



## tourism

Department:  
Tourism  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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**“A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step”**

**4 November 2015**

Mkhanyakude District Municipality celebrated the graduation of its Tourism Buddies programme, with 146 learners receiving certificates of completion after 12 months of training. The graduation ceremony was held at Jozini Tiger Lodge in the presence of the Deputy Minister of Tourism Ms. Tokozile Xasa and the KwaZulu-Natal MEC of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs Mr. Mike Mabuyakhulu.

Training comprised a theoretical and practical component, where learners were placed at host establishments in the hospitality, and food and beverage industry over a period of 12 months. The certificates can be used to seek employment in the tourism sector or as an entry level to further their studies.

Learners received National Certificate Food and Beverages NQF level 4 (No of Credits 135) and National Certificate Accommodation Services NQF Level2 (No of Credits 121), accredited by the Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA). MEC Mabuyakhulu emphasized that government would like to have solid relations with the industry in order for the sector to make strides. He made a pledge that the province would like to create 183 000 jobs by 2030.

Mabuyakhulu encouraged learners who were not absorbed by host employers to be positive and keep on working on their skills: “The industry needs skilled young people who will not only be employees but also be entrepreneurs and create jobs.” Mabuyakhulu went on to say that it is better to have a surplus of qualified individuals rather than not having any qualified people at all.

“Mkhanyakude district municipality has been identified as one of the rural tourism drivers,” said the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Ms. Tokozile Xasa, while addressing the soon to be graduates. Ms. Xasa says 60% of the students graduating have already been absorbed by their host employers and that gives hope that the industry is hungry for skilled people. Ms. Xasa informed the students that Kwa-Zulu Natal is one of the top 3 most visited cities in the country.

“There are plenty of opportunities for young people in the industry and we encourage and support entrepreneurship’ said Xasa. She further emphasised that learners who are graduating were one-step ahead towards realising their dreams. “We would like to change the current norm where young people enter the industry by default trying to make extra money, we want young people to treat tourism as a career of choice.

Tourism has become one of the major players in international commerce, and represents at the same time one of the main income sources for many families in our country. Xasa further said that the aim of the Department and Government is to safeguard the long-term prosperity of the tourism industry through sustainable development, giving special attention to training human resources in specifically tourism-orientated skills, which will ensure the professionalism of service performance.

Tourism Buddies graduation ceremonies will be held across the province, with a total of 815 learners from 11 district municipalities and 21 local municipalities around KZN benefitting.

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