

## THE DST/NRF CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN TREE HEALTH BIOTECHNOLOGY (CTHB) ATTRACTS TWO MSC STUDENTS TO WORK AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

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The CTHB advertises each year for post-graduate students from previously disadvantaged institutions to join the Centre at FABI to do their MSc and/or PhD studies. After undergoing a stringent screening process two students were welcomed in 2008, both of whom did their BSc Degrees at the University of Venda and their Honours degrees at the University of Limpopo (Medunsa campus). They had the following comments to make:



**Lunghile Mthombeni** says, “In 2007 I registered for BSc (Med) Honours in Microbiology with Medunsa (University of Limpopo), which I completed January 2008. The Honours degree included Medical Microbiology, Advanced Microbiology, Molecular Biology and Research Methodology. I researched on Tuberculosis (TB) focusing on its diagnosis, as it’s now a major health problem on people who are immuno-compromised.”

“I joined the University of Pretoria (FABI, CTHB/TPCP) in March 2008, enrolled as a Masters student in Microbiology with the Department of Microbiology and Plant Pathology under the supervision of Dr Emma Steenkamp and Professor Fanus Venter. The title of my Masters research project is the “Description of *Burkholderia* associated with root nodules of *Hypocalyptus* and related legumes”. My mentor is Chrizelle Beukes. I am happy to be part of the FABI family and would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Emma Steenkamp, my mentor, Chrizelle Beukes (MSc student), and Professors Mike and Brenda Wingfield for their support.



**Linda Ndove** says, “For my MSc, I will be working on the fungi associated with die back of *Podocarpus* spp. in South Africa with special reference to *Botryosphaeriaceae*. This will be done under the supervision of Dr Bernard Slippers and the mentorship of Elsie de Meyer, a PhD student. Thanks to my supervisors and mentor for their patience as it is not easy to supervise someone doing this kind of project for the first time.”

“Both Lunghile and I are very fortunate to have received substantial bursaries from the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF). We extend our thanks too for the financial support for our research projects to the NRF, the

Tree Protection Cooperative Programme (TPCP) and the DST/NRF Centre of Excellence in Tree Health Biotechnology (CTHB) without which our dream of doing an MSc at the University of Pretoria could not have materialised”.