

Bojanala

Collectively and Broadly Promoting Responsible and Sustainable Tourism for Benefit of All

EDITION

2

July
August
September
2015

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tourism

Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Cover photograph by John Hawks
- University of Wisconsin-Madison

Skeleton of Homo naledi are pictured in the Wits bone vault at the Evolutionary Studies Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, on September 13, 2014. The fossil trove was created, scientists believe, by Homo Naledi repeatedly secreting the bodies of their dead companions in the cave.

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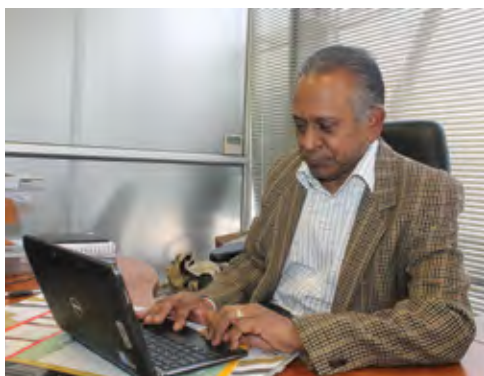
Talking Heads Advertising

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The World meets Homo Naledi!

On Thursday 10 September 2015 the internet nearly broke after the announcement of a new fossil find - it was the number one trend on Twitter in the world!...

How is Homo naledi going to boost *tourism* is what is on the minds of all in the tourism sector?

The discovery of a new species, Homo naledi, is expected to catch the imagination and stimulate the interest of people across the world, says Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa.

Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom announced that R22 million will be allocated for the renovation of Maropeng, the visitor's centre at the Cradle of Humankind, where the fossils were discovered as part of our tourism heritage and cultural projects. Maropeng is indeed a World Heritage site of significant interest to the world. It's the development of sites like this that will distinguish us from other countries and put us on the map - Derek Hanekom, Minister of Tourism.

We want to encourage family visits to Maropeng, the picnic site and interactive laboratory, where especially young learners can get involved in the paleontology work done there. We want to also plan on a 500-seater amphitheater in the area. And that's just the beginning.

In this edition we track how Homo Naledi was unveiled. The Department of Tourism is planning on erecting interpretive signage in all eight of South Africa's World Heritage Sites (WHS). The latest of these to receive signage is the Richtersveld World Heritage Site in the Northern Cape. We also track developments.

The 2015 Tourism Month is on our shores and in keeping with the trend from previous years, heaps of activities took place throughout the land, while placing a special focus on the importance of growing domestic tourism for the benefit of the economy of South Africa.

The celebrations in this year's event was held under the theme *"A million New Opportunities Await"*, which has been localized for the South African context from the "United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) theme: *"A Billion Tourists, A Billion Opportunities"*.

We track Tourism Month celebrations across the length and breadth of the land in our calendar of events and focus our attention on the national events hosted in Limpopo Province.

We track the department's involvement on the promotion of South Africa's Tourism industry in Kingston, Jamaica.

South Africa strengthened tourism ties with the Democratic Republic of Congo when South Africa's Tourism Minister Derek Hanekom and his counterpart in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mr Elvis Mutiri wa Bashara signed an agreement between the two countries that will promote cooperation in the field of tourism.

The National Tourism Careers Expo (NTCE) marks its seventh year in existence, as the 2015 version was launched by the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa, in Bloemfontein on 25 August 2015. The seventh NTCE takes place at the Sand Du Plessis Theatre in Bloemfontein from 1 – 3 October 2015.

The tourism sector abounds with opportunities for young South Africans to achieve gainful employment. As one of the highest contributing sectors to the country's Gross Domestic Product in 2014, initiatives like the NTCE provide valuable insight into employment in the sector, and aims to light a fire of passion and excitement in tourism as a profession of choice.

The lives of a group of learners from previously disadvantaged communities in Limpopo will never be the same again after the Department of Tourism approved a budget for their 12 months learnership programme which is termed Tourism Buddies Learnership. The programme was launched on June 23 of 2015 at Peter

Mokaba Stadium, Polokwane (Limpopo) and will see learners receiving intense training which is composed of 30 percent theory and 70 percent practical training. We draw attention to this successful programme.

The long hidden potential in community based tourism is beginning to blossom, with some becoming forces to be reckoned with, even in the international spaces. One such example is Bulungula Lodge, which is located in the Eastern Cape at a remote rural village called Nqileni-on the Wild Coast. Bojanala visits this Lodge.

A gathering during a business breakfast session in Limpopo (Polokwane) heard that there is a greater need for us to create a culture where South Africans want to take travels in their own country, something that can be beneficial not only to the economy of the province but also of the country as a whole.

The Public Lecture held on 4 September 2015 at the University of Venda in Thohoyandou, struck a very positive on a positive note, with industry role players sharing various experiences, best practices as well as challenges within the industry. In attendance during the lecture were representatives from government, hospitality industry, business, academics as well as ordinary members of the community.

A sustainability engineer shares with Bojanala that a lot can be done to improve the resource intensity of existing buildings and operational policies and procedures that ensure sustainability. He holds the position that there is hope yet for the stock of existing buildings out there depending on the budget and goals of a refurbishment or retrofit, maintainability and functionality.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Homo Naledi – a link in our understanding of evolution will once again draw attention to South Africa

By Jay Singh

The inevitable thought that enters our mind when we read and watched this discovery unfold in front of us is *what impact will "homo naledi" have on our tourism sector particularly from the cultural and heritage tourism point of view*.

In the coming editions we will explore that aspect in depth. For now **Bojanala** shares with you how the story unfolded with acknowledgement to **Policy, Law, Economics and Politics - Deepening Democracy through Access to Information** (<http://www.polity.org.za/article/homo-naledi-a-link-in-our-understanding-of-evolution>).

It is our preference that if you wish to share this article with others you should please use the following link: <http://www.polity.org.za/article/homo-naledi-a-link-in-our-understanding-of-evolution-2015-09-10>.

It is a discovery that is shedding new light on the origins of humankind. One unlike anything scientists have encountered in any other Hominin species and a discovery forcing scientists to rethink the origins of our genus. It is, perhaps even, the missing link in our story of evolution. And its name, is Homo Naledi, a brand new species jointly announced on Thursday 10 September 2015 by the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), the National Geographic Society (NGS), the South African Department of Science and Technology (DTS), and the National Research Foundation (NRF).

In 2013, two cavers – Rick Hunter and Steven Tucker – were investigating a narrow fracture system at a cave in Maropeng in Gauteng, South Africa, when they came across the entrance to the Dinaledi Chamber, the "Chamber of Secrets". It was there, in the cradle of humankind, that they made

the discovery of Homo Naledi (*H. naledi*), ultimately altering existing understanding of evolution. Having discovered the fossils and with pictures as proof, Hunter and Tucker contacted another caver and a geologist Pedro Boshoff who, having recognised the significance of the find, contacted Lee Berger, research professor in the Evolutionary Studies Institute at Wits.

After further investigations, Berger – also a National Geographic (NatGeo) Explorer-in-Residence and leader of the consequent expeditions – reached out to the NGS for assistance to dig deeper into who or what the yet unnamed *H. naledi* was. "This is a tremendously significant find," said Terry Garcia, the NGS' chief science and exploration officer. "This is why, when we received a call from Lee Berger reporting the fossils' initial discovery, we immediately committed our

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support to this remarkable effort." The effort, which began in November 2013, would span almost two years before knowledge of *H. naledi* became public.

Throughout, the team were supported and funded by the partners Wits, the NGS, the DTS, the NRF as well as the Gauteng Provincial Government and Gauteng Tourism Authority, The Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site and Maropeng and James Cook University. Continuation of the research would be supported by the Lyda Hill Foundation.

The expeditions became known as the Rising Star expeditions and the team grew. Part of the growth included putting a call out on social media for experienced scientists who could fit through the 18-centimetre-wide cave opening. The search yielded six women from around the world who became known in the team as "underground astronauts". Able to access the cave, the team discovered more than 1,550 numbered fossil elements, representing at least 15 individuals.

