

## **Press Release:**

### ***Trio of world 'firsts' achieved through Dekra IOL and AfricaX's online health and safety training collaboration***

**25 October 2021**

A simple phone call between two trusted digital education organisations in 2020, has laid the foundation for numerous ground-breaking world 'firsts' in the health and safety-related training courses which they have co-created over the past year.

The Dekra Institute of Learning (IOL) – a local division of global parent company, safety stalwart DEKRA - with a sound reputation for health and safety training locally – first initiated discussions with Western Cape-based AfricaX Academy in February 2020, regarding a potential synergistic collaboration. Subsequently, the two companies formed a strong, mutually supportive and beneficial online training partnership, which has seen them ultimately achieving a trio of impressive online training world firsts.

These include the successful co-creation of the following 'Big Five' health and safety online training courses: Safety Health Environment and Quality (SHEQ); Compensation for Occupation Injuries and Diseases (COIDA); Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA); Legal Liability and Ergonomics.

In addition, the Dekra IOL and AfricaX collaboration has produced the first-ever digital, fully-accredited ergonomics online training course in sign language for the hearing impaired, developed with the support of deaf skills development training body eDeaf; and online training audio options in five popular pan-African languages.

The above courses form part of a distinctive 12-tier 'ladder of learning' digital offering developed by AfricaX, and supported by a trusted local and global network of partners – offering over 4 500 courses in 37 countries, with input from more than 140 institutions, including tertiary education icons Harvard and Cambridge.

The above online health and safety training courses were co-created and completed over several months this year, in line with Dekra's stringent global safety and quality standards, and are locally QCTO-accredited.

Christopher Mörsner, Head of the Training Division at Dekra Industrial's Institute of Learning, explains the genesis of this collaboration, and provides further background on the trio of world firsts achieved to date:

“From an initial discussion with AfricaX on one online learning topic, we have now developed a synergy and opportunity for something far greater than what we originally had in mind. In terms of our partnership, we have learnt a great deal about the process of co-creating digital learning material. We have also grown together during this journey, supporting each other and gaining an understanding of the different challenges and trends in the online training sector.

“This collaborative understanding is a powerful resource to draw upon – and a very useful tool to have in monitoring the sector and our impact therein to determine whether our mutual training goals are being achieved.” Mörsner comments.

Jessica Rees-Jones, AfricaX founder and Chief Executive Officer, wholeheartedly agrees with this observation:

“What started out as a phone call of enquiry has resulted in co-creating world-class digital educational content - and resulted in a phenomenal training trajectory!”

### **‘Speaking’ the language of learning**

In addition to a sign language component, Dekra IOL and AfricaX's ergonomics online course currently comes with audio options in five languages commonly spoken locally: Zulu, Xhosa, English and Afrikaans; with a French audio option in production, to be developed and made available by the end of this year. This will closely be followed by a Sotho audio option.

Visual, auditory, text and animation have also been added to the course content, including PowerPoint slides, videos, infographics, Word documents and text-based learner reference guides.

The audio elements include a voiceover in popular languages offered to support linguistic learners. There is also an interactive quiz feature, to enable learners to put their existing knowledge of the subject matter to the test. This is motivational and also provides engagement with the course material in a fun and innovative way. The final test assesses the learners' knowledge and reinforces retention and skills transfer.

In developing the audio and sign language content of the course, more than five different types of software were used to integrate and process each aspect and stage of creation:

“Each element took many hours of development expertise and effort to craft it into the learner-friendly, easily accessible and seamless course that was the end result,” Rees-Jones remarks proudly.

She adds that the decision to implement audio and multi-language offerings was motivated by gaps which the AfricaX and IOL partnership perceived in other online training offerings:

“When we started mapping out the ergonomics course, we realised that we could include an audio element and offer translations into some popular languages spoken locally and in Africa - as these elements did not currently exist. It therefore made sense that we should cater for these important requirements – as well as the over-arching need to ensure our courses feature both diversity and inclusion,” Rees-Jones advises.

“It is astonishing that people cannot study these courses in their mother tongue, as it compromises their ability to fully understand the course and all its details and intricacies. Providing different language options will ultimately ensure better accuracy and dissemination of information from these courses – and empower a diverse range of learners from all backgrounds, regardless of their home language or disability,” she explains.

Mörsner was equally as enthusiastic about implementing the sign language and multi-language offerings:

“The moment that we came up with the concept of courses to cater for multiple local languages and hearing-impaired people, I thought it was a fantastic idea! It ultimately comes back to the essential driver and motivation for our partnership - how we are aiming to make a difference in our learners’ lives and careers. With so many training providers out there, you have to offer a strong differentiating element which stands out above the rest – and also caters to the need for inclusion and diversity – covering everyone’s individual needs,” he enthuses.

“In line with this,” Mörsner adds, “we have to ensure that adult-based education is delivered in a professional manner and results in all learners having the opportunity to become well-versed and competent in the online training subject matter: irrespective of their culture, nationality, language, background, intellectual or physical abilities.”

## **Thanks to a world-class team**

Mörsner pays tribute to all the parties involved in realising these many world firsts:

“I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our world-class team: our sign language partner eDeaf for creating that portion of the content - and to AfricaX for envisioning and assisting with realising this amazing opportunity.

Co-creating the health and safety online content was a tough but rewarding process - and a project which Dekra IOL is extremely proud to be associated with! It endorses the culture of Dekra IOL, and our intention to make a real difference in the lives of people – while also creating a lasting, positive legacy that supports our parent company Dekra’s 2025 vision for a safer world.”

Rees-Jones concurs that the Dekra IOL-AfricaX partnership is producing very impactful outcomes:

“We had no idea that the initial discussion would result in such positive and productive results! Despite only starting our work together last year, we have already realised an impressive trio of world firsts: the ‘Big Five’ health and safety courses in five popular languages, and a course in sign language. This is a measurement of our significant mutual dedication to co-creating empowering educational content online - and an indication of great things to come,” she concludes.

***Ends (1 211 words)***

## **Note to Editors:**

## **About Dekra Industrial and Dekra Institute of Learning**

With 96 years in the industry through its global parent company, Dekra Industrial SA has established a formidable reputation as a leader in inspection services, non-destructive testing (NDT), material testing, laboratory services, Advanced NDT, and asset integrity services, and offers industry training through Dekra Institute of Learning. With a group presence in more than 50 countries on five continents, Dekra Industrial RSA is committed to providing professional and innovative safety solutions across a multitude of industries, including power generation, oil and gas, construction, petrochemical, manufacturing, fabrication, pulp and paper, rail, mining, steel industry and foundries, within South Africa and pan-Africa.

Dekra Industrial RSA is RD 0034 compliant, a nuclear safety compliance standard and is one of the few NDT companies locally to hold the ISO 45001 certification.

Dekra Institute of Learning is QCTO-accredited and delivers an internet learning service across all industries, in both public and private sectors, with training pitched to all levels of competency, focusing on HSE, ISO and CPD-aligned courses. Classroom-based and distance learning are also available.

Dekra Industrial strives to be recognised as the 'heroes of safety'.

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