



Education

The N3 Toll Route

a living ecosystem surging towards advancement

by Rose Smuts

The golden thread that runs as a continuous strand along the N3 Toll Route is the communities adjacent to the route binding it as a living ecosystem. Within these communities lies a supply-stream of opportunity where employees and partners of N3 Toll Concession (N3TC) have actively sought out projects that effectively change lives. This 20-year phenomenon should surely be celebrated as the heart of our rainbow nation.

While writing this review on N3TC's contribution to the advancement of education over the past 20 years, along with all of the changes and challenges that have been embraced, I felt overwhelmed by a sense of pride in what has been achieved by educators, schools, students and most of all ordinary people who simply want to make a difference.

However, speaking as a scientist who is supposed to be good at recognising trends and patterns, for me the overriding trend in this story is one of success and rising productivity.

Since being awarded the contract to manage the N3 Toll Route, N3TC has been inclined to plough a huge amount of revenue back into the communities the Route serves and connects and the investment is reaping wonderful returns.

In the field of education, where development and renewal are urgently needed from Early Childhood Education to Tertiary Education so that South Africans can be empowered to flourish and do great things for themselves, the wonderful stories of the projects supported and nurtured by N3TC are uplifting. They give us hope for a better future, with each project acting as a life-enriching stream making its magnificent contribution in the parched landscape that is South Africa.

"Desperation is an emotion I seldom feel, except in relation to education, for I believe very deeply that for most of our children, a solid school education represents the only means available for ending the cycle of family poverty." Prof Jonathan Jansen

One only realises the full impact of a poor command of English when pupils must eventually write their external examinations in English. In rural KwaZulu Natal most children only speak Zulu – at school and at home. So how do they prepare themselves for sitting the complex standardised tests and examinations, from Grade 10 to 12?

Prof Jonathan Jansen asks: "Research indicates that 78% of grade four children in SA cannot read for meaning in any language. How can you expect graduates of quality?"

So many of the N3TC-supported educational projects promote English literacy, and therein lies the legacy and potential of the company's Touching Lives programme.

PROTEC Pmb realised in 2009, that it would have to open Senior Phase classes offering the full Secondary School academic continuum, from Grades 8 to 12 primarily, to give students time to work on English literacy while consolidating Senior Phase Maths and Natural Science. If the promotion of English Literacy is neglected, children's educational excellence will suffer. Why? They will be excluded from gaining understanding of complex concepts often in scientific, mathematical and technological subject areas. They will also restrict their own abilities to communicate – at a tertiary or business level.

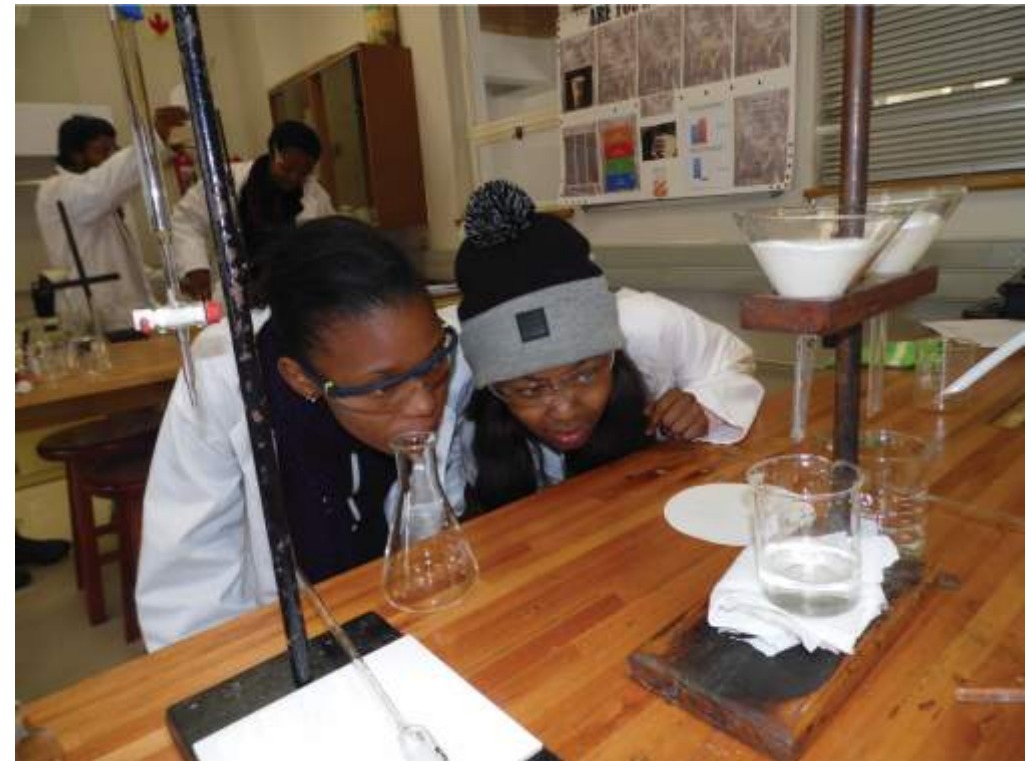
The fact that PROTEC Pmb students have done so well in restricted faculties such as Engineering, Medicine, IT, Actuarial and Business Science and Forestry, for example, can be

attributed to their excellent grounding in Mathematics, Physical and Life Sciences and English. There are obviously a myriad of other smaller factors operating, but as a general overarching trend, this is undeniable.

The Midlands Meander Education Project (MMEP) demonstrates similar success. Working in the fields of holistic and sustainable community development, the MMEP has provided magical classroom and extra-mural enrichment in the KZN Midlands Meander region for the past 15 years, equipping young children to approach life beyond school with confidence and broader life skills.

The Underberg Primary School Mastery Unit is successfully raising levels of English literacy in the local Family Literacy Project and in surrounding schools. Members of the Mastery Unit Training Team have tackled the most urgent need for training in dealing with pupils with special needs – both in caring for and educating them.

The Midlands Community College in Nottingham Road, well known for its effective Grade 12 improvement programme and mobile laboratory service, has taken a lead in computer literacy lessons for teachers from Bruntville Primary School in Mooi River. This has enabled the school's teachers to access more teaching resources, while improving their English



literacy in both conversational and written skills, which ultimately flows into the classroom.

People living in urban areas would probably have difficulty imagining the total lack of access to educational resources, the internet and computers, which is tragically all too common in rural areas. This has certainly been a factor holding exceptionally motivated and academically gifted people back, but N3TC brings schools to life and opens teachers' minds to a whole new world of education by supporting initiatives that bring technology into the rural classroom.

Very positive outcomes from all these projects and those not mentioned have resulted in teachers and schools in rural areas being equipped to facilitate pupil centred lessons using ingenious methods with great success.

So much has been written recently about the importance of early childhood education in preparation for entering 'big school'. In this context we are not only thinking about childcare playgroups or crèches, but those pre-school facilities which prepare 6- to 7-year-old children for the rigours of primary school.

A perfect example of preparing children for a successful school career is the work being done by Singakwenza. Through the development of educational toys using waste, Singakwenza is changing the face of childcare facilities, crèches and early learning centres through this ground-breaking approach. Bread bags become skipping ropes, margarine containers are turned into toys with a nip here and there and a few bottle tops as wheels, cereal boxes are turned into dice and polystyrene trays become puzzles. The concept is simple ... anyone can make these toys, all that is needed is a pair of sharp scissors, a marker pen and typical household waste. The key to Singakwenza's impact in the communities along the N3 Corridor is that they travel across the length and breadth of the region, and beyond, hosting workshops teaching carers, parents, teachers and community members how to make these toys and encourage children to use them as a fun way of learning through play.



As the South African economy continues to decline, the knock-on impact on rural communities has far greater affect. Many families are struggling to make ends meet and children find themselves at the mercy of these circumstances. But N3TC has been the conduit to bringing hope back into households and nurturing growth in rural schools through its generous top-up bursary scheme and securing the future of many young children.

At St Davids Diocesan School in Greytown, N3TC funds have enriched academic programmes and improved the school's infrastructure. The most important impact, however, has been its support of poorer families with hard-working and high-achieving children through its top-up bursary scheme. Where there once was thirst, N3TC has provided a flood of relief.

One of South Africa's iconic schools The Drakensberg Boys Choir School lies in the heart of the N3 Corridor and has partnered with N3TC for close to ten years. Boys with singing and musical talent are encouraged to attend the school and the opportunity to do so changes their lives, families and communities for generations. As many of these boys stem from families without the means to send them to the school, a beacon of hope lies in N3TC's generous contribution, along with many other corporate donors, which helps these talented young boys to gain a quality education while participating in many life altering experiences doing what they love ... singing.

It has been a humbling experience to read the reports of these amazing projects that support the effective delivery of education in the N3 Corridor region. Of course, the need is great but what is evident is that education is the key to a brighter future.

The conclusive overview from this study is:

- These programmes and projects build confidence, loyalty and good neighbourliness;
- They are all increasing in size and reach – meaning the programmes are effective;
- Teachers and Interns are prepared to sacrifice holiday time to get their skills (and pencils!) sharpened;
- A culture of life-long learning is being actively promoted by N3TC; and
- The inclusion of everyone who has something to contribute, no matter how big or small.

The image of small streams merging into larger rivers, leading to a massive flow of everything that is good about South Africa comes to mind. N3TC's Touching Lives programme is a really good South African story!

EDUCATION

Midlands Community College

Years Funded: Seven (7) • Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **J**



The Midlands Community College has been contributing to the advancement of physical science since 2001 through its Schools' Mobile Science Laboratory Project, a physical science learner support programme that was born out of an in-service training programme for Physical Science educators.

The objective was, and still is, to facilitate physical science curriculum aligned experiments and demonstrations. In 2002 a team of two technicians started working regularly with 765 Grade 12 learners at 19 schools in the KwaZulu Natal Midlands. Thirteen of those schools did not have a science laboratory, seven had no electricity, and eleven schools were not even attempting the curriculum practicals. Of those 19 schools, 11 currently remain on the programme.

Today the project reaches 7800 Grade 10, 11 and 12 learners from 80 high schools, with six technicians and four school visits per school per grade per year. Educators attend workshops twice a year to update curriculum information, refresh practical skills and gain access to other support resources and organisations.

In partnership with the Department of Basic Education in the Umgungundlovu District and the uThukela District, Midlands Community College strives to revitalise elements of the physical science curriculum that the Department of Education is unable to do on its own.

The expansion of the project from supporting 45 to 80 schools since 2014 is, in part, attributable to N3TC's ongoing support. In 2014, the project reach was 45 schools and 5200 learners. In 2019, the College is working with 80 schools on a full-time basis and supporting



additional schools over weekends and a further nine schools during the July holidays. This brings its learner reach to 7756 for 2019.

A team of six young enthusiastic technicians are supported through the project. These technicians are trained and provided experiential learning that can secure them an opportunity to further their studies. Most technicians have moved into further studies and a number are pursuing teaching qualifications.

- Thandanani Mdakane– MCC Class of 2010, Technician 2014 – 2017, MCC Teaching Assistant 2018 and 2019, and recipient of an N3TC Bursary for B. Ed FET Physical Science.
- Thobile Khumalo – MCC Class of 2014, Technician in 2015, Currently studying B. Ed at the University of the Free State.
- Bongamusa Majola – MCC Class of 2015, Lab Technician 2016, currently third year at Durban University of Technology studying towards B. EdFET Physical Science and Mathematics.
- Thobani Mbanjwa – Head Technician 2012 and 2013, now a Physical Science Educator at Bhungane High School.
- Siyabonga Zulu – MCC Class of 2005, Lab Technician in 2006, graduated from Medunsa and planning to do his Masters in 2020, specialising in plastic surgery.
- Qhawe Mthembu – MCC Class of 2014, Laboratory Technician 2015 and currently third year Bachelor of Engineering - Mechatronics at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.
- Nondomiso Ximba – MCC Class of 2014, Technician 2015, 2018 graduated with Bachelor of Law from University of Zululand and currently completing his Articles.

