

touching lives



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Compiled and Produced In-House by N3TC

The N3 Toll Route is the conduit that connects villages, communities, towns and provinces along the N3 Corridor, making it an integrated 'global' village. N3TC's Touching Lives programme is our authentic commitment to the communities in which we operate.

We acknowledge every person, with admiration and respect, who has contributed in any way towards the Touching Lives programme.

**** PLEASE NOTE: some photographs were taken pre-COVID-19***

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We are privileged to share our 17th edition of *Touching Lives* with you.

Through our *Touching Lives* programme, N3TC has been investing in communities along the N3 Toll Route and the broader N3 Corridor for over twenty years. The objective of the *Touching Lives* programme is to build a lasting legacy beyond N3TC's thirty-year concession period that ends in 2029.

In 2020, as we entered the final decade of the Concession Contract, we decided to consolidate the programme and place even greater emphasis on education.

Supporting programmes, projects, schools, teachers and community leaders that deliver quality education to their beneficiaries has always been central to our funding values. We have been proudly supporting toddlers just starting out in early childhood development centres, children in primary school, youth in high school, young adults pursuing their tertiary education goals and adults chasing their entrepreneurial dreams.

Little did we know, however, what lay ahead of us in 2020. There is no doubt that it was a particularly challenging

year for everyone due to COVID-19, perhaps more so for those living in the rural communities along the N3 Toll Route. You will, however, notice as you page through this report that every project found unique and innovative ways to overcome the challenges they faced. South Africans are known for being hopeful and resilient and this was truly put to the test this past year.

We are fortunate to bear witness to that adaptability in the communities along the N3 Toll Route. To see children nurtured and equipped to learn despite the odds, families supported, and communities still thriving has been nothing short of remarkable.

In this edition of *Touching Lives*, you will get a sense of the hardships faced by ordinary people trying to do their best, but more importantly you will discover the hope that has shone through and the sheer resilience of incredible people, both the beneficiaries and the project staff. N3TC salutes them all!

As we enter 2021, we know that there will be changes in how we go about life in the year ahead as we continue to adjust to the 'new normal', which will, most likely, be quite different from what we were used to. We will, however, continue our current programme with the vigour and enthusiasm it has drawn over the years, to ensure that we leave a lasting legacy, and in doing so contribute to building a better South Africa for all of us!

Thank you.

Neil Tolmie

CEO, N3 Toll Concession

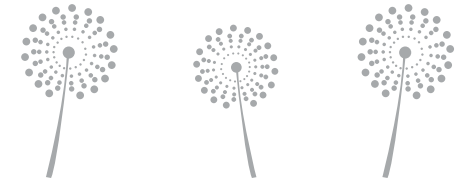


“ I can be changed by what happens to me.
But I refuse to be reduced by it. ”

Maya Angelou

child welfare





Free State Care in Action

Province: Free State
Project Champion: Gerda Louw

Thanks to N3TC...

...we could, with permits, still provide these households with support throughout lockdown. N3TC's involvement and contribution to our project serves as a motivator for the broader Harrismith community to get involved, because they see the impact of the project on the lives of beneficiaries from their hometown.

Gerda Louw.

Supporting indigent families in Harrismith for the past 31 years has always had its challenges but 2020 will go down in the history books as the year that truly tested the resilience, tenacity and influence of Free State Care in Action (FSCA).

Facing the stark reality of lockdown on the households of the 28 children in their care, the After School Care Centre (ASCC) team had to adapt to the circumstances the families were facing such as home schooling, unemployment or extremely limited income. Instead of facing lockdown with trepidation, the ASCC team embraced the opportunity to support and care for these families in a way that would help them thrive during a time of potentially severe hardship.



The children continued to receive the care and support that FSCA provides without compromise. They were encouraged and set up for success, with weekly household visits that catered for educational support, health and wellbeing checks, and the delivery of food parcels containing fresh fruit, vegetables, meat, basic groceries and toiletries.

At the same time the ASCC team remained employed during lockdown and they in turn were able to avert a negative financial impact on their own households.

All this made possible through the funding provided by N3TC to Free State Care in Action.

Through FSCA's influence in Harrismith, the community rallied around these families. Local clergy and ladies from various denominations in town visited the children weekly to contribute to their spiritual growth, with special attention paid to those children in Grade 7 going to High School in 2021 and who would no longer be able to attend the ASCC.

A parent guidance group was established by one of the pastors, and the parents remain grateful for the assistance they continue to receive in helping them raise their children.

Lockdown urged us to think differently.

When the schools closed, we were worried for the children and how they will survive. But the Lord provided volunteers with great and loving hearts, who worked diligently to source sponsors and deliver food parcels to these families every week.

Gerda Louw

The combination of N3TC's funding and increasing help from the community, has made it possible to sustain these families. Donations of fresh fruit, vegetables and meat from farmers and mealie meal from the local agricultural co-operative for example, has enabled the ASCC to distribute smaller food parcels on a weekly and more recently on a bi-weekly, basis which have complemented the substantial monthly N3TC-funded food parcels. Cash donations from local businesses have further helped to meet any unforeseen needs of the families.

Secondhand school clothes donated by locals are kept in the clothes store at the ASCC premises, which has helped reduce the cost of buying new school clothes and the reallocation of those funds contribute to educational areas when specific needs arise.

Secondhand casual clothes are also donated on a regular basis, and immediately provided to the children to meet their personal clothing needs.





Meet Wikus and Hardus.

They attended the After School Care Centre from the time they were in grade 1. In Wikus' grade seven year, they moved to another town where they faced dire circumstances.

Wikus says that the solid foundation he and his brother received at the ASCC, where they learned to trust the Lord in everything, helped him pass matric and gain immediate employment at an accounting firm. His employer has since funded his accounting studies while he worked full-time. He was due to write his final exam in November 2020 and plans to continue working for the firm.

Interestingly, the course should have taken Wikus six years to complete, but he completed it in just three years.

Hardus matriculated in 2019 and has been employed by a well-known fertilizer company where he is making his mark on the business.

The brothers are motivated young men and attribute their success to the time they spent at the ASCC.





Khanyisile N3TC Schools Project

Province: Free State, KwaZulu-Natal
Project Champion: Ansie Jooste

My job is not to judge.

My job is not to figure out if someone deserves something, My job is to lift the fallen, restore the broken and to heal the hurting, and the funding awarded to Khanyisile by N3TC helps me to do that every day.

Ansie Jooste

From dealing with the impact of a pandemic to natural disasters, the Khanyisile team has worked tirelessly to provide support - both practical and emotional - to the schools that make up the rural landscape of the Van Reenen area. Supporting schools that are isolated from major services with limited access to resources means having to think differently and respond wisely to ensure that the best and appropriate solutions are implemented for the benefit of the children, teachers and communities these schools serve.

The schools that Khanyisile supports are more than centres for learning. They are central to providing health, hygiene, nutrition and emotional support to the learners and communities surrounding the school.

Covid 19 has highlighted the daily realities faced, particularly, by under-resourced communities.

Khanyisile continues to be the voice of the vulnerable and we utilise the funding awarded by N3TC to touch lives by providing assistance to the most needy in the community on a daily basis.

Ansie Jooste



The work undertaken at the Van Reenen schools in the past has proven its value, and is already providing returns on the investment as the community navigated life under lockdown and adjusted to new ways of living.

With Khanyisile's support and interventions, the schools of rural Van Reenen have been able to establish COVID-Safe protocols that will safeguard and secure the health of learners, teachers and the community at large. Items such as hand sanitiser dispensers, hand sanitiser, masks and stationery have helped to set the children of Van Reenen up for success.

The Khanyisile community Vertiver plantations at the Sand River Farm and Sand River School are producing bumper crops with ongoing harvesting, cutting and bundling preparations for the dying process. All undertaken to facilitate the production of crafts that will be sold to provide an income for the community.





Garden boxes to ensure more mobility for food production between the community and schools have proven highly successful. By utilising these boxes, food production units are moved between the schools and communities depending on the need.

*We were blissfully unaware
of what the future would hold,
but with the wisdom of hindsight we can now
see that the work undertaken over the years,
with N3TC's support and funding, by providing
access to water, sustainable vegetable
gardens, and clean and safe cooking facilities
would be the very cornerstone of what would
help these communities navigate what has
been a very challenging time and recover from
the isolation and hardship of lockdown.*

Ansie Jooste



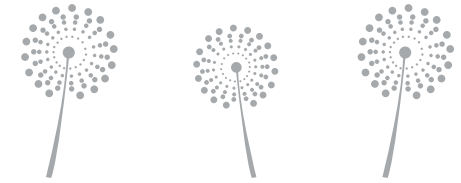
The fire damage to the Sand River nursery and outdoor classroom is under repair and the rebuilding works are ongoing.

There is a lot to be proud of when looking at the work undertaken in a community that is predominantly isolated from broader society, coupled with the challenges of limited resources but the work of Khanysile is changing lives, establishing sustainable practices and most importantly restoring hope to the hopeless.





youth development



Music Voyage

Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Project Champion: Katherine McClelland

*The past few months have been tough.
However, we have managed to stay afloat through
the support of our dedicated funders, and we have
created an income stream through virtual
performances.*

Katherine McClelland

COVID-19 may have locked the Music Voyage artists in but it certainly didn't knock them down as the sound of marimbas and saxophones echo through the KZN Midlands valleys and grasslands.

Resilience and tenacity are the cornerstone of the Music Voyage team, as they worked tirelessly to not only keep the music alive, but to keep the lights on and communications active.

The sweet melodies of Music Voyage have been reverberating through the airwaves of the virtual environment through online concerts, continued practice sessions and ongoing interaction with these budding and enthusiastic young musicians.

There is no doubt that the effect of the pandemic has had a devastating economic consequence on the Music Voyage beneficiaries and their families, but the children have not allowed this setback to silence them. Instead, they are determined more than ever to get back on track, play music and perform, come what may!



Through music, the children are given a moment to forget the harsh realities of life at this time and to feel joy, be part of a team and experience a sense of belonging.

From virtual projects to live rehearsals and performances, the Music Voyage journey continues, and it is clear, nothing will hold them back.

Bheki Shelembe, Music Voyage's dedicated Driver and Community Liaison, has jumped right in with passion and commitment. He has given his driving skills, his time and his heart to the children and the project as a whole. He is instrumental in connecting people within communities.

Music Voyage...

...has taught me that things are possible in life, no matter your circumstances. I've seen Music Voyage change children's lives, change behaviours and give discipline skills.

Bheki Shelembe



Meet Aphile Mdlalose

It's been a few years since Lidgetton resident and regular Music Voyage recorder student, Aphile Mdlalose, was recognised for her remarkable musical gift. With assistance from Music Voyage and its wonderful supporters, Aphile was offered a place at Drakondale Girls Choir School and a 50 percent scholarship in 2019. The balance of her fees has been covered by Lucky Beanz e.V. based in Germany. Two years later and Aphile continues to excel.

