

louis steynberg proves what metal he's made of







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publisher merSETA

editor

sibongiseni ziinjiva ka-mnguni

editorial management & production christina kennedy

design, photography & printing tenaka's tribe (www.tenaka.co.za)

contributors

hosea morapedi christo basson camilla smith dr. raymond patel helen brown

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Contents

talkingnotes

Indeed it is not a good time for our auto manufacturing sector. Current job losses in the industry have risen to more than 35 000 people in the automotive industry in South Africa. Local vehicle sales have dropped by more than a third this year despite interest rate cuts.

ut it is not all doom and gloom for our country, what with the Confederations Cup to be staged in SA in less than a month and the 2010 World Cup coming to our shores in less than 14 months. These are opportunities that will enable our economy to grow.

As SETAs undergo a major revamp, the good news is that the merSETA is geared up. The National Skills Conference that was held in October last year gave an indication of what can be expected from the NSDS III. In the past nine years, the merSETA has contributed immensely in facilitating and coordinating skills development. Our record speaks for itself; hence we welcome the new NSDS III with open arms. Our internal restructuring played a prominent role in ensuring that our clients get the best service. As Dr Patel says: "The idea behind the restructuring is to have the merSETA change its focus from operating as a public entity to functioning as a true service deliverer." We have shown our seriousness regarding our clients' needs. In January this year, we opened the Gauteng North and North West Regional Office, responsible for providing assistance to

our member companies that

We spoke exclusively to Dr Raymond Patel - who alludes to the revamp or re-license of SETAs. He also takes us through the first merSETA annual conference held at Birchwood in Johannesburg recently. He also places the spotlight on our future. Our Chamber Manager, Mr Hosea Morapedi, touches base on recognition of prior learning by Artisans. We also introduce our newly appointed LETQA Senior Manager, Mr Christo Basson, who takes over the reigns from Mr Wayne Adams, who

by our Gauteng South Office. This is to ensure that our

members' companies become winners in our quest to

close the skills gap in the manufacturing and engineering

Taking a glance at Achieve Newsletter for this quarter, we have packaged a number of interesting reads for you.

who takes over the reigns from Mr Wayne Adams, who was appointed Chief Operations Officer in October last year. The merSETA family welcomes Mr Basson and wishes him all the best in moving forward. He can rest assured of our support in taking the merSETA to another level. You are reminded to submit your WSP and ATR before 30 June, 2009. There's NO extension for late submissions. So, there is much to enlighten you in this

On a very sad note, the merSETA family mourns the passing away of a Client Liaison Officer, Bonga Msomi. Mr Msomi, who was based in our KZN Regional Office, was a humble and dedicated employee as well as a firm believer in the skills development fraternity. All of us at the merSETA are imbued with sorrow at his untimely passing. We convey our heartfelt and deepest sympathy to his family and friends and pledge our profound moral support. We supplicate that God gives you fortitude at this moment of your extreme grief and pain. When the big tree falls, the birds that nest in it twitter. May you find solace in the word of God.

In parting, I leave you with these words from the great Nelson Mandela: "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world."

Be Blessed!

Sibongiseni Ziinjiva Ka-Mnguni

Editor





A **VIEW**FROM THE TOP

As we rapidly approach the middle of 2009, it is with great pride that I recall the success of the merSETA Skills and Development Conference held at the end of February.

s we rapidly approach the middle of 2009, it is with great pride that I recall the success of the merSETA Skills and Development Conference held at the end of February. It was clear that there is indeed a high level of enthusiasm, vibrancy and zest for this SETA now and well beyond 2010. All in all, our stakeholders have participated enthusiastically and view this SETA as a major catalyst for transformation - something that all of us would like to see well into the future. Once again we have seen the participation of our stakeholders grow, immensely, which is very encouraging.

In the past, we have had to overcome many challenges with regards to steady leadership, but in the last few years, our Governance has improved immensely. This in turn makes operations far easier and creates an atmosphere conducive to effective delivery. The merSETA Board has set an ambitious, strategic and positive vision, and management and staff alike are working together cohesively to propel us forward to become the country's leading SETA.

The opening of our new office in Pretoria, will more effectively take care of Northern operations and is working towards a strong employee basis.

In the past financial year, we have achieved unqualified success by meeting and exceeding our targets in 12 out of the 14 set-out indicators – an outstanding performance indeed. One area that is also about to undergo a great deal of change is ABET. merSETA has chosen to review participation in this area, and has done extensive research to come up with the resources necessary to get required results. We are now satisfied that we have come up with a commendable solution and are certain that we will attain this goal in the near future.

As we herald the new government led by President Jacob Zuma, we feel confident that the new collective and its attendant policies will lead to greater emphasis on skills development. One area that needs much attention is the training of the unemployed; merSETA will work more closely with the Department of Education and the Department of Labour in this regard. We welcome the appointments of ministers Membathisi Mdladlana, Blade Nzimande and Angie Motshekga to the crucial portfolios of Labour, Higher Education and Basic Education.

We firmly believe that we are the most robust SETA in resolving the crisis around human capital. The introduction of the Accelerated Artisan Training Programme is well thought out and respected. The yields from this programme will have untold benefits for the future of our country. Also, New Venture Capital Creation has had a 70% success rate, and we have just introduced the retrench programme in different areas.

Lastly, it is important to note that even in the midst of the current economic crisis, continuous training is absolutely essential. Although the downturn is affecting all companies, if we fail to train – we will go the route of the dinosaur.

It is imperative that we persevere and continue with training and skilling people in this very difficult time in order that we have the necessary human capital on hand when the next economic boom arrives.

Until next time...

Sincerely,

Dr Raymond PatelCEO merSETA

merSETA is a Cog for Driving it Beyond 2010

Five hundred delegates from the manufacturing and engineering sector gathered at the Birchwood Hotel in the hub of the East Rand. At this venue, the first merSETA Annual Skills Conference was held between 26 and 27 February 2009. From all accounts, it was a resounding success.

erSETA's CEO, Dr Raymond Patel, opened the conference with an inspiring speech on the theme: "Driving skills beyond 2010." Dr Patel highlighted issues of Funding, Human Capital Development, SETA Landscaping and Delivery of Training and Development.

