

Clockwork: Empowering young women with free higher education

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The Clockwork Empowerment Fund celebrates another year of empowering young Black females, through their in-house non-profit division, which strives to elevate the lives of women through higher learning.



The Clockwork Empowerment Fund annually channels a portion of company profits to pay for the bursaries of three to five young female students who would not normally be able to afford higher education. With the full bursary donations for degrees and diplomas in the marketing and advertising sector, these students can complete courses at the educational establishments of their choosing.

The students' applications are self-motivated, steered only by their previous academic history and personal drive to obtain higher education. The applications are then vetted and adjudicated by the non-profit board for final decision.

Clockwork is very passionate about seeing these students complete their studies, regardless of whether they choose to be incorporated into the company infrastructure upon graduation or not. Co-CEO and founder of Clockwork, Nic Simmonds, has been a driving force behind the empowerment fund since its inception over five years ago. "As business owners and leaders in South Africa, I think it's important to take cognisance of our country's unique and challenging history and current situation. It is imperative that private enterprise plays an authentic and meaningful role in helping to transform our society and economy to become more inclusive and diverse. Our empowerment fund was created to do just that," he stated.

The enrolled students for 2022 are:

- Olwethu Nkosi: BCom in marketing at Mancosa;
- Tlou Nkoko: Diploma in marketing at Cape Peninsula University of Technology, and
- Sinothile Sikhakhane: National diploma in public relations at Damelin College.

Clockwork not only kick-starts their studies financially, but strives to keep students on track throughout the duration of their academic careers, making them priority applicants year-on-year until such time as they graduate. The graduates are then considered for either paid internships or first-job positions within the company. "In conjunction with providing the much-needed financial support these young women need to further their studies in marketing, we also aim to offer them roles inside the agency after graduation, so that they can transfer smoothly from academia to the real world of working. We want to walk as much of the journey alongside them as possible and do our best to facilitate meaningful career opportunities and growth," states Simmonds.

Sinothile Sikhakhane, one of the Clockwork Empowerment Fund's students, is hard at work for her national diploma in public relations. She has enjoyed life-changing success with the empowerment fund. "There are few things that can liberate a girl as much as education. The empowerment fund has helped me study easy knowing that fees are paid, and all I need to do is give it my all with no pressure to find a job and no hustling to make ends meet. It's given birth to many opportunities that women before my time only hoped for."

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