END-OF-YEAR REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2020 - DECEMBER 2021
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Executive summary

The purpose of this report

This report outlines the context, objectives and components of Symphonia for South Africa’s Partners for Possibility (PfP) programme. Data gathered from a sample of 245 school principals and 245 business partners across nine South African provinces who joined the programme during the reporting period of September 2020 – December 2021 is analysed in an effort to gain insight into:

- The demographic profile of PfP participants and participating schools
- Key expectations and motivating factors for joining the PfP programme
- The key lessons learned and outcomes achieved during and after participating in the 12-month facilitated programme
- The key areas identified for programme improvement

Report findings

Thirty-one leadership circles were launched during this reporting period, resulting in the establishment of 245 new partnerships. The majority of schools in the programme are primary schools that fall under Quintiles 1-3, mostly located in the Gauteng, Western Cape, Northern Cape and KwaZulu Natal provinces. Overall, PfP has a partnership completion rate of 88% - with 92% of school principals and 89% of business partners completing the programme.

A majority of the principals in the sample are males (58%) between the ages of 50 – 59 years (66%) who identify as Black African (76%). In terms of the BBBEE classification system, 98% of principals are classified as Black (African, Coloured and Indian)¹. The most common qualifications reported for this cohort were an Honours degree or Bachelor’s degree in Education. On average, principals have 25 years of teaching experience and only 7 years of school principal experience. The findings suggest that even though principals are highly experienced as teachers and are well-versed in the South African education system, they are less experienced when it comes to the daily management and leadership of a school.

The cohort of business partners consisted mostly of females (53%) between the ages of 40 – 49 years (40%) who identify as Black African (42%). Most business partners hold a Bachelor’s degree or a diploma in various fields of study (for instance business management, engineering, social science, education, etc.) and have careers spanning different sectors.

Findings suggest that the top three challenges that school principals face are: i) inadequate infrastructure and the lack of maintenance of school property; ii) lack of community and parental involvement at the school; and iii) inadequate resources (for example textbooks, desks, chairs, printers, etc.). Most principals join PfP to improve their leadership and management skills, to network with corporates and other schools in their area, and to gain personal and professional growth in the context of a partnership relationship.

By the end of the programme, principals report increased confidence; enhanced leadership skills; increased collaboration among school stakeholders; a willingness to confront difficult situations; improved listening skills;

¹ In terms of the Population Registration Act, South Africans were categorised into different racial groups – namely White, Coloured, African and Indian. Individuals who identify as African were divided into sub-categories based on linguistic differences, and Coloured people were defined as “those who cannot be defined as either White or African” (see Wilson and Ramphele, 1989; Western, 1996; Salo, 2005). The Population Registration Act was repealed in 1991. However, the racial categories set forth by the Act remain, and still underlie some of the official policies designed to remedy past economic inequalities. Data on race is collected strictly for BBBEE purposes.
increased efficiency among school management teams (SMT) and teachers; an improved school culture; a willingness to delegate tasks and show appreciation; and increased community involvement.

On the other hand, the factors that appeal to most business partners about the programme and motivate them to join PfP are: i) the ability to give back to the community; ii) the structured partnership model of PfP; iii) the opportunity to gain new skills and knowledge; and iv) the fact that the programme is specifically focused on education.

Business partners also join the programme expecting to acquire new skills; expand their networks; gain a better understanding of the South African education system and its challenges; and make a positive contribution to schools, the community and society as a whole. After participating in PfP, business partners report better listening skills; improved confidence; a more consultative leadership style; better relationships; an appreciation of diversity; and a better understanding of how to work effectively with and in communities. They also develop a mindset of curiosity, a deep sense of personal meaning and an ability to see problems as possibilities.

The PfP programme design supports action learning. The skills gained from the Flawless Consulting, Time to Think and Community Building workshops are put into practise when conducting meetings, contracting with internal and external stakeholders, inviting parents and/or community members to take part in activities at the school, resolving conflict among staff members and generally in the daily management of the school. Action learning also occurs as the partners plan and implement initiatives that addresses specific needs in their respective schools. Partnerships that completed the programme during this reporting period have implemented a variety of different initiatives in their respective schools aimed at improving the functioning of the school and empowering stakeholders. Some of these initiatives range from planting vegetable gardens, hosting staff teambuilding sessions, and renovating classrooms and playgrounds.

**Conclusion**

The PfP programme contributes positively to the leadership development of school principals. It leverages the power of partnership between the principal and business partner to effect positive change at schools in under-resourced communities. The PfP programme also supports principals in providing quality education by facilitating a functioning ecosystem that supports learning. It creates opportunities for active citizenship and connects resourced individuals to less resourced communities, thus working towards achieving a just community, which is in line with the purpose of the organisation.
1 Introduction

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), including several international agencies, articulated that all children have the right to quality education which includes:

- Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities.
- Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities.  

Section 29 (1) of the South African Constitution states that everyone has the right to a basic education, but it does not mention quality education. Although South Africa has made progress in education, such as restructuring the former eight education departments into one national department and considerably improving access to schooling, the quality of education for most Black learners is still poor. In 2011, the National Development Plan (NDP) was developed and education is one of its priorities, as quality education is the key to unlocking people’s potential and providing economic opportunities for everyone. South Africa has also committed to implement the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

School principals have an important role to play in providing quality education. However, the role and activities of principals changed after 1994, requiring them to have a combination of leadership and management capacity. The key changes in the way schools in South Africa are organised were:

1. Principals should lead rather than instruct. Principals also need to rely on the support of staff
2. The decision-making hierarchy becomes flatter – staff members should experience a sense of ‘ownership’
3. Responsibility should be shared
4. Leadership is about empowering participants
5. Develop instead of delivering expertise
6. Command respect through stature and not status
7. Emphasise effectiveness of schools and not simply efficiency
8. Create a culture of learning rather than controlling behaviour

According to the changes in the new system, principals must lead, manage the school and ensure that the policies and programmes of the school are executed in accordance with the Department of Basic Education (DBE)’s governance structures. Unfortunately, these changes have resulted in school principals not being fully prepared for their new role as ‘Chief Executive Officers’. Furthermore, principals are not fully supported in their leadership when it comes to running schools. Although the DBE has made attempts to change this by introducing the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) programme, there are no mandatory programmes to prepare principals for this very important leadership role.

