

ISSUE 13 September 2011

Achieve

LEADERS IN CLOSING THE SKILLS GAP

BRINGING DIVERSITY AND AN EMPATHETIC **APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT**

merSETA INJECTS R22.6m TO DEVELOP SKILLS



merSETA
MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING
AND RELATED SERVICES SETA
ISO 9001:2008



Vision

leaders in closing the skills gap

Mission

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



merSETA

MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING
AND RELATED SERVICES SETA

ISO 9001:2008



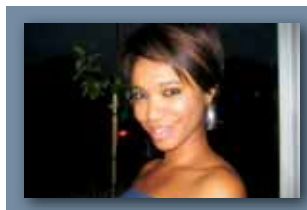
ON THE COVER

MsPhindile Nzimande
merSETA Chairperson



PG. 22

Eastern Cape reclaiming its place
in the skills development revolution



PG. 26

A wunderkind



PG. 28

merSETA injects R22.6m to
develop skills

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TalkingNotes

The implementation of the National Skills Development Strategy III (NSDS III) is in full swing and as your SETA, we are working around the clock in ensuring top-notch delivery.

Some noteworthy pointers are the synergy between NSDS III, the Human Resource Development Strategy of South Africa II, the Industrial Policy Framework and the New Economic Growth Plan. The cornerstone of our success depends largely on the synergy between government policies and our strategies.

A common factor about these strategies and policies is to stimulate the economy and create employment for millions of our people. In the past, young people felt the wrath of being unable to plan properly in terms of the skills required by the country.

With NSDS III placing more emphasis on Sector Skills Plans, it is a step in the right direction -- having the right qualification and right skill will assist in ensuring the unemployed are absorbed into the labour market.

The main objective of NSDS III is to boost the country's new economic growth and social development path. Strengthening the skills and human resource base is critical in a country that relies much on expertise from outside our shores, especially technical skills.

As a country, we have come a long way in celebrating and recognising the role played by women in our society. And August being Women's Month, we pay tribute to the powerful women who have made a major difference towards inculcating a gender-sensitive society.

The challenge is on young women to emulate these trendsetters and to do better. It is encouraging to note the number of initiatives being rolled out by women themselves in recognising their plight and their place in modern society; Take a Girl Child to Work and the South African Women in Engineering are but two sterling initiatives that indicate a country that affords women a place in the sun.

In this quarter, we introduce the newly-appointed merSETA Chairperson, Ms Phindile Nzimande. Her immense experience in the engineering arena will play a vital role in taking merSETA to another level. Find out more about her and what her mandate from the DHET is.

We also joined in celebrations of Mandela Day in Lusikisiki, in the Eastern Cape, with other SETAs, universities and FET Colleges in honour of Madiba. As a hub for artisan and engineering, we report on a R22, 6-million investment for skills development in the Eastern Cape. Staying in that province, the Strategic Skills Project paid dividends when 72 learners graduated recently. We spotlight their success.

Still on graduations, merSETA congratulates the Grootvlei Correctional Service for playing a prominent role in ensuring that inmates get trained so that when they are released, they can contribute to the country's economy. A paradigm shift is required to ensure we give people a second chance in life; this is indeed a compelling case study that readers should take note of.

Be blessed!



Sibongiseni
Ziinjiva Ka-Mnguni
Editor



A view FROM THE TOP

In line with its mandate of upskilling and training South Africa's learners and employees, the merSETA powered its way forward in the 2010/11 financial year, yet again achieving major milestones. The merSETA believes that the object of education is to prepare the youth to educate themselves throughout their lives. Famed author Victor Hugo once said: "He, who opens a school door, closes a prison."

The annual report shows that the merSETA is building an enabling society – a society steeped in promoting best learning practice within our post-school sphere.

Eric Fromm famously asked: "Why should society feel responsible only for the education of children, and not for the education of all adults of every age?"

In answering, merSETA has a dedicated and successful ABET programme that segues with the school curriculum as well as other post-school training assurance programmes. Thus, continuous improvement is not only our byword – we stand and act consistently by this progressive stance which supports lifelong learning.

Expanding the skills flow and pipeline through more effective strategies is also under consideration. Industrial tourism has become increasingly popular in recent years, particularly in Europe. From power stations to distillers, from light manufacturing to automobile service and maintenance, all sorts of factories and plants are opening their doors to industrial tourism.

In Europe, the automotive industry in particular is attracting considerable interest with production assembly sites welcoming tens of thousands of visitors each year. The merSETA is studying industrial tourism as a complementary mode of attracting South Africa's youth into industry and learnerships/apprenticeships.

The merSETA hopes to partner major companies to make their work processes attractive to potential employees.

As noted, the merSETA ensured its programmes benefited key industries and communities in its sector. But much more needs to be done. In the 2011/12 financial year, we began the process of measuring the social impact of our programmes. This is a major plank of government's thinking on skills development. The social impact assessment will be completed in the 2011/12 financial year. It is only with the help of the Board and our stakeholder commitment that we have achieved so much. merSETA management takes this opportunity of wishing the previous Board well, knowing that their leadership has successfully steered and guided numerous strategies projects.

We have a mandate to produce several thousand qualified artisans and this gap between scarce and critical skills must be overcome if we are to have the meaningful impact our society needs.

We welcome our new Board and trust their guidance will enable the merSETA to meet its objectives.

I also take this opportunity to thank all the staff who faced anxiety and apprehension as the fate of the SETAs remained uncertain. They remained steadfast in their commitment and loyalty to training all South Africans and supporting economic growth objectives.

Sincerely,



Dr R Patel
CEO merSETA



2010/2011 merSETA PERFORMANCE

At the end of March 2011, the Accelerated Artisan Training Programme (AATP) project uptake reached 3093 apprentices of whom 1432 were funded by the National Skills Fund (NSF) and 1661 by merSETA.

Of these apprentices (who started in October 2007), 1291 have successfully reached the final milestone by passing their trade tests. merSETA-funded candidates have had 90% successful completions in metal trades and 50% in motor related trades.

The merSETA is consolidating a broader platform for this project in the NSDS III period. Post-trade test career paths are receiving attention through further support for the Government Certificate of Competence (GCC), FET and university-based engineering lecturer development. Furthermore, a concept research assignment on the feasibility of a proposed "Master's in Technopreneurship" has been completed.

The pilot of the Occupational Trainer Qualification, developed as a QCTO project by the merSETA, commenced with five Master Trainers from each of the Chambers and a training resource file and website were developed.

Following site visits to the training centres, the next phase is to commence with the training and development of 40 candidate occupational trainers, and full registration of the qualification, for broader roll-out and release into the public domain.

The social impact of such programmes influences scores of potential SMEs and single-source providers. The Recognition of Prior Learning Project launched in mid-2010 relied on an approach rooted in each of the chambers.

This project has provided a sound platform to mainstream RPL through Discretionary Grants, matched by support and capacity-building interventions for companies.

The second year of the Science Engineering and Technology (SET) Project was highly successful with an intake of 600 learners in the 2010/2011 financial year. Grade 12 learners had a 100% pass last year with 105 distinctions and 85% university entrance passes.

Looking ahead, the merSETA plans to expand this intervention with a stronger focus on rural areas through linkages with FETs and institutions of higher learning in remote areas as well as the merSETA Bursary and Career Guidance Units.

As underscored by research, the global economic recession had a significant impact on the manufacturing, engineering and related services sectors. But the merSETA assuaged its negative impact through several initiatives.

Through the Retrenchment Assistance Programme (RAP), the merSETA provided direct assistance to 32 companies and 4127 retrenched workers to the value of about R51-million.

Through the national government initiative, the Training Layoff Scheme (TLS), merSETA was able to assist a further 11 companies and 4768 workers to the value of about R56-million.

These interventions included Skills Programmes, Learnerships and short courses. A further eight Training Layoff applications involving 880 workers were approved by the CCMA and are being processed via the NSF.

