

IN THE news December 2016



MASDT
MOBILE AGRI SKILLS
DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING (NPC)



Festive Greetings

Someone once said that strong people stand up for themselves, but the strongest people stand up for others". This is exactly what the staff of MASDT are doing on a daily basis – to assist, advice and support our emerging agricultural businesses in rural areas – no matter what it takes! If we reflect on the year gone by, MASDT feels very privileged to have assisted so many small businesses in remote areas to achieve success. This has been evident in almost every newsletter. We cannot do this in our own strength – we are dependent on and thank our Heavenly Father for strength, wisdom and protection. I also want to express appreciation towards our Sponsors – if it was not for your financial support, we could not have achieved our goals.

My wish for our readers is not to be the best in 2017, but to be YOUR best! Do not live your life based on what other people expect from you – live your life according to what your Maker wants you to be. May you all travel safely, rest well and be blessed in the festive time. Until we e-speak in 2017, take care!!



5 YEAR'S SERVICE AWARD

Ms Busi Milazi received her 5 Years of Service Award with MASDT at the annual Year-End function, this year held at "The Stoep" in Nelspruit. Busi started her career at MASDT in 2011 as a cleaner, but her quirky character and outgoing personality made her popular and she was promoted to receptionist the following year. She certainly proved her worth and in 2016 she was yet again promoted to Business Support Administrator.



Success Story



When you classify yourself as an entrepreneur, you know it means more than just starting a business. Every business will be tested and unforeseen circumstances will happen, but how the business owner deals with these, sets the entrepreneur apart from the fly-by-night business owners. A person(s) who can turn a roadblock into an opportunity is the one most likely to succeed because, let's face it, life and business isn't easy.

This is just what two entrepreneurs from Thohoyandou in the Limpopo Province did. British American Tobacco (BAT) have a Socio-Economic Development Programme with which they support local farmers farming tobacco for them, by supplying them with vegetable seed, fertilizer and other inputs to supplement their tobacco farming for when the tobacco season is over.

Lufuno Ramabulana and Oscar Tshikala are two of the farmers who benefitted from the BAT/ SED Programme through their venture called Dembe Agricultural Enterprise and are farming with cabbage and other vegetables. Due to the ongoing drought and subsequent above average temperatures of the summer, they realised that the sun has scorched their cabbage heads, and while still being edible, it was unappealing to the local market and they were in for a financial loss as well as production losses.

Ramabulana and Tshikala realised that they have to find a way to overcome this obstacle and make it work for them. They started doing some market research and found three things: that one can make atchar from cabbage and that it is actually in demand by the local community as it provides a unique flavour. It is also cheaper than the normal mango atchar. They came up with a plan to add value to their business by taking the unwanted cabbage and turning it into the sought after atchar. They approached Lufuno's sister, who is a culinary enthusiast, and she gladly accepted the challenge of making cabbage atchar.

The process took three weeks before the atchar was ready and taste tests were done. The project is still in its trial stage, but the response from the trails and taste tests done are positively overwhelming and these two entrepreneurs are certain it will be a success as word has already gotten around about this new and exciting product and people are queuing to order.

They are currently selling the atchar in a 500g container at R20 which gives the farmer a good return on his investment.

But the buck doesn't stop here for the two partners and their prospect of success in alternative products have given them the desire to add yet more value to their company. Ramabulana and Tshikala are looking into dried cabbage and are in the stages of doing proper market research and looking for resources and decent packaging for this new product. Lufuno says that he would like to see the products branded and labelled professionally, in order to make them a household name in the cabbage industry.

MASDT contractual agriculturist, Dawie Geldenhuys, has been mentoring the project and has full confidence in Lufuno and Oscar's venture. Isn't it amazing what can be achieved if you look beyond what is the norm? These two firebrands are certain testimony that you really can do anything if you put your heart and mind into it!

"This publication was made possible (in part, directly or indirectly), as a result of a Grant from the BATSA Signature Trust. The statements made and views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the BATSA Signature Trust, but remain the sole responsibility of the author."





Every year South Africa's leading National Development Agency - Seda - hosts its annual National Incubation Day where selected exhibitors and Seda board members can come together to network while discussing important topical points of interest.

The event was held on the Mankwe Campus of the Orbit TVET College in Rustenburg on the 8th December 2016 under the theme "Commercialising Disruptive Technologies in Incubation". Orbit College Campus Manager, Mr Z Nkomo opened proceedings with a heart-warming welcome and encouraged the approximately 80 delegates to provide support to especially young, emerging entrepreneurs. He was not disappointed as each guest speaker emboldened the importance of this topic.

Seda's Senior Manager of Incubation - Mr Tevern Jaffa also highlighted the need for Incubation Support Services in the North West Province and mentioned MASDT as one of only a handful of service providers that is rendering support to the area.

MASDT was once again invited to attend the event as one of only four exhibitors and graciously given a platform to present their objectives and services to exclusive Seda board members and officials from the North West Province.

Business Development Officer, Collen Mashigo, represented MASDT and gave the audience a brief description of the company background, services, location and the Mobile Laboratory. Other exhibitors included Orbit TVET College, Global Jewellery and Seda Automotive Technology Centre (SATEC). After the presentations and speeches concluded, the whole delegation was taken on a guided tour through the exhibition arena where each representative showcased their respective stall.

MASDT sparked a lot of interest with their presentation and the stall was bustling with interested parties, and as usual, the Mobile Lab - being the only one of its kind in the country - was a big hit once again. MASDT staff were certainly kept on their toes and prodded for information about MASDT services!

A local impoverished community member of Klokwe, expressed his concern about the lack of support services in the province and stressed the need for agricultural support services within his community. He was quite excited to have found MASDT!

Executive Manager of EDD - Seda, Mrs N Majola, insured all of Seda's commitment in terms of National Incubation perspectives in assisting emerging entrepreneurs to grow.

MASDT together with institutions like Seda are committed to providing services and support where it is needed most - in South Africa's most impoverished communities. MASDT will continue in their efforts to contribute to a sustainable future of all South Africans through skills and training to future farmers.

Staff Feature



Maleka Thakgang

What do you do at MASDT?

I am a Business Support Admin Clerk

How long have you been with the organisation?

I joined the organization in 2015 September.

How long have you been working in corporate and what did you do before you joined MASDT?

2 years

What is your experience like at the organisation?

The experience is quite good, its helping me grow professionally.

What's the best part about your job?

Working with people in the Agricultural industry

Tell us a bit about your family?

I am from a family of 3 kinds; two girls and a boy.

What are your hobbies?

TV and Music

What do you enjoy for relaxation?

I sleep