

20

years of Touching Lives



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Compiled and Produced In-House by N3TC

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

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

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“A little rain each day will fill the rivers to overflowing”





Contents

CEO's Review	03
Education	07
Top-up Bursaries	37
Tertiary Education Bursaries	50
Graduates Roll of Honour	59
Child Welfare	63
Youth Development	77
Disabled	87
HIV and AIDS	95
Road Safety	99
Conservation	105
Enterprise Development	119
Community Training	149
Community Events	157
Geographic Spread	166

As we reflect on twenty years of managing the N3 Toll Route and fulfilling our vision of providing safety, convenience and mobility to our customers, we would like to share some of our achievements in the Corporate Social Investment (“CSI”) space and our thoughts for the remaining 10 years of our Concession Contract.

The pre-eminent element of our CSI programme, which is aptly named “Touching Lives”, is education. A strong focus is also placed on persons (especially children) living with disabilities, child welfare, enterprise development, conservation and community events.

The Touching Lives programme has not been tackled in isolation of the rest of our operations. Whether in our routine route maintenance contracts, our major construction works projects or in our route safety initiatives, we have endeavored to leave a legacy that will remain rooted in the communities along our Route long after our Concession Contract ends and the management of the Route is returned to the South African National Roads Agency (SOC) Limited (SANRAL) in 2029.

Sustainability and securing meaningful contribution to touching the lives of the most vulnerable members of South African society across the four provinces that the route traverses, have always been at the heart of our Touching Lives programme. Central to that is our belief in facilitating education, from early

childhood development to tertiary education and beyond that to professional skills development.

We have intentionally focused our efforts on partnering with recognised centres of excellence in local communities and have fundamentally maintained a strategy of providing a 'hand up' as opposed to a 'hand out'.

This approach has seen our programme grow over the years with over 70 projects currently supported through our targeted social investment areas. Underpinning all of these projects is the foundation of education. The aim is to ensure, first and foremost, that vulnerable members of the communities along our route receive the appropriate and beneficial support that would secure a future for them individually, their families and communities.

It is our vision that this programme will continue to make a definitive and meaningful contribution to the development and economic advancement of the communities along the N3 Corridor. We remain certain in our belief that human connection, emotional support and personal encouragement is the essence and underlying success of our programme and will continue to play a fundamental role in the next decade of our operations along the N3 Toll Route.

Our work is not yet done. The road to the future is paved with the vision of continued education to support future generations along the Corridor. We have witnessed children graduate from school, university and enter the job market. These stories continue to inspire and motivate us to build on the legacy of the N3TC Touching Lives programme.

We trust you will enjoy reading this special edition of *Touching Lives* but, more importantly, we hope that the stories of the people whose lives have been changed will also inspire you to make a difference.

On behalf of SANRAL, the N3TC Shareholders and Board, management and staff we would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to you our customers, each and every person, group and project that has enabled the Touching Lives programme.

Thank you.

Neil Tolmie

CEO, N3 Toll Concession



CEO's
Review

Our Heroes

Di Milford

By Nikki Brighton

Miracles in the Making

Once Di Milford starts telling stories, it's hard to stop her.

After more than 30 years with Project Gateway, it is to be expected. Particularly because the stories are so intriguing.

The first story is about how, during the turmoil that surrounded the Seven Day War in the late 1980's in Pietermaritzburg's Edendale valley, three very different churches decided to build bridges between communities.

"Our pastor started to question why people came to church on Sundays, but for the rest of

the week, ignored the lives being shattered around us," she begins.

Here starts the extraordinary tale of an English, Afrikaans and Zulu pastor becoming the best of buddies against the odds (apartheid was still in place) and three very diverse congregations worshipping together in multiple languages at combined services on Sundays.

"We began by helping in the conflict torn areas – there were 20 000 people displaced during those dark times," Di recalls, "our first project was a feeding scheme, all run by volunteers and donations."

The need for real intervention to counteract the hopelessness many in the area felt, led to the formation of Project Gateway in 1996. Di, who had a passion for helping people and a background in business, was the ideal candidate for the job of handling PR and finding donors for the fledgling organisation.



"I have always keenly felt the divide between the wealthy and the poor, even during my childhood. I decided to give up my well-paying job and tackle this project."

How fortunate Project Gateway has been. Not only is Di now perfectly placed to narrate the history of the organisation, her multi-faceted skills have ensured that many hundreds of lives have been transformed.

"I'll never forget Beauty," recounts Di, "a young disabled woman living in deep rural

Bulwer. She had left school because the other kids laughed at her and arrived at our Fashion School timid and cowering. Donors covered her transport every day, even when she appeared to be struggling. Then she received her own sewing machine and suddenly shot towards the top of the class. She graduated well with a vastly improved self-esteem and has started her own business."

The opportunity to change someone's life, is the reason Di gets up every morning. "Often, it is only about connecting the dots, finding the right people to work together and enabling the ripple effect that follows. I have learnt these things as I go along."

Di is concerned that communities are severely traumatised, and expectations of those who can assist are often too high. Take the young woman who was not doing well at Fashion School, for example. On investigation, Di discovered that she lived in a shack with five other girls, hadn't eaten for three days and walked 15 kilometres to attend classes.

"No wonder she was battling! Fortunately, we were able to assist with food parcels and transport money, and get her set up to make the most of the opportunity."

Interestingly, not only are the less fortunate communities around Pietermaritzburg uplifted by Project Gateway. Many volunteers come from England and America to assist and blossom in the non-judgemental atmosphere of the Gateway Christian School or the other projects they run.

"So many say they are coming back, and do, because here you really can change people's lives. Others stay in touch for years. Funnily enough, our social media is managed by someone who now lives in the UK!"

Di has stories to tell about homeless folk housed in their overnight shelters, of pregnant, abused young women who don't give up, of elderly women creating food gardens at creche's in informal settlements and the young child left for dead in the shrubbery who is now an accomplished



caterer. There are many instances when lives have been changed forever, by their determination to work with individuals and give them the opportunity to transform their world.

"Our intervention may be their first chance, or it may be their last – none of us know, we just do the best we can."

On Di's notice board is a photo of a young Zulu man with his pale Canadian bride – there must be a story in that...

"Oh, Sthembiso," she exclaims, "he always asked us 'why did you choose me?'."

Orphaned Sthembiso arrived as a frightened 6-year-old, with the gardener who asked if they could help. He was enrolled in the Gateway Christian School and lived in the staff quarters at the centre. Over the years he flourished,

eventually becoming top of his class, excelling at sport and being chosen as a prefect at high school, before heading on to Wits University, meeting the love of his life and qualifying as an Electrical Engineer.

Di insists that moving into someone's life with assistance cannot be a short-term thing. It can be challenging, often exhausting and a great variety of skills are needed to produce a well-rounded, functioning adult. However, when she looks back at the 11 339 people who have been educated about TB and 21 720 people who have been fed over the years, she must realise that without Project Gateway, the world would have been a much harsher place for many.

"We call the success stories *Miracles in the Making*," she smiles, "one individual life creates more impact than we can imagine. We never lose sight of the value of every single person. There are many who have entered these gates hopeless and left filled with hope."





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.

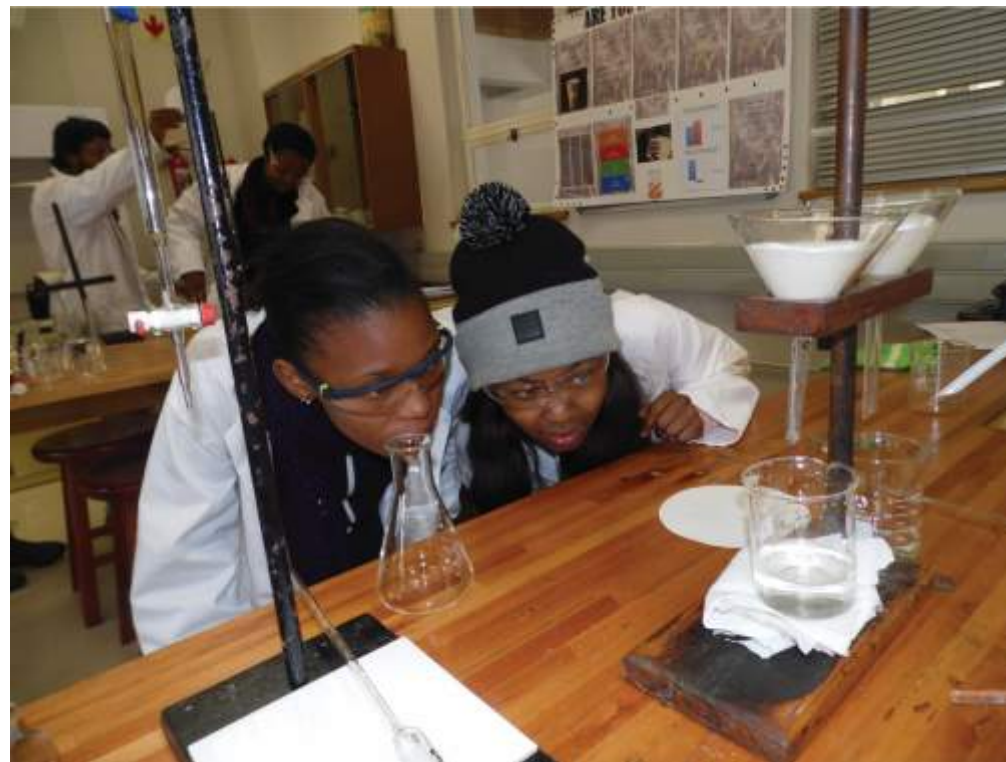
The fact that PROTEC Pmb students have done so well in restricted faculties such as Engineering, Medicine, IT, Actuarial and Business Science and Forestry, for example, can be

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!"

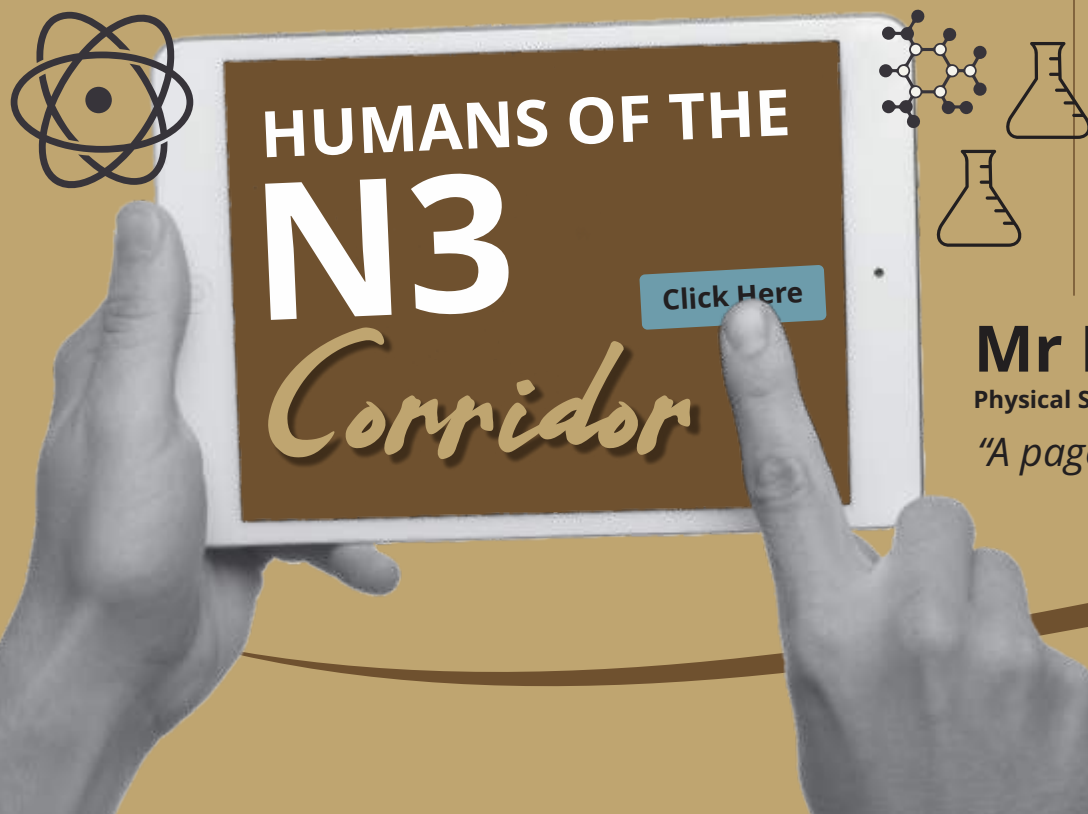
Bhekathina's learners have been known to gain acceptance to most universities in South Africa. Many past students are already employed as Marine Engineers and currently nine past students are completing their in-service teacher training at the school.

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.

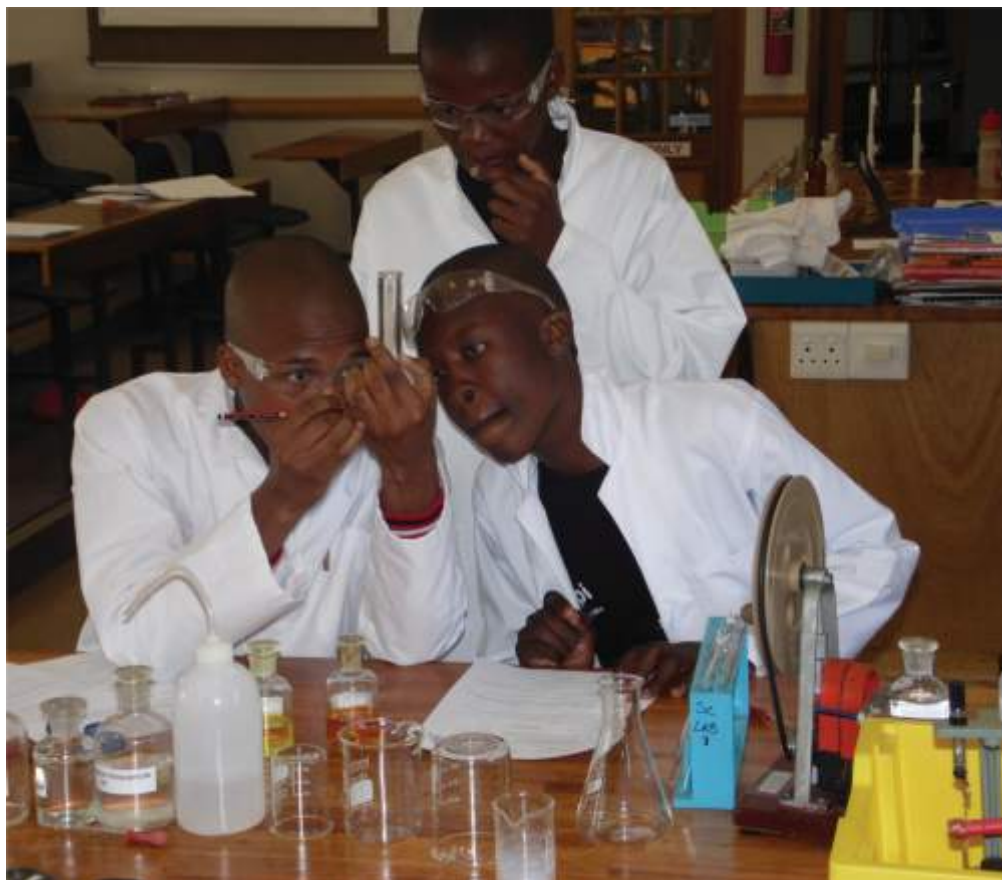


EDUCATION

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.

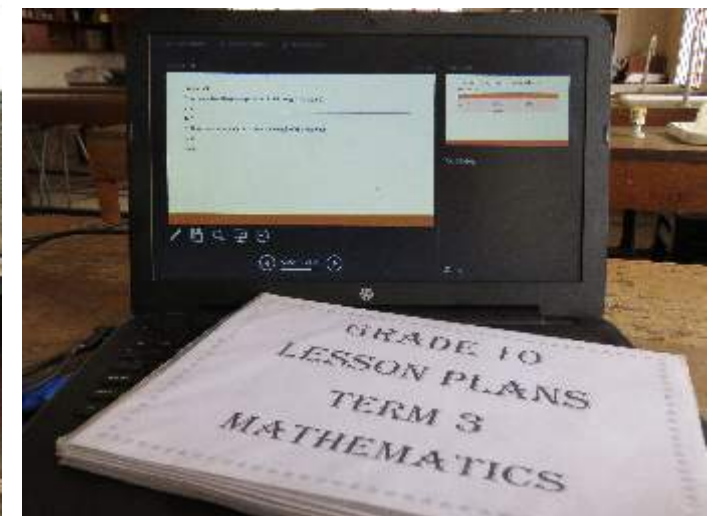
"Many things can be accomplished with hard work and a good understanding of Maths. Don't wait until you are in Grade 11

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: **M**



"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.

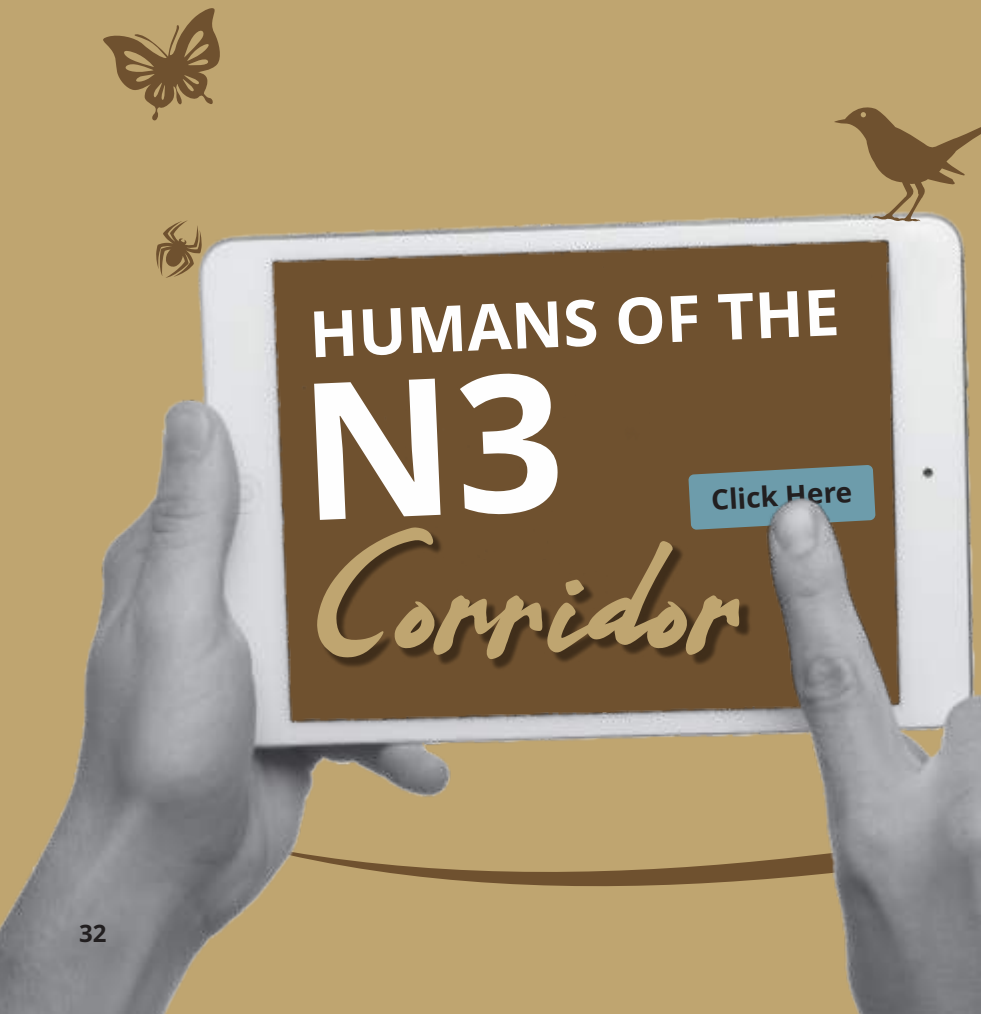
The Centre has initiated and maintained several projects over the years including a food garden supplying vegetables to the school's feeding scheme; a recycling project where a local community member collects the recyclable material for his small business; a biodiversity and nature project where they 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 Smart-boards. 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**



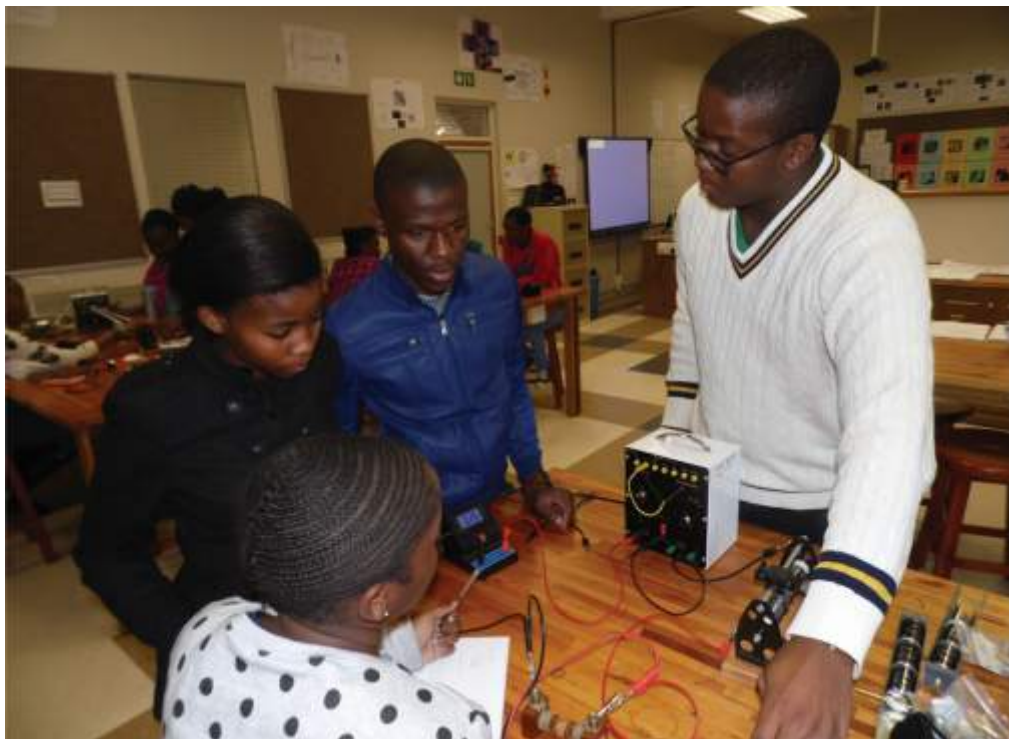
PROTEC continues to operate within the context of its vision: *“Giving our students an excellent academic foundation through which they can gain an edge or advantage for future tertiary study.”*

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.

