

## **Launch of Public Private Initiative**

**MEC Mac Jack**

**Wednesday, 13 November 2019**

**Elizabeth Conradie Special School**

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Members of the media;

Principal and SGB of Elizabeth Conradie Special School;

Principal and SGB of Mankurwane Primary School;

The Northern Cape Department of Education has always worked and continue to work with the private sector and education institutions to improve the quality of education in Province.

Government initiated several interventions to support the transformation and growth in the education system. In more recent years, there is much greater reliance on the private sector to contribute to research, interventions, monitoring and evaluation initiatives in the education sector, mainly through corporate social investment (CSI) initiatives.

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South Africa is an exceptional case study with regards to the private sector's engagement in the education sector. This has deep historical roots and is linked to the role education plays in South Africa's economic, social and political transformation, and in providing the critical skills needed for the country's economic growth. Numerous public–private partnerships have been established over the years to address the weak schooling system.

Corporations and their affiliated foundations have invested significantly in South Africa's education sector, through manifold types of interventions in support to the public system as well as through supplementary parallel activities. Corporate social investment is increasingly more aligned to the company areas of operation and facilitates a social function while also fulfilling business interests.

Business engagement in Northern Cape's education sector goes back many decades, as the corporate sector has always been at the heart of the country's economic and political transformation. Education has always been an apex development priority for both the government and the private sector.

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The Province economy is highly dependent on the availability of skilled labour, which is raised through a well-functioning school system. This provides a strong 'business case' for the private sector to partner with government and provide all kinds of support, interventions and development programmes to improve the quality of education in the Province.

Performance in the schooling system is at the heart of building the skills base for economic growth and development and ensuring that the society is able to achieve our equity and development goals. Our efforts must include, but are not limited to actions to improve access to textbooks, better teacher development plans, improve infrastructure as well as curriculum review. The President of South Africa has made a call to the nation to join hands in improving the education system and make partnerships a priority to achieve this.

As is the case in many developing countries, private schools remain the first choice of middle-class families due to their superior quality and standards as compared to public schools.

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Many corporate programmes, target learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and place them in high-end schools, providing them support with tuition fees, learning materials, uniforms, transport, meals and at times also boarding and psycho-social support.

Another form of support to learners suffering from weak public schooling are supplementary enrichment programmes, such as holiday camps and lock-inn sessions for specialised subjects, on weekends and during school holidays. These programmes are usually run at public schools by the Department, with accommodation, meals and transport being provided. Support to early childhood development (ECD), which is under resourced in the public sector, is also a popular corporate social investment.

With the increasing awareness of the importance of corporate support in public schools, in recent years there has been greater private investment in teacher training, both pre-service and in-service.

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Nevertheless, very few companies venture into more systematic school improvement in curriculum development and school governance, instead they prefer supporting well established NPO's to undertake such work.

Aside from the exceptions above, private sector interventions in the education sector are predominantly in the form of infrastructure and facilities upgrading (building new schools, ECD centres and refurbishing old schools), information and communications technology (ICT) and textbook provision.

Developing a young, well-educated and capable African population will in fact improve the available workforce, the contractors to partner with and the clientele to engage with. These are all critical for improving the country's investment environment and international competitiveness. A stable, prosperous and growing economy is important for all businesses, particularly the mining houses, the renewable energy sector and the financial sector, which control most of South Africa's economy.

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We have invited you here, to announce the launch of a Public Private Initiative that will deliver in the dire needs of our schools and learners. Today, we are officially partnering with Vermeulens and Build It to address the infrastructural needs in our schools. We have identified Elizebeth Conradie Special School and Mankuroane Primary School as the beneficiary schools for these renovations and upgrades. We have provided the infrastructural needs of these schools to Vermeulens and Build It, and collectively we will address the needs.

We do hope that more Private Sector Companies will join this initiative and adopt schools to build a better future for our youth through Education. It is only through your investment in Education that the dreams of our children in the Northern Cape will be realised.

In conclusion, our heartfelt gratitude to Vermeulens and Build It for this initiative and partnership. Today, we are honouring the legacy on our former President Nelson Mandela, who believed that the future and prosperity of our country is in the classroom.

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He said, “Education is the most powerful weapon one can use to change the world”. Let us work together and equip our children with the Education they deserve to conquer the world.

I thank you!

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