



# Impact Report

*Leveraging leadership, fostering change*



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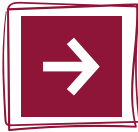


# About the Principals Academy Trust

The Principals Academy Trust (PAT) was founded in October 2012 in collaboration with the University of Cape Town’s Graduate School of Business (UCT GSB).

The founders were keen to contribute to the development of effective educational leadership and management in the public education sector. They collaborated with UCT GSB to develop an executive management development programme targeting Principals in this school system.

The three founding members understood and believed that improving the management and leadership skills of Principals who were serving marginalised communities, together with improving the quality of teaching, would be the most critical factors in improving learners’ performance.



## Our Vision

PAT strives to enable school leadership teams to create a sustainable positive culture that supports effective education.



## Our Leadership

**Trustees:** Charles Richard Haw, Clive John Edwards, Bruce Ernest Probyn, and Prof Vuyokazi Sylvia Nomlomo

**Patrons:** Prof Brian Figaji, Prof Mary Metcalfe, and Ralph Mupita



## Our Team

**Coaching Team:** Alan Clarke, Anne van Zyl, Bruce Probyn, Clive Barham, David Charles, Derrick Moore, Dhanan Naidoo, Estienne Rheinicke, Frank Peters, Gavin Fish, Gregg King, Keith Richardson (CEO), Midge Hilton-Green, Nomsa Shosha, Paul Cassar, Ronald Balie, and Sue Redelinghuys

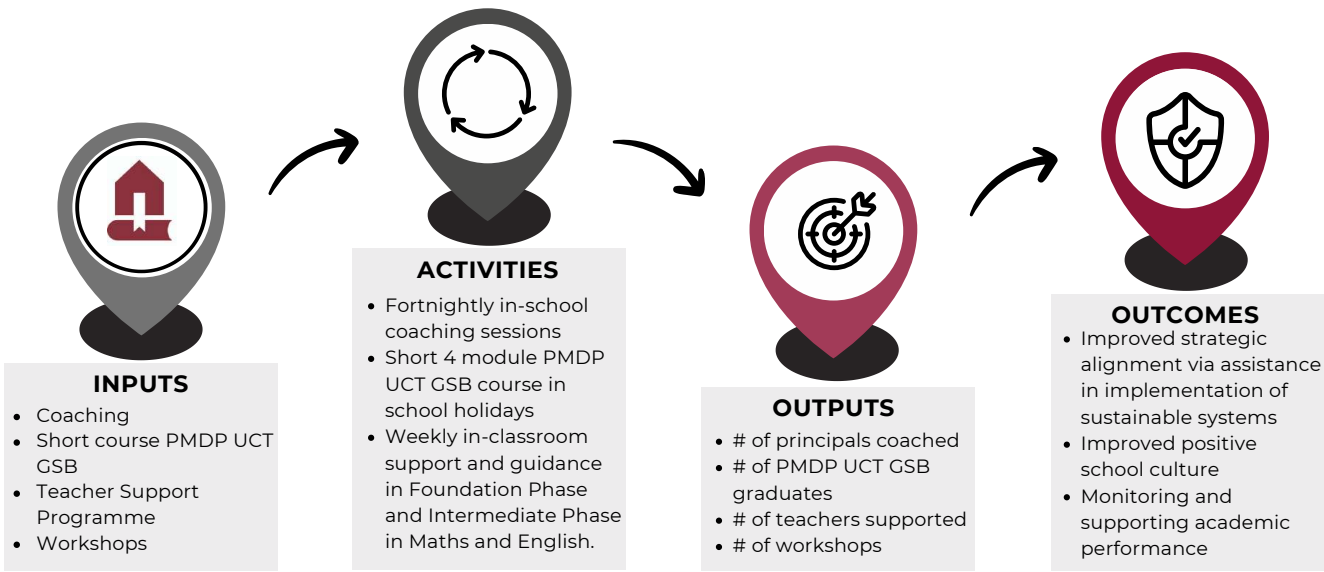
**Teacher Support Team:** Anita Bath, Bonita Engelbrecht, Caeleen Holmes, Catherine Meier, Charmain Meintjes, Coretha Aucamp, Dorothy Raine, Heather Bailey, Janet Venter, Janine Vosloo, Julene Philander, Julie Womack, Kath Eve, Marilyn Jacobs, Melinda van der Molen, Myles Bing, Reinette Bing, René Sinclair, Shelagh Scholtz, Shona Breytenbach, and Tracy Micklethwaite

**Admin Team:** Bronwen Murray, Hannalie van der Merwe, Heidi Short, Linda Roodman, Jeanette Clark, Joanne Golding



## Our Theory of Change

The diagram below demonstrates a simplified overview of PAT's Theory of Change.



