

ROLE MODELLING; WHAT A SCIENTIFIC PAGEANT



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It was in just 65 kilometres outside of Polokwane and the weather was behaving better than expected in the dusty village of Sefoloko. Sefoloko Secondary School was feeling just as lively as the weather while the learners together with the facilitators from the Council for Scientific and Industrial (CSIR) and the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA) made their way around the school (both the two parties were organised by Capricorn Educational Resource Centre (NPO), where Ms Valentine Saasa is Chairperson. The following are the passionate researchers who left their work to inspire young kids; Ms. Valentine Saasa: CSIR Biochemistry PhD student, Ms. Nomvuyo Nomadolo; CSIR Researcher, Mr Tlou Phukubje; CSIR Researcher, Mr Washington Makoana; CSIR Mechanical engineering Masters student, Ms. Dineo Bopape; Unisa Chemistry (Nano) Student; Ms Daisy Masemola; Unisa Chemistry (Nano) Student and Mr. Isaac Shivambu; Sefako Makgato Unisa Medical Physics Masters

The educational union had been initiated by the two scientific agencies as part of their outreach programme which has been doing its rounds in the disadvantaged and rural communities and schools around South Africa. The programme is titled: Nanotechnology role modelling. Among its many objectives the programme seeks to empower young people in the above mentioned communities into the scientific industry and to develop their scientific skills and knowledge so that they are better scientist and technological programmers in the near future (is to popularize science, engineering, technology and mathematics (STEM), especially the emerging technology such as Nanotechnology, as attractive, relevant and accessible. South Africa needs these kinds of professionals and the programme is making sure that South Africa is served as per its needs. The programme also focuses on empowering the black child in general. It serves as a reminder that it is not about where you come from but where you are going and what you will do to improve the lives of those left in the dungeons of poverty and other social challenges. The programme is a consciousness alarm as it constantly shows that more can be done when we come together for the betterment of our



own. "You should aim to make your parents proud. The first time my mom and dad boarded a plane; it was because of me. It was a two weeks trip to Spain, all paid by me," said Isaac Shivambu, a guest speaker from SAASTA.

He continued to emphasize the importance of education to the learners who listened attentively to his motivational speech which indeed was motivational. The programme equally makes a point of education. It reminds the young minds that are still caught up in the problems of mathematics, the chemicals of chemistry, the periodic tables of physics and the

soft wares of technology that there is more to life but education is the most of it all. It opens doors that are wide enough for you and your graduation gown and cap to penetrate with ease. Education is generational; if you learn something this day, you will have something to teach your children that day and them likewise. The Nanotechnology role models told the learners about the interesting research they do at their institution which includes the treating the water we drink everyday, diagnosing and treating diseases such as cancer, diabetes.

While villages like Sefoloko are usually looked down upon for being behind in development; they have potential for being looked upon for scientific and technological development. The programme is focused on unleashing this potential and serving it to South Africa and beyond its borders. Role modelling is not done; this is just the beginning of this scientific and technological pageant.

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