"The conference is about industry experts, merSETA staff and stakeholders exchanging ideas on Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)," said Dr Patel. He added that the main objectives were to improve stakeholder relations, provide feedback to both internal and external stakeholders, discuss progress of all merSETA programmes and projects, provide information to stakeholders on skills development and to assist merSETA in paving the way forward in the skills development fraternity.



Professor Sean Archer, a retired staff member of the School of Economics at the University of Cape Town and currently a Research Associate in that department added: "Skills training is only one driver of increased productivity - the others being investment, innovation, enterprise and competition."

Powered under the theme "Driving Skills Development Beyond 2010", the conference attracted leading skills development, manufacturing and engineering experts who tackled a number of pertinent issues and engaged in active discussions with other industry leaders. Patiently occupying one of the many seats, and anxiously waiting to hear what these experts had to say, was Selea Matebule. Unlike the many others attending the conference, Selea was not a delegate, stakeholder, academic or guest speaker. She was simply an employer – a positive result of what merSETA has accomplished

Robust debate ensued as participants talked about the current state of the industry and the progress necessary for it to grow and prosper. It was encouraging to see people from different industry platforms converse, which was one of the main aims of the conference. Throughout the conference, there was a resounding message of change and optimism within the industry, thereby inspiring a global crisis to become a global opportunity. merSETA's main objective was to emerge from the conference stronger and more responsive to employers' needs.

over the years in driving the skills development.



And it achieved it!

Skills Development,



Prior Artisan Aid to be Recognised

merSETA has identified the need for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) of artisan aids in the metals sector industry. The pilot phase of its RPL programme was extended to the end of March 2009, after which it should be rolled out.

PL is a different training intervention from normal skills and training programmes, in that there will be formal recognition of previously acquired experiential skills for artisan aids.

merSETA chamber manager, Hosea Morapedi, comments, "Most of the artisan aids tend to be either illiterate, or have a very low level of formal education, and their skills aren't recognised by employers. These lower skilled workers are thus paid much lower wages than the level of work actually carried out by them. RPL would take into account the extent of the experiential learning and afford the artisan aid a certificated acknowledgement of these skills."

As no current infrastructure for the RPL programme exists, such as assessment criteria tools, advisors, moderators and assessment centres, it is in merSETA's research phase.

Infrastructure for Successful Training Programmes

This year, merSETA engaged a different approach with industry regarding training programmes. Companies had to sign a memorandum of agreement that commits them to a year or two of training programmes and resources from merSETA.

merSETA provides course projects which create learning materials for companies to use in training programmes. It aims to ensure that there are registered qualifications and learnerships in place for the engineering sector. These learnerships have to be supported with relevant course work

and accredited trainers from the public and private sector, to tackle identified problem areas in skills and training development.

Morapedi adds that when skills and training programmes are initiated at merSETA, labour and employers are made aware of them from a very early stage, thereby ensuring their buy-in. Steering committees comprising business, labour and Seta officials, advise on these programmes. This aligns the programmes with the needs of all the stakeholders involved, ensuring open communication and mitigates any risk factors.

"There are mega-training projects such as the Accelerated Artisan Training Project (AATP) and the Small Micro Enterprise (SME) Voucher Training, which industry has never been exposed to before, which is why there are regular meetings to monitor progress," says Morapedi.

The Sector Skills Plan

The five-year Sector Skills Plan (SSP) reviews each sector under the merSETA's responsibility annually. The skills demand from industry and the supply of skills training from the Seta is reviewed. Problematic areas are identified, reviewed and worked on, to develop and deliver skills training where necessary.

The AATP is one of the fast-track programmes offered by merSETA. It tackles the critical artisan skills shortage in the metal and engineering sector by providing training for artisans. This is one of the programmes that assisted merSETA in delivering scarce artisans needed in the country.

Experience

By Fatima Gabru

"There are regular meetings to monitor progress"

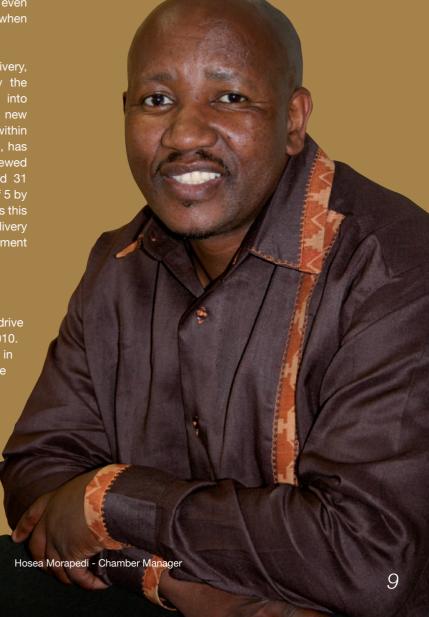
The AATP commenced in the second quarter of 2007.

According to Morapedi it will run throughout the second term of the Setas up to 2010, and even beyond that time frame, depending on when learners register for programmes.

On the criticism of poor service delivery, Morapedi says merSETA is measured by the new service level agreements entered into with the Department of Labour (DoL). The new service level agreement, that each Seta within the jurisdiction of the DoL has to adhere to, has clear deliverables and targets that are reviewed annually. For the financial year that ended 31 March 2008, merSETA was rated 4,3+ out of 5 by the DoL. Morapedi notes that merSETA views this as an indication of its successful service delivery and that it met and exceeded some department targets.

Setas Beyond 2010

Morapedi believes that the national skills drive through the Setas will continue beyond 2010. He says that Setas play a critical role in resolving the country's skills needs. There are current tentative discussions on the merging of certain Setas into clusters. This is in line with the new Industry Policy announced by the Department of Trade and Industry. "These are issues already being discussed by stakeholders to map the way forward for Setas," he concludes.





THE NEW FACE of quality service delivery

The newly appointed Senior LETQA Manager, Mr Christo Basson.

oming from a family that had a transport business where he started off as an apprentice, Christo Basson is no stranger to skills development. Now tasked with the responsibility of managing merSETA's LETQA unit, his philosophy is a simple one: "I believe in taking people with me. It's not a one-man show. I believe in participative management and about acknowledging the people that you work with." Armed with a wealth of experience as an apprentice, educationalist and South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) auditor, Christo hopes to be an asset to merSETA.

