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The Bigger Picture

The frenetic daily activities around the Seda offices, where attention switches constantly from one event or task or focus area to the next, often makes it difficult to maintain a balanced “bigger picture” view of how Seda is performing. As we wind down operations for the festive season break, it provides a welcome opportunity to step back and evaluate the year’s progress. The articles in this edition of Imbadu provide reassurance that both Seda and South Africa’s SMME sector are well on the path to success.

Our feature article puts the spotlight on the winners of the Seda Small Business Stars competition, and highlights the tremendous innovation and entrepreneurship displayed by our small business owners. Naturally, Seda is tasked with supporting these budding entrepreneurs and helping them to grow. The summary of our annual report key figures and statistics confirms that Seda is delivering beyond expectations, and providing excellent value both for our clients and our stakeholder, the Department of Trade and Industry. Seda winning the Top Women Award for the top gender empowered company in the public service reinforces that we are not only providing service excellence but also leading by example in women empowerment.

However, statistics alone don’t reflect what a successful and promising year it has been. In the globalised economy, Seda cannot limit itself to the South African arena. The organisation must look beyond our borders for opportunities - and then leverage them. Seda has recently secured key positions in the International Small Business Congress, an achievement that will allow Seda to champion the cause of small businesses throughout Africa. We have also strengthened our relationship with Botswana’s Local Enterprise Authority, helping our customers to access SADC markets via the annual Botswana SMME Fair. Finally, Seda facilitated an opportunity for our Eastern Cape artists to display their works in an American art gallery.

This international focus has not compromised our national efforts in any way. As we report on page 5, Seda has launched a new incubator (the SmarXchange incubator), our Outreach campaign has spread even further to introduce Seda services to potential new customers, and our Disability events continue to benefit a sector that is often overlooked.

Viewed as a whole, this edition’s articles constitute a collective pat on the back for all our Seda staff, stakeholders and customers on a job well done. In closing, I wish you all a happy and prosperous 2013!

Editorial Team



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Info Kiosks

PUT SUCCESS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Many young entrepreneurs looking to start a small business assume that gaining funding is the first key to success. While this assumption is understandable, it is also incorrect. An entrepreneur who spends funds without understanding their business, assessing their market or having a business plan is unlikely to see a healthy return on their investment.

Instead, accessing information and gaining knowledge are the first steps to business success. This is the message behind the establishment of the Seda Info Kiosks in Mpumalanga province. Seda has installed fourteen Info Kiosks around Mpumalanga, as part of the broader national Info Kiosk campaign to assist entrepreneurs.

The Kiosks, which are placed strategically in areas where there is no Seda branch nearby, offer a one-stop-shop for enterprise development services. Entrepreneurs can use the Kiosks to access the non-financial services offered by Seda. These services, in turn, provide them with the information and knowledge to assess, plan and start up their own enterprises.

However, to unlock the full benefits of the Info Kiosks, entrepreneurs also need help in learning how to use them optimally. So Seda launched an Info Kiosk workshop campaign in June. As June is “youth month”, the first leg of the campaign accordingly targeted the youth of Mpumalanga, empowering them with knowledge of opportunities around enterprise development, and focusing naturally on the Info Kiosks.

Under Seda’s guidance, participants at the workshops learn how the Kiosks can help them to assess themselves and their business ideas, and start the process of compiling business plans, profiles and marketing plans before they even visit their nearest Seda branch for further assistance. This is the first step in taking ownership of their overall business plan, knowing it intimately enough

to recognise all the possible income streams that they can generate profit from to enhance their business. This in turn will help them to grow their businesses to a level where they can expand and employ people.

The workshops also include detailed training in how to make best use of the Info Kiosks. Participants are taken through a comprehensive presentation on how the Kiosks work: from the technology that updates them to the type of information currently uploaded on the units and the frequency of information updates. The session continues with instructions on how to use the Kiosks, plans to upload stakeholder information, and ultimately plans to make the units more interactive.

