

Spuds grow businesses, people

Potatoes South Africa (PSA) has launched a "Growing Potato Entrepreneurs" micro enterprise development programme with its 'spudmobile', a fast-food outlet on wheels, perfect for the preparation of spatlos, one of South Africa's most popular township take-away meals.



(Image: David Briers)

Launching as part of World Food Day 2010 on Saturday 16 October, each spudmobile sports a deep-fat fryer ideally suited for chipping, as well as a flat plate gas cooker, which can be used to prepare boiled potatoes, fillings, sauces and other ingredients as part of a potato meal.

In a pledge to support PSA, Tinus Dodds of the Economic Development Department of the Tshwane Fresh Produce Market has confirmed a staple contribution of one ton of fresh potatoes, as well as 40 bags of potato seeds. This donation is to be presented to Soshanguve community members on Saturday.

PSA has manufactured six spudmobiles, of which four will form the foundation of the initial Soshanguve pilot project, located in the eastern side of Soshanguve (blocks B, W and Y), where impoverishment is at its most severe.

Immaculate Zinde, marketing assistant manager, PSA, says, "It's the organisation's vision to cover the full spectrum of potato businesses with an emphasis on developing small-to-medium scale potato farmers, as well as small business entrepreneurs. This ultimate goal is to enable and equip such individuals to become partners in the South Africa economy."

Growing entrepreneurs

"It is estimated that each new person who becomes self-employed, affects the lives of at least five others." ~ Anon

The aim of the "Growing Potato Entrepreneurs" programme is to address poverty and hunger by empowering vulnerable individuals to become economically active with potato businesses. Not only are individuals and their families uplifted, they are also empowered to provide communities with potato meals - a highly nutritious food source.

In order to nurture its potato entrepreneurs; PSA has partnered with a non-profit organisation, Acts2Change, which is firmly rooted within destitute South African communities. Its aim is to deliver practical and sustainable community-orientated solutions, implemented in order to address the endless cycle of hopelessness, abuse, homelessness, hunger and violence as perpetuated in such areas.



(Image: David Briers)

Investing over R100 000 in the initial programme development, PSA will sponsor the micro enterprise project and provide spudmobiles to selected delegates of the programme.

Potato programme

The programme will consist of a sustainable six-phase model, managed and executed by Acts2Change, with a focus on:

- Engagement and partnership with community leaders, who will be consulted to select relevant community members for the micro enterprise programme
- Entrepreneurial skills development, empowering delegates with basic business knowledge to enable them to start on the road to economic independence in only six months in potato-related businesses from fast food potato concepts like the spudmobile to innovative fresh produce sales

- "On the ground" mentoring and support in helping delegates to set up their various potato businesses and getting started; assistance with successful management and motivation and support.

Acts2Change is currently involved in several communities within Soshanguve, where it maintains extensive networks and strong relationships with community leaders. It will drive the programme on the ground, taking responsibility for the community leader engagement, training, mentoring, as well as programme logistics and supervision.

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