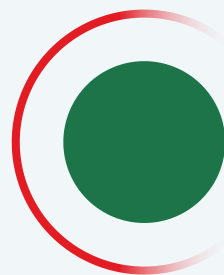




# **SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR GRADUATES (SACGRA)**

## **CO-OPERATIVE PROFILE**

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South Africa**



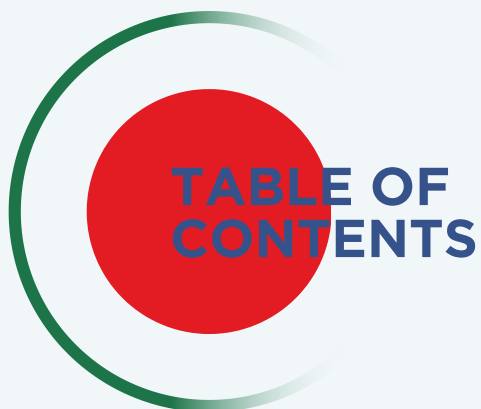
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The South African Council for Graduates (SACGRA) is dedicated to helping young people in South Africa transition from education to meaningful employment. Established to address the high unemployment rate among graduates, SACGRA connects academic knowledge with real-world experience. The organization provides internships, workplace training, and skill-building opportunities to prepare young professionals for successful careers. SACGRA also focuses on rural and municipal areas, encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship to boost local economies.

Since 2013, the SACGRA has played a key role to influence policy of government, organized business and labour through the following:

- Participation at the Nedlac process as part of the South African Youth Council.
- Invited to serve in the Presidential Youth Working Group in 2015 to 2018.
- Participation in the Presidential Job Summit to drive the direction of policy implementation.
- Partnering with the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETA) to implement the Skills Development Act of 1997.
- Partnering with municipalities, state owned entities and employers to boost its host employment pool for mentoring of TVET college learners and university students and graduates to be hosted as interns through funding from government and private sector.

Through its innovative programs, SACGRA has made a lasting impact on youth development in South Africa. By empowering young people with the skills and resources they need, the organization helps build a stronger, more resilient workforce that drives progress and innovation across the country.



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The SACGRA is governed by the board of directors in line with its constitution. It subscribes to the companies Act of South Africa and co-operative principles as enshrined in the International Co-operative Alliance co-operative principles. Board members play a special role in supporting the CEO and management to achieve the mission of the organization.

## ACCOLADES

The SACGRA is a member of the Presidential Youth Working Group since June 9, 2015 to advise the President of the Republic on matters affecting implementation of the youth policy. The South African Council for Graduates has received a number of accolades in recognition of its contribution to equip learners, students, and graduates.

Our employability programs have earned the organization the following awards:

- Central University of Technology (CUT) bestowed the SACGRA with an award in 2024 as a partner in placing students and graduates in workplace training.
- World Association of Co-operative Education (WACE) in 2015 inducted the Founder & CEO, Mr. Maqubela in its Hall of Fame as a champion for youth empowerment.





## FOUNDER & CEO'S MESSAGE



Thank you for taking the time to read our co-operative profile. I encourage you to read across all the pages to get to understand our work better.

As the founding CEO, I am grateful for the sustainable support that we have received over the years from corporates, government, and foundations. This assistance has enabled the SACGRA to become a beacon of hope for university students and graduates to get in-service training and mentorship to transition into the world of work.

We have further invested in helping learners from the TVET colleges to become preferred by captains of industry for workplace training.

Our greatest motivation comes from the transformation that I observe as I visit host employers and learners in the workplaces. True empowerment takes place in the factories, offices, plants and government departments when mentors and supervisors transfer their skills, competencies and expertise to learners.

I pay gratitude to the SETA boards, management and staff for their commitment to fund the placement of over 5000 graduates a year. I invite them to join the SACGRA in our quest and plan to place 40 000 graduates a year from 2025. This plan will make an indelible impact in reducing graduate and youth unemployment in South Africa. To achieve this feat, we require about R9 billion a year.

I believe that our international outreach through the African Council for Graduates and the World Council for Graduates will also propel the vision to place 1 million graduates, students and learners as interns per year in the African continent from the 54 countries of the African Union. This goal of helping graduates become employable has a price tag of R63 billion a year.

