



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SOUTH AFRICA



USIZO News

Usizo = Zulu for aid

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USAID South Africa's newsletter, "Usizo"—Zulu for "aid", Reports important and timely news about activities supported by the American people.



Photo: JMckenzie, ECI/Africa

Furniture created by Petite Designs



Photo: RZurba, USAID/SA

Issy Penniken has a lighthearted conversation with Senator Obama

U.S. Senator Visits South African Factory

U.S. Senator, Barack Obama, visited an award-winning entrepreneur whom USAID supported through the South African International Business Linkages (SAIBL) project.

"I wouldn't have been here if it wasn't for USAID," Issy told Senator Obama.

The client, Issy Penniken, manages the Petite Designs Factory near Soweto. Issy told the Senator that his family's racial classification as "Colored" (mixed race) during apartheid severely restricted where his parents could open their upholstery business when setting up shop in a small room 30 years ago. Obama, the only African-American currently in the U.S. Senate, said he became involved in politics to push for divestment of U.S. interests in apartheid-era South Africa.

In democratic South Africa, Issy credits USAID's SAIBL assistance with helping him to be a successful exporter today, designing and manufacturing high-end furniture for domestic and international customers.

SAIBL assisted the company to make strategic business and marketing improvements, attend international exhibi-



Photo: R. Zurba, USAID/SA

Issy at his factory with his wife, parents and USAID Director, Carleene Dei (middle)

tions, achieve high quality accreditation and benefit from the U.S. African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA). Issy's business now employs 85 staff (one-third are women).

USAID South Africa Mission Director, Carleene Dei, joined the Senator's visit to the company. Senator Obama complimented Issy's "very impressive" operations and said, "This is a good use of USAID support."

Issy replied, "I wouldn't have been here if it wasn't for USAID." According to Issy, "USAID didn't give me cash. They gave me much more: mentors and technical experts who taught me how to run my business effectively."

"This is a good use of USAID support." - Senator Obama



Photo: JMckenzie, ECI/A

Senator Obama speaks to Issy's factory staff