Establishing an integrated post-school education and training system

Aligned to initiatives such as the National Development Plan (NDP) and the New Growth Path, the White Paper for Post-school Education and Training released on 16 January 2014 provides South Africa with a blueprint for creating an integrated post-school education and training system over the next twenty years.

The Department of Higher Education and Training’s (DHET) vision is to create a transformed post-school education and training system, which is more equitable, expanded, more diverse, and which includes a key role for employers in the provision of education and training opportunities. It is envisaged that the various components complement one another and work together to improve the quality, quantity and diversity of post-school education and training.

Context

The White Paper seeks to address current challenges and short-comings within our post-school education and training system, including the fact that disadvantaged institutions in rural areas are still disadvantaged in terms of infrastructure, teaching and staff; poorer students have to fit into systems designed for students from relatively privileged backgrounds; opportunities in rural areas are limited and

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EDITOR’S NOTE

Romaana McKinnon

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The release of the White Paper in January 2014 made it an obvious choice for our lead story. The article: “Establishing an integrated post-school education and training system,” explains the key tenets of the White Paper and how Fasset is already closely aligned to government’s vision for a post-school education and training system.

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Fasset is the Finance and Accounting Services Sector Education and Training Authority
One of Fasset’s major successes, and something which we need to continually strive to do, is to re-evaluate what we are doing to see whether this has been successful. This is something we do constantly. What we have seen over the past year or two is an increase in focus on the skills pipeline approach, to see where Fasset, and the sector that we work with, fits into meeting these skills development needs across the broader finance sector, and particularly in terms of finance skills outside our sector.

We continuously look for new ways to engage with our sector and to engage with young people, who need skills to enter the sector and professions, which we represent. The current year, our fifteenth year of operation is no different. In the year ahead, we will continue to focus on the biggest challenge, which I believe our sector is facing, transformation. We will continue to offer grants to assist Black African learners to enter our sector, through grants such as our PIVOTAL Grant, the Learnership Cash Grant (LCG), and the NSFAS Loan Repayment Grant (NLRG).

We are also very conscious of the need for Continuous Professional Development (CPD). This is evident from our commitment to continue supporting our Lifelong Learning Programme.

In line with our revaluation of the skills pipeline, last year we started to focus our attention on TVET (previously FET) learners. In the year ahead, we will continue to build close relationships with TVET Colleges. We will also continue to encourage employers to take on young learners, who are coming out of the TVET Colleges, to give them the opportunity to complete their qualifications, by providing them with an opportunity to obtain the requisite workplace experience. Hopefully, many of these learners will join our sector.

Recognising our responsibility as an incubator sector for training accountants and finance professionals for the entire economy, we have broadened our scope. Whereas we have previously focussed our training on people, who train and get support within the Fasset sector and then leave and go into other sectors, we will now be looking at accounting and finance skills training needs, generally. By opening an incubator funding window, we will be looking at young people, who may not necessarily receive their training within the Fasset sector.

Our funding window is inviting tenders across the entire skills pipeline, from programmes, which target TVET learners and matriculants, through to academic programmes, and Work Readiness Programmes, both within and outside the Fasset sector. Our funding window reflects a change in our scope, and a broadening of our responsibilities as a Seta.

We are only able to do this because of our very strong partnerships with professional bodies in our sector. Moving into our incubator role, our partnerships with professional bodies will grow even stronger. We are also, forming very strong partnerships with TVETs, Universities of Technology and universities in general. Partnerships in the pipeline of skills development have been a focus area over the past year; we will continue to strengthen these going forward. However, this is not to the exclusion of employers. We are striving to draw employers closer to the source of young people that they need to be identifying, and hopefully to strengthen the partnership between the world of work and the world of academia.

Valuing people is one of our core values. We value people in the entire skills pipeline of development, including our staff, who work at Fasset. Together, as a unified team, we can address some of the challenges that we are facing. Working together with all of our partners, we are able to achieve so much more and we encourage you all to work with us on this journey of increasing employment opportunities for young people as they strive to become productive citizens of RSA Inc.

Bonani Duo make Fasset proud
Fasset pilots two TVET Programmes
Excellent attendance at Fasset’s flagship Budget and Tax Update
The focus falls on Fasset’s Quality Assurance and Learnerships Department
AAT (SA) delivers Fasset’s TVET Professional Qualification and Capacity Building Pilot Project
Performance Management workshops, followed by SDF Benefits and Incentive Event

Fasset is the Finance and Accounting Services Sector Education and Training Authority

FROM THE CEO’S DESK
Cheryl James

Setas have been operating for fourteen years. It is very important that, as Fasset, we maintain open minds and that we continuously reflect on what we are doing as a Seta, in terms of how we are able to make a real difference within the skills development space.
Fasset is the Finance and Accounting Services Sector Education and Training Authority (Fasset) is the Finance and Accounting Services Sector Education and Training Authority (Fasset) is the Finance and Accounting Services Sector Education and Training Authority (Fasset) is the Finance and Accounting Services Sector Education and Training Authority. The training and education system must cater for the needs of communities by assisting them to develop skills and knowledge in areas such as community organisation, how to deal with government departments, commercial enterprises such as banks, citizenship education, community health education and literacy.

Re-establishing an artisan training system is also a priority. The current target is to produce 30 000 artisans per year. Other forms of on-the-job training, including learnerships and internships need to be expanded.

Fasset’s pipeline approach to skills development is closely aligned to the single, co-ordinated education and training system envisaged in the White Paper. In line with our TVET and HET strategy to build partnerships with these public institutions, and our pipeline approach to skills development, Fasset funds Bridging Programmes for Access into Higher Education (NGF Level 5), Access into Employment (NGF Level 6-7) and Academic Programmes (NGF Level 6-8), which lead to the completion of a qualification, and/or a professional designation. Once in employment in the Fasset sector, Fasset’s Lifelong Learning interventions ensure that the soft skills of learners and professionals remain current.

A single, co-ordinated system

The post-school system consists of the following institutions: 23 public universities; 50 public Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) (previously FET) colleges; Public learning centres; private post-school institutions (private higher education institutions and private FET colleges, also to be renamed TVET colleges); Setas and the National Skills Fund (NSFAS) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the Quality Councils.

A coherent and co-ordinated post-school system requires easy articulation between the various components. Curricula need to be designed to permit articulation between succeeding levels of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), and access to a university diploma or degree; vertical and horizontal movement between different streams and levels must be facilitated; unfair and irrational barriers to acceptance and credit transfer must be removed; learners must be supported through bridging programmes, foundation programmes or mentoring programmes; and access must be expanded through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

Cognisance must be taken of the special training and education needs of various social groups including the youth, the sick, rural dwellers, and the disabled. As far as the latter is concerned, the DHET will develop a strategic framework to guide the improvement of the DHET will develop a strategic framework to guide the improvement of access to, and success in post-school education and training through partnerships with organisations such as the Higher Education Disability Services Association (HEDSA), Disabled People South Africa, and the Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities.

Training must also take cognisance of the fact that individuals may not be absorbed into formal employment. The training and education system must equip individuals to create employment opportunities by establishing co-operatives, community organisations, non-profit initiatives and small businesses. The system must also cater for the needs of communities by assisting them to develop skills and knowledge in areas such as community organisation, how to deal with government departments, commercial enterprises such as banks, citizenship education, community health education and literacy.

There are also challenges around quality: these relate to governance, management, teaching, curricula, quality assurance, infrastructure and insufficient co-operation between post-school institutions and employers.

National priorities have changed. Serious structural challenges around unemployment, poverty and inequality require a shift in focus and priorities.

Expanding access, improving quality and increasing diversity

TVET colleges must become the institution of choice for a large proportion of school leavers. The goal is to have enrolments of 1.6 million in public universities, 2.5 million in TVET colleges, 1 million in community colleges, and an additional 500 000 learners in private further and higher educational institutions by 2030.

Opportunities for part-time study must be expanded. Open and distance education opportunities must be increased, and more satellite campuses created, including campuses in rural areas.

Education and training must be affordable. The DHET is considering capping university fees to make these more affordable to individual students, to the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) and to other funders.

