

COOP Champions: Cebisile Nyambe

In our last newsletter we launched a section highlighting the work of colleagues on cooperatives around the world. In this issue we present a colleague from South Africa, Ms. Cebisile Nyambe, a cooperative and social enterprise practitioner with over fifteen years of experience in working on cooperatives.

After working for several agencies in South Africa promoting cooperative development, Cebisile joined the ILO in 2012 as the national project coordinator for the Public Procurement and Social Economy Project, based in the Pietermaritzburg Field Office in KwaZulu Natal Province in Eastern South Africa.

The project is funded by the Government of Flanders and explores the potential to use public procurement to stimulate the social economy in South Africa. It responds to the New Growth Path, which identifies the social economy as a sector with the potential to create 260,000 new jobs and specifically refers to the need to "encourage state procurement from and service delivery through organizations in the social economy".



Cebisile thinks that social and solidarity economy has the potential to create jobs in South Africa. At the national level, Cebisile says, the social economy needs to be supported through the establishment of an enabling legal, institutional and policy environment and institutional strengthening of it. At micro and meso levels there is a need to enhance the efficiency of social economy enterprises and organizations so that they become more effective and contribute to meeting people's needs in terms of income creation, social protection, employment promotion, rights at work, food security, environmental protection, the fight against HIV/AIDS, and the elimination of child labour.



The project works both on the demand side (clarifying and influencing the interpretation of procurement regulations, and creating greater procurement opportunities) and the supply side (building the capacity of social economy enterprises to respond to these opportunities). It seeks to develop and test new social economy enterprise models that reduce barriers to market entry for social economy suppliers and that create additional jobs. The project works in selected sectors in which there are significant decent work deficits. These include agriculture (particularly food production for supply to schools, hospitals and other state institutions); waste recycling; and various other municipal services.

The ultimate beneficiaries of the project are emerging social economy enterprises and their members, employees and clients. In line with the Decent work Country Programme, the project has a particular, but not exclusive, focus on women, youth and persons with disabilities.

The ILO has supported social entrepreneurship in South Africa since 2008. Prior to the current project, the *Social Entrepreneurship Targeting Youth in South Africa* (SETYSA) project targeted young unemployed women and men and sought to create new employment opportunities for them through the promotion of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship. SETYSA succeeded in achieving increase in jobs for young people as well as in access to social protection. In addition, it improved policy making processes and service delivery, and demonstrated that social enterprise development can become an important part in South Africa's policy context, as it led to the inclusion of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship in the government's strategic economic plans.

Several tools were created in the context of SETYSA, including: research reports at different levels; a set of case studies of social enterprises in South Africa; a guide to finance for social enterprise in South Africa; a guide to legal forms for social enterprise in South Africa and training materials for social enterprise development.

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