

EMPOWERING YOUTH THROUGH EDUCATION & CREATING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

In 1998 the Skills Development Act was introduced in an effort to assist with the development of skills within the South African workforce by encouraging workplaces to become active learning environments and make provisions for ongoing education and skills development.

The major factor preventing South Africa from fighting against poverty is the inaccessibility of higher education and training. Approximately 1.5% of South Africa's Gross Domestic Product is contributed towards education and training post school. Amongst others, most of these funds are distributed to vocational colleges and the National Skills Development Fund.

With the unemployment rate currently at 27.2 % many South African children and youth find themselves born into a destiny of poverty. It is a vicious cycle that lingers for many generations.

The government has made alternative methods to bring education to the masses that are born into the dire social and economic circumstances. This is done through prioritising Technical and Vocational Educational and Training (TVET) Colleges by allocating funds to TVET colleges and other skills development programmes in the hope to bring further education to the people.

Through providing access to further training and education in a controlled environment, the Skills Development Act sought to empower employees and unemployed learners while enticing employers to participate with promises of increased profits.

The Skills Development Act of 1998, and Skills Development Levy Act of 1999, set the bar for focussed skills development programs, and the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) were implemented to monitor skills development efforts and ensure that energies spent were in line with the overall Sector Skills Plans.

There are numerous benefits of skills development for both the employer and the learner. Employers are urged to embark on training and developing unemployed learners. Selecting suitable, motivated and eligible candidates to be trained. The organisation benefits from the training whilst the learner is in their employment, reaps the benefits of additional skills and has a pool of candidates to choose from in the event of further employment.

Technical skills should always be prioritised; this usually relates to production which directly affects the company's profit margins. Secondly, there should be a focus on critical skills and scarce skills, and thirdly, on

softer skills. However, all learner and employee training should be aligned the organisation's vision.

By making training and development available to the unemployed youth, in the form of learnerships, artisan courses, short courses, and workplace training the unemployed youth stand the chance to educate and upskill themselves with the hopes of landing employment.

This would provide these individuals with a reference letter and at least 1 years' experience. This would hopefully provide the economy and employers with innovative and experienced youth to bring about new ideas to combat the challenges that the country and the economy are faced with.

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