An Outcome Evaluation of Partners for Possibility in Hout Bay High School

An evaluation report submitted towards a Postgraduate Diploma in Monitoring and Evaluation Methods at Stellenbosch University

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1. Introduction

This paper reports on an evaluation of a school leadership intervention in Hout Bay High School (HBH). In 2014, the school principal of HBH was partnered with a business leader and they participated in the Partners for Possibility (PfP) programme. Through the year of the programme, they participated in leadership training sessions and began meeting regularly to plan and implement an action plan to improve the school. At the end of the year, the partners decided to continue meeting and working together to improve the school. They are still doing so in November 2017.

The evaluation was conducted between June and November 2017. The evaluation made use of primary data – interviews, group sessions and surveys – and a variety of qualitative and quantitative secondary data sources. It is an outcome evaluation, studying the extent to which the programme achieved the intended outcomes in the principal and ultimately, for learners in the school.

2. Programme description and context

2.1. Programme description: Partners for Possibility

Partners for Possibility is the flagship programme of Symphonia for South Africa, a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) aimed at improving the quality of education in South Africa. The programme started in 2010 and has so far implemented 672 partnerships. The PfP programme design rests on the belief that the quality of school leadership is a major determinant of the quality of education, a belief which is backed by plenty of international literature. The programme further recognises that, while principals in under-resourced schools have limited support and have generally been insufficiently equipped for their task, the South African private sector benefits from internationally competitive leadership skills. PfP draws on the leadership resources in the private sector by partnering principals up with business leaders for a year or more.

The PfP programme consists of three main components which run simultaneously over the course of a year. They are (1) A supportive partnership between the principal and a business leader; (2) Three leadership development workshops; and (3) A community of practice with other partners, which meets regularly throughout the year.

The structure of these components is depicted in Figure 1. As it states, the partners are expected to work on improving the school in specific dimensions. To structure their efforts, they develop an action plan and revisit it throughout the year. It is important to note that the partners embark on the entire PfP process together – they are “matched” at the launch and they attend the workshops and community of practice events together as partners.
Some further useful points to note about the PfP approach:

70-20-10 perspective. PfP describe their programme as 70% action learning (by leading change at the school), 20% developmental relationships and social learning (mainly through the community of practice and reflective thinking in the partnerships) and 10% workshops and training courses. The supportive partnership feeds into all of these elements.

The focus of change is the principal. As the programme theory (presented later) will also make clear, there is a heavy emphasis on empowering the principal. All other change, including changes in the attitudes, skills, behaviour and performance of the senior management team, teachers, parents and wider community, and ultimately learners, happens “through” the principal. The programme is also seen as a leadership development programme for the business partner, but the business partner’s development is in service of the principal and the school.

Non-prescriptive approach. PfP does not prescribe the activities and changes that the partners should focus on at the school. This is significant. There is a risk that partners may embark on inappropriate or unrealistic plans. On the other hand, there are major benefits to this approach. The partners are unique, and their assets will differ – for instance, some business partners have access to substantial financial and social resources while others do not. More importantly, every school is complex and faces unique problems and opportunities. The partners can be truly responsive to the unique situation and can adapt their plan as the situation changes. They are nevertheless given tools and support from the programme, including supportive relationships with other partnerships. This flexible and responsive kind of intervention approach is often advocated for in situations of complexity (Jones, 2011).

Nature of the partnership. The partnership is supposed to be a “mutually beneficial respectful co-learning partnership”. It is characterised by “not knowing” and being “open to learning”. It is particularly important for the business leader to recognise that they do not have the answers.
At the end of the year, the formal programme ends, but partners have the choice whether to end their relationship or to continue it in some form.

2.2. Hout Bay High School

Hout Bay High School (HBH) was founded in 1986 to serve the “coloured” community of Hangberg. Hangberg is on the slopes of the Sentinel mountain and overlooks the Hout Bay harbour. The residents mostly make a living as fishermen or work in the factories on the harbour. Many residents were forcibly removed from other parts of Hout Bay to Hangberg during Apartheid (South African History Online, 2015).

Over the last few decades the fishing industry has declined. The community has a high unemployment rate and faces a range of social challenges. Anecdotally, unemployment and drug abuse are the root of many of the challenges the community faces. There are also political tensions between residents of Hangberg and local government, especially around housing, fishing quotas and poaching (Harrison, 2016; South African History Online, 2015). Naturally, education is affected by these community dynamics. Nearly all the interviewees touched on children’s lack of motivation for, and low value attached to, education. An NGO staff member, who was interviewed for this evaluation, said that she and her colleagues have always considered the environment of Hout Bay High School the most challenging of all those that the NGO works in, including Khayelitsha and Mitchell’s Plain1.

HBH also served the growing community of Imizamo Yethu (IY), a predominantly black African neighbourhood, until Silikamva High School opened in that community in 2013. The last class with a substantial group of learners from IY matriculated from HBH in 2015. HBH now has a smaller and more homogenous student body. Anecdotally, IY learners tended to be more motivated in their education than those from Hangberg.

The current principal, Juan Julius, started as a deputy principal at HBH in 2005. The principal retired shortly thereafter, and Mr Julius served as acting principal for a few months before being appointed in the position in 2008. Mr Julius and his SMT describe the school as having experienced declining academic results over the period of the 1990s and 2000s. They also note that there were negative team dynamics in the SMT, and a negative relationship between parents and the school. After Mr Julius became the principal, he says that dynamics with the SMT and parents improved. Parents were no longer actively acrimonious toward the school, but were still not positively involved in their children’s education as the school would hope. The matric pass rate also improved, from 60% in 2008 to over 80% each year in the four years thereafter. However, the school still had a large dropout rate.

It is important to take this background into account, because clearly, some key outcomes had already improved under the principal’s leadership before PfP became involved. He may already have been exhibiting some of the leadership characteristics that PfP seeks to cultivate in principals. Nevertheless, in 2014, HBH matched many of the characteristics of the PfP problem statement (see programme theory), including limited support from parents and the community, low learner motivation and poor school performance, and a high dropout rate.

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1 Khayelitsha and Mitchell’s Plain are larger and better-known areas which are widely believed to be difficult environments in terms of socio-economic circumstances and education.
3. Evaluation purpose

Over the past few years, PfP has generated plenty of evidence from multiple surveys, evaluations and academic studies, that they produce leadership benefits for school principals. An evaluation of PfP in 20 schools around the country (Hartnack, 2016), as well as an evaluation of 20 schools in Gauteng (Quest Research Services, 2016) both found that the programme had major leadership benefits for principals. In terms of their programme theory, PfP can say that they are quite consistently and convincingly producing this first step towards changing schools. These evaluations and other smaller-N academic studies (Conradie, 2016; Naidoo, 2015) have also found that it is common for the benefits of improved leadership to filter through to senior management teams (SMTs) and teachers, and to result in increased parent involvement in the school.

Although the programme claims that it is ultimately improving educational outcomes for learners, it is harder to prove this, for a few reasons. Firstly, improved education is a long-term outcome; as PfP staff as well as participants emphasise, one should not expect effort to translate into academic results within the first year (Kirori, 2017: 71). A gradual and consistent improvement is desirable, but this means observing the intervention schools’ education outcomes over several years and preferably across several dimensions. It has proven hard to collect this data. Secondly, since improved educational outcomes are the ultimate intended impact, there is a preference for experimental or quasi-experimental designs. This has not yet been feasible for PfP for a variety of reasons. Furthermore, an (quasi-)experimental analysis would only provide an indication of whether the programme achieves this impact, and not how. It would not validate the intermediate steps in the theory of change.

A theory-based outcome evaluation, on the other hand, can trace the programme’s contribution along each of its intended mechanisms of change, as well as any other external factors or unanticipated effects of the programme, all the way to learner-level changes. This is what this evaluation does, thereby shedding light on how change has taken place. It also draws on a few methods from contribution analysis (CA) (Mayne, 2001) to “help managers come to reasonably robust conclusions” (Mayne, 2008) about whether and to what extent the PfP programme contributed to this change.

In order to do the methodology justice, it was important to collect in-depth data across all three levels of outcomes in the results chain. Taking resource constraints into account, the methodology was therefore applied to only one partnership, namely Hout Bay High School. This school was chosen because there was strong evidence of the programme’s positive contribution to the principal’s leadership and strong suggestions that this has led to positive change at the medium-term outcome level. Furthermore, the formal programme intervention took place in 2014, so it is reasonable to expect that, if the theory of change holds, it will be starting to show impact on education by now.

The purpose of the evaluation is thus to demonstrate, with reasonable certainty, the nature and extent of PfP’s contribution to educational outcomes at this school. This is expected to be of benefit to the sponsors of this particular partnership, and to other potential sponsors seeking a vivid example of PfP’s impact.

A secondary purpose is to generate lessons for PfP and for Hout Bay High School. For PfP, the evaluation serves as a trial run of this kind of methodology, to show what kind of data collection and analysis is feasible for inclusion in the programme’s M&E systems. For Hout Bay High School, the
evaluation provides the opportunity for the school’s stakeholders to reflect on the positive changes as well as challenges of the past few years, and to sharpen their awareness of the forces shaping education outcomes. This will hopefully give them fresh insight and renewed energy for the way forward.

To achieve the evaluation’s purpose, it seeks to answer four evaluation questions.

1. Short-term outcomes: To what extent did the quality of the principal’s leadership improve, and what evidence is there that the programme made a difference in this regard?
2. Medium-term outcomes: To what extent was there improvement in the role that the senior management team, teachers, parents and community play in the school, and what evidence is there that the programme made a difference in this regard?
3. Long-term outcomes: To what extent did learners’ educational outcomes improve, and what evidence is there that the programme made a difference in this regard?
4. Which external factors and alternative pathways played a significant role in the observed changes?

A note for the evaluation users

The evaluation reports on whether PfP has made a difference in this school, how significant this difference is, as well as how this difference came about. Readers should not generalise to other PfP interventions the findings on whether the programme made a difference and how significant the difference is. But the evaluation can help readers understand how PfP can make a difference – in other words, the mechanisms through which such partnerships can affect schools. Table 1 tries to make this distinction clear. The hope is that these findings will find application in many other PfP cases.

Table 1. Generalising the findings of this evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This evaluation DOES NOT help us understand...</th>
<th>This evaluation DOES help us understand...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Does PfP generally make a difference?</td>
<td>• How can PfP make a difference to educational outcomes in a school such as Hout Bay High School?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How big a difference does PfP generally make?</td>
<td>• What kind of factors may support, hinder or transform PfP’s contribution to change?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What sources of data can be used to monitor and evaluate whether PfP is making a difference beyond the principal?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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4. Evaluation design and process

4.1. Theory-based outcome evaluation

An outcome is “the state of the target population or the social conditions that a program is expected to have changed” (Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, 2004). An outcome evaluation is concerned with whether the intended changes in outcome have taken place, and how the programme has contributed to these changes. As such, outcome evaluations are concerned with programme effectiveness. They may also assess the (cost-)efficiency of outcomes and the sustainability of programme impact (Mouton, 2014: 165). Outcome evaluations are distinct from process evaluations, which look at more proximal programme results to assess “whether the program is delivered as intended to the targeted recipients” (Rossi et al., 2004).
The evaluation takes a theory-based approach in that it “explicitly integrates and uses stakeholder, social science, some combination of, or other types of theories in conceptualising, designing, conducting, interpreting, and applying an evaluation” (Coryn, Noakes, Westine & Schroter, 2011). This evaluation puts forward a comprehensive programme theory and focuses on the outcomes articulated in it. It also draws lessons from the evaluation findings regarding the comprehensiveness and validity of the programme theory.

4.2. Contribution Analysis

Outcome evaluations are usually distinguished from impact evaluations by whether or not they make claims about causal attribution of the programme to the observed outcomes (Mouton, 2017). Although this is not a fully-fledged impact evaluation, it does seek to increase the reader’s confidence as to whether the programme caused the observed outcomes. It does so by drawing on concepts and methods from Contribution Analysis (CA). In a 2001 article, John Mayne proposed CA as a methodology through which an evaluation can explore and perhaps demonstrate a “plausible association” between the programme and the outcome, in other words, whether:

“a reasonable person, knowing what has occurred in the program, and that the intended outcomes actually occurred, agrees that the program contributed to those outcomes” (Hendricks, in Mayne, 2001: 8)

CA does not produce definitive proof about causality, but reduces uncertainty about it, in a systematic and transparent way, and thereby allows the evaluator to make a well-founded causal claim if there is one to be made. This is a valuable alternative when an experimental design is unfeasible or inappropriate. The evaluation also draws on the CA methodology in two ways. Firstly, it does not just describe outcomes, but explicitly weighs the strength of evidence that the programme contributed to them. Secondly, it deals explicitly with alternative explanations and other contributory factors to change. Because PfP was by no means the only factor influencing change at HBH, the evaluation took a wide lens that included the most salient of these factors, thereby “acknowledging that attribution is indeed a problem” (BetterEvaluation, n.d.), and weighing the relative importance of different contributing factors. (The CA methodology is not applied wholesale, however. For instance, the draft contribution story was not compiled purely from secondary sources before designing and embarking on fieldwork.)

4.3. Overview of the process followed

The evaluation took place in five broad phases, as set out below.

1. **Scoping** (May to August)
   - Review PfP programme documents
   - Introductory interviews
   - Agree on an evaluation focus and draft questions

2. **Planning** (August)
   - Refine the programme theory for use in the evaluation
   - Review literature on education leadership and evaluation methods
   - Exploratory interviews
   - Identify alternative programme pathways and non-programme alternative explanations
   - Develop logic model with indicators
3. **Data collection** (September and October)
   - Choose data collection methods and respondents
   - Develop instruments

4. **Analysis and review of draft findings** (October)
   - Conduct interviews, group sessions, and surveys
   - Obtain secondary documents and data

5. **Reporting** (November)
   - Finalise report
   - Present final results to PfP and school stakeholders (still to be done)

The sections that follow will describe salient elements of this process in more detail, before presenting the findings in section 8.

5. **Programme theory: Why and how is the programme expected to work?**

5.1. **Background to the programme theory**

PFP developed a theory of change (TOC) in 2015 (Figure 2). It shows the programme inputs, activities, outputs, short-term outcomes, medium-term outcomes and impact. It also lists some of its key underlying assumptions (on the right). At the top are two statements: “Quality education for all children by 2022” and “School at the centre of community”, which should be seen as aspirational / vision statements rather than part of the logic being expressed.

Applying the distinction between logic models and theories of change proposed by Patton (2002), this bears most resemblance to a logic model, because it arranges the programme elements logically and provides a good overview of what the programme consists of and what it aims to achieve. Its emphasis is not on the mechanisms of change, e.g. what it is about an “aligned and cohesive” senior management team (a medium-term outcome) that results in changes like an increased matric pass rate (an intended impact). However, the assumptions do illuminate some of the intended mechanisms of change, so it can be argued that it is a hybrid of a theory of change and a logic model. It will be referred to here as a theory of change.

The evaluator met and corresponded with the PFP staff to discuss the theories and processes underlying this theory. In these conversations they refined the 2015 model to be more explicit about the intended mechanisms that PFP expects to activate through its intervention. This process produced the refined TOC (Figure 3) which was then used as the basis for this evaluation. The outputs have been expanded to include relationships (instead of just skills and understanding), and the outcomes and impact levels have been slightly adapted to reflect the PFP staff’s unfolding understanding of their programme. Some intermediate outcomes (indicated with dotted line borders) have been added between the levels to be clearer about mechanisms of change.

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2 With that said, PFP is constantly reflecting on its own work and refining its approach, which is a strength of an organisation working in a complex environment. The TOC used for this evaluation is therefore not definitive.
Figure 2. The PIP theory of change (2015)

UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS

1. The unit of change is the school. After his extensive study of schooling in America, the internationally acknowledged expert in educational improvement, John Goodlad, recognised that the critical unit of change for improving education is the school. The PIP process will change education one school at a time, with every school learning to manage its own unique challenges.

