



# SSACI Co-Operation SSACI News Update

JULY 2011

## 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 published electronically on our website and distributed via email. You are welcome to send it to other people who might be interested. If you would like to give us feedback please email us at: [info@ssaci.org.za](mailto:info@ssaci.org.za)

## **+SUCCESS:** SSACI writes the book on workplace-based experience

**SSACI's training manual on workplace-based experience is officially the how-to guide for all public FET colleges.**

In May 2011, DHET announced that the implementation of workplace experience for students will be incorporated into the key performance criteria for all public Further Education and Training (FET) colleges from 2012 onwards. SSACI's training manual on how to do this will be the standard text for college managers on this aspect of their duties.

**This important development stems from one of SSACI's flagship projects, jointly implemented by SSACI and DHET. The project helps public FET colleges to align their training more closely with the needs of industry through:**

- workplace-based experience for students
- in-service development of lecturers
- the development of local college-industry partnerships

The project, which began in 2008, is running to plan, with 15 new colleges joining this year. This brings the total number of participants to 25 of the 50 public FET colleges in the country.

**Each college receives a standard "package" of support comprising:**

- A two-day training course on implementing workplace experience for staff and students;
- A detailed "how-to" manual; and
- Telephonic hotline advice.

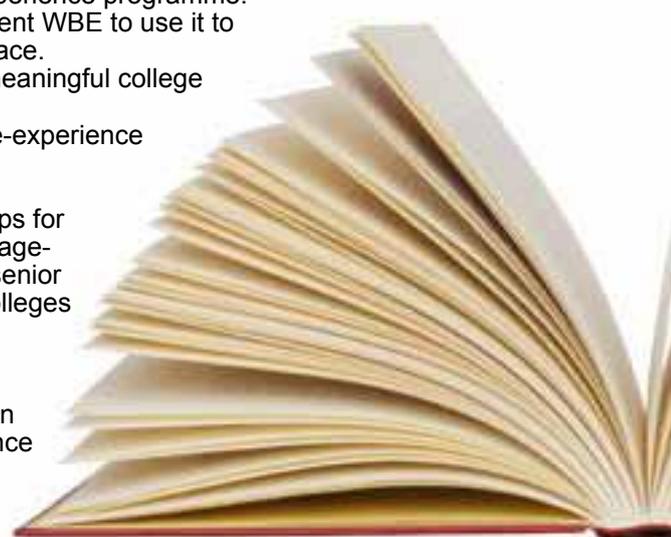
Overall direction has been provided by a steering committee comprising senior staff from the DHET, provincial FET directorates, participating colleges and companies.

**According to the external evaluation of this project conducted at the end of 2010, it had achieved system-wide impact by:**

- Improving perceptions of the NCV amongst college staff, students and employers.
- Increasing awareness among college and DHET personnel of the importance of an organised workplace-based experience programme.
- Enabling lecturers who underwent WBE to use it to prepare learners for the workplace.
- Establishing and maintaining meaningful college-industry partnerships.
- Raising the profile of workplace-experience throughout the DHET.

SSACI will now conduct workshops for all college CEOs and senior management teams, in conjunction with senior DHET personnel, on how their colleges can implement workplace-based training as per the SSACI model.

Thus, SSACI's pioneering work on implementing workplace experience for college students has been mainstreamed by the DHET.



## DID YOU KNOW?

SSACI is helping 25 public FET colleges around the country to implement workplace-based experience for students within the National Curriculum (Vocational). Periods of workplace-based experiential learning for students and lecturers not only prepares the students better for the workplace but also improve the alignment between the colleges and industry.



## +NEWS:

# Full-steam ahead for college-industry partnerships

**DHET has asked SSACI to help plan and implement a strategy to promote college-industry partnerships in public FET colleges. Work on this has started and will continue until at least the end of 2011.**

This far-reaching initiative arose out of research conducted by SSACI earlier this year into the current state of college-industry partnerships in SA. Our first report, released in June, drew on data received from 33 of the 50 public FET colleges. It quantifies the extent of linkages between the colleges and external entities (including private companies, local government, SETAs and NGOs) and offers analysis of the nature and distribution of these relationships. **The results show that:**

- There are more linkages of a more varied nature than was previously thought.
- Many of these relationships are more substantial, more active and longer-lasting than was previously thought.
- There are notable gaps. For example, very few college-industry linkages focus on lecturer development or the provision of workplace-experience for students. Fewer still provide structured feedback on the college curricula. Also, there are sectors of the economy (such as arts and culture, agriculture and personal services) in which there are almost no college-industry partnerships.

A second, qualitative report followed at the end of June. It describes several illustrative case studies and provides lessons on how college-industry partnerships can be promoted.

**The case studies highlight that positive and beneficial relationships can emerge if:**

- Colleges are committed to partnerships/linkages and link them to the key performance indicators of relevant managers and staff.
- Resources are allocated to partnerships.
- There is a champion who drives partnerships and understands the requirements.
- The college has a good reputation with local industry or a high profile in the local community.
- There is a willingness on the part of industry to work with an FET college, and the college shows that it understands and is willing to cater to the needs of industry.

