



***The Gauteng Provincial
Artisan Development
Steering Committee
(PADSC), Hosts a
Welcoming Ceremony to
acknowledge a sterling
performance by the
competitors at the WSZA
National Competitions***

The Gauteng Provincial Artisan Development Steering Committee (PADSC), through the World Skills South Africa (WSZA) Sub Committee, organised an event to welcome back 32 students who took part in the WSZA National Competitions held in Durban on February 1-3.

South West Gauteng TVET College (SWGC), as an active member of PADSC in Gauteng, hosted an event on February 29 where certificates of participation/excellence and medals were presented.

The event was graced by Mr. Pule Patric Mashele, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) Regional Manager for Gauteng and Free State as well as the WSZA National Office representatives.

The event was held to acknowledge a sterling performance by the competitors at the WSZA National Competitions which saw the province bagging 4 gold, 4 silver, and 8 bronze medals in different skills areas.



Lizelle Palm (middle); a WSZA competitor accepting an award from Mr. Gardner Dewu (left); Chairperson of PADSC and Ms N Mathye (right) PADSC Deputy Chairperson of Gauteng

'As Lizelle had said, it was really rough,' admitted Jack Shirindza, a Gauteng champion in mechatronics who landed a job with car manufacturer Ford South Africa through WorldSkills.

The WorldSkills National Competition, held under the theme: “Skills Change Lives” coincided with a two-day WorldSkills South Africa conference in Durban, attracting 500 delegates.

Additionally, the Career Festival, attended by more than 6,000 learners from various high schools in Durban and surrounding areas, along with unemployed youth, provided a platform for showcasing vocational skills.

Described as 'tough' and even 'rough' by three competitors – Lizelle Palm, Jack Shirindza, and Kamogelo Mofokeng – WSZA is one of the largest technical and vocational competitions aimed at encouraging young people to pursue artisanal vocations as a career choice to ease the skills shortage in South Africa.



Ms. P Morake; Chairperson of PADSC, calling names of the competitors to be awarded



Jack Shirindza (Left); and Duduzile Nxele (right) from Ford South Africa

Ford South Africa's involvement in WorldSkills began in 2019 with the sponsorship of automotive equipment like engines and gearboxes, required for a national event in Durban.

After seeing the immediate impact that WorldSkills was having on artisanal trade and skills development of the youth, the company procured the necessary mechatronics equipment required for further skilling learners in automation technology.

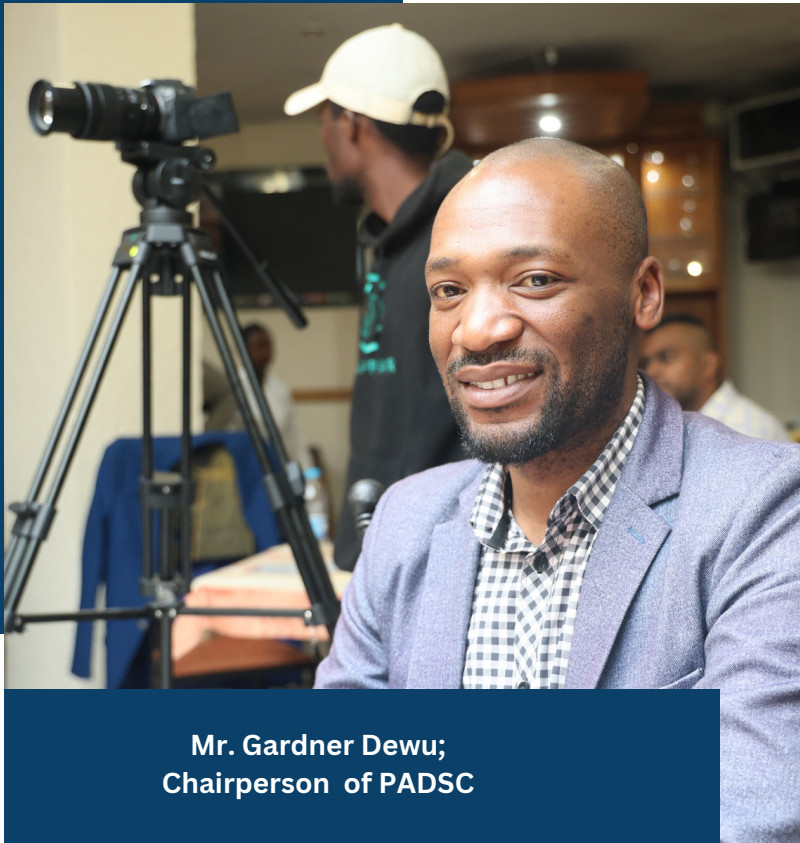
To date, WorldSkills has helped develop careers in multiple areas including mechatronics, mobile robotics, water technology, automotive technology, auto body repairs, spray painting, computer numerical control (CNC) turning, graphic design, plumbing, as well as careers in a number of beauty, cooking and service related industries.

