THE SAPRIN
CONNECTION

SAPRIN Participates in Generation Science Programme for Learners

December 2025

Gen S learners with SAMRC CEO and President, Professor Ntobeko Ntusi

The South African Medical Research Council's (SAMRC) Generation Science (Gen S) Programme, Durban edition took place from 9 to 11 July. The Programme is aimed at showcasing the careers available at the SAMRC to learners and allowing them to gain first-hand practical experience.

The South African Population Research Infrastructure Network (SAPRIN) played a key role in coordinating the Durban programme. A relevant, impactful and robust programme was crafted incorporating various units within the SAMRC.

Approximately 17 learners from Umlazi, Phoenix as well as SAMRC staff member's children participated in the programme. SAPRIN and the HIV and other Infectious Diseases Research Unit (HIDRU) conduct research in the Umlazi and Phoenix communities, respectively.

Funded by the Department of Science, Technology & Innovation (DSTI)
Hosted by the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC)

491 Peter Mokaba Road, Overport, Durban
E-mail: saprin@mrc.ac.za
Website: https://saprin.mrc.ac.za/

SAPRIN
POPULATION-BASED SCIENCE
SOUTH AFRICAN POPULATION RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

The programme commenced with a career panel where the learners engaged with a scientist, pharmacist, statistician and medical technologist. The session was informative and set the stage for the site visits, talks, experiments and activities in store for the learners.

Learners were split into groups and they visited the Chatsworth, Phoenix and Verulam clinical research sites. Here they viewed the various elements of the site including the waiting room, data management, laboratory, systems and pharmacy. Site staff explained their specific roles and responded to questions. The learners had the opportunity to conduct practical tests.

On day two SAPRIN partnered with the Africa Health Research Institute (AHRI) to offer an immersive experience at AHRI's state-of-the-art laboratory facility. Learners received a tour of the facilities, conducted mock experiments and interacted with scientists about their careers. The learners also had an opportunity to meet and greet the President and CEO of the SAMRC, Professor Ntobeko Ntusi.

Dr Joel Mouatcho, Specialist Scientist at the SAMRC's Malaria Research Group (MRG) presented an overview of malaria, its treatment and control. This was followed by a visit to the unit's insectary. The staff carried out microscopy demonstrations and various activities to give the learners exposure to the nature of the work the unit undertakes.

The third day focused on the work of the Biostatistics Research Unit (BRU). Staff spoke to the learners about their careers and the work that they were involved in. The learners participated in interesting and fun activities aimed at introducing them to the field of statistics.

The programme was well received by learners. In the feedback forms, one learner wrote, "The laboratory visit was an excellent experience. I really enjoyed observing the different scientists and seeing the various laboratories and careers and tasks that were performed in each. The visit allowed me to get more of an idea of what I want to study in university and exposed me to my prospective career options."

Another learner wrote that they found the speakers motivating and encouraging. While another learners described the Gen S programme as inspiring and educational.

"Building the next generation of scientists is integral to SAPRIN. We welcome the opportunity to nurture young minds at a high school level. It is hoped that exposing learners to the vast science career options and providing practical experience will assist them in navigating the plethora of possibilities available to them," said Mrs Roopa Moodley, Public Relations Manager at SAPRIN.

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