- Clifford Sibiya – MCC Class of 2014, 2015 Technician, 2016 and 2017 Department of Health Cuba, 2018 - 2019 studying Pharmacy, Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University.
- Nokubonga Sithole – Technician in 2013 and 2014 and graduated in Analytical Chemistry from DUT in 2018.

The funding support from N3TC has further allowed Midlands Community College to revitalise an initiative first undertaken in 2013, a Physical Science Olympiad. In 2018, the Olympiad was relaunched, and trophies were sponsored by N3TC.

The change inspired by N3TC in the communities that the Midlands Community College serves has been in the improvement of the skills of the teachers and the subsequent education that learners receive in the practical component of the physical science curriculum. N3TC has contributed to creating and sustaining enthusiasm for the sciences by bringing science to life for learners in these outlying areas.

The intent of the Mobile Science Laboratory project is to contribute to the success of the learners by improving the pass rate at disadvantaged schools, especially in physical science, which would ultimately translate into a greater number of Grade 12 learners having access to further study opportunities and more secure employment. This will positively impact their communities through economic sustainability, inclusion and instilling a sense of hope.



Located in the deep rural community outside Wembezi, just outside Estcourt in KwaZulu-Natal is a beacon of hope ... Bhekhathina High School.

Despite being located in an underprivileged community, the hallways of this school boast a fair number of ambitious and thriving learners. Bhekhathina does not have a science laboratory, but it has a tiny room where a little equipment and chemicals are stored, somewhat insufficient for the requirements of the curriculum and mainly used for Grade 8 and 9 practical lessons.

But the school has Mr Madinane a physical science teacher who regularly attends the physical science educators' workshops facilitated by Midlands Community College; and the Mobile Lab with all the equipment and resources needed for a practical physical science lesson.

Mr Madinane is a dedicated educator keen to see his students thrive. He has not only inspired learners with a thirst for knowledge and a desire to succeed, he has set them up for their matric pass 'win'. Over and above the usual class lessons, Mr Madinane encourages and

supports his students by running physical science intensives, science simulation sessions and workshops to work through past papers. It is clear, Mr Madinane is determined to see his pupils succeed.

When asked about the success of his learners when they complete their matric, he proudly responds, "a page is too small to record their successes"!

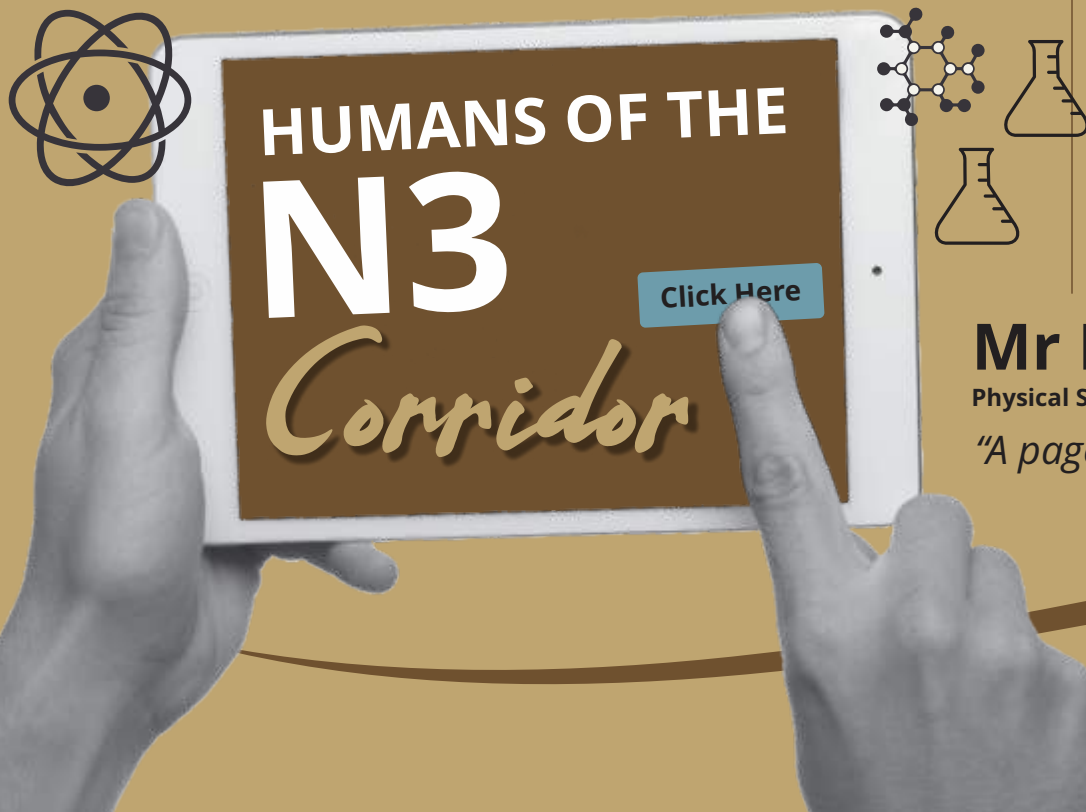
Bhekathina's learners have been known to gain acceptance to most universities in South Africa. Many past students are already employed as Marine Engineers and currently nine past students are completing their in-service teacher training at the school.

Mr Madinane has seen a steady growth in his class numbers and in 2019 taught 48 Grade 11 and 35 Grade 12 learners of which 27 learners in his Grade 12 class were girls! The future looks bright for girls in STEM.

Bhekathina has maintained a pass rate of 100% for the past three years and the Mobile Lab has been instrumental in achieving this level of excellence.

Working as an educator and attending school in a rural area is filled with many challenges says Mr Madinane but it is the tenacity of the learners with the support of the school that sees them rising above their circumstances to achieve success.

With the support of Mr Madinane and the Midlands Community College Mobile Lab, learners attending Bhekhathina High School can be assured of a bright future and can excel in anything they choose to do.



Mr Madinane

Physical Science teacher at Bhekhathina High School

"A page is too small to record their successes!"





EDUCATION

Midlands Meander Education Project

Years Funded: Fourteen (14) • Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **L**



In 2004 the Midlands Meander Association birthed the Midlands Meander Education Project (MMEP) with just a few thousand Rand in the bank. By 2014, Barend Booyesen, former chair of the Midlands Meander Association, counted MMEP as evidence of the Association's 'strong social investment...it is indeed a good place.'

Indeed, it still is.

In 2005 five schools were registered with MMEP. By 2019, 20 schools within reach of the N3 Toll Route enjoy the energetic games and crazy antics of the MMEP Bugs who arrive at their schools and contribute towards lessons, food gardens and open spaces around schools. Dancing is the newest extracurricular activity that the MMEP Bugs coach, but not the only one. Chess, sailing and swimming as well as nature walking and rambling are now standard MMEP activities.

The natural beauty of the Meander enables a mindfulness most educators ignore and MMEP seeks to make both educators and learners aware of the unique context in which they live. So MMEP natural science lessons target educators as much as the children they teach. The snake man, nature rambles, after and out-of-school excursions to Midmar and other Meander destinations complement lessons.

South Africa came nowhere near to winning the Soccer World Cup but, in 2010, MMEP won the M&G Cup for its role in Greening the Future. MMEP runs annual events that promote tree-hugging, land-loving, water-preserving ways of sustainable and complementary living in a Midlands biosphere, characterised by the MMEP way of "Thinking. Feeling. Doing."



Mindful of the journey ahead MMEP has become an independent section 18A, NGO and PBO with its own independent board. This means that donors, corporate or otherwise, can claim tax relief on donations to MMEP's initiatives. In 2018 MMEP became SACE registered, which ensures quality standards are met and key regulations are administered.

Superbugs emerged in 2007 in response to children expressing their deeper needs for love, care, support and comfort. The Superbugs initiative is a response to the most vulnerable



children articulating a reality that's often uncaring, sometimes cruel and occasionally abusive.

Superbugs are the kids that systems and curricular often ignore. Many Midlands children arrive at school nursing empty stomachs, ill-clad against the Midlands' biting cold, having weathered the predators we'd prefer not to know about. The truth is that snakes, genets and caracals are not the only predators of the Midlands. People are too - school lurkers, some teachers, uncles and even a few parents. It has always been like that but today school children are better able to articulate much of what was left unspoken in the past.

A different kind of education is needed in a context faced with such challenges and MMEP has seen and witnessed that the best support is often other kids faced with the same life dilemmas. Superbug Club meets in secret to tell secrets, with social workers on hand. They do fun stuff like singing and sailing, walking and climbing, swimming and jumping but they also talk, weep, get angry and console. They care for each other in ways that is often not possible in a crowded classroom, and at times with a teacher in it. Superbugs are the 'kind-da' kids that are learning to go the extra mile for each other.

Many more adults in the communities that MMEP serves know these days that they are being watched and held to account for ill-prepared and shallow teaching by being shown another way. Unprofessional conduct is reported instead of tolerated and ignored. Some significant things have changed.

Children, too, are beginning to realise they have rights. MMEP is increasingly their ally in pursuing these rights. It's no longer a cultural taboo to speak the unspeakable, though it may still be difficult. MMEP is in the business of not only protecting the environment by standing



alongside children; children are now standing up with MMEP as their ally to demand what is rightfully theirs: an education that is somewhere near worth having. A livelihood made possible by skills that give it meaning. And, for some at least, fewer predators and less predatory behaviour is an existence worth celebrating.

The challenge is, as ever, the constant demand as beneficiaries of MMEP's programmes grow into the knowledge that the world can and should be a better place for all. MMEP wants to make this a reality much more than a political slogan and its plans for the immediate future are clearly working towards making it a reality.

Through supporting education and social worker interns to gain their qualifications by working alongside MMEP Bugs; implementing out-of-school youth interventions to support teenagers through healthy living practices and activities; broadening the organisations funding base; and building partnerships that will strengthen and secure the future of the MMEP and the communities it serves, the future is bright both for the Bugs and the children they nurture, cherish and share a little magic with.

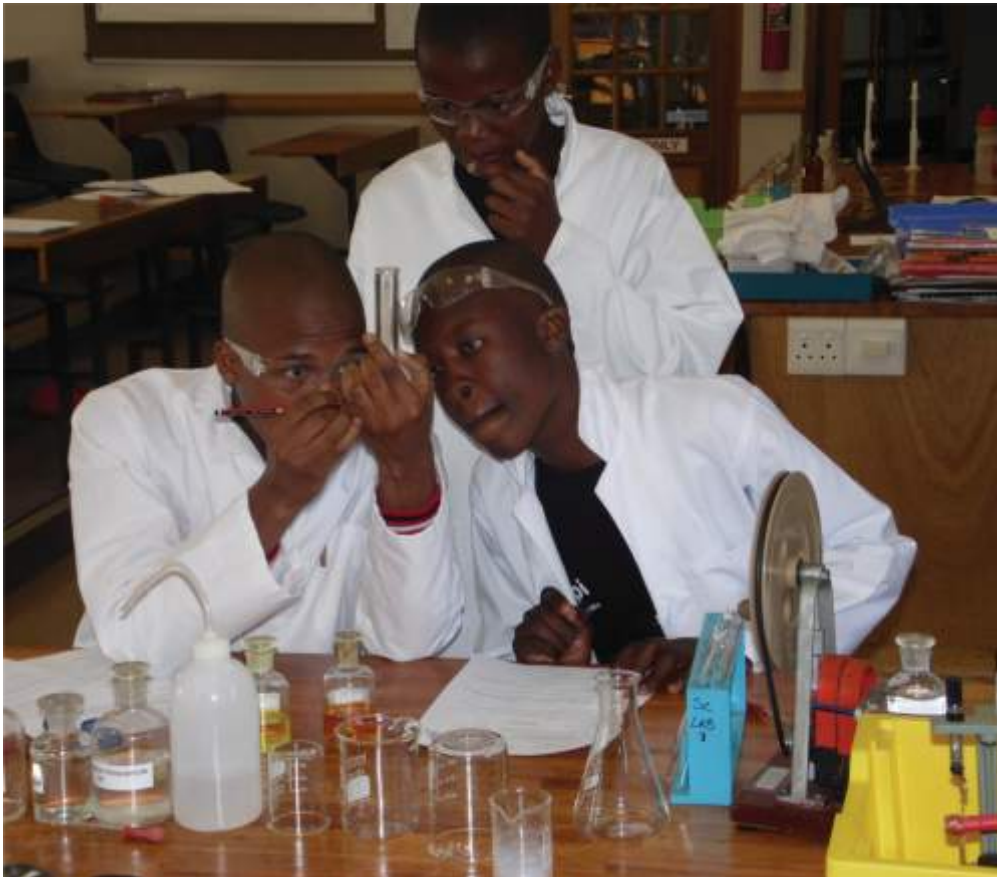


EDUCATION

Vula Programme

Years Funded: Nine (9) • Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **L**



While N3TC was finalising its Concession Contract with SANRAL in 1999, a group of far-sighted people at Hilton College was planning the development of a new *Centre for Innovation* – an IT and teaching facility which would become the home of an educational outreach project focused on sharing the resources and expertise of the college with teachers and learners from less privileged schools in the greater KwaZulu Natal Midlands.

