



Apiwe Hotele attended the Sindisa Dunga Foundation Career Exhibition in Butterworth, where she gave a talk about astronomy, the SKA and career opportunities at the SKA SA.



A woman candidate undergoing Cat machine operator training at the Barloworld Equipment Operator Academy in Isando

# GET WITH THE PROGRAMME

Graduate development initiatives are fast-tracking the development of women graduates, providing them with experience and exposure, writes **Tamara Oberholster**

**A** number of organisations in the country are now offering extensive graduate development programmes that focus on uplifting women.

## SKA SOUTH AFRICA

The Square Kilometre Array (SKA) project is an international effort to build the world's largest radio telescope. Rob Adam, director-designate at SKA SA, notes that the organisation takes a comprehensive approach to human capital development. "It's not just about higher-level post-graduate development," he says. "We offer internships, artisan training and a young professional development programme. We want to ensure there are no gaps, and we believe women belong in each of these areas."

Since 2005, the SKA SA Human Capital Development Programme (HCDDP) has awarded 717 grants, 199 of these to women. Tana Joseph, for example, was awarded an SKA bursary in 2007 to fund her MSc degree. "As an SKA bursary-holder, I attended and gave presentations at the annual SKA Bursar Conference. I was able to present my work to experts from around the world at an early stage in my research career. This experience has been invaluable," she says. "On completion of my PhD, I was awarded an SKA postdoctoral fellowship. This fellowship has allowed me to join the University of Cape Town (UCT) X-ray binaries group and carry out my black hole X-ray binary research."

Joseph says programmes such as this have a role to play in working towards gender parity. "Making SKA funding available to women in particular will allow a previously marginalised group to participate more fully in sectors that are traditionally male-dominated, like science and engineering. This will allow the SKA to build the best possible workforce and ultimately help the SKA project to be a driver for the growth of science, engineering, innovation, technology and business in the country."



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DR TANA JOSEPH, SKA BURSARY-HOLDER

Aphiwe Hotele is a beneficiary of SKA SA's bursary programme and part of its Young Professionals Development Programme (YPDP). After completing her Honours in computer science and biochemistry at the University of Fort Hare, Hotele was invited to attend an SKA SA open day and then to join the YPDP.

"It's a great opportunity," she enthuses. "SKA SA is funding my Masters in electrical engineering at UCT, and I'm working on the data processing team at SKA SA on a project on embedded systems and immersion cooling. I was always scared of the workplace, especially as a young black woman in the field of engineering. That all changed when I joined SKA SA through the YPDP. I was surrounded by intellectuals who welcomed my ideas and gave me a chance to grow academically. I've had the opportunity to acquire new skills and prove myself, and to meet other women in science, which has been very motivating. It is an opportunity my generation's parents would never have had, especially as a woman."

## BARLOWORLD EQUIPMENT

The Barloworld Equipment graduate development programme aims to provide a pipeline of talent for fast-tracking into leadership roles over a five-year period. Twelve to 15 graduates are selected annually for a 24-month structured work-integrated learning journey, including personal development, formal learning, on-the-job coaching feedback, mentoring by an engineer, and a panel review at the end of the period. All engineering

candidates are also registered as candidate engineers with the Engineering Council of SA.

Candidates must meet minimum academic requirements (65% average pass mark) and have completed their studies in 2015 in the field of engineering, industrial psychology, marketing/communications or IT

The programme aims to recruit 80% female candidates and 40% disabled candidates. This year it partnered with Women in Engineering (WomEng) to source engineering graduates. Barloworld Equipment interviewed 26 candidates at the WomEng Fellowship Week and 24 of them will undergo the second round of interviews in August-September this year.

## DELOITTE

Adriaan Basson, national manager: Audit Graduate Recruitment at Deloitte, says the chartered accounting (CA) profession has a long track record of graduate development. This is largely due to the fact that the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) requires aspiring CAs to undergo three years of structured training at a registered training office after university.

"At Deloitte, our business model relies heavily on employing graduates to assist us in performing statutory audits. The so-called 'Big 4' audit firms employ around 1 400 graduates each year," he says. This makes the audit firms the largest private-sector graduate employers in the country.

"Deloitte starts signing future talent from as early as Grade 11," says Basson. "We offer vacation programmes in every holiday period: a two-day programme for Grade 11 and 12 learners, an introductory three-day programme for first and second-year university students, a five-day advanced programme for students (second-year and above), and a practical field-work experience where students join a real-life audit for anything from two weeks to a month."