2. The principal is the change leader at the school. A growing volume of literature recognises school leadership as the critical factor in turning around an education system in crisis.

3. The principal needs to be equipped for this task. There is increasing recognition that the highly specialised role of a school principal requires specific knowledge, skills and expertise. However, in South Africa, the majority of school principals are not being sufficiently equipped for their role.

4. Business leaders can support school principals to lead change in their schools and communities. There are thousands of business leaders in South Africa who have been well-equipped to assume leadership positions and manage organisational change. They can support school principals and help them acquire the knowledge, skills and expertise they need.

5. The principal needs an actively engaged team around him or her to make change happen. School staff in South Africa, especially teachers, often feel overburdened, tired and de-energised. Many have become disengaged.

6. School staff need parents and other members of the community to become involved – they can’t lead change alone. Studies show that one of the key differences between schools that succeed and those that fail is the extent to which parents and other community members are involved in the school.

7. Schools can become magnets for gifts and contributions from the community. Many South African citizens are keen to make a contribution, but don’t know how to do so.

8. We can’t expect a quick fix. We need to invest in a school for at least three to five years.

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Figure 3. The PfP theory of change, as refined for use in this evaluation

**Long-term outcomes**
- Academic performance
  - Increasing proportion of students who pass NSC exams
  - Students performing better in standardised tests
  - More students reaching curriculum numeracy and literacy milestones

**Medium-term outcomes**
- SMT Aligned & Cohesive
  - SMT effectively plans, coordinates, and delegates
  - Good working relationships
  - Actively engages staff in decision making
- Teachers – engaged and motivated
  - Express enthusiasm for teaching and learning
  - Less absenteeism, more time on task
  - Clarifies expectations
  - Has courageous conversations
  - Supports rather than instructs teachers

**Parents & Community – engaged**
- Parents, individuals, organisations get involved
- More parents attend school meetings
- Community supporting school initiatives
- Promotes development of teachers’ unique potential
- Proactively engages / collaborates with school stakeholders
- Recognises and celebrates achievements

**Outputs: Skills & Understanding**
- Techniques to enhance one’s own and other’s thinking
- Ability to develop generative relationships
- Skills for dealing with ambiguity and complexity
- Skills and tools for mobilising stakeholders
- Understanding by business leaders of challenges faced by under-resourced schools & communities

**Outputs: Relationships**
- Strong relationship with Partner
  - Provides ongoing listening ear, “being present”
  - Provides access to networks & information
- Connected to fellow principals in a Community of Practice
  - Support network

**PFP Programme Activities**
- Time to Think Workshop
- Flawless Consulting w.shop
- Community Building w.shop
- Communities of Practice
- Leadership Coaching

**PFP Programme Inputs**
- PIP operational staff
- M&E staff
- Learning process facilitator
- Programme funding
- Education & leadership research
- Materials (books, DVDs)

**UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS**
1. The unit of change is the school.
2. The principal is the change leader at the school.
3. The principal needs to be equipped for the task.
4. Business leaders can support school principals to lead change in their schools and communities. Thousands have been well-equipped to assume leadership positions and manage organisational change.
5. The principal needs an actively engaged team around him or her to make change happen.
6. School staff need parents and other members of the community to become involved – they can’t lead change alone.
7. Schools can become magnets for gifts and contributions from the community.
8. We can’t expect a quick fix.
5.2. Narrative discussion

This section provides a narrative description of the TOC depicted above. It supplements the graphic depiction with other PfP programme documents and the explanations of programmes staff. The literature review is integrated into this section, showing where South African and international literature appears to support, complicate and/or contradict the TOC.

Problem statement and fundamental assumptions

The core problem that PfP tries to address is that a majority of schools in South Africa are “failing our children by providing them with a poor education” (Partners for Possibility, n.d.). The indicators of failure are well known. A foundational issue is failure to lay a foundation of literacy and numeracy in the lower grades. About 60% of children do not “learn to read for meaning” by the end of grade 4, leaving them unprepared to learn any other content as they progress (Van der Berg, Spaull, Wills, Gustafsson & Kotze, 2016: 15). The country also suffers from a very high dropout rate. Less than half the number of children who pass grade 2 in a given year, pass grade 12 ten years later (Spaull, 2017). Related to this is youth’s poor mastery of high school subjects, as evidenced by low performance in high school and low pass rates in matric. Other forms of personal development are harder to measure, but it is commonly asserted that South African youth leave school insufficiently equipped to deal with the challenges of a changing world because they lack attributes like self-confidence, entrepreneurism, resilience and critical thinking.

PfP posits that schools produce these poor educational outcomes because they suffer from two key problems (Partners for Possibility, n.d.):

1. **Principals have been promoted from teaching positions into role of principal without being sufficiently equipped for the task of leading an organisation.** This is depicted on the TOC as underlying assumption nr. 3. A recent study entitled *Binding constraints in South African education* again confirmed that “school principals matter for children’s learning” (Van der Berg et al., 2016: 42). Principals require a range of management skills including financial management, people management and change leadership. There is no statistically significant correlation between principals’ formal qualifications and the education outcomes at their schools, reinforcing the notion that the type of education most principals have does not adequately prepare them for their leadership role (Van der Berg et al 2016: 43).

2. **Parents and other citizens give little support to the school.** This is depicted on the TOC as underlying assumption nr. 6. PfP states that “schools that work” feature “an active community of citizens supporting the principal – with finance, HR, facilities, etc. and parents actively engaged (in partnership with teachers). Active and supportive School Governing Body”. In contrast, “failing” schools have “very little support from other citizens and parents”. Without this support, schools struggle to produce good educational outcomes. PfP cites a study in the Northern Cape that showed that parent and community involvement co-varies with school success (Partners for Possibility, n.d.). Jansen and Blank (2014: 152–155) reaffirm the importance of parent involvement in “schools that work” in disadvantaged communities.

A key assumption is that “the principal is the change leader at the school” (underlying assumption nr. 2). Because of this assumption, the programme activities are all aimed at the principal. The programme hinges entirely on whether the principal acquires the skills, understanding and
relationships listed at the “outputs” level – and whether he/she translates this into the behaviours listed at the “short-term outcomes” level. Programme staff, the business partner, and the community of practice play a role in making this change happen, through the activities and ongoing relationships with the principal. Then, at the school level, it is the change in the principal’s leadership that sparks change in the SMT, teachers, parents and community and enables them to drive improvements in education. PfP does not intervene directly with any of these role players, only with the principal. Thus the theory relies entirely on improving education indirectly. It has been pointed out that educational reform is more often seen as the starting point for improving educational outcomes, and that not all good schools owe their success to a powerful principal (Christie, et al., 2007, cited in Kirori, 2017). Kirori (2017: 69) argues that although the PfP approach does not focus directly on educational reform, it is compatible with it.

![Figure 4. Target groups across the results chain (source: own representation)](image)

A final key assumption of the PfP problem statement is that better educational outcomes are possible in spite of the significant challenges that schools face. There are major socio-economic problems in many of the communities in which under-resourced schools operate, and it can be argued that poor educational outcomes are to a large extent the product of the negative or unconducive social forces at work in these communities and children’s lives. There are also known weaknesses in the South African public education system; administrative/political weaknesses which many argue lie at the heart of poor educational outcomes. Although the PfP theory of change does not deny these factors, it nevertheless posits that “the unit of change is the school”, in other words, it is possible to start introducing change at the level of an individual school instead of trying to resolve the socio-economic or administrative/political problems first (or waiting for someone else to do so). This is also the assumption underlying some literature on school leadership, such as the finding that in “schools that work”, school leaders act as “buffers” between the school and the external environment – including undue union influence, violence and crime, and home environments where learning is difficult (Jansen & Blank, 2014: 164–165) – and that they also involve parents and community in safeguarding education (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010). However, other studies attach greater weight to political (undue union influence) and administrative weaknesses (weak institutional functionality in provincial departments of education) (Van der Berg et al., 2016). It is reasonable to conclude that all public schools operate in a tension between these internal and external factors and that authors and programme leaders will emphasise one more strongly than the other depending on the parameters of their research, and whom they hope to influence. The PfP programme’s claim that the “unit of change
is the school” risks under-emphasising external influences, and the evaluation provides an opportunity to reflect on how realistic this is in a case study that has been held up by the programme as a success.

**Inputs and activities**

The PfP programme inputs and activities are listed at the bottom of the TOC diagram. The inputs enable PfP to implement its activities. They include human resources (operational staff, M&E staff, and the learning process facilitator), programme funding, and what might be referred to as programme learning resources (education & leadership research; materials). The main criterion of a TOC is that it should be fit for purpose (Funnell & Rogers, 2011). This TOC was developed in order to give a clear, simple overview of the programme for potential funders and collaborators – hence the focus on PfP’s own resource inputs. The explicit articulation of learning resources also speaks to PfP’s organisational stance as one that continually learns and collaborates.

The TOC does not explicitly state it, but it of course requires the recruitment of a specific “type of” principals, and “type of” business leaders, in order to be effective. Principals must be in need of the intervention (i.e. they and their schools should have similarities to those described in the problem statement above). Business partners need to have some leadership experience (PfP’s rule of thumb is that they should have led other people at work for at least five years). These are conditions that PfP can’t influence and needs to identify during recruitment. There are also attitudinal prerequisites for principals and business partners. Principals must be receptive to the intervention (i.e. open to new skills, understanding and relationships). And business partners need to be eager to make a difference, but willing to do it in the PfP way – particularly, they need to empower principals instead of “taking over”. These prerequisites may rule out some potential principals and business partners up front – but at the same time, PfP holds the tension between how “ready” participants should be up front, and how they can be “prepared” in the early months of the programme.

**Activities and outputs**

The PfP programme activities are a set of 3 workshops; interpersonal activities (communities of practice, leadership coaching, learning from the PfP partner); and activities associated with documents (portfolio of evidence, self-reflections and partnership plan). From these flow the outputs which are divided into two clusters: skills and understanding, and relationships with the PfP partner and with the community of practice of fellow principals and partners. The relationships are expected to continue (to a greater or lesser extent) as the formal intervention activities come to a close. These relationships are expected to act as a continued mechanism for growth in the principal’s confidence and competence, as indicated by the circle in the diagram.

The activities and outputs are not the key focus of this evaluation and they will not be elaborated on in detail here. A conscious decision was also taken not to draw arrows between the inputs, activities,

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3 A PfP representative explained that, if one applies systems thinking principles to the complex system of South African education, then the best way to introduce change is to tweak its nodes (i.e. schools) on by one. “Once a sufficient number of nodes have been transformed, new patterns emerge that start having systemic repercussions.”

4 The outputs should more accurately be called immediate outcomes if one considers that they speak to the benefits accruing to participants, rather than products that are within the control of the programme to produce. However, PfP calls them outputs.
outputs and short-term outcomes. Trying to do so would have made for an extremely “busy” diagram, because a great degree of confluence is expected between these different elements. Especially between the outputs and short-term outcomes, since they are nearly all describing change in a single person (the principal), it is neither easy nor particularly helpful to try and anticipate the specific pathways and dynamics of change that the programme activities will activate in each individual principal. Furthermore, the outputs are described more as a “toolkit” on which principal draws over time, rather than a set of requirements to be met in any particular sequence.

A cursory review of these levels suggests that as long as the inputs are in place (including the appropriate participants), it is feasible for the activities to be implemented, and to lead to the outputs, and for the outputs to lead to the short-term outcomes. In the discussion of short-term outcomes below, there will be some further elaboration on specific activities and outputs where they are relevant.

**Short- and medium-term outcomes**

The short-term outcomes are at the level of the principal’s behaviour. It is expected that through the activities and inputs of the programme, a principal will become “confident and competent” and will come to exhibit specific leadership traits in his/her interaction with school stakeholders. Firstly, it is expected that the principal will **actively engage staff in decision-making.** A principal who feels defensive or overwhelmed may adopt an autocratic or distant leadership style, but PFP’s first workshop (Time to Think) aims to help the principal think more calmly and become more receptive to others’ ideas and views. PFP’s democratic or “distributed” style of leadership resonates with other research on effective school leadership in South Africa, such as Ngcobo and Tikly (2010). Linked to this is a leadership style that **supports rather than instructs teachers.** The PFP programme hopes to foster the “understanding that each person has the ability to think for herself and that providing answers is usually not the right way to support” (Partners for Possibility, 2017). Included in the techniques to enhance one’s own and others’ thinking is the ability to listen appreciatively in a way that makes others feel heard. The principal becomes an appreciative facilitator and coach. This kind of listening is one of the key “skills for dealing with challenging people and situations”; another skill is the ability to “deal with resistance”, including being self-aware enough to recognise resistance in oneself.

While being supportive and appreciative, the principal nevertheless **clarifies expectations** and **has courageous conversations.** These behaviours are linked especially to the Flawless Consulting workshop and the skills of “dealing with challenging people and situations”, “developing generative relationships” and “skills for dealing with ambiguity and complexity”. He/she is able to communicate effectively around a project or activity, accepting that control is shared 50/50 with others instead of seizing all control or deferring it all, and ensuring clarity about what all parties are agreeing to. “Courageous conversations” refer to the ability to engage with unwanted behaviour or confrontation in an “assertive yet respectful way” (Partners for Possibility, 2017). It is the heart of maintaining effective accountability.

As a result of these behaviours, the TOC expects improvements in the functionality of the senior management team (the principal, deputy and senior teachers). The assumption is that PFP’s intervention schools do not necessarily have well-functioning SMTs. One can hypothesise that a defensive, autocratic or disengaged principal is less likely to empower the deputy principal and senior teachers to take responsibility for aspects of leading the school. A principal who engages the SMT in
decision-making and supports rather than instructs them, sends the message of trusting them and being interested in their views and contributions, so that they become confident and motivated in their key roles such as planning, co-ordinating and delegating. When the SMT underperforms, a poorly equipped principal may be unwilling or unable to respond appropriately. But a principal who is engaged and hands-on when things move in the wrong direction, clarifying expectations and having courageous conversations, will, over time, bring better alignment in the SMT. These outcomes have to do with accountability: underperformance or inappropriate behaviour will be met with an appropriate response from the principal. Through a supportive yet assertive leadership style, one can anticipate that there will be less potential for factionalism and destructive types of competition and that these will be dealt with constructively where they arise, so that there are good working relationships among them and the SMT becomes a more cohesive and aligned team.

While the interpersonal aspects of this mechanism are sufficiently feasible, there are also technical skills required in order to plan, co-ordinate and delegate effectively. This includes things like project management skills, knowing how to compile a plan for the year, and even computer skills. The TOC does not clearly state through what mechanism the SMT will learn these skills.

The second medium-term outcome is improvement among teachers. The assumption is that PfP’s intervention schools do not always benefit from a sufficient quantity of teaching. The Binding Constraints report (Van der Berg et al., 2016) described the widespread problems of inadequate teaching time, teacher absenteeism, and insufficient opportunity to learn (including insufficient coverage of the curriculum content). These problems all contribute to wasted learning time. One can hypothesise that such problems are more likely to occur if the principal is not holding staff accountable. The Binding Constraints authors argue that lack of teacher accountability (no monitoring by the principal or district) is at least one root cause of the problem (Van der Berg et al. 2016: 48). Another article describing common characteristics of leadership in well-performing schools (including rural and township schools) reported that principals in these schools maintain accountability for “the basics”, including respecting teaching and learning time (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010: 216–217). Thus it is feasible that if the principal (and his/her aligned and cohesive SMT, who share the responsibility for leading teachers, as depicted by the arrow between them in the TOC) clarify the expectations they have of teachers in terms of attendance and teaching time, and if they “respectfully but assertively” hold teachers accountable who fail to live up to these expectations, the school will benefit from less absenteeism and more time on task.

