

# South Africans in London lured back home

Many employers value people with global experience

## WORKPLACE STAFF

**M**ORE than 1 000 South Africans living in London attended this year's Homecoming Revolution event at the Olympia Conference Centre in London on the weekend of March 20 and 21.

A partnership between Homecoming Revolution and the Landelahni Recruitment Group to proactively source skills needed in South Africa and bring them home was launched at the event.

"The timing was perfect," says Homecoming Revolution MD, Martine Schaffer. "The recession persists in the UK, and many South Africans are looking to return to their homeland, which continues to offer a wonderful lifestyle and good career opportunities," she says.

"However, visitors, particularly those who have been living in the UK for more than five years and have young children, did need reassurance that they were making the right decision."



**WAVING THE FLAG:** Some of the younger visitors at the Homecoming Revolution's recent London event. South Africans living in the UK were given plenty of good reasons why it is time to come back home.

The Homecoming Revolution is a non-profit organisation aimed at reversing the South African skills shortage.

"Partnering with a recruitment specialist provides an extension of

what we ourselves can provide," says Schaffer.

"We are offering a full proactive professional placement service to Homecoming Revolution's network," says Landelahni CEO San-

dra Burmeister.

"Visitors to the London event made use of our online facility to send us their career details. We will continuously add to this database of candidates to use as a resource when sourcing accountants, engineers, project managers, information technology and other professionals for our corporate clients.

"We are focusing on scarce skills and opening our global search service to Homecoming Revolution's network of candidates. We plan to be proactive in sourcing scarce skills and in increasing the number of South Africans returning home, by offering them a broad choice of career opportunities."

A combination of South African activities and a high-powered speaker programme marked this year's event.

With a "Great Trek" theme, and World Cup banners attesting to South Africa's status as the host nation, the event was alive with vuvuzelas, traditional dancing, and the opportunity to learn the Diski dance.

One highlight was the address by Bafana Bafana captain Aaron Mokoena, with his passion for the game, who related his story from the township pitches to the Premier League to the national squad.

Professor Cheryl de La Rey, vice-chancellor and principal of the University of Pretoria, challenged the audience's concept of "home" and spoke about the quest for belonging and the psychological significance of home as the place where you grew up. Professor Nick Binedell, director of the Gordon Institute of Business, brought a constructive approach to his talk on how South Africa is shaping up in these turbulent times and chaired a lively discussion on the challenges facing the country, including politics, education and crime.

The message from government delivered by the deputy high commissioner was one of engagement with South Africans abroad and recognition of their role in South Africa's future.

Among the exhibitors were relocation and immigration experts as well as major employers such as First National Bank, Investec, Group Five, Foschini, and the CSIR.

"Companies stayed on to conduct interviews and most were very excited by the diversity and calibre of the candidates," says Schaffer.

"Many employers value candidates with global experience and have found returning South Africans to possess both confidence and maturity"