

MEDIA RELEASE

UNICEF South Africa's "Techno Girls" mentorship programme enters growth phase

Pretoria 10 Feb. 2006... For 16-year old Zoliswa Yoyo from Ndyebo Senior Secondary School in rural Motherwell district of the Eastern Cape, the fast-paced, complex work of environment a motor car assembly company contrasts starkly with the tranquil, scenic setting of her village. Until recently, her exposure to the working world was limited to her school teachers and those from the village fortunate enough to have a job.

Courtesy of the UNICEF *Techno Girls Career Mentorship Programme*, Zoliswa has now gained first hand experience in the running a big corporate and is learning how the maze of operational divisions co-operate to make a company tick.

As one of 35 girls participating in the *Techno Girls*, Zoliswa spent two days at INVESTEC, an international specialist banking and financial group, where she was exposed to career options within the banking sector, including credit control, fund management and share trading. The result is that she can better relate her school-based learning and other training to the real world.

Techno Girls has given me the most precious treasure for the future," says a proud Zoliswa. "I am really grateful for the opportunity to explore a workplace in which I might make a career", she adds

The UNICEF *Techno Girls* programme is part of its overall Girls' Education programme implemented in partnership with the national and departments of education in South Africa. Bukiwe Fanta, Gender focal point in the Eastern Cape Department of Education says, "It is critical for the girl child, particularly those from rural areas, to be exposed to scarce career fields, more so in the arena of maths, science and technology. "*Techno Girls* helps by identifying talented girls from deep rural areas of the province and catapulting them into the world of real business for unique learning experience."

More companies are coming on board

A collaborative project of the South African Government and UNICEF, *Techno Girls* was launched in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape, last July. It is now set to grow in Limpopo and other provinces as UNICEF and its partners continue to mobilise more career mentorship partners from the South African private sector.

So far, commitments have been secured from 18 Limpopo province-based organisations, with a first intake of girls scheduled for March of this year. Additionally, 15 Limpopo girls stand to benefit from bursaries offered by MINTEK, a leading specialist in mineral and metallurgical technologies. UNICEF says the programme should escalate significantly during 2006, with the number of participating girls set to increase to some 300 per province.

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“Career mentorship is vital in providing a sense of what the professional world is like and the quality of work expected. It teaches girls more than any text book could about careers,” says SPO Julianna Lindsey, adding, “Girls need both the theory provided in school and the practical application of maths, science and technology that only business can provide.”

UNICEF and its partners will continue to work towards sustainability of the *Techno Girls* programme until the end of 2006 in collaboration with key government and private sector partners that support girls education and development in South Africa.

UNICEF Techno Girls Partners:

Company	Website	Company	Website
ABSA	www.absa.co.za	P E Tourism	
Barloworld		Standard Bank	www.standardbank.co.za
Dept of Science & Technology	www.dst.gov.za	Umsobomvu Youth Fund	www.uyf.org.za
Investec	www.investec.co.za	S A Institute of Chartered Accountants	www.saica.co.za
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality	www.mandelametro.gov.za	Anglo Platinum	www.angloplatinum.com
S A Post Office	www.sapo.co.za	University of Limpopo	www.unorth.ac.za
SANLAM	www.sanlam.co.za	Palabora Foundation	No web site
TWIB	www.twib.co.za	University of Venda	www.univen.ac.za
African Rainbow Minerals	www.arm.co.za	Department of Land Affairs	www.land.pwv.gov.za
Budget Rent-a-Car	www.budget.co.za	Seeff Properties	www.seeff.com
First National Bank	www.fnb.co.za	Mortgage SA	www.mortgagesa.co.za
Gijima AST	www.gijima.com	De Beers Venetia Mine	www.debeersgroup.com
Mintek	www.mintek.co.za	Lepelle Northern Water	www.dwaf.gov.za
Polokwane International Airport	http://home.intekom.com/gateway/	Capricorn District Municipality	www.dlpg.gov.za
Larciano Accountants	No website		