



## **Engineering Students Gain Experience at LHWP Construction Sites**

The complexity of a large-scale, multi-disciplinary project like the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) offers an invaluable learning experience for students and researchers from a variety of academic backgrounds. This week, close to 100 third-year civil engineering students and lecturers from the University of Pretoria visited key construction sites, including the Senqu Bridge, Polihali Dam, and Polihali Transfer Tunnel, as part of their educational programme.

The visit provided students with an opportunity to understand the scope and purpose of Phase II of the LHWP and to witness firsthand the construction progress. Presentations from project consultants and engineers offered deeper insights into the technical and engineering challenges involved in the project.

The Polihali Dam consultant, Matla a Metsi Joint Venture (JV) gave a detailed presentation on the dam's design, structural components, and the intricate process of building a concrete-faced rockfill dam. The students learned about the crucial stabilisation techniques used and how the construction is carefully coordinated to meet safety and engineering standards.

One of the highlights of the visit was a presentation by young female engineers working with the Metsi a Senqu Khubelu Consultant JV, who are responsible for the design and supervision of the Polihali Transfer Tunnel. Their presentation covered unique aspects of the tunnel, such as the innovative Lake Tap, which includes an inclined rise and a rare lake-piercing blast into the Katse Reservoir. The team also discussed the importance of geotechnical instrumentation monitoring and recent milestones, including the Polihali intake tunnels breakthrough and the arrival of the first Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM).

Additionally, the visit emphasised the importance of the Phase II Young Professionals Programme, which offers practical, on-the-job experience for young Basotho and South African graduates. This program, designed to nurture the next generation of engineers, has already supported 68 young professionals. Many former participants have gone on to assume senior roles within the LHWP and the LHDA, including Chief Executive Tente Tente, who started his career as a young professional during Phase I of the project.

The visit served as a platform for students to engage with industry experts, gain real-world insights into large-scale infrastructure projects, and explore future career opportunities within the LHWP.

