

Corporate SA's responsibility to break the cycle of poverty

The Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development which was launched recently by Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga, identified furthering basic education as a core element of the South African economic, social and growth objectives.



The key objectives for contributing to quality schooling in South Africa focuses on development for primary school teachers regarding management and leadership at school and district level. Norman Mbazima, chairperson of Anglo American's dedicated corporate social investment (CSI) arm, the Chairman's Fund, explains why corporates should contribute to improving basic education in order to help further these objectives.

Statistics show that although South Africa spends 6.4% of the GDP or 20% of its budget on education, international comparisons show that the country's learners are not performing well at all. According to the 2012-2013 competitiveness index of the World Economic Forum, South Africa ranks 146th out of 148 countries, with its mathematics and science education at 138 out of 148. This is a shocking state of affairs that cannot be the responsibility of government only to address.

Creating an appropriate pool of future employees

Corporate companies should participate actively to support and fast-track the development of South Africa's educational system to create an appropriate pool of future employees. Therefore, the Chairman's Fund fully supports government's educational strategies to contribute to the development of South Africa by supporting its developmental objectives, especially as they relate to the disadvantaged members of our society as it is doing in the fields of health and education.

It will be important to adhere to the outlined objectives to allow accurate assessment of academic progress because

education is central to assist South Africa in meeting its economic, social and growth objectives. The best way to achieve government's educational goals is a stable and challenging curriculum, improved infrastructure, especially in rural areas, teacher education and teacher development and management.

A vast improvement in the level of basic education in the country will ensure a positive socio-economic impact in the form of a more employable pool of school leavers and to increase the level of skilled productivity while our universities will get better quality entrants enabling them to produce better graduates.

Strengthening cooperation among business

Corporate companies can evaluate and track their investment in educational initiatives through a holistic initiative such as the recent National Education Collaboration Framework Trust (NECT), a civil society partnership aimed at strengthening cooperation among business, labour and civil society formations to improve education outcomes in the country, or by contributing to specific projects and monitoring them. Collaboration between various stakeholders in furthering the development of educators and students is important because the objectives can only be met when each role player is able to fulfill their responsibilities and those roles complement each other.

All companies can play an active role in ensuring the planning framework of the NECT makes a substantial contribution to teacher education and development, because many shortcomings in our education system are a result of inadequate teacher training, development and motivation.

It is important to ensure that the physical infrastructure and environment of every school inspires better academic performance from both students and teachers. It is easy to understand that learners who have class under a tree or have a large pupil-to-teacher ratio compared to those in modern classrooms, are severely disadvantaged. Adequate facilities and good equipment helps learners to concentrate on learning and teachers on teaching.

Anglo American's Chairman's Fund will include the elements of the Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in strategic planning for education development in the future to ensure further contribution and upliftment to the development of basic education in the country.

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