

# Creating lasting change through investment in education

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At M&G Investments, we believe that education is a powerful tool to break the cycle of poverty and foster active societal participation. This belief is what fuels our long-standing commitment to educational initiatives, which lies at the heart of our Corporate Social Investment (CSI) strategy. These initiatives are dedicated to creating lasting change in the communities we serve, reflecting our belief that true change requires ongoing dedication, not just a one-time effort.

As we reflect on 2024, we share the stories of our beneficiaries and the lasting impact these relationships have fostered.

## Empowering our youth for a brighter future

One of our long-standing partnerships is with **LEAP Science and Maths Schools**. These schools provide high-quality education to students from underprivileged communities.

In 2024, we contributed to the educational expenses of three LEAP schools in Gauteng, specifically in Linbro Park, Diepsloot, and Ga-Rankuwa benefitting over 3,800 students. Our donation was used to enhance teaching and tutoring, provide essential educational materials like textbooks and science kits, support cultural activities, and improve health, sport, and stationery provisions. The science kits, for example, have made learning more interactive and engaging, sparking students' interest in science and technology. Access to new textbooks has significantly improved academic performance by offering up-to-date information and study materials. The provision of essential stationery such as writing books, pens, and rulers has also been a crucial support, helping students who might otherwise have gone without these basic tools for learning.

During Women's Month, we donated reusable sanitary pad kits to girls at **LEAP 2 High School** in Crossroads to help address a critical need for menstrual health products in underprivileged areas. These kits include reusable pads and cleaning kits, ensuring that girls can attend school with dignity and focus on their education without the added stress of inadequate menstrual hygiene. Additionally, M&G Investments staff also donated ingredients, prepared and distributed sandwiches along with donations of non-perishable food as part of our **Mandela Day** initiative, which served as a reminder of the power of collective action.

## Enhancing educational infrastructure

Our partnership with the **SA Medical & Education (SAME) Foundation** continues to make a significant impact in underprivileged communities, particularly in the enhancement of education and healthcare infrastructures. SAME addresses critical gaps in government funding, focusing on the provision of resources that are essential for community development.

Many South African schools, particularly in disadvantaged areas, face a shortage of basic furniture. In 2024, we assisted in furnishing **Mosupatsela Secondary School** in Gauteng, which was rebuilt at the end of 2023. This contribution allowed the school to equip classrooms with essential desks and chairs, drastically improving the learning

environment for students. The school expressed heartfelt gratitude, noting how this donation has transformed the way students engage in their studies, ensuring they no longer need to share seating or sit on the floor.

### **Life Matters: Advancing literacy and educational support**

Our support for the Life Matters Literacy Programme continues to yield significant results. In 2024, the programme showed a remarkable 21% improvement in learner performance compared to a control group. This success is particularly noteworthy given the challenges faced by students in overcrowded classrooms. Life Matters focuses on providing personalised attention to learners, helping them overcome literacy challenges and achieve academic success.

By investing in initiatives like Life Matters, we are addressing disparities in education and empowering learners to unlock their full potential, setting them on a path to future success.

### **Supporting Early Childhood Development**

**Chic Mamas** is a volunteer-based NPO focused on raising funds for educational initiatives in the Early Childhood Development (ECD) sector. Our funding has helped transform **Empilweni Primary School** in KwaZulu-Natal by creating a fully functional kitchen, sandpit, and jungle gym for preschool children. Additionally, we funded a multifunctional playpark on the adjacent abandoned tennis court, which has been re-fenced, with one half resurfaced for basketball and tennis, and the other equipped with a large jungle gym and obstacle course for primary school children. A 12-metre container is also being converted into a library for the school community.

Another beneficiary, **The Learning Initiative (TLI)**, has worked with the Western Cape Department of Social Development to develop therapeutic interventions for 4- to 5-year-old children in disadvantaged communities, ensuring optimal growth and development. Our donation will extend these vital services to five ECD centres in the Western Cape, empowering young learners and fostering their full potential.

### **Literacy development**

**ABC For Life** is an NPO dedicated to supporting primary school students with literacy challenges. Our contribution will support their Foundation Phase Literacy programme, which serves over 550 Grade R-4 students across three low-income schools: Hout Bay Primary, Ithemba Primary, and Muizenberg Primary. ABC For Life provides daily literacy support through whole class teaching, small group sessions, and individualised lessons, making a lasting impact on the lives of young learners.

### **Alleviating student debt**

We supported the **University of the Western Cape's Access-to-Success campaign**, which helps financially disadvantaged students settle fee balances ranging from R50 to R25,000, enabling them to graduate without the burden of debt. Our donation has already helped clear the debt for 11 students, promoting academic success and financial relief as they start their careers.

### **Empowering young women**

Endurocad is a women's empowerment and athlete development academy. Our contribution supports the **Endurocad Achieve Young Women Empowerment Programme**, which has empowered over 100 young women across 13 schools in the Cape Winelands. The programme offers a holistic approach, blending athletics, personal development, and career-focused workshops. Our donation will help fund the participation of one school in this transformative initiative, fostering resilience and self-confidence in young women.

### **Fostering youth leadership and life skills**

A new addition to our CSI activities for this year was Help **Lesotho's Smart Kids Programme**, which enlists graduates from Help Lesotho's leadership and life skills programmes to tutor students in their communities, providing educational resources and psychosocial support. Designed to address challenges amplified by Covid-19, the Smart Kids programme has already benefited over 4,300 students in its first year.

## **Celebrating diversity and supporting communities**

On **Heritage Day**, we celebrated South Africa's rich cultural diversity through a community-focused initiative. Staff members shared dishes that reflected their personal heritage, and for every dish contributed, M&G pledged to donate 10 pounds. Proceeds from this initiative were donated to **U-Turn**, an organisation dedicated to supporting homeless individuals. This contribution will provide shelter for 157 people for a month, offering them respite from the challenges of living on the streets.

In addition, M&G Investments staff members are distributing vouchers to homeless individuals, ensuring that our commitment to alleviating homelessness continues year-round.

## **Looking Ahead**

At M&G Investments, our commitment to creating lasting change through consistent investment in educational initiatives remains core. Through the collective efforts of our staff, partners, and beneficiaries, we are proud to play a role in empowering and educating youth in the communities we serve and ultimately, driving sustainable change across South Africa.

*Sumayya is the Chairperson of the Corporate Social Investment (CSI) Committee at M&G Investments Southern Africa.*

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