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!"

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

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.





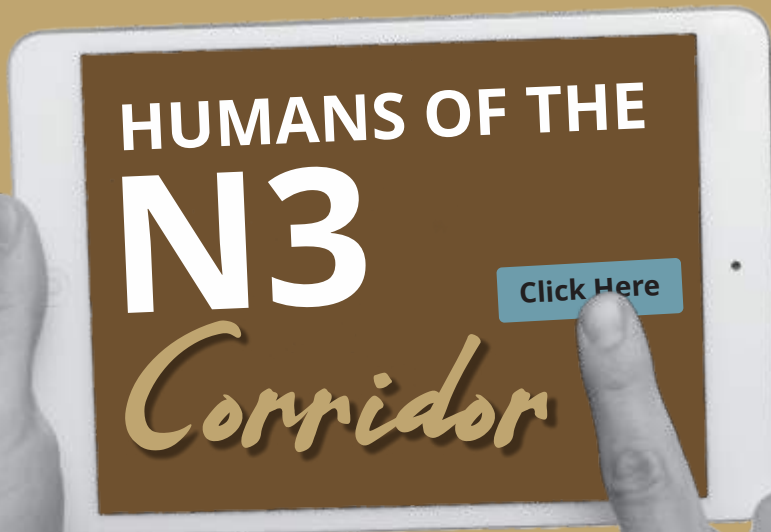
Jabulani Nyathi, former DBCS student is the perfect example of a young person grasping every opportunity provided to succeed.

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: 



“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.

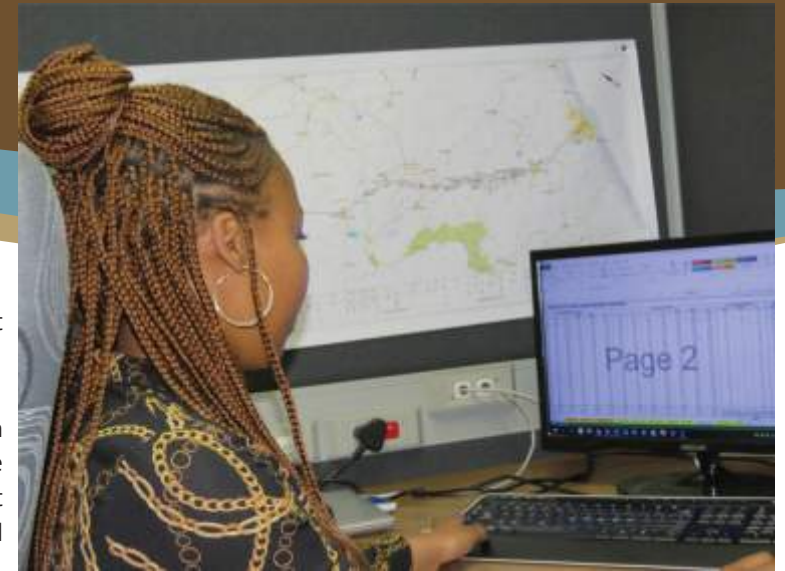


The third part of her job regards Traffic and Revenue – those toll fees that she now understands extremely well.

“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.



Thania Dhoogra

Course:
Flexible MBA

Institution:
**University of
Reading – Henley
Business School**

Year: Second

“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.

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.



Sinethemba Philani Mchunu

Course:
**BSc Civil
Engineering**

Institution:
**University of
KwaZulu-Natal**

Year: Third

“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 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 Nontokozo 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
December 2018



Paul Greyling

Diploma (Metropolitan and
Traffic Policing)
Lyceum College
December 2015



Sifiso Kunene

B.Sc. Engineering (Civil)
University of KwaZulu-Natal
December 2018



Sizwe Mchunu

National Diploma (Civil)
Engineering
Durban University of Technology
December 2017



Vusi Mvelase

B.Sc Geography and
Environmental Science
Rhodes University
December 2017

Anisa Khan

M.Ed. (Environmental Education)
Rhodes University
December 2017

Sandile Zulu

B.Sc (Environmental Sciences)
University of KwaZulu-Natal
December 2016

NBTC Staff - past and present



Amy Maharaj

M.Eng (Pavement Engineering)
University of Stellenbosch
December 2015



Andrea Visser

Certificate Programme in
Marketing Management (CPMM)
Wits Business School
December 2011



Bianca Henriksen

B.Com (Honours)
HR Management
University of Pretoria
December 2017
M.Com (Industrial Psychology)
University of Pretoria
December 2018



Christopher Kwesa

S4 National Diploma
(Civil Engineering)
Durban University of Technology
December 2008
B. Tech (Civil Engineering)
Durban University of Technology
December 2011



Hendrik Wolhuter

B.Com (Human Resource
Management)
University of North-West
December 2014
Diploma in Human Resource
Management (Postgraduate)
University of South Africa
December 2016



Koos Radebe

B.Sc. (Civil Engineering)
University of Johannesburg
December 2009
B.Sc. (Civil Engineering)
Postgraduate Diploma
University of Witwatersrand
December 2011



Londeka Ximba

B.Sc. (Civil Engineering)
KwaZulu-Natal University
December 2015



Miles le Roux

Transport Economics
University of Stellenbosch
December 2011



Palesa Senty

Diploma in Tourism Management
Free State Central University
December 2012
B.Tech Tourism Management
Tshwane University of Technology
December 2013



Sam Motshabi

Diploma in Transportation
Management
University of Johannesburg
December 2013
B.Tech Transportation Management
University of Johannesburg
December 2016



Sikholiwe Gwala

B.Tech (Tourism Management)
Durban University of Technology
December 2014

Innocent Dlamini

S4 National Diploma (Civil
Engineering)
Durban University of Technology
December 2010

Ipeleng Ndebele

Diploma (Communication)
University of Johannesburg
December 2008

Lerato Metswamere

B. Tech (Information Technology)
University of South Africa
December 2013

Nonhlanhla Ndumo

Diploma in Tourism Marketing
Diploma in Tourism Management
Intec College (Durban)
December 2011

Samora Ngcaweni

Practical Project Management
Graduate School of Business - UNISA, December 2008
Management Development
Graduate School of Business - UNISA, December 2010
B.Tech (Civil Engineering: Construction Management)
Tshwane University of Technology, December 2013

Theo Masiteng

S4 National Diploma
(Civil Engineering)
Durban University of Technology
December 2011

Zandile Sithole

Diploma in Public Relations
Management
Durban University of Technology
December 2009





Child Welfare

CHILD WELFARE

Maluti Child Care Project

Years Funded: Thirteen • Province: Free State

Route Key: **D**



N3TC's involvement with the Maluti Child Care Project goes back to the early days of the concession and its membership of the Harrismith Business Forum. The Forum was a collective of Harrismith businesses – large and small – that worked together on key community programmes and projects to support Harrismith and the rural communities surrounding the town.

The Maluti Child Care Project is a social welfare programme rooted in the foundation of the family-owned Harrismith business, Nouwens Carpets. The Nouwens family has been personally involved in the establishment and ongoing support of the project that is firmly entrenched in the company's daily business operations.

The project has been instrumental in supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged families in seven rural communities surrounding Harrismith.

Seven community kitchens have been established in these communities using refurbished shipping containers. Volunteers from the community prepare one balanced meal five days a week for children under 18 years of age.

The project has evolved since those early days of the Harrismith Business Forum and the down turn in the economy has meant that the donor pool of Harrismith businesses has diminished significantly in recent years; yet the project team has persevered and continues to support many vulnerable, orphaned and child-headed households in these communities. While the project has felt the effects of the economy financially, it has also seen an ever-increasing number of children destitute and in desperate need of assistance ... a significant



indicator of the impact of the economy, HIV and AIDS and other social issues on rural, disadvantaged and vulnerable communities.

But the Maluti team will not be defeated and continues to do what they can with what they have. Blankets and beanies are distributed to the children to help them keep warm during the icy Free State winters. Not to mention, the volunteers who encourage the children to continue going to school and assist them with homework and school projects as best they



can. They also strive to meet the social and emotional needs of the children and even assist by taking the children to the clinic should they require medical attention.

It goes without saying that the Maluti Child Care Project provides invaluable support to vulnerable members of the Harrismith community. N3TC applauds Nouwens Carpets, the volunteers, supporters, donors and community members who contribute to the project and provide children with hope for the future.



Topsy Holistic Early Childhood Development Programme

Years Funded: Six • Province: Mpumalanga

Route Key: **B**



The Topsy Holistic Early Childhood Development (ECD) Programme evolved from the Orphaned and Vulnerable Children component of the Topsy HIV/AIDS care programme that came to an end in 2014.

The programme involves improving the health, nutrition, education and overall wellbeing of disadvantaged children by providing quality, holistic ECD and support services to children up to five years of age.

By improving access to relevant and appropriate services in response to the needs of the communities Topsy is working towards:

- Encouraging active community involvement in the education and care of children through an integrated and holistic approach to their development.
- Providing emotional and social support to children and giving them hope for the future.
- Strengthening the ability of families and communities to provide their children with love, care and protection.
- Providing primary healthcare services to improve the health and wellbeing of children.
- Addressing basic human needs in community ECD centres and homes.
- Increasing the independence and self-confidence of women through training and skills development.

Initially, Topsy designed an ECD programme that focused on training the principals from 17 Early Childhood Development Centres in communities surrounding the Topsy facility in Grootvlei, Mpumalanga, and established a comprehensive toy Library that provided these 17 centres with educational toys on rotational loan.



Today, Topsy is partnering with 29 ECD centres and reaches 2000 children, through its Play and Learn Centre, which is visited, on average, by 45 children daily.

Of equal importance to this programme is the additional support provided to communities and households that Topsy serves through this comprehensive programme.

Essential to a healthy family, home and community is securing access to fresh fruit and vegetables through the development of vegetable gardens in centres and individual homes.



In this way, Topsy is ensuring the wellbeing of the children and their families.

Emotional support is provided to members of the community, ECD Centre staff and the children. Topsy's community workers lend an ear and offer moral support and advice and provide guidance on various issues that these families encounter.

This holistic approach to supporting the education, health and wellbeing of young children will ensure that their resilience, education and career prospects are secured for the future.





Paul and his family have been beneficiaries of Topsy's vegetable gardening programme since 2011.

Paul had an entrepreneurial vision to plant vegetables for resale, but he did not have the resources to start a garden on his own. Topsy provided him with garden tools, compost, seeds and a hose pipe to pursue his dream.



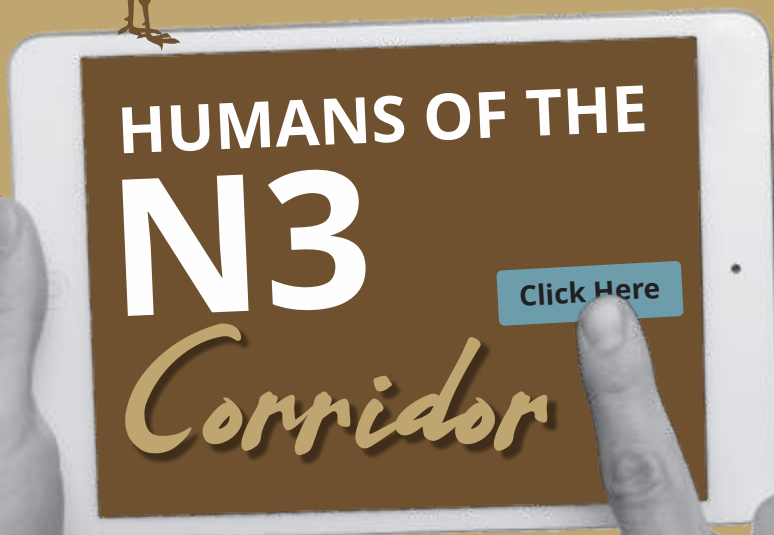
What started as a small-scale vegetable garden is now a fully-fledged farm. Paul has planted crops, and currently breeds chickens, ducks and rabbits. He sells the produce to families in his neighbourhood and supplies community tuckshops. He started breeding rabbits as a source of protein for his family, but he since discovered the benefit of using the manure from the rabbits as compost, which has contributed to the success of his crops.



From the proceeds of his sales, Paul has been able to take care of his children who are now completing their tertiary studies. Paul's eldest daughter, Ruth, is following in her father's footsteps and is studying Agriculture Economics at The University of Free State.



Paul is the perfect example of someone with an entrepreneurial spirit who despite all the odds has been successful. His story is one of hope for many others in his community.



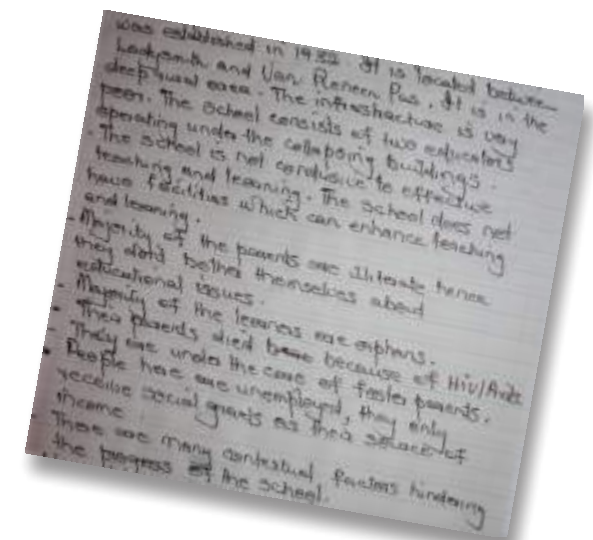
Paul and family



N3TC Khanyisile Community Trust

Years Funded: Eleven • Province: Free State and KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **E**



It was a handwritten letter from an educator at Ebojeni Primary School in Van Reenen that changed Khanyisile project champion, Ansie Jooste's life. The letter highlighted the dire circumstances faced by the educators and students attending the school. From crumbling buildings to a lack of resources and the plight of children left orphaned, Ansie soon uncovered the full extent of disadvantage faced not only by those associated with this school but by most families in Van Reenen and its surrounds.

This motivated Ansie to do whatever she could to change the situation. She singlehandedly travelled along the dirt tracks of the farm roads in the area visiting the schools, assessing their basic needs and requirements and slowly gathering information for what would become her list of 'to do's' for the people that she has since grown to love.

"I observed the children working when they should have been in class learning. Pumping water and then dragging the drums of water weighing more than themselves over vast and varying distances. Gathering and carting firewood. The cooks struggling to prepare food for the children over an open fire. The educators feeling isolated because of a lack of support." Ansie Jooste

This continues to motivate Ansie to touch lives by providing support and facilitating change. In so doing, Ansie has been able to support Educators, which has seen their students grow.

Today, the N3TC Khanyisile Trust is focused on addressing the health, welfare, development, education, school infrastructure needs and training to secure a sustainable future for the marginalised schools and communities surrounding Van Reenen.

Every year, for the past eleven years, Ansie has built a database of records of each child in the Van Reenen schools. These records include the child's photograph, measurements, weight,



in-classroom eye test results, parent detail, guardian detail, residential detail, full name and surname, identity number, grade, age, known medical history, gender and date of birth.

Ansie's list of completed projects is extensive and includes a number of infrastructure building projects where kitchens, ablution facilities, waste stations, nurseries, borehole installations, electricity supply, gas installations, fencing and basic repairs are now ensuring that learners are in the classroom and teachers are focussed on their education. Add to this well-established food gardens that now contribute to the daily meals provided at the schools and additional vegetable and fruit supplied to members of the local communities.

In recent years, Khanyisile recognised that the project needed a sustainability strategy. This saw the introduction of its envisaged sustainable arts and crafts project using Vertiver as the

material of choice. Khanyisile has since seen the successful production of Vertiver crops at Sand River Valley and Van Reenen village. Khanyisile is currently negotiating to secure two one-hectare plots - one in the Sand River Valley area and one in the Van Reenen area to sustain the Vertiver production going forward and to further the project's sustainability plans. Training of community members on managing and replanting the Vertiver is being undertaken, which will result in employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for community members in the future.

The schools, communities, families and children have been dramatically influenced by the Khanyisile support system that is fulfilling its vision to provide the community and schools of Van Reenen and the surrounds with a caring and inclusive environment while creating awareness of possibilities and opportunities despite the hardships.





Cindi was born in Van Reenen and grew up in the village while attending school at Remington Primary, Weleni Primary and matriculating from Uxolo Nokuzwana Secondary School – all schools currently supported by Khanyisile.

Today Cindi lives in the Sand River Valley, at the bottom of Van Reenen's Pass, and supports 13 children. When her sister Rebecca passed away, she adopted her children – a genuine act of sibling love. Cindi is described as humble, caring and bubbly and is an active member of the community. She participates in women's church groups and often represents her community at seminars and church gatherings.

But Cindi demonstrates her deeper attributes of empathy and care through her recently acquired First Aid skills. Cindi was a keen First Aid student and excelled in this new-found skill. She has since become a first responder to any medical emergencies in her community, sometimes having to walk over a kilometre to render first medical assistance to a patient. Emergency medical assistance to the Sand River Valley can take up to three hours from the time of a call, which makes the service provided by Cindi, in some instances, potentially lifesaving.

Cindi is saving lives thanks to the funding awarded to Khanyisile for first aid training and equipment bringing this essential lifesaving skill into the community.

Cindi received a hand up through N3TC and is making a difference in her community every day.



Cindi Mnikathi





Othandweni Creche

Years Funded: Ten
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **I**

Othandweni is based in Bruntville, Mooi River. N3TC first became involved with Othandweni at a time when the organisation (a collaboration of local charities and NGO's) had purchased its first foster home in the community. The home was managed by the most incredible house mother taking care of orphaned and vulnerable children from the community.

A few years later, Othandweni was able to purchase a second foster home, in the same street as the first and was able to accommodate more children. N3TC continued to support the expenses and upgrades required for running the two homes that clearly provided for the children's basic needs coupled with care, love and comfort. These children were given a stable home where they could grow and learn, and so they did.

Over time, it became evident that the community was in need of day care and pre-school facilities and as the number of children accommodated in the homes reduced as they grew up and 'left home', Othandweni was in a position to establish an Educare Centre in the original home.

The Centre serves on average 80 children, giving their parents the means to work and support their families, while their children are cared for in a safe, nurturing and comfortable environment. And so, N3TC continued to support Othandweni with a renewed vision that caters further to the N3TC Touching Lives vision of providing quality education to children in the N3 Corridor and establishing a legacy that will extend beyond the life of the concession.

Meet Nompumelela Khanyile...

... who was cared for in the Othandweni Home for most of her life. When she left school, she was given the opportunity to gain her FET Certificate in Early Childhood Development (ECD) (NQF Level 4) at Midlands Community College. She graduated in April this year. Nompumelela is currently volunteering at Midlands Community College but has a dream to continue studying towards gaining her Early Childhood Development (ECD) Diploma. Nompumelela has been given the opportunity for a rich and rewarding life and is well on her way to making a difference in her community.





Free State Care in Action Harrismith

Years Funded: Eight
Province: Free State

Route Key: **D**



"Before N3TC was part of this project, covering the costs of the needs of the project was always a big concern. N3TC's involvement is therefore greatly appreciated and makes a big difference in these kids' and their families' lives."

The Free State Care in Action After School Care Centre opened in 1989 as a project of, what was then, the Orange Woman's League (Non-Profit Organisation) and started with just a few children. Since then, the name has been changed to Free State Care in Action, but the main purpose of the project has remained the same. To give underprivileged children a secure haven after school where they can enjoy a healthy meal and have access to assistance with schoolwork and other needs.



N3TC first became involved with the After-School Care Centre in 2011 and at that stage the facility accommodated 16 primary school learners, representing 13 households. The number of children supported by the

Centre has increased over the years and currently 32 learners receive support.

Since 2012, N3TC's funding has provided for monthly food parcels, school uniforms, stationery, school bags, supplementary salaries for three personnel and other operational expenses like fuel, water and electricity.

The fact that N3TC has become involved with the project, has contributed to its sustainability and has fuelled the interest of other local businesses and individuals to become involved in the centre.





RCC Crochet Project

Years Funded: Five
Province: Free State

Route Key:

"I love to crochet, and it is such a calming creative outlet for me. I took wool and crochet needles from home to the Route Control Centre and asked the team if they would like to learn how to crochet granny block and make up blankets. At first they weren't too sure as they didn't know how to crochet but I managed to convince them that I will help them."

The Route Control Centre (RCC) Crochet Project was the brainchild of RCC Manager, Annatjie van der Sandt. Annatjie wanted to create an opportunity build staff morale and promote self-esteem in each member of her team. Today, the entire team, men and women, are part of the project and proud of all the items they make and donate to worthy community projects along the N3 Toll Route.

The staff crochet baby cuddle blankets and attach them to teddy bears that are handed out as part of the N3TC Duduza 'We Care' project. These colourful, soft and comforting blankets bring sick and traumatised children some comfort during their hospital stay and when they return home.

From blankets to beanies, the team is becoming more accomplished in their crochet work, but more importantly they are working well as a team, encouraging each other and the general atmosphere in the Centre is positive and supportive.



Our Heroes

RCC Crochet Project

By Nikki Brighton

*Adding
colour to
people's
lives*

It is way after midnight and the N3 is quiet. Still, the Route Control Centre (RCC) team is alert.

"Our wool and needles keep us company at night," smiles Supervisor Maggy Mothebe who has been part of the RCC team since 2001. "It's good to be busy, so we chat and teach each other new stitches when the phones are not ringing."

The RCC Crochet Project was initiated by Annatjie van der Sandt five years ago and has become an integral part of the team, keeping spirits high during the long, and sometimes challenging, shifts manning the N3TC Helpline.

