

## **THE CTHB OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO DO THEIR EXPERIENTIAL TRAINING**



Penelope Mahlangu

FABI and the DST/NRF Centre of Excellence in Tree Health Biotechnology (CTHB) gave Penelope Mahlangu, Project Assistant at AfricaBio, the opportunity of doing her in-service training at the University of Pretoria to enable her to obtain her National Diploma in Biotechnology. Penelope worked in our lab for three weeks during which she has completed a small project on identifying samples of the fungus *Ganoderma*. Her project formed part of establishing a foundation for future work within the CTHB on plant pathogenic *Ganoderma* species. During her in-service training she gained experience in the extracting DNA, doing PCRs, sequencing and using some of bioinformatics tools available for taxonomic purposes. She also acquired an understanding about the different groups of fungi, their characteristics and the fact that some of them cause disease leading to the death of trees. She worked under the supervision of Dr Martin Coetzee, research fellow at FABI and the CTHB. She has just informed us that she passed her training and will be graduating in September this year.

Congratulations to Penelope on her success. Her closing words were “thank you very much, please if you can, give other students the same opportunity – it has really bettered my life”.