# Small Wins, Big Change

## The Impact of the Principals Academy Trust

Without doubt, the question I am most frequently asked in my current role at the Principals Academy, is **‘How do you measure your success at PAT?’**

When PAT was established in 2012, it had a clear mission: to empower Principals in under-resourced Western Cape communities with the tools, mindset, and support that they needed to transform their schools into thriving learning environments. But how is success in such an initiative measured? The answer lies not only in the quantitative assessments that systemic and matric results provide, but also in the qualitative systems built by Principals and their leadership teams, as well as in the cultures they foster.

## Empowering Leadership Through Personal Mastery

At the heart of PAT’s model is the belief that effective school leadership begins with personal mastery. Guided by the thoughtful and probing questioning of Mike Abrams at the University of Cape Town’s Graduate School of Business, Principals develop their self-awareness, emotional intelligence and strategic thinking skills. One Principal reflected *‘The Personal Mastery component at the GSB built my self-confidence and grew my knowledge of the bigger picture needed in my role as Principal.’*

This focus on self-leadership translates into more empathetic and effective school management. Principals are encouraged to adopt questions like ‘Help me understand’ and ‘How can I help you?’ which a number of Principals said had shifted their schools’ culture from one of judgment to a non-threatening one of collaboration and growth.

*These sentiments indicate a growing belief in transformational leadership, where personal growth is seen as a prerequisite for institutional change.*

## Building Systems for Sustainable Change

Success is also evident in structural improvements within schools. The PAT Rubric

Tool supports leaders in implementing year planners, organograms, and clear job descriptions, ensuring that every staff member understands their role. One Principal noted, *‘The annual planning document with the job descriptions is an invaluable resource.’*

These systems promote clarity, accountability, and a shared vision. They also facilitate task delegation and empowerment of teachers—reinforcing the collaborative environment needed.

## Celebrating Small Wins—the Cornerstone of PAT’s Approach

In an educational environment often characterised by negativity and pessimism, Dr Elanca Shelley of the GSB encouraged Principals to set and celebrate small wins. This approach has proven transformative in many schools.

One Principal, for example, increased **sports participation** from 0% to over 75%. *‘Now two years later, our U13 Soccer and Netball teams are going on tour—a first for our school,’* he proudly shared. Inspired by this, he now aims to apply this strategy to academics, where targeted improvements in English and Maths have been set by his academic leadership team.

Another Principal fostered a greater sense of belonging by inviting two staff members at a



time to attend SMT meetings for a six-month spell and to participate in decision-making. *'Allowing staff to rotate through SMT meetings has proven so popular that there is a waiting list of teachers to have a turn.'*

In another primary school which focussed on vocabulary enrichment, learners were asked to keep notebooks recording five new words every day. Teachers, in turn, developed creative methods to ensure that learners understood and retained these words.

Inspired by her Coach, another Principal introduced weekly peer-led lessons allowing learners to teach their classmates. With similar intent, another Principal installed white boards down the length of the classroom so that learners could explain Maths concepts to their peers in small groups around the room.

Focussed on boosting their **matric results**, one high school encouraged their matric learners, after setting their goals, to track their academic performance by graphing their results in every subject. These were to be pasted *inside the front of their subject notebooks*. *'We began with a single learner taking up the challenge—our first small win...'* one pragmatic Principal noted.

*'We prioritised wellness last year as a staff goal,'* another Principal reported. *'Every morning, at the staff meeting, we asked a different teacher to say what they had done to promote the idea of wellness. No-one came forward at first, but now there is lots of talking and chatting.'*

*We now have a totally different atmosphere amongst our staff.'*

These examples—though anecdotal and based on qualitative data from a limited number of schools—convey a clear message: small, intentional actions can lead to meaningful, lasting change. The challenge now for these principals is to sustain, embed and improve on these wins in their schools' systems and policies.

**The Transformative Power of Coaching**

Regular coaching sessions, held every two weeks, provide Principals with a supportive space to reflect, strategise, and grow—while remaining accountable. One Principal shared: *'The regular, ongoing visits enabled me to discuss ideas in depth and at length with no pressure to move on.'*

Coaches offer honest, constructive feedback, helping Principals to focus on their vision, to gain confidence and to identify their next small win.

The coaching relationship is characterized by trust and mutual respect. Principals appreciate the opportunity to express concerns, celebrate successes, and receive guidance tailored to their own contexts. As one Principal noted, *'Knowing I could call on the coach at any time for help or advice gave me the confidence to keep going.'*

In conclusion, measuring the success of the Principals Academy involves looking at the

holistic transformation of school leaders. Through personal development, systemic improvements and a culture that values small wins and continuous growth, PAT has empowered a number of Principals to lead their schools with confidence and compassion. Although this 'bottom-up approach' is successful at an individual level, it cannot address the macro-level issues which still challenge education. It is my hope that this Impact Report offers a glimpse into the influence which PAT has had on several schools in the Western Cape during 2024.

