

issue 5 august 2009

# Achieve

*CLOSING THE SKILLS GAP*



**Powerful women**  
leading the way  
in skills development

**merSETA and I Can**  
*tackle skills shortage*



**merSETA**  
MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING  
AND RELATED SERVICES SETA

# Achieve



**merSETA**

MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING  
AND RELATED SERVICES SETA

## *VISION*

leaders in closing the skills gap.

## *MISSION*

to facilitate sustainable development of skills, transformation and accelerate growth in manufacturing, engineering and related services.

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# Contents

# talkingnotes

*Wow! I'm not only speechless, but I'm humbled by the response of member companies to our call to submit WSPs and ATRs. Our heartfelt gratitude and congratulations go to all who cooperated. KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK! As the future of SETAs is still under scrutiny, I am indeed hopeful that such commitment will not go unnoticed by the Department of Higher Education.*

**T**here is so much more to look forward to in this edition. As an institution that believes in and has invested so much in the training of our youth, we commemorated June 16 with the I Can Foundation in Pretoria. As I pointed out in the last edition, young people should be on the lookout for "Operation Closing the Skills Gap" in their area. We didn't mince our words; we took to Hartfield to talk to young people about critical and scarce skills in our sector. It is imperative that as a country we do more about youth empowerment and development.

In our quest to close the skills gap, we acknowledge the challenges faced by young people, and as merSETA we have put in place a number of programmes that seek to redress such challenges in the form of learnerships, apprenticeships, bursaries, the Voucher Implementation Project, and the New Venture Creation Project, to name a few. The time to ask what the government can do for us is over; it is time we ask the government what we can do. Let us roll up our sleeves and make the youth of 1976 proud by gathering the stones that they threw to the oppressor and instead build a solid foundation for the future.

There are positive signs that we are winning the battle against poverty and unemployment. By the same token, we continue to champion the cause of women in South Africa through skills development. Ninety percent of our stories in this edition focus on women. We speak exclusively to the General Manager of Corporate Services, Ms Moketenyana Mayongo, and our Chief Financial Officer, Ms Beaula Dziruni. They have achieved so much in life as well as in their respective professions that it is no coincidence that they are larger than life, at merSETA we are immensely proud of them. We also spoke to three women who are making a name for themselves in the manufacturing and engineering sector. Preserving our culture and heritage is so vital that we cannot afford to lose our identity as South Africans. Through the "Africa Meets Africa Project" we find solutions in simplifying maths. This novel initiative indicates that learning indeed should be an adventure that starts with what is known.

At merSETA, we will continue to lead the skills revolution by investing in the lives of our people holistically. Let me

take this opportunity to congratulate Bafana Bafana for a sterling performance during the Confederations Cup recently. I would also like to wish the stalwart uBawo Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela a happy belated birthday: May the God of love and peace richly bless him.

This edition is dedicated to two women in my life, my mother, Ms Ntsoaki Maria Radebe, and to my General Manager, Ms Moketenyana Mayongo. And to all our powerful women out there who have become role-models for millions of young girls, your determination to make it in the face of all obstacles presented by a patriarchal society makes your achievements that much more effective. Wathinta abafazi Wathinta imbokodo. Should you wish to write to us, do not hesitate to do so. On the back page of this newsletter are our contact details. Drop us an e-mail or give us a call; we look forward to hearing from you. In parting, I will leave you with these words from Jesse Jackson: "If your mind can conceive it and if your heart can believe it, so you can achieve it."

*Be blessed during this Women's Month!*



**Sibongiseni  
Ziinjiva Ka-Mnguni**  
Editor





# A VIEW FROM THE TOP

*This month is crucial for women empowerment, for it is the nadir of year-long efforts and campaigns to ensure that women are rightfully respected and emancipated in terms of our epoch-making constitution.*

**T**hus, this edition of our **Achieve** newsletter highlights the sterling efforts women staff at merSETA have made towards ensuring that the organisation strives and accomplishes its historic mission of ending gender bias in the manufacturing, engineering and related industries.

merSETA, as the national training agency in the manufacturing and engineering related industries, has made enormous progress in elevating women to their rightful roles in the organisation. Yet much more needs to be done throughout the industry itself.

We salute those companies and organisations that view women's emancipation as vital to sustainable economic performance. But we again call upon industry at large to go the extra mile and ensure gender equality at the workplace.

Far be it for me to speak on behalf of women, but the challenge remains that while industry has scored some success in this field, more effort needs to be made to open opportunities for women engineers and technicians, as well as learnerships and apprenticeships.

The global crisis demands that sustainability be the key platform for the survival of individual companies. Inherent in this quest for sustainability is the need to ensure availability of suitably skilled labour and expertise. Training for future upturns in the economy is a strategic issue. When the economic tide turns and global demand rises, South African companies will also benefit from a greater pool of scarce skills.

It is therefore incumbent upon companies that when the time comes, they are ready to engage the expert staff needed to increase production and productivity.

Thousands of women can and should be trained during this economic malaise, so that we can live up to demands for more goods when the recession ends. Our mandatory and discretionary grants cater for more women trainees. It is up to our stakeholders, particularly industry participants, to ensure that they access these funding mechanisms.

Industry should not sit back now and later bemoan the lack of suitable skills, when the opportunities now exist to make hay while the sun shines.

Women must have their rightful place in our economy, and merSETA will assist all companies and stakeholders in their quest to ensure that this indeed happens.

*Until next time...*

Sincerely,

**Dr Raymond Patel**  
CEO merSETA

# Africa Meets Africa *makes maths easier*

By Sibongiseni Ziinjiva Ka-Mnguni

*merSETA was proud to be present at the launch of the Africa Meets Africa Project at the Discovery Centre in May this year at which concerted efforts began to simplify mathematics education for rural learners. The project aims to assist educators and learners to find solutions to contemporary learning problems in the context of their southern African cultural heritage.*

**S**tudying the integrity of design in a Zulu basket woven by Reuben Ndwandwe or a homestead design and wall painting of an Ndebele artist like Esther Mahlangu or Francinah Ndimande, one can only be in awe at the craftsmanship and attention to detail in their work.

As a Section 21 company and Public Benefit Organisation, The Africa Meets Africa Project is sponsored by both private sector and government institutions. The project investigates the knowledge and skills embedded in beautifully crafted objects of everyday use, such as traditionally woven baskets, traditional beaded adornments and contemporary beaded jewellery. According to project director Helene Smuts, “Our indigenous southern African knowledge systems can support mathematics education in the classroom, making it more accessible to learners. We integrate a range of learning areas, including Arts and Culture, Mathematics and History. As its name suggests, the Africa Meets Africa Project looks to the skills and knowledge we already have, that are truly part of who we are. We propose that learning methodologies should start with what is known and from there be linked to a broader education system and philosophy. Otherwise education is experienced as an abstract system imposed on lived experience,” says Ms Smuts.