The Toolbox Project was designed to ease the learning pathways of candidate artisans in SME workplace learning settings by providing custom-assembled toolboxes for merSETA-funded learners. A total of 1488 toolboxes have been issued, with 556 SMEs and learners expressing satisfaction with the standard and quality of the tools.

The key objective of the Accounting Technicians Project is to improve the entry and middle management level financial skills in participating organisations. The project is implemented in association with SAICA (AAT) SA and runs over three years with budget of R2 million per annum for 100 candidates.

In July 2007, the merSETA Board approved the SME Training Voucher Implementation Programme (VIP) as part of a three-year strategy – the SME Skills Development and Support Programme – to assist SMEs in our sector to easily access training for their employees.



Learners with disabilities graduate after merSETA/VWSA training initiative; Scania apprentices Philadelphia Kaula, Precious Ginida Selogadi Mokonyama and Ingrid Moagi

The project value per annum is around R30 million, and several thousand learners and SMEs have been reached through this initiative.

The purpose of the merSETA bursary scheme is to create a supply of qualified employable engineers to fulfil industry requirements to stimulate economic growth and competitiveness at all levels of the economy.

The number of students supported by the merSETA bursary project has grown from nine in the 2004 academic year to about 750 (250 employed and 500 unemployed) in the 2010/11.

In all, the merSETA has sponsored more than 2500 students. There have been some notable success stories – a woman graduate in Mechatronics from NMMU, having gained experience with one of the Auto Chamber stakeholder companies, is now employed as an engineer in Germany; and our first MSc Engineering Management student who graduated in December 2010 is now employed by Stellenbosch University Centre for Renewable and Sustainable Energy Studies.

480 candidates were reached in the past financial under the New Venture Creation (NVC) project across all provinces. This year, merSETA was privileged to work with six FET colleges which ran programmes of this nature.

Currently, the merSETA provides direct funding support to 14 NGOs and CBOs. Significant challenges have arisen with regards to skills development compliance issues that were not anticipated in the tendering and appointment phase. This calls for a more considered and integrated strategy. The merSETA has engaged in this exercise. The purpose of the HIV & AIDS Workplace Project is to minimise the negative social and economic impact of HIV and AIDS within the working environment in SMEs across the sector.

The intervention was measured in terms of overall progress, Economic Impact Assessments (EIA), Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices / Perceptions (KAP), and development of workplace HIV & AIDS strategies and policies. Looking ahead, the primary task is one of promoting and disseminating best practices.

The merSETA Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) project aims to provide centrally-funded and managed support for learners in need of ABET. The project, aimed at furthering education and training opportunities, lifelong learning and enhanced career opportunities, has proved a resounding success.

In February 2008, the merSETA commissioned a research study to determine the status and impact of ABET training. In addition to implementing both Business and Accelerated ABET modules, the merSETA custom-designed an Occupational ABET programme.

This involved developing five (5) ABET curricula and learning materials at ABET L2, L3 and L4 customised to each of the merSETA Chambers in order to build a closer fit between ABET and the needs of these sub-sectors.

Registered apprenticeships numbered 5169, more than 800 compared to the previous financial year, while more than 15 700 employed and unemployed people completed learnerships. The purpose of the People with Disabilities (PWD) project was to develop a strategic and implementation plan to promote training and placement for the disabled in certain occupations.

A useful research report detailing learning and career pathways for people with various forms of disabilities has been developed and is available for the sector.

At the end of March 2011, the Accelerated Artisan Training Programme (AATP) project uptake reached 3093 apprentices of whom 1432 were funded by the National Skills Fund (NSF) and 1661 by merSETA.

The unit engaged in a range of initiatives designed to assist stakeholders in completion of their WSPs in terms of the OFO codes. A publication identifying key OFO codes in merSETA chambers/sectors was developed together with a range of "step-down" reports, designed to ensure the research findings were more accessible to a wider audience, including an updated Scarce and Critical skills list (2011/2).

The R&D Unit was also engaged in a range of national and international academic initiatives. These included academic papers delivered at the World Association of Co-operative Education (Hong Kong) and the World Teaching and Learning Conference (Cairo). Notable national conferences at which papers were delivered included the South African Society for Co-operative Education (SASCE) and the bi-annual conference of the Development Policy Research Unit (DPRU).

The unit was also actively involved in the SAQA Research engagement on RPL. The merSETA was invited to present papers at the UMALUSI Adult and Vocational Education and Training (AVET) Conference (Johannesburg) and the national Pan African Technical and Vocational Education and Training Conference (Cape Town).

In addition, partnerships and MoUs with the HSRC, the University of Bremen and the University of Witwatersrand

(Johannesburg) have been developed. Collaborative research ventures with the REAL (Research into Employment and Learning) at Wits University's Education Policy Unit (EPU) and the Further Education and Training Institute (FETI) at the University of the Western Cape are being explored.

The merSETA also engaged with the UNESCO initiative on the 2012 Global Monitoring Report which intends to explore the country context of skills development. We indeed are not an inward looking enabling institution but one that competes with best learning practice around the globe. We are well-placed to inspire the next generation of artisans.



AATP apprentices at the Murray & Roberts training centre; MSc Engineering management graduate - Corlie Leonard

BRINGING DIVERSITY AND AN EMPATHETIC APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT

By Achieve Correspondent

The National Skills Development Strategy III (NSDS III) ushered in a number of fundamental changes to the SETA landscape. Among the notable changes was the appointment of a new chairperson at merSETA, Ms Phindile Nzimande. In this in-depth interview with *Achieve*, she points out the direction merSETA will embark on to accelerate skills development.

Ms Nzimande is clear that the merSETA is pivotal to building global competitiveness among our country's industry.

"The merSETA has conducted extensive research to strengthen the manufacturing and engineering sector and labour market planning, including an analysis of the impact of the global economic recession, a workplace skills plan and annual training report analysis. It has also conducted an impact study into learnerships and apprenticeships through merSETA.

"Arising out of these initiatives are more concrete efforts that we'll embark on to increase competitiveness. The issue is that training should not be merely of a productive nature, but should also encompass innovation and initiative," she says.

Government's focus has shifted, she adds.

"Government's focus has shifted from the quantitative aspect of training to the qualitative. In the past, it was how many people were trained, and for what purpose. Now, we include the question: 'What impact will each newly-trained person have in the society in which they live?' The NSDS III is a new focus on impact-driven, post-school training. The role of the chair will be to ensure that the merSETA develops a strategy to meet all the priorities in terms of the Skills Development Act (SDA) and the NSDS III."

She points to successful partnerships between the merSETA and other organisations, including the Human Science Research Council (HSRC), the University of Bremen and the University of Witwatersrand (Johannesburg).

"We have also developed collaborative research ventures with the Research into Employment and Learning (REAL),

at Wits University's Education Policy Unit and the Further Education and Training Institute (FETI) at the University of the Western Cape."

The merSETA's new practices are aimed at boosting competitiveness at the factory floor.

"You can see how this aspect relates to world trade. Several of the merSETA's automobile manufacturers have scooped exclusive rights to produce certain parent company models. And these contracts, which are cost and competitiveness-based, are export-based. This is a stamp of approval that the merSETA must be doing something right if its member companies can win contracts from other countries."

She also points to a merSETA-driven skills competition which is being mounted around the country. "The result is that youngsters employed within our member companies in the merSETA sector, especially motor retail, will take part in the World Skills Competition in London in October 2011," says Ms Nzimande.

Ms Nzimande does not mince her words about gender parity.

"Gender equity is both a constitutional prerogative and a focus of the merSETA. We recognise the need for gender equity and our programmes must and do reflect this."

There have been some notable success stories.

