

# How the 4th Industrial Revolution and Covid-19 are changing the face of CSI donations

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It's common company practice to stick to a three-year cycle to update and upgrade employees' computers and laptops, but many of these devices still have years of use to go. So, instead of sending them off to the recycling depot, rather follow DriveRisk's example in donating them to a worthy cause. Here's how the country benefits when you rethink your CSI donation strategy to focus on the UN's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of improving access to quality education, with a particular focus on the role of technology at a time when we need it most.



Clair Harris

DriveRisk sits at the forefront of innovative technology, as one of South Africa's leading driver behaviour management companies, with the overall mission to reduce on-road risk for fleet operators and the driver community overall. The company does so by developing and providing risk-identifying information coupled with preventative forecasting and behaviour-changing solutions, in partnership with Lytx. Not only do they create focused risk profiles of particular drivers using video and caller reports, so fleet operators can establish an accountable, structured, proactive solution to driver management, but DriveRisk is also the original innovator of the Report My Driving programme on a structured commercial platform.

These solutions have transformed fleets across the world to be safer and more efficient, increasing productivity and, as a result, increasing their profit margins. But DriveRisk's goal has been to move away from merely 'paying up the money' to achieve certain BEE points, to rather to see the difference they are making to the beneficiaries of their CSI payments.

## **Make a tangible difference to tech-enabled education by updating the interface of your CSI donations**

As DriveRisk fall in the ICT space, what better way to contribute than to reward those students putting in the hard work that it takes to become contributing members of society.

Chartered Accountant [CA(SA)], Clair Harris explains that there's no denying you only really perform at your peak when working on a laptop, something that so many in our country consider a luxury. The Covid-19 pandemic has proven laptops are actually now a necessity, as the world shifts to a new mode of working remotely from home to stay safe.

This is why DriveRisk chose to donate 30 laptops to the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants' Thuthuka Bursary Fund. Much of the time, their CSI spend is in areas not necessarily chosen by the BEE scorecard compilers. Instead, this tends to be driven by operational needs or guided by specific legislation. But, as their laptop donation was a socio-economic one, DriveRisk was able to choose between a wide range of beneficiaries. Clair says: "Naturally, as the CFO and financial accountant, we chose a programme close to our hearts – that of supporting aspiring CAs(SA)."

This speaks to the importance of giving back beyond boosting corporate social responsibility to make a real difference to the country's youth through improved access to quality education, with a focus on technology. Because with the Fourth Industrial Revolution well underway, there's no denying the importance of practical digital skills in addition to the theory needed to succeed. In addition, technology is the ultimate linchpin in better educating the youth overall, to ensure they're up-to-speed with the latest thinking needed to enhance the future of the country.

But access to the required software through digital devices is also crucial, as businesses in 2020 not only expect a mindset of constantly upskilling yourself, but also the ability to log into work afterhours, wherever you may be. If your team can only do so via the 'dinosaur days' PCs plugged into your office network, the past few months of lockdown have most definitely served as a wake-up call for the need for a fully mobile workforce.

## **Boost the nation's education, boost the nation's future**

Beyond this, education is the 'gateway' key that reduces other inequalities as it allows other SDGs to be achieved, because when people have access to quality education, they can finally break away from the cycle of poverty and feel empowered to live healthier, more sustainable lives.

Yet, studies show that 103 million youths worldwide still lack basic literacy skills, while in one out of four countries, more than half of the children fail to meet minimum math proficiency standards at the end of their primary school studies. This drops to one in three countries at the lower secondary level. These are the skills on which the global economy is built.

Couple that with the impact of the global Covid-19 pandemic to full understand the gloomy picture we now face. Strict lockdown measures have seen many industries unable to return to a physical office and schools are only set to start opening again in the second part of the year. This highlights the importance of UN SDG 4, of ensuring equal access for all to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education.

"At SAICA, we aim to contribute towards strengthening the country's economy by playing a significant and leading role in transformation and skills development. For example, the Thuthuka Education Upliftment Fund (TEUF), which offers education-focused and community-based projects to learners and students alike from disadvantaged backgrounds, was launched in the Eastern Cape in 2002 as a pioneering initiative to promote transformation in the profession. Today, it is a well-established and successful national transformation initiative," explains Nthato Selebi: SAICA Project Director for Transformation and Growth.

## **Your turn to give back to those who need it most**

"Through Thuthuka, high school learners are encouraged to select mathematics as a subject, as one of the major stepping stones towards a career in the finance profession. In order to improve the subject's pass rate, we also identify the most gifted maths learners to apply for a bursary from the Thuthuka Bursary Fund with messages that "maths matters" and to "choose CA(SA)".

To date, our Bursary, in particular has supported over 3000 students, and has achieved excellent results ranging from over 900 BCom degrees to 600 honours degree, with 791 beneficiaries currently completing the CA(SA) training programme and over 1020 having qualified and registered as CAs(SA) – an incredible achievement, considering that it takes a minimum of seven years to qualify. But following this path is not easy – that's where you come in."

"Now, access to technology is a core aspect of this drive to support our students and ensure no student is left behind. Because sadly, while technology has changed the working world as we know it, much of the country still doesn't have access to the hardware that provides access to the World Wide Web. Many disadvantaged students only have access through libraries and educational institutions, which have closed under lockdown, making it impossible to use this time at home productively. "

To assist, Thuthuka is currently raising funds and seeking computer donations to ensure its aspiring CAs(SA) have the technology they need to continue with their studies, both during lockdown and beyond. If you're able to assist, your company is invited to follow DriveRisk's example and join hands with Thuthuka to help our students during this time. "Our students need our support not only in the form of tuition fees but also towards the wrap-around support we offer and right now, the need for technology is crucial. If you can help, please contact Mbali Mncwabe on [mbalim@saica.co.za](mailto:mbalim@saica.co.za) to make arrangements," concludes Selebi.

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