The methodology is simple: “It is an example of recognising what was there all along in the everyday objects of cultural expression around learners and educators. Inspired by the work made by master craftsmen and women, arts activities are developed for the classroom which are then interpreted in terms of mathematics learning area. A learner generates a beaded pattern, for example, enjoys doing so, and then is guided to discover the formula behind her own pattern,” Ms Smuts points out. “This process is a fascinating one, as the essential arts skill we focus on is explored pragmatically in relation to mathematics learning. The essential concept is clarified. It becomes crystal clear.”

Explaining how the project works in each area, Ms Smuts says they are often approached by a member of

the community or an educator for assistance in maths literacy. “Research is then undertaken. Each research process brings our core team of academics, writers, and film makers in contact with a particular rural region and its artists, government and traditional leadership.” As with all business that starts with a good idea, the project’s future depends on financial resources to sustain growth.

The Africa meets Africa Project functions primarily on funding grants. Past funders include the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Pretoria and the Shuttleworth Foundation. The National Heritage Council and FirstRand Bank have funded most of their recent publications, including Africa Meets Africa: Ndebele Women Designing Identity. The project also sustains itself through the sale of its resource books and films.

*The objectives of the project are:*

- To investigate and document the work of master craftsmen and women and the cultural traditions they are part of, also tracing contemporary innovation and cross cultural influence, and then to interpret and develop this research into learning material that helps educators teach within the National Curriculum Statement.
- To present educators with attractive and stimulating learning materials, richly illustrated, and in so doing make the best academic expertise accessible to all educators, especially those in the most isolated rural contexts.
- To investigate and seek to address the distinct learning needs of rural and urban contexts. Rural learners, for example, most often experience English as a barrier to learning. But using audiovisual aids and a visual language of pattern, the project serves as an entry point to mathematical thinking and learning.

The project has attracted interest from academic institutions abroad. “Most recently, interest has been expressed by academic institutions in India and the United States of America,” says Ms Smuts. Asked

# Project



*“This undervaluing of indigenous skills and knowledge clearly had much to do with the colonial suppression of indigenous culture”*



Top left: Sophie Mahlangu is a master beadwork maker from the Ndebele rural heartland of Mpumalanga here she is with the most celebrated Ndebele painters Francinah Ndimande, Esther Mnguni and Esther Mahlangu in downtown Johannesburg to launch The Africa meets Africa Project. Top right: Africa Meets Africa Project director Helene Smuts.

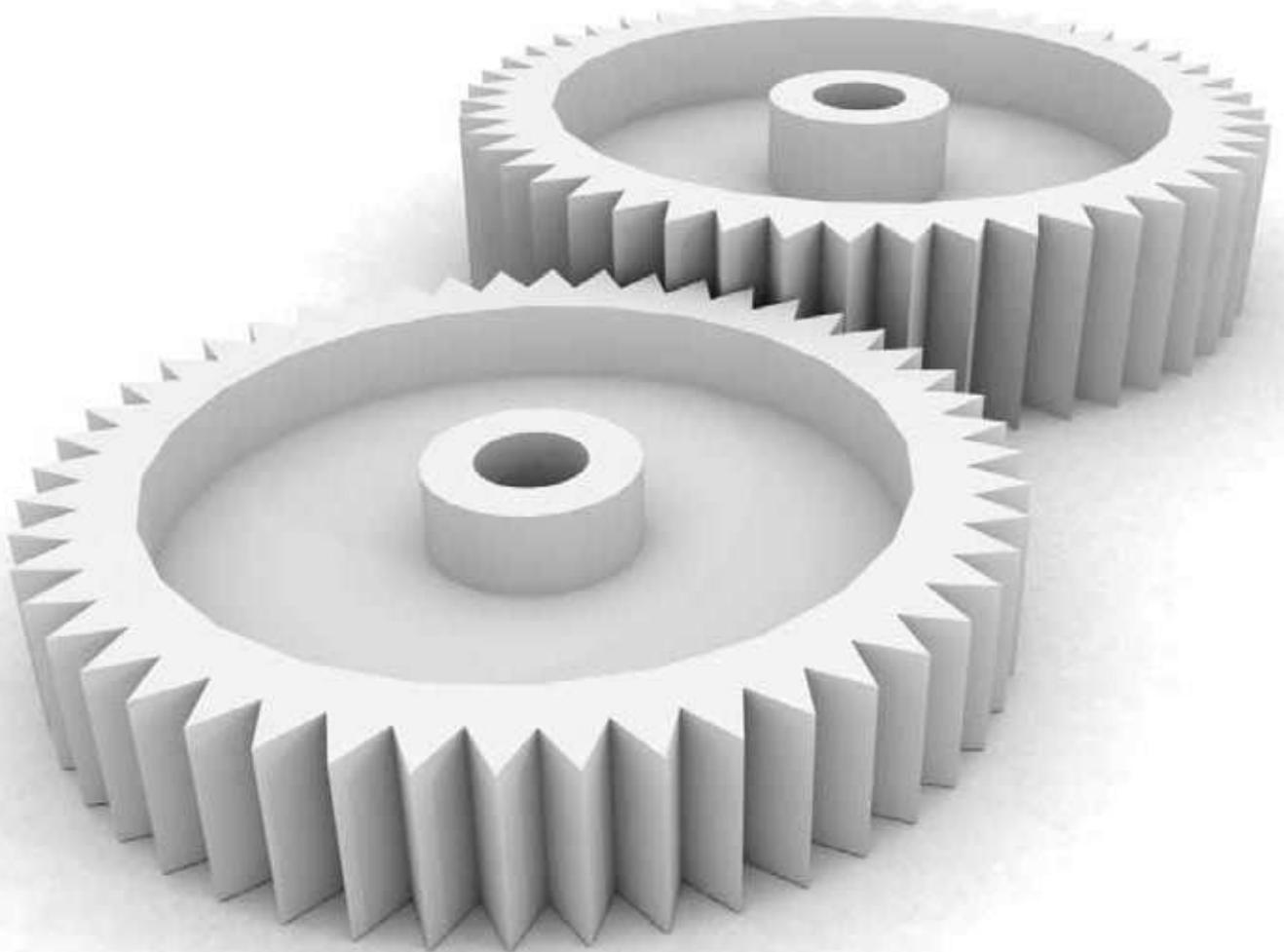
whether Africa is ready for such a project, Ms Smuts responds: “The project investigates the knowledge embedded in African cultural expression, in other words, we are pointing to something which has been with us for a long time and which keeps evolving. I could respond by saying Africa has been ‘ready’ for a long time, but that in terms of formal education we have not been open to what its cultural heritage holds. Indeed learning should be an adventure that starts with what is known. What a better way of replacing the current widespread fear of mathematics with the confidence vital to success.”