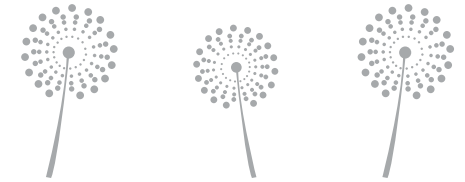
"I attended her prizegiving this week and was immediately struck by how happy, sociable and well-adjusted she is in her school environment. This was quickly followed up with an immense feeling of pride and gratitude." Katherine McClelland.

Aphile was awarded a distinction in Isizulu along with a certificate for best achievement in subject. In addition, she received a certificate for her academic progress in Life Orientation.

"Being part of a community where this kind of life-changing experience is possible brings me enormous joy and the deep-seated knowledge that what we do at Music Voyage is right, and our commitment to these children's lives must continue." Katherine McClelland.

Aphile has clearly blossomed and will celebrate her third year as a Drakondale student in 2021.





Funda Nenja

Province: KwaZulu-Natal
Project Champion: Lisa Button

*By being able to still get out into the community...
...and offer assistance where it was needed, the
community knew they could call on us for help.
They were able to let us know when they needed
assistance with food parcels or if their dogs
required medical assistance and, in this way, we
fulfilled our 'One Welfare' approach to the
community.*

Lisa Button

Thinking outside of the box and adapting to circumstances was the essence of Funda Nenja's support of the Mpophomeni community in 2020. From organising an Essential Services Permit and identifying the best way to support the community during the COVID-19 level five lockdown, Funda Nenja was determined to serve and support its beneficiaries.

Using the funding awarded by N3TC, Funda Nenja supplied food parcels and hygiene packs to the Funda Nenja participants and beneficiaries during the lockdown. In addition, they provided essential veterinary support to their participants' pets. This ensured that both the families and their pets were taken care of in the best possible way.

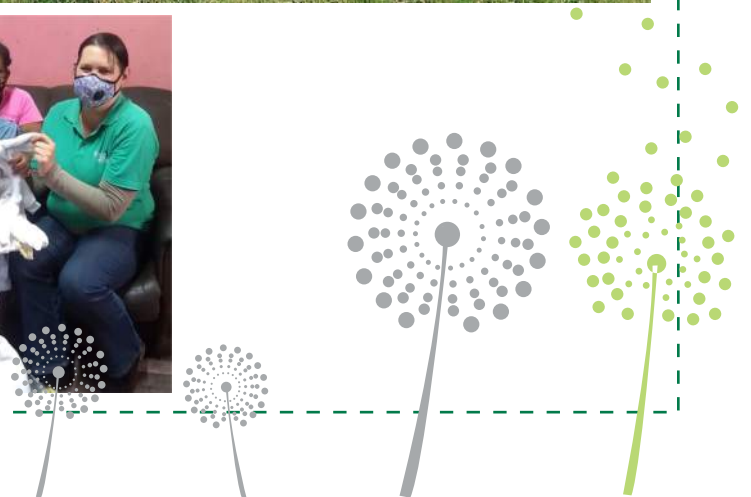
At the same time, Funda Nenja's staff members were able to hold down their jobs and continue to provide for their families, establishing a chain of sustainable support during a time of severe vulnerability.



As lockdown levels started to ease, Funda Nenja was able to expand their support and continue with home visits and counselling for the children and their families. Funda Nenja's social worker continues to provide support to the children and their families at workshops focused on feelings and emotions that have highlighted the adverse effects of the pandemic on the children.

Funda Nenja has since started its dog school classes and continues to provide educational, welfare and veterinary support to both existing and new participants in the programme.

*Covid-19 and lockdown
has obviously created a completely new challenge for
us all. We have, however, managed to survive and
overcome with relatively few major or permanent
problems.*
Lisa Button



disabled



Pevensey Place

Province: KwaZulu-Natal
Project Champion: Jan Niemand

*Covid-19...
... has caused some really challenging times for
most of South Africa and we are no exception.*
Jan Niemand

Supporting and caring for adults with disability is known for its many challenges. From dealing with limited funds to managing their emotional and physical health and wellbeing means that the team at Pevensy Place is accustomed to adapting to change and developing innovative solutions to ensure that their residents feel safe and secure.

As with most of South Africa, Pevensy Place was equally challenged by what 2020 held. From adjusting residential processes to protect residents from possible viral infection to managing disappointments and a significant reduction in income, it has been described as incredibly difficult.

Pevensy residents, many of whom are orphaned, rely on seeing family and friends during their Easter, winter and summer holidays, and the cancellation of these had an effect on the general mood of the residents, and subsequently the Pevensy staff.



Added to this the heightened anxiety linked to the cancellation of annual events such as joBerg2c, Sani2C and other key community events in the Underberg region and the greater concern of the associated loss in income as these events provide an opportunity to raise funds for Pevensy Place through pancake sales, fetes and farm produce sales.

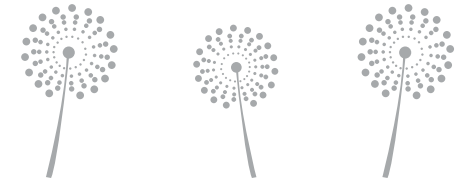


The Pevensy team, however, has established new routines, special fun occasions, games and traditions that have helped distract the residents from these circumstances that they cannot fully comprehend. They have made it through the year by managing funds carefully, maintaining a level of security for the residents and making sure that their mental health has not been compromised.

While there is little light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel in the immediate future, there is a flicker of hope amongst the residents and Pevensy staff that they will get to see family and friends soon and that the events they rely on will return in the not too distant future.

In the meantime, they cling to the prospect of receiving support and funding from trusted donors and the Underberg community.

wellness



Trucking Wellness

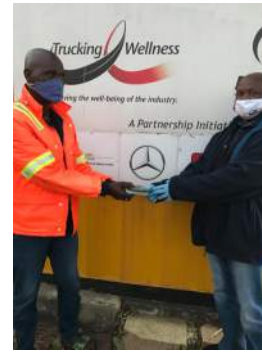
Province: All of the route
Project Champion: Tertius Wessels

*Due to the impact of the economic downturn...
 ...as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, Trucking
 Wellness had to adapt our core focus from HIV to
 focusing more on comorbidities and ensuring that
 drivers are aware of any existing ailment that
 could affect them should they contract Covid-19.*
 Tertius Wessels

The trucking community could possibly be the most vulnerable in this current climate. Not only are they exposed to contracting COVID-19 through their travels but many suffer with comorbidities such as HIV, Diabetes and high blood pressure. Yet we are totally reliant on them to keep the country 'moving' through the transportation of food, medication, fuel and essential every day supplies. All in a hard day's work to support their families and extended families.

Has COVID-19 affected the work of Trucking Wellness? Quite simply, yes. But, yet again, we see an underlying resilience that continues to meet the health and wellness needs of our trucking community.

Trucking Wellness, too, has pivoted during this time, spending considerable funds and effort on educating and supporting truck drivers at the Trucking Wellness centres along the N3 Toll Route. Trucking Wellness has been instrumental in sourcing and distributing immune boosters, vitamins and COVID-19 supplies to keep drivers safe during their travels, and educating them on the essentials of COVID



protocols such as sanitising, mask-wearing and maintaining safe distancing. It has been a bumpy, yet rewarding road to securing the health and wellbeing of a community that many take for granted.

Funding awarded by N3TC contributed to the ongoing efforts of Trucking Wellness to address the HIV infection rate and management of those who are HIV-positive, and in ensuring that drivers continue to receive much-needed medical support and advice that will maintain their health, keep their immunity strong and limit potential COVID-19 infection.

Trucking Wellness has seen a substantial drop in funding from donors locally and internationally as a result of COVID-19, yet they remain steadfast in their pursuit of caring for the trucking community in the best way possible.

*The funding awarded by N3TC...
...is enabling people to access appropriate and
effective interventions along the N3 Toll Route, to limit
new infections and diminish the impact of the HIV and
AIDS epidemic; resulting in reduced HIV prevalence
and the effect on individuals, families and
communities in the road freight industry.*

Tertius Wessels

education

There is no doubt that the pandemic has had a detrimental effect on children, teaching, schools and education in general.

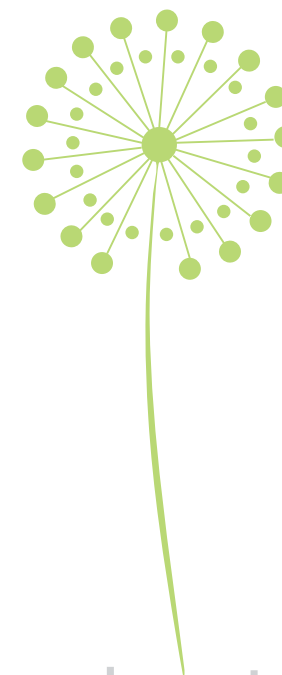
There lies, however, significant hope in the advancements made over the past year that potentially could stimulate change in the delivery of education in the future. While technology lies at the centre of the change, for the schools and children in remote and regional communities along the N3 Corridor, nothing can replace the connection and support that a school provides, and in most cases overcoming the bigger challenges of limited access to online resources, digital platforms, devices or connectivity are years away.

The role of schools in regional or remote communities, whether in the farming communities of the Free State or the valleys of the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, are starkly similar. These schools have multiple purposes acting not only as places of learning, but as community centres providing support to the broader community they serve. The majority of children attend school relying on the lunchtime meal they are served helping them to learn and grow and, in most cases, it is the only warm and nutritious meal they receive on any given day. Furthermore, they are reliant on their teachers for wellbeing support. In addition, the people living in close proximity to these schools rely on the schools as a source of employment, water and the left-over fresh produce harvested at the schools – they are essentially central to serving the basic needs of marginalised South Africans.

A central and consistent theme emerging from every one of the reports from the schools and education programmes supported by N3TC is one of adapting to the ever-changing circumstances that unfolded in 2020 and doing everything possible to ensure every learners' success.

The dedication, commitment and sheer resilience of school management, educators, education NGOs and learners are evident in each report. While circumstances may vary slightly from project to project, there has been an underlying theme of resilience. From reaching children whether directly through home visits or online and preparing homeschooling packs, to adjusting budgets and priorities to focus on humanitarian needs through the provision of essential food supplies and support to children and their families. Most importantly, each one tells a story of safeguarding children's futures through the delivery of quality education and support in a continually changing environment.

There is no doubt that 2020 was a challenging year for every school, programme or NGO supported by N3TC. But they have all overcome, reached new heights, grasped opportunities, rapidly learnt new skills and remote learning delivery mechanisms, and seen children tackle learning, albeit differently, demonstrating resilience... beyond understanding.



introduction



Michaelhouse Community Partnership Trust: Eduhelpers Programme

Province: KwaZulu-Natal
Project Champion: Amy Webster

*Not only did we secure...
...the employment of nine passionate teachers
who are eager to work in the schools, but they
are contributing towards the delivery of quality
education, which has far-reaching benefits for
the learners.*
Amy Webster

The Michaelhouse Community Partnership Trust (MCPT) Eduhelpers Programme was initiated with a very specific intention to support young passionate teachers – either those completing their studies or those who have qualified – and to equip rural Midlands schools with additional resources and teaching support. Central to the programme is the need to ensure that each eduhelper is paid a stipend, which means they earn a living while gaining in-classroom experience and supporting the schools and their learners to ensure their scholastic success.

