

DUT ENGAGED

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SOCIAL IMPACT NEWSLETTER



**STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES THROUGH
EDUCATION, INNOVATION AND PARTNERSHIPS**

ENVISION2030

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MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR: RESEARCH INNOVATION AND ENGAGEMENT

It is my distinct pleasure to introduce this Social Impact edition of the Durban University of Technology (DUT) Community Engagement Newsletter. This publication offers a compelling reflection of our institutional commitment to advancing research, innovation, and engagement as integrated drivers of societal transformation, in alignment with DUT's ENVISION2030 strategy.

As an engaged university, DUT embraces its role as a catalyst for inclusive development and sustainable change. Our approach is grounded in the recognition that the most pressing societal challenges, ranging from inequality and unemployment to education and sustainability, require collaborative, transdisciplinary responses. Through the intentional integration of teaching and learning, research, innovation, and entrepreneurship, we are strengthening our contribution to both local and global development agendas.

Central to this work is our adoption of the Quad-Helix partnership model, which brings together academia, government, industry, and communities as co-creators of knowledge and solutions. The initiatives featured in this newsletter exemplify how these partnerships are being mobilised to generate meaningful social impact, whether through strengthening science education in under-resourced schools, advancing digital inclusion, supporting community-based enterprises, or enabling student-led innovation.

These efforts are firmly aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the African Union's

Agenda 2063, and South Africa's national development priorities. Through our engagement platforms, we contribute to building resilient communities, advancing equitable access to education and opportunities, and fostering sustainable livelihoods. In doing so, DUT positions itself not only as a generator of knowledge, but as an active participant in shaping a just and inclusive society. Equally significant is our commitment to cultivating graduates who are both academically proficient and socially responsive. Through experiential learning, project-based engagement, and community-embedded scholarship, our students are equipped with the skills, values, and agency to become ethical leaders, innovators, and change-makers in a rapidly evolving world.

This edition of the newsletter stands as a testament to the collective efforts of our staff, students, and partners, whose work continues to demonstrate the transformative potential of engaged scholarship. It reflects a university that is deeply connected to its communities, responsive to societal needs, and committed to sustainable impact.

As you engage with these stories, I invite you to reflect on the power of collaboration, the value of knowledge in action, and the importance of partnerships in shaping the future we aspire to build, one that is inclusive, innovative, and sustainable. DUT remains steadfast in its commitment to strengthening its role as an engaged and anchor institution, one that not only produces knowledge, but actively applies it to advance societal well-being and shared prosperity.

Prof Fulufhelo Nemavhola

*Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research Innovation and Engagement
Durban University of Technology*



EDITOR'S NOTE

It is with great pride and purpose that we present this edition of the DUT Social Impact Newsletter, a platform that brings to life the work of our staff, students, and partners as they engage meaningfully with communities. As the Community Engagement Office, we see this publication not only as a record of activities, but as a reflection of a growing movement within the university, one that places engagement, impact, and societal relevance at the centre of our work.

The stories captured in this edition reflect a dynamic and integrated approach to engagement. From strengthening science education in rural schools and expanding access to digital skills, to advancing interdisciplinary innovation and supporting informal economies, these initiatives demonstrate how engagement is embedded across teaching and learning, research, and innovation. They also highlight the power of collaboration, where universities work alongside government, industry, and communities to co-create solutions that are responsive, context-driven, and sustainable.

Importantly, this newsletter also showcases the human dimension of social impact. It highlights students as active



citizens and change agents, staff as engaged scholars, and communities as equal partners in knowledge creation. These stories remind us that impact is not only measured in outputs, but in relationships built, capacities strengthened, and lives transformed. As you read through this edition, we invite you to see beyond individual projects and recognise the collective contribution toward building an engaged university that is deeply connected to society.

Phumzile Xulu

Engagement Practitioner

Community Engagement Office

Durban University of Technology



INTRODUCTION

This edition of the Durban University of Technology (DUT) Social Impact Newsletter showcases the university's unwavering commitment to making a meaningful difference in society. Through purposeful engagement, DUT continues to address real community needs, drive inclusive development, and create opportunities that empower individuals and communities alike.

At the heart of this issue is the impact of education as a tool for transformation. From strengthening science education in rural schools to expanding access to digital skills and career guidance, DUT is actively contributing to building more equitable and resilient communities. These initiatives reflect a deliberate effort to bridge gaps in access, knowledge, and opportunity.

The stories featured in this edition also highlight the importance of partnerships in achieving sustainable social

impact. Collaboration with government, industry, non-profit organisations, and local communities enables DUT to extend its reach and deliver programmes that are responsive, relevant, and impactful. Together, these partnerships create a collective force for positive change.

Equally inspiring is the role of students as drivers of social impact. Through leadership, volunteerism, and community-based initiatives, DUT students continue to demonstrate innovation, compassion, and a commitment to uplifting others. Their contributions reflect the university's mission to develop not only skilled graduates but responsible citizens.

