

African Bank Limited press release

18 August 2016

### Unlocking potential through art

**CAPTION 1:** Making something beautiful out of waste - African Bank volunteers share some quality art time with Mikateka grade 7 pupils

**CAPTION 2:** Anyone for Cricket? Grade 3 learners at Mikateka primary school in Tembisa having fun and learning some valuable batting and catching skills with staff from African Bank. As part of the Bank's broader CSI strategy it runs a number of programmes with schools in the area. The end goal of this programme is to develop a culture of cricket and culminate the practices in a tournament later in the year.

Creating art is a fine way for children to make choices and solve problems. Research shows that children that have greater exposure to art and the media for creating it, possess some qualities that many other children don't have. They usually read and write better than their peers and excel in so many other ways.

In a ten-year national study by Shirley Brice Heath of Stanford University, it was discovered that young people who are involved in highly effective non-school [arts-based community](#) programs in under-resourced communities, in comparison with a national sample of students were:

- Four times more likely to win an academic award, such as being on the honour roll.
- Eight times more likely to receive a community service award.
- Three times more likely to win a school attendance award.
- Four times more likely to participate in a math or science fair.
- Likely to score higher on their varsity admission test scores if they have been involved for more than four years of after-school arts study.

It's one of the reasons African Bank has implemented an art programme at Mikateka Primary School. Each month volunteers from African Bank's Specialised Collection team interact with the school and its learners. When the bank first adopted the school, it was agreed support was needed most in the arts and sports areas specifically.

On the art side volunteers work with the grade 7 children on various art projects. “The school provides learners with the background theory and then African Bank comes in and does the practical side,” explains Kennedy Dembetembe, African Bank’s National CSI manager. On the sports side cricket clinics are held with the younger learners.

Mikateka Principal, Mr. Mandla Sibanyoni says the programme, which kicked off in February, is doing fabulously. “We have done everything from beadwork to scrap booking and collages and there is a real passion for the project from both the kids and the teachers.” Sibanyoni says they welcome the partnership and support as they noticed that the Grade 7 learners were lagging behind their peers when it came to hand eye co-ordination. “Although some of the projects have been quite difficult like the week we did a woven basket, the beauty of the project is that African Bank breaks the learners down into small groups of four to five children and gives them the personal attention and love so necessary to develop their potential.”

“The kids have so much to give but never have the opportunity,” says Sibanyoni.

This week the theme is ‘Making something beautiful out of waste’ and the children experimented with paper collage. The girls made butterflies and the boys sail boats.

Dembetembe concludes, “We are so delighted to be able to assist these children who may be having difficulties in other parts of the school curriculum but now can find an expressive outlet through art. It’s a way to uncover talent that may not be seen otherwise and the response has been overwhelming.”

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