"For example, a woman graduated in Mechatronics from Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU). Having gained experience with one of the Auto Chamber stakeholder companies, she is now employed as an engineer in Germany. Similarly, our first MSc Engineering Management student, who graduated in December 2010,



merSETA Chairperson Ms Phindile Nzimande

“Young women must be courageous and strive to be different by making Maths and Science subjects of choice at high school and strive to enter into engineering and science programmes at FET Colleges, universities of technology or universities.

is now employed by Stellenbosch University Centre for Renewable and Sustainable Energy Studies.”

Ms Nzimande said merSETA is proud of the MoA with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) which focuses on support to rural schools, thus empowering women who make up the bulk of people in rural areas.

She also points to continued support for the South African Women in Engineering, a project that focuses specifically on leading women through a career in engineering. She said through the discretionary grant allocations to member companies, the merSETA is ensuring that women participation is increased.

There is ample published research, she says, that highlights the difference made by women in any working environment.

“Women tend to bring diversity and an empathetic approach to management. They are inclusive -- they listen to all perspectives before making decisions. They show high productivity levels. The manufacturing sector will benefit a lot if it increases the level of women participation.”

Apprehensive about the plight of young women, she points out that young women in South Africa stand at the most propitious moment in history -- where opportunities have never been so many and endless.

“Young women must be courageous and strive to be different by making Maths and Science subjects of choice at high school and strive to enter into engineering and science programmes at FET Colleges, universities of technology or universities.

“There are ample facilities in terms of resources, mentors and career opportunities. Do not limit yourselves by falling prey to unfounded myths about maths and science being difficult and impossible.

Our fore bearers fought hard for these opportunities to be availed to our generation, some even laid down their lives for us.

“The best way to make these gallant women proud is by seizing the moment and its opportunities with both hands. Engineering is the new frontier for us. Let us be pioneers and the vanguard and leave even bigger opportunities for those who come after us. Believe in yourselves, you are as good and as smart as the best, if not better,” concludes Ms Nzimande.

“Arising out of these initiatives are more concrete efforts that we’ll embark on to increase competitiveness. The issue is that training should not be merely of a productive nature, but should also encompass innovation and initiative.”

PARTNERSHIPS WITH FET COLLEGES

By Independent Correspondent

In his state of the nation address, President Jacob Zuma referred to making South Africa's Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges the primary site for skills development.

An executive of the National Professional Teachers Organisation said the promise by the President that FET colleges would be the primary skills development sites could depend on the detail behind it.

One of the reasons was that the 50 FET Colleges have been closing down their apprenticeship programmes after the Department of Education revamped the colleges in 2005 and replaced the national certificate courses with 11 "technical academic" courses that allow graduates access to higher education institutions.

At the FET Round Table and Summit, the Minister for Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, echoed the President's call and said it is one of his KPIs to give FET colleges more prominence and priority in the educational sphere.

The minister further said that skills development was predominantly happening in the private sector instead of the public sector.

The minister went on to call for stronger partnerships between the SETA system and FET College system. He wanted to see the alignment of SETAs with FET Colleges for work placement.

FET Colleges must be involved in artisan training and be strengthened to be involved in occupational linked training.

The Framework for the National Skills Development Strategy 2011–2016 refers to "Public institutions of learning and institutions of the skills development sector are now in one department. With the birth of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), the work of Skills Development, with its Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and National Skills Fund (NSF) can now more easily complement that of our public institutions the colleges, the universities of technology, comprehensive universities and universities.

"For the first time, workplace learning can become the visible supplement to institutional learning and it need no longer be seen as the invisible dimension of learning for those on

the road to professional, vocational or other occupational status. The potential for these partnerships to deliver more than the sum of their historical parts is great and must be realised in the interests of all South Africans."

merSETA shares this vision and it is therefore our priority to intensify the need for merSETA to engage with FET Colleges that fall within the primary scope of strengthening and further developing partnerships.

Some of the benefits from this partnership include:

FET Colleges

- Having ±50 FET College's country-wide has a clear potential to assist the skills delivery in South Africa;
- FET colleges have recently been funded in a re-capitalisation project and some have excellent training facilities. Some workshops of technical high schools could also be considered that are currently under-utilised;
- FET colleges were part of the delivery mechanisms under the Manpower Training Act with the NATED 191 courses, and delivery on an alternative is imperative;
- Public institutions falling under the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) pose less of a financial risk to SETAs from a funding point of view;
- Provide an opportunity to build Capacity and share expertise between professionals from FET colleges and sector industry specialist/ human resources practitioners from the industry; FET Colleges could through merSETA become more active in artisan training as per the Minister's request;
- and merSETA learnerships could be funded at FET colleges. merSETA needs to roll-out skills development and should use quality providers in any form to assist in meeting targets;

Eight of the Institutes for Sectoral or Occupational Excellence (ISOEs) in development from merSETA, are FET colleges.

merSETA has invested heavily in some of these ISOEs,



LETQA Senior Manager Christo Basson

ensuring quality equipment and will continue to assist FET Colleges in creating infrastructure and human capacity building; and

merSETA would like to see FET colleges play a pivotal role in partnerships between merSETA, Community-based Organisations and FET Colleges.

“merSETA would like to approach FET colleges as equal partners in skills development. Our approach is one of determining the needs of the country and the needs of FET Colleges as well as addressing the needs of industry,” elaborates ETQA Senior Manager Mr Christo Basson.

He went on to say that with the new dispensation for FET Colleges and SETAs (NSDS III), new avenues of funding will become available and should further investigate worthwhile projects, as jointly identified.

In the process of establishing “Programme Delivery Partners” as envisaged by the Framework for the National Skills Development Strategy 2011–2016, the request from Government is to focus on some of the following:

“It is generally acknowledged that there is much room for improvement in this area and hence a special focus of the new NSDS must be to focus resources -- both financial and human – on building improvements in this area. The improvements required may be in any number of areas, including:

- Infrastructure of facilities;
- Curriculum and qualification design;
- Lecturer, teacher or trainer development (a matter of national priority);

- Learning material;
- Student information and support;
- Facilitation of partnerships between public and private providers; and
- Even subvention of the wages of key staff members or the creation of dedicated “chairs” for required programmes. Finding and further exploring niches for colleges and partnerships amongst colleges with similar strengths might be another option to investigate.

When merSETA decides to go into partnerships with FET colleges, the following are some of the obvious gains:

- FET colleges have spare capacity as far as training is concerned and merSETA requires additional training capacity;
- FET colleges are geographically well situated to serve all corners of the country;
- Being State institutions give SETAs some form of guarantee of quality and less risk on investments;
- It is envisaged that partnering with FET colleges would be a “win-win” situation;
- merSETA could fund artisan training and learnerships offered by colleges;
- Developing a structured programme for college learners entering the workplace is imperative, both for experiential learning and placement; and

- Investigating the possibilities of incubators where college learners could practice their acquired skills.

Possible departure point

- A high level collaborative agreement was signed between eight FET Colleges in Gauteng and the engineering-related SETAs.
- It should be possible to establish a sub-committee to address the need for skills development in the Motor Sector using the same role players. This proposal would form the basis of discussions between colleges and merSETA, and is in no way prescriptive. Identify colleges wanting to be part of occupational skills delivery for merSETA specifically in the motor sector;
- Identify niche markets within colleges, based on their resources, both human and otherwise;
- Establish two-way relationships by further linking specific colleges with specific companies within our sector; Set up a working group to jointly develop a structured programme for college learners wanting to enter the workplace;
- The working group could position FET colleges as partners of choice for delivery of parts of artisan and learnership training;
- Companies could accept FET colleges as preferred feeder institutions and utilise screened learners from colleges for workplace exposure and possible employment; Colleges could become lead providers of the knowledge component of occupational qualifications for most or all indentured learners;
- Practical exposure could also be catered for at selected colleges;
- Learnerships at colleges could be extended and the learnership agreements will cement the relationship between the institution and merSETA levy-paying company; and

Addressing curriculum and career-pathing of learner at FETs as well as for lecturers at FETs could form part of such further deliberations.

