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An Expansive Mood

The stark national unemployment figures presented by President Jacob Zuma in his 2011 State of the Nation address could lead to a mood of national depression and pessimism. Happily, the mood at Seda remains overwhelmingly positive. Rather than flinching at the President's daunting challenge to the nation to create millions of jobs, Seda and its stakeholders are stepping into the breach and tackling this task with gusto and optimism.

This is not the time for the nation to withdraw into a shell of indecision and doubt, but rather to enter an expansive mood of growth and pursuing new opportunities. This edition of *Imbadu* highlights some of Seda's efforts to this end. We report back on the national Outreach campaign and the three provincial Incubation Day events, as well as Seda's strategic plans to prioritise certain sectors for job creation.

In keeping with this theme of expansion, Seda has also recently travelled far and wide in pursuit of its goals. From an overview of the successes of Seda Mpumalanga, to a co-operative which is creating jobs in the Limpopo agricultural heartland, to a lifestyle and design expo in Durban, we bring you news from all around the country - and beyond.

Thanks to partnerships with agencies in other countries, Seda is launching a new capacity-building training programme for exporters. In addition, a recent trip to Belgium paved the way for the launch of SAPLATO2, the mentorship project designed to help SMMEs. In our feature article, we report back on the two-week March visit to Sebrae, our partner SMME development organisation in Brazil, and the lessons learned during that trip. The sharing of international best practices and the new methods witnessed on this trip inspired and excited all members of the Seda delegation.

Training is a key requirement towards the goal of job creation. This is particularly valid for South African exporters who wish to attain international standards in order to access foreign markets. In this regard, we are happy to report that during the past financial year, the Quality Unit under the Stp Division trained 178 small enterprises on ISO 9001:2008 principles and methodology, 183 on Food safety, 60 on ISO 9001:2000 standards, while 12 attended a Quality Awareness Workshop. Under the Conformity Assessment sub-unit, 26 companies were trained on Quality Management Systems which were also developed in their companies, and 28 companies trained on Product Testing.

In this time of expansiveness, even the Seda brand is not standing still. Most of you will hopefully have taken note of the subtle improvements to the Seda brand and how it is applied. The brand is the face that we present to the world and the first impression that many stakeholders receive. So it's critical that the brand makes us as accessible as possible to our clients.

Until next time, let's keep at it and build the momentum!

Editorial Team



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Seda prioritises GROWTH SECTORS for JOB CREATION

In a bid to contribute to the country's job creation drive, Seda has reprioritised its focus sectors and has identified three sectors in which it will help small enterprises grow and make an impact. The announcement was made by Seda Board Chairperson, Mr Linda Mngomezulu. "Small enterprise development forms an integral part of government's strategy to boost the country's economic growth. Seda, as government's strategic instrument for small enterprise development, has to re-align itself and look to assist small enterprises in the sectors that show potential for growth," said Mngomezulu.

The sectors are:

- Agriculture - focusing on agro-processing and rural development;
- Services - information communication technology (ICT) and tourism; and
- Manufacturing - focusing on tooling, metals fabrication and chemicals manufacturing.

All three sectors are identified as priority areas in the Department of Trade and Industry's Industrial Policy and Action Plan 2 (IPAP2). However, Mngomezulu stresses that the shift in focus does not imply that Seda will now only assist small enterprises from these sectors. "Instead, it merely means that a greater degree of energy and effort will be expended in assisting small enterprises in these priority sectors. Having participated in these sectors, we are also confident that we possess the necessary skills and capacity as an organisation to deliver in these sectors and will be able to leverage the current and targeted partnerships in order to make an impact," adds Mngomezulu.

Seda will also, through its Community Public Private Partnership (CPPP) and Co-operatives Programme, seek to assist more communities to create secondary co-operatives in order to contribute to job creation, focusing on activities such as agro-processing. Chief Operations Officer at Seda, Mr Koeni Slabbert, says that the role of community driven enterprises is becoming more prominent globally, especially as a way of alleviating poverty and unemployment.

"These enterprises take a number of forms, from collectively owned enterprises to social enterprises. Seda revived the Community Private Public Partnership (CPPP) programme over a year ago as a way of developing rural enterprises. The model advocates the identification of a locally available resource that can be used to create a viable commercial enterprise," explains Slabbert.

