

## EIGHT “MADE-IN-SA” ENGINEERING COLLEGE GRADUATES JET OFF TO CHINA ON A 12 MONTH INTERNSHIP



*Pictured from left to right: ORBIT College Engineering students- Mr O Marumola, Ms B Mgcina, Ms P Selelo, Ms B Cweinyane, Mr T Lesejane, Ms O Tshenye, Ms B Makati, Mr P Seloba are currently in China for a 12 month internship programme*

Seven ORBIT TVET College students jettied off to Beijing, China on Thursday, 16 March 2017, on a 12 month internship programme which forms part of a collaboration between the Chinese Culture and International Exchange Centre and Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services SETA (MerSETA). They were later joined by another ORBIT College Engineering graduate, Thabo Lesejane on 29 April 2017, after arriving with the second group of students from other SA TVET Colleges and Universities in Beijing. The Chinese Culture and international Exchange Centre is a leading official Chinese Education Institution in South Africa, which focuses on educational collaborations between China and SA. The programme is aimed at bridging the skills gap and contributing positively towards the growth and development plan of the country.

Oarabile Marumula, Olerato Tshenye, Phemelo Selelo, Bokamoso Cwienyane, Piet Seloba, Boikhutso Makati, Buyelani Mgcina and Thabo Lesejane- all NC (V) Level 4 Engineering graduates from ORBIT College Mankwe Campus in Mogwase, are among the 200 students who were selected from various TVET Colleges and Universities of Technologies, to take part in an 'all expenses paid' internship programme which will see them further their studies while being exposed to actual workplace experience. The eight proved that they are worthy of being part of the 'cream of the crop', after making it into the top 200 from the 1748 applications received.

During their stay in China, they will be enrolled as students at Beijing Union University, for a period of six months, coupled with six months of manufactory/work-based training at some of the top 500 Chinese companies. Upon completion of the 12 months, they will be awarded with a University Certificate of Achievement and a Manufacturing Intern Certificate.

The thrilled students have not been able to contain their excitement and disbelief at having been chosen out of thousands of entrants. One of the students, Olerato Chauke said: "We wholeheartedly appreciate the love and support we have received from ORBIT College, especially the staff from Mankwe Campus. We were not selected because we are smart, but because of the immense support and assistance the institution afforded us. They believed in us, and for that, we will not disappoint them."

The students attended an orientation session on Friday, 10 March 2017 at the head offices of the Chinese Culture and International Exchange Centre, in Lynwood, Pretoria, where they were taken through what the internship programme entails, as well as what will be expected from them during their odyssey in China. Director of the Chinese Culture and International Exchange Centre, Dr Zhilei Lu, says the main aim of the programme is to create opportunities for the students to gain work experience through integrating them in real work learning methodology that is utilised by the top 500 Chinese Companies.

"Our dream is to see you become the foundation of '*Made in South Africa*'. Go to China and learn as much as you possibly can. Make sure that when you come back, you will be able to transfer all the skills that you acquired in China to South Africa." Dr Lu said.

The benefits of the internship programme include return flights, visa fees, accommodation, monthly stipends, university fees, daily transport to university & workplace, meals, workplace training fees, medical cover, and accident/death benefits.

ORBIT College Principal, Ms Maryna Marais says she is ecstatic for the students, and can only hope that they will use this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to the best of their ability. Ms Marais added that going to a country where the daily way of life, the language and culture is different to ours will have its fair share of challenges, but that the students should always be reminded of the words of Ho Chi Minh: "*Remember the storm is a good opportunity for the pine and the cypress to show their strength and their stability*". Lastly she asked that the students show their sponsors that, like the pine and the cypress, they can stand tall in any storm and that they have what it takes to make a huge success of this opportunity. "Life is about making an impact, and we as their ORBIT family, are convinced that this life-changing experience will equip them to make an impact their communities upon their return!"