Some of the possible spin-offs from such a project could include:

- Industry could be involved in the foreseen review of the National Certificate Vocational, in making it more industry friendly both in content and delivery method;
- College lecturers could be exposed to industry's latest technology and processes;
- Such one-on-one partnerships lead to a higher level of acceptance of each other, and of each others' products (learners and courses) introducing pockets of trust;
- Larger volumes of learners in the system, eventually leading to quality training and more qualifying artisans; and Infrastructure and training facilities could be evaluated and upgraded to address skills development needs.

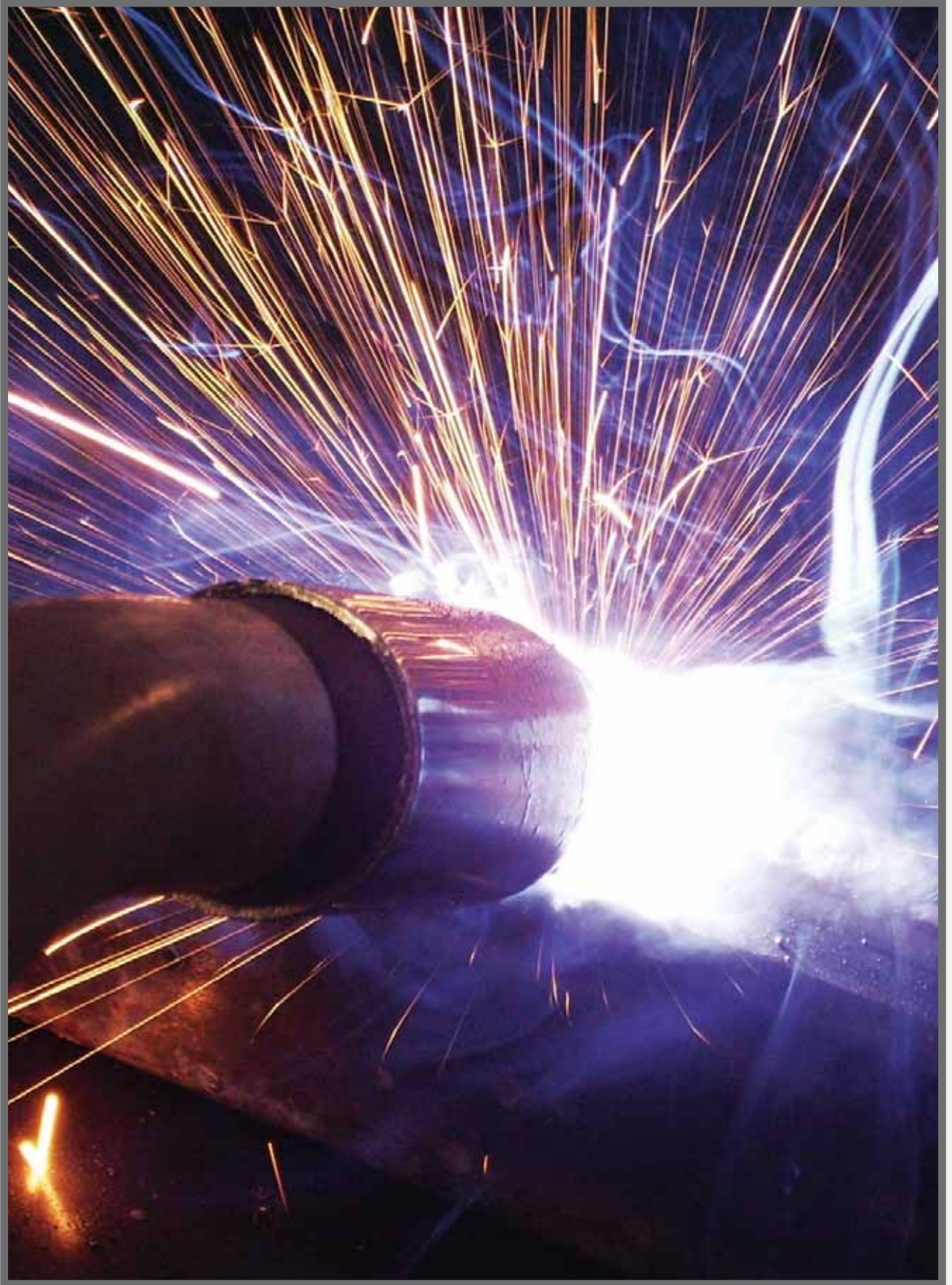
In conclusion, the formation of a sub-committee of the already formed FET SETA Collaborative Agreement, specialising in the Motor sector, with the inclusion of members of the motor sector, will give real impetus to the vision of the President, the Minister of Higher Education and Training, the MEC for Gauteng, the Motor Industry and merSETA.

Detailed action plans with time frames will jointly be developed with merSETA, the motor industry companies and "niche colleges".

It would create a formal communication structure whereby merSETA and colleges will be invited to meetings of mutual interest to build further relationships.

It would ensure more learners in the system qualify as artisans. Such projects will lead to "win-win" situations for all participants.

The minister went on to call for stronger partnerships between the SETA system and FET College system. He wanted to see the alignment of SETAs with FET Colleges for work placement. FET Colleges must be involved in artisan training and be strengthened to be involved in occupational linked training.



IDC TO PUMP MONEY INTO CAR MAKERS

By Independent Correspondent

The Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) aims to use the high growth automotive industry to partly drive its attempts to create sustainable jobs.

IDC spokesman Mandla Mpangase said the motor sector was ramping up its production because of export contracts and that the organisation was trying to encourage component suppliers to original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) to take advantage of available IDC facilities.

This is in line with the New Growth Path and Industrial Policy Action Plan, which focus on improving growth in key manufacturing sectors, such as the automotive, clothing and textile industries.

Mr Mpangase said the IDC had made R6,1-billion available to support distressed car companies during the global financial crisis, but that only R4bn of this had been disbursed.

IDC chief executive Geoffrey Qhena has disclosed that the state-owned financier had the capacity to invest a further R102-billion in the next five years to stimulate growth sectors of the economy.

Pietermaritzburg-based turnkey engineering firm Ramsay Engineering is one of the suppliers to the automotive industry that has taken advantage of the facilities available from the IDC, enabling it to create 100 new jobs.

Ramsay Engineering mainly manufactures metal and steel, plastic, leatherette components and related assemblies for the automotive industry. It also manufactures components for the agriculture and security industries.

Mr Mpangase said surging demand for vehicle components had stretched the company's capacity and led to it seeking capital funding from the IDC to expand its plant.

The IDC declined to disclose the size of the loan. But Titus Tshelane, the IDC dealmaker responsible for this project, said the post-recession period had been favourable to the local motor sector; despite recent jitters in the global financial markets.

"This positive trend is likely to continue because local manufacturers have tied themselves to long-term export

obligations. In the case of Ramsay Engineering, it was an easy decision for us to provide them with the investment required for their plant expansion projects."

Tshelane said Ramsay Engineering's product sales had picked up beyond the company's initial budgets, creating a working capital budget gap which could not be filled from its internal funding sources.

The IDC facility was structured to allow the company to maintain its cash flow and boost revenue, with the interest on repayments of the loan fixed at 7.8 percent for the next five years, while a 12-month moratorium on repayments also applied, he said.

Angus Anderson, the financial director at Ramsay Engineering, said it currently employed 490 people but that the IDC's funding would enable it to create 100 new jobs.

