

Empowerment through education

Transnet Foundation Education Portfolio



Many South African youths have shown resilience in the face of poverty and a lack of education – they tell inspiring stories of succeeding against all odds. Through their Education Portfolio the Transnet Foundation is involved with two programmes that are building bridges for our youth. The one programme provides extensive training and support for student teacher interns; the other enables promising orphaned children to get a solid education – and a healthy dose of hope.

A holistic approach to changing education for the better

In 2009, the Department of Basic Education identified certain key drivers in improving educational outcomes. These drivers highlighted the roles of both teachers and learners in creating an educational environment that truly empowers. Transnet's imperative and strategy underscores this approach. Teachers form the foundation of any education system. For a high quality system, it is imperative that they are well trained and have the necessary skills, knowledge and resources at their disposal. On the other hand, learners must be encouraged and supported in their journey and be given the right opportunities to fulfil their potential. This holistic approach has proven successful and continues to make a difference in the lives of many disadvantaged individuals.

Training a new calibre of teachers

In 2008, the Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa (ISASA) launched a Mathematics and English internship teacher-training model to train quality teachers. The course offers school-based training and completion of a university degree to selected trainee teachers, especially in the fields of Maths, Science and English. This model for teacher training is the first of its kind in South Africa and offers student teachers an opportunity to train at ISASA-affiliated schools and high-performing public schools under the guidance of highly skilled mentors. Transnet Foundation joined the programme as a sponsor in 2013.

"The model has set itself apart from other pre-service training models by giving extensive practical learning exposure to the student teacher interns. The students exit from the programme ready to walk into a classroom to teach and empower learners and enhance their academic performance."

*Theresa Moila, Senior Manager, Education Portfolio,
Transnet Foundation*

Student teachers acquire premier practical experience

ISASA conducts a rigorous selection process to identify candidates for the Student Teacher Internship Programme. Transnet Foundation pays for the students' placement in private schools as well as academic enrichment programmes that provide extra support and mentoring to the teachers. Student teachers' academic performance is tracked to ensure they meet top standards.

Mentoring is key to the internship. Experienced teachers offer guidance and support by specifically:

- Monitoring the trainee teachers' progress by reviewing lesson plans
- Offering general assistance with planning, curriculum content, teaching strategies, and professional conduct

The Transnet Foundation's portfolio is rooted in our belief in the value of teachers. In the words of Senior Manager for the Education Portfolio, Theresa Moila: "Teachers have the power to either make or break a child and it is for this reason that as Transnet, we want to highlight the value of teachers and urge them to use their power appropriately. The teaching profession is regarded as noble, but continues to be devalued for many reasons and we are saying to the teachers 'we know your value, use your value to empower learners'".

Giving vulnerable youth a bright future

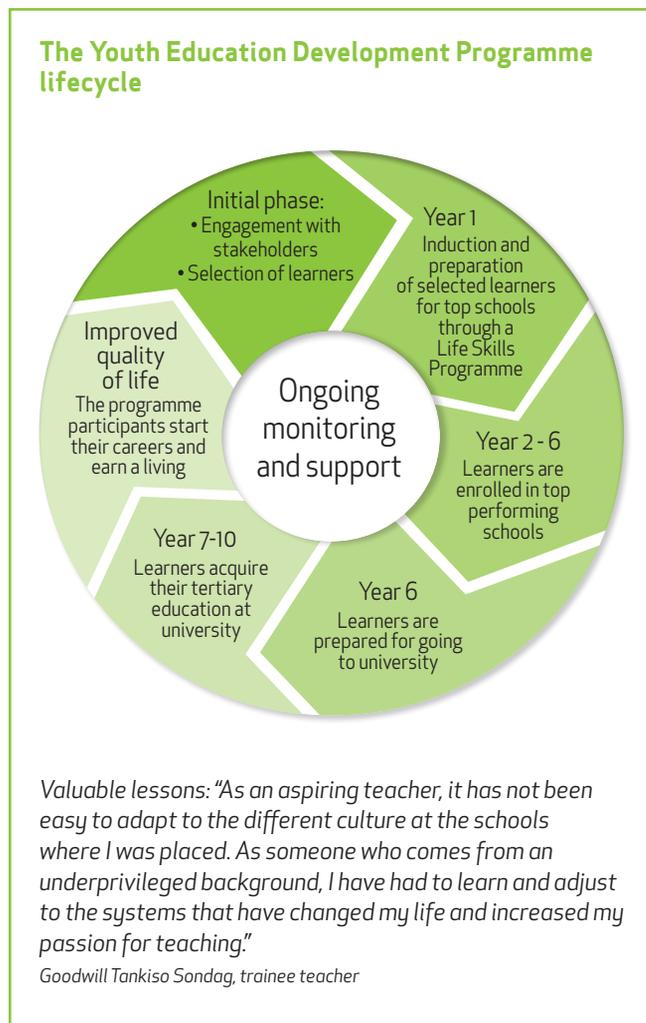
The Orphaned Youth Education Development Programme (OYEDP) speaks to the learner side of the education cycle. In 2012, Transnet Executives identified the need for a youth programme. The programme was conceptualised after extensive research and consultation with stakeholders from the Departments of Education and Social Development. Ten youths from three provinces were selected for the seven-year programme. Transnet modified the model in 2013 to target learners from grade 8 due to the cumulative academic knowledge gap identified in the first group. The programme now supports 40 students in top-performing schools. The first group of 10 youth obtained a 100% pass in grade 12, with eight Bachelor passes and nine distinctions.

They are currently enrolled at tertiary institutions. From grades 8 to 12 they receive boarding fees, school amenities, medical aid cover, clothing and a monthly allowance. We also place a distinct focus on their psychosocial welfare. These students are supported through their education and attend academic enrichment and life skills camps as additional coping support. The selection process includes:

- Investigation of the learners' academic results and school attendance records
- Maths, English and critical thinking ability tests
- Interviews with the learners
- Interviews by the placement schools
- Testimonials from the learners' teachers

Giving young learners emotional support

The life skills and leadership camps are a critical component of the Youth Programme. The six-day camps focus on personal growth and development and topics include social awareness, building self-confidence, facing their fears, dealing with the past, social etiquette, use of social media, financial management and nurturing their leadership skills.



Facts and figures

- Transnet Foundation funded 10 student teacher interns in 2013
- The student teachers were registered with UNISA and placed in ISASA member schools and top-performing public schools for experiential learning until they complete their studies
- Four of the student teacher interns have completed their studies, receiving distinctions in Maths and Science
- Twice a year the student teachers attend four-day academic enrichment camps hosted by ISASA; here they receive Maths, Science, English and life skills lessons from experienced facilitators
- The student teachers have the opportunity to attend a Maths conference organised by the Association for Maths Educators in South Africa (AMESA)



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