

CATHSNEWS

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Editor's Note



Building Skills, Preserving Heritage, Inspiring Futures

This quarter has been characterised by purposeful collaboration, strategic partnerships, and meaningful engagement with communities and stakeholders across the country. Each initiative we have undertaken reaffirms CATHSSETA's role in advancing skills development, as a catalyst for inclusive growth, innovation, and heritage preservation.

In line with June's Youth Month commemorations, we partnered with the Market Theatre and sister SETAs to showcase the transformative power of creativity and education. Similarly, we also honoured Tat' Nelson Mandela's legacy during the Mandela Month by bringing career guidance and much-needed support to Jumba Senior Secondary School learners, who are still recovering from devastating floods that claimed the lives of ten fellow learners.

We also celebrated milestones in skills development with our stakeholders, including the graduations at Sondela Academy and the Tourist Guides Graduation in KwaZulu-Natal, which highlighted the value of accredited qualifications in elevating professional standards within our sector.

As September marks both Tourism Month and Heritage Month, this issue is particularly significant, as it reminds us that tourism and heritage are interwoven pillars of national identity and economic opportunity. Our participation at the Royal Reed Dance in KwaZulu-Natal demonstrated our commitment to supporting cultural and heritage interventions. The career expos we supported across the provinces reflects our commitment to ensuring that young people embrace both their cultural heritage and the vast opportunities within the tourism sector.

Finally, we invite you to get to know Ms Lebogang Mpye, Executive Manager: Learning Programmes, whose leadership and vision embodies our mission of creating pathways for empowerment and growth.

We trust you will find this edition both informative and inspiring, as we continue to work together towards a future defined by skills, innovation, and shared prosperity.

Enjoy the read!



CATHSSETA collaborates with Market Theatre and other SETAs to commemorate Youth Month

Imagine a platform where creativity knows no bounds, where young minds are empowered to shape their futures, and where the vibrant pulse of South African culture resonates strongly. CATHSSETA, in partnership with the Market Theatre and fellow SETAs such as Fibre, Processing and Manufacturing (FP&M) SETA, Media, Information and Communication Technologies (MICT) SETA and Services SETA hosted a dynamic event in celebration of Youth Month 2025. Held at the iconic Market Theatre in Johannesburg, the event, intended to benefit Community Education and Training (CET) youth, brought together school learners, industry experts, and government officials, all in one room.

This event was hosted in commemoration of Youth Month. Since the dawn of democracy, the month of June has been dedicated to honouring the contribution of young people in the liberation struggle. It is a time to reflect on the active role of South African youth in numerous political campaigns and protests against the oppressive apartheid regime, including its discriminatory education system, which treated black South Africans as inferior.

The 2025 National Youth Day and Youth Month were commemorated under the theme: **“Skills for a Changing World: Empowering Youth for Meaningful Economic Participation.”** This theme, supported by the tagline **“Gear Up for Greatness,”** emphasised the importance of education and skills development for young people, linking

them with economic opportunities. The event also aimed to address the challenges facing youth in South Africa while reflecting on the progress made in advancing their empowerment.

The objectives of the Youth Month event included some of the key elements, such as:

- Promoting the importance of telling our own history through various forms of storytelling, both traditional and modern, while emphasising the skills required to do so effectively;
- Facilitating knowledge-sharing about careers in the arts and culture sector and promoting equitable access to creative educational resources;
- Showcasing the programmes and activities offered by the Market Theatre.
- Providing access to training programmes, internships, and learnerships.
- Highlighting the content and programmes offered by the SETAs, the Market Theatre, and CET College; and
- Exploring how skills in the creative sector can be developed and expressed through public training institutions.

A powerful moment from the award-winning production *The Fall*, staged at the Market Theatre to commemorate Youth Month.





A walkabout with the Honourable Minister of Higher Education and Training, Mr Buti Manamela (MP), engaging with our stakeholders.

The event featured a variety of exhibitions that highlighted practical skills transforming communities and inspiring young people passionate about the arts, fashion, hair, jewellery, technology, pottery and many more. Stakeholders from SETAs and CET centres shared expertise and resources, while the Market Theatre highlighted opportunities for CET and NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training) youth. Collaboration and active youth engagement remain central to the Department of Higher Education and Training's CET's vision for an inclusive, digitally empowered future.