The college system

TVET colleges

The DHET’s highest priority is to strengthen and expand public TVET colleges. Key objectives include improving access, throughput rates, management capacity, student support services and student accommodation, developing management information systems, strengthening governance, building partnerships with employers and other stakeholders, increasing responsiveness to the labour market, improving placement into employment, and creating a mix of programmes and qualifications to meet student’s needs.

TVET colleges are to provide training for mid-level skills to develop the South African economy. Skills must be developed for occupations in the engineering and construction industries, tourism, hospitality, and general business and management studies.
Establishing working relationships with employers is of paramount importance: this will assist in creating opportunities for work-integrated learning and in the placement of TVET graduates; it will also provide college staff with workplace exposure to enable them to remain abreast of developments within industry. Employers should advise TVET colleges on curricula, and experts from industry should be encouraged to teach part-time in TVET colleges.

Setas should play an important role in forging relationships between colleges and employers. They should not only use their contacts, but also their resources to incentivise employers to take on students for workplace learning opportunities.

Fasset has finalised its Public Further Education and Training (FET), now called TVET College system and Higher Education and Training (HET) Institutions Strategy for 2013-2016. By implementing this strategy, we are strengthening our partnership with public TVET Colleges and other stakeholders within our sector.

Fasset has also, piloted two TVET College projects: the TVET Learner Enrichment Project, which seeks to equip learners with the knowledge and skills required to increase their employability, and the TVET Workplace Experience Project, which provides students, who have completed the N6 Certificate in Business Studies, with 18 months of workplace experience, which will assist them in obtaining the diploma. (More information is provided in the article: "Fasset Pilots two TVET Programmes."

The White Paper acknowledge there is a possibility for colleges and Setas to work together to restructure some of the Nated (N) programmes as learnerships or apprenticeship, or for the work placement to become a more structured internship.

A current challenge emanates from the fact that there are currently five vocational qualifications: Nated programmes; National Certificate Vocational (NCV) programmes; occupational programmes; Higher Certificates and the National Senior Certificate (NSC) with technical subjects.

Through its TVET Qualification Mapping and Analysis Project, Fasset is conducting research into the relevance of the National N Diploma in Financial Management for the Fasset sector. We are also exploring possible opportunities for credit transfer for this and other qualifications within Fasset’s scope of quality assurance.

Furthermore, the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) in conjunction with the DHET and the Swiss-South African Cooperation Initiative (SSACI) is looking at restructuring the National Diploma in Financial Management. Fasset, together with professional bodies within its sector, is participating in this process.

TVET colleges are to provide Career Guidance, and while this should complement career guidance at school-level, it is envisaged that the DHET and other bodies also provide career guidance.

Fasset is the lead Seta at both the Sekhukhune and Waterberg Colleges in Limpopo. Fasset has established a Seta Career Awareness office at the Waterberg College Business Studies campus, which provides career guidance information from all the Setas. In addition, Fasset has appointed Brand Ambassadors at 10 TVET Colleges, two universities; and one Universities of Technology.

Our Brand Ambassadors are required to promote a career in the finance and accounting services sector as a career of choice, to fellow students, school learners and their communities. In addition, Fasset also hosts Finance and Accounting Career Events for learners.

Community colleges
Community colleges will be established to cater for the youth and adults, who did not complete their schooling, or who never attended school, and therefore, do not qualify to study at TVET Colleges or universities. Community colleges will be multi-campus institutions, which group together a number of existing public adult learning centres.

Their qualifications will articulate with programmes offered by other post-school institutions. They will offer the General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) and Senior Certificates currently offered, the proposed new National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA), and occupational programmes funded by Setas and the National Skills Fund (NSF).

"TVET colleges are to provide training for mid-level skills to develop the South African economy. Skills must be developed for occupations in the engineering and construction industries, tourism, hospitality, and general business and management studies."
Continued from page 5

While the DHET will provide the core funding for community colleges, including core permanent teaching staff and administrative staff, this will be complemented by funds from Setas and the NSF. The NSF will provide funding for youth programmes, building small businesses and co-operatives and rural development. It will also fund research into innovation.

Universities

The main focus will be on improving quality and building diversity. A differentiated system will provide a variety of modes of learning, learning programmes, and methods of teaching and assessment for diverse student bodies; this system should support flexibility and innovation.

The DHET will encourage expansion in areas of national need, including teacher education, health, and areas of engineering and technology. Other areas may be identified. Universities are required to provide for the education of sufficient numbers of professionals and other graduates in scarce skills areas. Deploying the labour market intelligence system (which still needs to be developed), and in consultation with other government departments and employers, scarce skills lists will be updated to ensure that priority skills are not neglected.

There is a strong focus on growing research and innovation and on improving the quality of research, ensuring coherence of policy frameworks guiding these areas across the higher education and research communities.

Universities are required to build strong partnerships with other post-school institutions, particularly TVET colleges; they should also seek to build strong partnerships with employers so as to expand workplace training opportunities, especially in areas where qualifications or professional registration depends on practical workplace experience. Setas can assist in brokering university-employer collaborations as well as providing advice and resources to facilitate work-integrated learning.

Fasset has well-established relationships, spanning many years through Fasset-funded Bridging Projects such as Bonani and Thusanani.

Strengthening teaching and learning across the system is a priority. Staffing is also a concern. The DHET will develop a policy, which focuses on recruiting and retaining academics, ensuring that academic careers are attractive, assisting academics to improve their qualifications, improving conditions of service, and where necessary, attracting academics from other countries. The DHET will also investigate the feasibility of introducing a national graduate community service programme.

The White Paper recognises that there are opportunities for greater collaboration between universities and the skills system.

One of the trends that have developed is for Setsas, supported by industry stakeholders to develop professional and other higher-level occupational qualifications, and then to fund the delivery. In future universities should engage with Setsas to examine how their programmes could be progressively adjusted to fulfil this role.

Fasset has a good track record for facilitating the development of high level qualifications. The recent development of the tax professional as an occupational qualification is a case in point. While the South African Institute of Tax Professionals (SAIT) is the driver and custodian of the qualification, and the development process included extensive consultation with SARS, law firms, the Big Four professional services firms, public universities, and some medium-sized firms facilitated by Fasset.

Distance learning

The quality of distance teaching must be improved. Curriculum development initiatives to improve success and graduation rates will be explored and supported. Enrolments in both Masters and Doctoral Programmes need to be increased, and the quality of both Masters and PhD degrees should be improved.

Open learning through diverse modes of provision

Providers are expected to collaborate in terms of sharing infrastructure, learning resources and staff capacity to improve access, quality, and the cost-effectiveness of provision.

Fasset has already delivered on this imperative through the Fasset-funded University of Cape Town (UCT) Bukela Ufunde Academic Programme. Fasset has funded the production of a professional video to assist first to fourth year accounting students to understand key accounting concepts. The video will be available in the open learning environment and can be used by any university, University of Technology, or TVET College.

Providers of distance education must strengthen their internal capacity for delivering quality education. Particular attention will be given to the accreditation of new distance education provision, which must be informed by an appropriate contextual analysis of need, taking cognisance of existing public and private provision.

The DHET will develop an integrated Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Plan to improve access.

Private education provision

This is particularly important in niche areas, where public provision is inadequate or non-existent, for example, advertising, design, fashion, theological training, film and television, information technology and teacher education.

While many private institutions have requested public funding to subsidise their students, public resources will be primarily directed towards meeting national priorities and provision through public institutions.
Central skills planning system and labour market intelligence system

In order to build an efficient fit between the education and training systems and the needs of the economy, a reliable and comprehensive system of data collection, storage and analysis is required. The DHET is working with researchers from the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and university-based lecturers to establish a labour market intelligence system. Learning pathways, including workplace learning will be designed to meet both current and future skills needs within the workplace.

The DHET will establish a planning unit, which will work with key public institutions to develop a national skills planning system. Setas will provide reliable, sector-specific quantitative data for the national central planning process; they will also engage with key stakeholders to test scenarios that emerge from the central skills planning process and plan to support provision in priority areas.

The role of Setas

In the future Setas (or their equivalent if they are restructured) will be given a clearer, narrower, and more focused role. Certain functions such as skills planning, funding and quality assurance will be located in well-resourced central institutions, thus enabling Setas to focus on engaging with stakeholders in the workplace, establishing their needs and agreeing on the best way to address these, facilitating access to relevant programmes and ensure that providers have the capacity to deliver programmes, which have an impact. A key role of the skills system structures will be to support efforts to implement workplace learning, which complements formal education and training.