Another source of poor teaching is teachers lacking capacity in the sense of weak content knowledge and/or pedagogical skill (Van der Berg et al. 2016: 44–46). Teachers may lack confidence and therefore be reluctant to present certain topics, or may teach them poorly. A principal and SMT need to recognise poor teaching capacity and take steps to encourage and enable teachers’ learning and development. The PfP emphasis is on a principal that promotes development of teachers’ unique potential – which the PfP leadership conceptualise as going beyond formal teacher training opportunities to extend to giving teachers the opportunity to take initiative in the school so that they develop and grow as people. This resonates with the expanded understanding of what it means to develop teachers that Ngcobo and Tikly (2010: 206, citing Day et al., 2000) found among effective
principals in under-privileged South African schools. Spurred on by supportive and individualised leadership, teachers are thus expected to undertake more relevant professional development.

Finally, teachers may teach poorly because they lack motivation. Assumption nr. 5 of the TOC states that South African teachers often feel overburdened, tired and de-energised, and that many have become disengaged. Such teachers would be easily discouraged by the kinds of social, resource-related and other hurdles to teaching that they face. Poorly equipped principals and SMTs may allow school-level sources of teachers’ stress to go unaddressed, or may either seize control or disengage entirely when teachers face challenges – hence the supportive but assertive leadership style described above is expected to help teachers become more engaged and motivated. The principal is also expected to recognise and celebrate achievements, thereby creating a sense of courage, pride and possibility among teachers. Indeed, the intermediate outcome of positive energy at personal and school level was added to this iteration of the TOC because it is a recurrent theme in PfP leadership that did not yet find articulation. There is a strong belief in the PfP leadership that teachers, parents, the community and learners are all more engaged, motivated and attracted to the school when there is a positive energy. No arrows were added from this box because it would make the diagram too busy, but the theory if that the positive energy affects all the stakeholders mentioned in the TOC.

The third medium-term outcome is the involvement of parents and the broader community. A poorly equipped principal may be shy or distant, but if a principal proactively engages / collaborates with school stakeholders, and there is a positive atmosphere around it, then these stakeholders are more likely to become aware of opportunities and to be eager to get involved. The school is thus expected to benefit from the involvement of parents, individuals and organisations, and to benefit from community support for school initiatives. The PfP Community Building workshop is particularly focused on building this leadership characteristic in the principal. It includes an emphasis on extending attractive invitations to meetings, which along with clear communication and a collaborative and appreciative leadership style is expected to increase parent attendance at school meetings. (The “community” here is quite a vague term. It is uncertain whether it includes other the other types of external role players mentioned earlier, such as the education department and teacher unions. If it does include them, then the TOC is asserting that through improved leadership, the principal can increase the level of support the school gets from the department and teacher unions. This does not necessarily follow. If it does not include them, then the TOC is silent on them, which as discussed earlier is a significant omission. This evaluation assumed the latter, and so did not try to investigate this as a mechanism of intended change. The report will return to reflect on this point in the conclusion.)

Before moving to the long-term outcomes, it is necessary to point out three intermediate effects of the above-mentioned outcomes. The first is a sufficient quantity and quality of teaching. This is the result of the teacher outcomes, as well as the involvement of parents and the community who may support learning in various ways both at the school and at home. Through the involvement of parents and the community, the school is also expected to become a “magnet for contributions” as PfP puts it, and therefore there will be more assets (including funds), resources (including more people’s time, skills and networks) and opportunities available to the school. These will also feed into the quantity

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5 The emphasis on “relevant” is new in this latest iteration of the PfP TOC. It acknowledges that not just the quantity but also the “fit” of professional development activities is crucial. The PfP leadership recognised that many teachers are exposed to large quantities of workshops and trainings which are not necessarily relevant.
and quality of learning. Also, learners are expected to be affected positively by the attitudes and behaviour of their teachers, the support and involvement of their parents and community, and the effort that they see being put into their education in terms of assets, resources and opportunities. Learners are expected to feel valued and encouraged in their education by these significant adults in their lives.

**Impact**

Ultimately, PfP’s purpose is to improve education outcomes for South African youth. Two types of “education” are considered here: academic achievement and personal development. Driving these improvements is a circular dynamic around learner motivation: if learners feel valued and encouraged in their education because of the medium-term outcomes, then this is expected to boost their motivation, reducing their dropout rate and increasing their academic performance. Good academic performance is expected to motivate them further, reinforcing their likelihood to stay in school. From the assets, resources and opportunities at the school, learners are also expected to be developing holistically as people – the PfP TOC specifically highlights critical thinking, problem solving and digital literacy as key skills to be gained. Improved problem-solving and critical thinking will further improve their sense of confidence and ability to overcome obstacles, reinforcing their motivation.

If the abovementioned outcomes are achieved for learners, and if they receive sufficient quantity and quality of teaching, then they are expected to perform better academically in three ways. The first is reaching curriculum numeracy and literacy milestones. As discussed earlier, this is a key concern in the foundation phase of education and hence this outcome is particularly associated with primary schools. The second, performing better in standardised tests, is applicable to primary as well as high schools – whenever standardised tests are administered. Better performance in these tests is believed to show that learners are keeping up the curriculum as they progress through the grades, although the controversy around the Annual National Assessments (ANAs) highlight that this is not always the case. The final outcome is applicable to high schools, namely increasing proportion of students who pass national senior certificate (NSC) examinations.

The fact that personal development outcomes are placed alongside academic performance emphasises that young people need more than just book learning to thrive as adults. It also justifies the types of contributions and support that people may want to give to the school that may not directly pertain to academics, such as sports, clubs, outings, psycho-social support, life skills, and cultural activities. Exposure to these opportunities thus have value for learners’ development, aside from their possible academic benefits.

**5.3. Indicators**

To support the evaluation, indicators were developed for each results chain element, from short-term outcomes upwards. The indicators presented in Table 2⁶ are those that that were feasible to measure in this evaluation. This does not mean that they are necessarily the “ideal fit” with the outcome, or

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⁶ Although indicators are often presented within a logframe or other tabular logic model format, a tabular logic model is limited in terms of showing direction and splitting strands (Wildschut, 2014: 176). This TOC contains two circular mechanisms; and furthermore, most of the elements in the results chain are connected to each other in a many-to-many relationship. Hence the evaluator found that a tabular format confuses rather than clarifies the relationships between them. Instead, the reader is encouraged to refer back to the sequencing described in the diagrammatic logic model and narrative programme theory.
that together, they give a comprehensive indication of the outcome’s achievement. Where possible, the evaluation used existing tools, including the SEED teachers’ survey and the NELI SGB self-assessment tool. These are discussed in more detail in a later section.

Table 2. Indicators by outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Short-term outcomes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School principal</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actively engages staff in decision making</td>
<td>• SEED(^7) item R1: There is opportunity for me to share my ideas and opinions openly with other staff (the indicator used will be the teachers’ avg. agreement rating; also for all other SEED indicators)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Clarifies expectations | • SEED GD1: I understand what the school is trying to achieve – its vision  
• SEED GD2: The Principal and Deputy are clear about what they want us to achieve as a school  
• SEED P1: Staff have a common understanding of what is expected from them in terms of attitudes and behaviours  
• SEED R1: I am clear about what my role at the school is  
• SEED R3: Staff members are clear about their roles at the school |
| Has courageous conversations | • SEED P3 Staff are held accountable when they don’t comply with what is expected of them in terms of attitudes and behaviours  
• SEED P5: I am clear about the processes to resolve conflicts between staff members |
| Supports rather than instructs teachers | • SEED R3: I feel a sense of trust and supportiveness from the Principal and Deputy |
| Promotes development of teachers’ unique potential | • Frequency of school’s official teacher development activities  
• SEED PMA2: I feel motivated to excel in my work at this school |
| Proactively engages / collaborates with school stakeholders | • SEED P6: The Principal and Deputy communicate clearly and effectively to the staff regarding matters that concern us  
• Number of contributions from companies, NGOs, and other stakeholders that were received through the efforts the principal |
| Recognises and celebrates achievements | • Nr of articles about HBH’s achievements published in *The Sentinel* annually  
• Number of celebratory events in the school’s annual calendar |
| **Intermediate outcomes: short to medium term** | |
| Good working relationships between principal and teaching staff (SMT and other teachers) | • SEED R4: I trust the Principal and Deputy to be open and honest with me  
• SEED R7: Generally, the relationships between staff members are characterized by harmony and cooperation |
| Positive energy at personal and school level | • SEED PMA3: The working environment at this school motivates me to apply myself fully to my work at this school  
• Grade 11s’ survey: There is a positive atmosphere at school. (The indicator used will be the distribution of responses (% that strongly agree, agree, etc.); also for all other grade 11s’ survey indicators) |
| **Medium-term outcomes** | |
| SMT is “cohesive” | • SMT’s self-rating\(^8\) on “Cohesion: Becoming a united whole” |
| SMT is “aligned” | • SMT’s self-rating on “Alignment: Pointing in the same direction” |
| SMT effectively plans | • Frequency of SMT planning meetings per term |

\(^7\) See description of the SEED Foundation’s indicators and survey in the section on Data Collection Methods.  
\(^8\) See description of the SMT self-assessment in the section on Data Collection Methods.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SMT effectively coordinates</td>
<td>SMT’s self-rating on “Planning the school’s affairs”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMT effectively delegates</td>
<td>SMT’s self-rating on “Coordinating the school’s many ‘moving parts’”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Teachers express enthusiasm for teaching | • SEED PMA1: I find my work at this school fulfilling  
• SEED PMA2: I feel motivated to excel in my work at this school  
• SEED PMA5: I enjoy teaching at this school so much that I don’t think that I would be more fulfilled at another school  
• SEED PMA6: I enjoy teaching at this school so much that I don’t think that I would be more fulfilled in another career  
• SEED 8: In the past 12 months, I have applied for a post at another school (% who say yes)  
• SEED 9: In the past 12 months, I have applied for a job outside of education (% who say yes) |
| Less (teacher) absenteeism | Average % of teachers absent per day |
| More time on task | Not directly measured in this evaluation |
| Teachers undertake more relevant professional development | Teachers’ survey\(^9\) question 3: Proportion of teachers who specify a personal motivation for their most recent professional development, as opposed to compliance only |
| More parents attend school meetings | NELI 7.1\(^10\): Parents attend & participate in meetings held by the school (Rating out of 5 in 2017 and change in rating since 2014; also for other NELI indicators) |
| Community supporting school initiatives | Number of individuals, organisations & companies contributing resources, assets & opportunities |
| Parents, individuals, & organisations get involved | • NELI 7.7: Parents volunteer services/time to the school  
• NELI 2.6: The school’s stakeholder community demonstrates active support for the school (funding, skills, time, visibility etc.)  
• NELI 7.5: Parents support learning  
• NELI 1.11: SGB parent and/or community members are long-standing |

**Intermediate outcomes: medium to long term**

| Sufficient quantity & quality of teaching | Not measured directly in this evaluation |
| Learners feel valued & supported in their education by teachers, parents & community | • Grade 11s’ survey: I feel supported in my studies by my teachers.  
• Grade 11s’ survey: I feel supported in my studies by my family.  
• Grade 11s’ survey: I feel supported in my studies by the community of Hout Bay. |
| More assets, resources & opportunities available to the school | Number of new extra-mural, academic support, and other types of learner support activities offered |

**Long-term outcomes**

| Learner motivation | • Grade 11s’ survey: I want to finish school  
• Grade 11s’ survey: I believe I have what it takes to pass matric  
• Grade 11s’ survey: Schoolwork is interesting  
• Grade 11s’ survey. I have dreams for the future.  
• TQ 1: % of my learners who are motivated to learn (2017) |

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\(^9\) See description of the Teachers’ survey in the section on Data Collection Methods.

\(^10\) See description of the Norkitt Education Leadership Initiative (NELI) SGB self-assessment tool in the section on Data Analysis Methods.
6. Data collection methods

6.1. Planning and selecting data collection methods

Once the programme theory had been clarified, the evaluator developed a framework listing the main sets of intended outcomes to be investigated. Against this, potential sources of data were mapped to ensure there would be sufficient data sources speaking to each of the main areas of inquiry. The potential value of the surveys became very clear in this exercise (as discussed below). Besides the sufficiency and spread of evidence, other considerations also shaped the selection of data collection methods. Time constraints were a key consideration which limited the number of primary data collection sessions that could be conducted, especially during work hours.

Another key consideration was to involve the key stakeholders appropriately in the project. They were identified as (1) the PfP leadership, especially the M&E lead; (2) the principal, and to a lesser extent the SMT and SGB at the school; and (3) the business partner. The data collection methods were designed to allow for their participation, to support “process use” (Patton, 1998). For instance, the PfP M&E lead participated in the designing and administering of some of the data collection methods, giving her the opportunity to gain insight into the methods, and into the case study itself. For the SMT, it was agreed that data collection from them would have elements of a strategic reflection session, in order to be of immediate benefit to them (see description of this activity, below.) There were also pragmatic reasons for prioritising participatory methods (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998). The evaluation’s quality relied on the key stakeholders: on the principal and business partner, to describe the changes and events of the last few years in detail and to provide access to supporting evidence; and on the PfP staff, to share their research and insights into the education sector and to identify and share data sources. The key stakeholders were also crucial in validating the draft findings and providing access to further sources of data to fill specific gaps.

Ultimately, 14 interviews, 2 group sessions and 2 paper-based surveys were conducted (Figure 5). Respondents were selected based on a combination of factors, including their ability to provide data on areas of interest; ensuring a sufficient spread of respondents closer to and further removed from
the intervention; and their practical availability. The final selection was adequate, but it would have been ideal to include at least one company (the preferred company was non-responsive to the evaluator’s communication) and some more parent representatives (a mutually suitable time was not found). Since the principal was closely involved in arranging most of the engagements, it is possible that there was some bias in the final spread of interviewees towards those who are on good terms with him. But there was no scope for selection bias in the SMT group session, surveys, and circuit manager interview.

*Figure 5. Primary data collection methods*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Group sessions</th>
<th>Paper-based surveys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Principal</td>
<td>1. SGB chairperson (a parent), principal, business partner and PfP representative</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Principal and business partner</td>
<td>2. Senior management team workshop</td>
<td>1. Grade 11s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Teacher (mathematics)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teacher (science)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Teacher (mathematics, tourism &amp; natural science)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Education department circuit manager for HBH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Two grade 8 learners</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Two grade 9 learners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Two grade 10 learners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Two grade 11 learners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. A grade 11 learner who currently lives with the principal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Two staff members of PASCAP (an NGO working at the school)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The leader of Lalela (an NGO working at the school)</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. The principal of a local private school</td>
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</table>

6.2. Key informant interviews

The majority of the data collection sessions took the form of semi-structured interviews with key informants. Interviewing has certain advantages over other primary data collection methods such as focus groups, surveys and observation. Semi-structured and unstructured interviews are similar to conversations, meaning that the respondent is usually familiar with the format and with the common social norms involved. There is an opportunity for the interviewer and interviewee to respond to each other as one does in a conversation. This allows for the following (among others):

- The respondent is more likely to experience it as “flexible and friendly”, than if they were asked to complete a paper-based instrument.
- The interviewer can ask follow-up questions to clarify or probe what the respondent has said.
- Likewise, the respondent can ask for clarification of what the interviewer is saying or asking. (Wildschut, 2015: 12; 32-34)

Based on the advantages listed above, interviews were clearly an appropriate method in this evaluation. The evaluation sought a rich description of the process of change, instead of merely checking whether the intended change has taken place. The semi-structured interview format allowed the evaluator to remain open to areas of inquiry that may not have been anticipated upfront. This was
especially important early on in the interviews, where the purpose included identifying themes and hypotheses to be explored later. On the other hand, interviews are disadvantageous in that they cost plenty of time and money:

- The process of planning, conducting, writing up and analysing interviews is more time consuming than, say, a structured survey (whether electronic or paper-based).
- It is labour-intensive: an interviewer can only conduct one interview at a time. This limits the size of the sample that is feasible within human resource and time constraints.
- Some of the tasks (such as transcription) can be outsourced, but at an additional cost. (Wildschut, 2015)

These disadvantages became apparent in the evaluation planning phase and led to the reduction of the study scope from three focus schools to just one. This made interviews more feasible as a main data collection method. Another disadvantage of interviewing is that it is prone to bias. Data collected through interviews can be skewed by the social effect of the interviewer (respondents may be influenced by the perceived race, class, gender, level of education etc. of the interviewer). Personalities, moods and interpersonal dynamics can play a role in how the interviewee responds (Sewell, 2015). Although these risks could not be entirely avoided, the evaluator sought to develop trusting and reciprocal relationships, especially with the key stakeholders who participated in the programme. This may have reduced these biases, because over time they volunteered more information about their challenges and critiques – both in the interviews and more informally.

