Making saving cool - Teach Children to Save South Africa starts in July

The Teach Children to Save South Africa programme, a nationwide generic financial literacy initiative geared at South African children, has adopted 'Making saving cool', as part of its 2013 campaign.

First pioneered in 2008 by the Banking Association South Africa, the programme rolls out annually during July, which is also Savings Month.

For a two week duration, professionals in the banking and financial sector volunteer their time, expertise and know-how, returning to the classrooms as 'Teachers- for-67-minutes' to deliver lessons on saving, budgeting and discerning between 'needs' and 'wants'; entrepreneurship and the wealth cycle: earn, save, spend, donate and invest.

"In the six years of the programme's existence, we have reached over half a million learners in 2000 schools nationwide," explains Fikile Kuhlase, senior GM of the Banking Association. "The programme is essentially about instilling sound financial habits in South African youth. A disturbing 67% of South African adults do not save and it is critical that we end that trend and introduce a new conversation around how we handle our finances - and start that conversation early. With youth comprising 60% of our population 'Ligotshwa limanzi', the programme's motto resonates, as it is a Zulu idiom meaning 'best shape a stick whilst moist'."

Lesson plans easy, friendly

The lesson plan is a child-friendly, interactive curriculum that has been developed in consultation with the Department of Basic Education and integrated within the Economic Management Science (EMS) subject. In 2009, the Islamic Finance Chapter of the programme was introduced and has continued ever since.

For the first time, learners from grades 7-9 will be exposed to the campaign due to the curriculum review. Previously grades 4 to 7 were the target grades of the programme. As a volunteer-driven initiative, the programme is an advocate of the Mandela Day initiative, living out the spirit of giving and community service that Madiba embodies.

Youth ambassadors

Once again, the programme has enlisted youth ambassadors Minnie Dlamini and ProVerb to drive the savings message home. Both successful young South Africans who embody the campaign's principles of sound money management, they will deliver motivational talks to learners and engage with them about how they think about and treat money, encouraging responsible financial behaviour.

Dlamini is an actress on Mzansi Magic's popular soapie Rockville. She is also the face of international hair care brand Motions and a DJ on Metro FM.

Born in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, her achievements include launching her own clothing line with Legit, a starring role on M-Net drama 'The Wild' and presenting SABC 1's Live and Mzansi Insider shows.

ProVerb, one of South Africa's most familiar faces, is the host of reality TV show South African Idols, a DJ on Gauteng radio station Highveld Stereo, and is a well-regarded hip-hop artist.

Mpumalanga launch

This year, the programme will launch on 18 July at the Lundanda Combined School in Hazyview, Mpumalanga and continue in schools nationwide with keynote address to be delivered by the Honourable, MEC for Education, Reginah Mhaule.

A partnership with the Mpumalanga Department of Education has coupled the programme with its 'Caring4Girls' programme of the Imbumba Foundation.

This ground-breaking initiative distributes sanitary towels to needy girls to eliminate school absenteeism during their menstruation period. Together, the campaigns provide key interventions that educate young South Africans and work to curb teen pregnancy, thus providing both social and financial empowerment. They align with the MEC's curriculum enrichment programmes.

"It's critical that approaches to empowering young people be treated holistically and address real issues," explains Kuhlase. "We are heartened by the Mpumalanga provincial department of education's strengthening our programme and allowing for mutual benefit in leveraging off each others much-needed initiatives and look forward to taking this relationship further."