

# Tourism minister praises efforts of Free State hospitality graduates

Ninety-six learners from Clarens, Xhariep and Thaba Nchu in the Free State have successfully completed their NQF level 2 and 4 qualifications in accommodation, food and beverage services. The graduation ceremony took place at the Naval Planetarium in Bloemfontein.



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Officiating the Department of Tourism's Hospitality Youth Training ceremony was Deputy Minister of Tourism Elizabeth Thabethe who applauded the efforts of the graduates in leveraging on the learning opportunities that arose from the gains of democracy, and she reminded them to play an active part in building a better country. "Today, we acknowledge your accomplishment in seeking opportunities to empower yourselves to enter the workplace. Your efforts are not only a reflection of your will to succeed, it is an affirmation of your active participation in building a better country."

"This year, we will be celebrating 25 years of democracy. I urge you to continue to look for opportunities to empower yourselves beyond this point, so that your families and communities can share in the greater benefits gained from freedom," added Thabethe.

Speaking on behalf of her fellow graduates, Zenith van Wyk said expressed her joy in being afforded the opportunity to participate in the hospitality training programme as it broadened her perspective on the multiple career paths in the tourism industry.

"We have learnt from the hospitality training programme about the importance of service excellence and professionalism in the tourism industry. The practical training opened our eyes to the vast range of career opportunities that we can pursue - beyond our current qualification. With a little hard work and dedication, we will make a difference in the tourism industry in our province," said Van Wyk.

The department approved a budget of R4m to capacitate 100 learners from the Free State under its Hospitality Youth Training Programme. Learners who successfully completed the 12-month course received CATHSSETTA accredited NQF level 2 certificates in Accommodation services, and NQF Level 4 certificates in Food and Beverage services. More than 500 learners have graduated from the programme in the 2018/19 financial year.

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