



Quick Brief

A news update from the NBI on its programmes, business leadership and issues on sustainable development.

7 December 2018

The Fourth Industrial Revolution and the Future of Work in South Africa: the Role and Impact on Youth

The National Business Initiative (NBI) in partnership with Adcorp recently hosted a thought leadership dialogue where subject matter experts shared their views on the Fourth Industrial Revolution, what it might mean for our economy and how best to engage to create new opportunities and jobs that support the vision of the National Development Plan (NDP) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The session, focusing on the implications and opportunities for youth, followed on from three previous sessions that focused on the implications of different aspects of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

This dialogue was facilitated by **Hein Weyers**, Chief Operating Officer of Adcorp, who introduced the topic and framed the session in terms of the need to engage with the Fourth Industrial Revolution in South Africa through the lens of a youth perspective in an environment where many traditional occupations will become obsolete and new occupations will emerge.

The three panellists who presented were:

- **Nella Qata:** Co-Founder & Business Development Executive, Yabasha Energy Solutions
- **Breyten Mojabelo:** Group Safety, Health & Environmental Risk Management Group Compliance, Standard Bank
- **Thembi Mthimunye:** Director, Climate Customized Solutions (CCS)

Nella Qata kicked off the session with an analysis of the need for a green revolution and the training required for young people to fall into step with the rapid march of technology by acquiring the education and skills to enter the future world of work.

She stressed that a different economic model would be needed to combat the far-reaching environmental challenges that threatened human wellbeing. “The global citizens of the future will require a whole new range of skills and attributes to prepare for entry to the labour market in formal employment or self-employment in the green economy,” she concluded.

In his presentation, **Breyten Mojapelo** honed in on the implications of the Fourth Industrial Revolution for employers and young leaders. He highlighted that work in the future should not necessarily be framed as what one *does* but rather as what one *becomes*. The disruptive wave of the future would demand enhanced skill sets as well as emotional intelligence, critical thinking and complex problem-solving skills.

A key implication of this change would be the need for a fundamental re-engineering of the current education system in terms of content, course duration and outcomes.

An important insight that Breyten shared with the delegates was the view that future leaders should not focus exclusively on the inputs of the so-called millennial generation but should also leverage the knowledge and experience of previous and current leaders to maximise flexible and innovative approaches to the challenges ahead.

Thembi Mthimunye gave an exuberant presentation on the data requirements of the future for our young country and framed her approach on the premise that “young people should keep calm and start the revolution.”

Her input was based on a summary of recent cutting-edge international research into the future world of work and emerging concerns around economic challenges and social inequality as South Africa attempts to play catch-up with the rest of the world. She stressed that the springboard for successful transition into the Fourth Industrial Revolution would be collaboration based on innovation to achieve the goal of a just and inclusive society in the context of a shared destiny.

After the insightful presentations, NBI members engaged in an interactive discussion session facilitated by Hein Weyers that cast a spotlight on the need to abandon entrenched, traditional thinking on education, training and economic policy and prepare to embrace radical disruption and innovation.

A key insight from the three youthful presenters was that the current generation of new leaders have the unique ability to operate in both an analogue and a digital environment and to straddle the divide with ease.

The rich thought leadership dialogue which was underpinned by a sense of optimism concluded with an explicit recognition of the many challenges ahead. The panellists made it clear that they were ready to question current assumptions about the future world of work, to strive to overcome outdated barriers of age, gender and ethnicity and to prepare to become agents of change and transformation to propel South Africa into a far more equitable and economically successful future.

We would like to hear your feedback so please send your thoughts and comments to: **Gillian Hutchings**.

Business Action for Sustainable Growth

www.nbi.org.za

The National Business Initiative (NBI) respects your right to privacy, if you do not wish to receive any further Quick Briefs from the NBI, please click [here](#) and your name will be removed from the mailing list.