

# Pretoria schools repurpose AAD 2012 expo stand material

Several reclaimed items from the pavilion of the Aerospace Industry Support Initiative (AISI) at the Africa Aerospace and Defence (AAD) 2012 expo are being put to good use by two Tshwane-based schools for children with special needs.



The two schools are the Pretoria School for Cerebral Palsied, Physically and Learning Disabled Learners in Gezina, and the Tshegofatsong Special School in Mamelodi. The AISI is an initiative of the Department of Trade and Industry (the dti), hosted and managed by the CSIR.

Marié Botha, programme manager of the AISI, explains how this came about, "The AISI hosted its largest pavilion to date for 36 organisations at the AAD 2012 event. The aim was to give both small, medium and micro enterprises, several South African universities and three dti aerospace initiatives the opportunity to exhibit and interact with players in the local and international aerospace industry at Africa's largest airshow.

## Giving back to community

"Once the event was over, we realised that a significant amount of material could be reclaimed and distributed to schools in need. In doing so, we have been able to maximise the investment made by the AISI for AAD 2012, by giving back to the community." The Pretoria School and Tshegofatsong Special School were selected as beneficiaries from a list of schools with special needs.

At the Pretoria School the large wooden panels are now being used as classroom dividers in the school hall. School principal Dr Fanie Janse van Vuuren comments, "Our preschool classes are currently being housed in the school hall while their classrooms are undergoing renovation. By using the material provided by the AISI, we are now able to accommodate four groups of lively young learners in one space." Teachers and their assistants created four usable teaching areas by setting up large dividers that double up as 'brag boards' to display the learners' artwork.

The AISI dividers will be pressed into service for the coming year as well as each grade will take a turn in the hall while their classrooms are renovated. Thanks to this donation, teaching will continue as usual.

## Privacy allowed during treatment

The Tshegofatsong School is also using the material as dividers in the area where pupils receive physiotherapy. School principal Mrs Mkhize says, "We are so thankful to have this material. It will help us to provide room dividers to allow privacy during treatment and a waiting room area."

The Tshegofatsong School has approximately 240 learners and is the only special school for learners with special educational needs in Mamelodi/Pretoria East.

Botha is delighted that the reclaimed material is being put to good use, "It is heartening to see what can be done with these wooden panels and other items of reclaimed stand material to help these educators and learners. As an exercise in repurposing, we have learnt from this experience and shall implement some of our learning in the planning of future exhibition stands.

"The AAD2012 and our subsequent decision to distribute reclaimed material have enabled the AISI not only to improve the local aerospace industry, but also create awareness of the AISI and the local aerospace industry in a community which would not under normal circumstances be exposed to the aerospace industry."

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