Principals in disadvantaged and under-resourced communities are also facing more challenges as their schools often experience a lack of infrastructure, inadequate water and sanitation facilities, learners who go to school barefoot and hungry, high rates of school dropout, teenage pregnancy, as well as issues of substance abuse and

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6 South Africa’s Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Voluntary National Review Report, 2019
gang-related activities in and around the school vicinity. All of this put a strain on the principal’s ability to deliver quality education.\textsuperscript{9,10}

Schools do not exist in silos - they exist in a wider context, which includes parents, community members and local businesses who form part of an ecosystem of learning. Communities play a crucial role in supporting schools as they have assets, skills and capacities, and in turn, schools have a major impact on communities. It is well-known that when parents are involved in their children’s learning, they succeed not just in school but throughout life.\textsuperscript{11}

Important to note is that parents and communities are more likely to get involved in their children’s learning and in the school when they know what principals expect from them and what role they can play.\textsuperscript{12}

It is within this context that Partners for Possibility (PfP), the flagship programme of Symphonia for South Africa NPC, was founded.

The Partners for Possibility initiative was initiated in 2010 as a response to the Dinokeng Scenarios held in 2009. These scenarios emerged from a series of cross-sectoral dialogues and discussions between a group of 35 South Africans from a wide spectrum of society, gathered together to probe the country’s condition and to consider possible futures. Inspired by the approach of the third possible future – i.e. ‘walking together’, in which an enabling state supports collaboration, allowing for leaders across all sectors to join hands in order to co-create the highest potential future for the country - PfP invites members of the business community to partner with a principal over a 12-month period. During this time, both partners are exposed to a dynamic leadership development programme while being supported through the experience of applying new skills and knowledge in their individual schools.

In alignment with the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals, the PfP programme seeks to develop conscious leaders, break down barriers, connect people and inspire change in schools and beyond – while responding to the Department of Basic Education’s call for a strengthening of the management and functionality of public schools. It is anticipated that as a result of the changes in the principals’ leadership skills, school culture could improve and parental and community involvement increase, with positive knock-on effects that may eventually lead to an improvement in the delivery of quality education.

**Key objectives of the PfP programme**

- **To uplift** principals to effectively deal with the obstacles and challenges facing them in their unique and individual situations and settings (adaptive, rather than technical, leadership)
- **To empower** principals and business partners to shift their leadership style to a more inclusive, participatory and collaborative style that actively breaks down barriers, fosters connections among staff and external stakeholders, and inspires change

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\textsuperscript{10} https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/


\textsuperscript{12} Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2018). Valuing Our Teachers and Raising their Status: How Communities Can Help Schools at the Centre of their Communities. https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264292697-4-en
Secondary objectives of the PfP programme

- To establish a cohesive and well-functioning team of teachers at each school
- To engage parents to take responsibility for their role as primary educators
- To create a strong sense of partnership between teachers and parents
- To support community partnerships that benefit learners

As of December 2021, the programme has reached 1 605 schools across all nine South African provinces.

2 How the programme works

The PIP programme design is based on the 70:20:10 model, where about 10% of learning comes from formal training (i.e. workshops). Twenty percent of learning takes place through social learning – whereby participants gain new knowledge and insights through their engagement with other leaders from their leadership circle. Most of the learning that occurs (around 70%) is experiential learning, which happens as the participants work together to identify, prioritise and tackle challenges in their respective schools.

Partnerships are actively supported and coached as a group throughout the year by an accredited coach (called a Learning Process Facilitator or LPF), who is trained in the PfP methodology. School principals and their business partners attend three co-sharing workshops geared towards refining their management and leadership skills: the Time to Think workshop lays the foundation for creating a thinking environment by focusing on strengthening listening skills, improving interpersonal relations and providing practical strategies for conducting productive and collaborative meetings. The Flawless Consulting workshop equips leaders with contracting and conflict resolution skills that assist in clarifying goals and expectations within and beyond the workplace. The third and final workshop, Community Building, teaches participants how to build communities where every individual has a sense of purpose and value – particularly within the complex eco-system of a school, where stakeholders are comprised of teachers, learners, parents, donors, local businesses and community members.

Every six weeks, principals and business partners meet to participate in Community of Practice (CoP) sessions, which are hosted at different schools so that participants can observe the place of learning of others and share their personal experiences.

PFP is built on the understanding that each school has a unique set of challenges which can partly be addressed through collaboration and an exchange of ideas. Relationship building and engagement in the first few months of the programme is thus very important. Once the principal and business partner have a good sense of who the other person is (i.e. the business partner knows the school and the principal is aware of what the business partner can bring to the partnership), they can then identify key areas of concern at the school and decide together what projects they would like to work on. These include projects related to infrastructure, resources, academic performance, school politics and other social issues.

A Partnership Plan is drafted about three months into the programme to outline their joint vision for the school, focusing particularly on the specific contextual needs of the school. This tool also captures the lessons learned and activities implemented at different stages of the programme.

When shared with the rest of the group, the Partnership Plan allows the Learning Process Facilitator and the broader team to provide tailored support and, where possible, identify resources and connections that may be useful to partnership initiatives. The tangible and intangible improvements that take place within the school at the end of the programme are thus a reflection of the different areas of school functioning that individual partnerships choose to focus on.
3 Demographic details of PfP partners

The demographic information of PfP participants who joined the programme between September 2020 and December 2021 is listed below. The total sample size for this cohort is 490, consisting of 245 business partners and 245 school principals.

Gender, age and race

![Gender of Business Partners](image1)

Of the 245 principals sampled, 103 (42%) are female and 142 (58%) are male. In total, 130 (53%) business partners are female and 115 (47%) are male.

A total of 162 (66%) principals are between the ages of 50 – 59 years. The youngest principal is 31 years old, and the oldest is 63 years old. The average age of the principals is 51.4 years and the median age is 52 years. This finding is in line with the results of the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey, which found that the average age of principals in South Africa is 51 years. The majority of business partners are between the ages of 40 – 49 years. The youngest business partner is 25 years of age and the oldest is 75 years old. Business partners have an average age of 45.4 years and a median age of 45 years.

