

## RECENT

- [Who is happy?](#)
- [Can you let go?](#)
- [M&C Saatchi Abel: Nothing is Impossible](#)
- [17 ways to know you were born to be an entrepreneur](#)
- [Meetings suck. Fix them with 6 easy steps](#)
- [5 steps to a successful New Year for companies](#)
- [10 trends of 2015](#)
- [3 must do's for breakthrough innovation](#)
- [How to find out what people really think about you](#)
- [...and justice for all](#)
- [It's not personal, it's business](#)
- [What does 2015 have in store?](#)



27 MARCH 2014

## Partners for Possibility: Leading change in SA Education



by **Louise Van Rhyn**: Education activist and founder of Partnerships for Possibility.

**We are all being called to be active citizens. The National Planning Commission has identified Active Citizenship as one of the three key enablers for the National Development Plan. Bobby Godsell and James Motlatse and other prominent South African leaders are asking us to sign the Citizens Charter and to give four hours a month to help to create a better South Africa for all (see [www.citizens.za.com](http://www.citizens.za.com)).**

Most business leaders have realised that we can't just sit back and hope that our government will deal with all the significant social issues facing South Africa. We simply don't have the knowledge, skills and experience in our government. I am always inspired by many daily conversations with current and retired CEOs, directors, entrepreneurs and business leaders at all levels of organisations. These are all people who were lucky enough to get a good education in primary and high school, had the opportunity to get a tertiary qualification and now want to "give back". They just don't know how and what to do with their precious four hours a month.

We have good news! During the last three years we have developed a process to support business and community leaders who want to make a meaningful contribution to South Africa's Education system. There are currently 170 business leaders from more than 70 organisations involved in this process.

These leaders become learning and implementation partners to school principals. Given the reality that most principals have not been adequately equipped for their task to lead change at their schools, this partnership creates an opportunity for leaders to share their knowledge and skills with a principal and school leadership team who are keen to learn and lead change in their schools and communities. Business leaders who are part of the process report that they have been inspired by the calibre of school principals but also dismayed at how these principals are expected to just learn about being a principal through trial and error. School principals have one of the most important jobs to do in South Africa and yet they are simply not equipped or supported for this task.

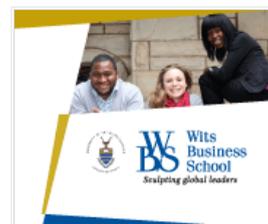
The [Partners for Possibility](#) programme is being recognised as an innovation in CSI, leadership development, education reform and principal support because it is not a coaching or mentoring process. Business leaders become partners to principals with the expectation that they will support and learn from each other in a reciprocal process. Many of the business leaders report that they have learned more about leadership from being a partner to principal than they've learned from attending a course at a business school. The programme is structured as a leadership development programme and accredited as a NQF level 6 programme with the University of the Western Cape.

### Partners:



#### Nina Wellsted, Nedbank

"I can honestly say that the programme has not only been a transformational journey for the two partners in terms of how the school benefited, but was a leadership programme like none other offered in a corporate environment. The skills learnt in the 3 training workshops ie Flawless Consulting, Community Building and Time to Think could practically be applied in a corporate environment and enhanced our general teamwork and my profile as a whole. The coaching programme and exposure to great leadership thinking and then applying this thinking in a challenged school environment and corporate environment has been a great privilege! If anything the whole programme has given me greater



### USEFUL TOOLS

- [Find a Course](#)
- [Find a Company](#)
- [Browse the Library](#)
- [Send a Training Request](#)

### USEFUL LINKS

- ▶ [GIBS](#)
- ▶ [Wits Business School](#)
- ▶ [UCT GSB ExecEd](#)
- ▶ [USB](#)
- ▶ [Henley Business School](#)
- ▶ [UNISA SBL](#)

determination to play an influencing and supportive role in education and society as a whole."



**Jennifer Taylor, FNB**

"In 2011, I met Louise and my life changed forever. I signed up to be a Partner for Possibility (PfP) because I was looking for something different from the typical leadership development programmes on offer. I wanted to learn real, practical, useful skills that would translate into change in my workplace. I was also looking to make a contribution to South African society; to do something purposeful as an active citizen. This programme offered me both, and is unique and special as a result."



**Chantal Du Chenne, Vodacom**

"I am now what I consider to be a more fully-fledged South African. Having worked in the community of Alexandra, I more thoroughly appreciate the complexities of the education crisis and what is required of every South African to be part of the solution. The future of this country is in the hands of every South African. A Couch potato rebel movement is required! Do anything, but do something! There is much to be done. We need to be courageous and overcome the barriers that divide our communities. The PfP program is a powerful conduit, a bridge for uniting divided communities of South Africans. When we begin to acknowledge that we are more connected in our humanness than we are separated by our differences, we realise the power of recognising every South African as an integral part of the richness of our unique South African community experience."