As the key institutions which mediate between education and work, the Setas' focus should be on skills development for workers within existing enterprises and the development of a skills pipeline for such workplaces through promoting and supporting learnerships, apprenticeships or internships.

Setas will also be required to establish workplace needs and to ensure that providers have the requisite capacity to deliver against these.

Mandatory and Discretionary Grants

In future, the focus of the Mandatory Grant will be exclusively on gathering accurate data on sector skills needs. Stakeholders will be required to submit one comprehensive document annually, which includes information about employees’ current skills levels, experience and qualifications, training that is taking place within the workplace, and skills priorities and skills gaps in both the short and medium term. Submission will enable employers to access 20% of their Skills Development Levy (SDL), through the Mandatory Grant.

Discretionary Grants will be used to fund training, for existing workers and for new entrants into the labour market. These funds will target substantive training for employed and unemployed people entering the sector in line with agreed sector priorities. Providers may be public, private or even the employer’s own training department, provided they have the capacity to provide all or substantial parts of qualifications.

The new funding regulations require 80% of the Discretionary Grant to fund Professional, Vocational, Technical and Academic learning (PIVOTAL Programmes). This includes qualifications and training programmes that lead to awards recognised by the industry.

A restructured and refocused National Skills Authority (NSA) will monitor and evaluate Setas.

National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)

Where Setas are funding the provision of qualifications for undergraduates or postgraduates, who are not currently employed in line with sector priorities, the White Paper requires Setas to make ring-fenced contributions to NSFAS and not manage their own bursary schemes. Ring-fencing ensures that NSFAS directs Seta money only at programmes that have been prioritised within their sector.

In line with this requirement and our Minister’s call for Setas to bolster the NSFAS Bursary Fund, during the past financial year, Fasset has contributed R130 million to the fund.

Conclusion

The current Seta landscape and NSDS III is expected to continue until March 2016. In the meantime efforts will be made to bring about a greater degree of collaboration through the clustering of Setas including: sharing research, collaboration in relation to skills training along supply chains; making effective use of offices located within TVET colleges; sharing resources at provincial and local level to improve access; and the development of a common approach to qualifications and programmes that cut across different Seta sectors.

Fasset is looking forward to working very closely with the DHET, and all of our training partners in the post-school pipeline, including employers, to ‘roll out’ the White Paper. We want to make a very positive contribution to creating an integrated post-school education and training system. We recognise however, that with only 22 months remaining of NSDS III and our current Seta licensing period, momentum for delivery will ‘really take off’ under NSDS IV.
Fasset launches its new Finance and Accounting Career Event at Waterberg College

Fasset piloted its Finance and Accounting Career Event at the Waterberg Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (formerly FET) College on 6 February 2014.

Exhibitors included:
- South African Revenue Services (SARS)
- Independent Regulatory Board for Auditors (IRBA)
- Financial Services Board (FSB)
- South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)
- Institute of Certified Bookkeepers (ICB)
- Associate Accounting Technician (South Africa) (AAT (SA))
- The South African Institute of Professional Accountants (SAIPA)
- The South African Institute of Tax Professionals (SAIT)
- The Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA)

The top 10 Grade 12 Accounting students from five different schools in the surrounding area as well as five educators attended the event. Learners really appreciated the opportunity to be able to field their questions and to interact on a one-on-one basis with representatives from the sector.

Fasset has shifted its focus to these interactive Career Events as the Seta believes that the current format of career exhibitions does not offer the same levels of engagement. This revised approach will allow Fasset to identify those learners who have a particular interest in pursuing a career in finance or accounting.

Going forward, Fasset plans to host many more Finance and Accounting Events. The idea is to invite an audience interested in the finance and accounting field, and to exhibit opportunities and professions in the finance and accounting field exclusively. These events will be hosted in a presentation or workshop format, providing learners with an opportunity to engage with professionals on a one-on-one basis.

CIMA launches its updated 2015 Professional Qualification Syllabus


The syllabus focuses on equipping finance professionals with the requisite skills to meet current and future business needs and is based on extensive global research conducted over the past four years, including face-to-face meetings with leading organisations in the United Kingdom, United States, South Africa and Malaysia, roundtable discussions in 13 countries and a global questionnaire to over 3,000 participants.

Besides core accounting and finance skills, top employers identified business acumen, people skills and leadership skills as crucial. An updated competency framework addressing the skills and competencies employers expect from their finance team, as well as a new assessment process has been developed.

New topic areas relevant to accounting in business such as managing big data, finance function transformation and sustainability have been included. Integrated case studies have been added to the assessment process at each level of the qualification to consolidate learning and reflect real-life work situations.

The syllabus has also been informed by research into Generation Y. Major changes have been made to the assessment of candidates in line with developments in the use of technology in education and industry. Students will now benefit from online assessment and exams on demand – through a partnership with Pearson VUE – allowing them to choose their own pace of progression.
Meet Shahied Daniels

Shahied Daniels

“Accounting and Tax are in my blood. My passion as CEO of SAIPA derives from my desire to serve the accounting profession, our institute as a business, and our members,” SAIPA CEO, Shahied Daniels summarizes his vocational commitment.

He grew up in Bonteheuwel, Cape Town. Before enrolling at the Peninsula Technikon, now the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, where he received a Diploma in Internal Auditing, he spent a year in a post school job. Subsequently, he completed a Diploma in Taxation through the University of South Africa, and an Advanced Diploma in Executive Management through the Business School of the University of Cape Town. To add to his prior knowledge, he also completed courses in Leadership, Personal Leadership and Board Leadership.

After graduating he was unable to find employment, as very few opportunities were available at that time due to apartheid related unrest, which peaked in the eighties. He consequently ‘helped out’ at the Western Province Council of Churches, most of the staff having been detained.

His first permanent position was with the then Boland Bank, where he was employed as a Finance Clerk. He then article with a small audit firm, thereafter moving to a larger five-partner firm as an article clerk. Subsequently, he joined Engen Petroleum, occupying various positions during his ten year tenure, which included that of management accountant, senior tax analyst, senior business analyst, and corporate internal auditor.

Moving to the University of Cape Town, he took up the Finance and Administration Management position for three years at the then largest non-academic support unit. On leaving the University of Cape Town, he was appointed the Chief Operating Officer of the Community Chest of the Western Cape, two years later accepting the position of Chief Executive Officer of the South African Institute of Accountants (SAIPA) in which role he has since served.

Shahied describes his leadership style as participative and consultative. “My focus of my leadership is educational and developmental. When I consult and make decisions, be it in relation to the business, staff, or the organisation, I always apply an educational perspective. When decisions concern staff, I always consider these decisions in terms of what they would stand to gain, and how their development would be influenced.

His personal vision, which is closely aligned to that of SAIPA, is to ensure that SAIPA becomes the accountancy institute of choice in South Africa. “I believe our institute has the ability to become the sought after institute in South Africa. To this end, I’m proud to have signed Memoranda of Understanding with international accounting bodies in Nigeria, Ireland, the United Kingdom and Australia.”

Shahied aspires to have SAIPA take its rightful position within the global accounting profession as a thought leader. “SAIPA is well positioned to assist with the development of the profession. The world is small, and South Africa’s challenge is to take up its rightful role as a citizen in this global village. As SAIPA members, we do business across borders, essentially in Southern Africa, but also increasingly beyond Southern Africa”, he observes.

“In a profession that is constantly changing, there are always challenges; challenges concerning recognition and how professional organisations should position themselves to be optimally relevant in future.”

“One of the most important lessons garnered from the corporate world is the importance of being an expert follower, in addition to being a paradigm pioneer. This affords the best opportunity to not only improve what is being done, but also to those in your midst to continuously seek to reinvent themselves and the organisations they serve. Although SAIPA is the second largest accountancy institute in South Africa, we are small within the context of the global village. We have much to learn from long-established professional bodies, but we also have much to contribute. Although we should be open to learning from others, it is crucially important that this does not result in a mere cut and paste operation. Not only do we need to adapt and develop what we learn, but also sufficiently trust our creative abilities to make unique contributions”, he stresses.

