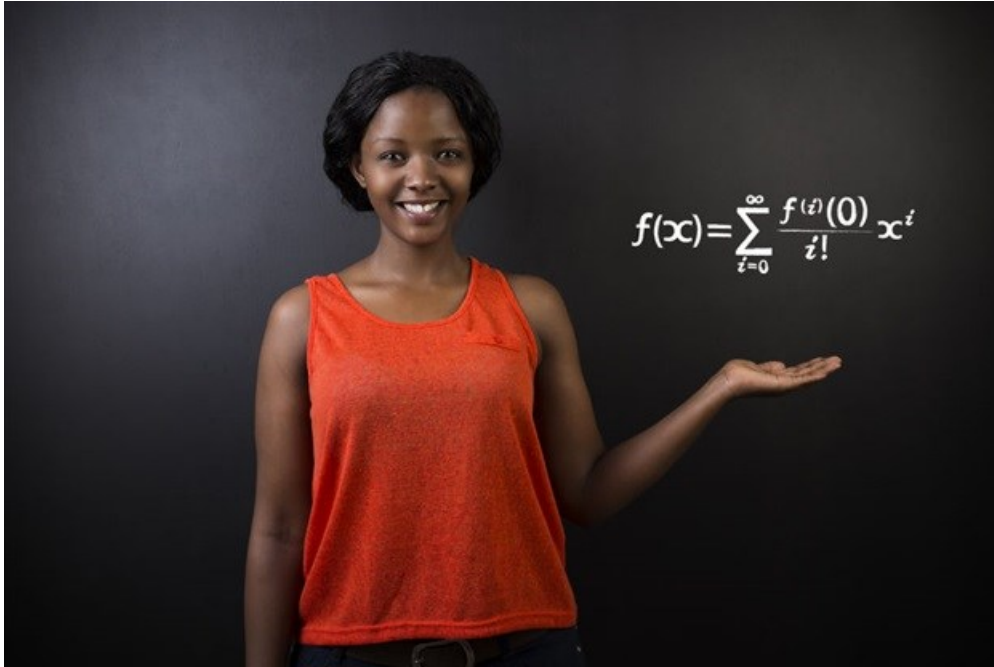


Chevron to invest R3.6 million in Stem centre

Chevron will invest R3.6 million into a new Chevron-funded facility for the Centre for the Advancement of Science and Mathematics Education (Casme) in Durban to address the educational challenges facing the communities surrounding its Lubricant Manufacturing Plant (LMP) based on the South Basin of the Port of Durban.



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South Africa spends 6.3% of its GDP on education, compared to South Korea, which spends 4.6%. However, 27% of pupils who have attended school in South Africa for six years cannot read, compared with 4% in Tanzania and 19% in Zimbabwe. (The Economist, January 2017).

“South Africa needs to set new benchmarks for success in order to meet this educational urgency,” said Chevron South Africa chairman, Shashi Rabbipal, at the opening of the Casme initiative. The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, Umlazi District, supports this funding and it has been used to expand the Lamontville Education Centre to include a Science Resource Centre.

The beneficiary communities of the investment include Bluff, Wentworth, Merebank, Isipingo, Montclair, Glenwood, Umlazi, Lamontville and Chesterville. Chevron draws its employees from and has its local roots in these communities.

“The private sector has a pivotal role to play in implementing workable solutions in education in South Africa. By far the best solution involves seeking and nurturing high value partnerships with other stakeholders in education.”

Addressing Stem needs

“We need to look at the demands of a modern economy on the one hand and the enormous projected growth in number of learners, especially at high school level. In 2025, there will be 21.3 million secondary learners in South Africa (The Global Rise in Education) and these learners will need clear pathways into science, technology, engineering and mathematics (Stem) careers.

“Therefore, as a leader in an industry with a strong science and technology orientation, it is critical for Chevron South Africa to invest in education in the communities from which it sources its workforce and to complement its massive investments into infrastructure, resources and other areas of the economy.

“We are addressing learners who stand to benefit through a tuition programme for Grades 10-12. Three hundred learners from five schools started their Saturday classes in the early part of the year, with tutors offering expert guidance in mathematics, science and English.

“The country’s National Development Plan has set a number of ambitious targets for mathematics and science learner achievement by 2030, including the creation of 30 000 artisans a year.

“These targets are critical if the country is to meet its goals of alleviating poverty, inequality and unemployment. However, government alone cannot solve the crisis in mathematics and science education in South Africa; it requires the collective effort of all stakeholders.”

He concluded that teachers are at the core of quality and innovative teaching and learning, and so at the heart of the programme is ongoing support for local teachers through training and mentorship from the Casme team of seasoned facilitators. The programme is three-pronged tackling the issue of resources for teaching, support for teachers and creating opportunities for learners.

The Centre for the Advancement of Science and Mathematics Education (Casme) is a non-profit education development institution based in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. Casme focuses on teacher professional development and support, through training and provision of resources for science and mathematics teaching, in under-resourced and previously disadvantaged communities. For more information, go to www.casme.org.za.

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