It is the single largest fossil hominin find yet made on the African continent. "If we learned anything about a completely new form of hominin only because a couple of cavers were skinny enough to fit through a crack in a well-explored South African cave, we really don't have a clue what else might be out there," said NatGeo executive editor for science Jamie Shreeve.

Further challenging what scientists believed they knew about human origins and the human genus was the location of the find and the anatomy of *H. naledi*. "What's important for

people to understand is that the remains were found practically alone in this remote chamber in the absence of any other major fossil animals," said Dr Paul Dirks of the James Cook University in Queensland, Australia and the author of a paper contextualising the find. In the chamber, which had always been isolated from the others in the cave, located approximately 90 metres away from the entrance were the remains of individuals representing a range of ages and both male and female.

It appeared to scientists that *H. naledi* had intentionally buried their dead in this remote chamber, a contrasting view to what they previously believed about the evolution of human behaviour. "We explored every alternative scenario, including mass death, an unknown carnivore, water transport from another location, or accidental death in a death trap, among others," said Berger. "In examining every other option, we were left with intentional body disposal by *Homo naledi* as the most plausible scenario." This, the possibility of a form of ritualised, repeated behaviour, was one believed to be unique to us, the human species.

With a mix of primitive features as well as enough human-like ones to warrant placing it in the genus *Homo*, *H. naledi*'s physical structure also represents a challenge to existing theories and human lineage. The unusual combination of features was unlike anything scientists had seen in any other early hominin species.

Similarities to australopiths such as Lucy, Mrs Ples, and the Taung Child, is *H. naledi*'s small brain, the size of an average orange.

Illustrating its belonging to the genus *Homo* is, among others, the shape of *H. naledi*'s skull with its distinct brow ridges, the narrowing of the cranium behind the orbits, and a "gracile set of jaws with small teeth". It also has feet much more like human feet than those of a chimpanzee although they are flatter and the toes are slightly more curved. Its strongly curved fingers illustrates the *H. naledi* regularly climbed.

It was thus, a climbing, upright, bi-ped, singling major implications for debates in human evolution. Identifying that the science fraternity had missed some key transitional forms in the fossil record, the team will now be testing the possibility that *H. naledi* is rooted in the initial origin and diversification of the genus *Homo*.

The impact of the *H. naledi* discovery and the consequent challenges to existing theories could have implications for the development of the African archaeological record, interpreting the South African archaeological record, and questioning the creators of the stone tools.

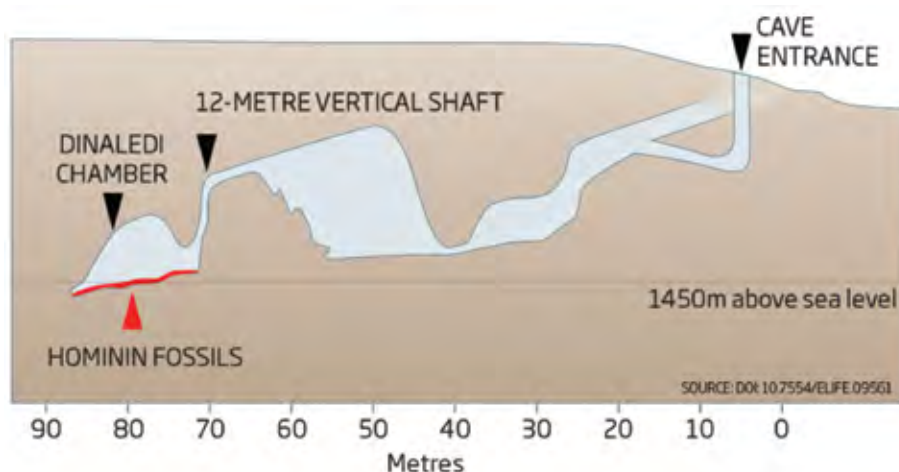
And the team does not believe the discoveries will end anytime soon. "There are potentially hundreds if not thousands of remains of *H. naledi* still down there," said Berger. "This chamber has not given up all of its secrets".

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<http://www.polity.org.za/article/homo-naledi-a-link-in-our-understanding-of-evolution-2015-09-10>.



The skull of Homo Naledi.



The diagram of the cave where Homo Naledi fossils were found.

Tourism Month 2015 celebrated in style

By Johannes Mokou



Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom and MEC for Economic Development, Environment and Tourism in Limpopo, Seapora Sekoati

The 2015 Tourism Month is on our shores and in keeping with the trend from previous years, there are heaps of activities planned, while placing a special focus on the importance of growing domestic tourism for the benefit of the economy of South Africa.

The celebrations in this year's event are held under the theme **"A million New Opportunities Await"**, which has been localized for the South African context from the "United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) theme: **"A Billion Tourists, A Billion Opportunities"**.

The UNWTO is the United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.

As the leading international organization in the field of tourism, UNWTO promotes tourism as a driver of economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability

and offers leadership and support to the global sector in advancing knowledge and tourism policies worldwide.

The theme for this year presents an opportunity to highlight a myriad new travel experiences for domestic tourists who are being urged to explore their own country in ways they have never before thought possible

Each year the Department of Tourism selects a host Province from a list of the less-visited regions of the country in order to give these Provinces an additional marketing boost. In this way, the lack of geographic and seasonal

spread of revenue generated through tourism is addressed. The festivities for the 2015 Tourism Month will be organised and held in Limpopo.

The theme for this year presents an opportunity to highlight a myriad new travel experiences for domestic tourists who are being urged to explore their own country in ways they have never before thought possible.

The economic impact of an increased number of tourists exploring in these million new experiences cannot be underestimated. These opportunities include economic upliftment, job creation as well as investment in infrastructure and the implications of this on domestic tourism and ultimately the economy.

For this to be realised, initiatives such as Tourism Month are celebrated every year with the aim of encouraging South Africans to travel their country and have a better understanding

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of the fun, affordable and exciting attractions available to them on their doorstep.

Furthermore, it is also aimed at inspiring potential travellers to experience the best of South Africa while highlighting the host Province as a leisure destination. The initiative is also aimed at celebrating and generating awareness on the enormous contribution that the tourism industry makes to provincial and national growth and job creation.

There are several activities planned to profile the achievements by the Department of Tourism and the sector as a whole, the country's flagship attractions as well as celebrating excellence in the sector.

The festivities started with the launch of Tourism Month, which was spearheaded by the Minister of Tourism, alongside South African Tourism (SAT) on 16 August in Limpopo. It was succeeded by a feature slot on Morning Live on 17 August, which was used as a perfect tool to disseminate key tourism messages to the members of the public and other tourism stakeholders at large.

The Minister's Business Breakfast session took place in Polokwane on 3 September as a platform to engage the travel, tourism and hospitality industry on key issues affecting the industry's operating environment. This was followed by a tour of the Mapungubwe World Heritage Site in Limpopo. A Student Seminar at the University of Venda on the same day gave students of tourism and hospitality from tertiary institutions around the country an opportunity to interact with each other and sector stakeholders about their research topics in the tourism space.

The Minister's Public Lecture at the University of Venda on 4 September saw a panel of industry experts deliberate on the competitiveness of South Africa as a tourism destination both from a research perspective, as well as on a practical level. On 24 September, the MEC for Economic Development, Environment and Tourism in Limpopo, Seapora Sekoati, will host a Welcome Dinner ahead of the celebration of World Tourism Day on 25 September, which will be followed by a media tour on 24 to 26 September.

The World Tourism Day will be celebrated at the Kruger National Park Phalaborwa Gate

where an annual tourism expo will showcase tourism products from the 5 regions of Limpopo. In addition, participation in the expo is expected from Mozambique and Zimbabwe, as part of promoting the Transfrontier Parks Destinations. This will be followed by the official opening of Nehakwe Social Responsibility Investment (SRI) in Tzaneen on 26 September 2015.

