

EMPOWERING YOUTH THROUGH TECHNICAL SKILLS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

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Presentation Outline

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Purpose

The purpose of the presentation is to present to conference on Technical Skills for Economic Development for youth empowerment.

MANDATES

H.E. The President Of The Republic Of SA

- “**Millions of South Africans remain poor, unemployed and live in a highly unequal society.**”
- “For a **decade and a half**, our **economy has barely grown.**”
- “... **South African people** today **require** that **we act together** as the GNU and **all key role-players** in our country with **great urgency, boldly and decisively.**” (July, 2024)

The 7th Administration: Three Priorities

- Drive inclusive economic growth and job creation.
- Reduce poverty and tackle high cost of living.
- Build a capable, developmental and ethical state.

The NDP Vision 2030

Different parts of the education system should work together allowing learners to take different pathways that offer high quality learning opportunities ... there should be clear linkages between schools, FET colleges, universities of technology, universities and other providers of education and training ... also clear linkages between education and training and the world of work.”
(NDP, 2012: p.300)

The NDP Vision 2030

“... the single most important investment any country can make is in its people. Education has intrinsic and instrumental value in creating societies that are better able to respond to the 21st Century challenges.”
(NDP, 2012: p.300)

The NDP Vision 2030

Lifelong learning, continuous professional development and knowledge production alongside innovation are central to building the capabilities of individuals and society as a whole.”
(NDP, 2012: p.300)

Medium Term Development Plan: 2024 - 2029

- It serves as a **Final Implementation Plan** towards achieving **NDP Vision 2030**.
- It aims to address the NDP's **core objectives** of **tackling unemployment, inequality and poverty**.
- It's therefore **crucial for the nation's transformative agenda**.

HRD Strategy & Master Skills Plan: Priorities

- **Addressing** skills imbalances – **supply and demand**.
- Meeting socio-economic needs
- Promoting **lifelong learning**.
- Improving work performance – **reskilling, upskilling**, etc.
- **Eradicating unemployment, poverty and inequality** – these through education and skills.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Problem Statement

- “Millions of South Africans remain poor, unemployed and live in a highly unequal society.” (H.E. President Ramaphosa, July 2024).
- In spite of many achievements towards 2030, economic challenges have created problems of unemployment and growing inequality that are structural in nature (MTDP: 2025-2030).
- Creating employment and growing the economy are rendered more complex given the changing world of work (ELMA Report: 2024).
- Very high unemployment rate for youth aged 15-24 was at 58% and for those aged 25-34 years at 38.3% in 2023 (StatsSA).
- As industries evolve, technology advances, and job markets become more competitive, employers are increasingly prioritizing practical hands-on skills that directly translate into productivity.

RATIONALE

Rationale

- For learners, jobseekers, and professionals alike acquiring technical and artisan skills is no longer an alternative path – it is a strategic and future-focused choice.
- In today's fast-changing economic landscape, Technical Skills have become one of the most valuable assets an individual can possess.
- Employers expect 39% of workers' core skills to change by 2030 down from 44% in scope, due to continuous learning, upskilling and reskilling programmes, enabling companies to better anticipate and manage future skills requirements.
- Economies and industries need skills that can drive productivity, resilience and innovation in the new economy, as the jobs landscape transforms at unprecedented speed.

TECHNICAL SKILLS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

Technical Skills in Context

- Technical Skills drive economic growth by boosting productivity and creating new markets
- Artificial Intelligence, Green Energy and Trade Skills are Technical Skills in high demand globally and locally.
- Mastering Technical Skills abilities helps nations to build modern, competitive economies (Google, July 2026).

TECHNICAL SKILLS FOR ECONOMIC
GROWTH THAT ARE IN DEMAND

AI, Data & Digital Literacy

- **Why do these skills matter?**
 - AI and Big Data are the fastest growing job skills (W.E.F.)
 - These job skills allow business to automate repetitive tasks and make smarter data-driven decisions.
- **Example:** instead of counting inventory by hand, a store uses an AI Programme to predict exactly what items will sell out next month.
- **Key Skills:** Data Analysis, Machine Learning and Cybersecurity.

Green and Sustainability Skills

- **Why do these skills matter?**
 - The shift towards low-carbon technologies creates new job opportunities and commands higher wages.
 - These Technical Skills ensure long-term environmental and economic health.
- **Example:** installing solar panels or maintaining electric vehicle (EV) charging stations.
- **Key Skills:** Renewable Energy Systems, Waste Management and Energy Auditing.

Trade and Vocational Skills

- **Why do these skills matter?**
 - Many areas face shortage of professionals who build and fix physical things .
 - These hands-on roles are foundational to building infrastructure and growing local communities.
- **Example:** an electrician safely wiring a new business so it has power to open its doors.
- **Key Skills:** Plumbing, Carpentry, Welding, and general construction.

Advanced Manufacturing

- **Why do these skills matter?**
 - Modern factories use complex machines to make high-quality products.
 - Workers who know to programme and fix these machines make companies more competitive world-wide.
- **Example:** Operating a 3D printer to create custom medical parts like joint replacements.
- **Key Skills:** CNC Machining, Robotics, and Industrial Automation.

Conclusion

- The research presented here is by no means exhaustive.
- South Africa is one of the eleven African countries that participated in the the October 2025 launch of the China-Africa STEM Acceleration Programme – so the “T” in STEM has an opportunity of being realised.
- Sincere thanks to NAST for placing Technical Skills Development in the Policy Dialogue agenda.

THANK YOU

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