The learners in attendance were captivated by a thought-provoking performance rendered by the Market Theatre titled, **The Fall**. This award-winning, internationally acclaimed collaborative protest theatre production explores the experiences of student activists, sparking meaningful reflection and discussion among the audience. The Fall was not the only source of entertainment on stage, but the Music Academy of Gauteng led by our

stakeholder, Mr Hendrick Monyeki, kept everyone on their tippy-toes with South Africa's old school jazz music and the young audience was jamming with the band.

The then Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training, Honourable Mr Buti Manamela, in his keynote address, highlighted the transformative power of the arts, praised the Market Theatre for its role in cultivating creative talent, and reaffirmed the Department of Higher Education and Training's commitment to empowering youth through arts and culture initiatives.

Throughout the day, learners were visibly enthusiastic as they discovered new skills and career pathways through the guidance of SETA representatives and affiliated stakeholders. CATHSSETA and its partners successfully ignited creativity and passion among young learners, empowering them to pursue their dreams and make a lasting impact in their communities.



Communications and Branding Intern, Ms Nothando Sindane with CET SRC member.



Honouring youth contributions and igniting future creativity – a powerful message from the then Honourable Deputy Minister, Mr Buti Manamela (MP).



Mandela Day Initiative

CATHSSETA's Mandela Day Initiative Shines at Jumba Senior Secondary School

In the spirit of Nelson Mandela's legacy, CATHSSETA hosted Mandela Day career day and exhibition on 31 July 2025 at Jumba Senior Secondary School, based in Mthatha in the Eastern Cape. CATHSSETA intentionally held the exhibition at the school, a community still reeling from the devastating floods that struck Mthatha in June 2025.

The floods, caused by torrential rains and a severe cold front, claimed dozens of lives across the Eastern Cape, with Mthatha among the hardest hit. A tragic incident at the Efata Bridge saw a scholar transport minibus swept away, resulting in the loss of 10 learners from Jumba Senior Secondary School. More than a thousand residents were displaced, and water infrastructure was severely disrupted, prompting the province to declare 19 June a Day of Mourning to honour the lives lost.

As a SETA that regularly participates in career expos, we seized this opportunity to visit Jumba Senior Secondary School to deliver a message of hope through motivational talks and career guidance. The team from CATHSSETA consisted of Ms Poshy Damane, Mr Luthando Njovane, Ms Priscilla Mahlangu, Ms Mpho Matamela and Ms Nothando Sindane who all took turns in addressing the learners from Grade 8 to Grade 12.

The day began with a resounding Career Expo, where learners explored opportunities advocated by CATHSSETA but also explored careers outside our subsectors by linking them with offerings from our sister SETAs. For a moment, their grief was overshadowed by dreams of a brighter future. The goal was to spark hope and empower them to dream beyond their current circumstances.



The principal of Jumba Senior Secondary School, Mr Fezile Fuzile joins in handing out promotional items to the learners.

“The experience was a reminder that daily acts of kindness do make a meaningful impact, irrespective of how miniature the giver might think they are. Witnessing how the community was so grateful for the kind gesture by SETA of organising the sanitary towels for the learners was fulfilling. The keen interest of the learners for opportunities and the gratitude when receiving the donations was a worthwhile experience,” said Mr Njovane, Manager: Human Capital Management and Development.

The Mandela Day initiative resonated deeply, not only with the teachers but also with the CATHSSETA team, who could relate to the learners and their aspirations for a brighter future. It was vital for the learners to understand that their journey does not end here. The smiles, conversations, and moments of gratitude shared throughout the day highlighted the transformative power of kindness, even in the face of adversity.

As one learner’s face lit up with joy, it became evident that this initiative was far more than donations, rather it was a celebration of humanity. By honouring uTata Nelson Mandela’s call to action, the programme reaffirmed CATHSSETA’s commitment to uplifting communities in need and fostering hope for the future.

CATHSSETA takes pride in having walked alongside the resilient learners of Jumba Senior Secondary School, carrying forward the spirit of Madiba through compassion, unity, and dedication to community development.



Jumba male learners proudly showing off and excited for their CATHSSETA backpacks.

Alongside career guidance, CATHSSETA donated essential items, including sanitary pads, rain jackets, school bags, stationery sets, gloves, scarves, and beanies, offering comfort, dignity, and practical support to the learners.

On the eve of the career and exhibition day, the CATHSSETA team worked tirelessly, spending hours carefully repackaging items and sorting them by size. Though the task was physically demanding, every moment of effort was worthwhile. Each package, prepared with love and care, carried not just essential items but also a symbol of compassion and a promise of support for the learners.



Ms Poshy Damane motivating the Grade 12 learners and sharing about career opportunities.



Jumba female learners showing off their CATHSSETA backpacks containing sanitary pads.