**Keith Richardson**  
**CEO: Principals Academy Trust**



# PAT by Numbers

Since the first intake of Principals in 2013, PAT has steadily expanded its impact across schools and communities in the Western Cape. These numbers show a story of growth, leadership, and impact. From the number of Principals enrolled and graduating, to the expansion of our team and the communities we serve, the numbers tell a story of commitment and change. They also reflect the long-term value of leadership development—with several Principals moving into senior roles within the WCED.

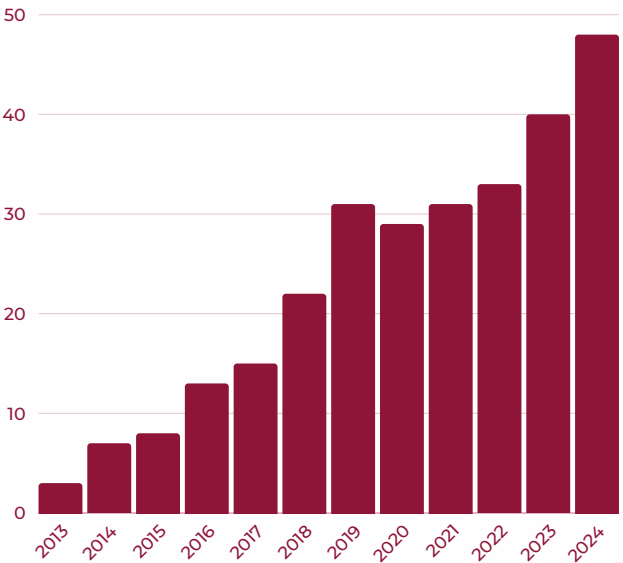
199

GSB Graduates since first intake with an average pass rate of 73%



346

Schools impacted since 2013 in 168 communities



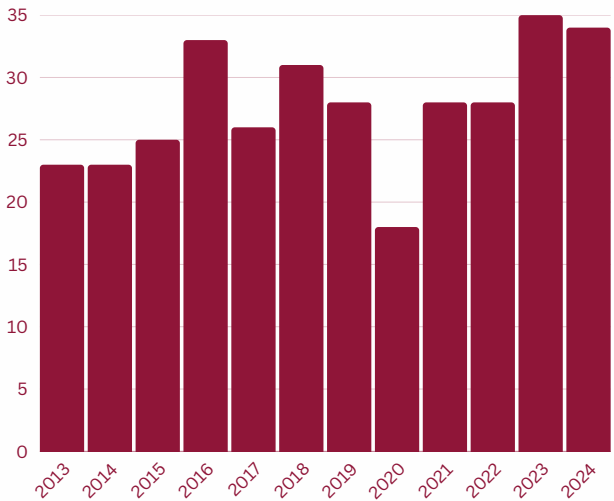
Number of PAT team members



23

Coached Principals promoted to Circuit Manager with WCED since PAT was established.

Number of Principals accepted into the coaching programme



# Data that Talks: New Tools, Better Insights

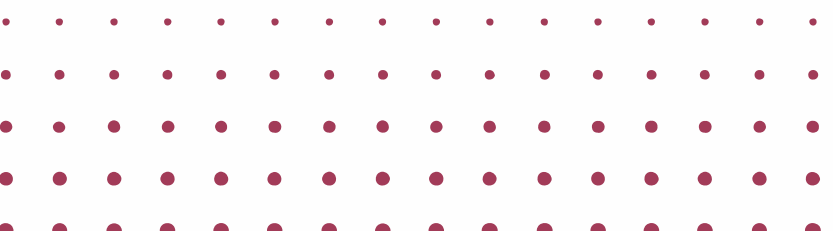
The end of 2024 and the start of 2025 have marked a significant shift in how we manage and use data at Principals Academy Trust. A major focus has been the successful rollout of our new app and database management system—tools designed to streamline data collection, improve accessibility, and enhance our ability to analyse and respond to the needs of the schools and leaders we serve.

**Our Digital Transformation**

The decision to overhaul our data systems came in response to growing challenges in managing a high volume of information across our network. As our operations expanded, it became increasingly clear that we needed a more efficient way to collect, store, and analyse the data that underpins our work. Equally important was the need to provide our coaches and TSP staff with a simple system that could be easily used in the field.

In response, we developed a purpose-built app allowing coaches and support staff to input data directly during school visits. This data feeds into a centralised database, from which we can generate reports at the click of a button—saving time, improving accuracy, and allowing for faster decision-making.

