target those in the province and tackle youth unemployment.

“The industry is dominated by a selected few, we want to level the playing field and this will increase players in the sector. We are preparing many of them to be absorbed into the job market, for instance through our partnership with the

Department of Culture Arts and Traditional Affairs (CATA) some will be able to work on a number of Cultural Villages that will be developed in VTSD areas”, he said.

The programme offers a variety of skills to new entrants ranging from cultural communication and presentation, first aid, entrepreneurship and marketing as well as knowledge on heritage and the history of different tourist attractions in the province.

Lebogang Mojanaga (31) who hails from the Dr. Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District (RSMD) is one of the beneficiaries of the programme. He successfully completed training early this year and proceeded to register his own company called Village Lerako Travels. Mojanaga is also Chairperson of the *Youth In Tourism* in Dr RSMD Municipality.

He said that the tourist guide experience was phenomenal as he learned a lot about his district mainly through Culture and Heritage. “Currently I am in discussions with representatives from the Taung skull and Taung Hotel School to assist Village Lerako to perfect their service offering to the market. The reason I entered the programme is because of an idea I had to establish a lodge facility in Dryharts Village in which tourism attractions visits would be one of the offerings from the lodge. Therefore, proud to say I am one step closer to reaching the lodge establishment dream”, said Mojanaga.

He has also encouraged young people to make use of such opportunities as a tool to craft their own future. “The youth should take charge of their own destinies. There are many programmes that the department as well as government offers. Young people should participate as much as they can in Tourism and it is entire broad through agriculture (agri-tourism) as well as culture and Heritage. We have a lot of history that we can share with the world. This is an economically viable route for those with a passion for tourism”, said Mojanaga.

According to an industry expert Matieho Phinah Phiri, if the sector is dominated by young people, it will set up the economy to harvest steady growth. She said that if

the ratio of youth versus old with regards to our population composition is anything to go by young people should be in the majority within our industry.

“Historically, I have observed that in the main one gets to see more ‘older’ people operating in that space and would encourage young people to really penetrate and take up participation in the industry. This puts them in a favorable position to be ambassadors of their own country as well as reflect what SA is really is - a Young and Youthful country”, said Phiri.

“Tourism as an economy, a subject and a career path has been downplayed for far too long, and putting efforts to elevate its significance should be our active effort so that young people can see the role our industry plays in SA's economy”, added Phiri.

Applications for the 2018 leg are now open until the 31st July. Those who hold a matric qualification and are interested in pursuing a career in Tour Guiding are encouraged to submit an updated CV, one page motivational letter and certified copies of their ID and qualifications to Mr Gabriel Dichabe gdichabe@nwpg.gov.za or Ms Molebogeng Morubane mmorubane@nwpg.gov.za alternatively they can drop them off at the nearest Tourism Offices, Municipality and Cultural Authority. For more information contact Mr Gabriel Dichabe on 018 387 7801.

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