Seda also plans to increase the number of Technology Business Centres for business incubation run by its Seda Technology Programme (Stp) during the financial year starting 1 April 2011. This will increase the number of small enterprises supported in the incubation programme and will in turn contribute to job creation. Eighty percent of small enterprises in Seda's incubation programme survive the first two years of trading therefore enhancing their chances of sustainability and capacity to create jobs.



Eighty percent of small enterprises in Seda's incubation programme survive past the first two years of trading therefore enhancing their chances of sustainability and capacity to create jobs.

DEPUTY MINISTER THABETHE Heralds Limpopo Co-op Contribution



Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry, Ms Elizabeth Thabethe addressing the community of Limpopo during the Co-ops and CPPP Programme Service Monitoring event.

The Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry, Ms Elizabeth Thabethe, says the target of five million jobs announced by President Jacob Zuma will only be achieved if South African citizens roll up their sleeves and contribute meaningfully to creating job opportunities. Thabethe was speaking at an event organised by the Small Enterprise Development Agency (Seda) at Morapeng Village outside Tzaneen in Limpopo on March 19, to celebrate the success of a co-operative that Seda has assisted.

“It is not the responsibility of big business and government only to create the jobs that President Zuma promised when he delivered the State of the Nation Address last month. This co-operative Ltd, whose success we are celebrating today, is a perfect example of how members of the community and government can work together to contribute to job creation and economic growth in our country. Members of this community are a good example for communities in other parts of the country to follow,” said Thabethe.

She was referring to the Emergent Farmers Enterprise Tours Agricultural Primary Co-operative established by villagers who produce Peppadew which is processed and exported to Holland and the USA by an International company. Co-op chairperson Simon Mametja explains, “The fifteen members were all farming individually before forming the co-op in 1998. Seda helped us with registration, start-up, co-operative workshops, business management and customer care training. Since then, we have created 821 seasonal jobs, of which 110 are semi-permanent.”

After doing a walkabout on the farm, where she was joined by MEC of Agriculture in Limpopo Dipuo Letsatsi-Duba, MEC of Public Works Thabitha Mohlala, Executive Mayor of Mopani District Municipality Leswafo Matlou, the Mayor of the Greater Tzaneen Municipality Alderman Mushwana, Mayor of the Greater Letaba Municipality Godfrey Modjadji, and the Chief Operations Officer of Seda Koenie Slabbert, Thabethe said she was highly impressed by the determination of members of the co-operative who slogged and persevered on their own until Seda came to their assistance.

“We as government would like to see viable projects like these succeeding and being replicated all over the country. This project proves that co-operatives can go a long way in creating jobs and helping rural communities, in particular, to better their lives. Officials from the dti will convene a meeting of all the stakeholders that can contribute to making this project grow even bigger by addressing some of the challenges that they still experience,” said Thabethe.

Slabbert said the assistance that Seda provided to the co-operative was part of its Co-operatives and Community Public Private Partnership (CPPP) programme aimed at growing sustainable enterprises in rural and peri-urban areas.

“This co-operative is an example of an enterprise that we as Seda have supported together with other stakeholders in pursuance of our tried and tested model of working with collectively-owned enterprises that lend themselves to partnerships at local, provincial, national and international levels,” said Slabbert.

According to Simon Mametja the co-op plans to build on this success. “Peppers cannot be planted on the same land continually. So we are looking to obtain another 300-400 hectares of land. This will allow us to plant permanent cash crops, as well as continue with peppers on a rotational basis. If we can get the desired land, we can easily create another 1 100 jobs,” confirms Mametja.

Koenie Slabbert continues, “Seda is in the process of assisting the co-operative to expand. We are also engaging MASHAV, Israel’s Agency for International Development Cooperation, through the Israeli Embassy to assist technically. Seda and MASHAV will be signing a Memorandum of Understanding next month.”

In conclusion, Mametja has a clear message for other co-ops who seek Seda assistance: “Be patient, attend all the workshops and listen carefully. If you do this, you will get the help you need to build a successful business.”

Communities interested in forming co-operatives under the Seda Co-operatives and CPPP Programme can contact the Seda Information Centre on 0860 103 703 for details of a Regional Facilitator closest to them.



