

NRGP news.

NATIONAL RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING PROGRAMME

A public/private sector initiative of government regulators and the gambling industry in South Africa

Robert Ladouceur returns to SA



Professor Ladouceur from the University of Laval in Quebec is no stranger to the National Responsible Gambling Programme. He paid a return visit to South Africa in 2008 as the guest of the NRGP to provide specialised training workshops for its addiction counsellors.

New treatment professionals and delegates with Professor Ladouceur. From left to right: Sipiwe Maqutu (Durban), Charleen Van Dort (Sanca Lowveld), Dr Busi Dlamini, Nikki Meiring (Swakopmund), Lindiwe Maseko, Prof Robert Ladouceur, Helen Pienaar (Bethlehem), Helena Galloway (Nelspruit), Eva Chabalala (Soweto), Dominique Mamet (Southport KZN), Mamoletsane Mota

Professor Ladouceur is an international authority on treating problem gamblers and issues related to some of the intrinsic behaviours and understandings that underpin their behaviour. He has written, published and lectured widely in these areas, and the organisers count themselves fortunate to have access to his expertise.

In Cape Town he took part in a workshop for counselling line team members and held a master class for about 70 addiction counsellors where he highlighted some of the core issues in the management of problem gamblers.

After this he flew to Johannesburg for a one-day teaching seminar to upgrade the skills base and knowledge of about 40 treatment professionals from the Free State, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. He also conducted an audit in which he commented favourably on the NRGP's treatment and counselling activities, as well as the calibre of its network.

Both workshops were also used to review some of the basic NRGP protocols as part of the ongoing process of fulfilling the programme's mission to provide the best possible treatment service in the most cost-effective and efficient fashion.

National Centre for the Study of Gambling (NCSG)



Professor Peter Collins

executive director
of the NRGD

The National Centre for the Study of Gambling (NCSG) is helping to build and secure SA's capacity for continuously enhancing our understanding of gambling behaviour, with a special but not exclusive focus on knowledge that promises to improve prevention and treatment of problem gambling.

It is headed by Professor Don Ross of the University of Cape Town, with members located at six other universities in the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada.

During the past three years, 20 researchers have participated in varied activities supported by the NRGD:

- National Prevalence Survey
- Longitudinal (panel) study of problem gamblers
- Poverty and gambling study
- Studies in cognition and gambling using functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI)
- Publications



Professor Don Ross

George Ainslie received a BA in behavioural science from Yale College in 1965 and an MD from Harvard Medical School in 1969. Following residency in psychiatry at Massachusetts Mental Health Center he became its assistant clinical director (1976), meanwhile doing research at the National Institute of Health with Bernard Engel and at BF Skinner's behavioural psychology laboratory at Harvard with Richard Herrnstein.

Working in the nascent field of behavioural economics, he moved to Pennsylvania in 1979 and took a clinical appointment at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Coatesville, in order "to do soft research on hard money." While serving as chief of psychiatry at that hospital he published two books, *Picoeconomics: The Strategic Interaction of Successive Motivational States within the Person* (Cambridge, 1992) and *Breakdown of Will* (Cambridge, 2001), as well as numerous articles and book chapters.

He continues to do both research and see patients.

Currently, he writes, "I am collaborating with Don Ross et al on the NRGD panel study. I contribute to the experimental design on the basis of my experience in studying impulsiveness and self-control, in particular with a model of willpower as a product of inter-temporal bargaining among successive motivational states. "This 'bundling' model will be tested by offering series of choices among real cash rewards to problem gamblers, recreational gamblers, and non-gambling control subjects, to see whether problem gamblers are less apt than controls to refer current choices to series of similar prospective choices. I will be involved also in interpreting the data and preparing publications. A pilot study led by Andre Hofmeyr of Don's group has already produced suggestive data in smokers, which we are preparing to publish."



Dr George Ainslie MD



**Jacques
Rousseau**

Jacques Rousseau of the University of Cape Town Commerce Facility's School of Management Studies has been an NRGD co-worker since 2004. He could probably be described as a modern equivalent of the classical Renaissance Man, whose main characteristic was an active interest and involvement in a widely divergent variety of intellectual and practical pursuits.

His formal qualifications are a BA degree (Social Science and Humanities) dating from 1993, an honours degree in philosophy (1994) and an MA in English (1999), but his core activities and sidelines in the past 15 years cover a much wider spectrum than these qualifications might suggest.

Since 2004 he has been a member of the National Centre for the Study of Gambling, which consolidates and conducts research on behalf of the South African Responsible Gambling Foundation (SARGF), with the aim of making significant contributions to academic research on gambling.

