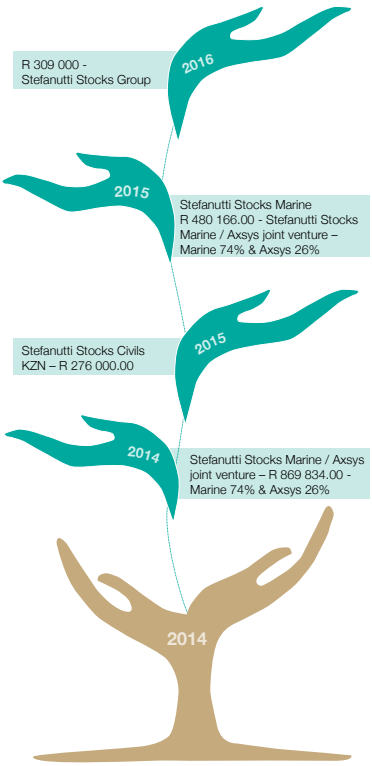
Jirah Academy's N3 graduates *pave way for second intake*

Jirah Academy's incredible results, in terms of the personal growth and academic achievements on the part of its 50 learners, has again and again compelled the Stefanutti Stocks group to continue its relationship with the academy. In addition to financial support the group continually promotes the initiative and assists it in raising funds so that it can continue to keep its doors open. It is also one of a number of corporates within the region that are exploring offering Jirah Academy graduates apprenticeship opportunities.

The original bridging programme was established in 2014, with the aim of rebuilding the foundations in engineering mathematics and engineering science of young school leavers from the Durban area. Following the overwhelming success of this programme, the academy went on to pilot N1 and N2 Engineering Studies in early 2015, with the objective of completing N3 Engineering Studies by November 2015. Its first mainstream engineering studies learners graduated at the end of November 2015, many of whom achieved their N3 Engineering Studies. The next step was to find apprenticeships and practical placements for the successful candidates, unfortunately, due to economic constraints, there are still some individuals who have not yet been placed.

The Academy however continues with its good work, and 2016 saw its second intake, with 54 young adults ranging from (18-30) enrolling to study for their N1. "We have learned so much, since we first began," explains Jirah Academy chairman Ian Jones, "and our approach today is certainly bearing better fruit, especially with regard to academic achievement and discipline."

Practical training within a workshop environment is key to artisan development, and Jones explains that a build project for workshops has been initiated, which when realised, will allow the academy to operate as an official trade school. Currently the academy outsources trade orientation that includes basic practicals to KZN-based SETA training centres and companies.



The municipality and public works have been approached for land and a number of companies are being engaged with, in the hope of securing funding for the build. "Having a dedicated workshop facility is going to add tremendous value to the integrated learning process especially for our learners with learning disabilities," says Jones. The long-term vision for this build project includes a boarding home service that can be used by companies across South Africa as part of their community skills development programmes. "The idea is that businesses select achievers from secondary schools in communities surrounding their plants, and offer them the opportunity to study through Jirah, with accommodation provided."

The academy has recruited a mathematics and science teacher, Colonel Deidrick Kruger. Colonel Kruger is a retired member of the military and still serves on the KZN Reserve, where his portfolio includes overseeing development, with regard to further studies and promotions. "I believe that he will add great value to the academy, and that our students will particularly benefit from his military background - which should really suit our "Love Tough" approach," says Jones.

In a bid to incorporate global learning, the Jirah Academy has reached an agreement with a USA-based mentoring organisation, "Mentoring Men" and plans on expanding its international collaborations to include other trade schools and universities.

Want to know more?
http://www.jirahprojects.org



Caption:



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Educational Partnerships create opportunities

After completing the Bridging Programme followed by N1 to N3 at the Jirah Academy, 20-year-old Rachael Johnson enrolled at PAX College, a Durban-based HET college that shares many of the Jirah Academy philosophies.

"My year at Jirah made me believe that there is a possibility of achieving my dream of becoming a civil engineer," says Johnson. "It also showed me that people care about our community, and how willing the lecturers are to assist the students to understand, and to improve their grades." Johnson aims to complete her N6 in 2017, and then has her sights set on studying Civil Engineering at the Durban University of Technology (DUT).

The Jirah Academy and PAX College work in partnership with the DUT in providing effective community development programmes, and enabling access to higher education to aspiring individuals from these communities. By completing her N4 to N6 at PAX Johnson has the option to articulate to the first year at the DUT, with two or three credits already.

"Rachael is very passionate about Civil Engineering and has been consistent in her subject choices at secondary school, at Jirah Academy and now at PAX College," says Jones, who is currently assisting Johnson financially. "She has the potential to do really well, and I'm very confident that she will excel in the conducive learning environment at PAX College."



Rachael Johnson, middle, at the college with Pax College chief executive officer Brenda Govender to the left, and Jirah Projects chairman, Ian Jones, to the right.