Right: Pepper dews at the Emergent Farmers Enterprise Tours Agricultural Primary Co-operative Ltd ready for the export market.

Seda Mpumalanga celebrates FIVE YEARS OF SUCCESS

Seda Mpumalanga recently celebrated having successfully assisted 482 success stories since its establishment in the province in 2006. Overall, Seda Mpumalanga has reached more than 60 000 people and has implemented close to 3 000 projects on both start-ups and existing businesses. The following three cases are typical of the successes achieved through Seda Mpumalanga's interventions:

Khengenene Welding Works in Tsonga is owned by seven young entrepreneurs under the leadership of Sethu Madubandla, who took over the company after his father's death in 2001. Madubandla learned his welding skills from his late father. His vision is to empower underprivileged youths by creating job opportunities along with skills development initiatives. The company manufactures and designs window frames, sliding gates, burglar-proofing, pot stands and palisades, among other products. Through Seda they were able to access funding to renovate their premises and to purchase the required machinery to expand their product range and business. Khengenene aims to become the leading steel fabrication company in Mpumalanga.

Phumula Guest House in Bushbuckridge was established by owner Mrs Gift Mokwena who is a teacher by profession. Mokwena had always

dreamt of having her own business in the hospitality industry. With Seda's help, Mokwena was able to register her business with Cipro, conduct a feasibility study and develop a capital expansion business plan. Seda has also assisted Mokwena to receive continuous business counselling and marketing training, among other services.

Nelspruit-based information and communication technology business, **Akrosscom IT**, is owned by two young entrepreneurs, Maphindi Ngwenya and Twain Ngwenya. The company focuses on design and development of print media and electronic materials. Through Seda, Akrosscom was able to access a loan to purchase outdoor advertising equipment consisting of digital screens. They have called this advertising platform BusTV and business is booming. Akrosscom went on to sign an advertising agreement as well as securing a 5 year contract for digital signage.

"Thanks to Seda, I can now earn an income and follow a career that I know will be very successful. Our future plans include expanding to Malelane and Hazyview," says the beaming Maphindi Ngwenya.

Phumula Guest House



Khengenene Welding Works

Akrosscom IT



Sunshine, Samba and SMME SUPPORT

Mention Brazil and most people think of beaches, samba, sunshine and supremely skilled footballers. But Brazil is also a renowned innovator in providing support for its multitude of small enterprises. Tapping into this wealth of knowledge and experience was the goal of Seda Practitioners who undertook a two-week study to Seda's Brazilian equivalent, Sebrae, during March under the banner of a Memorandum of Understanding that exists between the two organisations. This was part of an ongoing offering of the Learning Academy to enhance the skills and competencies of our Seda Practitioners.

"Global best practice" is a 21st century buzzphrase that often lacks substance. However, in the case of the Seda-Sebrae partnership, it has genuine application. Brazil has built an enviable record of support for small enterprises. Witnessing the results first-hand, and investigating whether similar initiatives would work in the South African context, was the aim of the study. The Seda Practitioners represented all levels and areas of the organisation and the twenty-strong party consisted of branch managers, senior managers in the Stp, as well as Human Resources Consultants and Marketing & Communications specialists.

"The first thing that struck us about Brazil was how successfully they have instilled a sense of entrepreneurship in their population of almost 200 million," says Beverley Kgame, Publications Specialist. "Even during their formative years at school, Brazilians are aware, knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the opportunities that entrepreneurship offers. A large part of this success is due to Sebrae working with teachers, training and encouraging them to include lessons on entrepreneurship in the curriculum."

This perception of entrepreneurial awareness is backed up by the figures. Statistics gathered by the Brazilian Department of Labour confirm that 91% of companies in Brazil are Small or Micro enterprises, providing around 52% of formal employment. In raw numbers, that is a whopping 30 million jobs.

Bongi Msibi - Manager in the Learning Academy - who was part of the delegation, says Seda has already built partnerships with universities and FET colleges but the Brazilian example has inspired Seda to extend efforts to high schools and even

primary schools. "The sooner we can wean our people off the notion that their job prospects rely on the State or the large corporations, the better," insists Msibi.