Activities planned in celebration of this Tourism Month from other provinces include, amongst others-

- Clanwilliam festival of lights happening in the Western Cape on 27 August to 06 September 2015
- Tourism Month Launch and Provincial Lizella Awards Ceremony happening in the Northern Cape (Upington) on 01 September 2015.
- Heritage Day Celebration happening in the Free State (Ficksburg) on 24 September 2015.
- Tourism Fun Train happening in Mpumalanga (Nelspruit) on 03 to 06 September 2015.
- West Coast Responsible Tourism Conference happening in the Western Cape (Citrusdal) on 28 September 2015.
- Social Tourism Summit in Mpumalanga



Limpopo Tourims Agency (LTA) board Chairperson, Andrew Dipela and South African Tourism (SAT) CEO Thulani Nzima



New signs erected in Richtersveld World Heritage Site

By Claire Allison - Marketing Manager of Open Africa

The Department of Tourism is planning on erecting interpretive signage in all eight of South Africa's World Heritage Sites (WHS). The latest of these to receive signage is the Richtersveld World Heritage Site in the Northern Cape. Open Africa was appointed as a service provider to see the project through, due to their vast experience in the region and the role they played in establishing the Richtersveld Route, a self-drive travel route showcasing the culture, history and attractions of the area.

The initiative aims to assist travellers visiting the WHS by interpreting the significance of local cultural and heritage attractions, particularly since the Richtersveld was declared a WHS due to its cultural landscape. The 160 000ha area of dramatic mountainous desert is communally-owned and managed, the only of its kind in South Africa. The area is made up of three key biomes (a large natural occurring community of flora and fauna occupying a major habitat); desert biome, succulent Karoo biome and fynbos biome.

Thirteen signs have been erected throughout the region with eight of these placed at attractions within the site, while five have been placed at key entry points, welcoming visitors to the area. Each one of the signs describing

a feature or attraction provides information about secrets from the past, nature's little secrets and the past, present and future. Each sign also highlights other noteworthy attractions within the WHS.

In addition to the botanic marvel, the site sustains the semi-nomadic pastoral livelihood of the Nama people, reflecting seasonal patterns that may have persisted for as long as two millennia in Southern Africa. It is the only area where the Nama people still construct portable rush-mat houses (haru om) and migrate to new grazing grounds seasonally.

The welcome signs provide vital information to travellers entering the area, as well as alerting them that they need a permit to travel through the site. It is hoped that this will prevent illegal camping, thus helping to maintain and conserve the area for its inhabitants and future visitors.

All thirteen of the signs also feature a Quick Response Code (QR Code) which, when scanned, directs travellers to a page on Open Africa's website, providing more information about the Richtersveld Route as well as other attractions and accommodation in the area.

Open Africa, a social enterprise that helps rural entrepreneurs feel confident to work together



Eksteenfontein town sign



Rooiberg Picnic Spot

to revitalise their communities through tourism. Open Africa opens people's eyes to the untapped potential of areas outside of the city and helps them overcome the obstacles to growth.

For more information visit www.openafrica.org

South Africa promoted very well during the Trafalgar Travel 20th Anniversary in Kingston, Jamaica

By Ntakuseni Mudau

The budgetary constraints facing South African Missions abroad in promoting South Africa as a preferred tourism destination, did not stop the South African High Commission in Jamaica in its endeavour to promote South Africa as one of the preferred tourism destinations for Jamaicans travelling abroad. Collaborative efforts between the Branch: International Tourism Management (ITM) of the Department of Tourism and South African Missions abroad in institutionalising tourism in Missions has been critical to the success of the Mission activities aimed at promoting South Africa as a preferred destination for travel.



RSA High Commissioner to Jamaica, Ms Mathu Joyini interacting with the tour operators

In March 2015, the Mission engaged Jamaican tour operators and travel agencies in order to obtain their inputs on increasing their interest in the SA market.

These engagements culminated in one of the travel agencies, Trafalgar Travel, inviting the Mission to participate in its 20th Anniversary event, which took place on 4 July 2015 in

Kingston, Jamaica. The event was used as a tool to target Trafalgar Travel's corporate and high-end private clients. Trafalgar Travel is one of the oldest and largest travel agencies in Jamaica. It has offices in a number of centres in Jamaica as well as the Caribbean region.

The Department and the South African Airways (SAA) provided support to the Mission which enabled the Mission staff to use the event to promote South Africa's tourism attractions. Support from the Department included the development of an exhibition concept as well as marketing collateral, while the SAA regional office in the United States (US) provided marketing material as well as two return tickets as a prize. SAA was also one of the Platinum Sponsors for the event. The South African stand displayed a Ndebele-patterned rondavel, which was aimed at attracting attention to it. The Department was informed that the strategy worked very well as it attracted a lot of visitors to the SA stand.

The Department is currently exploring the possibility of getting additional sponsorship from selected provinces as part of the province's familiarisation trips programme, in order to enhance the experience of the ticket prize winners with the ultimate objective of promoting SA as a preferred outbound tourism destination for Jamaicans. The prize winners expressed interest in visiting Cape Town as well as wildlife during the month of May 2016. The Department feels that a provincial spread is likely to enhance their experience. The prize winners will connect via New York or Washington. SAA recently signed a code share agreement with their Jamaican counterpart as a sign of their growing interest in that region. In 2013, the Branch: ITM presented the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) regional analysis to SAA detailing the size of that region's outbound tourism market and the potential to divert some of those tourists to South Africa. The regional analysis was also presented to the South African High Commissioner to Jamaica in 2014.

The exhibition (i.e. the day event, which was for the general public) did not meet the expectations in terms of numbers, however, the evening event (VIP Session) attracted more than 400 high-end patrons, including regular and corporate clients. Therefore, the Department as well as the Mission will need to put more effort and resources to sensitise the consumer market, especially the leisure segment.

Jamaica is an island nation of the Greater Antilles, located in the northwestern Caribbean Sea, south of Cuba and 191 kilometers (119 miles) west of the island of Hispaniola, where Haiti and the Dominican Republic are located. With 2.8 million people, Jamaica is the fourth most populous country in the Caribbean. In 2013, there were 267 800 outbound tourist/travellers from Jamaica with only 688 of those tourists visiting, which translates to a market share of 0.25%. Jamaica has a gross domestic product (GDP) - per capita of \$8 700. There is also a huge Jamaican diaspora in the United Kingdom and the US, which can be leverage.

The future plans for the Jamaican market include developing market insight reports as a service to inbound tour operators with interest in the Jamaican market as well as inviting them to seminars. The Department together with the Mission would explore the possibility of conducting seminars with outbound Jamaican tour operators in order to encourage them to include SA in their travel packages.



South African stand made up of Ndebele Hut



Trafalgar Travel 20th Anniversary Banner Set Up

Food Safety Assurers programme move to the right direction

By Johannes Mokou



Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa, flanked by MEC for Economic Development, Environment and Tourism in Limpopo, Seapora Sekoati (left) and DDG for Domestic Tourism, Morongoe Ramphela (right) strike a pose with graduates

The South African Tourism industry, as with those in other countries, has always maintained the number one spot of being the leading job creator as compared to other industries. The rapidly rising number of tourists in and around the country also play a bigger role in this regard. This and many others created a need for a thorough maintenance of quality and first-class standards in all hospitality pots countrywide.

One of these initiatives is the introduction of the Food Safety Assurer Programme (FSA), which is an Apprenticeship in 2013, which since its inception saw a dramatic success largely with the creation of jobs for young people, but also in contributing to the quality and food safety standards in the hospitality establishments within the South African tourism industry. The FSA initiative/concept was born after the Department of Tourism realised that food not produced and prepared in the right manner can cause food borne diseases to those who

consume it, as well as serve as a growth medium for bacteria that have potential for causing food poisoning; and this may have detrimental impact on the hospitality sector and by in large the destination South Africa.

