



# FP&M SETA

## Insider

### Maximising skills development for a sustainable future

#### YOUTH FOCUS PROJECT CHANGES LIVES IN CAPE TOWN



**Clotex (Western Cape Clothing & Textile Service Centre)** in partnership with the Western Cape Department of Education, has initiated a project to assist twenty individuals with learning difficulties to reach their full potential in life.

The Youth Focus Project, funded by the FP&M SETA, will assist community members from impoverished areas to attain technical skills in order to sustain themselves and to establish themselves as entrepreneurs. These individuals are currently undergoing a clothing manufacturing learnership at Clotex's Clothing and Textile Service Centre. This learnership provides them with skills to cut garments and to design and manufacture jackets, blouses, trousers and skirts.

According to the programme co-ordinator Ms Elizabeth Verster and the facilitator, Ms Ivy Daries the transformation of these students, from struggling school learners to self-sustainable individuals gives them great satisfaction: "When the programme started they were very nervous and some of them lacked the discipline and drive to make a success of the learnership. After proper induction and a few motivational speeches they recognized the benefits and grasped the opportunity. Today they are dedicated and motivated to make a success." said Elizabeth.

Additionally, Clotex consulted with a DHET (Department of Higher Education and Training) specialist to identify any other shortcomings which may hamper these individuals when entering the job market. Their inability to read and write were identified as two of the major obstacles and various remedies and support measures were introduced to assist them. Other issues such as the lack of adult basic education and training was tabled and the DHET, FP&M SETA and Clotex were consulted to advise and marginalize the problem.

Some findings and challenges of the project:

1. In the beginning stages of the learnership, it was found that the learners struggled with the theoretical aspect of the work.
2. Social problems were identified. For example, alcohol abuse by parents of learners, teenage pregnancies.
3. Low morale and low self-esteem among learners.
4. Literacy and numeracy challenges among learners. For example, learners couldn't identify letters of the alphabet, couldn't tell the time and battled with basic mathematic calculations.
5. High absentee rate from core module assessments.
6. The concentration span of the learners only lasted 15 – 20 minutes.
7. Learners tend to be forgetful.

Despite these challenges, the performance of most learners on the practical part of the learnership was 100%. Since commencing with the learnership, three learners have started small businesses and are selling their garments and products in their communities. Not only does this benefit the learners but it trickles down into their families and ultimately the overall community. These learners become the beacon of hope and an example to their peers who will hopefully follow their lead to educate and skill themselves. The learnership will conclude in six months' time and Clotex is certain that more success stories will be borne as a result of this initiative.

Given the challenges that the current local economic climate faces, it is of utmost importance that the public and private sector establish partnerships to skill the unemployed youth in order for them to become part of the economy and contribute to local community development.

The partnership between the Department of Education, Clotex and the FP&M SETA certainly changed the lives of these individuals for the better and made an immense contribution to their development.

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