She adds: “This undervaluing of indigenous skills and knowledge clearly had much to do with the colonial suppression of indigenous culture, but we also see a need for challenging perceptions of cultural heritage and tradition as ‘static’ and ‘belonging to the past’. The contrary is true—in the visual arts, Africans have shown a great talent for taking in and meaningfully reinterpreting external influences in new symbolic forms. Once they have been introduced to our learning methodology,

educators in KwaZulu-Natal would often comment: “This works! Why didn’t we think of it before?” At academic level the idea of approaching Africa’s visual cultural expression mathematically is not a new one. The Africa meets Africa project is unique in its pragmatic approach of helping learners and teachers find solutions to contemporary learning problems in their southern African cultural heritage. The project is developing a series of richly illustrated resource books, documentary films, as well as lesson packs for the classroom, which support the national curriculum statement.

The project is set to expand across the country by developing learning materials and training educators in using them in partnership with provincial education departments.

*merSETA:*  
*an integral cog*  
*development m*



# *in the skills machine*

*merSETA, the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Education and Training Authority is one of 23 SETA's established through the Skills Development Act [no. 97 of 1998]. It facilitates skills development for the metal and engineering; auto manufacturing; motor retail and component manufacturing; tyre manufacturing; and plastic sub-sectors.*

- More than 6700 Apprentices and 8300 learners are undergoing training across merSETA's five Chambers;
- More than 80 Qualifications registered with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA);
- Over 90 Learnership registered with the Department of Labour;
- R10 million set aside for engineering related studies in South Africa through Bursaries;
- Curriculum for 45 Qualifications developed;
- Supported the establishment of two Institutes for Sectoral and Occupational Excellence (ISOE's) in the welding vocation;
- R70 million invested in the Artisan Accelerated Training Programme (AAPT); and
- 6000 SME's stand to benefit from the R90 million sets aside for the development of the SMEs.

*leaders in closing the skills gap.*



A close-up portrait of Beaula Dziruni, a Black woman with dark hair, wearing a black blazer and a gold earring. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a warm, orange-brown color.

*“My advice is to have a long-term plan that takes into account the many pressures that come into a woman’s life and don’t let setbacks make you waver from your goals”*

# Up close and personal with Beaula Dziruni

By Sibongiseni Ziinjiva Ka-Mnguni

*Achieve newsletter took time out to talk with Beaula Dziruni, CFO of merSETA, on what it means to be a woman working in a man's world and how she comes out on top.*

## **What does Woman's Month mean to you?**

Woman's Month is a celebration of the many roles and responsibilities women have in this society. As workers and entrepreneurs contributing to the economy and the home, as mothers and aunts raising the future generations and giving them correct values and beliefs, and as wives keeping the home going.

## **Do you believe South Africa has done enough in terms of women empowerment?**

The legislation is in place to empower women and we have a good representation in parliament. However, we have a long way to go bring equality and empowerment to the majority of women. Women are still a minority in senior management and on average earn less than men. Women still have unequal access to housing, schooling, and finance, and families with single mothers still make up a greater portion of households below the poverty level. There are still social and cultural barriers to women's advancement which society as a whole has to find ways to change.

## **We have seen women emerge, gender issues addressed, at government level. How do you think the corporate environment can learn from this?**

The corporate environment can learn from governments commitment to equality shown by their wide search for suitable female candidates and investment in training of these candidates.

## **What is your perspective on the future of the training arena in terms of transformation?**

Transformation is a key pillar we have committed to and we will achieve. However, more efforts need to be made in supporting transformation within the training arena, particularly in supporting black learners in higher institutions who may struggle due to not having a firm educational background and exposure. Also, some learners have family responsibilities that may pressure them not to continue with a learnership if they have the opportunity to earn more elsewhere, and we need to find innovative ways of addressing these concerns.

Support and mentorship of black service providers is also needed.

## **What is your view of the participation of women in the mainstream economy of our country?**

The participation of women is still low, especially at the decision-making levels, and women need to be empowered and trained to move into higher ranks.

## **The financial sector is still male-dominated; are we likely to see women coming to the party?**

I think more women will enter the financial sector, especially if encouraged to pursue maths and accounting at school level and provided with support at the higher education level. There is a good representation of women at the clerical level in finance, but for various reasons including access to finance and family reasons, many women do not complete higher qualifications.

## **Women are of the opinion that they have to double their effort to be taken seriously by their male counterpart. Is this true?**

Unfortunately that is true in most sectors.

## **What is your advice to a woman who is still at school looking up to you for inspiration?**

My advice is to have a long-term plan that takes into account the many pressures that come into a woman's life and don't let setbacks make you waver from your goals. Research the availability of financial and other assistance widely; it is there, but you need to ask. Be prepared to work hard and to prove yourself at every point.

## **What legacy would you like to leave one day as a woman?**

I would like to leave a legacy of being someone who made a positive contribution in the small areas of responsibilities that I have been given, from working at merSETA and strengthening financial management to ensuring that public funds are used wisely toward social contribution.

# Moketenyana stays true to her female identity

By Ronel Nel

*Ms Moketenyana Mayongo is the GM: Corporate Services, responsible for Human Resources, IT, MIS and Communications and Marketing. Ms Mayongo considers success the ability to realise her goals and be content with what she has achieved and what she is doing. She has a strong feeling about the role mentorship played in her life.*

**M**s Mayongo believes that having a mentor is important as it provides an individual with someone who will guide and assist them on their professional journey. “I have had several mentors who mentored me in different aspects of my life,” Ms Mayongo says. At merSETA, mentoring takes place from lower levels right up to the CEO. Mentors may be internal or external, but all contribute to the growth and development of staff.

## *Obstacles*

Businesswomen experience several problems in their rise to the top. According to Ms Mayongo, the biggest stumbling block she had to overcome was the fact that she is a woman. “I always had to prove myself before people could take me seriously and believe in me,” she says. Ms Mayongo believes individuals should set very clear goals and believe in themselves. “It is also important to understand yourself, your strong and weak points, so that you are able to complement your weak areas with people that are strong in those areas. People who have served or worked with me will tell you that I am motivated and do not let go until I am sure a collective solution to inefficiency is implemented and produces the intended results,” she says.

## *Recession*

Ms Mayongo says the best way to cope in difficult times, like the recession South Africa is currently experiencing, is to adapt and change one way of life to suit the current conditions. “I prioritise and spend on things that are a real need,” she says. The recession also inevitably leads to bad experiences like job losses. Upskilling and multi-skilling have been identified as two possibilities employees can consider. Ms Mayongo believes that multi-skilling will allow people to move from one sector to another. “It is very important that organisations keep themselves updated with the skills required by the economy and train employees to be adaptable when conditions

require them to do so,” she says determinedly. “In addition, having innovative and creative people gives the company a competitive edge.”