The MCPT this year had to reimagine their programme, setting up online support and a WhatsApp group for the eduhelpers to ensure they continued to stay connected and supported while they were unable to gather for essential workshops, seminars or networking opportunities.



Meet Philile Zuma

Eduhelper at Esiphethwini Sendiza Primary School



PHILE



Full Name:	Philile Zuma
Qualification:	Bachelor of Education (Student)
Fun fact about yourself:	I enjoy trying new baking recipes
Best advice ever received:	Quality over quantity
School:	Esiphethwini Sendiza Primary School
Department / Subject:	Computer Training
Best part of being an Eduhelper:	It has given me a great opportunity to interact with children and staff. I learn new things from them everyday and I have colleagues who support me with my Unisa studies

MICHAELHOUSE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS: EDUHELPER OF THE WEEK

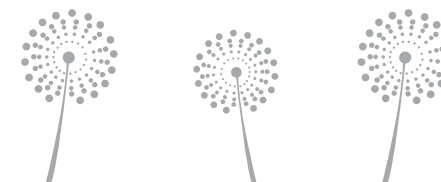
Philile is passionate about teaching and her learners adore her. She started as an eduhelper in July 2018 and connected well with the staff and learners at the school. Philile teaches CAMI and basic computer skills to learners from Grade R to Grade Three – essential skills required for today, and well into the future.

The majority of Philile's stipend covers the costs of her daughter Angel's education. Angel completed her Grade 8 in 2020 achieving 90% for both EMS and Technology. An example of the depth of the impact of N3TC's funding in touching lives meaningfully.

MOBILE LAB IS BACK IN ACTION



Midlands
Community
College



Midlands Community College

Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Project Champion: Rebecca Wakeford

The school closures during lockdown had a significant impact on learning...

for an education system already in crisis. Add to this poor network coverage in rural and historically under-resourced areas and limited access to digital learning resources. Even the most prevalent forms of distance learning, such as radio or television, did not reach our most vulnerable learners. The shift to distance learning exposed deep equity gaps which are predicted to intensify post-pandemic.

Rebecca Wakeford

N3TC's funding helped Midlands Community College to continue supporting Grade 10, 11 and 12 learners at 70 KZN Midlands schools and to retain the services of six laboratory technicians in 2020. The technicians are vital to supporting educators, especially Grade 12 educators, with key practical elements of the science curriculum and preparing learners for their final Grade 12 exams.



Each school was offered support options that included practical demonstrations only or longer sessions that included revision and exam preparation.



Most educators opted for the practical demonstrations with extended revision and identified the areas of the curriculum where the most support was required.

The programme ensured that the educators felt supported and were better equipped to make up for lost time and instilled a confidence that provided their learners with a clearer understanding of core concepts. The project provides Midlands Community College with an expansive beneficiary reach that highlights the importance of STEM. It has provided a basis for collaboration with the Department of Education and is a catalyst for learners from low socio-economic communities, improving educational outcomes.



Crystal Springs Primary School

Province: KwaZulu-Natal
Project Champion: Thembi Ngubane

N3TC's funding has enabled the school to make tremendous advances in educational development...

...and has brought about a vast and positive impact on the community, which is now committed to working with the school. They don't just provide donations they give their time and resources to supporting the school and our learners. We have been so fortunate to receive the support of four former teachers who now volunteer at the school and teach English every week, which is of significant benefit to our learners.

Thembi Ngubane

Where learners once had to deal with excessive dust or mud as part of their daily school routine, they now look forward to coming to school. In fact, many learners have left bigger nearby schools and opted to attend Crystal Springs Primary instead – a dramatic reputational shift in four years.



classroom



computer room



While the pandemic has plunged the school, like all others, into difficult times, Crystal Springs Primary School is able to look on the bright side. Teachers and learners are now enjoying warm classrooms in the winter months and cooler ones in the summer months, all thanks to N3TC's funding. This support has seen a significant reduction in absenteeism and improved the morale of staff.



Lions River Primary School

Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Project Champion: Silondile Mhlongo

*Our association with N3TC has
been incredibly positive...*

...for the teachers, learners and the community. In 2020 we had to change our plans due to the pandemic, but the installation of air conditioners has helped to establish a more conducive environment for learning. In addition, the school was in a position to purchase masks for each learner and install sanitiser stations in and around the school.

Silondile Mhlongo

Lions River Primary School has changed significantly since N3TC first awarded funding to the school in 2016. Today, the school is making a difference through the improvements made to basic infrastructure and learning resources over the years. As a result, better community participation is evident, and learners are showing substantial learning improvements.

The school was once a multi-grading farm school with two teachers, but it has expanded over the years and increased its staffing to six educators and only two



grades are currently multi-grading. The school now has access to more resources and the quality of education and support offered to learners has expanded and the impact of these improvements couldn't have been timelier than in 2020.

With the increase in staff and learners, the school is now considered an employer of choice in the area with local community members filling the roles of cooks, security guards, cleaners and eduhelpers. In addition, they have been able to recruit a librarian for one day a week as well as a 'Reading Crew' that assists learners with their reading and improving their English.

Life in Lions River is looking up and the school is central to that optimism.



KwaZulu-Natal Crane Foundation

Province: KwaZulu-Natal
Project Champion: Jon Bates

Our mission this year...

...has been both humanitarian and strategic. We have kept hunger at bay and by providing food relief we lessen the risk of poaching and general theft. We have built goodwill within our community and these efforts have brought us closer together.

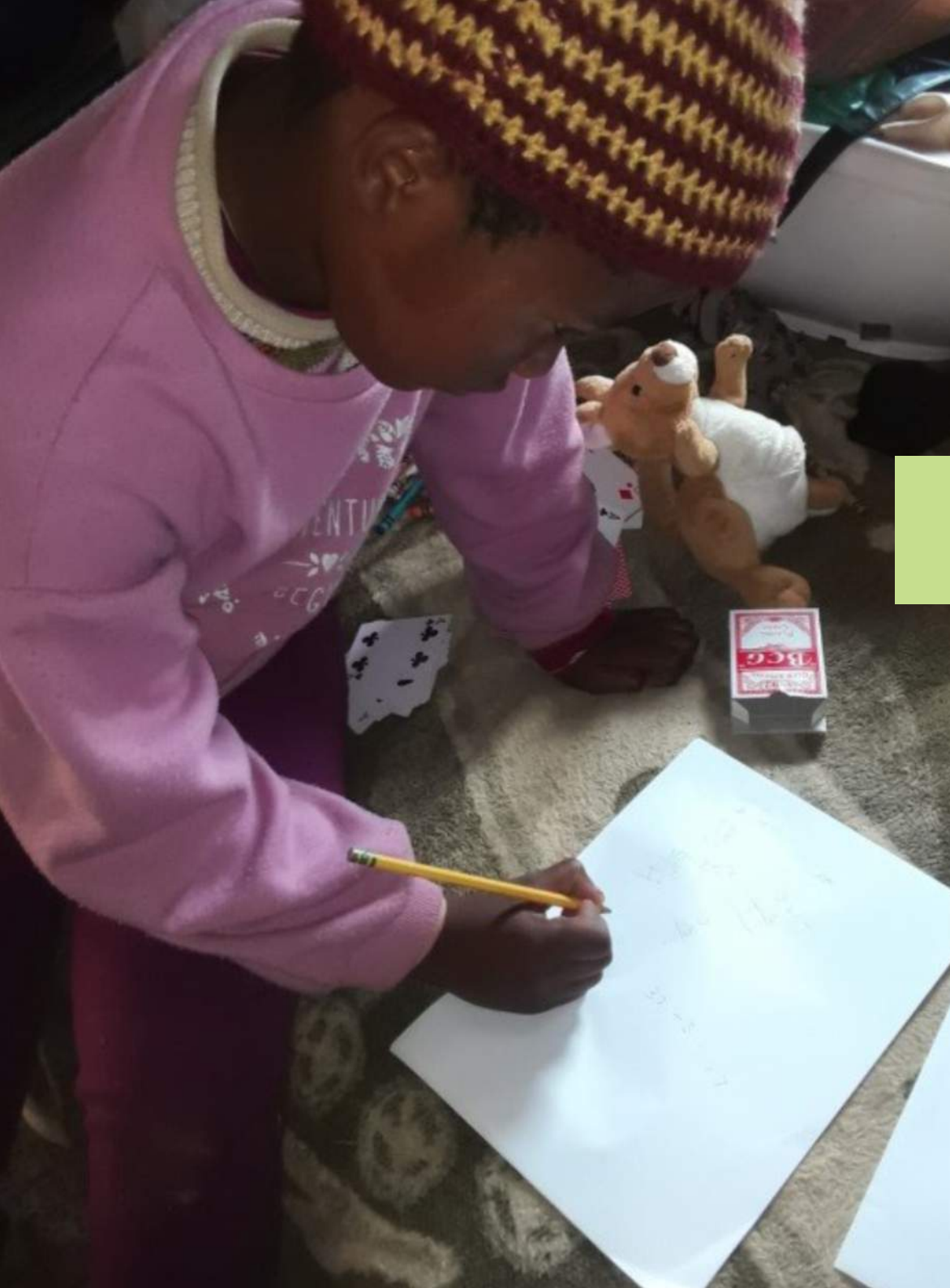
Jon Bates

In March 2020, the KZN Crane Foundation suspended its Education Programme – *Cranes in the Classroom* – and cut its expenses to the minimum in anticipation of the impending humanitarian crisis that presented itself with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.



N3TC's support of the Foundation's philosophy and change in direction has resulted in the Foundation supporting over 3,500 people in the KZN Midlands. N3TC's support provided the Foundation with the fundraising impetus to seek further support for its humanitarian efforts in the area with three major donors following suit.

To date, the Foundation has been able to raise close to R1-million that will continue to avert the humanitarian crisis and ensure that people negatively impacted by the pandemic are supported in tangible ways – alleviating hunger and limiting the associated negative effects such as theft. This will further help people to get back on their feet when things return to some form of normal economic activity in the months ahead.



Reach out to Read

Province: KwaZulu-Natal
Project Champion: Cheryl Taylor

The training sessions...

...were vibrant and happy, filled with singing, practical hands-on learning and lots of laughter.

Cheryl Taylor

In mid-January, the Underberg Mastery Community Outreach Project was warmly welcomed into the Family Literacy Project (FLP) and Reach out to Read was launched. The team moved from the Mastery Unit at Underberg Primary School to the FLP premises in Underberg. Thirty new education interns, sponsored by Absa Bank, were introduced to the project and regular training and workshops were underway.



Then COVID-19 hit. Plans and routines had to change. Schools were closed, the interns and facilitators could no longer visit schools, libraries or homes. Morale was low and a sense of fear pervaded within the team.

Fortunately, WhatsApp groups were already well established, and the team soon realised



Although it has been challenging...

...due to limited technology, we have persevered, and it is very exciting to see the creativity of our interns and watch their teaching skills develop."

Cheryl Taylor



that it could be used to further the programme's literacy offering. It developed into a full-scale platform of teaching and learning across all education phases, and the ten facilitators took turns to deliver either video or voice note lessons in isiZulu via WhatsApp.