Having to provide development support services to such huge numbers of entrepreneurs is a daunting logistical challenge, but Sebrae's response has been exemplary. Sebrae customers and visitors to branches log in via simple thumbprint technology. Thereafter, all engagements are logged and tracked electronically, and all Customer Relationship Management solutions are integrated into a single platform. This means that Sebrae staff can, at the click of a mouse button, access a complete history of engagements with the client - even those that took place at other Sebrae branches in different cities.

A further benefit is that each Sebrae branch contains offices for the Brazilian equivalents of SARS and Cipro. So a budding entrepreneur can get all the necessary administrative processes rolling with a single visit - and can expect finalisation within twenty days. "While equivalent South African processes can take a lot less than twenty days, the benefit of the Brazilian model is that the entrepreneur doesn't have to travel from one department to another. The Sebrae branch is a comprehensive one-stop-shop," explains Msibi.

Business support services however must be more than just user-friendly. First and foremost, the services must be effective - and Sebrae has again set a shining example. Sebrae customers are supported for three years and six months. The initial six months is an analysis phase in which Sebrae specialists determine whether the entrepreneur's business is viable and sustainable. Thereafter, the entrepreneur is provided with a further three years of incubation support, with most resources offered at no charge.

Sebrae operates several campuses around the country, where entrepreneurs can "set up shop", learn about business and benefit from the resources offered. By the end of the three year incubation period, they will be ready to go out on their own and survive in the competitive free market. Even after the incubation period, entrepreneurs can choose to continue renting their premises on the Sebrae campus for a nominal fee.



Left: Sebrae has an Entrepreneurship Exhibition which is held after every two years at a specified venue. Seda has what we call an Entrepreneurs Day which happens every year in each province.

Right: Sebrae outreach mobile unit that is utilised to reach SMMEs in remote areas.





The Seda Practitioners visited the Sebrae campus at the gigantic Foz do Iguaçu power plant, the largest operating hydroelectric facility in the world, situated at the Itaipu Dam on the border between Brazil and Paraguay. This campus houses the Sebrae Biodiesel incubator and represents a mutually beneficial relationship. The power plant provides the land for the campus and Sebrae entrepreneurs are encouraged to investigate and specialise in technologies or inventions that could help the power plant to become more productive. Sebrae, in turn, supports this green approach by running its fleet of vehicles on clean alternatives to conventional fossil-based fuel.

Another example of how Sebrae assists its SMMEs from the agri-business sector is the mobile unit (Ultrasonic Milk Analyser), which travels to family-owned dairy farms and conducts the mandatory quality and safety tests on milk before it is sent to the market. This saves both time and money for the farmers, while alerting them timeously to potential problems with the dairy herd.

“The Sebrae visit was both tremendously informative and inspiring,” says Bongsi Msibi. “The next stage is to analyse what we have learned, assess whether it will translate to the South African situation, and make our recommendations based on that.”

However, the relationship is not one-way traffic. South Africa, too, has its innovations, successes and global best practice models in small business development and support. Although dates have not been finalised yet, Sebrae practitioners will soon pay a reciprocal visit to Seda. “We have a lot to show them. Just one example is the excellence of our scientific research facilities at the CSIR. We look forward to renewing the acquaintance and sharing more experiences with our Brazilian counterparts,” concludes Msibi.

Imbadu will be tracking the progress of this mutually beneficial relationship. So keep an eye out for more news in upcoming editions.

Below: Seda practitioners together with delegates from Mozambique, Guine Bissau and Cape Vrede that formed part of the two week study.



Above: A Sebrae Consultant demonstrating how the Ultrasonic Milk Analyser works



BUSINESS INCUBATION helps entrepreneurs to BEAT THE FAILURE TRAP

It is very difficult for small enterprises to survive past the first year or two of their establishment. Many small enterprises find the competitive and cut-throat world of business difficult to navigate when they lack resources and are still trying to build up the necessary business skills and experience to run their operations efficiently. However, Seda's Technology Programme (Stp) is turning this around.

According to Seda CEO, Ms Hlonela Lupuwana, eighty percent of small enterprises incubated in Stp's Technology Business Centres have survived the first two years of trading. Lupuwana was speaking during the Seda Incubation Day held on March 4 at the Durban Exhibition Centre in KwaZulu Natal.