The second part of the workshop consists of a Seda briefing where participants gain first-hand knowledge of Seda’s product offerings as they engage with facilitators. Lastly, participants are taken through a step by step practical lesson where the facilitator shows them how to download information from the Kiosk onto a compact disc or USB memory stick. This is followed by a question and answer session in which participants who answer questions correctly can win memory sticks and blank CDs.

The Seda Info Kiosks are playing a vital role around the country in putting Seda’s services at the fingertips of entrepreneurs who need them. In Mpumalanga, Seda has also partnered with the Department of Labour, Thusong centres and Municipalities to promote optimal use of the Kiosks. The workshop campaign has provided another effective means to ensure that small businesses draw maximum benefit from this Seda innovation.

The Seda Info Kiosks are playing a vital role around the country in putting Seda’s services at the fingertips of entrepreneurs who need them.



Seda Marketing Specialist; Syndi Ntombini showing some entrépreneurs how to use a Seda Info Kiosk



Seda broadens INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

In order to offer the greatest value and most effective services to South African entrepreneurs, Seda must not only work together with all role players in enterprise development around South Africa. The organisation must also seek to engage with international organisations, ensuring that South Africa stays abreast of global developments and can leverage opportunities in the international enterprise development arena. This imperative received a major boost when Seda was appointed a permanent member of the International Small Business Congress (ISBC) Steering Committee during the 37th ISBC Congress, held at Sandton from 15-18 September 2012. It was the first time that the ISBC Congress had been hosted on African soil.

Founded in 1974, the ISBC is a global body which fosters discussion around issues pertaining to the promotion of entrepreneurship and small business development. It does this by gathering policymakers, academics, entrepreneurs, and representatives of small business support agencies (such as Seda), financial institutions, international development agencies and other interested parties to exchange ideas and share experiences. This exposes small business developers to the lessons learnt by their peers in different contexts around the world.

Seda was further honoured when CEO Hlonela Lupuwana was elected ISBC Vice President for Africa during the Congress. Lupuwana noted that the appointments provided due recognition for Seda's contribution to small enterprise development, and would also provide a valuable opportunity to promote the interests of African entrepreneurs in the global economy.

"As we step in to represent Africa in this world body, our aim is to work with our partners in the rest of the world to promote fair and equitable trade for small enterprises all over the world, and especially in Africa. All that our small enterprises require is a fair opportunity to trade, and we want to advocate this imperative through the ISBC," says Lupuwana.

Both Seda and Lupuwana take up their new positions with immediate effect. Lupuwana is aware of the high expectations to champion the cause of African entrepreneurs and small businesses, and confirmed both her and Seda's commitment to making the most of this exciting new opportunity.

"We look forward to being in constant contact with respected policymakers and small business support agencies around the world as we trail-blaze on the path of small business development. We will use this opportunity to create much needed exposure not only for our clients, but for each and every small business in Africa that wishes for an opportunity to compete fairly in the world market," concludes Lupuwana.

Seda was further honoured when CEO, Ms Hlonela Lupuwana was elected ISBC Vice President for Africa during the Congress.



From Left: ISBC Project Manager; Mr. S. Bukula, Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry; Ms. E. Thabethe, Seda CEO; Ms. H. Lupuwana, President of ISBC International; Ms. C. Swift, Deputy Director General of the dti; Mr. S. Zikode and FABCOS Secretary General; Mr. T. R. Makgene.



Eastern Cape artists

BUILD BRIDGE TO CHICAGO

Business success is often sparked by chance encounters. While this could be dismissed as simple good fortune, it nevertheless takes skill, commitment and effort to recognise and capitalise on such opportunities. These are the attributes which Seda Eastern Cape showed in helping their artist clients to build a metaphorical bridge to Chicago and access the potentially lucrative American market.

