



## Media Release

### **A boost for the Early Childhood Development sector in South Africa as Old Mutual partners with GROW Educare Centres**

**2 December 2021.** It's a long-held belief that the key to South Africa's success lies in education. It is also widely understood among education specialists that the earlier a child begins their education the better. That's why Old Mutual is pleased to announce a partnership with GROW, a leading Early Childhood Development (ECD) network of 'Educare' centres. This is part of the Group's comprehensive commitment to education as a fundamental pillar in developing both the economy and the communities in which it operates.

Old Mutual has invested in a number of key educational initiatives, working closely with educational stakeholders to ensure that the needs of learners and teachers are appropriately met. The Group's Flagship Education initiative focuses on the provision of Numeracy and Literacy skills for Grades RR to Grade 7 to improve learning outcomes. Meanwhile, Old Mutual's "Learn.Think.Do" initiative is working to strengthen the curriculum which has been heavily impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, specifically focusing on mainstreaming financial education concepts for the higher grades up to Grade 12 and including second chance learners to improve engagement and understanding. Additionally, a range of Bursary programmes are in place to support students wanting to complete qualifications at centres of higher learning.

Old Mutual is excited to add another new partnership with GROW Educare Centres, extending its support to the ECD sector and strengthening its overall offering across the educational value chain. Collectively, this investment demonstrates the Group's commitment to creating long-term shared value and better learning outcomes for the communities it serves, its partners and for the business.

"The first five years is a critical stage in every child's life and early education is formative. "To this day, I can still clearly recall how my very first teachers worked to instil a respect and love in me for languages and learning in general," says Tabby Tsengiwe, General Manager for Group Marketing, Public Affairs & Sustainability at Old Mutual. "With the influence and stimulation that quality early childhood development can have on the brain, we simply cannot say that education starts at primary school."

Founded in 2014, GROW is a non-profit social enterprise that was born from a deep desire to address the lack of access to quality early childhood development (ECD) education in marginalised communities in South Africa. Co-founder Tracey Chambers says, "I wanted every child in South Africa to have what my children had. It's proven, time and time again, that young children who go to quality learning centres are much more likely to be successful, not just at school but also in life." GROW equips local women to run professional Early Childhood Development centres that are also financially sustainable businesses.

Supporting a program involving South Africa's educational building blocks has an added benefit to Old Mutual as a business. The ECD model sets up a good stepping stone for the work being done to boost numeracy and literacy skills in the primary phase as well as ongoing efforts to embed financial education concepts at the



secondary phase. Additionally, the partnership contributes to the shaping of shared value outcomes for the stakeholders involved – children learn and understand how to plan for a life of financial freedom and prosperity, and in the same way Old Mutual may be introduced to future customers. Then there's the potential to grow the economy.

The GROW partnership is being managed through Old Mutual's New Growth and Innovation (NGI) office, headed by Vuyo Mpako and established to find new ways of doing business and new ways to reach people and communities. "This partnership has afforded us the opportunity to view ECD centres as empowered small businesses and this has been one of most fascinating things for us. To find disruptive innovation, we have to create spaces where we incubate new businesses that require different models."

John Campbell, head of Innovation at the Edge adds, "The days of just counting on a brand to sell products may be limited. The things we do as an organisation will influence the view the customer has of us. We need to earn the right to sit at the table and earn the right to offer them our products and services. It's exciting – that this project will make a difference in so many people's lives."

Old Mutual's decision to take on a partnership with GROW, that has an existing and established organisation in a highly dynamic environment, ensures the best chance of success. It's a symbiotic relationship where both can benefit from each other's strengths – GROW's experience, refined formula and proven track record combined with Old Mutual's financial resources and services. "For us it's the opportunity to take our tried and tested model to scale, to expand to include thousands of ECD centres," says Chambers. GROW has always been about bringing quality education to every neighbourhood. "It shouldn't be a privilege, it should be the standard."

**Click on the link [here](#) for more commentary on the partnership between Old Mutual and GROW Educare Centres.**

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### **About GROW Educare Centres**

*GROW Educare Centres is a non-profit social enterprise operating across South Africa. Through their 5 Steps to 5-Star ECD programme Grow equip local women to run professional Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres that are also financially sustainable businesses. Grow's free ECD management app is available to any preschool in the country and equips centre owners and teachers with tools, downloadable resources and training. [www.growecd.org.za](http://www.growecd.org.za)*

### **About Old Mutual Limited**

*Old Mutual is a premium African financial services group that offers a broad spectrum of financial solutions to retail and corporate customers across key markets segments in 14 countries. Old Mutual's primary operations are in South Africa and the rest of Africa, and it has a niche business in Asia. With over 175 years of heritage across sub-Saharan Africa, we are a crucial part of the communities we serve and broader*



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society on the continent. For further information on Old Mutual, and its underlying businesses, please visit the corporate website at [www.oldmutual.com](http://www.oldmutual.com).

**Media Enquiries:**

GROW Educare Centres:  
Helene Brand: Marketing Manager  
Email: [info@growecd.org.za](mailto:info@growecd.org.za)  
Tel: +27 82 671 1441

Old Mutual Limited  
Vuyo Mtawa: Head of Communications  
Email: [VMtawa@oldmutual.com](mailto:VMtawa@oldmutual.com)  
Tel: +27 68 422 8125