Since 2008 he has been co-ordinator of the NRGD's Academic Division, which consists of a programme which consolidates and conducts research on behalf of the SARGF. As a member of this "highly inter-disciplinary research team", as he describes it, he takes part in the planning and implementing of the centre's research activities.

But his work for the NRGD is only one aspect of a career which has had so many facets that enumerating all of them would be a truly onerous task. Among other things:

Since 2007 he has been the convenor/lecturer of a course called "Accounting for Ethics", presented in accordance with the requirements of the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants, as a compulsory post-graduate diploma course for accounting students. He not only teaches the course but co-conceptualised and designed it.

Since 2001 he has been the convenor/lecturer for another course, "Evidence-Based Management", the focus of which is on critical reasoning in the application to dilemmas and issues in modern business practice. It lays emphasis on the development of student ability to express and defend cogent points of view in written form. It is taught to about 1800 students a year.

For four years he was the convenor/lecturer of a course entitled "Critical Reasoning in the

Quantitative Sciences", a year-long compulsory course for students in the Humanities Gateway Programme, aimed at furnishing students with skills in critical reasoning and competence in understanding the scientific underpinnings of scientific reasoning.

In addition to all this he is a member of the University Senate, which is responsible for academic governance, and has served on a number of different committees at various times, ranging from one charged with determining and implementing appropriate information and communications technology to the Faculty of Commerce's Re-Admission Review committee, of which he is chairman, which considers applications for re-admission from failed students.

He also has a media career on his CV. For two years he was reviews editor of *New Contrast*, the literary magazine, and has been published in *New Contrast*, the Oxford University Press publication *Voices from all Over*, the poetry magazine *New Coin* and *New Letters*, a publication of the University of Missouri, USA.

One of his most unusual activities is his membership in an organisation called "The Brights", which has resulted in his twice being interviewed on radio. The Brights he describes as "an international movement which aims to promote the civic understanding and acknowledgement of the naturalistic world-view, which is free of supernatural and mystical elements".

In 2006 he established the local community of this movement, the aim of which is to strive to gain public recognition that people who hold such a world-view can bring principled actions to bear on matters of civic importance in South Africa.

In addition to all this, his interest and enthusiasm for technology and digital media led him to setting up a website design and hosting company in 2004.

He also has an interest in religion. In August 2007 he delivered a lecture entitled "Some good reasons to not believe in God" at the inaugural address of the UCT Atheist and Agnostic Society, and in June 2008 another, "Is belief in God rational?" to the Biblical Worldview summit at Grabouw, Western Cape.

Is he likely to add yet another string or two to his well-equipped bow in the future? Well, only Jacques Rousseau knows. But the odds seem to be good.

National Centre for the Study of Gambling (NCSG) (continued)



**Professor
David
Spurrett**

David Jon Spurrett was born in 1969 in Bulawayo, in the then Rhodesia, and is currently Professor of Philosophy at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, head of its School of Philosophy and Ethics and director of the Cognitive Science Programme.

His career began when he obtained a BA, majoring in philosophy and English, from the then University of Natal in 1989, followed by honours in philosophy (cum laude) in 1990. After this he obtained an MA (cum laude) in philosophy in 1993, his thesis title being "A Philosophical Enquiry into Freedom and the Defensibility of the Doctrine of the Compatibility of Freedom and Determinism".

Six years later – his studies having included a four-month stint at King's College, London, and a year as a visiting student there – he achieved his doctorate in philosophy with a thesis entitled "The Completeness of Physics".

Professor Spurrett's activities cover a wide range. His areas of specialisation are cognitive science, philosophy of science and metaphysics, and his areas of competence are philosophy of mind, early modern philosophy (especially Descartes), epistemology, post-modernism and science, history and philosophy of early modern science and critical reasoning.

He has won a number of prestigious awards for his work. In 1989 he received the Notcutt Prize for Philosophy, and 1994 the University of Natal's doctoral research scholarship, one of only two awarded annually. In 1998 and 1999 he had a three-year visiting research fellowship in Philosophy at King's College, London; an Association of Commonwealth Universities split-site doctoral scholarship; and an overseas doctoral scholarship

from the Centre for Science Development (South Africa).

In 2002 he received the National Research Foundation's President's Award, and in 2003 the University of Natal's Distinguished Teacher's Award and the Vice-Chancellor's Research Award; he was elected a Colenso Scholar and spent one term (Easter 2003) at St John's College, Cambridge.