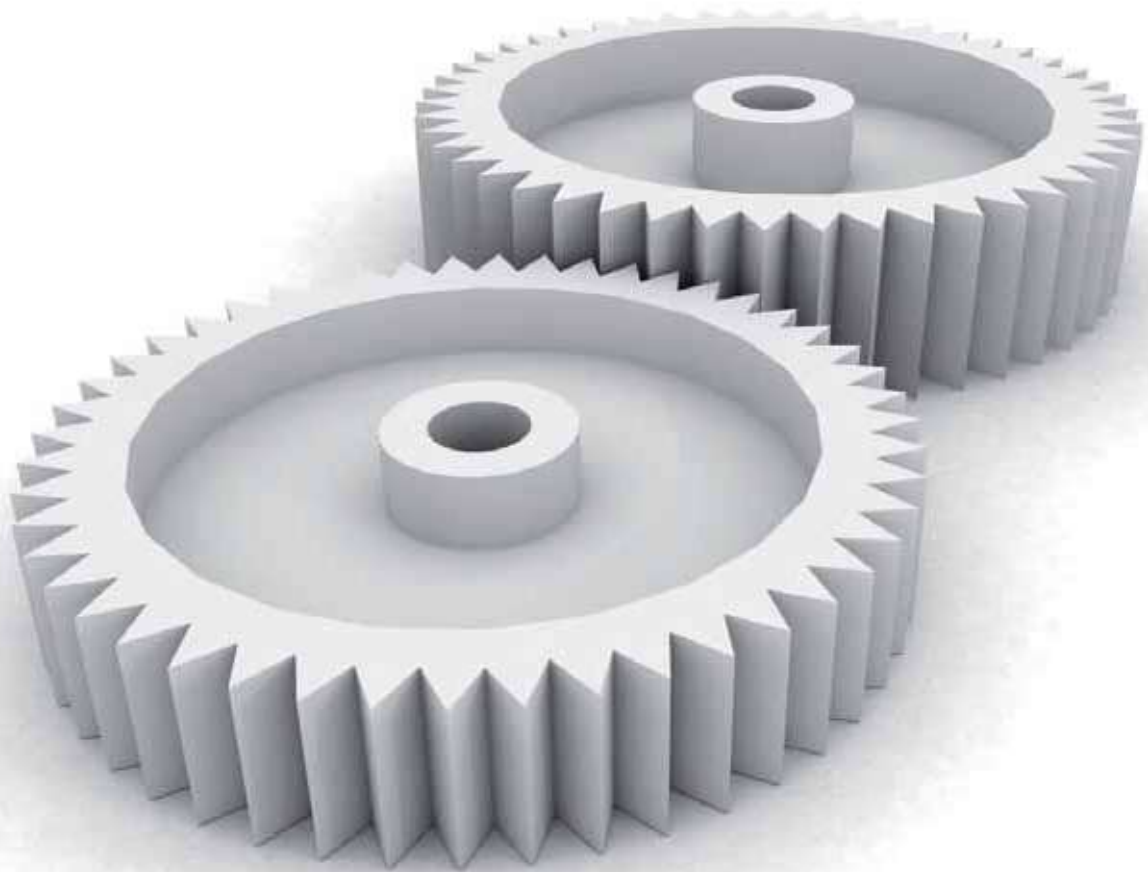
Mr Anderson said the localisation of production and retention of local skills was another key aspect of this project, which was critical in an area such as Pietermaritzburg because it was "battling a skills drain".

He added that the IDC's investment would also boost the company's purchasing capacity of materials supplied by small local firms in the Pietermaritzburg area.



Car assembly plant

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



g in the skills machine

merSETA, the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Education and Training Authority is one of 21 SETAs 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.



PHUMLA - BREAKING NEW GROUND

By Achieve Correspondent

the merSETA Bursary Scheme has produced yet another jewel in Ms Phumla Lubelo who is studying Extraction Metallurgy at the University of Johannesburg (UJ).

Being a high achiever since her school days, Phumla Lubelo's passion for extraction metallurgy was inspired by her love and adoration for gold, "I'm passionate about gold but I didn't want to go underground to mine it. Instead, I decided to study extraction metallurgy," points out Ms Lubelo.

Explaining the requirements of an extraction metallurgist, she says it is essential to have mathematical and scientific aptitudes, have insight and logical thinking, have well-developed problem-solving skills and must possess discipline and concentration at a high level.

Extraction metallurgist are involved in the recovery of useful metals or minerals such as gold, coal, diamonds, copper and iron, from the ore bodies deep in the earth.

They develop and control the processes used to separate metals and extract useful minerals. Being a mineral-rich country, there is a strong demand for extraction metallurgists in South Africa.

Ms Lubele was exposed to metallurgy during a field trip where they witnessed the operational side of engineering. "Having visited the mines around our area in Emerlo, I got exposed to engineering, particularly mining.

That is why I chose extraction metallurgy. I also wanted to prove that as a woman, or any other person for that matter, if you set your mind to it, you can achieve it."

Taking us through her journey, Ms Lubelo says it was difficult at first, especially matriculating from a school, where resources were non-existence. She first encountered proper resources when she attended the University of Johannesburg, which has excellent laboratories and other scientific facilities.

"You ultimately get to teach yourself to be strong." Amidst the lifestyle in Johannesburg, she pointed out the importance of creating a balance in all activities.

"I'm very fortunate in that I have surrounded myself with friends who are in the same mould as me -- they have brought the best out in me. At times, you don't feel like studying but if you see them studying, it encourages you to do likewise; at the end of the day it all boils down to discipline and focus.

I am also grateful to my family for their unwavering support, especially my mother. She is a guiding angel and dispel a stigma attach to a teacher," states Ms Lubelo.

Commenting on the qualities of extraction metallurgist, Ms Lubelo says one must have an in-depth knowledge of the physical and chemical characteristics of metals and minerals and how these vary under different conditions. This knowledge is used to design, test, operate and maintain processes and plants to extract metals and minerals efficiently and economically.

Remarking on gender parity, she feels that women have shown their capacity and are claiming their rightful place in modern society. "As a country, we have made inroads, but we are not at that level where we are supposed to be

"Having visited the mines around our area in Emerlo, I got exposed to engineering, particularly mining. That is why I chose extraction metallurgy. I also wanted to prove that as a woman, or any other person for that matter, if you set your mind to it, you can achieve it."

in terms of transformation and gender parity -- a lot still needs to be done to afford women senior management positions and absorb them into the engineering field." Acknowledging challenges that still besiege women in South Africa, she concedes it is important to celebrate achievers. "We look upon these incredible women as they give us the strength and courage...and we draw

strength from them. In this day, we need to celebrate opportunities and privileges that have arisen since the advent of democracy. As women, we are climbing the corporate ladder, but in the same breath, we still need to acknowledge women who are abused physically and otherwise."



merSETA bursary recipient Ms Phumla Lubelo

EASTERN CAPE RECLAIMING ITS PLACE IN THE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT REVOLUTION

Celebrations around Mandela Day resonated strongly in the Eastern Cape, where the East London Industrial Development Zone (ELIDZ) held a glittering graduation ceremony for 72 learners, *writes Sibongiseni Ziinjiva Ka-Mnguni.*

The Eastern Cape Strategic Skills Project, which is coordinated by the province's Office of the Premier, is funded by the National Skills Fund and runs in partnership with district municipalities, IDZs, SETAs, FET colleges and various provincial departments.

Aimed at making a strategic economic contribution to the Eastern Cape Provincial Gross Domestic Product (PGDP) by developing critical and scarce skills among the youth, the project provides effective work-based training and learning within industry.

The project yielded fruit recently when learners graduated in the following trades: National Certificate: Welding Application and practice NQF L2-12; National Certificate: Welding Application and practice NQF L3-12; National Certificate: Automotive Component Manufacturing and Assembly NQF L2-12; National Certificate: Automotive Component Manufacturing and Assembly NQF L3-18; National Certificate: Mechatronics NQF L2-8 and National Certificate: Fitting and Machining NQF L3-8.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony, merSETA Chief Operations Officer Mr Wayne Adams said it was inspirational that during the week of the Mandela Day celebrations, the 72 graduates were receiving their certificates. Flanked by their parents and family members, graduates were in high spirits as Mr Adams pointed out: "As has been said, there is no passion to be found playing small – in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living.

"A man who devoted 67 years of his life to public service, Madiba sets the standard for service worldwide, whether we are students, shopkeepers or farmers, cabinet ministers

or presidents. He calls on us to serve our fellow human beings, and better our communities."