Sondela Academy celebrates graduates at prestigious ceremony



A proud moment for our graduates, celebrating their hard-earned success and the recognition of their dedication with certificates and trophies.

On 02 September 2025, Sondela Academy hosted its graduation ceremony at the scenic Sondela Nature Reserve in Bela Bela, marking a day of pride and accomplishment for learners, families, and partners. The event brought together approximately 80 guests to celebrate the achievements of students who successfully completed their training programmes.

A total of 27 students graduated, with 12 learners completing Events Support (NQF level 4) and 15 learners completing Professional Cookery (NQF level 4). To recognise exceptional performance, graduates were awarded both certificates and trophies, symbolising their commitment and dedication to excellence.

Representing CATHSSETA at the occasion were Ms Priscilla Mahlangu and Ms Nolwazi Lebepe, who joined the Sondela Academy principal in honouring the learners.

Speaking on behalf of CATHSSETA, Ms Mahlangu delivered a message of encouragement, “Today, you reap the rewards of your hard work and dedication,

and we witness the true value of the investment made through our SETA programme. Congratulations to all the graduates on this remarkable achievement. We sincerely thank Sondela for its unwavering commitment. Educating and inspiring the younger generation is no small task. We celebrate this milestone with you and truly appreciate that you are celebrating it with us.”

The Sondela Academy principal echoed these sentiments, reminding learners, that the more you polish your career, the more opportunities you get.

The celebrated academic achievement highlighted the strong partnership between CATHSSETA and Sondela Academy, which continues to create pathways for young professionals in the tourism and hospitality sectors.

The graduation ceremony was a testament to the power of education, collaboration, and resilience, leaving graduates inspired to pursue rewarding careers in their chosen fields.



Honouring 15 Professional Cookery graduates with certificates, celebrating their dedication, skill, and a key milestone in their culinary journey.



Whisking dreams into reality — our graduates and CATHSSETA celebrate a recipe for success!



CATHSSETA Brings Career Guidance to Maidens at the Royal Reed Dance

The annual Royal Reed Dance (uMkhosi woMhlanga), held at eMashobeni Royal House Palace in Nongoma, remains one of South Africa's most significant cultural celebrations, attracting thousands of maidens from across KwaZulu-Natal and beyond.

In line with its mandate to advance skills development within the Arts, Culture and Heritage sub-sector CATHSSETA accepted an invitation from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Sport, Arts and Culture to participate in the celebrations alongside stakeholders from across the province, many of whom were showcasing their programmes and offerings to the maidens and the wider community.

On this special occasion, the SETA represented by Mesdames Mpho Matamela, Ms Bonisile Shandu, and Ms

Linda Mdlokolo, who engaged directly with the maidens, providing guidance and inspiration on meaningful career pathways within the Arts, Heritage, and Culture sectors.

For CATHSSETA, attending the Royal Reed Dance was more than an exhibition but was an expression of solidarity with the youth and an opportunity to celebrate cultural pride while emphasising the importance of education and skills development.

As South Africa commemorated Heritage Month 2025, the entity's presence at the Reed Dance served as a powerful reminder that culture and education are intertwined, and that investing in today's youth is essential for nurturing tomorrow's custodians of heritage.



Reeds raised high, the spirit of the Reed Ceremony thrives.



CATHSSETA supporting and celebrating our diverse cultures and traditions.



Cultural pride and career guidance in one frame.





CATHSSETA joined the Tshimologo Outreach Programme themed 'Together for a Brighter Tomorrow', inspiring youth with skills development and care.



CATHSSETA Empowers Youth Across South Africa

This quarter, CATHSSETA participated in a handful of career guidance expos across both rural and urban areas, engaging learners with valuable insights into skills development and career opportunities within our diverse sub-sectors. From municipal career expos to outreach programmes, our team connected directly with learners across the provinces, providing guidance to prepare them for life beyond Grade 12.

These initiatives reflect CATHSSETA's ongoing commitment to equipping youth with the knowledge and skills needed to build successful futures within our sector. We invite schools, municipalities, and organisations to partner with us in their career guidance initiatives, or to provide opportunities for our team to share information and insights directly with learners. Kindly send email to info@cathsseta.org.za.

By collaborating, we can inspire and empower the next generation to explore meaningful career paths and make informed decisions about their futures.



CATHSSETA continues to strive to share the career guidance information with its stakeholders at Ganyesa Career Expo.



CATHSSETA at the Drone Soccer Tournament Career Expo — showcasing future skills and career opportunities in innovation and technology.



