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The more I immerse myself in the Partnership for Possibility initiative, the more excited I get because it empowers me to positively change our country's destiny, one school at a time.

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Chamu M'kombe

Partner to **Peter Mosiane**

Albert Einstein once said that *“It is every man's obligation to put back into the world at least the equivalent of what he takes out of it”* and the Bible teaches us that *“it is more blessed to give than to receive”*.

There are many socio economic challenges that besiege our wonderful country of South Africa such as crime, unemployment, income inequality and others. A key approach to effectively address these challenges is to ensure that our young people get good education that prepares them well to meaningfully participate in an inclusive economy.

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 **Partners for Possibility (Pfp)** 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.

While on the programme, I have found a new determination to solve any problem even with little or no resources. An example of this was at the beginning of the year, when some of the needed text books did not arrive on time. A temporary solution was put in place to ensure that every learner had access to the prescribed reading content until the books arrived. Another example pertains to how the school has been able to address the teacher shortage in an innovative manner. The school has a stipulated number of teachers allocated to it by the Department of Education, as determined by the average learner to teacher ratio. One of the classes had close to double the average number of learners per teacher and it was clear that the teacher would not cope with

such a large class. A sustainable fund-raising mechanism was put in place to raise money that could pay a stipend for an additional teacher thus lightening the load of the overburdened class.

In working with Peter and his team over the past year, I have grown immensely in my understanding of how to motivate people and influence them to achieve objectives that initially may seem out of reach. For example, at the beginning of our partnership, it was difficult to motivate guardians to participate in school events such as feedback sessions on the learners' performance and on progress of certain projects. Working with Peter, the School Governing Body and some committed parents we were able to find ways to reach most of the parents by finding out what motivates them and leveraging this to get them excited about attending school events. Recently, a cultural event at the school proved to be successful in getting parents to attend an important school event.

Working closely with the school, I have come to appreciate the deep level of lack in some of our communities. The houses surrounding the school and where the bulk of the learners live are four roomed structures originally built to house one family per unit. However, they have been subdivided to accommodate 2 or more families per unit in order to help alleviate housing shortages in the area. For the majority of the learners, the meal provided by the school for lunch is the only nutritious meal of the day. Observing this level of lack has spurred me to do all that I can to ensure that these learners have an opportunity to improve their future and that they get equipped to participate in our economy on an equal footing with other learners from more privileged communities. This has given me a profound appreciation of Nelson Mandela's famous quote, *“Education is the most powerful weapon that you can use to change the world.”*



Peter Mosiane
Molaetsa Primary School

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