The chain of connections started with husband and wife team Andre and Frances Guichard, owners of Gallery Guichard located in South Martin Luther King Drive, Chicago, which showcases artworks of the African diaspora. This venture has taken the Guichards to the Caribbean, Senegal, France - and now South Africa. When the Guichards expressed an interest in South African art to exhibit in their gallery, they were invited to the Eastern Cape by the Nelson Mandela Metro via a mutual acquaintance. Seda OR Tambo also became involved and urged Seda Amathole and Seda Chris Hani to invite their artist clients to submit artworks for consideration. The rest, as the old saying goes, is history.

The result was an Art Exhibition, held at Mthatha on 6 July 2012, which showcased the work of fourteen Eastern Cape artists and Seda clients. The Guichards attended the event and would decide which of the works on show merited exhibiting at their own gallery in Chicago. Apart from Seda, the Department of Arts and Culture and social and economic development organisation Ewe Masenze also attended and made presentations to the American guests and local artists. The aim of the event was to network, build bridges and expand relations between the parties.

Following the event, the Guichards announced that five of the artists on show had been rated “gallery ready”, with four scoring either 14 or 15 out of a maximum total of 16 points. The top four were:

- Tshiva Sinxolo: oil on canvas painting
- Chuma Zuma: ceramic sculptures of abstract figures
- Litha Ncokazi: ceramic bowls and centrepieces
- Msali Mathole: acrylic on canvas painting

The nine artists whose work is not yet gallery ready also benefited by receiving expert pointers and instruction on how to make their work more marketable.

The next step in the developing relationship was a follow-up conference at which two of the five finalists were selected to have their works featured during the South African Bridge to Chicago exhibition at Gallery Guichard from 20 September to 15 December 2012. This unexpected opportunity to access the vast American market has naturally been received with great excitement. Litha Ncokazi noted “Of course, this assignment has not only brought ecstasy but also a great deal of responsibility for me, given the fact that so much needs to be done now from this point going forward to make sure that I maximise on this great opportunity.”

Our congratulations go to those whose works were selected for exhibition, and we hope and trust that the burgeoning relationship between Gallery Guichard, Seda and our clients will grow from strength to strength.



From Right: The Seda EC Provincial Manager Mr. Sipiwo Soga with some of the participants that took part in the event.

Business Plan competition launches

A NEW GALAXY OF SHINING STARS

Eco-friendly litter bins, custom-built electric wheelchairs, fragrances for cars, stylish career wear, syndicated community radio programming, high quality canvas products, school uniforms, and product branding through the performing arts - these were just some of the innovative and prize-winning ideas to flow from the 2012 Seda Small Business Stars national business plan competition.

Launched in October 2011, the competition encouraged South Africans to tackle the country's unemployment challenge by thinking differently about their situation and pursuing entrepreneurial ideas and opportunities. The nation's budding entrepreneurs responded with overwhelming enthusiasm, collectively submitting 5 500 business plans for potential or existing businesses. This flood of entries was whittled down to a shortlist of 180 finalists, who each got to present their business concept to one of 18 provincial judging panels. From the shortlisted candidates, eleven national winners were selected.

The grand prize was awarded to 32 year old KwaZulu-Natal based entrepreneur Adesh Naidoo for his Clean Street concept. Naidoo first got the idea of an eco-friendly waste disposal product while he was working abroad in London. He developed his initial idea of an ashtray into a litter bin and then on to the final, award-winning concept: a shoebox-sized cigarette and chewing gum disposal bin, made from recycled plastic, which also carries advertising. The benefits are threefold: cleaner streets, advertising revenue for municipalities, and job creation for workers to empty the bins.

"The challenge I face is getting municipalities to buy in to my concept, but I have had promising interest from some, including Maputo in Mozambique," says Naidoo. His plan is to market the idea to every municipality in the country, and his first prize will

certainly give him a head start in reaching that goal. Apart from a laptop and software as well as R50 000 in cash, Naidoo also received R600 000 in business support from Seda.