As partners, locally and abroad, we appeal for your collaboration and investments to build a technically skillful workforce in the African continent.

## Thamsanqa Maqubela

Founder & CEO





## Mission

To grow a high calibre of youth and the advancement of graduate co-operatives as viable economic entities to:

- Fast-track job creation.
- Accelerate innovations and industrialization.
- Promote foreign direct investment.
- Invest in skills transfer to grow the economy in municipalities and rural areas.

## Vision

An Internationally recognized champion for youth economic advancement.

## Values

Integrity - High Performance – Collaboration - Stakeholder Priority - Entrepreneurial.





### ***Value of an Internship/WIL/Candidacy***

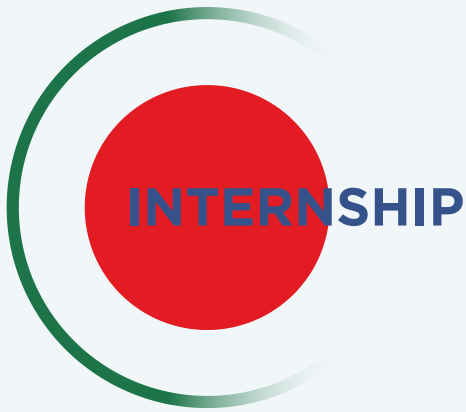
In line with its mission and vision, the SACGRA board and management have been consistent in their monitoring and implementation roles to empower learners, students and graduates to prepare for the world of work.

The primary business of the entity is to secure resources, raise funds and manage workplace training programs such as:

- Internship for university graduates and TVET college learners to get work experience. Graduates who are unemployed are recruited, matched to employers and placed on a subsidized internship for a period of 12 or 24 months.
- Work Integrated Learning (WIL) for university students and TVET college learners who require in-service training to get exposure to industry. These programs are implemented for a period of 12, 18 and 24 months.
- Candidacy is earmarked for Graduates that require work experience and exposure in line with professional body training. They are recruited, matched to employers, and registered with professional bodies for 36 months.
- Below are the nine benefits of the programs:

1. **Establish Graduate Talent:** Discover the skills and abilities of graduates from colleges and universities.
2. **Affordable Hiring:** Hire skilled graduates at subsidized costs, saving money and building your team.
3. **Support Youth Employment:** Help young people find jobs, build careers, and make a big impact on the country's future.
4. **Help Colleges and Universities:** Work with institutions of higher learning to help their students find jobs and meet their employability goals.
5. **Grow Talent for the Future:** Use internships to develop new talent and plan for future leaders in business.
6. **Support Professional Growth:** Give graduates the chance to join professional organizations and grow in their careers or occupations.
7. **Provide Mentorship:** Enable graduates learn from experienced professionals to gain knowledge and skills.
8. **Help with Skills Development:** Support national goals by helping SETAs meet their skills training targets.
9. **Create Future Leaders:** Give young people the chance to grow into professionals who can make a difference in their industries.





## Workplace Training Strategy

Propelled by a resilient mission, attracted to an inspiring vision to serve and equipped with a Four Pillar Strategy to execute its mission. These are the ethos that drive the SACGRA board, management and team to stay committed to empower South Africa's youth to become initiated in how the country's factories, manufacturing plants, businesses and governments operate.

The Four Pillar Strategy (FPS) derives its credibility from the prowess of partnership, viability and sound governance as follows:

- **Partners** - armed with several partnership agreements with credible entities such as the - Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, Independent Development Trust, Trade & Investment KwaZulu-Natal, K-Tel Solutions are a few of the many employers that host graduates, students and learners. This pillar is foundational in supporting the SACGRA's application for funding from various entities.
- **Host Employers** - they are a vital part of the sustainability of the SACGRA. It helps build a demand led approach to the placement of graduates, students and learners. The SACGRA recruit host employers through its website link([www.cooperativecouncil.co.za](http://www.cooperativecouncil.co.za)) and this builds a credible database of host employers all across South Africa. Entities such Nexia SAB&T and many others came to become host employers through this platform. Currently, there are over 600 host employers with a capacity to host about 8 000 graduates, students and learners as interns.
- **Graduates, Students and Learners** - their hunger and desire to be groomed for the world of work remain and inspiration to the SACGRA. These are also recruited through the SACGRA website. With over 10 000 potential interns registered in the database, the SACGRA has a strong youth mandate to seek funding and host employment for the young geniuses.
- **Universities and colleges** - this pillar is essential for the placement of learners from different disciplines and academic programs.





