

**Gert Sibande TVET College's Mncedisi Mkhalihi to represent South Africa in**

**Bricklaying**



Gert Sibande TVET College, Skills Academy and Artisan Development Centre apprentice in bricklaying, Mncedisi Mkhalihi, recently won the national leg of the third National World Skills Competition at the Durban International Convention Centre.

Mncedisi will soon be representing South Africa at the WorldSkills International Competition in Kazan, Russia on 22 to 27 August.

World Skills South Africa (WSSA) is an initiative that is championed by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), and was formally established in April 2013 by the then Deputy Minister of DHET.

Mncedisi was born and bred in Fernie, where he completed his primary and secondary school.

Raised by his father after his mother died while he was young, he is the sixth child out of 10 siblings.



**“My father was very strict and he was a firm believer in education,” said 22-year-old Mncedisi.**

Becoming a civil engineer has always been his dream.

**“I’ve always wanted to do something related to Civil Engineering because I am artistic and I enjoy drawing.”**

**“In civil engineering there are drawings of house plans and other structures, and studying it provides me with an opportunity to express myself artistically.”**

Mncedisi enrolled for civil engineering at the Ermelo Campus through the assistance of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS).

**“I decided to join a TVET College because it provides a lot of opportunities in terms of financial assistance as compared to a university.”**

The Civil Engineer completed his qualification in 2017, and was faced with the realities of unemployment.

While working at a local retail store with no other prospects, he was advised by his lecturers to apply for an apprenticeship at Skills Academy and Artisan Development at the Standerton campus.

He was successful and began at the centre in April last year.

His facilitator at the centre, Mr. Sello Paille, pushed him to enter the competition because he was the only person who qualified to enter the competition in his class.

**“I took the opportunity because of the prospects of learning new things and seeing other countries.”**

Mncedisi is proud that he will be representing the country.

**“I feel that I have a responsibility on my shoulders to represent my country well and make everyone proud. I want to give it my best and bring the trophy home.”**

His future plans are to open his own company that will specialise in civil engineering, building and construction, and to continue studying.

His advice to the youth who are currently unemployed, is to grab all the opportunities that are presented to them with both hands and to always work hard.

