

Youth programmes address needed skills

Sanlam Foundation recently launched a corporate social investment foundation, where projects that help the youth foster skills are pursued. Specifically, it focuses on financial literacy; environmental education awareness; leadership development for school management; HIV/Aids education; and maths, science, English and accounting working through a series of partnerships with local and international NGOs.



Lulu Letlape, executive head of group corporate affairs at [Sanlam](#) group, says, "We recognise that our efforts as a South African corporate citizen will be best amplified through partnerships with organisations that specialise in the areas in which we are hoping to make an impact. Partnerships are already in place with organisations such as Operation Hope, the Regency Foundation and the WWF, among others."

She said the common thread running through Sanlam's projects is staff involvement. "Involving our people key to our CSI strategy. Not only do we believe in engaging and mobilising entire communities around the rallying cry for education, but an equally important distinction is that employees as well as executives of Sanlam are encouraged to get involved."

Encouraging financial literacy

During National Savings Month, finance minister Pravin Gordhan revealed that South Africans are still not saving enough. Between 2001 and 2010, the household savings rate amongst South Africans declined by an average of 0.1 percent of GDP (gross domestic product) every year. The minister attributed this decline to various reasons including people's 'short-term' outlook, the lack of transparent and cost-effective saving products, and poor financial awareness among potential savers.

Letlape says the partnership with Operation Hope, will aim to address these issues. "It will bring financial literacy education to 20 schools in the Western Cape and Gauteng over a period of three years. With this initiative the two organisations will reach around 4000 pupils at an average of approximately 200 pupils per school. All financial literacy classes are presented by Sanlam employees who have enrolled and received appropriate training as volunteer facilitators. Approximately 80 company employees from the Western Cape and Gauteng offices have already signed up as part of Sanlam's National Start Something Day."

HIV education

One of the other major partnerships is with the Regency Foundation and the provincial Department of Education. Sanlam launched HIV&Me in 20 schools at KwaMashu and Umlazi in KwaZulu-Natal this month through the Regency Foundation, an NGO that assists schools and governing bodies to develop, integrate and implement their own school specific policies. It does this in keeping with the principles of the national policy on the management of HIV and AIDS in schools drafted by the Department of Education for public learning institutions.

Letlape says, "The project is unique in that the participating schools, which are identified with the support c

the Department of Education, are involved in a comprehensive two-year HIV&Me programme. It starts with training workshops for all stakeholders (teachers and the community), includes in-classroom delivery of the programme for Grade 8s, which is embedded into the curriculum through Life Orientation and concludes in the second year with the same pupils now in Grade 9. Another component that sets it apart from other programmes is the corporate partner engagement. Through this aspect, Sanlam will impart financial literacy skills to the pupils and the community."

Other projects

The WWF Sanlam Living Waters Partnership, one of the company's longest collaborations, now falls within the foundation. It forms a key part of environmental awareness education and sustainability. It seeks to catalyse concerted action from government, the private sector and civil society around the sound management of South Africa's aquatic resources.

Other projects include:

- A partnership with Protec focusing on maths and science education for learners in Grade 10-12 in the North West.
- The Thuthuka bursary programme (owned by SAICA) that will award eight bursaries a year to aspirant black chartered accountants for their studies.
- The Sanlam Ubuntu-Botho Schools Development Trust Project, a schools project aimed at providing light infrastructure and building teacher skills and capacity to 80 under-resourced schools across the country.
- The Billion Child Appeal, a one-year project that will assist parents to help kids with homework and assignments.
- The Executive School Programme where Sanlam group Exco members nominate a school (either an under-resourced school or their former high school) and establish how the company can make a meaningful impact at the school.

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