

Wholesale & Retail LEADERSHIP CHAIR

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SECTOR TRANSFORMING, BUT GREATER COMMUNICATION NEEDED

Efforts of the W&RSETA towards bringing about transformation in the sector have been bearing fruit. However, more effective communication of their vision and greater engagement with stakeholders is required, in order to increase their commitment to the SETA's programmes.

This was a significant finding of recent research carried out by the W&R Leadership Chair at Cape Peninsula University of Technology into four of the SETA's key programmes: Bursaries; Graduate Placement; Rural Development; Disability.

Bursaries

Less than 3% of retail workers in SA have degrees or post-graduate qualifications. So with more than 7 000 students receiving bursaries in GP, KZN, and WC provinces between 2013 and 2015, this programme has been an enormous success. However, of concern was an apparent lack of awareness amongst bursary recipients, of the SETA's wider transformation objectives for the retail sector.

Graduate Placement

Enormous value has been added through this programme, as the theory learnt while studying is put into practice in real world, work situations. At the same time, graduates gain the kind of experience critical to making them employable. A lack of sufficient human resources capacity within the SETA to engage organisations willing to participate, however, remains a serious challenge.

Rural Development

Non-agricultural entrepreneurial activities are promoted through this programme, helping to improve many women's self-sufficiency and food security. However, the national annual target of 500 learnerships is too small to make an impact on South Africa's rural landscape and needs to be significantly increased.

Disability

With 70% of those completing the programme receiving offers of mainstream jobs, the disability programme is a major contributor to transformation in the sector. An area of concern though, is the lack of education provided to able-bodied co-workers, as to what to expect of their disabled colleagues.

The management mindset of many large retailers remains a major obstacle to transformative efforts. It is a recommendation of this study that the SETA apply itself to this problem. An understanding of the necessity and benefits of a diverse workplace needs to be developed among retail managers and owners.

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