Turning to challenges, his biggest regret is that SAIPA, although increasingly well-recognized internationally, has yet to achieve the desired level of recognition in its home market. As daunting a task as this may be, it is, in his view, the ultimate challenge.

“A big hurdle remains the fact that large accounting firms continue to attract the ‘cream of the crop’ when it comes to black graduates; those with ‘average ability’ being left to find opportunities elsewhere. In this regard, Fasset has a very important role to play by virtue of its Fasset-funded Work Readiness Programmes, now known as Bridging Programmes for Access to Employment, which have the potential to add considerable value to this sector by helping to ‘polish’ young talent.”

His message to young South Africans is that accounting is a rewarding career. “The days are long gone where accountants were mere bean counters or number crunchers. Today, accountants are business advisors, even when employed in public practice or in organisations as financial managers, or financial accountants. Making such a meaningful contribution, requires accountants to understand the business within which they operate, and then be able to look beyond the numbers when offering advice.”

Shahied concedes that his work-life balance is skewed towards the work side with very little time for relaxation. He, however, remains passionate about sport, especially rugby, but does on odd occasions enjoy a good movie. Although he resides in Gauteng, he continues to support Western Province.

At a personal level, Shahied is passionate about developing young people, by helping them to find a good balance between education and sport, as this ensures an active mind.

Fasset is the Finance and Accounting Services Sector Education and Training Authority

May/June 2014
Fasset opens four funding windows

Fasset opened four funding windows in May 2014 which include:

- a window for Bridging Programmes for Access into Higher Education, where learners will possibly repeat matric maths and accounting with the view of gaining entry into higher education institutions;
- a window for NQF levels 6 – 8 to support students in completing their academic qualifications and/or professional body designations;
- a window for a Bridging Programme(s) that lead to Placement into Employment (including funding for undergraduates, who are studying to complete their academic qualifications, and who will ultimately enter the Fasset sector); and
- a window for professional bodies and tertiary institutions for the completion of qualifications and professional designations that will ultimately lead to learners being placed outside the Fasset sector.

The latter incubator funding window is new. This window has been devised to fund professional bodies, who train learners to complete professional body qualifications, where learners do not necessarily end up working in the Fasset sector. Examples of professional bodies, include the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA), Association of Certified Chartered Accountants (ACCA) and Institute of Certified Bookkeepers (ICB). The tender windows will close on 27 August 2014.

More information is available on the Fasset website: www.fasset.org.za

SAIPA and ABASA host the National Accounting Olympiad 2014

The SAIPA/ABASA National Accounting Olympiad 2014 seeks to boost the number of black Professional Accountants (SA) by raising awareness of the Professional Accountant (SA) as a career choice, particularly among learners in rural areas.

Teachers are required to identify Grade 12 learners, who are interested in pursuing a career in accountancy. Top learners are identified on the basis of a cycle test. Learners, who enter the Olympiad, are given study guides to assist them in their schoolwork and in preparation for their final matric examinations.

The National Olympiad consists of two rounds. The first round, held on 21 May 2014, consists of a written exam at the learners’ school. The final round consists of a written exam, written at the learners’ school on 30 July. The final round will determine the regional and national winners.

Fasset applauds SAIPA and ABASA for this creative strategy to increase the number of learners entering the accounting profession in South Africa. We would also like to wish the learners, who have entered the Olympiad every success.

A Phadisa learner is awarded a NSFAS bursary

Fasset-funded Bridging Programmes continue to change learners’ lives. Amanda Sokwanga’s prospects of furthering her education were bleak as her mother is unemployed and her father is a general worker at a high school in Soweto. Amanda never thought she would be able to realise her dream of becoming a CA.

“My parents did not have the money to send me to tertiary education. Furthermore, my matric Maths marks were not good. Mom borrowed money from our neighbour to buy a copy of ‘The Star’ so that I could look for a job. I saw the advertisement for the Phadisa Programme. I knew there and then that God had answered my prayers. I applied because I wanted to study and I also have a passion for accounting.”

Amanda was accepted onto the 2013 Fasset-funded Phadisa Bridging Programme. The programme prepares learners for entry into tertiary education and includes training in first year university modules, student readiness and Grade 12 Mathematics revision.

Amanda was a very diligent student and obtained distinctions in seven of the twelve Phadisa modules. “Obtaining 99% for Accounting was particularly exciting for me,” she confides.

The programme has opened doors for her: she has been awarded a National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) Bursary and has been accepted by the University of the North-West, where she has enrolled for a BCompt degree. Her bursary pays for her studies, accommodation and books; it also provides her with some spending money each month.

“I would like to say a big thank you to Fasset. You have not only changed my life, but you have changed those of my community. I pray that the Lord blesses you as you continue changing people’s lives. I pray that you have strength to continue with this project,” Amanda concludes.

Fasset would like to encourage young South Africans, who are interested in pursuing a career in finance or accounting to monitor the Fasset website [www.fasset.org.za] and the Fasset facebook page [www.facebook.com/fasset.org] for information about Fasset-funded Projects, grants, internship opportunities and bursaries offered by stakeholders in the Finance and Accounting sector.
Fasset bids Jane Scott Paul farewell

Jane Scott Paul, Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) Chief Executive, retired on 28 March 2014. Jane served as AAT’s Chief Executive for a period of seventeen years.

Jane visited South Africa shortly before she retired. Fasset was absolutely delighted that Jane made time in her busy schedule to attend Fasset’s combined launch of the Seta Career Awareness Office, Fasset’s Professional Qualification and Capacity Building Project (which AAT (SA) is delivering), Fasset’s Learner Enrichment Programme, and Fasset’s first ever Finance and Accounting Career Event at the Waterberg College on 6 February 2014.

We last interviewed Jane in 2012 when she visited the Fasset-funded Ithemba Project. (The article appeared in our December 2012 issue of Facts).

Jane is very excited that AAT (SA) is delivering Fasset’s Professional Qualification and Capacity Building Pilot Project at the Waterberg College. (Do read the article: “AAT (SA) delivers Fasset’s Professional Qualification and Capacity Building Pilot Project” in this issue).

“It is not just about the learning. It is not just about the technical things you are going to learn. It is not just about the accountancy that you can understand to produce the reports and the numbers; there is the recognition of the learner as a whole person.” Jane explains.

To her mind it is just as important to build self-confidence and self-motivation as it is to learn the “technical tricks of the trade.”

She urges Waterberg College learners to seize the opportunity that they have been given: “You are fortunate to be in a community, which has a very special college doing exciting work. Fasset’s Brand Ambassador [Thato Mahlako] is a very confident and mature young man. If he is an example of what this college can deliver, any student placing themselves here is in good hands and has good prospects.”

Jane has always admired the fact that Fasset has been willing to break the mould: “Fasset does not do what everyone else does. Fasset looks at what it is trying to achieve and draws its own map to achieve this. I have also, always admired Fasset CEO, Cheryl James’ commitment to people and getting people to work together, always remembering that at the heart of it we are here to look after learners and to take them further.”

She has a special message for South Africa: “Respect what works. Do not persevere with things that are not working. Try new things. Do not be afraid of failure. Stop quickly if it is not working. Keep the wonderful community you have created and that sharing of knowledge and experience and willingness to take action. Ultimately it is people, who are going to make this happen, not policies, not government laws.”

Fasset, together with its stakeholders would like to wish Jane a very happy retirement.
Ithemba 2014 programme launched

The Fasset-funded 2014 Ithemba Programme, delivered by Future Creation in partnership with S&T School of Accounting, SAP Education, the Mosaiek Church, Sparrow TVET (previously FET) College and the Open Learning Programme, was launched at the Mosaiek Campus in Fairlands, Johannesburg, on 4 March 2014.

The programme targets unemployed learners, who have a NQF Level 6 or NQF Level 7 qualification. Three hundred learners were interviewed; the top hundred learners were recruited. Learners receive training towards the registered Generic Management qualification; they also receive training in SAP, Microsoft Word, Excel and Pastel. Learners also complete a work readiness component, which equips them with the soft skills needed within the workplace.

This year, for the first time, the SAP training will be instructor-led. In the past, the SAP component has been taught via e-learning.