As you explore this edition, we invite you to reflect on the power of collaboration, knowledge sharing, and active citizenship in shaping a better future. DUT remains committed to advancing social impact through education, innovation, and engagement that truly transforms lives.





ART GALLERY

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UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH AUSTRALIA
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STUDENT COUNSELLING
AND HEALTH
FINANCIAL AID
STUDENT ADMISSIONS
STUDENT HOUSING AND
RESIDENCE LIFE



ADVANCING EDUCATION & SKILLS FOR SOCIAL IMPACT



Pictured: The DUT Team and the Mahlabathini CMC

DUT STRENGTHENS RURAL SCIENCE EDUCATION THROUGH REFLECTION AND COLLABORATION

By: Phumeza Msongelwa

The Durban University of Technology (DUT) Community Engagement Office hosted the Mahlabathini Schools Engagement Programme (MSEP) Reflection, Evaluation and Planning (REP) Workshop at Garden Court uLundi in February 2026. The workshop brought together key stakeholders, including representatives from the DUT Chemistry Department under the Faculty of Applied Sciences, the DUT Career Resource Centre, the Faculty of Health Sciences, the Mahlabathini Circuit Management Centre (CMC) and the Zululand District Office.

The MSEP is designed to enhance access to quality education and strengthen curriculum delivery within schools in the Mahlabathini Circuit. With a strong focus on addressing challenges experienced by both learners and educators particularly in the sciences, the programme provides practical science week workshops and structured career guidance sessions for Grade 12 learners. Its broader objective is to build capacity among teachers and learners alike, contributing to improved academic performance and sustainable educational outcomes.

The REP workshop served as a platform to reflect on and evaluate the successes and challenges of the 2025 Science Week and Career Guidance Programme. Positive learner outcomes in 2025 included increased engagement, practical science demonstrations reaching approximately 50 schools, and improved physical science pass rates in several schools. The overall Grade 12 pass rate for the Mahlabathini CMC was

84.4%, highlighting progress while underscoring the need for further improvement in challenging subjects like Accounting, Mathematics, and Physical Sciences.

Feedback presented at the workshop indicated notable progress in 2025 compared to 2024. Challenges previously identified were deliberately addressed during planning stages, resulting in a more coordinated and effective rollout of activities. However, attendance issues, foundational knowledge gaps, and limited resources in some schools were noted as barriers to achieving full programme impact. Discussions emphasized enhancing support for Life Orientation teachers, early career guidance integration, and strategic planning to address these challenges in 2026.

Dr Phathisanani Hloma, Lecturer in the DUT Chemistry Department and one of the Science Week facilitators, affirmed the programme's growth: "There has definitely been



an improvement from 2024. What worked well in 2025 was having more teams deployed to different schools simultaneously. This ensured that more learners could be reached and supported.”

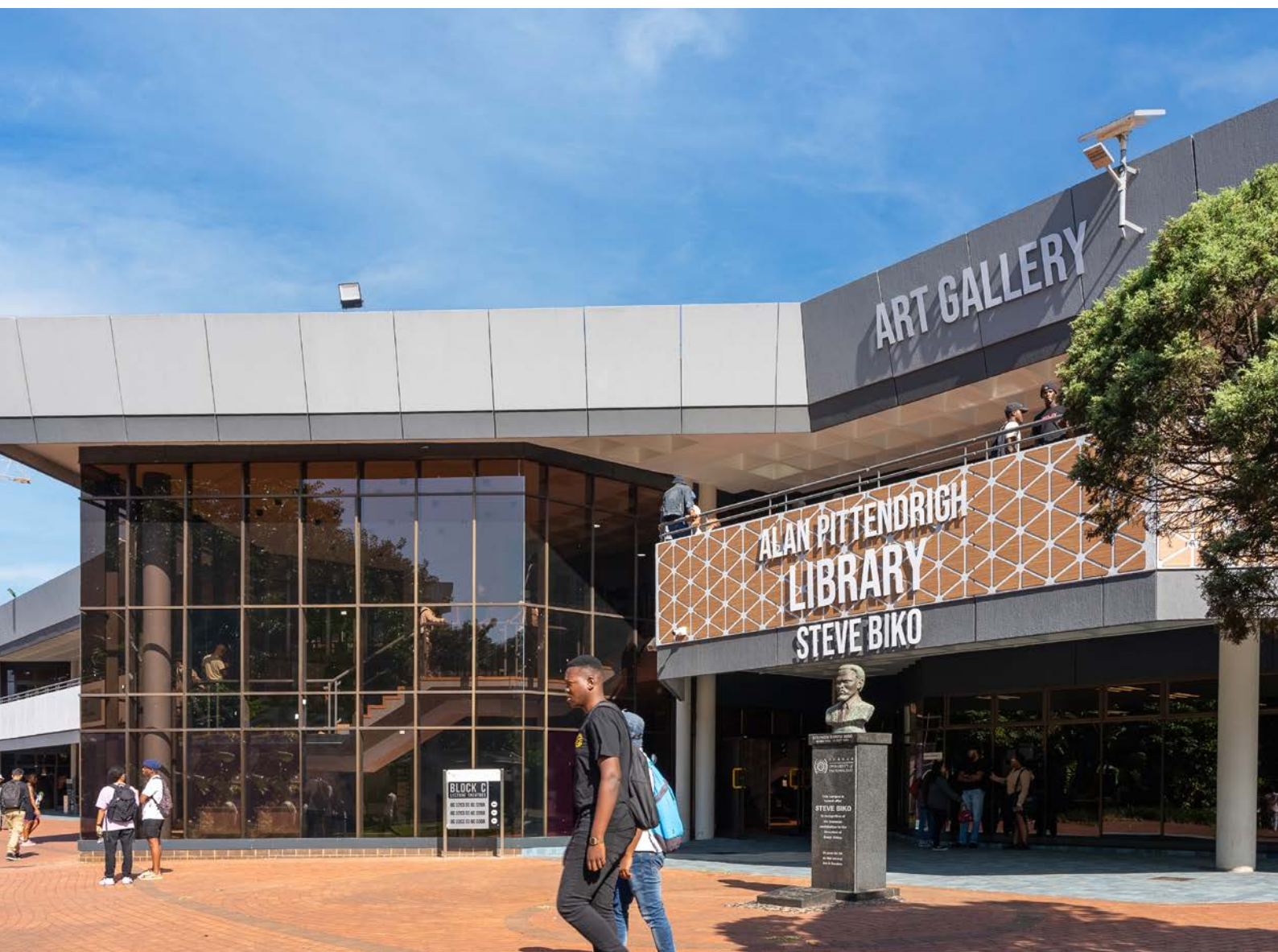
Mrs Xoliswa Cele, Chief Education Specialist at the Mahlabathini CMC, highlighted the programme’s measurable impact. “We have seen a rise in the Physical Sciences matric results, although there are still a few schools that remain a concern,” she noted, emphasising the need for continued support.