The other award winners in the 2012 Seda Small Business Stars national business plan competition were:

National Runners-up (R10 000 cash prize, R240 000 business support from Seda):

- Palesa Moeketsi (Chesa Communications): Moeketsi developed the concept of simultaneous syndicated programming to a network of community radio stations, thus opening up a new marketing channel to advertisers.
- Bokao Theka (Canvas Products): Theka's business adds value to a bland common material like canvas by turning it into a range of high quality products, from laptop bags to lapas. Considering that Theka started his career as a cleaner, he has shown remarkable entrepreneurship to build a business with national potential.
- Lizelle Beukes (Arrero Premium Car Fragrance): bored with car fragrance products that typically smell of fruit? Beukes has pioneered a range of designer fragrances to prolong that "smells like a new car" sensation.

Special Awards (R15 000 cash prize):

- Most promising woman entrepreneur: Tabisa Nomnganga of Bravo Promotions, which stages consumer branding shows in communities, using the performing arts to make the brands come alive. Nomnganga also earned a second award in the "Most promising entrepreneur with a disability" category.
- Most promising youth entrepreneur: 28 year old Thula Sindi has, over the past five years, created



From Left: Seda CEO; Ms. Hlonela Lupuwana, Small Business Stars Winner, Mr. Adesh Naidoo and Seda Chairperson of the Board, Mr. Linda Mngomezulu.

a range of affordable, contemporary and stylish career-wear. In the highly competitive fashion market, Sindi has succeeded in having his range stocked by leading retailer Edgars.

- Most promising job-creating entrepreneur: Martin Brown, whose company (Radical Holdings) is a leading manufacturer of powered wheelchairs in Africa. Confined to a wheelchair himself since 1998 and frustrated at his inability to find a wheelchair that suited his unique needs, Brown decided to found a company and embark on his own designs. He now custom builds his wheelchairs around customer requirements, supplying the South African market as well as exporting to Namibia, Botswana, New Zealand, Brazil, the US and the UK. Brown has created 20 manufacturing jobs, and personally mentors all his employees. Like Tabisa Nomnganga, Martin Brown also picked up a second award in the “Most promising entrepreneur with a disability” category.

Most promising entrepreneur with a disability: the quality of entries in this category was so high that

three national winners were announced. Apart from Tabisa Nomnganga and Martin Brown, Obed Segooa was also honoured. His company, Cycle Check Trading, supplies work wear and school uniforms to eight local schools, and has created 20 jobs in the process.

During the competition, Rob Stead, chief executive of the SA Institute for Entrepreneurs, noted “Entrepreneurship has tended to be seen as an application of knowledge and skills. But it is more about one’s mindset. People need to move from a passive interest of waiting for government to provide employment, to actively engaging in searching for opportunities.”

The outstanding response to the 2012 Seda Small Business Stars national business plan competition demonstrates that South African entrepreneurs have taken this message to heart. This positive approach heralds a bright future for the economy, and Seda congratulates all the competition winners and entrants for their commitment to innovation and business success.

Seda concludes ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR

The recently launched National Development Plan challenges the Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMME) sector to create 90% of the jobs expected in the country by 2030. In this context, Seda’s work is now more important to the economy - and more in the national spotlight - than ever before. The good news is that Seda is delivering beyond expectations, as evidenced by the figures contained in the organisation’s annual report for 2011/12, which was released on 28 September 2012.

Summing up the year’s performance, Seda Board Chairperson Mr Linda Mngomezulu stated that the organisation was proud that it had once again been able to respond to the needs of small enterprises across the country - especially in the context of the crucially important role that SMMEs must play in the national economy. The year’s successes are summarised below:

Reaching out to SMMEs:

Seda interacted with 79 570 new and potential SMMEs during the year.

Helping SMMEs to create wealth:

The Seda Technology Programme created 1 517 jobs and turned 295 aspiring SMMEs into trading businesses. Of Seda’s total client base, 56% reported growth in turnover for the year, while 32% increased the number of people who they employ.

Customer satisfaction:

97% of Seda’s clients are happy with the quality of Seda’s services.

