

NEWSLETTER

Best Wishes 2009



Winners of Innovators Mauritius Award III Rewarded

The winners of the Innovators Mauritius Award III were rewarded at a ceremony held on Thursday 16th October 2008 at the Imperial China Restaurant, Emerald Park, Trianon.

The Innovators Mauritius Award launched in June 2008, received 107 entries for this year's edition. The theme was Eco-living: 'pour une ile Maurice durable' - Everybody can make a difference.... This theme goes in line with the Government's objective of making Mauritius a sustainable island especially at a time when threats of global warming and wide scale environmental pollution are jeopardizing human life and the environment. The objective of the award is to awaken the creative potential of the Mauritian people so that innovation becomes an integral part of the local culture. It is through constant innovation that a nation can sustain the competitiveness of its products and services, and thus challenge globalization.



The jury, appointed by the Innovation Technical Committee to assess the projects, was co-chaired by Mr Joel de Rosnay, Conseiller Spécial du Premier Ministre, République de Maurice, Conseiller du Président de la Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie, Paris and by Mr Manoj Vaghjee, Managing Director, Sustainable Resource Management Ltd..

In the General Public category, Mr Romeno Ramasawmy won the Gold Award for his project on low cost wind turbine made from metal scrap. The Bronze Award in the same category was awarded ex-aequo to Mr Emile Oudin for his project on electric generator running without solar energy, fuel oil or biofuel and to Mr Rajendranath Balkee for his project on Tide and



Mr Emile Oudin with his certificate and trophy



Mr Tony Lee Luen Len from Ecosis Ltd. being rewarded by Honourable Vasant Bunwaree, Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources



Mr Romeno Ramasawmy receiving his trophy and certificate from Honourable Lormus Bundhoo, Minister of Environment and National Development Unit

Wave Concertina Energy Conversion Device (TWCECD). No participant was awarded the Silver Award in this category.

In the Industrialists / Professionals category, the Gold Award went ex-aequo to Mr Tony Lee Luen Len and his team from Ecosis Ltd. for their project on Residence Tanzi and to Dr (Mrs) Nalini Heeralall-Issur and her team for their project on passive cooling and daylighting of buildings. There was no winner for either the Silver Award or the Bronze Award in this category.



Dr (Mrs) Nalini Heeralall-Issur being interviewed by the MBC live just after receiving her award

Winners of Innovators Mauritius Award III Rewarded (continued)



In his speech, Honourable Vasant Bunwaree, Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources stressed that under the given economic situation where our local industries are under tremendous pressure due to the removal of protectionist barriers and the turmoil created by the financial crisis on our export markets, the need for continuous innovation is vital for our country to maintain its economic growth while ensuring the well-being of its citizens. Innovation is one of the most critical components that will drive this transformational change for Mauritius.

The Executive Director of the NPCC on his part pointed out that it is of utmost importance that we change our mindset "We need to depart from past practices, improve, and compete with the best in the world if we want to sustain our economic development".

What is Kanban?

Kanban – from two Japanese words: "kan" meaning "card" and "ban" meaning "signal"; therefore kanban referring to "signal cards" – is a system of continuous supply of components, parts and supplies, such that workers have what they need, where they need it, when they need it. As its name suggests, kanban historically uses cards to signal the need for an item. However, other devices such as plastic markers (kanban squares) or balls (often golf balls) or an empty part-transport trolley or floor location can also be used to trigger the movement, production, or supply of a unit in a factory.

Directly associated with Just-In-Time (JIT) delivery, kanban forms an integral part of Kaizen and 5S. It was out of a need to maintain the level of improvements that the kanban system was devised by Toyota. Kanban became an effective tool to support the running of the production system as a whole. In addition, it proved to be an excellent way for promoting improvements because reducing the number of kanban in circulation highlighted problem areas.