Most interviews were about 45 minutes to 1.5 hours long and were conducted based on a customised guide of about 8 to 14 questions. They were semi-structured, with the evaluator trying to cover most or all of the questions in the guide but in a flexible way. Four interviews differed from the rest in this regard:

- The first interview with the principal and the interview with the circuit manager had an exploratory purpose. As such, the interview guides contained smaller numbers of very open questions, so that they could be used to identify emerging themes and surface potential alternative explanations for any changes witnessed at the school. Later interview guides included more specific questions because the key areas of inquiry had been decided upon.
- The interview with the mathematics teacher was also conducted early on and was deliberately more structured than the other interviews. It had a purposefully designed questionnaire, with 21 mostly closed questions on facts and events about the school (e.g. what extramural activities are offered; who are on the senior management team, etc.). The purpose of this interview was to collect description information to help orientate the evaluator, rather than exploring the respondent’s subjective experience.
- For the interview with the principal and business partner, only 90 minutes were provided – which is short considering how pivotal their relationship and actions are to the theory of change. It was important to focus their discussion on mechanisms and key factors, rather than obtaining detailed narratives of individual events. To help ensure this, the evaluator brought paper cards, each with a particular anticipated outcome, mechanism or external factor on it, and encouraged the interviewees to point to the appropriate card as they spoke, to demonstrate its relevance. This helped to keep the conversation on topic and moving along. By writing onto the relevant cards when the respondent made a point about them, the evaluator sought to help the respondent “feel heard” on that point.
The most important strategy employed to mitigate the disadvantages of semi-structured interviews was not to use them in isolation, but to combine this data collection method with several others (Wildschut, 2015: 39). This is known as “method triangulation” and can potentially improve the validity of the data (Office of Data Analysis Research and Evaluation, 2016: 17). Different data sources can serve as checks on each other, and where they produce divergent findings, they can alert the researcher to possible elements of bias (USAID, 2013: 2–3).

6.3. Group sessions

The group sessions have not been named “focus groups” because only one of them – the SGB session – fitted the classic format of a focus group. The session with the SMT did not take such a conventional format. The evaluator facilitated three activities, as discussed in the box below. This format was preferred, because in the evaluator’s experience a conventional focus group can sometimes take on an extractive style. This more “workshop” format, it was hoped, would be more valuable to the SMT as a team reflection session. The exercise in which the SMT rated the quality of their leadership in terms of certain criteria was inspired by a similar method associated with empowerment evaluation (see descriptions of “taking stock” in, for instance, Fetterman, 1996). The criteria were derived from the PfP theory of change, which states that an SMT should be/become cohesive and aligned and should be effective in delegating, coordinating and planning. The session went well, although the group ran out of time and had to agree a bit hastily on the last few self-ratings (the most divergent ones were discussed while it was agreed to assign an average for those where the individuals’ ratings were close to each other).

Box 1. THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM’S GROUP SESSION

**Introductions.** Each of the 4 SMT members was asked to introduce one other member of the group, highlighting what he/she brings to the team in terms of experience and strengths.

**Timeline exercise.** The facilitator drew a timeline on the board, from 1990 to 2017. The longest-serving SMT member was asked to describe the school as it was in the 1990s and how the school changed over time up to the point when the second-longest serving SMT member was appointed at the school. This person then took over the telling of the story up to the point when the next member joined, and so on, until each member had told a piece of the story.

**Self-rating exercise.** The SMT rated their performance as a team on a list of criteria. They were each given a sheet listing the criteria and after agreeing that the criteria were appropriate, they were asked to assign a score out of 10 for their team’s current performance on each criterion, as well as to indicate whether the rating is going up or down. They then shared their ratings on each criterion with each other and discussed the reasons for their ratings. They were given a chance to debate the ratings and then to agree on a rating as a group.

The principal and deputy were subsequently sent copies of the timeline that the SMT had developed and the self-ratings they had come up with together, so that they can be used for further thinking and action if desired. The value for the evaluation was that this method collected both quantitative (ratings) and qualitative data on the SMT’s perceptions of their own leadership.

6.4. Surveys

Two anonymous surveys were conducted: one with non-SMT teachers, and one with the grade 11s. The following advantages made surveys an attractive data collection method:

- They collect information from a large sample cost-effectively;
• The yield specific and comparable data; and
• They allow respondents to remain anonymous (Wildschut, 2015: 12).

The first listed advantage meant that it was possible to administer the survey not to a sample, but to all grade 11s and non-SMT teachers (as long as they were available and willing).

A short, anonymous survey was developed for the grade 11s. The goal was to get the perspective of the learners who have been at the school the longest and were therefore the most likely to have witnessed any changes in the outcomes of interest to the evaluation. It was also important that they be sufficiently literate (Wildschut, 2015: 12). Originally, therefore, the plan was to conduct the survey with the grade 12s, but because of time delays the grade 12s were already writing exams by the time the survey was administered and so it was modified for the grade 11s. It was deliberately kept very short in order to keep interference with learning time to a minimum. It contained 9 close-ended, Likert-type questions where learners had to rate their agreement with a statement, followed by two open-ended questions. In an attempt to collect some sense of change over time, they were asked to rate how much they would have agreed with the statement in 2014 (when most of them were in grade 8) and their agreement with the statement now, in 2017. The rating they assigned for 2014 was thus based on their own recall of how they felt and experienced that year. Although this is not necessarily entirely accurate, it gave some sense of change that would not otherwise have been possible in a once-off evaluation. (See appendix for a copy of the questionnaire.) The statements were developed based on the learner-level outcomes of the theory of change, especially those on learners’ sense of support, motivation, and the atmosphere at the school. The two open-ended questions asked the learner to comment on one rating where their agreement had increased and one that had decreased, respectively. Unfortunately, the survey was not formally piloted, otherwise it may have been picked up sooner that the simple fact of growing up is a major factor driving change in learners’ level of motivation regarding high school education (items 1 and 2) and more broadly their sense of having dreams for the future (item 9). Not only did this render the results on these indicators less valuable, but many learners also chose to write about this change in the open-ended section, which did not tell the evaluator much about changes at the school. Results on the other items were valuable though.

The teachers’ survey drew from two sources: the SEED Education Trust’s teacher survey, and the theory of change for this evaluation. SEED conducts leadership development for principals and deputy principals with very similar goals as those of PfP, and the organisation periodically administers a 2-page questionnaire in its target schools. The questionnaire measures key dimensions of organisational health in the schools, mostly using Likert-type questions. Usually SEED administers the questionnaire to all teachers, distinguishing between SMT and non-SMT; in this evaluation’s case only the non-SMT members were asked to complete it. The one downside of the SEED questionnaire is that it speaks about the “principal and deputy” together in many of its items, whereas the PfP theory of change is interested at one level in the principal (individually) and at another level in the whole SMT (including the principal, deputy, and other senior teachers). The evaluator nevertheless decided to replicate it exactly rather than modify it, both because it has been piloted by SEED and is trusted in its current form, and because of the benefit of “specific and comparable data”. SEED’s leadership shared the results of a few comparable schools with the evaluator, and these were useful as a benchmark for Hout Bay. They stressed that it is more valid to compare a school’s own results over time than to compare schools’ results to each other; nevertheless, since this was not possible for the current evaluation, they offered advice on how to interpret the results of the once-off survey. Implementing
the existing SEED survey in this evaluation also allowed PfP to see whether this would be a useful instrument to implement in more of their schools, which would then allow them to combine efforts with SEED to refine the instrument, and to continue comparing school results with SEED for learning purposes. The teachers’ survey therefore started with an exact copy of the two-page SEED survey. The third and final page asked some additional questions based on the theory of change.

Although a low response rate can be a challenge with surveys, both the grade 11s’ survey and the teachers’ survey yielded satisfactory response rates. Of the 57 grade 11s officially enrolled at the school in September 2017, 49 (86%) completed the survey; and all 12 of the non-SMT teachers (100%) completed their survey. Furthermore, virtually all respondents completed the surveys right up to the last question. This can probably be attributed to the guarantee of anonymity offered to respondents; the short and non-burdensome nature of the questionnaires, and the commitment and willingness of the deputy principal to prioritise the surveys and administer them in a conducive setting with each group (for the grade 11s, during one of their classes; and for the teachers, during a routine staff meeting). However, one of the known disadvantages of surveys is that questions can be misinterpreted by the respondent (Wildschut, 2015: 12); in the teachers’ survey this unfortunately happened because of an error in the layout in one subset of six questions. Four teachers apparently misunderstood these questions, rendering their responses unreliable. These responses had to be ignored (coded as “no response”) in order not to skew the results.

6.5. Secondary data

The review of existing documents can give an easy, rapid overview which can help orient the evaluator, and highlight areas for further exploration in the primary data collection sessions. Documents can also be more accurate than respondents’ memory (Wildschut, 2015: 13). Furthermore, the benefit of conducting an evaluation at a school is that schools produce plenty of secondary data as a matter of course which can then be helpful for the evaluation. In the planning phase, many potentially valuable secondary data sources were identified and the stakeholders (mostly the principal) agreed to make them available for the evaluation. Table 3 lists the data sources received and analysed for the evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Specifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme documents</td>
<td>The Partnership Plan (as updated at the end of the year); the principal’s self-reflection report; the principal’s and business partner’s respective portfolios of evidence submitted for credit to the University of the Western Cape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner enrolment and progression data</td>
<td>Number of learners enrolled in grade 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, 2014 - 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner attendance</td>
<td>Number of days on which school was held, as well as number of learner absentee days per school term, Term 1 and 3, for 2014 to 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photos</td>
<td>46 photos of positive events that happened at the school over the last few years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper articles</td>
<td>Local community newspaper The Sentinel: clippings of articles about the school over the last few years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matric results</td>
<td>Official results including number of learners who wrote and number of bachelors passes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGB membership list</td>
<td>Annual lists of SGB members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGB meeting minutes</td>
<td>Most minutes from 2011 to present, including attendance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some pieces of data were not forthcoming. After some follow-ups, the remaining data gaps were accepted, because it was important to respect school stakeholders’ level of willingness to share data, as well as their existing workload. The other data collection methods were modified to address the gaps – for instance, the interview guides were modified to gauge stakeholders’ perceptions of the frequency of teacher absenteeism since actual attendance records were not forthcoming.

7. Data analysis

7.1. Analysis process

The interview transcripts were coded and analysed with the NVivo software package. Coding is a first part of analysing qualitative data but is not the sum total of the analysis; it is “the transitional process between data collection and more extensive data analysis” (Saldanha, 2009: 4). Coding was done in two cycles. In the first cycle, which took place while data collection was still underway, the qualitative secondary data (e.g. partnership plan; newspaper articles) and transcripts were reviewed, and codes were created based on the patterns seen in the data. A code is usually “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of ... data” (Saldanha, 2009: 3). Although the evaluator kept the programme theory in mind, codes were not predetermined by the programme theory. The decision to identify codes “from the ground up” in the first cycle, was deliberate because it was important to remain open to unexpected causal mechanisms and external factors not articulated in the programme theory.

Once most of the primary qualitative data had been collected and the first coding cycle completed, the evaluator organised the codes under headings that corresponded to clusters of outcomes in the programme theory, and flagged those that did not. Where some parts of the programme theory did not yet have codes to cover them comprehensively, such codes were created and if possible, populated from the qualitative data. As is typical in coding, further coding was done as new questions arose from the analysis of the quantitative data sources, and after discussion of the results with the programme stakeholders.

The various pieces of quantitative data were analysed in Excel, using calculations as appropriate depending on the nature of the data. Where there is an existing convention on how to analyse a particular set of data, this was replicated for the sake of comparability; for instance, SEED uses teachers’ average ratings and therefore so did this evaluation. Basic descriptive tables and charts were developed. Qualitative data from the open-ended questions in the surveys, were copied into tables in Word and then coded in NVivo.

Once the qualitative and quantitative data had been analysed separately, the relevant pieces were used to rate the school’s outcomes on the relevant Norkitt Education Leadership Initiative (NELI)
indicators. These indicators are from a Self-Assessment Tool for SGBs\textsuperscript{11}. The tool is intended to be completed by an SGB as a formative exercise to gauge leadership outcomes, governance outcomes and community outcomes, expressed as 77 indicators. Each indicator is an outcome statement, with 0 indicating the outcome was not achieved or non-existent, 3 indicating “adequate” and 5 indicating “excellent”. For most indicators, there is a description of what a score of 0, 1, 3 and 5 should look like.

Finally, all sources of data pertaining to each outcome were compared and integrated to produce draft findings, distinguishing between (1) the level of achievement of the outcome and (2) the evidence suggesting that PF contributed to it. These were presented in mid-September to the principal, business partner and FPF M&E lead and discussed in depth. The group identified a few last sources of data to collect and analyse. The relevant evidence from this final round was integrated into the final report.

7.2. Limitations of the data

The data collection process was comprehensive, considering the evaluation time frame and resources, and yielded rich and multi-faceted data about Hout Bay High School over the last few years. Yet once the data was matched to the logic model, there were still boxes and arrows where the data is “thin”, often coming from only one source. Where the findings are presented in the sections that follow, the strength (or not) of the evidence will be transparently discussed, but it would have been ideal to cover all boxes and arrows with at least two or three data sources. However, the sheer volume of data needed to both evaluate the outcomes and trace the programme’s contribution across more than 20 boxes and 15 arrows, was larger than the evaluator fully realised at the outset. This experience resonates with that of evaluators who have been applying CA to European Union policy evaluations. Delahais and Toulemonde (2012: 283) stated that they “have progressively come to understand that the efforts required to undertake a CA are proportionate to the number of boxes and arrows”. It would be wise to take their advice in future, to circumscribe more narrowly the causal issue to be addressed.

Another key limitation of the primary data is that it is not longitudinal. There was an element of retrospection in the surveys and qualitative engagements, but longitudinal data purposefully collected over the course of two or more years would have served the evaluation considerably better. In the absence of this, there is a risk that more recent events play a disproportionate role in the overall understanding of change over the last four years, simply because they are fresher in respondents’ memory.

8. Findings: What changed at Hout Bay High School, and why?

8.1. Outputs: Equipping the principal with skills, understanding & relationships

As discussed earlier, there is documentary evidence of the implementation of the FPF programme activities and the HBH partners’ full participation in them, and these were not interrogated in this evaluation. It was further taken as given that the intended outputs were achieved, in the HBH case. The reason for this is that there was sufficient confidence among the evaluation users (PF leadership

\textsuperscript{11} https://www.norkitt.net/sgb-assessment
and HBH stakeholders) that the outputs had been achieved. A cursory review of the evidence supports this:

- There is programme documentation on the **skills and understanding** that the principal gained, from among others a portfolio of evidence submitted for credit to the University of the Western Cape. He scored a high mark for it.
- There is also documentary evidence that for the first year, the **community of practice (COP)** was active and acted as a support network as intended, and that the principal was an active member of it. The principal and business partner have remained in contact with the rest of the COP, albeit more informally and less frequently.
- Above all, a **strong relationship with the business partner** was not only established in the first year, but continued very strongly thereafter, with the principal and business partner still meeting once a week four years later. The principal remains hugely enthusiastic about the partnership and likes to say that he will stay in the partnership for the rest of his life. The PfP theory of change is expected to be activated within the first year, and theoretically should not need the relationship to continue for as long, or as actively, as in the HBH case – it can be assumed that the HBH relationship is even more likely to activate the theory of change.