Mr Adams pointed out that the merSETA is known as the artisan and engineering hub. "We're known as this hub because of our stakeholders and the role they play in the well-being of the merSETA.

"The field of engineering, whether we are referring to the trades, technicians, engineers or research and development in this context, means that we have to ensure there is a continuous supply of qualified people for this skills pipeline.

"It also means that there are ample opportunities for our learners in career development, as well as lifelong learning. However, we can only do this and provide these skills development opportunities if we work together. These initiatives would also not be possible without the employers and industry. We celebrate the success of our learners as a family of collaborative partners and merSETA is proud to be of support in this partnership."

MEC for Education in Eastern Cape Mr Mandla Makupula said the graduation was the culmination of work begun in 2007.

"South Africa is part of the constantly changing world.... 2008-2009 saw massive job losses in the manufacturing sector as a result of the economic meltdown. The 2009 Ford survey indicated that three million young people between 18-24 years are unemployed in South Africa or have no formal education." Mr Makupula urged young people to make use of education and training opportunities to make a better life for themselves and their communities.

Ecstatic about his achievement, Automotive Component graduate Mr Wanda Ntwana said his training had opened a new vista in his chosen discipline.

"It was never easy -- there were challenges along the way. The theory we learned at college as well as the practicals we were doing at the plant were not the same. Practical are more intense, whilst theory makes things look easier."

He pointed out that he would use his acquired skills to fulfil his childhood dream. Ms Nondumiso Ntlongweni, who graduated in fitting and machine level 4, said being a woman and disabled made no difference to her dream.

"I never doubted my abilities and potential as a person. As a woman, especially a disabled person, you need to have a thick skin. I told myself that I am not going to let anyone discourage me. As a person, you don't need people feeling sorry for you - you need to make things happen. I am standing here today proud of what I have achieved; it's a wonderful feeling to know that I can now operate a machine."

As merSETA, we join in congratulating the graduates. We call on them to make South Africa a better country by using their skills in a meaningful manner. They resemble the embodiment of hope and a brighter South Africa.



merSETA Chief Operations Officer Mr Wayne Adams ; East London Industrial Development Zone graduates

NO MAN'S WORLD ANYMORE

By Special Correspondent

Fixing trucks is a man's job...right? Wrong! Three young women apprentices at MAN's Isando truck and bus workshop are proving that what they lack in grunt, they make up for in theoretical and practical diesel savvy. A *FOCUS* writer investigates.

Definition: Girl Power or Grrrrl Power – Power exercised by girls; spec as self-reliant attitude among girls and young women manifested in ambition, assertiveness and individualism.

Like most school-leavers in 21st century South Africa, Thembi Nkosi and sisters Thando and Kwanele Oliphant faced many challenges when it came to finding permanent employment in the field they have passion for.

"I gained an N4 qualification in diesel mechanics from Middelburg Technical High, but finding employment as a diesel mechanic was not easy. I spent six months going to interviews with all sorts of automotive companies until I signed the four-year apprenticeship contract with MAN," says Thembi.

For Thando and Kwanele, who both graduated with matric certificates from Jabulani Technical High in Soweto in 2004 and 2005 respectively, barriers to entry into the industry made it extremely difficult for them to find full-time employment that offered genuine career prospects.

"I studied welding and metalwork at school and I have a love for cars, but somehow that was not enough to secure a technical job at the many automotive companies I approached in the years after matriculating. It was a great relief for me when I heard that I could specialise as a heavy-duty diesel technician at MAN through their four-year apprenticeship programme," says Thando.

That heavy-duty trucks and buses are fitted with components that can weigh in excess of 300kg apiece, like axles and engine blocks, may have something to do with the reluctance by commercial vehicle companies to employ women, considering them insufficient muscled to handle the workloads. In the case of automotive electrician apprentices, the scenario is quite different.

"My main piece of equipment is a laptop computer, instead of a torque-wrench," says Kwanele, who is undergoing a two-year auto-electrician apprenticeship at MAN.

"My work is by no means as physically demanding as a diesel mechanic's tasks, but it is definitely more mentally exhausting."

Both apprenticeship courses at MAN's Apprenticeship Academy are merSETA-accredited and comprise 50% theoretical and practical training. The theoretical curricula are compiled according to a skills development model known as CBMT (competency-based modular training) that can be adapted to suit the existing competency levels and skills needs of individual learners.

The diesel mechanic CBMT training comprises four levels, rolled out over four years. In their first year, Thando and Thembi learned 13 modules covering both generic automotive and diesel mechanic skills, including training in the motor industry, safety and first-aid in the workshop, identifying lubricants, materials and metals, the care and use of applicable tools, identifying locking devices, gaskets, seals and heavy-duty vehicles components, understanding the fundamentals of lubrication and electricity and how to perform a minor service to a heavy-duty vehicle.

Both women are now in their second year of the programme and are mentored by MAN's Isando workshop manager, Henry Labuschagne, who conducts on the job training (OJT) with his apprentices for 11 months of the year.

The level-two courses, spread over a five-week period of classroom lectures, include understanding the fundamentals of heavy-duty vehicle technology, identifying various bushes and bearings and how to replace them, the removal and replacement of heavy-duty vehicles engines and sub-systems, drive-trains, cooling systems, suspension systems and electrical architectures.

"It is extremely physical work and I am exhausted at the end of a busy day," says Thando. "But the correct use of the tools and repair machinery does make things easier. I prefer working on trucks because you simply tilt the cab and everything is there, right under your nose. Buses are more of a challenge to work on because they do not have



From left: Thembi Nkosi, Thando and Kwanele Oliphant

a tilting can and you have to remove body parts to get to various components. Month-end is always busy for us and we work extra hard to clear the workshop of vehicles that are in for repairs and servicing."

Kwanele's apprenticeship as an auto-electrician follows the same CBMT/OJT programme but is rolled out over two years. Level-one (first-year) training is very similar to that of the diesel mechanic course with a bias towards the electrician apprentice. Kwanele is learning the basics of vehicle electronics, wiring systems and how to diagnose electrical faults using the latest MANCATS computer.

She will undergo training on how to identify, assess and repair electrical components, from vehicle charging and ignition systems to the repair of peripheral electrician and electronic component.

"The modules are very useful because they also cover the fitment and maintenance of aftermarket vehicle accessories, which helps make my skills more marketable. The truckology trucks like the MAN TGA and TGS WW are a pleasure to work on because electrical faults are easily identified by computer software. Older vehicles like the F2000 don't have on-board computers so I have to use multimeters and follow a lengthy process of elimination to faults-find," says Kwanele.

For all three women, the MAN apprenticeship programme has set them on well-defined career paths. Not only do they earn respectable salaries, but they gain exposure to the many different employment opportunities the commercial vehicle industry has to offer.

"I am looking forward to leaning how to repair turbochargers and vehicle management systems in the next two years of the programme," adds Thando. "After completing my apprenticeship, I want to study logistics and supply chain management."

Thembi has her sights set on a career in fleet management, while Kwanele's long-term goal is to obtain a university degree in project management, specialising in electronics.

Clearly, all three have big dreams of working in fields they love. Graduating from MAN's Apprenticeship Academy will not only provide them with globally recognised and much sought-after heavy-duty diesel technician skills, but provide a solid platform on which to launch their careers as executives in the commercial vehicle industry.

A WUNDERKIND

Ms Sinazo Mashale relishes her rise to the stardom as an industrial engineer. She is a graduate of the merSETA bursary scheme and is now a business analyst for Mercedes-Benz South Africa. Here she shares the challenges and recipe for success in a male-dominated field.

By Sibongiseni Ziinjiva Ka-Mnguni.

Supremely confident and self-driven is how best to depict Ms Mashale. She possesses the quality of a powerful woman who has what it takes to succeed in a male-dominated arena. She attended her lower grades and high school at Clarendon school for girls; this is where her talents and abilities were noticed.

