

ACSA reflects on W Cape socio-economic development as it celebrates 30 years

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Airports Company South Africa's (ACSA) contribution to the economic growth and development of South Africa extends beyond the numbers, telling a story of a key enabler of economic growth, transformation and socio-economic development.



Elelwani Tshikovhi

As ACSA celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, it is fitting to note its massive contribution towards and support for socio-economic activities that empower communities for a better future around its airports across the country.

“ACSA’s socio-economic development (SED) programmes are focused around our sustainability framework, which covers business, people and society, as well as the environment,” says Elelwani Tshikovhi, group manager for transformation at ACSA.

“The SED programmes focus on sustainable initiatives in youth empowerment, women empowerment, education, disability, protection of the environment and employee volunteering. We support socio-economic activities that empower communities for a better future and our moral imperative is to create fair, transparent, equal opportunities for the economically active population and eliminate unfair discrimination.”

At the same time, Tshikovhi notes that as ACSA celebrates 30 years of existence, it is also marking Transport Month in October, which calls for a celebration of its post-Covid-19 recovery, which is positively impacting ACSA’s bottom line.

“While we celebrate the benefits that our communities derive from aviation industry, we must remember that we should also be celebrating air transport. The more people travel by air, the better our business performance, meaning that our contribution to SED initiatives grows proportionately,” she says.

“Thus, the contribution that ACSA makes to air transport in Southern Africa has a direct impact on the communities in which we operate.”

In accordance with its Integrated Transformation Agenda, which is driven through the five-year Socio-Economic Development Strategy, ACSA has invested in excess of R150 million in SED projects since 2018. Its Cluster 2 airports – Cape Town International Airport, Upington International Airport, George Airport and Kimberley Airport – are involved in several SED projects ranging from firefighting training for women to empowering community members to become solar panel installers.

“The ripple effect of poverty, inequality and unemployment is so severe that we needed to specifically focus on those factors, because those are the realities that many in our country are faced with, and it isn’t any different for our local communities,” says Tshikovhi.

For example, Upington International Airport’s firefighting training course for women not only created skills but also promoted employment for young women, while the cluster also supported a project for women empowerment through a sewing programme for unemployed elderly women.

Cape Town International Airport and Kimberley Airport took part in an environmental sustainability programme aimed at

managing the waste that is dumped around the airports. The project created 30 direct job opportunities and simultaneously ensured that the airport surroundings are clean and monitored at all times.

From an environmental sustainability perspective, Cape Town International Airport supports a humane and ecologically sound bird and wildlife management programme around its vicinity, as well as a partnership with non-profit organisation Green Cape to provide renewable energy to households in two communities that do not have legal access to electricity.

George and Kimberley Airports participate in a programme that is aimed at helping the youth with acquiring carpentry and woodwork skills, which will assist them to generate an income. The project aims to build technical skills in furniture making for 20 unemployed youth in Green Point, in Kimberly, and in various communities in George.

Other projects across the airport cluster include a skills development programme for Agro-Processing, Green Economy Fruit Farming and Processing that teaches beneficiaries to agro-process, package and resell fruit to generate sustainable revenue.

ACSA values diversity and inclusion by ensuring that we contribute towards a sustainable livelihood of people with disabilities within the communities. Partnership with a disability skills development centre has assisted people with disabilities surrounding the Upington Airport to acquire bricklaying and paving skills which enable them to earn an income and sustain their families.

Additionally, Cape Town International Airport also drives a sports development programme for youth to be trained football referees in conjunction with the South African Football Association of the Western Cape.

“These are just some of the projects that demonstrate our commitment to support socio-economic activities. Whilst our social imperative is to assist people living below the poverty line and assist them to mainstream economic growth by designing and implementing socio-economic activities that empowers them to ultimately lead better lives,” says Tshikovhi.

“As a state-owned enterprise, we believe our approach to value creation must certainly include a socio-economic development component which includes not only transformation within the group at board and employee level, but also in communities surrounding our airports. As such, we are dedicated to supporting skills development programmes, corporate social investment and preferential procurement across all part of the country, given our national footprint.”

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