"We needed to do something as a team, but someone always has to be on duty so we can't all go out at one time. I had found crochet to be very helpful during a difficult time of my life, so I brought in my hooks and yarn and just started."

Everyone got excited, learnt quickly and soon

colourful granny squares were piling up. In the winter of 2016, the team donated 43 blankets they had made to the community centre in Intabazwe and felt so proud – both of their work and their contribution to keeping the less privileged warm. Now they were on to their next goal – beanies and scarves for the orphanage, then baby blankets for new mothers in the hospital, nowadays they even take orders for their creations.

"We love to try new things," Philile Thabede says confidently. At first, she was convinced she couldn't learn because she was left-handed. "Nonsense," the team told her and set about teaching her by sitting opposite so she could copy the mirror image. She and Thuli Simella are both expert pattern readers now and encourage the team to create the most gorgeous things.

Crochet and conversation are perfect companions and these women certainly have stories to tell. Many road users get quite angry and take out their frustrations when calling the Helpline.

"A guy shouted the other day, saying it is nonsense that we have the toll lanes closed for five minutes to install new equipment. He told me to open all the booths immediately or he will make sure I get fired!"

The women keep calm, despite the rudeness, simply thanking the caller for reporting the issue and assuring them it will be dealt with as soon as possible.





"Saying thank you a lot usually calms them down," says Maggy.

Minah Sikosana, who knows the route like the back of her hand, laughs. "I asked a man who had broken down to tell me which route marker board he was near, so I could send help to the right spot. He replied that there are no route markers on this road. Well sir, you must be on a different road then, not the N3!"

Along with her colleagues, Keke Tsoaeli and Grace Mabe, Minah loves to go on adventures on her days off. "I always feel happier when I am in the concession area, when we are on other roads, I get a bit worried. We stop at every route patrol vehicle to say hello and take photos. I know we are safe on the N3, and if we have a problem, we can phone the best call centre in the world."

The N3TC RCC is well known for providing exceptional service, in multiple languages (Minah speaks seven!). Occasionally they get calls for assistance from drivers on roads in other areas.

"They had good service on the N3, so expect that on other roads too," says Joyce Mosia. There are regular callers too – like old Auntie Zelda who calls twice a day. "We chat to her, ask if she has eaten and taken her medicine. She just needs some attention. We don't know where she is, but if she doesn't call, we get a bit worried."

This dedicated team have a difficult job, dealing with stressful situations in a consistently cheerful manner – all out of sight of the public. Perhaps their next project could be a very visible 'yarn bomb' of the trees in the carpark outside the Control Centre?

"Making people happy is important," Annatjie insists, "a bit of random colour will do wonders for Harrismith and all the drivers who pass by."



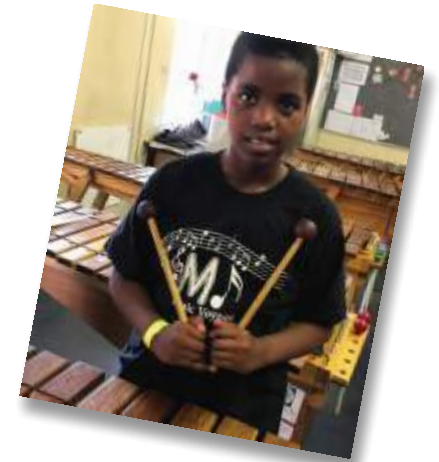
Youth Development

YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT

Music Voyage

Years Funded: Eight • Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **L**



Music Voyage consistently facilitates music education and provides performance platforms that young children and youth in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands wouldn't typically have access to.

This has engendered the opportunity for parents and guardians to see their children embrace a future filled with song and dance, coupled with a wealth of benefits made manifest by these marketable skills.

Through Music Voyage's programmes children are encouraged to express themselves through music, are made aware of the poor choices prevalent in their communities and given a sense of purpose. From a more pragmatic perspective, they are kept busy with lessons, exam preparation and performance opportunities.

The project has grown because as much as Music Voyage is invested in the communities it serves, the communities have started to reciprocate; demanding its presence in their children's lives, its intervention in youth development, and the light-hearted, joy-filled relief it provides against the backdrop of the reality of living in an informal settlement.

This is particularly evident when it comes to the Marimba band. This relatively new initiative continues to impress. While the children are acquiring extensive musical knowledge, they also have opportunities to perform at a variety of venues and events. From fundraisers set up by Music Voyage, to invitation-only competitions at the prestigious private schools in the surrounding cities and towns, to workshops further afield in Ballito and Johannesburg.



The school and community choirs continue to thrive. From skills shared between existing choirmasters and experts introduced to these communities through the Music Voyage network, to the provision of funds and transport for the choirs to travel beyond their communities to participate at events and competitions they may not have had access to previously.

In addition, there are several children learning to play instruments, receiving training from expert teachers who provide lessons at least once a week.

The violin programme was reinstated and has proven popular enough that the acquisition of new instruments through fund-raising was completed in 2019.

The recorder group continues to grow and thrive and participates regularly in Eisteddfods.

Success is measured through performances like this, but also through internationally recognised grading via the Trinity College London music exams.

Considering that two of the girls who started out on recorders are currently preparing to sit their Grade Six Saxophone exams with Trinity College London is worth noting. This basic wind instrument provides a solid foundation and an excellent launch pad for children who show an affinity for music. What's more, at a Grade 6 level, the saxophone girls have earned not just kudos and certification, but a marketable skill.

This is but a single note echoing in a musical ocean for the Midlands and it is evident that the work of the Music Voyage team is not only changing lives today, it is going to impact generations.



Our Heroes

Justice Hakata

By Nikki Brighton

*Marimbas
resonate with
a voyage of
discovery*

"Let's go make some music", Justice Hakata beckons as a dozen teenagers spill out of the minibus.

They don't need encouragement to follow him to the practice room. "You know the drill. Communicate with one another and build on your performance from last week." Justice gets the beat going on a Djembe and soon the room reverberates with rhythm and joy.

Members of the Music Voyage Marimba Band, never, ever miss practice. They think that their coach Justice is awesome.

"He is so good at marimba and drumming, he is patient and he never shouts," grins Nosipho Vilikazi.

Justice adds the magic to the energetic and accomplished performance. "Did you hear the melody? Good job guys, but let's control our speed. Slow does not mean faint."



Everyone is having a blast, dancing as they wield their mallets, creating incredible music. It seems astonishing that they only get together once a week.

"We practice at home with spoons on the table," laughs Sthembiso Mbhense.

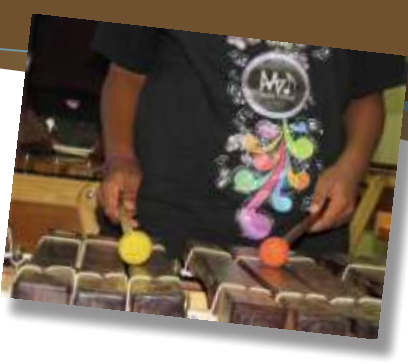
Growing up in Zimbabwe, the mbira (thumb piano) was a big part of cultural life, having originated in the Zambezi valley over a thousand years ago. For many generations, a dried calabash and twenty-two flattened nails, in the accomplished hands of a local craftsman, has become a perfectly tuned mbira.

At boarding school, Justice was desperate to join the marimba band, an instrument that was widely played across Zimbabwe.

"To begin with they said I could help carry the instruments! I was just happy to be around the positive energy and watched closely. I learnt to play quickly."

Nowadays, Justice not only plays marimbas with aplomb; he fixes marimbas and builds new marimbas too.

At University in Pietermaritzburg, he and fellow students formed the Sunrise Band and Justice, who loves being around children, quickly became in demand as a teacher of the fledgling marimba bands at local schools. He soon began repairing the instruments, which is not a common craft. Did you know that all marimbas are tuned in E flat? He spends happy



hours in his workshop, with his dogs Vako and Gift for company, carefully shaping keys to size, sanding, cutting resonators according to the frequency of each note, assembling and tuning. He is keeping his craft alive with passion and commitment to quality.

Justice takes real pleasure in watching the youngsters blossom thorough playing marimba. Not only does it assist with

motor-skills, it's great for brain development and focussing attention – particularly useful for ADHD or autism.

"I see psychological benefits too," he maintains, "individually, they may not be brave enough to perform, but the music gives them courage. They become confident, more comfortable with meeting new people and very often their school grades improve."

"I dream of every school having a set of marimbas to play. Of thousands of enthusiastic learners gathering at festivals to celebrate the ancient rhythms of Africa."

This instrument is universal, accessible and inclusive – a perfect introduction to the world of music. Besides, who can resist breaking into dance when the band strikes up?





YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT

Funda Nenja

Years Funded: Three • Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: 



Funda Nenja is fast becoming a well-known and respected organisation throughout South Africa. Regular enquiries from people around South Africa wanting to start similar organisations is evidence that the work being done through Funda Nenja and the impact of its various programmes are effective and meaningful.

Funda Nenja has been focussing on home visits and its outreach program using the funding awarded by N3TC to expand the programme in Mphophomeni. The social welfare aspect of the programme has grown considerably, reaching 152 families in 2018. More dogs are being sterilised, vaccinated against rabies, de-wormed and treated for ticks and fleas through the programme, ensuring a healthy dog population in Mphophomeni.

Over 60% of the dog population has been sterilised, which is remarkable considering the provincial average is less than 1%). There seems to have been a generational change in this attitude over the years of Funda Nenja's involvement in Mphophomeni. The evolution of the project from dog focussed, to child, then family and ultimately a social experiment is by far the best and most valuable observed anywhere in Africa. With the value of the 'person - dog relationship' shaping this society, it is becoming a healthier and socially enriched place.

At the same time, Funda Nenja has expanded its social welfare programme to include more life skills workshops for the children who do not own dogs and is even offering more holiday workshops to cover a multitude of social welfare issues such as sexual awareness and sexual abuse, bullying, children's rights, kindness, respect and politeness to name a few.



Through Funda Nenja's outreach programme a greater number of parents are showing an interest in what Funda Nenja is doing for their children and some are even accompanying their children to the dog school on Friday afternoons. It is evident that the families' perspective and appreciation of Funda Nenja has changed and several positive testimonials from parents have been received.

Communities that consider and cherish the value of people, land and animals are intrinsically healthy and bode well for a future where compassion, empathy and consideration are the norm.



At the age of 9 Sbonelo, and his pup, Bathat, joined Funda Nenja. This young duo seldom missed a training session and soon progressed through the programme until they reached the advanced class.

Sbonelo's father had died a few years earlier and his mother is raising Sbonelo and his three siblings in a tiny mud hut with a corrugated iron room added on. The family was extremely poor, and their mother was seldom home to take care of the children. It would appear that to some extent the local community stepped in and helped raise these children.

Sbonelo and Bathat, however, never missed their classes but Sbonelo was not always very kind or gentle with his dog. He was witnessed hitting her if she did not do as he asked. It became clear to the Funda Nenja team that Sbonelo needed some support. He was gently pulled aside, made aware of the correct way of dealing with his dog and encouraged to be kinder and more compassionate. Sbonelo soon recognised that Bathat did not understand what he was asking of her and that he needed to show her more carefully using positive reinforcement methods.

Sadly, however, the treatment he showed Bathat was indicative of his treatment at home. The Funda Nenja team kept a close eye on him and continued to encourage him to use praise and reward instead of punishment. Slowly, they started to see a change in his method of training and his handling ability steadily improved.

Once Sbonelo and Bathat reached the advanced class, it was clear that Sbonelo had mastered an appropriate and desirable training method and showed great potential to become an instructor. He was soon paired up with an experienced instructor for further mentorship and support. Again, Sbonelo showed his tenacity. He attended all the training workshops and progressed to a point where he was able to instruct a class of his own.

Sbonelo's journey with Funda Nenja has seen an angry, unloved and lonely child become a mature young man who has shown perseverance, commitment, patience, responsibility and accountability, not to mention, kindness and compassion.

But Sbonelo's journey has turned into a voyage of hope. Not only is Sbonelo actively participating in a worthwhile and life altering programme but Funda Nenja has partnered with their intern social worker, Rene Morcom, and as part of her UNISA assignment, they will be building Sbonelo and his siblings, a new house. This house will be the first of its kind in KwaZulu-Natal as it will be built entirely from eco bricks.





Treverton Sports Festival

Years Funded: Ten
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **I**

"There are several students who have been through our festival who would not have had the opportunity to do so if it wasn't for N3TC's help. These young men and women have had the opportunity to compete with opposition from all over the country."

The Treverton Sports Festival remains one of the top co-ed school sports events in the country and contributes significantly to the development of sport in many private and public schools. It has grown substantially over the years and in the most recent festival, 650 learners from around South Africa participated in the event. Field hockey, netball and rugby are the chosen sports for the festival.

The festival plays host to the KZN Rugby development side from the Midlands, which is proving beneficial to the development of the sport in the region. The team has gained experience and recognition through the festival and plays in fixtures against other teams throughout the season.

Three years ago, Treverton started a basketball outreach program, partnering with a local school in Bruntville, Mooi River. Once a week Treverton's staff and pupils head into Bruntville to teach basketball. It is an opportunity for growth for all involved bringing people together no matter their language or culture. N3TC's funding has facilitated this outreach program and there is great hope for it to grow in years to come.





The background of the page is a high-speed photograph of water splashing, creating numerous droplets and ripples. A large, dark blue circle is positioned on the right side of the page, partially overlapping the water splash. The word "Disabled" is written in a white, cursive script font within this circle, with a thin white arc underneath it.

Disabled

DISABLED

Kwazamokuhle Special School

Years Funded: Eleven • Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **G**



FROM EXCLUSION TO INCLUSION FOR THE KWAZAMOKUHLE SCHOOL CHILDREN WITH SEVERE PHYSICAL DISABILITIES ... OUR JOURNEY WITH N3TC

As told from the perspective of the Therapists working at Kwazamokuhle Special School

I imagine not being able to move around as you wish? Having to be pushed everywhere in a wheelchair? Imagine being left outside a classroom and you are unable to push your wheelchair so that you can join your classmates for your next class? These are but a few of the challenges faced by the learners attending Kwazamokuhle Special School.

Today, there has been progress nationally to include children with disability in Education, however barriers around meaningful social participation and equal learning opportunities remain.

Kwazamokuhle School accommodates children with physical disabilities, mild and moderate intellectual disability, learning problems and Autism. As Therapists, we often focus on children with the more severe physical disabilities such as those with Spina Bifida, Muscular Dystrophy, Spinal Muscular Atrophy, Arthrogryposis and Cerebral Palsy amongst others.

The main aim for Therapists is for each child living with a disability, to achieve his or her maximum level of function and independence, to enable them to be included in all aspects of life experiences and society. As Therapists, we are witness to the fact that children with severe physical disabilities are often denied the experience of everyday lifestyle activities and this plays into societal norms of exclusion.



The definition of Disability introduced in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, UN 2006) states that disability is an 'evolving concept' resulting from interactions between persons with physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments and various barriers (such as attitudinal and environmental barriers) that hinder their full participation in society on an equal basis with others.



Children with severe physical disability face many challenges of limited mobility and access as well as poor social integration. Their support needs are great regarding the assistive devices that enable them to achieve their maximum level of mobility, functional independence and social inclusion in school activities.

This is what has made our journey with N3TC so incredibly meaningful. It has been a wonderful journey. The fact that our ambition to move from the exclusion of those children with severe physical disabilities to inclusion, became our collective common goal. Together we have built a relationship of trust and shared vision that to include all children is achievable, one small step at a time.

Through N3TC's initial funding award in 2010, the school was able to install a hoist on the school bus so that children using wheelchairs could be lifted into the bus in a dignified and humane way. In the words of a former pupil *"it means that we are no longer lifted into the bus as bags of potatoes"*.

N3TC's investment in Kwazamokuhle has enabled the school to procure 12 new computers and construct a new classroom. The Kwazamokuhle Top-up Bursary programme was initiated to address the needs of one of the Kwazamokuhle pupils who had gone on to attend Secondary School. From this initial seed of support, the Fundisisizwe Bursary Project has evolved and now assists 18 deserving learners.

As already mentioned, children with severe physical disabilities have various support needs including expensive assistive devices. Through N3TC's support, Kwazamokuhle has been able to acquire specialised motorised wheelchairs for mobility and postural support for four severely disabled learners. This mobility independence has enabled them to go where they want, when they want! This freedom of movement has given these four children the ability,



opportunity and experience of speed and they are now 'running' wherever they need to go. Of greater significance, however, is seeing their self- confidence and self-esteem improve.

Walking aids such as reverse walkers for children with Cerebral Palsy and computers and special aids for children with limited hand function, have been purchased. The positive impact these items have had on the children is best expressed through their joy as they discover something new every day.

The wheelchair playground funded by N3TC in 2016 has created a whole new 'world of play' for our children in wheelchairs. They now enjoy the experience of swinging and movement. This form of movement is fun but more importantly it helps to regulate their sensory systems. There is a lot laughter and chatter outside the Therapy Block when our volunteers collect the children from class to go swinging. The time in the playground gives the children a sense of freedom, they feel special and are no longer intimidated by the abilities of able-bodied children. Apart from the fun of playtime, it is also a time of learning about speed and direction, position in space, movement and developing postural awareness and balance. It has changed lives and will continue to do so in years to come.

The motivation behind the Cerebral Palsy (CP) Early Intervention Project lay in the fact that many children born with Cerebral Palsy missed essential foundational movement therapy and integration interventions as a result of a lack of early identification. Many children with

CP present with secondary complications leading to severe disability and by creating awareness of CP and that it is a condition for life, it was hoped that a better quality of life could be achieved. With N3TC's support this project presented numerous workshops for parents and caregivers of CP kids in 2015 and 2016.

This CP Early Intervention Project soon evolved into the CP Indaba that took place in 2017 with the aim of promoting collaboration between the Department of Education and Department of Health in the Uthukhela District, to examine and evaluate current services available for CP children and to develop management strategies for children with CP and their caregivers. The hope was to work towards successful outcomes for CP children to enter the education system.

Through our journey with N3TC, we have made many friends. GRINAKER LTA donated a container for storing wheelchairs, and Music Voyage assisted us with establishing a drumming and marimba programme.

What a journey it has been! A collaborative approach to advocating for and empowering the severely disabled learners in Kwazamukuhle School. Their lives have been forever changed. It is a work in progress, and we know that there is still much to be achieved to secure inclusion, even in Special Schools. Siyabonga!

Lungelo is 17 years old and lives in the rural area of Ntunda, outside Estcourt in Kwazulu-Natal. He lives with his mother, older brother and his twin brother in a mud house without electricity. His father sadly passed away this year and his mother is unemployed.

Lungelo was born with Arthrogryposis which effected his entire body resulting in tightness of his soft tissues and contractures of his arms and legs. He uses a wheelchair for mobility and needs assistance with all his daily needs such as bathing, dressing and feeding.

When Lungelo was younger he was screened at Kwazamokuhle Special School and it was found that he could not sit in a wheelchair as his legs were contracted in abduction. A little while later Lungelo underwent surgery on his hips, which was successful, and he was able to start school in Durban in 2012. But the cost of transport to and from Durban soon became restrictive and in 2016 when he was in Grade 4, Lungelo transferred to Kwazamokuhle.

Lungelo is now in Grade 7. He is an incredibly determined young man, quiet and reserved but very popular amongst his peers. He realised that his English needed to improve and has worked hard at building his confidence in conversational English, which is steadily improving. Lungelo writes with a pen or pencil in his mouth. The neatness of his writing is amazing! It soon became evident that this form of writing excluded him from participating in class discussions. An eye-gaze head pointer was purchased and has improved Lungelo's ability to take notes while participating in class discussions.

Pretty soon, Lungelo's life changed again when a motorised postural support wheelchair arrived at Kwazamokuhle. Funded by N3TC, the wheelchair has given him the gift of independence and freedom of movement - his wheelchair has a chin control, which he controls with his elbow.

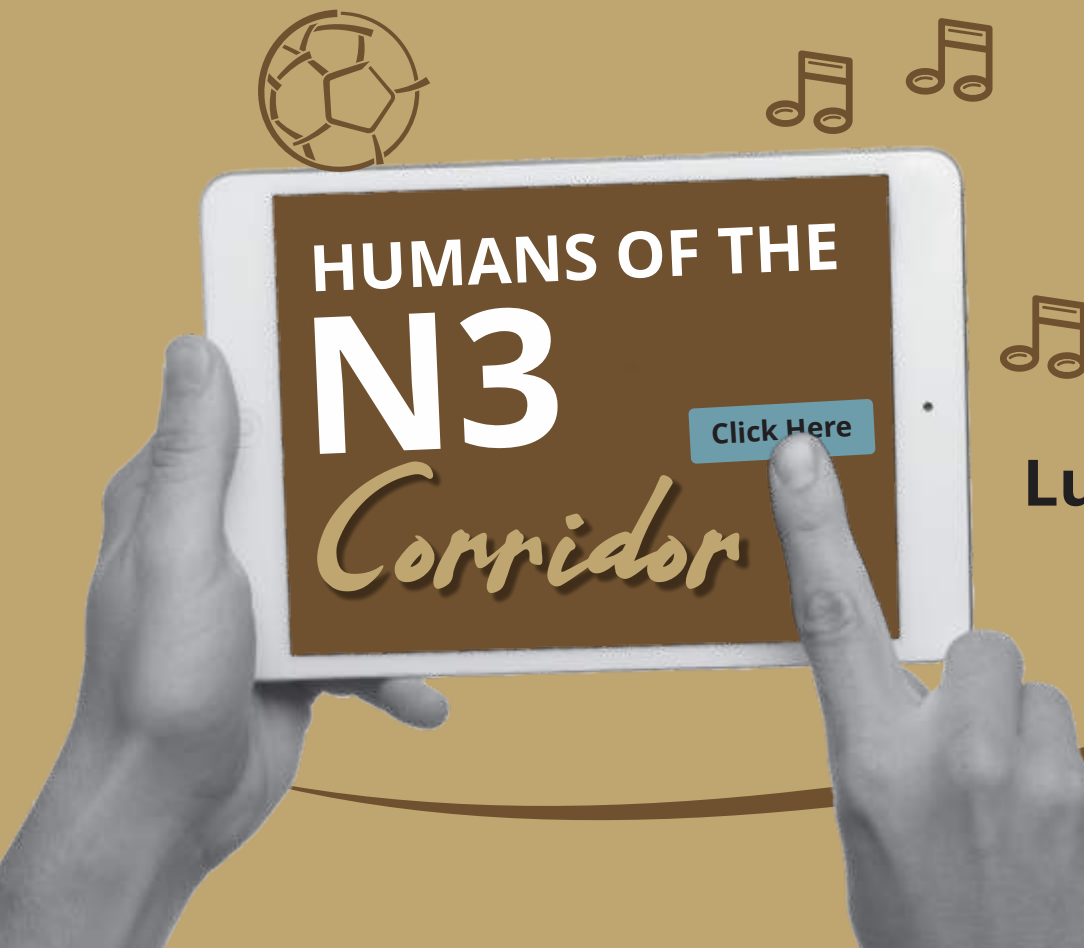
Lungelo's self- confidence has grown and he is always surrounded by friends. His friends are amazing, they lift him, position him comfortably, help him get dressed and on occasion even feed him. It is a testimony of true friendship and Lungelo's tenacity.

