

Manana promotes Decade of the Artisan in the North West

10 May 2016 –Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training, Mr Mduzuzi Manana, MP, engaged over 1000 learners from surrounding schools in Bojanala District Municipality as part of promoting the Decade of the Artisan advocacy campaign.

“This is a wonderful day as I have the opportunity and privilege to talk to you the future leaders from nearby high schools and to continue the conversation that we started yesterday when I met with your future employers in the Mining, Hospitality and Automotive sectors, to initiate a meaningful partnership discussion that will benefit you, the communities you come from and the country at large in a long run,” said the Deputy Minister.

The aim of the learner engagements is to motivate them to consider artisanship as a career of choice in the 21st Century as well as share information on critical scarce skills that will advance the economy of the country.

“Out of the 100 careers in high demand released by the Minister in 2014, 47 careers are artisanal related. Therefore, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges and employers become central in the development of artisans”, said the Deputy Minister.

Mr Manana said, “it is not a mistake today we are hosting you at ORBIT TVET College in Mankwe Campus, we have brought you to the environment so you can be exposed to colleges by participating at a try-a-skill exhibition. We trust that the experience gained today will contribute to your decision making when you are to consider post-school education. It is indeed *cool to be a 21st century artisan* which is the slogan of the campaign”.

Yesterday, the Deputy Minister met with leading employers to advance the Decade of the Artisan agenda. The Deputy Minister said, “the private sector is the biggest employer of artisans in the country, hence the Decade of the Artisan Campaign that I am championing on behalf of government has employers as an integral stakeholder as well as the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges as the training partner”.

When engaging with the employers the Deputy Minister said “there is a continuous need for suitably qualified artisans to sustain industries and support economic growth of the country. In a range of national strategies the need for artisans has been elevated and identified as a priority area for skills development.

“While the National Development Plan indicates that by 2030 the country should be producing 30 000 qualified artisans per year, this target has been brought forward by the 2014 – 2020 Medium Term Strategic Framework to 31 March 2026”.

At present the country is producing on average 15 000 qualified artisans per year and the number has to more than double in the next 11 years leading up to 2026, and reach 30 000 by 2030.

To achieve such a significant growth not only needs considerable investment and commitment by all artisan development role players with a special focus on workplaces in South Africa, reposition of TVET colleges as institutions of choice but also requires a sustained, committed and high profile political leadership.

Such political leadership has been put into place through the personal intervention of the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, and the Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training, Mr Mduzuzi Manana.

The Decade of the Artisan (2014 – 2024) is an aggressive advocacy campaign and a flagship project of Deputy Minister Manana. He travels quarterly to provinces to advocate about artisanship to employers; youth not in employment, education nor training (NEET) and high school learners. It is necessary for this campaign to be pitched at this level to drive a skills revolution towards making artisanship fashionable, hence the slogan, **it is cool to be a 21st century artisan.**

The sitting government expects that Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges to become the cornerstone of the country's acute skills shortage.

“Hence, the partnership between the employers and the colleges is integral to advance artisan development in order to meet the 30 000 per annum artisans by 2030 as required by the NDP,” said the Deputy Minister.

Currently, the workforce is not keeping up with the skills needed to remain competitive in an increasingly knowledge-based economy. There is a need to ensure the continuous upgrade of skills in the workforce, to help ensure a measurable increase in the intermediate skills pool, especially in artisan, technician, and related occupations attributable to increased capacity at education and training institutions and increased workplace experiential learning opportunities.