A pivotal aspect of the work of SACGRA is the training of learners from TVET Colleges in the industry, enabling them to complete their qualifications. This aspect of training follows the SACGRA database of unemployed graduates. As of January 10, 2025, there were 10,542 graduates, learners, and students in the database. The highest need comes from the TVET colleges, and here is the display of the acute need for WIL:

- **TVET college learners represent 4,591 learners** who are desperate to do their in-service training to obtain their qualifications.
- **University of Technology has 2,479 students and graduates** who also require work in the industry as part of their academic requirements.
- **Universities come third, with 1,436 graduates** who have completed their studies and are in desperate need of either employment or internships to become competent.
- **Private Colleges have 727 learners** who have completed their studies and need work opportunities.

SACGRA believes that there is a ticking time bomb that could affect the social stability of South Africa if the needs of the youth are not addressed in a coordinated fashion.

Mr. Maqubela believes that learners, students, and graduates ought to become part of the solution, not part of the problem. Graduates should be dispensable and better able to transition toward either employment or entrepreneurship.

An appeal is made to Dr. Nobuhle Nkabane (Minister, Department of Higher Education and Training), Ms. Nomakhosazana Meth (Minister, Department of Employment and Labour), Mr. Park Tau (Minister, Department of Trade, Industry and Competition), and Mr. Ronald Lamola (Minister, Department of International Relations) to work in unison.



Youth Employment Award bestowed by the SACGRA Founder & CEO to Mr. Phumlani Mntambo, Chairperson and Mr. Ineeleng Molete, CEO LGSETA with Ms. Hlubi Eland looking on.

Doing so will help South Africa remove the silos in government and strengthen the efficiency of the government to implement programs that champion world-class work-integrated programs. In doing so, SACGRA believes that South Africa can become an exporter of human capital to the rest of the continent, reaping the youth dividend.

Finally, the period it takes for learners to undertake their WIL program should be streamlined to 24 months for all programs. This will also allow the calibration of funding for these programs by the sector education and training colleges.

The SACGRA management would like to appreciate the management and staff at Vhembe TVET College and Boland College for being the leading colleges that prepare their learners for WIL.



Special projects have been adopted to help SACGRA open new channels and opportunities for the placement, mentorship, and absorption of graduates, students, and learners as competent professionals.

The following consists of the special projects designed to build a community of like-minded partners with the same vision. Our quest to increase youth employment in South Africa has propelled the organization to initiate the following special projects:

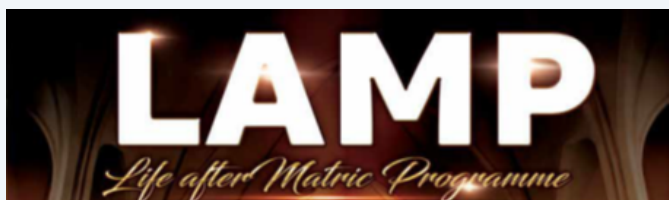
**1. Earnentrepreneurship Program** – It was established because of the funding received from the Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA). The program has been earmarked to develop the capacity of entrepreneurs, non-profit organizations, and co-operatives in the construction sector. To date, over 50 entities have been trained through the Business Toolbox Incubation (BTi). The BTi uses virtual tools, templates for business management, budgeting, process management, and other essentials to build startups and scale them.



**2. Life After Matric Program (LAMP)** – SACGRA has partnered with the Methodist Church in Sharpeville since 2018 to invest in the development of quality learners from grades 10 to 12.

The Life After Matric Program (LAMP) has since increased the number of participants from 400 in 2018 to 800 in 2019.

In 2020, NWU Vaal Campus joined forces with SACGRA, and the program was a success, with over 900 learners and 8 high schools participating to help learners make informed subject choices and provide exposure to interact with professionals in unique careers and vocations. The event is hosted yearly on July 18 to celebrate the life and contributions of former President Nelson Mandela.



**3. Graduates Innovations Council Africa (African Council for Graduates - ACG)** – it is an initiative to rally heads of states, cabinet ministers, universities, captains of industry and students in the 54 African Union member states to implement the resolutions of the African Union.