Lungelo likes listening to the radio, loves music and is an avid Pirates supporter; and when he is home for the holidays, he visits his neighbours and enjoys watching a game of soccer with them.

The N3TC Touching Lives Programme has been instrumental in helping Lungelo become an independent young man who exudes confidence and a desire to succeed.

Lungelo's mother sums it up beautifully, *"I can see there is hope for my child, even though he cannot walk or use his arms, I can see that he has a life ahead.....a good life, the life that God has given him"*.

Lungelo Majola





DISABLED

Pevensey Place

Years Funded: Four • Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **N**



Tucked away in the foothills of the Underberg district in the Southern Drakensberg is Pevensey Place home to 74 residents of varying disabilities.

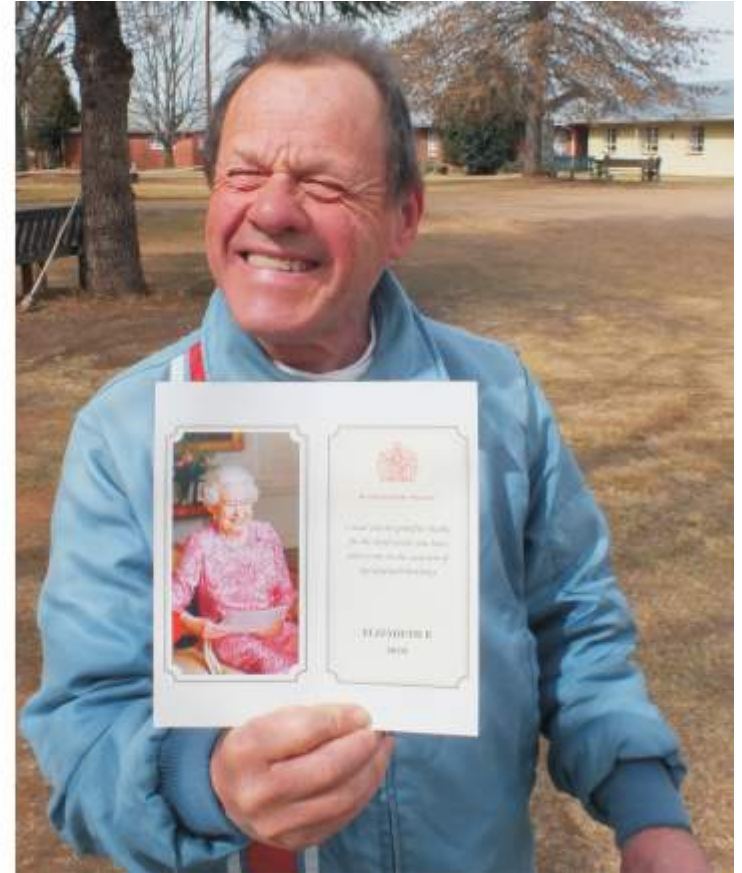
The residents' range in age from 23 to 84 years of age. There are many orphans living at Pevensey Place who have outlived their parents and the financial resources left to them by their parents have depleted.

The residents develop deep and meaningful relationships with one another. They are taken on numerous excursions to game parks, picnics, sporting events, agricultural shows and any events of interest in the community. They are family and Pevensey Place is home.

The Pevensey team works hard securing the sustainability of the facility, but the number of orphans and growing expenses often drain the resources and the little surplus that has been saved over time. N3TC supports Pevensey Place through funding a number of orphans who no longer have the resources to cover their costs to stay at Pevensey Place.

This has given the residents and the Pevensey team the peace of mind that these vulnerable members of the Pevensey family are cared for and can continue to live in the only home they have ever truly known.

Pevensey Place builds financial reserves through various means, including raising funds through large-scale sporting events that take place in Underberg such as Sani2C, N3TC Drak Challenge, joBerg2C and Splashy Fen. Furthermore, a variety of farming interventions, free



range egg production in particular and the lease of 35 hectares of farming land, secures further funding that contributes to covering its operating costs.

With the help of N3TC and other donors, local charities and the large-scale sporting events that take place in Underberg, Pevensey Place manages to support its residents and provide a loving, caring and secure home where they flourish.

The joy of seeing residents support one another, contribute to the upkeep and running of Pevensey Place, and participate in a range of activities that contribute to their wellbeing far outweighs the daily challenges of making ends meet.







HIV and AIDS



HIV and AIDS

Trucking Wellness

Years Funded: Nine • Province: ROUTE – Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Free State and KwaZulu Natal

Route Key: 



The impact of N3TC's investment in the Trucking Wellness Programme is evident in the statistics. In 2013, Trucking Wellness reported an average HIV infection rate of 8,68%. Through various interventions including the dissemination of condoms and one-on-one training and education, Trucking Wellness recorded a significant decrease in new HIV infections of 3,64% in 2018.

But what has changed since 2010 when N3TC first invested in the efforts of Trucking Wellness along the N3 Toll Route.

Trucking Wellness has focused on upgrading its wellness centres located at truck stops along the N3 Toll Route, the acquisition of mobile clinic facilities and improved services to ensure that clinic staff and visitors receive the full benefit.

Trucking Wellness is celebrating 20 years of supporting the trucking community in 2019 and has much to be proud of. The programme has been instrumental in promoting the health and wellness of the logistics industry through the provision of world-class services.

The services provided by Trucking Wellness are comprehensive and holistic. The programme's impact extends beyond the logistics industry into the communities where it operates, and beyond – thanks to more recent acquisition of a mobile clinic fleet. The programme is playing its part in addressing the scourge of HIV and AIDS on the sector, families and the economy. Beyond that they are playing an instrumental role in supporting the treatment of chronic illnesses such as Diabetes and Hypertension.



By building trust within the logistics industry, families of their patients, members of the surrounding communities and sex workers, Trucking Wellness has become an integral part of the healthcare system in rural communities and, in so doing, is contributing to building sustainable, healthy and informed communities for the future.

With the financial support received from N3TC, Trucking Wellness has expanded its footprint and is providing services to the transport sector in managing and mitigating the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on the economy.

The acquisition and supply of point-of-care technology, PIMA machines, to all the Trucking Wellness Roadside Wellness Centres has changed the way patients are supported. The PIMA machines provide patients with their CD4 counts immediately, which has seen a significant

improvement in the roll-out, adjustment and effectiveness of treatment.

Furthermore, Trucking Wellness has become a conduit to addressing human trafficking through workshops presented to staff and healthcare support teams on the prevalence, methodology and identification of possible sex-trafficking situations and safe methods to report a possible trafficking situation.

Trucking Wellness' has firmly positioned itself as a leader in supporting the health and wellbeing of the logistics sector. With a continued focus on innovation, growth and improved services tailored to meet the changing needs of its clients, Trucking Wellness will remain an integral part of the Road Freight and Logistics industry.







Road Safety

ROAD SAFETY

Community Medical Services

Years Funded: Fifteen • Province: Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **E**



Community Medical Services (CMS) was formed in 1983, primarily as a joint venture with BMW South Africa, who mobilised onto the N3 with technical teams to assist BMW owners whose vehicles were affected by the introduction of alcohol in the fuel.

At the time CMS founder, Philip Hull, received a request from BMW to assist with medical support primarily over long weekends, the start and end of school holidays and the month of December to assist the BMW technical teams. Two BMW's were sponsored and that's where the CMS journey began.

More than three decades later, 37 years to be exact, the team is still operating and supporting N3TC's Route Patrol Services on the N3 Toll Route. Stationed at Van Reenen's Pass over long weekends and other peak traffic periods when increased traffic volumes are expected, the CMS team has become part of fabric of the N3 Toll Route.

BMW withdrew four years later once the fuel issue had been resolved. Since then numerous motor vehicle manufacturers have assisted CMS with the generous provision of vehicles for what has become a vital service on the N3 Toll Route. These include Fiat, Ford, Honda, Land Rover, Mercedes Benz, Peugeot, Volvo and Volkswagen.

The CMS team runs on the generosity of highly skilled paramedics and medical professionals who volunteer their time. As people have moved on so the team has adapted and adjusted, never missing a long weekend or a peak traffic period to date. The CMS team has been responsible for saving countless lives through the varying degrees of professional medical care and attention provided at every incident or crash scene. These are the unsung, unseen yet remarkable heroes of the N3 Toll Route.



Once N3TC took over the management of the N3 Toll Route, a solid relationship was formed with CMS, which has grown from strength to strength. It is difficult to adequately describe the physical and emotional hardships of treating patients' day or night, rain, mist or snow and for many of those years having inadequate local medical support available.

Philip Hull recalls one particular incident: *"I remember one occasion in the early 90's when a truck pulled out of the Caltex garage at Van Reenen around 2am in heavy mist. Halfway across the intersection, a taxi with eleven occupants collided with the truck and shortly after a light vehicle with three occupants impacted from the other side. With our base literally 100 metres away, we were woken by the impact and were on scene within minutes."*

"Not only did we have two fatalities, but eight seriously injured patients, five of which had bilateral fractures of the femurs (both femurs fractured). Temperatures were extremely low and hypothermia was one of our main concerns as four of our patients were trapped in the taxi and we had no way of getting them out. The mist and light drizzle continued unabated making secondary accidents a very real possibility. Cutting a long story short, it took over an hour and a quarter for the first ambulance to arrive due to the heavy mist and it was over three hours before our final patient was removed and the road cleared, fortunately with no further accidents."

The team is nothing short of determined and has braved all weather conditions while assisting the N3TC Route Patrol Vehicles and the various traffic authorities at numerous accidents and obstructions in the Van Reenen's Pass vicinity, and beyond, in an effort to keep other motorists safe. This has built a level of camaraderie between the various teams, all united with one objective - to keep motorists safe.

There are many occasions that bear significance in how CMS together with the other services



that form the backbone of the N3 Toll Route's Route Incident Management System (RIMS) have responded to incidents such as aircraft and helicopter crashes, searching for an ambulance transporting a post-operative patient stuck somewhere on the Pass in heavy snow and many others.

The CMS team, however, has not limited its involvement to the N3 Toll Route community through the provision of medical and rescue services only. The team has assisted with blanket, beanie, food hampers, clothes and various educational materials donations to schools and organisations in the area.

One of the highlights of the CMS outreach efforts was the case of an elderly villager who had 'borrowed' a pair of glasses from a friend who had since passed on and were worlds away from being effective for his eyes. The CMS team arranged a consult that resulted in a pair of proper prescription glasses provided to the gentleman. The delight he expressed as he squatted in front of a car and read the number plate is forever etched in the minds of the team. "I can see again," he kept muttering as the tears ran down his cheeks.

Another remarkable story was that of Samkelisiwe (Sam) who was observed by Ansie Jooste, a member of the CMS team at the time, as always being on her own and she did not appear to



have friends. On further investigation, it turned out that Sam had been in an accident at home that had resulted in extremely bad scarring under her eye and had been shunned by her classmates. The CMS team took Sam and her mother to Johannesburg for a consult with a leading plastic surgeon. A few weeks later, Sam underwent facial surgery to correct the scarring. Sam now has many friends and has grown into a beautiful young lady with aspirations to become a doctor.

"As a team, every one of us shares the sentiment of feeling blessed to be in a position where we are able to make a positive difference in other's lives and for that we are extremely grateful." Philip Hull
In 2008, the CMS team was recognised for its efforts on the N3 Toll Route and was awarded the 'Mayoral Meritorious Award' from the Emnambithi/Ladysmith Municipality – but one of many other awards bestowed on the team over the years.

While the team has undoubtedly made a difference, it could not have been done without the support of the local community. There have been many occasions where local residents have arrived at an accident scene where emergency services have been busy for hours, with cold drinks, sandwiches and other sustenance to keep the teams going. Meals and accommodation for the team have also been provided where necessary, but more than this, lifelong friendships have been established.



ROAD SAFETY

SADD - South Africans Against Drunk Drivers

Years Funded: Four • Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **K**



SADD is focused on raising awareness of road safety and educating youth in the importance of safe road practices whether as a pedestrian, cyclist or motorist. Their efforts are centred on education and everything undertaken is intended to support ongoing awareness and education efforts.

Typically in South Africa we concentrate on the statistics of those killed on our roads and often forget about those who are injured, often left traumatised with life changing consequences. Many crash victims have either no or infrequent visitors and would have been hospitalised for extended periods of time.

This is the motivation behind the SADD teams' visits to road crash victims in Greys, Edendale and Northdale Hospitals in Pietermaritzburg, to offer support and conduct research to further support their education efforts – N3TC's funding award, in part, supports this programme. The victims are provided with a reflective road safety goody bag that contains a t-shirt, toiletries, pens, writing materials and road safety materials.

Many of the victims visited were struck by a vehicle while walking on the pavement, or side of the road where there were no pavements. It is for this reason that SADD is advocating for the construction of pavements with guardrails to be built on all roads to protect pedestrians having to walk in these areas. This is especially important in high traffic areas and public transport drop-off and collection points.

Some of the crashes had been caused by reckless and intoxicated drivers as well as unroadworthy vehicles such as tyre bursts. SADD also found that some victims – either passengers or drivers – were not buckled up and subsequently thrown out of vehicles in crashes. All good reasons for SADD's continued efforts to have these issues addressed through law enforcement.

SADD's efforts are not only noteworthy and meaningful they are a necessity as they advocate for improved safety on South Africa's roads – a concern for each one of us.





Conservation

Conservation Review

By Janet Snow

One of N3TC's strengths has been the support given to various conservation initiatives, research and the responding education projects. Strong partnerships have been developed resulting in successful actions and stories which have 'filled the rivers' of the N3 Corridor.

The N3 Toll Route falls predominately in rural areas transecting the Grassland Biome with natural vegetation, river systems and forests; and incorporating farmlands and plantations. Although there is a rich biodiversity within these areas there are significant challenges, threats and risks. N3TC has played a significant role over the past 20 years through partnerships with

leading conservation organisations to address these issues and supporting related environmental educational projects.

Partnerships

The ripple effect is a good indicator of the philosophy adopted by N3TC and the organisations that the company has supported the past two decades. N3TC's model is an enabling system which includes cross-collaboration, individual connections and knowledge generation for the greater good and sustainability of communities, education, endangered species and conservation.

The collaboration between organisations running conservation programmes and those facilitating environmental education projects has developed a community of practice across the region which has grown individuals and strengthened alliances. On the surface the conservation programmes are specific to a particular endangered species, however, based on the premise that a 'river' is made up of many tributaries, each project supports a diversity of species, habitats, communities or educational projects.



With a 'little rain' of support one research project contributes to the biodiversity in the threatened Grasslands Biome and all the species within support the education projects, partnerships and collaborative process of 'filling the river'. N3TC has strategically selected programmes and projects to swell the proverbial rivers in the area.

An indication of the significance of N3TC's support was highlighted in 2016 when the company received Bird Life South Africa's (BLSA) Owl Award.

CEO of BLSA, Mark Anderson, said "N3TC is a very deserving recipient of an Owl Award for [their support of] a variety of ... conservation projects along the N3 Toll Route".

Endangered Species Projects

Projects which support the research and conservation of the critically endangered (in South Africa) **Wattled Cranes** - beautiful large birds which are wetland dependent - are conducted by the KZN Crane Foundation and the Endangered Wildlife Trust. Sandy Stewart (Chairman of the KZN Crane Foundation) said these two organisations and their partnership with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, Fordoun and the farmers has been a success story. The organisations have been able to conduct research, develop management practices to improve habitats and educate landowners who are the stewards of the land. These efforts have resulted in the Wattled Crane numbers increasing by 120% from 169 in late 1990s to 380 in 2019.

The organisations can develop protocols for future wild releases, analyse the data and educate communities and landowners but it is the people on the ground who protect the species and ensure its long-term survival. Appropriate areas are being secured through the landowner Stewardship Programme which establishes management procedures for specific sites. Credit should go to people who have transcended politics for the benefit of this iconic species. As Wattled Cranes have a specific requirement for wetlands the protection of these habitats benefits the species, preserves the biodiversity and supports water protection and quality.



Sungazers are an endemic species, classified as vulnerable (IUCN Red Data list) with a population trend decreasing to endangered due to habitat destruction. The biggest concentration, over half, of all the Sungazers occur in the Harrismith area.

The Sungazer project focusses on research, education and supporting farmers so that farming practices can complement the protection of virgin grasslands through Biodiversity Stewardship programmes. As with the 'little rain that fills the rivers', looking after the grassland habitat protects the Sungazers as well as the cranes, Yellow-breasted Pipit and Botha's Lark, all listed as vulnerable and endangered.

Biodiversity Stewardship is a process of developing management plans and conservation strategies towards the registration of nature reserves under safeguard by the landowners.

One of the flagship species for the mistbelt is the **Blue Swallow**. With N3TC's support organisations like Conservation Outcomes and a group of volunteers assist BLSA to monitor and protect the habitats of these vulnerable species. There are many unknown factors about the Blue Swallow. They are a migratory species but as they are too small for tracking devices it is not known to where they migrate. Apart from habitat loss, it can only be surmised what is causing the decrease in numbers. It appears as if these insect reliant birds are being affected by climate change. The support by the volunteers is significant for the monitoring of the nest sites. Once more an indication that every drop of 'water' contributes to the flow of the tributaries and rivers.

From one of the smallest species requiring special attention to one of the largest species, that of the **Bearded Vultures**. N3TC supported the construction of bird hides with Wildlands Conservation Trust and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife at the vulture feeding sites in the UNESCO Maloti-Drakensberg Park.

Bearded Vultures are now classed as critically endangered and the **Cape Vulture** as endangered. These ecologically important birds face many risks including poisoning (intentional and secondary) and power line collisions. Unfortunately, the Bearded Vulture has a very low productivity rate which is being reduced due to the high mortality.

Response through Education

N3TC recognised the importance of addressing the responses to challenges highlighted by the endangered species, social sciences and education research programmes. National research has shown that because environmental factors were not incorporated into previous South African education systems it has resulted in poor comprehension of environmental significance. When one adds in the trajectory in resource utilisation and alterations in lifestyles, the environment is under serious threat. Education at all levels is required to enable reflection on the challenges, change perceptions and develop systems for the future for environmental and socio-economic sustainability.



Continuing with the concept of a web of tributaries feeding into a river, N3TC has partnered with a variety of educational organisations to facilitate education for change. The projects supported were specifically selected for 'scaffolding'. From the Midlands Meander Education Project, Cranes in the Classroom, Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA) Eco-Schools projects, educators' skills development and bursaries for educators' post-graduate studies in environmental education related courses.

A partnership with Environment Learning (ELT) and Treverton, facilitates the development of teachers' skills. Initially the courses were held for general understanding of environmental education, but the 'river' grew with ELT as a founder and member of a national initiative for teacher training, **Fundisa for Change** (2011/2) under the guidance of Rhodes University. The Rhodes University Short-Course Certificate is endorsed by the South African Council of Education.

During the pilot Fundisa for Change course in 2012 (supported by N3TC, Rhodes University and the Department of Environment) one of the teachers showed her potential. Although **Antonia Tholakele Mkhabela** was initially quiet it became evident that others were drawn to her for guidance. She attended the official launch of the Fundisa for Change programme in Pretoria and received a standing ovation after her presentation on how the course had changed her teaching practices to the extent that her learners only wanted to attend her Life Science lessons. On the back of this, N3TC awarded Antonia a bursary to obtain her Rhodes University Master's Degree in Environmental Education and Life Science. Mkhabela has since been promoted to Deputy Head, yet is still mentoring, inspiring and guiding teachers to teach about the environment. Her light shines bright in her teaching and in her community. Landowners, communities and commercial farms are important custodians of the land, having significant influence on the environment, the protection of habitat and species, especially in areas near significant conservation sites.

With N3TC's support organisations are assisting farmers to develop and implement management recommendations for species, wetlands, grasslands and rivers; and enabling appropriate choices and changes in farming practices. These important projects are conducted by the Endangered Wildlife Trust (Cranes and Sungazers), Birdlife South Africa (Blue Swallows) and the KZN Crane Foundation.

N3TC's support of the various conservation and environmental education projects influences many. Each drop N3TC adds to the system is having a profound influence at all levels, in all communities and is changing the perceptions in many ways. They are reducing the 'thirst' and filling the rivers. The environment is that much stronger through the company's Touching Lives programme.

CONSERVATION

Drakensberg Crane Conservation Project

Years Funded: Four • Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **F**



Daniel Dolpire



EWT's work in the Hlatikulu and Mooi River area has grown substantially since N3TC first awarded funding to the project. The project has expanded its footprint along the Eastern Escarpment to the Southern Drakensberg, further elevating and supporting the conservation of the three crane species found in the region.

From the development of conservation sites for the benefit of communities, water resources and wildlife known as the National Biodiversity Stewardship Programme, to the development of a toolkit to measure specific functions within the wetlands, grasslands and rivers and educating landowners in its use, the EWT has been effective in affecting change and addressing the broader issues around crane conservation.

Species-focused work was implemented for the three crane species found in the area – the Wattled Crane (*Bugeraus carunculatus*), Grey Crowned Crane (*Balearica regulorum*) and Blue Crane (*Anthropoides paradiseus*). This work included the development of wetland restoration process where an artificial Wattled Crane nest site was built. Field research was conducted on Wattled Cranes to inform knowledge gaps of this Critically Endangered species through the tracking of chicks and adults and the completion of a PhD in Wattled Cranes, entitled *Bridging the Gap in Wattled Crane Conservation*.