Implementing these systems was a collaborative effort. With expert support from the **Go Company** in designing and building our tools, and valuable feedback from coaches and TSP members, we’ve



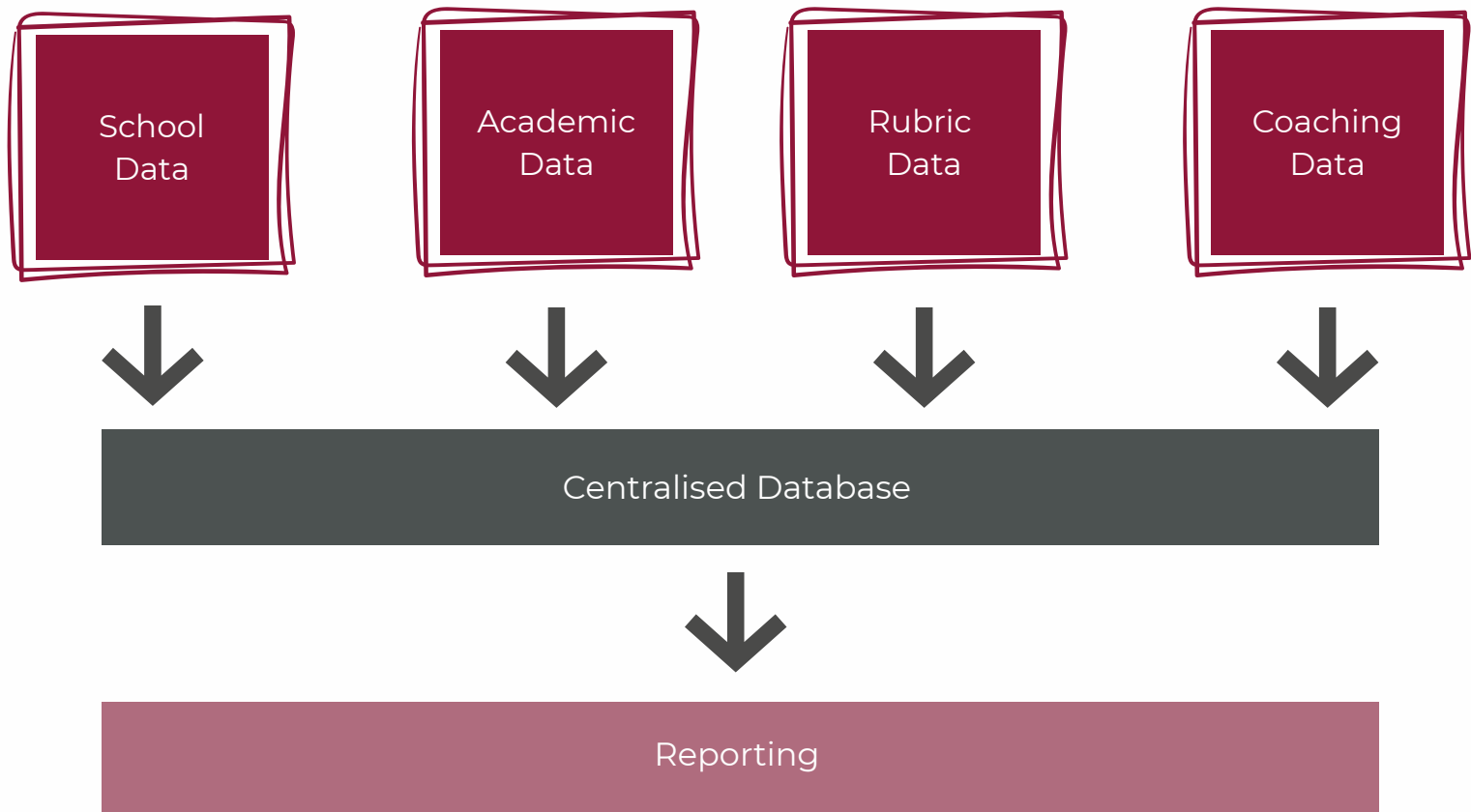
ensured the platform is practical and easy to use. Strong uptake and consistent data input are already strengthening our feedback loops and helping us adapt our support with greater precision.

**The App in Action: Stronger Feedback Loops, Smarter Support**

Our new tools are about more than data entry—they’re about making data useful. The app is now fully embedded in the day-to-day work of our

coaches and TSP members, creating a more dynamic connection between schools and PAT leadership.

Coaches use the app to log each school visit, capturing notes on interactions with staff and leadership. These records offer rich context to support our understanding of each school’s progress. At the end of each term, coaches upload summary reports, providing PAT leadership with a consolidated and accessible view of activity across the network.



Administrative staff input systemic test results into the system, and coaches add rubric scores aligned with our PAT Rubric tool, providing a clear and consistent picture of school progress against defined indicators. With all this data in one place, we can now respond in real time, tailor support more effectively, and base our decisions on a much fuller view of school performance.

Evidence of Impact: What the Data Is Telling Us

As our digital systems have matured, so too has our ability to track the impact of our programme with

greater consistency and clarity. One of our key goals is to measure how our partner schools perform over time, particularly in relation to broader trends in the province and nationally.