Hence, a cursory review of the evidence gives sufficient confidence that the intended outputs have been sufficiently achieved to warrant an outcome evaluation.

### 8.2. Short- and medium-term outcomes for school stakeholders

#### 8.2.1. Principal’s leadership

The TOC asserts that a principal who has participated in PfP will exhibit certain key behaviours (short-term outcomes) which will support good outcomes in the school. The first is that the principal **actively engages staff in decision making**. In HBH’s case, the evidence is affirmative of this outcome. The principal specifically highlights improved listening skills he gained from PfP and says he is open to staff’s views and ideas:

“Listening to people, and really give them that freedom also to express their opinion and say how they’re feeling, and listen their ideas also, don’t think you’re always right.”

The principal has in the last few years introduced a regular and structured format for meeting and having discussions with staff. On Monday mornings, he meets with all the main role players of the school in a series of meetings: the teaching staff, admin staff, SMT, cleaning staff, feeding scheme cook, sport coordinators, and occasionally with the learners (assembly). Not only the principal discussed the value of these meetings: an SMT member also mentioned these meetings as evidence of the SMT’s effective communication with each other. Previously the principal rarely convened SMT meetings (e.g. once or twice a term). Now, he says: “I always say yes, on paper I’m the principal of this school. But the four of us, we need to run this school.”

Teachers also affirm that the principal involves them in decision making. When asked to describe his leadership style, one of the teachers said:
“Very inclusive... You [the principal] might come with an idea to the staff room but if somebody else have another idea you would listen, and they would say that is the better idea, so he is very open.”

Further confirming this, teachers mostly expressed agreement or strong agreement in response to the statement, “There is opportunity for me to share my ideas and opinions openly with other staff”. Their average rating was 4.2, with 4 being “agree” and 5 being “strongly agree”.

In terms of **clarifying expectations**, the Monday morning meetings also give the principal an opportunity to bring role players onto the same page. He also described how he calls people back into the office on Fridays to “tick all the boxes” of tasks from Monday. The interviewed teachers also cited examples of him clearly stating expectations for staff. For instance:

> “When we had assemblies and the children don’t behave the way they should, and he would come and say: I am not happy with the way the assembly went. And from now on each teacher will sit by his class.”

He has also recently introduced a weekly newsletter to parents. Figure 6 shows two excerpts from the newsletter which are included every week (to make sure parents receive the message).

![Figure 6. Excerpts from the weekly newsletter showing how expectations are clearly communicated](image)

In the teachers’ survey, there was also agreement with all the statements around the clarity of roles and expectations. Teachers in HBH agreed more strongly with the first statement (clarity about their own role in the school) than with the rest of the statements; this is also the pattern in other schools where SEED implements the survey and that were used as a benchmark. However, HBH’s ratings are higher on each of these statements than the average across benchmark schools, suggesting that clarity around roles and expectations is an area of relative strength for the school.

<p>| Table 4. Teachers’ agreement with statements about clarity of roles and expectations |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Statement                                    | Average rating  |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am clear about what my role at the school is</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff members are clear about their roles at the school</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff have a common understanding of what is expected from them in terms of attitudes and behaviours</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand what the school is trying to achieve – its vision</td>
<td>4.0*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Principal and Deputy are clear about what they want us to achieve as a school

* = because of an error in the layout of the questionnaire, three teachers’ responses to these statements had to be discounted.

The principal considers himself to be more confident and calm as a result of PfP. He cites confidence as one of the major benefits he derived from the programme (the others being skills and networks). There is some evidence that he is able to have courageous conversations. He says he is “outspoken” and not afraid to assert himself in his interaction with his WCED circuit manager. The SGB minutes also included reference to the school’s dissatisfaction with a certain NGO and stated that the principal would arrange a meeting with the NGO’s leadership to discuss it.

The leader of another NGO also perceived a clear change in the principal’s leadership “from the moment he started getting involved” with the business partner. She explained this change as “strengthening his leadership” and becoming “strong enough” to introduce consequences, for instance, for learners or even teachers who came late. She later referred to it as a willingness to set boundaries in the school, even if that means being unpopular. Although she did not specifically speak about conversations, her view is clearly that he became more comfortable with the potential confrontations that may arise when one takes a firm stand.

Further in 2016, a remarkable exchange took place between the principal and a group of parents. A group of parents were disgruntled that many learners were hanging around shops in the morning, arriving at school late and disrupting other learners. They met with the principal to voice their frustration (bordering on accusation) that the school was not doing more to address this. The principal listened to them calmly and then invited them to help him come up with a solution. With a small teaching staff, teachers would have to leave their classes to engage with learners who were coming late, which was not a desirable solution. They discussed what could be done, and the outcome of this potentially explosive meeting was that some of these parents (four or five of them who are unemployed) volunteered to be present at the school gates every morning, taking down the names of latecomers and making sure they went to detention. These parents also keep a presence on the school grounds throughout the school day, helping to maintain order. The principal credits PfP with the skills that he applied in this situation, saying that he would previously have been more defensive.

However, respondents were not unanimous in the view that there is consistent accountability from the leadership. Among teachers in the survey, there was a very wide spread of answers from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” in response to the statement about staff accountability (the first statement in Table 5 below)\(^\text{12}\). In the open-ended section of the survey, one teacher offered the comment: “Even though there is a vision, and everyone works together to achieve [it], there are loose cannons that are on their own mission and seemingly ‘untouchable’. This breaks morale.”

\(^\text{12}\) In displaying results from the teacher survey, scores under 3.5 are coloured red to signal fairly low agreement, since 3 = “sort of” and 4 = “agree”. Scores of 3.5 and above are coloured green.
Table 5. Teachers’ agreement with statements about accountability and conflict resolution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Average rating (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff are held accountable when they don’t comply with what is expected of them in terms of attitudes and behaviours</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am clear about the processes to resolve conflicts between staff member</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The SMT, who share the responsibility for keeping staff accountable with the principal, also had considerable discussion of this point in their group session. Without having seen the results of the teachers’ survey, they aligned with the view teachers had expressed, by giving themselves a 3 out of 10 for “keeping teachers and staff accountable”. They cited, in particular, the fact that some teachers repeatedly submit their marks late. Although the principal calls these teachers in to discuss this when this happens, the SMT agreed that this is not resulting in the desired improvement. It makes sense that this kind of a pattern would cause frustration among the staff. They flagged this issue for further strategizing. The evidence on this aspect of the principal’s behaviour thus suggests that the principal is now more willing and able to have courageous conversations with some stakeholders, but it is not entirely consistent or effective.

When it comes to supporting rather than instructing teachers, there is again plenty of evidence that the principal exhibits this behaviour. In the teachers’ survey, the average rating was 4.2 in response to the statement, “I feel a sense of trust and supportiveness from the Principal and Deputy”. In the open-ended section, when asked about any changes in the principal or deputy in the last 6-12 months, teachers also volunteered some comments about the support they feel, saying “More support”; “They lead by example and are hands on all the time”; and “Motivating the teachers and learners”.

The interviews helped to sketch the picture of a supportive principal:

“He’s very quiet, listens to each and every single thing, he doesn’t jump - he gives everybody the opportunity to speak and that’s quite a phenomenal part that stands out every single time.” (SGB member)

“What I want to say is that I got free reign, I can really spread my wings... If he sees this teacher is really committed he would really go that extra mile for that teacher in supporting and making sure that he’s got the resources and whatever... an open door if you want to come pak af [get something off your chest], an open door to listen to new ideas.” (Teacher 1)

“Yesterday I went for the Tourism moderation and the curriculum advisor was very happy, [saying] ’you don’t have zeros on your marking’. I said no... there was a school which had 20 zeros... So they said, ‘how did you manage to do this?’ I said: ‘I have a very strong principal’ and that is very true. In the school if the Grade 12s don’t submit it you just go to Mr Julius. He will write a letter, call the child or phone the parent and then he sits with the child and the child must do the work. That kind of support you don’t get everywhere, it’s very helpful... I never have to struggle so much about the Grade 12s”. (Teacher 2)
The problem with instructing teachers, from the PfP leadership’s point of view, is that it disempowers them or gives them the sense that their views and contributions are not good enough. The absence of these kinds of negative dynamics across all the data sources is telling.

Related to the supportive behaviour of the principal is the next short-term outcome, which is that the principal should promote development of teachers’ unique potential. There has been no particular increase in the school’s official teacher development workshops / sessions; these are held periodically on Wednesday afternoons. But interviewed teachers emphasised that the principal supports teachers to seize any professional development opportunity that may benefit them:

“He is always supportive and always encouraging whenever a circular comes out that there is training, he will even come to you individually... people sometimes don’t check their emails and there is a deadline... then he will say during briefing ladies and gentlemen I sent this and this and the deadline is this...” (Teacher 2)

“Whatever the department sends in terms of what courses are available he will always make sure that we are informed, and he will remind us also... then he would come back to the staff on the Monday morning also and applaud what you have done... he would always applaud, he will make a point of it. I can remember there was one day that he made this example. He said: ‘If you go into the wood as a wood chopper and you have your axe with you, you will chop but there must be a time where you stand still and sharpen your axe, so Miss so-and-so went to go sharpen her axe this weekend.’” (Teacher 1)

The latter teacher also mentioned that the principal made an effort to arrange substitute teachers if necessary, to enable his teachers to go to training. While he is clearly very supportive, this outcome (as discussed in section 5.2) is not just about being broadly supportive of teachers’ development but also about developing an individualised relationship with them, similar to a coach. There is no evidence of this in particular.

Next is the question of whether the principal proactively engages / collaborates with school stakeholders. There is plenty of evidence that the principal has grown in this regard. The principal himself says:

“I just have the freedom, of inviting other people into the school. To assist us, to make this institution a super institution... In terms of resources... I’m really fortunate to say, HBH can’t complain anymore. I went out [to approach people for resources]”.

One of the teachers also attributed the presence of so many NGOs at the school to the principal’s open door and his attitude of “it’s not my school, it’s the community’s school”. The principal also came up with the idea of involving the business partner formally in the school by co-opting her onto the SGB.

In addition to his welcoming of external stakeholders, the principal has in recent years made a particular effort to engage pro-actively with parents at the school. The weekly newsletter was mentioned earlier. During an SGB meeting which the business partner also attended, they

*Figure 7. Parents at the Lalela art exhibit*
came up with the idea of exhibiting learners’ art (which they create with Lalela, an NGO that operates at the school) and inviting parents to come and view it. Learners created personalized invitations for their parents. The evening was a great success: As the business partner writes: “The turnout of the parents filled the hall, the children were proud and excited. The newly formed jazz club at the school performed two songs and on seeing this, the choir asked if they could perform and did.” This evening marked the beginning of further positive changes in parent involvement (see discussion in later sections).

The Lalela evening is by no means the only way in which the principal recognises and celebrates achievements. This is a clear and distinctive feature of his leadership, and more so since the start of the partnership. He keeps a large ring binder named “positive things happening at the school”. The file is organised by year, starting in 2015, and contains certificates, photos and newspaper clippings. According to his self-reflection report, he and the business partner decided to “make sure the world knows about it” when good things happen at the school. The school had been featured in the local newspaper, The Sentinel, at least 25 times over two years – as evidenced by the newspaper clippings in the file. At the entrance of the school, these newspaper clippings and learners’ art pieces are prominently displayed. The principal also specifically requested an honours board when donors approached them two years ago; this board hangs in the foyer and lists the top academic achievers since 2009.

The newsletter also allows the school to share congratulations and good news with the parent community. The newsletters reviewed for the evaluation included, for instance, congratulations extended to specific learners for winning a regional spelling competition and to others for scoring goals in recent soccer matches. The staff members involved were also named. It was also announced that a qualified nurse would henceforth be at school on Monday and Thursday morning, with the comment: “A BIG thank you to PASCAP (Nadia) for making a dream come true for Hout Bay High School”. The principal explains his rationale for publicly congratulating learners:

“When I walk into the class, I will scan quickly through the class and I will say, stand up, stand up, stand up and I will say: ‘Thank you for what you are doing here at school. You people sitting here, I think you need to wake up and get onto that same level that those kids are.’ That’s two minutes in the period where I say thank you... They [feel] good and I said: ‘That kind of spirit that you had on the field yesterday, that you must bring onto the school. I want to see that in the class with behaviour. You must say, I want to be a winner in terms of that. And you see them smile.”

Since last year, learners’ achievements are also celebrated at newly-introduced awards evenings. There is one every term, plus a big one at the end of the year. The principal also publicly applauds teachers (see the example of “sharpening your axe” earlier). The SMT members have clearly discussed this characteristic of the principal’s leadership, and they talked to the evaluator about their (friendly) differences of opinion as to whether people should be congratulated for doing what is expected of them (e.g. doing their homework). Nevertheless, there is a broad belief that this style of leadership is motivating school stakeholders. A learner gave a sense of this from his peers’ perspective:

“Not only in the newsletter but in the school, the newspapers, the social media. He salute them, he acknowledge them for the good work and that makes the children... because most
of the time when we played they said: ‘Our name’s going to go in the newsletter’ and they
can’t even wait because that’s how they feel.”

In summary, the principal’s current leadership style has all the characteristics envisioned in the PfP
theory of change. The findings suggest that the principal has always been a supportive leader, if not
exceptionally assertive. Looking at longitudinal change, none of the respondents described a radical
departure from how he led the school before 2014. The fact that this evaluation is taking place nearly
four years after his participation began, weakens the evidence base with most sources dependent on
respondents’ memory. Nevertheless, he has put in place some concrete tools and resources that were
clearly not there before, for instance, the Monday morning meetings and newsletter.

Although respondents may always feel some pressure to tell an evaluator that the evaluand made a
difference, it is still worth pointing out that the principal himself is convinced of PfP’s impact on his
leadership style. He specifically credits the partnership for improving his confidence, calmness and
listening skills. In his interviews, he cited specific lessons from the workshops he participated in with
PfP (such as taking time to think) as contributing to these changes. But above all he cites the
encouraging and supportive relationship with the business partner.

The principal claims, and it seems plausible, that his growth through PfP contributed to his more
proactive engagement with parents and his ability to navigate the confrontational meeting with them
constructively. There is a clear longitudinal change (improvement) in parents’ involvement with the
school (which will also be discussed later), suggesting that he did indeed change his behaviour towards
them. It is also plausible that increased confidence contributed to him more proactively approaching
and engaging with donors. There are also clear links between how frequently he celebrates
achievements, and the partnership: for instance, the explicit goal in the partnership plan of publicising
good news about the school; and the PfP training on making invitations more attractive. In conclusion,
it appears that PfP has further strengthened an already positive, supportive leader.

8.2.2. Senior Management Team

As noted earlier, the principal and the other long-serving member of the SMT remember that in the
mid-2000s, there were negative team dynamics in the SMT. The principal describes it as follows:
“conflict in the SMT at that time – people didn’t always say, but you could just feel that there was an
unpleasantness in the SMT with the principal sitting there... not necessarily [that he was dominating
them, but] there was a lonely principal [isolated from the team]”. Of course, with leadership not being
cohesive, nor were the teachers. The current principal believes that this contributed to the poor matric
results that the school was producing at the time.

