

Female pupils steeled for engineering

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The dawn of empowered women proves there is no longer any task only a man can handle.

Not even heavy engineering firm, DCD Venco is without female members of staff, as was communicated to the 14 female pupils hosted at the annual *Cell C Take A Girl To Work Day* last Thursday.

These pupils represented Sabela- and Amazulu High Schools, both situated in outlying areas of Newcastle.

Highlighting the necessity of dedication to studies, Venco's production manager, Mihail Radu Patrascoiu hoped an insight into engineering would place the importance of artisans at the forefront of the pupils' minds.

After an introduction, safety officer, Haroon Vawda, took the pupils on a tour of the facilities.

At the processing plant, Mr Vawda explained how Venco utilised a number of different techniques such as X-rays and ultrasounds to ensure welds were perfectly sealed.

One of the company's biggest jobs, he added, was related to an American surface miner.

"This machine can dig up ore, rocks and soil in huge volumes."

Part of Venco's function also ties into the work of ArcelorMittal. Mr Vawda demonstrated in another section of the plant, describing how flat steel was rolled and moulded into massive industrial piping systems.

Pupils were also shown the automated cutting machine system, used to cut through up to 32 inches of solid steel.

Despite its reputation as



Safety officer, Haroon Vawda explains the functionality of metal to female pupils on tour of DCD Venco's facilities.

a major roleplayer in the Newcastle engineering industry, Venco also boasted how certain processes had been initiated to reduce pollution by smoke and dust.

On the other end of the scale, it has donated more than R100 000 into disadvantaged schools in this area.

"Pupils who show promise are given bursaries and taken into our fold once their tertiary education is complete."

After the tour, a representative from Majuba FET College addressed the pupils on the stigma associated with such tertiary institutions.

"Going to a college is not just

for the rejects from university or technikons."

Wrapping up the day with lunch for staff and pupils, Mr Vawda expressed his hope more females would assert themselves as the new driving force in heavy industry, breaking the old stereotypes of weak women.