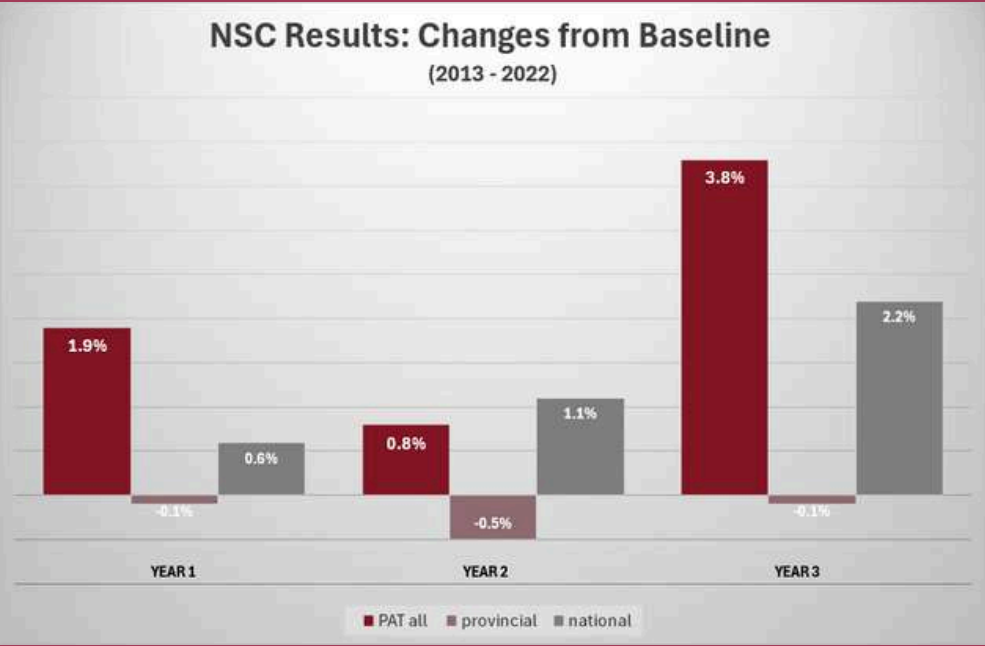
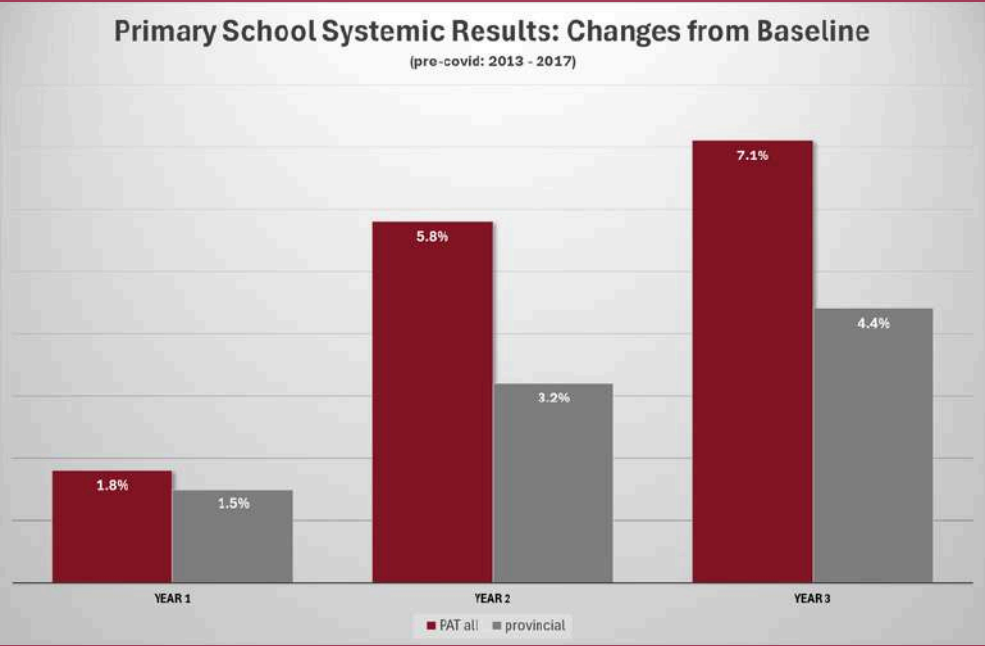
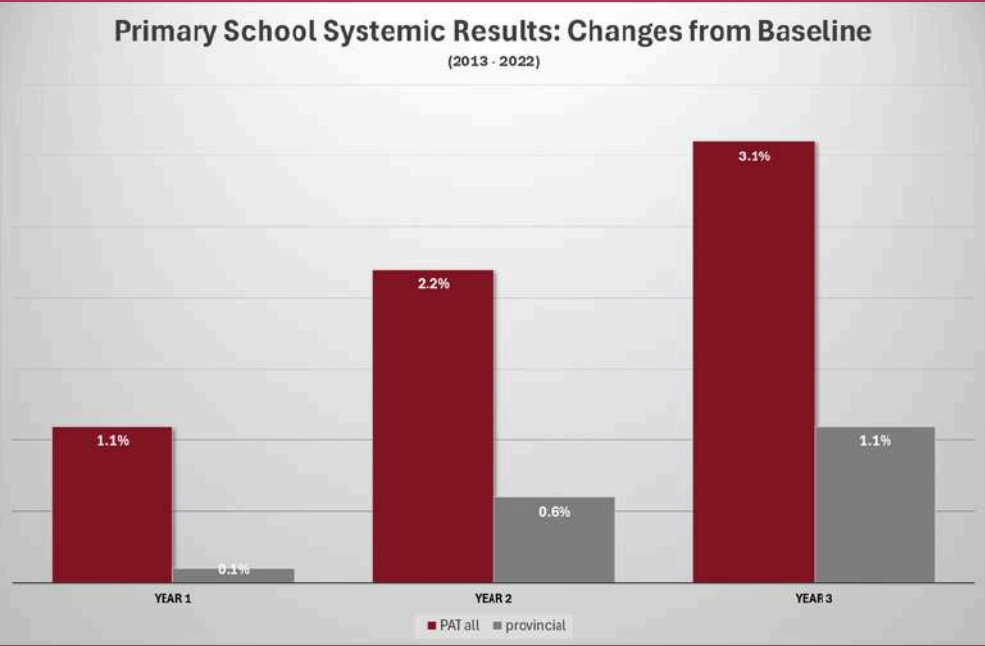
To do this, we are comparing systemic testing and NSC (matric) results from our schools to the corresponding provincial and, in the case of matric, national averages. By looking at the average change from a school's baseline year (results from the year before a school joined the PAT programme) over the course of its three years in the programme, we're beginning to see a positive trend: on average,

