

# SASTA CONGRESS 2009

## Training Needs in the African Sugar Industries – Background, Challenges and Solutions – an Illovo Perspective



## Technical Skills Shortage

- ... starts with the schooling system

## Technical Skills Shortage

“... black students ... tend to graduate in fields of study with lower employment prospects, often because they do not meet the minimum requirements for enrolling in **mathematics, science and engineering** courses.

**“This raises questions about the quality of secondary school education in South Africa.”**

(UCT Development Policy Unit report, Sunday Business Report, 1 July 2007).

## Technical Skills Shortage

- the National Benchmark Tests Project results released earlier this month found, from a sample of about 13 000 first year students, the following proficiency levels:
  - 53% in **academic literacy**
  - 25% in **quantitative literacy** (ie numerically competent)
  - 7% in **mathematics**

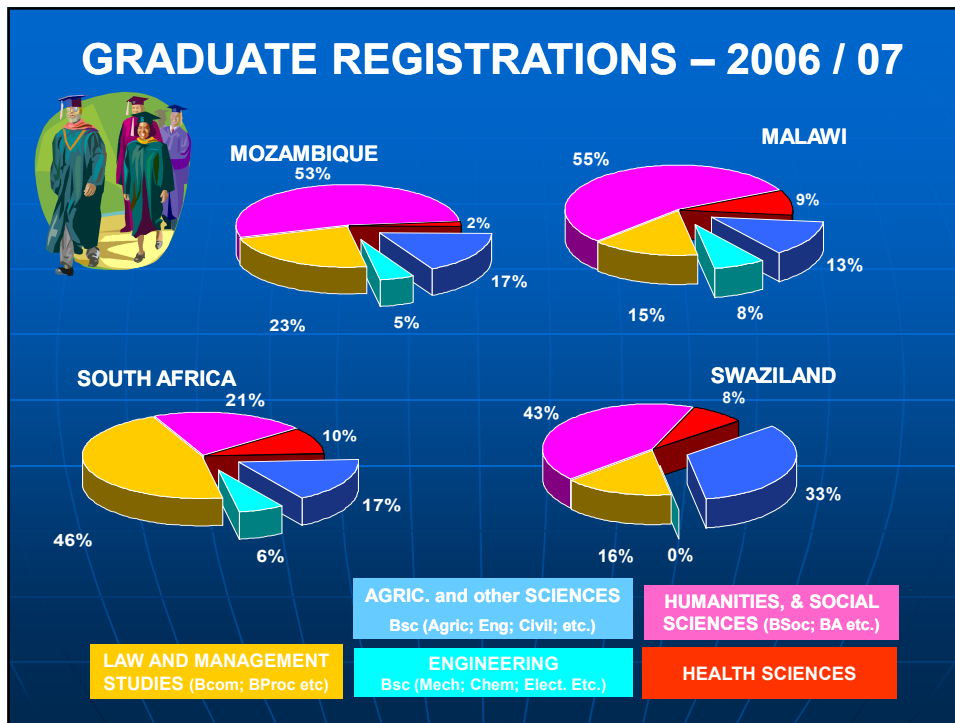
(HESA Report; The Mercury, 11 August 2009, p1; 20 August 2009, p2)

## Technical Skills Shortage

- consequently South Africa produces about 1 400 engineering graduates a year

(Saturday Star, 25 July 2009, p.5)

- this problem is replicated in other southern African countries, judging by university graduate registrations...



## Technical Skills Shortage not a Global Phenomenon

- South Korea, with a similar sized population to SA, produces 30 000 engineering graduates a year  
(Saturday Star, 25 July 2009, p.5)
- India and China together produce about 900 000 engineers each year.  
(Business Report, 24 January 2007)

**These countries "...approach the issue of human capital formation as a burning strategic priority of national significance."**

(Business Report 24 January 2007)

## ILLOVO'S PINCH-POINTS

- have to employ relatively inexperienced people, with no exposure to the sugar industry
- high level of attrition due to retirement/ill-health of 'old-school' employees with skills gained through years of experience
  - Pan Boilers
  - Panel Operators
  - Boiler Operators