CATHSSETA at Science Week Career Expo — sparking curiosity and guiding youth towards careers in science, technology, and innovation.



Career Guidance Expo at Reneke Mamusa Hall, North West — CATHSSETA shared skills programmes and post-school opportunities across our subsector.

Tourism Graduate Development Programme Closing Ceremony and Tourist Guides graduation

In the heart of the scenic eMakhosini Valley near Ulundi, KwaZulu-Natal, stands the uMgungundlovu Multimedia Centre a proud custodian of Zulu history and cultural heritage. Named after the ancient Zulu capital, the centre serves as a museum, themed exhibition hall, and cultural venue that honours the richness of the Zulu nation while fostering modern development. Over the years, it has become a hub for cultural exchange, education, and tourism initiatives, making it a fitting venue for a celebration of learning and achievement.

On 14 August 2025, the centre came alive for the Tourism Graduate Development Programme (TGDP) Closing Ceremony and the graduation of a new cohort of Tourist Guides. The valley resonated with the rhythmic beat of drums and vibrant performances by the Indonsa Cultural Group, creating an atmosphere of celebration and pride.

The ceremony marked the successful conclusion of the TGDP, hosted by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA) under the leadership of the Member of the Executive Council, Hon. Mr Musa Zondi. Introduced through EDTEA's Tourism Development Unit, the initiative was designed to train and upskill both new and practising Tourist Guides, particularly those already working in the sector without formal qualifications.



The rhythmic beats of the Indonsa Cultural Group set the stage for a vibrant celebration of Zulu heritage.



Mr Sadha Naidoo shared insights from Tourism World, representing the Tourist Guide training provider's perspective.



A milestone moment certificates in hand, graduates step into a world of professional tourism.

CATHSSETA's role was central in guaranteeing that the training offered under the programme was accredited and aligned to national and industry standards. By facilitating access to recognised qualifications, the initiative sought to professionalise the guiding profession, enhance service quality, and instil credibility in the sector.

The day was further distinguished by the presence of senior leaders from local and district government. Welcoming the guests, His worship, the Mayor of Ulundi Local Municipality, his Worship Mr Wilson Ntshangase (Cllr), expressed his gratitude to EDTEA for investing in what he described as the "city of heritage." He highlighted the programme as a demonstration of the KwaZulu-Natal government's commitment to youth empowerment and skills development.



Wisdom meets achievement - the eldest TGDP graduate proudly marks a new chapter in his journey.



Her future is so bright she had to wear shades – ready to shine in tourism.



Among the graduates, Mr Sphehile Ntombela expressed his excitement upon receiving his certificate. Having specialised in nature and culture during his training, he reflected on the skills he had acquired: “I learned how to interact with people, conduct thorough research, and present myself professionally so that I can be an informed and effective tour guide,” he said.

The Head of Department, Mr Nhlakanipho Nkontwana, reinforced EDTEA’s commitment to government priorities, noting the department’s role in advancing skills and fostering entrepreneurship. He encouraged graduates to use their training as a stepping stone to strengthen the rural and township economy.

The auditorium was filled with a sense of pride and accomplishment, shared by dignitaries, stakeholders, and families who had supported the graduates throughout their journey. Speakers applauded the learners’ perseverance and urged them to seize every opportunity within the tourism sector. Leaders emphasised that the graduation was not only the culmination of months of training but also a gateway to a dynamic and rewarding career path.

“We honour and celebrate our Tourist Guide learners and graduates who are completing their internship journey today,” said Ms Fikiswa Pupuma from EDTEA. “This milestone would not have been possible without the invaluable support of our stakeholders, who hosted our learners and ensured they gained practical, hands-on experience in the field.”

As the graduates departed the auditorium, certificates in hand and smiles on their faces, the drums sounded once more. The moment marked not only the personal achievements of the graduates but also the promise of a thriving, professionalised tourism sector in KwaZulu-Natal - a harmonious blend of heritage, opportunity, and hope for the future.



GETTING TO KNOW MS LEBOGANG MPYE – EXECUTIVE MANAGER: LEARNING PROGRAMMES



Meet Ms Lebogang Mpye – CATHSSETA'S Executive Manager: Learning Programmes. She leads with purpose, driving skills development through funding initiatives, industry-relevant qualifications, and strong stakeholder partnerships. Passionate about creating opportunities that change lives, Ms Mpye blends strategic leadership with a personal commitment to empowerment and growth. In this conversation, we delve into her professional journey, vision, and values.

Work and Leadership

Can you tell us a bit about the department you head and how you support the work of CATHSSETA?

