

# NGO wins award for work done in schools

LILLIAN AMOS

Partners for Possibility (PfP) scooped a top award for the work they've been doing at schools across South Africa.

The programme, which is the flagship programme of NGO Symphonia for South Africa (SSA,) was started in 2010 by business consultant, Louise van Rhyn to improve education by pairing school principals with business leaders.

PfP has won the Guardian of Governance Award from the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE), a Qata-based foundation.

The foundation recognises innovative projects that address issues in education.

PfP so far has 850 partners in South Africa which includes schools Sibelius High, Hillwood Primary, Fairmount High Lavender Hill High, Kannemeyer Primary and several other school in the area Southern Mail is distributed to where they've built libraries, raised funds and implemented various positive programmes.

The business leaders pay to participate in a 12-month programme with the various schools but usually continue the relationship long after the stipulated time.

Ms Van Rhyn said the NGO's aim was to help provide quality education for all children in South Africa by 2025.

"The PfP initiative speaks to the idea that enhancing the quality of education, improving the school

environment and encouraging engagement between parents and teachers are meaningful and attainable goals that would provide an upward spiral of real change in society.

"By placing the school at the centre of community, we believe that a radical transformation can be achieved in the education sector.

"School principals learn from business leaders about human resources (HR), information technology (IT) and finances and business leaders learn about life in an under-resourced community," said Ms Van Rhyn.

Partners meet twice a month to design a school plan, lead change and get the community involved.

Ridwan Samodien, principal of Kannemeyer Primary School in Grassy Park, said since the inception of the programme more than 850 former under-resourced schools, a result of the apartheid system, had been touched.

"We have lifted our school out of its former gutter education state and have moved towards providing a quality, holistic education.

"Not only, did I benefit from the collaborations but so have our deputy principal, heads of departments, and staff.

"The resultant benefit is that more and more parents are showing up to take ownership of a 50%-50% partnership with the school and in so doing ensuring that they play their part in the



■ School principal, Ridwan Samodien, librarian Cedric Meyer and Dr Louise van Rhyn from Partners for Possibility (PfP) in 2015 in the library that was funded by PfP.

education of all of our children," said Mr Samodien.

He added that the school also benefited from a new library, a new science laboratory, a new reading adventure room and an upgraded computer room.

"We also have a new hall and a wonderful security fence, affording greater piece of mind. We can easily describe our school as one which has moved to greater

organisational health, simply because of our participation in this wonderful programme," he said.

Charmaine Singh, a senior IT manager, said: "I got such immense value from the programme.

"I had no idea what was going on in school and then when you're closer to the system you see the complexity of the problem," she said.

Mr Samodien encouraged companies to come on board. "We have about 20 000 former under-resourced and under-performing schools in need of support.

"We are appealing to businesses out there, that if you seek a life-changing moment, and really impacting positively on the challenges facing our schools, we extend a warm invitation for you to join us," he said.