

Youth Month highlights entrepreneurial and leadership skills

June paid tribute to the youth of South Africa and is considered a time that we focus on the importance of empowering our youth to develop the leaders of tomorrow.



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SDC Skills Development Corporation believe that going forward, there is going to be a significant need for traditional soft skills training like critical thinking and leadership.

“The current pandemic has initiated economic uncertainty across the globe and will push South Africa into reviewing the critical educational needs of our country. The recovery will rely on the suitable realignment of skills development initiatives,” says Melissa Van Aswegen, Operations ETQA Manager at SDC.

The educational sector will need to adapt skills development programs to suit a transforming workplace. It will be imperative to introduce technology in all sectors of the economy to be able to optimise work output and improve product and service delivery.

As this will require an innovative and forward-thinking workforce, core skills training as part of a school or a work readiness

curriculum will become necessary. Equipping small business owners with modern-day entrepreneurship and business skills will ensure a more rapid reopening of small businesses as well as opportunities associated with that. ICT skills, and the new generation of technology solutions, will be critical to developing both private and public sectors.

“We are also seeing an increasing need of emotional intelligence skills. Oxford defines this as the capacity to be aware of, control, and express one's emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically. Although this school of thought may be a newcomer to the critical skills arena, it is certainly one of great value to personal and professional development.” says Van Aswegen.

It is no secret that this pandemic has disrupted the PSET (Post School Education and Training) sector and in order to catch up and address the skills shortage, one should look closely at the content of the sector skills plan as they form the basis on which participating employers and institutions plan their skills development initiatives. The implementation of blended and e-Learning policies from SETAs has also assisted many institutions to deliver methodologies that were not permitted in the past. SDC - as part of their post-pandemic plan, would like to encourage SETAs to keep these policies active as it would accelerate the rate at which the industry is addressing the skills shortages in South Africa.

“This pandemic has forced nations and industries to stick together for the survival of the entire sector, rather than for individual gain and this rings true for skills development sector too. We can no longer conduct business the way we used to – what's happened to our world will force us all into a new ‘norm’ and government will also need to learn to adapt to these changes,” observes Van Aswegen.

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