



October 2010

Newsletter Mission

The aim of this newsletter is to inform readers about what SSACI does and why. It presents information about our projects and highlights issues in education, training and skills development that affect SSACI's work.

This newsletter is

▶ News *Class Action*



SSACI has teamed up with two universities – Western Cape and Free State – to offer in-service training to FET college lecturers on how to implement workplace-based experience for their learners.

With the decline of the apprenticeship system in the 1990s, FET colleges lost touch with industry and today hardly any of their students get any exposure to the workplace during their time at college.

So they complete their studies with no authentic practical experience or contacts with potential employers. As part of its efforts to improve vocational training in South Africa, SSACI is training college lecturers on implementing workplace-based experience for their learners. SSACI's

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programme has been adopted by 10 of the country's 50 public FET colleges and another 15 colleges will do so in 2011.

At the same time, the programme has been incorporated into a new professional qualification for technical and vocational educators – the first of its kind in South Africa – being offered on a pilot basis by the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and the University of the Free State (UFS). This Vocational Educators' Orientation Programme, or VEOP as it is called, is a tertiary-level qualification aimed at college lecturers who have expertise in a technical field areas but training as teachers. Currently, a large number of lecturers fall into this category.

The VEOP is a six-month "crash course", combining contact and distance education, in teaching and assessing vocational subjects. Part of it deals with organising and managing workplace experience for students. For this component, UFS has adopted SSACI's programme "as is", while UWC is using a slightly modified version.

The 280 college lecturers enrolled for VEOPs at UFS and UWC are scheduled to complete their studies by April 2011. The programme will be externally evaluated and the findings fed into the further development of professional qualifications for vocational educators.

Thanks to SSACI's involvement in the training of college lecturers, workplace experience for students will in future be an important part of the college curricula.

▶▶▶ Issue: After the summits



In two well-publicised summits – one on 3-4 September for the public Further Education and Training (FET) colleges and the other on 9-10 September for the private-sector vocational skills training industry – new momentum was given to skills development.

The FET Summit ended with the adoption of a series of recommendations to the Minister of Higher Education and Training on how to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the country's 50 public FET colleges.

These recommendations emerged from work conducted between April and September by five task teams of DHET personnel and outside consultants, each focusing on a specific aspect of the college sector. The task teams were funded and managed by SSACI. The Skills Summit climaxed with a pledge from participants – who included representatives from the DHET, the parastatal Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and industry – to scale up the provision of vocational skills training, especially to unemployed youths.

The challenge now is to give effect to these resolutions.

The recommendations adopted by the FET Summit are clear and specific. They deal *inter alia* with the regulatory framework within which public FET colleges operate their funding formulae and mechanisms, their programme offerings, enrolment policies and examination practices – all of which need some adjustments. The DHET has mandated four new teams, again combining departmental staff and outside experts, to start implementing the recommendations. One of the teams, focusing on the development of college-industry partnerships, will again be funded and managed by SSACI.

There is an enormous amount of work to be done on this aspect alone. Colleges have largely been out of touch with industry for more than a decade. Few of their students receive any workplace-based training or experience. Few college lecturers have current industry experience. Partly as a result of that, the placement of graduates in jobs related to their studies – never above 50% - has in recent years fallen even lower. The management capacity of colleges, especially financial management, is notoriously weak. About half of them face bankruptcy unless they stabilise their finances within the next few months. Getting such colleges back on their feet and in step with industry will not be easy.

Fulfilling the pledge of the Skills Summit will be even more difficult. The government's main vehicle for occupation-specific skills training, the SETA system, has so far failed to deliver on its promises. By pushing learnerships at the expense of apprenticeships, the SETAs actually contributed significantly to the collapse of artisan training, which has led to a critical shortage of skills across industry. Learnerships have not produced a single trade-tested artisan from scratch. They have instead attracted widespread criticism from industry and independent researchers for their "narrow and shallow" content, poor delivery quality, byzantine administration and being mostly pitched at a level too low for skilled work in industry. Yet delegates to the Summit still seemed to endorse learnerships as a solution to the skills

▶▶▶ Success: Star Graded

The **Hospitality Youth Initiative**, a Grahamstown-based NGO that implemented SSACI's *Hospitality Skills for 2010 Project*, has been awarded a R7'000'000 training contract from the national Department of Tourism to train 300 youths for the hotel industry in 2010-11.

The Department's interest was aroused when it noted that the employment rate for graduates of the SSACI-supported *Hospitality Skills for 2010* training programme was more than triple that of publically-funded training programmes in the same field. After examining the SSACI-HYI project, the Department decided to expand it. This is a vindication of the assistance in programme development and implementation that SSACI gave to HYI over the past three years. As the Director of Human Resources Development in the Department of Tourism wrote to SSACI on 7 October 2010: "We [the Department] followed up on the SSACI trainees and found most of them had found employment. SSACI saw the potential in this programme and supported it. SSACI should be proud of what the programme has achieved."

This is the third SSACI project to have its training programme adopted and scaled up by a government agency after proving superior to existing publically-funded training. It is another good example of our projects achieving systemic impact and independence from continued donor funding.

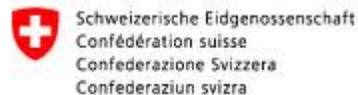


▶▶▶ Double Up On This Month's "Trade Secret"

This month, our trade secret focuses on partnerships. We would like you to share our trade secret with someone else. That is why we've sent our selected partners *two* pocket guides and partnership-evaluation wheels. These handy little tools are meant to assist you to find the right partners for their development projects – be they funders, implementers or other kinds of partner. SSACI may be able to help you maximize the value of your social investment and meet your business goals.

If you would like to receive our trade secrets or more information about becoming a SSACI partner, please email a request to [Ken Duncan](#).

▶▶▶ Partner Introduction: SDC The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation



The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is one of SSACI's founding partners, and arguably the prime mover behind SSACI.

SDC is Switzerland's international cooperation agency, located within the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and responsible for the coordination of the Confederation's development activities and humanitarian aid. It has an annual budget of CHF1.5-billion (about R11-billion) and a staff of about 600 people in Switzerland and abroad. In addition, SDC employs about 1000 local people in the 71 countries where it currently operates.

Since 1994, SDC has implemented a bilateral development programme in South Africa, with the goal of contributing to the emergence of a prosperous, non-racial, democratic society. Since 2005, its operations in South Africa have been integrated into a regional programme for Southern Africa, which encompasses all fourteen states in the SADC region.

In 2000, SDC mooted the idea of a partnership-in-development with Swiss and South African companies. This led

to the creation of SSACI in 2001, with funding of CHF1-million p.a. for 5 years from Swiss companies trading in South Africa and a matching grant of CHF1-million p.a. from SDC. The matching-grant formula continued until the end of 2009, by which time SDC had contributed a total of R53'650'000 to SSACI. SDC has now pledged funding to SSACI for another four years on an annual step-down basis.

Apart from this generous financial commitment, SDC has contributed invaluable technical advice and support to SSACI, and has been an active participant in all our councils.

In its long association with SSACI, SDC has well illustrated the old saying that “partner is a verb as well as a noun”.

Development Support