



Fossil Casting – Tourist Treasure – April 2009

A continuing part of the project sponsored by the US Embassy, is the Fossil Casting project. This project represented the second phase of a rollout of a pilot project aimed at providing unique skills to learners from Mamelodi so that they may become successful creative entrepreneurs. This skills focused on fossil casting.



While Phase 1 of the training programme focused on the creation of visual arts and sculpture, Phase Two consisted of the more advanced skill of the casting of fossil remains from the Cradle of Humankind. Aside from the skill to be acquired, Learners were exposed to understanding the historical importance attached to fossils as another form of our heritage. The training modules were undertaken by a team of experts led by Dr. Berger from the Cradle of Humankind for a group of 45 learners who comprised the trainee group of Phase 1. Training took place over two weeks of the school vacation and continue on selected weekends for a further five months.

SITE VISIT

This programme included a site visit to the Cradle of Humankind to understand the importance of this heritage site in our country's history as well as an opportunity for participants to learn more about fossils.

An exhibition showcased the value of varying creative skills in moves towards sustainability; education of South Africans on the value of fossils in the heritage landscape; demonstrates the link that exists between different creative areas such as the visual arts, sculpture and fossil making; and how income can be derived from the tourist market through trade in fossil casting products.

The product produced will be sold at the gift store at the Cradle of Humankind with profits being passed onto the project participants. Should the project enjoy success in this regard, the possibility exists of a long term partnership between Ifa Lethu and the Cradle for such initiatives which will ensure sustainability for youth.

In addition, three outstanding participants will be identified and rewarded with prizes and opportunities for internships with the Cradle of Humankind. These winners will also become part of Ifa Lethu's lecture programme for youth which would see these young trainees speak about their experiences and skills to learners in other Ifa lethu Projects. They will be rewarded further by being involved in Ifa Lethu's Young Ambassador's Projects.



Location:

Wits University

Partners:

US Embassy, Wits University Origins Centre, P.A.S.T., Cradle of Humankind.

Deliverables

Achieved:

45 Learners trained.

Two internships created at the Origins Centre.

Community Mentorship programme implemented.

Opportunities for collaboration between Mamelodi and the Cradle of Humankind Museum Store created.