

Saint-Gobain showcases its skills development programme

The French Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Jean-Yves Le Drian recently visited Saint-Gobain South Africa's premises in Germiston where the company showcased its skills development programme. In the 16 year since its inception, the Saint-Gobain YouthBuild Academy has seen more than 1000 learners graduate from the programme and about 80% of the 2018 graduates were placed into employment. In addition, 30 deaf learners have been empowered through the programme.



Founded in 2003, the Saint-Gobain YouthBuild Academy has been supported by YouthBuild, an international NGO, since 2016. Through their complementary expertise, their objective is to upskill and educate unemployed youth on the theory, practice and installation of environmentally compliant systems for new and renovated buildings. Practical activities are aimed at uplifting the communities from which these young men and women come, and learners practice their skills by repairing and fixing crèches, schools and community halls in need.



Once learners have been selected by the academy, they are required to achieve competency in 132 credits. These credits are clustered into four subjects, which include drywall and ceiling installation (safety, tools and assembly of components), written and oral communication skills, applied mathematics (calculating quantities and costings), and workplace skills like understanding HIV/Aids, first-aid basics and business plans. The programme runs for twelve months.



CETA accredited programme

The academy is the only CETA (Construction Education Training Authority) accredited training provider in South Africa that presents the National Certificate: Ceiling & Partition Installation NQF 3. With Saint-Gobain as a founding member of the Green Building Council of South Africa (GBCSA), the curriculum also includes training that earns students a “Green Star Contractors” certificate.



“Through the Saint-Gobain YouthBuild Academy we aim to make a real difference to empower disadvantaged young South Africans. We want to contribute to the dynamism of our sector by providing sustainable support to youth employment as well as upskilling the construction sector towards more efficient technologies. For this reason, we are considering extending the programme to other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa,” said Jean-Claude Lasserre, Saint-Gobain CEO for Sub-Saharan Africa.