

Township youngsters become wine advisers

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A total of 200 unemployed township youngsters who trained as wine advisers under the auspices of an R11m government-sponsored job creation programme have completed their training.



Image: GQIS

The youths, aged 18 and older, were selected from Western Cape and Gauteng townships for the 12-month training course as part of a joint partnership between the Department of Tourism and the Cape Wine Academy.

The course focused on wine and marketing and included six-weeks of practical courses at hotels, wine estates, retail chain stores and liquor companies and distributors.

After graduating as wine advisers on the first level of the Cape Sommelier programme, the youngsters will be eligible to work in hotels, restaurants and the liquor industry.

The students will be given their certificates by Tourism Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk and the Cape Wine Academy at a graduation ceremony in Cape Town on 28 February.

Van Schalkwyk says the government is committed to encouraging further growth, development and profitability in the tourism sector through its training programmes.

He also acknowledges the role of the private sector.

"It is well known that the private sector bears the major risks of tourism investment as well as a large part of the responsibility to satisfy tourists," he says.

The academy's chief executive, Marilyn Cooper, says the academy recruited highly qualified wine and hospitality lecturers to make sure that the students received the best education to enable them to compete professionally anywhere in South Africa or internationally.

The training centres were based in Soweto, Thembisa, Mitchell's Plain, Gugulethu and Langa. Hein Koegelenberg, chairperson of the academy and chief executive of La Motte wine estate, says education is key to unlocking "the golden door of freedom and with this freedom, we can build a true rainbow nation".

Both the department and the academy are investigating the possibility of continuing the programme by training a new group of students this year.

Source: *Sunday World* via I-Net Bridge

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