Professor Spurrett has published extensively on many subjects within his field. He has co-authored or co-edited a number of books, as well as over 30 journal articles and chapters in books. One recent monograph on disordered gambling that he co-authored, entitled "Mid-Brain Mutiny", was published by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

He is involved in several NRGD research projects. He has taken part in the design of the current national study on the prevalence of gambling and problem gambling, the national leader of which is Professor Don Ross of the University of Cape Town, and he and his graduate student, Andrew Dellis, are working on a study of the prevalence of gambling and problem gambling in a poor community in KwaZulu-Natal which is located in close proximity to a casino.

"To date," he says, "there has been no dedicated study of the rates of gambling and problem gambling in such communities in South Africa. As well as following the main structure of the recent national prevalence study, our project will include additional focus group sessions aimed at shedding more light on attitudes to gambling, to casinos, and to problem gambling.

"We plan to complete data collection by May of this year, and have the full analysis and final report completed before the end of the year."



**Andre
Hofmeyr**

Andre Karl Hofmeyr is living proof of the old saying that if you want to get something done, give it to a busy man to do.

By the time he matriculated from St Stithians College in 2000 with distinctions in English, history and computer science, he had been awarded academic colours, qualified as a top-scoring speech and drama student and won the school's Matric History Prize – the first of an array of achievements, scholarships and merit awards he was to gain during the next seven years.

Armed with a merit scholarship to study politics, philosophy and economics at the University of

Cape Town, he enrolled at UCT in 2002 and obtained his degree with distinction. After that he went on to receive scholarships for his B.Com (Honours) and MA degrees and graduated from both with distinction in economics.

Despite his demanding studies, Andre always found time to work on other projects. As early as 1998, while still in school, he developed computer programmes for Psion palmtops that he subsequently sold over the Internet to users from as far afield as Egypt, the United States and Europe. These programs received the highest ratings attainable at some of the largest software websites on the internet - Tucows, for example.

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Andre Hofmeyr (continued)

This pattern continued throughout his academic career. At various times he has slotted a wide range of work activities into his academic schedule. Among other things he has been a part-time data-capturer and then website designer for the Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa (ISASA), a technology co-ordinator for International Survey Research (ISR) in London, a university tutor, a teaching assistant, a research assistant and full-fledged researcher, and in 2007 and 2008 a lecturer at UCT.

He also found the time to co-author 2007's "*Income Inequality, Reciprocity and Public Good Provision: An Experimental Analysis*" in the *South African Journal of Economics*, and in 2008 he wrote "*Social Networks and Ethnic Niches: An Econometric Analysis of the Manufacturing Sector in South Africa*", an ERSA Working Paper.

His association with the NRGF started in 2008 when he was awarded a scholarship from the South African Responsible Gambling Foundation (SARGF) for post-graduate study at the Ph.D level.

He reports, "I am currently working on three interrelated studies examining gambling behaviour in South Africa: the national prevalence study, the panel study and the cognition study. The prevalence study will identify the prevalence rate of problem gambling in South Africa and look at factors that affect it. The panel study will track a sample of problem gamblers and controls over a period of 18 months to look at factors that affect transitions between categories of gambling severity. Finally, the cognition study will involve functional magnetic resonance imaging of the brains of problem gamblers and controls to determine whether there are marked differences in their ability to control cognitively the receipt of uncertain rewards. I have been deeply involved in the design of these studies and will be doing analyses of the panel and cognition studies."

In addition to all his heavy-calibre professional work, he has a number of outside interests, all reflecting one or other facet of his short but very busy life. He is interested in drama, film, art and technology. Needless to say, he is also an avid reader.



Dr Carla Sharp

Although Dr Carla Sharp is a South African, she is currently a long way from home – in Houston, Texas, in fact, where she is Assistant Professor at the Menninger Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Baylor College of Medicine.

Here she is the Director of Training for the Baylor Clinical Psychology Internship Programme and Director of Research for the Adolescent Treatment Programme at the Menninger Clinic.

Her career goes back to 1992, when she obtained a BA degree (Psychology & Philosophy) from the University of Stellenbosch. In 1993 she took an honours degree in psychology. Between 1994 and 1996 she obtained an MA degree in clinical psychology, completed internships at the Stikland and Tygerberg Psychiatric Hospitals and also served as an intern with Stellenbosch University's student counselling service.

In 2000 she earned a doctorate at Cambridge University with a thesis on the theory of mind in emotional-behaviour disorders of middle childhood. Then followed several years of post-doctoral training in research fellowship in a National Health Service programme and at Cambridge, during which time she also became a licensed clinical psychologist and served – sometimes simultaneously – in a number of appointments.

She has written a wide variety of academic articles, contributed chapters and reviews to a number of books and co-authored others, and has undertaken 10 funded research projects.

