

Engen takes a stand against artisan shortages and unemployment

In a move to help address artisan skills shortages in the wider petrochemical industry as well as high unemployment levels in the South Durban community, Engen has backed a two-year learnership programme that will provide full funding for 20 learners.

The programme, which provides a 100% fee-free college service, targets persons from underprivileged backgrounds who have struggled to access mainstream education and training.

Successful applicants attend satellite classes run by Jirah Academy at Fairvale High School, which is located across the road from Engen's refinery in South Durban.

The Jirah Academy was established in 2014 and functions as a community-based satellite campus catering specifically to previously disadvantaged individuals within South Durban and extended communities of the greater Durban area.

"The Academy is entirely donor and management funded and operates as a fees-free college satellite campus that provides engineering studies to learners who are suited to become artisans and technicians, or who want to pursue careers in engineering," says Unathi Magida, Engen's head of Transformation and Stakeholder Engagement

Courses offered include a Bridging Course (focusing on maths and science education) and mainstream N1/N2/N3 Engineering Studies

The Jirah Academy also provides a second chance to previously disadvantaged individuals who have no access to further education or training, to pursue a formal qualification and boost their chances of employment.

Adds Magida: "We have also partnered with industry in the South Durban area who have agreed to provide apprenticeships to these learners once they have graduated or assist in helping them find employment."

Three graduates from last year's intake currently work at the Engen refinery.

“We are very proud to be part of this immensely rewarding programme – which benefits the learner, the company and the country.

“When somebody succeeds because of a one-in-a-thousand chance that they grabbed with both hands, it gives a glimpse of the kind of resolve that will ultimately start to address the skills crisis and unemployment that is facing our country.”