The goal of the ACG is to place 1 million graduates, students and learners a year from the 54 African countries as interns to learn innovations and workplace best practices in Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia and the USA.



**4. World Council for Graduates (WCG)** – an entity established to build a solid demand for universities and colleges to report on the employability of their graduates globally. This program is aimed at influencing the global rankings of universities and provide critical longitudinal research on the performance of universities in all the continents in bridging the gap between education and world of work.







# ANNUAL DDM/IGR CONFERENCE



Deputy Minister: Ms Phumzile Mgcina, Department of Employment and Labour and Deputy Minister, Mr Zuko Godlimpi after addressing the 2024 district development model (DDM)/ intergovernmental relations conference on November 13-15, 2024 at the Nelson Mandela University in Gqeberha.



Former Minister: COGTA, Ms Thembi Simelane; Founder & CEO SACGRA, Mr Thamsanqa Maqubela; Vice Chancellor Stellenbosch University, Prof. Wim de Villiers and Prof. Deresh Ramjugernath, Vice Chancellor Designate, Stellenbosch University at the opening of the 2023 DDM/IGR Conference.

The annual DDM/IGR conference was initiated and convened by Mr Thamsanqa Maqubela to give citizens of South Africa a seat at the table of government business.

It is a critical initiative aimed at helping the three spheres of government: national, provincial and municipal to work together in partnership with civil society, business and labour.

Interest in the conference has been high and key stakeholders in government and private sector have been supportive of the conference based on the following benefits:

- Promoting the breaking of silos in government.
- Fostering clean governance by promoting clean municipal financial audits – funding the Clean Audit Titan Awards.
- Helping the citizens to see themselves as board members instead of complainers, protestors and victims of government lack of service delivery.
- Channel skills development towards municipalities to boost service delivery – funding the DDM/IGR Catalyst Awards for officials in national, provincial and local government.

The 2025 annual DDM/IGR conference will be held in Gauteng province at the venue and date to be announced.



Dr Elna von Schlicht, Executive Mayor – Cape Winelands District Municipality and Ms Ayanda Mafuleka, CEO FASSET at the DDM/IGR Conference Gala Dinner in Stellenbosch.



Right to Left: Councillor Zukisa Gana, KSD Municipality, Councillor Connie Msibi, Executive Mayor, Thabo Mofutsanyana District Municipality; Former Mayor of eThekweni Municipality, Councillor Mxolisi Kaunda and Mr Eric Sebokedi, SACGRA Consultant at the DDM conference panel discussion in 2023



Mr Bheke Stofile, SALGA President and Prof. Somadoda Fikeni, Chairperson National Public Service Commission at the 2024 DDM/IGR conference on November 13-15, 2024 at the Nelson Mandela University in Gqeberha.



Clean Audit Titans Award presented to Councillor Vikizitha Mlotshwa from Okhahlamba Local Municipality at the 2024 DDM/IGR conference on November 13-15, 2024 at the Nelson Mandela University in Gqeberha.



Skills Development Panel discussion led by Ms Nombulelo Nxesi, CEO ETDP SETA and Mr Tom Mkhwanazi, CEO W&RSETA at the 2024 DDM/IGR conference on November 13-15, 2024 at the Nelson Mandela University in Gqeberha.



Presenting the DDM Catalyst Award to the senior management of Nelson Mandela University at the 2024 DDM/IGR conference Gala Dinner on November 13-15, 2024 at the Nelson Mandela University in Gqeberha.

# FUNDERS & PARTNERS



Empowering Leaders - left to right: Mr Tom Mkhwanazi, CEO W&RSETA; Ms Bontle Lerumo, CEO PSETA; Dr Felleng Yende, CEO FP&M SETA; Ms Gugu Mkhize, CEO INSETA; Dr Innocent Sirovha, CEO AgriSETA, Ms Mpho Mookapele, CEO EWSETA and Mr Malusi Shezi, CEO CETA.

## FUNDERS

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## INTERNSHIP PARTNERS

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As the SACGRA embarks on its goal to place 40 000 students and graduates into workplace training (internships, WIL and candidacy) from 2025, we appeal to funders locally and abroad to join forces to build a capable workforce where university graduates and TVET college learners are equipped with employability skills and essential skills to achieve.

