

# Hlambanyathi River Bridge



For the residents of the Makhosaneni area access to schools, the Ndundulu clinic and the district hospital was provided by a low-level crossing of the Hlambanyathi River. For many days at a time, during the rainy season, access was cut off and long detours were necessary to reach these facilities, as well as markets for crops and livestock. At times, some travelers attempted to cross the river - which is very swift in the wet season, as a result of the steep terrain - and were swept away.

In addition, the isolation of the area had led to a deepening of rural poverty, as young people increasingly looked to the urban areas for employment opportunities.

To help boost safety, mobility and accessibility, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport commissioned the joint venture of Royal HaskoningDHV and Mzansi Africa to design and supervise the construction of a high-level bridge as well as safer access roads.

Intended to improve the transportation network of northern KwaZulu-Natal, this road corridor is an important link as it helps to boost the local economy, bringing the region in line with the Local Economic Development Plan. However, the client and engineers also saw an opportunity to use the project to stimulate employment within the local community, and to promote a programme of training, not just in technical skills, but in enterprise development. The key to this initiative was the use of concrete in as many elements of the project as possible.

Accordingly, the bridge was deliberately designed in concrete and a number of additional components of the civil works and supporting social infrastructure such as schools, clinics and houses were adapted accordingly.

Members of the community were employed and trained in the preparation, mixing, placing and curing of concrete. Since this project required an all-weather surfaced road some 50 kilometres long to reach into the rural areas, there were many opportunities to utilize these skills. The expertise in the community grew and several small businesses have emerged and the economy of the area is moving steadily forward.

Not least amongst the achievements of these efforts is the fact that the Hlambanyathi River Bridge has emerged as a wonderful example of a high-quality concrete structure far from the towns and cities of South Africa, to be enjoyed and cherished by the local residents, as a sign that they are not forgotten; that progress is a reality and that they may enjoy the modern facilities, that many take for granted, a little easier than before. ▲

### TEAM

**Location:** Makhosaneni Area (Northern KwaZulu-Natal)

**Categories Entered:** Infrastructure

**Submitted By:** Royal HaskoningDHV

**Client:** KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport

**Principal Agent:** Royal HaskoningDHV

**Main Contractor:** Icon Construction