Although it was not explicitly discussed, it seems that SMT dynamics improved in the years after Mr
Julius became the principal (from 2008 onwards). By 2014 when the principal and business partner
developed their partnership plan, they assigned the SMT the 6th out of 8 priorities, suggesting it was
not a major area of concern for them. They set two goals for the SMT: “Engage and motivate the senior
management team to give their best and improve output and thus education of the learners” and
“Work with senior management team to improve teaching staff skills e.g. Participate in the UCT
schools development unit on teachers’ maths and science skills”. This suggests that the SMT could
grow in its level of engagement, motivation, and support but was not significantly dysfunctional (at
least not in the principal’s view) by 2014.
In 2014, a new teacher joined the SMT, and in 2015 a new deputy principal was also appointed (the post had been vacant for a while before). The same four SMT members have been serving since then. The circuit manager attributed some of the positive developments at HBH over the last few years to the appointment of the deputy and the stability that the SMT has experienced over these few years. The SMT did not specifically describe this shift, but they did express appreciation for the deputy.

As for whether the SMT could currently be described as cohesive and aligned, the evaluation picked up mixed views. Individual interviews suggest that there are some frustrations. Some feel that the SMT members don’t all “share the vision” that the principal has for the school, and most respondents felt that the four SMT members have varying levels of energy for their task. There is also a sense that the principal and deputy principal’s leadership approaches are not (yet) aligned – they are both very energetic, hands-on leaders, but the deputy is described as a “quiet, no-nonsense person” who will keep following up until others comply with what is expected of them, whereas the principal appears to be more focused on relationships than structures. This difference can potentially be very complementary, but may not yet be recognised as such. There was also a suggestion that the deputy principal can still grow in confidence in executing her responsibilities. Despite the individual interviewees raising these concerns, the four SMT members in their group session were quite positive about their interpersonal dynamics. They gave themselves 7.3 out of 10 for “cohesion: becoming a united whole” and also 7.3 for “alignment: pointing in the same direction”. Furthermore, there was no suggestion in any of the data sources of significant conflict, back-biting, communication breakdown or power struggle in the SMT. Thus it seems that the SMT is adequately cohesive and aligned, but there is some room for growth.

When it comes to their performance in terms of managing the school, they were also fairly positive about it. For coordination they gave themselves a 7. They felt that staff, learners, and the growing number of extra-mural role players and others generally know what to expect and where to be. They also gave themselves a 7 for planning. They say that recently there has been more “structure” and they are pleased with the way they have enhanced some of their planning practices in the last few years, such as having a meeting with the parents of incoming grade 8s at the end of the previous year, instead of waiting until the new year starts.

For delegating, the team had more divergent ratings, from 3 to 7, and they eventually settled on a 5. They felt that more can be done to share work with teachers, also for the purpose of staff development. They noted that their teachers already have a significant workload and that they as SMT needed to be hands-on and lead by example. Still, they felt encouraged by the way some teachers have grown into new responsibilities over the last few years, so that they can now look to non-SMT members to be master of ceremonies at school functions or to invigilate exams. They felt that there was an upward trend in their ability to delegate to and empower the staff, but it was still something they needed to work on.

With a principal exhibiting most of the characteristics envisioned in the TOC, and the SMT also performing adequately in terms of the outcomes on the TOC, one would expect to find good working relationships between them and the rest of the school’s staff. This is indeed also the case. The leader

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13 This was one of the final ratings on the list and the session ran out of time. Since the SMT did not differ significantly in the scores they had assigned individually for this item, to save time it was agreed that the evaluator would take an average.
of one of the NGOs at the school was able to paint a longitudinal picture as she has been involved with the school since 2011. Without being prompted on the topic of interpersonal relationships, she said that she had seen considerable improvement in this area among school staff over the last few years. In the first few years she perceived the school staff as being “hijacked by negative teachers – unwilling teachers, not willing to cooperate... a lot of insecurities and jealousies among the teachers... unhealthy competition in the school”. She said things have “changed dramatically” since 2014. She attributed this both to improvements in how the principal leads teachers, and to changes in the staff complement (the departure of certain negative teachers and the principal’s deliberate appointment of new teachers who “share his vision”).

Similarly, when asked about cooperation among the staff, an interviewed teacher emphasised that when the school organises an event, “they cooperate – that’s how the team works – there is a lot of teamwork”. Other teachers share his positive experience, with an average rating of 3.8 on the statement “I trust the principal and deputy to be open and honest with me”. Furthermore, they gave an average rating of 3.9 on the statement “Generally, the relationships between staff members are characterised by harmony and cooperation”. In fact, the average ratings of HBH teachers on all the statements in the “relationships” section were positive, with the average across statements for this category coming out to 3.8 (Table 6) while at benchmark schools it is only 3.3.

### Table 6. Teachers’ agreement with statements about relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Average rating (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is opportunity for me to share my ideas and opinions openly with other staff</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I trust my colleagues enough to be able to share my ideas and opinions openly</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel a sense of trust and supportiveness from the Principal and Deputy</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel a sense of trust and supportiveness from most of my colleagues</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I trust the Principal and Deputy to be open and honest with me</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I trust my colleagues at school to be open and honest with me</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generally, the relationships between staff members are characterized by harmony and cooperation</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average of answers under ‘Relationships‘ category</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.8</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, the finding that staff relationships are mostly positive at HBH is reinforced by the absence of any evidence to the contrary – there is remarkably little mention of interpersonal conflict or in-fighting by any of the staff interviewed, and no suggestion of serious rifts between the SMT members and any non-SMT members.

Whereas with the short-term outcomes there was plenty of evidence suggesting that PfP contributed to them, there is less evidence when it comes to the SMT. It is plausible that cohesion and working relationships started to improve early on under the principal’s leadership, and were already adequate by 2014. As mentioned earlier, the partnership plan did not assign high priority to improving the SMT, and in fact it is not documented whether the partners followed through on the two SMT-related goals that they set for themselves. The introduction (by the principal) of the Monday morning SMT meetings
may have contributed somewhat to improved communication among them; there may also have been some indirect benefits from the principal’s growth in confidence and listening skills.

The circuit manager’s suggestion that the school has benefited from the appointment of the deputy and the relative stability in the SMT since 2014, is plausible. This could help to account for the positive outlook of the SMT and their sense that they are making incremental progress in coordinating, delegating, and enhancing planning processes. The appointment of the deputy and the stability of the SMT has little to do with PfP. The PfP business partner, as a member of the SGB, was involved in the process of appointing the deputy in 2015, but it is not apparent that her involvement changed the course of events substantially.

8.2.3 Teacher outcomes

Although teachers at HBH expressed positivity regarding their relationships with the SMT and principal, the survey picked up mixed feelings when it comes to teachers' enthusiasm for teaching and learning. Their agreement with the statement, “I feel motivated to excel in my work at this school” was at 3.5, right in the middle between “sort of” (3) and “agree” (4). Their agreement dipped below 3 on the statements comparing their enjoyment of teaching at this school with the alternatives of teaching at a different school (2.9) and a different career (2.7). While one may expect teachers in any under-resourced school to struggle with motivation, HBH teachers’ average ratings on these statements were lower than in benchmark schools.

Table 7. Teachers’ agreement with statements about motivation and fulfilment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Average rating (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I find my work at this school fulfilling</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel motivated to excel in my work at this school</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy teaching at this school so much that I don’t think that I would be more fulfilled at another school</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy teaching at this school so much that I don’t think that I would be more fulfilled in another career</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

They were also asked whether they had applied for such alternative jobs. The majority had not, as Table 8 shows. The evaluation cannot render a judgment about whether these results suggest high or low levels of motivation, given that it has no data from other schools on these two statements.

Table 8. Teachers’ recent applications for jobs outside Hout Bay High School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the past 12 months I have applied for a post at another school</th>
<th>In the past 12 months I have applied for a job outside of education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes (N of responses)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the open-ended section, teachers attributed their low levels of motivation to learner attitudes and behaviour as well as lack of parent support. As will be discussed later, all the teachers felt that only a small percentage of their learners are motivated and eager to learn, and they also felt the percentage had gone down compared to 2014 – if this is how a teacher feels, it is little wonder that they struggle to stay motivated. Learners also pick up on the frustration of their teachers:

Learner 1: The only probably negative thing is the teachers are very strict.
Learner 2: And the teachers that swear.
Learner 1: Actually it’s because of the learners, of being angry at them.

In the grade 11 survey, one learner also commented that the teachers seem more “grumpy” than in the past.

Unfortunately, the evaluation has very little longitudinal data on teacher motivation\(^{14}\). The one NGO representative who has seen change at the school since 2011 reported that many of the teachers who were very negative have left the school and that the school now has “a really good team, positive, who like to invest in the kids”. This creates the impression that teacher motivation started from an even lower base and is indeed better than before. But this is only a single person’s view; the evaluation cannot rule out the possibility that teacher motivation has not changed. An important point from these findings is that teachers point to learners as an important factor shaping their motivation, rather than focusing on the principal, SMT, or their fellow teachers. The reciprocal relationship between teachers’ and learners’ level of motivation was discussed, but not included in the TOC developed for this evaluation, because the evaluator felt it would make the TOC too complicated. However, based on the findings of this evaluation, it may be worth including in future iterations. On the other hand, one may hope that good leadership and professional development can shift teachers’ locus of control, potentially making their motivation less dependent on learners.

When it comes to teachers’ absenteeism and time on task, the evaluation does not have any quantitative data. However, interviewees were not concerned about teacher absenteeism. Respondents point out that the staff are a “small team” that feels the impact whenever a teacher is absent, and they try to keep this to a minimum. This is not currently, nor ever seems to have been, a major concern. However, one NGO representative said the school did not always start punctually at 8 o’clock, and that learners as well as teachers used to arrive late for school, with people still hanging around outside the school well past 8 o’clock. She said that this stopped “straight away” around 2014. As discussed earlier, there were still some concerns about learner latecoming in 2016, but this is perceived by several stakeholders to have declined significantly since parents started volunteering to stand at the gates and organise detention for latecomers. This means more learning time for learners.

Although the evaluation has no corroborating evidence of teacher latecoming pre- and improvement post-2014\(^{15}\), if it is true then it increases the potential amount of time on task at Hout Bay High. This limited evidence further suggests that the improvement came not through increased teacher

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\(^{14}\) There are no easily accessible proxy indicators for it – perhaps teacher turnover could be such an indicator, but it would be more reliable in a bigger school. With less than 20 teachers, one does not want to attach too much importance to it. But this data was not easily available for this evaluation.

\(^{15}\) The interview was unfortunately conducted late in the project after all the other qualitative engagements had been done.
motivation, but through stronger leadership / management (both of which are potential pathways through which this improvement can occur according to the TOC).

When it comes to time on task, teachers must not only be at school during school hours, but they must also be teaching during teaching time. Again, unfortunately there is no quantitative evidence of time on task at HBH. None of the interviewees (school-based or external) specifically raised any concerns about whether teachers teach during work hours. It is assumed that this stayed constant or improved slightly with the reduction in teacher late-coming.

Teachers can potentially also offer academic support after hours, over weekends and holidays. There has been a small increase in this. For the last two years, one of the teachers and a strong grade 11 learner have been offering extra maths and physics classes to all learners who wish to attend. As mentioned above, the school has also introduced daily extra maths classes for the grade 8s. This is an initiative which previously started and then tapered off, but has this year become “more serious”. More generally, the school has this year also made a greater effort than in the past to persuade all learners to stay at school for an hour or two longer and to study in classrooms, and/or to approach their teachers with any questions. (There is also more academic support from non-teacher sources, which will be discussed later on.) The increased teaching is not directly linked to PfP as far as this evaluation can ascertain. Instead, one respondent mentioned the WCED’s continued pressure and scrutiny into academic results as a motivation.

The final teacher-level outcome is teachers undertake more relevant professional development. As discussed earlier, the principal is extremely supportive of any and all teacher development training, workshops etc. Teachers are encouraged to develop themselves, although the evaluation was not able to quantify how often they do so or whether they do so now more often than before. In the teachers’ survey, they were asked for their two main reasons for undertaking their most recent professional development training / workshop / course. Eight out of 12 cited at least one reason suggesting personal motivation (e.g. “to improve myself” or “because I recently started teaching this subject”); 3 were unclear, while only 1 gave only a compliance-related reason. The teacher wrote “staff request” in relation to the MOT workshop which all the staff have been requested by the principal to attend. This suggests that most teachers take some degree of personal interest in further training and development.

In addition to the principal’s efforts, in 2014 and 2015, the school was flagged as an underperforming school by the WCED and therefore benefited from a range of support interventions. This included the curriculum advisors providing additional training and material to teachers. Both the interviewed teachers said they benefited from the extra training, materials and workbooks. One interviewee pointed to this support as a factor contributing to the improved pass rate from 2014 onwards. Thus some more teacher training has taken place, probably with positive effects on the quality of teaching at the school, but not because of PfP.

The only training opportunity that can be linked back to PfP is the MOT training that teachers recently underwent. This training helps teachers to develop self-confidence, sound values, and life skills in their learners. It was sponsored by the Oceana Fishing Company, a company that became an active supporter of the school following the principal’s efforts (since 2014) to attract more contributions to the school. The effects of this remain to be seen, but it is only one type of programme. The WCED has clearly been the main source of teacher development opportunities.
In conclusion therefore, the evidence on teacher outcomes is a bit thin, but does not suggest substantial changes in teachers’ level of motivation and enthusiasm (it is neither particularly high nor low), absenteeism (it has never been a concern, nor is it now), and time on task (there may have been some increase from arriving at school punctually and offering more academic support after hours). There has been plenty of additional teacher training and development, but this was mostly on the initiative of the WCED, unrelated to PfP. PfP appears to have made only a small change to these specific teacher outcomes at HBH.

8.2.4 Parent outcomes

The involvement of parents in the school was very low in the first few years of the principal’s leadership. In their 2014 partnership plan, the principal and business partner wrote that less than 10% of the parent body was interested and engaged in the school. They assigned high priority to changing this (priority 2, second only to inspiring learners and giving them opportunities to develop and shine).

The Lalela art evening in August 2014 (described earlier) was a huge moment in parents’ relationship with the school. More recently, the awards evenings were also introduced to celebrate learners’ achievements with their parents, and parenting workshops were implemented with sponsorship from the Oceana Fishing Company, with plans currently underway to offer further parenting workshops in 2018. As discussed earlier, the principal also turned a potentially confrontational meeting with disgruntled parents into an invitation and a small group of parents are now volunteering at the school daily. They are checking late-coming, organising detention, keeping a presence on the school grounds, and invigilating in classes. Parents were also invited to contribute to redesigning the school uniforms. Parents participated in a series of meetings, and new uniforms are being rolled out.

These initiatives have created an opportunity for positive, constructive interaction between the parents and the school and all respondents emphasise the clear change in the levels of parent involvement in the school. Although the parents who actively volunteer and get involved are not yet a large and varied group, there is more pro-active involvement. On the NELI rating scale, the change has been from 1 to 4.

![Figure 8. Improvement in parents volunteering services / time to the school (NELI rating), 2014 to 2017](image)

Over the same period, parent involvement in the SGB has also strengthened. According to the principal, during the early years of his leadership the SGB was difficult to work with. Especially the parent members of the SGB were uncooperative, according to him. He said that in the last two SGB electoral cycles (2011 to 2014, and 2014 to 2017) things has improved. Indeed, if one uses long-standing parent involvement as a proxy for constructive parent participation in the SGB, then this
improvement is evident. The SGB membership lists (which were reviewed from 2011 to 2017) show that by the end of 2014 there was one parent who had served for more than a 3-year term. This already places the school at level 5 of the NELI indicator “SGB parent and/or community members are long-standing”. By 2017, there were four parents who had done so. Although no improvement can be registered on the scale, the participation is even higher now than in 2017. No respondents clearly attributed this improvement to any specific change, but two interviewees chair said that the business partner’s co-optation to the SGB (since 2015) has strengthened it. The SGB chair (who is also a parent) explained that the business partner’s commitment to the SGB has made an impression on him, that she brought to the table her “structure” and “ability to stay calm under pressure”. As a result:

“the school has grown, the SGB is stronger at this point in time. For me it feels that I don’t want to leave, everything has just come into place. You see the structure and everything that’s put in place, phenomenal work that she’s done as well and this is the part where I say, this is the foundation that is laid and we can go from here and work to step up.”

