

Coronation honours SA teachers as key agents of social change

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Improving the quality of education in South Africa lies at the heart of breaking the cycle of poverty, but our education system is in crisis and puts sustainable socio-economic development at risk.



Despite around 17% of South Africa's total budget being spent on education, the learning needs of our youth are not being adequately served. Alarmingly, only about 15% of children who start Grade 1 enter higher education in South Africa. Among children from the poorest 70% of the population, this figure drops to less than 5%.

It is amid this stark reality that Coronation is dedicated to collaboratively solving the education crisis in South Africa. "All our CSI initiatives are strongly aligned with our belief that, as a responsible corporate citizen, we have a key role to play in empowering learners to achieve a quality education, standing them in good stead to succeed in life and become economically productive members of society," says Coronation group head of marketing Wendy Bergsteedt.

On the frontline of the challenge to prepare our youth for the world that awaits them are our teachers. The role of a teacher in our country is invaluable and key to uplifting our communities and combating poverty.

World Teachers' Day, which falls annually on 5 October, is a day to acknowledge the global teaching profession and achievements made and to bring awareness to critical education challenges being faced.

In celebration of World Teachers' Day 2019, Coronation this week visited the teachers in the schools it supports as part of its primary school focused Capsule Programme. To acknowledge the vital role that they play in the lives of the children of South Africa, 150 primary school teachers received a gift of gratitude from Coronation staff.

Long-term interventions

But Coronation doesn't simply apply itself to rewarding and supporting teachers one day a year. Coronation's flagship Capsule Programme, launched in March 2018 to maximise the impact of its community and education-based CSI initiatives, is an integrated, measurable and long-term CSI programme focused on the ecosystem of a primary school. It aligns learner, educator and parent training programmes within one school so that not only are learners set up for success, but communities are strengthened.

Through Capsule, Coronation is already transforming the lives of over 3,200 learners.

With the teaching profession being under-resourced and underpaid, Coronation has extended its focus to also educating the educators. The company's Future Leaders Programme, developed and managed by non-profit organisation The Global Teachers Institute (GTI) tackles the severe shortage of qualified teachers in South Africa by providing bursaries to students studying towards a Bachelor of Education through Unisa.

The programme also offers practical classroom training, dedicated mentoring and specialised tuition for teaching students. Around 5,000 of the 430,000 teachers in the South African schooling system are unqualified or underqualified but stay in the system due to the shortage of teachers, highlighting the need for the upskilling of this critical profession. The programme's goal is to develop high-quality teachers from disadvantaged communities for rural, urban, low income and high-density schools in South Africa.

"As mentors and role models to our youth, teachers are truly at the heart of social upliftment and combating poverty in South Africa," says Bergsteedt. "By supporting teachers, we can collectively steer South Africa through its complex challenges towards a better future."

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