



We are a Non-Profit Company that exists to develop and support sustainable change in under-resourced schools

www.strongschools.co.za

INTRODUCTION

We are proud to present to you our first annual report after the formation of Strong Schools Community Collaborative (SSCC) at the beginning of 2020. Despite the lockdowns and all the Covid-19 challenges, we are thankful to be able to present this integrated report with our highlights, goals and commitments to offer professional, quality, practical solutions and charitable support to under-resourced schools and disadvantaged communities.

Supporting principals, teachers and learners remain at the heart of everything we do. During the past year we have build new relationships with partners, funders and volunteers who continue to play a key role in allowing SSCC to empower school leadership in various areas.

We function as a not-for-profit organisation that assists schools in previously disadvantaged communities throughout the Helderberg Basin area in the Western Cape. SSCC works directly with the principals and teachers through our School Support Hubs. We need many more volunteers and 'boots on the ground' to enable the schools to meet their goals.

SERVICE, TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY, RESPECT, SUSTAINABILITY. With these values SSCC believes it is possible to create, shape and cultivate a sense of responsibility, will and belief that every individual, no matter size, statue, position, colour or creed, has something unique to contribute - to make a difference by bringing light and hope in a broken and dark world wherever they are.



***"You fight for what's right, you set that vision of where we could be -
and then you go after it yourself"***

- Chandini Portteus



In 2016 RESEP (Research for Socio-Economic Policy) from the University of Stellenbosch tabled a report which was called Identifying Binding Constraints in Education. This formidable report listed the following as the primary reasons why education is still unable to deliver the results that we as a South African society so desperately needs. The constraints listed were:

- Weak institutional functionality
- Undue union influence
- Weak teacher content knowledge and pedagogical skill
- Wasted learning time and insufficient opportunity to Learn

Strong Schools was launched in 2020 to address exactly these constraints in under-resourced schools. Knowing that it will be a huge task to undertake, because of the systemic nature, we believe that simplistic approaches and putting plasters on deep wounds will not be the answer. What is needed is a longer-term perspective, the involvement of the bigger system and dedicated collaboration between stakeholders with the same vision and purpose.

Sadly, we encountered the impact of Covid-19 on a community which was already vulnerable and it made the mountain to climb even steeper.

We were forced to take a more immediate and short-term perspective. Through serious dedication and extreme hard work, we are thankful and proud to look back at the progress made over the last year. Often, we were amazed by responses we received just in time from the broader community and institutions who got involved in different ways to strengthen and support our team and our schools.

Our relationship with institutions such as Trim Tab Foundation, African Bank, Afrimat, Capitec Bank and Mergon Foundation is of immense importance to us and made a huge impact on our work in the past year.

What makes us optimistic and gives us energy and hope?

- We are experiencing great involvement from leadership of the Western Cape Education Department.
- The schools we currently target in our programme are dedicated and committed to take their schools to the next level of functioning.
- We know we are in it for the long run and there are no quick fixes. We are experiencing a build-up of momentum which looks promising and needs encouragement and perseverance.

*"There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way it treats its children."
- Nelson Mandela*



SUMMARY

DIRECTOR TRUDIE SCHOEMAN



We are thankful to report about the Strong Schools (SSCC) ventures of the past year. Despite a pandemic and a lot of challenges and sadness around us, we could still make a difference in a few schools of the Helderberg Basin. The Covid -19 pandemic of 2020 brought with it terrible devastation and painful loss. After lockdown the sudden shift from the classroom has not only affected children's stress and anxiety levels, but has taken the essence of their normal lives away from friends and their school environment.

The main challenges we faced were how to implement our goals in the context of school lock downs and physical distancing. It was a daunting task for a new start-up, finding itself in the middle of an unforeseen pandemic. This forced our team to re-think and re-engineer our planned model, embracing these new challenges. The School Support Hub system was birthed out of this crisis and we trust for many more innovative ideas and methods in order to streamline the SSCC functionality and future impact – always an ongoing process.

Our team used the past year to establish Strong Schools as a professional organisation, building many relationships in our local community with like-minded organisations and individuals, in order to collaborate and co-create towards solutions.

