

## South Africa's Young Trail-Blazers in the development of Mathematics and Statistics – Partners of Statistics South Africa



*Victor Sebothoma - addressing teachers at an ISIBalo workshop in Cape Town, March 2007*

In August 2006 Statistics South Africa's attention was drawn to a newspaper article about a young man called Victor Sebothoma who was teaching Mathematics in a remote school outside Hammanskraal, Pretoria. Victor Sebothoma was 24 years old then and cherished a love for Mathematics and a desire to see the African child excel in Mathematics, a subject he loved but was denied when he was a young boy. To achieve this dream he taught at a local village school which paid him US\$38 a month more as a token of appreciation than as a monthly wage. Victor managed to bring the school's results from 13% to 46% in Mathematics and 23% to 64% in Physical Science in 2004 to 2006. Statistics South Africa roped him in as a core part of the **ISIBalo Capacity Building Programme**, in the sub-programme on International Statistical Education (ISIBalo-4) in which he helped develop a Student Volunteer Program. Assisted by Statistics South Africa, Victor immediately enrolled for a Bachelor of Education Degree (majoring in mathematics) at the University of Pretoria. Currently the Student Volunteer Program he developed has 18 student teachers of Mathematics drawn from the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Education, who go out into the nearby village schools every Saturday morning to give learners extra lessons in Mathematics and statistics. Currently the 18 student teachers are teaching over 500 learners at Saturday school, who come out faithfully every Saturday morning, neatly dressed in their full school uniform, eager to learn as much as they can from the young student teachers. Statistics South Africa's commitment to this Saturday

school initiative has been to provide transport and teaching resources for the student teachers led by Victor Sebothoma.

In addition to sponsoring the annual Congress of the Association of Mathematics Education of South Africa (AMESA), Statistics South Africa also sponsors the student teachers of Mathematics to attend the annual AMESA Congress. The eighteen (18) student teachers will be attending the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress of AMESA in Port Elizabeth, South Africa in July 2008. The theme of this year's Congress is **“Mathematics: A Universal Language”**. Last year Stats SA sponsored 6 Student teachers to attend the 13<sup>th</sup> Congress of AMESA. It is anticipated that Victor and the other student teachers will attend the 57<sup>th</sup> Session of International Statistics Institute to be held in Durban in August 2009. They will assist in facilitating some of the Mathematics and Statistics activities for learners that will take place at the ISIBalo Activity Centre at the ISI 2009 and will also assist Dr. Juana Sanchez to moderate the International Statistical Literacy Project Competition examination at the ISI in 2009.



*Six student teachers at the 13<sup>th</sup> Congress of AMESA, White River, South Africa, 2007*