



Meeting the skills shortage at Geita Gold Mine

The gold mining industry in Tanzania is faced with a critical shortage of skills, particularly at artisan and technician level. Training and Development Manager Chris Britz comments: "A number of schemes for artisan training have been established in Tanzania over the years, but none of them equip their trainees with the full range of skills needed by the country's emerging large-scale mining industry."

This shortage of appropriate skills led to the establishment of the Geita Gold Mine engineering training centre in 2003.

Initially, the focus was on supplementing the training of nationally-qualified artisans to enable them to meet the mine's skills requirements. The success of this artisan upliftment programme led to the decision, in 2004, to provide full-time apprentice training, and eight trainees – in the fitting, electrical, plating and welding trades – were recruited.

The scope of the training centre has expanded steadily over the years. Local trainers, to handle the practical skills training component of the programme, were trained by expatriate artisans

assigned to the training department, and through completing a three-month training course at AngloGold Ashanti's engineering training facilities in South Africa.

The centre has been upgraded and refurbished, and a second intake of eight apprentices (expected to qualify in 2008) embarked on their training during 2005.

During 2006, the centre's curriculum was expanded to include diesel mechanic and auto electrician training.

The eight apprentices who made up the first intake all successfully completed their training during 2007, becoming fully qualified artisans and meeting the skill requirements of the mining industry.

The group initially sat for their trade tests at the mine in May 2007, under the supervision of three trade test assessors from the AngloGold Ashanti Vaal River Engineering Training Centre. "This supervision ensured that these trade tests met the standards applied by AngloGold Ashanti in South Africa. After a rigorous two-day test, only two candidates were found not to be fully competent," recalls Britz. "After further training, they were sent to Vaal River in July and passed with flying colours."

During their apprenticeship, the group receives a balance of theoretical and practical education. Enrolment at the WestCol technical college in Carletonville, near AngloGold Ashanti's West Wits operations, enables them to study technical subjects by correspondence, while local trainers continue to handle the practical skills training. Expatriate artisans who have completed the same technical subjects continue to be used as subject tutors.

All eight of the qualified apprentices have been employed at Geita Gold Mine as artisans. "The two top performers have been enrolled full time with the WestCol technical college for further study," says Britz. "Depending on their performance, the plan is to appoint them as in-service bursars, studying towards a tertiary qualification, with appointment as engineering management trainees being the ultimate objective."