

# Team work makes the dream work for engineers Louise Buys and Nikita Budree

In celebrating International Women in Engineering Day (INWED), both Louise Buys, Aecom's executive, transport lead, and Nikita Budree, senior structural engineer, believe that teamwork is essential in delivering great design solutions that improve the day-to-day lives of communities.



Louise Buys and Nikita Budree

## Louise Buys

"I am a firm believer that diverse teams are successful teams. Focusing on I can say that I work with great, bright and professional women on a daily basis. The success and quality of some of our projects are directly linked to their ability to focus on a lot of tasks all at once. I don't know how, when and where, but they get it done," says Buys.

Buys says being part of a great team that makes her job easy, exciting and fun. "I am very passionate about project management, and therefore actively managing various roads and civil infrastructure projects."

Her duties include managing project teams, client liaison, stakeholder liaison and schedule, cost, quality, risk and scope management. She is an active member of the transportation business development team, assisting with various proposals and tenders.

Buys starts her working day touching base with clients “to find out how they are doing and to see how we can assist in making their lives easier. Then I have quick check-ins with various team members, before the day gets really busy”.

Her guiding maxim is ‘your attitude determines your altitude’.

“Guide your team by leading with a positive attitude or, if part of a team, be that team member who inspires everyone around you to be the best they can be. My message to any young woman contemplating engineering as a career is that there are a lot of things that can distract you from your end goal, but stay focused. Women are sometimes put in a very specific box, but do not allow anyone else to shape your future except you.”

## **Nikita Budree**

Budree is based in Durban. Her main role as a design engineer is to assist the lead manager to plan the weekly workload for a team of eight engineers. This not only encompasses traditional engineering, but project management as well. “I am fascinated by design management, as it entails coordinating all of the different engineering disciplines involved on a typical project, including architecture and quantity surveying.”

Nikita achieved her professional registration with the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) in 2015. “Being a well-rounded engineer is a major achievement, because sometimes as an engineer you can get stuck in a rut of just doing engineering or calculation type work. Fortunately, due to my experience and the projects I have been exposed to, I have an engrained multidisciplinary approach to my work.

When Nikita joined the company, there were already many other female engineers and technicians. “I did not really feel out of place. However, when visiting a site, which is invariably male-dominated, you do feel a little bit insecure and unsure of yourself. We just need to stay strong in order to gain the respect of everyone. Keep your head high and treat everybody equally, and then they will learn over time that you have as much right to belong as anyone else,” Budree says.

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