![Gender of Principals](image2)

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One hundred and eighty-six principals identify as Black African (76%) and 47 principals (19%) identify as Coloured. According to the BBBEE classification system, 98% of principals are classified as Black (African, Coloured and Indian). Conversely, there is a wider distribution of race groups among business partners, with individuals who identify as Black African (42%, n=103), White (36%, n=88) and Coloured (13%, n=33) making up a large proportion of the sample.

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Figure 3: Age of Principals and Business Partners

Figure 4: Race of Principals

Figure 5: Race of Business Partners

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Level of education\textsuperscript{15} and school leadership (principal) experience

1. School principals

Overall, 103 principals (43%) have an Honours degree, 100 principals (41%) hold a Bachelor’s degree, 48 principals (20%) obtained a diploma and 19 principals (8%) hold a Masters degree. Two principals hold a PhD degree in Education. An overwhelming majority of the qualifications reported are in the field of education. Nevertheless, other fields of study for principals also include accounting, law, management and social sciences.

Principals reported varying years of school leadership (principal) experience.\textsuperscript{16} The majority of school leaders (51%) have held the position of principal for less than 5 years. However, many of them (37%, n=89) have been teaching for more than 25 years. On average, this cohort of principals has 25 years of teaching experience and only 7 years of school principal experience.

![Teaching years compared to Principal (leadership) years](image)

The disproportionately large number of teaching years compared to school leadership years is due to a number of factors, including the fact that most teachers earned their two-year teaching qualification after completing either Grade 10 or Grade 12; and were previously required to have more than 12 years of teaching experience before becoming principals. This requirement was eased in 2000, and nowadays a minimum of 7 years of teaching experience is required.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{15} Please note that some applicants listed more than one qualification on their application form. For analytic purposes, each qualification listed is counted separately. Therefore, for both school principals and business partners, the total number of qualifications reported does not necessarily reflect the total sample size. Furthermore, this analysis is based on application form data, and only 484 participants (i.e. 242 principals and 242 business partners) submitted their application forms.

\textsuperscript{16} The figures reported for this measure are based on the most prominent results only.

\textsuperscript{17} Amendments to Personnel Administration Measures (PAM), 2021.
Findings suggest that even though principals are highly experienced as teachers and are well-versed in the South African education system, they are less experienced when it comes to the daily management and leadership of a school.

In order to be strategic leaders and effective school managers, principals need to possess skills such as good communication, strategic planning, external and internal stakeholder engagement, financial management and administrative skills just to name a few.

While many school principals have been outstanding teachers and many have inherent leadership potential, they often have not had access to the quality of leadership training that enables them to produce the best possible outcomes for their schools and communities. It is precisely this gap that the PfP programme aims to address within the South African context. Ultimately, an effective principal who is equipped to engage with the school community and a wide range of stakeholders is one of the single most important levers for improving education.

2. Business partners

Among business partners, 57 (24%) hold a Bachelor’s degree; 56 (23%) have a diploma, 48 (20%) hold a Masters’ degree and 37 (15%) obtained an Honours degree. Seven business partners (3%) hold a PhD degree in various fields of study including business management, engineering, social geography, mathematics education and urban and regional planning. Similarly, given the diversity of sectors that the PfP programme recruits business partners from, the qualifications reported above span numerous areas of study.

Unlike school principals, business partners are not required to state the number of work experience they have in their PfP application form as many of them tend to start working at various ages, move between different sectors/industries and occupy an assortment of roles. Regardless, the diversity of sectors represented by business partner applicants means that principals are exposed to team members from several industries who can provide a fresh perspective on any given issue.

4 Profile of PfP schools

PfP partnerships’ geographic location

The Covid-19 pandemic caused major disruptions to PfP programme activities. The organisation undertook an ambitious and carefully planned transition from the customary face-to-face delivery of the programme to virtual implementation. Furthermore, restrictions on movement in order to contain the spread of the pandemic meant that some principals could not involve stakeholders such as parents and community members in school activities as much as they had hoped. In some cases, the implementation of partnership initiatives had to be delayed as schools were forced to close and PfP partners suffered ill health or lost loved ones due to Covid-19.

Despite these challenges, 31 leadership circles were successfully launched between September 2020 and December 2021. This resulted in the establishment of 245 new partnerships. Each partnership represents an individual school, thus 245 schools across the country were reached. Partnerships were launched in all nine provinces: 49 were launched in the Western Cape, while 42 were launched in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Northern Cape respectively (see infographic displaying PfP’s reach on page 12).
A principal’s improved leadership skills also positively impacts the lives of teachers and learners at the school. This is because not only do staff members develop a better working relationship with a more confident principal by the end of the programme, but they also benefit from partnership initiatives such as skills training, staff teambuilding and motivational talks.

Likewise, learners benefit from being taught by more enthusiastic, skilled and motivated teachers. The health, safety and wellbeing of learners is prioritised (for instance through projects like feeding schemes, health and wellness days, upgrading classrooms, building safer playgrounds, additional academic support, safety talks, better equipment for extramural activities, etc.). Additionally, learners get to play an active role in the betterment of the school by helping to clean the school yard, planting vegetable gardens and recycling among other activities (see page 23 for examples of partnership initiatives during this reporting period).

Type of schools

The programme has a vision of getting parents involved in their children’s education as early as the Foundation Phase, i.e. Grade R to Grade 3. Studies have shown that parental involvement in children’s learning improves a child’s morale, attitude, academic achievement across all subject areas, and promotes better behaviour and social adjustment.18

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Parental involvement at the Foundation Phase matters because literacy, numeracy and life skills are developed during this period, allowing parents to play a more participative role in their children’s early learning journey. One of the most decisive factors for a child to complete high school is their ability to read fluently for meaning in home language and English by the end of Grade 3. In order for children to succeed, there needs to be a 50-50 partnership between parents and educators - children need to know from Grade R that the adults in their lives have high expectations for them to succeed.

Figure 7: Types of School

Bearing this in mind, 189 (77%) out of the 245 schools in the sample are primary schools, while 45 (18%) are secondary schools.

