

KALKVELD COMMUNITY CELEBRATES SUPPORT FROM LOCAL RAIL CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

Kalkfeld – The Constituency Councilor of Otjiwarongo, Honourable Marlayn Mbakera recently encouraged community members of the small Kalkfeld settlement to make themselves available for new opportunities which may arise as a result of developments within the community. This she said at a ceremony during which local railway construction and maintenance company, D&M Rail Construction donated clothing to the local community; awarded certificates to staff and celebrated the completion of an anti-poaching bush clearing initiative.

“D&M Rail Construction has been leaving footprints wherever they operate, ensuring that communities are better off because of its presence. It employs local people, provides training which has lifelong benefits to the recipients whilst providing much needed assistance to communities,” she said at the ceremony during which 11 heavy machinery operators received certificates after successfully clearing an area of more than 16.4 hectares as part of the community’s fight against poaching in the area. *“These certificate recipients can, when the company is no longer here, look for opportunities elsewhere, because now they are certified and employable in the job market,”* she emphasized.

In relation to the anti-poaching bush clearing project which was initiated in response to the ongoing poaching on adjacent commercial farms, Councilor Mbakera said that she is *“saddened that we have over 200 poaching cases in this town alone. We must ensure that we report these culprits to the authorities as it will cause conflict between the local commercial famers and our settlement’s community,”* she encouraged.

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D&M Rail is said to have spent close to N\$170,000.00 in clearing the area between the settlement and the commercial farmlands. This is in response to requests from both the farming community and local residents to clear an area of woodland in which poachers hide.

Around thirty children from the community also received tracksuits to alleviate the effects of the harsh winter. This is part of D&M Rail's social upliftment endeavours which aim at assisting the most vulnerable in the settlement to survive the winter. An additional 50 such tracksuits are currently under production by the Reverend Ngeno Nakamhela Foundation, with support from the rail construction company. The company currently employs over 180 local people since January 2020. Leon Steyn, Project Manager at D&M Rail Construction says they remain committed to assisting the most vulnerable amongst communities. *"We have and will continue to provide assistance where we can, in collaboration with local community organisations and councils,"* he said during the ceremony.

In conclusion, Councilor Mkbakera also warned residents to take the Covid-19 seriously and adhere to government issued regulations which are *"aimed at curbing the spread of this pandemic amongst our people. We are a small population. Imagine what one unguarded infection can do to this town's population...?"* She reminded the residents.



Otjiwarongo Constituency Councilor, Hon. Marlayn Mbakera (seated at desk) preparing to hand out to recipients at Kalkveld



Reverend Ngeno Nakamhela (The Reverend Ngeno Nakamhela Foundation) -left; and Leon Steyn of D&M Rail Construction (far right) with seamstresses from the foundation.