



USIZO News

Usizo = Zulu for aid

Volume 1, Issue 5

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USAID South Africa's newsletter, "Usizo"—Zulu for "aid", Reports important and timely news about activities supported by the American people.

U.S. Senator Visits South African Factory

U.S. Senator, Barack Obama, visited an award-winning entrepreneur whom USAID supported through the South African International Business Linkages (SAIBL) project.

"I wouldn't have been here if it wasn't for USAID," Issy told Senator Obama.

The client, Issy Penniken, manages the Petite Designs Factory near Soweto. Issy told the Senator that his family's racial classification as "Colored" (mixed race) during apartheid severely restricted where his parents could open their upholstery business when setting up shop in a small room 30 years ago. Obama, the only African-American currently in the U.S. Senate, said he became involved in politics to push for divestment of U.S. interests in apartheid-era South Africa.

In democratic South Africa, Issy credits USAID's SAIBL assistance with helping him to be a successful exporter today, designing and manufacturing high-end furniture for domestic and international customers.

SAIBL assisted the company to make strategic business and marketing improvements, attend international exhibi-



Issy at his factory with his wife, parents and USAID Director, Carleene Dei (middle)

tions, achieve high quality accreditation and benefit from the U.S. African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA). Issy's business now employs 85 staff (one-third are women).

USAID South Africa Mission Director, Carleene Dei, joined the Senator's visit to the company. Senator Obama complimented Issy's "very impressive" operations and said, "This is a good use of USAID support."

Issy replied, "I wouldn't have been here if it wasn't for USAID." According to Issy, "USAID didn't give me cash. They gave me much more: mentors and technical experts who taught me how to run my business effectively."

"This is a good use of USAID support." - Senator Obama



Furniture created by Petite Designs



Issy Penniken has a lighthearted conversation with Senator Obama



Senator Obama speaks to Issy's factory staff

SEED's Home Garden Grows a Champion

Lukhanyo Matshebelele, a 4th Grade student at Zanemfundo Primary School in the Cape Flats township of Phillipi, is turning his passion for food gardening into a small business. In February of this year, Lukhanyo emerged a winner in SEED's Home Garden Competition.

The USAID supported *Schools Environmental Education & Development* (SEED) offers a comprehensive program that incorporates teacher professional development and the design and implementation of appropriate environmental/agricultural systems on school grounds. The Cape Flats townships are built on unstable and infertile sand dunes where most of the natural vegetation has been removed. SEED enables teachers and students to take control of their environment.

SEED was born out of the obvious need to create a healthy learning environment for the children. As teachers transform the school grounds and enhance their teaching skills, school communities come to life with vegetable gardens, animal husbandry projects, and models of income generation.



Photo: R Powers, USAID/SA

Lukhanyo tends to his winning garden.

SEED and the home garden competition has sparked an entrepreneurial spirit in Lukhanyo, who sold his tomato crop and invested the money back into his garden. He is now growing another crop of tomatoes as well as butternut squash which he plans to sell.

This competition aims to transfer food security skills to the school community. Participating classes are provided with a small bag of fertilizer and a couple of multi-harvesting plants. Students are then asked to keep a record of their plant production. This information is reported back to the teachers who visit and judge the strongest contestants. SEED then awards the winners with garden infrastructure like watering cans, herbs and worm bins.

"If any crop is ripe, my Grandmother will harvest it for our meal of the day."
- Lukhanyo

This story is testimony to the successful competition and highlights the importance of providing people with opportunities. SEED also hopes to secure its workforce of the future by hiring such student contestants for upcoming staff positions.

Determined To Live... Sibongile's Story



Photo: M. Elsbach, HIVSA

I became ill in 2001 and lost a lot of weight. The local clinic nurse asked me if I want to go for an HIV test. At that time, it took two weeks to get the result. I was HIV positive. I did not want to believe it. I always thought it could not happen to me. My mother asked me when I returned from the clinic if I had AIDS. I lied...

I went for another test at a different clinic. Again, two weeks later... I was positive. I then heard about the Perinatal HIV Research Unit (PHRU) at Soweto's Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital and got another test. I had to believe it this time...

My family means more to me than anything. My three sons are 17, 15 and 5 years old. My brother and sister died in 1996. It was not acknowledged - but they both died of AIDS. They suffered from the same symptoms I had. In 2002, both their spouses also died. My mother takes care of their three orphaned children.