## *Male Domination*

“In the early days of my career, I worked in a power station. Not only was it male-dominated, it also had older black male employees. This proved to be challenging for me as my cultural traditions require that I listen to my elders rather than them listening to me. I discovered it is not an insurmountable challenge, but it takes time to win trust and confidence,” says Ms Mayongo. “The recognition of women in the workplace is not yet at the level it should be. I think more needs to be done, and women need to play a role in facilitating this,” she adds.

At merSETA, a special emphasis is placed on advancing previously disadvantaged individuals, including women and the disabled. merSETA has for this reason implemented its own programme for the development of women in the sector. The programme, which is run through UNISA, was attended by 50 women last year and 350 in 2009. merSETA currently boasts 60 percent women employees and 33 percent women executives. Achieving a balance in her personal and professional life is one of the biggest challenges she faces. “I use every opportunity that I get to be with my family and make sure that I go to my yoga classes at least three times a week,” says Ms Mayongo.

## *Femininity*

Businesswomen are often accused of “losing their femininity” when rising to high-profile senior positions. Ms Mayongo agrees with this description, saying that women lose their femininity because they want to prove that they are equal to men and sometimes end up behaving like men instead of proving their capabilities in a feminine way. Feminine characteristics aside, some female traits have been identified as deterrents to success. These include



*“The recognition of women in the workplace is not yet at the level it should be”*

a lack of emotional intelligence, insecurity, getting too involved and the well-known “jealousy”. Yes unfortunately “pull her down” syndrome exists. Ms Mayongo adds that “these are women who are not content with themselves as individuals and lack inner peace. I have met such women, but I have also met a number of women who are supportive.”

#### *Leadership*

Ms Mayongo identifies her leadership style as participative and says she believes in giving everyone a chance to participate when a decision is made within set time frames.



Top: IT manager Fabian Brown, HR manager Ester Meyer, Corporate Services general manager Moketenyana Mayongo and MIS manager Siphon Mlotshwa. Left: Moketenyana Mayongo.

# Chase the Dream...

By Sibongiseni Ziinjiva Ka-Mnguni

*The Achieve Newsletter caught up with Ms Ester Meyer, the HR Manager at merSETA, to talk about women empowerment and the celebration of women.*

**J**uggling a working life with home commitments is not an easy task—just ask any working mother. Yet, merSETA's HR Manager, Ms Ester Meyer, seems to have found the magic formula.

"It is about setting boundaries. When I am at work I focus on work, and when I am at home, I focus on my family. Obviously there are some exceptions, but in general, I find that this approach works. Most importantly, I make time for myself. You can only make your employer or your family members happy if you are able to make yourself happy first. What you do on the inside will happen on the outside," says Ms Meyer.

As part of celebrating Women's Day, the merSETA HR department will lead awareness campaigns on woman's issues such as work-life balance, sexual harassment and how women can break the glass ceiling.

Ms Meyer is modest when asked about her personal development and the importance of mentorship. "So many people have contributed to my development. I do believe that mentorship plays an important role in each person's growth and development as human beings. I am, however, also of the opinion that it is our own responsibility to grow and develop ourselves. We can learn valuable lessons from others, but ultimately success is when we are able to practically translate and implement these ideas into our own life and not become clones of others. We must find our own unique identity and way of doing things."

The new South Africa has gone a long way in addressing gender issues, she says, adding that it is exemplary that women are now being given opportunities to showcase their worth and the contribution to society.

"However, no amount of external opportunities will make women feel empowered unless they make a shift on the inside. I believe that not enough is being done to unlock the potential that lies within women in order that they can empower themselves, regardless of the circumstances they face."

Ms Meyer says to be a successful woman in a leadership role is not a "male thing".

"It is not about becoming masculine and bullish. It is about embracing the uniqueness of being feminine and being authentic—being who you are and being proud of that. This does not mean emotional outbursts and being soft. It means being emotionally intelligent, able to balance people and task targets, and being able to fulfil various roles as leader, manager, mother, wife, and friend. It is about bringing an ethos of caring, nurturing, and a sense of family into the workplace." She adds that the environment is very conducive for women in South Africa, especially in the skills revolution.

"The challenge is for women to embrace the opportunities and show the value that they can add."

But there are still many hurdles, she points out. "My view is that one of the major challenges we face is that of perception. This relates to the perception that male counterparts have regarding the value that we can add.

*"It is about setting boundaries. When I am at work I focus on work, and when I am at home, I focus on my family"*

But, more importantly, it relates to the perception that we have about our own competence—our self-limiting beliefs. Eleanor Roosevelt once said, 'Nobody can make you feel inferior unless you allow it'."

Ms Meyer does not feel intimidated or discriminated in her workplace. In the diverse workforce of today, her male colleagues value her sensitivity, diplomacy, creativity and supportive approach in dealing with challenges faced by staff.

To women faced with many challenges, especially in deeper rural areas where access to information and role models are scarce, Ms Meyer quotes Mohandas



Clockwise from top: Women celebrating women's day at country club; Ester Meyer; Boitshoko Moikanyane, Creselda Kananda, Claudinah Freezer, Morongwe Molefe and Dr Raymond Patel.

Gandhi's famous words: "Be the change you want to see in the world."

"If women want to improve conditions, they have to be the spark that lights the fire. Find out what is available and contribute in your small way," she says.

Every year, merSETA celebrates women during the month of August. This year, merSETA women will visit the Women's Museum at Constitution Hill, with guest speaker being the merSETA Chairperson, Ms Jeanne Esterhuizen. She will speak on the challenges that she faces as a successful business woman and how she overcomes these.



# LETQA Continues to

By Christo Basson

*The LETQA division of merSETA continues to chart new courses in its education and training path.*

“**L**earning, Education, Training, and Quality Assurance (LETQA), as with the whole of merSETA, intends to move with changing times and ensure that we are rendering the best possible and current service to our stakeholders,” says Christo Basson, Senior Manager of LETQA.

In doing so, the LETQA division has embarked on exciting new projects:

- With the phasing out of the national “N” certificate at further education and training colleges, merSETA has identified the void left by this. Our clients and stakeholders need a short-term replacement for the skills acquired when doing the N2, as this is prescribed as the required minimum for a trade test in the Manpower Training Act and its amendments. The last date for the N2 to be administered is April 2010, whereafter an alternative must be found. After careful consideration of alternatives, LETQA embarked on a project whereby syllabi of the N2 Trade Theory subjects were evaluated and unpacked for the theoretical knowledge addressed in these syllabi. This identified theoretical knowledge of the N2 Trade Theories, which were then mapped back to the outcomes of unit standards that form part of qualifications in the merSETA scope. merSETA is in the process of “packaging” these unit standards as a short-term replacement for the N2 Trade Theory subjects. Next steps will be to identify supporting learning material where available, and to conduct the same process for the N2 Mathematics and Technical Drawing/Engineering Science. This project is expected to be completed by the end of August. “We intend to form partnerships with other SETAs in certain areas of this project. Providers will then be able to offer these ‘packages’ as an alternative to the N2, purely for purposes

of gaining access to a trade test,” says Basson.

