

## **Thandulwazi Maths & Science Academy's pilot project in Limpopo brought to fruition**

Eskom has been supporting Thandulwazi since 2012 as part of the company's commitment to improving the quality of mathematics and science education in South African schools, an initiative aimed at helping to provide a strong foundation for South Africa's children as the next generation to be sensitized about the wise use of electricity in the service of a country that needs to be both energy efficient and environmentally friendlier. Eskom reaffirmed this commitment with its sponsorship of the Thandulwazi Maths & Science Academy's pilot project to upskill teachers in Limpopo Province.

A series of workshops in the province in 2014 focused on up-skilling the teaching methods of Grade R to Grade 9 educators working in schools in previously disadvantaged areas - workshops covered maths literacy and numeracy as well as science and technology. Some 299 teachers registered and benefitted from the workshops in Limpopo.

"We are pleased with the results of the pilot project and its positive impact on educators. However, we know that there is still much work to be done in this region and in rural schools across the country. Effectively upskilling educators is the key to ensuring quality education for South Africa's youth, particularly in the areas of mathematics and science, which are essential for preparing young people to become effective contributors to the economy as these subjects provide the foundation for so many jobs," comments Andrew Etzinger, Senior General Manager of Eskom's Integrated Demand Management (IDM) department.

The Thandulwazi Maths & Science Academy was established in 2006 by the St Stithians Foundation in response to the need to improve the quality of education in South Africa, particularly in the areas of mathematics and science.

Thandulwazi has long contended that teachers are the agents of change who can bring about transformation in the education system, and that effective teacher upskilling through training programmes tailor-made to improve the critical base of content knowledge and practical skills in key subjects must become the strategic focus nationally.

Eskom first sponsored the 2012 Thandulwazi-Rokunda Teacher Development Programme and also presented a series of workshops on how to save energy, conduct energy audits in schools, and inculcate an awareness of the need to use energy wisely in learners. Aligned to this, Professor Colleen Vogel, a former Wits geography lecturer and expert on climate change, facilitated workshops on global warming and how to teach climate change to children in an engaging manner. Close to 1 000 teachers and principals from schools across Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Free State and North West Provinces registered for the programmes.

Eskom also sponsored teaching materials and workshops on energy and implementing energy audits in schools in 2013 and joined other sponsors - including the Solon Foundation, Afrisam (Pty) Ltd, AKA

Capital (Pty) Ltd SA and Compensators (Pty) Ltd – to bring Thandulwazi’s Pilot Project in Limpopo to fruition in 2014.

The success of the Thandulwazi Maths & Science Academy rests on effective partnerships forged between the independent and public school sectors, educators, learners, volunteers, individual donors and corporate partners – the academy had a direct and very positive impact on just under 9 000 historically disadvantaged South African students and educators from over 590 schools between 2011 and 2014.