As part of the remedy, the FSA's programme was introduced and piloted in three provinces, namely Limpopo, Kwa Zulu Natal as well as Mpumalanga, where Further Education Training hospitality and tourism unemployed graduates were recruited to form part of the program.

Selected students underwent an intensive three-week food safety preparatory course and subsequently placed in hosts partners within the hospitality industry for a period of twelve month. The course material afforded the trainees to build the required technical skills to implement a food safety management system. The material also had a strong focus on interpersonal and character building skills, to foster confidence in assisting the youth in their

first workplace experience. The outcome was 100 capable, confident and motivated Food Safety Assurers (FSA) that were introduced into South Africa's Hospitality industry.

On the completion of the programme, the students will have an opportunity to be permanently employed within the establishments wherein they are placed or will qualify for employment by any other establishment.

A total of 100 carefully selected individuals went through training and orientation which commenced in March 2014 and concluded in May 2015, with Kwa Zulu Natal hosting 40, Mpumalanga 30, while 30 was hosted in Limpopo. There were 10 mentors for the three provinces.

This resulted in hospitality and tourism industry receiving 100 FSA's in 2015, who graduated in their respective provinces between June 13 and June 27.

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The introduction of the FSA in the South African hospitality and tourism industry made an immediate noticeable difference, as articulated by many role players.

"I would like to thank you for the project that we are currently a part of. We have found that with a FSA here in the shop we are having a great response, with regards, to the programme. My compliments to you and your team for this and we are looking forward to the wonderful outcome."

- Gerhard, Ocean Basket, Mall of the North, Polokwane, Limpopo.

"We at Protea Hotel Nelspruit are dedicated to seeing this project succeed as we see the value this can potentially have not just on our company but also our Country."

- Erika Labuschagne, Protea Nelspruit, Mpumalanga.

"Hygiene index is up from 83% to 94%"

- Garden Court Marine Parade, Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal.

"My hygiene index improved from 76% to 87%"

- Peter, Executive Chef at Garden Court South Beach, Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal.

The introduction of 100 Food Safety Assurers to the Hospitality industry has been a rewarding experience at many different levels. The challenges experienced during the placement period were manageable but required time, flexibility and a lot of understanding from all involved. The interventions by the implementers as well as the mentors at this initial difficult moment assisted in reducing the number of dropouts.

Nonetheless, It is envisaged that by 2020, an estimated 5000 FSA's will be trained and educated over 7500 food handlers in the

hospitality industry on food safe practices, making the country the Global Capital of Food Safe Destinations.

Current plans are to roll out the project nationally with an intake of 300 candidates as per the available budget. This number is envisaged to be more as provinces are committing to add and even double their allocated numbers.



MEC for Economic Development, Environment and Tourism in Limpopo, Seapora Sekoati and Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa, hands over the certificate to one of the graduates



Some of the owners of various hospitality establishments in Limpopo

Tourism careers take centre stage at Expo publicity campaign launch

25 August 2015

By Lynette Skriker

The National Tourism Careers Expo (NTCE) marks its seventh year in existence, as the 2015 version was launched by the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa, in Bloemfontein today.

The tourism sector abounds with opportunities for young South Africans to achieve gainful employment. As one of the highest contributing sectors to the country's Gross Domestic Product in 2014, initiatives like the NTCE provide valuable insight into employment in the sector, and aims to light a fire of passion and excitement in tourism as a profession of choice.

The seventh NTCE takes place at the Sand Du Plessis Theatre in Bloemfontein from 1 – 3 October 2015. This will be the first in a cycle of three years that the Free State Province will play host to the event, having previously seen successful events in the Eastern Cape for three years, and prior to that in Kwa Zulu Natal for three years.

"The publicity campaign for the NTCE that we are launching today will reach all corners of the country to stimulate interest amongst the youth to attend. Under the theme "Tourism is Alive with Possibilities", it is important that this message can reach our youth and bring hope for a brighter future", says Ms. Xasa.

The NTCE's primary audience are learners from grade 9 – 12 doing tourism and hospitality at school, FET College and University students, unemployed tourism graduates, educators and lecturers in the subject as well as industry product owners.

Some of the main attractions during the three day Expo will be:

- Exhibitions by product owners and other stakeholders, prioritising skills development and career opportunities in the sector;
- Virtual Classroom and Recruitment Area;
- A Hospitality Corner that simulates a "mock hotel"



Attendees giving an attentive ear during the NTCE launch

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Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa, with Free State MEC for Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Sam Mashinini, and Mayor of Mangaung, Wilson Spelman, take their seat during the NTCE launch



Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa, with Free State MEC for Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Sam Mashinini, and local business women strike a pose

- Chefs and Mixology platforms
- Aviation Platform;
- Competitions for students and schools;
- Exposure for unemployed graduates to tourism sector jobs and assistance in preparation for job interviews

"While I am optimistic about the future of the tourism sector and its possibilities for our youth, we cannot overlook the challenges we face as a country," says Ms. Xasa. "A collaborative approach is the key to overcoming these challenges. The NTCE, like many of our other programmes as the Department of Tourism, works on a partnership model."

Ms. Xasa expressed her gratitude to the partners who have come on board to create an impactful NTCE in 2015. Implementation partner CATHSSETA will repeat the support they have given to the NTCE over previous years in 2015. Project partners like the Hilton Hotel Group, the Mangaung Tourism Guides Association in and FEDHASA pledged their support at the launch event.

The Department of Tourism has a host of successful youth development programmes that leverage off stakeholder partnerships, such as the Food Safety Assurers, the Chefs Training, Sommeliers and the Tourism Buddies.

"The youth and unemployed are urged to come out in their numbers to see what the tourism sector has to offer them," Ms. Xasa says.

Speakers at the NTCE launch event echoed a common sentiment: it is the responsibility of all stakeholders in the tourism industry (from public and private sector to education and skills development institutions) to pool resources and opportunities that will market the endless possibilities that the sector holds.

Caleb Mabaso, from Fedhasa Hospitality Association, advised that alignment needs to be created between policies and systems in the education sector and the skills needed by tourism product owners on the ground in the sector. "With other sectors of our economy under pressure at this moment and shedding jobs, we in the tourism sector need to pull together to sustain the growth that our sector continues to show," he told delegates at the launch.

Ms. Helen Mabaso from the Hilton Hotel Group added her voice, saying that platforms such as the NTCE provides organisations in the hospitality industry a golden opportunity to work with government to reduce unemployment, especially amongst the youth. The Hilton Hotel Group have pledged their full support to the Expo with a number of innovative activations. She urged other hospitality organisations to join the crusade of raising awareness amongst the youth around employment prospects that exist in the sector.

Chairperson of the Mangaung Tourist Guide Association, Mr Khedamile Mkabane, said

that his organisation welcomed the NTCE to the Free State "with two hands". He told delegates the story of how he started in the sector as an unemployed graduate with completed studies in tourism, and how he had to use personal initiative and drive to secure a future in the industry. His message centred on the phenomenal scope for entrepreneurs in tourism businesses, urging stakeholders to participate in the NTCE as a mechanism to empower and encourage learners to take up an interest in a career in the sector.

Pledges of support were also delivered during the launch by Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA) and the Provincial Department of Education.

Talking about the excellent progress made in his Province, MEC for the Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism & Environmental Affairs (DESTA), Sam Mashinini, urged the people of the Free State, and especially the youth, to "claim what you have and be proud of it". He thanked Deputy Minister Xasa for her dedication to bringing the NTCE to the Free State as he believes the "Expo will leave a legacy over the next three years for young people to enter the mainstream of the industry". "Start at your own home and make our country an attractive place for people to visit," he advised.

Department of Tourism plays a vital role in changing peoples' lives

By Johannes Mokou



Some of the graduates and recipients of the Excellence Awards

The lives of the previously disadvantaged young people in Limpopo, as with others in all other provinces, will never be the same again. This is after the Department of Tourism approved a budget for their 12 months learnership programme which is termed Tourism Buddies Learnership.