Mr Sikhumbuzo Nkwanyana, Subject Advisor at Zululand District emphasised the importance of early career guidance and continuous support for teachers: “Sustained engagement with both learners and teachers is key to improving science performance across the circuit. Collaboration with DUT ensures targeted interventions that make a real difference.”

Strategic priorities for 2026 were also discussed during

the workshop, including early integration of career guidance with science practicals, collaboration with subject specialists to ensure curriculum alignment, and securing local partnerships and sponsorships to address logistical challenges like transport and centralised venues.

The successful REP workshop reaffirmed the shared commitment between DUT and the Mahlabathini CMC to strengthening science education and expanding access to higher education opportunities. The team intends to undertake research to consolidate and evaluate existing support programmes, monitor their effectiveness, and measure long-term impact. In addition, career guidance will be more closely integrated with science outreach initiative to maximise reach and relevance. With these measures in place, 2026 is expected to be an even more transformative year, with a focused drive toward improving Physical Sciences pass rates and supporting students’ university aspirations.





Pictured: DUT Team with Learners from Nwabi and Mhawu High School who were part of the Campus Visit.

DUT INSPIRES GRADE 9 LEARNERS THROUGH FILM AND TELEVISION EXPOSURE

By Mthetheleli Meyiwa

With an aim of exposing Grade 9 learners to the dynamic world of film and television production, the Durban University of Technology (DUT) hosted 40 Grade 9 learners from Nwabi and Mhawu High Schools at City Campus in March 2026. The Department of Video Technology supported by the Community Engagement Office organised and facilitated the workshop to provide learners with hands-on experience in the various aspects of the film and television industry.

A heartfelt welcome from Irene Rajeshree John, Secretary at the Video Technology Department, captured the attention of the learners as she introduced the purpose of the day. She explained that the visit was designed to show the learners what happens behind the scenes in film and television production, from cameras and sound to editing and directing, giving them a taste of how stories come alive on screen.

She also provided a brief overview of the Video Technology Department stating “Video Technology Department is at the forefront of television production education, offering comprehensive training in, screen arts and technology. Our degree programme is designed to equip students with technical

skills and creative vision necessary to excel in the dynamic field of television. Our facilities include a fully equipped television studio and an outside broadcast unit which you will get access to later today.”

She further emphasised: “Filming and television aren’t just about entertainment they are about imagination, creativity and giving people a voice; who knows maybe today you will spot something in you a passion, a dream or even a career path you haven’t thought about.”

As Dr Lance Lutge, HOD at the Video Technology Department, took over the stage he explained the different types of film making in a way that made it easier for the learners to



understand and engage. He emphasised that filmmakers have the power to influence people's thoughts and shape society through stories they create. He concluded by encouraging learners to pursue their passions saying "you need passion in life in order to succeed because when you have it you always go 120% in to achieve what you want"

Ms Phumzile Xulu, Engagement Practitioner at the Community Engagement Office, led an informative career guidance session. She noted that DUT operates across seven campuses and six faculties, offering diverse career paths for learners to consider. As learners received goody bags with information brochures, she encouraged them to consider their interests, abilities, personality types, and values when choosing a career, noting that aligning a career with these factors can lead to a more fulfilling and successful life.