The project has since diversified to include enterprise development in key communities along the Escarpment, vital for the sustainability and resilience of biodiversity over the long-term.

The two villages central to these interventions are KwaMkhize and uMlutshini. Following a



detailed situational analysis, a qualitative base for evaluating and monitoring the work undertaken has been established to ensure a holistic and integrated approach to sustainable environmental management in these villages and surrounds.

The Cranes in the Classroom (CiC) learning series developed with the KZN Crane Foundation is being used in the area to encourage learners to use critical and creative thinking, work effectively as individuals and members of a team, communicate effectively, show responsibility towards the environment and the health of others and demonstrate an understanding of their world as a context that does not exist in isolation. The lessons in the CiC contain content and activities such as stories, games, songs, dances, craft and art lessons that support school subjects. Subjects which the CiC support are Arts, Natural Sciences, Life Orientation.

Vulekani Primary School in Hlatikulu, is one of the schools where the Project is using the CiC learning series and significant changes are already becoming evident.

Nduduzo Khoza a CiC educator, shared with the KZN Crane Foundation, recalls the story of a

child who wanted to be a mechanic, a few weeks into the lessons he identified that this child was becoming more and more interested in nature conservation and by the end of just four lessons the learner had started to ask questions that weren't even related to cranes or anything that was directly being taught in the class, he was asking about nature. At the end of the programme this learner had achieved the highest score for performance and was teaching other children about nature and cranes in the classroom.

"I finally know what I want to do when I finish school, I want to look after the environment but mostly cranes," he told Nduduzo. This is just one example of how children can be inspired through effective education interventions.

This effect is multifaceted as EWT engages across all age groups, ethnic backgrounds and economic levels within communities. Powerful changes are bringing hope to poverty-stricken communities by changing lives through reframing a vision for environmental sustainability. Perceptions around the value of the landscape in which communities are situated are changing through engaging learning and sharing of sustainable farming practices and food security programmes.



Yonela knew nothing about the environment before he joined EWT as an EcoRanger and little did he know that an exciting adventure awaited.

Yonela Sipeka grew up in Khorong Koali Park, a township in Cedarville. While working for MACAC, a local NGO in Matatiele, and completing an 18-month Business Management Diploma course he heard about the call for applications for EcoRanger interns with EWT's African Crane Conservation Programme. Although he was so close to finishing his diploma, he left MACAC to take up the role of EWT EcoRanger intern. An indication of his passion for the environment.

Yonela completed his Higher Certificate in Nature Conservation and Environmental Management through UNISA at the end of 2017, thanks to support from the EWT's ACCP.

As his internship came to an end Yonela was chosen to participate in an exciting new adventure. He was selected for a fully paid naturalist internship at the world-renowned

International Crane Foundation and Drakensberg Crane Project partner, located in Baraboo, Wisconsin, USA. This four-month internship with the Conservation Education Department has changed his life.

During his time in America he learned about all the different crane species and was trained in educating 3 to 4 year old children – a very new experience for Yonela. He also experienced the Sandhill Crane Festival and raised awareness of the plight of cranes in Nebraska.

EWT *"opened the doors of understanding to the environment"* he says and, now he is doing the same for others. When asked what he gained most from the whole experience he said it built his confidence dramatically, especially talking to large groups of people.

When he returned to the beautiful Southern Drakensberg, South Africa, he was passionate and enthusiastic to make a difference. Today he continues his environmental work, under the guiding hand of Environmental and Rural Solutions. His new position as Environmental Supervisor means he is responsible for the coordination and management of 120 workers for the removal of alien invasive plants, as well managing community education and awareness.

Yonela has youth on his side and is furthering his studies in nature conservation. A bright future awaits this incredible environmental advocate.



Yonela Sipeka

From EWT EcoRanger to fulltime employment with Environmental and Rural Solutions





CONSERVATION

KwaZulu-Natal Crane Foundation:

Years Funded: Eight • Province: KwaZulu-Natal
Route Key: **J**

Wattled Crane Research, Rearing and Recovery Project



At the dawn of the new millennium, the population of Wattled Cranes in South Africa had fallen to under 200 adult birds. All these birds were concentrated in the KwaZulu Natal Midlands between Wartburg and Underberg, with Nottingham Road central to the territory.

The KZN Crane Foundation had been established in 1989 to create awareness of habitat loss and the conservation of all three species of Crane, with particular emphasis on the Wattled Cranes.

The KZN Crane Foundation entered into an agreement with its partners EWT, Johannesburg Zoo, PAAZA and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, marking the establishment of the Wattled Crane Recovery Programme. This involved a project to collect abandoned eggs from wild nests and rear Wattled Cranes for release into the wild.

The challenge was to develop protocols and the methodology for rearing to release in such a way that if there ever was a population crash, the Foundation would have the know how to hatch, rear and release Wattled Cranes back into the wild flocks where they could integrate, pair and breed.

The project further involved research (behaviour and movement) and tracking of both wild and released birds to understand and react to behavioral differences, if any.

In 2010 it was decided to site the Rearing Centre at the KZN Crane Foundation property in Nottingham Road.



Considered to be one of the most advanced purpose-designed rearing facilities in the world, the building was funded by a number of donors of which N3TC was the lead funder.



In 2015 the first three Wattled Crane chicks were reared to adulthood.



Costumed humans imitated Wattled Crane pairs. This discipline resulted in Chicks identifying themselves as Cranes.



The Micro Telemetry Trackers last for over five years. This image shows the first long flight from the home nesting site of a wild-bred Wattled Crane.



The Hide developed on the property at Kildare was funded by N3TC and plays an important role in the observation of Cranes in the KZN Midlands



It was at this point that N3TC first became involved with the Foundation and has since continued to support its efforts to secure the successful release and monitoring of captive reared cranes integrated into the wild.

The crowning achievement of the Wattled Crane Recovery Programme has been the increase in the number of these birds in the wild over the last 20 years. It is a legacy to all involved, past and present. The accumulation of knowledge on how to rear and release Wattled Cranes in captivity for future wild population needs is invaluable.

The Sentinels

N3TC was a significant donor of *The Sentinels* book project. This dream was five years in the making and the Foundation proudly released the book in 2018. The Sentinels is significant to the conservation efforts of the Crane Foundation and its partners by highlighting the

importance of Cranes species and wetland health being an indicator of water security for the country.

In 2019 N3TC funded the upgrade of the entrance roadway from the R103 to the Usher Centre. This road is of utmost importance to bringing large groups of school children to the Bill Barnes Reserve for educational visits. The future of conservation lies in the fact that we cannot expect people to appreciate and protect nature and its creatures if they have not experienced it.

Over the last 20 years the foundations of successful crane rearing science, actual population growth, and future marketing for the protection of the species have been laid. N3TC has been behind these achievements every step of the way.

CONSERVATION

Highland Grassland Conservation Project

Years Funded: Six • Province: Free State

Route Key: **E**



Conserving Sungazers, their habitat and associated biodiversity

One of the main aims of the Highland Grassland Conservation project has been to encourage landowners to keep their intact grasslands in a natural state and at the same time manage these grasslands correctly for future grazing benefits as well as biodiversity.

The purpose being to assist with the survival of threatened species such as the well-known, endemic Sungazer (*Smaug giganteus*) where the largest population in the world is found in the Harrismith district.

With the support of N3TC, the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) has been able to advance the Biodiversity Stewardship process in three areas in the north-eastern Free State and the Eastern Great Escarpment near Normandien, KwaZulu-Natal, and Volksrust in Mpumalanga.

The Biodiversity Stewardship process offers a form of formal protection such as a protected environment, biodiversity agreement or nature reserve. This will also benefit other species of concern in the grasslands identified by the EWT, such as the Botha's Lark (*Spizocorys fringillaris*), Yellow-breasted Pipit (*Anthus chloris*) and Oribi (*Ourebia ourebi*).

One area between Verkykerskop and Memel is in the process of being proclaimed a nature reserve and will be known as the Witkoppen Nature Reserve. Two areas in the Free State are in the process of being proclaimed protected environments: the Upper Wilge Protected Environment located in the Van Reenen area as well as the Ingula Pumped Water Scheme.

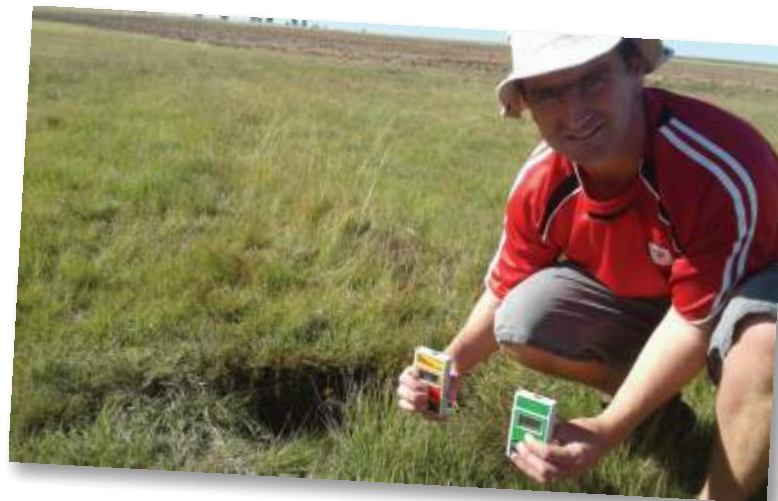


The interaction with landowners and officials from the Free State Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DESTE) has been implemented in partnership with BirdLife South Africa. The size of this area will be over 25,000 hectares once declared.

In addition, the EWT team has been engaging with landowners in an area between Eeram and Verkyerskop for over three years and the team has decided to focus on a smaller area consisting of six landowners for the start of the process. The exact size of the area is 6,163 hectares and it will now be known as the Eeram Protected Environment.

Since EWT has been working on these Biodiversity sites and engaging with landowners across the Highlands region there has already been an attitude shift amongst landowners who are doing what they can to change management practices on their farms even though some of the areas have not yet been proclaimed protected areas.

It is evident that Sungazers are already enjoying more leisurely naps in the sunshine thanks to N3TC's funding and the EWT team's efforts to protect the grasslands and the species endemic to the area.





BirdLife SA Nakekela Environmental Education Programme

Years Funded: Ten
Province: Free State
and KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **E**

"I started the Nakekela Environmental Education Programme ten years ago in the Van Reenen township of Entokozweni because I was worried about children killing birds. The programme has made a huge impact through educating children about looking after the environment and building their knowledge about conservation."

The Nakekela Project has certainly grown since its inception ten years ago when three children from Entokozweni in Van Reenen turned up to learn all about the environment from Bonginkosi, the project champion.

The Nakekela Environmental Education Programme currently has 50 children involved in the programme with an average of thirty-five participating in activities nearly every weekend. The programme covers a host of environmental activities including birdwatching, making briquettes from waste for the elderly, waste management, bird migration, vegetable gardening, water purity testing and water management, making bird feeders, outings for bird watching and environmental awareness and more.



Meet Njabulo Mkhize.

Njabulo is a 17-year-old boy who has become involved in the Nakekela programme. He joined Nakekela without any knowledge about nature. But his great interest and love of nature started when he joined Bonginkosi for bird watching and other nature awareness activities. His best birding experience was seeing a Secretary Bird because "that bird is so stylish", and he mentioned its hairstyle as well as its leggings. Njabulo has developed an appreciation for conserving birds through his involvement in the Nakekela project.

Today, the children of Entokozweni have far more purpose and are given access to meaningful educational activities to keep them occupied and out of trouble. There is a further benefit that translates into more environmentally conscious families and friends.





BirdLife SA KwaZulu-Natal Mistbelt Grassland and Forest

Years Funded: Two
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **F**



"It is through the continued funds from N3TC that BirdLife South Africa has been able to collaborate with Conservation Outcomes to continue the important work being done in KwaZulu-Natal, focusing particularly on the protection of mistbelt forest and mistbelt grasslands sites, and on the conservation of the threatened Blue Swallow and Cape Parrot."

In March 2018 BirdLife South Africa and Conservation Outcomes, signed a long-term formal collaborative partnership agreement to promote and support the conservation of KwaZulu-Natal's natural heritage. Through this partnership, the human resources, project costs, and local level support have been shared to meet common conservation objectives.

Through this partnership, several Biodiversity Stewardship sites continue to be supported for protected area declaration. After completing the required processes and procedures for approval and public participation, declaration agreements for three sites - Trewirgie, Tillietudlem and Roelton in the mistbelt grasslands - were submitted to the provincial MEC in July. This has added over 2000 hectares to

Protected Area estate and formally secured a further 2% of the Endangered Midlands Mistbelt Grassland.

This is significant when one considers that only 2% of this grassland type was formally conserved before N3TC funded the project, which has already effectively doubled the amount of mistbelt grassland conserved.

The partnership is negotiating with landowners to secure several hundred additional hectares of mistbelt grassland, and has assessed and negotiated a level of security with the landowner of a critical 320-hectare grassland and wetland property, which is home to breeding critically endangered Wattled Crane and the source of the Umgeni River. The conservation of the Umgeni River is critical for the continued supply of good quality water to the main economic centres of Durban and Pietermaritzburg.

The partnership coordinated the 2018/19 monitoring of the Blue Swallow breeding season, which was undertaken in close collaboration

with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (EKZNW) and numerous private landowners. It has shown that continued land-use change is further driving the numbers of this beautiful bird down and underlines the need to secure as much of its remaining habitat as possible. The project partners are in the process of developing appropriate conservation actions for the threatened Cape Parrot and have consulted with experts on the species at the University of KwaZulu-Natal to plan priority actions.



Using drones for conservation efforts at Royal Natal National Park

by Stephen Richert

"Ezemvelo and the Royal Natal Honorary Officers wish to thank N3TC for their contribution to conservation and public safety in the Drakensberg Mountains."

N3TC's affinity to the uKhahlamba Drakensberg World Heritage Site dates to the start of the concession.

Over the years, N3TC has invested in a variety of projects and programs to support the Park's continued conservation efforts. From the development of Bearded Vulture hides and restaurants to monitoring endangered and protected species, N3TC's commitment to conservation in this iconic South African heritage site continues to reap reward and benefit for the environment, tourism and farming in the region.

Through the collective efforts of Wild Trust and N3TC, a drone was acquired by the Honorary Officer Corps at Royal Natal, a section of the uKhahlamba Drakensberg World Heritage Site. The drone forms part of the Corps' intention to transform the World Heritage Site into a Smart Park, where technology will enhance the experience and safety of visitors to the Park.

The drone will be used to improve the already comprehensive conservation efforts of the Critically Endangered Bearded Vulture – the Drakensberg's flagship species, which has fewer recorded numbers than the rhino currently.

Search and rescue is another important function for the rangers in the Drakensberg, who have the safety of visitors to the mountains top-of-mind. When things go wrong in the mountains, having eyes in the air as soon as possible can save lives. Drones are fast

becoming a standard tool for search and rescue efforts and have already saved numerous lives in outdoor incidents across the globe.

The Park's new drone is portable and can be rapidly deployed to aid rescue efforts in the mountains, and scan areas rescuers cannot reach on foot. It is equipped with powerful spotlights and a signaling system to further aid in the search for lost hikers.

Boasting a high resolution camera, the drone is effective in monitoring a variety of projects in the Park from mapping alien plants and assessing areas in need of back burning, to evaluating vegetation and monitoring endangered species' movement, the drone is fast becoming an essential addition to the Park's conservation efforts.



Although regular patrols take place throughout the park, rangers are unable to cover every hotspot for poaching and illegal activity. The nature of the terrain as well as the distances covered, make a drone the ideal solution for extending patrols to eradicate illegal activity.

To support the tourism efforts of the region, the Park is a member of the Hiking Association of South Africa and the team is currently seeking Green Flag Trails accreditation of its popular trails. Part of this requires good marketing materials that include maps of the trails, and the drone is essential to the development of this collateral.



Enterprise Development

Off the beaten track

By Nikki Brighton

with Commercial Manager, Con Roux

Many South Africans dread the thought of breaking down on the side of the road. Not Con Roux, Commercial Manager of N3TC since 2002.

"Some of my most memorable experiences have been when plans go awry," he smiles. He remembers the day his tyre punctured on a dirt road beyond Mooi River after he had visited Carshalton School to plant trees with the kids. The school principal, Nathi Majola, came along a few minutes later and, despite being dressed



smartly for a meeting with the Department, got down in the dust and helped to change the tyre. "I'll never forget a similar incident on my way back from Underberg. I pulled off onto the Impendle Road. A battered bakkie stopped and four elderly gents emerged to ask if I needed help. The problem was quickly sorted so there was time for a chat, and I learnt that one of the elders was a Chief. It struck me how incredible it is that someone with such standing in the community, did not hesitate to help a stranded motorist – despite the delays it may have caused to his schedule."

Con does not spend all that much time stuck on the side of the road. Each day of his job is totally different. On Tuesday he might be compiling the minutes of a Board Meeting while sipping beetroot juice in a country café, on Wednesday enjoying an early run through frosty fields before starting work, Thursday could include a hands-free conversation about the new ad campaign during the long commute to the office. Friday might offer a celebratory glass of champagne on a township dump about to become a vegetable garden, a television interview will occupy much of Saturday and Sunday could be spent at the Drak Challenge helping the cerebral palsied folk from Pevensy Place to man a refreshment table. Then there is that pot of Earl Grey tea in a forest-side cottage, one Monday morning... That was the start of a good week. Actually, it was the start of a couple of decades of good weeks.



Before joining N3TC, Con had been involved with construction firms negotiating the N3 concession, so had good background knowledge and it seemed like the perfect job – weaving together his legal background, skills in HR and Marketing and his considerable experience working with diverse communities for the National Peace Secretariat in the early 1990's.

“I was fortunate during that time to become aware of what was actually happening in our country – not just reliant on the curated news. I met people who, against the odds, were beacons of light. I had the immense privilege of facilitating reconciliation and drawing people together during very challenging situations. These were unforgettable, life altering times.”

Initially the N3TC CSI project was to be called Corporate Social Responsibility, but the rebel in Mr Roux refused to call it that, preferring Corporate Social Investment. “We were investing in communities. There would be positive returns if we touched lives in a meaningful way. Our focus has always been on sustainability – on socio-economic development within the specific context of the road - developing skills, enterprises and supply partnerships. Major focus areas have been Education, Road Safety, Conservation, Child Welfare and Persons with Disabilities.”

To say Con is passionate about education, is to put it mildly. Con's personal involvement in the projects has meant one thing always leads to another. That cup of tea in 2005, for example. Entranced by the enthusiasm and energy of the fledgling Midlands Meander Education Project (MMEP), Con agreed, as he sipped his tea, to supporting the programme with a small grant. This relationship blossomed as the MMEP grew beyond the wildest dreams of the



initiators and led to a connection with the Midlands Meander Association which inspired N3TC to form the flourishing N3 Gateway Tourism Association a few years later.

“Once you develop trusting relationships with project champions, we find they inform us of other worthwhile activities, and in most cases I am blown away when I get to meet them. Treverton School introduced us to Les Stanley – it has been an honour to support the amazing work he and his wife Hazel have done in Weenen. Dedicated life support practitioner and fire fighter in Van Reenen Ansie Jooste, started the Khanyisile project with Phillip Hull (Community Medical Services) who also told us about the amazing voluntary work that Dave and Mariette Steele did in Ladysmith. Louis Harmse knew about Lusa Community Chest. An opportunity to help a Drak Challenge paddler led to a partnership with S.M.I.L.E.”

Being on the ground, hands-on, with an incredibly supportive management team and Board, rather than just being an implementing agency, has been key to growing the Touching Lives programme. The programme now encompasses over seventy projects, with a thousand employees and ninety thousand beneficiaries, between Heidelberg and Cedara. It's the N3TC eco-system, a web of connected communities all determined to make the world a bit better for the people they meet.

N3TC acknowledge that there is a desperate need along the corridor. “How do we enable people to break the cycle of hopelessness and poverty and aim for better? When I hear stories about it being a major celebration for a child in rural Van Reenen to graduate Grade 7, I despair. Until I think of the amazing



work that is being done by so many remarkable people to turn things around."

"We have certainly seen the returns," beams Con with obvious delight, "individual lives have definitely been changed and those, who in their context are able to do more, are most likely helping to change other lives too."

Memorable examples include Vusi Hoyi, a ten-year-old member of the garden club at Shea O'Connor School in Nottingham Road when he first met N3TC, who graduated recently from Rhodes University with the help of a N3TC bursary and is now a teacher intern at a well-known private school. Talented musician, Luyanda Mazibuko, a beneficiary of N3TC assistance to attend Drakensberg Boys Choir, won a full bursary to St Stithians College to finish high school. When Londeka Ximba, (who works for N3TC now after completing her degree) was asked why she wanted to study Civil Engineering, was adamant that she needed to help her deep rural community where there were no services. She has become a positive role model in her network and the ramifications of this are not quantifiable.

"It is a thrill to watch people take flight. Qhapela Dlamini at KwaZamokuhle inspires me more than I can say – an N3TC bursary helped a disabled child to attend school rather than spend his life crawling about the fields – now he has a bursary to study for a Masters' in Education Management. We would love to see him become Minister of Education one day."

It's the relatively small top-up bursaries for local schools like Harrismith School and Underberg Primary that enable kids, that might otherwise have to trudge 10kms to school during winter, to have regular meals in a safe, structured boarding environment. While less than 100 learners out of the millions in need can access this help, providing a better platform for a handful of youngsters to achieve their dreams is worthwhile.

Con is in awe of those who raise their heads above the parapet when there are many factors

pulling them down and keep following their passion even though they may be tired. "I cannot believe the stories I hear sometimes. It is the individual aspirations that make the difference. We are trying to create a platform from which people can achieve their dreams and in turn assist others to achieve theirs."

Slondile Mhlono, principal of Lion's River Primary, moved the entire school to a place where her learners would not have to brave a dangerous road walking to school. Bheki Lepheana turned a dilapidated farm shed into a school and when the rains flooded half of it, simply moved the desks to the drier side and continued teaching. Manana Molo, concerned about the plight of hungry children in her community, began a feeding scheme after she had retired. Julie Hay, who started the innovative Singakwenza ECD programme, is now sought after throughout Africa to assist with teacher training and inspiration.

