



basic education
Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Address by the Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie Motshekga, MP, at the launch of the 2nd phase of the Anglo American Education Programme, held at Sci-Bono Discovery Centre.

Friday, 22 July 2022

Programme Director

Ms Nolitha Fakude, the Chairperson of Anglo American's Management Board in South Africa,

CEO and Senior Executives of Anglo American Public Limited Company (plc)

Senior officials from the Basic Education Department

Teachers, Parents and Learners

Distinguished Guests

It is indeed my singular honour and privilege to address you today on this historic occasion, namely, the launch of the 2nd phase of the Anglo American Public Limited Company (plc) much-vaunted education programme.

As jointly conceived with Basic Education, the overarching objective of this initiative is to focus on quality to ensure improvement in learning outcomes.

With the new investment, we will build on the successes of the previous generations of education managers.

As a country, we have made great strides in advancing universal access to basic education over the past 28 years.

Our journey must continue through innovative partnerships as required by our policy lodestar, the National Development Plan (NDP).

Our partnership with Anglo American plc is a tangible example of what can be achieved when business and government partner to make a lasting difference in children's lives.

The continuation of Anglo American's impactful education programme makes the company one of the most significant private-sector contributors to South Africa's basic education system.

This is something we can all be proud of.

However, we must never lose sight of the fact that our collective endeavours as a society are to right the wrongs of the past through healing the festering wounds of underdevelopment, poverty and neglect.

We must work without ceasing to free the potential of each child in our homeland.

Our Constitution recognises that all human beings are born free and equal, but as education mandarins, our constitutional duty is to extend equal opportunities to all our learners to thrive.

We must find innovative solutions to bridge the gap between urban and rural schools, rich and poor schooling communities, information-rich and information poor.

Thus, today's event is significant and critical in the context of the substantial investment required to improve our basic education. Still, it is a game-changer for the mining host communities.

Secondly, today's occasion fortifies our belief in the importance of mutually beneficial partnerships for the growth of the basic education sector.

We believe education is a societal enterprise, and in a fiscal constraint environment, we need the private sector to partner with us to address the challenges facing us today.

Furthermore, the investment we are launching today is crucial as it comes post-Covid-19 restrictions, which threatened to wipe away gains registered since the dawn of democracy in 1994.

Programme director, this is the time to rebuild, refocus and endure as the country navigates headwinds of global turmoil marked by low economic growth, high fuel prices and even higher inflation.

Thus, an investment in our basic education system at this juncture of global economic turbulence is bittersweet. Yet, it shows Anglo American plc's singular commitment to our homeland's future.

As a Government, we long concluded that the key to a better basic education system is to build sustainable partnerships for the sector's growth.

We mobilise civil society and social partners, especially private enterprises, to invest in our sector and to rally behind our vision to improve learning outcomes.

We admit that it is daunting, but many hands make light work.

Since time immemorial, we believed that the most excellent investment we can make as a society in our country's future is to give our children access to high-quality basic education.

This is why we have invested heavily in basic education and skills development locally since the Democratic Breakthrough in 1994.

To paraphrase former President Nelson Mandela, basic education is the most incredible engine for personal development and has an invaluable ability to change the world.

In honour of Madiba's wisdom and bravery, we will spare neither strength nor courage to build a high-performing basic education system in our lifetime.

We are acutely aware of the multiplier effect of good basic education.

Basic education is the single Government's lever to help deal with the apartheid legacy of underinvestment in the education of blacks and underdevelopment.

Similarly, it is the only lethal weapon we have to tackle today's challenges of acute inequality, social ills, rising unemployment, and poverty.

Therefore, an improved basic education system and better learning outcomes become a panacea for the massive socio-economic issues that beset our homeland.

Thus, it is pleasing that Anglo American's brain trust can ask pertinent questions such as this: how can we help improve educational outcomes for children living in the communities around our mining operations?

The answer isn't throwing money at the problem but investing with one eye into the future of both the investor and investee communities.

It is exciting that Anglo American's Sustainability Mining Plan aligns with our long-term basic education strategy to use education to improve people's lives, a Better Life for All, as it were.

To use the mining industry's terminology, your best business practice and civic duty are investing in host communities.

According to Anglo American, one of the three pillars of the company's Sustainable Mining Plan is thriving communities with a focus on education, health and employment.