Samuel Ntsanwisi, Lecturer at the Video Technology Department energised the learners with a motivation talk. Using the example of a diamond, he showed how the value can change depending on how it is presented and perceived. He explained that the value people place on themselves often determine their future worth.

He encouraged learners to start building their value by developing skills, talent and knowledge. "Depending on the value

you are putting on yourself that's how much you are going to be worth one day," he said. Urging them to work hard and strive to become rare and valuable like a diamond. He concluded with a powerful message: "Add value to your life, learn new skills, multiply, grow your talents and get new knowledge. Shine Bright like a diamond."

As the day continued, learners were taken on group rotation, exploring key areas of film and television studio. The tour was both impactful and eye-opening beginning at the Outside Broadcast (OB) Van, followed by the directing and Ops room (Visions Control, VT Operator). They then moved to studio floor, where they learned about handling studio cameras and sound equipment including microphones, before concluding the tour at the Journalism department where they gained insight into the compilation and production of radio and television news.

Sanelisiwe Dlamini from Nwabi High School expressed gratitude on behalf of Nwabi and Mhawu High Schools for the great opportunity they got to learn about careers options at DUT. She thanked the university for taking time to host them and shared that the learners truly enjoyed and appreciated the experience.





Pictured: The DUT team at the Career Expo in Port Shepstone.

DUT AND UNIWAY SUPPORT LEARNERS THROUGH CAREER GUIDANCE EXPO

By: Sinamile Sithole

The Durban University of Technology (DUT) Community Engagement, in partnership with UniWay, participated as exhibitors at the Career Expo held at Port Shepstone Civic Centre in February 2026, in the Ugu District. The event was hosted by Thy Will Ministries under the leadership of Prophet Sandile Msimango and brought together high school learners, educators, and community members from schools across the Port Shepstone area.

Learners received guidance on choosing suitable courses, understanding admission requirements, and exploring career paths. Exhibitors focused on empowering learners, particularly those from rural communities, with knowledge to make informed decisions about their futures.

Dr Thuli Mwelase, General Manager: Water Services at Ugu District Municipality, explained that the career expo aimed to give young people access to information and guidance that is often limited in rural areas. “When you bring institutions and organisations to spaces like this, learners can access information they would not normally have,” she said, adding that the organisers plan to expand the programme in the future.

UniWay is a career guidance initiative that empowers learners with the information, resources, and confidence to make informed academic and career decisions. The initiative was established to help capable young people overcome limited access to guidance and learning materials, ensuring they can explore opportunities aligned with their interests.

Ms Kwanele Makaluza, the founder of UniWay, together with her team from DUT, presented to learners on the wide range of academic programmes offered across all DUT faculties. The session provided an overview of the institution’s diverse study options, outlined general admission requirements and

application procedures, and emphasised the importance of aligning subject choices with future career goals. Learners were encouraged to explore different pathways into higher education, including both traditional and alternative routes.

Educators also welcomed the initiative. Ms Thabi Malunga, a teacher from Ezinqoleni Secondary School, noted that the career expo helped teachers better understand current university application processes and admission requirements, enabling them to guide learners more effectively.

Following the presentations, DUT representatives engaged directly with learners at their exhibition tables, answering questions, providing course guides, and offering further academic guidance. Learners actively participated and took advantage of the opportunity to interact with the DUT team.

A Grade 9 learner, Ms Melokuhle Mncwabe from Port Shepstone High School, shared her excitement about the experience, saying the expo helped her and her peers understand subject choices and career expectations ahead of selecting academic streams in Grade 10. She appreciated the detailed explanations of courses and requirements and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to gain knowledge that she could share with other learners.





Pictured: DUT Cindy Stewart during one of the advanced skills courses.

DUT AND NEMISA EXPAND DIGITAL LITERACY TRAINING ACROSS KWAZULU-NATAL

By: Phumeza Msongelwa

The National Electronic Media Institute of South Africa (NEMISA), operating under the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies, has strengthened its partnership with the Durban University of Technology (DUT) Short Course Unit to advance digital skills development across KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). Since 2011, DUT has led the provincial rollout of NEMISA's programmes through the KZN CoLab, delivering digital literacy training to communities throughout the province.

The initiative supports the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, which aims to create an inclusive, digitally literate South Africa where all citizens can participate meaningfully in the digital economy. Central to this goal is equipping unemployed youth and community members with practical digital skills that enhance employability and broaden economic opportunities.

A key offering is the fully funded Mobile Digital Literacy course, which introduces participants to the Fourth Industrial

Revolution (4IR), cybersecurity and artificial intelligence (AI). The course focuses on practical smartphone skills, including accessing email, using mobile banking, navigating Google Maps, creating documents on Google Docs, browsing the web and managing appointments through digital calendars. These skills enable participants to prepare CVs, search and apply for jobs online, and communicate professionally.

Upon completing the course on the NEMISA Digital Skills Platform, participants can enrol in additional free courses to

further strengthen their competencies. Despite challenges such as unstable internet connectivity in some areas, the KZN CoLab has implemented innovative solutions, including offline theoretical sessions and the use of mobile routers to ensure learners can complete online assessments.