**Gerard Mohamed, Multisol**

"As a senior manager in a multi-national organisation, neither my high level professional exposure, or post-graduate qualifications, adequately prepared me for experience on the PfP program. Complexity theories as learnt on my MBA course, pales in significance to the realities of dealing with a school where a grade 1 learner got shot due to being innocently caught up in the cross-fire between rival gangs in the area. One of my greatest personal learning areas was about everyone having a role to play in making South Africa a better place. We all have a degree of expertise that we can use to contribute towards a needy cause especially within our disadvantaged communities. I have also learnt to listen more attentively when people speak and to leave my personal prejudices one side by focusing on the issue at hand. Often we hear people speak, but we miss the message because we are not actively listening or too busy formulating an answer to show others how clever we are."



**Chamu M'kombe, Microsoft**

"The reality in our country is that while efforts are being made to educate as many young people as possible, there still remains a big gap in the quality of education between those that have financial resources and those that do not. The Symphonia Partners for Possibility programme is one initiative that strives to improve the quality of education in some of our under resourced schools. I feel honoured to have been approached by Symphonia to partner with Peter Mosiane, the Principal of Molaetsa Primary School in White City Jabavu, one of the poorest sections of Soweto. Many of the learners at this school come from households that do not have a steady monthly income and some stay with their grandparents who are pensioners and depend on the state for grants. Consequently, the school is a 'no-fee' school."

**Endorsements:**



**Trevor Manuel**

"The National Development Plan is all about different parts of society working with government to increase capacity. The Partners for Possibility Programme is exactly what is needed to make the NDP real and take our education forward. I commend the initiative for what it does for education. But I also commend the initiative for how it develops business people and gets them into communities those business people would not necessarily get involved with. That has to help nation building as well. Well done PfP."



**Dr Mamphela Ramphele**

"Nothing matters in the life of a nation as much as education. If you look at history, the societies that have succeeded are those that value education. That invests in education. By investing I'm not talking money only. I'm talking time, energy, enthusiasm and high expectations of our children."

**Professor Brian O'Connell**

"It is clear that we all underestimate just how deeply our history has hurt people and institutions, but if our country is to have any



chance of transcending that hurt and if our people are to take full ownership of our future then our schools must lead the way. I believe that Partners for Possibility has it right and that partnership with our leaders in this critical venture, our principals, will create a new environment and release the kind of positive, confident energy, supported by knowledge that will put us on a new path. I support this project unconditionally and hope sincerely that the project will be supported: for all of our sakes."



#### Professor Jonathan Jansen

"I challenge every company concerned with the future skills set of high school graduates to join the Partners for Possibility Programme in linking Principals and Corporate Leaders in making schools better now but, also in improving our economic futures later."



#### Archbishop Desmond Tutu

"I am always moved by the number of people who are engaged in wonderful acts of transformation, of making a real difference in the world. When each of us does something good – where we are – it's these acts of goodness that together overwhelm darkness and change the world. I warmly commend Symphonia for South Africa for bringing together citizens committed to building our country through education – such as in the Partners for Possibility Programme. God bless you!"



#### Wendy Luhabe

"In a world where there is a chronic leadership vacuum and pockets of excellence, I am inspired by this home-grown, innovative and sustainable solution which places education at the centre of community. We invite you to join us in creating new possibilities, new partnerships, collaborative and experiential approaches for leadership development in a changing environment that requires a new intelligence. This is essential for us to leapfrog South Africa to realize her full potential."



#### Tony Leon

"I am delighted to be a Patron of Partners for Possibility and making a small and positive difference in the battle to achieve good educational outcomes, one school at a time. Partners for Possibility brings together leaders from South Africa's high performing private sector and matches them with school principals in challenging environments. We all know, and research around the world proves, that the health of a school depends on empowered principals and good teachers. Our country spends more on education than practically every developing country in the world and yet we have dismal results. These Partnerships can, in a meaningful way, change that trajectory and transform our country."



#### Clem Sunter

"This project goes to the heart of what is needed to improve the performance of schools in South Africa. In my experience of 12 years at the helm of Anglo's Chairman's Fund, the principal variable in a school's future is the quality of the principal. A good leader will automatically hold the teachers accountable for the results inside and outside the classroom and will inspire the entire community behind the school to provide the intensity of commitment which ensures excellence. I have no hesitation in giving my whole-hearted support to this initiative."

#### Get involved:

For more about the Partnerships for Possibility process, please see: [www.pfp4sa.org](http://www.pfp4sa.org) or write to [louise@symphonia.net](mailto:louise@symphonia.net).

#### Useful resources:



Symphonia is an Organisational Change practice that works with leaders to engage their stakeholders so that talent, human energy and creativity is maximised. Our mission is to ignite a sense of possibility everywhere we work. Visit our [website](#).

Share: [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Email](#) [Other](#) [Print](#) [Newsletter](#)



R