

GMSA addresses skills shortages

To address the lack of career guidance in our schools, General Motors South Africa (GMSA) and Kommunity Group Projects have partnered to support learners in making school subject and career choices.

The distribution of 5,000 Kommunity Career Handbooks to Grade 9 learners across the Eastern Cape began with a launch in Port Elizabeth on Thursday, 31 July and continues in Fort Beaufort, King William's Town and Mbizana over the coming week.

A practical roadmap to future participation in the economy



The handbooks, produced by the Kommunity Group, were developed to provide young people - particularly those who cannot afford or do not have access to professional career guidance and subject choice support - with a practical roadmap to the future participation in the economy.

According to Shane Immelman, Kommunity Group's Founder, the handbooks materialised after 14 years of research. "The lack of effective career guidance in the majority of South African schools led to poor choices of school subjects at the end of Grade 9, often limiting learners' future study options or leading to career choices that were not relevant to market needs," said Immelman.

Research by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) has found that one of the key reasons for dropping out of further and higher education is an incorrect study path not aligned to students' interests and abilities.

Speaking at the launch of the Kommunity Career Handbook at the Port Elizabeth district offices of the Department of Education, the Eastern Cape Education MEC, Mandla Makupula said school leavers are desperate for work, but they are often not prepared. "Choosing the right subjects for the right career early in high school is important. Be prepared for your future."

Makupula's message to the Grade 9 learners in attendance from eight schools in the PE District was clear. "Missing a day of school can never be made up. Use the moment as it is available to you and use it optimally," he told learners.

"A practical solution to a very real problem"

GMSA Corporate Communications Manager Gishma Johnson said that the Kommunity Career Handbook provided "a practical solution to a very real problem."

"Like many businesses in South Africa, GMSA is affected by the national shortage of critical skills. This project enables us to make a difference by ensuring that learners receive effective guidance in making decisions that will give them a better chance of securing employment in the future," she said.

GMSA will distribute the initial distribution of the GMSA Kommunity Career Handbooks to more than 2 300 learners in Port Elizabeth while Provincial Head of Department Ray Tywakadi joined Johnson in handing out the guides to an additional 1,400 learners in Fort Beaufort on Friday, 1 August.

The Eastern Cape leg of the programme will support 5,000 Grade 9 learners in 66 schools: 2,330 in Port Elizabeth (16 schools); 1,500 in Fort Beaufort (33 schools); and 900 in King William's Town (12 schools), with the balance being provided to schools in Idutywa and Mbizana.

The handbook is uniquely self-guided and can be used by learners from Grade 9 to Grade 12, with a proprietary questionnaire that helps them to align their subject and career choices with their interests, relative to national skills shortages. Information is provided on more than 400 professional, technical and learnership-based career options, along with information on places to study, financial assistance options for further study, preparation for the job market and other important information.

The Community Career Handbook was developed in collaboration with Stellenbosch University and is underpinned by robust scientific and academic research conducted over a period of more than a decade. The handbook is supported by the Department of Basic Education as a supplement to the compulsory Life Orientation school subject.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>