

Education is key to success – EC's top Engen Maths and Science School matric

The Eastern Cape's top Engen Maths and Science School (EMSS) matric graduate, Libhongo Mko lives by the philosophy that hard work and dedication will open doors. It is this belief that saw him come out as the top learner in the Eastern Cape EMSS classes with five distinctions, including 90% for science and 83% maths, marks that secured him a place to study Computer Science at the University of Cape Town in 2019.

Hailing from Mdantsane in East London, Libhongo was schooled at Philemon Ngcelwane High School and attended weekly EMSS supplementary classes at the University of Fort Hare in East London.

He joined the EMMS programme when he was in grade 10 and says attending classes every Saturday morning gave him the confidence and boost he needed. "EMSS really helped me by taking away my examination fears as we had regular tests throughout the year. The lectures and our centre co-ordinator are the ones who encouraged me in choosing the course that I will study this year, as they always emphasised that nothing can limit us, not even the sky."

Libhongo says he comes from a God-fearing big family. "I'm the fourth child at home and received a lot of support and motivation from each and every family member. I was taught that education is the key to living a successful life. What motivated me through the year were my teachers, principal, family, friends and my mentor, my Life Science teacher Miss Dimakatso Mosola," he says.

His message for this year's matrics is to take advantage of every opportunity for extra learning. "I would advise them that hard work is the key to achieving the results that one wants. Being competitive will also help them to study even harder, while being curious about the subjects that they are doing and never going to sleep without studying will also be of benefit."

In 2019, 532 matriculants from across South Africa benefited from Engen-backed extra classes in English, Maths and Science, achieving an impressive 93% pass rate against the national pass rate of 78.2%. Of these, 67% of the EMSS learners received Bachelor passes against the national average of 43%.

Libhongo attended the East London EMSS centre, which is one of three centres in the Eastern Cape (the others are located in Cala and Port Elizabeth). There are nine EMSS centres in total in South Africa, including one each in Cape Town and Gauteng, and four in KwaZulu-Natal. Two of the KZN based centres attained impressive 100% pass rates in 2018.

Adhila Hamdulay, Engen's Corporate Social Investment Manager, says the company is delighted to see Libhongo get the chance to pursue his computer science studies. "Libhongo is a prime example of future leaders that the EMSS programme aims to assist, with a view to not only see them achieve personal success, but also to tackle the bigger issue of helping address key national skills shortages in the engineering, medical and other technical fields.

She adds: “At Engen, we strongly believe that we have a responsibility to help young people realise their full potential, and we feel enormously privileged to have played a role in Libhongo’s impressive achievements.”

Equipping people with potential and drive to succeed in their careers sums up Engen’s approach to human resource management and education-focused corporate social investment programmes, comments Engen’s head of transformation and stakeholder engagement, Unathi Njokweni-Magida. “We identify, support, reward, recruit, train and develop high-potential candidates for fulfilling careers in skills-challenged fields, in support of SA’s transformational agenda and Engen’s own business. We strongly believe that we have a responsibility to help young people realise their full potential, and we feel enormously privileged to have played a role in their impressive achievements.

“We are so incredibly proud of these learners, who epitomise the quality of the young people we work with around the country every year. Our ultimate reward is to help set them up to pursue stimulating careers that won’t only benefit them personally, but also the economy as a whole,” adds Njokweni-Magida.

Engen congratulates Libhongo and the EMSS class of 2018 and offers a well-deserved round of applause to all the learners and teachers.