Quintile of schools

PfP aims to empower principals by teaching them to mobilise available human capital and community support to achieve goals, especially in the context of limited financial resources. As such, a majority of schools in the programme are classified between Quintile 1 and 3 since these schools tend to be located in under-resourced communities that can benefit most from this training. Eighty-five schools (35%) in the sample are Quintile 3 schools, 50 (20%) are Quintile 2 schools and 71 (29%) are Quintile 1 schools.

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5 Motivation for joining the PfP programme

Expectations of principals

An analysis of data obtained from the application forms of PfP participants who entered the programme between September 2020 – December 2021 indicates that the top three challenges that school principals face are:

- inadequate infrastructure and the lack of maintenance of school property
- lack of community and parental involvement in the school
- inadequate resources (for example textbooks, desks, chairs, printers, etc.) as a result of a lack of donors or unsuccessful fundraising attempts

The findings suggest that the expectations that principals have for the programme are directly related to the challenges identified above. These challenges were also found to influence subsequent partnership initiatives. Overall, 187 principals (77%) joined PfP hoping to improve their leadership and management skills; 69 principals (28%) wanted a platform to network with corporates and other schools in the area; and 31 principals (13%) hoped to benefit from a partnership and/or mentorship relationship.

Many school principals view their participation in the program as an opportunity to gain personal and professional skills that will translate into more sustainable growth and exposure for their schools. Partnering with a business leader gives them the opportunity to receive guidance on contracting, financial management, corporate management styles and thinking outside of the box when it comes to fundraising and approaching potential

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20 The figures reported in this section are based on the most prominent results only. As such, these figures may not reflect the total sample size.
21 A total of 484 application forms were analysed from 242 business partners and 242 principals. Six applicants – 3 individuals from each group – did not submit application forms.
22 Some applicants listed more than one motivating factor for joining the programme on their application form. For analytic purposes, each factor listed is counted separately. Therefore, the results of this measure do not necessarily reflect the total sample size.
funders. This in turn enables them to gain access to networks and resources that allow them to cater to the holistic wellbeing of learners and educators, as well as ensure the delivery of quality education as defined by UNICEF.\(^{23}\)

**Principal leadership goals**

The top three leadership goals that principals hope to achieve by the end of their participation in the programme include:

- having skilled and collaborative staff members
- improved academic results
- becoming more effective and efficient leaders

Effective and efficient leadership entails gaining and putting into practice ‘soft’ skills such as leading dynamic teams, listening, accountability, delegation, self-discipline, time management, relationship building and adaptability to change.

**Expectations of business partners**

Business partners stated that what appealed to them most about the programme (and motivated them to become part of PfP) was the ability to give back to their community; the structured partnership model of PfP; the opportunity to gain new skills and knowledge; as well as the fact that the programme is specifically focused on education. Their main expectations when joining were personal growth and acquiring new skills (n=140, 58%); networking (n=70, 29%); gaining a better understanding of the South African education system and its challenges (n=68, 28%); and making a positive contribution to schools, the community and society as a whole (n=58, 24%).\(^{24}\)

This suggests that business partners are not only deeply invested in understanding and playing a more active role in their communities, but they also enter the programme expecting to learn as much as their principal partners.

**Previous leadership courses**

Overall, 172 principals (71%) have completed a leadership course(s) in the past. A total of 184 business partners (76%) also reported having completed at least one leadership course during the course of their career. Despite this, both principals and business partners still sign up to be part of the PfP programme, which suggests that the programme offers an experience that differentiates it from other leadership programmes. Participants have previously stated that what sets this programme apart from other leadership programmes that they have been part of is the fact that PfP is more practical, hands-on and offers more opportunities to learn from others, for instance their PfP partners and other school principals.

“The difference between the PfP programme and the other leadership courses is some of the other leadership courses that I have done are dealing with different leadership styles. They are values driven - what is the leader and what is the management. PfP does not focus on that. You get to do it hands-on and it is more practical. You already know leadership styles, but sometimes you don’t know how to do it practically. It [PfP] is more interesting and experience based.” - Principal Martina Steyn, Uitsig Primary School (CPT39)

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\(^{24}\) Some applicants listed more than one motivating factor for joining the programme on their application form. For analytic purposes, each factor listed is counted separately. Therefore, the results of this measure do not necessarily reflect the total sample size.
The remainder of this report will focus on other unique benefits of the PfP programme based on feedback from participants during and after participating in the 12-month facilitated programme.

6 Learning experience mid-way through the programme

What works well in CoPs and workshops

The data gathered from 175 mid-circle surveys (administered 6 months into the programme) suggest that business partners and principals alike start reaping the benefits of PfP midway through the programme. Respondents commended PfP for its well-structured and interactive presentation of programme content, the depth of group discussions, the clarity and brevity of its resources, the professionalism of facilitators, and the commitment and passion demonstrated by everyone involved in the learning journey.

Many principals described the process of leading a school as lonely and isolating. However, they stated that spaces such as Community of Practice meetings provide a safe environment that builds trust, empathy, transparency and a sense of community despite diverse backgrounds and age differences. Business partners in turn have stated that they appreciate the fact that PfP allows them to give back to their community through an immersive, supportive and collaborative partnership model. All of the facilitated workshops serve as a platform for the cross-pollination of innovative ideas, expertise and best practices for tackling many of the current educational challenges in South Africa.

Partner Engagement (Time, quality and learnings)

Partners are required to meet and have one-on-one engagement time regularly during the year to get to know each other as well as strategise about partnership goals and project implementation. Midway through the programme, 76 respondents (43%) engaged with their partners between 3-5 hours per month, while 29 respondents (17%) engaged between 6-10 hours per month. Only 8 partners (5%) have had more than 10 hours of one-on-one engagement time per month. Of the 62 participants (35%) who reported less than 3 hours of one-on-one engagement per month with their partners, most cited leading “incredibly busy lives” and “time constraints” as the primary reason for this.
The majority of respondents (54%, n=94) felt that their engagement with their partner was ‘good’ and 63 respondents (36%) rated it as ‘excellent’.

