**Honouring the role that teachers play**

“Everyone who remembers his own education remembers teachers, not methods and techniques. The teacher is the heart of the educational system.” Sidney Hook, philosopher

It’s World Teachers Day 2017 (on 5 October) and [Tsogo Sun](https://www.tsogosun.com/), which has education as the primary focus of its [CSI programmes](https://www.tsogosun.com/citizenship/community), is recognising the committed and hard-working educators around the country who strive – often against the odds – to give their learners the best chance for a successful future.

Shanda Paine, Tsogo Sun’s Group CSI Manager, says, “Our work with is primarily with school learners – in leadership development programmes, in career guidance and job readiness, in chess, in life skills development, in soccer, in environmental initiatives, and more – but we know that without the input, support, dedication, and special efforts by the educators, our programmes would not be nearly as effective.”

She adds that their role goes way beyond teaching the curriculum. “Their discipline and conduct, the life lessons they impart, and their listening and communication skills with the learners, all make a huge difference in how learners learn and grow in their own conduct and attitudes.”

The success of Tsogo Sun’s numerous initiatives within disadvantaged schools around the country are greatly dependent on how the principals and educators support, and present them to the learners. “Because of their participation and commitment, we are able to work together to impact on the lives of the learners and their future. For this reason, we salute and acknowledge the often unappreciated and extremely demanding role that they play in producing the next generation of educated, principled, hard-working, and great leaders.”

Educator Mali Ntombi, Life Orientation and isiZulu educator at Mandisa Shiceka High School in Kagiso on the West Rand, which has been part of the Tsogo Sun-sponsored Columba Leadership programme, learned from the programme that “treating learners better, not judging them, seeing the good in them, and working more closely with the learners, helping them to see that no matter their backgrounds, they can make it if they take school seriously, made a big difference – to the learners and the educators. I no longer regard my job as just a career, it is a calling.”

Paine adds, “It is a privilege working with committed educators in our various initiatives. They are a shining light in their communities and a beacon of hope for the learners. They are crucial to the growth of confidence, academic and personal discipline, and leadership competence in our young people.”

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