schools show strong gains that outpace provincial-level improvements during the same period.

There are some limitations in the data. The disruption caused by Covid-19, with no systemic testing conducted in 2020 and noticeable dips in performance thereafter, has complicated long-term tracking.

Nonetheless, where consistent data is available, the signs are encouraging. Our schools are not only recovering well post-Covid, but **surpassing the average trajectory** of non-participating schools.

The graphs on this page show the average percentage change in primary school systemic results and NSC pass rates from each school's baseline year (the year before joining the PAT programme) through Years 1, 2, and 3 on the programme. Maroon bars represent PAT schools, while grey bars show provincial/national average increases. Data is first averaged across all PAT cohorts, from the 2013 intake to the most recent cohort starting in 2022. This data is severely affected by the Covid years, and so an additional graph for primary school systemic results is given, showing results in the years prior to Covid schooling. On average, PAT schools show strong gains over three years, consistently outperforming provincial and national trends.





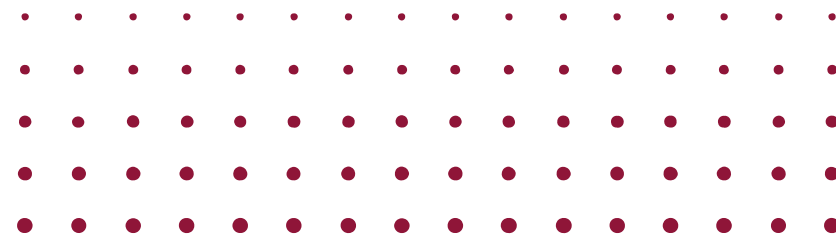
Looking Ahead: Embedding Insight into Practice

Looking forward, our focus is on embedding these tools more deeply into everyday practice. Already, a number of coaches have begun using the reports from our new system in their meetings with school Principals. These early adopters have reported how valuable it has been to walk into conversations with a clear picture of what’s happening in the school, backed by evidence. This kind of insight will not only improve the quality of our coaching conversations, but will also help Principals reflect more purposefully on areas for development.

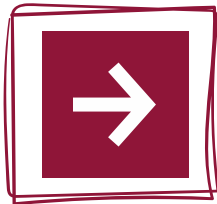
We want this to become standard practice: that all coaches consult and reflect on their reports regularly as part of their preparation and planning.

Importantly, these new tools also give us a powerful way to report back to our funders—showing clearly what our coaches and TSP teams are doing in schools, and how those efforts are making a difference. Whether it’s tracking classroom practices, mapping leadership development, or demonstrating academic recovery, the app helps us surface the stories behind the stats. It’s a vital step in honouring the trust and investment of our donors, and in reinforcing the shared commitment we have to improving educational outcomes in under-resourced communities.

