

From strength to strength

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Fifty thousand girls enjoyed a life-changing experience on Thursday 29 May as they participated in Cell C's sixth successive Take a Girl Child to Work Day® campaign. This year, 520 organisations hosted girl learners from 600 schools in one of South Africa's biggest and most successful acts of corporate volunteerism.



"Every year, we see the numbers of girl learners and organisations involved increasing," comments Mercia Maserumule, CSI Manager of Cell C who heads up the project. "It is clear, not only that this kind of initiative is fulfilling a very real need in South Africa, which more and more organisations are realising, but that the campaign remains relevant in our changing socio-economic environment." Each year, Cell C selects a theme applicable to the challenges and trends in business and society. This year's theme was "Choice empowers."

Organisations from both the public and private sectors have come to the party and the campaign enjoys the personal support of both President Mbeki and Deputy President Mlambo-Nguka. Many executives, such as Nicky Newton-King, Deputy CEO of the JSE Securities Exchange, have dedicated the day to hosting girls personally, becoming custodians who frequently remain in touch with the girls for many years afterwards.

"Already, we have been receiving positive feedback from some of the girls and teachers who took part in the campaign," claims Maserumule. "This is a good indication that their personal experiences and learning will be shared with their schools, families and communities." Those who don't participate are not left out. Cell C prepares a booklet for all high schools which explains the rationale behind and the need for the campaign, addressing girl and boy learners, teachers and parents.

Complementary to this ground-breaking initiative is Cell C's Girl Child Bursary Fund, which recently benefited from the R200 000 which Absa donated to kick-start it. "The Bursary fund has been designed in the form of an SMS where public can donate R10 by SMSing the word 'Girl' to 38060," explains Maserumule. "Cell C has committed to match all funds raised, enabling girls from disadvantaged backgrounds to undergo tertiary education and training.

The third leg of Cell C's Take a Girl Child to Work Day project is the Career Choice Expo, which since 2007 has been focusing on both boys and girls from grades nine to 12 in the rural communities. "These youngsters do not have the same access to information as the learners in urban and per-urban areas," continues Maserumule, "Hence our decision to reach out to them too." Currently the Expo is staged in seven of the nine provinces, reaching over 6 000 learners from some 60 high schools. Over 22 corporate and government exhibitors participated in 2007. The Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa, a Cell C shareholder group, collaborates in organising the event.

This year's Career Choice Expo will take place in August in rural communities across the country.

About Cell C

Cell C (Pty) Ltd is one of three cellular operators in South Africa. Cell C offers products and services to 4.8 million active subscribers - 610, 000 postpaid subscriber; 3.5 million prepaid subscribers; 578,000 controlchat subscribers and 125, 000 community service telephones (CSTs). With a network capable of providing voice, data and multimedia

communications, the company is committed to delivering to subscribers a full range of GSM services, based on the key principles of affordability, accessibility and value for money. Launched in November 2001, Cell C has rolled out 2,187 base stations nationwide and now carries over 87% of its own traffic. The network operator has roaming agreements with 425 telecommunications operators in 170 countries worldwide. Cell C is South Africa's most empowered telecommunications company in terms of equity ownership, preferential procurement, employment equity and enterprise and skills development. Visit: www.cellc.co.za for more information on Cell C and its products and services.

Editorial contact

Vinnie Santu
Corporate Communications
Cell: 084 777 0300

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