When selecting graduates, Deloitte focuses on leadership skills and culture-fit, as well as academic performance. Furthermore, 56% of Deloitte's current first-year trainees in its Johannesburg office (its largest in South Africa) are female.

Basson says there are about 10% more women enrolled in the SAICA-accredited postgraduate qualification than men. "Their pass rates have shown trends of being higher than those of males in the past. Last year, for example, women exceeded men by 10% in the number of enrolments, but by 13% in the number of passes. We can thus empirically show that females have a slightly higher throughput rate than men, both in headcount and percentage. This is, in my opinion, a reassuring indication that our industry is past the point where we need to actively convince girls to consider becoming CAs – the student-enrolment numbers are already skewed in their favour. As a profession, our focus should now be on creating equal opportunities for women at all levels of management."

## UNILEVER

Patrick Hull, leadership development director: Africa at Unilever, says the multinational consumers goods company has a long history of developing graduates. "We see it as a strategic investment in the future leadership capabilities of our organisation. The Unilever Future Leaders Programme is aligned with global best practice in graduate development, ensuring that Unilever produces graduates of the same calibre and capabilities, irrespective of geography."

Graduates join the business as permanent employees and are put on an accelerated three-year development programme. At the end of the programme, graduates are promoted into management roles, either in their home countries or in other Unilever markets.

"Our graduate programme is a rotation-based programme that ensures that we build sound business knowledge in our graduates and expose them to different areas of our operations," says Hull. "It starts with a comprehensive four-month induction programme. A three-year leadership development and professional skills training roadmap is provided to all graduates, which includes mentoring and coaching by our senior leaders, a short-term international assignment and opportunities for graduates to present their work to our senior leaders."

Unilever seeks graduates who are well-rounded and demonstrate excellent leadership potential. "Typically, our graduates are technically strong in their area(s) of expertise, able to learn quickly and capable of adapting to different situations rapidly," says Hull. "We find that graduates with higher levels of maturity and resilience are able to

adapt better in the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment that we operate in." ■

## ARTISAN TRAINING PROGRAMMES

**1** SKA SA initiated an Artisan Training Programme in 2011, offering skills training opportunities for youth in towns close to the SKA SA site. Those selected attended FET (Further Education and Training) colleges in Kimberley or Bloemfontein, with a total of 40 bursaries offered to date. A further 10 bursaries were made available in 2015. Five of the FET students are now employed by the project full-time, with a plan to employ up to 15 of the students completing FET training by 2017.

**2** Barloworld Equipment invests significantly in earthmoving equipment apprenticeships at its Technical Training Academy in Isando. "This is also where we want to make a difference in terms of gender representation – through women artisan training and qualification," says Barloworld Equipment HR director Francis Graham. "Through ongoing mentorship, some of these artisans could become master artisans within our company. We need a diverse, highly skilled artisan and engineering talent pool to ensure that we remain the No 1 reliable expert in our industry."

## GENERATION Z JOINS THE WORKFORCE

**Gen Z-ers are those born from the mid-1990s. Dion Chang, trend analyst at Flux Trends, notes that they are "today's true digital natives, who have no point of reference of a world without the internet, smartphones and social media".**

He adds that while millennials (otherwise known as Generation Y, born between 1977 and 1994) are generally optimistic, Generation Z is realistic.

Workplace consultant Alexandra Levit paints Gen Z as independent and curious. "They don't wait for their parents to teach them things or tell them how to make decisions," he notes in a New York Times column. "Gen Z is already out in the world, curious and driven, investigating how to obtain relevant professional experience before college. Despite their obvious technology proficiency, Gen Z-ers seem to prefer in-person to online interaction and are being schooled in emotional intelligence from a young age. Thanks

to social media, they are accustomed to engaging with friends all over the world, so they are well prepared for a global business environment."

According to a report by Millennial Branding, a Gen Y research and consulting firm, and Randstad, the third-largest HR services and staffing company in the United States, key differences between Gen Y and Gen Z are:

- Gen Z is more entrepreneurial: 17% of Gen Z versus 11% of Gen Y wants to start a business and hire others.
- Gen Z cares less about money: Only 28% of Gen Z said money would motivate them to work harder and stay with their employer longer, as opposed to 42% of Gen Y.
- Gen Z prefers face-to-face communication: Gen Z grew up with technology, yet 53% prefer in-person communication to tools such as instant messaging and videoconferencing.