Con remembers once hearing Michael Cassidy of African Enterprise say, "If you want to live on the playing field, stay in South Africa." There is no way that Con wants to spend his one precious life watching from the side-lines. "Even if we have to make it up as we go along, I am determined to do the best that I can, to pay it forward and expect the unexpected."

What might this next week bring? Tuesday could be spent on the side of the highway with the Truck Driver Wellness Campaign, Wednesday might be a presentation to the Board, Thursday planning the ringing of young Wattled Cranes, Friday a quick visit with Isabel Potgieter and Thandiwe Rakale to an after-care centre in Harrismith, and then chatting to the team who man the N3TC Helpline at the Route Control Centre, and with luck, part of the weekend will be with his family. Then it will be Monday again and who knows where Con might be having a cup of tea this week?

The incredible N3TC team and community is what gets him out of bed in the morning and make him unafraid of any hitches that might occur in his journey.

ENTERPRISE
DEVELOPMENT

Singakwenza

Years Funded: Eight • Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **L**



Singakwenza's vision of training caregivers and ECD practitioners in sustainable and purposeful play activities for young children has remained central to the programme's ethos for close to a decade. This philosophy has seen Singakwenza's programme evolve into an holistic and sustainable education programme.

"Thanks to the incredible support of N3TC, we have managed to grow our programme substantially and make a significant impact in the lives of caregivers, practitioners and thousands of young children." Julie Hay

In 2010, Julie Hay decided that she needed to use her education, training and skills as an educator to try to improve the education crisis in South Africa in some small way. Her vision was to provide an Early Childhood Education programme that was sustainable, and so Singakwenza was born.

A year into the programme Singakwenza had one trainer, Sthembile, who was running a pilot programme in Mickey Mouse Educare Centre. The toys and lesson plans were still in the early stages of development. The idea that crèches could develop key skills in children through purposeful play activities using household packaging was tested with the 42 children attending Mickey Mouse. Eighteen months of training, mentorship and support later Mickey Mouse's first class of Grade R's started formal education at the local primary school.

Three months into the school year, the Grade 1 teacher visited Zandile at Mickey Mouse. She wanted to know what programme was being used at the Centre, because the children who came from Mickey Mouse stood out way above the other children in their ability to cope with



Grade 1. It was simple, the Centre was providing children with opportunities to play purposefully every day. These children are now in Grade 7 and are doing very well at school, particularly in mathematics.

Currently Singakwenza has four trainers, working in 18 crèches with 60 practitioners and almost 900 children. A total of 38 crèches have been part of the programme to date.

After being approached by a teacher at Hamilton Preparatory School in Ladysmith to teach parents and practitioners from the area how to make toys from household waste, the Singakwenza Waste 2 Toys workshops became part of Singakwenza's offering.

Today, a flood of opportunities and successes flow from Singakwenza's workshops for Gross Motor Development, Fine Motor Development, Types and Stages of Play and Numeracy in English, isiZulu, isiXhosa and Sesotho.

Singakwenza runs around 50 workshops a year in southern Africa, including almost every province in South Africa as well as Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Botswana and Swaziland.



Since 2012 the workshops presented by Singakwenza have reached 6 738 adults and almost 120 000 children.

Access to ideas on what to use the toys for after the Waste 2 Toys training, especially in areas that Singakwenza cannot travel to regularly, led to the development of an online Resource Centre. Anyone who attends a Waste 2 Toys workshop is given the password to access the Resource Centre, and they can download lesson plans and information directly from the site. N3TC assisted with the filming of video clips to demonstrate some of the skills included in the online Resource Centre, which helps caregivers and practitioners to better understand the purpose of each play activity.

Many of the practitioners that Singakwenza trains and mentors show a passion for teaching and are encouraged to gain a formal ECD qualification. The reality, however, is that these practitioners do not have the financial resources to fund their studies. To address this need, Singakwenza has established a scholarship fund that provides deserving practitioners with the opportunity to complete their NQF Level 5 qualification, the highest that is currently being offered.



Three practitioners are currently in their first year of study through the Caversham Institute.

Over time, Singakwenza realised that practitioners were not equipped to deal with any barriers to learning that may present themselves. An Occupational Therapist was employed to provide the necessary support to help practitioners identify 'red flags' that indicate these barriers to learning, how to conduct parent interviews to present their concerns, where they need to refer certain problems so that they can access government assistance and what activities can be adopted to help children with minor issues.

In working so closely with the practitioners and crèche owners, another concern soon became evident. They needed guidance on how to manage their centres to prevent them from closing due to poor financial management. Singakwenza's admin assistant and driver, Joseph, studied bookkeeping at Varsity College and uses his skills to train the crèche owners

in basic financial management and accounting, which has helped balance the books of many centres over the years.

The amount of waste household packaging that Singakwenza has used over the years that would have ended up in landfill is beyond conceptual understanding. On average, Singakwenza uses approximately 200 000 bread bags, over 5 000 yoghurt containers, hundreds of thousands of plastic lids, around 5 000 cereal boxes, and over 5 000 coke bottles in its Training and Mentorship Programme and Waste 2 Toys workshops each year. Managing the stock of waste has become a full-time job for two Singakwenza employees.

A more dynamic, passionate and committed team one couldn't possibly meet. The Singakwenza programme is a beacon of hope not only along the N3 Toll Route but throughout southern Africa. It is the perfect example of using sustainable practices in an empowering and meaningful manner.



ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

iThemba

Years Funded: Six • Province: KwaZulu-Natal
Route Key: **M**



When N3TC first funded iThemba Projects, the programme was involved in 12 ECD centres in the community of Sweetwaters. Today, iThemba's Asidlale Early Childhood Development (ECD) mentoring programme is supporting 17 centres, which has been attributed to N3TC's consistent, and gradual increase in funding, which ensured a consistent presence in the community coupled with the opportunity to expand over time.

iThemba's vision was to provide quality ECD to the whole community and in the course of the past five years the vision has been honed with specific strategies put into place to achieve the goal. For example, iThemba has formalised a strategy of tackling one district at a time to provide in-depth support and mentorship that will embed ECD practices in the area before moving on to the next district. Already, iThemba has made significant inroads in the district of Zayeka and is mentoring teachers from four ECD sites.

"This strategy is allowing us to concentrate our efforts and to witness change, which over time will see long-term, sustainable community change in Sweetwaters and N3TC has made this possible."
Stu Walker

Five years ago, iThemba's ECD site mentor, Wendy, was hosting quarterly workshops, visiting all the teachers in its programme weekly, and leading iThemba's monthly teacher support groups better known as 'Hlanganani Teas' (come together teas). Today, two teachers from Sweetwaters who have been mentored since inception, Gretta and Sibongile, are now themselves mentoring teachers. They assist with hosting the Hlanganani Teas and the quarterly meetings that have evolved into collaborative term planning and prep meetings.



This has facilitated a peer mentorship programme that benefits the teachers and frees up the iThemba ECD site mentors to focus on mentoring teachers from new crèches entering the programme.

Another area of focus for iThemba is in building teachers' capacity for improved classroom management and learning through instilling the discipline of planning and preparing lessons ahead of time. For example, teachers who spend time planning for the next day before they go home are more likely to implement the curriculum, feel calm and have a good attitude in class the next day, which makes for an environment that promotes learning.

iThemba's efforts are reaping the rewards. Over the past five years, iThemba's annual assessments of Grade R students from Zayeka has shown consistent improvement in the children's ability to perform in a formal school environment. Learners from schools where their teachers were mentored in Asidlale perform far better in basic school readiness tasks than children from other areas where ECD is not yet embedded in their day care centres.

One of the most significant changes that iThemba has witnessed over the years is that parents are beginning to value quality ECD and are demanding it more. This is partly due to Asidlale's home-based programme in Zayeka. iThemba's ECD mentors visit the children's homes and provide parents or caregivers with the understanding and skills to support their children's development at home. Some parents have since become quite involved and often visit their child's creche with requests for more artwork, new songs and activities for their children. It is quite clear that parents from Zayeka are no longer satisfied with simply having their children cared for, they are seeking education.

It is evident that home and site based ECD strengthens the quality of education provided to children and their subsequent ability to perform in the formal school environment, making iThemba's programme of extreme importance and relevance to the Sweetwaters community.





Senzakahle Primary Co-operative

Years Funded: Six
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **I**

"The project started in 2008 and was producing only bedding and curtains. Since N3TC has assisted our project, it has diversified, and we are producing a wide range of clothing, embroidery and printing services."

N3TC's funding awarded to Senzakahle Primary Co-operative has empowered the members to build the business and, more importantly, it has helped them provide for their families.

Being a member of the Bruntville community, Senzakahle is committed to providing support where it is needed most and has donated clothing to needy children at Bruntville Primary School. Community members are given the opportunity to volunteer at the project while gaining skills and knowledge. At the same time, Senzakahle is providing the community with an alternative outlet for affordable clothing and bed linen.



Meet Lungelo Ntuli who is a volunteer at Senzakahle.

Lungelo matriculated last year and was unable to further his studies or gain full-time employment. He describes his time at Senzakahle as life changing as he is learning new skills every day and kept him from a life of drugs and crime. Lungelo has a creative talent and is helping to steer Senzakahle into the next phase of its development through designing new and authentic designs that he hopes will attract more customers. He has been trained to operate the new silk printing screen and he is well on his way to becoming proficient in many other areas of the business. Lungelo sees himself running his own business in the future with the knowledge he is gaining at Senzakahle.

Furthermore, Senzakahle has intentionally recruited youth from the community as a means of keeping them off the streets and away from a life of crime and drugs.

Senzakahle is community minded while remaining focused on building their business. They have identified the need to become more engaged with their potential customer base and are seeking guidance from younger community members to guide them into digital marketing avenues.

Our Heroes

Zodwa Khoza and Sylvia Ntuli

By Nikki Brighton

*Building
a legacy
on a spirit
of resilience*

As often happens in small towns, one major manufacturer employs a lot of people, and when this business relocates or closes, many are left desperate.

The women who lead Senzakahle Co-Op in Mooi River, Zodwa Khoza and Sylvia Ntuli, had been employed at Mooi River Textiles since 1981 and 1974 respectively. Both women excelled at and loved their jobs, happily crossing the bridge over the Mooi River every day until the factory closed in 2007. Zodwa's father was employed as a cotton spinner for Mooi River textiles, so the textile business was literally part of her family. It was a shock when it came to an end.

Senzakahle, which means 'we do a good job', was formed in 2008 after the women attended a gathering hosted by the then KZN Premier, Zweli Mkhize.

"I stood up at the meeting and suggested that he come and make a big factory in Mooi River," remembers Zodwa, "he encouraged us - saying that yes, we had worked for many years, had lots

of experience and we should call the people who would work with us."

A group of 30 women gathered and met with the local municipality telling them their plans. They were advised to form a cooperative.

"We really believed that the government would be making us a big factory," laughs Sylvia, "we were really surprised that they expected us to do it for ourselves. We thought that forming a co-op meant we would get machines and materials to start."

Despite this misunderstanding, the enterprising pair just got going.

"We looked for somewhere to work and were lucky when the lady who runs the bakery suggested we use a small space next door. We borrowed two domestic sewing machines, pushed them in wheelbarrows and started."

To begin with they bought the 'end pieces' and fabric offcuts to make scatter cushions, putting up flyers across the township to advertise their services. Zodwa is an expert 'cutter', able to make the most of the scraps of fabric.

"A small piece means something to me," she smiles, "I like to match perfectly and not have any waste."

Being used to strong industrial machinery, adapting to small sewing machines was a challenge, but they persevered and as soon as they had saved enough cushion money, they bought one machine. A local businessman bought them an overlocker.





"We were so happy! It felt like we had everything," they recall.

After a while, the municipality got funding for another six machines and for the past few years support from N3TC has meant they have filled their tiny factory with a large cutting table, industrial machines and plenty of cloth.

Marketing their products is a challenge. Particularly when cheaply made Chinese goods are freely available at a fraction of the price.

"We met with a group of Chinese people once to discuss this issue with them," recounts Sylvia, "they told us our problem was that we made things that last too long. If something only lasts one year, customers will come and buy again, but our sheets and curtains are good quality and will last for more than 10 years."

Despite this, they are determined not to compromise on quality and are thinking of new ways to sell their products, which now include warm gowns for cold Midlands winters, t-shirts and leggings. They plan to set up a gazebo on a busy corner in Market Street in central Mooi River soon. Here they will cheerily greet familiar faces and make new friends, and hopefully convince passers-by of the value of buying better quality goods.

These strong women are exceptional role models to the grandchildren they live with, and the community at large, epitomising the resilience of women across the world.





Midlands Meander Emerging Artists Project

Years Funded: Six
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **L**

"All the N3TC-funded artists and crafters are categorised as 'Butterfly Crafters'. The idyllic surroundings of the Midlands Meander are a rich source of freedom, inspiration and creativity for its local artists and crafters, much like the butterflies prevalent to the area. The 'Butterfly Crafters' create at least 80% of their products within the boundaries of the Meander and the beautiful symbol of the Karkloof Butterfly is their logo."

N3TC has been instrumental in improving the lives of the emerging artists and their families through the marketing, training and sales of their handcrafted items under the Midlands Meander Association (MMA) banner.

Beneficiaries of N3TC's funding over the past five years have received essential training, support and mentorship to develop their skills and provide the foundation to establish themselves.



MMA Emerging Artists

2014-2016

Impumelelo Beaders (co-operative)
Siyabonga Duma

2016/2017

Impumelelo Beaders
Stanley Nxumalo
Calson Ngwenya
Muzi Ndlela
Nkosinathi Mabaso
Xholani Eric Ncgobo

2017/2018

Muzi Ndlela
Sibusiso Mvelase
Nkosinathi Mabaso
Stanley Nxumalo
Xholani Eric Ncgobo
Calson Ngwenya

2018/2019

Alson Zuma
Siyaphambili Disabled Weavers (Co-Op)
Stanley Nxumalo
Xholani Eric Ncgobo
Khanya Themba, (Co-Op)
Themba Creations (Co-Op)

All these artists are members of the MMA and given exposure through the MMA's various marketing platforms including the organisation's annual guide, social media platforms and website. In addition, N3TC provided funding to the MMA for the development of a Midlands Meander Info Centre and Craft Gallery at the Nelson Mandela Capture Site, which provides an outlet to exhibit their goods and generate an income for the artists.

One of the project's success stories is Impumelelo Beaders. Their work is becoming highly sought after and they have been commissioned for installations in the Nelson Mandela Capture Site Visitor's Centre and the Children's Ward of the Nelson Mandela Hospital in Johannesburg.

Our Heroes

Alson Zuma

By Nikki Brighton

*Living a
simple life
that matters*

Leopards live in Fort Nottingham.

Alson Zuma has never actually seen one. He has spotted the spoor, heard unusual growls and observed the remains of a fresh predator kill. He knows they are there. While some might avoid wandering through the forest and exploring the cliffs, Alson is undeterred.

Much of the inspiration for his art comes from nature. "I like to be alone. I like to walk in these hills as I have done all my life," he explains quietly.

As far back as he can remember, he has been drawing. "I was amazed by a woman's head that my mother drew in the book in which she recorded births and deaths," he recalls, "even though the paper was flat, the head looked rounded. I always opened this book just to look at the picture."

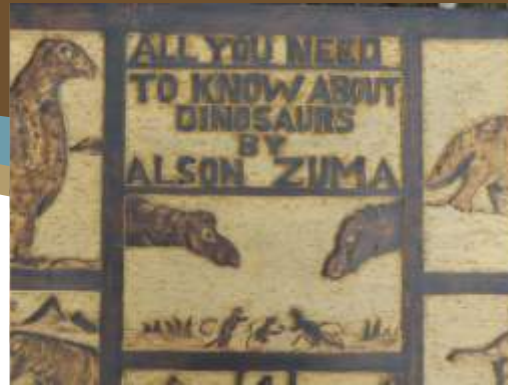


At school, he could not resist drawing in his books – according to his teacher, he was ruining them – and was smacked often for this misdemeanour. "In class, I would stare at someone for a long time, looking at all the details on their face. Faces are funny when you focus on them and I would sometimes burst out laughing." More trouble from Mrs Mzila. "There was nothing I could do. Drawing was in my blood."

In those days creativity as a career was unheard of, so Alson took a job tending livestock. Each day he would spend free time sketching with a ballpoint pen on the bag he used to carry his lunch and, in the evenings, draw pictures he stuck up in his cottage window. These were noticed by his employer David Fox, who encouraged him to do more. In the late 1980's Alson moved to Fort Nottingham and now works at the Fort Nottingham Museum owned by David Fox's family.

The museum is in the original buildings that housed soldiers of Nottinghamshire's Regiment, the 45th 'Sherwood Foresters', who were stationed in this garrison from 1856 to protect white settlers from raids by Bushmen. Ironically, Alson has Bushman ancestry and the museum shop contains his depictions of Bushman life painted on pieces of rock, along with his wonderful wood carvings.

While he has seen many bushpigs and baboons around Fort Nottingham, there are certainly no rhinos or giraffes as carved on his boxes and panels. He uses books on wild animals for inspiration and has been a member of the Nottingham Road Library forever.



The library ladies know the sort of thing that would appeal to him and point them out. "I have paid many fines for late returns," he laughs, "especially the books about dinosaurs. I am fascinated by dinosaurs."

Another fascination is radios. Alson has always fixed and fiddled with radios and his carved radio boxes are an absolute

delight. They are covered with depictions of the various shows – weather, soaps, news and cooking – and contain a transcript of Radio Alsum broadcast from Fort Nottingham. Listeners (readers) will be riveted by the politics of the village, the wildlife spotted late on Saturday night when villagers are dressed in their finest feathers, the traffic chaos caused when Mr Dube's goats and Mr Cele's sheep met on the main street and the weather report on yesterday's weather rather than tomorrow's.

Alson lives a simple life. To sit in the sunshine, listening to the radio, carving a piece of wood is pure pleasure. To walk down the road, through the ouhout trees into the hills is freedom. To teach his sons how to paint brings him great joy. To share his passion for Zulu culture makes him proud. To imagine the leopards roaming nearby makes him smile.

This creative citizen has found his spot in the world. Fort Nottingham is his place.





Sunfield Home Fortuna

Years Funded: Seven
Province: Mpumalanga

Route Key: **B**

"Our community is very grateful for N3TC's support. With your help we are growing. Through N3TC's funding we have been able to continue employing breadwinners from the Siyatemba community to care for our residents. While putting bread on the tables of our staff, we are able to provide a better service to the disabled residents of Sunfield Fortuna."

Sunfield Home Fortuna is home to 81 mentally and physically disabled residents, most of whom do not have families to care for, or support, them.

N3TC has walked a wonderful journey with Sunfield Home Fortuna and has taken a keen interest in providing essential support that will secure the sustainability and comfort of the people the organisation serves, and the residents' lives are enriched as a result.

Sunfield Home generates an income from the production of 'Cellular Trees' for the cellular industry. Through this project, 22 members of the local Siyatemba community are employed alongside 10 residents from the home. Not only are they producing quality items, they are earning an income that provides a sense of self worth and value. N3TC assisted Sunfield Fortuna to construct a workshop for this purpose to secure the

contract to continue the production of the trees and to source additional income streams.

To ensure that the residents were able to have access to the appropriate equipment and facilities to provide the necessary physical and mental stimulation, N3TC provided further assistance to the Home to equip a Stimulation Centre that now has the residents exercising and 'working out' regularly and has improved their mobilisation and movement.

For Sunfield Home caring for their staff is as important as caring for their residents. The home would not be able to function without the support of its staff as they provide 24-hour care to the residents. This means that it is essential for the home to provide its staff with secure, comfortable and safe accommodation. N3TC assisted Sunfield with the funds to build new staff quarters that has provided relief to the management team and contributed to improved staff morale.

"N3TC has made life at Sunfield Fortuna better!" The home is secure, the residents are comfortable, and the staff have peace of mind. As the home looks to the future and its continued focus on caring for some of the most vulnerable members of society, they look ahead with hope and a sense of pride.





Mamello Support Group

Years Funded: Five
Province: Free State

Route Key: **D**



"Thanks to N3TC, our beneficiaries have a place where they feel comfortable because our premises are safe, and we can accommodate and cater for their needs."

Mamello is providing support to between 300 and 400 underprivileged children on any given day in the week. While providing the children with a wholesome meal at the end of a school day, Mamello also provides homework support and a safe environment for the children to play.

As a means of generating an income, Mamello initiated a baking enterprise and more recently managed to upgrade its ovens and

kitchens to accommodate the growing demand for their baked goods through funding awarded by N3TC. Mamello currently supplies baked goods to local supermarkets and shops in Harrismith. Through this initiative, Mamello is generating an income to support the Centre and providing job opportunities to local community members.

From providing healthy meals to children at the end of the school day and giving parents or carers peace of mind that their children are safe, to supporting drug addicts and providing relief in the event of emergencies or natural disasters affecting the community, Mamello is a place of safety, security and care, but more importantly it is a place of hope.





LUSA Gr8Start Early Childhood Development Programme

Years Funded: Three
Province: Gauteng

Route Key: **A**

N3TC's involvement in the Meals on Wheels Cycle Race has developed into a community outreach initiative in the Heidelberg community of Ratanda.

Through Meals on Wheels' race organiser, Louis Harmse, N3TC was introduced to Lusa Community Chest and so a meaningful partnership has developed. Through N3TC's funding, Lusa has been in a position to provide support to the village community surrounding Sedaven and beyond through the Lusa Gr8Start Early Childhood Development Programme.

Starting with Siphiliswe Day Care Centre at Sedaven, the project has grown to reach 25 local ECD centres in the Ratanda Community.

Most of the teachers and principals that Lusa supports do not have a

teaching qualification and many have not completed high school. Since the inception of the programme, the principals have been equipped with managerial knowledge that will secure the sustainability of their centres through effective management and governance.

The principals have mentioned that their personal growth has given them the confidence to mentor new principals and educators. More than 45 teachers have been trained and provided with the tools, teaching aids and knowledge to prepare 1 250 children to be school-ready.

As the programme is securing a future for the educators and the children they teach, so the need for continued support and training grows. There is still much to be done and many lives to be touched according to Lusa.





Care Bears Project

Years Funded: Three
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **I**

"We are now also linked to the Litres for Education programme and are on our way to building a support base of over 1000 people, which will enable us to apply to become part of the Woolworths My School My Planet program. All these external sources of funding will help secure the employment of our ladies."