Education Programme Specialist at SAP, Lorna Kombol, urged learners to be committed and to work hard; she also encouraged them to consider becoming a SAP consultant.

Fasset Projects Manager, Tania Lee, reminded learners that they need to prepare the road for those who come behind them. They can do so by being exemplary role models within the workplace. She also urged them to tell their peers about Fasset, and the various skills uplifment opportunities and grants which Fasset offers.

On completion of the programme, learners will be placed with a Fasset registered employer. They will either be placed on a learnership, internship, or into permanent employment.

The Ithemba Programme is recruiting for its second intake, which will commence in July 2014. Applications for the four-month programme close on 30 June 2014. More information is available at http://www.puff&pass.co.za. Alternatively, unemployed graduates can contact Lorna (074 863 3556) or Tracy (083 656 5065).

Online applications only: www.fcportal.co.za/apply.php
Meet Sathie Gounden

Sathie Gounden brings to the Fasset Board many years of experience as a Director of various companies. Being a Chartered Accountant, he has a strong background in finance, an expert knowledge of corporate governance, and is a strategic and independent thinker. “Having been the CEO of a large Audit firm, Gobodo Incorporated with 400 staff, I have sound leadership skills. My expertise and experience will add value and make a difference to the Fasset Board,” says Fasset Board member, Sathie Gounden.

Sathie describes his leadership style as “consultative/participative.” “When it comes to integrity and values, I do not compromise. I solicit views and engage in the process, but I make the final decision. If there are time constraints I will adopt an autocratic leadership style, with clear expectations of what needs to be done,” he explains.

He has a passion for developing black accounting and auditing talent. It is not surprising therefore, that Sathie was the proud recipient of ABASA’s Most Active Member Award in 1996 and in 1997.

It is widely acknowledged that skills shortages in South Africa constrain economic growth. While Sathie believes Setas have a very important role to play in terms of skills development, he believes Seta’s have a much broader role to play in the economy. “Setas provide the foundation and building blocks to facilitate the development of skills, work experience and career development, sustainable employment and on-the-job training. Setas play an important role in addressing skills shortages, in transformation imperatives, gender parity, age discrimination and disability sensitivities within the sector. With the ever-increasing number of unemployed citizens in the country, Setas have a fundamental role to play in training the unemployed and preparing them with skills to make them more employable.”

Fasset is widely acknowledged as one of the top performing Setas. Sathie attributes Fasset’s success to its strong Board, which provides leadership and direction and the Seta’s “great management team”, which implements the Board’s strategies. Additional factors, which contribute to Fasset’s success, include the fact that the Seta has tried and tested policies and procedures, a strong value system and sound governance principles.

Sathie believes there are a number of prerequisites for ensuring Seta delivery. He concludes with a special message for Fasset stakeholders: “In order for Setas to deliver on their mandate, the Department of Higher Education and Training must provide proper guidance timeously in order for the Board to develop strategies to deliver on their mandate. Government departments, Setas, employers, public education institutions and training providers must work together in addressing specific sector Skills Development Plans.”

Fasset provides feedback on Mandatory and Discretionary Grant submissions

As a result of new Seta funding regulations, which came into effect in December 2012, Mandatory Grant payments decreased from 50% of the Skills Development Levy (SDL) contribution to 20%. While there were slightly fewer applications for Mandatory Grants during the 2013/2014 period, Fasset has nevertheless met its targets for the disbursement of the grant.

Four discretionary grants were offered during the period: the NSFAS Loan Repayment Grant (NLRG), the Assessor and Moderator Grant (AMG), the Learnership Cash Grant (LCG) and the PIVOTAL Grant.

The number of applications for the NLRG were largely unchanged. However, for the period 2014/2015, Fasset has removed the salary threshold criteria. As a result, Fasset expects to receive more applications, as the Seta will also receive applications from learners working in the large firms.

The number of applications for the AMG has remained stable. In the previous financial year, a specific firm “blew Fasset’s budget” for this grant. In view of this, the Fasset allocated an additional R200 000 for the grant. Since there were fewer applications from the same specific applicant, Fasset did not exceed its budget for the AMG.

Application numbers for the LCG were stable as the grant is only applicable to Black African learners. As applications remain low, the full LCG budget is not fully utilised.

It is the first year that the PIVOTAL Grant has been offered. The PIVOTAL Grant was based on Fasset’s previous Strategic Cash Grant (SCG) and enabled employers to claim back a maximum of 49.5% of their SDL if they undertook education and training interventions in certain strategic priority areas. The PIVOTAL Grant was open to all population groups. However, while a maximum of 29.5% of their SDL could be claimed for PIVOTAL programmes implemented with White, Indian and Coloured learners, and non-South Africans; any unutilised portion of the 29.5% and an additional 20% of the SDL could be claimed for Black African learners and people with disabilities on PIVOTAL programmes. Fasset met its targets for the grant.
Fasset launches its 2014 Brand Ambassador Campaign

Fasset has launched its 2014 Brand Ambassador Campaign. Thirteen Brand Ambassadors have been appointed. Most importantly, Fasset has expanded its Brand Ambassador Campaign's reach. In addition to appointing Brand Ambassadors at Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges, Universities and Universities of Technology in the Eastern Cape, the Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and the North West, we have also appointed Brand Ambassadors in Gauteng, the Northern Cape and the Western Cape. We are very proud of the fact that we now have at least one Fasset Brand Ambassador in each of the nine provinces.

Brand Ambassadors have been appointed at the following TVET (previously FET) Colleges, Universities and Universities of Technology:

- Kundai Gonese, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (Eastern Cape)
- Katlego Leeuw, University of the Free State (Free State)
- Ntsiucu Mapultle, Goldfields FET College (Free State)*
- Petunia Mbathe, Ekurhuleni West College (Gauteng)
- Lungile Gumbi, Durban University of Technology (KwaZulu-Natal)
- Thuleleni Hlela, Mnambithi FET College (KwaZulu-Natal)*
- Katlego Malakane, Sekhukhune FET College (Limpopo)*
- Elnry Phiri, Waterberg FET College (Limpopo)
- Lorraine Seshoka, Letaba FET College (Limpopo)
- Angel April, Gert Sibande College (Mpumalanga)*
- Rosinah Lekaba, Orbit FET College, Rustenburg (North West)
- Tsebepiso Mseleke, Northern Cape Urban FET College (Northern Cape)
- Sihle Mngxuma, False Bay College (Western Cape)

* Four of our 2013 Brand Ambassadors, have been re-appointed for the 2014 year.
Nominated by their respective institution, our Brand Ambassadors are truly the ‘cream of the crop.’ They are all enrolled in finance-related qualifications; they are also ‘top of their class,’ academically. Rosinah Lekaba is a case in point. Last year, Rosinah was the top learner overall, at all three Orbit College campuses.

Being top achievers themselves, our Brand Ambassadors have influence as they are perceived as role models by fellow learners; they are also viewed as role models within their community.

In addition to having a good academic track record, our Brand Ambassadors have also been selected on the basis of their strong leadership skills, their self-confidence, and their ability to communicate well.

Our Brand Ambassador Campaign constitutes a core pillar of our Career Awareness Campaign; our Brand Ambassadors are a critical component of Fasset’s strategy to develop close partnerships with TVET Colleges and institutions of higher education.

In order to prepare our Brand Ambassadors for this very important role, we scheduled a three-day training, photographic and interview session from 10 to 12 April in Johannesburg. Transported by plane, by bus, or door-to-door transport, our Brand Ambassadors arrived at the All Suite on 14th hotel in Fairlands, where they stayed for the duration of their training. This was also the venue for our interviews and for our photo shoot.

The ‘early birds’ arrived by mid-morning; their peers, the last arrivals, only arrived at around 18h00. It was truly a ‘baptism by fire.’ Having checked into the hotel, our Brand Ambassadors were interviewed for our advertising and our publicity campaign. They were then sent to ‘make up’ to preen them for the photo shoot.

Friendships were forged and strategies shared. However, having travelled from far afield, having been interviewed and photographed, and knowing that the next morning was another early start, our Brand Ambassadors retired to their rooms straight after enjoying dinner with some of the Fasset managers.