Value for money and sound financial management:

69.31% of Seda’s budget was used for direct service delivery programmes. The organisation again achieved an unqualified audit report, with negligible deviations of 0.89% - one of the best figures in the public sector.

Company image:

Seda attained a 92:1 positive to negative ratio in terms of media publicity.

For the year ahead, Mngomezulu confirmed that Seda would strive to roll out more business incubators via the Seda Technology Programme, and also aims to increase the number of collectively owned enterprises and cooperatives. Both of these initiatives had been reliable job creators in other parts of the world. The Chairperson also expressed confidence that Seda would contribute to meeting the job creation challenge outlined in the National Development Plan. “Judging by our performance, working with our SMME clients, as the principal small enterprise development organisation in the country, we are confident that our sector can achieve this momentous task,” concluded Mngomezulu.



Seda stars excel AT BOTSWANA FAIR

Seda is always on the lookout for opportunities to help its clients expand into new markets. The Botswana SMME Conference and Fair, held annually at the Gaborone Showgrounds, is a prime example of such an opportunity.

“When the Botswana Local Enterprise Authority (LEA), who organise the SMME Fair, invited Seda to partner with them, we immediately recognised the value for all stakeholders,” says Thandi Nkosi, Specialist: Event and Promotional Material for Seda. “Signing a Memorandum of Understanding with LEA has been the launch-pad to a blossoming relationship.”

The 2012 SMME Conference and Fair was held early this year, attracting more than one thousand visitors and role players from throughout the SADC region, and enjoying strong support from the government of Botswana. Seda exhibited as an organisation and also sponsored all costs for fifteen client companies to attend and exhibit. “This year, we focused on clients from Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North-West provinces. Sectors represented included clothing, leather, jewelry, textiles, beadwork craft, ceramics, construction décor and ceilings. We selected the clients very carefully, identifying those who were most ready to benefit from exposure to the Botswana and SADC markets,” notes Nkosi.

The South African representatives excelled at the SMME Fair, not only setting record sales but also drawing accolades for the excellence of their exhibition stands. Seda itself won the award for “Outstanding International Stand” and two of the Seda stakeholders also won awards at the Fair.

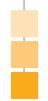
The first was the Seda Limpopo Jewelry Incubator. They won the award for “Best International

Exhibitor”, along with fifteen thousand Pula (approximately R16 600), for showcasing their work in providing jewelry design and manufacturing training, along with business skills development. “The SMME Fair was a fantastic experience for us,” enthuses Babhekile Ngcobo, Marketing Officer for the Incubator. “We met organisations with the same objectives as we have, were able to sell our services and also form relationships with Botswana on behalf of the jewelry manufacturers who we train. It was very rewarding to get to meet the Local Enterprise Authority, as this is a key relationship for us. The cherry on top was the wonderfully warm and friendly reception that we enjoyed from everyone in Botswana.” The Seda Limpopo Jewelry Incubator also secured an invitation to return to Botswana for the Global Business Expo held in late November.

The other award winner was BJ Gamazine Trading, a Nelspruit-based manufacturer of its own unique formulation of wall coatings with anti-damp properties. Owner Eunice Mokoena was delighted to receive the award for “Best Exhibition Stand” in the category “Black Women Chemicals Manufacturing”, along with a prize of ten thousand Pula (roughly R11 000). “I signed fourteen contracts during the SMME Fair and will be returning to Botswana shortly to open an office there,” says Mokoena. “Seda and the dti have also helped me to attend similar exhibitions in Mozambique and Senegal. I will definitely be planning to attend the Botswana Fair again next year.”

Seda is looking to expand its participation at the Botswana SMME Fair, year by year. “For next year, we plan to add a fourth province, probably KwaZulu-Natal,” confirms Nkosi. “We aim to build our relationship with the Local Enterprise Authority, as Botswana is a vital gateway to other African markets. So we are already looking forward to the 2013 Botswana SMME Conference and Fair.”

Ms Thandi Nkosi, Seda Events Specialist receiving a cheque on behalf of Seda for Best International Exhibitor Award.



