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**Fundi encourages learner leadership in KwaZulu-Natal schools**

*This past week saw Fundi partner with learning and data management platform Syafunda to amplify the impact of the critical work Syafunda is doing with learners at schools in KwaZulu-Natal.*

With self-leadership and accountability important elements of student success, Syafunda’s recent programme in the Harry Gwala District of KwaZulu-Natal included a leadership event, as well as a maths baseline test and an assessment on key concept (i.e. building block) comprehension. While the results will be used to inform other interventions in the area, the event culminated in the launch of a Syafunda Digital Library to district schools in the region, together with the rollout of ICT infrastructure across the region. Fundi was there to celebrate and acknowledge top learners at the 25 schools – handing out 1 000 waterproof backpacks and bursaries to top achievers.

“Our contribution here today builds on the significant commitment already made by the Albaraka Bank and the South African Muslim Charitable Trust,” noted Tshepo Ditshego, Fundi CEO. “We wanted to celebrate and showcase what is being achieved by top learners – encouraging others to keep pushing to reach their full potential and remain inspired by their own futures.”

Speaking at the event whilst surrounded by extremely excited pupils from across the region, Ditshego reminded learners that they are the masters of their own destiny. “While other people can offer you advice or a hand-up, it’s up to you to take it. Where you’re from, your background, and even your home reality do not define who you are, what you will become, and the gifts you will give to the world. It’s up to you to seize every opportunity that comes your way – like the opportunity being offered to you by all of us today.”

Founder and CEO of Syafunda, Zakheni Ngubo welcomed Fundi as an ideal partner for this local initiative. “We share the common goal of improving access to educational content and resources in order to support, empower and inspire our young people: the next generation of leaders and innovators on the continent. As such, we are delighted that Fundi could join us here today as we launch our digital learning platform – providing learners and educators with access to everything from best teaching practices to textbooks and past exam papers. We are confident it will enable further learner success.”

Each of the Fundi backpacks handed out at the event is both waterproof and reflective – meaning that learners will now be more visible on local roads when they walk to and from school, and that their books can be kept dry and in good condition; no longer being carried in plastic bags. “The bursaries we announced today are also extra special,” explained Ditshego. “They come from our very own Fundi Fund Trust, which is funded by our own staff, suppliers and stakeholders. This means that these learners are being supported by a community of individuals who are contributing what they can every month to help learners realise their dreams.”

With the event so well received, Ngubo is confident it will inspire many great things in the area. “This launch has set the tone for the 2020 school year here in the Harry Gwala District. We wanted learners to feel supported and encouraged on their journeys, and to believe that it is possible for each of them to achieve great things. We look forward to continuing to support them in partnership with our key sponsors,” he concluded.

Ends.