

Novus Holdings contributes to Africa's development

Novus Holdings highlighted that Africa forms part of its growth strategy, as the company seeks to unlock value in sub-Saharan Africa. This is planned predominately through security printing (such as ballot papers and examination papers), as well as literacy and education products.

"The sub-Saharan region offers great opportunity for us to extend our product offering and grow organically. As the African continent develops, together with its growing retail industry, we see an increase in the demand for paper and tissue products," says Keith Vroon, Chief Operating Officer at Novus Holdings.

Specialising in printing, as well as tissue paper manufacturing, the company has established itself as a comprehensive commercial printing and tissue manufacturing operation in Africa. The business currently operates entirely in South Africa but services customers across Africa.



Impact of manufacturing on literacy

In sub-Saharan Africa, 182 million adults are unable to read and write. In 1990, the adult literacy rate in all of Africa was 53%; it is estimated to be 63% in 2015 according to [UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Adult and Youth Literacy: National, Regional and Global Trends, 1985-2015](#).

Education is a critical element in developing Africa and a fundamental human right; however, the biggest barrier to increasing literacy is the lack of books, especially in rural areas.

Vroon believes that the physical production and distribution of educational materials is instrumental in the development and success of the continent. "Access to information, through written materials including textbooks, newspapers, reading books, posters, brochures and leaflets encourages literacy, and they help promote a reading culture.

"Learning materials are often limited throughout Africa but we have been able to work on improving this. In South Africa we have had support from government to help supply 26,000 schools across South Africa with more than 50 million workbooks annually."

It has also printed and delivered more than 2.8 million schoolbooks to Angola, as well as printed and delivered schoolbooks to Botswana, Zambia, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, DRC, Zimbabwe, Guinea and Mozambique.

Emerging African markets

"Given the demand for literacy, print manufacturing plays an important part in the development of Africa. We have a dedicated African team and approach business in African countries with partnerships in mind, specifically with funders and operators in the market. We offer experience, diversified product offerings and scale, whereas local operators have a better understanding of the market dynamics and distribution options."

Global print trends are playing out differently in emerging markets such as South Africa and parts of Africa, compared to Europe and the US, where digital and television are the dominant communication channels. In the emerging African markets, development challenges such as literacy, education and democracy contribute to a strong demand for printed products.

Vroon concludes that through the implementation of faster, more advanced technology and efficient, fully automated production processes, the company ensures its position as the leader and preferred supplier of printing requirements for the sub-Saharan region.

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