Incubation Day is an annual event which aims to build awareness of the services offered by Seda's Technology Business Centres as well as showcase the successful enterprises that have come out of the incubation programme. This encourages other start-up small enterprises to make use of the incubation services. This year, Incubation Day activities were held in Gauteng (Soshanguve Manufacturing & Technology Demonstration Centre), Mpumalanga (Timbali Incubator) and KwaZulu Natal (Seda Construction Incubator).

Technology business incubation revolves around empowering small enterprises to use technology to improve the competitiveness of their businesses. The programme currently funds and works directly with 30 incubators across the country, ranging from ICT small enterprises to enterprises in the aluminium, platinum and even bio-diesel industries.

Not only do these incubators provide necessary business infrastructure and strategic guidance, but also an environment of learning and sharing in which information, experiences and ideas are freely exchanged. This builds entrepreneurs' skills and knowledge bases, better preparing them for business in the open market, with a view to increasing profitability and growth.

"In the past financial year, the Stp created 6 778 direct, indirect and casual jobs; increased its support to 656 small enterprises; and assisted in increasing the turnover of the small enterprises it supports from R129-million in the previous year to R169-million. We are on course to see these figures increasing as more small enterprises go the technology incubation route. This can only bode well for our country's drive to create employment," concluded Lupuwana.



Above: The three key speakers for Incubation Day in the respective provinces were as follows: Durban: Mr. R. Alummoottil, Executive Seda Technology Programme, Gauteng: Mr. J. Ravjee, Senior Manager: Incubation(Stp) and Mpumalanga: Mr. K. Motlhoioa, Seda Executive: Corporate Services.



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Belgium trip PAVES THE WAY for SAPLATO 2

Effective, proven coaching programmes which help SMMEs create jobs and build sustainable businesses are essential if South African small enterprises are to achieve their potential. A February trip to Belgium by Seda officials and stakeholders has paved the way for just such a programme - SAPLATO 2.

PLATO is a coaching programme pioneered and practised widely in the European Union. The aim is to assemble groups of SMME business owners under the mentorship of senior employees in large corporations. These corporations also provide the premises and catering for monthly PLATO meetings. During the programme start-up sessions, participating SMMEs decide on a business objective to be achieved by the end of the programme. At each monthly meeting, specialist guest speakers offer their expertise, allowing the SMMEs to gain knowledge, exchange experiences and network with each other. After each meeting, participants reflect on what has been discussed and then act towards achieving their objective by the end of the programme (usually two years).

The first PLATO programme in South Africa (SAPLATO) was launched in July 2006 and ended in January 2009. SAPLATO was facilitated by Seda in conjunction with the Antwerp-Waasland Chamber of Commerce (Voka) from Belgium. Seda coordinated and managed the three provincial implementing partners - Invest North West (North West), the Durban Chamber (KwaZulu-Natal) and the Cape Town Chamber (Western Cape). Implementing partners selected groups of 15-25 participants from their regions, with two groups in North West and one each in KZN and the Western Cape.

After the completion of the SAPLATO programme, Seda commissioned an evaluation study which concluded that the programme had been a success in all three provinces - and recommended that the project should continue with minor changes to the methodology. In 2010, the Flanders government approved funding for the second phase of the project, SAPLATO 2. This funding covers international travel, while operating and staff costs as well as other overheads are shared by Seda and the implementing partners.

The February trip to Belgium allowed Seda and its SAPLATO 2 stakeholders to discuss the proposed changes to the methodology with Voka, along with programme and funding arrangements. Meetings were held with PLATO participants, mentors and parent companies to share experiences of the PLATO programme. The itinerary also featured a networking event with Belgian companies who have invested in South Africa. This included a promising offer by the Belgian Technical Cooperation (BTC-CTB) to provide traineeships to South Africans involved in the SMME development sector.

The tour concluded with a visit to the World Diamond Centre to learn about global trends in diamond beneficiation skills like cutting and polishing. Tour members were interested to learn how diamond beneficiation professionals have been able to transfer their skills to the automotive industry as world demand wanes for diamond cutting and polishing skills.