Friday morning was an early start, as there was a comprehensive programme to complete. Our Brand Ambassadors met the ‘Fasset team.’ They also met representatives from many of the professional bodies in our sector and public sector partners such as the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

In addition to learning about Fasset’s role and its various offerings, including Fasset Grants and Fasset’s Bridging Programmes, the myriad of careers within the Fasset sector, and the entry requirements and qualifications and career opportunities offered by the various professional bodies, our Brand Ambassadors learnt what Fasset expected from them in their role as Fasset Brand Ambassador.

They were also provided with a toolkit, which includes a standardised Fasset presentation; they were also given Fasset and professional body brochures to distribute to learners. Since our Brand Ambassadors are required to document their two interventions and to report on these every month, they were given a digital camera and will be provided with airtime on a monthly basis. Interventions typically include lecture hall presentations, networking workshops, community visits and interviews on campus or community radio stations.

We are really looking forward to working very closely with our Brand Ambassadors. There is a lot at stake: collectively, we need to persuade more-and-more young South Africans to pursue a career in finance or in accounting, as these are skills, which our country desperately requires.

Bonani Duo make Fasset proud

Botse is living proof that if one grasps the boundless opportunities that are available within the Fasset sector, the sky is truly the limit.

Desmond is a Trainee Accountant at GMFA Accountants. “Everything I learnt at Guarantee Trust prepared me for my work. I aced the interview using the soft skills and I was able to apply the technical skills from the first day,” he explains.

Desmond has been promoted to Office Manager. He supervises three employees. He has also been entrusted with the firm’s daily operations.

Botse and Desmond you have certainly done Fasset proud. We would love to hear the success stories of other Fasset learners and Bridging Programme beneficiaries.

Please email your learner success stories to our editor: romaana.mckinnon@fasset.org.za
Fasset pilots two TVET Programmes

Although Fasset has not operated in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (previously FET) institution space traditionally, the Seta is committed to partnering with TVET Colleges, in support of Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande’s vision of positioning TVET Colleges as the institution of choice for young South Africans.

Fasset piloted two TVET College projects in 2013. The first, the TVET Learner Enrichment Project seeks to equip learners with the knowledge and skills required to increase their employability and to help them in their preparation to enter the workplace, while at the same time, enhancing their overall learning experience through workshops.

Similar to Fasset’s Lifelong Learning events, but available only to learners and staff at TVET Colleges, the content is linked to the life orientation module offered as part of the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) programme at National Qualification Framework (NQF) level 2-4. The pilot was successfully completed at the end of March 2014. New events have been scheduled for the 2014/2015 calendar year.

The second project, the TVET Workplace Experience Project, targets learners who have completed the N6 Certificate in Business Studies. Learners were recruited from a range of disciplines including Finance and Accounting, Marketing, HR and Administration. Six employers participated in the pilot project, and 159 learners were placed.

The project will provide learners with the 18 months work experience required to achieve the National N Diploma. Most importantly, the project will expose employers to TVET learners as an alternative source for recruitment at the lower levels.

Fasset has adopted a staggered approach to implementation. The first tranche of learners started in September 2013 and the last tranche started on 31 March 2014.

The TVET Workplace Experience Project includes a research component to assess the project’s impact. The first tranches of learners have completed the ‘six-month milestone’. Feedback from learners and employers alike has been very positive.

Fasset has started recruiting for its next Workplace Experience Project and would like to encourage employers, who are interested in placing a TVET learner in their workplace to contact our Education and Training Liaison Officer, Molly Rabaloi via email: molly.rabaloi@fasset.org.za, or landline: (011) 476 8570.

Employers are not required to pay the learner a salary; Fasset will pay the learner a monthly stipend for the 18 month period. Any other benefits that may accrue are the employer’s responsibility. There is no limit to the number of learners that an employer may recruit. Employers are, however, required to provide learners with work related to their particular field of study. Fasset will conduct a pre-evaluation of the workplace to assess whether the workplace has the capacity and the right skills and systems in place to support a learner.

Learners are required to maintain a logbook which will be submitted to the TVET College and then forwarded on to the DHET. The DHET will provide the final confirmation as to whether or not the learner has met the workplace experience requirements for achievement of the National N Diploma at NQF level 6.

Fasset hosted its annual half-day Budget & Tax Update seminar in all nine provinces in March and April 2014. It is the eleventh year in succession that Fasset has hosted the event.

ProBeta Training delivered the seminar, facilitated by Dieter Schulze, Lynette Badenhorst and Magda Tumer.

The seminars, which targeted small and medium-sized firms, including tax practitioners, auditors, accountants and learners, covered some of the key areas announced in the 2014 Budget. Areas covered included personal income tax, corporate tax rates, estate duty, donations tax, capital gains tax, transfer duty, indirect tax proposals, including fuel taxes and duties on beverages and tobacco products.

The seminars also covered key amendments in the Taxation Laws Amendment Act, 2013 and the Rates and Monetary Amounts and Amendment of Revenue Laws Act, 2013, the key provisions of the Tax Administration Laws Amendment Bill, 2013; and the Employment Tax Incentive Act, 2013; and developments in Tax Law, including important cases and rulings issued during the course of 2013 and early 2014.

Some 6 707 delegates attended Fasset’s flagship Lifelong Learning event.
The focus falls on Fasset’s Quality Assurance and Learnerships Department

We have profiled our Executive Office and our Skills Department in previous issues. In this issue the focus falls on our Quality Assurance and Learnerships (QAL) Department.

Our QAL Department is responsible for the quality assurance of learnerships, providers, assessors and moderators. It is also responsible for Fasset’s TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) projects. The department has a staff complement of seven.

Our QAL Department consists of our Quality Assurance and Learnerships Director, Natércia Faustino; Senior QAL Officer, Marlie Spencer; Education and Training Liaison Officer, Molly Rabaloi; QAL Officer, Nomadlozi Buthelezi; and three Quality Assurance and Learnerships Assistants, Unathi Nkosiyane, Maphuti Setati and Berlinda Chidi.

While Natércia has overall responsibility for the QAL Department, Marlie is responsible for some of Fasset’s TVET projects, including the TVET Qualifications Mapping and Analysis Project and the TVET Professional Qualification and Capacity Building Project. She is also responsible for ensuring that training providers, who are accredited for the delivery of qualifications that fall under Fasset’s scope, meet Fasset’s quality assurance requirements.

Molly assists with the implementation of the TVET Strategy, and is responsible for monitoring of some of Fasset’s TVET projects, including Fasset’s TVET Learner Enrichment Project and the TVET Workplace Experience Project. This role requires on-going liaison with project providers and learners.

Nomadlozi, commonly known as ‘Dlozi’, is the longest serving staff member in our QAL Department. Dlozi is responsible for the registration of learnerships, the maintenance of current qualifications and unit standards on the Fasset system, and the certification of learners.

Our three Quality Assurance and Learnerships Assistants, Unathi, Maphuti and Berlinda are primarily responsible for the registration of learnership agreements. Maphuti is also responsible for some of the learnership certification; Berlinda is also responsible for the registration and certification of assessors and moderators.

While Fasset has always worked very hard to inculcate a strong customer-focus within the Seta, by introducing our stakeholder to our team members and their respective roles and responsibilities, we hope to make it much easier for our stakeholders to contact the person, who is best able to assist them with their query.

Fasset staff subscribe to Walmart Founder, Sam Walton’s view: “The goal of a company is to have customer service that is not just best but legendary.”
AAT (SA) delivers Fasset’s TVET Professional Qualification and Capacity Building Pilot Project

“People like myself, who come from the SAICA environment, have worked on Thuthuka capacity building projects with the Walter Sisulu University, the University of Zululand, University of Limpopo and University of Fort Hare. While these programmes have different levels, different time frames, and different pricing, the principles of capacitation for accreditation are very much the same,” says Association of Accounting Technicians (South Africa) (AAT (SA)) General Manager, Natalie Zimmerman.

Fasset has partnered with AAT (SA) for the delivery of the Fasset-funded Professional Qualification and Lecturer Capacity Building Pilot at Waterberg TVET (previously FET) College. The project seeks to build the capacity of Waterberg College lecturers and support staff, to get the college up to a level where it can be accredited by AAT (SA); and to train the unemployed for further employment in the area.