'It was tough with too many challenges, a kind of vocational test but the last days were intense. I got position one at the national competitions, and it was the second time I have been to Durban,' says Shirindza'.



Ms. Kholofelo Mashale; SWGC Acting Deputy Principal and Gauteng WSZA Marketing & Communication Deputy

Referring to the competitors as the 'special guests', she stressed that artisan development is a top priority in combating youth unemployment amid a dire shortage of skilled artisans.



**Mr. Gardner Dewu;
Chairperson of PADSC**

'I am proud of what the province has done,' he said of the sixteen medals they won: four gold, four silver, and eight bronzes'.

Clad in the same attire they wore at the national competition in Durban, the Gauteng students were competing in 23 skills areas according to Gardner Dewu, a trained artisan and also chairperson of the PADSC.

All the Gold and Silver medalists will represent South Africa at the 47th World Skills International Competition in Lyon, France from September 10-15.

Over 1,500 competitors from over 65 countries and regions will compete in 62 skill competitions. A Competitor at the WorldSkills Competition must not be older than 22 in the year of the Competition. Competitors in Information Network Cabling, Mechatronics, Manufacturing Team Challenge, and Aircraft Maintenance, must not be older than 25 in the year of the Competition.



**Sibongile Mashabathakga;
National Team Leader**

'But it is not about going to France,' echoed Sibongile Mashabathakga, 'it is about benchmarking South Africa with the rest of the world. 'You are all winners,' she said, 'come with gold from France. 'We are not doing it for ourselves but for the country to be benchmarked with others.'



Mr. Pule Patrick Mashele; DHET Regional Manager for Gauteng and Free State Provinces

'You are the best in the country,' he said, 'and have proved that academic excellence in class can take you around the world. I hope to fly with you wherever you go.'

This event should be seen as part of boosting quality education in what the Department of Higher Education and Training declared a 'Decade of the Artisan' said Ms. Kholofelo Sylvia Mashale, SWGC Acting Deputy Principal; Academic Services, speaking on behalf of Mr. Joseph Monyamane, SWGC Principal, who could not make it to the event.

Speaking at the end of the ceremony, DHET Regional Manager for Gauteng and Free State provinces, Pule Mashele congratulated all the 'great competitors' for what he described as a 'tireless effort.'

He encouraged the students to prepare themselves because 'the next round is on the map.'

South Africa has been a member of WorldSkills International (WSI) since 1990 and is one of the 85 actively participating countries all working with youth, education governments and industries to prepare youth for jobs of the future. It is designed to give them the opportunity to compete, experience, and learn how to become the best in their chosen skill.

Since 2014 WorldSkills South Africa has been organising biennial national competitions bringing together tertiary students to compete in various artisan trades in Cape Town and Durban under the Department of Higher Education as well as supporting learners at various international competitions.

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 <https://worldskillsza.dhet.gov.za>



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