Interestingly, all four respondents (2%) who rated the quality of engagement as ‘poor’ had less than 3 hours of one-on-one engagement time with their partners. Some respondents (40%) who rated the quality of engagement as ‘excellent’ had engaged for more than 5 hours in a month with their partners. Some of the main learnings reported from all partnership engagements are patience and calmness during challenging situations, assertiveness in decision-making, an appreciation of diversity, being less judgemental and practising empathy more often.
7 Overall impact of the programme

During this reporting period, PfP had a partnership completion rate of 88%. The completion rate among school principals is 92% and 89% among business partners. A total of 131 post programme surveys completed by this cohort indicates that the programme has a transformative impact on their lives. Many principals mentioned enhanced leadership skills; increased efficiency among school management teams (SMT) and teachers; improved school culture; increased community involvement enabling a stronger partnership between educators and parents in support of learning; and context-driven school improvement as some of the positive outcomes of the programme. Business partners also reported enhanced leadership skills as a result of taking part in the programme, as well as a greater awareness and deeper understanding of the realities within under-resourced communities.

School principals’ enhanced leadership skills

Significant improvements have been shown in school principals’ leadership, particularly in the areas of:

- personal confidence
- staff cohesion
- teacher enthusiasm
- mobilising parents and community members to inspire change (see graphs on page 19)

**Personal confidence**

Ninety-one percent (91%) of principals indicated that their confidence had increased substantially after a year in the programme (see figure 12). Before joining the PfP programme, these principals rated their confidence level as ‘poor’. By the end of the programme, they felt more confident and rated it as ‘excellent’ (see figure 11).

**SMT cohesiveness**

Ninety-two percent (92%) of principals revealed that their SMTs have become more cohesive (see figure 12). Before joining the PfP programme, 43% of the principals mentioned that their SMT cohesiveness was ‘satisfactory’, and this improved to ‘good’ after implementing what they learned in the PfP programme.

**Teacher enthusiasm**

Ninety-one percent (91%) of principals reported that teachers at the school have become more enthusiastic. Principals indicated that before joining the PfP programme, the teachers at their schools were not enthusiastic to teach – 45% felt the teachers’ enthusiasm was satisfactory. However, this has changed after the principals joined the PfP programme. Principals changed the way they lead and communicate with teachers. At the end of the PfP programme, 48% rated their teachers’ enthusiasm levels as ‘good’ and 37% rated it as ‘excellent’.

**Parental and community involvement**

More than half of the principals (77%) indicated that there had been an increase in parental and community involvement at their school during the PfP year. At the end of the programme, 41% felt that parental and community involvement was ‘good’ and 19% felt that it was ‘excellent’.
Principals’ increased level of confidence since being part of PFP is evidenced by their increased willingness to confront difficult situations, be assertive, and communicate their needs and desires while also being mindful of the needs of others. They listen more attentively without interrupting the speaker, and support and appreciate staff members. They are more open to possibilities and allow staff members to come up with their own solutions to problems by creating empathic, judgement-free thinking environments. A culture of collaborative decision-making
has taken root in the schools of PfP principals. They cultivate an environment for success by increasingly delegating tasks, thereby promoting efficiency while fostering trust and ownership. They also focus on values that allow for one vision in their schools.

“Now my management style is [an] open, participative management style because of PfP. I can accommodate everybody, I can listen more, I can think more, I can support more and I can be more assertive.” – Principal Moses Kalane, Relebeletse Primary School (BFN4)

“Teamwork and appreciation are the two things that I am stuck with and that are beautiful things that I have learned through PfP.” – Principal Zilindile Thambo, A.V. Bukani Primary School (PE5)

Improved culture within the school

Due to the principals’ increased confidence and the implementation of leadership practices learned through PfP workshops and from their PfP partners, many note that morale among the SMTs, SGBs and teachers has improved. The principals’ continuous encouragement, trust and teamwork contributes to teachers feeling more valued, inspired, supported and understood. Principals reported having better working relationships with the teachers because of changes in his communication style and overall leadership practices. Teachers and SMTs have also become more cohesive. This in turn has led to harmony within the school and a renewed enthusiasm and commitment for teaching and learning among staff members.

“I have benefitted as a person and also as a manager of a school. The school is under capable leadership - one that consults, requests for help, has a network of other leaders... Teamwork forms the backbone of this leadership – ‘we’ instead of ‘I’... Our meetings have always been [a] full house but after implementing my skills from PfP and interacting with all stakeholders there, our meetings overflow. The SGB is trained to check their audience needs and address them accordingly.” – Principal Themba Michael Simelane, Mholo Primary School (Kruger1)

“I am very proud of the kind of a person that I’ve developed [into], so the school has now been enjoying the new leader who has now been developed through PfP. Now I am a leader who is very patient. I’ve learned to be patient with people, I’ve learned to listen, I’ve learned to hear people and be compassionate with them. I’ve also learned to share the responsibilities and begin to trust and believe that people are capable of delivering.” – Principal Malose Kganakga, Malakabeng Primary School (Vaal1)

Improved community involvement in schools

Principals reported using the tenets of the Community Building workshop to invite, encourage and support parents in their efforts to play a more active role in their children’s education. Notable positive changes at the school inspire community members to become more actively involved. Examples of the communities’ increased engagement in the schools include:

• higher levels of attendance at school meetings and active participation in these meetings
• support in the maintenance of the schools
• protecting the school against vandalism
• local businesses donating food for Grade 12 learners during weekend and holiday classes
• youth from the community volunteering to assist with office management tasks and tutoring learners
Business partners’ enhanced leadership skills

Business partners reported that listening is the most important skill that they have learned from the programme. Once they learned how to listen effectively, they were better able to practice all other leadership skills in their own organisations. These leadership skills include:

- showing appreciation
- delegating with confidence
- motivating others because they are better able to understand the problem
- understanding the key strengths and weaknesses of their team members

“I’ve learned to listen, and that’s been the biggest takeout for me. Just be patient, listen, internalise what you’re hearing and work from there... When you have a lot of experience in something, you tend to give the solution, but not listening 200% to make sure that you are providing a solution to the right problem. Experience is a good thing, but it doesn’t mean you know all.” – Business partner Terence Royeppen, Mara Primary School (JHB47)

“Whenever someone comes to me with a problem, I listen instead of rushing to comment and to come up with solutions. Now people leave my presence feeling like they came up with a solution and they are going to implement it...I thought I knew how to listen, but through the PfP programme I learned how to really, really listen to people when they speak. And it’s so beautiful to see someone thinking and discovering that they have solutions and they’ve always known what to do, you were just a catalyst for that to happen.” – Business partner Kagisho Molema, AB Kolwane Primary School (Kuruman4)

Their confidence as leaders has improved due to learning opportunities and experiences within different communities during the PfP programme. Within their organisations, business partners are now working more collaboratively, thinking more strategically and have a more consultative leadership style. Working collaboratively has enabled them to learn from anybody, create equality within the workplace and develop quality relationships with others.

