

Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Entrepreneurs in the Making

One of the major objectives on the Education, Training and Employment sector is to assist the Technical and Vocational Education Department of the Government of Lesotho in improving the delivery of business skills and training in order to enhance self-employment prospects for trainees. The Technical Institute of Leloaleng has risen to this challenge as exemplified by these various voices.

Nteboheleng, a 2nd year bricklaying student, had this to say about the business and entrepreneurship course: *"After this course I will be a fool to want to be employed by somebody. Most of us after graduation meet with financial problems, even if we want to start our business. This course has given me light on how to collect the necessary information about a business I want to start, how to develop a business plan, how to set goals and take action. With a good business plan I might get a business loan. Ntate John Phiri (Skillshare International development worker) is a good*



teacher. He is able to teach business topics in a very simple way. He uses interesting ways of teaching: we take visits to nearby businesses and interview the owners. He also uses games in class. We plan and learn at the same time."

Semunyane, a final year student in carpentry and joinery, is also impressed with Ntate Phiri and says about him: *"He is very patient and does not go to the next topic until*

The instructors of TIL have also been sensitized to business and entrepreneurship training through workshops conducted by John Phiri. Some have started to infuse business skills into their subjects. There is general agreement among the instructors that having someone from outside motivates staff and gives them another perspective on issues. Staff, including the principal, are pleased with John's programme with the informal sector. The programme brings together people from different backgrounds, including farmers, café and shebeen owners, builders and former students of TIL, for training in business and entrepreneurship. They feel strongly that this programme enables the institute to respond to its community in a meaningful way.

A beneficiary of this programme, Ausi Lebohang Nkhabu, says: *"The course encourages self-employment and teaches us how best to market our products. Because of the course I know the importance of being patient as I experience problems in business, more so because some businesses are seasonal. The hints which we received on how to strategise when operating in a competitive environment, where most of us will be selling the same things, were very helpful."*

The general feeling about this course is that the knowledge and skills acquired are empowering even in other areas of life. Ntate Sesoane, the Principal, says that the impact of the programme is already apparent as some of the trainees have started their own businesses, and the community has been drawn closer to the school, seeking advice on different business ventures. *"We are looking forward to the graduation next week of the first group of the informal sector,"* says Ntate Sesoane, with a beaming smile.