Natalie describes AAT (SA) qualifications as “vocationally based, very practical and business-led, created by business for business”. AAT (SA) qualifications are based on case studies and simulations; this will add considerable value to TVET lecturers as many do not have any business-related workplace experience. The capacity building process also includes building a Facilitators Toolkit.

The second component of the Fasset-funded Programme is to get Waterberg College to a level where the college can be accredited to deliver the AAT qualifications, which are also registered on the NQF. As part of the accreditation process, five lecturers will be required to complete the AAT (SA) NQF Level 4 qualification, which they will then be teaching. In addition to this, AAT (SA) will be assisting the TVET College to prepare the necessary documentation and implement the related processes for accreditation.

Former South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Deputy Director, Eddie Brown is assisting AAT (SA) in driving the TVET accreditation process, together with AAT (SA) Programme Development Manager, Trudy Paul. AAT (SA) hopes to achieve accreditation for Waterberg TVET College within a one-year period.

The third component of the Fasset-funded Professional Qualification and Capacity Building Pilot at Waterberg College is to train unemployed learners for further employment in the area: “The Fasset Project is looking at recruiting 20 unemployed graduates from the Waterberg College and putting them through the AAT NQF level 4 qualification. The project will cover the tuition costs of the learners.”

AAT (SA) is working very closely with lecturers and Fasset’s 2013 Brand Ambassador at the college, Thato Mahloko, to identify learners, who are going to be part of the programme. The project champion, and Centre Manager of the Business Campus, Magda Pienaar, has selected lecturers, who will participate in the programme. AAT (SA) has partnered with a private accredited training provider, College for People, Management and Development (CPMD) to provide the training.

Participants will complete the five-day AAT Access Programme, which covers basic numeric skills such as decimals and percentages, Understanding the Language of Accounting and Understanding the Basic Concept of Accounting. Candidates will then complete a computer based assessment.

The workplace readiness component will focus on soft skills: “The presumption that a person knows how to behave in a workplace is incorrect. Our workplace readiness includes everything from business communication skills, interview skills, and CV writing skills to the fact that the lunch in the refrigerator is not necessarily yours. We then revise the NQF Level 3 qualification Certificate: Accounting technician, the basic principles of accounting, but we do not do the full NQF Level 3 qualification; we move straight on to the NQF Level 4 qualification, FET Certificate: Accounting Technician.”

The FET Certificate: Accounting Technician AAT (SA) qualification is “quite technical” and includes management accounts, financial ratios and costing. “By that stage they have done Introduction to Computers, Excel spreadsheets and Introduction to Accounting Systems, Professional Ethics, Working Effectively in Accounting and Finance, which is a Soft Skills Programme and Basic Debtor/Creditor Management as well, Understanding the Concepts of Accounting.”

Having completed the programme learners will be placed anywhere from tourism, to mining or banking: “The placement process will bring the TVET college closer to industry and to business. We want them to form a longer term relationship that might lead beyond this qualification.”

Natalie cites as a challenge the fact that Seta accredited qualifications do not attract funding from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) or from the National Student Financial Aid Scheme. (NSFAS): “Where it would cost the TVET college around R26 000 to R28 000 a year to deliver the N4 Financial Management, it costs the learner about R6 000, for which they can get NSFAS funding. The AAT qualification will cost them between R26 000 and R28 000 a year to deliver. At the moment the expectation is that for Seta accredited programmes employers and the Setas will fund the learners, so there will always be 20 learners on this qualification, and 2 000 learners on the N4 qualification.”
American businessman and former CEO of International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation, Harold Geenen observed that: “It is an immutable law in business that words are words, explanations are explanations, promises are promises but only performance is reality.”

In a highly competitive global world, organisations place a premium on performance. Knowing how to optimise performance is a critical skill for business success.

Acknowledging the importance of performance management, Fasset hosted a half-day Performance Management Workshop at various venues in the Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape in April 2014. The workshop targeted individuals, who are required to get people to work together to achieve shared objectives.

The workshops were facilitated by The Training Edge. Topics included the definition of performance management and how to incorporate a balanced scorecard; the performance management procedure, including the performance management cycle; performance contracts, including policy statements and performance contracting paper work; tracking performance and taking corrective action, paying attention to performance improvement planning, career development plans, disciplinary action and the 360 degree approach to performance management; reward strategies, remuneration models and performance communication; potential challenges in terms of performance management; trends in performance management; and the role of technology in performance management.

Striving to optimise efficiencies, and taking full advantage of the fact that many Skills Development Facilitators (SDFs) were attending the Performance Management workshops, Fasset sought to “kill two birds with one stone,” by hosting Fasset Incentive Events at three venues directly after the Performance Management Workshops. The Event included a Fasset Strategy Directives session; this included a session on Fasset forms and systems.

"It is an immutable law in business that words are words, explanations are explanations, promises are promises but only performance is reality."

Since applications for Mandatory Grants closed on 30 April, attendees had the perfect opportunity to pose questions or concerns that they had around the Mandatory Grant process.
The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) is the first global accountancy body to introduce integrated reporting into its qualification.

Integrated reporting (IR) is a process established on integrated thinking that results in communication, noticeably in a periodic integrated report by an organisation, about sustainable value creation. For the first time in the accountancy profession, students will be examined on integrated reporting when ACCA introduces it into its qualification from December 2014. An integrated report is a brief, detailed communication about how an organisation’s performance, governance and strategy lead to the holistic creation of sustainable value.

This introduction comes as the International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC) launched its new integrated reporting framework. Chaired by Professor Mervyn King and Paul Druckman (Chief Executive Office), IIRC is a comprehensive union of firms, investors, regulators, standard setters, the accountancy profession and NGO’s. The International Integrated Reporting Council is the global authority on integrated reporting and is of the notion that vested interest in communication about value creation is crucial to the advancement of corporate reporting.

ACCA’s strategic introduction of integrated reporting aims to improve the quality of information available by developing a diversified set of skills and supporting decision-making that focuses on the creation of value. “We continue to enhance our syllabus on a regular basis to ensure that ACCA members are at the forefront of good practice.” - Allan Hatfield, Director of Learning at ACCA. Enhancing the syllabus will preserve ACCA’s relevance, resonating change within the accountancy profession and emphasize the importance of integrated thinking. Furthermore, ACCA was also the first accountancy body to introduce and examine International Financial Reporting Standards, better known as IFRS, and a first to examine the Global Reporting Initiative framework in 2000.

“The accounting industry needs to be one step ahead. Consider your market, challenge your own processes and never let competitors govern your direction.” – Karen Smal, Acting Head of ACCA South Africa.

South African organisations need a well-thought-out reporting environment. By introducing IR into the syllabus creates an area where professional ACCA affiliates can create long-term value for their firms and demonstrate leadership. Evidently, ACCA’s unique core values such as accountability, innovation and opportunity continue to steer the professional body, equipping professionals with understanding and expertise to work in all sectors.

ACCA has developed resources to inform members on the adoption and implementation of integrated reporting.

More information about the ACCA Qualification can be found at: http://www.accaglobal.com/en/qualifications/glance/acca/overview.html

"An integrated report is a brief, detailed communication about how an organisation’s performance, governance and strategy lead to the holistic creation of sustainable value."
The Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) South Africa hosted its two-day Public Sector Forum, entitled: “Guarding Governance through Strategic Partnering” at Emperor’s Palace on 10-11 February 2014. Well-known economist, Mike Schüssler, was one of the speakers.

This year, the consensus is that the South African economy will grow around 2.8%. Inflation is expected to be higher; interest rates are expected to be between 10-12% this year. We can expect very little job creation.

Manufacturing, mining and agriculture have declined over the past 20 years. In 1980, mining employed around one million people. Mining employs half of these numbers currently, and numbers are declining. The number of people working in manufacturing is the same as it was in 1973. The number of people employed in agriculture has halved since 1996.

While the weaker rand is helping a few manufacturers, it is not helping most manufacturers. We are dependent on world demand.

We should be spending 25% on fixed capital formation; we are only spending 20%. “We are getting behind because we need evermore money to fix our roads, our sewerage, and our water.”

The size of our civil service is a challenge. Public service costs in South Africa are proportionately amongst the highest in the world. We cannot afford such a large civil service. Government has to lower its costs. It has a huge salary bill to pay, particularly for a developing country.