After completing his motor mechanic qualification, Christo also completed a Diploma in Mechanical Engineering at Wits. Thereafter, he spent time in the industry and practised his passion for training and skills development at FET Colleges for 16 years before joining SAQA, where he spent six years. Speaking of his latest

appointment, Christo says: "It was time to take on a new challenge, hence I joined the merSETA. It's like completing the cycle, coming back to engineering and manufacturing."

Faced with the challenge of ensuring that policies are implemented in a consistent and effective manner at regional level, thus ensuring that clients get the best service from the merSETA, Christo is confident that he is up to the challenge. He believes in collective effort to foster quality service delivery.

Asked about the role of SETAs in the future, Christo believes that there's a definite need for them. He emphasises that, with the imminent restructuring, it will be up to the SETAs with an excellent track record to be given a new mandate to take the skills development fraternity to another level. He said that new roles and responsibilities for SETAs must be expected with the NSDS III and that in order to survive beyond 2010, SETAs must adapt to the new system of doing things.

Christo points out that SETAs are often blamed for chasing wrong targets and not producing what the industry needs. The industry is in turn blamed for failing to absorb learners, while institutions of higher learning are

adamant they are on the right path in terms of producing graduates that are sought after by the industry. He thinks that a possible problem could be having a sector skills plan that does not necessarily address real sector needs. He says: "Too many WSPs we receive are not well thought through and the majority are prepared by external SDFs."

Christo adds: "You need to have a proper and a well-researched sector skills plan. Without one, you end up chasing wrong targets and as a result, fail to meet the needs of the industry."

It becomes evident that the industry, SETAs and institutions of higher learning are not talking the same language when it comes to skills shortages across different sectors. It remains to be seen how the new NSDS III will change. Christo believes all is not lost. He's passionate about quality and feels that we need to

"You need to have a proper and well-researched sector skills plan"

shift towards quality delivery by having targets that are coupled with quality and relevant qualifications.

Achievements:

As a Director of Assurance Development, Christo accredited ETQAs and monitored and quality audited 31 ETQA's in total.

This and that...

Favourite music: 70's and 80's music

Favourite band: *The Beatles*Likes: *Honesty and friendly people*

Dislikes: Hypocrites, philosophy and people who are all

talk but no action

Favourite getaway: Far away from the city

Motto: Don't tell anybody on your team to do what you

won't do yourself.

merSETA Bursaries Power Tomorrow's Leaders Ry Sibongiseni Ziiniiya Ka-Mnguni

By Sibongiseni Ziinjiva Ka-Mnguni

Addressing employment equity, promoting productivity and global competition and reducing scarce and critical skills, especially to previously disadvantaged South Africans, these are just some of the objectives the merSETA bursary scheme hopes to fulfil.

ince its inception, the bursary scheme has contributed immensely to the manufacturing and engineering sector. Asked about challenges faced by the bursary office, Camilla Smith, bursary scheme officer, said that they are inundated with application forms and that many applicants feel that they are entitled to bursaries. She added, "Very few grasp what is involved in actually studying at a tertiary institution, or their chosen career. Many may be better suited to an apprenticeship."

Camilla believes that this misinformation emanates from a lack of career guidance at high school level and that the newly-launched career guide aimed at Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) is the right tool for high school learners. This will hopefully avoid the high number of bursars dropping out at tertiary level. About 40% of merSETA bursary holders drop out in their first year due to ill-informed career choices. In an attempt to reduce this figure, the merSETA has decided to introduce psychometric testing for first year applicants.

A monumental challenge faced by learners residing in rural areas is the lack of, or poor quality, information centres. Speaking at the Eastern Cape Provincial Summit, Minister of Education Ms Naledi Pandor said: "We celebrate those schools in rural areas where the results are above expectation, and resources are poor."

Regarding the dissemination of information, Camilla said: "The bursary scheme is widely advertised through electronic and print media, road shows, career expos and exhibitions."

Through these, merSETA has reached deeper rural areas and attracted interest from learners right across the country.

Luntu Daki, a merSETA bursary holder says: "I want to thank the merSETA for assisting me financially and otherwise. The good news is that after finishing my qualification I got a job at Freeworld Automotive Coatings as the technical consultant." Another success story is Sesethu Lungu, studying Eng. Mechatronics at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. She represented South African students in Brazil, showcasing the finest talent that merSETA has to offer, a testimony to the bursary scheme.





Meet the man steering merSETA towards 2010

merSETA relives and relishes its achievements and looks to the future as SETAs undergo a major makeover. Achieve Newsletter speaks exclusively to the CEO, Dr Raymond Patel, who takes us through merSETA'S journey thus far.

r Patel wastes no time in getting to the crux of why he feels merSETA has achieved and, in some instances, even exceeded some of the objectives as set out by the Department of Labour.

"The reason why some SETAs are underperforming, is because they are failing to comply with the National Treasury Act and don't understand the way business operates," he says. "We are one of the few SETAs that have a board totally compliant with the King II report on corporate governance and a board that gives good strategic vision, but allows the merSETA functionaries to operate and achieve their objectives."

He explains further: "Board members need to understand their role and mandate and, most of all, they need to understand the business in which we operate. We need people with the skills and the will to take decisions to further the aims of the SETA. The merSETA now has this kind of board."

When Dr Patel took the reigns at the merSETA, his quest was to make it one of the best SETAs and a thought leader in closing the skills gap. This required major internal restructuring so that merSETA could change its focus, as he put it, "from operating as a public entity to functioning as a true service deliverer."