The *Centre for Innovation* was completed early in 2001 and the Vula Programme was born.

It was decided that Vula would focus on improving the teaching and learning of Mathematics and Physical Science in township and rural schools in the region. Vula's work has a strong IT component, introducing teachers to the vast array of teaching resources available through technology.

N3TC's story of touching lives through the Vula Programme began in February 2009 and for the past ten years N3TC has funded the Programme as follows:

- 2009 – 2019:** A contribution each year towards the costs of the annual Grade 12 residential Mathematics and Physical Science teaching and revision week.
- 2015 – 2019:** A contribution each year towards the costs of providing a laptop computer to each teacher attending the term-long in-service training provided by the Vula Mathematics Academy (VuMA).

N3TC has also been a regular and enthusiastic participant in the annual Vula Careers Day,



that provides teachers and learners with valuable information on careers requiring above-average results in Mathematics and Physical Science. The day is attended by 500 selected Grade 12 learners from Vula affiliated schools.

N3TC's funding has contributed to the ongoing development and improvement of the Vula Programme. Some of the achievements include:

- The conceptualisation and realisation of the Vula Mathematics Academy – a unique term-long in-service training opportunity for teachers, offered in co-operation with the provincial department of education;
- An increase in the scope and reach of the Maths and Science programmes offered, with Maths teachers from eight of the thirteen educational districts in KwaZulu-Natal attending training at Hilton College in 2018;
- Independent research has provided verifiable proof of improved results obtained by teachers who attended Vula in-service training workshops; and
- Teachers have used these opportunities to make life-changing decisions about their teaching styles and overall educational effectiveness.

Considering all these efforts and successes, one would have hoped that over time the educational needs of the communities Vula supports would have diminished. This has, unfortunately, not been the case and to some extent the overall educational needs in some schools have become even more desperate.

What has changed, is that generous donor support such as N3TC's funding invested during the past ten years has enabled the programme to substantially increase its number of





beneficiaries and the extent of the Programme's provincial footprint, which is benefiting students in these centres.

There can be no doubt that the teachers who successfully participate in Vula workshops, take their new insights and skills back to their schools and have experienced significant changes at school and in their personal lives. Examples of this include:

- The use of more interesting and effective teaching methods, which are mostly IT-related as learners are instantly attracted to computer-based teaching and learning;
- Improved relationships between teachers and learners;
- Improved academic results; and
- Improved self-esteem and levels of professionalism.

It is widely accepted that the educational needs of under-resourced township and rural schools are as great, if not greater, than ten years ago.

Looking ahead, the Vula Programme will continue to provide ongoing mentoring and support to teachers and learners in under-resourced schools that seek to improve their understanding of, and performance in, Mathematics and Physical Science.

Successful, confident and knowledgeable teachers easily stand out in a crowd of mediocrity – and this recognition often provides the motivation required for teachers to secure their futures rather than expecting others to do this for them.

For example, of the 160 teachers who attended the Vula Mathematics Academy (VuMA) since 2014, two have been appointed as departmental subject advisers, eight have been promoted to principal and at least twenty are deputy principals or heads of departments.

Evidence that a little investment coupled with determination and a desire to succeed can go a long way in touching lives and reaching communities.



Our Heroes

Gift Zwezwe VULA PROGRAMME

By Nikki Brighton

*Kicking goals
through a
love of
learning*

“Understanding Maths will help you with all other subjects and in life,” Gift Zwezwe tells his Grade 12 learners. “Even if you want to be a professional soccer player, it will be useful. When Ronaldo takes a shot, he needs to understand the angles and work out the best option before he shoots. That’s geometry.”

While football and maths don't seem like natural partners, Gift often uses fun real-life situations to explain difficult Maths terms. From bank passwords to number plates – simple, interesting and easy to understand – that's the way Gift likes to teach.



Gift has always loved learning. Early on, while walking 18kms to school and back each day he heeded the advice of one of his teachers who told him that determination, dedication and diligence would get him where he wanted to go.

“I had to work hard even in challenging circumstances and be focussed.”

With his ability to grasp concepts easily, he was often called upon to assist learners in higher grades to understand the work.

While Gift has been the first in his family to complete Grade 12, the first with a Degree and the first Head of Department, his parents set a good example of the value of working hard in the circumstances they were in.

“When there was a mess of books scattered all over my bedroom, they did not complain, they supported my need to know things.”

“Some don't understand the power of education. It really can change lives. I used it to change mine. But you must be serious.”

Gift encourages learners to become teachers, so that they can go back to their rural communities and contribute to changing the lives of others too.

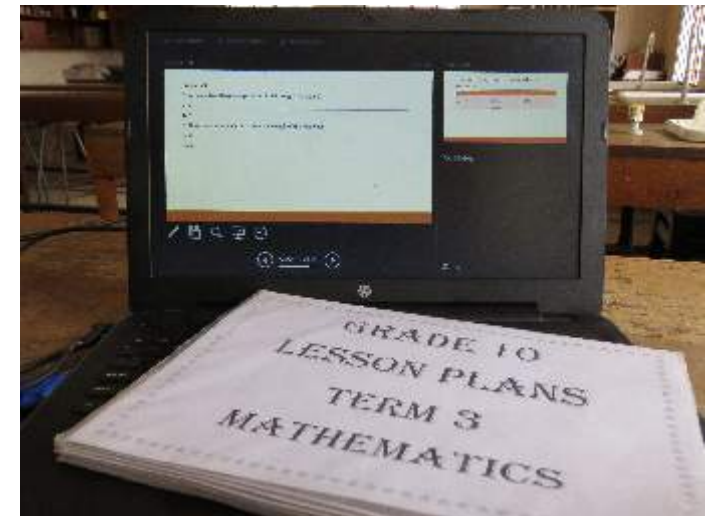
“Many things can be accomplished with hard work and a good understanding of Maths. Don't wait until you are in Grade 11

to start focussing,” he advises, “it is important to have the building blocks in each grade that relate to higher learning. When there are links missing, it is almost impossible to catch up.”

As part of the Vula Maths and Science programme, Gift bumped into his high school teacher Nosisa Sisobo who is now a Vula facilitator as well as an educator. She was delighted to find he had followed his passion for maths and was helping excite the next generation. With Vula he learnt new ways of teaching difficult concepts and how to create engaging visuals to assist learners to grasp them.

“I wish it was possible for students from other schools to join me for extra lessons on Saturdays and during holidays, but the problem in rural areas is always transport.”

Every evening, Gift makes sure he is fully prepared for the next day, lessons planned, examples ready. Then he can turn on the TV, relax and watch Orlando Pirates play, or if Barcelona is playing, work out the best possible angle for Ronaldo to take a penalty.





Curry's Post Primary School

Years Funded: Five
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **L**



Curry's Post Primary School (CPPS) has gained its status as a 'hub' of educational activity, despite being far from many of the schools in the Midlands. It is also recognised by the Department of Education (DoE) as a successful centre and is being considered for possible expansion to incorporate a boarding section.

A gradual but evident change has unfolded in the CPPS teachers as a result of the Curry's Post Educational Trust's (CPET) efforts to improve the quality of education in maths and science at the school.

This change is seen in the teachers' increased confidence and commitment and is evident in the altered appearance of their classrooms, which are more conducive to a learning environment. At first the teachers were reluctant to use the science centre's equipment but after the workshops they are more confident to use a hands-on approach and today the equipment is being used for both maths and science lessons.

Below is the progression of the **CPET Science Outreach Programme:**



2015: It started with a fully equipped Science Centre, donated to the Curry's Post Primary School by N3TC.

2016: Maths and Science workshops were held for the first time in the Science Centre; run by lecturers from the Centre for the Advancement of Science and Mathematics Education (CASME) and attended by Lions River Circuit primary school teachers. Funded by the New Settlers Foundation.

2017: The workshops continued to be funded by the New Settlers Foundation; and N3TC funded the development of Science Kits for each of the 20 primary schools in the Lions River Circuit. These were customised kits based on the schools' needs, rather than a 'one size fits all' approach.

The University of the Free State Family Math Programme had a meeting with DOE, CPET and the Lions River Circuit teachers to introduce their programme to KwaZulu-Natal.

2018: N3TC funded four science workshops, one per term, facilitated by Jill Cadle.

For the first time teachers from KwaZulu-Natal attended the University of the Free State maths workshops. Learning from the Family Math programme, the focus shifted to one grade per year, starting with grade 4, and the development of resources.

N3TC funded science Kits were distributed to all participating schools.

2019: The Science Workshops, funded by N3TC, continue with full attendance from all Lions River Circuit schools. The focus for 2019 was grade 5.



St David's School, Greytown

Years Funded: Nine
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **H**

“On browsing through our Wish Lists for the last nine years, it is hard to believe that so much has been accomplished.”

Much has been achieved in the nine years of N3TC's support of St David's School in Greytown. The school has seen significant developments and improvements that have changed the lives of the school's dedicated educators and enthusiastic learners.

Not only has the school grown in numbers from 126 to 140 pupils and from a staff of nine to eleven, but it has also grown in other ways. The funding awarded by N3TC has enabled the school to install fitted carpets and air conditioning in all the classrooms, library and office to make learning more comfortable and achievable. The school has managed to pay back the loan on its pre-built classroom, send two pupils for professional educational assessments, pave pathways, improve drainage, pave the areas around the classrooms and under the shelter, build a staffroom, repaint the interiors of the prefabs, repair ceilings and roofs, replace guttering, put up palisade fencing with new entrance gates, fence off the playing field and replace the old gates with new ones.

The school also boasts a jungle gym and obstacle course and has purchased library books and new sets of readers.

And this year N3TC is assisting with the construction of an extra classroom.

All these accomplishments are but an investment in the future of the school and leaving a legacy that will benefit future generations as they progress through their early childhood and primary school education.



Juanita-Anne
Photography



Underberg Mastery Community Outreach Project

Years Funded: Four
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **N**



“One of our greatest achievements has been the trust that has been built, nurtured and grown with the schools, parents and communities. A relationship of gratitude and trust has been forged through the co-operation of all involved. There is a new hope in the schools and in the community.”

The Underberg Primary Mastery Project is adding value to the teaching and learning of children in the Underberg and Himeville communities and surrounds. Parents have seen the progress their children have made and the opportunities available to them as a result.

The teachers have been empowered with new skills and are growing in confidence, which has enriched teaching. A support base has been established and education is now exciting, interesting and meaningful.

The evidence of this is seen in the number of requests for the same support in schools that are, at this stage, not part of the programme.

There are children with learning difficulties in every classroom, in every school and teachers are ill equipped to provide enriching teaching and learning experiences for them, in most instances. When Underberg



Primary initiated this project it soon became evident that although the educators were very keen and the request for assistance had come from them, there were numerous underlying challenges that needed to be addressed first.

