

Rand Refinery reinforces commitment to local industry

Rand Refinery, one of the world's leading LBMA gold and silver refiners and an operator of one of the continent's low-grade gold recovery smelters, is reinforcing its continued commitment and support to the local jewellery industry.

THROUGH ITS LONG-STANDING GOLD Zone initiative, Rand Refinery is investing in reinvigorating local talent within the jewellery manufacturing sector.

The Silver and Gold Mentorship Programmes, established in partnership with the Ekurhuleni Jewellery Project (EJP), NQ Jewellers and the SA Diamond and Precious Metals Regulator, have seen remarkable success since their inception in 2021. These programmes have celebrated the graduation of 42 small, medium and micro-enterprises (SMMEs) since 2022.

In 2024, Rand Refinery aims to further enhance its support with an enriched SMME curriculum and the introduction of personal coaching, in collaboration with Thietso Academy. The initiative underscores Rand Refinery's commitment and dedication to nurturing a diverse talent pool in a promising, but under-invested industry.

Through the programmes, the refinery will facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skills to new generations of future jewellers. This will not only ensure the sustainability of the industry, but also uplift the community by providing valuable skills that can lead to economic empowerment. Furthermore, investing in the industry will create employment opportunities, particularly in areas like design, manufacturing, marketing and retail.

"In the South African context, particularly, this has a positive impact on local economies and contributes to reducing unemployment," says Praveen Baijnath, CEO of Rand Refinery and Chairperson of EJP.

Rand Refinery will also be approving further capital investment for the technical and commercial campus upgrade, incorporating advanced jewellery technology to accommodate all students, including those with disabilities.

It has partnered with Intsika Beneficiation



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Projects to bolster its efforts in skills development for people living with disabilities through a learnership programme in jewellery design and manufacturing. Launched in 2020, the programme continues to make significant inroads in this specialist space. The company has been fully funding the learnership (ie the tuition costs and students' stipends) for five consecutive years. To date, a total of 109 students have been trained and have progressed from NQF L2 to NQF L4. In 2023, Rand Refinery hosted a graduation programme for students with disabilities who completed NQF L3 and recently the 20 students who graduated completed NQF L4.

"By engaging directly with the jewellery manufacturing sector, we can promote and implement sustainable and ethical practices in the sourcing, processing and trading of precious metals. This can only improve the industry's reputation and ensure long-term viability with known provenance practices. Supporting local talent and industry contributes to community development

and broader economic growth. It fosters an environment where local businesses can thrive, encouraging further investment and development in the region," adds Baijnath.

Improvements for the 2024 intake process include a comprehensive assessment to identify and develop top jewellery design talent, ensuring participants are well-equipped to launch and grow their businesses successfully. Additionally, the Rand Refinery Enterprise Development Programme continues to support the Jewellery Village Store, enhancing market access for its participants.

Top-performing SMMEs have had the opportunity to present their designs at the Mining Indaba, showcasing local capabilities to a global audience.

"We take immense pride in our role of fostering growth through beneficiation and developing local talent. Witnessing these SMMEs present their work globally reaffirms the tremendous potential within SA, all made possible through the Rand Refinery Enterprise Development Initiative," says Baijnath. ■

WE RESHAPE VALUE

WITH EVERY GRANULE



There was a time when value in the industry was measured only in purity, and weight, but today provenance and ethical background play an important part in value.

Which is why we are always evolving how we source our metal. Our commitment to responsible business practices and sourcing, allow us to not only preserve our business, but our people, product and planet.



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