The programme's impact has been strengthened through collaboration. While NEMISA provides funding and nationally aligned content, DUT facilitates the training and drives community engagement. The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA) has supported recruitment by working with municipalities across KZN and assisting with catering during training sessions.

With positive feedback from participants and growing interest from communities, the KZN CoLab at DUT remains committed

to expanding Mobile Digital Literacy training across the province, contributing to a digitally inclusive future for KwaZulu-Natal and beyond.

“ The course focuses on practical smartphone skills, including accessing email, using mobile banking, navigating Google Maps, creating documents on Google Docs, browsing the web and managing appointments through digital calendars. ”





DRIVING INNOVATION FOR COMMUNITY IMPACT



DUT STRENGTHENS COMMUNITY DISASTER PREPAREDNESS THROUGH FLOOD SAFETY INITIATIVE

By: Phiwayinkosi Sibiya and Waheeda Peters

The Durban University of Technology (DUT), through its Co-operative Education and External Engagement Unit, in collaboration with the Departments of Chemical Engineering and Media, Language and Communication, has launched a flood preparedness initiative in partnership with the Springfield Civic and Ratepayers Association (SCRA). The programme focuses on distributing One-Go Bags and Flood Safety Booklets to vulnerable communities, including areas surrounding DUT student residences. The launch took place at the DUT Co-operative Education and External Engagement Unit's Boardroom in February 2026.

The initiative aims to promote knowledge sharing, research development and capacity building among staff and students, while creating opportunities to enhance academic growth and contribute to the wider community. Acting Director of the Co-operative Education and External Engagement Unit, Dr Themba Msukwini, welcomed guests to the session and emphasised the importance of proactive strategies, community engagement and collaboration to reduce the impact of flooding and protect lives and livelihoods.

Dr Innocentia Mkhize, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Chemical Engineering and Project Leader, explained that the project originated in 2023 when SCRA approached the department for technical support to strengthen flood

preparedness in Ward 25 of the eThekweni Municipality. Affected areas include formal and informal settlements in Springfield, as well as communities near the Alpine Road student residence, all located in flood-prone zones.

Following this engagement, DUT and SCRA formalised their partnership through a Memorandum of Understanding in July 2024, outlining the roles, responsibilities, governance, and shared commitment to flood preparedness and community development. The project includes two key tools: the Flood Safety Booklet, which provides guidance on flood risk awareness, safety procedures and emergency response measures, and the One-Go Bag, a ready-to-carry kit containing essential items for rapid evacuation.



Prof Peterson Ngema, Acting Head of the Department of Chemical Engineering, expressed his appreciation for the collaboration and highlighted the link between community engagement and DUT's mission. Mr Jabulani Mtshali, a community leader from Jadhu Place informal settlement, praised the initiative for helping families store essential items safely and evacuate quickly.

Reflecting on the devastating 2022 floods that claimed three lives, Ms Nicole Daniel from SCRA emphasised the importance of community-based disaster management plans and thanked DUT for its support in providing One-Go Bags and Flood Safety Booklets. She also acknowledged the commitment of DUT staff and departments in turning the 2023 discussions into a tangible, life-saving project.

Dr Mkhize confirmed that 630 One-Go Bags and 1,000 Flood Safety Booklets will be distributed to the community, prioritising

elderly residents and those with special needs. The initiative also aims to strengthen flood preparedness among nearby student communities.

Mr Nceba Antony Hoto, lecturer in the Department of Chemical Engineering, concluded the session by thanking all participants for their engagement, noting that their contributions made the event both informative and impactful.

Pictured: Acting Director of the Co-operative Education and External Engagement Unit, Dr Themba Msukwini, and Dr Innocentia Mkhize, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Chemical Engineering and Project Leader, at the launch of the flood preparedness initiative in partnership with the Springfield Civic and Ratepayers Association (SCRA).





Pictured: Architecture lecturer Wendle Naidoo with DUT student and learners of Inanda Seminary

INTERDISCIPLINARY DEPARTMENTS UNITE FOR INANDA SEMINARY DORMITORY PROJECT

By: Phumeza Msongelwa

The Durban University of Technology's (DUT) Departments of Architecture, Civil Engineering, and Construction Management and Quantity Surveying (CMQS) have partnered in a transformative community-based initiative involving second-year students at Inanda Seminary, one of South Africa's most historic institutions dedicated to the education of young women.

Inspired by the Seminary's legacy of nurturing generations of African female leaders, the Inanda Seminary Project centres on the design of a new girls' dormitory to address the school's growing learner population and infrastructure needs. The proposed facility prioritises safety, dignity and well-being, reinforcing the institution's mission to empower young women while symbolising continued investment in female education and leadership.

Operating as a fully interdisciplinary studio, the project mirrors real-world professional practice. Second-year Architecture students lead conceptual and spatial design development, Civil Engineering students focus on structural systems and technical feasibility, while CMQS students oversee planning, costing and buildability. Through coordinated meetings and shared critiques, students collaborate as an integrated team, strengthening communication, critical thinking and collective problem-solving early in their academic careers.