The successful conclusion of discussions and arrangements with Voka during the trip has paved the way for the launch of SAPLATO 2. The programme will again feature Invest North West and the Durban and Cape Town Chambers as implementing partners. Participating SMMEs and coaches will be selected during May-August 2011. Voka will train the coaches and coordinators during September and the Start-Up sessions to decide objectives and select topics for the monthly meetings are scheduled for October.

Judging by the results of the first SAPLATO and the experiences of Belgian SMMEs, participants in SAPLATO 2 have every reason to be excited. One of the Western Cape participants, Emily Vollmer of Evo Media, was the only worker in her fledgling firm when SAPLATO started. By the end of the programme, she had employed sixteen others and won a contract from FIFA.

"It forced me to set aside one day a month to focus on my business and systematically do an in-depth analysis and develop real workable solutions." Emily Vollmer of Evo Media

Some of the Belgian participants have been in the PLATO programme for almost a decade and insist that their businesses could not survive without the help of the programme.

If you would like to know more details about SAPLATO 2, please contact Lusanda Dyani at +27 12 441 1359.

"It forced me to set aside one day a month to focus on my business and systematically do an in-depth analysis and develop real workable solutions." Emily Vollmer of Evo Media



From left: Thabsile Ntuli -Durban Chamber, International Trainer- VOKA, Romilda Williams - Cape Town Chamber, Imraan Bakhas - INW, Mark Schoupe - PLATO Coordinator VOKA, Yolisa Mkhize - Seda Senior Manager: Stakeholder Relations and Records Management, Jill Suetens - Manager International Dept. VOKA, Charmaine Singh - Seda Specialist: Reporting and Business Analysis and Jan Borremans - Adviser to CEO, VOKA.



Seda reaches out to **RURAL COMMUNITIES**

For an organisation like Seda, providing business support services to small enterprises entails far more than just having the required expertise and programmes in place. Ensuring that these services are accessible to those who most need them is a key challenge - and one that was answered successfully by the recent completion of the Seda Outreach programme.

South Africa's geography is characterised by large under-developed and sparsely populated rural areas. Residents of these areas seldom have the time or money to travel to the country's major cities in order to receive services. Yet it is the Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise owners in these rural areas who are most in need of the services provided by Seda. This applies to all provinces. So there is a need to increase Seda's visibility, particularly in areas which have no Seda branches and where services are largely inaccessible.

In response, Seda developed the Outreach programme, a partnership with municipalities and other stakeholders to raise awareness and provide information to SMME entrepreneurs via community workshops in the smaller rural towns throughout the country. The Outreach programme also helps Seda to attain one of its key objectives: to ensure equitable access to its services for small business.

Seda joined with the relevant municipalities and other stakeholders to offer three to four workshops in each province during the Outreach programme. Workshops were held in the smaller towns and townships in each province and attracted enthusiastic participation:

- North West** (Moretele, Taung, Ventersdorp) - 1 011 attendees
- Limpopo** (Sekhukhune, Capricorn, Makhado, Musina) - 530 attendees
- Mpumalanga** (Mhluzi, Mashishing, Acornhoek) - 743 attendees
- Free State** (Xhariep District, Motheo District, Fezile Dabi) - 534 attendees
- KwaZulu-Natal** (Osizweni, Driefontein-Ladysmith, Umzinto-Ugu) - 495 attendees
- Eastern Cape** (Aliwal North, Mqanduli, Port St Johns) - 584 attendees
- Western Cape** (Masiphumelele, Worcester, Piketberg) - 523 attendees
- Northern Cape** (Douglas, Groblershoop, Carnarvon) - 436 attendees
- Gauteng** (Soweto, Pimville, Grace Bible Church) - 1 046 attendees

In total, 4 856 SMME role players attended workshops during the national Outreach campaign. The workshops introduced the SMMEs to Seda and the benefits of the services offered by the organisation. Budding entrepreneurs were motivated to visit their nearest Seda branch office to access services. The workshops also offered vital business information and advice on the challenges that SMME owners typically face in establishing their businesses. Seda stakeholders and partners were also given a platform to make presentations on their small business development services and programmes.

The interaction wasn't all one-way communication. Just as entrepreneurs benefited from information provided during the workshop, Seda also learned much about the conditions and dynamics that affect entrepreneurs in each area. This data will prove invaluable in helping Seda to tailor its services and provide more effective assistance to entrepreneurs in rural areas.