Since then, the merSETA has strived to deliver on its mandate and boasts the following achievements:

 Approximately 50 women graduated from a 12 month programme, enabling them to fulfill the fundamental aspects of management in an effort to combat the shortage of female managers in the engineering and related sectors;

- The merSETA is currently funding 450 learners studying management, from entry level to advanced MBA courses;
- Due to an 11% drop in the manufacturing sector and imminent retrenchments, a social investment training programme called Retrench, was established to train people in scarce financial skills, such as accounting. As financial management was identified as a critical skill in our local municipalities

"SETAs need to shift the focus from employees to unemployed people"

and city councils, the board approved a relationship between merSETA and the Finance and Accounting Services Seta, (FASSET), and the South African Institute of Charted Accountants, (SAICA), to train and retrain people in financial management;

- The merSETA is also packaging its own "new venture creation" training programmes. These improve production skills and also teach learners the business aspect of making purchases, factoring in profit, taxes, etc. There are currently 450 people participating;
- There are now 10 000 learners enrolled in these programmes, which include business Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), accelerated ABETs for those who have



higher competence, and occupational ABET programmes tailored to the different careers people hold, and;

 Currently, 1 640 artisans are being funded in 20 scarce skills areas. Learners are carefully selected resulting in a very low dropout rate. A further 1 850 learners are enrolled in three to four year artisan programmes.

Dr Patel feels that SETAs of this new dispensation need to push a dual agenda. Firstly, SETAs need to focus on the economic importance of increasing production in the country and ensure that the human resources are developed to produce the necessary skills. Secondly, SETAs must become socially aware by improving skills, halving the unemployment rate, reducing poverty and improving the quality of life amongst the disadvantaged. Dr Patel believes that failure to do so could spell disaster.

"SETAs need to shift the focus from employees to unemployed people." He sees a NSDS III, which

will respond to the needs of South Africans, as essential.

As the lifespan of SETAs comes to an end in March 2010, Dr Patel is of the opinion that the majority of them should be left as they are, except for those that are underperforming. He is in favour of a cluster approach, whereby SETAs with similar occupational characteristics and requirements work together in designing curricula and developing qualifications.

He would like merSETA to stay as is, but come together with its counterparts with artisan-focused mandates – Chieta (chemical), MQA (mining), CTFL Seta (clothing, textiles, footwear and leather), ESeta (energy) and Fieta (forestry) – on an ad hoc basis. He adds that the responsibility of the National Skills Authority should be to oversee the functions of cluster SETAs and to ensure that service delivery takes place.

In his opening address at the first merSETA annual conference held at the Birchwood Conference Centre in February, under the theme "Driving skills development beyond 2010", Dr Patel captured the essence of the conference's aims by saying: "In order to carry out our responsibility, our mandate as a skills development agency, we have to engage actively in our country's economic, social and environmental circumstances. It is important that the skills we offer go beyond the superficial and meet the needs of the people being trained."

The main objectives of the conference were to improve stakeholder relations, provide feedback to both internal and external stakeholders, discuss progress of all merSETA programmes and projects, provide information to stakeholders on skills development and to assist merSETA in paving the way forward in the skills development fraternity.

Deliberations at the conference raised the question of whether or not merSETA is the right vehicle to drive skills development in the manufacturing and engineering sector. Dr Patel said: "From what people are saying, it's quite clear that they want merSETA to stay for the next 10 years or so."

When asked about his future at the merSETA, Dr Patel, whose contract comes to an end in March 2010 said, "All I can say, is that I won't be lost in the skills revolution." You be the judge.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

MANDATORY GRANTS



merSETA is the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Education and Training Authority established through the Skills Development Act. merSETA facilitates skills development for the following sub sectors: Metal and Engineering, Auto Manufacturing, Motor Retail and Component Manufacturing, Tyre Manufacturing and Plastics Industries. Together the five sub-sectors comprise approximately of 44 000 companies, with a workforce of approximately 650 000.

MANDATORY GRANTS 2009/2010
(Workplace Skills Plan and Annual Training Report)

ATTENTION: ALL merSETA LEVY COMPANIES

The time for WSP/ATR submissions for the year 2009/2010 has arrived. We would like to encourage our companies to endeavour to submit earlier this year. **Only electronic submissions** will be accepted. Submissions can be done from as early as **01 April 2009**. Our system has been improved to ensure easier submission than before.

No extensions will be granted and no late submissions will be accepted this year. Deadline for all submissions is Tuesday, 30 June 2009 at 17H00.

Should you require any assistance, be it electronic or personal assistance, kindly make an appointment with your dedicated Client Liaison Officer, in the relevant merSETA Regional Office:

HEAD OFFICE (011) 551 5202 • EASTERN CAPE (041) 363 0117 • FREE STATE & NORTHERN CAPE (051) 430 1263 • KWAZULU NATAL (031) 208 4600/02 • GAUTENG NORTH & NORTH WEST 086 163 7731 • GAUTENG SOUTH (011) 551 5200 • MPUMALANGA & LIMPOPO (013) 656 4762 • WESTERN CAPE (021) 914 8130

For up to date information, frequently asked questions & answers, kindly visit **www.merseta.org.za**

merSETA simplifies mandatory grant submissions

The Mandatory Grant submission deadline is looming, with the cut-off date being 30 June 2009.

It's time for merSETA Levy Paying Companies to claim back 50% of their Skills Development Levies

- Have you done a skills audit in order to plan for your training for the year ahead? paid for the year
- Do you have all your training records ready to complete your Annual Training Report?
- Have you registered as a SDF and received your personalised log-in and password for Datanet?

lease visit the merSETA website at www.merseta.org.za in order to see the answers to these questions. In the coming weeks, merSETA will be updating their website regularly in order to give you all the information you need. There are also 'Frequently Asked Questions' and answers currently on the website to keep you informed.

In a quest to expedite and, at the same time, simplify the Mandatory Grant submission system, Merseta embarked on a project in February to do just that. The system has been improved based on feedback received from stakeholders. They are confident that the improved system will ensure much easier submissions than before.

merSETA also proudly announced that as of 1 April 2009, they were ready for online submissions. You are being encouraged to start collecting your information and preparing your data to ensure that you submit on, or before, the deadline.

Please note that only online submissions will be accepted this year. Also note that NO extensions will be granted and NO late submissions will be accepted.

For your convenience, regional staff will assist you with your submission. Should you not have the electronic equipment available to do an online submission; it can be done at your nearest merSETA regional office. Be sure to phone the regional office to make an appointment with the Client Liaison Officer dedicated to your company. Without an appointment, you might end up waiting for someone to assist you.