- LETQA is involved in pilot projects in the design of new occupational qualifications that will be developed according to the proposed new Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO). Pilot projects include a suite of qualifications for the foundries industry as well as the new Occupational Trainer qualification, where merSETA was nominated as the Quality Development Partner. All relevant SETAs have been invited to participate in this pilot project;
- We further intend to embark on a process to review and further develop a suite of qualifications for the boat-building industry. The industry requested that successful completion of these qualifications should culminate in an individual being

*“Stakeholders can be assured that we will keep them updated on all developments.”*

able to attempt a trade test in boat-building. An application to this effect will follow with the Department of Labour.

- merSETA has successfully identified eight Institutes of Sectoral or Occupational Excellence (ISOEs) in the past. Memoranda of agreement are being reviewed and possible extensions will be considered. These will focus on changing requirements of our sector and enhancing links with other organisations within our sector.

# Shine New Light

LETQA Senior Manager: Christo Basson



- Another imperative project focuses on the development of courseware for 44 of merSETA's current qualifications—specifically those that are in demand and have a substantive uptake. A new approach has been adopted in unpacking generics and cross-cutting elements in the qualifications as an initial curriculum development step. Courseware for registered qualifications is designed with this emphasis on curriculum, including formative and summative assessment exemplars related to outcomes and assessment criteria. The approach aligns with some of the proposed QCTO conceptualisations. The project has an 18-month timeline, and the first manuscripts will be available in August 2009.
- merSETA is planning national road shows in all regions to workshop our stakeholders on the following:
  - Proposed new regulations for artisans
  - Proposed new skills sets for trade tests
  - Proposed models of establishment of a national artisan moderating body that will moderate all trade testing in the future

“As part of our service to stakeholders, the aim of these workshops is to ensure full participation by our sector in regulations and changes that will affect all in the near future,” says Basson. These road shows began in July and will end in August. Dates and venues are available from the LETQA offices of merSETA.

“Stakeholders can be assured that we will keep them updated on all developments,” Basson added.

# merSETA *Empowering* Women

*merSETA, the Black Management Forum (BMF) and the UNISA Graduate School of Business Leadership (SBL) joined forces in a project that saw 50 women from the Eastern Cape, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal being granted bursaries to follow one of the acclaimed non-formal programmes offered by the school.*



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**leaders in closing the skills gap.**



The 12-month Fundamental Management Programme is aimed at equipping entry-level managers with theoretical knowledge and hands-on skills to handle fundamental management aspects. All three stakeholders are committed to the empowerment of women as leaders. This year saw 350 females enrolled for the programme, thus paving the way for several more to come.

According to Professor David Abdulai, Executive Director and CEO of the SBL, women form an integral part in the transformation in South Africa's growing economy. He quotes the famous Ghanaian educator, J.E. Kwegyir Aggrey, who said: "If you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate an entire nation."

The stakeholders therefore encourage other women to participate in programmes like these as they could serve as a bridging education before embarking on more advanced management development programmes.

# Women Engineers De of Women in Industry

By Sibongiseni Ziinjiva Ka-Mnguni

*South Africa Women in Engineering (SAWomEng) has declared war on the critical shortage of women engineers in the sphere.*

**A**t a glittering event held in Johannesburg, the organisation, backed by merSETA, launched an awareness project aimed at 60 female students in grades 11 and 12. The learners were taken through the need for maths and science in the engineering arena, while the Drum Café facilitated a team-building event.

Focusing on a technical project, which included a house-building competition, the aim was to map out career options in engineering by identifying the brightest female minds and providing them with crucial soft skills necessary to succeed in the engineering sector.

SAWomEng is determined to alleviate the shortage of women in South Africa's engineering sector. In a country where 1200 engineers are produced annually, as compared with countries in East Asia, which produce a whopping 500,000 engineers per annum, the project is aimed at increasing engineering graduates in terms of the Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA). The dire situation can be seen by the fact that a mere 300 vacancies exist for engineering academics. Yet more than 1000 engineers, 300 technicians and 15000 artisans need to be trained to overcome the national skills shortage in South Africa.

SAWomEng is committed to supporting UN Millennium Development Goal 3 by promoting gender equality and women empowerment. The number of women in engineering has been of particular concern as they are still grossly underrepresented, with the percentage of women graduates in engineering still below 20% in many countries.

Mandated to increase the number of women engineers, SAWomEng is taking the "gospel of women engineers" to tertiary institutions where learners are encouraged to pursue a career in engineering. The organisation was inspired by the vision of two then-third-year University of

Cape Town civil engineering students, one of whom, Ms Mabohlale Mampuru, launched the platform to fast-track young women in engineering careers..

Asked about the criteria used to select learners for the project, Ms Mampuru says: "We looked at the marks the girls got for maths and science. From there, we chose the girls with maths and science marks that were averaging 60 percent. Most in this category were the girls from private schools, public schools and the excellence schools. The girls from the disadvantaged schools were failing to meet the 60 percent mark.

"We studied their marks more closely and a benchmark of  $\pm 45$  percent was decided on. Their motivations were also studied very closely and the girls who showed a keen interest in SAWomEng and engineering were chosen. Girl-Eng advances two of the five SAWomEng pillars, namely Mentorship and Igniting the Engineering Flame," says Ms Mampuru.

Under mentorship, the SAWomEng delegates will now deliver speeches at high schools in their respective provinces. Each delegate will also mentor at least one female high school student.

"We believe that through this mentorship, school girls will be inspired to study engineering and will do well in their chosen career. Challenges in both the academic and working worlds will not be insurmountable as they will have SAWomEng 'ex-patriots' to counsel them," she adds.

According to Ms Mampuru, the Girl-Eng committee will pick six schools in their respective provinces; three privileged and three underprivileged schools. Delegates will visit these schools to market SAWomEng and engineering as an occupation of choice for women. The delegates will also identify 10 top performers in maths and science. These top performers will be mentored by

# clare War on Shortage

*“SAWomEng is committed to supporting UN Millennium Development Goal 3 by promoting gender equality and women empowerment.”*

the Girl-Eng committee. Most importantly they will be invited to spend the day with SAWomEng. One day each will be hosted in the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, and Gauteng. Each day will be attended by 60 female learners. SAWomEng enjoys the financial support of various engineering companies in South Africa as a non-profit, student-run body.

Ms Mampuru thanked merSETA for contributing to positive change in South Africa whilst showing commitment to the development of female engineers at the grassroots level, hoping they will maintain this relationship.