At present she is involved in investigations into several aspects of problem gambling.

She is the principal investigator for a project on reward-related brain areas in pathological gamblers – the first study to elucidate the neural substrates of the control of reward processing in pathological gamblers.

The study aims to identify neurobiological targets for psycho-therapeutic and pharmacological treatment of pathological gambling. As the principal investigator she is responsible for all aspects of the study design, data collection, data management, data analyses, dissemination of results and the supervision of study staff.

She is also a collaborator on the NRGF's current prevalence study, her responsibility being the clinical aspects of the study, such as mental-health measures. She is also involved in the data analyses and dissemination of results phases, and is the principal investigator on a project to review the literature on intervention in risk-taking behaviour by the youth, assisted by Andrew Dellis.

National Centre for the Study of Gambling (NCSG) (continued)



**Professor
Graham Barr**

Since 1996, Professor Graham Barr has been retained as a specialist econometrician in the gambling industry by both the public and private sector. In this capacity, Graham has been responsible for the construction of casino profitability models and the econometric analysis of the optimal casino locations in the nine jurisdictions in southern Africa which have awarded new casino licenses. His detailed financial feasibility studies for the licence applications of the Boardwalk (Port Elizabeth), Flamingo (Kimberley) and GrandWest (Cape Town) casinos were key elements of the successful outcome of over R4-billion in new investment.

He was a member of the international academic team set up in 1995 to advise the National Gambling Board on the optimal number and location of casinos which should be permitted in post-apartheid South Africa. He constructed computer models of suitable casino locations and related casino profitability as a basis for determining the optimal number of casinos in each province and their expected profitability. This study team was the forerunner of the National Centre for the Study of Gambling.

Graham is a professor in the Department of Statistical Sciences and Economics at the University of Cape Town. He holds a BA and BSc with majors in mathematics, statistics and economics with six class medals and distinctions in all majors, a first class Honours degree in mathematical statistics, a Masters

degree in econometrics and a PhD, all from the University of Cape Town. His research is in the areas of quantitative analysis, econometrics and forecasting and he has published sixty articles in these fields in international and local journals. He has consulted widely in the public and private sectors in the area of quantitative analysis and economic model building.

Professor Barr is at the same time the consultant statistical analyst of the National Responsible Gambling Programme, with a specialist interest in consumer behaviour in the gaming industry. With Professor Peter Collins, he has produced two editions of a major research report on gambling and problem gambling behaviour in South Africa. These reports, in addition to giving a comprehensive insight into how South Africans perceive and participate in gambling, demonstrate to what extent and in what ways gambling behaviour has changed since the first casinos were opened.

Professor Barr has also been working with Nelleke Bak on the NRGPs National Schools programme. Together with Jacques Rousseau and John Schoonbee, he has developed additional web-based material for *Taking Risks Wisely – Grades 7-9*. This material will be posted on to a new, comprehensive website that complements the teaching manual and learning activities: the ultimate aim is to have supplementary material and enrichment tasks for each of the 15 lessons.

On-line betting company to help with research

Bwin, one of Europe's largest online sports betting and gambling companies, has signed a five-year agreement on research collaboration with the Division on Addictions at the Cambridge Health Alliance, a Harvard Medical School teaching affiliate.

The research will focus on creating the safest gambling environment and combating problems such as gambling addiction, while creating an entertaining environment for the company's customers.

The agreement is an extension of Bwin's long-standing collaboration with the Cambridge Health Alliance. For the past three years the company has analysed data from 47 000 customers, the main focus of which is to develop an array of tools and applications which could be used not only to battle existing problems but also to act pro-actively to prevent the further emergence of gaming-related problems.

"Bwin has taken the industry's leading position for corporate social responsibility," according to Dr Howard Shaffer, associate professor at Harvard Medical School and Director of the Division on Addictions. "Their commitment to the scientific process and unwillingness to take shortcuts to achieve short-term gains is noteworthy and indicative of their commitment to the health and welfare of their subscribers.

"Through its relationship with the Division on Addictions, Bwin has supported numerous scientific inquiries, including the first-ever scientific longitudinal study of actual internet gaming behaviour, numerous scientific publications, and editorial position statements. Bwin has integrated responsible

gaming efforts into its business practices and made empirically supported self-help resources available to its subscribers."

Manfred Bodner, Bwin's chief executive, says: "We need to understand what goes on in consumers' minds and be able to answer fundamental questions about online gaming based on scientific evidence – and not based on speculation.

