

Driving positive change and transforming lives through education:

The Reunert Learning Institute's 30-Year Journey

Corporate social investment (CSI) is the shared commitment of businesses and society to act legally, ethically, morally and philanthropically to enhance the wellbeing of both. This is done within the economic framework and capacities of the stakeholders based on the principle of mutual benefit. The Reunert Group of Companies stands as a pioneering and visionary entity in South Africa, recognising the need for businesses to play an active role in developing society (through education), the economy (through employment) and the country as a whole.

In 1993, South Africa faced a severe shortage of qualified black students in Mathematics and Physical Science and a lack of skills for employment and tertiary education. To fill this gap and to contribute towards the education and empowerment of disadvantaged black youth, the Reunert "Advancement Programme" was established.

In 1993, two "programmes" were established to support learners from surrounding, underprivileged communities who wanted to improve their matric results in Mathematics and Physical Science. The Reutech Development Programme in Alrode, funded by subsidiary companies within the Reutech group, and The Reumech Advancement Programme in Benoni, funded by the subsidiary companies within the Reumech group. These "programmes" were based on the "MINTEK" programme developed by Dr Edwards. Each "College" selected, enrolled and fully sponsored 15 learners out of the community. Full-time teaching in Mathematics, Physical Science, English Communication Skills and Life Skills was provided. As the years progressed, subjects such as Technical Drawing, Business Skills and Computer Skills were added to the timetable. Additional support such as individual mentorship, career guidance and financial allowances are added to the success of the programmes. At the end of that year, bursaries/loans for tertiary studies were allocated according to merit for tertiary studies. A total of 28 learners were assisted with access to tertiary studies. The first graduate joined Reunert as a permanent employee in 1997.

To support Reutech and Reumech subsidiaries, training and skills were offered to selected employees. ABET training, SATORI programmes (to enhance high school Mathematics and Science understanding for the children of employees) and mentorships programmes were developed and offered. Partnerships were formed with Principals from surrounding community schools and a WEGO programme (to assist subject teachers from these schools) was founded.

The "Reunert College" was established in 1998 as a merger of the two successful programmes that began in 1993. It operates from two campuses in Alrode and

Boksburg. The advancement of NSC Mathematics and Physical Science continues, as well as the additional skills training in English Communication, Computer and Life Skills. Career Guidance is added as a formal subject, and in 2000 Commercial subjects were provided as an academic subject option. Bursaries continue to be allocated according to merit (via the Reunert and Rebotona Trust). Employment placement within the Reunert Group of Companies is facilitated. More than 2000 learners have successfully passed through the “College”.

Various non-academic student events take place on an annual basis, to provide some balance to the education of the learners. These events include volleyball days, first aid training, career days, drumming, company visits, blanket days and award ceremonies.

Beyond academic accomplishments over the past 30 years, numerous highlights can be celebrated. These include visits from Parliamentary Committees; accreditation as examination centres by the Gauteng Department of Education, the Independent Exam Board and UMALUSI; being part of the “Proudly South Africa” campaign; participation in the “CEO Sleepover” initiative and partaking in the Banago Traders Entrepreneurial Sim Game. Collaborations with professional institutions such as Peotona, Standard Bank, the JSE and The Zenex Foundation over some years have added to the growth of the College.

An exciting and significant transformation is presently taking place. A new brand name has been established - The Reunert Learning Institute! This is a result of being newly registered as a non-profit company (which will assist companies with their CSI initiatives). Furthermore, a new state-of-the-art building has been erected on the premises of Fuchs Electronics, where all staff and 60 learners will be housed. Occupation of the new Reunert Learning Institute took place in early September.

Currently, fifty-eight learners are part of the 2023 Reunert Learning Institute group of learners, with 48 bursary learners studying at different tertiary institutions.

The Reunert Learning Institute’s primary objective over the past 30 years has been to advance the academic potential of South Africa’s youth. However, the added value of the institute lies in the offering of valuable skills, mentorship and guidance to each learner. Every interaction with every learner is aimed at fostering positive, confident and well-balanced young leaders who can uplift themselves, their communities, their employers and the country. The commitment of the Reunert Group of companies to the Reunert Learning Institute continues to ensure its success.