



**BUILDING ON MANDELA'S
COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL JUSTICE**

800 BUSINESS- EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS SINCE 2011

Partners for Possibility (PfP) has launched its 800th business-education partnership in just seven years – a significant milestone which coincides with the centennial celebrations of the late struggle icon and father of the nation Nelson Mandela.

“We developed the Partners for Possibility programme to address the national education crisis” says Dr Louise van Rhyn, founder of PfP and CEO of Symphonia for South Africa.

Echoing the essence of the often quoted words attributed to Mandela, ‘It always seems impossible until it is done’, the successes of the PfP programme bear testament to the possibilities that can be generated through collaborative effort, innovative thinking and active citizenry.

“By bringing together key stakeholders in such a productive way we are able to make a real difference, one school at a time. The changes made to the morale and efficiency of participating schools and their communities have been significant – and very heart-warming,” says van Rhyn.



Garth and Tiego from our opening Community of Practice meeting

Partners for Possibility began in 2011 when South African education activist, Dr Louise van Rhyn, who has over 25 years’ experience as a change practitioner, realised that the abundant expertise available in the business sector could be tapped into to help equip school principals with the skills they need to lead change in their schools and communities.

From this Dr van Rhyn launched PfP, the flagship programme of registered NPC Symphonia for South Africa, which establishes co-learning, co-action partnerships between principals from under-resourced schools and leaders from the business community.

The aim of these partnerships is to support and equip principals with the skills they need to lead change and to mobilise communities to engage with their schools.



As the partners reach out to parents and community members to engage them in the life of the school, they foster a sense of shared responsibility, active citizenship and community building which strengthens the fabric of society.

Poverty continues to stifle meaningful progress in South Africa. More than 63% of South African children living in poverty, and one in five – or 12 million – South Africans living in extreme poverty. It is becoming increasingly clear that education is a viable means to overcome inherited poverty and inequality, with the scourge of poverty best tackled through the creation of an effective state and culture of active citizenship.

In honour of Mandela's appeal to eradicate poverty, a theme that underscores annual Mandela Day celebrations, PfP seeks to heed this call by continuing to improve school leadership through the rolling out of its programme to more under-resourced schools and thereby improve the education outcomes of these schools.

The sustainable nature of the programme means that every day on the programme - and beyond - truly epitomises and maintains the spirit of Mandela Day for the participants and their respective communities.

As the 800th partnership to join the year-long PfP leadership development programme, Garth Smith, CEO of business process outsourcing and technology leaders Silica, who is partnered with Tiego Tawana of



Dr Louise van Rhyn, founder of Pfp and CEO of Symphonia for South Africa

Meadowlands Primary, expressed how being part of the PfP programme has afforded him an opportunity to actively contribute to the betterment of South Africa's future.

"I believe that achieving Partners for Possibility's vision of improving the quality of education for all of our children is vital to the future growth of South Africa. The programme facilitates a much needed public/private sector partnership, and allows business leaders like myself the opportunity to contribute to developing the future potential of our children."

By gaining a better understanding of the challenges faced by school principals like my partner, Tiego, and working with him to overcome some of those challenges, I have an opportunity to pass on the lessons I have learnt in my own career. More importantly, I look forward to learning some new lessons and skills as we take on these challenges together, in what will be a very new & unfamiliar environment for me," says Smith.

To find out more about this ground-breaking initiative, visit www.pfp4sa.org