

Local Development Institute Expands Into Africa

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South Africa may have taken some time to develop its current NQF framework, but this revered structure is now sought after across Africa. Having recognised the worth of the framework, African countries have been emulating South Africa's framework to develop their own for the last three years. While Botswana and Namibia have now formalised their own NQF structures, they took the time to use South Africa as an example, learning from the mistakes made and utilising the services of South African consultants to perfect their frameworks.

Having identified Africa as *the* new avenue for learning and development, and skills development as a whole, the South African Institute of People Development (IPD) has expanded its service offering across the African continent. "There is a very strong sense of need coming from Africa," says IPD's Director, Gizelle McIntyre. "We have been involved in consultations in African countries at a very high level, guiding them through the process of developing effective frameworks, while steering them away from the pitfalls experienced in South Africa."

The Institute has experience working abroad, having offered its services in Namibia since 2013, while consulting in Botswana and Swaziland last year. "The next country that we will focus on is Zambia, as it is ready to create its own NQF structure," confirms McIntyre. "We have focus areas but we are open to offering our services to any English speaking African country that is interested in making use of our vast experience in developing frameworks."

The qualified trainers delivering the services have commented that they look forward to working in Africa, with a great passion for upskilling learning and development (L&D) professionals. In addition to consulting on framework development, trainers offer learning and development in terms of education, training and development as well as management training.

Despite the challenges of working across borders, such as varying procurement processes, an overload of paperwork and, of course, the requirement to travel, IPD has built lasting relationships in the countries that it has operated in. At Namdeb, for example, the Institute initially offered a short skills programme in assessment and moderation, implementing its recognition of prior learning (RPL) process for some L&D practitioners. As the relationship grew, IPD conducted a needs analysis for the mine and has continued working with the mine annually in order to address skills gaps.

“Working with clients that are open-minded regarding their needs always makes for a successful partnership,” says McIntyre. “As Namdeb forms part of De Beers (now Anglo), a multi-national standard has been set for anyone in this environment.” This level of awareness of Namdeb’s needs, and the ability to customise and adjust training onsite, has led to a continuous stream of upskilling and assistance with curriculum design.

While the mine as a whole benefits from an upskilled workforce, individual learners have seen incredible growth. “The depth of understanding and ability to apply what is taught will take your breath away,” concludes McIntyre. “In our experience, the learners work very hard despite not having the luxury of a South African market; they are true pioneers in their own environments. They don’t believe that anything is irrelevant.”

The ability to foster relationships across the continent, learning from other countries and promoting mutual growth is exemplary. South Africa should consider this level of interest in its practitioners and framework a resounding compliment.

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Boilerplate:

Founded in 1999, Workplace Skills Solutions t/a The Institute of People Development (IPD) strives to equip, prepare and certify practitioners in order to serve South Africa’s skills development strategy as well as facilitating the transformation of education and training. Over the years, IPD has become the preferred people development partner to most state owned and private enterprises in Southern Africa. For more information, please contact IPD at trainingenquiries@peopledev.co.za on (011) 315 2913 or visit www.peopledevelopment.co.za