I lead the Learning Programmes Department, which lies at the heart of CATHSSETA's mandate. Our work focuses on the disbursement of grants to beneficiaries, the review and alignment of qualifications, and engaging with stakeholders to ensure programmes remain relevant to industry needs. In essence, we are responsible for translating policy into opportunities that change lives.

What impact has your department made within CATHSSETA so far?

Our team has created tangible opportunities for learners and employers across the sector. We've improved access to funding, strengthened partnerships, and ensured that qualifications remain industry-relevant. The ripple effect has been the growth of skilled individuals who can actively contribute to South Africa's economy.

How do you see your department evolving in the next few years?

I envision the department becoming more agile, data-driven, and collaborative. We will continue to expand programmes into underrepresented sectors, embrace digital transformation in learning, and deepen our engagement with stakeholders to drive sustainable impact.

How do you ensure your department aligns with CATHSSETA's overall goals?

Alignment begins with clarity. We anchor our work in CATHSSETA's strategic plan, continuously measuring outputs against national priorities and stakeholder needs. I also believe in building a culture of accountability within the team so that every initiative contributes meaningfully to the bigger picture.

When you reflect on your career, which milestones or achievements stand out as the most meaningful to you?

The most meaningful moments for me are when I see learners transition from training to employment or entrepreneurship. Personally, playing a role in reviewing and shaping qualifications that speak directly to industry needs has been a highlight, because it means the work we do today will continue to empower future generations.

Personal Life

When you're off the clock, what do you enjoy doing most?

I enjoy gardening, spending time with family, and reading. These moments recharge me and remind me of life's simple joys.

You carry yourself with confidence and composure — but deep down, what is your biggest fear?

My biggest fear is not living up to my full potential. I'm constantly driven by the belief that we are all here to make a difference, and I don't want to leave this world with my purpose unfulfilled.

What's a childlike habit you've held onto that still brings you comfort or happiness?

I've kept my curiosity and sense of wonder. I still find joy in asking questions, exploring new things, and appreciating the beauty in small details that many might overlook.

Is there something you've always been deeply curious about but haven't had the chance to explore?

I've always been curious about environmental conservation and the ways technology can be used to preserve nature. It's an area I'd love to explore more deeply.

If your closest friends were asked to describe you, what qualities would they highlight?

They'd likely describe me as dependable, empathetic, and driven. Someone who listens, supports, and also pushes others to grow.

Balancing a demanding leadership role with personal life is not easy — how do you create that balance for yourself?

Balance for me is about boundaries and priorities. I make time for family and personal wellness because I believe you cannot pour from an empty cup. Knowing when to switch off is just as important as knowing when to push forward.

When you think about your legacy, what would you most like people to remember you for?

I want to be remembered as someone who used her position to create pathways for others. A builder of opportunities and a champion for skills development.

If you could speak to your younger self, what piece of wisdom would you share?

I would tell her: "Trust the process, be patient with yourself, and never dim your light to fit into places you've outgrown."



Shaping future leaders: The impact of CATHSSETA interns at the Central University of Technology Hotel School

Shaping future leaders: The Impact of CATHSSETA Interns at the Hotel School continues to stand as pillar of excellence in hospitality education within the Free State, blending academic theory with hands-on experience. A key contributor to this success is the CATHSSETA internship programme, facilitated through the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) office. This initiative equips aspiring professionals with the practical skills and industry insight needed to thrive in the dynamic world of hospitality.

Interns come from diverse backgrounds, some are former students, while others are newcomers eager to launch their career. Many have made such a strong impression that they've been offered permanent positions within the institution.

One intern reflected, "It hasn't been easy balancing my postgraduate studies with the internship, but I've gained valuable skills - especially working under pressure and managing finances responsibly."

The programme welcomes interns from related fields such as business management and office management, who contribute to departments such as operations, administration, and procurement. Their involvement has enhanced efficiency and brought fresh perspectives to the team.

A standout feature of the internship is the management of two on-campus food kiosks. Interns are responsible for everything from customer service and food preparation to inventory control and financial management. This real-world experience not only builds confidence but also lays the foundation for future entrepreneurial ventures.

Meanwhile, marketing interns have gained hands-on experience in digital marketing and event management, sharpening their skills in time management, multitasking, and resilience - especially during high-pressure events with tight deadlines.

These interns are a living testament to the Hotel School's commitment to mentorship, practical learning, and professional growth. Then they continue their journeys; they are not only shaping the future of the hospitality industry but also developing the values and skills that will serve them for years to come.



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