While at school, career guidance showed that she would be more suited to engineering as she was technically inclined and structured in her thinking. And this is where her love and passion for industrial engineering was born...a passion that will soon culminate in reality.

Fervent about her career choice, Ms Mashale explains that industrial engineering deals with the optimisation of complex processes or systems. It is concerned with the development, improvement, implementation and evaluation of integrated systems of people, money, knowledge, information, equipment, energy and materials. It is also concerned with the principles and methods of engineering design to specify, predict, and evaluate the results of such integrated systems.

Ms Mashale hails from Mdantsane, a small town in the hub of the automotive industry, the Eastern Cape. Having a parent, who is a motor mechanic, played a major role in her choice of the engineering field.

After passing her matric with flying colours, she registered at the University of Johannesburg to pursue a career in industrial engineering. While at the university, she became aware of the merSETA bursary scheme and applied for a bursary.

With a radiant smile, she explains her fairytale "Upon finding out that I was successful with my bursary application, I was ecstatic -- it took a lot for an organisation like merSETA to believe in me and I had to return the favour by performing beyond expectations."

Coming to Johannesburg for the first time can be a daunting experience, but Ms Mashale knew what she wanted and she was not going to let social and peer pressure deter her.

Determined to carve her niche and establish herself, she has remained steadfast to her roots. "As a person you need to remember where you come from...this is a principle I live by."

Asked about the support system, Ms Mashale couldn't stop praising the merSETA for its support. "It wasn't only about the financial support, but it went beyond that. The Bursary Department kept contact with me and we often talk about my studies and my needs as a student. I am truly grateful for the support I get from the merSETA."

Taking us through challenges she faced as a student, Ms Mashale said she attends classes from 8am till 5pm on during weekdays. "You still need to do your assignments which involve extensive research, hours are long, and you have to set yourself a very high standard -- therefore, you need to maintain that standard.

"I had to get my priorities straight -- social pressures were there as well - you are branded boring and a stereotype if you keep to your studies, but I know what I want in life and I will not let anything distract me from achieving what I have set out to achieve."

In a male-dominated field, woman's capabilities and talents come under severe scrutiny and Ms Mashale is not immune to scrutiny.

"When I started my internship, males doubted my abilities - I had to work twice as hard as a man. As a woman, you constantly have to prove yourself, prove your worth, and also cope with the pressure to succeed and fight the battle of being noticed. These are some of the factors that made me develop a thick skin."

She noted that when she graduated, women made up only 20% of graduates.

When she applied for a permanent job, there were only two women in a group of 12, indicating the severe under-representation of women in the engineering field. She worked in in-bound logistics, a position she has held for the past three years, before venturing into business analysis a year ago.

“I had to get my priorities straight -- social pressures were there as well -- you are branded boring and a stereotype if you keep to your studies, but I know what I want in life and I will not let anything distract me from achieving what I have set out to achieve.”



merSETA bursary graduate Ms Sinazo Mashale

Explaining her current job, she said it involves understanding business processes in order to make recommendations on the optimal means of improvement to save costs and become more efficient and effective. She offered a pearl of wisdom to those women who aspire to industrial engineering.

“Engineering requires discipline, analytical thinking and a structured person. As an industrial engineer, you need to know what is happening around you - the world in which we live in evolves and you have to be a part of it, if you are to be successful.”

merSETA INJECTS R22.6m TO DEVELOP SKILLS

By Achieve Correspondent

merSETA and the Eastern Cape Provincial Government launched a multi-million rand, three-year project aimed at training thousands of artisans in the Eastern Cape.

merSETA CEO Dr Raymond Patel said the agreement would uplift people in the rural areas. "Skills development, job creation and poverty alleviation go hand-in-hand. We are confident that this partnership will lead to sustainable job creation for the youth and also address gender equality in the process."

The agreement structures partnerships between FET colleges, Eastern Cape universities, business and the provincial government to ensure a consistent pipeline of skills to the manufacturing and engineering industries in the province. In terms of the agreement, merSETA will disburse R22, 6-million to the Office of the Premier in the next three years to effect the training.

This will see students undergoing experiential training for the completion of the P1 and P2 work-based learning programmes required to graduate from their respective higher learning Institutions and will include assisting 80 learners who have completed at least a Level 2 qualification through the Eastern Cape Strategic Skills Project to complete their learnerships and undergo trade tests. A further 42 indentured apprentices will complete a three-year programme, while 150 engineering students in need of completing their training through bridging programmes.

Dr Patel emphasised that all the economic sub-sectors, inclusive of agriculture; artisans, technicians and engineers are integral to successful production and economic development. "I'm stating this, because in the province's Growth and Development Framework, agricultural transformation is also a strategic objective, specifically in relation to food security."

Eastern Cape Premier Noxolo Kiviet said skills development

has proven to be a foundation for successful economies. She said it is an ingredient to achieve sustainable job creation and economic development as the youth, haven been subjected to deep poverty, often need more than subjects to study and a job: they also need to develop the skills to sustain and maintain these jobs.



merSETA Chief Executive Officer Dr Raymond Patel

BUILDING TOMORROW'S LEADERS TODAY

By Sibongiseni Ziinjiva Ka-Mnguni

The partnership between merSETA and I Can Foundation continues to tackle challenges faced by young people through the “careers for the future” programme. The career expo, staged annually on June 16, has grown in leaps and bounds. This year’s expo took place in East London under the theme “Making dreams come true”.

Held in commemoration of June 16 1976, when young people took to the streets in protest against the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction, the annual I Can Foundation expo seeks to encourage the youth to choose careers that add value to the country’s current socio economic conditions.

The merSETA and the foundation launched the programme to empower and showcase possible careers young people can pursue in the future, including preparing young people for the world of work.

Scores of learners in East London converged on the Abbotsfort Youth Christian Centre where they were taken through different careers available in the manufacturing and engineering sector, the emphasis being on critical and scarce skills which are the backbone of the country’s economy.

As John W. Gardner, puts it: “Much education today is monumentally ineffective. All too often we are giving young people cut flowers when we should be teaching them to grow their plants.”



Learners at “careers for the future” in East London

DOING IT FOR MADIBA

By Sibongiseni Zinjiva Ka-Mnguni

More than 2000 learners from 21 high schools experienced a life-changing experience when the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) staged yet another career exhibition in honour of Madiba. The exhibition took place in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape, at the Ingwe College.

The dusty streets of Lusikisiki buzzed afresh in July when the merSETA and several other SETAs, universities and FET Colleges staged an exhibition as part of the 67 minutes campaign to honour Madiba. This was the second year the exhibition ran after the United Nations declared 18th July "International Mandela Day". The honour was bestowed on Madiba for his relentless and selfless effort in dedicating 67 years of his life to serving people.

At the event held at Ingwe College's Ngqungqushu campus, Minister of Higher Education and Training Dr Blade Nzimande urged learners to follow Madiba's footsteps by making education a priority. The minister also announced the launch of KHETHA – "make the right choice, decide your future". This programme is aimed at helping learners to make right career choices when deciding their future.

Dr Nzimande also stressed the importance of FET colleges, saying universities were not the only institutions young people should aspire to. He said FET colleges ensured that 70% of young people, who underwent in-service training, were on job-placement alert, and this enhanced their chances of employability.

He confirmed that previously disadvantaged learners wishing to further their studies in National Certificates or NATED courses will not pay for tuition fee. The DHET will take over the costs. Further, final-year students at universities would have their tuition paid provided they pass all final year subjects.

"All of us have scars, but the challenge is for young people to seize the moment. I want to challenge all of you today and see if you can match it. There are 21 high schools around this area-Lusikisiki-I have put aside funds that will go towards the top 67 learners to get a full bursary funded by the DHET."

Understanding the plight and concerns raised by young people, the minister said government had also set aside money for learners who excelled in maths and science, especially in deeper rural areas where access to quality education remained a challenge.