The programme was launched on June 23 of 2015 at Peter Mokaba Stadium, Polokwane (Limpopo) and will see learners receiving intense training which is composed of 30 percent theory and 70 percent practical training.

In her address during the launch, Deputy Minister of Tourism Ms. Tokozile Xaza, stimulated young people that Tourism Buddies Programme does not only transform the lives of the youth, but the tourism industry as whole, adding that, "an economy that grows must be an economy that creates jobs. We are happy that Tourism is on the spotlight when it comes to economic development within this country." The Project commenced its operations in 2011 and has since been rolled out in all nine provinces.

During the length of this training learners will be placed at various hospitality establishments around the province for their workplace training.

Learners will be trained towards achieving either a National Certificate on Food and Beverages (NQF level 4) or National Certificate on Accommodation Services (NQF level 2)

which will be advantageous in their future career aspirations in the sector.

The Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sports Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA), will award the learners with a nationally recognised qualification after they have completed the said qualifications.

Learners will be paid a daily stipend of R 100 to be used for necessities such as transport and meals as well as an EPWP branded uniform which includes two white shirts, jacket and a carry bag for their books. During the programme, they will work for a maximum 22 days in a month.

The selected learners comprises of 150 from Capricorn, 130 from Mopani, 100 from Vhembe, 95 from Waterberg and 25 from Sekhukhune District Municipalities.

In the 2013-14 financial years, 3860 learners were enrolled in the programme nationally, out of this number, a whopping 441 learners have been permanently employed by the hospitality industry throughout the country. Meanwhile, in 2014-15 financial years, 3434 learners are enrolled in the programme nationally.

This is indicative of a positive impact the project has in the lives of young people of South Africa, as in addition, some learners are employed on a part time basis while being trained.

Lwandile Makubalo, one of the project beneficiaries, submitted that he would have never imagined being where he is today if it was not for the opportunity he got from the project. Lwandile currently works for The Peninsula All-Suite Hotel as a Human Resource Assistant. He completed his National Certificate in Accommodation through Networx for Career Development.

Another beneficiary, whose name is Lee-Marque Jansen, also shared the same sentiments echoed by Lwandile, saying, "I was part of a group of young learners who were selected to form part of the Tourism Ambassador Programme, placed to work at the Garden Route National Park-Tsitsikama Section Stormsriver Mouth.

Jansen added that after completing his three year NCV level 4 Hospitality course, he was unemployed but had the operations in both Tourism and Hospitality Sector. He also completed his Certificate in Accommodation Services Accommodation through Networx for Career Development.

He currently works for South African National Parks-Frontier Region-Addo Elephant National Park as a Receptionist and Stand in Duty Manager and Hospitality Service Manager in their absence.

Although the project was initiated with good intentions, it has not gone without some glitches since it was initiated. Challenges ranging from high pregnancy rate which led to a high level of dropouts, long working hours because of the nature of the industry, high level of absenteeism because of lack of work ethics and passion and a high standard of curriculum, which few learners were struggling to cope with, are some of the challenges which the role players are battling with.

However, part of the proposed mechanisms to curb these high levels of drop-outs are to take learners on two-month work readiness (boot camp) before they can be enrolled. It is hoped that this will sharpen their communication skills as well as attitude towards and work ethics.

SA and DRC strengthen tourism ties

By Bulelwa Seti

KINSHASA (DRC) – Tourism Minister Derek Hanekom and his counterpart in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mr Elvis Mutiri wa Bashara, have signed an agreement that will strengthen ties between the two countries and promote cooperation in the field of tourism.

Speaking at the signing yesterday, Minister Hanekom lauded the DRC's efforts to advance tourism in the country, and in the region. "This agreement reinforces the great strides this country has taken to prioritise tourism as an economic growth driver that will not only have a positive impact domestically, but will also boost tourism in the SADC region," said Minister Hanekom.

The agreement will lay the foundation for the promotion of tourism exchanges between the two countries.

"Africa is fast establishing itself as one of the most promising regions for tourism," said Minister Hanekom

A Joint Technical Tourism Committee consisting of government representatives from both countries will be formed, and a five-year plan of action will be developed to focus on the following issues:

- The preservation and promotion of heritage and cultural tourism
- Tourism investment
- Research and planning
- Marketing and promotion campaigns
- Quality assurance
- Human resource development
- The promotion and practice of sustainable tourism development.

The DRC is the largest country in Central Africa, and a regular exhibitor at the Tourism Indaba that takes place in Durban annually.

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council report, Travel and Tourism contributed 1.1 % towards GDP in the DRC's in 2014, which generated 137,500 direct jobs in their tourism sector. This is anticipated to rise by 5.3% in 2015.

The agreement between the two countries will lead to new initiatives and projects that will boost tourism in a manner that is beneficial to both countries.

"Africa is fast establishing itself as one of the most promising regions for tourism," said Minister Hanekom.

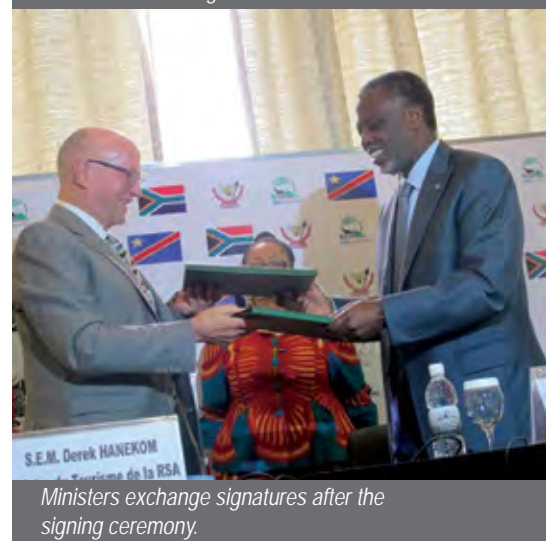
"The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) estimates that Africa will receive 85 million international tourist arrivals by 2020, and 134 million in 2030, representing 6,3% and 7,4% respectively of international tourist arrivals worldwide. Africa needs to be prepared, and it is through such agreements that we will be able to work together to ensure our continent's readiness and success."



Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom, addresses the delegates.



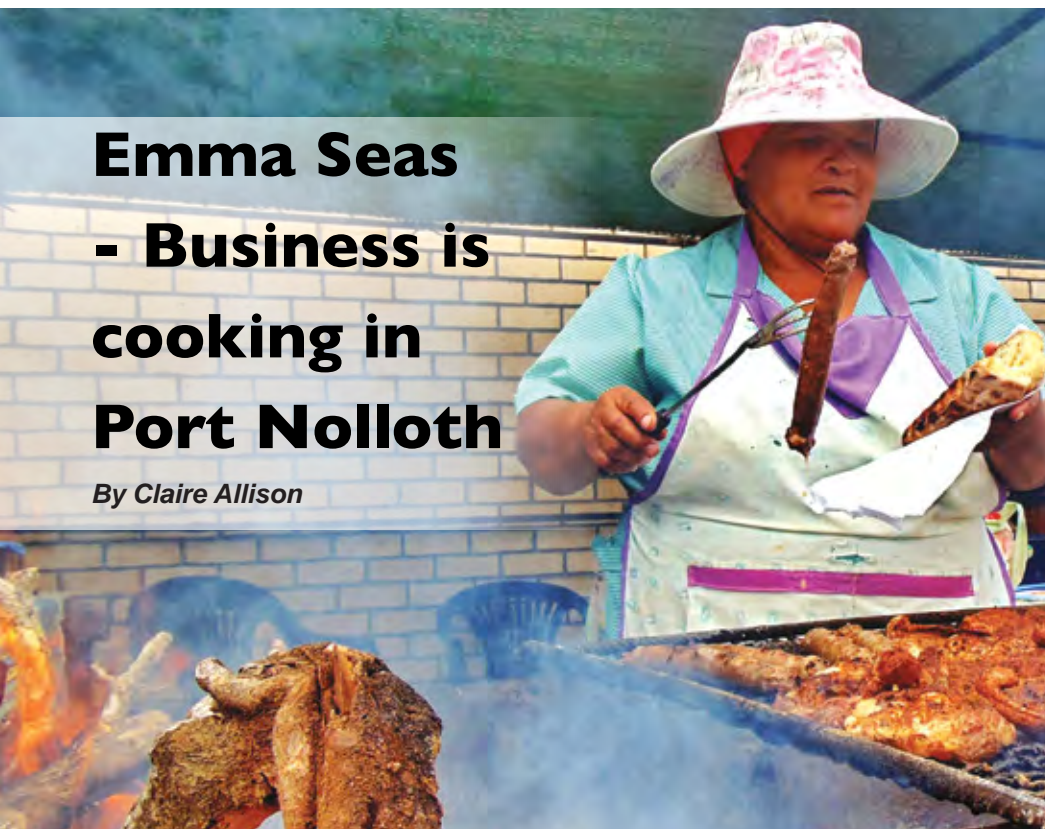
Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom, and the Minister of Tourism in DRC, Elvis Mutiri wa Bashara, during the signing ceremony