“We had to take 10 steps back and consider the holistic learning environment and tackle challenges like management of classrooms, lack of desks, furniture, blackboards, adequate seating, basic nutrition, hygiene, ear testing, eye testing and emotional intelligence.”

The programme was then restructured to incorporate support in these areas and a better understanding of the basic learning process.

Underberg Primary is well on the way to achieve its goals as classrooms are becoming more effective in offering quality education. Thorough teaching and learning are taking place and the children are showing progress in all areas.



Lions River Primary School

Years Funded: Three
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: 



“The Midlands Meander Education Project has been helping in gardening activities, technology lessons and natural science lessons, which would not have been possible without the long arm of N3TC.”

Lions River Primary School is starting to see the benefits of N3TC's investment in its school and the long-term benefits of a school that encourages learning in a safe, comfortable and encouraging environment.

Today, Lions River Primary School is far different from the impoverished school N3TC first visited four years ago.

Learners are more environmentally aware and look after the environment and participate in recycling activities, some even take part in the annual Midlands Trashion Show.

The school has recorded a pleasing increase in enrolments, which can be attributed to the fact that the school's facilities have been improved. Some of these improvements have been made possible through N3TC's funding such as fencing the school perimeter that has improved safety for learners and the conversion of a park home into a classroom.

N3TC assisted the school to build a soak pit that has given the school access to flush toilets (almost a luxury in many rural and disadvantaged schools); and a shelter was built and paved to eliminate dust and provide space for assemblies and protection for the children in inclement weather conditions.

The nutritional needs of the children are now better met through the acquisition of a wendyhouse that acts as a spacious and effective kitchen for daily meals.

The community sees the school as its own, the learners are eager to go to school and many local NGOs are on board to assist with various educational needs.

Lions River Primary School has introduced the SMILE English textbooks and readers into their curriculum, which has helped learners become more confident in English and a new photocopier helps teachers prepare resources for classrooms coupled with the school's recent connection to the global village through a reliable internet connection. As the school grows, classrooms are needed and recently the school took delivery of a new classroom to complement its growing enrolment figures.

Lions River Primary School has become a beacon of hope in its community and this has been made possible through the generosity of N3TC's Touching Lives programme. Leaving a thriving legacy of touching lives well beyond the concession.

Our Heroes

Slondile Mhlongo

LIONS RIVER
PRIMARY SCHOOL

By Nikki Brighton

*Turning
challenges
into
opportunities*

Who remembers life before cell phones? Slondile Mhlongo does.

While employed as a teacher at a farm school in Kamberg, she applied for a post in Greytown. The only way to contact her was by phoning the farmer who would pass the message on to the school principal.

As it was the weekend, the principal could not let her know until she arrived at school on Monday morning and told her that she needed to be in Greytown for an interview at 9am!

"I had no idea where Greytown was", she recalls, "I asked at the PMB taxi rank how to get there and when I arrived, I didn't know which school I was supposed to go to. Someone helped me to go from one school to the next - until the only one left was Greytown Junior School, an ex-Model C English medium school. So, at 1 o'clock they called the school board back to interview me!" To her surprise, despite being so terribly late for the interview, she got the job.



She spent eight years there, the only black teacher, determined to prove to the doubting staff that she could do the job and used the opportunity to learn as much as she could about running a class and school efficiently.

"Then I needed a challenge. I couldn't just do the same thing every day for ever and I wanted to share the skills I'd learnt with African schools."

So, when the DOE offered her a post at rural Crystal Springs in Lidgetton, she took it, despite the protestations of the Greytown Primary staff. She spent a few years getting the school shipshape.

In the spring of 2014, she arrived at Lion's River Primary tucked away in the SAPPI plantations. Despite the calm surroundings conducive to learning, she was very concerned that many of the learners had to walk along the busy R103 to get to school.

"When a little girl was hit by a car and killed and I saw another walking with crutches, I had to do something."

She thought it would be wise to move the school into the heart of the Engonjeni community where many of the learners lived. There was not much spare space, but after discussions with the community, the municipality gave her permission to establish her school on the empty ground beside the soccer field with instructions that all buildings needed to be temporary.



Now, with cell phone communication well established, Slondile set about sourcing donations to set up her new school.

“I like challenges, but they must not take too long to complete. I get restless.”

N3TC donated a park home and in 2017 the first classes started within easy walking distance for the learners. Slowly, she added facilities as she was able. A wooden hut served as an additional classroom, a shipping container as the kitchen and then a roof was added between the park homes to create an airy outdoor classroom to accommodate the ever-increasing number of learners. Despite requests to the DOE for proper toilets, more classrooms and more teachers, she heard nothing. In 2019, she was not prepared to wait any longer, and

wrote again, attaching the original 2017 letter. To her delight an official team arrived to inspect the site in June. By the end of July, three new classrooms and a toilet block had been installed with great fanfare! Clearly Slondile is not that easy to ignore.

“When I make a request, I tell the truth about what we have and what we need. I think people appreciate that.”

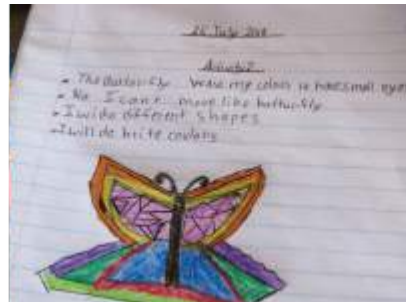
Slondile started a Lions River School Supporters Facebook page to give credit to whoever has assisted to get something done and ensure that the help she receives from other organisations is well publicised.

The Engonjeni community is thrilled and many neighbours help with the chores, from tending the veggie garden, to fixing desks and cheering every time a new structure arrives. Local businesses have been charmed by Slondile’s honesty and determination – securing her a soak pit, a brand-new photocopier, a wooden jungle gym for the playground and free WI-FI for the school.

While all the teachers embrace technology now, the school retains the charm of a village school with Sheila the goat visiting daily to eat orange peels and apple cores discarded by the kids and Sphesihle’s old dog KP lying patiently outside his classroom until school is over.

“Attending a good school did wonders for me, I want this school to be so good that no one would think of catching a taxi to take them to a school outside the area.”

Slondile is currently campaigning to have the school status officially changed to English medium and there can be little doubt that she will achieve this – with a little help from social media, friends and admirers.





KZN Crane Foundation Education Project

Years Funded: Nine
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **J**

"We count as our biggest success our small contribution to the marked increase in Wattled Crane numbers. The KZNCF was established in 1989 with the specific intent of counteracting the decrease in numbers of Wattled Cranes in KZN. This was to be achieved through its various programmes that were specifically focused on engaging with the public, schools, communities and farmers. The Aerial Survey of 2018 carried out by EWT and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife recorded 430 Wattled Cranes in KZN. This is a 21% increase in Wattled Crane numbers since 2017 and 125% increase since 2000."

It is rewarding to see that the KZN Crane Foundation's (KZNCF) environmental education outreach programme, *Cranes in the Classroom* (CIC), has grown substantially.

The Cranes in the Classroom (CIC) environmental education programme mainly serves children who reside on farms or rural areas in the Midlands area. Many of these children attend historically disadvantaged schools (HDS) that are greatly under resourced. The CIC programme is intended to bring about sustainable learner-centred transformation and change in areas that are particularly vulnerable to climatic and socio-economic conditions. The message conveyed in the environmental education lessons and activities is that it is important to protect the wetlands and grasslands as this affects not only the well-being of the cranes but also the survival of the community. The education programme aims to increase learners' awareness about cranes and the need to conserve these unique species and the



ecosystems on which they and their communities so critically depend.

One of the changes brought by introducing the CIC programme at these schools is that it is providing enrichment and environmental education that was not present before in these communities.

In 2016 the KZNCF's CIC programme recorded 1 963 beneficiaries from nine rural schools. Since then, the programme has been implemented in over 20 rural schools in the greater Midlands area. In addition to the classroom programme the project includes presentations at schools and public events and reached about 5000 individuals in 2018 alone.

In 2019, the KZNCF had thirteen rural schools included in the programme and reached over 3000 learners. In addition, schools in the Underberg and Chrissiesmeer areas have continued to participate in the CIC education programme.





Crystal Springs Primary School

Years Funded: Four
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **M**



"All that is happening because we were made to shine by N3TC."

Crystal Springs Primary School is located in an impoverished community that was struggling to make ends meet and cater effectively for the needs of its learners.

In the past four years, the school has grown and more learners enrol every year. It has been successful in its application to be recognised as a fully-fledged primary school by the Department of Education, and the first Grade 7 class was offered this year.

N3TC has contributed to various upgrades at the school, including the paving of the school's main walkways in 2016, the construction of an assembly area in 2017, a learners' waiting area in 2018 and more recently N3TC provided the funding to erect a roof over the assembly area.

The community has taken 'ownership' of the school and are contributing to its growth and stature, looking on, and over, it with a degree of pride.



Crystal Springs principal, Mrs Ngubane received a call from Dr Blade Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology. He had noticed the school's improvements on many of his trips through the area and that the learners were clearly enjoying school. After Mrs Ngubane explained the background of N3TC's support of the school he subsequently adopted the school and has been helping with various projects.

Thabiso Mahlaba, a Grade 7 learner at Crystal Springs Primary, shared his thoughts on his school's improvements.

"We promise that we shall take good care and protect our shelters to make them stay beautiful until other children come and learn in our school. I just want to say thank you N3TC for helping us.

Every time when I travel with my mum to Pietermaritzburg, I see the N3TC sign on the highway, my heart says thank you N3TC for making our school a better place for us to learn and play. I came to this school in 2015. It was always difficult for me and my friends to walk around our school yard when it was raining because the place was full of mud. I could also see the teachers having the same challenge. I remember one of the teachers slipped on the mud and fell while she was going to the classroom. I felt very bad and sorry for her.

The following year we heard from our Principal, Mrs Ngubane, that N3TC has funded our school. We closed for the June holidays and to our surprise, when we opened, we found the whole front yard and the parking lot beautifully paved. We all felt very happy and proud of our school. Our school shoes and uniform stayed clean even when it was raining. There was no need for the teachers to wear flat shoes and change their shoes when leaving school every afternoon.

Today, we thank you very much for giving us shelters. You sympathised with us. We usually soaked in the rain during assembly or when we waited for the transport to take us after school. That is long gone as we were provided with two good shelters; the waiting area and the covered assembly area.

We are filled with so much joy and I quietly sing a hero's song for you N3TC because you are our hero! Live long N3TC live long!"



Underberg Pre-Primary School

Years Funded: Four
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **N**

"Looking back, we are just so grateful. We have seen our little school grow and light up beyond our dreams."

The children of Underberg Pre-Primary School are reaching new goals with all the puzzles and equipment that has been acquired over the past four years with funding awarded by N3TC.

The children are thriving and loving every minute of their school day as a result of the new educational games, equipment and toys. Their growth and development has progressed beyond expectations.

Underberg Pre-Primary has a few 'special needs' learners who fit into the mainstream school lifestyle quite easily and the school accommodates these needs through various interventions that help manage their development and the classroom environment.



Meet Tristan Maloney.

He is in Grade R and is a special little boy – very active, very sweet and very busy. He is also but NOT only, Down Syndrome and Autistic.

With funding awarded by N3TC in 2018, Underberg Pre-Primary purchased a new ship jungle gym. It has been a huge hit with all the children, but especially for Tristan. He has difficulty coping with school early in the mornings. When he arrives, he runs to the jungle gym and swings and plays, all part of his stimulation and preparing him for his day.

From a teacher's perspective, this is very encouraging for a boy with his abilities. It is a coping mechanism and a starting point for his day. The hanging and playing is good for stimulation and the climbing helps to build concentration. It is not only a jungle gym for Tristan, it is his classroom.

This is complemented by the soft play equipment that was purchased in 2017 that Tristan rolls on when he needs a brain break. Tristan loves school, his teachers say he is a pleasure to teach and the school has the tools he needs to help him grow in every possible way.