The areas covered included language development, phonological awareness, phonics, reading, vocabulary enrichment, life skills, arts and crafts, numeracy development, gardening, auditory perceptual skills, emotional intelligence, and social and emotional support for adults and children.

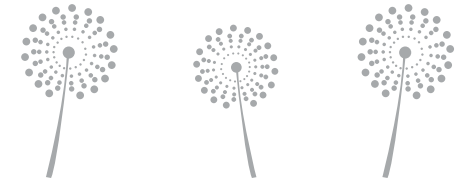
Resource packs were developed by FLP and Reach Out to Read and distributed to the facilitators, interns and families involved.

As a result of data challenges, Reach out to Read has since included SMS lessons to its offering, which enabled an increase in reach to more families within the Underberg and Himeville communities.

Daily monitoring of the project...

...is carried out through photos and videos, and it is heart-warming to see the effort that is being made by caring parents with very limited resources.

Cheryl Taylor



PROTEC Pmb Academy

Province: KwaZulu-Natal
Project Champion: Rose Smuts

*Most of our families are single parent families...
...child-headed households and extended families of mothers
and offspring (cousins) living together, in very small homes.
There is no such luxury as 'my bedroom' where I study. As a
direct result of this lifestyle, PROTEC Pmb is seen as a quiet
haven where groups of children often congregate to seek a
quiet space, where they can study. Where they can establish a
study circle, and true student-centred learning can take place.*

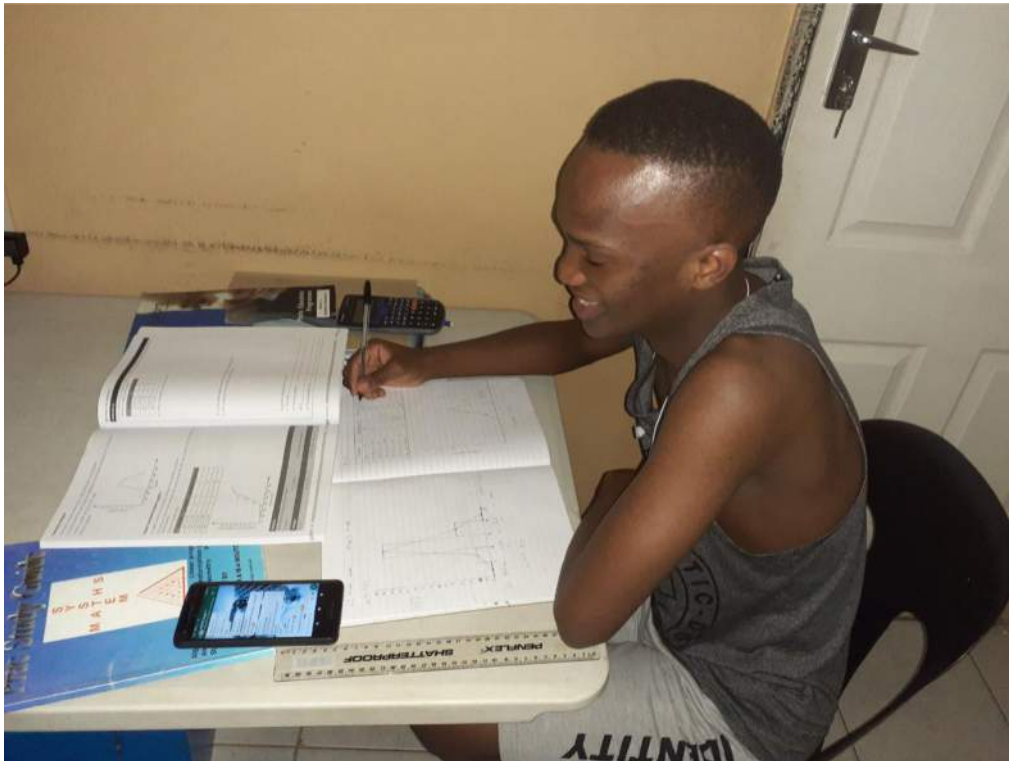
This has been especially difficult this year.

Rose Smuts

The report from PROTEC has a similarity in its narrative to most of the reports from the educational organisations included in the N3TC Touching Lives programme. It tells the story of mobile technology being used as the core medium to help learners continue with their studies, while confined to their homes during lockdown periods and to accommodate physical distancing in learning environments when in-person classes resumed.

The learners that signed up with PROTEC have a common desire to succeed and through the help of the various offerings provided by the Academy, their academic results speak for themselves.

Using WhatsApp groups and mobile technology to provide continuous support and educational guidance to Grade 10 to 12 learners, PROTEC was able to help learners maintain their academic momentum, keep up with their studies and see them through to the end of the academic school year.



PROTEC further extended its support to students that they deemed to be 'lost' to the system as a result of their isolation and proximity to schools and educational resources. These learners were not registered with PROTEC but were taken under the wing of the Academy to set them up for success.

A large, detailed dandelion seed head is positioned on the right side of the frame. Numerous seeds with their feathery parachutes are shown in various stages of dispersal, floating across the background. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green with a vertical gradient, transitioning from a lighter green on the left to a darker green on the right.

education

TOP-UP BURSARIES

A core component of N3TC's Touching Lives Programme is supporting educational centres of excellence along the N3 Corridor to provide financial support to deserving learners whose families may be experiencing financial difficulties or personal hardship.

The top-up bursaries are intended to secure a child's potential that will bring promise of a bright future, and ultimately bring change to their families and communities.

These bursaries are administered and awarded at the discretion of each school based on a rigorous evaluation process.



Drakensberg Boys Choir School

Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Drakensberg Boys Choir School (DBCS) attracts the best young vocal talent in South Africa. These boys are incredibly gifted and talented in their vocal and musical skills. But talent is not only gifted to the affluent. Many DBCS boys' families cannot afford the fees for their sons to attend the school, which includes boarding facilities, extensive musical training and academic learning; but they all share a keen desire to see their children succeed.



DBCS, through the top-up bursary funding awarded to the school by N3TC was able to assist eleven young learners from Grade 5 to Grade 9 to continue attending DBCS in 2020. These boys were then able to continue performing in their virtual performances, gain choir status with ease and continue to achieve academic excellence. These boys all come from a range of backgrounds and provinces, but they all have one thing in common – a love for singing, music and performing.

The boys all progress from DBCS at the end of Grade 9 and the majority are accepted into leading private high schools across South Africa because of their excellent foundational learning in both music and academics.



The 'old boys' of DBCS rank high and many go on to achieve great success whether in the music and entertainment industry or corporate world.

Harrismith High School

Province: Free State

N3TC supported a deserving Grade Nine learner at Harrismith High School, which meant that the learner was able to stay in the school hostel. This saved him many hours of travel to school and home every day, providing opportunities to participate in school sport, and access to homework and academic support. At the same time, the learner was provided with the security of a safe place to learn, play and relax.



This learner has shown commitment to learning and achieved good results. The life skills, values and support he receives from the school as a result of the bursary, will set him up for life-long success.



Harrismith Primary School

Province: Free State

N3TC provides support for nine children through Harrismith Primary School's 'We Care for our Children' programme that supports children from Harrismith and the surrounding communities.



These learners all stem from families experiencing difficult and challenging circumstances and the bursaries ensure that these nine children can learn in a safe and caring environment. Of primary importance to the school is the need to equip each child with the abilities and capabilities to overcome challenges and succeed in life.

The children are all accommodated in the school's hostel where their health, nutrition and cognitive stimulation support are prioritised, coupled with developing their social, life skills and extra mural abilities.

All nine learners have shown significant improvement academically since being



accepted into the bursary programme as a result of the financial stability they have received and the personal support they enjoy from teachers, support and hostel staff.

KwaZamokuhle School for the Disabled: Fundisisizwe Bursary Fund

Province: KwaZulu-Natal

N3TC's ongoing support of the Fundisisizwe Bursary Fund has directly touched the lives of 20 learners at KwaZamokuhle School. These learners all have special education needs and the Fund covers their school fees, hostel fees and other support needed, such as transport and assistive devices.

Due to the closure of schools as a direct result of COVID-19, the Fund's committee identified that many of its beneficiaries and their families had insufficient funds to purchase food and essential supplies. This required an urgent intervention and some of the funding awarded by N3TC was reallocated to provide relief to these families.

*The assistance we have been able to provide this year...
has meant that we can address many of the social
barriers the students' experience.*
Kristy Flemming

Royal Drakensberg Primary School

Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Ten remarkable young learners from Royal Drakensberg Primary School (Royal Drak) get to go to school every day and learn new concepts, engage with quality educational resources and share their lunch in the playground thanks to N3TC's top-up bursary programme.

Furthermore, N3TC's funding has enabled Royal Drak to move forward confidently and to make important strides in developing a continuum for growth from babies to 10 years of age. The school provides an important base from which knowledge is shared and teachers mentored to further support schools and early learning centres beyond the school to the rural outreaches of the Northern Drakensberg.

BabyBoost, a programme implemented by Royal Drak to support carer and baby interaction during the first vital 1000 days of a baby's life includes home visits and more recently workshops using Zoom and mobile technology to connect with carers and mothers. The programme is administered from the school and the facilitators



have been able to adapt and still make a valuable contribution to the development of mothers, carers and their babies during this unusual time.

Mentorship of teachers continued through workshops both virtually and in-person and the interns employed at the school have shown significant progress.



*Our broader reach within the community...
...has meant that our impact is far greater. We have encouraged growth mindsets for effective learning, been focused on continual development and we continue to strive to make positive changes in foundation phase education.*

Megan Bedingham

St David's Diocesan School

Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Eight learners at St David's Diocesan School were able to continue learning and growing at St David's this year as a direct result of the top-up bursary funding awarded by N3TC.

St David's is a centre of educational excellence in the heart of Greytown in rural KwaZulu Natal, where primary school learners gain a quality education in a safe and secure school environment.

The school's vision and drive to improve its facilities, infrastructure and resources, has parents clamoring to get their children enrolled at the school.

The learners supported by N3TC's funding in 2020 ranged from the youngest in grade three to the eldest in grade seven.



As with many other schools in the rural regions of South Africa, St David's has struggled to provide support and assist learners while in lockdown as a direct result of limited access to



devices and connectivity to continue supporting their educational needs. Their greatest concern is managing the risk of many families affected by the pandemic and not being able to cover school fees. Add to this the concerns for every child's educational progress and a measure of desperation is evident but their resilience shines through thanks to the school's strong foundations.

There is no doubt that St David's will overcome these struggles, children will return to school and families will be given the support they need – they simply have too much faith to let it get them down.

Many pupils come from single parent families... or have lost their parents and are being taken care of and educated by relatives. In some cases, the extended family is supported by the salary of only one breadwinner. N3TC's funding enables us to educate children whose parents or guardians could not otherwise afford independent education.

Janet Klapprott

Treverton School

Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Treverton Schools is located on the outskirts of Mooi River overlooking the N3 Toll Route, where quality education is delivered, and many young lives are changed. Treverton has an express vision to ensure that its student body is diverse and inclusive, and seeks to provide support to deserving young learners from surrounding communities that would not only benefit from access to independent education but to the broader social, extra mural and sport offerings available at the school.