# merSETA Western Cape Paves the Way

By Charlene Gillies

merSETA Western Cape had a momentous occasion recently when 38 learners became the first to graduate in various disciplines in merSETA's National Qualification Framework Level 4.

Proud parents, excited learners and dignitaries from the FET Colleges, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), and the industry heralded the success of the graduates at the ceremony, which took place early this year.

"These learners are our pride and joy as they have paved the way for other learners to follow. They survived the system that so many don't believe in and today, they can pride themselves on being the leaders in closing the skills gap," said merSETA CEO Dr Raymond Patel at the graduation ceremony. Their learning was further enhanced at the FET colleges of Northlink and False Bay.

In his address, Dr Patel encouraged graduates to seize every opportunity and be steadfast in future endeavours. merSETA HR manager Ester Meyer also inspired graduates with her presentation on motivation and the need to strive to be the best as well as having a positive outlook. "The merSETA applauds industry, particularly those companies committed to the development of people and who consistently train for the enrichment of our country and its economy," said Dr Patel.



## David lives his dream...

By Sibongiseni Ziinjiva Ka-Mnguni

Like any other child yearning for bigger things in life, David Tihakaye is living testimony of "if you dream it, you can achieve it".

Starting off in 2003 as a cleaner for Imperial Toyota at Isando in Johannesburg, David knew the way upward was through sheer determination and training.

He looked further than where he was at the time. "As I had my matric and relevant qualifications, I approached the service manager and asked if I could be an apprentice. It was my ambition to become a motor mechanic. I was offered the opportunity to become an apprentice. I qualified as a motor mechanic a few years later. All along the way my service manager supported and encouraged me."

Since then, he has come a long way. He became a certified Toyota technician (pro) and completed full product knowledge courses. He also completed a

service advisors course and now intends to be a service manager. "I have been earmarked for a new position in the group and will be embarking on it soon," says David.

David believes that through proper people development, Imperial Group has unlocked potential talent amongst aspiring youngsters.

His message to everyone out there is that "perseverance is the mother of success". We can only hope that young people will follow David's courage and never-say-die attitude by taking the bull by its horns.

"He is indeed a symbol of hope, and we at merSETA are proud of such youngsters who turn their lives around when given a lifeline. We also recognise the contribution made by Toyota in upskilling their workforce," says merSETA CEO Dr Raymond Patel.

# Western Cape Tooling Initiative Flies High

By Charlene Gillies

*Eight learners recently flew the merSETA flag high when they graduated with flying colours under the auspices of the Western Cape Tooling Initiative. Established in 2004, the initiative assists in developing, coordinating and stimulating growth in the tooling industry with a view to increasing job opportunities and attracting new investors.*

**T**oolmaking provides the mechanical and technological know-how in support of competitiveness of the broader manufacturing industry. It is also responsible for scores of job opportunities. The Western Cape Tooling Initiative (WCTI) is a sector development partnership managed by a board made up of merSETA, toolmaking industry members, local government, college and university representatives and other special interest groups.

It supports the tool, die and mouldmaking industry (TDMI) through human resource development, innovation, SME/BEE support and business development.

Recently, the WCTI has also supported skills development through support for the Wingfield Engineering Campus of Northlink College, with a view to establishing a Centre of Excellence for Toolmaking. Current initiatives include developing the Centre of Excellence and marketing toolmaking as a career choice among the youth. With tool, die and mouldmaking being classified as a critical and scarce skill in South Africa and categorised as such by the National Skills Development Strategy, marketing toolmaking as a career is also important for the industry's sustainability and growth.

Other interesting projects are the development of modules and courses around CNC machine maintenance and a learning pathway from further education and training to higher education, enabling future learners to progress from a Technical College to a University of Technology.

Hoosain Chalklen is the project manager responsible for the Skills Development leg of the WCTI, and he remains optimistic about the impact of the skills development projects at Wingfield College. "The change in the landscape of education must be emphasised, and we need to encourage learners to consider what industry prefers i.e. a qualified engineer who first becomes an artisan, gains experience, and then progresses to become a professionally registered engineer. The toolmaking industry has statistics which prove that the latter is the most effective pathway to become a competent engineer in the tool, die and mouldmaking industry," says Chalklen.

Remarkable improvements in the quality of training and education in the TDMI and the number of learners opting for this interesting career are also evident. With the advent of other initiatives by the WCTI, South Africa is on track to become a bigger and better global TDMI competitor.



Western Cape NQF Level 4 Tooling learners accompanied by Nasir Williams and Bronwin Abrahams of merSETA.

**For more information on the WCTI, contact Monique at [monique@wctiweb.co.za](mailto:monique@wctiweb.co.za) Tel : (021) 483- 3907.**

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# Success Knows Boundaries

By Sibongiseni Zinjiva Ka-Mnguni

*The country's failure to develop, harness and use the science, engineering and technology potential of women continues to be a serious drawback for South Africa's economy. A study commissioned by the Department of Science and Technology/NACI/SET4 has found that women are clearly underrepresented in these fields, particularly at senior levels.*

**W**ith Emmie Mfisa, Priscilla Zwane, and Catherine Ludick, there is no glass ceiling in the science and engineering fields. Emmie is no doubt a go-getter. After studying mechatronics at the then-Setlogelo Technikon, she fancied her chances in the engineering field and enrolled at a technical college in Pretoria to study diesel mechanics.

Last year August, the heavy equipment company Komatsu gave Emmie a rare opportunity to work as an earth-moving mechanic apprentice. According to Mr Coen Myburgh, the Apprentice Training Officer, it was not only Emmie, but Priscilla and Catherine who also got an opportunity to do their apprenticeship at Komatsu.

Mr Myburgh elaborates on the appointment of the three: "First of all, I was very skeptical when first I found a couple of CVs of women who showed an interest in our apprentice programme and wanted to pursue a trade relative to our industry. It took me six months to consider these applications. I subsequently decided that I needed to find out first-hand whether these and other similar ladies would be able to undertake heavy physical work. They had the required theoretical knowledge, and after they engaged in our programme, I was suitably impressed with their passion with which they took on the trade."

Priscilla Zwane hails from Ladysmith in KwaZulu-Natal. She attended the Johannesburg College and completed the electrical engineering N6 course before getting her break. Like others, she dreamed of being an engineer one day and when she got an opportunity to showcase her talents and abilities, she grabbed the chance with both hands. She is currently serving an apprenticeship as an earth-moving electrician apprentice.

Catherine Ludick finished her N6 in electrical engineering after having applied for an apprenticeship with Komatsu. She is doing an earth-moving electrician apprenticeship as well. Asked about the treatment from her male

counterparts, Catherine says: "Men are still struggling to work with women but as time goes on, things will be better." With her abilities and potential she is determined to prove her worth in the male-dominated workplace.