The overwhelming majority of business partners reported improvements in all key competencies after participating in the PfP programme (see graph below).

![Figure 13: Improvements in Leadership Competencies](image-url)
Opportunities for better business

Business partners reported a deeper appreciation for the diversity of people within the programme, as well as the various challenges and contexts of school principals. The programme gave them relevant insights into the communities where the schools are situated and a better understanding of how to work effectively with and in communities. They also developed a mindset of curiosity, a deep sense of personal meaning and an ability to see problems as possibilities.

Context-driven school improvement

The PfP programme is much more than a leadership development programme. It engages citizens and communities to partner with principals and teachers in the education of our children and mobilises additional support around every school so that the school becomes both a well-functioning place of learning and the centre of its community.

Extensive evidence has shown that through the partnership model developed by PfP and implemented in schools, tangible and intangible resources and social capital (i.e. networks) are mobilised around every participating school. The partnership focuses upon each individual school and through networking, collaboration and active citizenship, tangible and intangible resources become accessible to schools. Additionally, PfP also has a wide and constantly expanding network of ancillary partner organisations that bring value into the schools that the programme works with.

Initiatives implemented by the partnerships during the PfP year

Partnerships that completed the programme during this reporting period have implemented a variety of different initiatives in their respective schools aimed at improving the functioning of the school and empowering stakeholders.

The infographic on page 23 lists some examples of the kinds of projects completed by PfP partnerships during this reporting period.
Figure 14: Partnership Initiatives in Schools

- **245 school principals** strengthened in their leadership
- **245 business leaders** completed the programme
- **38,000+ families**
- **4,663 teachers**
- **156,677 learners**
- **Vegetable gardens & environmental education**
- **Fundraising workshops for SGB's**
- **Infrastructure upgrades** (upgrades of outdoor spaces or classrooms, sick beds)
- **Staff teambuilding**
- **Strengthening relationships with stakeholders**
- **Teacher training**
- **Community involvement, including youth, parents**
- **Motivational speakers**
- **Financial literacy workshops**

**Covid-19 responses**
- Engage & support school community (food, psycho-social support etc.)
- Build tech readiness of principal, SMT & staff
- Ensure safe reopening of classes post lockdown
- Support teachers & learners with remote learning
Learners at Van Wyksvlei Primary establish their own organic vegetable garden

On 6 May 2021, learners at Van Wyksvlei Primary in Wellington started the first phase of planting their own organic garden at the school. LPF Jessica Batts relayed her amazement at seeing the space transform from dirt to a small plot of kale, broccoli, turnips, beetroot, cauliflower, spinach and many other vegetables.

With 1 097 learners from Grade R to Grade 7, the number of learners has more than doubled since the school opened its doors in 2015. Van Wyksvlei Primary is a Quintile 3 school, therefore learners do not have to pay school fees and the Department of Basic Education (DBE) provides the school with a subsidy of approximately R200 per child per year. The school’s fundraising initiatives and partnerships with local businesses are essential for its financial sustainability.

Principal Riaan Ross was partnered with business leader Karin Kleinbooi when the Winelands 11 circle was launched in February 2021. Principal Riaan lauds his partner’s extensive network, and it was through her initiative and connections that the project got off the ground. When Karin asked her principal if he believed that the Seed 2 Harvest food gardening initiative would be beneficial to the school, he responded that it would link well with the Transform to Perform leadership initiative that they are currently running. The DBE’s efforts to promote value-driven schools includes a growth mindset component which motivates learners to go from ‘Can’t Do’ to ‘Can Do’, equating to Transform to Perform.

An official launch of the project took place on Youth Day, 16 June 2021, and the team got media partner, Paarl FM, and the Junior Town Council involved to increase the exposure of the school. The National School Nutrition Programme Director of food security and nutrition programmes, as well as a representative of the Department of Agriculture (DoA) attended the launch, indicating a further collaboration opportunity for the school.

Under the DoA’s One Household: One Garden banner, learners were given gardening starter packs to take home. Principal Riaan relayed that it was wonderful to see the first photos of a learner who prepared the ground at his home and planted the seeds he had received in the way they had been shown at school. One of the principal’s proudest moments was when he saw learners guarding the new seedlings over the school holidays of their own volition to make sure that they do not get trampled on. The Seed 2 Harvest Foundation supported the garden with Organic Garden Starter Kits. The Western Cape Department of Agriculture assisted with irrigation (water tanks and pumps); infrastructure (fencing); equipment (garden tools); and production input (seeds, seedlings, compost and fertiliser) to the value of R40 500.

The garden has produced enough vegetables for the school to sell and to give learners who are involved to take home. This school garden initiative provided learners with the opportunity to better understand their relationship with nature. It created a dynamic environment for learning gardening skills and it continues to promote cooperation because the garden is a collective activity. A garden encourages self-confidence and a sense of responsibility and belonging. The Van Wyksvlei Primary organic garden is an extension of learning and the learners created their own...
nutritious learning environment where they are able to grow the food they consume. Gardening is a lifelong skill that learners can enjoy even as adults.

**Inhlangeni Primary’s borehole and sanitation initiative**

The lack of consistent running water was one of the major issues that plagued Inhlangeni Primary School, located in Pietermaritzburg. Whenever the school did not have running water, children were sent home - primarily due to the effect that this issue had on the school’s flush toilet-based sanitation system.

The principal of the school, Mr Sifiso Moseia, was partnered with business leader Khwezi Kunene when the Pietermaritzburg3 Leadership Circle was launched in February 2021.