SMARTXCHANGE Incubator broadens Seda's KZN footprint

Expanding its engagement with incubators around the country is a key strategic thrust for Seda, allowing the organisation to broaden its footprint and offer its services to more SMMEs and potential entrepreneurs. This strategic imperative received a major boost with the launch of the SmartXchange incubator in eThekweni on National Incubation Day, 12 March 2012.

The SmartXchange incubator was originally founded by the eThekweni Municipality in July 2004. The incubator focuses on the ICT sector, with the goal of enhancing the competitiveness of South African ICT companies to compete in global markets, ensuring high returns on investment, creating jobs and providing upliftment, particularly to previously disadvantaged individuals. During the 2011/12 financial year, the SmartXchange incubator accepted 62 new SMME companies for incubation, which collectively created 338 new jobs in the ICT sector.

Seda wished to partner with the eThekweni Municipality in the incubator, and much of 2011 and early 2012 was spent in negotiations and developing the partnership from a Memorandum of Agreement to the final signed and sealed partnership.

“The partnership provides benefits for all parties,” says Justine Magashoa, Regional Project Officer, Incubation for Seda. “Seda was already engaged in construction and furniture manufacturing incubators in KwaZulu-Natal. Adding SmartXchange allows us to reach out to entrepreneurs in the ICT sector as well. In turn, Seda provided R1 million in funding for the incubator during 2011/12, as well as its expertise and international experience in benchmarking and best practice. The incubated businesses benefit by having access to Seda services such as quality and standards conformity, along with technology transfer for needs such as equipment funding. In short, everybody wins.”

The agreement was signed during a special breakfast ceremony held in eThekweni on 12 March. Key stakeholders who attended included the Deputy Minister of the Department of Trade and Industry, Elizabeth Thabethe, Deputy Mayor of eThekweni Logie Naidoo, Seda Board Chairperson Linda Mngomezulu, Seda CEO Hlonela Lupuwana, SmartXchange CEO Jonathan Naidoo, and the managers of other Seda incubators in KZN.

“National Incubation Day is a major event in our drive to spread awareness about Seda and reach

out to new customers,” explains Justine Magashoa. “This signing ceremony was the centrepiece of our Incubation Day celebrations. Apart from KZN, Seda also hosted exhibitions in Gauteng and Limpopo. Guest speakers presented talks on entrepreneurship and enterprise development to the general public, budding entrepreneurs and representatives of business. More than 600 people attended these events, which have resulted in many follow-up enquiries about Seda services at our various branch offices in these provinces,” confirms Magashoa.

Although Incubation Day is a global event celebrated internationally on 8 December every year, South Africa decided that this date coincides with many local businesses winding down for the festive season. So National Incubation Day was moved to 12 March, putting it close to the end of the financial year rather than the calendar year.

“The Seda Incubator programme is going from strength to strength. With the signing of this partnership agreement, the SmartXchange incubator became the 34th Seda incubator. By the end of the 2012/13 financial year, we will have added another eight incubators to bring us to a total of 42,” concludes Magashoa.

For more information on the SmartXchange incubator, please visit www.smartxchange.co.za.



From left: Seda Chairperson of the board, Mr L. Mngomezulu, Seda CEO, Ms H. Lupuwana, Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry, Ms E. Thabethe, SmartXchange CEO, Ms. R. Erwin and SmartXchange Chairperson, Mr. T Ngcobo.

FINDING

Oscar

The recent Paralympics has drawn the world's attention to both the plight and the potential of people with disabilities. For Seda, this is not a seasonal issue. Instead, identifying and helping people with disabilities is a year-round and ongoing effort. Despite the success and glowing praise internationally for South Africa's standout Paralympians like Oscar Pistorius and Natalie du Toit, sport is not the only area in which the disabled can excel. Seda aims to find the Oscars and Natalies of the business world and help them to become successful entrepreneurs and owners of Small, Micro and Medium Enterprises (SMMEs).

