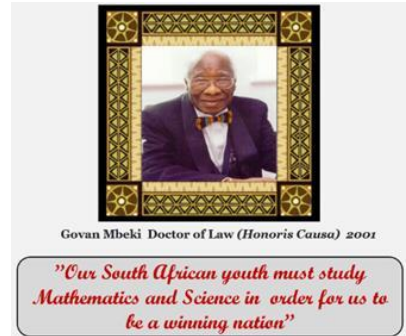


Information about the origin of the Govan Mbeki Mathematics Development Centre (GMMDC) at the Nelson Mandela University:

The Govan Mbeki Mathematics Development Centre (GMMDC) origins started in February 2001 by Professor Werner Olivier, in collaboration with two colleagues, within the Mathematics and Applied Mathematics department of the University of Port Elizabeth (UPE).



The centre's name is in honour of the late Dr Govan Mbeki, and the initiative to create it stemmed from discussions with Dr Mbeki early in 2001. The Science Faculty at UPE supported the endeavour, and an agreement was reached to launch a project in Dr Mbeki's name. The primary objective at the time was to promote the study of Mathematics and Science among the youth in the Eastern Cape Province.

Dr Mbeki's strong advocacy for education, particularly in Mathematics and Sciences, naturally aligned with the existing engagement initiatives of the Mathematics and Applied Mathematics department at UPE at the time, which had been in place since 1990. A statement he made during his 90th birthday speech continues to serve as a guiding principle for the GMMDC:

"Our South African youth must study Mathematics and Science in order for us to become a winning nation."

The formal inauguration of the Govan Mbeki Mathematics Development Programme (GMMDP) occurred in 2002, with the endorsement of UPE's top management and sponsorship from SASOL. The event was attended by prominent figures, including the then Deputy-Minister of Education, Mr. Mosibudi Mangena, and UPE's Vice-Chancellor, Dr Ralph Stumph.



Launch of GMMDC in 2002: (From Left) Prof Olivier, SASOL General Manager, Dep Min Mangena, Dr R Stumph.

In 2008, the GMMDP's entity status was officially elevated to that of a community engagement unit within the Science Faculty of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU). Subsequently, in 2017, the unit underwent further advancement to become a community engagement centre. The vision of the GMMDC encompasses key objectives:

- Enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in Mathematics and Physical Sciences at Secondary Schools and Colleges.
- Promoting the integrated use of relevant 21st-century technologies in the teaching and learning of Mathematics and Physical Sciences.
- Raising public awareness about the crucial role of Mathematics and Physical Sciences as gateway subjects for accessing Higher Education and fostering economic growth in South Africa.
- Advocating for a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) education approach in schools and colleges, considering the skills requirements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and the future marketplace.

The GMMDC remains an effective self-funded community engagement entity within Nelson Mandela University, continuing its efforts to advance STEM education and promote its significance in the context of the Strategic Development Goals (SDG) of South Africa.

UPE awarded an honorary doctorate in law (Honoris Causa) to Govan Mbeki in 2001. As he passed away in August 2021, this award was received posthumously on his behalf by his son President Thabo Mbeki in December 2001.