



USIZO News

Usizo = Zulu for aid

Volume 1, Issue 2

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USAID Helps Black Farm Business Mushroom

Assistant Administrator for Africa, Lloyd O. Pierson, visits entrepreneur

Welcome to USAID South Africa's second edition of "Usizo"—Zulu for "aid". We appreciate your response to our first issue and hope you enjoy reading this newsletter as much as we enjoy writing it. This publication reports important and timely news about USAID's activities in Africa's "rainbow" nation. We welcome our new Director, Carleene Dei, who will be introduced to Usizo's audience in the next issue.

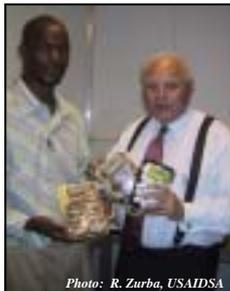


Photo: R. Zurba, USAID/SA
Peter shows freshly packed mushrooms to Lloyd.

South Africa's award-winning mushroom farmer, Peter Nyathi, was encouraged when USAID Assistant Administrator for Africa, Lloyd Pierson, visited his rural agricultural operation recently. Nyathi said, "He motivated us to keep the company going strong as an example to other entrepreneurs."

Pierson was impressed by Africa's top award winner for the Best Small and Medium Enterprise in Agriculture from the Center for Investment Analysis in 2003. Peter also won South Africa's Sanlam3Talk (SME) Business Owner for May 2005.

He accompanied Nyathi across the farm and saw the organic preparation of compost, climate control units to help the mushrooms thrive, and women labeling the freshly packaged mushrooms with the farm's name, *Tropical Mushrooms*, before loading them onto delivery trucks heading to markets.

Peter Nyathi symbolizes the new face of South African commercial farming,

supplying organic white and brown mushrooms for local and other African markets (including Mauritius and Madagascar). Importantly, Peter provides jobs for more than 60 employees (more than half are women) and leadership for an economically depressed community.

Nyathi earned his agricultural economics degree at the University of Zimbabwe agriculture department that USAID assisted. Despite impressive qualifications and experience, Peter struggled for three years to get financing for his venture. He obtained the first black economic empowerment loan from ABSA (African Bank of South Africa) buying 19 hectares of land in the Magaliesburg region. Nyathi built the infrastructure while USAID assisted in designing the computerized control system. Since January 2000, *Tropical Mushrooms* has grown, producing more than five tons of mushrooms per week with plans to expand to 11 tons. Nyathi's success as an entrepreneur has been profiled on the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and Summit TV.

USAID assists Nyathi through the South African Agricultural Financial Restructuring and Privatization Program (SARPP), a two year, \$1.6 million (R9.9 million) project implemented by the Emerging Markets Group. SARPP helps commercial farm owners and interested employees with "willing

seller-willing buyer" transactions. This includes developing a business plan, assessing the transaction's viability and assisting with obtaining local government grants and private sector loans for workers to buy equity in the operation. Last year, SARPP helped broker 409 equity ownership agreements exceeding \$3.5 million (R21 million), empowering agriculture ownership by historically disadvantaged individuals. SARPP staff helped establish the *Tropical Mushrooms* Employees' Shareholder Trust, enabling 37 new workers (of which 22 are women) to purchase about 20% of the farm. Peter notes, "This is the first time they have been able to own land and gain equity in a profitable enterprise." Nyathi's workforce admires and respects him as a community role model who assists employees and their families by redressing poverty and unemployment.

"My mushrooms are usually better in the market than anyone else's."

Mr. Pierson, who represents USAID's Africa programs to the U.S. Congress, complimented Peter, "*Tropical Mushrooms* is one example of how USAID promotes growth in rural communities in South Africa.

Peter is proud of his products, "My mushrooms are usually better in the market than anyone else's."



Photo: R. Zurba, USAID/SA
Peter provides jobs and leadership for an economically depressed community.



Photo: W. J.V. Rensburg, USAID/SA
Peter and his staff in a control room where his mushrooms are grown.

