

Tourism career conference to be held in Durban

To highlight National Tourism month and the employment opportunities and benefits of working in the industry, the National Tourism Careers Expo (NTCE) will be held from 23-25 September 2011, at the Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban.



The expo is being hosted by the National Department of Tourism (NDT), the Department of Economic Development and Tourism in KwaZulu-Natal (DEDT - KZN), and the Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA).

The tourism industry is a field with an infinite list of employment sectors. Transport in all its forms, hospitality, food, general and specialised touring, sales and marketing, wildlife, journalism and photography are just some of the possibilities open to those seeking a career in tourism.

"The National Tourism Sector Strategy is also focussed on ensuring that South Africa is ranked in the top-20 tourism destinations in the world by 2020. Initiatives like the NTCE support this vision as it provides learners and educators with the opportunity to learn more about the exciting world of tourism," said Thokozile Xasa, Deputy Minister of Tourism.

Young tourism entrepreneurs to speak

The programme of this year's NTCE includes a cook-off with celebrity chef and NTCE ambassador, chef Citrum Khumalo, mixology sessions with non-alcoholic drinks, a CV-writing workshop and an interactive exhibition showcasing the wide range of careers available in the sector. Young tourism entrepreneurs will also be speaking during informal sessions, sharing their inspiring stories of success from the sector.

"For the 15 000 learners, unemployed youths and educators coming through the doors, the expo highlights that working in tourism provides career progression, a source of reliable income and it offers young people the chance to start their own businesses. The NTCE is also all about showing learners the variety of careers available in the sector," said Mike Tsotetsi, CEO of CATHSSETA.

A world of possibilities

For Lebo Malepa, a backpack lodge operator from Soweto, tourism has opened up a world of possibilities. Since he was 22, Malepa has been involved in hosting tourists to his home township, Soweto. "I used to see visitors coming into the township in coaches," he said. "I felt strongly that they needed to get off the bus, mix with the locals and experience township life with all their senses."

Malepa would tailor excursions in which tourists would play football against young Sowetans, or meet ordinary people in shebeens in the evenings. "I began taking them to my grandparents' house for a meal, and if someone needed accommodation for the night, I would give up my room. My ability to take them places was often limited by my lack of a car, so I came up with the idea of using bicycles."

The business is multifaceted

Slowly the business shaped itself and word spread. By 2003, Malepa was operating Soweto Backpackers in Orlando West. The business is multifaceted, offering accommodation, cycling and walking tours in the heritage-packed township, and a volunteer programme that has visitors getting involved in local developmental projects.

While Malepa completed some short business and management courses earlier on, he believes passion, innovation and perseverance are the qualities that have made Soweto Backpackers the success it is. "It doesn't happen overnight, you've got to keep pushing and not get discouraged," he ended.

For more information on the NTCE, go to www.tourismcareers.co.za.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>