

GPR class sailing smoothly

Transnet National Port Authority (TNPA)'s General Purpose Rating Class of 2015 has just completed a four week bridging course in Mathematics at Transnet's Maritime School of Excellence (MSOE), before starting their theoretical training.



The class of 28 students is the first intake to be selected from TNPA's adopted schools in Gauteng, East London, Richards Bay and South Durban Basin, where they attended Saturday classes in Science, English and Mathematics from Grade 10 to Grade 12. This is part of ongoing initiatives that fall under Transnet's market demand strategy with the aim of developing core skills that will drive performance and ensure that the state owned enterprise has adequate and skilled personnel in the future.

TNPA's corporate social investment programme includes various initiatives designed to build TNPA's own capabilities within its ports by developing mission critical skills within its communities, explained Vishnu Govender, TNPA's marine training and development manager, who has been raising awareness of these initiatives amongst communities. "Preparing youth for maritime careers is one example of how we can meet the needs of the ports while uplifting surrounding communities. The students, who are all from disadvantaged backgrounds, are being prepared for a brighter economic future that will have a positive impact on their families and communities. We are proud of our bursary students doing the General Purpose Rating Course, who are a vital part of our asset base," he said.



Course curriculum

Next year the students will begin their theory courses at the MSOE including: ordinary seafarer engine and deck modules, steering and look-out, followed by their able seafarer engine and deck modules. They will then complete numerous ancillary courses at Unicorn Shipping including: pre-sea familiarisation, elementary first aid at sea, fire prevention and fire-fighting at sea, personal safety and social responsibilities and personal survival techniques, explained marine training manager at the MSOE, Ben Smith.

After this they will go to sea and put their theory to the test. They will first complete two months learning the practical side of being on deck and in the engine room in the ordinary seafarer roles, followed by six months learning the able seafarer engine and deck roles, after which they will select either role. Thereafter they will qualify with a General Purpose Rating. They will graduate with Certificates of Competence in Able Seafarer Engine, Able Seafarer Deck and General Purpose Rating, which makes them highly employable.

Students shared their joy at being selected for this programme: "This is a great opportunity and privilege that will open many channels and enable me - an orphan from Johannesburg - to focus on my studies and become financially independent." said Nomcebo Nkwanyana. Aphiwe Luthuli from Durban commented "I am the last born. My mother is a 58 year old hawker and my father is 63. I studied hard to get here because I want to be an independent woman. I am grateful to TNPA who have provided everything - the only thing we have to do is learn."