Math And Science Teachers Bring Home New Skills from the U.S.

Thabo Khumalo (32) was born in the rural village of Qwa Qwa in the Eastern Free State Province. As a young boy, he hated math and science because the teachers lacked knowledge and resources, so the subjects were boring. He was also discouraged because his school didn't have water and electricity. His parents struggled with their sparse income to send Thabo and his six siblings to school.



Thabo Khumalo, far left, with colleagues, Free State Province

Today, Thabo is a math and science teacher. Demand is high for this specialty profession and he wanted to fill the gap. Thabo has just returned from the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) sponsored third Leadership course, held at Prince George's Community College in the American State of Maryland. He was supported by a crowd of 20 family, friends and colleagues when he left Johannesburg International Airport in May. Thabo's colleague, Mr. Shibane, said, "It is wonderful that Thabo is going to get new skills from the U.S; he will bring back new ideas to develop our people and further our children's knowledge in math and science." During this 10 week

program, each South African teacher worked closely with U.S. counterparts, receiving on-the-job training, student-teaching experiences and leadership development. USAID provides \$1.7 million (about R10 million) for intensive training with Prince George's Center for Academic Resource Development. USAID supports South Africa's Department of Education national strategy to improve math, science and technology education in schools dedicated to these subjects. The program is called "Dinaledi," which means "stars" in the Northern Sotho language, lighting the way as centers of teaching and learning excellence. One hundred and thirty-four educators have benefited from the program. USAID provides training, while companies such as Microsoft and MultiChoice contribute equipment to upgrade teaching abilities.

"... I want them to discover the wonders of math and science and produce good results"

Since moving to Thabong township in 1999, Thabo has taught at Lebogang Secondary School. He noticed that half

the community's adults have not been to school, and about 90% of the surrounding population is illiterate. He plans to improve the situation by sharing his knowledge with as many teachers and students as possible. He will hold workshops and teach others in his province to work with graphic calculators, apply effective strategies with students and use technology for science experiments. Thabo hopes to motivate nearly 1,000 learners in his school to love math and science, especially girls, who avoid the challenges by considering them "men's" subjects. He is determined to dispel other misconceptions, too. "Learners think the subjects are difficult and useless for the job market. I want them to discover the wonders of math and science and produce good results."

Thabo and his colleagues are positive about the work ahead of them. They now have tools and resources to open students' and teachers' eyes to new perspectives in math and science. "I will continue supporting teaching long after I retire because it is my duty to act as a mentor and guide those who need us." He also believes that, "An educated nation is a prosperous nation", because once you have a skilled teacher you will have skilled learners who are seeds for a great nation.

South Africa Develops World-Class Economists



Former South African President Nelson Mandela congratulates USAID's economics scholars.

Denied meaningful math and science education throughout apartheid, many black South Africans did not earn degrees in economics. The shortage of black economists and local economics education hobbled the country's ability to plan and implement sound policies in its quest for economic reconstruction and development.

USAID's \$6.6-million scholarship program has helped 117 disadvantaged black South Africans complete advanced economics degrees.

In an effort to reverse this problem, USAID created the Mandela Economics Scholars Program in 1996. Since then, the

\$6.6 million scholarship program has helped 117 disadvantaged black South Africans complete advanced economics degrees at universities in South Africa and the United States.

The Mandela Scholars were so enthusiastic about the "brain gain" the program brought to South Africa that they formed the Mandela Economics Scholars Alumni Association in 2003. Geared to foster open debate on important economic issues in South Africa, the Alumni Association seeks to continue the work begun by USAID and, in the words of former South African President Nelson Mandela, "open the way for many other students to follow in your footsteps." The launch of the Alumni Association was the largest gathering of black economists in South Africa's history.

USAID's Mandela Scholars initially studied exclusively at U.S. institutions, but the program shifted emphasis in 2001. It now assists South African universities in Cape Town, KwaZulu-Natal and Stellenbosch in upgrading their economics curricula to attract and train more qualified economists from disadvantaged backgrounds.