BENEFITS OF KANBAN

- It reduces inventory and product obsolescence
- It eliminates overproduction and reduces waste and scrap
- It provides flexibility in production
- It increases output
- It reduces total cost



African Productivity Practitioners Practicing Kaizen in a Japanese Company

Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development (JPC-SED) invited twelve productivity practitioners from South Africa, Botswana, Kenya and Mauritius to a two-week Observational Study Mission on Management Consultancy for Productivity Improvement in Japan between 18 October and 1 November 2008. The objective was to enable the African participants acquire experience in applying Japanese management improvement methodologies in a local company. The Japanese company which was chosen for this challenging experience was Sankyo Kogyo Co. Ltd, a sub-contractor of spare parts to Toyota, which has adopted the production system of the leader in automobile manufacturing.

Sankyo Kogyo ni youkoso (Welcome to Sankyo Kogyo)

Go to Gemba (workplace) and observe

DAY 1

On the first day, together with the resource persons from JPC-SED, Ms Mariko Kamuichi and Mr Katsushi Honda, the African participants met the management of the company, Mr. Hideki Kawase, the President, and Mr Tesuo Tokunaga, the General Manager. The presentation of the company from the management revealed that Sankyo Kogyo is striving to become a global company. It has established an integrated production system to achieve total production from the development and design phase to the final stages of quality control. They have also established an environment that enables them to respond to any requests from their customers. The company produces more than 100,000 models and types of products. The strength of Saky Kogyo, in the Higashiura Plant, relies on a simple low cost production line which by being very flexible allows the company to respond quickly to the requirements of its customers.

The assignments of the African productivity practitioners as consultants in the warehouse of Sankyo Kogyo Co. Ltd. consisted of:

- reducing the workforce from 5 to 4 in the Reception Area
- improving the way information is received by the Counting Department
- reducing the number of workers from 7 to 6 in the Shipment Area.

They were impressed to see the management openness to KAIZEN (continuous improvement). KAIZEN is not only a philosophy but it is a concept that is being applied everyday in the company.

DAY 2 AND DAY 3

Observations, measurements, interviews with the employees, assumptions and conclusions were the tasks of the African consultants during the forthcoming two days. They realized that it was not easy to understand fully how the warehouse operates in just two days but they learnt a lot about KANBAN, which relates to lean and Just-in-Time production. Sankyo Kogyo does not need many supervisors because of the internal and external KANBAN in place.

DAY 4 - D DAY

The morning of the fourth day was devoted to some final fine tuning before the presentation of the findings and recommendations to the top management of the company that was made in the afternoon. Time was a limiting factor and despite all the efforts it was impossible to get a thorough understanding of all the processes. However, the pertinent observations made – minimization of idle-time of employees and job organization to reduce number of workers, and use of a conveyor belt for organized supply of materials – impressed the management who admitted that they have never thought of such solutions before. The African consultants received congratulations for the good work put in and a suggestion was made to extend future in-plant practices.

The objectives of the study mission have been met as it enabled the participants to get hands-on practice in a Japanese company which will definitely help them improve their consulting skills in business management, marketing, human resources and production management and also to get the necessary confidence to act as professional consultants and contribute to productivity improvement in their respective countries.



Application of Kanban in Sankyo Kogyo

Advocacy and Poverty Alleviation and Community Health

Three hundred and twenty women from the District of Pamplemousses / Rivière du Rempart that attended the courses on Advocacy and Poverty Alleviation and Advocacy and Community Health were awarded their certificates at a ceremony held at the Farmers Service Centre, Goodlands on 1st December 2008.