"Ultimately, we are interested in creating behavioural models capable of predicting certain outcomes. Therefore, we are working towards establishing the scientific foundation that will yield algorithms capable of identifying risk patterns associated with disordered gambling so that we can prevent them."

Standing to attention...representing the NRGP for the sixth consecutive year at the Johannesburg Easter Festival from April 3 to 13 this year were facilitators (from left to right): Sam Medupe, Princess Mhlongo, Michael Mandla Mncube and Bongane Msibi. As in the past, the National Responsible Gambling Programme shared space with the Gauteng Gambling Board, as part of the Department of Economic Development on the Gauteng Provincial Government's stand. This was the first year under a new name and identity for the event which has been known as the Rand Show for many years.

JOHANNESBURG EASTER FESTIVAL

Say it again Sam... Sam Medupe interacting with some of the visitors who were most interested in the collateral on display and went off with copies of the comic book, Myths and Facts leaflet – now also available in Xitsonga – the trio of joker playing cards and bookmarks.



KIDS ARE EVADING “BOGUS” UK ON-LINE BETTING SITE SAFEGUARDS

A THIRD OF BRITAIN'S 164 ON-LINE GAMBLING WEBSITES ALLOW UNDER-18S TO BET, AN INVESTIGATION BY THE BRITISH GAMBLING COMMISSION HAS DISCOVERED. JUST OVER 33% OF ONLINE CASINOS AND BOOKMAKERS HAD “DEFICIENCIES” THAT COULD ENABLE YOUNGSTERS TO GAMBLE ON THE INTERNET, THE COMMISSION HAS REPORTED.

The commission's figures, which emerged in Parliamentary answers, were compiled using debit cards belonging to under-18s to find out whether the sites had loopholes that meant youngsters who wanted to bet were not weeded out.

According to Minister of Culture Minister Gerry Sutcliffe “the majority of the tests showed that policies and procedures to prevent children from gambling on remote sites are effectively in place.”

Under the Gambling Act, which came into force in 2007, any company that holds a licence for online gaming in the UK must carry out stringent checks to prevent children playing highly addictive games.

But Dr Emanuel Moran, an advisor on gambling to the Royal College of Psychiatrists, said: “It is obvious that the safeguards put in place by the Government, and the statements made about responsible gambling in relation to the internet, are totally bogus. We are in danger of allowing

a generation of children to become addicted to gambling.”

Liberal Democrat culture spokesman Don Foster commented: “There is a massive danger that this will fuel a huge increase in under-age gambling addiction.”

The Gambling Commission said the websites may only have failed one of a series of checks, so other safeguards may have caught under-18s.

British problem gambling stays the same

The proportion of British citizens who have a gambling problem has not decreased – but it hasn't increased either, according to the latest Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey to be published by the National Health Service Information Centre.

The APMS data suggests that currently 0.7% of the English population are problem gamblers. This is consistent with the problem gambling prevalence rate found by the 2007 British Gambling Prevalence Survey, which estimated that between 0.5% and 0.8% of the British population were problem gamblers.

The survey report says problem gambling is relatively rare in Britain. The 2007 British Gambling Prevalence Survey estimated that 0.6% of the British population experienced problems because of their gambling behaviour; the rate has remained unchanged since the previous BGPS was conducted in 1999, and equates to around 250 000 adults currently being problem gamblers in Britain.

The prevalence of problem gambling in Britain is similar to that observed in Canada, New Zealand and Germany, and lower than that in South Africa, the USA, Australia and Singapore.

For the purposes of the survey, "problem gambling" is defined as gambling to a degree that compromises, disrupts or damages family, personal or recreational pursuits.

The survey's main findings on gambling in the past year included the following:

- Overall, two-thirds (65.9%) of adults reported spending money on a gambling activity in the past year. Participation in gambling was higher in men (70.8%) than women (61.3%); a difference observed across all age groups.

- For both men and women, gambling was least prevalent in the youngest (16-24) and oldest (75 and over) adults. The highest rate for men was observed among those aged 25-34 (75.4%), while for women it was those aged 55-64 (69.5%). The finding that past-year gambling is less common in women and in those aged 16-24 – which includes 16- and 17-year-olds, who have the fewest legal opportunities to gamble – was a pattern found in other surveys of gambling, both in the UK and abroad.
- Overall, 0.7% of people endorsed three or more diagnostic criteria, the threshold used to indicate problem gambling. This is consistent with BGPS 2007, which found between 0.5% and 0.8% of British adults were problem gamblers; 0.3% of adults met the threshold of five or more criteria, indicating pathological gambling.
- A higher proportion of men than women met the threshold for problem gambling (1.2% of men, 0.2% of women), and for pathological gambling (0.6% of men, 0.1% of women). Problem (and pathological) gambling was not significantly associated with age, although this figure could result from the sample size.