N3TC provides funding to support eight learners who make their unique mark on the fabric of Treverton Schools whether through achieving top scholastic results, developing their sporting prowess or building friendships in their school environment.

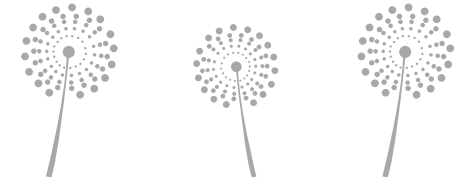


These achievements are not only attributed to the funding provided by N3TC and other like-minded organisations but to the continued support and encouragement they receive from the teachers and support staff at Treverton Schools.





community training



St Mary's Interactive Learning Experience (S.M.I.L.E.)

**One Teacher One Textbook Many Learners
(Grade 9 pilot programme)**

**Province: KwaZulu-Natal
Project Champion: Daniela Brown**

Some of the challenges facing learners and teachers...

in the English home language classroom are that many learners are ill equipped to master English as a home language but believe that English home language will open doors for them in an English-dominated world. Many teachers, as English first additional language speakers, lack confidence when teaching English home language, and out of date textbooks do not cater for the changing demographics of the English home language classroom.

Daniela Browne

Resilience is best demonstrated by those who overcome challenges, grasp opportunities and work hard to turn them into reality. And there is no better example than S.M.I.L.E.'s One Teacher One Textbook Many Learners programme.

Despite the challenges of 2020, S.M.I.L.E. continued to support twelve (12) high schools within the N3 Corridor, resulting in 26 teachers receiving essential English home language support.

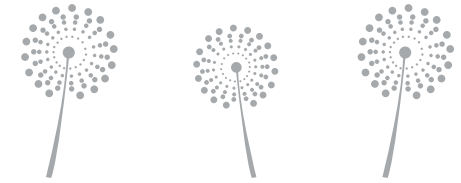
The pilot programme's reach extended to schools in Pietermaritzburg, Estcourt, Newcastle and Vryheid. It is seen as an extension of S.M.I.L.E.'s existing Grade 8 programme and the pilot was intended to demonstrate the effectiveness of the programme for a broader roll-out in 2021 and beyond.



As a result of pandemic-related restrictions and lockdowns, S.M.I.L.E. had to curtail some of its offering but was still able to provide continued support when schools reopened and learners were able to return to the classroom.

Feedback on the pilot programme from the schools was positive and they all anticipate being able to scaffold the process in 2021 as they hope to move forward in a more stable school year.





Educator's Skills Development in Environmental Learning

Province: KwaZulu-Natal
Project Champion: Janet Snow

The long-term knock-on effect is improved teaching... which has a significant impact on society. We have had teachers applying to re-join any course we offer, stating that they gain so much at each course and they want to continue growing in their profession.

Janet Snow

Redefining historical procedures and systems used for the Educator's Skills courses offered in the past was a primary focus for Janet Snow and her team in 2020. The key outcome being the development of a blended learning platform to provide course participants with access to information and course materials as well as to enable them to submit assignments. This was all complemented by face-to-face contact sessions, ensuring a cohesive training experience.



The demand on teachers is significant and their role in the community is very often underestimated. It has been shown, through national research projects, that teachers (over 80%) are undertrained to teach the current curriculum requirements.

The Educator Skills Development Courses intend to improve teachers' general teaching practices and their environmental education abilities.



Courses are delivered relatively close to rural schools and teachers are further supported either through funding of transport costs and/or accommodation.

Teachers who attend the courses are inspired to adopt a life-long learning approach and encouraged to seek advice on other courses that can improve their teaching practice or even degrees that they could pursue.

*It is encouraging to see the teachers enthusiastic...
...about the possibilities of continuing their studies. We
have had some teachers return a few years later having
successfully completed a university degree.*

Janet Snow



community training

TERTIARY BURSARIES

Amkele Shembe

Degree: B.Sc. (Civil Engineering)

Institution: University of Pretoria

I am from Imbali, a township in Pietermaritzburg, where I live with my father who is a widower, my sister and her two children.

Raised by a father who was a bricklayer, I was exposed to different things like plugs, cables and heavy machinery. My father is the classic example of a handyman. He taught me many basic skills like how to use a screwdriver, drill a hole in a wall, sharpen a machete and even mix cement. We constructed the roof on our house together, from preparing the roof trusses to laying the roofing tiles. So, it was inevitable that I would enjoy a fascination with fixing and building things.

In grade ten I represented PROTEC Pmb Academy in a bridge-building competition. I really loved the experience of learning new concepts. At the same time, I enjoyed Mathematics, Physical Science and Information Technology at school. All the ingredients needed to pursue a career in Engineering.

I always enjoyed listening to my father's stories, and one particular story he tells is about a popular bridge in KwaZulu-Natal that he helped to construct. The fact that his hands helped produce such a masterpiece is my motivation. I look forward to being one of the brains behind a similar or even bigger project in the future.

The biggest challenge I have faced at university has been self-doubt triggered by the fear of failure. To be honest, I am still working on finding ways to regain my strength and self-confidence and I always try to surround myself with hard workers. I also have a few lecturers that I look up to, who are helping me to reframe my vision for the future.

N3TC has played a huge role in assisting me to achieve my career goals with a bursary that covers my tuition, accommodation, compulsory study materials and meals. It really helps me to focus on my studies and not to worry about my finances. I cannot express in words how grateful I am.



Bongeka Mthembu

Degree: Diploma in Civil Engineering

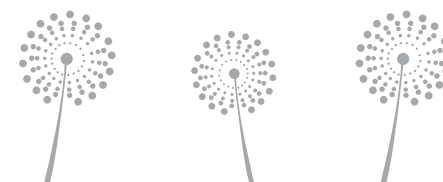
Institution: Durban University of Technology

I come from a small family. My mother worked as a domestic worker for more than 25 years and has always supported our family financially. Growing up wasn't easy but COVID-19 has resulted in my mother losing her job, making life at home even harder.

I matriculated in 2017, and I worked hard to be accepted to study engineering. Sadly, my family couldn't afford to send me to university, which makes my bursary from N3TC highly important and valued.

I struggled in my first year because I didn't know my way around, but I was determined to succeed and eventually got the hang of university life and made the most of my studies. My short-term goal is to get my diploma, but I don't want it to end there. I want to further my studies to eventually gain my PhD.

My mother is my motivation. She's been the one by my side every step of the way telling me not to give up and to never leave university no matter what happens. I am so grateful for my bursary because I have been able to pursue my studies and still help my family whenever I can.



Londeka Ximba

Degree: M.Eng (Civil Engineering)

Institution: University of Stellenbosch

The highlight of my year was the approval of my Masters degree proposal to Stellenbosch University: *The Analysis of the Human Error Effect on Road Traffic Crashes, Developing a Human Error Analysis Technique to Prevent and Reduce Road Traffic Crashes.*

Being accepted for my Masters degree is a major personal milestone and a step closer to fulfilling my career goals. My supervisor believes that my thesis topic will have an enormous impact on society, and this has given me the motivation to see this study through to completion. The results could potentially provide a solution to road crashes caused by driver error and a reduction in injuries and fatalities.

As an employee of N3TC, I have witnessed numerous fatal crashes that have claimed many lives, making this study of personal significance. I would love to play my part and contribute to developing solutions that reduce fatal crash statistics.

My study should further reduce the financial impact on the Road Accident Fund (RAF) and facilitate the reallocation of funds to improve and further develop the country's road transport network and potentially result in safer roads countrywide.

I am so grateful for all the support I have received. My colleagues at N3TC, my immediate family and husband have shown incredible support for my study journey. The University of Stellenbosch staff and my supervisor have guided me through the courses and lectures required to complete the degree, and helped me improve my knowledge and understanding to adequately research and analyse the results of this study appropriately.



Loyanda Ximba

Degree: B.Com (Accounting)

Institution: University of the Free State

I am passionate about numbers so it was inevitable that I would choose a career that would help me achieve my dream of playing a role in the finance industry.

But as we all know some dreams only come true when you overcome challenges. My biggest challenge is that I struggle to communicate with other people and that makes me, potentially, a weak team player. Working in groups as part of my studies, coupled with online learning in the last year has helped me to overcome this challenge because I was able to meet with my study groups and communicate effectively on a social level as well.

My mentor, family, friends and mam Thandiwe have played a very important role in bringing out the best in me. They have all been there for me and encouraged me along the way. When I graduate with my Honours in Accounting, I know I will be employed where my skills will be used to the benefit of my employer, thanks to their encouragement and support.

Although I enjoyed the fact that I didn't have to stress about my finances this past year thanks to the generosity of N3TC, the pandemic changed many things especially in my studies. Adapting to significant changes in the delivery of my studies was difficult, to be honest. The one good thing that came out of this time though was the improvement in my communication skills and I earned my learners license permit.

I really appreciate all the support I have received from N3TC and the opportunity I have been given to make my career dreams a reality.



Lunga Xulu

Degree: B.Sc. (URP)

Institution: University of the Witwatersrand

In 2020 I completed my BSc in Urban and Regional Planning (Town Planning) at the University of the Witwatersrand. It is hard to imagine that this young girl who grew up in Richards Bay moved to Johannesburg to study, but N3TC helped me make it happen.

My time at university was not easy, and I faced many challenges academically and mentally. This has meant that the one thing I gained on a personal level, was resilience.

Having a bursary sponsor supporting me and checking up on my wellbeing was crucial to my pathway to graduation. The thoughtfulness and concern shown to me was the motivation I needed to keep pushing myself to achieve success. I am very grateful to N3TC for everything they did to help me reach this first step in my career and life journey.

I must admit, I made a great career choice. Now that I have completed my studies, I will be focusing on getting a job where I can gain experience and put my studies into practice. I aspire to further my studies and have my sights set on a few post graduate degrees.

I am committed to my future and I want to gain all the knowledge and skills I can so that I can achieve my dream of becoming a professionally accredited town planner.



Luyanda Sokhela

Degree: B.Sc. (Civil Engineering)

Institution: University of KwaZulu-Natal

I grew up in a world where going to University was rare. Most teenagers were high school dropouts, and alcohol- and drug-use were the norm. I have so much respect for my parents for raising my siblings and I into young, responsible adults amid the circumstances surrounding us.

The story of how I ended up in Engineering is a story of unmerited favour. I grew up always wanting to be a medical doctor. I made the decision to study civil engineering in my matric year after my mentor, at that time, suggested that I apply for something outside the Health Sector. I remember how upset I was. I felt like no one supported my dream to become a doctor.

Looking back now, I am so grateful for the people who took it upon themselves to understand me and were not afraid to tell me what they felt was best for me. Even if I didn't agree with it. Today, I love what I do and cannot imagine myself doing anything other than civil engineering. The idea of building a better South Africa for future generations gives me goosebumps!

I've had such an exciting university experience, with so many hopes and dreams. My short-term goal is to finish my degree and to be accepted into an Engineering Masters programme. An even better opportunity would be to get into a graduate programme, which would be a great way for me to sharpen my business and leadership skills, while doing what I love.

My long-term goal is to get my PrEng and pursue my journey in social entrepreneurship and philanthropy.

