

# Small business support in a big way

“People cannot be trained in a day or a month, it is a process,” said Fischer.

The Rustenburg Business Support Centre, an initiative funded by Xstrata Alloys and launched in May this year, is part of the company's community and social responsibility programme. The Centre was established to help historically disadvantaged businesses to become sustainable and profitable, and to ensure a return on investment for the funders of these businesses.

Xstrata Alloys CSI and enterprise development manager, Naas Fischer, says that the aim of the Centre is to equip local businesses with the skills so that they can take care of issues that they couldn't before because of the disadvantages of the past.

“This project is part of our responsibility to address the inequalities of the past. The intention is to bring small black emerging businesses into mainstream procurement opportunities,” said Fischer.



Sagewise employees

The Centre is run by Sage Wise, a company with much experience in socio-economic growth and development. Fischer says Xstrata Alloys teamed up with Sage Wise because of their expertise in mentoring small emerging businesses and providing them with skills that can one day see them standing on their own and surviving in a competitive market.

At the Business Support Centre, SMMEs are given support in just some of the following areas:

- Skills development in business, financial, risk and time management;
- Guidance on how to comply with statutory requirements and submissions; and
- Development of feasibility studies, business plans, due diligence reports and business profiles.

Sage Wise's Pierre van der Merwe, founder of the Business Support Centre concept, says their slogan “Wealth created through knowledge” is the foundation on which the Centre was established.

He knows too well that small companies often suffer because, even though they have all the right equipment to start a business, no-one teaches them how to run a company properly.

“It's wrong to just build infrastructure, find entrepreneurs and give them working capital. We need to teach them how to run a business, and that's how you create a sustainable company which will eventually bring you wealth,” says van der Merwe.

The Centre aims to create business-minded young leaders who will leave the programme with the skills to run a successful company.

“We teach enterprise development, business planning and how to set up a business. Then we take them through practical training and the sessions go on for as long as the participant needs them,” said van der Merwe.

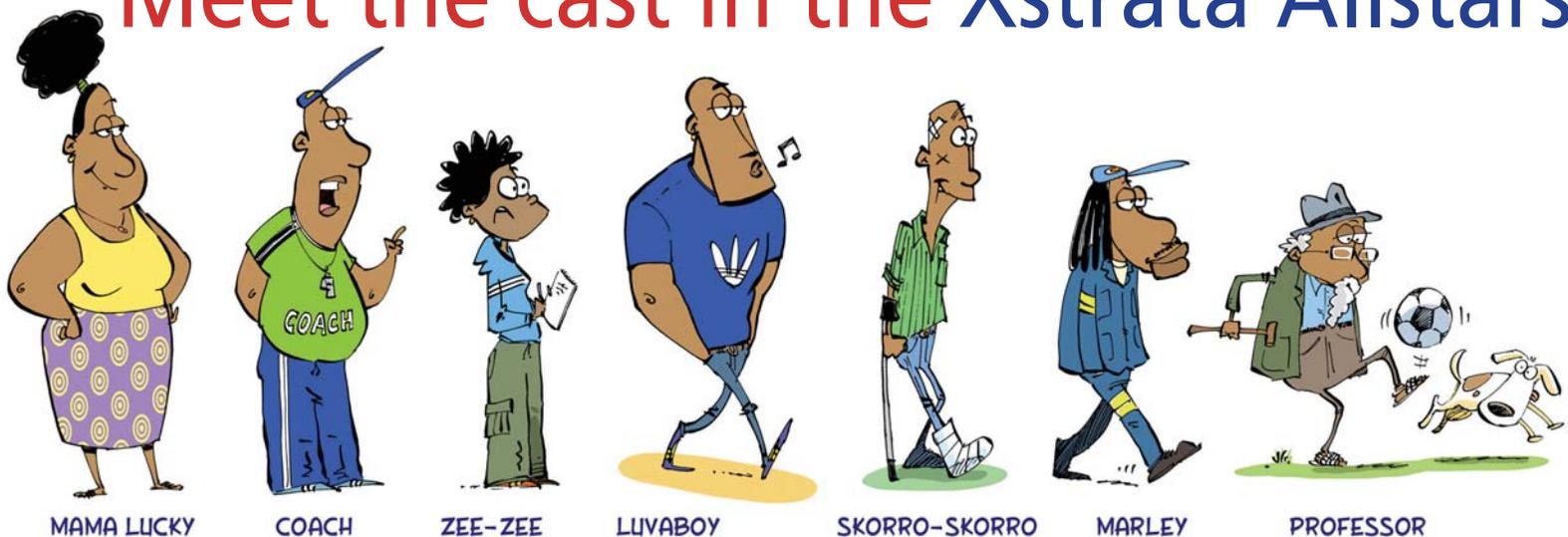
A boardroom, a personal assistant and internet access is made available to SMMEs registered with the Centre if the need arises. Currently there are 15 SMMEs registered on the programme.

Pierre says they plan to build a database of all SMMEs in the Bojanala municipality which will be available on the server of the Business Support Centre.

“This will help the municipality, mines - anyone who has a tender - to look for companies in the area with relevant expertise,” said van der Merwe.

The success of this project will also see this initiative being rolled out to other municipalities in Rustenburg in the near future.

## Meet the cast in the Xstrata Allstars!



### Introducing the XSTRATA ALLSTARS comic strip -- TELLING IT LIKE IT IS!

Welcome to Mama Lucky's Spaza Shop! This is where every Saturday you can meet the Xstrata Allstars, the local amateur football club made up of smelter employees and local residents, as they get ready for this week's match and discuss issues affecting the life of the local community and Xstrata.

Join **MAMA LUCKY**, the all-business spaza shop owner and her husband **COACH** whose two passions in life are coaching the Xstrata Allstars and Mama Lucky's chalaka chicken pies. There's **ZEE-ZEE**, the young reporter who wants to be a famous sports journalist one day (not to mention that she's a better soccer player than most of the guys on the team -- much to their irritation) and **LUVABOY**, the team's smooth striker who is always trying to score... both goals on the field and with the ladies. **SKORRO-SKORRO** is a local taxi driver and his minibus is also the team bus. Skorro-Skorro can't seem to get through a game without getting injured... and his taxi doesn't look much better and barely makes it to away games.

**MARLEY** is the team's rasta goalie and probably one of the most nicest guys you'll ever meet. In fact, Marley is such a nice guy, that if the other team is losing badly, he'll let in a goal just to make them “feel better.”

A retired school teacher who spends his days sitting with his dog under the shady tree next to Mama Lucky's Spaza Shop reading the newspapers, **PROFESSOR** is the “brainy” one of the cast of characters and a fount of elder wisdom and advice.