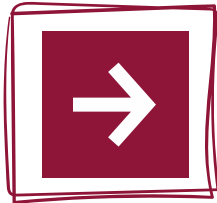
As we move ahead, we’re committed to strengthening the loop between insight and action—ensuring that every data point collected is used to drive meaningful, measurable change in the schools we serve.



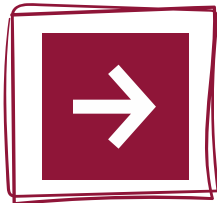
# Coaching in the Spotlight



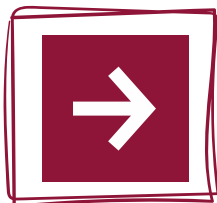
**1 774**  
Coaching sessions



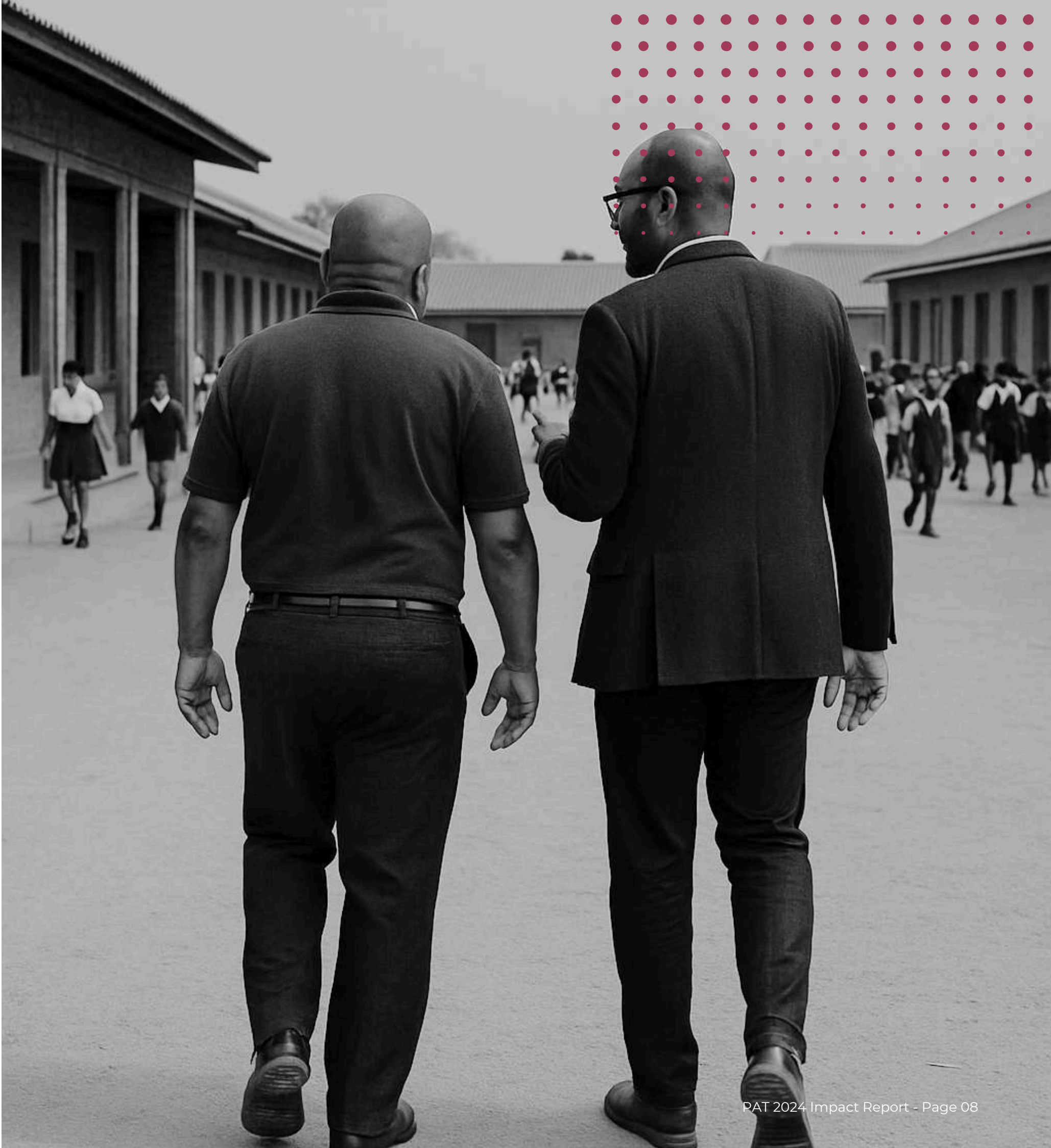
**84 389**  
Learners in schools served



**474**  
Planning workshop attendees



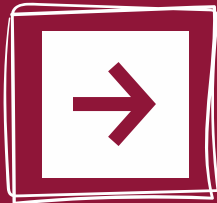
**104**  
Principals coached





*“The one main area that the coaches impacted me in the leadership role was through confidence. They really gave me the confidence to be me and lead authentically. Without their input there may have been self-doubt and anxiety. Systems absolutely make sense! And the whole school IS a system and learning how to address the multiple, complex parts of my own school system was for me personally life changing. How a couple of years down the line I still lead my school is underpinned on the lessons I learnt while at GSB and the influence of my coaches.”*