My biggest motivation is definitely the people around me. I have a strong network of intellects who are a constant reminder that you can achieve anything you put your mind to. My family, friends and mentors have played a huge role in keeping me



motivated and shaping me into the person I am today. They are a true revelation of Ubuntu, an African proverb meaning, 'I am because you are'.

The past few years have been life changing. My proudest achievement so far was receiving the WM De Wet Leadership Potential Award from Enactus South Africa. Winning the Award allowed me to see how far I have come and how much more is required of me to build a better future for our people.

The impact that N3TC has had on my career has been immense. My university experience, the friends I have made, the lessons I have learned, these are all as a result of N3TC, and I remain grateful for the opportunities I have been granted over the past few years.



Qaphelani Dhlamini

Degree: M.Ed. (Education Management)

Institution: University of KwaZulu-Natal

I am an educator and department head of the intermediate phase at KwaZamokuhle Special School situated at Ephangweni Mission outside Estcourt. I am a disabled person reliant on a wheelchair, but I am also an active sportsman and a schools' sport convener for KwaZulu Natal Sports for persons with a disability.



I have the privilege, thanks to N3TC, of studying towards my Masters degree in Education Management. While taking up the mantle of lifelong learning, this degree will help me to advance my career and build on my abilities. It could even result in me tackling an entirely new field one day.

The degree will set me up to transition into more senior positions and help me to improve my research, writing, and analytical skillset. It will also improve my problem-solving skills and I will be better equipped to tackle complex projects.

After receiving the Global Sports Management Programme Award in 2019 from the USA Government, this year I was so excited to have been awarded the Best Exemplary Alumni award in 2020. I should have travelled to Texas to receive my award but due to COVID-19 the ceremony was postponed.

N3TC has been my pillar of strength. When I suffered the loss of both my brothers in the space of one week, N3TC was there for me. The messages and calls encouraged me a lot. My prayer is that God blesses N3TC, its management and staff.

Sibusiso Sokhela

Degree: Advanced Diploma in Internal Auditing

Institution: Durban University of Technology

I was raised by my grandmother on a small farm in Howick. I was one of eight cousins and siblings living with my grandmother and she instilled in each one of us that education was our only way out of poverty.

I completed my matric at a township school, Injoloba Secondary School, in 2016 and achieved a Bachelors Degree pass. I was really confused about the career I should follow but luckily, I had my father to guide me in the decision. He told me to pursue any career in accounting because he saw the love and passion I had for the subject. I took his advice and enrolled in the National Diploma in Internal Auditing.

I started my studies without any financial assistance as the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) hadn't responded to my application. I was dependent on my family for all my financial support. It was a challenging time as my family didn't have much to cover all the costs. I knew I had to pass well to earn a reduction in my tuition fees. I also started working at the University as a Financial Accounting Tutor, which helped me earn an income that contributed to tuition fees. As hard as it was, I was driven to reach my dreams, and that was motivation enough to keep me going. I graduated with my National Diploma (CUM Laude) with 27 distinctions.

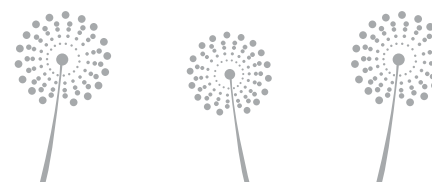
Sadly, just before my graduation in 2018 I lost my grandmother. This loss was a massive distraction, but I decided to honour my grandmother and used the example she set for all of us as my motivation to pursue further study. As much as I wanted to further my studies, I didn't have the funding to pay for them. I heard about a bursary opportunity from uMngeni Municipality that assists students in their third and fourth years of study and decided to apply. Fortunately, my application was successful.



A further windfall was the bursary I received from N3TC. The bursary helped to cover all my additional tuition fees and I was soon on my way towards achieving my Advanced Diploma at the Durban University of Technology. Suddenly life was a little easier and I was able to focus on my studies.

This was a once in a lifetime opportunity for me. I have learned more in the field of Internal Auditing, which has equipped me with the confidence I need to enter the job market.

I would like to thank N3TC for all the support, it has opened a world of opportunity for me.



Sinethemba Mchunu

Degree: B.SC. (Civil Engineering)

Institution: University of KwaZulu-Natal

This year's events were unexpected, and I had to adapt quickly to get ahead. Shorter semesters and moving into an online learning environment proved challenging for me. Despite the negatives, I have been able to draw on the positives.

The online learning environment meant that I had to teach myself most of the topics and concepts being taught. Challenging, yes, but I see it as a positive. My research skills have improved, I have been able to really unpack each subject in greater detail, and I have gained more computer and software skills. All of which will help me in my final-year design project.

Another positive was developing time management skills. There was no clear schedule, so I had to develop my own and stick to it! I am very happy with my results this year as my grades have improved, and I am determined to do even better in my final year.

Being a recipient of a N3TC bursary has made this past year so much easier for me. Not only did I have the freedom to focus on my studies, but I had the necessary hardware (laptop) to enable me to adapt easily to the online learning environment. This is all thanks to N3TC and the support I have received over the years.

I have faced many challenges in my time at university, some bigger than the others, but I always try to keep myself focused on the end goal. With every new day I am one step closer to achieving this first goal in my career. Thinking about the future scares me and excites me at the same time, but one thing is certain I am willing to work every day to get there.



Sizwe Mchunu

Degree: BTech (Transportation)

Institution: Durban University of Technology

It has been a challenging year. From adapting to long-distance learning, finding a balance between work and study, and missing out on opportunities to tap into the knowledge of academics and classmates on campus are but a few of the challenges I faced.

When I considered my background, where I came from and being the first one in my family to enjoy the privilege of attending university, I knew I needed to find the courage and motivation to work through these difficulties. All this with the vision to make life better for myself, my family and community.

A few key people have played a pivotal role in helping me achieve my ambitions. My mother, and my colleagues Praveen Sunderlall and Christoper Kheswa who have helped me to become the person I am today. I am so grateful for their continued support and encouragement.

In the future I see myself as a qualified civil engineering technologist with an immense amount of experience and being able to pass it on to others. Graduating with my National Diploma in Civil Engineering already opened doors for me and enabled me to study towards a Bachelor of Technology in Civil Engineering with a specialisation in Transportation Engineering.

I am where I am today because of N3TC. I have benefited so much not only financially but through the opportunities I have been given to gain experience on projects along the N3 Toll Route.



Thabo Mofokeng

Degree: B.Ed. (Mathematics and Science)

Institution: University of South Africa

I have always had a passion for mathematics and the sciences, and a keen desire to pass my knowledge on to others. To help young people grow and develop was my main reason for choosing teaching as a career. I believe I am a life-long learner and will make a difference in the lives of as many learners as possible.

When going through life alone, the most important thing to remember is that one is not alone. I know that there are people supporting me and encouraging me to achieve my goals, who want to see me succeed. And I have learned to have a positive outlook on life.

Life as a student has often been fraught with challenges well beyond my control. From struggling to access textbooks to dealing with confusion around course and module allocations. I soon realised though that challenges are not insurmountable, and I can work through them by tapping into my support network.

I am proud of my achievements at university so far, having earned a few distinctions in the past year, and I am a member of Association for Mathematics Education of South Africa (AMESA).

Receiving a bursary from N3TC has greatly eased my financial burden, given me peace of mind, and allowed me to continue with my education. I greatly appreciate N3TC's generous financial support and this opportunity I have been given to pursue my dreams.



Thokozani Nxumalo

Degree: B.Sc. (Agriculture)

Institution: University of KwaZulu-Natal

Relying on my unemployed parents for rent money and playing for the university rugby club to cover my living expenses defined my first year of study at university.

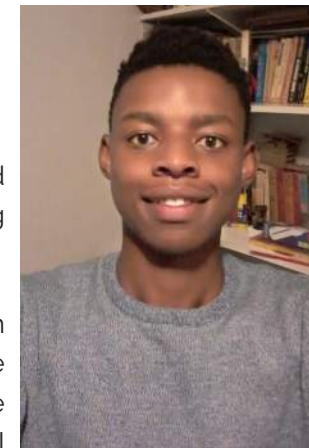
But my fortunes changed thanks to a community event in Mooi River that my father attended a few years ago, where he met Mr Con Roux. Mr Roux told my father to encourage me to apply for a N3TC bursary, which I did. Not only was I granted a bursary, but all my outstanding fees were covered. This changed my life and I was soon on my way to achieving the goals I had set for myself.

Today, I am a highly regarded student of plant pathology. In 2020, my Honours year, I was entrusted with an important research project. The project seeks to solve the problem of aflatoxin-contamination in food and feed. Aflatoxins are toxins produced by fungi and are known to cause liver cancer in humans and other diseases in animals. I have been able to develop a solution in the form of an edible coating to prevent and control the pathogen. The results of the experiments are promising but further studies must still be conducted.

Being a student has exposed me to various opportunities, one of which is a business venture I have established with Senzakahle Co-Operative (a beneficiary of N3TC funding). I am selling university-branded clothing to students and staff all manufactured by the Co-Operative.

I have been gifted an opportunity that many can only dream of. The effect of N3TC's support will have far-reaching benefits in my community and the country at large.

N3TC is doing great work in our communities and continues to be a significant driving force of our national economy. I am truly grateful to N3TC for changing my life and for its impact on the Mooi River community.



A close-up photograph of several dandelion seed heads. The fine, white, feathery seeds are covered with numerous small, clear dew drops that catch the light, creating a sparkling effect. The background is a soft-focus mix of green and blue, suggesting a natural outdoor setting. A semi-transparent green rectangular box is positioned in the upper-left corner, serving as a background for the text.

enterprise development



Care Bears

Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Project Champion: Rebecca Pinnell

*Funding has become especially hard...
...to come by in light of COVID-19 and therefore N3TC's funding
has become even more crucial in ensuring that our project
survives these trying times.*

Rebecca Pinnell

All the motivation needed to continue to keep Care Bears in business is the joy on the knitters faces when they are told that they can remain employed for longer. A mix of determination and a passion to help people is what keeps these 20 Care Bears' knitters employed.

Covid-19 has dealt a heavy blow to Care Bears. Many of the project's donors are in the hospitality and tourism sector, and have had to withdraw their funding as they desperately try to take care of their own staff and businesses. Further, many individual donors have also been unable to donate due to loss of employment or a reduction in earnings.

*Watching these ladies...
...go from strength to strength makes
it all so worthwhile.*
Rebecca Pinnell



Some of the ladies had never held a pair of knitting needles before they discovered Care Bears. Today, they are making the most beautiful knitted bears and realising, for the first time, that they have a talent.

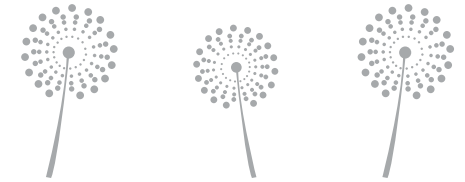
Add to this the reward of handing a beautifully crafted bear masterpiece to young child who may not have their own toy or have experienced trauma. Over 8000 bears have been handed out by Care Bears to date, bringing comfort to children when they need it most.

The funding from N3TC continues to improve the quality of life of every lady employed by Care Bears, and their families. This has a flow-on effect of significant impact on the community.