During May and June, the Merseta regional offices will be setting up satellite venues to assist companies in the rural areas that are situated too far to travel to the regional office.

merSETA is committed to assisting you in submitting your Mandatory Grants information as early as possible this year, to avoid the rush at the end of June.

Eastern Cape (041) 363 0117 • Free State/Northern Cape (051) 430 1263 • Gauteng North/North West 086 163 7731 • Gauteng South (011) 551-5200 • Kwazulu Natal (031) 208 4600 • Mpumalanga/ Limpopo (013) 656 4762 • Western Cape (021) 914 8130

merSETA proves its

In the last four years, the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services SETA has trained more than 15 000 learners in various technical fields covered by its mandate.

he shortage of critical skills is an ongoing problem in South Africa following the mass exodus of scarce human talent in the last two decades. Yet success stories about concerted efforts to replace critical and scarce skills abound as state-supported institutions mount an all-out offensive to ensure that South Africa is not debilitated by the lack of appropriate human resources.

One such success story is the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Seta (MerSETA), which in the last four years has trained and equipped more than 15 000 learners and apprentices with the necessary skills to ensure South Africa's economy remains at the cutting edge of world technological frontiers.

"Technical progress and the general increase in knowledge today have allowed populations to aspire to a better standard of living," says MerSETA Chief Executive Officer, Dr Raymond Patel.

"Similarly, the increase in the availability of educational opportunities has reinforced people's desire to exercise control over their own lives. And this is where MerSETA has played a crucial role in ensuring our learners and apprentices are able to receive training that ultimately will lead to a better life for all."

In line with its mandate from the Department of Labour, MerSETA has three main planks:

- Upskilling South Africa's current workforce;
- Training and utilising the talent of the unemployed for use in those areas expected to suffer severe critical skills shortage; and,
- Holistically addressing the scarce and critical skills shortages that currently exist in those economic spheres that are catered for by MerSETA.

"It was as a response to this imperative that the establishment of the Setas was one of democratic South Africa's answers to the question of how best to assist the economy realise these goals," Dr Patel says.

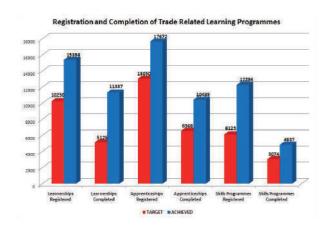
"The central value was to have people, workers, leaders and managers who have the required skills suited to their

various functions, who have the ability to learn new things and who can be responsive to change to collectively put their shoulders to the wheel. This was the transformation paradigm that the country sought.

"And we at MerSETA are proud to state that we have embraced this culture through our learnerships and apprenticeships."



Dr Patel adds that prior to 1994, training and upskilling in key sectors of the economy was blindsided by the politics of the time. "The paradigm since 1994 has



mettle

changed dramatically and is unique in its holistic approach to assisting the economy grow." And MerSETA's output and results bears testimony to the new paradigm.

In the four years to March 2009, MerSETA's learnership programme saw a success rate of more than 200 percent in the numbers of successfully completed learnerships. Out of a target of 5 125, more than 11 300 learners successfully completed the MerSETA sponsored programmes.

Similarly, out of 17 672 apprenticeships registered, almost 10 500 were completed. "We have exceeded our targets by far," points out Dr Patel, adding that small companies have also felt the benefits of MerSETA training and grant schemes.

merSETA graduates

Mandatory grants paid to large and medium companies totalled 4 739, while small company support totalled 19 251 grants and sponsorships. Also, BEE, community-based organisations and non-levy paying companies received 1 243 grants and sponsorships from us. "At the end of the day, it is all about fashioning a new socioeconomic fibre for the South African society and thereby contributing to the process of excellence in thought, creativity and community spirit," says Dr Patel.

Accelerated Artisan Training Programme Sees Success

he Accelerated Artisan Training
Programme (AATP) is a project, cofunded by the merSETA and the National
Skills Fund (NSF) of the Department of
Labour that seeks to promote the concept of
a high quality, modern apprenticeship. It was
launched in June 2007. To date, of the 1 643
apprentices employed through this initiative, the
first cohorts have begun reaching the Trade Test
Milestone, with the first group of 22 indentured
apprentices, successfully completing their trade
test on the first attempt.

The management and AATP Project Staff of the merSETA would like to express their sincere appreciation for the effort of employers whose commitment has contributed to the success of the project, now entering its third phase. The Employers listed below have heeded the national call to increase the number of qualified artisans in the South African workforce by training apprentices over and above their own needs.



merSETA Recognises Training Excellence

Goodyear has received a highly-regarded MERSETA award, which recognises the organisation as a top training company and supporter of the National Skills Development Strategy.



Goodyear for

By Peter Middleton

oodyear People Development Manager Carla McIntosh said, "For us, it's a most prestigious award. Offering top-quality learner programmes has long been a priority for our team at the manufacturing plant in Uitenhage. All the key stakeholders need to be commended for their effort and support in ensuring that the learners successfully complete their programmes. This is truly a team effort. The People Development team is the driver in the process, and I am grateful for their hard work."

While McIntosh commended Manufacturing Training Specialist Daniel Rayners and the People Development Team for their hard work, she added that the award also reflected the commitment of every manager, mentor, coach and trainer in the organisation.

Goodyear was recently promoted to 'established company', which is merSETA's top-rated category, therefore placing it in a position to qualify for the award. This rating widens the scope for the organisation

"We strive to develop & retain excellent people"

to introduce more programmes, train more learners and receive more funding from merSETA.

Some of the merSETA learner programmes currently offered by Goodyear include supervisory learnerships (for existing or potential supervisors), experiential

learnerships (the practical component for learners who have completed P1 and P2 engineering qualifications), apprenticeships, the Graduate-in-Training programme and skills programmes for the unemployed, who are trained in tyre building.

McIntosh and Goodyear's People Development Team are hoping to quash the outdated thought of using training courses as ad hoc, crisis management tools. Instead, they are looking at the developmental needs of each individual within the organisation and how that person can be motivated to perform to their potential, and meet the business's objectives.

This forward-thinking approach is summed up in the team's new vision statement, "We strive to develop and retain excellent people through creating a learning culture that builds capability and capacity and takes advantage of every learning opportunity for every employee."