The partners decided to take action to address the school’s intermittent municipal water supply problem by drilling a borehole at the school. The principal sourced quotations from different local service providers to estimate the cost of drilling a borehole. Luckily, someone in business partner Khwezi’s network had a contact at AECI WATER, who then offered to sponsor the drilling of the borehole.

One of the local AECI WATER manufacturing facilities is based in Pietermaritzburg, and water is a key pillar for this organisation under their #OneAECIForABetterWorld campaign. They organised and paid for the drilling and will soon be installing a filtration plant to secure clean potable water to the school. AECI WATER further donated a mobile library and garden kits, and is also working in collaboration with the school to solve sanitation problems.

Reliable water at the school does not only mean learners and teachers do not have to deal with a little thirst. Issues of sanitation go to the heart of the right to dignity, a fundamental human right and a cornerstone of the South African Constitution. In a more practical sense, it also means that learners will not be sent home when they get to school because there is no running water, that their parents did not waste transport money or that they did not walk many kilometres to get to school in vain.

Teachers have more classroom time - in an already crammed COVID-19 year - to present lessons from the extensive curriculum when their teaching time is not regularly interrupted by water issues. More importantly, learners have a greater chance to not be left behind academically, when they already have so many other factors working against them.
9 School Leadership Forum

The School Leadership Forum (SLF) is one of Symphonia for South Africa’s initiatives aimed at contributing to a functioning ecosystem that supports learning. The objective of the programme is to strengthen school leaders’ leadership capacities and enable connections that foster collaborative relationships of trust, solidarity and mutual learning. The programme offers monthly talks and panel discussions on a wide range of education and leadership-related topics. These sessions expose school leaders to new ideas, knowledge and practices, and gives them the opportunity to learn from each other. The sessions are usually highly practical and aim to strengthen these key influencers with adaptive leadership skills. Some of the topics covered include:

- Leading and managing organisational change
- Educator wellbeing during these trying times
- Striving for excellence in our schools
- Mental health impacts overall wellbeing
- The School Principal as change agent
- Leading transformative dialogue across difference
- The role parents and caregivers can play to support the learning of their children
- Team leadership

![Rating of SLF sessions](image)

**Figure 15: SLF Session Rating**

Between February - November 2021, 16 virtual sessions were held with 1 134 attendees. As all the SLF sessions were held virtually, the number of attendees for the SLF programme is lower than in previous years.

### Ratings of the SLF sessions

As the graph below shows, the majority of participants (67%) rated the sessions as ‘excellent’ and 34% felt that the sessions were ‘good’. Only one person felt that one of the sessions was unsatisfactory.

The table below provides a sample of the qualitative feedback received from participants on the value of the sessions.
Well presented, very positive, informative and what I liked is that I can apply what I have learnt.”
22 April 2021

“Every single teacher in South Africa needs to attend this presentation. Our children are in distress and Busi’s great tools needs to be rolled out to all teachers so that our children can be helped.”
23 June 2021

“Brilliant content, just what principals need at the moment.”
29 July 2021

“Very interesting and helpful information on parent involvement.”
26 August 2021

“Very enlightening and confirming on the methodologies to be used in the groups I manage.”
9 September 2021

“The steps for a meeting was very valuable.”
9 September 2021

“This is a must for the Department of Education and all schools to hear/watch.”
21 September 2021

“Very relevant topic that definitely needs to be fleshed out more in future.”
14 October 2021

“Good information, but maybe some solutions can be included with the issues that we face.”
14 October 2021

“This is really required to keep us going in this field and empower us (to) adapt to changes.”
16 November 2021

There is no doubt that the sessions have become accessible to all stakeholders in education. The events have connected experts, practitioners, school leaders, educators and business partners. The topics discussed are helping to develop the capacity of school stakeholders by providing them with practical solutions to the problems they face at their respective schools.

**School Leadership Forum sessions in Northern Cape**

In 2021, SLF Northern Cape was launched. The aim of these SLF sessions was to focus on Northern Cape-specific issues and to involve local experts from the Northern Cape. The table below shows the title and presenters of the sessions.

**Table 1: SLF Northern Cape Session Titles and Presenters**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Session title</th>
<th>Date of session</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Number of people registered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Success vs. Significance</td>
<td>20 May 2021</td>
<td>Tumi Seboko, Boitumelo Seboko</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>NO is the perfect answer</td>
<td>24 June 2021</td>
<td>Yolandi Strydom, Nadine Blom</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Finance First</td>
<td>15 July 2021</td>
<td>Aliwiya Mac Minn</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**10 A Better Africa (ABA)**

A Better Africa (ABA) is an online knowledge-sharing platform, designed for programmes, organisations and communities across the African education ecosystem. To enhance collaborative engagement between principals in the PFP programme, school communities and other education stakeholders that are not part of the PFP programme add resources on ABA, such as details of school-based activities implemented by some of our partnerships and discussion forums where participants can ask questions and share their experiences.

Groups are essential building blocks of collaboration and thought leadership. We designed three groups, namely: (1) Core – which is essentially only for the organisation’s staff, (2) Basic information on public education – which is an introduction to public education and supports business leaders in their PFP leadership journey. Content such as fee structures across the quintile system, school governance and best practices are curated and uploaded on ABA, and (3) Project resources for schools - which consists of information and resources on bursaries, financial aid, gardens, greenery and eco-social education, numeracy and literacy, and wellbeing in education.

**Basic information on public education**

More people are accessing and viewing information in the basic information on public education group. Between January - November 2020, the most viewed wiki’s (What I Know Is) are on governance and management, POPIA, PFP on ABA, and wellness in schools. The most viewed blogs are ‘School nutrition programme’, ‘Integrate Quality Management Systems (IQMS)’, ‘Good for hunger - bad for health’ and ‘How principals are appointed’.

The top five documents that have been downloaded are: (1) Quality Management Systems training (QMS) for principals, (2) SGB roles and responsibilities, (3) 2021 school calendar, (4) Minimum qualification for teachers, and (5) SLF invites.
Project resources for schools

In this group, the most downloaded blog is ‘PnP partners Bruntville’ and the most downloaded documents are ‘Getting a Zoom register’, ‘FET contact details’ and ‘KZN Funda app’. The most viewed wiki topic is on bursaries. This topic has consistently been the top viewed wiki since January 2021. Between January – July 2021, the wiki topic on ‘Inclusive and special education’ has been viewed a significant number of times. However, views for this topic have dropped between July – November 2021.

