

The impact of CSI: what we achieved in 2010/11

This provides a round-up covering examples of the CSI work of Massmart's four divisions, including the implementation of container kitchens and vegetable tunnels at primary schools.

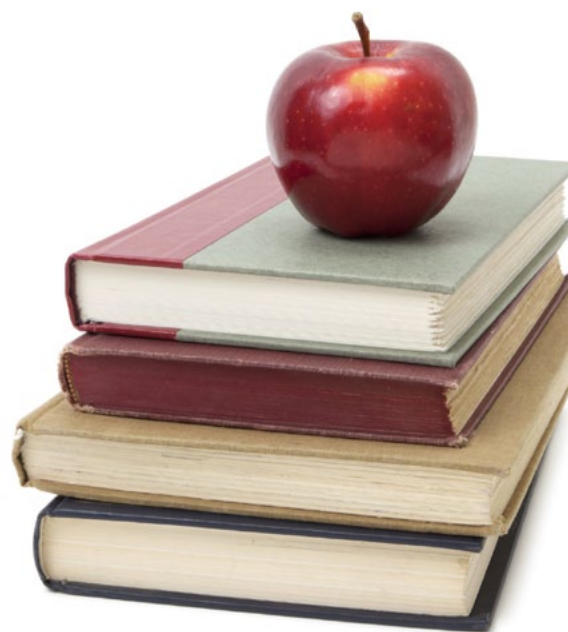
An investment of 1% profit after tax (PAT) has made an enormous difference to the corporate social investment initiatives supported by Massmart in the past. While the group's 2011 investment of 2% PAT has allowed it to take each project a step further into beneficiary communities the past year, it is 2012 that will bring about the greatest impact.

While Massmart's CSI spending is decentralised to its operating divisions, with each identifying their own initiatives, they are always guided by the group's central CSI commitment to nutrition and education (delivered in partnership with the Department of Basic Education) in the country's poorest schools. These two focal areas receive a minimum 85% of divisional CSI spending, primarily allocated to container kitchens, vegetable tunnels and the very challenging foundation phase transition from mother tongue

to English as the language of instruction. Other investment areas include early childhood development and teacher support.

Improving nutrition for primary school learners

South Africa's poor basic literacy and numeracy rates are among the most urgent sustainability challenges facing the country's future. Any teacher will tell you a hungry child cannot concentrate and a malnourished child cannot learn, so Massmart approached the Department of Education to find a sensible, sustainable and safe solution that would complement the National School Nutrition Programme. This led to the development of three complementary divisional initiatives: Game's AmaLunchbox, Masscash's Econo-Kitchen and Vegetables Under Construction. Vegetables Under Construction,



a Builders Warehouse initiative, has given the Builders chains and the Massmart group a strong start in creating a nationwide sustainable food production project. With over 3 500 hydroponic veggie tunnel units set up, usually near schools, Massmart has already seen benefits to participating school-communities that range from school meal supplements to income generation from the sale of surplus crops.

The above image is a stock image and does not represent Massmart's activities in this area



Builders Warehouse has set up veggie tunnels near schools creating a nationwide sustainable food production project

The project roll-out has been challenging, however. This is primarily the result of neglect and theft of the tunnel structures, so Massmart recently brought in expert assistance to improve the process. The group's choice of service provider for the consultative intervention was the Siyakhana Initiative for Ecological Health and Food Security. Siyakhana, established in 2004 by the University of the Witwatersrand Health Promotion Unit, is a leader in urban agriculture and work to improve food security, increase access to nutritious and sustainably grown foods and raise awareness of ecological health promotion. Given its track record, Massmart requested Siyakhana identify methods and practices to improve the group's current vegetable tunnel project to diversify crops, decrease or eliminate the use of chemical fertilisers and ensure that flourishing tunnels make the intended impact on the lives of the school communities. The ultimate goal is to optimise the produce from the gardens providing an increased yield and variety of vegetables so ensuring the most nutritious learner meals possible.

Once a sustainable food source is in place, Massmart will expand its AmaLunchbox and Econo-Kitchen programmes (see details on Massmart's website), which provide either container kitchens in urban environments or purpose built kitchens in the rural areas for the preparation of hygienic, healthy



A Game amaLunchbox school kitchen

meals that nourish hungry stomachs and minds. These initiatives currently feed over 76 000 children per school year and it is Massmart's intention to reach a great many more in the near future.

Working to improve literacy for primary school learners

Massmart companies have already made inroads in CSI education support. Massdiscounters, Masscash and Makro have a spectrum of programmes ranging from vouchers for workbook photocopy paper and support materials to the provision of technology into schools at all levels. The literacy programme, supporting Foundations for Learning, offers a balanced language programme

that helps intermediate phase teachers deliver the curriculum more effectively and provides the resources, training and materials for them to do so. Piloting of the programme will commence in 2012, aligned to the academic year, located primarily in schools where we have existing relationships to allow monitoring and impact benchmarking.

Ultimately each school supported by Massmart's programme will have the triangular investment intervention of a food garden, kitchen and literacy programme which will help achieve the goal of creating future generations of literate, nourished individuals who can take up their rightful place in the mainstream economy. ■

Massmart's investment in CSI

In the past Massmart invested 1% of profit after tax (PAT) in corporate social investment initiatives. In 2011, this amount increased to 2% of PAT.

Massmart's CSI work is undertaken by its four operating divisions, but all efforts follow the group's central CSI commitment to helping improve nutrition and education.

Improving nutrition and supporting education receive a minimum 85% of divisional CSI spending.