Disability Days are an effective Seda initiative to promote this goal. On 14 March, Seda Amathole and Buffalo City Metro arranged a Disability Day at the Baptist Church in Southernwood, East London. "Although the Disability event took place on one day, it is part of a much wider process," explains Phoebe Madlwabinga, Information Officer at Seda's Amathole and Buffalo City Metro branches. "We started off by contacting organisations for people with disabilities, such as Disabled People South Africa (DPSA), DEAFSA and Rehab, and inviting them to send their disabled members for basic business skills training." This training was held both before and after the Disability Day, during February and May. In total, training was provided to 20 deaf clients, 32 blind clients and 16 with other disabilities.

Delegates participating at the workshop



Seda also believes that it is important to introduce clients to Seda and its services while they are still young, in order to build a lifelong partnership. "We sent out invitations to schools in the Eastern Cape and were delighted when eight teachers and 22 youths turned up to attend the Disability Day event. These learners now know about Seda and our services and can play a prominent role in their career and business plans once they have left school," confirms Madlwabinga.

The aim of the Disability Day itself was to introduce disabled entrepreneurs to the support services offered by various stakeholders, and also to allow the disabled attendees to exhibit their products and talents. A total of 102 attendees received presentations from Seda, Khula, the South African Revenue Service (SARS), the Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEDEAT), the South African Micro-Finance Apex Fund (SAMAF) and the Buffalo City Metro, as well as the three organisations for people with disabilities - DEAFSA, DPSA and Rehab. The presentations were followed by a Question & Answer session, allowing all attendees and stakeholders to learn more about the daily difficulties faced by people with disabilities as well as the services available to help them.

But it wasn't all business and talking. The event also featured highly entertaining performances by the disabled. These included the New Evangelist choir of blind singers, a blind pianist Siphe Mditshana and a display by disabled bodybuilding trainer Samuel Casey, who got one of his trainees to wow the crowd by flexing and posing his impressive physique.

"The Disabled Day event continued to bring benefits long after the event had ended," says Madlwabinga. "Attendees have been coming in to our Seda branch for help with registering their companies, drafting business plans and profiles, and other services. During the event, we were particularly impressed with the quality of the ottoman soft furniture produced by Sibusiso Ntsila and his company Tshisa Deaf Project. As a result, we helped him to exhibit at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown during July/August, providing him with marketing material like banners and business cards."

These disabled entrepreneurs may not draw the same media attention as our Paralympians do. But their achievements are just as commendable. Thanks to events like the Disability Days, Seda is helping many of our country's disabled people to turn a background of despair and disadvantage into a future of hope and fulfilled potential.



Seda reaches out TO STAKEHOLDERS

For an organisation like Seda, providing valuable services to entrepreneurs is only one part of the success equation. There is also the obligation to expand Seda’s reach into communities and ensure that services are accessible to as many clients as possible. To achieve this, Seda initiated a National Outreach Campaign.

“The Outreach Campaign serves to establish a first contact with potential clients, and also to strengthen our partnerships with stakeholders such as local and tribal authorities, business forums, NGOs and private bodies,” explains Thabo Modingwane, Specialist: Customer Relations Management for Seda.

The Outreach Campaign takes the form of workshops, held annually in all nine provinces, in which Seda experts join their peers in the Department of Trade and Industry, Local Economic Development representatives and other stakeholders in making presentations to entrepreneurs from the local

community. Presentations cover the range of Seda services and the benefits which they offer to small enterprise owners. In turn, the workshops allow Seda to engage with entrepreneurs face to face, learn more about their challenges, and receive pointers on how Seda can make its services more accessible and valuable. Although many workshops are generic, some are targeted at specific industry sectors.

“Informing communities about workshops in their area can be challenging as many don’t have access to mainstream mass media. So we use all the channels available to us - email and website announcements, posters, fliers, adverts in local print media and even loudhailing,” notes Modingwane.

