

The South African Department of Basic Education and Sun International partner to enhance Hospitality Studies.



Barbara Mallinson of Obami



Hon Minister Motshekga



Nancy Ncube of Sun International

On Wednesday, 19 April, The Honourable Minister of Basic Education Mrs. Angie Motshekga launched the Hospitality Studies Digital Curriculum Project in partnership with Sun International at Tembisa High School in Ekurhuleni North. The theme of the project is “21st Century Education for 21st Century Hoteliers”. The minister was joined at the launch by the MEC of Education in Gauteng Mr Panyaza Lesufi, the CEO of Sun International and senior managers from partners including Omashani Naidoo from SchoolNet SA, Barbara Mallinson from Obami, Stanton Pillay from IT Masters as well as local leaders and education officials. Further images and videos came via Twitter such as pic.twitter.com/BU7A44dijC and pic.twitter.com/Y9aB6azx9m. Many more such tweets emanated from Sun International which has the twitter handle of @MillionThrills.



There are approximately 300 hundred schools in South Africa, which offer Hospitality Studies as a to learners in Grade 10 to Grade 12. According to the research conducted by Department of Basic Education (DBE), there has been a decline in the number of government schools offering Hospitality Studies in recent years. The cost of equipment associated with offering Hospitality Studies as well as a shortage of appropriately qualified teachers has contributed to this decline.

The drop in numbers of students matriculating with the subject has negatively influenced the hospitality industry and therefore Sun International has come to the fore to redeem this situation. The project they have devised is entitled *Systems Strengthening & Capacity Building Programmes for Teachers of Hospitality Studies*. The conceptualization of this initiative was initiated by Reza Barden, an independent consultant who facilitated the partnership between Sun International and the DBE. Reza then approached [Obami](#) to develop digital teaching resources and [SchoolNet South Africa](#) to provide teacher professional development. The DBE

firmly believes that the teaching and learning of Hospitality Studies will be significantly enhanced through the effective use of technology and digital resources. The aim of the training was for these teachers to become confident in using increased digital learning in their teaching of their matric subject, Hospitality Studies.

All teachers of hospitality studies at the eighty schools selected for the first phase of the project roll out received a laptop, a data projector and a magnetic whiteboard. Teacher laptops were supplied and delivered to the training venues by [IT Master](#). Sun International generously offered their hotels around the country as venues for the training workshops and to accommodate both teachers and trainers for the duration of the training. The first roll out of training happened simultaneously around the country during the last week of March. The workshops were clustered per province and comprised one teacher from each of the participating schools.

The South African educational landscape consists of diverse schools and teachers. The professional development workshops therefore, had to cover a broad range of skills. Some Hospitality Teachers are advanced pedagogically, others have strong technological skills. None of the teachers had experience of locating their teaching resources via a Learning Management System such as the Obami online learning platform. All combinations of these skills gaps had to be accommodated in the training workshops

SchoolNet SA selected Intel® Teach Getting Started. This is a SACE-endorsed teacher training course which aims to accomplish the following: introduce 21st century teaching and learning skills and approaches, such as learner-centred teaching, critical thinking, creativity and collaboration; involves planning, executing, reviewing, and sharing meaningful and relevant activities; requires the development of an action plan detailing how each teacher will apply new skills and approaches to enhance productivity and professional practice over time.

In addition to the technology skills and teaching strategies, teachers received an orientation to the Sun International digital content learning management system hosted by Obami. The Obami platform is 100% South African and houses a customized repository for CAPs aligned FET content for Hospitality studies learners and teachers. The educational content for the subject has been developed by Obami in collaboration with Sun International and reviewed and approved by curriculum specialists at the national department of education. These learning resources have been made available on the platform for use by all teachers of Hospitality Studies in South Africa. The intimate involvement of Sun International in the programme has meant that Obami was able to capture authentic footage from actual Sun International Hotels for the purposes of illustrating prescribed topics in the Hospitality Studies Curriculum. An example video resource may be viewed online here: <https://youtu.be/OxG8VoAAvc>



Teachers will be using the Sun Obami platform to access resources to enhance their teaching of the subject but will also be registering learners on the platform so that they too can access information relevant to Hospitality Studies. Sun International firmly believes that this intervention will increase the pass rate of learners at matric level across the country but furthermore the intention is to encourage more schools to offer this subject.

Feedback from the initial training was just as varied as the schools and teachers themselves. SchoolNet uploaded some snippets of video feedback from participants on their YouTube Channel here:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/SchoolNetSA/videos>

This video <https://youtu.be/44G6w7JPWQM> features Ms. Vuyi Khezwa, a teacher of Hospitality Studies, from Kwathintwa School for the Deaf in Marianhill. Vuyi is reflecting on the first day of training delivered by SchoolNet's project manager, Ms. Hlengiwe Mfeka at Isibaya hotel in KwaZulu- Natal.

Sun International has commissioned an evaluation of the project which is being conducted by Kelello and will provide insight into how the project can be improved for the remaining schools to receive hardware and professional development. Further to the project, Sun International provides bursaries to students who wish to study in the hospitality field at tertiary level. Sun International have proposed to offer teachers in the project the opportunity to experience an authentic working stay at one of their hotels in order to learn more about their subject during their holidays.

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