

Corporate Social Investment

Dwarsrivier Chrome Mine (DCM)

Educational Community Development Project

Kitso ya Boleng Bridging School



Background information

Education has always been at the core of our company strategy in terms of community development, yet it was becoming exceedingly more difficult to convince management to award bursary opportunities. Our bursary statistics indicated that students struggle to pass their first quarter of their first year at universities, despite exceptional high matric passing averages. The result was that promising students lost their bursaries and ended up as part of the unemployed pool of community members relying on grants and government support.

To address this challenge, the Tertiary Education Preparation (TEP) Program was designed and funded by the Boleng Trust which is a DCM community development trust funding community projects specifically focussed on education. The aim of the program focusses on bridging the gap between high school and university by preparing the students for the academic and as well as social aspects of further study while allowing them to improve their Mathematics, Physical Science and Life Science matric results to give them the best possible chance to attend university and to be accepted into their desired field of study.

Facilities

The bridging school is equipped with lecture rooms equipped with state-of-the-art information and technology solutions. Students stay in hostels on the facility which boasts a recreation facility, canteen, outdoor gym as well as a TEP bus used to transport the students.



TEP Program Components

Academic Development

The program offers Mathematics, Life Science, and English for academic purposes, Computer Skills, Life Orientation, Physical Science and Entrepreneurship which is facilitated by lecturers who have school and Technicon classroom experience.

The students are assessed on a continuous basis through in class activities, revision, and homework and in class tests on each unit covered before a test on a collection of units before the IEB exam and then the final DoE exam.

The basic computer skills component is addressed early in the program to give these students, who most likely have not used a computer before. These skills are supported by the English for academic purposes component where they are introduced to note taking techniques, listening skills for lectures and general lecture etiquette. Furthermore, the Lector SA Reading Lab-on-Line lessons are used to test the following reading components; perceptual accuracy, visual accuracy and efficiency, vision memory, vocabulary, reading speed, language and grammar application. Reading is one of the most challenging components for university students as their study skills are highly dependent on their reading speed.

A component that was thought to be quite important in this program during course conception was that of Entrepreneurship. This subject aims to creating young adults with a business mind set which will give them the stepping stone to one day finding their own path being providers of employment in the future.

Social Development

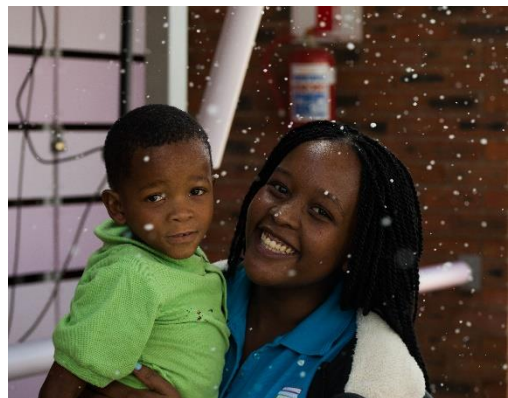
The program includes a social development component which allows the students one on one time with an appropriately qualified individual as well as group social development activities to help the students address underlying difficulties and coping challenges.

Through this program they will develop new skills such as leadership and defining their personal identity to grow their self-confidence.

As part of their social development the students also have recreational and cultural development programmes which aim to keep them active, informed, social and occupied while on the yearlong program. In addition, the sports coordinator has a variety of sports and fitness equipment to provide the students with sports and fitness coaching to instil the importance of a balanced lifestyle as a student.



Another important aspect of this component is that of the Pay- it- Forward program which sees the students giving some of their time towards performing acts of kindness to local community. Special intervention opportunities are arranged by the CSI department of our company.



University and Corporate Visits



Many of the students that apply for bursaries have not had the opportunity to visit the universities the students apply at, which means they may have a skewed idea of the institution and end up being desperately unhappy. Thus, we have found university visits crucial where they are taken on a tour of the campus. They are also taken to a few corporates where they can get a taste of what the corporate environment entails.



Bursary and Evaluation

The bursary and evaluation component aim to assist the students in registering at universities and applying for bursaries from other Corporates and government institutions. Students are motivated to apply for as many bursaries as possible to ensure they receive the best opportunities available.

This component includes bursary interview preparation, application assistance for both bursaries and universities.

Once they have completed the TEP program and start their first year of university they are supported by a Student Support Centre which has a call centre for students to call when they need support and who keeps bursars informed of student performance. This service is beneficial to both students and bursars.

TEP Selection Process

Students are required complete an application form followed by a selection process which includes interviews and Psychmetric tests to ensure the best suited candidates are awarded the opportunity.