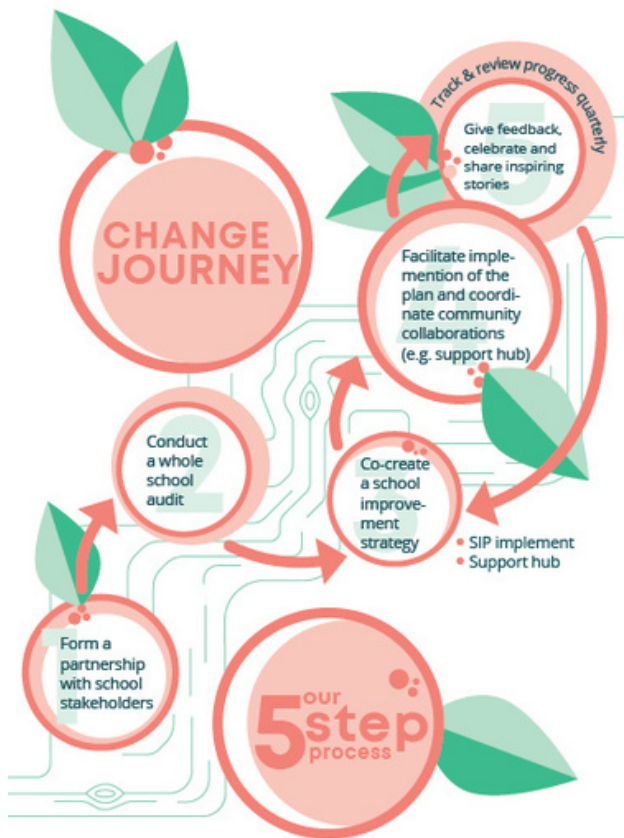
Without the help of our supporters none of this would have been possible. We are extremely thankful for the faithfulness of prayer partners and wisdom of our mentors who believed in SSCC and our vision, coming alongside to motivate and cheer us on.

SSCC applauds corporates like African Bank, Capitec Bank, Afrimat, Mergon Foundation and Trim Tab Foundation who demonstrated their commitment to improve education in South Africa by supporting our efforts in various ways. Without your support, there would be no Strong Schools. We honor every person and business who were involved in many different ways – from making masks to donating tablets and laptops, volunteering services to our team, to every Rand and gift which was donated towards our projects and non-event fundraisers.

Most of our team volunteer their services, for which we are very grateful. We trust to grow into an effective and efficient organisation in the years to come.



OUR UNIQUE 5-STEP CHANGE JOURNEY WITH THE SCHOOLS



One of our strong modus operandi is co-creation. We rolled out our unique 5-step journey. It starts by building a trust relationship with every principal involved and with other stakeholders in the specific schools. SSCC piloted a whole school audit with 3 of our schools to use as a baseline for our measuring and evaluation and impact reporting. It will help to ensure each school's buy-in and involvement and to indicate the collaborated impact of donors and partners involved.

In the school Support hub meetings specific projects are identified and prioritised to help each school to reach their own dreams and goals, indicated in their School Improvement and Development Plans.

SSCC invites the community and try to find business partners who will come along and turn the projects into practical and sustainable solutions.