The NPCC was actively involved as the training partner in this project run in collaboration with the National Women's Council. The project received financial assistance from the Decentralised Cooperation Programme and the Fondation Nouveau Regard (Ciel Group). Eight training workshops were organised in different centres in the north of the country namely, Triolet Women Centre, Petit Raffray Social Welfare Centre, Pamplemousses Village Hall, Indira Gandhi Women Centre (Rivière du Rempart), Terre Rouge Community Centre, Abercombe Women Centre, Rivière du Rempart Social Centre, and Cap Malheureux Village Hall. The workshops provided the women, mainly from the Women's Associations of the northern region, with the necessary knowledge and skills in problem-solving and needs identification at the regional level, with advocacy skills in promoting their participation in policy making and politics at the regional level, and to set up networks and linkages with other stakeholders in the pursuit of common goals at the community level in their respective locality. In the short and medium term, it is expected that new projects would come up from the issues and needs identified as the participants were requested to prepare an action plan at the end of the training.



InnovEd



Civic Action Teams



Training in collaboration with Asian Management Institute



ELIT



Japanese Consultants for the Model Companies

Developing the Innovative Potential of Civil Servants

The Mauritius Public Service Quality Association (MPSQA) organized a National Quality Week held from 17th to 21st November 2008 to promote a quality culture in the public service in view of making it more efficient. In this context, the NPCC conducted a training for the members of the Mauritius Public Service Quality Association on "Quality: from improvement to innovation" on 20th November 2008.

The participants were introduced to the concept and importance of innovation in their professional activities. The workshop was based on brainstorming sessions and on practical exercises to practice what was taught.

Innovation is a tool being promoted by the NPCC to help people think out-of-the box; the aim being that ultimately, innovation will become an integral part of the lives of the Mauritian people.





[Continued]



Strategic Visioning Exercise in Namibia



Innovators Mauritius Award 3



Commonwealth of Learning - Network of Farmers of Eastern Region



Corporate Social Responsibility at Floreal Women Centre



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Knowledge Sharing for Productivity Improvement in Africa

Further to the positive outcome that was received from the first cohort of participants of the Basic Training Course for Productivity Practitioners (BCPP) held last year, a further twenty-five participants from five Pan African Productivity Association (PAPA) member countries – Botswana, Mauritius, Nigeria, South Africa and Zambia – followed the same course from 10th November to 5th December 2008 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The training course, sponsored by the Asian Productivity Organisation (APO), aimed at enabling the participants acquire basic knowledge relating to the concepts, tools, and methodologies of productivity and quality and to apply such tools and methodologies in practice through an in-plant intervention in an enterprise.

For the participants, the course provided a new and enriching experience as it assimilated both theoretical and practical lessons. Meeting with counterparts from different countries and background also provided the participants with a broader perspective and a new insight of how productivity can be implemented in various situations in Africa.

Women Citizens Empowered

The ELIT (English Literacy using IT) course has become increasingly popular among the women of Curepipe, Quatre Bornes and Vacoas / Phoenix as it enables them develop their numeracy skills and fulfill their information and communication needs; and hence empower them to face the challenges of the 21st century more effectively. Fifty-seven women living in the vicinity of these towns that followed the course between May to December 2008 received their certificate at a ceremony held on 19th December 2008 at NPCC conference room in presence of Mrs Indranee Seeburn, Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare, Mr Sik Yuen, Mayor of Curepipe, Mr Thodda, Mayor of Vacoas / Phoenix, and Mr Rajkoomar, Deputy Mayor of Quatre Bornes.

Empowerment is about learning to stand on one's own, learning to walk and where possible, run with minimal support from others. Empowerment starts with a process of mindset. It starts with convincing people, that deep inside themselves they have the power to aim at better living and the substance to achieve this aim.

Based on NPCC's guiding principle of Empowerment through Education for Employability and Entrepreneurship, the training course enables the women participants to develop their potential, open themselves to the world through information technology and empower themselves to take initiatives to launch their own micro-enterprise to become self-sufficient financially and contribute to their family's household. With the knowledge acquired, the women would become ambassadors propagating the productivity culture among members of their family, among the community, and to all the people they interact with everyday.



Participants receiving their certificates from the Mayor of Curepipe (top), Mayor of Vacoas/Phoenix (middle) and the Deputy Mayor of Quatre Bornes (bottom)