May the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, the National Skills Fund, Unemployment Insurance Fund and Small Enterprise Development Agency work with the SACGRA to achieve the goal of increasing employment for the youth with college certificate and diplomas and university graduates with diplomas and degrees.





SACGRA partners with relying in the implementation of the Four Pillar Strategy, the board, management and staff of the SACGRA understand the meaningful role played by host employers.

Recruitment of host employers takes precedence to securing funding and placement of graduates. This pillar is the strength of the organization and has been able to help SACGRA withstand challenges and competition.

Top host employers have the following attributes and these make them venerated by the SACGRA as well as its funders:

- Takes effort to recruit the interns and provide appropriate induction.
- Offers project management fee and stipend top up for the SACGRA and the interns respectively.
- Provides learners with the tools of trade such as laptops or work software and protective clothing (PPE).
- Submit timesheets on time to enable the SACGRA to process stipends on the last day of each month.
- Contributes towards additional training of interns by making budget available to training interns in career or vocation specific programs.

Host employers across diverse industries to place graduates in workplaces that provide meaningful, hands-on experience. These employers equip graduates with essential skills and real-world exposure, aligning with industry standards. This collaboration ensures graduates are well prepared to build successful and sustainable careers.



Strategic host employers are over 600 and we would like to pay gratitude to the following host employers that have carried the SACGRA flag quite high:

- 1. Parliament of the Republic of South Africa.**
- 2. Office of the Premier, Northern Cape Provincial Government.**
- 3. K-TEL Solutions and Net Nine Nine.**
- 4. PUTCO.**
- 5. King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality.**
- 6. Nexia SAB&T.**
- 7. Tembisa Maginti Court .**
- 8. Morobi Accounting.**
- 9. Schneider Electric.**
- 10. uMgungundlovu District Municipality.**
- 11. Vhembe TVET College.**
- 12. University of Limpopo.**
- 13. University of Pretoria.**
- 14. North West University.**
- 15. Stellenbosch University.**
- 16. Department of Public Works and Infrastructure.**
- 17. Aveng Manufacturing.**
- 18. Department of Home Affairs.**
- 19. Dr AB Xuma Municipality.**
- 20. Vuselela TVET College.**
- 21. SSG Consulting.**
- 22. Moripe Holdings.**
- 23. Vaal University of Technology.**
- 24. Ndlambe Local Municipality.**
- 25. ETDP SETA.**
- 26. FP&M SETA.**
- 27. Department of Basic Education, Engcobo, (EC).**
- 28. Afrisam.**
- 29. King Cetshwayo District Municipality.**
- 30. Metro Rail (PRASA).**
- 31. Transnet.**
- 32. Eskom.**
- 33. South African Weather Services.**
- 34. Afrimat.**

SACGRA management is grateful for the support that it has been receiving from host employers over the years. We further request the existing host employers to refer the SACGRA programs to other host employers as we embark on a journey to place 40 000 graduates, students and learners per year from 2025.

# MANAGEMENT & TEAM



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The SACGRA has made a commitment to contribute towards workplace training by hosting interns annually. The interns are sponsored by several SETAs for a period of 12 months to build their careers and obtain work experience through mentorship and exposure.

All qualifying graduates will receive stipend top ups from the SACGRA when they meet or exceed targets and milestones for personal development, business discovery and problem solving after three months of being hosted at the South African Council for Graduates.

Our entity has a reputable practice and track record of absorbing eligible interns into its members of staff. We are proud that we have been able to groom few interns to become part of management and board as follows:

§ Mr Simphiwe Vulindlu – served in 2015 to 2018 and grew in the ranks until he was nominated to serve as a director in 2019 - he sadly died in 2020 due to COVID-19 related complications.

§ Ms Chiedza Muchimwe – served in 2017 and was promoted to the position of Placement Manager in 2023.

In essence, management has adopted the PXT Assessment as a hiring and grooming battery of assessment. Interns placed in the SACGRA are given an allowance of 15% to utilise the time and resources for purposes of Learning on the job.