Respondents were asked about a range of types of treatment and services such as the current use of psychoactive medication and counselling/therapy for any mental or emotional reason, together with the use of a

range of health, community and day-care services over the last year.

While for most treatments and services the profile of use was similar in those meeting at least one problem-gambling criterion, and in those meeting none, people meeting three or more criteria had higher levels of usage across all types of treatment and services.

Around a quarter of adults (26%) meeting three or more criteria (the threshold for problem gambling) were receiving current medication, counselling or therapy for a mental health or emotional problem. This compared with 7% of adults meeting no problem gambling criteria.

Adults screening positive for problem gambling (meeting three or more criteria) were around ten times more likely than those meeting no criteria to be in receipt of counselling or therapy (11%, compared with 1%).

20% of adults meeting three or more criteria reported using a health care service for a mental or emotional reason in the past year, compared with 11% of those who met no problem gambling criteria.

The higher reported use of day care services in those screening positive was also significant, with 14% of those meeting three or more criteria reporting using a day care service compared with 4% of those who met no problem gambling criteria.

SMART CARDS to curb problem gambling – on the cards?

Anti-gambling campaigners in the Australian state of Victoria are calling for pre-paid smart cards to be introduced into gaming venues to reduce problem gambling, with users nominating a monthly cap on the amount of money they would be prepared to lose.

Figures from the Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation reveal that residents of four areas – Brimbank, Casey, Monash and Dandenong – are spending around \$A10 million a month at gaming venues, and anti-gambling activist Tim Costello says gaming operators are deliberately targeting socially isolated people in Melbourne's outer suburbs, particularly bored women.

"Fifty-three cents in every dollar going through a machine comes from someone who is an addict," he says. "We certainly know that in the outer suburbs, where there are few community centres, public transport is harder

to get into the city and to other events, so a social recreational need can often become a quite devastating gambling addiction."

He says smart cards used in Canada and in several European countries have helped stem the tide of slot-machine losses - "once you have preset your losses, say it's \$200 a month, and have lost that amount and you have to use a card or ID to play ... you then can't play, so you then have your own automatic lockout."

"It overcomes the biggest problem, which is saying 'I'm only one win away from not having a problem, I'll keep chasing my losses'"

NATIONAL SCHOOLS PROJECT: TAKING RISKS WISELY

IT'S ALL GO IN GAUTENG

After almost a year of negotiation and clarification, the pilot project has been implemented in four provinces, the latest being Gauteng. On February 20 and 21, Nelleke Bak and Natalie Bossi conducted an information session for 52 principals, curriculum



advisors, regional directors, teachers and education department administrators at the Birchwood Conference Centre in Boksburg. The information session was followed by a training workshop for 22 teachers and curriculum advisors who are directly involved in implementing the programme in 12 schools in the Gauteng East district. Plans are to start implementing the material from April 2009, with feedback survey sheets to be completed and returned to the NRGPs for analysis by the end of August 2009.

KZN FEEDBACK WORKSHOP – PHASE 2



Can't wait – roll on with material for Grades 8 to 10! That's in essence the feedback from the KwaZulu-Natal pilot project of the National Schools Programme. The first workshop was held on February 27, 2009 in Durban to discuss the content of feedback surveys submitted by the KZN participants in the pilot programme last year. In summary there was overwhelming and enthusiastic support of the material by both teachers and learners. Based on the input of 12 teachers, two curriculum reviewers and 390 learners in Grades 7 to 9, nominal additions will be made to the teaching resource materials. The end-of-year examinations and the usual first-term activities delayed the return of feedback surveys from the Western and Northern Cape provinces, but these are expected any day now.



NORTHERN CAPE

Go north, go NRGPs! The Northern Cape pilot programme started last September with a group of 17 (most of them life orientation) teachers, seven principals and seven learning area managers (LAMs) – four from the FET band grades 10-12 and one LAM co-ordinator, Tony Meremetsi. Mrs Marilyn Villaflores, FET LAM from Kimberley, was very positive about the programme. Four schools districts were represented, namely the Frances Baard, Namaquwa, Kgalagadi and Siyanda districts.

NATALIE BOSSI

around the block a few times



Natalie Bossi, the NRGP's current training manager, has been around the block – and the world – a few times in her 43 years. Born in the Netherlands as Natalie Haagen (she is the “amicably divorced” mother of two boys and a girl, she says), she is the daughter of a globe-trotting civil engineer whose work took him everywhere.

