

Finding opportunities in tough times

Government plans to regulate marketing and advertising campaigns targeting children in order to reduce the high number of obesity in young children; and the dismal performance by South Africa's athletes at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games has led to Cadbury South Africa seizing the moment to nurture the next generation of South African athletes for the 2012 Olympic Games in London.

By [Tshepiso Seopa](#) 15 Sep 2008

After spending a year developing potential talent and building an awareness among disadvantaged children about the importance of remaining physically active, the company hosted the Cadbury Youth Games finals on Saturday, 13 September 2008, at the Wits University Athletics Stadium in Parktown, Johannesburg. The campaign ran in all nine provinces, educating school children about the importance of physical activity. At the same time, the company established athletics events in each region for children between the ages of 12 and 16.

Five hundred children who demonstrated potential in track and field events participated in the Cadbury Youth Games, standing a chance to win one of five bursaries.

"A lot of money is spent annually on the sponsorship of national and international sports but there is definitely a tapering off of these funds at a grassroots level which is where new talent and sporting prowess is born," said Geoff Whyte, marketing director for Cadbury SA.

"Many sporting programs rely on private sector support and it is exciting not only to get involved with future sporting heroes of our country but to initiate these programs and see the response of disadvantaged communities being given the chance to compete," he continued.

According to Whyte, the motivation for this initiative stems from the fact that a staggering 30% of SA schools do not offer any form of physical education. This has resulted in approximately 40% of SA's youth being classified as inactive. "South Africa's 2006 Obesity Statistics further reveal that this lack of physical activity is one of the reasons that 20% of South African children under the age of six are overweight," he concluded.

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