



PRESS RELEASE

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Saint-Gobain YouthBuild Academy skills development captures the attention of the French Minister of Foreign affairs

On 1 March 2019, the French Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Jean-Yves Le Drian, visited Saint-Gobain South Africa's premises in Germiston, Ekurhuleni (Gauteng). The focus of the visit was to showcase how Saint-Gobain has positioned itself as a leader in the sustainable construction sector while developing skills through its Saint-Gobain YouthBuild Academy.

The Saint-Gobain YouthBuild Academy was born out of the need to tackle national ever-growing challenges where a 45% high school dropout rate has fueled a national youth employment crisis. Its ambition is to contribute by bridging artisan skills gaps and creating a pathway into the labour market for disadvantaged youth. In the 16 years since its inception, the Academy has seen more than 1000 learners graduate from the programme and about 80% of the 2018 graduates were placed into employment. In addition, 30 deaf learners have been empowered through this programme.

Founded in 2003, the Saint-Gobain YouthBuild Academy has been supported by YouthBuild, an international NGO, since 2016. Through their complementary expertise, their objective is to upskill and educate unemployed youth on the theory, practice and installation of environmentally compliant systems for new and renovated buildings. Practical activities are aimed at uplifting the communities from which these young men and women come, and learners practice their skills by repairing and fixing crèches, schools and community halls in need.

Once learners have been selected by the Academy, they are required to achieve competency in 132 credits. These credits are clustered into four subjects, which include drywall and ceiling installation (safety, tools and assembly of components), written and oral communication skills, applied mathematics (calculating quantities and costings), and workplace skills like understanding HIV/Aids, first-aid basics and business plans. The programme runs for twelve months.



The Academy is the only CETA (Construction Education Training Authority) accredited training provider in South Africa that presents the National Certificate: Ceiling & Partition Installation NQF 3. With Saint-Gobain as a founding member of the Green Building Council of South Africa (GBCSA), the curriculum also includes training that earns students a “Green Star for Contractors” certificate.

To conclude, Jean-Claude Lasserre, Saint-Gobain CEO for sub-Saharan Africa says:

“Through the Saint-Gobain YouthBuild Academy we aim to make a real difference to empower disadvantaged young South Africans. We want to contribute to the dynamism of our sector by providing sustainable support to youth employment as well as upskilling the construction sector towards more efficient technologies. For this reason, we are considering to extend this programme to other countries in sub-Saharan Africa.”

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About Saint-Gobain: Saint-Gobain designs, manufactures and distributes materials and solutions which are key ingredients in the wellbeing of each of us and the future of all. They can be found everywhere in our living places and our daily life: in buildings, transportation, infrastructure and in many industrial applications. They provide comfort, performance and safety while addressing the challenges of sustainable construction, resource efficiency and climate change. Saint-Gobain has been present in sub-Saharan Africa since 1997 and currently employs 1200 people. Today it has five representative offices, 14 manufacturing plants (plaster, plasterboard, industrial mortars, insulation...), a portfolio of strong brands (Rhinolite, Rhinoboard, Weber-Tylon, Aerolite...), and a commercial footprint in 12 sub-Saharan Africa countries.

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