

# Arc Skills students form company, win home-building contract

Thirteen formerly unemployed students of Arc Skills have formed their own company, Simunye Trading Construction, and have won their first house-building contract. The contract, with Mokgolokwane Civils (M Civils), will see Simunye build 20 low cost houses - valued at R1,960,000. As part of the process, Simunye is hiring around 100 young people as labourers, helping to address the chronic problem in South Africa whereby many young people cannot get jobs because they don't have experience and they cannot get experience because they don't have jobs.



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Two years ago, in May 2017, Arc Skills was awarded a contract to train 60 unemployed young people across Gauteng, South Africa. The Community House Building leadership training programme was conducted in partnership with the Motheo Construction Group. It tasked Arc Skills to select the most promising students from three underprivileged local communities – Westbury, Palm Ridge and Fraser House – where housing is a serious challenge.

Over 12 months the students learned key vocational skills including bricklaying, plastering, painting, glazing and carpentry skills. Their training consisted of detailed theory instruction, simulations of practical construction work and finally workplace experience on live construction sites. It was the first time Arc Skills had ever delivered TVET on Wheels in South Africa – a unique programme to rapidly skill up unemployed youth. The programme sees Arc Skills come to a location where there are employment opportunities and set up a temporary training facility where students can gain first-hand knowledge in a practical working environment.

Encouraged by their facilitators to consider using their newly acquired skills to start their own businesses and support themselves, 13 of the Palm Ridge group chose to band together to form the building company Simunye Trading Construction. Simunye, which means 'We are One' in isiZulu, symbolises the togetherness, unity, and passion that the 13 partners have and the vision and goals that they share.

## Further support

Seeing the commitment and passion evident in the group, Arc Skills decided to help them further on their new path, tasking its divisional manager Andrew Zondi to provide additional guidance, coaching and support. He has worked with the team to

provide significant mentorship in their entrepreneurial journey. Motheo, their original sponsor, is also offering to do business with them, finalising an offer for Simunye Trading Construction to build low cost houses on their behalf, while also receiving further technical mentoring and support.

Arc Skills South Africa CEO Wikus van Vuuren said: “It’s incredible to think that at the start of their journey with Arc Skills, these 13 young people, who are all under the age of 35, had no previous experience in construction. Their success is testament to how providing young people in South Africa with relevant skills can positively impact some of the country’s social challenges, in particular youth unemployment and access to affordable housing.

“Simunye Trading Construction is already making a meaningful impact in its respective communities and will be instrumental in creating around 100 job opportunities for other young people.

“Motheo Construction Group is also to be congratulated for having the vision to see the potential in South Africa’s young people and investing in their development for a brighter future. At Arc Skills we are actively seeking additional investors from home and abroad to support other similar educational and vocational projects.”

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