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Children from local pre-schools, grade R and one attended.

Photo: Supplied

Raising an educated nation

Stephen Selaluke

Mamelodi mothers have been encouraged to read to their children, even unborn ones, to raise an educated nation.

Johannes Magoro, director of Libraries in Tshwane was speaking during the Born to Read programme celebration in the Mamelodi West community hall on Friday.

This year's celebration was themed "the importance of the mother tongue in the development of literacy".

Magoro said it was important for mothers to start reading to their children at an

early age.

"The programme seeks to ensure parents, mothers in particular, are exposed to the importance of integrating books in their children's lives," said Mogoro.

He said that this would eventually reduce illiteracy and build an educated community.

Tidimalo Nkontoe a guest speaker said: "We must appreciate the cultural diversity because it is important to us and our children. Open a book and make a difference".

This also goes to all the pregnant mothers they must also read for their unborn

babies.

"I am happy that our learners came to this event because it was very exciting for them. This will motivate them to read," said teacher, Rhoda Matjebe.

Resident, Lorraine Mahlangu said she appreciated what the Tshwane metro was doing for their children and the community at large.

She told learners who attended that reading books would grow their knowledge.

Children at pre-school, grade R and one from different Mamelodi schools attended.

Teaching skills instead of dishing out food

Teaching skills instead of merely dishing out food. This has become the motto of an initiative dubbed POPUP that seeks to transform lives and uplift individuals.

Since the inception of POPUP at the end of 1999, their model changed with time and learned many lessons along the way.

"We started off as a shelter by giving food to the underprivileged, but soon realised that teaching people how to fish is far more beneficial," said POPUP spokesperson Nerésá Vogel.

Since 2012, POPUP was able to equip trained learners who attended one or more of the skills programmes by mentoring and coaching them how to start and run their own enterprises.

POPUP's core focus areas are aligned with the National Development Plan and speaks directly to the critical and scarce skills listed in South Africa.

After piloting an initiative within the corporate sector for three years, POPUP rolled out a new concept to uplift companies' entry level to supervisory level workers at their own site, in a venue, day and time of their own choice while building an income stream for POPUP.

Under our harsh current economic climate and the pressure to companies to comply with the DTI gazetted Codes of Good Practice on Black Economic Empowerment which came into operation on 11 October 2013, effective date 1 May 2015. Many companies feel "forced" to give. From there the "grudge tax" jargon emerged.

"POPUP has thus created a way for companies to benefit directly, taking the 'grudge' out of giving," Vogel said.

Not having a skilled workforce was the largest business constraint, and a serious inhibitor of growth in the South African economy. Skills transform lives and drive economies.

"Without adequate investment in



POPkids Salvokop Day Care Centre cares for on average 50 children aged between 1 and 5 years. POPkids provides for the children's physical, spiritual, emotional and educational needs.

Photo: QJ Photography

skills, people languish on the margins of society, technological progress does not translate into economic growth, and countries can no longer compete in an increasingly knowledge-based global society.

"People with poor skills face a much greater risk of experiencing economic disadvantage, and a higher likelihood of unemployment and dependency on social benefits." In the past 16 years POPUP has built strong relationships with various South African companies.

"A number of our corporate social invest-

ment partners indicated that they are actually moving away from the hand-out concept and is now focusing on building partnerships with NPO's over longer periods (3 to 5 years) of time.

"POPUP firmly believes transformation must take place from a holistic point of view, impacting the heart, hand and mind of the individual to transform him/her from the inside out, resulting in changed individuals who can positively impact their immediate surroundings, whether it be their households, communities or country at large."