

Arup launches R1 million education trust

On Friday 28 January 2011, the Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training Professor Hlengiwe Mkhize officially launched the Arup Education Trust (AET), which announced the names of the twelve 2011 beneficiaries who will be collectively awarded R1 million annual sponsorship and the 30 secondary students who will be aided through a holiday and Saturday school programme from grade 10 to 12. Ten of the 12 beneficiaries are women.

ARUP

AET owns 30% of Arup, a global firm of consulting engineers and designers, with a reputation for delivering innovative and sustainable designs that reinvent the built environment. The trust has partnered with the Tomorrow Trust, which will be the trust's bursary administrators and Ownership Solutions, which will be the trust's administrators, responsible for corporate governance and legal matters.

Women in the built environment

The trust, established as a means to enhance the quality of lives of historically disadvantaged individuals through education, is particularly concerned with the advancement of women. A decision that trustee, Hleziphi Mtshizana, says will jump start the company's goal in playing a role in the development of women in the country and the field of the built environment in particular, as 50% of beneficiaries are obligated to study in that field and at least 50% of the beneficiaries are female.

Mtshizana says that the decision to ensure that at least 50% of candidates are women is based on social science, "Many of these girls are orphans, caring for siblings and relatives and are financially responsible for heading the family. By enhancing their lives, we have a greater impact because we touch more lives."

In her address, Prof Mkhize stated that Arup's support to needy students for tertiary education in the field of built environment, chemical engineering, commercial law and public management is well appreciated. It is in line with the Department's mandate to support the national economic growth path by accelerating the attainment of scarce skills. She noted with appreciation that women are beneficiaries.

"The most impressive feature of the trust is its selection model. A model that is based on the realities of talented students who come from poverty stricken backgrounds, yet, they manage to excel academically. This is a developmental approach underpinned by values of quality, unity, compassion and integrity, embracing a fundamental concept, inherent in our culture, commonly known as Ubuntu. The strategy of the trust will go a long way towards ensuring that we create a critical mass which will help to increase a number of people who can secure decent jobs," added the Deputy Minister.

She also noted approvingly that beneficiaries of the Arup Education Trust are required to remain in the country after graduating, thereby reducing the skills drain. "This principle is a further positive mark on the part of the leadership of the trust, as it clearly speaks to patriotism and being proudly South African."

Board reflects gender priorities

The chairperson of the AET is Sabi Mthwecu of the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa. She is joined on the board by trustees Lungi Sisulu (Arup chairman); Jenny Baster (Arup group legal director); and Hleziphi Mtshizana (Arup project manager). The independent trustees of the AET are Mthwecu as chairperson; Sakhi Dumakude of Usizo Engineering as vice-chairperson and Kenalemang Nkoma of the Allen-Gray Orbis Foundation.

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