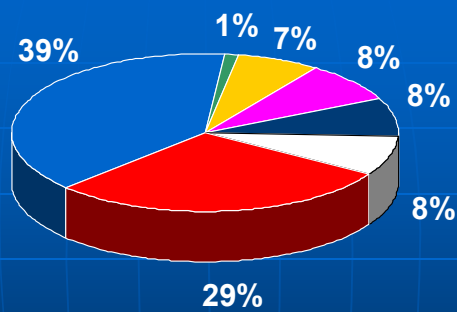
## ILLOVO'S PINCH-POINTS

- Engineers
- Process Managers
- good quality Foremen
- good quality artisans (esp. Instrumentation)
- Draughtsmen

# WHAT ARE WE DOING?

- investing (ie spending money!)

## ILLOVO SUGAR PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT SPEND



- Business Alignment
- Education
- Technical
- Management

- Management Trainees
- Safety/Risk
- Other

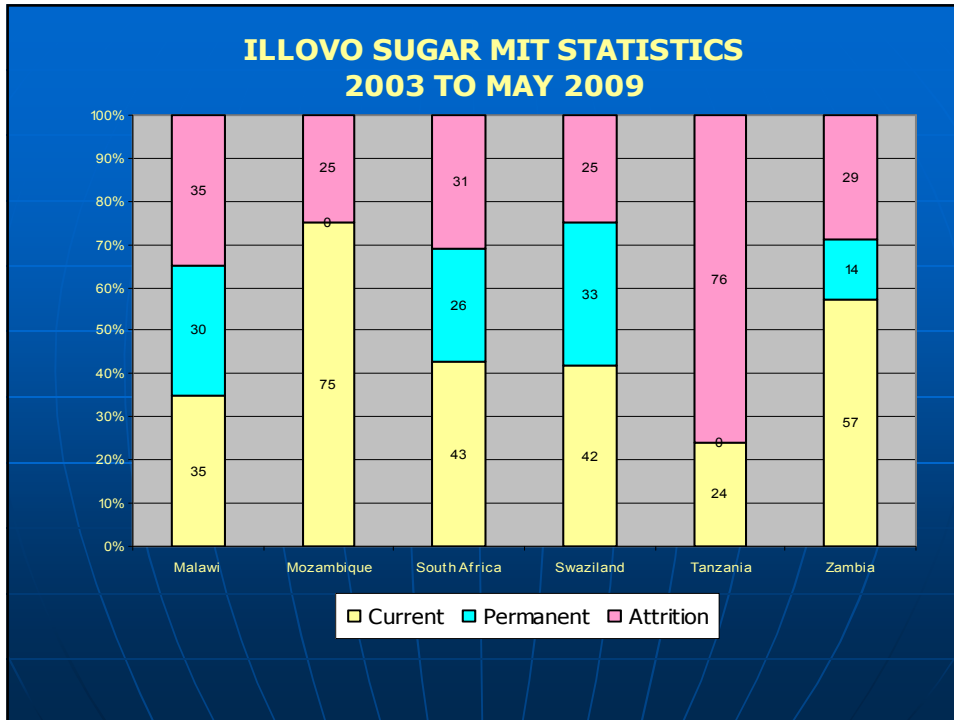


## WHAT ARE WE DOING?

- spending money!
- focusing on identified key technical skills

## TRAINEES IN ILLOVO SUGAR

- 20 bursary students
- 60 Managers-in-Training of which 35 are engineers
- 90 Apprentices
- 100 other trainees (mainly factory technical)



## WHAT ARE WE DOING?

- spending money!
- focusing on identified key technical skills
- on-the-job coaching
- joining the 'homecoming revolution'
- focusing on identified key professional and managerial/leadership skills
- monitoring the external environment to keep competitive
- paying attention to working conditions





## POSSIBLE FURTHER SOLUTIONS

- pan boiler apprenticeship?
- sugar technology qualification?
- Foreman development programme?

**BE PREPARED**



**THANK-YOU!**