

Investing in the Future & Drivers of Change

See well, learn better

Business Award Winner
Ster-Kinekor Theatres

Iwan Pienaar

Part of the Primedia Group, Ster-Kinekor Theatres made the strategic decision in 2005 to align its corporate social investment (CSI) around sight and vision – a core part of its cinema product. This resulted in the organisation launching the Vision Mission project in 2005.

“Approximately 80% of what children learn is assimilated through their eyes. Eyesight problems consequently affect school achievement, sporting ability, and, by implication, social integration. Research revealed that blindness could be avoided in the majority of cases in our country if proper testing is done at an early age. Since a child’s visual system is fully developed between 10 and 11 years, if a problem is identified early and corrected, vision can be preserved,” says Geraldine Engelman, CSI manager at Ster-Kinekor Theatres.

This has seen Vision Mission screening in excess of 280 000 children from previously disadvantaged backgrounds across the country to date.

“Until early this year, we had a partnership with Spec Savers for the provision of professional services at its 250 national branches and mobile clinics. They played a key role in our success. We have subsequently [entered] into a new partnership between the Brien Holden Vision Institute and the South African Optometric Association. We have also received endorsement from the departments of health, education and social development,” says Engelman.

The other partners in the Vision Mission programme are Kabelo Mabalene, Bonteheuwel



Organisation for Youth Development, The South African Motion Picture Medium and Live Performance School (AFDA), and OR Tambo International Airport through the Airports Company of South Africa.

Grassroots focus

The Vision Mission programme is operating in Gauteng, the Free State, the Northern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, and Mpumalanga. “Although our focus is on metropolitan areas where we have our infrastructure, the need in rural areas is huge. We therefore expend some of our efforts

in those communities, especially [in] KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga,” says Engelman.

Mission Vision identifies schools in underprivileged areas with assistance from the national government departments. It also integrates with the efforts of the national government 20/20 project by using ophthalmic nurses from the department of health to do initial screenings in schools.

These pre-screened learners are then brought for further eye tests at schools, local clinics, Ster-Kinekor cinema foyers, optometrist practices or community centres. The tests are

carried out by registered optometrists who are brought in by the Vision Mission partners.

Prescriptions are documented, frames selected, and then sent to labs for completion. The learners who need spectacles return to receive their prescriptions, and then watch a movie with clear vision. Alternatively, the mobile clinics deliver the spectacles.

The sustainability of the project is measured by improved academic pass rates in class, the decrease of absenteeism in school, and the number of learners who return after two years for further eye tests.

Dell opens new academy

Business Award Finalist
Deli South Africa

Iwan Pienaar

The Dell SA Development Fund (DDF) was established to create literate and connected communities through education, supporting developing businesses, and investing in the community. This has seen the IT giant benefitting many South Africans with a percentage of every rand going towards local initiatives.

“We believe that in order for a company to thrive, it has to make a positive difference in the countries it operates in and the communities it serves. In fact, the DDF was created in the belief that improving social conditions is the best way to cultivate strong business conditions,” says Clerrene Bhabha, who provides support for the DDF.

Earlier this year, Dell announced the launch of the Khulisa Academy. It will open in 2016 in partnership with the department of trade and industry and the Centre for High Performance Computing (CHPC).

Spotlight on skills development

The academy will comprise Grade 12 learners and graduates. Students will receive market-related salaries while studying and are guaranteed employment once their courses are completed. In addition, at least 10 students will be supported in the start-up of their own businesses during the period they are studying.

The academy stakeholders will be split 50% between genders and there will be an overall 75% black representation.

Basic level courses required by all students will gradually be accredited through the academy while specialist courses will be offered by various service providers. Once its accreditation is in place, the academy will be able to offer services to the wider market, which will result in income-generation opportunities beyond the funding it is currently receiving from Dell.

“There is limited awareness of HPC and careers within the ICT sector, which Dell hopes to bridge with this programme. The brand development, collateral, and marketing material will be developed by a professional team in line with the international Dell brand guideline,” says Bhabha.

She says that the primary objective behind this marketing is to incentivise quality entries to the programme. The current Dell internship and graduate sponsorship programme will be used as guideline to source participants.

“The establishment of the Khulisa Academy is informed by several interventions. The main one is the history of transformation of the company and how it aligns to the B-BBEE Codes of Good Practice. Secondly, the strategic partnership with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and the CHPC has provided a proven track record of the impact that technology has on the lives of the youth,” concludes Bhabha.

Adopt-a-School Foundation is working

Business Award Finalist
Adopt-a-School

Fatima Asmal

In 2001, Cyril Ramaphosa was asked to donate a fax machine to Tshilidzi Primary School in Soweto, which he had attended as a child. When he went to the school to hand over the fax machine, he saw that this wasn’t all that was needed. This inspired him and a group of others to initiate the Adopt-a-School Foundation in 2002, with the aim of mobilising the private sector, organisations and individuals to support schools. There has been no looking back.

To date Adopt-a-School has benefitted over 700 000 learners in 620 schools adopted across South Africa, Mozambique and Lesotho, creating 6728 temporary jobs and benefitting and supporting 1012 small businesses in the process. The key objective of the foundation is to implement Whole School Development, a holistic model aimed at improving the academic, infrastructural and social environment in schools.

In 2012 the foundation partnered with the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) to officially adopt the Moses Maren Mission Technical Secondary School in Lenasia, Gauteng. Since then, the school has

received a fully resourced science laboratory and a two-year mathematics and science educator development programme. Six new classrooms have been built to reduce the severe overcrowding. The IDC also supports a health and sanitation programme every year and runs career guidance workshops at Moses Maren.

“Adopt-a-School not only provided the necessary infrastructure and resources, but also helped facilitate a change in the attitude of us as learners and in the school as a whole,” says Koketso Baylo, a matriculant at the school. He points out that when a school lacks the basics, people find it easier to believe that mediocre work is acceptable. “So when you have new developments like this, it takes away that story you told yourself: ‘My school is in the dust, I don’t have what I need to succeed.’ Now that your excuse is gone, mediocre work becomes unacceptable ... It’s the light at the end of the tunnel.”

At Olifantsvlei Primary School, a feeder school for Moses Maren, a full model of Whole School Development was implemented over a period of 10 years. Principal Freddy Mapula says his school struggled before Adopt-a-School came along: “It was a slow process,



our being adopted, taking about two years. They assessed us during this time, sometimes arriving unannounced, to see how we were doing things,” he recalls.

“Then began a process of renovating and building much of our new infrastructure. They also realised that we have many challenges, particularly on the part of the community that we are servicing where many parents are illiterate, unemployed, lacking income and resources. The result is that

these kids bring these realities with them to school. Adopt-a-School organised counselling services and social welfare programmes. Then they assisted in the development of teachers, they helped with strategic planning, doing computer training, many things ... I am nearing retirement and I keep on reminding my colleagues that Adopt-a-School is not here for me, they are here for these children who are entrusted into our care.”