Life was sad. I received pre- and post-HIV test counseling, but it was hard to accept. I also found out that I had tuberculosis (TB) and started a two-month treatment program.

Being HIV positive changed my life. My once loving husband left me. My middle son and I moved to a one-room shack in an informal settlement outside Soweto. My other sons went to live with my mother. I desperately needed to earn income. I finally told my mother I was HIV positive; it took her a year to accept. She was angry and upset. She told me not to tell others.

People in the community where I live started talking about me when I lost weight and my hair changed. I found a place of safety in a support group run by HIVSA, a non-profit organization assisted by USAID through President Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). HIVSA provides psychological and social support to people affected by HIV/AIDS. This circle of people shared what I thought had only happened to me. One person became my closest friend. She was on antiretroviral treatment (ARVs) through a research trial. Sadly, all the trials were full, so I couldn't participate. I had no other treatment options at that time.

We both learned how to garden food through the support group.

My health was failing; I spent two weeks in hospital with a low CD4 count. That's when I told my eldest son. He accepted me unconditionally, saying, "It does not matter..."

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Determined To Live... Sibongile's Story

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I love you". I did not lose hope - I had no option; I could not leave my mother with another three children to support. I asked her, "Love me; care for me."
I again had TB and received a second treatment course. I was extremely thin and weighed only 28 kilograms (62 pounds). I knew that without treatment I would not see my youngest son grow up.

"Be tested for HIV and join a support group if you're positive. Being HIV positive does not mean death. Deal with your status; you can live! If I can recover, you can too!"

In September 2002, the Prince of Belgium attended the World Summit for Sustainable Development in South Africa. He also wanted to see what was happening with AIDS. A Belgian organization helping to sponsor our food gardens referred him to us. I met him, told him my status and asked, "Please help me to get treatment." A few days later, Karen, my HIVSA director, called and said, "You can celebrate...the Prince of Belgium will pay for your treatment." I was amazed and hugged my son.

On Monday, I again started a two-month TB treatment regime. After this, I began with ARVs. The side-effects of nausea and weakness were horrible, but I pressed on. I want to live.

Through GardenAfrica, I learned about permaculture—

growing food while caring for the earth. It was delightful... we ate fresh vegetables at every meal. I gained so much weight that my mother asked me if I was pregnant! I said, "No - I am well! The treatment is working!"

Food gardening has become important in my life. I am healthy, employed full time and teaching community youngsters about nutritious eating and establishing their own food gardens.

My husband wants to come back to me now... I don't know if I can forgive him - he abandoned me when I needed him the most. But we have a child in common - our young son needs his mother and father. My husband has not tested for HIV. I worry about that. He is working. My eldest son has a part-time job. My second son has been asked to leave school because he failed the same grade three times. I need to find a house where my sons can stay with me in a good, private, healthy environment and I can show them how to live.

My mother is proud of me and refers sick people to me. I advise them: "Be tested for HIV and join a support group if you're positive. Being HIV positive does not mean death. Deal with your status; you can live! If I can recover, you can too!" I tell people in my community I am HIV positive. They think I am lying because I am no longer ill. But I am not lying....I am HIV positive and happy to be alive.

They Fixed The Leaks

An ambitious plumbing project has helped residents of the Mogale City Municipality learn about the importance of conserving water.

Leaky taps, toilets and pipes were costing the Municipality and residents substantial money and water wastage. USAID supported a \$100,000 (about R750 000) Leak Repair Project in the low-income Munsieville community that helps more than 13,000 people to access water efficiently and reliably, improving sanitation and hygiene in the process. After eliminating water loss and lowering the costs, the Municipality is now saving money while delivering water services. Several residents have also gained skills and jobs as plumbers, thanks to the Project's training crew.

Several partners assisted the Municipality's effort: USAID, the Alliance To Save Energy, Re-Solve Consulting's Project Engineer - Dugald Ross, Coca Cola and the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership.

Water consumption is down from 1024 liters to 781 liters a day, saving the municipality nearly R352 000 a year.

The benefiting communities of Munsieville Proper and Muncieville Extension represented the ideal setting and size to implement a leak repair project. The communities are also separate from a water supply point.

The Project's chief technical objectives aimed at creating communication awareness; supplying plumbing materials and repairing and replacing old and damaged taps, components, water pipes, and toilet cisterns in the area's

homes. The last goal was to audit the properties after completion to ascertain its success. Before the project began, every household in the area was handed an information brochure explaining the objective and goals and a competition was held to give it an appropriate name.

