

Media Release

Actuarial Society of South Africa

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Technology and corporate goodwill gives more than 12 000 learners instant access to qualified teachers

More than 12 000 low income learners from 60 secondary schools around the country have started studying Mathematics, the Sciences and Accounting on their mobiles phones and other devices. Over the past two years these schools, most of them in desperate need of qualified teachers and learning resources, have received the innovative Paper Video learning materials from the Educational Trust of the Actuarial Society of South Africa.

Paper Video is a social enterprise consisting of a team of experienced South African teachers who use innovation and technology to make available their lessons to as many learners as possible. The Paper Video resources provide learners with access to past exam papers embedded with video solutions explained by a teacher for Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Life Sciences and Accounting for Grades 8 – 12. All solution videos can be accessed without an internet connection and data thanks to the groups use of microSD cards.

To help fund the roll-out of the learning materials, the Paper Video team partnered with the Actuarial Society in 2015. Through its Education Trust, the Society has made it possible for Paper Video to collaborate with some of the largest corporate entities in South Africa to sponsor learners from low-income households.

Opening doors in partnership

Mike McDougall, CEO of the Actuarial Society, says in partnership, the Educational Trust and Paper Video are providing Grade 8 to 12 learners with a real chance to matriculate with meaningful Maths, Science and Accounting grades that will qualify for university admissions and bursaries.

According to McDougall, a distinction in Maths is the universal key to the doors of most professions with good job prospects. Yet, he says, very few learners writing matric earn a meaningful A in this critical subject, thereby contributing significantly to the national skills shortage in professions requiring strong Maths, Science and language skills.

“In order to speed up the transformation of our profession and to assist the country with reducing unemployment through meaningful education, we recognise that we need to make a difference at secondary school level,” says McDougall.

He points out that the actuarial profession has an unemployment rate that is practically zero. Other professions that enjoy a very low unemployment rate include engineering, medicine, and accounting. However, achieving a career in any of these professions is only possible through earning a degree that requires a distinction in Maths and also the Sciences or Accounting.

In an effort to help more learners achieve better marks in Maths, the Sciences and Accounting, the Actuarial Society joined forces with Paper Video.

Learning without restrictions

Paper Video boasts the largest collection of education videos in the country, with over 10 000 solution videos available online, or in microSD card format, making it possible for learners to watch without requiring an internet connection or incurring the high cost of data.

Paper Video Co-Founder and Mathematics teacher Paul Maree says, the ultimate goal is to expand the Paper Video resources to include more grades, subjects and languages of tuition.

“We will also continue innovating in the edtech space to ensure that no student will be left behind, irrespective of the infrastructure and resources available to them. Through continued collaboration with the Actuarial Society, corporate South Africa and Government, we will not stop until every student in the country can gain instant and easy access to excellent teachers.”

Maree says the Subject Maps are Paper Video’s most recent innovation. Describing the Subject Maps as “unique and revolutionary”, they provide learners in Grade 8 and 9 with video lessons equivalent to all of the lessons a student would need in Mathematics and Natural Sciences for the first two years of high school.

“In combination with our Exam Books, the resources essentially provide each learner with unlimited access to an additional teacher for all of their Maths and Science needs, including revision for exams and learning topics from scratch. All of the videos can be accessed without requiring an internet connection and data thanks to our microSD cards and Content Hubs.”

Maree says Grade 8 and 9 are massively important years for learners, which often determine whether a learner successfully continues with Maths and Science until Grade 12.

Khulani Secondary School roll-out

The brand new Subject Maps, which Maree describes as the London Underground Map of Maths and Science education in South Africa, were recently rolled out to the 43 Grade 8 learners of Khulani Secondary School in Langa, Cape Town. The Paper Video Subject Maps were sponsored by the Society’s Educational Trust as well as RGA Reinsurance South Africa.

Maree says Khulani Secondary is the first school in the country to receive the Subject Maps.

“We selected Khulani for the first roll-out of the Subject Maps, because the school proactively campaigned for assistance to address their weak results in key subjects such as Maths and Science.

“The concept is that we are providing the current Grade 8 learners with resources that they will use for the remainder of 2017 and their Grade 9 year. The hope is that we would then continue to get them sponsored resources for the senior years of high school, but that's a bridge we will cross at a later stage.”

Ends

Note to Editors: A professional photographer documented the roll-out of the Paper Video resources to the Grade 8 learners at Khulani Secondary School. We will gladly share them with you on request.

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The Actuarial Society of South Africa is the professional organisation for actuaries and actuarial students in South Africa. The vision of the Actuarial Society is an actuarial profession of substance and stature, serving, and valued by, our communities as a primary source of authoritative advice and thought leadership in the understanding, modeling and management of financial and other measurable risks.