As SA fights to regain its eco-
nomic strength, the country for too long neglected the sci-
tific, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) sectors for innovation, and the scientific and techn-
ical skills needed to boost growth.

This focus is not unique to SA — many other countries are also feeling the after-
egchoes of foregoing STEM education. Growing numbers of tech-savvy graduates are leaving the country, and encouraging the youth to follow this path is vital. In response, a number of institutions and universities have been setting up programs to attract and retain students in the STEM fields.

The slogan "Nurture an innovation culture in schools and universities is starting to be more popular — but it is not enough. To fully harness the potential of the STEM sector, SA will need to develop a comprehensive strategy that considers the needs of businesses and the workforce as a whole.

For many years, the country has struggled with a brain drain, as skilled and educated professionals have left to seek better opportunities abroad. This has been exacerbated by the ongoing pandemic and its impact on the global economy.

However, there are signs of hope. The government has recently announced plans to invest more in STEM education and training, with a focus on producing more graduates with the necessary skills. This is a positive step, but it will take time to see results.

In addition, partnerships between universities and businesses can help to ensure that the skills being taught are relevant to the needs of the job market. This can be achieved through internships, research collaborations, and industry-led initiatives.

Overall, the development of the STEM sector is crucial for SA's economic growth and competitiveness in the global marketplace. It is a positive step forward, but more needs to be done to fully realize the potential of these fields.