

# Mining firm plugs a hole

## ENTREPRENEUR CREATES JOBS

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Business Reporter

**HULA Minerals and Processing is only eight years old but the company is already making significant inroads as it staff complement has now grown to 65 people.**

The company, owned by 32-year-old Mandisa Masango, offers engineering services to mining companies in Limpopo.

Masango, a metallurgical engineer, told Sowetan that she started the company after spotting a gap in the market with a former colleague.

“We were both employees of coal mining company Exxaro and we realised that there were no companies in Limpopo providing engineering services to mines,” she said.

Masango said Exxaro at the time

procured engineering services from companies in Gauteng.

“Exxaro had to, in addition to carrying contract costs, pay for the transport and accommodation costs of its service providers.

“This meant that if we cut out the contract costs, we could afford to provide the service at cheaper rates and easily beat the competition.”

The engineering services they provide include advising mines on how best they could optimise their services.

“We also assist companies that win mineral rights and don’t have a clue on how to best utilise them.

“We help them to set up a plant. And those who have operations but don’t want to run the mines, we run the mines for them.”

Hula Minerals, credited with



**GO-GETTER: Mandisa Masango is the owner of Hula Minerals and Processing that offers engineering services to mining companies in Limpopo**

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

creating an average of 21 jobs a year, recently walked away with the coveted first prize at the Shanduka Black Umbrellas Awards for job creation in Lephalale.

However, the business started with a rocky patch.

“We struggled for a year to get business and could not find anyone to quote or tender,” Masango said.

The partners decided to resign from their formal employment in August

2008 and penetrate the market by seeking a contract from their former employer.

“Our advantage was that we already knew the plant and the company would not need to waste productive time showing us around, as compared to our competitors.”

Masango said being a businesswoman has taught her that the corporate sector is tough. She, however, derives solace from the fact that she is exposing young

black engineers to mining.

“Working for yourself needs you to become a master of all trades; you need to know about the Labour Relations Act, SA Revenue Service, compliance with the Companies Act and other things.

“You also need to constantly learn a lot because the world is forever changing,” she said.

“And, you must always push yourself because if you don’t, no one will put bread on the table.”

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