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Dream

WOMEN IN STEM TECHNOVATION SUMMIT 2024 REPORT

Prepared By Project Leads:
OFENTSE KGOMO & TAKALANI NETSHIPALE

@DreamBig.StayHumble

www.dreambigstayhumble.com

@DreamBigStayHumble

info@dreambigstayhumble.com



Introduction

The **Dream Women In STEM Technovation Summit**, held from June 26-28, 2024, was an inspiring and transformative event aimed at empowering young women in grades 9-12. Organized by **Dream Big Stay Humble** in collaboration with the **South African Institution of Civil Engineering (SAICE)**, the summit brought together a diverse group of speakers and mentors to inspire, educate, and challenge the participants to think creatively and solve real-world problems. This report provides a detailed overview of the three-day summit and its profound impact on the participants.



Day 1: June 26, 2024

Welcome Address and Ice Breakers

The summit commenced with an enthusiastic welcome address by the project leads, **Ofentse Kgomo** and **Takalani Netshipale**. They highlighted the impactful work and missions of **Dream Big Stay Humble** and **SAICE**, setting a positive and energetic tone for the event. This address was followed by an engaging ice breaker activity led by **Asande Zuma**, the programme coordinator. The girls were divided into teams of five, allowing them to make new friends and foster a spirit of collaboration and teamwork from the outset.

Keynote and Guest Speakers

The first day was packed with inspiring talks from industry professionals, each bringing a unique perspective to the table:

- **Nokukhanya Mthembu**, a Geographic Information Systems Technician & Remote Sensing Professional at **Mondi South Africa**, shared her journey and professional achievements, emphasizing the importance of perseverance and hard work. Her story of overcoming challenges to reach her goals resonated deeply with the participants, inspiring them to pursue their dreams in STEM fields.
- **Sibongumusa Nkosi**, the Kwa-Zulu Natal regional manager at **ROMH Consulting**, provided valuable insights into the engineering consulting industry. He discussed the various career paths within private consulting institutions and the opportunities available for young women in engineering.



- **Pieter Oosthuizen**, Corporate Liaison Officer at **UXI mPowered**, delivered an insightful presentation on career opportunities in the technology sector. His talk was aimed at motivating the girls to embrace the numerous opportunities that the technology industry offers and to curate their own career paths with confidence.
- **Sindisiwe Ngiba**, Senior IT Support Technician at **Nedbank**, spoke about her experiences and challenges as a woman in the IT industry. Her inspiring journey highlighted the importance of resilience and determination in overcoming barriers and achieving success in a male-dominated field.



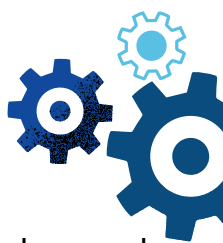
Technovation Challenge Introduction

A major highlight of the first day was the introduction of the Technovation Challenge by the Dream Team from **Dream Big Stay Humble** and **SAICE**. This challenge was designed to stimulate innovative thinking and problem-solving skills by tasking the girls with developing projects addressing one or more of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The teams were encouraged to think critically about the issues facing their communities and to come up with practical, sustainable solutions.

Day 2: June 27, 2024

Guest Speakers and Workshops

The second day began with an inspiring talk by **Garry Mmulutsi**, Founder and Managing Director of **Mmulutsi & Partners Projects**. He introduced the participants to the various types of engineers and the project management industry. His success story as a black entrepreneur in engineering and project management served as a powerful example of what can be achieved with determination and hard work.



Keynote Speaker and Flash Mentoring

- **Mirriam Mosia**, President of the **South African Roads Federation**, delivered a powerful keynote speech. She shared her journey in the engineering field, emphasizing the importance of perseverance, dedication, and self-belief. Her speech encouraged the girls to chase their dreams relentlessly and to not let any obstacles deter them.
- A **'Flash Mentoring Session'** followed, where mentors from various fields rotated among the teams, answering questions and offering guidance. This interactive session allowed the girls to gain diverse perspectives and advice from experienced professionals, fostering a deeper understanding of the STEM industries and potential career paths.



