

Final Year Achiever Participates At Cambridge

The Arup Education Trust's (AET) top final year achiever for 2016, Comfort Matlakala, recently visited the University of Cambridge to take part in the Interdisciplinary Design for the Built Environment (IDBE) programme. The AET was launched in South Africa in 2011 and owns 30% of Arup Pty (Ltd).

The theme of the week was climate change, sustainability and resilience and included a number of lectures by academics and industry specialists as well as a studio project that groups of students undertook.

"It was an honour to be chosen as the top performer for the AET and to travel to the UK. It afforded me the opportunity to attend the residential week for the IDBE Masters Programme in Cambridge while at the same being exposed to different people and cultures. The lectures themed around climate change, sustainability and resilience were very insightful and contributed greatly to my chosen research topic for my Honours degree, which is based on the execution of sustainable construction projects," said Comfort.

"The highlight of my week was working on the group project. I loved the fact that groups were made up of individuals from different professional backgrounds within the built environment, making group discussions interesting and providing a constructive platform for debate and information exchange," commented Comfort.

Susan Snaddon, leader of Arup's Planning and Development team in South Africa and trustee of the AET commented, "Our collaboration with the IDBE programme aims to expose historically disadvantaged built environment students from the AET to interdisciplinary international thinking and experience. This year the IDBE and Wolfson College hosted Comfort Matlakala, AET's top final year student for 2016. It is incredibly rewarding to witness someone like Comfort engaging with international Masters level students in a stimulating environment such as Cambridge".

The IDBE is a two-year part-time Masters course for built environment professionals, offered by the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership and supported by the Departments of Architecture and Engineering. It is structured around emerging trends, opportunities and challenges within the built environment such as building information modelling and low carbon energy and materials, political and regulatory changes.

Comfort is currently an Honours student in Construction Management at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.

The AET was established as a means to enhance the quality of lives of disadvantaged youths through education and skills development, with a mission to provide an enabling environment that allows students to reach their full potential. The holistic approach of the Trust marries funding with guidance and mentorship, empowering with skills and knowledge; enabling development of successful, empowered leaders of tomorrow.

