



# SSACI NEWS

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This newsletter aims to keep SSACI's partners informed about what the Initiative is doing, and why.

It seeks to give sponsors and project-holders a better understanding of one another's perspectives.

It highlights issues in the fields of education, training and skills development that affect SSACI's work.

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## The first Poultry Production Learnership in South Africa



Claudia Mntembu in training at KZNPI

For 27-year-old Claudia Mntembu of KwaDlangezwa, the opportunity to study poultry production gave her a chance of a qualification at a time when she had almost given up hope of finishing her education. It has also steered her life in a new and challenging direction as she settled into employment as a packstation supervisor of a large egg production business.

Claudia was part of a SSACI-supported project of the KwaZulu-Natal Poultry Institute (KZNPI) ran the first Poultry Production Learnership of its kind in South Africa. Working in partnership with AgriSETA, the Sector Education and Training Authority for the agriculture industry, 26 historically-disadvantaged, unemployed young people were trained in poultry production.

The training materials used by KZNPI were developed specifically for the course – the first of their kind for the

poultry production unit standards accredited by the AgriSETA. The materials were developed with the support of retired Professor Emeritus James Hayes of the University of Stellenbosch.

KZNPI has a unique, fully established training centre with accommodation and a training farm with 8 poultry units. Participants therefore receive practical experience similar to that required in the industry, albeit on a small scale.

Mntembu was not expecting to don overalls and gumboots, to go out at night onto the training farm to check the birds or to "put the chickens first", a philosophy that is emphasized throughout the training.

"At the time, we didn't think there was much to a chicken, but as we learned  
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## SSACI's new Programme Manager has a passion for youth development



Thantshi Masitara

In January 2007, Thantshi Masitara joined SSACI as Programme Manager with responsibility for project implementation.

Thantshi is an experienced educator and development professional who holds a master's degree in education from Columbia University in New York.

Thantshi began her career as a lecturer at the University of Botswana where she taught for four years before becoming Botswana country manager of a rural community-development project. Thereafter, she spent three years in exile in London, where she raised funds for Cosatu, before returning to Botswana to manage an enterprise-development project in rural villages.

After coming to South Africa in 1991, Thantshi undertook a range of programme research and evaluation consultancies before being appointed manager of a nationwide school-development project. From 2003 to 2006, she was Director of the Catholic Institute of Education which provides managerial and curricular support to Catholic schools around the country.

Thantshi believes passionately in helping young people to realize their full personal potential in a complex, challenging world. Her wide experience in education and training, and of project management in rural and urban settings will be a great asset to SSACI.

## Poultry Production Learnership

90 % of recent graduates have been placed in the industry

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more in the classroom and saw it implemented on the farm, we became more and more interested," she says.

With almost 90 % of recent graduates being placed in the industry, KZNPI has received favourable comments from the industry about the quality of training

and the calibre of the candidates. KZNPI hopes that this enthusiasm translates into further funding for the its training programmes, thereby ensuring its future sustainability.

Looking back at the training received at KZNPI, Mthembu is emphatic, "The opening that SSACI, AgriSETA and KZNPI gave us was like a miracle. It is the best

thing that ever happened to me! We were so lucky to be chosen – there are thousands of needy people out there, all desperate for training and the chance to move forward."

*Additional reporting by Julie Nixon KZNPI*



# Slavery, tourism and SSACI

The Slave Lodge Museum in Cape Town is currently displaying information on slavery at the Cape that was researched by participants in the SSACI-funded Inyathelo project aimed at increasing the involvement of black tour-operators in the Western Cape tourism industry. The project, which was implemented by the South African Institute for Advancement, involved training and business development services, including the creation of new products, for 10 local black-owned enterprises.

The project arose from research conducted in 2004 which revealed that the number of black-owned tourism businesses in the Western Cape had remained consistently low despite a dramatic growth in the industry and an influx of new tour-operators. The researchers found that most new black-owned tourism businesses failed because they lacked new products with which to attract customers. From June 2004 to December 2005, participating black-owned enterprises

were helped to develop new products, improve their management skills, enter into collaborative agreements with established tour operators and thereby expand their businesses.

As part of the process of product development, participants researched aspects of the history of the Western Cape which had the potential to become part of a new "tourist route". Slavery at the Cape was one such aspect. So much material of historical interest was collected that the participants decided to hand it over to the Slave Lodge Museum once they had used it to package new tours to slavery-related historical sites. This material now forms part of the display at the Slave Lodge.