Architecture lecturer Mr Wendle Naidoo said he feels "extremely encouraged and inspired" by the initiative. "Students have shown enthusiasm and a strong sense of responsibility, knowing their work contributes to a real community need," he said, adding that working with a live client and real site conditions has strengthened their collaboration, critical thinking and understanding of professional practice.

Architecture lecturer Temitope Olaniran highlighted the broader institutional value of the project. "I am delighted to be part of

the PBL/DT initiative supported by the Centre for Teaching and Learning at the Durban University of Technology. The experience strengthened students' understanding of context-responsive design in a real community environment and aligns with DUT's ENVISION2030 priorities of improving lives and livelihoods, fostering creativity and innovation, and building meaningful partnerships that contribute to sustainable community development."

The initiative extends an earlier Project-Based Learning and Design Thinking programme, moving students beyond classroom theory into meaningful community engagement. They participate in all stages of the construction process, from site analysis and concept development to technical documentation and cost planning, gaining practical experience that bridges academic knowledge with industry expectations.

Key milestones include the completion of Phase One conceptual and schematic designs, detailed architectural drawings, 3D digital and physical models, preliminary structural input, and a draft Bill of Quantities. Site visits and stakeholder presentations have provided the school with tangible proposals to support future development and funding opportunities.

More than a design exercise, the Inanda Seminary Project demonstrates how interdisciplinary collaboration can shape socially responsive built environments while preparing ethically grounded, work-ready graduates. A new community-based project is set to follow in 2026.





Pictured: Stakeholders who were part of the market clean-up.

Strengthening Partnerships for Sustainable Development

COMMUNITY PARTNERS REVITALISE WARWICK MARKET THROUGH CLEAN-UP CAMPAIGN

By: Phumeza Msongelwa

The Warwick Junction informal trading market in Durban was recently a hive of activity as Inhlalo Yabesifazane, in collaboration with the Durban University of Technology Green Campus Initiative and Community Engagement Office, eThekweni Municipality and the Wear Your Brand Foundation, hosted a successful English Market Clean-Up and Informal Trading Revitalisation Campaign.

The initiative focused on promoting clean, safe and hygienic trading spaces for street vendors operating within Warwick Junction. By encouraging improved hygiene standards, the campaign aimed to create a healthier environment for both traders and consumers who rely on the bustling market for their daily goods. Several non-profit organisations and multiple departments within eThekweni Municipality also supported the clean-up, demonstrating a strong spirit of collaboration among civic bodies, higher education institutions and community stakeholders.

Delivering the opening remarks, Ms Nosisa Mbobo, Area Manager of the Business Support Unit at eThekweni Municipality,

expressed her appreciation to all partners and volunteers who participated in the initiative. She highlighted the importance of maintaining a clean working environment, particularly in spaces where food is handled and sold to the public.

“We are grateful to everyone who came out to support this initiative. A clean trading environment is essential, especially when working with consumers. We also acknowledge the ongoing support from DUT. The university has assisted Inhlalo Yabesifazane at the Bovine Head Meat Market through financial literacy training programmes. We value that collaboration,” she said.



Among the volunteers was Innocentia Mahlangu, a third-year Internal Auditing student at DUT and an executive member of the Green Campus Initiative, an organisation dedicated to promoting environmental sustainability both on and off campus. Mahlangu noted that the initiative reflects the organisation's commitment to community engagement and environmental responsibility.

"As GCI, we believe community engagement brings meaningful change and improves the environment," Mahlangu said. "Being present today was not only about representing DUT but also about contributing to positive change for the traders at the market, because at the end of the day, we buy food from them," she added.

Participants worked with dedication and enthusiasm, collecting waste and restoring cleanliness to the market area. The visible transformation of the trading space reflected the collective efforts of students, municipal officials, non-profit organisations and community members.

Ms Xolisile Nzuza, co-founder of Inhlalo Yabesifazane, expressed her heartfelt gratitude to all stakeholders who contributed to the campaign's success. She emphasised that partnerships such as these play a vital role in empowering informal traders and strengthening local economic spaces.

The campaign not only reinforced the importance of hygiene and environmental sustainability but also highlighted the power of collaboration in driving community development and revitalising informal trading hubs in Durban.

“

We are grateful to everyone who came out to support this initiative. A clean trading environment is essential, especially when working with consumers.

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Pictured: Mr Michael Zulu from the Student Recruitment Unit with learners at the Nyala Awards ceremony.

DUT CELEBRATES MCHITHEKI HIGH SCHOOL'S OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS AT THE NYALA AWARDS IN NONGOMA

By: Sinamile Sithole

The Durban University of Technology proudly participated in the Nyala Awards Ceremony recently held at Mchitheki High School in Nongoma, celebrating outstanding academic achievement and the school's exceptional 100 percent matric pass rate.