Ministers exchange signatures after the signing ceremony.

Emma Seas - Business is cooking in Port Nolloth

By Claire Allison



Photographs by Open Africa



A hungry customer watches on.

In the financial year 2014-2015 the Department of Tourism signed a partnership agreement with Open Africa (www.openafrica.org), to unlock tourism potential through route development in rural areas in various identified poverty nodes in South Africa. Key to route development has been to provide support to emerging rural tourism enterprises in business development, access to funding and market access, amongst others.

Emma Seas began baking "roosterkoek" (traditional grilled bread) to fund her daughter's education in 2003. It has been an uphill battle for her to learn how to run a business and now, over 10 years later, she has become a household name for tourists visiting Port Nolloth.

Emma was involved in a mentorship programme, which was launched in November 2013. Within one year Emma was able to expand her business substantially. In addition to the mentorship support that has been offered to Emma, she has received support from the Northern Cape Department of Economic Development and Tourism. She now employs three people, two of whom are women, and her turnover increased by 50% from 2013 to 2014.

Not only did Emma succeed in putting her daughter through tertiary education, but she

has been able to ensure that all her children and grandchildren have been able to go to college. In the early years she got some support from the Diamond Trust fund, which helped her to improve a shade structure for her outdoor business. Over the years Emma took the opportunity to appear on television twice, appearing in travel programmes focussing on the Northern Cape as a tourist destination. This boosted her profile and she found people coming to visit her after seeing her on national television.

More recently, Emma has been able to build a mobile trailer that will allow her to continue selling "roosterkoek" in Port Nolloth, as well as travel to nearby tourism events. Along with the infrastructure development, Emma has developed a marketing campaign that will make her more visible on the web. With the expansion of the business, Emma plans to support local farmers within the area to secure local meat and fresh produce.

Magda de Waal, Emma's mentor, has helped Emma develop and expand her menu for 2015 with the aim of diversifying her product range and further increasing her turnover. It is expected that 2015 will see Emma achieve record breaking profits since she first started her business in 2003.



The new trailer allows Emma to take her business on the road.

In April 2015 the Northern Cape Department of Economic Development and Tourism provided funding for four of Open Africa's Northern Cape Routes to be represented at Indaba 2015. Emma was selected to represent the Richtersveld Route on the Northern Cape Tourism Association's stand.

Open Africa is a non-profit organisation working in rural economic development using tourism as a platform. Open Africa creates self-drive tourism routes that promote authentic experiences while developing rural economies. It helps rural people see what is unique and valuable about what they have and encourages them to work together to grow their livelihoods as a community.

For more information about Open Africa and its projects, visit www.openafrica.org Article sponsored through a partnership between the Department of Tourism and Open Africa.

Some of the beautiful chalets from Bulungula Lodge

Community-based tourism on the rise

By Johannes Mokou



The long hidden potentials in the community based tourism is beginning to blossom, with some becoming forces to be reckoned with, even at the international spaces. One such example is Bulungula Lodge, which is located in the Eastern Cape at a remote rural village called Nqileni-on the Wild Coast.

Bulungula lodge has become a perfect example of responsible tourism and community based tourism in action, with the adoption of sustainable operations, community beneficiation as well as being environmentally friendly, which are the three phenomena that forms part of the cornerstones of responsible tourism.

Asked how Bulungula Lodge came to be, Lindile Mthyo, General Manager for the Lodge said, "The Bulungula idea was born and grew during years (1992 to 1997), when Dave Martins worked in the townships and informal settlements around Cape Town as well as during trans-Africa backpacking travels in 1997 to 1998. Martin's plan was to use backpackers/independent tourism as a tool for rural development in a remote African community while simultaneously being an example of sustainable living.

The Wild Coast is one of the few parts of South Africa that retains the traditional, relaxed, and rural African atmosphere - so it was a natural choice as the regional location."

Bulungula lodge has become a perfect example of responsible tourism and community based tourism in action

Mthyo stated that, "a two-week exploratory walk along the beach from Kei Mouth (near East London) to Port St Johns at the end of 2002 led to the meeting with Dave and the community of Nqileni village and the agreement was to build the Bulungula Lodge at the mouth of Bulungula river mouth.

In addition, Mthyo added that two years of long negotiations with government followed, but finally they were given a go ahead and building began on 2 May 2004, saying that, "The approval we received from government was an interim lease (in March 2004) from the Department of Land Affairs in East

London, giving right to rent the land from the community. Department of Environmental Affairs further gave permission to build the lodge on an environmentally sensitive land."

At the initial stage, the investments deal was structured in such a way that Dave had 60 percent equity while 40 percent would be owned by the local community trust. However, currently the status quo is that the community owns 100 percent and is in complete control of the lodge. A big achievement for a community which had no previous training or experience in hospitality.

What really makes the lodge stands above the rest is the way they prioritise responsible tourism principles in totality. From the structural development of the lodge powered completely by the renewable energy where solar power with rocket shower were used, odorless compost toilets that have little impact on the environment and the lodge being 100 percent run by members of the community.

On how the lodge benefited the community, Mthyo indicated that the main benefit the lodge provides to the community is employment, adding that, "at the end of the year the community gets its share called profit

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share which depends on how much profit the lodge has made at that particular year. This profit share is paid to the community bank account and used to help the community of the Nqileni village.

The lodge is Fair Trade Tourism (FTT) certified and this has been the case since 2006, which demonstrate empirically its practice to community empowerment.

FTT is widely recognised as South Africa's leading responsible tourism organisation, and works broadly in the field of responsible tourism with the goal of educating and incentivising the private sector and other stakeholders to adopt more sustainable operations.

As part of experiencing responsible tourism at the coal face, the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa visited the lodge on 17 July 2015. The visit was facilitated by FTT and NDT's Responsible tourism Directorate.

In her address to the workers during her visit, the Deputy Minister encouraged them to be innovative and come up with new ideas to further boost tourism in the area. She said that some of the workers needed to develop themselves by learning other languages to better service the number of international visitors they receive, adding that "It is always nice when somebody greets you in own language and gives you a warm welcome. Some of the women can also assist with horse-riding activities to show that women can also do such things."

Part of the benefits and differences the lodge has done on the community include helping the community to start a 100 percent community-owned and run businesses which include horse riding, canoeing, fishing, guiding, baking, sewing, cooking, wood-carving amongst the others.

The lodge has also been instrumental in helping some of the women in the village to

start legendary Ilanga Fire Restaurant, one of whom is Asiphe Denjana who claims to bake the sweet and best savoury pancakes in Africa. She said, "The lodge has helped a great deal in developing me as a person as I am able to do something I was not able to do before."

