



Meet Dr Mokhwetha Mabula; A Senior Lecturer at University of Pretoria who also assists township students with Mathematics and preparation for a Mathematics Olympiad.

Determination to succeed against adversity

Dr Mokhwetha Mabula's journey to being a holder of a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Mathematics from the University of Cape Town (UCT) was a long and hard one. He grew up in a small farming community of Danielsrus in Eastern Free State. From his early years he encountered a number of setbacks, including failing grade 3 (previously referred to as Standard One) and spending 2 years of high school standing or sitting on the classroom floor because the school did not have enough chairs. His resolve was also tested when he had to choose to enrol onto a bridging programme designed for people who did not do well enough to enter University because it was the only option his parents could afford. Walking for an hour and a half to University and working as a gardener to raise money for registration fees, were just some of the other things Dr Mabula had to do to succeed.

His motto of seeing things through to the end, regardless of challenges one may face at the beginning, was a guiding force that helped him stay the course. Dr Mabula acknowledged from an early age that he, alone, is the only driver of his own learning and career development and was willing to do what was required to progress and develop in his career.

Today Dr Mabula is currently working at the University of Pretoria; in the Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics. His position is a Senior Lecturer in Pure Mathematics in the category of Research and Teaching. He holds a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree in Mathematics and Mathematical Statistics from the University of the Free State, a B.Sc. Honours degree in Mathematics from the

University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), a Master of Science (M.Sc.) degree in Mathematics from Wits and a PhD in Mathematics from UCT all because he took it upon himself to drive his career development.

Dr Mabula is an example of what is possible to do when one is determined not to be defined by the circumstances and childhood background.