

Kgabo Cars at the forefront of skills development

The war against the critical shortage of skills in the country's automotive sector is an enormous and complex one that needs all hands on deck and contributions from all fronts – no matter how small or modest they might be – to subdue and defeat it.

One of the “soldiers” that have come on board to systematically and purposefully chip away at this mammoth and growing challenge is Kgabo Cars, a merSETA workplace-approved training centre that emerged in Soshanguve, north of Pretoria, several years ago, to empower aspirant motor mechanics with the necessary motor skills, reduce unemployment and contribute to the country's economic growth.

Years after hosting its inaugural graduation ceremony, Kgabo Cars proved its mettle once again when 14 learners graduated from its Automotive Repair and Maintenance Learnership NQF Level 4 course, in what its founder and executive director, Mr Isaac Boshomane, described as the centre's “biggest milestone” on its road to success.

“The graduation means a lot to Kgabo Cars. We fulfilled and will continue to fulfil our promise to upskill our youth from Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges and help to realise the vision of the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, to turn workplaces into training spaces. We are happy to report that nine of the 14 graduates are employed by Kgabo Cars,” said Mr Boshomane.

The first-year of the programme [NQF Level 2] was funded by merSETA, whereas levels 3 and 4, as well as trade test preparations, were paid for by the National Skills Fund (NSF).

The total cost of the training was R3 million, R1,8 million of which was paid for by the NSF and R800,000 by merSETA. The rest was paid by Kgabo Cars itself.

Mr Boshomane added his voice to the growing call for artisan development to be given sufficient time to reach required levels.

“Artisan development, especially in motor mechanics, is not to be rushed for purposes of reporting numbers to

higher education authorities. It has to be done correctly and has to take its required timeframe. There mustn't be any microwaving of mechanics, because people's lives are involved when driving cars on the road and safety needs to be considered,” said Mr Boshomane.

merSETA CEO, Dr Raymond Patel, congratulated the learners, saying merSETA was duty-bound to ensure that such graduation ceremonies



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Kgabo cars learners graduate from Automotive Repair and Maintenance Learnership

became the norm. He went on to say that the certificates the graduates were receiving gave them the responsibility to ensure the safety and reliability of tens of thousands of cars on South Africa's roads.

"If a vehicle is faulty, it is a safety hazard. This is indeed an awesome responsibility ... one that I'm sure you will take on with confidence," he said.

"This is crucial if we are to avert a catastrophe arising out of youth unemployment. This unemployment is particularly acute among those aged between 18 and 24, whose prospects for a better life dissipate every day, as they are buffeted by the ill winds of the economic downturn," Dr Patel said.

In a parting comment, Mr Boshomane extended his appreciation and gratitude to the McCarthy Automotive Artisan Academy, merSETA and the NSF for their contributions to Kgabo Cars' success.