The prestigious event honoured learners from Grade 8 to Grade 12, recognising the Top 10 achievers in each grade and applauding the Top 10 Matric Class of 2025 learners who passed with distinctions and are now pursuing higher education. The atmosphere was filled with pride, celebration and hope for an even brighter future.

Mr Samkelo Nkosi, the event organiser and Nyala Regional Community Development Specialist for KwaZulu-Natal, highlighted the organisation's strong commitment to

empowering rural schools and giving back to the communities they serve. He said they came to the school because they care about the future and success of learners and believe that ensuring a brighter future for them can change the world.

Nkosi noted that this was not their first visit to Mchitheki High School. In September last year, during Heritage month, they hosted a cultural competition encouraging learners to showcase their heritage, with prizes awarded to the winners. Towards the end of the year, during study camps, they also provided support by donating essential items such as instant porridge and past examination papers to help learners prepare for their final examinations.

He further emphasised that the awards ceremony was aimed to boost learners' confidence, academic achievement and overall wellbeing. In addition to their academic recognition, a special category acknowledged learners who demonstrated

resilience, strength and confidence, regardless of their marks or background.

The school principal, Mr Xolani Mthethwa, expressed his sincere gratitude to Nyala and DUT for investing time and their resources in their learners. He said exposure to institutions like DUT motivates learners to dream bigger and work harder and that the programme had made a lasting impact on them.

The keynote address was delivered by DUT alumna Dr Thabile Mwandla, whose journey from humble beginnings to becoming part of the team, contributed to the breakthrough of the HIV prevention injection, inspiring many. She emphasised the importance of education and perseverance, encouraging learners never to give up on their dreams and reminding them that education can change their lives.

She urged learners to take full advantage of opportunities when institutions such as DUT visited their schools and to listen carefully to guidance provided about career choices and academic programmes.

Dr Mwandla also shared how a visit from DUT's Student Recruitment team during her own high school years helped to shape her future. After learning more about Clinical Technology, she worked hard to achieve strong results and was later enrolled at DUT, a decision that ultimately shaped her successful career.

Mr Michael Zulu from the Student Recruitment Unit shared

valuable information about the programmes offered at the university, the specific entry requirements for different faculties and the importance of making informed career choices. He encouraged learners to take their studies seriously, particularly highlighting the importance of strong academic performance in their Grade 11 results and their June results in Grade 12, as these marks are often used by universities when considering applications.

He explained that the Grade 11 results and June Grade 12 results determine whether learners meet the minimum requirements for their chosen courses and whether they can secure a space at the university. He encouraged them to start preparing early, remain focused and be consistent in their work. One of the Grade 12 learners who achieved position one shared how deeply she was inspired by the programme. She said Dr Mwandla's story gave her hope and motivated her to believe that she could also succeed. She added that having DUT representatives at the school helped her gain a clearer understanding of what she needs to study at university and the requirements she must meet.

In closing, the school principal expressed his heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed to the success of the event, including the School Governing Body, teachers, Nyala members, DUT representatives, parents and learners. He highlighted the importance of education and urged the learners to apply their insights gained to their studies and their future.



**CULTIVATING
STUDENT
LEADERSHIP
& ACTIVE
CITIZENSHIP**

SUPREME CARE INITIATIVE: EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES THROUGH PURPOSE AND SERVICE

By: Mthetheleli Meyiwa

“Aspire to inspire before you expire” is more than a quote for Nokwanda Jannet Sibiya, it is a principle that shapes her life’s work. Raised in Lamontville, Sibiya is currently pursuing a Postgraduate Diploma in Financial Accounting at the Durban University of Technology (DUT). Her upbringing exposed her to persistent social and educational challenges, experiences that would later inspire her commitment to community upliftment.

Simultaneously with her academic journey she is actively involved in student leadership and currently forms part of the DUT ACFE Student Chapter, ABASA Student Chapter, Accounting club leadership, The Men Carve, and VarsityGenie where she contributes to student development, skills development, volunteering, and institutional engagement.

In 2025, during a period of self-reflection, Sibiya founded the Supreme Care Initiative, an organisation dedicated to empowering communities through education, mental health awareness, and youth development. “I felt a strong calling to serve others and identified a need within communities for career guidance, support, and empowerment,” she explained. Witnessing inequality first-hand motivated her to turn her personal challenges into a platform for positive change.

The Supreme Care Initiative focuses on career guidance for Grade 11 and 12 learners, educational support, accounting tutoring, skills development, and mental health awareness. The organisation also runs sanitary pad donation programmes and community support initiatives aimed at restoring dignity and ensuring equal access to basic resources. A core objective of the initiative is to equip young people with essential skills for university readiness and future workplace competitiveness.

Despite operating on a limited scale due to academic commitments, the initiative continues to grow through community engagement, partnerships, and volunteer-driven programmes. Its impact is measured through learner participation, community feedback, improved confidence, and informed career decision-making among beneficiaries. The long-term vision is to expand the Supreme Care Initiative to multiple

communities and establish sustainable programmes that address both educational and social needs.