More than 60 economists who graduated with help from USAID's Mandela Economics Scholars Program now work at

the highest levels of South Africa's government — from the Office of the President to the National Treasury. One Mandela Scholar went on to head South Africa's delegation to the 2003 World Trade Organization meeting in Cancun, Mexico.

Lulu Dikweni, an economist at the Department of Transportation, who completed her Masters degree at Brandeis University in Massachusetts, said, "The scholarships provided an invaluable opportunity for people from disadvantaged communities to train in the field of economics and form a great resource alliance with fellow economists." She said the launch of the Alumni Association served to "consolidate this network so we can make a real difference in the country and to the economics profession as a whole."

At the Alumni Association launch, South African Deputy Minister of Finance, Mandisi Mphahla, praised the program, saying, "May this association of alumni be a truly influential establishment that will take its rightful place in our quest for more constructive ideas, for more commitment, and for more unwavering dedication to the achievement of a society we can all be proud of."

Training Prosecutors in South Africa Has Cut Corruption



Photo: S. Mokoena, USAID/SA

A witness testifying before the commercial crimes court

By her second year in law school in Free State, South Africa, Glynnis Breytenbach knew she wanted to be a prosecutor. So it was no surprise when she entered the prosecutorial service in Johannesburg in 1987.

In the mid-1990s, she actively supported the South African governments began aggressively fighting back against an upsurge in commercial crimes and Breytenbach found a new calling.

She was named director of operations for the Specialized Commercial Crime Court, nicknamed "the Unit." It was established in 1999 by President Thabo Mbeki to put a dent in the spate of commercial crimes that became blatantly obvious in the 1990s and were siphoning \$6 billion a year from the economy.

USAID supports Business Against Crime (BAC), an association of major South African corporations, with Anti-Corruption Initiative funding. USAID began training prosecutors to try commercial crimes, which include fraud and corruption. And, BAC advised the Unit on management approaches, which led it to adopt a computerized caseload management system.

The volume of cases is high, says Chris Jordaan, special director of public prosecutors and head of the Specialized Commercial Crime Unit. Each police investigator could be handling 30 cases and each prosecutor almost double that amount.

Prosecutors assigned to his unit have won the South African Prosecutor of the Year Award four years running. A major reason is the use of plea bargaining, introduced by U.S. technical specialists as a new concept in South Africa. Today one out of 10 accused are plea bargaining, and the number is growing.

"Training in the Unit is a high priority," he says, "both in-service training – coaching and mentoring – and formal training." The Unit lacks adequate resources for the latter, he added.

The Unit in Pretoria proved such a success that in 2003 the Department of Justice

opened a second court in Pretoria and one in Johannesburg. With USAID's Anti-Corruption Initiative funding for BAC's programs, a court opened in Port Elizabeth in 2004 and another in Durban. All five courts maintain conviction rates of more than 90%. Additional courts in the major cities of Bloemfontein and Germiston are planned, Jordaan says.

Jordaan's teams of prosecutors do not shy away from the rich or powerful. One trio of stock brokers was hit with 5,256 counts of fraud involving \$4 million. Specialized Commercial Crime Prosecutors have successfully indicted senior members of parliament, senior police officials – including a commissioner – and members of the legal fraternity.

"Co-location, good case planning, and high [staff] retention," she says. "We are seeing a deterrent effect."

Breytenbach is smiling when visitors ask her to account for the success of South Africa's Specialized Commercial Crime Courts. "Co-location, good case planning, and high [staff] retention," she says. "We are seeing a deterrent effect."

If the Unit could get "a sufficient number of higher skilled prosecutors," she adds, "in five to 10 years, white collar crime will be under control."

NOAH's Arks Rescue South African AIDS Orphans and Vulnerable Children



Say hello to 10-year-old Nicholas. He is deaf and suffered mild brain damage at birth. Nicholas will smile at you and then run to play with friends at NOAH's Ark in Midrand where his sister, Beatrice, is learning to care for her little brother's needs.