SCHOOL SUPPORT HUBS AND PROJECTS

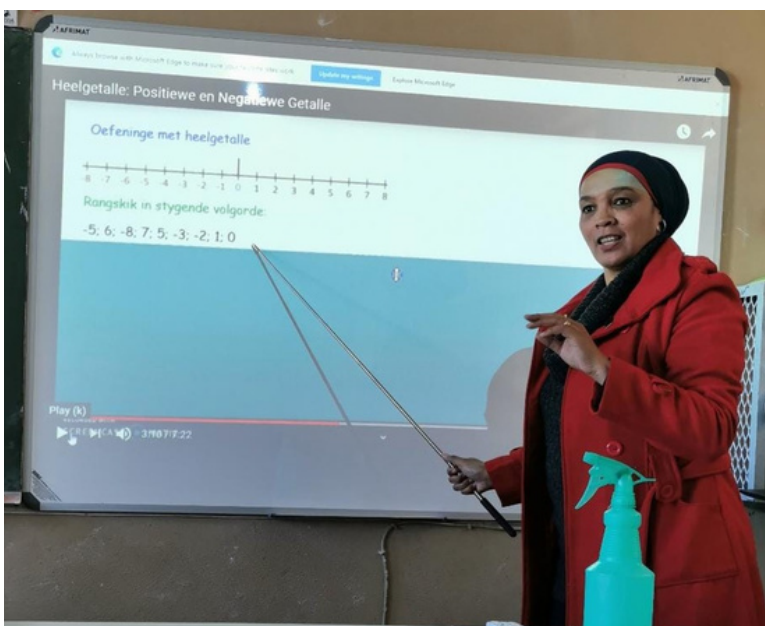
Our School Support hubs are ACJ Phakade Primary School, Christmas Tinto Primary School, Dr GJ Joubert Primary School, Sir Lowry's Pass Primary School and Nomzamo High School. These schools are targeted under-resourced schools and have experienced success in addressing existing problems, lacks and needs through community participation on grassroots levels. Principals and teachers, corporates and volunteers, serving in School Support Hubs, are implementing our Improvement and Development plans, (sanctioned by the WCED) bringing professional support and quality practical solutions to the under-resourced schools and communities involved.

Camino Consulting's Sonja van der Bank has been building trust relationships with schools over a 5-year period and planted our 5 school support hubs this year. In partnership with the Trim Tab Foundation, Camino has been involved in leadership development and change management for more than 5 years in our schools. SSCC is privileged to help build on the foundation laid by Camino and to have them as a strategic partner. Each school has its own support hub and we invite all stakeholders already involved in schools to attend these hub meetings and to help brain storm towards solutions. The principals are the leaders of their own hubs and their leadership teams determine which projects are prioritised.

Our dream is to plant a support hub in every school. With the necessary funding we can create jobs for school support hub coordinators, with a specific set of organisational and management skills.

SUMMARY OF KEY RESULTS AND PROJECT STATUS

- Leadership Development programs for principals and school leadership teams by collaborating with Camino Consulting's industrial psychologists.
- 52 Tablets with Vodacom SIM cards donated to Nomzamo High School for e-learning by African Bank, Cure Day Hospital and other donors.
- Data and sim from Vodacom for 45 tablets in Nomzamo High School.
- More than 5000 masks were made and donated by community members for our schools.
- Our Education specialist piloted and launched the Whole-School Audit in our schools.
- Emotional support for principals and "The power of conversations" workshops.
- Established 5 school support hubs, networking with other NPOs and support groups.
- Identified and launched and financed various school support hub projects.
- Delivered 4 laptops and R10 000 printing paper for schools, donated by African Bank.
- Delivered 5 laptops donated by Capitec Bank to our principals and their deputies.
- IT support by Complete Office Solutions in Somerset West and donated computer bags to our support hubs.
- Printing solutions for schools by Diverso, Strand.
- Collaborating with Lions Club who refurbished Dr GJ Joubert Primary School's library.
- Afrimat donated finances towards three projects:
 - Projectors and whiteboards for Dr GJ Joubert Primary School.
 - Bright Star Life skills programs for learners and Team building for teachers.
 - Sand and stone for the ACJ Phakade Primary School project to help solve the drainage problem.
- Community members & businesses donated goods worth over R30000 for our Non-event fundraiser projects.
- R50000 donated towards the ACJ Phakade Primary School's kitchen and drainage projects.
- Initiating conversations and meetings with City of Cape Town and Public Works towards solutions from the community for ACJ Phakade Primary School, trying to solve their complex drainage problems.
- Launched BrightStar Life skills programs in the Sir Lowry's Pass Primary school and community.
- Mergon Foundation donated substantial funding towards our 5 support hub projects.



*"The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity."
- Amelia Earhart*

FEEDBACK OF CHANGE AND IMPACT

The principals' positive feedback motivated us:

"We, at ACJ Phakade, would like to convey our sincere gratitude to be part of Strong Schools. Ever since the pandemic Covid-19, you shown a great deal of generosity, our school never lack of masks through your kind heart. Recently our school have a challenge of sewage and flooding water, even there, the school feels your intervention. Gary and his colleagues they even visited our school to see our plight... Once again we are so grateful to be part of you. Thank you." (Mr Majingo)

"For me the highlight was the hub formation and how it swiftly move to this melting pot machine.