The ladies' dependence on Care Bears has been further entrenched in the wake of COVID-19 and the continued impact the pandemic is having on job losses, illness and the health and wellbeing of families in the Lidgetton community.

Care Bears is putting a number of measures in place to keep the ladies employed during the next few months of uncertainty, with the hope that some of the local businesses will soon be able to support the project again as they recover from the economic impact of the pandemic. This will then enable Care Bears to again focus on increasing the number of knitting kits they provide to the ladies and handing out many more bears to children from disadvantaged and marginalised communities.

*The pleasure...
...it gives the team to see something so simple
make someone so happy, is impossible to
describe in words.*
Rebecca Pinnell



Babanentse Primary Co-Operative

Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Project Champion: Elsie Nomathemba Majola

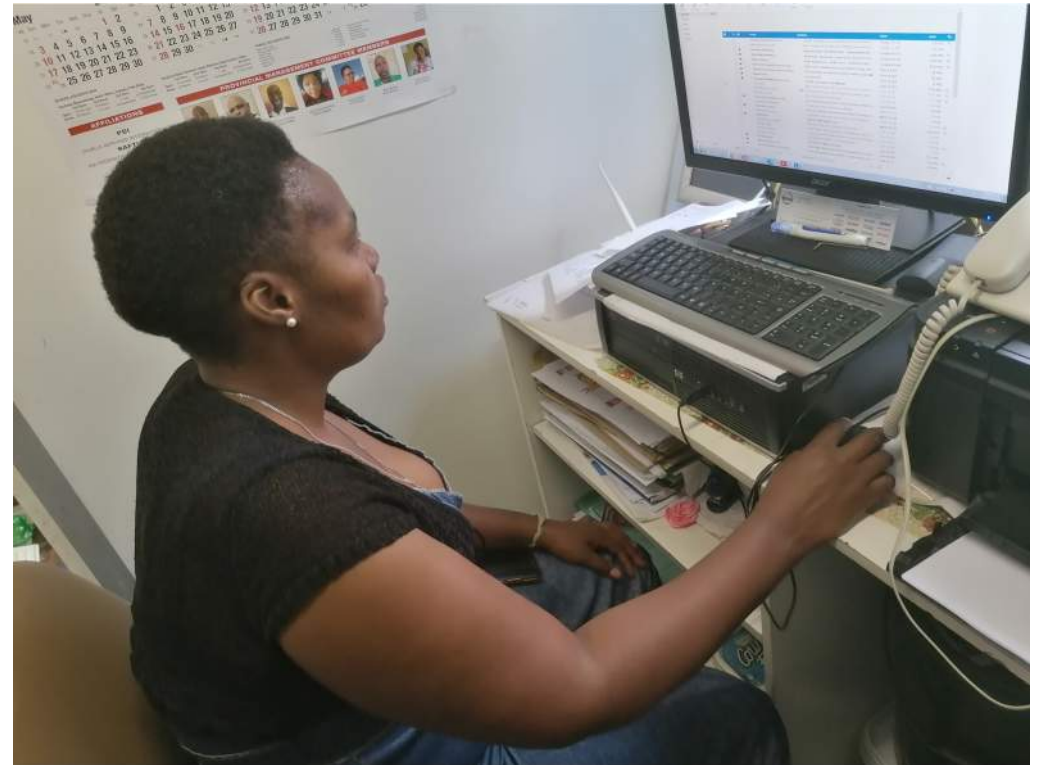
Without N3TC our company would not be growing.

We really appreciate all the help we get from N3TC. This is our special thanks to N3TC. Without you, our business would not be able to grow.

Elsie Majola

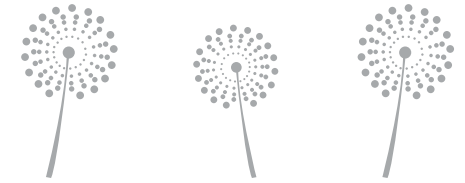
Keeping Babenentse staff employed, active and safe over the past year has been the focus for Elsie and her team.

Producing and marketing textile items remained their focus despite the challenges of 2020 and the subsequent closure of tourism businesses in the area during lockdown.



The funding granted to Babenentse helped to keep the enterprise afloat by covering the operational costs to secure the team's employment during a time when many were losing jobs and going without. The funding further helped to secure and safeguard the Babenentse employees' families, keeping children in school and food on tables.





iThemba Projects

Province: KwaZulu-Natal
Project Champion: Stu Walker

*Originally, we considered providing food parcels...
...to the families we work with, but at the request of
leadership in Sweetwaters, we decided to focus our efforts
on a more long-term approach. We realised that the effects
of lockdown would last much longer than the initial few
weeks, and we needed to help families get nutritious food
well into the future.*

Stu Walker

N3TC's funding of iThemba Projects has played a large role in helping to bring quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) to children in Sweetwaters (Mpumzuza). But as COVID-19 took hold and South Africa was plunged into a health crisis of global impact, N3TC provided additional funding towards iThemba's emergency pivot to a sustainable food gardens project for families in the community.

The funding has contributed to the establishment of food gardens in 400 households, and families have been mentored in permaculture skills ensuring that the gardens will flourish long into the future.

For iThemba, nutrition and early childhood development are closely linked.

We know...

“...that quality early childhood education does not create impact if children are not getting the nutrients they need for their brains and bodies to develop.”

Stu Walker



In the past, iThemba partnered with ECD sites and schools to help them establish school gardens to supplement their learners' school lunches, giving them all the fresh vegetables they need to thrive. However, with schools closed the children could not access these meals. Equally, many people in Sweetwaters were facing unemployment, and food insecurity due to the impact of lockdown.

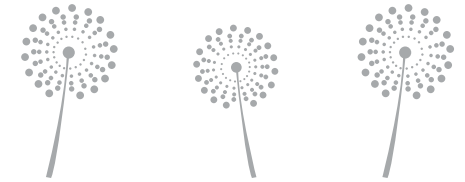
Over the course of a few months, iThemba pivoted and re-trained their staff in permaculture gardening techniques. This equipped iThemba staff to work with families in the community and to help them start home food gardens.

N3TC's quick response...

“...to this need through extra funding really helped us to quickly get these gardens in place during this time of crisis.”

Thank you N3TC!

Stu Walker



Mamello Support Group

Province: Free State

Project Champion: Manana Moloi

Our beneficiaries always smile...

...because they eat excellent, healthy food. Our staff is always providing support to the children and their families in our care and we intervene in cases of disaster, abuse or poverty.

Manana Moloi

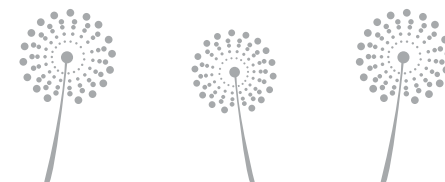
Sustaining a project that provides essential services to the Intabazwe community in the form of a daily meal for local school children, homework support and a safe place for children to learn and grow after school is no mean feat. Manana Moloi, however, is a lady of many means and bright ideas.

Mamello Support Group through its baking business is managing to generate an income that helps to sustain the afterschool centre.

N3TC has over the years, awarded funding to Mamello for the establishment of, and improvements to, its baking business in addition to funding further renovations and improvements to the afterschool centre.



During the harsher periods of lockdown, families were provided with food parcels while children were given the educational support they needed through the centre. Jobs have been created for local community members and young people have been given the opportunity to gain experience and skills either in the bakery or in providing tutoring or assistance to the children at the centre.





Midlands Meander Emerging Artists Project

Province: KwaZulu-Natal
Project Champion: Marian Evans

It has been an eye opening and emotional journey...

*...for me to watch how each artist and crafter started
understanding their value, became seen and heard, and
accepted that their own talents were marketable.*

Marian Evans

N3TC has helped the Midlands Meander to establish the identity of the individual participants in the Midlands Meander Emerging Artists Project.

Prior to joining the project, the artists' work was perhaps viewed by family, friends and local community members. Once joining the Project, however, their ability was suddenly acknowledged by N3TC, the Midlands Meander Association and its members, their trainer Gael Taylor and most importantly the buying public.

The participants have featured on the Meander's website, attended shows, had many photographs taken – not just of their products but also of themselves; and last, but not least, the lives of families have been changed.

This change brought about by being part of the Project didn't just affect the individual but has changed the course of families. Suddenly there was a good reason that a wife, husband and child could look up to them as their self-worth and confidence in their talent grew.



The Midlands Meander Association and all its members have been severely impacted by COVID-19. The lockdown saw the closure of the Capture Site and the Association's office. Midlands Meander Association staff were working on a 'no work, no pay basis' and the outlook was bleak. Yet, the Midlands Meander Association pursued further funding streams for this project to secure the success of the artists.

When everything was shut and no tourists – domestic or international – were in sight, the artists were provided with Spar food vouchers, a product of N3TC's support that has helped them through the harder times and encouraged them to continue working on their art and craft in preparation for the country's recovery. In fact, one group of artists put down their quilts and took up manufacturing masks to help sustain their business.

Resilience comes in many shapes and sizes and one can never underestimate the value of building self-confidence in individuals, as is evident in these artists.



Project Gateway

Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Project Champion: Diana Milford

Our biggest challenge...

...was the continuance of some of the funding we had secured. However, we insisted that our programmes continue to run as best they could bearing in mind that lockdown did make it much more difficult at times.

Diana Milford

Project Gateway has built its reputation on being a project that delivers on its promises to fulfil its mandate to change lives and impact communities.

Speaking of which, in a year when international travel was near impossible and unemployment was on the rise, Project Gateway managed to employ a full-time marketer to assist with marketing the Project Gateway programmes, a role essential to raising funds locally and internationally. Project Gateway's operations were funded through a UK Trust, South African funders – including N3TC – and a subsidy from the Department of Education, which is channelled directly to the Gateway Christian School. Additional funding from an American church-based programme provided further financial support to the Project.

This enabled the Gateway School of Fashion to assist learners with fabric purchases, haberdashery and transport costs, and to cover the salaries of facilitators.

The School attracts learners who typically cannot afford tertiary education, which makes the payment of fees an issue for most students. But many of them could continue with the course as funding from N3TC and other donors helped contribute



to the school's operational costs. It also allowed the facilitators to concentrate on the teaching tasks at hand without the worry of whether they will receive their salaries or not.