The product of the Care Bears' project, hand knitted teddy bears, provides a colourful sight on any given day. Care Bears has donated over 5000 bears in the past three years to various schools, orphanages and hospitals, putting a smile on the face of the recipient and providing comfort that bears no measure.

The Care Bears' project and its story is inspirational beyond measure.

The project's story starts in 2016, at a time when funding was scarce and the process of employing knitters to produce the bears was being reviewed. The decision reached was to employ fewer ladies where a guaranteed income each month could be met, rather than disappointing many in the event of no income or funding. In practical terms, this meant that at the end of 2016, Care Bears was employing five ladies to knit their quirky teddy bears.

In 2017, Care Bears applied to N3TC for funding and their journey of sustainability began. Care Bears was now in a position to cover ten knitters for the full year, giving the project the financial boost it needed, along with extra exposure and credibility.

In 2018, N3TC's funding enabled Care Bears to double the number of knitters they could employ, and further benefits were realised along with twenty households impacted through the income streaming into their homes.

One complete knitting kit produces eight bears and costs R500, of which R400 is paid directly to the knitter, the balance covers the cost of the supplies. The money paid to each of Care Bears' knitters means the difference between being able to pay school fees, or put food on the table, or even just to be able to pay for a little more electricity – things many of us take for granted!

Today, Care Bears employs 30 knitters, the original 20 that N3TC continues to support, as well as through additional funding streams from other corporate and individual donors and Care Bears own fundraising initiatives.

"Through our association with the N3TC, and the credibility it has brought to our project, we have been successful in our application for charity entries for the 2017, 2018 and 2019 Two Oceans Marathon Initiatives, which is a wonderful opportunity for exposure of the project and a fundraiser for us annually."





Project Gateway

Years Funded: Seven
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **M**



The Gateway School of Fashion working with the Fashion industry and local crafters has benefited from N3TC's funding that is helping young designers enter the world of fashion.

Learners from the school have received financial support to purchase fabrics and trims that they would not normally be able to afford to produce stunning outfits that are now being judged by the top fashion influencers in KwaZulu-Natal.

Gaining access to the world of fashion and making a name for oneself is complex, expensive and somewhat challenging. Through the Gateway School of Fashion, the designers have been able to enter their creations into the Tsogo Sun Sprint held at the Pietermaritzburg Racecourse, and some spectacular outfits were noted by the Judges.



These shows are expensive but with the funding from N3TC the School of Fashion was able to give its young designers the opportunity to attend these shows and gain experience and exposure to the industry.

The School's annual Fashion Show is held on the 'platform' of the railway station, the same station that Gandhi was evicted from a first-class carriage more than 100 years ago. The Fashion Show encourages the young designers as they 'hone' their craft and present their works to the audience and potential 'buyers' of their products.

Many learners that pass through the Gateway School of Fashion and Craft programme now generate an income for themselves and their families.

"I have now started formalising my business especially making clothes for bigger people. I like to see them wearing clothes that really fit them well."



"I can now advertise my business via social media, create a brand using a slogan and a logo that is not stolen from someone else. They have taught me to think for myself."

Our Heroes

Ayanda Mkhize

By Nikki Brighton

*fashion
statements...
the fabric
of his being*



Ayanda Mkhize sleeps with a notebook and pen beside his pillow.

"You just never know when inspiring thoughts and dreams will arrive. I need to write or draw quickly before it disappears into the night."

Ayanda's life has been challenging – he was orphaned young and relied on food parcels from NPOs to survive. After matric, he took every opportunity he could – including a short stint studying Mechanical Engineering and a learnership in Wholesale and Retail Operations.

"All the time, I kept drawing – landscapes, portraits and fashion. I drew happy pictures when I was happy and sad ones when I was struggling."

While creative life is not particularly valued in Mpophomeni, someone noticed and suggested he apply to the Project Gateway School of Fashion. The course was full, but luckily for Ayanda, someone dropped out and space

became available. He had to catch up fast after missing the first sessions of the 2017 year and went on to win 2nd place as Designer of the Year in the first year.

"The best thing about being part of the Fashion School is the support and love I have received. This is my family," he says with obvious joy. "Even when I had a difficult time in 2018 and couldn't attend, they found sponsors to help me with the fees and transport to classes. Without this, I would not be here."

At the Durban July 2019, Ayanda was placed in the top ten in the Classic Racewear Female category for his colourful ensemble – repaying the faith that the school had in him. The winning garment, modelled by fellow student Pamela Shabalala, created from donated off cuts in his favourite African print, really stood out in the crowd. He also won Best Dressed Female at the Dundee July for a striking black and white striped garment that he designed. "I am going to be famous", he declares earnestly, "I don't like being in the limelight, but my name will be well known in future".

He has his brand all sorted - Jaque - a name his grandmother gave him. "I will design with unusual fabrics and add interesting details like pockets and belts. Ayanda is keen to learn how to create his own fabrics, particularly batik and after graduating plans to learn to make shoes and handbags to ensure that he will be an all-round designer.

Without a doubt, Ayanda is in line for a few more Fashion Show awards. He has probably already sketched those colourful designs.



Tsa Lapeng Designs

Years Funded: Ten
Province: Free State

Route Key: **D**

Tsa Lapeng designs was the brainchild of Harrismith entrepreneur and manufacturer of quality knitwear, Rheola van den Bosch.

Eleven years ago, Rheola loaded yarns, needles, patterns and a bucket-load of enthusiasm into her car and set out to Moholokoeng, a community on the outskirts of Harrismith, where she began teaching a group of unemployed ladies various skills that could potentially help them earn an income. Little did she know then that her initiative would expand and grow into small enterprises that today are feeding families and changing lives.

The skills taught included crochet, knitting, beading, jewellery making and other crafts. The focus was, predominantly, on crochet – Rheola's personal passion – and their items were marketed through Rheola's store in Harrismith. Already a small income stream was flowing into Moholokoeng.

The project has since grown and matured into a small enterprise that currently employs five ladies full-time. Tsa Lapeng is an institution today, it has been responsible for equipping the mothers, grandmothers, aunts and sisters of Moholokoeng with more than the basic craft skills of those early days spent in a small, cold and dilapidated hall on the property of the resident Traditional Leader. Today these ladies have access to sewing machines, overlockers and other clothing manufacturing resources in their homes and at Rheola's premises in Harrismith, where they are refining the art of patternmaking, design and sewing; and producing clothing that can stand the test of time, quality and design on any Fashion Week 'ramp'.

Rheola, Zeenath and Cecilia continue to teach, train, mentor and guide these ladies and most importantly market their items in Harrismith and other leading stores in key tourist destinations in the Free State and KwaZulu Natal.



The project, however, is more than providing women with a skillset and an income, it has restored dignity, pride and self-worth in a community that is familiar with poverty and exclusion.

An inspiring story that will bear testimony to a legacy for generations to come.



Mooi River Business Development and Support Centre

Years Funded: One
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **I**

“The Mooi River WOWBIZ centre has been welcomed by the Bruntville and surrounding communities, as the need for its services were identified through in-depth community engagements in the year preceding its launch. The franchise is owned and managed by Innocent Mncube and Thembi Mkhize, both of whom live in Bruntville.”

Africa!Ignite, in partnership with N3 Gateway Tourism Association created the Mooi River WOWBIZ Centre as a viable and sustainable social franchise.

The purpose of the centre is to understand the business needs of local communities and support small businesses and emerging enterprises. The centre provides a range of business development support services through establishing a more inclusive business and tourism sector. Contributing to job creation, enterprise development and transformation within Bruntville, Mpofana and surrounding municipalities.

Typical businesses targeted are local tourism, craft, manufacturing and

other 'supply-chain linked' enterprises. The centre is open to all businesses that may need support with business registration, SARS compliance and other essential business services. Additional services provided at the centre include document solutions such as photocopying, printing and binding, and business access services such as high-speed internet, hot-desking and access to financial services such as facilitating funding applications.

N3TC has invested in the Mooi River project, which is primarily funded by the IDC. The WOWBIZ model is being piloted by Africa!Ignite at three locations in KwaZulu-Natal namely, Mooi River, Khula Village and Ilembe.

Over the next two years, Africa!Ignite and N3 Gateway will provide mentorship and coaching to the WOWBIZ team to ensure that the business can grow while delivering essential services to support local economic development.





Babanentse Co-operative

Years Funded: Six
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **I**

"In my opinion someone owning a business must be business minded, and if you start a business you have to communicate with other people that have businesses and learn something from them."

N3TC's funding support provided to Babanentse has helped transform the business over the years. The Co-Operative has been able to purchase new machines, materials and office equipment that has helped improve their operations and ensure better business practices.

Babanentse has big visions for its clothing and textile manufacturing business and aims to own a factory with an outlet or market that will support the local community and create employment one day.

The Co-Operative continues to supply quality clothing and textiles to local schools, as well as tourism and commercial businesses in the KwaZulu Natal region, predominantly; but with the determination and desire to succeed demonstrated in this group of entrepreneurs their market should grow and their dreams will be realised.

Babanentse too is community minded and spirited and often donate items to local schools for their sport's teams as part of their contribution to social investment and community upliftment.





Topsy Holistic Early Childhood Development

Years Funded: Five
Province: Mpumalanga

Route Key: **B**



"Topsy's presence has a noticeable impact on the wellbeing of children and their families. The Topsy staff complement is mostly made up of members of the local communities, therefore the programme is creating far-reaching opportunity within the area."

Topsy has expanded its Early Childhood Development (ECD) programme to reach more children and provide a more comprehensive holistic offering to communities and their families. This approach includes improving the health, nutrition, learning capacity and overall wellbeing of disadvantaged children from birth to the age of five.

Topsy is building capacity by increasing access to relevant and appropriate programmes and services in support of and in response to the expressed needs of the communities that it serves.

It is encouraging active community involvement in the education and the care of young children through an integrated approach to their

developmental needs. At the same time giving the children hope and instilling dignity by supporting their emotional and social needs.

Topsy's approach, being holistic, views the whole family as important – in this instance where a village helps raise a child – and therefore focuses on strengthening the ability of families and communities to provide love, care and protection to their children. At the same time catering to improving access to primary healthcare and addressing their health and wellbeing needs.

Topsy's influence in the community has far reaching benefits. From establishing food gardens in community centres and individual households, to providing support that assists families to function effectively and taking care of any health-related concerns, Topsy is leaving an indelible mark on the children in its programme but more importantly securing their future.

Topsy's Holistic ECD services include:

- Stimulation and Early Learning
- Nutritional Support
- Medical Support
- Psycho-social Support
- Support for Parental Skills



Central Drakensberg Information and Booking Centre

Years Funded: Four
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **F**



The crucial role of information offices in sustainable tourism

*By Chris Hearne, Central Drakensberg
Information & Booking Centre*

By way of introduction some thought needs to be given to what tourism is, the role it plays in the current and future well-being of the country's people and the effect it has, both positive and negative, on the environment.

As a business aimed at sustaining traditional tourism, the information centre model has apparently become problematic. Traditionally information centres doubled as booking offices for various accommodation venues in a tourism area. Businesses paid commission to information offices as a means of augmenting their own marketing efforts. However, the advent of online booking has disrupted this pattern substantially and the latest figures show that over 70% of all tourism bookings are made via the internet, either directly with the chosen venue or via one of the online booking sites such as Booking.com and AirBnB. This has resulted in the impending demise of non-publicly funded information centres, as their primary source of income has been severely curtailed.

Is this, in itself, a bad thing? The internet has its place as a source of information for tourists. However, this is done prior to their arrival and the web information will only be useful if it is accurate and up to date. The requirement to keep information up to date makes a powerful case for why professionally administered, knowledge-based information centres are crucial to the growth and future sustainability of any tourism area. In addition, the tourism information centre plays a critical role in acting as a conduit between the tourist and the industry



Maintaining a sustainable balance

Ultimately sustainability in the tourism industry revolves around the number of tourists visiting any one region. The greater that number, the greater the volume of business that can be supported and increased employment opportunities created. However, the more tourists that visit a destination, the greater amount of waste is generated. Here information centres need to play an important role in ensuring businesses understand this dynamic and that best practice management structures are in place and effectively practiced. In addition, many activities in environmentally sensitive areas, such as the Drakensberg World Heritage Site, should only accommodate a limited number of visitors on a daily basis to ensure healthy carrying capacity limits are maintained. Information centres fulfil a critical role in ensuring that such vital information is conveyed timeously to visitors in an area. Further, information centres are up to date on an ongoing basis with resource requirements within the local area and can play a role in matching skills needs with training interventions.

Local Knowledge

Local, provincial and national expertise is a vital component of any information office whose personnel need to be able to converse

accurately and competently on subjects as diverse as local attractions and the variety of available accommodation. While tourists surf the internet and make bookings for their accommodation online, the vast majority head straight to the local information centre on arrival at their destination. The concept that 'print is dead' is untrue. Invariably, once all the questions have been answered, the tourist collects as many brochures as possible relating to what they want to do and see during their visit. The information centre's advice regarding their next destination is also often sought. Typically, enquiries relate to road conditions as well as possible scenic routes to get there. All of this relies on the personal knowledge and experience of the tourism information officer.

Mentorship

The information centre should come into direct contact with the tourism trade as a whole and can influence the direction and practices of the industry by creating a link between the tourist and local B&Bs, hotels and local entrepreneurs. Numerous opportunities exist for cottage

industry businesses to thrive within tourism nodes. The making of soap, candles and even staff uniforms are businesses that can be easily established in rural areas. However, emerging business owners benefit immensely from mentors who can give advice to ensure products are up to standard while also encouraging the tourism stakeholders to support the small businesses rather than just using the traditional mainstream companies. This responsibility should not rest with the information centres alone but should be monitored by the local tourism departments. Within South Africa, the information office also fronts as an outlet for cottage industries and rural crafters.

Education

Information centres play a vital role in facilitating education across the tourism value chain, including schools.

There is always an abundance of out-dated tourism material which can be used to enlighten the children not only about their local area, but about places further away. While, for example, it may matter to the tourist that they are being shown a year-old brochure of the bushman paintings at Giants Castle; for a learner, the exposure gained is much more important than the brochure date. The learner becomes aware of something that was created hundreds of years ago that exists in his or her immediate environment totally unbeknown to them. One such tourism awareness project that is being run in conjunction with the Central Drakensberg Information Centre and The Drakensberg Experience, the local tourism association, is the Proud Schools Project which is striving to instill better sustainable tourism knowledge to some 5,000 school children. Its motto is *Pride in Self, Pride in School and Pride in Community* where ten schools are being tutored from within the Central and Northern Drakensberg region of KwaZulu Natal.

In the South African context, there is much discussion on 'over tourism' relating to destinations such as the Kruger National Park and Cape Town. A solution put forward is to encourage visitors to go elsewhere, a domain where a knowledgeable information centre can play an important role as there are numerous other 'Big 5' destinations around South Africa. Competent and knowledgeable information officers play a critically important role in advising tourists of other, equally exciting options.



Information centre – institutional requirements

In order for an information centre to fulfill its roles, certain institutional requirements need to be in place. Of paramount importance is adequate, ongoing funding and the will (especially on the part of authorities) to train staff and create permanent positions as well as stable income stream for business owners. Currently, public sector information offices are staffed in part by tourism interns. This is not a viable model, as positions are short term, with personnel often rotating frequently. Internships create an expectation of permanent employment at the onset of training only for these expectations to be crushed a few months later when the next intern is brought in and the whole process repeats itself. In addition, funds need to be made available for the officers themselves to experience, not only the local tourism offerings, but to gain firsthand knowledge of areas further afield. There is no short-cut to experience to enhance knowledge.

One cannot over-emphasize the crucially important role that competent and knowledge driven information offices play in ensuring tourists are suitably informed and their vacation

experience in any region of the country as a whole is made as unforgettably gratifying as possible. 'Word of mouth' is a very important cost-effective marketing tool. One positive referral or review can result in any number of future inbound tourist arrivals. Conversely, negative comments regarding lack of professionalism or knowledge on the part of information office staff, without the necessary abilities or passion, can undo any amount of positive marketing efforts. It is surely no coincidence that in European cities such as Amsterdam, where tourists outnumber the local inhabitants by fourteen to one, there is a very substantial information centre, filled with books, brochures and all manner of information pertaining to the Netherlands. These information offices are staffed by teams of highly competent, dedicated people.

There is no question that the information centre's role is vitally important to the South African tourism industry and cannot be replaced by a computer or smart phone. However, and most importantly, these offices must to be professionally staffed and adequately funded.



Our Heroes



Cavern Choir

By Nikki Brighton

*Singing
to the beat
of the
'Berg'*

After lunch at The Cavern you shouldn't be surprised to hear the bar lady humming a beautiful tune or strains of *Maskandi* wafting down the passage from the kitchen. Pot washer, Sakhile Nqubuka, sings bass in the Cavern Choir and loves to drown the noise of clattering pans with song.

The Cavern Choir started many years ago, when gratuities soared whenever staff sang happy birthday to guests. When voices are this beautiful, it seems a pity to hide them in the

kitchen. Chef, Collen Zwane admits to breaking into song when he has a particularly boring repetitive task (all those onions to chop!) to finish.

While almost 30 staff members are part of the choir – whoever is on duty on a particular evening, participates. They perform for guests twice a week after dinner. During the afternoon break some play soccer or watch movies while others practice for the choir.

"Singing is in our blood," says Collen, "we are happy to do choir practice and play soccer on the other days."

Mpume Mkhize is the leader of the choir. She has been at the Cavern for seven years. "We used to sing gospel but changed to traditional Zulu wedding songs because they are fun,





and guests love them. We have many guests who come over and over again, so when we hear they will be here, we practice some new songs for them."

Mpume remembers two older ladies who wanted to sing in the choir but who were not that good at the dance moves. "Thulani used to laugh and laugh so much, falling on his knees, that it became part of the performance, with the guests all laughing too!"

The nature guides and the nannies, the receptionist and the housekeepers join in once the last table has been cleared and

guests are comfortable on the couches. All decked out in traditional gear, with voices raising the roof of the lounge, one is transported right into a cultural event in the neighbouring *amaZizi* tribal area where community is strong, and traditions are upheld with pride.

"We put our spirit into the songs. We want the guests to feel it and experience the real thing," enthuses Neh. She and fellow waitress Khanyisile Hlatshwayo sing alto, waiter and tenor Nkosinathi Mlangeni loves performing traditional songs, getting out his very best dance moves for every occasion.

Steward, Nompilo Mabaso sings at home all the time with her family. When she arrived at the Cavern, her sister was remembered for her lovely voice, so she was immediately commandeered to join the choir. She often sings the soprano solo.

"We are like a family here at The Cavern. It is good to live here and work close to our homes," says Nompilo.

The Cavern supports 16 schools in the *amaZizi* area where their staff have homes, providing a daily meal, improving facilities and the quality of education. The Cavern family extends far beyond the choir – transforming lives in the surrounding community and creating unforgettable memories for guests who travel from afar and leave with Zulu melodies and mountain landscapes embedded in their hearts.



The background of the slide is a composite image. The lower half shows three small green seedlings with two leaves each, growing out of dark, rich brown soil. The upper half is a soft-focus green background with numerous small, bright white water droplets, suggesting a mist or rain. On the right side, there is a large, semi-circular blue overlay that contains the title text.

Community Training



COMMUNITY TRAINING

Treverton Schools Educator Skills Development

Years Funded: Nine • Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **I**



The Educator Skills Development in Environmental Learning project has, with N3TC's support, had a significant impact on teaching in the KwaZulu Natal region of the N3 Corridor.

From the initial stages of basic workshops on general environmental education to what is today a fully accredited course that is Rhodes University certified and endorsed by the South African Council of Education, the project has far exceeded all expectations.

Initially the schools and teachers were not too sure about participating in the workshops. Now there is a waiting list of teachers who would like to attend. Invitations to attend the workshops are sent from the Circuit Manager of the Department of Education who defines which teachers may attend. This gives an indication of the importance both teachers and the Department are placing on the training.

While some tweaks and adjustments have been made to the course over the years, significant changes have been implemented in 2019. Some of these changes include:

- The updated course content focuses on Indigenous and Heritage Knowledge, a first for South Africa. A Professor from Rhodes University who specialises in Indigenous Knowledge will co-facilitate the course.
- Private school teachers are paying participation costs to attend the course.
- Information on the course will be included in reports to universities in Japan and Germany.
- Resource material is presented to participants on flash drives (to reduce impact on the environment and costs).



- Evaluation of the course will be conducted by Rhodes University.
- The course has moved away from being grade and subject specific to phase specific.
- The concept of Education for Sustainable Development (not only Environmental Education) forms part of the course structure.

Of paramount importance is the subsequent benefit of the training on the schools and learners. While the quality of the course being presented needs to meet the requirements set by Rhodes University, it is equally important that teachers leave the course feeling more confident in the subject and equipped with the skills and knowledge to promote learning in their class.

Teachers personally comment on the fact that they recognise their confidence has grown and are more enthusiastic in the classroom.

It has become apparent to the facilitators of the courses that the teachers' abilities, environmental comprehension and content knowledge has improved over the years, which is benchmarked as they start the course. This is attributed to the in-service training and support which is given to teachers as part of their qualification.

A further benefit of the training has been the fact that many schools are now adopting a whole-school approach to environmental awareness and not merely a teaching and learning outcome.

The project allows for continuous growth through a formal evaluation process coupled with networking through a national programme, which is led by the Higher Education Institutions with Rhodes University overseeing the progress. The Department of Education's interest in the course not only ensures that standards are maintained but facilitates requirements within the area.





COMMUNITY
TRAINING

SMILE Classroom Teacher Training and Support

Years Funded: Five • Province: Free State and KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **C** **M**



S.M.I.L.E.'s focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning in English as the core foundation for improved proficiency in community schools is making inroads throughout the N3 Corridor.

The extent of S.M.I.L.E.'s influence and support has grown and developed markedly over the past five years as a result of N3TC's funding. To date, S.M.I.L.E. is supporting 11 primary schools, 40 high schools and subsequently over 16 200 learners along the N3 Corridor.

To enhance the teaching and learning process, S.M.I.L.E. developed English Learner Books, Readers and Teacher Guides for daily use. S.M.I.L.E. more recently developed exciting new English Home Language Learners Books – designed around the social media framework to meet the needs of current Grade 10, 11 and 12 learners.

