**PRESS RELEASE**

Bakwena supports unemployed youth in Rustenburg to become small business owners

**Zutari, Bakwena collaborate in developing innovative community development programme**

**15 November 2021:** The Bakwena Platinum Corridor Concessionaire (Pty) Ltd. (Bakwena) and leading consulting engineering and infrastructure advisory firm [Zutari](http://www.zutari.com) have successfully collaborated in developing an innovative community development programme called the Bafenyi ka Bakwena Community Champion Project. Bakwena had a vision of co-creating a legacy for the community of Rustenburg, and Zutari has assisted in bringing it to life.

Since Bakwena’s inception in 2001, its goal has been to build strong relationships within all the communities they serve, and Rustenburg is no different. As part of its commitment to support and contribute to the development of communities, Bakwena embarked on the Bafenyi ka Bakwena Community Champion Project, which aims to build on the assets that exists in these communities to mobilise individuals and create local economic growth.

The goal of Bafenyi ka Bakwena is to improve the social and economic landscape of the community and develop entrepreneurs and socio-economic opportunities, leaving the lives of the Rustenburg community completely changed.

In October 2019, with the support of the Rustenburg Local Municipality, 13 unemployed youth from the Rustenburg area were selected to form part of a two-year development journey, and today boast with their own small businesses to sustain their lives and their families.

The Community Champions went through a phased approach of different theoretical and practical skills to equip them with tools to transform their lives. In its first year, the programme focused on Life Skills and teaching the Champions that they have assets and opportunities around them that can be accessed and utilised.

Through a concept called Asset-based Community Development (ABCD), the Community Champions learned to leverage their own personal talents, gifts, knowledge and skills to create external opportunities for themselves that yielded personal benefits. This meant that these unemployed individuals found it within themselves to start small projects during Covid-19 that looked after the livelihoods of their own families and communities.

The second year of the programme focused on Enterprise Development, whereby the Champions learned how to look at the market for business opportunities, how to sell products and services and how to manage their small business income and write a business plan.

The Bafenyi ka Bakwena Community Champion Project resulted in 13 individuals with existing businesses ranging from food stalls to carpentry and vegetable gardens to cleaning, each one making a profit and earning their own income.

“I started my own business and am now able to build a legacy for my son,” says **Mbukeni Joshua Ndlangamandla** (22), a Champion in the Rustenburg area.

“Each of the unemployed individuals have a business that provides them with an income,” says **Amelia Visagie**, Associate and Programme Manager at Zutari. “These young professionals started their two-year journey with very low self-confidence and almost no hope for the future. Once they realised their value and their own personal skills, they took up the courage to start a small business to take care of themselves and their families.”

“It is encouraging to note that through these partnerships, training and support, we have been able to make a difference and help communities. The ABCD methodology has proven itself to be appropriate to enable sustainable socio-economic development, even during a pandemic and a tough economic climate,” says **Solomon Kganyago**, Chief Operating Officer of Bakwena.

In October 2021, the Bafenyi ka Bakwena Community Champions’ personal development journeys were celebrated. SANRAL and Sibanye Stillwater representatives celebrated with Zutari and Bakwena to commend these champions on the success they have achieved over the last two years.

“Now more than ever it is essential for key stakeholders like SANRAL, Sibanye Stillwater, the Rustenburg local municipality and Zutari to come together to create meaningful impact in local communities across South Africa,” says Kganyago. “It is only through key public-private partnerships that we can systematically change communities and bring upliftment to those who need it most.”

***Ends***

**Notes to the Editor**To download hi-res images for this release, please visit <http://media.ngage.co.za> and click the Zutari link to view the company’s press office.

**About Zutari**

As engineering consultants and trusted advisors, Zutari co-creates an engineered impact that enables environments, communities and economies to thrive. Few others can match our local capacity, long-standing presence and understanding of the challenges required to operate successfully across various regions in Africa.

We have created an impact across Africa for the past 89 years (1932 to 2021) and remain committed to this continent, making us the perfect partner to those less familiar with working in Africa. We are experienced in international projects and our Global Design Centres allow us to bring world-class solutions to our clients.

As a private management-owned company, our commitment is true and we have vested interest in our clients’ success. Our strong relationships allow us to connect the right expertise, processes and resources to match client’s needs and bring stakeholders that have shared interests together.

We blend the old and the new. We have moved beyond traditional engineering and work collaboratively to integrate technical and creative thinking. This process of co-creation allows us to unearth new opportunities with our clients and partners.

Zutari’s broad collective of in-house, industry-recognised engineering consultants and trusted advisors provide seamless and integrated delivery. This unique ability to offer scaled engagement allows Zutari to solve complex challenges more efficiently.

Grounded in digital engineering, we continuously deliver better results.

**Zutari Contact**

Rashree Maharaj

PR and Media Advisor

Email: Rashree.Maharaj@zutari.com

Tel: (012) 427 2000

Web: <https://www.zutari.com>

**Media Contact**

Rachel Mekgwe

Account Executive

NGAGE Public Relations

Phone: (011) 867 7763

Fax: 086 512 3352

Cell: 074 212 1422

Email: rachel@ngage.co.za

Web: [www.ngage.co.za](http://www.ngage.co.za/)

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