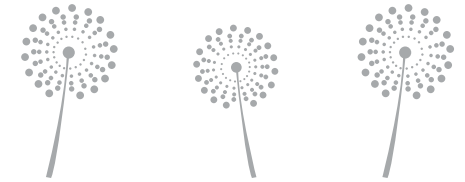
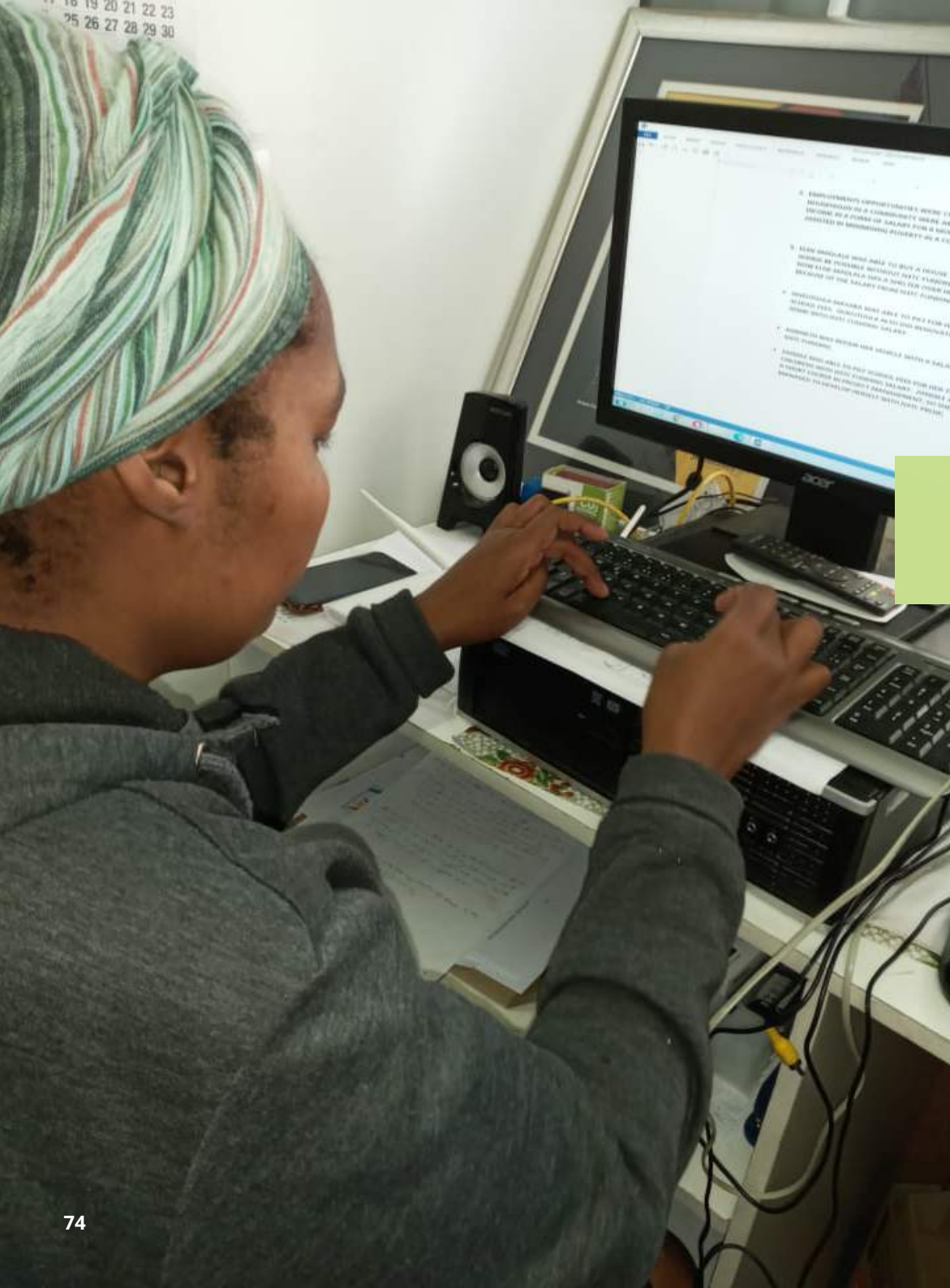
Being unable to open the school during lockdown helped build the students' confidence in continuing to design and sew at home.

They began making masks and some even designed other items such as bags and wallets. This had a direct benefit on the communities where the learners live as they were generating an income which is also spent in the same community.

Facilitators kept in close contact with the learners during lockdown through WhatsApp groups, which proved very encouraging.

*The fact that we purchase fabrics...
...allows learners to access a broader range of fabrics to
buy than they normally would be able to afford. This
gives the students freedom to design what they would
really like to and not be restricted in any way.*

Diana Milford



Senzakahle Primary Co-Operative Ltd

Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Project Champion: Ntombizodwa Khoza

It is evident...

...that the funding contributes not only to those of us involved with Senzakahle but the broader Bruntville community. There are no words to express the impact N3TC's generosity has had on each one of us.

Ntombizodwa Khoza

Like many other small enterprises in South Africa, Senzakahle was equally impacted by the COVID-19 fall-out. Instead of accepting their fate, Ntombi and her team faced the challenges, adapted their product line and continued to provide for their families during lockdown, which came as a financial and emotional strain to them all.

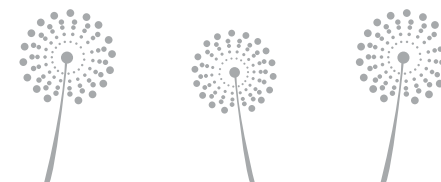
With N3TC's funding at their disposal Senzakahle was able to keep all its employees on staff and further recruited unemployed youth, which helped them to learn new skills and they helped Senzakahle to keep producing and selling quality clothing.

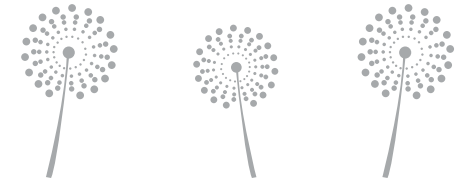
In addition to manufacturing affordable clothing, Senzakahle started a line of cloth masks that are being sold at below the average price to help the people of Bruntville to stay healthy and safe while complying with the Government's rules for COVID-19.



While the challenge of expanding to new markets has been further constrained because of the pandemic, Senzakahle continues to look at opportunities to broaden their reach in the retail sector. In addition, addressing their accounting challenges was a focus this year and a suitably qualified accountant was employed to ensure compliance with all accounting standards and regulations.

Ntombizodwa and her team continue to demonstrate good business acumen, adapting to the circumstances they face with a dream to grow and expand in the future.





Singakwenza ECD

Province: KwaZulu-Natal
Project Champion: Julie Hay

*Thanks to the funding received from the N3TC...
...we have been able to continue to employ our full complement of staff
who have provided support to our practitioners, made toys for
Learn@Home activity boxes, developed protocols for a safe return to
crèche, and enabled our occupational therapist to assist little ones
who need help. The impact of our programme may look different, but
your support has enabled us to continue to make a difference.*

Julie Hay

Singakwenza has continued to support and serve the communities in the KwaZulu Natal Midlands communities through the challenging times associated with COVID-19.

The team provided coaching and guidance to Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres and ECD practitioners were further supported mentally and emotionally so that they were equipped to support the young learners in their care.

Children have been able to continue learning through all levels of lockdown thanks to the development of Singakwenza's Learn@Home programme. Through the programme, parents have been reached in a way that Singakwenza has never tried before, but it proved very successful in many homes.

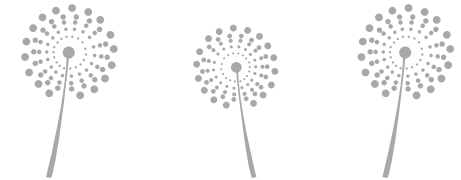


Singakwenza has developed a manual for all the ECD centres it supports with instructions on how to effectively reopen in line with the Department of Social Development guidelines for crèches.

Children at crèches that cannot reopen will be issued with a second set of activities for their Learn@Home boxes, to give them a greater variety of activities to play with until they can return to their creches.

*The relationship that our trainers build...
...with practitioners provides a great opportunity to coach them in more
“than just teaching skills. We increased the amount of airtime allocated”
to our trainers and asked them to regularly check in with the
practitioners to provide them with the correct health and safety
information, educational updates; and assisted them to register with the
Vangasali Project, driven by the Department of Social Development.*

Julie Hay



Sunfield Fortuna Projects

Province: Mpumalanga
Project Champion: Brenda Gouws

*We have been focused on surviving...
...and covering the running costs of the home. If it was not for
N3TC and local community members, businesses and farmers,
our disabled residents would have struggled. Because of the
goodwill of caring businesses like N3TC we have managed to
overcome all these challenges.*

Brenda Gouws

The funding that Sunfield Home Fortuna received from N3TC literally meant the survival of the home.

As COVID-19 hit, local businesses and key funders of Sunfield Fortuna started to dwindle. The support helps to keep this home to 75 mentally and physically disabled adults running. Suddenly this support was unavailable and access to business opportunities that help to fund the home were not forthcoming.

Add to that the home's inability to continue to pursue the normal fundraising channels associated with attending local markets and community events to raise funds, and Sunfield was faced with a huge shortfall in its running costs.



Funding plays a big part in assisting and caring for the residents of Sunfield Home, many of whom are now orphaned, or their parents are on pension and unable to support them any longer. Brenda and her team aim to make sure that every resident is given the appropriate care, stimulation and support to help them reach their potential and thrive.

We also...

...have not received any assistance from any of the relief funds we applied to. We were desperate and N3TC, as so often happens, came to our rescue.

Brenda Gouws



Topsy Foundation ECD

Holistic Early Childhood Development Programme

Province: Mpumalanga
Project Champion: Marianna Pretorius

*Early childhood education...
...is a period of immense importance in a child's life and can
holistically shape their intelligence, personality and social
behaviour. It plays a huge role in shaping who you are from
childhood to adulthood.*
Marianna Pretorius

The Topsy Foundation's Holistic Early Childhood Development Programme is focused on providing support to communities in the Dipaleseng Municipal area to create a suitable environment for the development of children.

Topsy's approach is multifaceted and provides the following support:

- Food security and nutrition to 6000 community members;
- Medical care and support to 500 children and ECD practitioners;
- Home visits, counselling and parental guidance;
- Training parents and caregivers in protective behaviours to keep children safe from abuse;
- Assisting parents to access support grants for children; and
- ECD education and guidance to 768 children.



N3TC funding awarded to Topsy has ensured the continued delivery of the parent support programme and the ECD programme at home and in the centre; and the rollout of the community and household vegetable gardens project.

*It is our purpose...
...to serve and to provide hope and support to
vulnerable families.*
Marianna Pretorius

Geographic Spread





Geographic Spread

A Sunfield Fortuna Enterprise Development
Topsy Foundation Enterprise Development

B Free State Care in Action Child Welfare
Mamello Support Group Enterprise Development
Harrismith Primary School Education
Harrismith High School Education

C N3TC Khanyisile Community Trust Child Welfare

D Drakensberg Boys Choir School Education
Royal Drak Primary School Education

E KwaZamokuhle School Education
for the Disabled Disabled

F St David's Diocesan School Education

G Babanentse Co-Op Enterprise Development
Senzakahle Primary Co-Op Enterprise Development
Treverton Educators' Skill Development Community Training
Treverton Schools Education
Care Bears Enterprise Development

H KZN Crane Foundation Education
Midlands Community College Education

I Singakwenza ECD Programme Enterprise Development
Midlands Meander Emerging Artists Project Enterprise Development
Music Voyage Youth Development
Funda Nenja Youth Development
Lions River Primary School Education
MCPT Eduhelpers Education

J Crystal Springs Primary School Education
Project Gateway Enterprise Development
PROTEC Pmb Education
SMILE Community Training
iThemba Projects Enterprise Development

K Pevensey Place Disabled
FLP Reach our to Read Education

L Trucking Wellness Wellness

Thank you