WESSA Free State Eco-Schools Programme

Years Funded: Five
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key:



“Parents are involved in recycling at the schools, demonstrating that what is learned at school is having an impact at home.”

The WESSA Eco-Schools Programme focuses specifically on the Qalabotjha community schools in Villiers.

The programme started with five schools – two Educare Centres, two primary schools and one secondary school. The two educare centres have been highly influential in involving most of the other Educare Centres in the community, doing their bit to 'pay it forward'.

The Educare Centres have become the main focus of the project with eight centres, three primary schools and two secondary schools currently involved in the Eco-Schools programme.



Learners and teachers involved in the Eco-Schools programme are more keenly aware of the environmental issues at their school and in the community. Teachers have noticed that learners pick up litter without having to be asked and this has a direct influence on the rest of the community.

Qalabotjha is cleaner as some of the illegal dumping sites have been closed. There has also been a marked reduction of burning of waste in open spaces and illegal dump sites around Qalabotjha. Several community clean-ups and education and awareness campaigns about waste are considered to be the motivation behind this change in behaviour.



Mrs. Annah Tsotetsi is the principal of Zenzeleni Educare Centre. She was instrumental in registering the school as an Eco-School for the first time in 2012. Through her efforts and those of her colleagues, learners and parents, the Centre has managed to receive an Eco-School Award every year, since joining the project.

This year, the Centre is working towards its Platinum 3 award, year eight in the WESSA Eco-Schools journey to sustainability.

Annah has great passion for seeing learners between the ages of 2 to 5 years old thriving in all aspects of their growth and development, of which the environment is a key factor. She

believes that if we are aware of our environment, we will be able to see the linkages it has to our everyday lives and its influence on the academic curriculum.

The Centre has initiated and maintained several projects over the years including a food garden supplying vegetables to the school's feeding scheme; a recycling project where a local community member collects the recyclable material for his small business; a biodiversity and nature project where they plant indigenous trees; a community and heritage project where the learners look at the different cultures and traditions in their community; and water conservation projects to save water at the school using a tippy tap to wash their hands and learners bringing grey water from home to reuse in the garden.

She has more recently introduced learner excursions to her programme, giving children the opportunity to experience nature while learning about nature.

Using waste for educational toys has also become part of life at the Centre, where children use bottle tops, for example, to learn maths concepts through play.

Annah is not alone in her Eco-School vision, which she shares with other Educare Centre principals in the community, but she is the perfect example of a community leader with great influence who will leave a legacy beyond her retirement some day.

Mrs Annah Tsotetsi



Our Heroes

Class of 2019

Shea O'Connor Matrics

By Nikki Brighton

*The Sky is
the limit...
with a little
connectivity*

The top ten Grade 12 students at Shea O'Connor School in Nottingham Road are well set to be part of the 4th Industrial Revolution. The digital age is all they have known; they are completely comfortable with computer technology and expect classrooms to be equipped with Smartboards. When internet connection is available, the first thing they do is research.

"We are fortunate to attend the best school, with the greatest teachers," enthuses Head Boy Sandile Ngubane.

Shea O'Connor is indeed well recognised for its dedicated, professional teaching team and very active Enviro Club. The school is a plastic-free zone with no crisp packets, cheap drink bottles or sweet wrappers littering the ground. Vendors are not allowed to sell junk food and parents supply reusable lunch boxes filled with unpackaged snacks and refillable water bottles for break times.



"We are proud of our school, which has given us a good platform to plan our future. When we have learnt new skills at University, we will all be coming back to teach extra lessons and encourage the younger ones."

School principal, Nicholas Nxumalo, sets the tone and is admired by the learners for his outlook on life, the respect he shows other people and his dedication to his job.

Sandile is fascinated with cars – particularly with Mechatronics – the science which mixes mechanics and electricity. So, free time is spent doing research on electric and hydrogen cars rather than petrol powered ones, naturally.

Brandon (Breezy) Chataika is determined to become a pilot after he finishes school – particularly to travel to Barcelona to watch Messi play! However, understanding the issues around fossil fuel extraction and combustion, he is thinking about ways to power aeroplanes with less environmental damage.

"Mercedes have already designed a solar powered car, so why not aeroplanes?" he asks.

Just six years ago, Brandon moved to South Africa from Zimbabwe. He believes that he was very fortunate to be accepted at Shea O'Connor School where one of the teachers, Mr Mchunu, spent afternoons teaching him isiZulu.

"He changed my life because once I understood, I could join other students in the study groups."



As a youngster Sanele Shange recalls a TV programme which sparked his interest in studying Electrical Engineering.

“Humans have such a huge impact on global warming, I am sure there must be a way to generate electricity without doing harm. I am most interested in wind power. I know it is not perfect, but there is always room for improvement.”

Brandon, Sandile and Sanele could make a great partnership – especially because Sanele has already taken flight - “in my imagination!” he laughs!

Arthur Kugara is a keen researcher and dedicated mathematician. “I started to love maths in Grade 7 and began to apply it to my life every day. My phone, my computer – everything is about maths. I like to help others to understand maths too. This keeps my memory refreshed and is good practice.”

Determined to achieve at least four A symbols in the Matric exams, Arthur plans to study Metascience and put his skills to researching solutions to reduce the problem of solid waste.

During break times conversation turns to

data. “Eish, it is so expensive,” laments Sandile, “I buy 50MB for R5 and it is gone in a few minutes. I used to work at the car wash to earn money for data or save my lunch money by eating the free school food. We are always hustling for data.”

Fortunately, Shea O’Connor has good connectivity at school, so this student super group stays late each day to work on projects.

“There is a spot in the road opposite the taxi rank in Notties, where we can connect to wi-fi,” a fellow student advises.

Mandisa Duma giggles and relates how she and her friends, buy the cheapest thing on the menu at KFC (ice cream for R6) so they can sit a while and make use of the free wi-fi.

Every Saturday these keen students attend extra Maths and Science lessons, the Ligbron E-Learning programme, which is partly funded by N3TC.

“Now we have access to the best teachers. We can interact and ask them questions. It is dope,” Luyanda Madlala declares.

More girls than boys seem to be studying Maths and Physics these days. Luyanda believes that it is because girls work harder and boys are more occupied with wanting to look cool.

“Education gives women power,” she observes, “and I think women leaders listen to their conscience and are less susceptible to corruption.” Luyanda has noticed that there are many children in her community with hearing difficulties. “Our Life Science teacher Ms Mkhabela got me excited about the human body and how it works. I don’t think there are enough Audiologists in the Government hospitals, so that is what I will study in order to give back to those in need.”

Sandisiwe Mchunu lost her sister when she was in Grade 7 and became severely depressed, unable to eat or attend school with a broken heart. “My community don’t understand depression, they just think you are weak, but there is a lot of depression in the area, which leads to substance abuse and suicide. I was lucky to get help from a social worker and join a support group. I have applied to study Clinical Psychology in order to help others get the help they need to heal,” she says earnestly.

Andiswa Ndlovu, also experienced a life changing incident which influenced her career choice.



“An old lady had a stroke right in front of me. Mrs Mkhize lives alone, and I had to cook for her and wash her clothes. She is a bit better, but I still visit.”

Andiswa learned about Physiotherapy at a Careers Day hosted by Midlands Community College and has decided that will be her field, so she can assist other stroke sufferers.

Mandisa Duma got an infection in her eyes when she was little, which affected her sight. “We were a rural family, couldn't afford good doctors and relied on help from hospitals and clinics. I will be studying Health Science and focus on Ophthalmology, so I can help other kids with eye problems.”

Mandisa's sister, Snethemba, is also interested in the medical field and will be studying Forensic Science after Grade 12. “This year I fell in love with DNA while we were learning about it in Life Science. I have been investigating it a lot and in future, I hope to work with the police to solve crimes and bring justice to those who have been harmed.”

Sabelo Zondi is mad about bones – he has a goat humerus hidden under his bed

(don't tell his mom). When he was just six years old, he broke his arm jumping out of a tree and a few years later broke his ankle.

“My family was disappointed that I had broken myself again,” he recalls. “The doctor who treated me was so kind and inspiring.”

A long period on crutches meant he stopped playing soccer and put on weight.

“Yoh, I ate too much junk food. But when you grow up you start to realise that bad things sometimes turn into good things. I don't eat rubbish anymore and have lost all that weight.”

Sabelo (now nicknamed Mr Mthambo) will be studying to become an Orthopaedic Surgeon. No doubt gathering a collection of interesting bones on the way.

Despite the damaged education system in South Africa, and often challenging circumstances, these learners certainly shine. They are lighting the way by encouraging others to follow them into the future.

Who knows where they will end up if they can just get their highly motivated hands on some free wi-fi?





Education

**TOP-UP
BURSARIES**

EDUCATION

PROTEC Pietermaritzburg Academy

Years Funded: Nine • Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **M**



PROTEC continues to operate within the context of its vision: *“Giving our students an excellent academic foundation through which they can gain an edge or advantage for future tertiary study.”*

N3TC's first tranche of funding awarded to PROTEC was to support the establishment of its Grade 12 Career Guidance Module in 2001.

“The award of funding has continued since then and has been instrumental in motivating us all to add value and new dimensions to our programmes over the years.” Rose Smuts, Executive Director of PROTEC.

Since then, PROTEC has added a Grade 8 Class to its high School continuum (now supporting Gr 8 to 12 learners) and included important interventions into its Grade 12 Career Guidance Module:

- Grade 12 Parents and Students Meeting: held in February to outline and publish all dates and deadlines for the year.
- Completing Myers Briggs MBTI (Personality profiling) and Self-Guided Search (Interests) Assessments that are analysed by an educational psychologist and a detailed individual report is given to students and parents at a focused interview.
- Attendance at the annual Vula/PROTEC Pmb Career Day at Hilton College.
- Attendance at UKZN and DUT Open Days.
- Administrative and online assistance with all University and Bursary Applications.
- Assistance with NSFAS Applications.
- Completion of a Workplace Experience Etiquette & Preparedness Workshop.
- Participation in a Work Experience Week at a workplace of the student's choice, such as



engineering, medical wards, accounting practice etc.

- Testimonials (character references and achievements) are written and Certificates of Merit for Good Attendance (commitment and academic participation) and Academic Excellence are issued.
- Assistance in sourcing in-service experiential learning opportunities, where possible.

The inclusion of the Grade 8 Class in the Academy's Saturday School continuum has given the PROTEC team more time to focus on learners' English literacy and communication and provided an opportunity to consolidate the primary school Mathematics and Science concepts learned, which contribute to the learners' improved results.

PROTEC's Grade 12 success rates have stabilised at 100% for the matric pass-rate and close to 100% for the Bachelor Admission Rate. The number of key subject distinctions in Mathematics, Physical Science, Life Sciences and English have opened the door for many PROTEC matriculants to access restricted University courses such as Engineering, Medicine, Actuarial Science and Accounting, Forestry, IT and Teaching.

This is significant considering two very distinct dichotomies within the PROTEC cohort.

Rural students show greater signs of poverty and semi-rural/urban students are somewhat better off financially.

Many of PROTEC's rural students from the Mfakhathini and Elandskop region (south of Midmar Dam), Mpolweni near Wartburg and Hammersdale to the East, are fast becoming seriously impoverished. They are displaying signs of malnourishment due to a low-cost carbohydrate diet with little or no protein. The majority of these students stem from single-parent families and are predominantly cared for by their grandmothers, surviving on the Old Age Pension and Child Grant system. These students require transport-cost assistance from PROTEC and in many cases, PROTEC has had to waive the R200 annual Commitment Fee to ensure that they continue to receive the educational support they need. Academically, their biggest challenge is often English Literacy as they typically only speak English when attending classes at PROTEC. However, these students are generally hard-working and motivated to do well.