At a tender age, Emmie knew she was destined for a career in the engineering field. "I have always liked to work with my hands and I am fascinated by small cars, and this is where my dream of being a diesel mechanic started," she says. She further adds that she never dreamt of a career in earthmoving, but when the opportunity arose, she was up to the challenge. Although the environment is male-dominated as you would expect, she enjoys her work and does not feel discriminated against by her male colleagues.

As we celebrate Women's Month, Emmie feels it is paramount to uncover "who you are as a woman" to pursue your dreams. Asked about her plans to salute her

*"I was suitably impressed with their passion."*

mother, her primary inspiration, Emmie says she will take out her mother and shower her with love. Her message to South African women is that they should be focused and know what they want in life. Asked about her role model, Catherine was quick to also point out her mother, whom she refers to as her fountain of wisdom and inspiration. Her mother, she says, encourages her to work hard and never use the words "I can't", Catherine wants to spoil her mom during this Women's Month as a token of love and gratitude. Her advice to other women out there is that "nothing will come knocking and present itself as an opportunity to you. You have to go out and find out about opportunities available in your surroundings".

# No



Top: Priscilla Zwane, Emmie Mfisa and Catherine Ludick;  
Right: Emmie Mfisa at the workshop.

Mr Myburgh feels empowerment in general is something that we have to take seriously in terms of transformation. “As regards empowerment of women, we take this as a business imperative and know that this will make a small difference. But if more companies do so, then the country at large will benefit and we will certainly advance the aims of legislation such as the Employment Equity Act and other related legislation. At Komatsu, we believe in such initiatives because we know they will improve our country—we do not engage in such activities to merely comply,” he says.

Komatsu has 60 apprentices in their plants. merSETA salutes Komatsu and urges other member companies to take a leaf from them. The under-representation of women in fields such as engineering is a serious threat to our economic survival, but if companies are determined to make a meaningful contribution, with time their contribution will yield the desired results and women empowerment will be a reality.



# Reflections on Learning... in Her Own Words

*At Beekman Super Canopies, we are very passionate about training the unemployed community. It is so rewarding to see how these learners develop and grow.*

**W**hen we started the learnerships about five years ago, women did not make up a large part of the groups. In particular, African women did not apply for learnerships. Today, this is not the case. Now, African women make up about 40% of the learnerships.

If one thinks of the adverse circumstances that surround most of women learners, then the dedication and commitment to the programme is astounding. They spend long hours at the training centre and then go home to look after families.

When Feiki Mabula applied for the learnership, she told April Fortuin, our training officer, that she needed to better herself. At Beekman, we are very fortunate to have such a large contingent of women who have completed their learnerships and hope that, in a small way, the company is able to help build a better future for women in the country. As we all know, women are the backbone of any community, and therefore we will continue to offer learnerships to those who want to uplift themselves.

*The following is an extract from her Portfolio of Evidence of Learnership—in her own words.*

By Feiki Mabula

Education is a weapon that makes the poor to be wealthy. Educating yourself is not a waste of time. Communication helps me to learn. Chatting with others is the best way of getting knowledge. Sharing ideas is the best way of making the subject enjoyable and easier.

My learnership is very important because I am getting experience for a specific job. I will also get a certificate to prove that I have done this course for about this period of time. I feel so lucky to be a member of the learnership because the doors are open for me all over. Now I have an opportunity to make my dreams come true.

I wish to get a decent job with a decent salary from a wealthy company. I will take care of my family. I want to buy a big house and a nice car. I'm always praying to God to help me so that I can achieve one of these dreams soon.



Learners at Beekman Super Canopies.

# merSETA Conquers Soweto

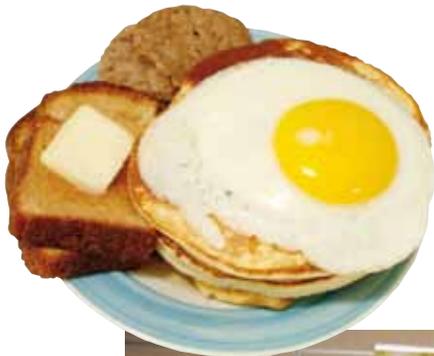
## – Mass Vocational Guidance Careers Exposition

By Sibongiseni Ziinjiva Ka-Mnguni

The Mass Vocational Career Guidance Exposition held in Dube, Soweto in June this year provided an opportunity for merSETA to raise its profile. Although the month of June was exceptionally busy for merSETA as a result of the submissions of WSPs and ATRs, we were able to make time to advocate the importance of making correct decisions when it comes to career choices. It was indeed fulfilling to see Sowetans taking their personal development so seriously that when we are invited next time, it will be difficult to turn them down. Congratulations and well done to all learners who braved the cold weather and attended the event! As Walt Disney once said, all of our dreams can come true if we have the courage to pursue them.



Learners at the Mass Vocational Careers Expo.



## GAUTENG SOUTH BREAKFAST SESSION



Gauteng South Office (SDFs)

merSETA Gauteng South Office took time out to meet with the skills development facilitators (SDFs) in Birchwood recently. The objective of the breakfast session was to capacitate the SDFs on grant submission format and process, thus addressing targets set out by the National Skills Development Strategy. The Gauteng South Client Relations Manager, Mr Takalani Murathi, says we are likely to see more of these breakfast sessions in the future.

# merSETA and I Can Foundation Tackle Skills Shortage Head-on

By Sibongiseni Ziinjiva Ka-Mnguni

*While the debate around the commemoration of June 16 rages on in our society, merSETA and the I Can Foundation have moved quickly to address the pertinent issue of skills development in South Africa.*

**A**t a June 16 commemoration this year, more than 5000 students from Pretoria, Johannesburg, Limpopo and the North West descended on Hatfield, Pretoria, to attend the annual “Careers for the Future” Expo hosted by both organisations.

This was the third such event since its launch in 2007. “As a previous June 16 detainee, we made a decision to maximise Youth Day to redirect the anger of the past to something constructive. It gives us a great platform to refer to the courage, boldness, tenacity, and determination of the young people of June 16 to hopefully inspire today’s youth to dream big, fight for a cause, and assist in defeating HIV/AIDS, as well as to be leaders to take us to the next level,” says Dr David Molapo, CEO of the I Can Foundation.

Learners were bussed in from various schools to a central venue where they listened to different speakers dealing with available career opportunities in the different sectors of our economy.

Each year, about 100 high schools from various regions attend the exposition. To date, learners from more than 300 schools, numbering some 15700 students, have attended the annual event. Of the attendees, 6973 are at universities and colleges, 2564 learners qualified for learnerships and 1820 ventured into entrepreneurship.