Photo: N. Wilkinson, NOAH

Shacks and mud roads blemish the outside as the Ark serves four informal settlements. But inside, dozens of children sing, laugh, eat, play and learn, guided by loving care-givers—community volunteers trained to be social workers by Noah's Ark.

NOAH is a nongovernmental organization that "Nurtures Orphans of AIDS for

Humanity". Sponsored by USAID, funds from President Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), NOAH aims to help Nicholas and a staggering number of poverty-affected children orphaned by AIDS to mature into

emotionally and psychologically stable adults. Since April 2004, NOAH has established 13 community Arks nationwide and networks of resource centers that train local volunteers to support and protect nearly 4,000 Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC), also assisting their families. In the next year, NOAH, with PEPFAR funding, plans to mobilize

and train volunteers in 28 communities, establish 20 new resource centers and train their staff to help 8,000 needy children.

"Noah is gallantly navigating full steam ahead into the flood of AIDS orphans, giving them protection and care so they can make it through life's storms."

Carefully developed programs help children with education, nutrition, healthcare, life skills training and counseling. Children enrolled in NOAH's Arks are kept in school or provided with educational alternatives through study skills; homework supervision; and access to a library, computers and internet connectivity where possible. Some Arks offer after-school mentoring in Math, Biology and English. In Vosloorus,

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The U.S. Agency for International Development provides economic, development and humanitarian assistance worldwide. USAID supports people's efforts to develop themselves and their countries. USAID programs in South Africa move the country closer to its goal of equality and a better life for all.

USAID began supporting South Africa through community organizations and study scholarships to the U.S. in 1985. Partnership with the South African government began after the 1994 democratic elections. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are an important component of USAID's program.

USAID programs aim to strengthen South Africa politically, socially and economically. Historically disadvantaged South Africans are assisted to improve their abilities in six key areas:

- **Democracy and Good Governance**
- **Education**
- **HIV/AIDS and Health**
- **Economic Analysis**
- **Sustainable Employment**
- **Housing and Local Government Services**



NOAH's Arks Rescue South African AIDS Orphans and Vulnerable Children



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14 orphans have been accepted into school after the basic education provided by NOAH volunteers was sufficient to ensure entry. The computer program at another Ark has instilled the children with self-esteem and confidence to see themselves as worthy of respect, a feeling that was lacking among the orphans in the community before NOAH's support started. USAID South Africa Deputy Director, Denise Rollins, says, "NOAH is gallantly navigating full steam ahead into the flood of AIDS orphans, giving them protection and care so they can make it through life's storms."



Photo: R. Zurba, USAID/SA

Children learn computer skills at NOAH's Arks

NOAH's Director in Midrand, Tshepho Chuene, describes his Ark that assists Nicholas as "a lifeline to children from poor communities who arrive from a bad environment, demoralized emotionally, physically and spiritually."

Each day poses new challenges for Nicholas as he falls behind at school, gets frustrated with teachers and is upset not to have any school friends. He goes straight to NOAH's Ark after school every day, from where his sister walks him home. "Home" is a one-room shack of cardboard and iron sheets, where Nicholas lives with his mother and sister.

Thankfully, Nicholas seems to be thriving at NOAH. Under the ever-watchful eye of his sister, he spends hours enjoying basic educational games on the computer, playing football with other children and eating his lunch—that includes vegetables and fruit from "survival" gardens planted and tended at the premises.

NOAH assigned a social worker who visits Nicholas at home and monitors the child's well-being, identifying where additional assistance is needed for school and his medical conditions. That's how his beloved sister, Beatrice,

started learning care-giving techniques from Noah. His social worker has also registered Nicholas to obtain a birth certificate and relevant grants that will assist him to source further appropriate assistance.

The challenge posed by a child such as Nicholas is not uncommon, but through the community's unfailing commitment to this program and through invaluable support from partners such as USAID and PEPFAR, this challenge is surmountable. Noah strives to ensure that children such as Nicholas will live a long, healthy and happy life. Noah asserts, "Today they live in our world; tomorrow we will live in theirs."



Photo: R. Zurba, USAID/SA

Children at NOAH eat nutritious and well-balanced meals.