Then there are those from semi-rural/urbanised homes where they by and large reside with their parents, who try everything possible to enrol their children in ex-Model C Schools within urban Pietermaritzburg. This often results in the children being transported to and from School in a 'Club-Car', an old bakkie, and most of these children only arrive home around 17h30. Less time is therefore available for homework as parents still expect children to





complete their chores, once home. We have had to counsel parents about this, particularly in the case of matric students as some semi-rural schools are, in fact, very good institutions.

These differing circumstances have the potential to exaggerate poverty, bullying and isolation, having a significant impact on learners' wellbeing. It is a matter of identifying common ground and recognising that everyone is working towards the same goal of improving their future prospects. The PROTEC team works tirelessly with learners to develop

the life skills required to ensure acceptance and instil support and collaboration between learners, parents and the teaching staff.

Looking to the future, PROTEC's most urgent and desirable future plan is to purchase a permanent home for the Academy. Over the past 30 years PROTEC has moved from UKZN to Tembalethu, to UNISA, to DUT Indumiso Campus, to Project Gateway and more recently to its current location at ESSA. PROTEC has identified a property with an adequate footprint, just outside Pietermaritzburg's CBD, which is in walking distance of the Taxi/Bus Ranks. A Business Plan has been developed and PROTEC is searching for a donor to assist with the purchase.

With a heart to see children succeed, PROTEC is certainly touching lives meaningfully and contributing to an educated generation of the future.



EDUCATION

Drakensberg Boys Choir School

Years Funded: Nine • Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **F**



The mission of the Drakensberg Boys Choir School (DBCS) is to prepare boys for life and leadership through excellence in music, academics, physical development and social enrichment in a Christian environment. The vision, as it was from conception, remains for a racially integrated and diverse institution catering for musically talented boys.

Today, the school boasts six new classrooms, a multimedia centre, revamped administration wing, 72-bed boarding facility, new dining room and kitchen and a new multipurpose area; not to mention, the many talented bursary recipients whose lives have been transformed through the DBCS Bursary Programme, supported by N3 Toll Concession.

Brad Glasspoole a former 'Drakie', now responsible for assisting the school with major projects and fundraising was asked 15 years ago to report on the success of a project still in its infancy (literally). His response, "give me 10 to 15 years and I will show you just how important this project will become".

The saplings of 15 years ago are now bearing fruit. DBCS is not only about a world class choir, it is a training ground for well-grounded young men who can make a meaningful contribution to society, not just through music, but holistically.

There are many great choirs in South Africa today, testament to a new way of thinking where 'the arts' are recognised as being just as important as sport in education. What could be seen as negative is in fact a huge positive as many of these choirs are conducted by DBCS old boys. At school level, boys who leave after grade 9 still have three years of positive influence on a school's choral or music programmes as recognised by some of South Africa's top



independent schools who have 'inherited' some 'Drakies' for the last three years of their schooling. Schools such as Hilton College, Michaelhouse, Kearsney College, St Stithians and St Albans to name a few.

The Drakensberg Boys Choir School is ingrained in the history, culture and essence of the South African community. Based in the heart of South Africa's heritage site, Drakenberg, where some of the best choral voices are heard reverberating across the Champagne Valley it is no surprise that the DBCS boys stem from all sectors of South African society. Furthermore, the school takes South Africa into the world when performing on foreign soil, showcasing some of the best choral talent that South Africa has to offer.

What is clear though is that funding from the N3TC into the DBCS Bursary Programme has made this form of education accessible to a greater number of previously disadvantaged, but talented boys. It has created an opportunity for these boys, not only to attend a leading educational institution in South Africa but opened the doors to education through many of the country's top independent schools and tertiary institutions.

Although there is a constant battle to explain that wealth does not necessarily equal talent, central to DBCS' belief system is that given the opportunity to attend the Drakensberg Boys Choir School will benefit each and every boy. However, the Bursary Programme will mean the difference to a select group of talented boys whose financial status would typically dictate their accessibility to an institution geared to nurture that talent.

The story of Nathan Julius

When meeting with Nathan's grandmother on his first day at the Drakensberg Boys Choir School, her story played on Brad Glasspoole's emotions.

"What she said on the morning will remain with me forever and each time I hear of Nathan's achievements I am grateful that we were able to 'bend the rules'."

Marita Sanders misunderstood the bursary offer sent to her for her grandson, Nathan. She was short of R65,000 to cover his school and boarding fees. As the sole bread winner in the family with an ill daughter and young grandson, she wanted the best for Nathan, and that was to get him off the Cape Flats and away from the gangs. She sat in the Headmaster's office with tears streaming down her face and said, "If I take him home he will end up in a gang or dead!"

DBC'S, thanks to N3TC's support, made the right choice and Nathan has gone on to achieve great success.





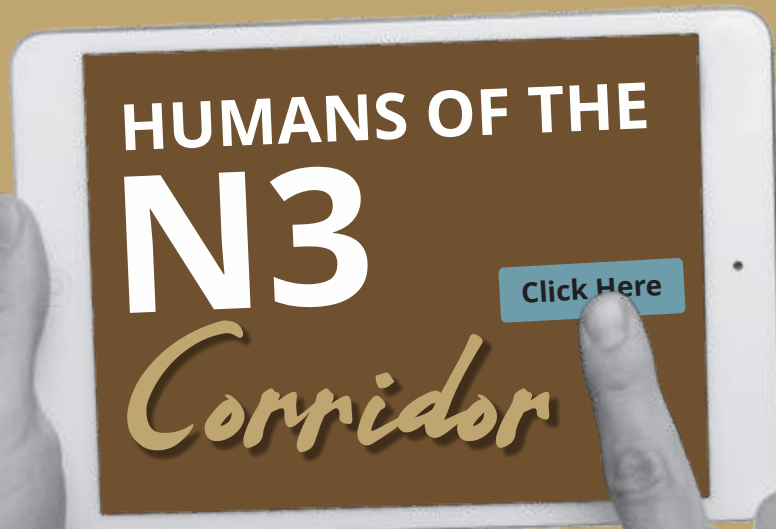
Jabulani Nyathi, former DBCS student is the perfect example of a young person grasping every opportunity provided to succeed.

After finishing Grade 9 at Drakensberg Boys' Choir School, Jabulani was offered a full scholarship through ISASA and Kearsney for his final three years at the College. He matriculated in 2015 as Kearsney's 2015 Dux, deputy-head prefect, head of the prestigious choir and captain of cross country. He was the College's top achiever in the IEB examinations; attaining seven distinctions and placed in the top 5% of learners in six or more subjects in South Africa, and in the country's top 1% for Drama, Music and Physical Sciences. He was Kearsney's highest achiever in Afrikaans.

Jabulani has gone on to study chemical engineering at UCT, which he plans to follow with studies to become a chartered financial analyst.

Jabulani was awarded the prestigious Allan Gray Orbis Fellowship which provides a full scholarship for undergraduate studies, including tuition, textbooks, accommodation and a stipend for living expenses.

The future looks bright for this young superstar.



Jabulani Nyathi
A remarkable all-rounder



EDUCATION

Royal Drakensberg Primary School

Years Funded: Nine • Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **F**



What's missing in the current debate over economic inequality is enough serious discussion about investing in effective early childhood development from birth to age five. There is the critical gap in skills between advantaged and disadvantaged children that emerges long before they enter school." – James J. Heckman

This brings context to Royal Drakensberg Primary School's future plans to become a more inclusive school that provides greater support to the wider community through teacher mentoring. Equally novel is the School's plan to assist with supporting the newly developed Baby Boost programme which focuses on the first 1000 days.

Royal Drakensberg Primary School is in the rural reaches of the Northern Drakensberg mountains. Daily this community faces the challenge of living remotely. Water is still collected, schools are under resourced, and food and supplies are expensive. Royal Drakensberg brings hope to its community and has had a positive impact on many families.

Royal Drakensberg Primary School opened its doors in 2007 with just 14 children. N3TC first became involved with the school in 2010 through a sponsorship of the Royal Drak MTB Challenge. This was the start of a wonderful journey of mutual discovery, growth and development.

At Royal Drakensberg, knowledge is acquired through play and learning rather than instructional rote learning. Children participate actively creating a deeper understanding of concepts and ideas.

Each child that attends Royal Drakensberg gets a quality start and they are nurtured and



loved. They experience kindness and are encouraged to be respectful. They are taught the value of hard work and the importance of integrity.

By prioritising education, Royal Drakensberg is well positioned to unlock the potential in children and broaden each child's chance for a successful life. An investment in these foundational years can have a profound impact on the individual, community and broader economy.

N3TC's involvement in the school has expanded significantly through top-up bursaries for deserving children. This has resulted in children being able to attend a well-resourced school with a dedicated team of teachers and will help them realise their own success.

"N3TC's support and genuine interest in our success resulted in us being able to expand our reach and accommodate more children." Megan Bedingham.

Royal Drakensberg has grown substantially since those early days and its current enrolment for 2019 is 80 children resulting in significant reach and changing the lives of children and their families within the Northern Drakensberg region.

There is an increasing awareness of the importance of education in the region. Parents and community members realise that a quality start will help children escape the cycle of poverty. Children no longer need to remain disadvantaged. Through commitment and hard work, the future can be quite different.

Royal Drakensberg Primary is a small school. It remains vulnerable as it relies quite heavily on donor support to function. The community is unable to afford high school fees and as a pure financial model it should not survive. But, through very careful planning and continual assessment the school continues to thrive.

The Royal Drakensberg team has evaluated the national statistics in South Africa and has become keenly aware of where the real need lies. Of the one million children that started school in South Africa in 2000, only 50% matriculated; and, the recent PIRLS report found that 78% of grade 4 South African children are unable to read with understanding.

With these statistics in mind, the school's focus has shifted to the pre-primary and foundation phase, so that children have the capacity to learn when they reach Grade 1. Many rural children do not receive early stimulation, and brain development and growth can be stifled without this. This makes learning much harder. By getting children into the school system earlier, they are assured a better chance of success in primary school.

Furthermore, children learn to read so that they can read to learn. Children that do not have the skill of reading battle in the intermediate phase and many drop out as a result. By focusing on the foundation phase and doing this incredibly well, Royal Drakensberg is contributing towards improved literacy levels.

The Royal Drakensberg Primary School is a beacon of light in a small community. A collective effort, with sound growth year in and year out, providing children with a quality education.





Treverton School

Years Funded: Nine
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **I**



"We have greatly valued the way N3TC has considered each application on merit and been sensitive to the individual needs of each learner. For all the recipients, the financial assistance offered by N3TC has been the catalyst in making a good education possible."

Through N3TC's Top Up Bursaries fund, Treverton School has been able to develop future leaders who would otherwise not have been able to remain at the school because of financial constraints affecting their families, very often as a result of circumstances beyond their control.

The School attempts to match the support given by N3TC but is limited by the fact that the school relies purely on fee income and does not have a trust fund or similar mechanism to fund bursaries or scholarships. The consistency of N3TC's funding has enabled the school to support deserving learners and given their families peace of mind.

The significance of this support is helping Treverton to establish a more realistic cross-section of the population represented at the school. This has meant that Treverton is no longer regarded in the community as exclusive and elitist. As one of the school's main objectives was to be a positive influence in the Mooi River community, the funding received from N3TC has been a significant factor in helping Treverton School achieve this goal.

Meet Amanda Xaba...

... a **Grade 10 learner at Treverton School**. Amanda joined Treverton School at the start of her Grade 9 year in 2018. Amanda's academic ability was first recognised by her grandfather's employers who wanted to ensure that Amanda got the best education possible. However, funding her education was the main challenge and it was only at the end of her Grade 8 year that Amanda was able to come to Treverton through a joint funding effort of N3TC, Treverton and her grandfather's employer, Catherine Emanuel.

Amanda is thriving. She settled into the new curriculum quickly and after her first term at Treverton she had worked her way into the academic Top 10 for her grade. Although Amanda found the level of work and the workload significantly higher than what she was used to at her previous school, she has taken this challenge in her stride. Amanda is now ranked third in the grade and has an average of well over 80 percent. She is confident that, in time, she can work her way into the top position!

