



The Office Of The Principal and Vice - Chancellor

PROF MS MAKHANYA, PRINCIPAL AND VICE CHANCELLOR

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Address on the occasion of

Umbumbulu Circuit Career Exposition

KwamaKhutha Township, Amanzimtoti

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I am humbled and profoundly honoured by the invitation to address the launch of Umbumbulu Circuit Career Exposition. Let me first commend the chairperson and leadership of Hope-well community organization and all those who partnered with you to organize such an important and very-often life-changing intervention in the lives of our learners particularly those in Grade 12. Let me also acknowledge with a sense of appreciation all those internal community and external stakeholders

and schools that have collaborated to make this event a success. In a sense some amongst you may even underestimate this work as just a local community initiative that is a drop in an ocean but I would hasten to remind you of the profound insight of Mother Teresa who remarked that “We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop.” (Mother Teresa Quotes, [www.brainy](http://www.brainyquotes.com) quotes). The scale of our education challenges is such that we all need to put our shoulders to the wagon and every effort by a community, an NGO, a school, a company or government department will be part of the rising tide to lift us up and forward.

Whilst I have travelled to many parts of the world, the African continent and my own country to address forums, this particular invitation has a special place in my heart as it comes from a community which produced me in my formative years and created a foundation for the person I have become. It is, for this reason, that I was touched by this invitation and my spirit is behind the initiative. It, therefore, means that each and every one of you, with the right support and attitude as well as discipline of hard work, can rise to any height and realize your dream in life. This career exposition is one of the most important platforms to launch and direct your academic orientation and future career. That you have made it to Grade 12 is a sign that you have the

potential for greatness and you can unleash this through proper exposure to various careers and opportunities in life.

All studies indicate that education and proper guidance and skilling of learners is the most important aspect of national development, and this is the case throughout the world. Our country is currently facing numerous challenges on the education front especially at the foundation stages which are crucial for the success at tertiary levels. It is for that reason that I, as a Principal and Vice Chancellor of Unisa, the largest university in the country and in the African continent, fully support initiatives of this nature as they create a solid foundation and transition to university or higher education in general.

Our global icon and international statesman, the late President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, always understood the profound importance of education and its transfiguring experience at both personal and national level. It was, for this reason, that he often championed the course of education. One of his most important and much-cited observations on education is that “Education is the most important weapon you can use to change the world”. In yet another observation on the transfiguring power of education on an individual, he remarked “Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that a

son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farm workers can become the president of a country” (Nelson Mandela: By Himself-The Authorised Book of Quotations. 2011).

Of course, this career exhibition and exposition goes beyond the general concept of education to provide you with an intelligent menu of career choices that will define your tertiary education and future career as well as the area that will define your contribution to the society as a professional.

When we were growing up in KwaMakhutha Township, technology was very far from our lives and therefore, information was difficult to attain. Today most of you have an idea of what technology is all about and what it can offer you. Most of you are familiar with Facebook and all the other internet services. It’s those types of platforms that you now have, that can be used to access information. It’s up to you to decide on how to make such platforms work to your advantage.

I do acknowledge that not everyone will have access to technology; therefore it is events such as this one which will bridge the gap of information. This type of initiative offers you the opportunities as well as benefits, as learners of Umbumbulu. It is through this event that access to information regarding financial assistance, different

educational institutions as well as the different careers can be accessed.

I would like to encourage learners here to aspire to achieve great things in their education and in their lives. If you believe in yourselves or if you believe in the geniuses in each one of you, you will definitely achieve what you set your mind to. If you set your eyes on your vision and you want to realize your dream, nothing can stop you, not even your background should disrupt you from reaching your dream.

Great leaders like Mandela, Luthuli, Dube, Lillian Ngoyi, Charlotte Maxeke, Anton Lembede and others, came from disadvantaged backgrounds but had the right attitude to reach the highest altitude in the life's social ladder hence they became leaders who had a profound global and national impact. Have a positive outlook towards your life and never be discouraged by your background or any other failures that might have happened in your life. Yes there will be challenges along the way, but they are there to make you ten times stronger. Challenges are there for all of us to learn from. When faced with a challenge, always remember the words of *Saneca* that "*difficulties strengthen the mind, as labour does to the body*".

We must always aspire to achieve careers that will have positive impact on our communities and society and not just look for a career that will earn you more money. A career ought to be a calling in the service of humanity even if a by-product of that will be improvement of your personal and family circumstances. As you choose your careers, your primary consideration should be the kind of career that you have a passion for. I repeat and emphasize this point, it should also be a career though which you think can make the greatest contribution to humanity. Choosing your career should never be driven by money or perceived prestige of a position. It should be perceived to serve a calling, than personal ones. Never let anyone tell you that you're a failure, you can't make it in life or that success is not for everyone. Be ambitious and a go getter. Yes it's nice to leave home and have independence after matric, however, independence comes with great responsibilities.

For me it's always great to see the young ones like you enter through Unisa's main campus in Pretoria or in any of our regional campuses such as Durban to study and I also get to see them graduate. At that moment I know that we, as a university, are doing a great job not only for the graduate but for the African continent.

A few years from now, we would like to read about testimonies that your lives were changed by this exhibition. With that being said, I encourage more participants and sponsors towards this initiative, so that this event becomes regular. One hopes that this sustained program will begin to have a positive effect with matric results and university throughput rates. Remember, every nation that has succeeded in economic development has done so because of a solid foundation in education. This, in turn, produces a skilled human capital. You are the future African leaders and therefore education is vital in ensuring that Africa is recognized as one of the best continents in the world.

To end, I would like to amplify the importance of community initiatives of this nature as well as intelligent choices that learners should make about their careers. Live your dreams, make it happen as the future is in your hands as future leaders. I wish this event and each one of the learners success in your current and future studies and careers. May God bless you and bless Africa.

I thank you.