



Jewellery made by students at the Atteridgeville Jewellery Project.

Youngsters carve careers in jewellery

MOGOMOTSI MAGOME
and KELLY DUNCAN

A group of city students are looking forward to making a career for themselves in the jewellery industry, all thanks to a project that offers them skills free of charge.

Over the last nine years, the Atteridgeville Jewellery Project has been imparting design and manufacturing skills to previously disadvantaged young people from areas around the city.

Elizabeth Motloko, who graduated from the project in 2002, is now making a living as a jewellery designer. She is working on securing funding so that she can open her own workshop.

"I'm benefiting mostly from orders from the community and corporate clients, but things will be rosier once I have my own workshop," she said.

She inspires younger students like first-year Koketso Rakgwadi, who is grateful to be part of the project. "I want to use the skills that I get here to be a successful entrepreneur in the jewellery designing and manufacturing field," said Rakgwadi.

The students are allowed into the workshop to use the equipment after completing their courses.

The project, which is housed at the Tshwane South College in Atteridgeville, last year received R500 000 worth of equipment from the Japanese embassy.

Project director Fana Maseko said the equipment has helped improve the quality of design and manufacturing.

"When the students leave they will be prepared for the job market because of access to adequate equipment," he said.

Students are taught to use copper and brass in their first year and later move on to work with silver and gold.

Second-year student Francis Nare said jewellery design as a career was still overlooked, especially in the townships.

"By the time people start rushing to take it up as a career, I will be one step ahead in the field," he said.

More than 80 graduates of the school are working as professionals and building sustainable careers in the jewellery design and manufacturing field.



Sondri Kgwadi is in her second year at the Atteridgeville Jewellery Project.

PICTURES: DAMARIS HELWIG

Court finds 'pastor' guilty of incest

A self-proclaimed pastor who fathered three children with his own daughter was yesterday found guilty of raping her over a period of eight years.

The 50-year-old man from KaNyamazane near Nelspruit in Mpumalanga, who can't be named to protect his daughter's identity, was found guilty in the Nelspruit regional court of nine counts of rape.

He was remanded in custody until April 15 when a pre-sentencing report – to help the court determine a suitable sentence – will be submitted. The pastor had pleaded not guilty to the nine counts of rape, alternatively incest.

The man raped his daughter between 1998 and 2006 after telling his wife, three sons and daughter that God had told him to fulfill his promise as a "descendant of Benjamin".

He testified that he slept with his daughter so that she could "see the kingdom of heaven" when she died.

The pastor further testified during his trial that he had never heard

the word "incest" until he appeared in court and that he'd never seen the word in the Bible.

He told court that a man like him would not sleep with his daughter unless it was for religious reasons.

He said he prayed for everyone in his family before they went to sleep in a one-hour prayer session.

He had quoted many Bible verses in an attempt to back up his plea of innocence. He said that in the Bible, Lot impregnated his two daughters.

He claimed that if Lot's act was not deemed a sin, then his own sexual union with his daughter could not be deemed immoral either. His daughter is now 23 and has three children – aged eight, five and four.

According to a policeman who testified during the trial, the man's wife and daughter were kept virtual prisoners in their house in KaNyamazane where the man ran a "church" and preached about the end of the world.

When passing judgment, magistrate Andre Geldenhuys said it was unacceptable for the pastor to distort Bible verses to justify his actions. – African Eye News Service

Consumers are really feeling the pinch: bank

Higher interest rates, rising prices and stricter lending criteria are starting to curb consumer credit demand, Nedbank's group economic unit says.

In its monthly money supply report released yesterday, the bank said consumer credit figures for February were below market expectations. "Growth in private sector credit extension (PSCE) finally surprised on the downside, coming in well below market expectations of 21.5% year-on-year."

"This suggests that higher interest rates, rising prices and stricter lending criteria are finally taking their toll on consumers' appetite for credit," the bank said.

Growth in money supply also eased significantly to 21.07% year-on-year in February, down from 25.2% year-on-year in the previous month.

"Money supply and credit growth tend to lag behind the real economy. The remarkable growth

since 2005 is likely to reverse more significantly in 2008 as the effects of higher interest rates and tighter credit conditions take hold."

Vehicle finance and home loans were also slowing down.

"Taken together, instalment and leasing finance slowed further, easing to 11.6% year-on-year from 13.8% year-on-year."

"Growth in mortgages advances, which makes up 50% of asset-backed credit, continued to moderate, easing to 23.1% year-on-year from 24.5% year-on-year," the bank said. Insolvencies were also picking up.

The bank warned that the situation could deteriorate if the SA Reserve Bank again raised interest rates later this month. "If the SA Reserve Bank's monetary policy committee MPC hikes rates, the economy, which is already looking weak, will be in a much worse state by the end of the year," Nedbank said. – Sapa

SA takes over UN Security Council presidency for April

JOE LAURIA
INDEPENDENT FOREIGN SERVICE

South Africa has taken over the presidency of the UN Security Council for the month of April during which African issues will dominate the council's agenda.

The centrepiece of South Africa's leadership of the 15-member council will come on April 17, when several heads of state, including President Thabo Mbeki, will attend a special council meeting in New York.

