



## INTERNET ARTICLE

### Former Graduate Trainee pursues PhD studies

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A former Graduate Trainee at the Department of Water and Sanitation, Nompumelelo Mgabisa, has raised the bar for herself as she is about to complete her PhD in Structural Geology and Virtual Learning with the University of the Western Cape.

The 31-year-old, who is originally from Durban in KwaZulu Natal, expressed immense appreciation for opportunities provided to her by the Department through a bursary programme which she says has enabled her to achieve her long-life goal of eventually attaining a PhD Degree.

“I am a former Graduate Trainee of the Department of Water and Sanitation’s Learning Academy and am truly grateful for the opportunity and experience I have received. The process of being a bursary recipient and a trainee helped in shaping my career in water infrastructure. I have received the best guidance from several mentors who ensured the best training experience I could have ever asked for,” Mgabisa said.

Mgabisa is presently employed as a Professional Engineering Geologist and has been within the Department for seven years. Her day-to-day work entails providing information on rock and soil materials for new and existing dams, canals and bulk pipe systems, amongst other things.

“This means I explore the best alignment of a dam in terms of the underlying rock and its structural geology,” she said.

Mgabisa says if she is not on the field working to ensure effective implementation of projects, she enjoys spending time with her family.

“If I am not spending some quality time with my family, I usually cosy around some corner in my home while I catch up on the news or read a good book – or just laugh at funny memes on social media,” she says with a chuckle.

Sharing her passion about her field of work, Mgabisa said her qualifications have enabled her to fully understand the significance of having dams built to withstand any kind of eventuality

“It is important to understand materials used to build dams in the country in order to ensure that the designs and models are safe. This we do with an interest to have water delivered to all the communities we serve,” she said.

Mgabisa said despite her passion for the sector, some of the challenges she has faced have taught her to pave the way for others still to come after her.





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"I work in a largely male-dominated industry where gender bias exists, and then you find that your ability to do or manage work is predominantly judged based on your gender. This is unfortunate. It is an existing reality which still needs to be changed in the sector," she maintained.

She added by urging that transformation of management be more inclusive and representative.

"To young people who would want to be in the similar line of work, I suggest you be focused and diligent. There is a lot of reading and calculations you are required to do and apply. Therefore, mathematical skills and critical thinking are very important. Another valuable aspect is to be confident in what you do. Trust your instincts and be able to articulate your work through presenting or reporting it," she concluded.

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