



Press Release – Tsogo Sun – 28/06/2018

Meeting the challenge of youth unemployment

By Vusi Dlamini, Tsogo Sun Group HR Director.

“Our most grave and most pressing challenge is youth unemployment,” President Cyril Ramaphosa said in his first State of the Nation Address on 16 February 2018, and added, “It is therefore a matter of great urgency that we draw young people in far greater numbers into productive economic activity.” It is this very issue that has been weighing heavily on Tsogo Sun’s corporate mind and has driven the focus of the group’s national [CSI programme](#) for some years.

Youth unemployment has escalated in recent years. Equal Education stated recently that in the third quarter of 2017, 30% of SA’s 10.3 million youths aged 15-24 were not in employment, education, or training. “This untapped potential is a national tragedy. The number of youths who are neither learning nor engaged in income-generating activities has risen since 1996, from 2 million.”

There is no doubt that this dire situation affects everyone in South Africa, and that a concerted effort on the part of the private sector, local and national government, communities, and civil society to work together to address this reality can have an impact on levels of youth unemployment. While there are myriad ways to get involved in improving education standards, starting from early childhood development through to tertiary education; it’s rare that organisations outside government can make a meaningful contribution to the entire spectrum of educational requirements.

Tsogo Sun’s decision to invest – through funding and staff volunteerism – in career guidance and development in high schools, was based on discussions and input from learners, educators, and principals. Through the years and through our various community-based programmes, we have worked with young people in secondary schools and engaged with many who are passionate about working, about their futures, and about making something of themselves – but they were equally concerned about how to achieve this. It was also clear that a large number of these young learners would need to join the working world straight after school, but have no idea how to do this, or have an understanding of what it entails.

Based on this, we recognised the need to create a pipeline of career development that starts in Grade 9 when learners have to make their subject choices for Grade 10, and continues through to Grade 12.

Tsogo Sun’s career development and guidance programme was introduced in January 2017 in four high schools: Mosupatsela and Mandisa Shiceka secondary schools in Kagiso, supported by [Silverstar Casino](#); Johannesburg Secondary School in Homestead Park, supported by [Gold Reef City](#); and Itirele Zenzele Comprehensive School in Diepsloot, supported by Montecasino. The programme, developed and run by the Education Agency in collaboration with Tsogo Sun and the schools, impacts close on 3 000 learners.

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The programme starts in Grade 9 with online assessments that provide the learners with a comprehensive portfolio on who they are with regards to their interests, skills, and aptitude, and gives them some insight into possible tertiary studies and what subjects they will require, enabling them to make well-advised subject choices for Grade 10. In Grade 10, tertiary options are highlighted, particularly the option of TVET colleges that offer greater chances of successful employment. Workshops are conducted that show the diversity of career options, what different jobs entail, scarce skills, and other information to assist them in making career choices.

In Grade 11, staff at the three Tsogo Sun properties get involved in sharing work experiences and hosting the learners in job-shadowing, and in Grade 12, assistance is given in applying online for bursaries and to tertiary institutions. Work readiness workshops are also conducted for learners who are going directly into the working world.

As the programme continues, Tsogo Sun is engaging with educators and parents with the assistance of the school principals in an effort to ensure that the best outcomes are achieved. Already we are seeing a positive response – and we believe that this three-pronged approach of concerted effort at home, school, and us as the supplier will ensure the programme pays the best dividends possible.

Tsogo Sun 2017 Career Guidance programme in numbers:

- 2 981 learners completed the online assessment
- 2 981 learners attended the portfolio workshop
- 1 643 learners attended the presentation on tertiary options
- 476 Grade 11 learners attended mentor day talks
- 56 Grade 11 learners attended job-shadowing on property
- 25 mentors volunteered their time
- 131 Grade 12 learners attended workshops and did online tertiary applications

Numbers for 2018 to date:

- 2 295 learners completed the online assessment
- 2 295 learners attended the portfolio workshop
- 1 005 learners attended the presentation on tertiary options
- 252 Grade 12 learners attended workshops and did online tertiary applications