Dr Molapo places the success rate at the door of the three P’s, “...the preparation phase where, with the Department of Education, we target areas where there’s skills gaps; proclamation phase, where a big event is organised to make learners aware of opportunities; and finally the preservation phase, where the fusion of study and exam skills takes place and prepares prospective learners for sponsors and funders”.

The genesis of the project came in 2007 when Dr Molapo approached merSETA to get involved in helping young people choose careers that would assist South Africa fight the skills shortage. Aware of the challenges facing youngsters, merSETA CEO Dr Raymond Patel seized the opportunity and promised his organisation’s full support.

“The objective of the project is to empower and display possible careers in the future, including preparing young people for the world of work,” Dr Patel says.

Dr Molapo adds: “Most learners come from schools where there is no career guidance or life orientation educator. Therefore, they enjoy being inspired, challenged and exposed to various careers at this event. The challenge facing young people today is not only to use education as a vital tool that will enable them to open doors, but also to find it easier to make the right career choices.”

merSETA bursary officer Camilla Smith points out that 40 percent of first-year bursary holders drop out of tertiary education because of a lack of career guidance.

“With monies being committed to funding young people to further their studies, it is essential that young people are well informed of what is available on the job market before even applying for a bursary or any other form of funding.”

The project is funded by individuals and organisations that share the values of skills development.

The future outlook of the project looks rosy as the deeper rural areas in South Africa will experience Careers for the Future expos, especially in such areas as Limpopo, Mpumalanga, the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal.



Clockwise from top: Learners at the Careers Expo; Gauteng North and Northwest Client Relations Manager Mr Harry Geldenhuys; Dr David Molapo and Dr Raymond Patel.

“This is not seen as a programme, but a process in the sense that the I Can Foundation continues to work and walk with learners as well as monitoring their progress and needs as they complete their secondary schooling. Parallel to that, a cordial relationship with sponsors of the project is maintained.

He said learners would in the future enjoy experiential learning opportunities as well as more bursary opportunities. Learners would also be addressed by well-known role models and motivational speakers.

“I truly thank the merSETA for its continued financial support and personal involvement in the project. The project is able to meet our objective of reaching out to as many young people as possible. Thank you, merSETA.

“To all learners attending these events, I say we can only do so much; the rest is up to you. Continue to aspire for great things, have a desire, be self-disciplined, and strive for your God-given dreams. And to all our wonderful educators, I thank you for partnering with us. We are in this together. We pray that the Lord will continue to fortify you, strengthen you as you aim the arrow right to the target. We honour you.

“I can, you can and together we can close the skills gap,” says Dr Molapo.

# Inkandla Becomes the Centre of Attention

By Sibongiseni Ziinjiva Ka-Mnguni

*While all eyes were still on the newly-elected president of South Africa, Mr Jacob Zuma, his home town, Inkandla, hosted the Inkunzi Isematholeni Career Exhibition.*

**A**s a catalyst for skills development in our country, merSETA took to KwaZulu-Natal to advocate the gospel of choosing a career in the manufacturing and engineering sector. As Africa's development depends on youth development, this aspect needs to be given prominence, hence our participation in this career exhibition.

"We take the agenda of young people seriously, and as merSETA we will continue to advocate for

youth development," says merSETA Corporate Services General Manager Ms Mocketenyana Mayongo. "As merSETA, we believe a paradigm shift is required to regard young people as the solution rather than the problem to the challenges facing our country, and if the career exhibition is anything to go by, we must brace ourselves for exciting times in terms of closing the skills gap in the manufacturing and engineering sector," she adds.



Learners and unemployed people at the Inkandla Career Expo.

# The Metallurgical Engineer

## ...MAKING SO MUCH POSSIBLE!

The merSETA is one of the 23 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) established to promote skills development Act of 1998. The 23 SETA's broadly reflect different sectors of the South African economy. The merSETA encompasses Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services. The various industry sectors are covered by five chambers with the merSETA: Metal and engineering, Auto Manufacturing, Motor Retail and components, New Tyre and Plastic.

Metallurgists are engineers who specialise in metals. They develop processes that produce or process metals, and give advice on their use, extraction, improvement, production, performance and the way they should be combined with other materials such as polymers or ceramics.

It is the metallurgical engineers and the manufacturing processes they control that makes so much possible! Without their input we would be living in a dreary, simple world with few of the everyday comforts we take for granted- such as air-conditioning and even vending machines. And there would be no Statue of Liberty, Eiffel Tower or Golden Gate Bridge – three of the wonders of the modern world made or supported with steel.

Metallurgical Engineers are involved with almost every aspect of our world and lives, from gravity-defying skyscrapers, magnificent sports stadiums, far-reaching bridges, tunnels, dams, cars, railways, aeroplanes, ships and exploration!

### Made in South Africa

Our world today requires a variety of metals, researched and created to meet specific needs. Strong and flexible; rigid and light; heat resistant and non-corrosive – the list of specifications goes on and on. Guns and tanks, ships, trucks and cars (including every part that goes into them) are now manufactured in South Africa... and its South African steel and the expertise of our metallurgical engineers that makes this possible.

### Personal qualities

If you have the following personal qualities, a career as a Metallurgical Engineer could be for you:

- Metallurgists need to be clear and enquiring thinkers who enjoy work that involves accuracy.
- They should be adaptable and flexible, as they will be required to work on a wide range of projects at various work sites.
- They also need to be patient when examining metals and analysing
- An ability to work well under pressure is also important, as is the need to be self-motivated and innovative.

### Bursaries available...

MerSETA offers bursaries in the following subjects:

#### a) University Undergraduate

- BSc (Eng) Engineering Electrical (light and heavy current) and Electronic
- BSc (Eng) Engineering (Chemical)
- BSc (Eng) Engineering (Metallurgy and Materials)
- BSc Mechanical Engineering (including Mechatronics)
- BSc (Eng) Engineering (Industrial)

#### b) Universities of Technology

- National Diploma
  - Chemical Engineering
  - Electrical Engineering (light and heavy current)
  - Engineering Metallurgy
  - Mechanical Engineering (including Mechatronics)
  - Industrial Engineering
  - Production Management
  - Rubber Technology
  - Process Instruments
- B. Technology
  - Chemical Engineering
  - Electrical Engineering (light and heavy current)
  - Engineering Technology
  - Production Management
  - Rubber Technology
  - Process Instruments

### Dream big

Always remember that a career in Engineering can only be reached if Maths and Science are your chosen subjects. Dream big and think of maths and physics as a small step along the path to a great and profitable career in engineering.



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# closing the skills gap.

The merSETA is one of the 23 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) established to promote skills development in terms of the Skills Development Act of 1998. The 23 SETAs broadly reflect different sectors of the South African economy. The merSETA encompasses Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services.

The various industry sectors are covered by five chambers within the merSETA: Metal and engineering, Auto Manufacturing, Motor Retail and Components, New Tyre and Plastic.



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