The gathering is intended to

improve ties between the UN and the African Union, particularly in the management of peacekeeping operations on the continent, said Dumisani Kumalo, South Africa's envoy to the UN.

So far Prime Minister Romano Prodi of Italy, President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso, Panama's vice-president, a presidential envoy from China and the foreign ministers of Britain, France and Belgium will join Mbeki, who will sit in the president's chair.

Kumalo said other heads of state from Africa, whose nations are on

the council agenda, have also been invited.

The heads of state of Cote D'Ivoire and Somalia are attending. "The purpose is to have a resolution that will look into strengthening the relationship and also finding predictable resources for funding AU peace missions," Kumalo said.

As the AU increasingly takes over the traditional role of UN peacekeeping in Africa, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon is creating a panel to study how to finance the African effort.

The fault lines between the AU

and the UN were perhaps best displayed in President al-Bashir's attitude towards both in the conflict in Darfur. Undermanned and under-financed, the AU peacekeeping force in Darfur was replaced last year by a planned 20 000-man UN mission.

But al-Bashir balked for months about accepting the UN and demanded that only African troops make up the UN force. He eventually relented and allowed Indian and Chinese troops to join UNAMID, which is still only 9 000 strong. South Africa has contributed 500 peacekeepers with the intention

of deploying as much as 800.

The lesson is that if the world and some African leaders want Africa to police its own conflicts the international community must at least help with the logistical and financial support.

Kumalo said South Africa would also use its presidency to hold a meeting on the importance of reducing world trade in small arms and in particular to the continent. "In Africa that is what kills us more than large conventional weapons or weapons of mass destruction," Kumalo said.

Brave burn survivors soldier on

HANTI OTTO

They say with faith and courage one can conquer mountains. "They" must have been referring to burn survivors and the Children of Fire charity.

Two years ago the organisation and several teenagers who had overcome terrible injuries sustained during burning incidents conquered the mighty Drakensberg.

Their adventures would have made for a fascinating book and their inner strength was a lesson to many.

Then, last year Children of Fire volunteers and 19 teenage burn survivors climbed to the top of Kilimanjaro to raise awareness of the dangers of fires and the plight of survivors.

One of those was 15-year-old Thulani Nhleko whose feet were so badly burnt in a veld fire that he could not wear shoes for two years. But with surgery at Johannesburg General Hospital a few months before the trip, and a personal trainer, Thulani made it to the top of Kilimanjaro. "I never knew



Burn survivors who made it to the top of Kilimanjaro with the Children of Fire organisation last year.

what I could do in life, until I was offered that challenge."

Bronwen Jones, director of Children of Fire, said this year's Drakensberg Outreach, planned for June, was to build the children's self-esteem and to form strong friendships.

They also want to raise awareness of injuries due to burns. Burn survivors aged between 12 and 17 can be nominated for the expedition being run in co-operation with Msunduzi

fire-fighters. Children of Fire will make the final selection from the nominations.

Nominations can be sent by surgeons, therapists, even the youngsters' families to firechildren@icon.co.za with full contact details, marked for the attention of Lindiwe Ngenya. Alternatively they can be posted to: Children of Fire, PO Box 1048, Auckland Park 2006. Tel: 011 726 6529.

Mantashe to meet DA over Scorpions

ANC secretary-general Gwede Mantashe has agreed to meet the Democratic Alliance to discuss the future of the Scorpions, DA leader Helen Zille said yesterday.

"Unfortunately, Mr Mantashe's letter indicates that ANC president Jacob Zuma will not be attending the meeting, as I originally requested," she said in a statement.

Zille said she had told Mantashe of her disappointment at Zuma's rejection of her request to meet him.

It flew in the face of Zuma's comments in the weekend Press that he was ready to "debate anything", even the future of the Scorpions.

"This is unfortunate. I believe that it is critical that the leaders of the two largest political parties meet from time to time to discuss issues of profound national importance," she said.

"I sincerely hope that Mr Zuma, as the potential future president of South Africa, is not shying away from a robust discussion on an issue as serious as the Scorpions."

"This would not bode well for the future of democratic engagement in South Africa."

Zille said she hoped Zuma changed his mind and agreed to attend the meeting.

"But if he is not bold enough to debate the future of the Scorpions with me face-to-face, then so be it."

She would meet Mantashe instead to ascertain the ANC's reasons for disbanding the most effective crime-fighting unit the country had ever seen.

She looked forward to a full and frank discussion, Zille said.

A date for the meeting would be announced soon. – Sapa

Mass literacy campaign set to be rolled out

CANDES KEATING

In just less than two weeks, 300 000 adults will start learning to read, write and count.

The Khari Gude Mass Literacy Campaign, aimed at reducing adult illiteracy, is the biggest project of its kind to be rolled out by the Education Department. About 4.7 million adults

have never attended school and cannot read, write or count.

The department hopes that by 2012 these adults will all have attended adult literacy classes to be rolled out at community centres, schools and churches across the country.

The campaign has been welcomed by groups lobbying for adult basic education, who have criticised the depart-

ment for being slow to address the training needs of this sector.

Professor Veronica McKay, an adult basic education expert appointed by Education Minister Naledi Pandor to run the R6.2 billion campaign, said: "This is a great investment. Enabling the right to literacy is one of the greatest gifts that any government can give its people."

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