Guided by the belief to “follow your calling, not the crowd,” Sibiya continues to lead the Supreme Care Initiative with purpose, resilience, and a deep commitment to service. Through this work, she aims to inspire hope, create opportunities, and empower the next generation, living out her belief that one should always aspire to inspire before they expire.



Pictured: Nokwanda Jannet Sibiya





Pictured: (Picture Supplied) Members of the Maswamahle Youth Development NPC at the Bursary Applications and CV Writing workshop.

EMPOWERING STUDENTS THROUGH BURSARY AND CV WRITING WORKSHOP

By: Phumeza Msongelwa

Maswamahle Youth Development NPC hosted a workshop titled Bursary Applications and CV Writing at Classy Residence in February 2026. The event aimed to equip university students with essential knowledge and practical skills related to bursary applications, CV writing, and employment opportunities.

Maswamahle Youth Development NPC is a non-profit organisation whose members are students from the Faculty of Management Sciences at the Durban University of Technology (DUT). The organisation focuses on empowering young people through education, career development, and community-based initiatives

The workshop targeted students preparing to enter the job

market, as well as those seeking financial assistance to further their studies. It created a valuable platform for engagement between students and professionals experienced in career development and employability.

The highlight of the event was a presentation by guest speaker Dr. Tessa Reddy from the Durban University of Technology (DUT) Department of Marketing and Retail Management. Dr. Reddy focused on CV writing, job applications, and the importance of creating a professional LinkedIn profile.

Addressing the students, Dr. Reddy emphasised the importance of early preparation. "Preparation for the world of work should not begin in your final year. It should start the moment you enter university," she said. "Your CV is your personal marketing document. It must clearly communicate who you are, what you can do, and the value you bring to an organisation."

She encouraged students to tailor their applications to specific opportunities. “Do not send the same CV everywhere. Study the job description carefully and align your skills and experiences with what the employer is looking for,” she advised. Highlighting the importance of digital presence, she added, “A professional LinkedIn profile is no longer optional. It allows you to build networks, showcase your achievements, and increase your visibility to potential employers.”

Dr. Reddy reiterated her passion for youth development and graduate employability. “Universities are not only about academic knowledge. They are about preparing students for life beyond the classroom,” she said. “Confidence, communication skills, and professional presentation are just as important as your qualification.”

Members of Maswamahle Youth Development NPC, Yonelisa Sithunzi and Sbahle Mhlongo, also delivered presentations focusing on bursary opportunities and the importance of applying on time for both bursaries and university admissions. The workshop was attended by an engaged and enthusiastic group of students, including second-, third-, and fourth-year students, as well as Residence Advisors (RAs) from residences 546 and 556. All reserved seats were occupied, demonstrating strong interest in the topic.

Students actively participated by asking questions and engaging with the presenters. Feedback from attendees was largely positive.

Sinethemba Mkhwanazi, a student from the Faculty of Management Sciences, described the workshop as insightful. “The CV writing section was very clear and practical. The slides made it easy to understand how to structure my CV properly,” she said. She noted that the bursary section could benefit from more structured presentation materials but added that the overall session was helpful.

Another attendee, Nomthandazo Ndlanzi, also from the Faculty of Management Sciences, said the session was informative and beneficial. “The job application tips were very useful because we can apply them immediately when looking for internships or graduate programmes,” she said. She suggested that clearer presentation materials for the bursary section could improve future workshops.

The organisers described the event as a success, highlighting the strong engagement from students and the collaborative effort of the team. They also extended gratitude to the Department of Marketing and Retail Management at DUT, the DUT Community Engagement Office, and the students and Residence Assistants who attended.

Overall, the workshop reinforced the importance of early career preparation and access to funding opportunities, empowering students with practical tools to navigate both their academic and professional journeys.



LOOKING AHEAD

As reflected throughout this Social Impact edition, DUT continues to play a pivotal role in driving meaningful change within communities. Through education, innovation, and active engagement, the university remains committed to addressing societal challenges and contributing to sustainable development.

The initiatives featured in this newsletter demonstrate that impactful change is not achieved in isolation, but through collaboration, shared knowledge, and a collective vision for progress. Whether through strengthening science education, advancing digital inclusion, supporting career development, or empowering communities through research and outreach, DUT continues to make a tangible difference in people's lives.

Importantly, these efforts reflect a long-term commitment

to building resilient communities and creating pathways for opportunity. By investing in young people, supporting educators, and partnering with key stakeholders, DUT is helping to shape a future that is more inclusive, equitable, and responsive to the needs of society.

As the university moves forward, it remains focused on deepening its social impact, strengthening partnerships, and expanding initiatives that improve lives and livelihoods. The continued involvement of students, staff, and community partners ensures that this work remains dynamic, relevant, and transformative.

Together, we are not only engaging with communities, we are co-creating solutions, inspiring change, and building a better future for all.



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SHARE YOUR ENGAGEMENT STORY

DUT Engaged invites staff and students to share stories of Community Engagement initiatives, partnerships and social impact for consideration in upcoming editions.

Submit articles to: phumzilex@dut.ac.za

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