Amanda is not just showing her prowess in the classroom, she has shown her ability on the sports field and is involved in social tennis and hockey while continuing to pursue her first choice in sporting code, soccer, and has been selected for the Girls 1st Team this year.

Amanda is a wonderful example of a young lady who is embracing all the opportunities that have been given to her. There is no doubt that Amanda will be a future leader.



Kwazamokuhle: Fundisiswe Bursary Fund

Years Funded: Nine
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **G**



“N3TC's funding and support of the Bursary Fund means that these students can continue their educational pathways with the assistive devices, financial and emotional support that they require.”

From offering to support a gifted and deserving learner attending Kwazamokuhle in 2014, the Fundisiswe Bursary Fund was born and has grown into a flourishing fund that has seen 22 students pursuing their education dream.

The impact the funding has made in the student's lives, their families and the community is remarkable. The students who are supported by the bursary fund all come from low-income households and many rely on disability grants to cover their basic needs.

The families of the students who receive bursary funding have been greatly impacted. There is an overall sense of relief and gratitude that their children are receiving an education.

Bursary recipients from KwaZamokuhle Special School have a bright future if they grasp the opportunity and work to the best of their abilities. Many of the children are now able to dream of what they want to be when they leave school - some more ambitious than others – knowing that there is a possibility of these dreams becoming a reality.



Meet Kwanele Tshabalala a Grade 4 learner at Kwazamokuhle Special School. Kwanele is 14 years old and was diagnosed with Spinal Muscular Atrophy (Type II). He was in grade 2 when he first became a recipient of a Fundisiswe Bursary grant in 2016.

Kwanele is reliant on a wheelchair for mobility and dependent on others for his daily care. He is one of five children and comes from Peacetown, a rural township just outside Ladysmith in KwaZulu Natal. He is being raised by his father who is currently unemployed and surviving on Kwanele's disability grant and his siblings' child support grants.

Kwanele is a softly spoken boy who has incredible academic potential. In July 2017, Kwanele was assessed by Shonaquip, a Cape Town based company that specialises in customised wheelchairs built for the needs of the individual. Kwanele was overjoyed when he received his motorised chair, which meant that he had mobility independence something he had never experienced before. This gave him a whole new lease on life, and he grew in confidence.



Through various interventions and a supportive environment created through the bursary fund and the school, Kwanele's father has been able to move onto the school premises to take care of his personal needs, which has seen Kwanele thrive academically and socially.

His father frequently expresses how grateful he is that Kwanele has been given the opportunity to complete his studies and that he would not be able to afford to send him to school without N3TC's funding.



St David's Diocesan School

Years Funded: Nine
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **H**

"The staff feel deeply the joy of service to others when the school is in a position to assist deserving pupils whose parents are struggling to cope with annual fee increases on top of the rising cost of living."

Through N3TC's Top Up Bursary Scheme, parents have been able to keep their children at St. David's, their school of choice, securing a quality education for their children, which otherwise they would not be able to afford. The financial support gives parents peace of mind and the beneficiaries feel appreciated and valued.

St. David's catchment area covers Greytown, its townships and rural areas. The school's excellent reputation attracts many scholars from these areas. The school's goal is to serve the community by providing a high standard of education at an affordable price in a supportive environment. With N3TC's support, the school believes that it has achieved the goal and is now continuing to build on the reputation it has built over the years.

Meet Nothando Masikani...

... a Grade 7 pupil at St Davids. _Nothando has been a beneficiary of N3TC's funding since Grade 2. She has a sweet disposition and is always the first to offer help. Academically, Nothando is alert, eager to learn, a neat worker and able to complete tasks given to her timeously. She is a mature young lady with a bright academic future ahead of her. Nothando has two older brothers and her family lives in a rural area, which adds transport to the cost of her education. Nothando's mother is very grateful for the partial bursary that Nothando receives as she is educating five children, including two of her nephews.

The school always reports an excellent attendance record and a good pass rate per grade. Scholars with learning difficulties are well supported and make good progress and its pupils are accepted into the secondary schools of their choice where they are frequently achieving top ten grades in their academics. Some have been selected as prefects and even Head Girl and Head Boy, and some have achieved Dux Awards or excelled in sports. Many have successfully completed tertiary education and embarked upon professional careers, while others are currently studying towards their dreams and ambitions.

Many pupils come from single parent families or have lost their parents; and are cared for by relatives. In some cases, the extended family is supported by the salary of only one breadwinner. N3TC's funding enables the education of these children. The impact is beyond measure, impossible to fully comprehend but one thing that is certain, these children know they are fortunate to be given this opportunity and take full advantage of the gift.

Meet Donna Norton...

.... a Grade 6 learner at St David's. Donna has been the recipient of N3TC's financial support since Grade 3. She is a sweet-natured, quiet, hard-working young lady who always gives of her best. As her class work has become more difficult, she has managed to maintain a good average and enjoys participating in many sports. Donna is polite, loves to help others, has a keen sense of humour and is mature for her age. Her brother is in Grade 5. Their parents are divorced and their father, who moved to another province, provides very little financial support. Their mother tries her best to support her children in addition to extra medical expenses that she must cover. She is very appreciative of N3TC's assistance with Donna's school fees.





Harrismith Primary School

Years Funded: Six
Province: Free State

Route Key: **D**

"We want to give more children from disadvantaged and vulnerable backgrounds the chance to be part of this programme to ensure a more stable and comforting environment for them during their formative primary school years."

Harrismith, like many other rural towns in South Africa is feeling the effects of the downturn in the economy and face a variety of difficulties including access to employment and opportunities to grow and prosper due to limited commercial prospects, financial support and education.

Harrismith Primary School is a thriving community of young learners eager to learn and grow. It offers outstanding education and sees the effects of poverty within its own four walls. The needs are great, but the school sees opportunities where others may see disaster.

In 2014, N3TC first partnered with Harrismith Primary School to assist five learners who were struggling to get to school every day and their

academic results were floundering. Through N3TC's Top Up Bursary fund, these children were given access to the school's boarding facilities and all the associated benefits.

Today, the programme is supporting nine children who benefit from living in a safer and more comfortable environment that promotes learning.

These children have grown in confidence. They are achieving outstanding academic results and perform in various extracurricular activities.

This holistic approach to education and the support offered to these children will benefit their families and communities in the future as they will have the necessary skills, abilities and academic prowess to go on to secondary school and potentially tertiary education.





Education

**TERTIARY
EDUCATION
BURSARIES**

Our Heroes



Londeka Ximba

By Nikki Brighton

*On the
road to
success*

When Londeka Ximba was little, she loved trips to Durban with her family and always knew that when they reached the Marianhill Toll Plaza, that the beach was near.

"The air became much warmer and we could feel the sea breeze. The tollgate (as we called it) was just a reference point on the journey. I never questioned why it was there or what my Dad was paying for."

Now, in her role as Transportation Engineer with N3TC she knows exactly what the tolls are about. "When I started this job, I was amazed that there was a whole different career that I had never heard about. Engineering is not all about road surfaces and gutters."

Luckily, Londeka does not need to wear a hard hat and spend hours sweating in the sun – although she does don her luminous safety jacket whenever she is out inspecting "the best road in South Africa".

How she came to have her dream job is a tale of luck and hard work – or as she puts it "God's Grace". She was keen on studying medicine but after doing work experience during a school holiday, decided that was not for her. She had heard that there were opportunities in Civil Engineering so chose that instead. During High School in Pietermaritzburg, she had been a Protec student, so Rose Smuts recommended her for a bursary interview with N3TC, based on her excellent results (6 A's). Londeka was the first undergraduate student that N3TC funded.

At University, she worked hard, surrounding herself with others who were as ambitious as she was and keen to walk to the campus library, even at night, to study. She graduated well and as luck would have it someone at N3TC resigned at that time and she was offered her current job.

"I was a brave young person. I packed my bags, caught the bus to Johannesburg, and stayed with University friends while I looked for accommodation."

Londeka's job entails Road Safety - finding ways to ensure the N3 Toll Route is safer in high accident zones.

"We constantly work to improve the road for users – installing more signs, or rumble strips to wake sleepy drivers who may nod off."

She also monitors the Traffic, particularly overloaded trucks which have a big impact on the road surface.

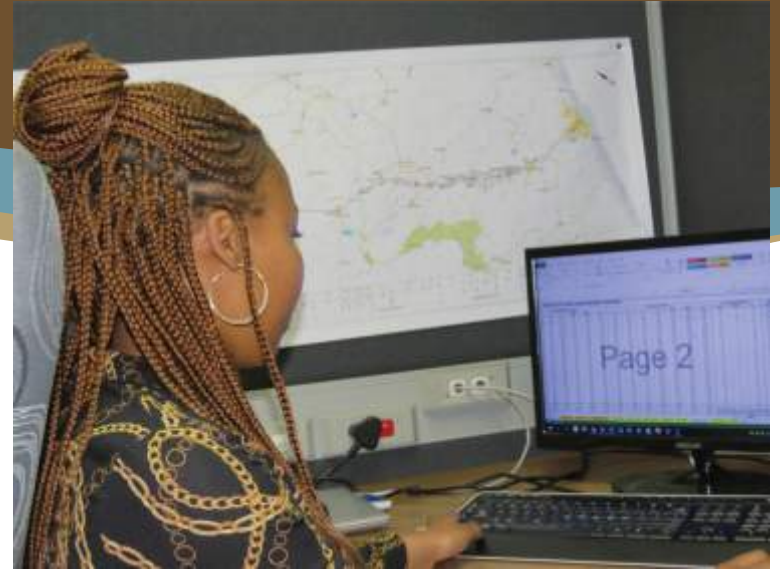


The third part of her job regards Traffic and Revenue – those toll fees that she now understands extremely well.

“I believe we are lucky in South Africa to have tolled roads as they are in great condition. The fee structure was agreed at the beginning of the concession and only goes up according to the CPI. I often meet strangers, who have stories to tell me about the assistance they received when they broke down. Road users really appreciate the route services.”

When Londeka married fellow engineering student, Bulelani Ndebele in 2018 the celebration was held near to the sea, giving her an opportunity to travel on the beautiful road that makes her proud.

“The N3 is world class,” she says with conviction, “besides the good quality road, it is amazing to see the passion and enthusiasm that our company has for people’s lives. A commitment to making a significant difference to communities along the route – like they did in my life.”





Thokozani Smangaliso Nxumalo

Course:
BSc Agriculture
(Plant Pathology)

Institution:
University of
KwaZulu-Natal

Year: Third



"N3TC has offered me all the necessary resources to achieve my goals and express myself on this academic platform."

Thokozani is clearly a committed student and is determined to succeed. He has shown great improvement in his academic results, having received a merit certificate for achieving the second highest academic results in two modules and the Dean's Commendation for outstanding academic work.

Thokozani's mentor, Peter Hundermark, HR Manager at Clover is supporting Thokozani and assisting him as he works through his degree.

By taking a few key decisions to reduce his involvement in extra curricula activities, manage his time better, instilling some discipline to his studies and deferring an elective has allowed him more time to focus on his studies and achieve the results he was hoping for.

"I produced good results in the recent semester, however, there's lots of room for improvement."

This determination and self-assessment are going to bode well for Thokozani as he continues with his studies. He is an asset to the N3TC Touching Lives tertiary bursary programme and is bound to succeed in his chosen field of agriculture.



Amkele Shembe

Course:
B.Eng Civil
Engineering

Institution:
University of Pretoria

Year: Second



"I managed to pass all my modules this semester and did considerably well in some of them."

Amkele made the decision to change his degree from Electrical Engineering to Civil Engineering this year and he couldn't be happier.

He has adapted well to the change and feels that he is more suited to this field of engineering.

His interest in structures, strength of materials and geology has made for an exciting start to his course.

Amkele is achieving excellent results and has found his passions and interests are better met in Civil Engineering. He has settled in well and is enjoying working with his study group, which he refers to as being the 'cream of the crop' in his year. He has found the group has been very supportive, helping with study and encouraging each other through assignments and exams.