In short, we both believe that the communities that thrive are those which provide their children with the best possible education so that they can go on to become the great leaders, professionals and entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

I am happy to report that since its launch, the Anglo American South Africa 1st phase Education Programme in 2018, we have positively impacted an estimated 220,000 learners.

The project (1st phase alone) has to date, supported 3 391 teachers at 109 schools and 110 early childhood development sites (ECD) in host communities.

It is a testament to the project's design, which adopted a holistic approach to improving learning outcomes.

The project scope does so through teacher development, learner/parent support, school management support, infrastructure upgrades and information and communications technologies (ICTs).

We have already noticed significant improvements on the ground in literacy and numeracy.

Maths and Science pass rates have more than doubled in many schools in the short four years, as did matric pass rates and university exemptions.

We have even noticed significant social improvements manifest through improved school attendance and lower teenage pregnancies.

For instance, in Limpopo, the matric pass rate for participating schools in 2021 was 76%, compared to the provincial average of 66.7%.

Eight out of 32 participating schools in the province were in the top 30% of national school performance, with five schools in the top 20%.

In the Northern Cape, schools on the programme saw a 76.1% pass rate, compared to the provincial average of 71.4%.

The number of students that wrote school leaving exams (matric) in 2021 was 36% higher than in 2020. This was at a time when school dropout rates tripled in our country.

The programme also resulted in numerous early childhood development centres being registered to receive government subsidy support.

Our joint investment in these host communities isn't about keeping youngsters off the street but changing their lives for the better and for good.

All Anglo American supported schools' learners were given the skills and opportunities needed to get jobs and participate in the novel digital economy.

Programme director, it is my honour and privilege to announce the official launch of phase two of this exciting and innovative investment in our children's future.

The 2nd Phase Anglo American Education Programme sees an additional investment of a whopping R430 million, doubling its scope and commitment to improving educational outcomes.

I am told that by 2027, Anglo American plc investment in improving basic educational outcomes in our nation will top R1 Billion.

The investment (2nd phase) will target an improvement in educational outcomes in 84 schools and 80 ECD centres in host communities in the Limpopo, Northern Cape, and North West provinces.

The 2nd phase of this education programme has set ambitious learner-focused targets, including:

- 90% of learners aged five meet the minimum requirements for school readiness.
- 90% of Grade 3 learners passed with at least 50% in Numeracy and Literacy.
- 75% of Grade 6 learners passed with at least 50% in Mathematics and English First Additional Language.
- 90% matriculation pass rate, with a 50% university entrance.
- 65% of Grade 12 learners passed with at least 50% in Mathematics.

As partners, we have learned some vital lessons in implementing the 1st phase of this programme.

One of the lessons is that education programmes require a holistic approach where the entire community is committed to achieving the same goal.

This must be supported by adequate infrastructure and a solid school management system.

We must also address socio-economic issues that are not directly education-focused but clearly impact a school's ability to provide quality education.

Effective learning cannot occur in environments that are not conducive to teaching and learning.

To show that Anglo American plc is an excellent student, I am happy to pronounce that an additional R107 million is set aside to upgrade school infrastructure.

This investment will improve learners' dignity by providing safe drinking water, modern sanitation facilities, upgrading and repairing classrooms, and improving the safety of schooling communities.

The designated ECD centres will also benefit from the additional investment through building cognitive play areas.

It is a no-brainer that in the context of hard lessons we learned during the Covid-19 intermittent school closures, ICTs became the sector's saving grace.

Therefore, phase two pays a singular focus on ICTs in education to give the youth in our communities the skills they need to leave school job-ready.

The additional investment in ICTs will enhance school connectivity and provide devices for learners and teachers.

Furthermore, we will be focusing more than ever on learner support; and creating after-school programmes like career guidance, food gardens, and sporting activities.

Our children deserve no less.

As we say, no learner must be left behind.

Our children are the nation's greatest asset.

I implore all our learners, parents and teachers to make good use of the resources that come with this massive investment in the nation's critical asset, our children.

Parents and learners must protect these vital schools from vandals and service delivery protestors.

We send our gratitude to the entire Anglo American family for this shot in the arm to brighten the school days of our learners and teachers.

I thank you.