Engineering Workshop

The **South African Roads Federation** hosted an engaging engineering workshop that proved to be both fun and educational. Teams were tasked with building a tower using only paper and tape, with the strongest tower winning the competition. This hands-on activity, supported by **Raubex Construction Dardanelles - Lynfield Park**, emphasized teamwork, creativity, and problem-solving skills. The girls donned hard hats and safety vests, adding a sense of realism and excitement to the exercise.



Financial Literacy and Career Talks

- **Fundiswa Zuma**, a financial education expert at **Nedbank**, provided a crucial session on financial literacy. She equipped the girls with essential knowledge about managing finances, budgeting, and planning for the future. Her ability to link financial education to STEM careers was particularly impactful, highlighting the importance of financial independence and smart money management.



- **Linah Ndlovu**, Facilities Manager at **Mondi South Africa**, and **Sibabalwe Mpofu**, Fellowship Programme Coordinator at the **Allan Gray Orbis Foundation**, shared their career journeys and insights. Linah discussed the realities of working in the engineering field at Mondi, while Sibabalwe emphasized the importance of community development and the opportunities available through the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation. Both speakers inspired the girls to pursue their passions and to consider the broader impact of their careers on society.

Day 3: June 28, 2024

Project Completion and Presentations

The final day was dedicated to the completion and presentation of the **Technovation Challenge** projects. The girls worked diligently to finalize their solutions and create compelling presentations. The atmosphere was charged with excitement and anticipation as they pitched their projects to a panel of judges. The projects covered a range of SDGs, including zero poverty, no hunger, climate change, and sustainable innovations. The judges and organizers were deeply impressed by the creativity, ingenuity, and thoughtfulness demonstrated by the participants. These young innovators showcased a deep understanding of global challenges and a strong commitment to making a positive impact in their communities.

Awards Ceremony and Launchpad Workshop

An awards ceremony followed, celebrating the top three projects. The winners were recognized for their outstanding efforts, but all participants were acknowledged as winners for their creativity and hard work. The ceremony was a joyous occasion, filled with pride and encouragement.



The day concluded with the **"launchpad workshop"** by **Takalani Netshipale**. In this workshop, the girls were given the opportunity to decorate hard hats to represent themselves. This activity aimed to boost their confidence and individuality, encouraging them to be bold and to embrace their unique identities. The decorated hard hats symbolized their readiness to embark on their STEM journeys, empowered and inspired.

Closing and Acknowledgements

Takalani Netshipale and **Ofentse Kgomo** closed the summit with a heartfelt thank you to all participants, sponsors, and facilitators. Special thanks were extended to sponsors such as **Mondi Group**, **South African Roads Federation**, **Raubex Construction Dardanelles - Lynfield Park**, **ROMH Consulting**, **Mmulutsi & Partners Projects**, and the **Kwa-Zulu Natal Museum** for providing the Pringle Hall venue. **Malaika Ahiwe** and the **SAICE PMB Student Chapter** were also recognized for their facilitation efforts, ensuring the smooth running of the event.



Impact and Conclusion

The **Dream Women In STEM Technovation Summit** was a resounding success, providing young women with the tools, knowledge, and inspiration to pursue careers in STEM. The summit not only fostered a sense of community and collaboration among participants but also empowered them to think critically about global challenges and develop innovative solutions. The event truly highlighted the potential of these young innovators and left a lasting impact on their lives, setting the stage for a brighter future in STEM. The participants left the summit not only with new skills and knowledge but also with a renewed sense of confidence and purpose, ready to make a difference in their communities and beyond.



Takalani Netshipale
Dream Big Stay Humble Ambassador
SIACE STAR Representative
+27 (0)83 287 5951
tnetshipale@gmail.com

Ofentse Kgomo
Chief Operating Officer
Project Manager
+27 (0)84 440 2478
Ofentse@dreambigstayhumble.com

 @DreamBig.StayHumble
  www.dreambigstayhumble.com
  @DreamBigStayHumble
  info@dreambigstayhumble.com