

Kutlwanong Promaths Programme puts rural learners on a professional career path

 By [Shan Raddiffe](#)

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"Mathematics and Physical Science are gateway subjects to professional careers," says Tumelo Mabitselo, CEO for the Kutlwanong Centre for Maths, Science & Technology. "Poor marks in these subjects eliminates a range of study and career options for students."



Mdantsane Promaths cohort

Initiated in 2005, the aim of NGO, Kutlwanong is to accelerate the quality and quantity of STEM performance amongst township and rural youth in South Africa.

Over the past 15 years, the programme has advanced the Maths and Science performance of over 25,000 township and rural students, enabling over 7,000 students to achieve distinctions in Mathematics and Physical Science.

Here we speak to Mabitselo further about Kutlwanong and its programmes, such as the Promaths Programme...

What is Kutlwanong and the Promaths Programme?

Mabitselo: Kutlwanong runs learner, teacher development, career path and alumni programmes to provide a pipeline of support for township and rural students to achieve top performance in Maths and Science; access tertiary education and enter professional careers.

Promaths is the learner programme that advances the STEM performance of township and rural youth across South Africa. The programme is a platform for top performance in Math and Science, encouraging students to perform well in these and other subjects to obtain a Bachelors Pass - a key criteria for accessing tertiary education.



Tumelo Mabitselo, CEO for the Kutlwanong Centre for Maths, Science & Technology

Our programme also runs career roadshows where it exposes learners to scarce skills STEM careers, assists them with tertiary and bursary applications, enabling them to make informed decisions about their choice of career and place of study.

We provide a springboard for learners to enter professional careers, growing a pool of young, driven, talent pursuing

Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths careers.

■ How does the model work?

Our model is multi-pronged, consisting of a:

- learner support programme providing Maths and Science tuition;
- a teacher development programme providing curriculum support; Maths and Science content and training;
- a career path programme exposing learners to scarce skills careers and supporting them to access their careers;
- and an alumni programme that supports tertiary students

■ How do schools and/or learners get involved in the programme? Who can apply?

The programme is not open to application; schools are selected against a set internal criterion. Kutlwanong works with the Department of Education to identify learners and schools who participate in the programme. We do not accept applications or requests for interests in participation. It is a closed process.

However, our programme is funded by corporate support and most often we run programmes within the vicinity of a corporate footprint. As such, our team works with the Department of Education in those provinces and districts to identify schools and learners to participate. We undergo a rigorous process of teacher selection, working with school principals and SGB's to initiate our programme and harness parent, teacher, school and district support.

■ Promaths is not just for students... Tell us about the teacher training?

Teacher development is a part of the programme that runs training to equip and support teachers with Maths and Science content. The aim is to ensure teachers have the necessary knowledge and tools to transition content from the curriculum to the classroom.

The curriculum team further works with teachers to track performance, identifying areas of poor learner performance, and how teachers and training can address this. Teacher development is also a platform to connect, communicate, support, train and foster talent amongst and between Kutlwanong educators.

■ Having seen its 90 students achieve a 100% pass rate across all subjects in 2019, what are the goals for 2020 and beyond?

While these results are a testament to our learners' hard work, as an organisation focused on constantly evolving we also explored ways to improve our performance year on year. More specifically, we assessed the value chain of students that enter Kutlwanong at a Grade 10 level and the number of students who accessed STEM careers at tertiary institutions.

Our aim is not only to boost performance in Maths and Science from Grade 10 onwards, but to also ensure that our mandate of facilitating a pool of black professionals to enter these STEM careers is fully realised.

Our goals for 2020 and beyond is to boost the talent pool of black professionals in these scarce skills careers – we want to see our youth achieving top performance in high school but also entering tertiary education and becoming captains of industry across Mining, Engineering, Science, Technology, Commerce and Information Technology.

ABOUT SHAN RADCLIFFE

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