Her main home, though, has been South Africa: “I came out as a baby when my parents emigrated here. Then it was back and forth as my father got contracts in various countries, but we always came back eventually because we loved South Africa.”

Natalie has had a very varied career, starting off in the financial world, the unit trust industry. In the course of this phase of her life she worked for the Old Mutual Unit Trust division in Cape Town, then Investec in Johannesburg and Cape Town and for the UAL Merchant Bank in Johannesburg.

But she has also worked for an exclusive hotel in the fly-fishing paradise of Dullstroom, for a small IT software company called Monarch Project Services and for Janet Unite Penny, manufacturer of South African flower remedies.

Why the change of direction? “Motherhood with its time constraints meant I had to make other plans,” she explains.

“Other plans” covers a variety of other activities, some quite unusual. Among other things she is a part-time yoga instructor and was a yoga instructor in the maximum-security section for men at Valkenburg Hospital, has completed a course in systems design and analysis and is a practising reflexologist - “I took up reflexology when I was pregnant with my first child and became more health-orientated,” she says.

Until recently she was also a part-time parliamentary monitor for the Parliamentary Monitoring Group, an affiliate of IDASA which keeps an eye on politicians' shenanigans.

Looking back on her varied career, Natalie concludes that “everything I did added something on”. She honed her training and presentation skills, for example, while working as a marketing co-ordinator for UAL and Investec; teaching yoga gave her confidence and made her aware of the need

to speak concisely and clearly, and not waste words. She also learnt to love lecturing

But her long-time interest has always been psychology, and in between all these other things in her busy life she obtained a BA degree through UNISA, majoring in English and international politics. Now she is working on an honours B.Psychology degree, also through UNISA, and is hoping soon to obtain a master's degree in psychology as well.

When she heard of a vacancy when training manager Loren Human was given six months' maternity leave, she applied, got the job and started in February, and “I really love doing what I'm doing.”

On 21 March Loren finally gave birth to a substantial 3.8 kg daughter Shira Grace in her 42nd week, in a natural birth which took place at home.

ALL'S WELL AT GRANDWEST



What has problem gambling to do with employee wellness? Certainly, it was not out of place for the NRGP to be participating in the Wellness Lifestyle Expo held on 12 February 2009 at the GrandWest Casino and Entertainment World in Goodwood, Cape Town. Although, the NRGP stand was not the first port of call for most casino staff and the employees of the concessionaires operating at the complex, it was gratifying to see their instantaneous recognition of the counselling line number 0800 006 008 which features on all slot machines on the premises, and even on the ATMs. GrandWest's security manager, Michael van Neel, was one of the early morning visitors, seen chatting here to NRGP facilitator Euginia Budaza. This highly successful event was planned by HR manager, Riaan Visagie, and was well-patronised by other health-related and non-governmental organisations, as well as health insurance firms, a well-known gym chain group, health food and product merchants, health book and magazine publishers, as well as various health testing professionals. Facilitator Bukelwa Duma did the afternoon stint, and the event also served as an informal introduction of the NRGP's new training manager Natalie Bossi to the casino staff she was scheduled to teach the following week.

LOSING MAKES YOU RECKLESS

- STUDY

Losing can make a gambler **more** rather than **less** reckless according to a recent study, based on anecdotal evidence, which was conducted by University of California marketing professors Eduardo Andrade and Ganesh Iyer and published in the *Journal of Marketing Research*.

The study reported that its results showed that in the “planning phase” gamblers behaved conservatively, betting less on average after an anticipated loss and the same amount after an anticipated gain. But this pattern changed when an actual loss in the first gamble was experienced.

Then, Andrade and Iyer said, individuals betted significantly more than they had initially planned to do, whereas on average no differences from the plan were perceived after a gain.

The study said part of the reason for such “asymmetry” was people’s tendency to under-estimate, at the planning phase of the gamble, the impact of negative emotions in betting decisions during the actual phase of the gamble.

People who carefully budgeted their bets before they hit the casinos – for example, setting a betting limit of \$200 per day – routinely went against their plan when they lost.

According to Andrade and Iyer, experiencing the pain of actual loss often resulted in people abandoning their plans

and betting more money, whereas “when gamblers haven’t experienced the actual pain of loss, they make cold and deliberate assessments of how much to bet in case of a future loss.”

Real-life gambling involved situations where consumers might plan the budget that they would want to gamble. Yet it was common to encounter cases of consumers who, on losing, ended up betting more than planned in the “heat of the moment” in an attempt to make up for the losses.

Casinos have been known to respond to this behaviour by offering free house money or free accommodation to get people into casinos, or even to have strategically placed ATMs that allow consumers to withdraw cash easily.

