



Londiwe Mthembu,
Managing Director of Abcon Foundation

Collaboration key to education development

Londiwe Mthembu, Managing Director of the Abcon Foundation, wears two “hats”: she is also SAPOA’s Education Committee Chairperson. She talks to *Property Review* about the Committee’s mandate as well as some of the initiatives she is driving at Abcon

By Mark Pettipher

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Many of the qualifications that are required by the various disciplines within the property industry need to be accredited by the Estate Agency Affairs Board (EAAB). Organisations such as the Property Sector Charter Council as well as SAPOA member organisations rely on close collaboration with the EAAB to maintain an understanding of the changing legislation within the commercial property industry.

In order to closely align accreditation requirements with real-time industry realities and skills shortages, the SAPOA Education Committee constantly discusses and drives facilitation with the EAAB to unlock bottlenecks within the EAAB itself. The Committee also discusses the future education, training and development needs for the industry with representatives of member organisations, and works closely with a number of South Africa’s leading universities that offer property courses.

Added to these responsibilities is the requirement for the Committee to represent the industry at – and in discussion with – Services SETA.

A critical aspect of the work that Londiwe Mthembu does is to determine the skills gap in the property sector. This also includes driving awareness of job opportunities through career

days at schools, TVET colleges as well as universities, in close partnership with SAPOA and the Property Sector Charter Council.

“We need to transform the industry by getting more involved with learners at a younger age,” says Mthembu. “The property industry has a vast array of opportunities, and a broad church of disciplines. I’m amazed at how few learners and students actually know about property and its value chain as career options.

“Most of the SAPOA member organisations are committed to utilising six percent of their income for skills development or transformation and education purposes. Imagine what could be achieved if that capital was centrally pooled? The property sector is purported to be a R5,8-trillion industry!

“Opportunities that are spread across industry players through collaboration will trigger sustainable solutions in skills development. In the long term, this will help with the transformation of the property sector”