In 2018 S.M.I.L.E. extended its reach into the rural districts within the N3 Corridor as teachers in these areas receive little guidance from District Curriculum Advisors in teaching English Home Language, making it meaningful by design.

In June 2019 S.M.I.L.E.'s new Grade 8 English Home Language publication was introduced into nine N3TC-supported high schools. This publication is the foundation of critical English Home Language skills for high school learners.

Skills Training Workshops are an integral part of S.M.I.L.E.'s support for teachers and schools. In February this year, 30 Grade 8, 10, 11 and 12 teachers from eight high schools in the N3 Corridor attended S.M.I.L.E.'s Planning Workshops to enable them to embed the basics of



planning – teaching without planning is doomed to failure – and S.M.I.L.E. has provided much needed guidance in this area to boost teachers' confidence and expertise.

"I have been through your books and they are so very helpful. As a cluster co-ordinator I was asked by the Subject Advisor to represent the Ladysmith District at Provincial level at a Provincial materials development workshop in Ladysmith. I took S.M.I.L.E.'s Grades 8, 10, 11 and 12 Books to show them to the panel. The entire Province was represented at this Workshop. Everyone was mesmerised by the structure and content. A sincere and heartfelt appreciation to you and your team for revolutionising our approach to English Home Language. We are truly blessed to have been selected to use the books and have this resource at our disposal." **Ms Fathima Rassack – Teacher, Drakensberg Secondary School**

"I really want to say thank you for everything you have done in creating these incredible textbooks. The layout and content really reflect the passion of everyone involved in creating this wonderful resource and the desire to really help our students. The entire English Department at Harvest High

School are extremely grateful for all your help and support."

Mr Hagan Nash Principal, **Harvest High School**

"The Grade 8 textbook gems are such a blessing and we are SO happy with them. They are on their way to get covered and then we shall devour them! A BIG THANK YOU to all of you for your kindness and generosity." **Mr Noelin Naidoo – English HOD, Alexandra High**

The Grade 8 English Home Language Learners Textbook and Teacher Guide have been well received countrywide and the enthusiasm among teachers for the Grade 9 Learners Book for 2020 bodes well for the future of English in schools.

S.M.I.L.E.'s reputation has spread far and wide and each year S.M.I.L.E. receives requests from schools and teachers for classroom assistance. N3TC is contributing extensively to S.M.I.L.E.'s national initiative - 'One Teacher One Textbook Many Learners' - building critical English language proficiency among teachers and learners, and touching thousands of lives in the process.



Our Heroes



Nosipho Mnguni

By Nikki Brighton

*Where
wisdom, love
and
understanding
abounds*

When there are 72 learners in your English class, you need to ensure your lesson is well prepared. Seriously well prepared.

Nosipho Mnguni knows this and makes certain that her classes are smooth and productive by being exceptionally organised.

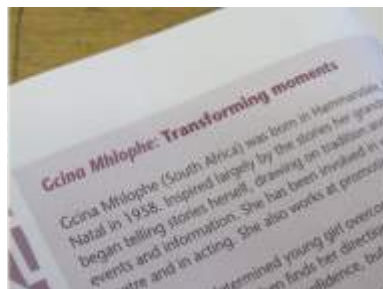
"Our school days start at 6.30 am, most teachers are already there at that time. We assist learners with queries and get our admin sorted before classes start at 7.30."

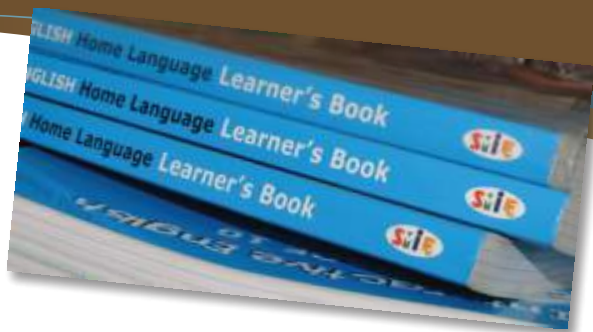
Menzi High School in Umlazi is renowned for producing good results and capable, confident learners. Principal, Ms Ntombela Muntu, is proud of the fact that they have achieved 100% pass rate in Matric for the past seven years. Amongst the many distinctions are English First Additional Language – which she puts down to the dedicated efforts of her team of teachers.

"When we needed a new English teacher, I knew I wanted Mrs Mnguni. Not only is she an excellent teacher, she soon became a Head of Department for Languages and is now one of my two female Vice-Principals. Women leadership changes a school – we are firm and disciplined but we care about the learners and make them feel at home."

There is wisdom, love and understanding in abundance.

24 years ago, Nosipho was a young English teacher at Ndengetho High outside





Kwandengezi in Mariannhill. Here she encountered S.M.I.L.E for the first time. S.M.I.L.E provided her with user-friendly English First Additional Language Books and mentorship.

Head of S.M.I.L.E, Daniela Browne recalls "We could see her potential from the start and were delighted when she applied to become a facilitator at S.M.I.L.E. She spent 10 years with us becoming our Senior Trainer and then Coordinator of all our Classroom Teacher Training Programmes." These were very happy years for Nosipho.

Whilst at Ndengetho, Nosipho was invited to a memorable six-week writing workshop in Indiana, USA.

"As the only African in the group, I had to answer many questions and realised that I was representing my country and the continent."

On one occasion an author brought in a book she had written, which had been translated into many Nguni languages, "I was so excited and asked if I could read the isiZulu version, then the isiXhosa version

and the Ndebele as well! Everyone was amazed and I felt so proud of the diversity of South Africa."

While S.M.I.L.E was a marvellous place to work, Nosipho had a young family to care for and could not afford to spend so much time travelling. She decided to go back to teaching in Umlazi (where she grew up) and Menzi High was determined to have her.

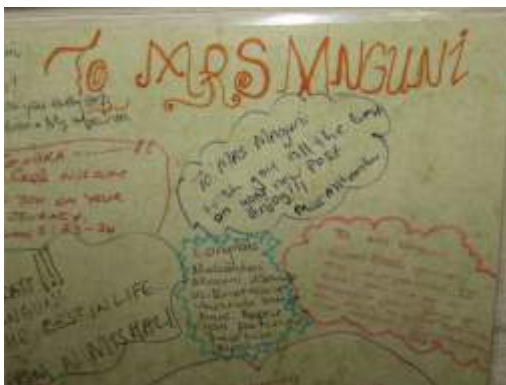
"I hope I am making sense", Nosipho asks the 72 students riveted by her lesson on Gcina Mhlope's book '*Transforming Moments*'. Everyone is eager to volunteer their answers and does so eloquently when she calls their name. Clearly, she has built confidence along with proficiency in English.

"Good English is essential these days. Besides helping students in all other subjects, it is essential to access Google Maps, banking, mainstream movies," she smiles, being a big fan of Netflix.

"I advise my learners to keep their dictionaries close at hand, I have one next to my bed and the Oxford App on my phone, I consult it often. One should never stop learning. I am passionate about the emancipation of women, primarily through education and self-realisation."

After leaving school at 4pm, spending time with her family, finishing the day's marking and jotting down reflections in her journal, Nosipho sleeps well. She knows that she is as well prepared as possible to help learners take responsibility for their lives.

Is it any wonder that Menzi High had 4885 applications for just 250 places last year?





Midlands Community College Digital Literacy for ECD Practitioners

Years Funded: Two
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Key: **J**

"The computer room at Midlands Community College, is available to students to use after class and in the evenings, to maximise their opportunities for online access and resources. We see this facility and course, as a potential game changer for learners who do not have the confidence or skills to study further in an online environment."

Midlands Community College is in a unique position to have a fully equipped computer room, that can seat forty people, coupled with an accredited service provider for ICDL (International Computer Driver's License) Africa. An entry point into computer literacy is the Digital Citizen Plus course.

This course is ideal for Early Childhood Development (ECD) practitioners who have little experience of computers and the internet.

ECD Practitioners from thirty-nine ECD Centres in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands participated in the course this year. These practitioners are supported by the Solon-funded *Inspiring and Equipping ECD Practitioners*



Programme, which includes the College's mobile toy library. The ECD centres are situated in Howick, Mooi River, Mpophomeni, Estcourt, Loskop, Ntabamhlope and Hlatikulu.

Designed to establish a basic understanding of computers and the internet, the course builds the confidence of practitioners and allows them access to:

- Online higher education opportunities;
- Interactive online learning such as the PLAY SA course;
- Online applications such as Care Up, African Story Book; and
- Accessing, downloading and printing educational resources.

Upon completion of the five-day course, learners are assessed according to ICDL assessment practice, and if deemed competent, they are issued with a Digital Citizen Plus certificate.

Providing ECD practitioners with a practical skill such as this will have far reaching benefits. Young minds are always hungry for knowledge and with access to additional resources and support services, these practitioners will be able to nurture and grow young minds into well educated, thinking adults.



*Community
Events*

COMMUNITY
EVENTS

N3TC Drak Challenge

Years Funded: Nine • Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Map: 



The destination is Underberg, a 'sleepy hollow' in the southern Drakenberg known for idyllic views and cold, snowy winters. But it comes alive in the summer months as the Umzimkulu River flows through the valley (on a good rainy season, that is)... at times one can hear a gentle trickle as the river flows gently over giant boulders in parts of the riverbed; and at other times it gushes through the valley and the boulders are lost to sight.

This is the story of the N3TC Drak Challenge. A true community-owned and organised event on the South African canoeing calendar. It is known for outstanding paddling in some of the cleanest water in South Africa, it is recognised for outstanding organisation and most of all for an incredibly fun, exhilarating and challenging time.

From racing down the river for the top paddlers in the country to those portaging across more difficult river terrain it is a race for one and all – beginner, advanced, amateur and elite. It is an event that caters for the family and supports local charities, changing lives one stroke of the paddle at a time.

The N3TC Drak Challenge has been the recipient of awards from Canoeing South Africa in recognition of its organisation and contribution to canoeing in South Africa. More than 5000 entrants in the past seven years have been able to enjoy this event but more importantly the local community has been able to provide superior quality event service and delivery as a result of N3TC's investment in the event but more importantly in the community the event ultimately serves.



The Underberg village is alive with paddlers, supporters, families and media for the annual N3TC Drak Challenge, the array of accommodation venues are filled to capacity and restaurants and cafes are brimming with people as locals scuttle around making sure that their guests' every desire is met, with a smile and a genuine heart of hospitality – that is the spirit of this community.

With N3TC's support the Drak Challenge team, entirely comprised of volunteers from the community, has been able to continuously improve the event and the service offered to paddlers. Typically, 'no stone is left unturned' as planning is undertaken year-on-year with a critical view to ensuring that every aspect of the event is well managed, executed and delivered so that every paddler has an incredible but safe experience.

Equally important to the Drak Challenge team is the contribution the event makes to supporting local charities, organisations and community projects. This makes a significant difference to the lives of those living in Underberg and the surrounding communities as the spin-off benefits have far reaching impact.

The race acts as a significant fund-raising platform for local community projects. Some are environmentally focussed such as the eradication of Wattle along the Umzimkulu River, others have contributed to the education of children in the community through its support of Underberg Primary School and the vulnerable members of the Underberg community, the residents of Pevensey Place, are taken care of.

As the popularity of the N3TC Drak Challenge has grown it has been able to attract additional investment that further supports these initiatives. Another significant partner, FNB, recently signed up and is contributing to further amplify and secure the future of the event.

The N3TC Drak Challenge is but one of many other local events, but it is a highlight on the Underberg calendar and has fast grown into one of N3TC's most significant community event investments that touches lives near, far and wide.



COMMUNITY
EVENTS

Meals on Wheels Cycle Race

Years Funded: Nine • Province: Gauteng

Route Map: **A**



As the infamous saying goes, 'dynamite comes in small packages', and there is no better example of this than that of Louis Harmse from Spectrum Sport – founder and organiser of the annual Meals on Wheels Cycle Race.

Louis is an avid cyclist, a Comrades Marathon enthusiast, founder of the Ironman in South Africa and sports event organiser extraordinaire. And despite these accolades Louis remains humble, family focused and dedicated to supporting the vulnerable members of South African society.

This is the magnitude of the man behind the Meals on Wheels event, but he is the first to mention that he cannot do it alone and relies on a much bigger team to support him. His team includes many members of his family as well as his beautiful wife Rinette, who quietly supports and encourages Louise while anticipating what he may be thinking or wanting to achieve. A formidable husband and wife team!

"It is thanks to the generous support from N3TC that the first Meals on Wheels Cycle Race kicked off at Sedaven in Heidelberg nine years ago." **Louis Harmse**

It was a chilly and windy day in September 2013, when 290 entrants lined up for the first race. It was a tough one as the cyclists battled gusty conditions but the team celebrated the R26 000 that was raised for Meals on Wheels in the area and would further support them in the delivery of nutritious, healthy and wholesome meals to less-fortunate elderly citizens and vulnerable children in the communities they serve. It was a resounding success for Louis and the team.



Today, the Meals on Wheels race has become a sought-after qualifying race in South Africa. Its location makes it unique and cyclists enjoy the beautiful mountains and scenery of the Soutpansberg. It's the day that the city 'slickers' descend on the quaint village of Sedaven to enjoy a day out while cycling for a good cause.

Entries have naturally grown over the years with over 900 received in 2018 and the profit donated to Meals on Wheels was R149 000 – even more reason to celebrate was the fact that the proceeds from the race had doubled in two years.

In 2018, the road met the trails of the Soutpansberg. As the team introduced a challenging trail run to complement the speedy road race. Despite a somewhat small field participating in the first event, it is anticipated that the trail run will grow.

One runner mentioned: *"This is such a beautiful route. I will definitely come every year. The event was inspiring and lifted my spirits."*

Local ECDs (Early Childhood Development Centres) next to Sedaven managed the water points and community members were invited to participate. Some of the income from the trail run will benefit the ECD centres as well as the Pathfinder Association that focuses on developing young leaders for our country.

The Meals on Wheels Cycle Challenge and now the Sedaven Trail Run certainly brings the

community together to make a difference in thousands of people's lives.

The community impact linked to the event is having far-reaching affect. The Meals on Wheels event is one of their major fundraisers for many local charities as they host water points, food stalls and provide additional services that contribute to the event's offering.

Through the Meals on Wheels event more than 25 local ECD centres were identified and have received valuable training over the last three years through N3TC's support and interventions.

Sindile Ntanda the principal of Siphiliswe Day Care Centre at Sedaven said that the Meals on Wheels event gave them opportunities they would not have had otherwise. *"Because of N3TC we not only benefit from the race but from training provided by Lusa. We have grown so much, and we can see the difference in our children. We now send school ready children to Grade 1. We are empowered. Thank you so much N3TC for the Meals on Wheels race and the training."*

While one may think that supporting an event of this nature only benefits the entrants that is really not the case in a truly community-spirited context. In the case of the Meals on Wheels Cycle Challenge that supports many local communities – their people, children and the elderly – and showcases the Heidelberg region, it is contributing to the economic growth of the area.



1000 Paws Walk for SPCAs

Years Funded: Six
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Map: 



"A far wider range of sponsors now support the event, from insurance companies and other 'corporates' to local retailers and veterinary clinics. The event has also become far more multi-faceted, combining various activities to promote the 1000 Paws Walk."

The 1000 Paws Walk for SPCAs is an annual event, now in its 11th year, and has been a beneficiary of support from N3TC since 2013.

The event is the largest single fundraising event for three participating branches of the SPCA, Pietermaritzburg, Umngeni-Howick, and Mooi River & District. It contributes significantly towards these SPCAs

continued operations and for more outreach work to be done through this increase in funds.

The event is extremely popular, attracting in excess of 1200 people each year (many with their dogs). There are two walks within the grounds of Hilton College, a 2km walk around the playing fields and a scenic 4km walk overlooking Albert Falls Dam.

Families enjoy a day in the open where kids can have fun with their pets, with dog-focused activities, stalls, refreshments, displays and live entertainment.



Royal Drak MTB and Trail Run

Years Funded: Eight
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Map: **F**

"The Royal Drakensberg Primary School inspires the wider community to be better: we don't have to accept litter and harshness as the only way. Children that grow in the happy environment of the school open the eyes of their community members to what can be."

N3TC's decision to support the Royal Drak MTB and Trail Run was based on the fundamental principle that the proceeds of the event contribute to the fund-raising efforts of Royal Drak Primary School. It provides a hand-up to an impoverished community and highlights the importance of a quality education.

Further spin-off benefits are centered around creating awareness of the school, the Northern and Central Drakensberg as a tourist destination and the subsequent economic impact on the local tourism sector through the event.

Royal Drak Primary School provides its learners with hope for a future, but the broader impact on the AmaZizi Tribal Area and the Northern Drakensberg Valley is far reaching.

Community members see how life can be; their children are taught first world ideas in excellent facilities; donors see the growth and improvement in the children; local businesses are inspired to do their part in closing the poverty gap; and visitors contribute towards meaningful support of the community.

N3TC's support touches lives directly and the success is showcased in the children who get the opportunity to learn to read and write and who have a real chance of growing into successful leaders of the future.





Splashy Fen

Years Funded: Four
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Map: 

Splashy Fen is South Africa's oldest music festival. Impi Events took over the operation of this event in 2016, which had an attendance of 2800. In 2019, the event attracted 11 500 people.

With N3TC's support the event has been able to include local rural music acts in the Splashy Fen programme; and cover the costs of their logistics to attend the event. In this way, these artists are gaining a platform to showcase their talent and establish a foundation for ongoing promotion of their music in South Africa.

Over 80 rural musicians have been provided an opportunity to perform at the festival, an opportunity that they wouldn't have had before.

Splashy Fen is yet another community event that contributes to the local economy of Underberg and Himeville and the surrounding rural district communities.





joBerg2c

Years Funded: Ten
Province: KwaZulu-Natal

Route Map:

“N3TC has, by association, been part of the one of the most significant community mountain bike events ever.”

N3TC has supported joBerg2c for 10 years as one of the event's supporting sponsors through its Dropngo2c Supporters Tour and has contributed to creating one of the most incredible multi-stage, world renowned MTB events in South Africa.

joBerg2c works with eight schools and 24 community-run water points, all of which contribute to the fund-raising initiatives of the individual institutions that host these water points. All of which have a direct benefit on their communities and the beneficiaries they serve. The event is also responsible for creating temporary and permanent employment through the development of the trails along the route.

The Nelson Mandela Education programme is the national beneficiary of the event that has been responsible for establishing 14 libraries in rural areas along the joBerg2c route.

joBerg2c also partners with Surgeons for Little Lives – a charity focused on improving post-operative care for children at Baragwaneth Hospital.

The respective schools that benefit from the joBerg2c use the event as their biggest fund raiser for the year. The proceeds have contributed to employing extra teachers, the purchase of school buses, funding new classrooms and essential maintenance at the individual schools.

N3TC through the Dropngo2c Supporters Tour has contributed to profiling the N3 Corridor region and the tourism destinations along the way. By promoting these, predominantly, rural communities as tourism destinations, there is the potential for knock-on economic benefit both during the event and beyond as many supporters return to these destinations on other occasions.

The event, through the support of sponsors like N3TC, is an authentic 'feel-good' story of South Africa.



Geographic Spread





A	LFP Training	Community Training
	Meals on Wheels Cycle Event	Community Events
	LUSA – Gr8Start ECD Project	Enterprise Development
B	Sunfield Fortuna	Enterprise Development
	Topsy Foundation	Child Welfare
		Enterprise Development
C	Free State Eco-Schools Project	Education
D	Free State Care in Action	Child Welfare
	Maluti Child Care Project	Child Welfare
	Tsa Lapeng Designs	Enterprise Development
	Mamello Support Group	Enterprise Development
	Harrismith Primary School	Education: Top-Up Bursaries
	New Horizon College	Education: Top-Up Bursaries
E	Community Medical Services	Road Safety
	N3TC Khanyisile Community Trust	Child Welfare
	BirdLifeSA Nakekela Project	Conservation
	EWT Sungazer & Grasslands Conservation Project	Conservation

F	EWT Drakensberg Crane Project	Conservation
	BirdLifeSA Blue Swallow Project	Conservation
	Drakensberg CDIC	Enterprise Development
	Drakensberg Boys Choir School	Education: Top-Up Bursaries
	Royal Drak Primary School	Education: Top-Up Bursaries Community Events
G	KwaZamokuhle School for the Disabled	Education: Top-Up Bursaries
H	St David's Diocesan School	Education
		Education: Top-Up Bursaries
I	Othandweni	Child Welfare
	Babanentse Co-Op	Enterprise Development
	Senzakahle Primary Co-Op	Enterprise Development
	Treverton Sports Festival	Youth Development
	Treverton Educators' Skill Development in Environmental Learning	Community Training
	Treverton Schools	Education: Top-Up Bursaries
	Care Bears	Enterprise Development
	Mooi River Business Development & Support Centre	Enterprise Development
J	KZN Crane Foundation	Education
		Conservation
	Midlands Community College	Education
	Esiphethwini Sendiza Primary School	Education
K	Midmar Mile	Community Events
	SADD Youth Road Safety Project	Road Safety
	1000 Paws Walk	Community Events

L	Vula Maths and Science Programme	Education
	Midlands Meander Education Programme	Education
	Curry's Post Primary School	Education
	Singakwenza ECD Programme	Enterprise Development
	Midlands Meander Emerging Artists Project	Enterprise Development
	Shea O'Connor School	Education
	Music Voyage	Youth Development
	Funda Nenja	Youth Development
	Lions River Primary School	Education
M	Comrades Marathon	Community Events
	Crystal Springs Primary School	Education
	Project Gateway	Enterprise Development
	PROTEC Pmb	Education: Top-Up Bursaries
	SMILE	Community Training
	iThemba Projects	Enterprise Development
N	N3TC Drak Challenge	Community Events
	Splashy Fen	Community Events
	Underberg Primary School	Education
		Education: Top-Up Bursaries
	Pevensey Place	Disabled
	Underberg Pre-Primary School	Education
O	Trucking Wellness	HIV/AIDS
	Old Mutual joBerg2c	Community Events
	Duduza	Child Welfare
	RCC Crochet Project	Child Welfare





Thank you

