



Maximising skills development for a sustainable future

FROM TVET STUDENT, TO INTERN, TO EMPLOYEE - PROFILE OF SAKHILE ZINCUME

Name: Sakhile Zincume

Hometown: Eshowe KwaZulu-Natal

Age: 26, born 17 November 1988

Educational Background: Sakhile went to Bhekeshowe High School in Eshowe until Grade 11. After he failed Grade 11 twice, he moved to Majiya High School in Gingindlovu, KwaZulu-Natal to complete Grade 11 and Grade 12.

During Grade 11 & 12, Sakhile worked after school at a funeral service to pay for school for himself and his younger brother who was also in Grade 11 at the time. Sakhile also had to assist his mother financially who was working on a farm to support her 7 children. Sakhile passed Grade 11 and 12 while working at the Funeral home every day from 16:00 to 23:00, and then studying from 24:00 to 2:00 to wake up again at 06:30 to go to school. The situation was very bad but he worked hard as he did not want to fail again. He persevered and passed Matric in 2010. His mother was very glad that he passed and was very proud of him.

The question was what to do next as Sakhile did not see himself going to university or other post school institutions because of the situation at home. Ms Gumede, his isiZulu Teacher at Majiya High School was his mentor at school and she encouraged him to visit Umfolozi College in Richards Bay to find out what was on offer. Sakhile visited the Richtek campus and enquired about courses that were on offer and what the cost would be. He considered going into teaching and was directed to the Mandeni Campus. He visited the Mandeni Campus where he met Mr Tarif Hanif who informed him about the NCV: Process Plant Operations and Pulp & Papermaking Technology qualification (NCV level 2, 3 and 4). Mr Hanif explained to Sakhile that the qualification will afford him the skills to obtain a job at one of the big pulp and paper manufacturing enterprises in the area such as Sappi. Sakhile became very interested in the programme and registered for the programme in January 2011. Sakhile found the classes very interesting. Theoretical lessons were conducted at the college and practical sessions were conducted at the Sappi Stanger and Tugela Mills as the college did not have a workshop with the necessary equipment.

Sakhile studied diligently and passed all his levels. Sakhile also displayed exceptional leadership skills and in 2012 was elected as the SRC president for Mandeni Campus as well as President of the Umfolozi College SRC. In July 2013, after completing their level 4 theoretical studies, Sakhile and his fellow students were offered 12-month internships at Sappi. In April 2014, Sakhile was offered permanent employment at the Sappi Stanger Mill as water/effluent operator in the water treatment plant.



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iDecide asked Sakhile some questions:

Did you always know what you wanted to become before you finished school?

I originally wanted to become a Lawyer but my situation did not allow me to pursue this career option. I am very happy with my current career choice and enjoy working at Sappi.

Did you receive Career guidance at school or help regarding career choices?

Apart from Mrs Gumede and Mr Hanif who assisted me to make my career choice, I also received career guidance during life orientation classes at school.

How did you apply for an FP&M SETA bursary or how were you chosen to be part of the programme at Umfolozi College?

I was approached by Mr Hanif from the College who informed me about the option of registering for the NCV: Process Plant Operations and Pulp & Papermaking Technology qualification. I passed the College Placement Test and registered for the NCV: Process Plant Operations and Pulp & Papermaking Technology qualification.

Where did you hear about the FP&M SETA?

The lecturers told us about the FP&M SETA during our studies and we knew that the FP&M SETA made funding available to ensure the programme continued and that we had the necessary equipment available to complete our studies. We also learned about other organisations involved in the programme e.g. PAMSA.

Which programme did you complete at Umfolozi College and when did you complete your studies?

I completed the NCV: Process Plant Operations and Pulp & Papermaking Technology qualification in December 2013.

Where are you currently studying / working?

I am currently working at Sappi (Stanger Mill).

Did you know about SETAs and the role they play in upskilling our youth?

I know that the FP&M SETA provided bursaries and equipment for us specifically to help us complete our process plant operations qualification.

What advice can you give young people who cannot afford to study after school?

It is hard to study after school and in order to achieve a qualification you should envision yourself where you want to be one day. Perseverance is the mother of success, also respect for other people especially your elders and hard work. You should tell yourself that I am not what I am but what I want to be. My message to the youth is this: When you finish your matric you must not go and sit down. Never ever sit down. Go to your nearest TVET College and find out about the opportunities they have. My situation brought me to the Umfolozi College and the College opened doors for me.

How do you hope to give back to the individuals, company or community that has helped you become the person you are today?

I would want to go back to the College and speak to the students about the opportunities that are available to them if they make a success out of their studies – the same opportunities that were created for me through my attendance of Umfolozi College. I also want to inform the youth of my community about the College and the learning opportunities that are offered there. But I will tell them to first finish matric and then to go to the College and register for one of the courses.

Gauteng

Forum 1B, 2nd Floor, Braampark Office Park,
33 Hoofd Street, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O Box 31276, Braamfontein, 2017
Tel: 011-403 1700; Fax: 011-403 1718

KwaZulu-Natal

2nd and 3rd Floor, Umdoni Centre,
28 Crompton Street, Pinetown, 3601
PO Box 935, Pinetown, 3600
Tel: 031-702 4482; Fax 031-702 4113

Western Cape

3rd Floor, West Wing, Palms Centre, 145 Sir Lowry Road,
Woodstock, Cape Town, 7925
PO Box 351, Woodstock, 7915
Tel: 021-462 0057; Fax: 021-462 0039