The project was extremely successful in terms of its business-development objectives. Over an 18 month period, the 10 participating companies developed several new products, more than doubled their combined annual turnover from R14-

million to R30-million and also increased their staff levels and profits. Among the formerly-marginalised tour-operators that were thus able to establish themselves as mainstream companies were Grassroutes Tours, Legend Tours, Cape Capers Tours, and Ikhumba Tours.

Enver Mally, director of Grassroutes Tours says the Inyathelo programme developed his entrepreneurial and management skills, gave him access to useful business information and linkages, and helped him understand how businesses develop.

According to Moeketsi Molsa, CEO of South Africa Tourism, "Two years ago, tourism eclipsed gold as a foreign exchange earner for South Africa". In 2005, the country recorded its highest-ever number of arrivals.

This augurs well for the Inyathelo participants and for tourism generally.

*Enver Mally, operator of Grassroutes Tours, and a graduate of the SSACI-supported Inyathelo project, recently entered into a BEE deal with a large European tour operator. He is a director of the new company, which retains the Grassroutes brand. He also holds a 7% share in it, which will grow to 15% in 2009 after certain business targets are met. Enver calls this his 'sweat equity'.*

*Faizel Gangat of Cape Capers Tours offers tours that support emerging tourist guides. They are committed to sustainable and responsible tourism and take tourists on visits to District Six and the Bo Kaap. An interesting tour offered by them is The Slave Experience*



# SSACI meets JIPSA

In his 2006 State of the Nation Address, President Mbeki announced the establishment of a multi-stakeholder working group called the Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA), through which government, business, labour and civil society would jointly address critical skills shortages in South Africa. The group, chaired by Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, comprises 10 cabinet ministers, 7 industrialists, 4 educationists and 2 trades union leaders. The National Business Initiative (NBI) acts as the secretariat for JIPSA, while the Independent Development Trust has responsibility for programme implementation.

With an initial life-span of three years, JIPSA will determine which skills must be given top priority and how they may best be acquired. The five categories of skills upon which JIPSA has decided to concentrate are: artisan and technical skills, project management, biotechnology, ICT and public services. Amongst the strategies to be employed to acquire these skills in the short-, medium- and long-term are:

- Recruitment of retired experts
- Recruitment of South Africans from abroad
- Establishment of skills databases and targeted placement of local graduates
- Greater use of under-utilised training facilities
- Partnerships between training colleges and industries
- Improved teaching of maths and science in schools

With a common interest in skills training for employment, JIPSA and SSACI should in theory be natural partners. In practice, however, the partnership has proved difficult to forge. In February 2006, SSACI approached NBI with ideas for artisan training at public FET colleges. Lengthy discussions followed but little progress, so in September SSACI made a direct approach to the office of the Deputy President. From there, SSACI was referred to the national Department of Education, and from these discussions came agreement in March 2007 on a project very similar to the original proposal.

This project, which will run over three years, involves collaboration between SSACI, the national Department of Education and three or four Further Education & Training (FET) colleges that offer training in mechanical or electrical engineering. The overall objective is to align the implementation of the new National Curriculum (Vocational) more closely to the needs of industry by providing learners and teachers with access to workplace-based experiential training.



*Entry level training of artisans is essential in order to address the current skills shortage*

The project could also feed into JIPSA's medium-term objective of promoting college-industry partnerships and help to develop participating colleges as centres of excellence.

It is expected that, by the conclusion of the project at the end of 2009:

- at least 3 colleges will be running improved skills training programmes geared directly to the needs of the engineering sector
- at least 60 learners (20 per college) will have graduated through this new programme, of whom at least 50 will be in sustainable wage or self-employment in the engineering industry; these outputs will increase year-on-year as new cohorts of learners come through the college programme
- A model of skills-training-for-employment will have been developed which will be replicable in other colleges.

SSACI is also exploring ways of fast-tracking the training of artisans from amongst the many thousands of FET college graduates who have completed their theoretical training in engineering-related fields but have little or no practical experience. These half-trained, mostly unemployed youths constitute a huge waste of investment to date. However, with some well-chosen and well-managed additional inputs, they may yet produce handsome dividends in the form of much-needed qualified artisans.