

## **Learners from poorly resourced schools participate in engineering job shadowing programme**

In a move to empower the youth through its education, training and skills development programme, the Uitenhage Despatch Development Initiative (UDDI) has partnered with Royal HaskoningDHV to offer twenty grade 12 learners a job shadowing opportunity at the company.

Royal HaskoningDHV is an international consulting engineering and project management group with presence in six of South Africa's provinces and this includes offices in Port Elizabeth, East London and Queenstown.

Currently taking place at Royal HaskoningDHV's Greenacres office today, "the annual programme is designed to expose and entice learners about the engineering field, especially consulting engineering," explains Royal Haskoning's water technician, Sanda Ndlovu, also part of the company's eight-member mentorship team.

"We hope to inspire the learners to explore engineering as career path, and help them to understand the importance of maths and science in the engineering world, and how engineering plays a role in the development of South Africa," Ndlovu adds.

The learners will also visit the Fishwater Flats Wastewater Treatment Works in Swartkops that is currently being undertaken by Royal HaskoningHDV.

"Since also runs a Saturday programme to assist learners with application for science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) qualifications; the job shadowing programme is a natural progression in our efforts to intensify support to learners that will one-day form the captive pool of a new generation of engineers," Ndlovu adds.

The learners were selected by the UDDI from ten under-resourced high schools in Uitenhage and Despatch, namely: Zanolwazi Secondary High School, Tinara High School, Limekhaya High School, Phaphani High School, Sisonke High School, VM Kwinana High School, Thanduxolo High School, Nkululeko High School, Solomom Mahlangu High School and Molly Blackburn High School.

"These schools participate in curriculum support programmes offered by the [UDDI-managed] Nelson Mandela Bay Science & Technology Centre," explains the head of the science centre's outreach education programmes, Singa

Poswa.

“We selected top maths and science performers at these schools, particularly learners that have an interest in pursuing a career in engineering,” Poswa says.

UDDI’s CEO Patricia Dlamini adds: “It is through solicited support from external partners, like Royal HaskoningHDV, that we [as the UDDI] are empowered to deliver maximum value to our target beneficiaries which includes learners and educators as well as small businesses, particularly those in townships.

“This partnership is therefore a show of our commitment to advance access to STEM-related resources and opportunities, as well as career guidance and other learner and teacher support programmes,” ends Dlamini.

Besides its education, training and skills development programmes, the UDDI also focuses on enterprise development as a tool to advance business incubation and clustering through the establishment and support of small, micro and medium-sized enterprises (SMMEs) while providing support packages, capacity building, new business solutions, investment opportunities and markets.