We had our school as the center of attention, Camino Consulting as a driver, Strong Schools as co-driver and NPOs as a promise, hope and support. Especially at the second hub meeting, it was amazing how this melting pot of ideas came together so nicely. Sonja, from Camino Consulting, was amazing on the strategic plan leading to the second hub session. The hub idea was brilliant."

(Mr Qantolo)

At the African Bank handover, CSI manager, Mr Kennedy Dembetembe, said they want to work with efficient companies like Strong Schools who have hands and feet on the ground. Mr Naeem Cassim from African Bank said at the handover event: "We want these laptops to bring about change in classes for teachers and want to inspire the young ones. We want to enable them to achieve their highest level and be successful."

The testimonies from the Sir Lowry's Pass learners after they participated in the BrightStar LifeStyle life skills programmes, are inspiring to other learners.

We were moved by the feedback and testimonies from the teachers and learners of Dr GJ Joubert after the whiteboards and projectors were installed in a few of their classrooms.

"This donation goes a long way in improving the overall learning experience for students and equips the teachers with resources to teach more effectively".

Listen to more of our stories in the video clips on our website:

<https://strongschools.co.za/tell-your-story-videos/>



COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS




African Bank
donated 4 laptops


Complete Office.co.za
SOLUTIONS
donated 4 bags and provide the IT support



The success of an NPO like SSCC lie in building trust relationships and partnerships with like-minded individuals, NPOs and companies. Without the buy-in from our community, a lot of volunteers and the support of businesses, this venture to support the education of our children from disadvantage communities will not be sustainable.

AFRICAN BANK donates electronic equipment and supports our schools on the ground. AFRIMAT financially supported three of our schools' projects. Local businesses like Complete Office Solutions and Diverso continuously support the schools with IT and printing solutions. CAPITEC supported our schools with furniture, laptops and through their volunteer program. We are proud to partner with BrighStar Lifestyle, who trained local facilitators to present Life skills and Legacy Dad programmes in our schools and community.

Local business owners blessed us and our community with many gifts that enables us to run our non-event Fundraisers.

The volunteers who reported to serve the schools and our community with their gifts and talents warmed our hearts. We are extremely grateful towards every donor, volunteer and supporter, in which every way you have supported us.

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."
- Nelson Mandela

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Starting a not-for-profit company during a pandemic is not the most favorable circumstances to thrive financially. It was and is still a tough financial season for Strong Schools (SSCC), like with many other NPOs and businesses after Covid. The turnover of the company for the financial year ended on 30 June 2021 was R460,106. We managed to raise funds through a few ventures like MySchool-MyVillageMyPlanet, two non-event fundraisers and 6 virtual workshops to enhance the NPO sector. SSCC does not yet have enough financial support from regular donors from our community. It was mostly a few private donors who started SSCC with seed funding and we used consultants and experts to help develop and build our organisation and prepare us for the year 2022. Our budget towards the next financial year is R2 Million.

SSCC was sustained this year by funding from a few private donors and companies who saw the potential of Strong Schools and invested financially to support the work we do in our schools.

Budgeting accurately is quite a challenge, because our schools have new and unique challenges every month. Strong Schools has to search and find funding for specific projects as the challenges surface. We experience that companies and individuals prefer and enjoy giving funding towards specific projects with specific outcomes.

Audited statements for SSCC are available on request.



GOVERNANCE

Strong Schools was founded by three directors, Vonnie Mostert, Trudie Schoeman en Caryn Maree at the end of 2019. Sadly Maree had to resign in the early stages of Covid and we dearly miss her input and initiative in our team. Fortunately, in the beginning of 2021, our board was expanded – Dr Henk Punt and Marguerite Wahl joined our team.

We have been searching for a person with corporate experience and are very thankful towards Berthold Alheit who got involved as a volunteer the last few months. We recently welcomed him on our board and team. SSCC still needs a lot more diversity on our board and we trust to achieve that in the new year.