STAMP OF APPROVAL – Proudly posing with Goodyear's MERSETA certificate are, at the back from left, Patience Lusiti (Learner Facilitator), Marius Fourie (HR Manager), Blackie Swart (Solidarity representative, Training Committee), Fundile Gqubule and Thobile Gwija (Numsa representatives, Training Committee). In the middle from left are, Eric France (Numsa representative, Training Committee), Daniel Rayners (Manufacturing Training Specialist) and Dennis Joseph (Numsa representative, Training Committee). In front from left are, Carla McIntosh (People Development Manager), Anadia Sawyer (Training and Development Practitioner) and Shannon Holmes (People Development Practitioner).

LOUIS STEYNBERG PROVES WHAT METAL HE'S MADE OF...

Louis Steynberg is the 2009 Young Welder of the Year.

By Dale Kelly & Peter Middleton

fter a gruelling competition held over four days at the Southern African Institute of Welding (SAIW), Louis Steynberg earned the well-deserved title of 2009 Young Welder of the Year. Damian Pedro, a boilermaker apprentice from John Thompson in Cape Town, was the runner up. African Fusion's Dale Kelly reports.

Sponsored by MerSETA, Louis Steynberg will be travelling to Calgary, Canada, to compete in the 40th International WorldSkills Competition in September this year. Steynberg, who hails from Uitenhage, successfully completed the International Welder (IW) programme at the Eastern Cape Midlands College (EMC), which is a Centre

welding as a career, and skills excellence within the welding community. It seeks to identify one young welder – not older than 22 years of age by 31 December 2009 – who is proficient in the welding of carbon steel, stainless steel and aluminium. Entrants must master shielded metal arc welding (SMAW), gas tungsten arc welding (GTAW), gas metal arc welding (GMAW), and flux-cored arc welding (FCAW), across the three materials.

Thanking the SAIW staff, advisory committee and the many sponsors, executive director, Jim Guild, says that this competition couldn't run without the support of the industry. "While the welding supply industry is very competitive, there is no

problem in companies coming together and putting their hands in their pockets for a competition of this kind," he says.

"Our Institute is dedicated to the development of skills at all levels."

of Excellence. He is a qualified IIW fillet plate and pipe welder, with four welding processes on carbon steel. Prior to the competition, Steynberg was appointed as an instructor at the EMC and is now training future welders.

The head of practical welding at EMC and one of his lecturers, Bruce Daniels, says that Steynberg has always been an outstanding student and that his win is a credit to the IWT programme and the school.

The competition, open to all young welders in South Africa, is a biennial event and promotes

Sponsors for the event

were: Merseta (the main prize); Afrox (Fabrication Division); AFSA; Air Products SA; Alexander Binzel; Amalgamated Welding and Cutting; ArcelorMittal; Böhler Welding; CSIR; Goscor Arc Welding Solutions; Highveld Steel & Vanadium; Lincoln Electric; Macsteel Tube and Pipe; and Sassda. Babcock Fabrication; Columbus Steel; Hulamin; Stalcor; and VRN Steel also contributed.

Guild thanked all the competitors and added that there were seven entrants young enough to participate in the national competition once again. WorldSkills SA, which is a member of the WorldSkills international organisation,



(Top) Louis Steynberg - 2009 Welder of the Year; (Left) 2009 finalists

benchmarks vocational training through the hosting of an international biennial competition. The next one takes place in 2011 in London.

André Vermeulen explains, "WorldSkills SA is mainly sponsored by two of the Setas - the Services Seta and the Merseta, which sponsors the mechanical engineering sector. We have six competitors going to Calgary from the Services Seta, and hopefully we'll have six participants from the merSETA as well." He believes that being a member of WorldSkills International is one of the vehicles that can take our youngsters from competence to excellence.

SAIW president, Professor Andy Koursaris, wants to encourage young welders and says, "Skills are vital in order to grow the economy and avert some of the threats facing us as a nation. Our Institute is dedicated to the development of skills at all levels. It is a globally recognised custodian of quality standards and technology and is a national treasure to be jealously guarded and supported by all stakeholders, so as to achieve its objectives." Koursaris continued by saying that he believes the Institute has made itself indispensable to the country and that the competition has shown that there is still a lot of ground to be covered.

By Linda Nxumalo

merSETA Voucher Implementation Project *Bears Fruit*

One of the most successful initiatives of the merSETA is the Voucher Implementation Project (VIP) that is part of its SMME Skills Development Support Programme.

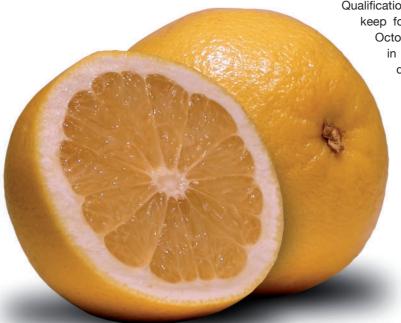
MME's (companies employing less than 149 employees in the metal & engineering, motor retail as well as plastics sub-sectors) can now apply online for training vouchers that would directly impact upon business growth both within and outside of our scope. This includes areas such as marketing, financial management, IT, human resources, SHEQ and ABET.

An important principle of VIP is that all programmes lead to learners accumulating credits on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which learners keep for life. Since the project launch in October 2007, 17 782 training vouchers in excess of R31.3 million have been

disbursed.

The project is also being adapted to the current economic climate, and will offer business turnaround support to SMMEs in distress from the middle of the year.

It remains the responsibility of companies and employees to make use of such opportunities.





taking skills development to the people

By Sibongiseni Ziinjiva Ka-Mnguni

Notching skills development up another level, merSETA took its message to Gauteng and surrounding areas in an effort to reach as many learners as possible. This forms part of its objective to realise the NSDS II's strategy of prioritising and communicating critical skills.



Mogale City Exhibition

It began with an exhibition on 10 March at the Mogale City Community hall, organised for grade 10 to grade 12 pupils. Here, learners were exposed to a variety of careers within the manufacturing and engineering sector, with the emphasis on critical and scarce skills.



Learners attending the exhibition at the Mogale city.