Minister of Higher Education and Training Dr Blade Nzimande and MEC for Education in Eastern Cape Mr Mandla Makupula

"All of us have scars, but the challenge is for young people to seize the moment. I want to challenge all of you today and see if you can match it...."

“To educate a rural child is to educate a village, to educate a village is to educate the nation, because a child is a national asset”.

MEC for Education in the Eastern Cape Mr Mandla Makupula also highlighted the importance of education, adding that it is a social heritage. It is very important for people to plough back into their communities and give their lives selflessly in restoring the pride of Africans in our

quest to emulate Madiba. One of the fundamental vehicles to do exactly that is through education,” pointed out Mr Makupula.

Several learners at the exhibition lamented the lack of employment, infrastructure and resources in rural areas, citing these as reasons why learners migrate to urban areas in search of better education.



Clockwise: Learners attending the DHET career exhibition in Lusikisiki

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE - GIVING HOPE

By Baleseng Masotho and Flaxman Qoopane

There were smiles from all when 40 inmates at the Grootvlei Correctional Centre in Mangaung in the Free State, completed a National Certificate in welding: National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 2. They were awarded national certificates by the correctional facility.

Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (merSETA) CEO Dr Raymond Patel said: "We invested R2m in this project and we're proud of those who graduated. We wanted to assist them in the rehabilitation process by giving them skills to enable them to go back to society as functioning citizens who will contribute to our country's prosperity and growth."

Guston Wilson, from correctional services in the Free State and Northern Cape, said: "The project was launched in November 2009, training started in January last year and finished in March this year. We want inmates to leave our centre with skills that enable them to be employed or create businesses."

Prisoner Stephen Finger, 29, said: "I'm excited I'm one of the group of 40 awarded welding certificates. I came to Grootvlei in October 2007 to serve eight years for armed robbery and rape. But I hope to get out on parole in October and look forward to using my skills."



Dr Raymond Patel and Correctional Services Officers handing over a certificate to one of the inmates at Grootvlei Prison

BRIDGING THE SKILLS GAP

By Achieve Correspondent

African Education Week 5th annual convention and learning expo took place in Sandton, Johannesburg, under the theme: Bridging the skills gap through quality education for all.

More than 2000 delegates attended the recent 5th Africa Education Week which sought to foster a culture of accountability amongst educators, promote technology to enhance teacher and learner performance in urban and rural areas and advance the alignment of education with the needs of the workplace.

Addressing the conference, Minister of Basic Education Ms Angie Motshekga said the theme was most apt. “Africa’s problems and potential are aptly captured by the theme of the convention – “bridging the skills through quality education for all”. The theme speaks to the hitherto marginalisation of our people underlying the skills gap that we must bridge,” said Ms Motshekga.

She said it was reflective of the potential for a new beginning, a new dawn which must be unleashed, and will be unleashed, through quality education for all. Giving a hint on a new government initiative to restructure education, the minister revealed that it was aimed at laying the foundation for advancing human resources development goals.

“This Action Plan that we have put forward for the education sector...is a product of careful planning and consultation aimed at consolidating and strengthening the work we have done since the 1994 democratic breakthrough.” South Africa witnessed major policy shifts, including curriculum reform since the advent of democracy.

“It should help us through the second stream on Further and Higher Education and Training, in creating competitive world-class institutions to equip students for the demands of the workplace,” concluded Ms Motshekga.



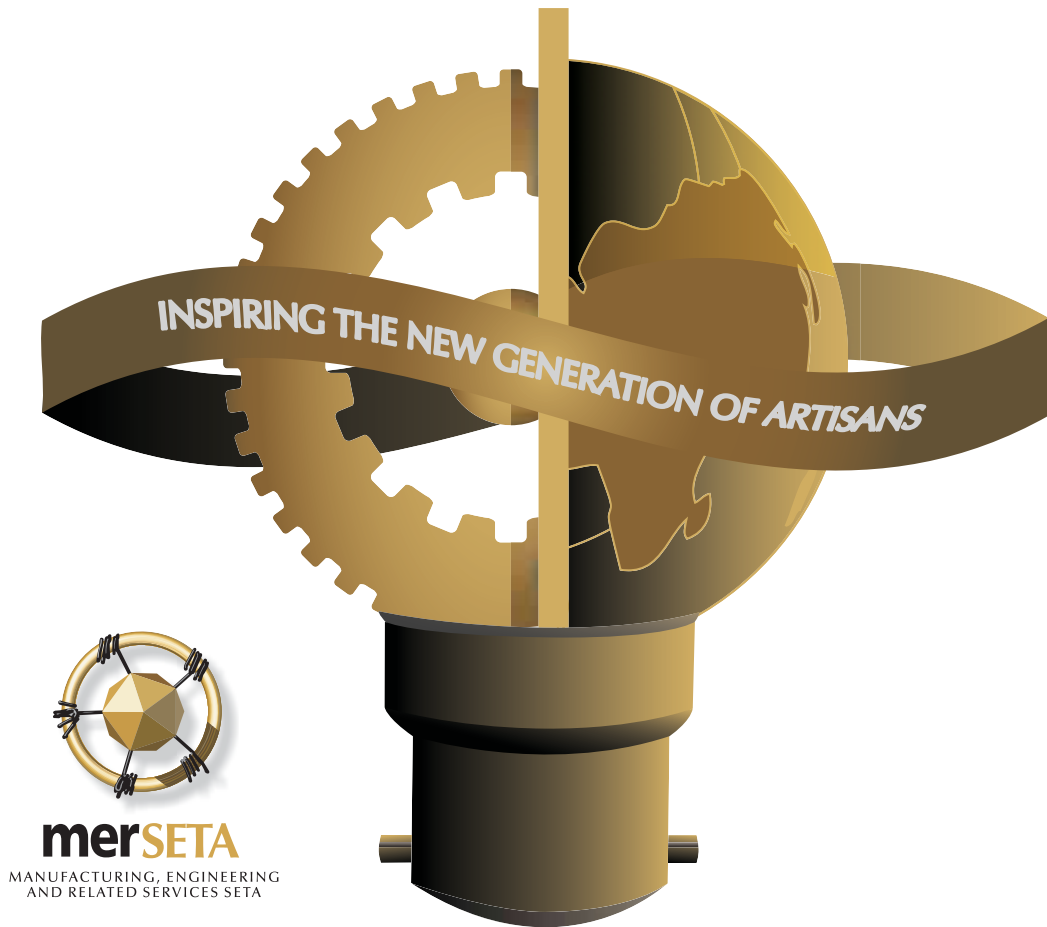
Delegates at the Africa education week 5th annual convention in Sandton

Events of the Quarter



Anti-clockwise from top: Client Liaison Officer Mr Winston Adams advising learners of possible career options; Learners at Tembisa career expo.

merSETA 2011 NATIONAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



merSETA will hold its National Annual General (AGM) Meeting on the 20th September 2011 at Johannesburg Country Club in Auckland Park, 1 Napier Road, Auckland Park, Johannesburg, under the theme "Inspiring a new generation of artisans".

Notes: The notice also serves as an invitation for stakeholders within the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sectors to attend the Annual General Meeting. The registration form for attendance is also available on our website and must be emailed to agm2011@merseta.org.za or faxed to 086 500 7899/086 644 3781

Please note that seats are limited and will be allocated on a first-come served basis.

Date: 20th September 2011
Venue: Johannesburg Country Club
Time: 07:30

For more information and registration visit: www.merseta.org.za



leaders in closing the skills gap.

The merSETA is one of 21 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) established to promote skills development in terms of the Skills Development Act of 1998. The 21 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, Automobile Manufacturing, Motor Retail and Components Manufacturing, New Tyre Manufacturing and Plastics industries.



merSETA

MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING
AND RELATED SERVICES SETA

ISO 9001:2008

*facilitating sustainable
development of skills,
transformation and
accelerating growth in
manufacturing, engineering
and related services.*

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