A teacher also said that the business partner “sometimes gives them [the SGB] direction, better than [the principal] would have given because of her different background”. Thus influence of the business partner may have increased the engagement and interest of the other SGB members, including parents.

Another dimension of parent involvement is whether more parents attend meetings. The main regular meeting is at the beginning of the new term, at parents’ evening. On these evenings, all parents are expected to come and meet with their child’s teacher and take home the report card. A good indicator of parents’ attendance of these meetings is how many report cards are left by the end of the night; the principal is proud to report that whereas he remembers 90% of reports used to be left over, now 90% of reports are taken home on parent-teacher evening so that only 10% are left over. The evaluator happened to be at the school on the day of the most recent parent-teacher evening and saw large groups of parents starting to arrive in the early evening. The principal pointed out that the school entrance was a hive of activity (Figure 9), and this in itself was a clear change from the parent-teacher evenings of the past. All the stakeholders who discussed parent involvement, expressed the view that far more parents are attending school meetings.

The evaluator used this information to rate the change in parent attendance and participation on the NELI indicator (Figure 10). The rating of 4 was chosen because a majority of parents attend meetings and there is thin evidence (the claims of the teacher and principal) that parents share their thoughts, ideas and opinions at these meetings.
After the TOC had been finalised, the evaluator realised it is important also to distinguish general parent involvement and meeting attendance from parent support for learning. This fits in with the theme of parent involvement, but it is more specific. Parent support for learning is an important prerequisite for the outcome of learners’ sense of being supported in their education.

The teachers’ survey flagged a lack of parent support for learning, with statements like:

“Learners don’t realise the importance of getting at least NSC. No motivation from home.”

“Parents are not assisting teachers where discipline of children is concerned.”

In interviews, too, several learners & teachers said that many of HBH’s parents don’t teach learners discipline at home, and that parents sometimes take learners’ side against teachers even when learners are in the wrong.

There is some optimism about the influence of the parents who volunteer at the school now. According to two interviewees, they are gaining better insight about children’s misbehaviour at school and they are sharing this insight with other parents, informally but also sometimes in formal events, like when they recently spoke to other parents at a parents’ evening. While this is encouraging, school stakeholders certainly do not consider active parent support for learning to be common. The change, on the NELI indicator, can be expressed as going from level 1 to level 2 (Figure 11).
Parents support learning e.g. homework support, reading materials at home, engagement with school notices and response to letters when their children have been underperforming

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Parents are not involved in learning at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Some parents indicate a willingness to support learning but there is little action taken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Some of the parents support learning when asked to do so by the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Most parents play an active role in learning support as proposed by the school and proactively look for additional ways to support their child’s education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 11. Movement on the NELI indicator for parents’ support for learning**

Across the parent outcomes discussed here, it is evident that PfP has played a valuable role. The shift in parents’ behaviour around meeting attendance started clearly after the Lalela evening and has continued after the principal had his encounter with the group of parents that led to some of them volunteering at the school. The types of leadership behaviours exhibited in these two events are in line with PfP’s intended outcomes: the Lalela evening featured more attractive invitations, which is a theme of the PfP Community Building workshop, and the PfP Time to Think workshop focuses on being able to listen in such a way that people feel heard and are able to come up with self-generated solutions. The principal and the business partner both credit the partnership for these events. In short, there is strong evidence that PfP has contributed to these parent-level outcomes.

**8.2.5. Community outcomes**

In the last few years, HBH has benefited from increasing community support. Far more organisations, companies and individuals are contributing assets, resources and skills to the school. The evaluation found reference to 20 different contributing entities that have gotten involved since 2014, the majority of them contributing to the school on a long-term basis (Table 9). There were 6 new types of opportunities (academic support, extramurals and other types of learner support) introduced since 2014. Where the evaluation had information about how the relationship was initiated, this information is also indicated in the table and as it shows, the principal and the partner have been instrumental in establishing these connections.

**Table 9. Contributors to the school**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entity</th>
<th>New since 2014</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>School approached them</th>
<th>They approached school</th>
<th>Through whose initiative / effort?</th>
<th>Once-off contribution / long-term relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maths clinic</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>Academic support</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massimo’s restaurant</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>Donations - in-kind</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>PfP Partner</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse manure donor</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>Donations - in kind</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>PfP Partner</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underdog project</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>Extramural</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>PfP Partner</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolworths / Myschool</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>PfP Partner</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police station</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>Access to resource</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The most appropriate way to describe the current situation in terms of contributing organisations, companies and individuals is that they are a large and varied group who provide support actively and regularly. This warrants a movement up from level 3 to 5 on the NELI indicator (Figure 12).

There are a few striking things about this significant change at the school. The first is the fact that so many of the contributing parties were approached by school stakeholders. It shows that it was not happenstance, but the product of deliberate effort. The second is the frequency with which the principal is listed as the person through whose effort or initiative the contribution was eventually received. It reinforces the claim, made in the earlier sections, that he has grown in confidence and has
sought contributions for the school more actively than before. The representatives of two of the NGOs that have been working at the school since before 2014, also said that the principal has become even more supportive of their work at the school. The third is the frequency of the PfP partner on the list. The HBH case strongly demonstrates the validity of an underlying premise of the PfP model, which is that business leaders have significant social networks which an under-resourced school would not be able to access on its own, but could be unlocked through the partnership. The theory of change as used for this evaluation is limited in that it makes it seem like all change at school level will happen via the principal – but in the HBH case, the partner became an advocate for the school in her own right and single-handedly attracted major contributions to the school. This is an “alternative pathway” that the PfP theory of change did not presume. The efforts of the principal and the business partner together explain most of the massive list of new assets, resources and opportunities.

The TOC also does not anticipate that the partner herself will become a long-term contributor of skills directly to the school (not via the principal). But by co-opting her onto the SGB, the school is now benefiting in a sustained way from her skills, reportedly particularly around financial management.

It should be noted that most of the “community” support and contributions that have come to HBH over the last few years are in fact not from Hangberg itself. They are from the larger Hout Bay –Hout Bay-based companies and organisations, and residents of the more affluent parts of the town. PfP envisions the “school at the centre of the community”, but HBH has not necessarily become the centre of the Hangberg community. The change should rather be described as the school being “put on the map” of the larger community of Hout Bay, or “getting connected” into the larger Hout Bay community.

8.3. Long-term outcomes: Learners’ experiences and educational outcomes

The previous sections have discussed the changes over the last few years at HBH, firstly in the principal, and then in the SMT, teachers, parents and community. This section considers how these short and medium-term outcomes have affected learners and ultimately, learners’ education outcomes.

The mechanism through which the TOC expects learners’ education to be affected, is sufficient quantity and quality of teaching. Before discussing the change in academic offering, it is important to point out that learners’ need for extra academic input may have increased over the last few years. As mentioned earlier, the school previously served a mix of Imizamo Yethu learners (among whom there were reportedly some stronger candidates) along with the Hangberg learners. For the last two years, the school no longer has these relatively stronger learners. This means the average HBH learner today is academically weaker than before, and there may also be fewer examples of good performance or help from classmates than before. This shifts the bar for what constitutes “sufficient” teaching if one wants to improve academic outcomes (or at least keep them stable).

Concurrent with the change in learner demographics, the academic offering at the school has been reduced in the last few years: pure mathematics and physical science are no longer necessarily offered to every grade. The current grade 10s and 12s are not offered these subjects, and just three grade 11s are being offered it in an extra period after school. The school management’s argument is that it is not a good use of resources to offer these subjects in a school with such limited staff, when learners
are so weak in these subjects. This is a complex issue, because one may argue that the school should be doing more to prepare learners so that they are indeed ready for it by the time they finish grade 9. However, the grade 8 baseline results demonstrate just how big the challenge is. These tests are standardised across the Western Cape and are done early in the grade 8 year. They are therefore an indication of how ready learners are for high school. As the graphs show (Figure 13), they perform extremely poorly in maths. The small improvement in the number of learners who passed the maths test this year have given the school some cause for optimism and extra maths classes have been introduced for this cohort, in the hope of making it feasible to offer maths to them in grades 10 to 12.

![Figure 13. Grade 8 baseline results, 2015 to 2017](image)

Whether sufficient or not, there are several indications of an increased quantity of teaching. Firstly, school reportedly starts more punctually now – for teachers as well as learners – meaning more time on task. Secondly, there is the extra academic support that teachers now offer. This includes more teachers being available to respond to learners’ questions after school; there is also an explicit invitation to learners to study in the classrooms after school. Basic lunch is available to learners to enable them to do so, and learners in the interviews spoke appreciatively about this. Thirdly, there is plenty of extra academic support (see the list of contributions above). SAEN inspires learners with regard to science in particular. PASCAP and Lalela both offer more academic support and homework help than in the past and the Maths Clinic also helps a few learners per term. Teachers can also periodically go pick up free pizzas from Massimo’s restaurant, which is used as a surprise treat for learners who study after school. Fourthly, the WCED also introduced extra holiday tutoring for learners when the school was classified as an Intervention School, and this has continued despite the school no longer having that status. All these inputs suggest there is more teaching and academic support. It is important to note that the focus of the HBH partnership plan, at least in the first year,

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16 It would be useful to compare grade 8 baseline results over a much longer period, to quantify the decline in grade 8 “readiness” that teachers and the principal describe.
was not directly on teaching and learning (the only relevant action was about improving teacher skills, and it was priority number 6 of 8). Nevertheless, the first and third of the four changes listed above have come about through the influence of PfP.

In terms of the quality of teaching, as mentioned earlier, teachers received extra training and resources from WCED in 2014 and 2015 and the two interviewed teachers believe this benefited their teaching. The various other types of professional development that teachers do with the support of the principal may also be contributing to the quality of teaching. Finally, some stakeholders on the SMT and SGB said that some of the less effective teachers have left the school over the last few years and been replaced with better ones. Nearly all the teachers at HBH currently, are qualified to teach the subjects that they teach, which is an improvement on previous years. None of these pieces of evidence are conclusive, but they all point in the same “direction” - improving quality of teaching.

The second mechanism that would affect learners is the extent to which they benefit from more assets, resources and opportunities. The increased prevalence of these things has already been discussed. For the sake of brevity, this section will not spend much time discussing whether learners are indeed benefiting from this. A more thorough evaluation of this may quantify the number of learners actually participating in / benefiting from each of the assets, resources and opportunities. Suffice to say here that for several of the interviewed learners, the prevalence of opportunities stood out as a defining characteristic of their school.

The third mechanism through which learners would be affected, is whether learners feel valued and encouraged in their education by teachers, parents and community. The interviewed learners were very appreciative of their teachers’ support. They spoke about teachers “motivating” them. The word “push” also came up more than once:

“They always push us even though they know some are not trying their best, but they keep on; you can do better, you can do this, you can achieve this.”

“They’ll always push us to do our work.”

The grade 11 survey also helps to gauge learners’ sense of support. As Figure 14 shows, the majority of grade 11s feel positive about the support they receive from teachers, although not unequivocally so, with 12% disagreeing and 22% feeling neutral. A grade 11 who reported a higher level of agreement with this statement for 2017 than for 2014, explained: “The teachers empowered me to be more serious when it comes to my schooling career and motivated me to work harder.” But another one, whose rating is lower in 2017 than in 2014, said: “They sometimes push us away when asking for help or information”. Thus there are some mixed feelings among grade 11s. It is also important to remember that by grade 11, many of the learners who were not academically strong or did not feel supported, have dropped out already (see dropout rates presented later).
The interviewed learners are also unanimously positive about the principal and his caring for learners. The TOC does not include a direct mechanism from the principal to learners, but the principal believes he has a direct influence on learners’ sense of support and motivation. Considering the highly visible role that the principal plays in the school and the fact that interviewed learners spoke about his supportive role without being prompted, this may well be an alternative pathway to learners’ sense of support, that has been activated in the HBH case.

The evaluation has argued previously that parents are clearly more involved with the school than in the past, but that there was little change in parents’ support for learning. In the survey, grade 11s reported that they feel much more supported in their studies by their families in 2017 than in 2014. (The combined % who “agree” and “strongly agree” rose from 49% to 73.) But this may be explained more by the fact that these learners have made it to grade 11 now, than by any inherent change in parents. It is not taken for granted in Hangberg community that children finish school, and as the quotes below demonstrate, parents / families may naturally take more interest in a child’s studies when it becomes a real possibility that the child will finish matric (emphasis added):

“In 2014 my family was supportive but not as in 2017, just because it’s more serious and they're excited for matric.”

“My family support me better now that I'm grade 11 and want me to finish school.”

“In 2014 my family was going through a hard time so no-one really took note of me, but I got through to grade 9 on my own. This year they are sitting on my head and putting pressure on me to pass to matric.”

Overall, since evidence does not point to major change in parents’ support for learning, it is unlikely that there has been a major change in how learners experience that support.

When it comes to learners’ sense of support from the community, the change reported by grade 11s is decidedly negative. As Figure 15 shows, strong disagreement quadrupled and strong agreement dropped by three quarters. Explaining this, learners wrote:

“They only care for themselves and their household.”

“As time went on people are more jealous then happy for people that achieve things in life.”
“Then I felt a bit supported by the community but now that I understand things better, they don’t support you at all. The whole community is negative.”

![Figure 15. Grade 11s’ sense of community support](image)

This clear negative change must be understood in light of the timing of the grade 11s’ survey. There were protests in Hangberg community about fishing quotas from about 10 to 13 September 2017. Protesters clashed with police and the school closed for two days because of concerns for learners’ safety. This was on the eve of the grade 12 examinations. The survey was conducted only two weeks later, so the protests and the disruption of school would have been fresh in the grade 11s’ memory. If this is true, then it means learners’ sense of “community” support is more strongly influenced by the negative events in Hangberg community where most of them live, than by the increase in positive support and contributions from the larger “community” of Hout Bay.

The PfP TOC envisions that through the short and medium-term outcomes, there will be a **positive atmosphere at the school**. Responding to the statement, “there is a positive atmosphere at the school”, learners indicated that their levels of agreement dipped under 50% between 2014 and 2017. The largest group (37%) indicated that they are neutral about this statement (Figure 16).

![Figure 16. Grade 11s’ views on the atmosphere at school](image)

Learners mostly blamed their peers for their declining levels of agreement with this statement (emphasis added):

“At first when I came to this school I thought it was the most wonderful school. But as I past on from grade to grade the school doesn’t have a positive atmosphere learners are rude and don’t care.”
“Basically because of the learners, teachers can't teach in such an environment.”

“Learners are being affected negatively with peer pressure and social problems, e.g. drinking alcohol at early ages and being drug addicts.”

“Because when I started grade 8 in 2014 only seniors smoked on school premises, but now the juniors is beating the seniors. There is also a lot of dropouts.”

Interviewed learners agreed with these sentiments; and one of the NGO representatives also commented on the bad behaviour of learners at the school. Negative peer issues are clearly prevalent at the school.

Teachers in the survey also leaned towards “sort of” rather than “agree” on the statement “The working environment at this school motivates me to apply myself fully to my work in this school.” They gave it an average rating of 3.3. Like the grade 11s, the teachers mentioned the attitudes and behaviour of (most) learners as having a negative effect on the atmosphere at the school. These ambivalent responses from learners and teachers are really stark if one considers all the positive changes that have been described in this evaluation so far. One would hope that the regular celebrations and showcasing of achievements would in themselves have a significant positive effect on the atmosphere at the school. One is forced to conclude that the negativity in the community really affects the learners, and the school.