Taking a break from the intricacies of his sciences and engineering modules is important to Amkele and he has joined the University's drama department, where he gets a 'breather' from his studies while working creatively on the department's productions.

Amekele is a remarkable student, determined and passionate about his studies. It is a privilege to support this young man as he makes his way to his graduation.



“The MBA has made a significant impact on my personal development. I am more confident about the operational aspects of a business and now have a clearer understanding of the fundamentals underpinning the strategic aspects.”

Thania Dhoogra, N3TC Operations Manager tackled her MBA with great enthusiasm and commitment. She is as dedicated to her studies as she is to the plaza operations along the N3 Toll Route.

Thania Dhoogra

Course:
Flexible MBA

Institution:
University of Reading – Henley Business School

Year: Second

Despite the challenges of adjusting to the University's academic style of writing and finding an effective work-, study- and life-balance, Thania is clearly enjoying student life and building a network of support amongst her cohort.

For Thania the course has been interesting, although thought provoking. As the N3TC business model does not necessarily fit into the contextual content and assignment requirements of her course, she is frequently required to apply the concepts, theories and frameworks to other enterprises.

As with anyone trying to balance a full-time job and studies, time is Thania's biggest challenge, yet in Thania's words, “these are not insurmountable challenges”.

With one year left to complete her studies, Thania is looking forward to the master research assignment and to choosing a topic relevant to the toll industry and its ongoing development.



“So far, my third year at University has been very challenging, more than in previous years. The work has started to intensify, it shows that I am now being prepared to apply the knowledge that I have been learning to the workplace. There is no room for mistakes as I would be putting people's lives in danger.”

At first it was unclear how the modules of his studies fitted into the puzzle of the world of civil engineering, but for Sinethemba it is now a very clear picture of how they apply to real world scenarios.

Sinethemba Philani Mchunu

Course:
BSc Civil Engineering

Institution:
University of KwaZulu-Natal

Year: Third

Sinethemba has gained new insight and understanding in the importance of how all these modules work together. He has particularly enjoyed the practical components of his course where he has been given the opportunity to apply theory to real life practice. In his geotechnical practical module, he explored soil engineering properties and managed to test his knowledge and ability to work with other people.

Sinethemba has a deep desire to be the best engineer he possibly can be and is determined to do his best one step at a time. His ultimate goal is to make a difference in his family and community.





Lunga Nontokozi Xulu

Course:
**BSc Urban and
Regional Planning**

Institution:
**University of
Witwatersrand**

Year: Third



"I would have to say consistency is the ultimate best. To always be prepared for anything. So that when opportunity comes, or if challenges arise, you can be ready. So, consistency, preparation and hard work have helped me."

Lunga has her sights set on achieving her three-year BSc (URP) and one-year BSc Hons (URP) to attain her professional qualification in Urban Planning, accredited by the South African Council for Planners.

Lunga is currently repeating third year, which was overwhelming for her. Lunga made sure that she was prepared for her year and achieved good results in her tests and assignments – indicating that her determination to succeed is wrapped up in her belief for consistency and preparation. She has expressed her concerns that her exam results were not as she had hoped, despite her high semester DP (Duly Performed) mark.

Lunga has found herself wondering through book stores and investing in books on politics more recently, which she says she has found to be very interesting. For Lunga it is all about enhancing her education and the fact that her degree centres around politics, it made sense to become more aware of the role of politics on the country and its economy.

Lunga has enormous potential to succeed but admits that she struggles with high levels of anxiety that she is trying to manage. It is clear that she has a bright future and with N3TC's continued support and encouragement, it is evident that she will achieve all she sets her mind to.



Luyanda Sokhela

Course:
**BSc Civil
Engineering**

Institution:
**University of
KwaZulu-Natal**

Year: Third



"I am super proud of the way in which I was able to prioritise my goals and objectives. Time management is of dire importance in University, even though it can be very difficult to adapt to a new study timetable or daily planner. Proper planning and having daily objectives really helped me measure my daily, weekly and semester successes, which allowed for progress in areas where I felt I was lacking."

As a student, Luyanda places a lot of pressure on herself and has very high expectations for her studies. She faces every challenge as an opportunity and believes firmly that she is working towards her ultimate goal to undertake her MEng Structural Engineering degree, if she can maintain good academic results. These are high aspirations but well within Luyanda's reach, if she continues to focus on her studies.

She is starting to see how all the modules she has completed to this stage in her degree fit together and feels that she has a better grasp on what she is doing and why. She sees her studies as foundational to her future and lives with the belief that good things will be realised in her future.

Luyanda lives by the motto that 'no matter how difficult it gets, giving up is not an option, I have to push till the end'. The end is in sight and she is simply staying focused on the ultimate prize!

"I understand that this requires consistency and hard work, which is never easy, but I'm willing to take the risk!"



Thabo Simon Mofokeng

Course:
**Bachelor of Education
(Senior and FET Phases):
Mathematics and Science**

Institution:
**University of
South Africa**

Year: Second



“Receiving this N3TC bursary has greatly reduced my financial burden, given me peace of mind, and will allow me to continue to pursue my education dreams. I greatly appreciate N3TC’s generous financial support and the opportunity to pursue my dreams.”

Thabo is focused on the future and with that comes his determination to work hard, accept situations that he cannot control and become a team player.

He sees his studies as N3TC’s investment in his education, which he finds humbling but motivates him to apply himself to his studies while he *“creates a fully rewarding education experience for myself”*.

Thabo’s vision is to guide other young adults to gain meaningful education and sees his studies as his means of ‘paying it forward’ in the future. Giving others the benefit of a good education is his inspiration and the reason he is working hard to attain his degree.

Life as a student is often fraught with challenges well beyond their control, from struggling with accessing textbooks to dealing with confusion around course and module allocations, but these challenges are not insurmountable and Thabo is evidence of that.

Thabo is already well on his way to achieving his dreams and aspirations and his desire is to show others what can be achieved with some hard work and a lot of support – financially, academically, personally and professionally.



Qaphela Professor Dlamini

Course:
**Masters in Education:
Leadership and
Management**

Institution:
**University of
South Africa**

Year: First



“As a disabled person from the rural area of Loskop Enyezane, N3TC has helped to address the needs of disabled students who feel they may not be able to finance their studies. I am so grateful for my N3TC bursary as it has given me access to further education. By assisting disabled students like me; you assist us in realising our dreams and reaching our full potential. Your bursaries are not only providing financial support for our education, but an investment in our future.”

Perhaps there is something ‘prophetic’ in Qaphela’s name ... having started with his master’s degree, he is potentially on the road to gaining a PhD!

Qaphela sees his master’s degree as helping him build on the foundation of his existing qualifications, abilities and skills while gaining fresh perspective, understanding and new proficiencies. He is optimistic that this post graduate qualification will assist his transition into more senior positions, such as management and leadership, where he believes disabled people are excluded, giving him the ideal opportunity to express and fulfil the need for inclusion.

At the same time Qaphela is improving his research, writing, and analysis skill set and is grasping the opportunity to gain a wealth of knowledge while preparing him for a life of constant learning.

Outside of his studies, Qaphela has been involved in a collaboration with the United States Consulate to develop an action plan to address rural development through sport. Sport is known to provide immediate and long-term relief and sense of achievement for people with disabilities who are often plagued with health issues, poor social skills and lack of self-esteem. However, there are numerous challenges that prevent the disabled from participating in sport events and activities. Qaphela’s action plan is the answer to these challenges and he is hoping that through his planned interventions he will create an environment that will help disabled people to develop crucial life skills while benefiting from stronger muscles, enhanced cardiovascular aerobic levels and improved motor skills.

Qaphela clearly doesn’t let anything stand in his way. His enrolment and registration with UNISA were finalised very late, which left him with limited time to complete three assignments before he even had a textbook in his hands. He managed to complete all these assignments and is now settled in a routine that should stand him in good stead as he pursues his education dream.

Our Heroes

Sifiso Kunene

By Nikki Brighton

Reaching
for the
stars

It comes as little surprise to hear that Sifiso Kunene's favourite nursery rhyme was *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*. Sifiso is most definitely a rising star.

His childhood was spent dismantling his mother's cupboard doors to 'borrow' the nails for the wooden go-carts he and his mates made. "We'd walk to the wood factory to collect off cuts and then spend hours constructing our carts and racing them on a steep hill near home."

Back then, Sifiso was pretty sure he wanted to study Mechanical Engineering, he was forever taking things apart to see how they worked and helping his Dad work on his real car.

As a teenager he was coasting along but clearly remembers the day everything changed.

"My mom had no money for bus fare, so I had to walk to school in the middle of winter. It was many kilometres, so I had plenty of time to think.



I wondered, what can I do to change this situation? I realised that I needed to focus and work hard if I wanted my life to be different. I knew that it was my responsibility to look after my mom later in life and I wasn't going to manage that without dedication."

That was the last day he walked to school. Sifiso applied to attend Linpark High and was accepted in Grade 10. Here his choice of subjects included Civil Technology, and because he liked drawing, he opted for that.

"I noticed that the construction industry was booming, so thought I'd definitely be able to get a job in this field. There is always a need for new buildings and maintenance of infrastructure."

Consistently top of his class meant he was noticed by a fellow maths and science student, who suggested he enrol with Protec and even went so far as to escort him to his first visit, despite the rain that day.

"This made me realise that this guy really thought it was a beneficial programme – and it certainly was! Suddenly I realised that I was not really the best. Here I didn't outshine everyone as I did at school."

Sifiso became a regular at the Saturday classes. His classmates wondering why on earth he was spending his Saturdays in school when he was already passing all subjects well. But, feeling comfortable is not Sifiso's style, so he made the most of the opportunity and when it



came time to apply to university, he was accepted to study Civil Engineering and the recipient of an N3TC bursary.

After my dad died, I struggled. It was a bad year, but N3TC stuck by me and didn't give up, for which I am forever grateful."

After graduating, Sifiso was certain that he would get a job and start work in January, so spent the holiday re-painting and fixing all the cupboards while he had time. February rolled in and then March, and he realised it would not be that easy without any experience. He applied for a job at SAPPI, setting his heart on this training post as a Civil Engineer. By June he had started work there and luckily his mother's house was ship shape by then!

"I don't want to be famous, but I do want to make a difference. Not only to my family, but to South Africa. I want to inspire and encourage other youngsters to believe in themselves, focus and reach for the stars."

There is little doubt that his family will be proud of their young man, and his father and ancestors too. Their Clan name is Mgoza, which is the isiZulu name for the African Star Chestnut or *Sterculia rhynchocarpa*, a plant found where they originated in Swaziland. Coincidentally, the wood of this tree is traditionally used as roof poles and the strong bark fibre for tying in house construction. So, perhaps Sifiso's trajectory was written in the stars long before he sang about them in nursery school.





Education

**GRADUATES
ROLL OF HONOUR**

Tertiary Bursaries – Graduate Roll of Honour

N3TC is proud of its Bursary Program that has seen many staff, community members and deserving young scholars graduate with a qualification that will benefit generations to come within the N3 Corridor and beyond.

In another ten years, at the end of the Concession, these graduates will be leaders in their spheres of influence making their individual and collective mark on the growth, development and success of South Africa.

Community Members



Antonia Mkhabela

M.Ed. (Environmental Education)
Rhodes University
December 2016



Dibetso Sydney Motshabi

National Diploma in Accounting
University of Johannesburg
December 2014



Elsa Human

Masters (Sustainable Tourism)
Degree
University of KwaZulu-Natal
December 2011



Jennifer Russell

PhD (Science)
University of KwaZulu-Natal
December 2018



Isandrie Naudé

B.Ed. (Foundation Phase)
North-West University
December 2015



Louine Boothway

Advanced Certificate in
Environmental Education
Rhodes University
December 2012
M.Ed. (Environmental Education)
Rhodes University
December 2018



Maria du Toit

B.Sc. Honours (Quantitative Risk
Management)
North-West University
December 2017
M.Sc. (Quantitative Risk
Management)
North-West University
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