**Factors that hinder partnerships include:**

- Lack of understanding by college managers of the value of partnerships and a failure to assign a strong person to drive such initiatives.
- Lack of any existing relationships with industry.
- The limited capacity of college lecturers to engage with local industry, especially when they have not worked in industry for many years and feel out-of-touch with developments in industry.
- The poor quality of learning materials used in certain colleges and their mismatch with current industry practice.
- The limited resources available to the college's partnerships unit and the fact that, in the majority of the colleges, the units are separate from the main college and operate almost autonomously from the teaching and learning units.

Since developing partnerships with industry is a requirement for all public FET colleges, DHET is now working with SSACI staff on a training and support programme for college managers. This is another example of how a SSACI project has made a positive impact on the national skills training system.



## +OP ED:

# New ways to grow small enterprises to realise great potential

The creation of new jobs through enterprise development is a pressing national priority. Small enterprises have great potential for job creation because they are the most rapidly-growing sector of the economy. It is therefore not surprising that they show the highest rate of growth in employment (about 1.5% p.a. for small businesses in recent years compared to less than 0.5% p.a. for medium and large enterprises).

SSACI views enterprise development as an essential part of its overall strategy for getting young people into gainful employment. Initially this was done through projects that provided start-up training to aspiring young entrepreneurs and business development services to more established enterprises with potential for further growth.

Although we had some success with these projects, from 2008 onwards, we began to see a need to change our strategy. Research in SA and elsewhere, as well as SSACI's own experience, suggested that these were not cost-effective or sustainable interventions.

In response, SSACI started to explore different approaches to enterprise development, such as the promotion of new industries, markets or supply chains.

### The emerging small entrepreneur is faced with a daunting set of obstacles, including:

- Limited access to reliable markets - the biggest single barrier to success.
- Competition from established large-scale enterprises, whose products or services surpass the small players' in terms of quantity, quality, cost, reliability of supply and every other criterion that counts in the market
- Lack of expertise in essential value-adding elements along the value-chain. These include cash-flow management, logistics, packaging, branding, adaptation to market changes, quality management and, risk management.
- Limited capacity to diversify products and services and therefore to adapt to changes in the market.

As a result of all this, the failure rate among new businesses is extremely high.

### To overcome these complex problems, new small entrepreneurs must be assisted to:

- Identify a market demand that is not yet saturated, nor is likely to be in the next 5-10 years.
- Develop a relatively high-value product or service that generates a decent income even when sold in small quantities.
- Integrate themselves into an existing value chain, within which they can source customers and services that they themselves need.
- Tap into external sources of the expertise they lack in the various value-adding elements.

Many researchers believe that this market-development approach to promoting small, productive enterprises has the greatest potential for success. SSACI is currently exploring ideas for new projects that will test its value for emerging young entrepreneurs.



## **+PARTNER:** Cemented in a shared objective

AfriSam has been in partnership with SSACI for a number of years, supporting the latter in vocational training programmes.

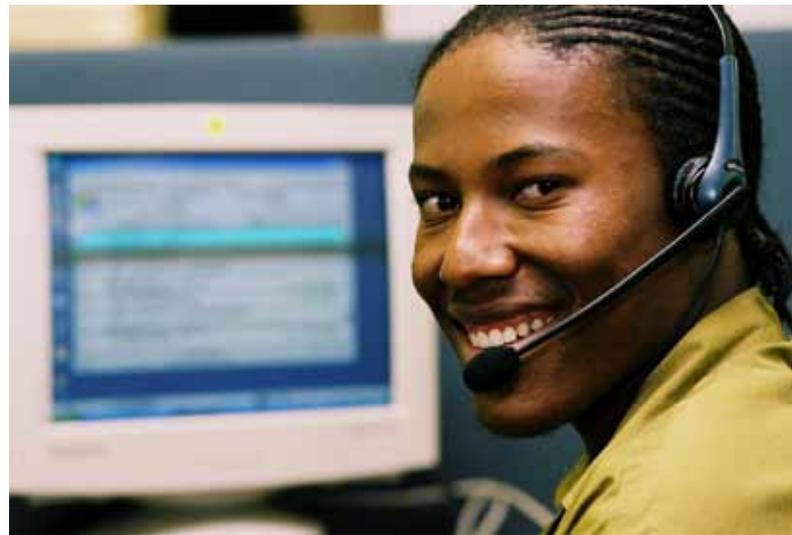
Founded as Anglovaal Portland Cement Company Limited in 1934, AfriSam is the leading black-controlled building and construction materials group in southern Africa. The company has operations in South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland and has an annual production capacity of over four million tons of cement.

AfriSam has six cement production facilities, eight cement depots, 16 quarries and aggregate operations, 40 readymix concrete plants and a Ground Granulated Blast Furnace Slag (GGBFS) milling plant. The company also has a 62.5 percent interest in Tanzania-based and listed, Tanga Cement Company.

AfriSam's involvement with SSACI is part of the company's intensive Corporate Social Responsibility programme which focuses on education and conservation. The company is involved in various educational projects nationwide, with the objective of empowering and equipping communities with the knowledge and skills, as well as providing them with the tools and facilities to become self-reliant and sustainable.

AfriSam's overall Community Involvement mission is to understand the needs of society and communities in areas where it does business to make meaningful and sustainable contributions to their upliftment.

The company contributes R600 000 towards SSACI's training and educational projects every year.



Afrisam's contribution is applied by SSACI in projects providing skills and placement in sustainable jobs.

### Development Support

For more information about SSACI visit our website [www.ssaci.org.za](http://www.ssaci.org.za) or phone **011 6422110**