Despite this, many are positive about HBH as a place of opportunities. Many different stakeholders picked up on this, as the following quotes demonstrate:

“The school provides a wonderful place for kids to grab onto opportunities if they want to.” (SGB member)

“The opportunity is there, if you want it you just grab it.” (Grade 11 learner)

“School has become more interesting over the past few years. More activities have developed at the school.” (Grade 11 learner)

“[How I would describe my school to an outsider] - It’s a very beautiful school, it's fun, we do a lot of activities, we go out a lot of times, and it's a creative school also.” (Grade 8 learner)

“[In the school in my home community, there is gangsterism at school] but this school is better for me, a lot of activities and stuff to do to keep you from the road.” (Grade 8 learner)

New resources, esp. digital resources, are also mentioned with pride & excitement. And most learners want to be at the school. In the interviews, two learners said they want to hang around at school, participating in every possible activity, to avoid going home. The PfP business partner also expressed the belief that the extramurals which continue through the holidays, give the learners a sense of belonging at school.

Closely intertwined with these results are the results on learner motivation. An NGO representative commenting on the dropout rate, said that HBH learners seem to have no interest in school and from her experience of invigilating classes, many learners are “not here to learn”. Every single teacher who has been at the school since 2014 or earlier, indicated a perceived decline in the percentage of learners
who are motivated to learn (Figure 17). Most indicated that already in 2014, less than half of learners were motivated.

![Teachers' estimates: What % of the learners that they teach are motivated to learn, 2014–vs. 2017?](image)

**Figure 17. Teachers' perceptions of learner motivation**

The grade 11s indicated improvements in their level of motivation, but one can see clearly from their explanations that the improved levels of motivation are mostly a natural result of “growing up” and becoming more mature, rather than from any particular change at school. Thus in this instance, the cross-sectional research design did not serve the evaluation well. The teachers’ ratings are taken to be more credible.

In conclusion, the results on the atmosphere at the school are mixed. There is a positive atmosphere around the many resources and extramural activities, with a sense of possibility and pride in achievements which is encouraged by the principal. Learners feel at home and welcome at school. And yet these improvements are offset by the negative effects of social issues in the community, and by the negative attitudes and behaviour of some learners.

The absenteeism rate reinforces the impression that positive and negative factors have offset each other when it comes to learner motivation. Figure 18 shows the absenteeism rate; it can be interpreted as the average number of learners absent per day of the term. After rising from 7% in the first term of 2014 to 12% by the second term of 2015, absenteeism fluctuated, ending at 13% for the third term of 2017. (This last term may have been influenced by the disruptions of the protests, but there are no comparable significant events to explain the previous terms with high absenteeism rates.)
Absenteeism was calculated as the number of absent days reported, divided by the total number of possible attendance days (the product of the number of days school was held times the number of learners enrolled).

Figure 18. Absenteeism rate, selected terms, 2014-2017

Against this backdrop, the educational outcomes have also been mixed. The throughput rate has not seen any major change. This was measured in two ways: the change in enrolment levels between term 1 and term 3; and the size of each cohort as they move from grade 8 to grade 12. The former (Table 10) is not influenced by the pass rate from grade to grade. Although some learners may leave the school for other reasons, the most prevalent reason for declining enrolment within a year according to several interviewed stakeholders, is children dropping out of school\(^\text{17}\). The 3% drop in enrolment between term 1 and term 3 in 2017 is an encouraging improvement on the previous three years, but it is too soon to consider this a trend of improvement.

Table 10. Enrolment levels from term 1 to term 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Term 1</th>
<th>Term 3</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>-5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>-6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>-6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>-3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the dropout rate from the first to third term may not seem extreme, comparison of the size of each cohort from its grade 8 to grade 12 year gives a clearer sense of how many learners fall away over time. As Figure 19 shows, the cohorts shrink as they progress. This is a combination of learners failing and dropping out, and the trends presented here may mask bigger changes in the pass rate from one grade to another, or in the dropout rate. The most extreme cohort is the grade 8s of 2013 (this year’s grade 12s). They were 94 in grade 9, and only 31 by matric – meaning they lost 67% of their classmates in three years.

It was pointed out that socio-cultural factors may also render Imizamo Yethu learners less likely to drop out. The last group with a substantial proportion of them was the grade 8s of 2011.
As Figure 20 shows, the matric pass rate improved soon after the current principal took the reins in 2008. The rate was stable at over 80% between 2009 and 2012 but then took a serious plunge in the two years that followed\textsuperscript{18}. This is what prompted WCED to classify the school as an Intervention School and allocate additional support for 2014 and 2015. The pass rate then improved to a record-high 86.3% in 2015 and stayed there for 2016. This high pass rate is worth celebrating, but has to be tempered by the serious problem with dropouts described above. The matrics who attained the 86.1% pass rate in 2016 were less than half of those who were in grade 10 two years earlier.

\textbf{Figure 19. Cohort sizes, 2014 to 2017}

\textbf{Figure 20. Matric pass rate: Hout Bay High School and National average, 2008-2016}

\textsuperscript{18} The 2014 rate was reportedly affected by the change in policy which prevents schools from failing learners more than once in a phase, but there is no such explanation for the 2013 results.
As for the other education outcomes in the TOC, they were unfortunately not directly measured. Learners are quite possibly leaving the school with better digital literacy since they now benefit from three computer rooms instead of the one they had in 2014 – so they are likely to gain more exposure. These computer rooms are reportedly put to good use, with computer assisted design (CAD) classes and an extracurricular programming course for the grade 8s. Changes in learners’ critical thinking and problem-solving skills were not measured, but with more and a wider variety of extramural activities and opportunities available at the school, it is possible that learners are leaving school with more well-rounded life skills in this sense. There is no data on their achievement of numeracy and literacy milestones. The only standardised test results made available were the grade 8 baseline tests, which are more an indication of the primary school’s educational outcomes than of the high school.

9. Conclusion

9.1. Answers to the evaluation questions

Short-term outcomes: To what extent did the quality of the principal’s leadership improve, and what evidence is there that the programme made a difference in this regard?

The evaluation has found that the principal had already been leading in a supportive way before participating in PfP. After 2014, however, there is evidence that he became more confident and assertive. He appears to have taken a more proactive approach with potential donors. He has introduced tools and events to celebrate achievements and good things happening at the school, and also makes a habit of doing so informally. He exhibits all the short-term outcomes, and is especially known for being inclusive, supportive, and ready to celebrate achievements. Some further room for growth is noted around being consistent in holding staff accountable, and in taking a unique and personalised approach to each staff member’s development.

The evaluation surfaced no other significant factors that, from 2014 onwards, may have led to the improvements noted in the principal’s leadership style. Instead, there is plenty of evidence linking specific parts of the PfP programme to the observed changes. The supportive relationship with the partner in particular contributed to his increased confidence and their conversations were often cited as being the origin of the events and changes implemented at the school. Specific skills and concepts from the PfP workshops found expression in the principal’s efforts to communicate with parents and invite them to be involved in the school. The listening skills he developed through PfP appears to have improved his ability to deal with difficult interactions, and may have enhanced his staff’s sense of openness and support.

Medium-term outcomes: To what extent was there improvement in the role that the senior management team, teachers, parents and community play in the school, and what evidence is there that the programme made a difference in this regard?

The SMT has become a stronger team over time and currently leads the school in a way that enables positive interpersonal relationships among staff, with teachers agreeing that relationships between staff members are characterised by harmony and cooperation. Individual respondents noted scope for better complementarity between the principal and deputy, and that the different SMT members have different levels of energy for their roles. Still, the SMT consider themselves fairly well aligned,
cohesive, and fairly effective in coordination and planning. They felt that they can do more to delegate effectively, but are making progress in this as well as all other dimensions of their leadership. There is no conclusive evidence that PfP played a direct role in the improving performance of the SMT. Instead, the appointment of the deputy and the relative stability of the SMT over the last four years appear to have benefited the team. It is also plausible that the principal’s introduction of regular SMT meetings and his growth in confidence contributed indirectly to the health of the team.

For teachers, the evaluation has little to go on in terms of change over time. But the evidence suggests that the outcome of “engaged and motivated” teachers who “express enthusiasm for teaching and learning” has not yet been fully attained. Although they are supported by the leadership, teachers’ morale is affected by learners who they perceive as largely not motivated to learn. Teacher absenteeism has not changed because it was not a problem to begin with, but they may have become more punctual, thereby increasing the potential time for learning. Teachers are also offering more after-school academic support to learners. Still the evaluation does not have enough data to judge whether the increased quantity of teaching is sufficient. In terms of quality, teachers have always been supported to undergo professional development, but in the last few years benefited from increased input from WCED. In terms of what contributed to these improvements, PfP appears to have influenced teacher punctuality (through stronger leadership around this issue) and the increasingly supportive and well-performing SMT leadership team may also have raised teachers’ levels of motivation from an even lower base, but neither of these claims are backed by strong evidence. The WCED is credited for the additional teacher support and development in 2014 and 2015, and is also implicated in motivating the school to offer more after-hours academic support to learners.

Parent outcomes have improved in a very obvious way since 2014. Evidence is strong that far more parents attend parent-teacher meetings, and the parent members of the SGB are increasingly serving for more than a 3-year term. A small group of parents actively offer their time and services to the school on a daily basis, not only benefiting the school but also gaining insight into the school’s challenges and sharing this with other parents. Parents are also involved in other ways, like designing the new school uniforms. Still, few parents actively support learning. In terms of what contributed to the observed improvements, there are no significant alternative explanations for these changes and there are clear links to PfP. The changes in the principal’s leadership style, specific ideas that were inspired by PfP content and in conversation with the business partner, and the energy that the business partner has brought to the SGB have all been credited for these improvements.

Hout Bay has also benefited from a huge increase in contributions from individuals, companies and organisations in the broader “community” of Hout Bay and beyond. Many of their contributions are long term, such as ongoing after-school activities or regular donations. The fact that so many contributions were secured through the efforts and networks of the business partner virtually eliminates doubt that the programme contributed to this change. The principal’s increased confidence in approaching potential donors is also clear. It is notable, however, that very few contributions (except for the contribution of time from parent volunteers) are from Hangberg, the immediate neighbourhood around the school.

Long-term outcomes: To what extent did learners’ educational outcomes improve, and what evidence is there that the programme made a difference in this regard?
Learners at HBH are mostly appreciative of the support they receive from teachers, but do not feel supported by their community (probably influenced by the recent protests). The evidence on their sense of support from their parents is unfortunately too thin to render a judgment here. Learners are not perceived to have particularly high levels of motivation, and teachers believe that the percentage of learners who are motivated has declined, rather than increased since 2014. Learners express frustration with other learners in particular.

Unfortunately, learner absenteeism and dropout rates do not yet show clear improvement. The matric pass rate has recovered from a serious dip however. This may reflect the improved quality and quantity of teaching and learning, to which PfP contributed in particular by improving punctuality, and through the mobilising of significantly more contributions towards learners’ academic support. Alongside PfP’s contributions, the WCED also contributed to the quantity (extra classes for learners) as well as quality (support for teachers) of teaching. The other education outcomes were unfortunately not measured directly.

The outcomes at learner level are quite mixed. If it is true that learner motivation and the average academic “quality” of learner at HBH has declined in recent years, then the improvement in the pass rate is a bigger achievement than if one assumes that conditions stayed constant. Even the fact that absenteeism and dropout did not worsen significantly, may be an achievement under such conditions. Nevertheless, much clearly remains to be done. The school’s continued efforts to involve parents in their children’s learning may yield more gains in future.

Which external factors and alternative pathways played a significant role in the observed changes?

The evaluation found two external factors that affected the school negatively. Most notable is the flare-up of political tension in the Hangberg community which influenced learners’ morale. A further factor is that the school now serves learners mostly from Hangberg instead of a combination of Hangberg and Imizamo Yethu, which anecdotally lowers the average academic quality of HBH learners and leaves them in need of more intervention and support.

The evaluation also found two notable positive external factors that contributed to improvements at HBH alongside PfP. The first is the increased support from the WCED. As discussed above, the WCED through its additional teacher support and materials, as well as its additional classes for learners, is believed to have contributed to improved teaching and learning at HBH during the period under review. The second is the effect of new appointments and stability in the SMT, which has allowed the school’s leadership to make incremental improvements to their cohesion, alignment, and performance.

Lastly, it was noted that PfP did not make a difference only through the pathways anticipated in the theory of change. Firstly, the principal may have directly influenced learners’ sense of support (instead of doing is via the staff, parents and community). In a small school, this may be a more common occurrence as a principal is able to relate to learners individually, and to encourage them individually in their classes as the principal does. Secondly, the PfP business partner single-handedly attracted a wide variety of contributions to the school. This is not explicit in the TOC, but may be implicit as it has often happened in other partnerships too. But the fact that the business partner became a long-term, active contributor to the school not just through her relationship with the principal but also through
the SGB was certainly not anticipated by the TOC. Through this alternative pathway the programme appears to have strengthened some of the outcomes further, including parent participation.

9.2. Lessons learned

This evaluation has yielded some valuable lessons around the types of methods that an intervention like PfP can use to monitor and evaluate its contribution to change. Two were already mentioned in section 7.2: if causality is of interest, make sure to delimit the causal question quite narrowly; and seek ways to collect data on outcomes over time instead of once-off. Three more lessons are briefly highlighted here in conclusion.

The first lesson is about the importance of tracking education outcomes in intervention schools. A recent study of 12 PfP partnerships pointed out that neither PfP nor the PfP business partners track schools’ academic performance. Some business partners in that study therefore expressed doubt about the impact of their work on education (Kirori, 2017: 70–71). This evaluation also found that while all were aware of HBH’s matric pass rate, neither PfP nor the partnership had been tracking other educational outcomes, such as the dropout rate and learner progression from one grade to another. Seeing these trends was an eye opener for stakeholders. There is definitely value in principals and partners keeping an eye on these trends, in order to have a fuller picture of progress. Related to this, however, is the difficulty of actually obtaining the data of interest. Neither the principal nor the education department share this data easily. The programme may need to consider what could be done to help principals feel more comfortable to share their data.

Secondly, the juxtaposition of the exciting changes taking place at the short- and medium-term outcome levels, with limited change in the observable long-term outcomes for learners raises the question of how the programme defines success. The programme has clearly been hugely beneficial as a leadership development intervention. Yet external factors continue to temper the achievement of improved educational outcomes. If this is unsatisfactory, perhaps PfP should consider further empowering its schools to be able to influence factors that are currently external to its TOC, e.g. by facilitating broader socio-economic change in the community.

Thirdly, the PfP stakeholders, including principals, would also able to see the effects of their efforts more clearly if they periodically monitored intermediate outcomes using instruments like the SEED questionnaire and the NELI tool. PfP naturally does not wish to impose excessive M&E on principals and schools, but could consider informing partnerships of the value of such tools and offering them basic support (e.g. capturing and graphs) should they choose to administer them.
10. References


Conradie, J. de V. 2016. The Partners for Possibility leadership development and support process within the South African school context: Three case studies of Western Cape schools. Stellenbosch University.


Partners for Possibility. 2017. *Partners for possibility programme: Quarterly breakdown of activities, outputs and outcomes (Draft 1)*.


11. Appendix

See examples of data collection instruments in the separate document.
Alice Kramer and Juan Julius

Donation of the honours board by the International School of Hout Bay

Cara Hartley, Magali von Blottnitz, Juan Julius and Alice Kramer

Donation of a kombi by Oceana Fishing Company

Learners at the Wonderbag workshop

Learners selling the school Enviroclub’s produce with support from Woolworths