Finally, the Outreach programme also served to build sustainable partnerships with Local Municipalities, Tribal Authorities, LED departments and small business formations. This is the perfect springboard from which to launch further workshops and other initiatives to take Seda's small business development services to SMMEs in even the most remote communities in South Africa.



Entrepreneurs register before a workshop



SMMEs SHINE at Trends Expo

For any SMME lacking the budget to advertise in the mass media, trade expos offer an alternative platform to showcase their products to the general public and potential industry clients. Unfortunately, even the cost of hiring an expo stand can be prohibitive for a small enterprise. Recently, Seda offered a timely helping hand to eight SMMEs by paying for their stands at the Trends and Tastes Expo in Durban.

Trends and Tastes, described as a “trend, décor and foodie paradise”, is organised annually by Decorex SA in collaboration with the Kitchen Specialists Association (KSA). The expo draws design and décor pundits and purchasers from South Africa and further afield. This year’s Trends and Tastes was the seventh expo under this banner, and was held at the Durban Exhibition Centre from 18-21 March.

Seda sponsored stands for eight companies in the design and décor sector:

- African Space Creation
- Elliot Mkhize
- Injiya Interiors
- NT Design Box
- Glass artist Sarah Whitaker
- Strings & Things
- Belleza Indoor and Outdoor Creations, and
- Clive Sithole

“Seda kindly sponsored my 3mx3m stand, along with support from staff and paint from Plascon,” says Sonja Davies of Strings & Things, a company that specialises in unique affordable beaded products and gift boxes. “Seda’s help was well coordinated and very professional. I would not have been able to fund a stand at this expo without their help.”

For the first-time exhibitors, the expo proved a novel and rewarding experience.

“This was my first expo ever so it was tremendously exciting,” says Fazila Coga of Belleza Creations in White River, which designs and manufactures a wide range of concrete wall decorations for both exterior and interior display.

“The expo was very well-run and attended generally, but the bonus for me was that an Architects’ Society meeting was held in Durban at the same time. So I had many architects visiting my stand, and also met two interior decorators. Hopefully we will be working together in the future.”

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“What a fantastic experience!” adds self-taught glass artist Sarah Whitaker who specialises in free-standing lamps. “The Seda staff provided really warm and helpful support. I was very happy with the location of my stand as it allowed me to showcase my work and also explain my style and passion for glasswork to visitors. Over the four days, I spoke to many architects, interior designers and potential customers from the general public. I went through three sets of business cards and made many meaningful connections. The expo gave me far more exposure than I would have been able to get on my own.”

Ntokozi Ntuli, the owner of Pinetown-based interior design company NT Design Box, qualifies as one of the “old hands”, having exhibited at Trends and Tastes before. “I think Trends and Tastes needs to be marketed more clearly as some visitors still arrive with the idea that it’s a food market. Nevertheless, I managed to make more than 50 leads on products and consultation during the expo. I need as much marketing as possible for my starter business so every opportunity is greatly appreciated.”

But what of the future, now that Trends and Tastes is over? “In 2009, I decided to put aside my career for a while to look after my baby girl and my two older daughters,” says Sarah Whitaker. “Now that the youngest is about to turn two, I decided to launch myself back into my passion for glasswork. This expo gave me the exposure and the perfect opportunity to do that.”

Having now experienced her first successful expo, Fazila Coga is already planning ahead for the next event. “Trends and Tastes was fantastic but the biggest expos in my specialist field are in Cape Town and Johannesburg. Now that I’ve seen the benefits, I can’t wait for the opportunity to exhibit at these shows!” she concluded.



From Musina to Franschhoek
Seda is always there for
small enterprises.



Do you want to start, build, or grow your small enterprise?

The Small Enterprise Development Agency can help you. Our 9 provincial offices, 42 branches, 53 information centres, 30 incubation centres, 40 information kiosks and mobile units enable us to offer services tailored for small enterprises. Seda believes in partnering with entrepreneurs to help nurture and grow their small enterprises.

Our ongoing support and easily accessible services make us the perfect partner for start-ups or small enterprises.

So take your idea or business to the next level by visiting:

www.seda.org.za or calling 0860 103 703

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