

Digital platform offers free maths and science resources

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What innovative teaching programmes are making a difference in under-resourced schools? And how relevant are global educational rankings to local conditions? These are just some of the topics addressed on a free online knowledge hub that offers extensive information on improving maths and science education in South African schools.



Top three achievers in the Promaths class of 2017 in QwaQwa with (second from right) Setlogane Manchidi, Head of Corporate Social Investment at Investec.

The portal mainly targets companies wishing to get involved in corporate social investment (CSI) projects, as well as those that are already invested and want to stay abreast of the latest initiatives and findings. It's also ideal for educators, researchers, philanthropists and media.

The portal, known as the [Trialogue Knowledge Hub](#), has been established by CSI consultancy Trialogue, with financial services company Investec partnering on the maths and science sector.

The hub is highly relevant as many South Africans have limited maths and science qualifications and cannot find work in the formal sector. Centre for Development and Enterprise research has revealed that only half of South African learners starting school will make it to Grade 12. Only 12% will qualify for university entrance.*



Learners celebrate at the 2017 Promaths awards.

Nick Rockey, MD of Trialogue, says the hub has examples of innovative education programmes, updates on teacher training, academic papers discussing sector issues, local and international research papers, and much more.

“It’s well known that South Africa performs poorly in maths and science rankings compared to other developing countries. Obviously many companies are extremely concerned about this and education is the leading sector that they support through their CSI programmes. South African companies spend over R9 billion a year on CSI, and nearly half of this is invested in education.

“There is consequently a wealth of knowledge that has been accumulated on education projects – and this hub is an ideal way to make it readily available and so enable more people to find out how they can also make a difference.”



Class of 2016 in the 2017 Promaths awards.

Investec’s head of CSI, Setlogane Manchidi, said that the group initiated its Promaths programme in 2005 with one hub in Soweto with 100 learners. This has since grown to eight Investec-funded hubs around the country with capacity for over 3,500 learners. Talented grade 10, 11 and 12 learners are offered extra lessons, mainly in maths and science.

“Amazing results are produced year after year, hence Investec’s interest in the Knowledge Hub with a focus on maths and science. Our aim is to make a meaningful contribution in this space.”



Setlogane Manchidi, Head of Corporate Social Investment at Investec.

Rockey said that in addition to the Knowledge Hub section on maths and science education, the portal provides information on school leadership and management (through partnering with Old Mutual), financial literacy (MMI Holdings), philanthropy (Nedbank Private Wealth), shared value (ABSA) and information communications technology in education (Vodacom). More Knowledge Hub topics are under development, with the goal of offering information across 12 development sectors at no cost to users.

“There is a wealth of CSI information available on everything from environmental issues to disaster relief. We are in talks with more companies to come on board and share their learnings with others so that they can help others address the challenges that our country faces.”

*(Centre for Development and Enterprise, Jeff McCarthy and Rebecca Oliphant, *Mathematics outcomes in South African schools: What are the facts? What should be done?* 2013).

Contact: To access the Knowledge Hub, see www.trialogue.co.za/knowledgehub. Companies interested in sponsoring a topic or contributing learnings and insights should contact Ruendree Govinder at rgovinder@trialogue.co.za.

Reference: *Mathematics outcomes in South African schools: What are the facts? What should be done?*
<http://trialogueknowledgehub.co.za/index.php/key-issues-stem/item/mathematics-outcomes-in-south-african-schools-what-are-the-facts-what-should-be-done>.

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