

Northlink College receives ICT equipment from the UNDP with support from the Government of Japan

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Northlink College forged a partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), under the banner: Automotive Training and Re-Skilling in the Post-Covid-19 Economic Recovery for Vulnerable Youth and Women in South Africa. The focus of the UNDP is mainly targeted at the youth and women. The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated challenges around youth unemployment, interrupting learning and depriving students of opportunities for growth and prospects for employment, said Ms Phumla Hlati (UNDP's Inclusive Growth Programme Manager). The partnership between the UNDP and the Northlink college is designed to mitigate against empowerment hindrances and build capacity for future growth.



Seen in the picture above, is the college management team led by the College CEO Mr Xolelo Brian Phike, Deputy Principal Ms Sandra Raubenheimer, Wingfield Campus Manager Mark Cornillse, Bellville Campus Manager (Acting) Mr Mbulelo Pepese, Assistant Director: IT (Acting) Mr Clinton Robyn, and Manager CoS Mr Henri Mafoumba. UNDP delegation: Ms Phumla Hlati, Mr John Cardozo, Mr Sangsun Kwon, and Ms Izumi Ogawa.

UNDP, DHET and Government of Japan collaboration

In the past week, the UNDP handed over Information Communication and Technology (ICT) facilities (two laboratories) which included devices such as laptops and smartboards intended for support provisioning to Northlink college students. The main focus of these donated resources was on the automotive studies, which are offered at Bellville and Wingfield campuses. The reason for the focus on the automotive sector is because this segment is regarded as a high-priority sector that employs workers in numbers, across various skills levels, said Ms Hlati. Such job opportunities will assist towards the recovery of the South African economy in a long term, and also have an immediate impact in providing an impetus to reignite the economy from the devastation of Covid-19.

The UNDP aid through partnering with other institutions, in providing support to youth and women, equipping them with relevant digital skills in a post-Covid-19 economy. Ms Hlati cited the slogan "leave no one behind" asserting that it is not ideal to discuss youth development without the participation of the youth, hence she was looking forward to meeting the students.

Northlink College's chief executive officer, Mr Phike, leads the UNDP and Government of Japan delegation in campus visits

Upon the conclusion of the engagement with the college management team at the central office, which included the college's chief executive officer, Mr Xolelo Brian Phike, the UNDP and the government of Japan delegation led by Ms Hlati. The entourage made their way to the campuses for the interactive sessions.

The engagement with the students was characterised by motivation to the youth to sign-up on the SAYouth platform (<https://sayouth.mobi/Home/Index/EN>), which helps the youth to find jobs and opportunities to grow their skills (the website/mobi platform is zero-rated). This platform was launched under the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI).



The handover of the facilities and devices was marked by cutting of the red ribbon by the college's CEO, Mr Phike, together with Ms Hlati at both Bellville and Wingfield campuses. The delivery of the information communication and technology (ICT) devices was made possible by the partnership between the UNDP, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) funded by the Government of Japan.

In accepting the donation of ICT devices, Mr Phike said the college is deeply grateful to the UNDP and the Government of Japan for the donation and support, helping the college improve its ICT resources and consequently improve quality of learning and training.

Northlink College is dedicated to improving the lives of youth through teaching and learning, the equipment you have provided is an aid towards achieving the college's objectives, said Mr Phike. This donation by the Government of Japan in collaboration with the UNDP and (PYEI), is a much-needed generosity, more so in the post-Covid-19 economic recovery period.

As Covid-19 started to spread across the country, the college staff had to shift to virtual learning, and many students had limited exposure to the technology required to continue virtual learning. Fortunately, the UNDP has recognised the need and was quick to respond.

The donation of the 60 laptops, two interactive smartboards and two projectors delivered to the Bellville and Wingfield campuses was a much-needed injection into our system. These devices will assist in augmenting the blended learning process, which has become a catalyst for learning and training, Mr Phike said. He added, that the donation will help students to complete their automotive projects with much more efficiency and the college will ensure that these devices are put into good use and not gather rust somewhere in storage.

Internships

Mr Phike asserted that although some of the opportunities provided to students by the UNDP and its partners are only internships, they are however in some cases viewed by the student as a valuable support system for them and their families. The CEO extended the invite to businesses and other institutions to be involved in the development of the students, in order to build a stable economy and a poverty-free South Africa. He said this could be done by working together with the college's Work Integrated Learning (WIL) division, which assists students with work exposure.

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