

FEM Establishes R750 million Education Foundation

With the spotlight on the South African education system over recent months, a welcomed announcement has been made by The Federated Employers Mutual Assurance Company (FEM) following the establishment of the R750 million FEM Education Foundation.

Through the establishment of this education foundation, FEM and the construction industry is responding to the education crisis which has reached boiling point, both in the construction industry and within all levels of our education system. FEM has committed to this important initiative - the first step of an ongoing scholarship programme - which is to be made available to the children of employees in the construction industry.

"FEM thanks its policyholders for approving the establishment of the R750m FEM Education Foundation and is proud to announce that this first initiative and launch of the programme is in partnership with Make A Difference Leadership Foundation (MAD Leadership Foundation) - one of a number of partners with whom we aspire to engage with," says Thelma Pugh, Managing Director of FEM.

Initially, 37 scholars will be awarded scholarships providing comprehensive financial and personal support to assist them through high school and their first tertiary degree. This initial sponsorship amounts to an estimated R49 million, with the possibility of FEM allocating additional funding for scholarships in the following years. The first 37 applicants are currently being confirmed for 2017.

Founded by former Springbok captain Francois Pienaar, Make A Difference Leadership Foundation focuses on leadership development through education. The approach is to identify academically talented scholars, who do not have the necessary financial resources, and offer them integrated support in the areas of education, mentorship, leadership and life-skills development.

Comments Francois Pienaar, "This partnership is a very exciting time for Make A Difference Leadership Foundation. It entrenches what we have aimed to achieve and builds on what we have been working towards, that is to develop long-standing, mutually beneficial partnerships with corporates who share our values and goals. This allows us to create sustainable educational opportunities for young people with leadership potential who do not have the financial resources to afford a good education, thus providing hope to many scholars at a time in South Africa where such help is so desperately needed. This partnership presents to us an opportunity to expand our reach to identify, develop and support even more deserving young leaders year-on-year, allowing us to dream bigger for South Africa. We challenge and encourage corporates from other industries to step forward, as FEM has done, to invest in education and ultimately help grow your industry through a new generation of leaders."

Adds Pugh, "When the FEM Board, with the full approval of our shareholders, agreed unanimously that these funds be applied to the establishment of the FEM Education Foundation, it was immediately apparent to myself and the Board that this was indeed the perfect opportunity to make a significant difference to education and the promotion of strong leadership within the construction industry through the meaningful growth of talented individuals. It is with great pride that through the FEM-MAD partnership, we are able to put in place this first initiative to finance and nurture the first intake of selected learners through their secondary and tertiary education."

FEM will continue to work diligently and steadfastly on this programme in the years ahead, with a view to expanding it further and entrenching it within the building industry.

The Federated Employers Mutual Assurance Company (FEM) was established as a mutual insurer in 1936 and on the introduction of the Workmen's Compensation Act 1941 was granted a licence to continue to transact workmen's compensation insurance for the [building industry](#). Its business operations are essentially confined to the insurance of employers against their liabilities under the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act 1993.