The Star Workplace Career Expo

The Star Workplace Career Expo in Sandton was the next stop where industry leaders, stakeholders and learners gathered to witness what closing the skills gap is all about. This was certainly the place to be, and the exhibition exceeded all expectations. Over three days, about 14 500 visitors attended the expo, of which hundreds were learners and educators from schools around Gauteng. A learner, Daisy Khumalo, had this to say, "It's very encouraging to see merSETA at the career expo to advise us on the different career options that we can choose from."

A recent survey conducted by Productivity SA and 2007IMD shows that South Africa has the highest brain drain and worst skills shortage of the 50 countries studied. Thanks to merSETA however, there is light at the end of the tunnel for youngsters who yearn for a brighter future in SA.

Clockwise from top – Learners attending The Star Workplace; Learners attending the Alexander exhibition; Educators visiting the merSETA stall at The Star Workplace in Sandton; Learners attending The Star Workplace.

taking skills development to the people (contd.)



The Mabopane Career Expo and the Gauteng Career & Skills Expo 2009

The Mabopane Career Expo and the Gauteng Career & Skills Expo 2009 did not disappoint as merSETA endeavoured to reach as many learners as possible.



Main pic – Learners attending the Mabopane career expo. Bottom right - merSETA stall at the Gauteng career & skills expo (26/04/2009).



Gauteng career & skills expo in Alexander.

Automechanica and SADC Conference and Exhibition

Skills development took to the road again as merSETA appeared at Automechanica at NASREC in Johannesburg, and Lagoon Beach Hotel in Cape Town. The SADC Indaba Conference and exhibition held in Cape Town from 30 March to 2 April was the highlight of the month. The goals of the conference were to strengthen economic growth, alleviate poverty, enhance the standard and quality of life, and support the socially disadvantaged through regional integration. Organisers said that the meeting also intended to evolve common political values and institutions. The merSETA used this opportunity to market its product and services, and most of all, its vision for closing the skills gap.

Look out for operation "Closing the Skills Gap" in your area. It's a "ride" in the right direction. As Madiba said: "Education is the most powerful weapon that you can use to change the world." The challenge, it seems, is for learners to seize the opportunity and rise above expectations. Walala Wasala.

"Education is the most powerful weapon that you can use to change the world."

Top Training Companies 2008 - 2009

n 2008, the merSETA introduced a new approach to the allocation and approval of Discretionary Grants, under which the top training companies in the sector (small, medium and large) were identified on the basis of their skills development history, and two thirds of available Discretionary Grant funds were reserved for

allocation to these established performers, and a further one third for allocation to companies classified in the "developmental" category. As at 31 March 2009, a total of R236,532,925.99 had been disbursed in first tranche payments against a total contractual commitment of more than R700m.

Our Established Companies were honoured as our Top Training Companies at prestigious events held in each region. Herewith a list of names of these companies:

EASTERN CAPE

Bath Motor Investments

Continental Tyre

Dorbyl Automotive Systems

Firstpro Engineering

Fischer Profile

General Motors SA

Goodyear

Hella SA

INXS Investments t/a Kudu Motors

Johnson Controls

LN Manufacturing

Mercedes-Benz of SA

Meyers Motors

Remtec Grundy

Schaeffler South Africa

Snyman Engineering

Stanmar Motors

Volkswagen of SA

Welfit Oddy

FREE STATE/NORTHERN CAPE

Buks Brits Ingenieurswerke

Fanie Smith Panelbeaters

H&S Motorherstelwerke

John Williams Bloemfontein

John Williams Welkom

Kuruman Auto

North Wester Motors CC

Orandia (Pty) Ltd

Philtrac

Raubex

SA Truck Bodies

Upington Toyota

Zelco Motors

GAUTENG NORTH/NORTH WEST

BMW SA

Bridge Stone SA

Flextech Manufacturing

Ford Motor Company SA

Nissan SA

Pasdec Automotive Tech

GAUTENG SOUTH

Aberdare Cables

Arcelor Mittal

Ampaglas SA (Pty) Ltd

Assa Abloy SA (Pty) Ltd

Audi Centre Bruma

August Lapple

Aveng Manufact Grinaker

BAE Systems - LAND Systems

Barat Carbide (Pty) Ltd

Barloword Armstrong Alberton

Barloword Armstrong Johannesburg

Barloworld City Bruma

Barloworld City Centurion

Barloworld City Hatfield

Barloworld City Heriotdale

Barloworld City JHB
Barloworld City Pta North

Barloworld Equipment

Barloworld Toyota Pretoria East

Barloworld Toyota Pretoria West

Barloworld Toyota Sandton

Barons Bruma

Barons Woodmead

Battery Electric

BMW SA (Pty) Ltd - Midrand

BMW SA (Pty) Ltd - Rosslyn Cape

Gate (Pty) Ltd

Carlos W Power

Carrier S.A (Pty) Ltd

Circuit Breaker Industries Ltd

Climatron (Pty) Ltd

Club Motor Randburg

Club Motors Pretoria

Compact Cool

Desta Power Matla

Diemaster Industries cc

Element Six Production (Pty) Ltd

FB Crane Builders& Repairs

Field Auto Electrical

Flextech Manufacturing

Ford Motor Company of SA

Genrec Engineering (Pty) Ltd

Harvey Roofing Products

Hillaldam Coburn Systems

HJ Bosch & Sons

Honda Midrand

Hyflo Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd

Hytec Holdings

Imado Marketing
Kolbenco
Komatsu SA (Pty) Ltd
LH Marthinusen - Denver
Lindsay Saker
Linex Yamaha
Mancosa

Marthinusen and Coutts - Cleveland

Matador Refrigeration

McCarthy Audi Center (West Rand)

Menlyn Motor

Metric Automotive engineering
Micro Motor Engineering
MME Manufacturing Co. (Pty)Ltd
Nissan Diesel SA (Pty) Ltd
Nissan SA (Pty) Ltd (Midrand)
Nissan SA (Pty) Ltd (Rosslyn)
Osborn Engineering Products

OTIS Elevators
Ozz Foundries

Pasdec Automotive Technologies Peltec Engineering CC Polyoak Packaging (Products)