Formal employment in government circles has increased from 11% in 1967 to 23%, currently. If you add state owned enterprises, this increases to 25%.

The majority of the top 10% of earners in South Africa are civil servants. Their salaries have increased from 11% of GDP to 15% of GDP if we add state owned enterprises. “It gives you the right to say do not misspend the money, because we are paying you a lot of money. Make sure that services are delivered,” Mike remarks.

As a result of the recession in 2008, South Africa lost 1.1 million jobs. “The tax base shrunk considerably. Less than 10% of our population of around 53 million, pay tax: “You have the responsibility, as auditors in the public sector, to look after these people because for every one of them that feels that they do not want to pay taxes anymore, because they hear of corruption and misallocation, 12 other people get hurt.”

There is R85 billion outstanding for municipalities, and R3 to 4 billion outstanding to Eskom: “People are taking loans, if you wish, from the municipalities. Because you do not pay them, it is an automatic loan. You do not pay your water and lights; this is going to get bigger. If people do not pay their taxes, this will make service delivery more difficult.”

Internal auditors working for municipalities need to remind municipalities to collect money: “Up to the third quarter of last year from the year before, we wrote off nearly R10 billion, at municipal level only.”

Welfare accounts for almost 20% of government expenditure. If we include water and lights, health insurance, and pensions, this percentage increases to 31%. “The European Union got into all sorts of trouble because they have so much welfare expenditure, they are nearly at 20% - this is only health and actual check payments to welfare and state pensions,” Mike cautions.

In terms of ‘social protection,’ South Africa is ranked third highest in the world. There are around 4.5 million registered taxpayers: 16.5 million people are on welfare and another 500 000 are on Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF).

These are not easy times for South Africa: in 41% of households no-one is employed. 36% of these households receive state welfare. “When only 59% of households have somebody in a job, and only about 42% of them have something in formal sector job that says to you, who is rich and who is poor in relative terms at least. Every one of us, me included, who has a job has to feel lucky.”

Since Government is the biggest economic role player in South Africa, it is important that this 44% delivers. “The civil service is an important role player. They are not only people that should sit behind desks; they are people that have to make sure that they can deliver to the real poor of this country. They are people that have to make sure that we are honest, that the justice system works, that old ladies do not get killed in their houses, and that children go to school,” Mike concludes.
Fasset hosted Office Etiquette workshops in all nine provinces in February 2014. Recognising that inappropriate conduct within the workplace can be career-limiting, Fasset stakeholders expressed a great deal of interest in these workshops. The programme was designed to complement in-house induction programmes and firm-specific policies on office etiquette.

The workshops have proved to be Fasset’s third most popular Lifelong Learning event for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014; some 2,208 delegates in total attended. Indicative of the perceived value of these workshops, a number of companies requested in-house sessions. In order to run in-house training sessions, 50 or more delegates needed to register for the training. In these instances, companies provided the venue and catering while Fasset covered speaker expenses.

Faranani Facilitation Services were appointed to deliver the workshops. Facilitators included Belinda Ketel, Chris Osborn and Mandy Antoylatosy.

Topics covered included office etiquette, interpersonal relationships, professional conduct, etiquette in meetings, appropriate use of the internet, attending business functions, social gatherings and office parties, bathroom etiquette, confidentiality, and unacceptable behaviour at work and common office etiquette mistakes.
Inspired and motivated by *Facts*

Rendani Nefale, a BCom student at the University of Cape Town, contacted Fasset’s Communications Manager, Romaana McKinnon after reading copies of our Facts newsletter on the Fasset website. “I found these very inspiring and they motivate me to do even greater things in my community,” he informs.

Rendani registered a non-profit organisation RENEFORG on 7 November 2013.

“The main aim of my organisation is to provide mentorship to designated schools. We have currently partnered with one orphanage and two schools in Limpopo Province, one of which is Mopane Intermediate School, where I matriculated. We offer leadership camps, career tours to different universities, mainly UCT, and visits and exposure to corporates. We also encourage our mentees to engage in community services and outreach work. To this end, we organise visits to the local orphanage,” Rendani explains.

The eighth child on his father’s side and the fifth child on his mother’s side, Rendani was born in the village of Siloam in Limpopo. “I have always had a passion to help others. I have always advised my peers,” he explains.

When he was in Grade 11, he started assisting a Grade 8 learner, Khathutshelo Singo with his homework; he also offered him brotherly advice. Today, Khathutshelo is a first year BCom Accounting student at UCT. Rendani also volunteered as a receptionist in Casualty, at the local hospital. “I am now a head mentor on the UCT Vice Chancellor’s 100 up programme, which helps Grade 10 to Grade 12 learners from Khayelitsha with tuition and mentorship. I am also, the founder and chairman of an NPO, RENEFORG,” he informs.

Rendani has not always been an achiever; he was second last in class in Grade 9. When he was in Grade 11, his life changed: “I started to change when I told myself to let go of some of my associations. I entered into a period of self-discovery, without anyone validating me. This helped me discover who I really am; it also helped me discover my purpose and my vision. It helped me break down false beliefs acquired from friends. I changed the belief that Maths is difficult, into practice, makes perfect. I started telling myself that I can; all I had to do was to try and make myself believe that I really can,” he recalls.

"After seeing my results, I decided to do something in accounting, something that could equip me with more skills to be a great leader,..."

The ‘changed’ Rendani was top of his class in Grade 12. He obtained a distinction for Economics in Matric; this was his school’s first distinction in Economics ever. “When you have outperformed everyone you have raced with, one has zeal to stand against greater challenges. After seeing my results, I decided to do something in accounting, something that could equip me with more skills to be a great leader,” he reveals.

RENEFORG’s community projects include: hosting a leadership camp, which seeks to give young people a chance to realise that despite their background, we are all leaders, and the only question that need to be asked is who or what can I lead? career tours, which seek to help young people to have clearly defined goals, to look into their future and see possibility, and how to find information, which will help them ‘get there;’ the Rendy Award, which motivates learners to maintain and continue to achieve outstanding results; visits to the local orphanage, which shows young people that everyone can be a role model and motivate others; and the Rendy Matric competition, which seeks to bridge the gap between where learners are, and where they need to be in order to enter university.

All of these projects target high school learners in rural areas with the potential and the passion to learn.

According to Rendani these projects are making a positive difference: “Parents often ask me how I did it as they had lost hope for their child. The answer is simple. allow the child to give himself a self-definition. All of my mentees, who were in matric in 2013, have managed to get into universities such as WITS, UP and UCT. Some are studying Actuarial Science and Chartered Accounting. Most importantly, all mentees are involved in the community services projects during their school holidays, including those, who are now at university.”

Most projects are self-funded: “I try to use the little that I get as my bursary allowance for the fares to the school and for the Rendy Award Ceremony, However, for huge projects such as the leadership camp and the career tour, I ask local business people for donations; parents pay the balance.”

If you would like to know more about RENEFORG’s projects, Rendani’s email address is: reneforg@gmail.com or log on to www.reneforg.webs.com
Organisations learn how to develop and implement strategy

Strategic planning is critical for business success as it provides an organisation with a roadmap to achieve its goals and objectives.

Recognising the importance of strategy, Fasset will host full-day Developing and Implementing Strategy workshops at various venues in the Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the Western Cape in May 2014.

The workshops target professionals, business managers and owners of businesses, who provide financial, strategic, advisory and management consulting services.

Human and Mentor Consulting has been appointed to deliver the workshop. Facilitated by Neale Roberts, the workshop will cover topics such as strategic thinking as part of the decision-making process, creating a Strategic Plan, Strategy Mapping, Developing and Evaluating Tools, Implementation; and Measuring Performance and Monitoring Progress.

Calendar of Lifelong Learning Events 2014

Fasset’s Lifelong Learning events are designed to assist practitioners within the Fasset sector to remain abreast of all sector developments and topics pertinent to their professional functioning.

Our Lifelong Learning events are delivered by experts in the field. The topics which are offered are informed by training requests from our stakeholders. While our soft skills training events seek to improve learners’ soft skills, events at an intermediate level target SDFs, HR Professionals and Middle and Senior Managers.

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The schedule and topics of the Lifelong Learning interventions is subject to change. Please consult the Fasset website for the most up-to-date information: www.fasset.org.za