

Certification in ECD gives women access to funding

Britehouse will collaborate with the Diepsloot Preschools Project and Training Force, on a one-year project focused on early childhood development certification for preschool teachers in underprivileged areas. The 67-Day Digital Activation Movement is designed to accelerate the benefits that communities derive from corporate social investment initiatives.



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The pilot project which is ETDP-SETA registered, will be launched in April 2016, with 23 teaching assistants from 19 preschools in Diepsloot Gauteng being trained using a blended learning approach delivered in the Britehouse digital hub. These previously unemployed women have all been given a two-year employment contract by a preschool, under the banner of the Diepsloot Preschools Project, whilst attending the course.

Equipped with smart technology, internet and Wifi infrastructure, the hub provides a facility from where teachers, enterprise and community development projects can be hosted. The hub is managed by the high school on whose grounds it has been placed. The school earns revenue from projects hosted in the hub.

Training Force, a MERSETA accredited training company with more than ten years' experience across various industries, will facilitate the early childhood development classroom training, using both ETDP-SETA approved content and content developed over the past 23 years by the Diepsloot Preschools Project.

Training Force will also oversee the digitisation, funded by Britehouse, of early childhood development content that will enable teachers on the training course to unlock and leverage the power of technology in the classroom. All learners that have successfully completed the course will receive a tablet, donated by the Diepsloot Preschools project NPO, pre-loaded with teaching resources, facilitating true monitoring and evaluation of the impact of these teaching resources to the pupils.

Enterprise development

The digitisation process forms part of Britehouse's CSI focus on enterprise development, with a young

black software developer being commissioned to digitise Training Force's content.

"We consider the training of these teachers, who, in some cases are also the owners of the preschools, an enterprise development," says Emmeline Bester, Britehouse CSI manager. "However, we chose to get involved in this project because it offers multi-layered benefits. Apart from providing women with a living, it will ensure that the children at their preschools between three and seven years of age will reach primary school adequately prepared for their formal education. In turn, if replicated, this initiative may contribute to improvement in matric pass rate over the long term."

Patti Hanley, founder of the Diepsloot Preschools Project, which now includes 30 preschools in several provinces, says that the early childhood development certification initiative is the achievement of which she is proudest. "23 years ago, we started out helping women, who were essentially child minders, to renovate buildings or install essential facilities such as well-equipped kitchens with running water and toilets for their crèches. In many cases, we bought property on which preschools could be built and then helped build them. Our corporate sponsors have helped us equip them with books, playground equipment, furniture and hygienic kitchen facilities so that the children can get two healthy meals a day.

"We've also helped the women involved graduate from child minding to an early childhood development approach, making their services to the community more valuable.

"However, being able to provide formal certification converts the preschools into early childhood development centres and puts the small businesses on a sustainable footing, while giving the children a means to succeed at school that their circumstances would otherwise deny them," concludes Hanley.

"We see the Diepsloot pilot as the beginning of a new era of transformation in education," says Training Force director, Rita Du Chenne. "Equipping women in underprivileged communities with the tools to help children reach their potential in their preschool years, while making a living, is an extremely powerful way of paying it forward and building capacity at multiple levels in society. Through the partnership of corporate, private and NPO knowledge we aim to enhance educational content delivered while driving enterprise development."

67 Day Digital Activation Movement, designed by Britehouse, enables corporates to use digital hubs to provide measurable community benefits within short timeframes. The 67-day window is modelled on the United Nations' 67 minutes of activism used annually to celebrate Nelson Mandela's birthday.

For more information, go to www.britehouse.co.za, www.trainingforce.co.za, or www.diepslootpreschoolsproject.com.

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