After many entries were considered, the name Reathiba Marothodi (seTswana for "We fix the leaks") was selected.

"To spread the news about the plan, a Project Awareness Day was held at the Munsieville Soccer Stadium," said Project Engineer, Dugald Ross. "Every property in the Project was inspected and evaluated and all 1,371 properties were audited."

In total, 1,075 plumbing repairs were carried out and more than R150,000 of plumbing materials were installed on the properties of Munsieville.

Once completed, Plumbing Inspectors from the appointed Plumbing Auditor Contractor assessed the work. The



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They Fixed The Leaks

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owners of all the properties were then asked to sign their approval of the completed work. An important requirement of the Project was to ensure that the home-owners were happy with the work.

After all the hard labor was finished, the most important aspect of the Project was to measure the success by determining the liters of water that were saved after proper plumbing was available.

Six new bulk meters were installed at vital points of the district to measure the amount of water flowing into the Project area and the amount of water flowing out again. According to Ross, each of the meters was read every week and the results were a resounding success.

Prior to the Project launch, each household used an average of 1 kiloliter or 1000 liters of water per day. On completion of the Project, each household now uses an average of less than 800 liters daily. About 274,200 liters of water is



Photo: Dugald Ross, Re-solve Consulting
A resident receives clean water after her pipes were repaired.



saved every day in Munsieville Proper and Extension 1 alone, saving the municipality nearly R352,000 (about \$47,000) a year.

The success and amazing results that Reathiba Marothodi produced must give the relevant authorities something to think about.

Article condensed and published with permission from R. Macnamara, Editor; Plumbing Africa Magazine.

HIGHLIGHTS

USAID Supports Investigative Journalism

USAID supports the South African Government's Anti-Corruption Strategy for the public, private and civic sectors to join forces to expose and prevent corruption. Investigative journalism raises public awareness. USAID South Africa's program is the only one of 15 in Africa that directly trains practicing journalists.

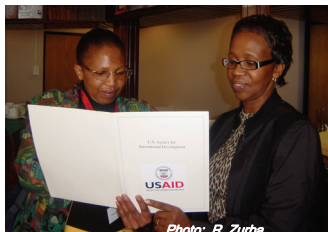


Photo: R. Zurba,
From left: Thembi Majombozi and Nomea Masihleho from USAID/SA

The stamping of feet, lifting of fists and cries for freedom echoed through Soweto's streets on June 16, 1976. The children of South Africa's liberation struggle fought for human rights that day 30 years ago. World media reported the news. Thembi Majombozi was one of these children. Today, she continues fighting for human rights through journalism.

"Our country has made very positive developments to transform," says Thembi, who was 15 at the time of the Soweto uprising. She is now a journalist, "interested in moral issues in society," tackling welfare concerns of poverty, women's rights, children and those with disabilities.

Thembi describes herself as a voracious reader and says that thoroughness is lacking in current journalism. She is one of 12 working journalists participating in the USAID-supported Investigative Journalism Workshop (IJW) at Wit-

watersrand University in Johannesburg. USAID sponsors a similar training program at Rhodes University. USAID Director, Dr. Carleene Dei, recently presented graduating Rhodes journalists with certificates.

Thembi envisions using her new journalistic skills in social and community development. She is currently investigating the secondary victimization of domestic violence and abuse victims. Her main focus is "victims of femicide". South Africa has the world's highest rate of female homicide (femicide) by an intimate partner, with a woman being killed every six hours by her partner.



Photo: R. Zurba, USAID/SA
Carleene Dei, USAID Director, (second left), gave certificates to the Rhodes Investigative Journalists.

Journalism is changing, but Thembi still says little serious investigative reporting is taking place. She believes that the IJW will help overcome those gaps.

Through the development of investigative journalism in South Africa, Thembi sees journalists making an impact socially, professionally and politically. She considers the progress significant locally, in the rest of Africa and throughout the world.

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 projects in South Africa move the country closer to its goal of equality and a better life for all. USAID programs from the American people aim to strengthen South Africa politically, socially and economically. Historically disadvantaged South Africans are assisted to improve their abilities in key areas:

- ◆ Democracy and Good Governance
- ◆ Education
- ◆ HIV/AIDS and Health
- ◆ Economic Growth and Employment
- ◆ Local Government Services

Americans working with South Africans for South Africans