Two women from the village have also been professionally trained as Masseuses and offer luxurious full body and Indian head massages. Bulungula lodge has also been nominated for several responsible tourism awards, namely:

- 2014 Imvelo Awards-Best Social Involvement Programme and Economic Impact business within the small establishment category.
- It was named one of the World Top 25 Ultimate Ethical Travel Experiences by the Rough Guide 2007.
- It was also nominated as one of the Top 100 Sustainable Destinations in the world by Green Destinations for 2014.

Since the commencement of the lodge, the rate of unemployment has improved drastically. This is because the community members, who have never been employed before, have found employment within the lodge as full time workers and have been empowered through various programmes to improve their skills and knowledge in different departments and operations of the lodge. It employs 22 staff members and all are members of the Nqileni community, which are the owners of the lodge.

What makes the lodge even more special is that since its inception, it has never received funding from any source to support it in its development and operations. All finances were sponsored by the Founder, Dave Martins, who has since left it entirely in the hands of the community members.

Additionally, the lodge has created a state of the art early childhood learning center that identifies and places local learners in high quality schools, via bursaries as well as the Bulungula Incubator, which is a stand-alone non-profit entity identifying and assisting entrepreneurs in the community. All these major community support programmes are funded externally and through volunteers.



Bulungula Lodge staff member demonstrates some of the offerings from the Lodge to the Deputy Minister of Tourism



André Harms, Director of Evolution Consulting and a Sustainability Engineer

Existing buildings – filled with possibility

By André Harms

Nature knows no waste, depletes no finite resources and generates no uncontrollable amounts of harmful toxins. In the past, civilisations knew how to harness and work with nature in the construction of efficient buildings. The Romans, for example, worked with gravity in the construction of the now famous aqueducts to transport water over vast distances, whilst the Persians, to use another example, designed passively efficient buildings and knew how to naturally ventilate, constructing ventilation towers called 'Badgirs'.

Contemporary design, architecture and construction, however, too often ignore these ancient wisdoms, resulting in the construction

of a seemingly endless amount of energy intensive or uncomfortable buildings. To exacerbate matters, inappropriate and/or inefficient systems, equipment and appliances are too often used within these buildings.

With today's mounting energy, water and landfill-space constraints, the status quo is simply no longer sufficient. Accordingly, an effective, efficient and sustainable way of designing, constructing and operating buildings needs to be adopted.

Depending on the brief, goals, budget, location and many other factors, it is often not viable or even environmentally beneficial to design and construct a building from scratch

to incorporate sound passive strategies and efficient system design or selection. Nevertheless, there is hope yet for the stock of existing buildings out there. Depending on the budget and goals of a refurbishment or retrofit, a lot can be done to improve the resource intensity of existing buildings and operational policies and procedures can ensure sustainability of the operation and long-term maintainability and functionality. Sure, the location, orientation and other hard properties of the site and building cannot be changed, but there are always many options available to make improvements.

There is certainly no silver bullet as all buildings, operations, budgets, targets and preferences

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are different. Depending on building type, heating and air conditioning, hot water generation, lighting and cooking are usually the biggest energy consumers. All of these areas have opportunities for passive load reducing strategies and efficient active systems.

Knowing where energy, water and other resources are being consumed is a crucial starting point. The commonly used adage of 'you cannot manage what you do not measure' is certainly true. Recording, tracking, analysing and comparing your consumption of electricity, water, waste and other resources through any and all means available is invaluable. Municipal or utility accounts, prepaid electricity purchases, contractor or purchase receipts, meters and ideally sub-meter readings are useful sources for this data. Comparing this against relevant parameters for that particular business (such as room nights sold in accommodation, trips or kilometres travelled for a tour operator, or covers in a restaurant will provide some insight). Factors like season, weather, days in a month, faulty equipment, recent or scheduled maintenance or interventions should also be taken into consideration. A thorough assessment by a professional of the status quo is advisable as a first step in order to identify opportunities, priorities and to strategise an approach for the retrofit.

During a complete refurbishment it is strongly advised to appoint a sustainability professional to the team as early as possible to ensure that a holistic set of sustainability interventions is incorporated based on the project, brief and client/team priorities. The same professional should also be able to develop strategies for a sustainable operation together with the operations team.

For step-by-step implementation the collated data, assessments and knowledge will start to inform the owners and operations teams about their business' consumption and environmental impact. It will also drive awareness-raising, which is a key aspect to unlocking many efficiencies. Behaviour change towards a more sustainable operation contributes greatly at little to no cost.

Think about some of these activities and more:

- Switching off or closing unused equipment, lights, refrigerator/cold room doors, air conditioned or heated space's doors and oven doors will save energy and often extend the lifespan of that equipment or luminaire;
- Preventative maintenance scheduling will enhance the running efficiency of equipment and extend its lifespan;
- Conservative and defensive driving will not just save fuel but also maintenance costs as components such as brakes, clutches, shock absorbers and tyres will be useable for many more kilometres;
- Rethinking before purchasing, reducing the amount of wasteful consumption, reusing for the same purpose, repurposing, and recycling will not just significantly limit the amount of waste that is sent to landfill but will save funds at several of those steps;
- Programming set-points and thermostats to more conservative yet still effective values will again save and also often prolong equipment life. Examples include water heating temperature, heating or air conditioning temperatures, pressures and fan speeds;
- Placement of equipment can also make a big difference. Cooling equipment such as refrigerators and ice machines in well ventilated shaded areas and not next to heating or cooking equipment; and
- Be appropriate to the local climate, conditions and communities.

On the low cost and investment side some key strategies such as the following should be considered:

- Fit low flow fixtures and fittings;
- Insulate ceilings, water heating equipment and hot water pipes;
- Repair leaking equipment;
- Seal leaky building elements;
- Implement a responsible procurement plan to act consciously and selectively not just on price and effectiveness but also for sustainability criteria such as efficiency, wastage such as packaging, harmful ingredients or components, responsible farming or fishing practices, seasonality and third party certified products;

- Replace inefficient water heating, cooking, lighting and refrigeration systems;
- Fit control equipment for lights, fans and other equipment and variable speed drives for pumps where sensible;
- Implement a sustainable travel plan to facilitate ride sharing, car-pooling, shuttles and other responsible travel options for staff and guests;
- Retrofit shading or plant deciduous trees; and
- Upgrade glazing appropriately to orientation, space utilisation and shading devices.

These suggestions are by no means exhaustive, but could be used as a guide to start the path towards running, maintaining and retrofitting a more sustainable operation in the hospitality industry. Based on this thinking more opportunities can be identified that are specific or applicable to the respective business. It is vital to understand that a green building needs to be operated and maintained sustainably for long-term efficiency and environmental impact reduction. If civilisations before us could learn to harness and work efficiently with nature, then there is no reason for us not to be doing so today.

For practical examples of the above in action, visit Hotel Verde at the Cape Town International Airport, where the author led the sustainability consulting during the design and construction of the hotel, and now leads sustainability consulting for its operations: www.hotelverde.com

In addition interested parties can also consider Africa's first ever Sustainable Hotel Management Solution Company www.verdehotels.co.za as it is crucial to be able to manage your establishment in a sustainable manner, whether it is designed and built sustainably or retrofitted.

André Harms is the Director and a Sustainability Engineer at Ecolution Consulting (www.ecolution.co.za; hello@ecolution.co.za; +27 21 385 0909) and was responsible for Hotel Verde receiving a double platinum LEED certification from the United States Green Building Council, the only hotel in the world to have done so to date.

A culture change to be prioritized in promoting domestic travelling

By Johannes Mokou

There is a greater need for us to create a culture where South Africans want to take travels in their own country, something that can be beneficial not only to the economy of the province but also of the country as a whole, a gathering during a business breakfast session in Limpopo (Polokwane) heard on Thursday.

