



RIVERSANDS

INCUBATION HUB



SED Progress Report - March 2017

A word from CEO

Jenny Retief

Since September 2016, Vibramech's SED funding for projects at Riversands Incubation Hub has improved access to economic opportunities for a growing number of emerging entrepreneurs in a meaningful way.

Money has been spent to establish the Riversands Urban Agri-Dev Platform to create a new generation of 'agripreneurs' who are set to take advantage of the market opportunities in the areas surrounding Riversands Incubation Hub.

Using Vibramech's funding, Riversands Incubation Hub has also established a retail showroom for all the SMEs on the campus to sell their wares. Known as 'The Yard', the designated area is open during office hours and has seen a steady increase in turnover during the start-up phase.

The relationship between Riversands Incubation Hub and Vibramech has worked in exactly the way that was anticipated during the concept phase of the project.

Successful partnerships are beneficial to all parties and we look forward to building on the synergies which have been established between Vibramech and Riversands Incubation Hub.



Riversands Urban Agri-Dev Platform

The agricultural plots at Riversands Incubation Hub have undergone a transformation since the beginning of September 2016. Vibramech funding allowed the team to recruit Positive Cycle as a training partner. Using environmentally sound and health techniques, Positive Cycle trains and coaches emerging urban farmers to grow natural organic food. In what has become a virtuous cycle, vegetables grown in the agri-hub are sold in The Yard.

Good rains have helped the entrepreneurs establish their vegetable gardens and set themselves up to take advantage of the trend to edible landscaping and 'locavores' who want to eat locally produced food and know the provenance of everything they eat. The Agri- Hub will take advantage of the extensive development and construction in the area surrounding Riversands Incubation Hub. This development ranges from affordable housing to luxury homes and commercial buildings. Cleverly conceived goods and services (enabled by the Riversands team) can open up a tract of opportunity across all these markets.

Vibramech's contribution has unlocked these opportunities and provided the infrastructure for agri-preneurs to set themselves on a successful path.



Pictures above: The agri-preneurs received both technical and practical training.

Picture left (left to right): Lindiwe Makhanya, Wander Mlotha, Paul Selikane, Alex Woolfe, Mzingisi Dingane and Jeanet Hlako.

The Yard

Market access is one of the four pillars of support offered to SMEs at Riversands Incubation Hub. While the Riversands team works with business owners on marketing and sales strategies to suit each individual business, it was recognised that a collective retail outlet for the businesses producing goods would benefit the eco-system.

The Yard opened in January 2017 and has been well received by both business owners and visitors to Riversands Incubation Hub. Turnover is increasing steadily and a full time manager as well as an assistant have been appointed, once again thanks to Vibramech.

On 11 May the team will host an open day to encourage local visitors to experience the variety available in the showroom. It is envisaged that each cluster of businesses e.g. home décor, textiles and food will be allocated a slot during the course of the day to focus attention on the considerable variety of businesses represented at Riversands Incubation Hub.



Picture above: Manager Mary Malinga in The Yard

The in-house marketing team has created a look and feel for The Yard to make it an appealing destination and residents from the surrounding areas will be invited to visit the showroom for the open day.

“ The training has helped me understand how to make money by growing vegetables, even in a small space. *Mzingisi Dingane from Diepsloot*

I have a passion for growing things and am excited to become an agri-preneur. I intend growing things to sell and hiring previously unemployed people. *Lindiwe Makhanya from Diepsloot*

“ I'm looking forward to using the knowledge he has learnt to landscape an upmarket garden or create a home veggie garden in Dainfern or Fourways Gardens. *Wander Mlotha from Diepsloot*

Conclusion

The partnership between Riversands Incubation Hub and Vibramech has certainly been worthwhile. Each group of agri-preneurs has gone out into the market to spread the word about sustainable gardening and each individual now has improved prospects of earning a living by using their new skills.

About Riversands Incubation Hub

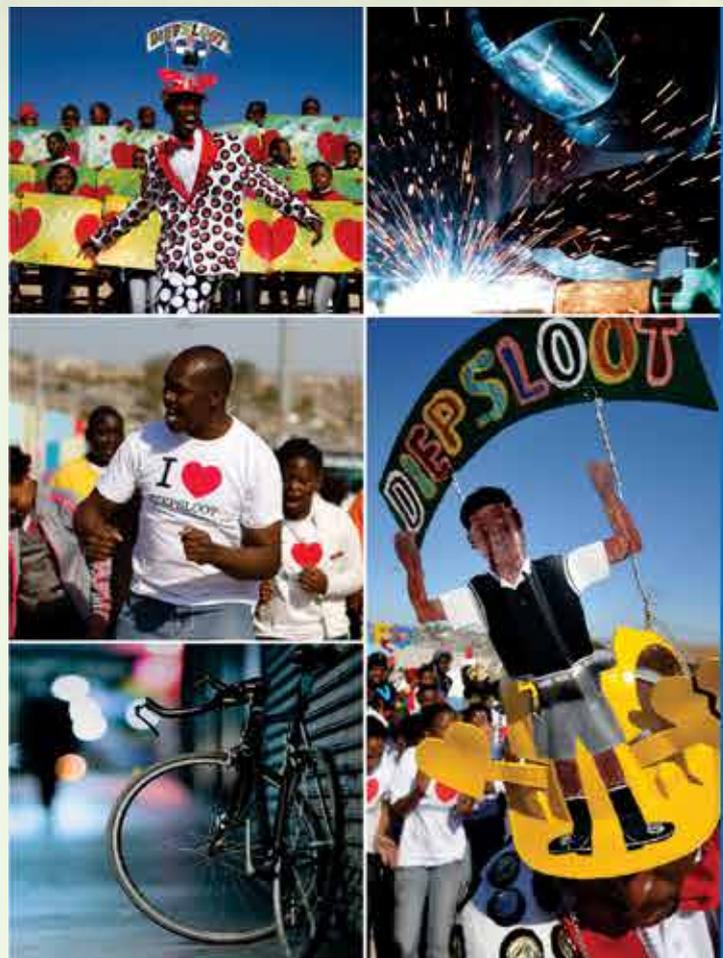


Riversands Incubation Hub is a large-scale business incubator established in 2015 through a private-public partnership between Century Property Developments and South African National Treasury's The Jobs Fund. Riversands is Century's primary corporate social investment initiative.

The Riversands team puts entrepreneurs at the heart of everything it does, always with the goal of helping individual businesses grow and thrive. The primary intention of the initiative is to create a vibrant ecosystem and provide a rich set of business development and support services that catalyse business success.

Riversands is located a few kilometres from Diepsloot, one of Johannesburg's newer townships. In less than 20 years Diepsloot has grown into a bustling neighbourhood covering approximately 5 km² with a population of approximately 350 000.

Diepsloot remains a marginalised residential node with few available jobs within the vicinity. This forces people to travel vast distances and makes them uncompetitive as a work force. In some cases more than 50% of a person's salary is spent on transportation. Despite its socio-economic challenges, Diepsloot is a vibrant neighbourhood with residents determined to make better lives for themselves.





RIVERSANDS

INCUBATION HUB