An additional component of the allowance is dedicated towards the three critical competences:

- workplace discovery (critical for company knowledge, understanding of its competitors and to be proficient in the wisdom of its customers and competitors).
- networking (mentoring the graduates to live a lasting impression in their interaction with other employees, management and external stakeholders). This is emphasized as it has been proven to be a useful yard stick to increase chances of being absorbed post the internship.
- Insights – an important complementary component that relates to the practice and ability to submit and present well written project and work reports. It carries a weight of 35% in the greater scheme of an internship, work integrated learning and candidacy.
- Finally, performance of structured tasks, which carries a weight of 50% is combined with the SMARTER agenda to fulfil the needs, deliverables and mandate of our clients, funders and partners.







## TESTIMONIALS BY INTERNS



SACGRA Chairperson, Ms. Busisiwe Nsutsha; Founder & CEO, Mr. Thamsanqa Maqubela with former interns Ms. Marie Masekela and Ms. Lorraine Mashiloane. The duo were placed by the SACGRA in 2005 at the Road Accident Fund.

The SACGRA has a strong track record of developing interns and we are happy to have many learners, students and graduates who have been able to complete their internships and have since been absorbed as employees.

Graduates who have completed their internships regularly praises the following SACGRA programs for their development:

- Career Readiness – there are 16 topics in a podcast to help interns with essential skills to cope in the workplace.
- Assessments – PXT and DISC assessments for job fit provides an opportunity for self-directed learning. There are 5 cognitive and 9 behavioral traits that are being assessed with the PXT assessment, which is registered with the Health Professionals Council of South Africa.
- Testimonial videos – learners are required to submit three testimonial videos in the first, sixth and twelfth month of their internship commencements. These are then shared with funding SETAs and potential host employers.

We are pleased to have graduates, students, and learners who have made the SACGRA proud to be in the service of grooming young professionals. They include the following:




Premier Dr Zamani Saul joins SACGRA, Ms. Itumeleng and Mr. Van Wyk from Afrisam at the Youth Employment Launch in July 2024.

1. **Ms Melissa Itumeleng** took part in the **BANKSETA** 24 month internship program and was absorbed by Afrisam, Ulco in Northern Cape.
2. **Ms. Marie Masekela and Ms. Lorraine Mashiloane** placed in 2005 at the **Road Accident Fund**. Today, they both serve as managers in the entity.
3. **Mr. Thobelani Mathenjwa** – Electrical Engineering graduate who was part of the **merSETA** three year candidacy program from 2020 to 2023 and is now working as an engineer in the Netherlands.
4. **Ms. Nthabiseng Masinge** – works at Infrastructure South Africa.
5. **Ms. Thato Yende** – part of the **BANKSETA** 24 month internship program and absorbed by the Department of Home Affairs in Cresta.
6. **Mr. Bonke Wright** – part of the **merSETA** three year candidacy program and was absorbed by the host employer. He holds a national diploma in Electrical Engineering.
7. **Ms. Masechaba Mathe** – funded by the **merSETA** in 2022 and was absorbed by the host employer Aero Klas.
8. **Mr. Winston Malatji** – with an Electrical Engineering National Diploma, took part in the **EWSETA** funded program and was placed at City Power.
9. **Ms. Bongzi Mbonani** - **MICTSETA** funded programme, intern placed at Nkgwete IT Solutions.
10. **Mr. Themba Nkabinde** – Dr. Sam Motsuenyane Foundation: **BankSeta** 2023 program.
11. Mr. Mxolisi Mthanti, SACGRA
12. Mr. Vuyo Zenzile – King Sabata Dalindyebo Municipality.
13. **Ms. Tholi Mimbiri** – uMfolozi TVET College in 2013 in the **Service Seta** funded program.
14. **Mr. Sibusiso Ndaba** – in the **TETA** funded 2012 progra and was placed at KPMG, DPWI and currently employed at the PSETA.
15. **Ms. Siphokazi Toto** – in the **FOODBEV** funded program, placed and absorbed in Parliament, RSA.
16. Ms. Modiegi Mashamaite – SACGRA
17. Ms. Gauta Dibakoane – Nexia SAB&T.
18. Mr. Mervin Ndlovu – SACGRA
19. Ms. Asandisa George – SACGRA
20. **Ms. Margo Pellesier** – holds a National Diploma in Computer Systems Engineering and was placed at Microzone through the **MICTSETA** funded program.



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