



GIBB successfully addresses the skills shortage in the engineering sector

For Thulani Nkwali (30), it all started with Thusano, which gave him the motivation, drive and opportunity to following his dream of becoming an engineer. It's because of the GIBB Thusano project that he found himself living and working as an engineer on Eden Island in the Seychelles. Because of his love for knowledge, and a belief in himself, instilled in him by the Thusano project, that he returned to South Africa in 2009 to continue his studies, setting his sights on his ultimate goal, a masters degree in Civil Engineering.

Thulani's story is an inspiring one of adventure and learning that takes him from Kulani High School in Langa, Western Cape, to the Seychelles, and back to the bustling metropolis of Johannesburg, South Africa.

The best part about Thulani's story is that he is just one of the remarkable successes of a project that has changed the lives of hundreds of learners

since its inception in 2002, and is set to transform the engineering sector in South Africa. It's just one more way that GIBB is building our nation.

Thulani's story starts while he was attending Kulani High School in the Western Cape, where he first encountered the GIBB Thusano project. The Thusano project is designed to make a real difference to the skill shortage in the engineering sector of South Africa, by introducing talented but disadvantaged learners to the world of engineering and assist them in preparing for a career in this exciting industry.

Says Yusray Frizlar, Director at GIBB: "The engineering industry is currently suffering from major skills shortages, and it's been recognised that this is largely due to students at secondary school level achieving below-par results in mathematics and sciences. Not only is this exacerbating South Africa's engineering skills crisis, it is devastating on the morale and future outcome for these youngsters who, without some assistance and proper guidance, will never have a chance to realise their full potential and fulfil their dreams. This is where GIBB's Thusano project is changing lives."

"The project selects schools where a need for additional, quality tuition in English, mathematics and science has been identified, and assists the learners involved by facilitating extra classes, tuition and guidance in these areas, with the aim of preparing them for entry into tertiary education institutions for further study."

Thulani joined the Thusano project, attending Saturday classes in Maths and Science. Through hard work, determination and the support of the Thusano project, Thulani achieved an A in Mathematics, which earned him a partial bursary to study Civil Engineering at the University of Technology. Half way through his diploma, in July 2003, Thulani joined GIBB, who paid for him to complete the remainder of his diploma. He joined GIBB permanently in 2004.

His hard work and determination earned him a place on a construction contract on Eden Island in the Seychelles, where he lived and worked as an engineer for two years. He is still consulted on a part-time basis on the Seychelles project, but he has returned to South Africa to further his studies. Thulani's story teaches us that anything is possible if we work together, and believe in ourselves.

"We are very pleased with the results the Thusano project, and we will be upping the funding for both the Eastern and Western Cape programmes in 2010," says Yusray. "We look forward to welcoming more Thusano graduates into the GIBB family in the future." ■

