



Leveraging entrepreneurship opportunities in the tourism sector

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As more and more start-ups are booming nationwide, the Department of Basic Education's E³ (DBE-E³) programme is tapping into the value of empowering Learners to initiate, manage or lead local enterprises, especially in the tourism industry this tourism month.

The winner of the Future of Tourism Bootcamp in 2020, which was held at the UCT Graduate School of Business, was a virtual art tour. This app combines mobile technology with an actual road trip, the idea being to guide people on a physical tour but once they get to the venue, showing them what could be seen inside via a screen. Of course, innovative ideas like this can't take place in a vacuum.

In the modern world, the requirements of society for universities in the preparation of specialists have increased. Entrepreneurship education is important not only for shaping the thinking of young people but also for creating opportunities, ensuring social justice, establishing trust and boosting the economy.

"Our education system is responsible for preparing young people to thrive in a changing world. They should be ready for the wide range of possibilities





ahead of them, including working for others, starting their own ventures, and contributing to their communities or furthering their education”, says James Donald, Executive Director of the DBE-E³ programme.

So, how do we incorporate entrepreneurship education into our existing school subjects or project-based learning curriculum? The DBE- E³ programme seeks to end South African unemployment by encouraging entrepreneurship in the tourism sector. From dance groups to art, music, entertainment, and technological and communication innovations, Learners are contributing to their local landscapes and tourist attractions.

Entrepreneurship education teaches Learners a wide range of skills simultaneously: problem-solving, decision-making, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, innovation and more. In addition, Learners can learn about finance, business and marketing - all of which can turn into career options.

On the African continent, South Africa ranks among the most popular countries for tourists. In 2020, the country was a destination to close to 3.8 million international tourists, making it the most visited in Africa that year, despite lockdown restrictions. Millions of tourists annually visit South Africa to see its beaches, landscapes, and wildlife. As of 2022, the country housed the largest number of UNESCO World Heritage sites on the African continent.

Tourism is an important part of our economy — it contributes around R425 billion to GDP (about 8%) and provides 1.5 million jobs. In 2017, one in every 22 employed people in South Africa was working in the tourism sector, totalling





722,013 individuals, around 4.5 percent of the 16.2 million people making up the national workforce.

The COVID-19 pandemic nearly annihilated the tourism, travel and hospitality industries, and countries around the world are harnessing the latest technologies and innovations to revive the sector. Leveraging entrepreneurship education will thus inspire and uplift the youths to pursue business ideas and innovations that will unlock sustainable livelihoods in the tourism industry.