Reef Fuel Injection

Saficon Industrial Equipment Sandown Motor Holding (Pty) Ltd

Sandvik Mining & Construction RSA (Pty) Ltd

Scaw Metals

Schindler (SA) Investment Holdings (Pty) Ltd

SKS Gear Specialists
Subaru Germiston
Subaru Southern Africa

Summit Auto SA t/a Fury Midrand Super Group Trading (Pty) Ltd Team Diesel Services CC Toyota SA Motors Trident Steel Videx Wire Products

Vulcan Catering Equipment (Pty) Ltd VWSA (Midrand Dealer Academy) Wegezi Electric Machines (Pty) Ltd

Westrand Engineering
XYZ Panelbeating Centre

KWAZULU-NATAL

Arcelor Mittal

Arlona Engineering (Pty) Ltd

Barloworld (Mercedes Benz Commercial

Vehicles Durban)

Barloworld (Mercedes Benz Durban) Barloworld (Mitsubishi Motors Umhlanga)

Barloworld- NMI DSM Pinetown

Barloworld PMB Barons South Fleet Barons Volksway

Behr SA

Bell Equipment Company Sa (Pty) Ltd

Ben Booysen Brace Able CMH Defy

Di-Gn Engineering (Pty) Ltd

Dormac Marine

Duys Component Manufacturing

Elgin Brown & Hammer F P Installations (Pty) Ltd

Federal Mogul Friction Products (Pty) Ltd

Fibre-Wound Gap Moulding

Garden City Commercial (Barloworld)
Garden City Motors (Mercedes Benz
Commercial) BarloworldHalcast (Pty) Ltd

Halfway Toyota Port Shepstone Hesto Harnesses (Pty) Ltd Hulett Aluminium (Pty) Ltd ITB Manufacturing

LHL Engineering Natal (Pty) Ltd Maritzburg Engineering CC

Mccarthy

Mekrolek Industrial Supplies CC

Mercedes Benz Umhlanga (Barloworld)

Merlin Gerin SA (Pty) Ltd

NMI DSM Commercial Pinetown (Barloworld)

Non Ferrous Metal Pinion and Adams

Polyoak

Ppm Airconditioning

R.I. West

Ramsay Engineering
Ray Emond T/A Emond Auto
Serco Industries (Pty) Ltd
SMG Auto (Durban) (Pty) Ltd
Smiths Manufacturing
Smiths Plastics
Stucky Motors
Toyota SA
Trellidor (Pty) Ltd

Umgeni Iron Works
Waydon Fuel Injection Services CC

LIMPOPO/MPUMALANGA

Assmang Chrome - Machadodorp Works

Columbus Stainless P/ L Highveld Steel & Vanadium

Barloworld (Toyota Witbank)

Barloworld (Toyota Middelburg)
Barloworld (Land Rover Amstrong)

Ermelo Toyota

Corporation Ltd

Produkta Motors (Pty) Ltd

Middelburg Ferrochrome (Div of Samancor)

Samancor Tubatse Ferrochrome
J De Wit Motorbelange (Edms) Bpk

MGM Motors

WESTERN CAPE

AAT Composite
Alstom John Thompson

Atlantis Foundries

Audi City N1
Auto Atlantic

Bafolo Precision Auto Atlantic

Barloworld Armstrong N1 City

Barloworld Toyota Kuils River
Barloworld Toyota Stellenbosch

Barloworld Toyota Tygervalley Barons

Bellville & N1Barons Culemborg Barloworld Armstrong N1 City

Beekman Super Canopies

Bell Equipment
Belmet Marine
Cape Panelbeaters
CFW Industries
CME Precision

Confeheur Engineers
De Jonghs

Desta Donaldson

Durbanville Bakwerke
Drg Metal Sprayers
Elco Plastics
Elzile Properties
Endee Panel Shop

Eikestad Esani Trust

Fabrinox

Faber Coachworks

Gear Pump GKN Sinter Metals Gullivers Engineering Hansing Engineering Hilfort Plastics

Jaffes Ford & Mazda Kupberfet M&L Panelbeaters Master Panelbeaters

Metric Engineering Orbit Coachworks Paarlberg Motors Polyoak Management

Polyoak Product Precision Press Prompdealts Twelve Reeds Motor Group

Reitech

Riaans Auto Repairs

Rustgard

SA Five Engineering Sambra Group

Sandown Motor Holdings Senior Automotives Subaru Cape Town Tru Temp Airconditioning

iru temp Airconditioning



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.



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

www.merseta.org.za

HEAD OFFICE

3rd Floor, Block B, Metropolitan Park, 8 Hillside Road, Parktown 2001 Tel: 011 551 5202 Fax: 0866 730017

EASTERN CAPE

Pickering Park
Office Suites,
14-20 Picketing Street
Newton Park,
Port Elizabeth, 6045
Tel: 041 363 0117
Fax: 041 363 0144
Client Relations Manager:
Zwelethemba Ngayeka

GAUTENG SOUTH

1st Floor,
Metropolitan Park
8 Hillside Road
Parktown, 2107
Tel: 011 551 5200
Fax: 011 484 5499
Client Relations Manager:
Takalani Murathi

GAUTENG NORTH & NORTH WEST

Automotive Supplier Park 30 Helium Road Rosslyn Ext. 2 Tel: 0861 637731 Client Relations Manager: Harry Geldenhuys

FREE STATE & NORTHERN CAPE

52 Krause Street, Oranjesig, Bloemfontein, 9301 Tel: 051 430 1263 Fax: 051 447 8873 Client Relations Manager: Gerhard Slabbert

KWAZULU NATAL

3rd Floor, Fassifern Old Mutual Building, 35 Ridge Road, Berea Tel: 031 208 4600/02 Fax: 031 208 4626 Client Relations Manager: Musa Mtshali

LIMPOPO & MPUMALANGA

Section 1 No.8
Corridor Crescent
Route N4 Business Park
Ben Fleur X11
Witbank
Tel: 013 656 4762/88/02
Fax: 013 656 4629
Client Relations Manager:
Sabelo Buthelezi

WESTERN CAPE

5th floor, Catnia Building Bella Rosa Office Development Bella Rosa Road, Tygervalley Tel: 021 914 8130 Fax: 021 914 8131 Client Relations Manager: Bronwin Abrahams