In the project resources for schools group, discussions on various topics normally take place between principals, education stakeholders and school communities. The three discussions that were viewed the most are:

- Sponsorships and fundraising at schools – 376 views
- Gardens, greenery and eco-social education – 320 views
- Communications with parents – 268 views
A number of different offers - ranging from youth work placements to online eLibrary resources from organisations that PfP collaborates with - are uploaded onto ABA. Schools can also create a school website profile on the ABA platform to have a web presence. Currently, 15 schools have created a profile on the ABA platform.

The most viewed offer is ‘Youth@Work’ since its launch on the platform. Its views increased by 25% (from 556 to 747) between July – November 2021. Views for ‘The family-centred early intervention (FCEI)’ offer have increased by 22% (from 472 to 601) since being uploaded onto ABA.

Successful partnerships and school activities are also uploaded on the ABA platform in the form of a case study (i.e. stories). The most viewed case study is ‘Lessons learned from Hoedspruit’, followed by ‘The Educational Graffiti’.

### 11 Recommendations for the PfP programme

1. **More face-to-face meetings and frequent communication between partners**

   The overall impact of COVID-19, together with contributing factors such as long distances between partners and/or the school, conflicting schedules, a lack of transport, time constraints and constant rescheduling means that partners have very limited time to spend getting to know each other. Mid-circle survey data suggests that midway through the programme, 76 participants (43%) have on average engaged with their partners between 3-5 hours per month. Those who spent less than 3 hours per month engaging with their partner were more likely to rate the quality of the interaction as ‘poor’.

   Less time spent engaging with one’s PfP partner affects not only the partnership relationship, but also delays the implementation of key projects. This was the biggest constraint for most partners, suggesting that more time needs to be carved out within individual partnerships (and possibly within the programme) to facilitate regular meetings (either virtual or face-to-face) between partners.

2. **More time in the programme**

   Relatedly, due to the anxiety and uncertainty caused by COVID-19, difficulties with meeting project deadlines and collaborating with the schooling community were experienced. As such, respondents expressed a desire for extended time within the PfP programme. This is being addressed by the introduction of a second year in the PfP programme, called School at the Centre of Community (SCC), currently in pilot in Gqeberha, Eastern Cape. Additional measures to ensure that the partnership continues at the end of the facilitated programme could also go a long way towards making sure that envisioned initiatives become concrete realities.

3. **Increased commitment, support and initiative from the PfP partner**

   Nineteen respondents (11%) voiced their frustration with the lack of consistent support and commitment shown by their partners throughout the programme – this can take the form of not following up on decisions or plans made, never initiating contact without being prompted, a lack of momentum or progress in the partnership, and not being on the same page. Support from PfP in terms of re-contracting with the partner, frequent and consistent check-in sessions with partnerships and other forms of support for struggling partnerships is recommended.

4. **More funding and resources**

   Difficulties with fundraising for key projects were discussed. The need to allocate additional programme funds to train educators as well to enable quicker short-term results was also brought up by one of the respondents. They noted that projects often stall due to a lack of funding or prospective donors. Although monetary support for schools does not form part of the PfP programme (and is in fact discouraged to teach principals to mobilise available
human capital and community support), there is a need for more workshops/seminars on fundraising for both partners to ensure that they are able to successfully identify and secure the right donor funding.

5. **More leadership circles in rural areas**

Currently, the programme is mostly focused on urban areas. There is a need for more resources to be allocated towards establishing leadership circles in rural areas. Not only will this provide much-needed support to school principals in these predominantly under-resourced communities, but it will also empower small business owners within these communities to improve their management skills and grow their businesses in a sustainable and community-centred manner.

### 12 Conclusion

The PfP programme contributes positively to the leadership development of school principals. It indeed assists to fill the gap in the absence of a formal compulsory leadership development programme for school principals. This is evident in the skills that principals acquire from the PfP programme – these skills are precisely the knowledge that the DBE wants principals to have in order to develop and empower themselves and others, as stipulated in the Policy on the South African Standards of Principalship. Furthermore, the outcomes of the PfP programme are in line with the nine key focus areas that principals need to deliver on as mentioned in the School Improvement Plan.

The PfP programme definitely creates opportunities for active citizenship by facilitating cross-sectoral collaboration to strengthen connections and partnerships across boundaries. Drawing on the leadership capacities, networks and resources of the business sector, the PfP programme leverages the power of partnership to effect positive change at schools in under-resourced communities.

The programme also supports principals in providing quality education. This is evident in principals’ strengthened leadership capacities to make positive changes at the schools, ensuring that learners are supported by their parents and communities, as well as making sure that the schools are safe, and have adequate resources and facilities.

Indeed the PfP programme successfully executes its theory of change (see appendix 1 below), which is to ensure that principals are supported in the creation of an ecosystem that supports learning. PfP enables the creation of networks and connects resourced individuals with less resourced communities. Thus making sure that there is an improved distribution of opportunities, knowledge, experience and resources in under-resourced communities – which is in line with the organisation’s purpose of developing conscious leadership that builds social cohesion, uplifts communities and works towards achieving a just society.
Appendix 1

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

THE PROGRAMME COMPONENTS
A carefully crafted 70:20:10 leadership development journey

Capacity building workshops
One-on-one mentoring
Reflection/sense-making
Learning/Coaching/Leadership Coaching

OUTCOMES
Completion of the programme
Enhanced school leadership skills
Improvement projects at the school
Expanded network supporting the school

PRIMARY OUTCOMES
- Strengthened leadership capacities in schools
- Principals who are better supported to drive change

SECONDARY OUTCOMES
- SMTs becoming more... aligned, cohesive, efficient at planning, coordinating and delegating
- Teachers becoming more... energised and motivated for teaching and learning
- Learners becoming more... respected, cared for, inspired and engaged
- Caregivers and communities becoming more... engaged, supportive and involved
- Schools becoming... the centre of community as parents and communities take more ownership of the school

LONG-TERM IMPACT
A functioning ecosystem supporting learning

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