

SA Taxi employees commit 25% of performance bonuses to community development projects

SA Taxi have voluntarily committed 25% of their performance bonuses to community development projects of their choosing. The initiative is known as RU MAD (Making A Difference) and is linked to the company's Taxi Change Makers programme, which is geared to giving everyone in the organisation an opportunity to invest in social upliftment.



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RU MAD and Taxi Change Makers are facilitated and coordinated by SA Taxi's CSI arm, the SA Taxi Foundation.

RU MAD projects in recent months have included SA Taxi individuals and departments funding and getting hands on involved in the renovation of a place of safety in a Johannesburg township, the collection of upmarket clothes and evening wear that young people can wear to their matric dances or to job interviews, the stocking of libraries for rural and township schools, and the collection of plastic bags for a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that uses them to create solar backpacks that serve as a domestic light source.

By contrast, Taxi Change Makers projects tend to have a less personalised or localised focus and involve the entire company. They include sponsorship of 100 child-headed households, the provision of study bursaries, sponsorship of mobile school libraries, and, from the beginning of 2016, collaboration with the Department of Higher Education and NGO Khensani's Collection in helping high school students prepare for their working lives.

Career guidance workshops

At weekend career guidance workshops, the three organisations provide insight for students into the full range of job opportunities that are available to them, as well as teaching them how to write CVs and fill in job applications.

“An eye opener for those of us from SA Taxi has been the extremely limited view most school-goers have of the kinds of jobs they could do,” says SA Taxi Foundation director Kalnisha Singh.

“Career guidance was removed from the school curriculum some years ago. So neither teachers nor learners are being made aware of careers outside of the traditional and obvious ones of teaching, medicine, engineering, social work, and law.

“Also, many learners believe that a university degree is necessary to make a good living. We were gratified to see the Department of Education point out that artisans such as plumbers, electricians, and builders are able to charge very competitive rates.

“Not everyone is suited to university study and students shouldn’t feel inadequate because they’re handier with tools than books.”

At a recent career day held in March in Diepsloot, Gauteng, Singh and other SA Taxi volunteers were saddened to hear a student say that she could have done better, academically, but didn’t want to stand out among her peers.

“For many young people from disadvantaged areas, there seems to be very little hope of becoming a professional of some sort,” Singh says. “So it’s easier not to aspire to that life and for everyone to muddle along together.

“We see time spent with such young people - opening up their horizons and proving to them, through our own stories, that living a productive, happy life is always possible - as absolutely crucial to transforming this country.

“To help ensure that the full strength and capabilities of South Africa’s youth do flow into South Africa’s socio-economic environment, we will be rolling out this career preparedness initiative as broadly as possible during 2016. It’s a sustainable project that will bring fresh momentum to communities that, at the moment, feel their options are very limited.”

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