

Private-public collaborations for the upliftment of underprivileged schools

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On 10 March 2017, the Industrial Development Corporation celebrated five fruitful years of partnership with Adopt-a-School (AAS) Foundation and the Department of Education at an event in Bushbuckridge.



The three schools in Mpumalanga adopted by the IDC have improved their annual pass rates by an average of 20 percentage points, giving thousands of underprivileged learners educational opportunities that will allow them to rise above their impoverished circumstances.

“The progress made by the IDC, in collaboration with Adopt-a-School, in uplifting learners from disadvantaged areas needs to be applauded. Improving the environment in which learning and teaching takes place remains one of our key priorities in the sector. We welcome all committed stakeholders to join our efforts to take forward the cause of education transformation in our country,” said Basic Education Minister Mrs Angie Motshekga, speaking at the event.

“Unemployment among the youth is an ongoing challenge in South Africa,” said Geoffrey Qhena, CEO of the IDC. “Nearly half of people aged 15-24 years old are currently unemployed.* A lack of educational attainment is a major contributing factor to this challenge, and one of the ways of addressing this is through the kind of sustained intervention we have achieved in our partnership with Adopt-a-School,” he adds.

Makhosana Manzini High in the rural village of Calcutta, situated on the edge of the Kruger National Park is one such school to benefit from this partnership. Over the last five years, science and computer laboratories have been renovated, ablution facilities revamped and a new administration facility built.

In addition to improving the school's physical infrastructure, training and support programmes have been facilitated for both educators and learners. Skills like planning, leadership and governance, as well as career guidance and personal empowerment are covered during these sessions. Both learners and educators have received supplementary support in the vital subjects of mathematics and physical science.

“We are thrilled with the progress made at Makshosana Manzini over the past five years,” said Steven Lebere, Executive Director at Adopt-a-School. “The matric pass rate at the school has improved from 53.8% in 2012 to 82.5% in 2016. It's a great example of our Whole School Development Model at work.”

In 2015 the IDC adopted Mapaleni Primary School, the feeder school to Makhosana Manzini. To date, they have built a library and renovated an ICT centre and rolled out development and support programmes, including a programme supporting Grade 4 to 7 learners with learning barriers.

This partnership has built a platform for meaningful collaborative investment. In 2016, the Nelson Mandela Foundation provided library books for Mapaleni's new library as part of the Mandela Day Library Initiative.

The new ICT centres at both schools were implemented in partnership with Wipro Technologies, who made a significant contribution of software and hardware for the facilities.

Lehlasedi High School, a rural school near Bushbuckridge, has also benefitted from the construction of a science laboratory, six new classrooms and the implementation of a range of support and training programmes for both learners and educators. As with Makhosana Manzini High, special emphasis was placed on mathematics and science. These subjects are vital to a whole range of careers that are in critically short supply in South Africa's economy. In 2016, four distinctions were obtained in these subjects.

"We look forward to continuing our successful partnership with the IDC and Mpumalanga's education department; making further progress in uplifting South Africa's next generation," said Lebere. "We are extremely proud of what has been achieved so far and grateful to our partners for their invaluable contributions to this effort."

For more information on Adopt-a-School visit the Foundation's website at www.adoptaschool.org.za, email nbrown@adoptaschool.co.za or call 011 592 6430.

References:

* <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/479161467998767997/pdf/98880-WP-P131437-PUBLIC-8-17-15-Box393184B.pdf>

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