SERVICE



TRUST



ACCOUNTABILITY



RESPECT



SUSTAINABILITY

LESSONS LEARNT, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Finding enough volunteers, especially during Covid, is hard.
- With the Covid regulations and lock downs it was not always possible to get to the schools and it took longer for projects to be completed.
- Fewer opportunities for fundraising because of physical distancing.
- Working with part-time employees and team members in the NPO environment is always challenging, because there are not enough resources to draw and sustain full-time employees.
- Motivating our community amidst so many challenges to get involved in our schools was difficult.
- Passion and perseverance are the things that drive people in the NPO environment and let them stand together through hard times.
- We cannot be in corporate offices if we want to solve the problems in e.g. Nomzamo High School - we need to get our boots on the ground and be willing to get our hands dirty.
- Technology, e.g. Zoom and Teams made it possible during the difficult Covid times to stay connected and build relationships.
- In times of need people stand together. TOGETHER WE WILL BE STRONGER!
- Partnerships and collaboration are not always about money. People are willing to give their time, gifts and goods to make a difference.
- There are always stories of hope to be written and we can be the authors of it.



***"Stories also help us to solve problems by providing opportunities to try out different actions that might lead to different outcomes. This is especially true if another person is helping to co-create the story."
- Kate Hurst***

OUR VISION AND DREAMS FOR 2025

Strong Schools and collaborators contribute towards breaking the cycle of poverty and inequality in South Africa by enabling young people to unlock their full potential through quality education.

We work towards the following outcomes:

- Motivated and supported principals to lead and support their school's management team.
- Better equipped and supported subject teachers.
- The community benefits from a higher standard of education.
- Mathematics and Literacy improvement of the learners.
- Educated learners, who have received a higher degree of education are better equipped to serve their community and make a contribution to society.
- Offering guidance to learners in choosing subjects and careers. Prepare learners emotionally and vocationally to enter the journey of life.
- More strategic collaboration between different NPOs, businesses and other stakeholders through proper coordinated support hubs.
- Enhancing the NPO (For Purpose) sector by offering virtual workshops.
- A school support hub for every school.
- Partnering with more corporate institutions using their CSI to support education in South Africa.
- Substantial resources to be able to support the other under-resourced schools in the Helderberg Basin.
- To help create a learning culture in our schools.
- A significant increase in pass rate for Mathematics and especially for the matric learners.
- Enough funding to employ a full-time CEO, COO and Marketing manager.
- Funding for full-time school support hub coordinators for all our schools.
- 1000 MySchool beneficiaries who swipe their cards for Strong Schools.
- Many more local volunteers who can go into schools and assist our learners with homework, reading lessons and Mathematics extra classes.
- Effective teacher support and development.
- Launching our Literacy strategy in every school – learners must learn to read with more understanding.
- To co-create and be part of many stories of hope and to get positives outcomes for the challenges our schools face.



***“Don’t tell us all the reasons this might not work.
Tell us all the ways it could work.”
- John Wood***

THANK YOU

We are grateful towards each and everyone who have contributed the past year towards the following:

- Volunteering your gifts and professional talents.
- Donating monthly or once-off towards our projects.
- Praying for the Strong Schools team and for new and creative strategies.
- Offering your professional services to our team and/or schools – marketing ideas, financial service, IT support, proof reading letters and proposals, teacher support, etc.
- Participating in the School Support hubs in a thinking environment towards creative solutions.

Thank you for the generosity, support and contributions of all the donors and partners towards the work that Strong Schools does. Without you the feedback outlined in this report would not be possible. You enable our young NPO to make a difference in the Helderberg Basin community.

African Bank
Afrimat
BrightStar Lifestyle
Camino Consulting
Capitec Bank
Complete Office Solutions
Diverso
Mergon Foundation
All local businesses who donated gifts for our fundraisers
All private donors and supporters for their valuable contributions



**THANK YOU
TO ALL OUR SUPORTERS**

LEAD THE CHANGE



FROM ROOTS TO FRUITS

**TOGETHER
WE ARE STRONGER**