

Bridging the skills divide: What can we do to address the critical skills shortage in our country?

By [Mosima Phale](#), issued by [Inscape Education Group](#)

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Join the conversation and the collaborative efforts to address this problem worth solving. **Exploring collaboration between big business, SMMEs and higher education to close the skills gap.**



Youth unemployment in South Africa can no longer be described as a ticking time bomb. The bomb has gone off and it has not spared the economy, our society, and the dreams of young people. The crisis is bleak with approximately 3.4 million (32.8%) out of 10.2 million young people aged 15-24 years who are not in employment, education, or training (NEET), of any kind.

As much as higher education institutions produce an increasing number of graduates each academic year, research paints a bleak picture of graduates armed with skills that are not always relevant to the dynamic labour market. This may further exacerbate the youth unemployment crisis.

Traditionally, society has relied heavily on public service and big businesses to absorb graduates through learnerships and internships to close the skills gaps and offer pathways to employment. Whilst many big businesses have run meaningful graduate, internship, and learnership programs, they may fall short of the ideal with a high attrition rate of young people that are ultimately not gainfully employed. Graduates are increasingly finding themselves in dead-end internships and learnerships are often described as revolving doors to nowhere.

Data from the International Labour Organisation (2019) confirms that SMMEs are responsible for up to 60% of the total jobs in South Africa. This points to an interesting trend that reveals that although young people generally aspire to work for big

business and look for entry points through graduate programs and the like, they have a higher probability of obtaining a permanent employment opportunity within an SMME.

Observing these trends, **Inscape seeks to design a conversational space where a collaborative approach to the skills and youth unemployment challenge in South Africa can be interrogated and engaged with.** In this approach, we question if big business, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMMEs), and private and public institutions could work together within an ecosystem of stakeholders to equip young people with both the skills and job opportunities for the new economy.

The purpose of this event is to:

- Foster a common understanding of the careers of the future in the African context.
- Identify where the demand for graduates/skilled youth is today and where will it be tomorrow.
- Consider how SMMEs might partner with big businesses and education to increase their absorption rate of graduates and ultimately increase the number of real employment opportunities created for young people.

The event will provide a space for discussion and to look for sustainable solutions, drawing in relevant representatives from small and medium enterprises, big businesses, higher education, industry, Inscape alumni, present staff and students. The outcome of this event is expected to yield possible collaborative opportunities between big businesses, SMMEs and institutions like Inscape in solving the skills gap in the South African labour market.

“It has long been the time to unlock this country’s potential. I refuse to believe that we cannot rival the global north in technological development, quant skills and design. A functional collaborative ecosystem, as proposed by this discussion, has the power to not only develop critically skilled persons and businesses but retain them for this nation and this continent’s benefit,” said Thulare Matlaba, global brand manager at Inscape.

The poster is divided into two main sections: 'Moderator' and 'Panellists'. The 'Moderator' section has a purple background with white text and a circular portrait of Nozipho Tshabalala. The 'Panellists' section has a grey background with white text and circular portraits of four individuals. Logos for 'The Conversation Strategists' and 'Inscape Education Group' are also present.

Moderator

NOZIPHO TSHABALALA
The Conversation Strategists

Panellists

HELEN BÜHRS
Chief Executive Officer
Inscape Education Group

DR ILKA DUNNE
Global Head, Leadership
FirstRand

SIBUSISO RAPHEKWANE
Founder & Chief Executive Officer
The Transformation Legacy

KIRA COLE
(Inscape alumnus) Founder & Graphic Designer
Kide by Kira

To join the conversation online, click <https://lnkd.in/g-CVgDS8> and book* your spot today. The live countdown starts at 5.30pm. Booking is set for 5.55pm as the discussion starts at 6pm promptly.

For more information, visit www.inscape.ac, and follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). Media contacts: Mosima Phale / mosima.phale@inscape.co.za.

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