When people were not in the moment they tended to decide that when they lost money they should bet less in the next round of betting. However, when they actually lost “the resulting negative emotion makes them over-react”.

The research suggested that emotions could be manipulated to alter spending

behaviour, and this had implications for state-owned lotteries, public policy and the issue of consumer over-spending, according to Andrade and Iyer.

They said that three main findings had emerged from their experiments with test groups.

- In the planning phase people behave quite conservatively, betting less after an anticipated loss and the same amount after an anticipated gain.
- When offered the unexpected choice to change their bet during the actual phase there is a remarkably systematic and robust pattern of deviation from the plan, the nature of which depended on whether there had been a gain or a loss.
- At the planning stage (before the outcome is experienced) people might be under-estimating how much their actual negative emotions would influence subsequent decisions.

The study showed that positive deviations happen more frequently among those who, at the planning stage, under-estimate the intensity of negative feelings after a loss in gambling. Moreover, changes in people’s emotional states between gambles seemed to be critical. Deviations from the plan after losses went away only when there had been a pleasant delay between gambles.



The NRG was represented at the first-ever Khayelitsha Festival held at the OR Tambo community hall from 26 to 28 October last year. The event was pronounced by the organisers as ‘a great success’ and there was a great atmosphere. Reports from our team of facilitators indicate that it was extremely well-attended. This was reinforced by the fact that by end of the festival, tourists, corporate representatives, youngsters and adults between them had picked up some 3 000 isiXhosa Gambling Myths and Facts leaflets, 1 000 comic booklets, 1 000 FAQ leaflets and 1 250 playing cards. As proof of how popular some of our handouts were, after closing on Saturday night, a half-full box of playing cards was stolen from the stand. A report was filed with the organisers, for the record, but the message on those joker cards will surely spread far and wide!

PROBLEM GAMBLING AND MENTAL DISORDERS: STILL A GREY AREA

Gambling problems and substance use disorders seem to be more closely related than gambling problems and other disorders, according to a recent Canadian study.

The very comprehensive study was based on face-to-face interviews with a nationally representative sample of 36 885 people.

Past research has shown that there is definitely a significant overlap between disordered gambling and substance use, as well as mood and anxiety disorders. But exactly how disordered gambling interacts with substance use disorders and other mental disorders still remains to be discovered.

For the purposes of analysing the data, substance use disorders were collapsed across alcohol and drug-use disorders to create four past-year categories: abstainers, non-problem users, problem users, and dependent users. Other mental disorders were collapsed into a single variable indicating presence or absence of any lifetime disorder.

The analysis showed that:

- The presence of life-time mental disorders other than substance use disorders increased the prevalence of past-year moderate/problem gambling from 1.7% to 2.9%.
- The more severe the past-year substance use disorder, the higher the prevalence of past-year moderate/problem gambling – from 1.0 to 1.4% among abstainers to 9.1 and 9.6% among those with substance dependence.

- The relationship between past-year substance use disorders and past-year gambling problems was not affected significantly by the life-time presence or absence of other mental disorders.

The study concluded that past-year gambling problems appeared to be more strongly linked with substance abuse during that time than with life-time mental disorders, and that the link between gambling problems and substance use disorders was not affected by life-time mental disorders.

This suggested that gambling problems and substance use disorders were more closely related than gambling problems and other disorders, the study said.

These other disorders might relate to problem gambling through their associations with substance use disorders, or might predispose individuals to gambling problems and substance use disorders.

NRGP Highlights

- Since inception in June 2000, more than 252 496 calls have been received by the tollfree helpline (0800 006 008), and 8 795 callers referred for free treatment by a medical professional, on average some 95 per month. More than 2 818 have received assistance telephonically.

- The multilingual problem gambling counselling line operates 24 hours a day and seven days a week.
- Over 17 500 industry workers, along with staff from government regulatory authorities, have received formal training on the subject of compulsive and problem gambling.
- The treatment and counselling network comprises 68 treatment professionals in 50 towns and cities of southern Africa, including Namibia, Swaziland and Lesotho.
- Since inception of the educational programme in the Western Cape in 2002, more than 55 000 learners at 166 schools have participated.

- Since inception of the educational programme in Gauteng in 2004, more than 85 000 learners at 154 schools have participated.
- Since inception of the AllPay community outreach initiative in the Western Cape during 2004 some 857 paypoints in 30 districts have been visited.
- Since inception of the AllPay community outreach initiative in Gauteng during 2006 some 361 of the larger paypoints in the metropole have been visited, reaching an estimated 131 000 beneficiaries of social grants and/or old age pensions.