The session was organised by the Department of Tourism, in conjunction with the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, with an aim of gauging the level of happiness from the industry role players, but also paying a special focus on affording them an opportunity to voice out their frustrations as well as sharing best practices in making the province the priority tourism destination.

Addressing a group of visibly enthusiastic industry role players, Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom, said, "It is necessary for us to push domestic tourism in order not to depend too much on the international travels.

"We must agree that much efforts have not been done in this areas and we need to pay more attention to it."

Hanekom said, Part of the remedy we have come up with this year is that we have earmarked R 100 Million for the promotion and marketing of domestic tourism through South African Tourism.

He said that platforms such as media will be explored in this regard.

Hanekom cautioned though, that such avenues, although effective, are not sufficient, "as one of the biggest reasons only 12 million people out of a population of over 50 million took travels domestically is money, he said."

He added that priority must also be put on regional tourism, especially for Limpopo province as the greatest number of people coming to the country is through the border of Zimbabwe "and they spend a lot of money when they are in the country, thus we should embrace them and never be dismissive of them, Hanekom said."

Notable stakeholders present during session include, Member of Parliament, Dr Mathole Motshega, Chairperson of Limpopo Tourism Agency, Andrew Dipela, newly elected Chief Executive Officer of Limpopo Tourism Agency, Ndumiso Matlala, Polokwane Municipality Executive Mayor, Councillor Thembi Nkadameng, amongst the many.

On the perspective of the province, MEC for Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, Seapora Sekoati, said, "Limpopo contributed immensely in the growth of the country this year as it is currently having a 13 percent share in the provincial tourism arena, while having added 50 percent at the national level."

To maintain this, or even surpass it, Sekoati said, the province will continue to expand on other parts of the province that have not yet been explored in order to expose the uniqueness of the province domestically and internationally.

Sekoati added that features such as the order of Mapungubwe and the order of the Baobab, which reside in the province, including a diversity of parks, firmly establish the province as a competitive and attractive destination, both for a local and an international traveler."

Managing Director for Forever Resort, Kobus Tait, who represented the industry during the session, submitted a pledge to government to do more in support of the industry, saying that, "there are a lot of places that are run-down and need some fixing so that they can be used as attractions to the locals and people outside the country. This is where government must step-in and remodel these places and make them alive again."

Tait said, "as an industry, we have made programmes available to ensure that local people, especially the young, are brought on board and are encouraged to take travels in their own country. These includes creating cheaper rates and even inviting them just for a day in order for them to experience domestic travelling."

Turning his focus to Limpopo, Minister Hanekom indicated that people come to the province for many reasons. These include paying a visit to the world heritage sites or coming to experience the rich cultural diversity found in the province as well as enjoying the best shopping malls and finest eateries.

He added that the biggest known tourism attractions in South Africa are Table Mountain as well as Kruger National Park, which happens to be found in Limpopo.



Some of the industry role players give an attentive ear during the seminar.



Mr Kobus Tait, Managing Director, Forever Resorts presents the industry perspective during the Business Breakfast.

Industry role players share best practices during public lecture - Thohoyandou

By Johannes Mokou



Minister of Tourism and his delegation arrive for a Public Lecture at the University of Venda.



Benny Masekwameng, Executive Chef at Tsogo Sun, presenting during the lecture.

The Ministerial Public Lecture held on September the 4th at the University of Venda in Thohoyandou, started out on a positive note, with industry role players sharing various experiences, best practices as well as challenges within the industry.

In attendance during the Lecture were representatives from government, hospitality industry, business, academics as well as ordinary members of the community.

One of the academics, who was present during the lecture is Professor Berendien Lubbe from the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Economic and Management science, who made a presentation on rediscovering South Africa through tourism.

During her presentation, Professor Lubbe reminded the audience to bear in mind that 1 billion tourists and 1 billion opportunities starts with just 1 tourist and 1 opportunity.

Lubbe said, "in order to rediscover ourselves successfully we need to know our purpose, how we see our future and what principles or values defines us", adding that aspects such as the enabling environment, travel and tourism policy and enabling conditions, infrastructure and natural and cultural resources" will go a long way in helping us to discover ourselves.

In 2012, a record one billion tourists crossed international borders in a single year. Another five to six billion are estimated to travel in their own countries every year. This is one reason why tourism matters as, these one billion tourists turn into one billion opportunities.

On the importance of partnerships and vigorous marketing, Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom, said, "we value partnerships with the universities, private sector as well as other key stakeholders as these afford us an opportunity to hold dialogues of these nature, and help us to strategise, analyse and look for opportunities in a smart way."

Hanekom added though, that tourism attraction does not only happen through marketing, adding that "there is a need for us to focus on destination improvement. You can market all you want, but if the places are not attractive, then it is a waste of time. We should make the place be memorable."

The Lecture was held under the theme – 'South Africa's Competitiveness: A driver Towards a Billion Opportunities.

Currently South Africa has moved up the global tourism competitiveness ranks and is sitting at number 48 from a worrying 64 in 2013.



Professor Berendien Lubbe presents a lecture to the industry role players at the University of Venda.

Professor Lube further added that a tourist always has a choice. "It is never a force for the tourist to travel to a particular place. It is always driven by interests such as culture and others. We should therefore try and understand a tourist as a consumer," she said.

She said, "As tourist practitioners, we at least interact with some tourists in our day to day business, therefore, for each tourist we meet, we have an opportunity to show them what our country is about."

Lubbe added that tourism is not an island as it is dependent on quite a number of things such as safety and security. "We therefore need a strategy that will help us deal with these aspects during our dialogues," she said.

Upcoming tourism events

SEPTEMBER 2015

DATE	EVENT	VENUE / REGION
19 September	Kannaland Big Walk	Ladysmith and Calitzdorp - Western Cape
24 September	MEC welcome dinner (Tourism Month)	Limpopo
24 September	Heritage Day Celebration	Free State
25 - 26 September	Media tour	Limpopo
25 September	World Tourism Day Celebration	Phalaborwa: Kruger Gate
26 September	Nehakwe SRI Project Launch	Nehakwe
26 - 27 September	F1 Power Boat	Free State
28 September	West Coast Responsible Tourism Conference	Western Cape
29 September	Eastern Cape Mthatha Airport Visitor Inform	Eastern Cape
29 September	Mthatha Airport Visitors Information Launch	Eastern Cape

OCTOBER 2015

DATE	EVENT	VENUE / REGION
1 - 3 October	National Tourism Careers Expo 2015	Sand Du Plessis - Bloemfontein
2 - 3 October	Annual Kimberley Diamond Cup Skateboard Competition	Northern Cape
8 - 9 October	Minister's Outreach Programme	Northern Cape
24 - 25 October	Donkey Tracking Project Launch	Western Cape

NOVEMBER 2015

DATE	EVENT	VENUE / REGION
2 - 12 November	KZN Tourism Buddies Graduation Ceremony	Kwa-Zulu Natal Durban - 2 November 2015 Hluluwe - 3 November 2015 Newcastle - 4 November 2015 Bergville - 5 November 2015 Margate - 6 November 2015 Nongoma - 9 November 2015 Pietermaritzburg - 10 November 2015 Richard bay - 11 November 2015 Korkstad - 12 November 2015

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NOVEMBER 2015

DATE	EVENT	VENUE / REGION
11 - 18 November	Western Cape Tourism Buddies Graduation Ceremony	Western Cape CPT, West Coast & Winelands – 11 November 2015 Central Karoo -13 November 2015 Eden Area – 18 November 2015
17 November	Wine Services Training Graduations	Cape Town
20 November	North West Tourism Buddies Graduation Ceremony	North West
24 November	Wine Services Training Graduations	Gauteng Sedibeng
26 November	Gauteng Tourism Buddies Graduation Ceremony	Gauteng

DECEMBER 2015

DATE	EVENT	VENUE / REGION
1 December	World AIDS day	Pretoria

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