Judging by the figures, the approach is working well. During the previous quarter, the following workshops were concluded successfully:

Province	Area	Date	Attendance
North West	Wolmaranstad	27 March	336
KwaZulu-Natal	Jozini (Tourism)	23 October 2011	181
	Ixopo	9 February	141
	Newcastle	29 February	198
Limpopo	Thabazimbi	23 February	60
	Shongoane	28 February	130
	Molekane	7 March	203
	Steilloop	14 March	178
	Mutale	29 February	123
	Malamulele	1 March	193
Free State	Virginia	9 February	270
	Frankford	14 February	162
	Sasolburg	15 February	216

“In the areas visited through the Outreach Campaign, we have noted significant increases in visits to Seda branches by potential clients. Entrepreneurs understand more about our services and procedures before even visiting the branch so it makes the process easier and quicker for everybody. This year, we have set ourselves a target of reaching 11 700 SMMEs through the National Outreach Campaign, and are well on course to attaining that target,” concludes Modingwane.

For an organisation like Seda, providing valuable services to entrepreneurs is only one part of the success equation.

Seda sets the standard IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

While Seda provides valuable services and business development opportunities to thousands of SMME entrepreneurs around the country, the organisation also has an obligation towards bettering the lives of its many employees. In both cases - Seda clients and staff members - the promotion of women empowerment is a critically important focus area. Seda has demonstrated its commitment to this goal, and success in achieving it, in the most emphatic way - by scooping the title of “Top Gender Empowered Company: Public Service” at the 2012 Top Women Awards. Seda CEO Hlonela Lupuwana attended the awards ceremony, held at Emperors Palace near OR Tambo International Airport during August, to receive the award on Seda’s behalf.

The Top Women Awards is an annual event, now in its ninth year, organised by Topco Media and Top Women, South Africa’s authority on gender empowerment. Awards in nineteen categories are presented to organisations who can demonstrate success in women empowerment, as well as to individual woman achievers in industry. As women empowerment is a golden thread that runs through all public sector entities in South Africa, the “Public Service” category was especially keenly contested. Seda was nominated along with the Johannesburg Roads Agency (JRA), Pan South African Language Board, SAMSA, and the South African Heritage Resource Agency (SAHRA). All nominees presented their credentials and achievements to the judging panel which included:

- Top businesswoman Basetsana Kumalo
- Leigh Gunkel-Keuler, Director of Pfizer South Africa
- Stewart van Graan, General Manager: Dell Southern and Central Africa
- Christine Ramon, Chief Financial Officer and Executive Director of Sasol Limited
- Dolly Mokgatle, Executive Director of Peotona Group Holdings.

The judges based their evaluation on established and strict criteria. Nominees had to prove measurable and accountable leadership that is committed to developing women in that organisation. At least one-third of overall staff and at least 25% of management must be female, the organisation must have met their gender empowerment key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets for gender relations and globalisation within the departmental or public structure, and vision for the public service going forward.

Seda comfortably exceeded the stipulated requirements: 60% of Seda staff are women; 48% of management positions and 50% of executive

management positions are held by women; and six of the nine Seda provincial operations are headed up by women. During her acceptance speech, CEO Hlonela Lupuwana noted that such remarkable levels of empowerment cannot be attained at short notice. “The work of women empowerment in our organisation has been a work in progress for many years. We have put in place a number of internal policies that are geared to be in favour of women empowerment over the years. These policies are now showing positive results,” explained Lupuwana.

Lupuwana added that this same dedication to women empowerment is also reflected in Seda’s dealings with its clients. “Seda endeavours to ensure that an equitable percentage of clients it works with are women-owned businesses. Of the 15 391 clients that Seda worked with during 2011/12, 49% were women,” concluded Lupuwana.

The “Top Gender Empowered Company: Public Service” award is not just recognition of Seda’s achievements in gender empowerment. It is an ongoing and heartening reassurance for all women, whether working for or with Seda, that the organisation is giving their needs and empowerment the attention that they deserve.



Seda CEO Hlonela Lupuwana with the “Top Gender Empowered Company - Public Service” Award