Heather Calmeyer, Principal of Zonnebloem NEST Senior School

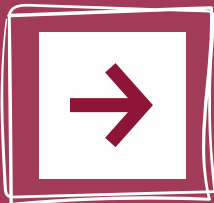


[Click here to read Heather’s full story of coaching, confidence and transformation.](#)

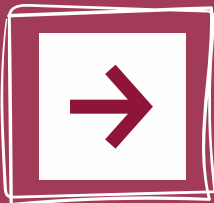




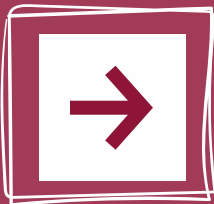
# GSB in the Spotlight



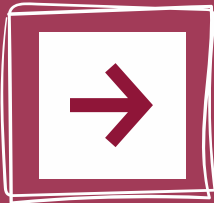
**22**  
GSB Graduates



**81%**  
Pass Rate



**4**  
Modules



**15**  
Days of classes

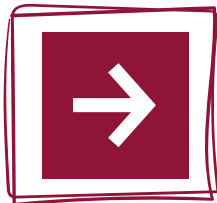


The **UCT Graduate School of Business** Principals Management Development Programme, an Executive Education short course, equips school Principals with critical leadership and management skills to drive school improvement. Since the first intake in 2013, **Capitec Foundation** has generously funded the participation of around 24 Principals each year, playing a key role in strengthening school leadership across the Western Cape. In 2024, with additional support from **Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropies**, the programme expanded to include more Principals annually—giving more school leaders access to this transformative opportunity.



*“Trust is the foundation of any successful organisation, and it is built through authenticity, empathy, and consistent actions. Through the programme, I learned that conflict can be an opportunity for growth and innovation if handled correctly. One of the most impactful aspects of the programme was the emphasis on self-reflection. This process of self-reflection has been instrumental in my personal development. It is very important to me to acknowledge that I made a mistake and to strive to do it better next time. By being true to myself and not succumbing to the pressures of pleasing everyone, I have been able to lead with confidence and authenticity.”*

Cindie Ah Ling, Principal of the Peter Clarke Art Centre and top student in the GSB Class of 2024

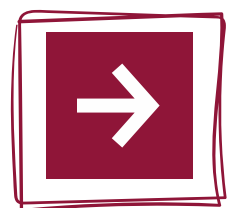


[Click here to read Cindie’s full reflection on her GSB journey.](#)

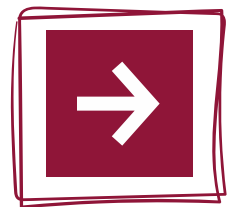




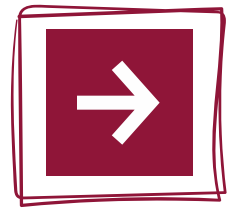
# TSP in the Spotlight



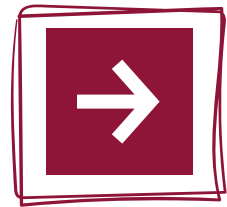
**2 553**  
TSP classroom visits



**12**  
TSP Workshops



**1 000**  
Google Classroom  
Resources



**102**  
Classroom Library  
kits





*“The support from PAT in 2024 was incredibly valuable in enhancing both my teaching approach and student engagement.*

*The interventions, particularly Shona’s visits, brought a fresh perspective to my teaching methods. Her insights and strategies reinforced the importance of structured play in learning, making lessons more interactive and accessible for all learners.”*

Ms. Kwaza, teacher of ASD (autistic spectrum disorder) at Mary Harding School

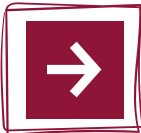


*“Her approach to lesson planning —thoughtful, intentional, and learner-focused— completely changed the way I plan my days. With her mentorship, I’ve grown not only in my own teaching, but also in my ability to support others.”*

Ms. Fransman, Grade 1 teacher at iThemba Primary School

*“The PAT interventions changed the way I approach homework by emphasising the importance of parental involvement. Before, homework was just an individual task for learners but no, by sending creative booklets home, I’ve seen how it can become a shared learning experience between students and their families.”*

Ms. Brevis, a teacher at Blossom Street Primary School



[Click here to read these three teachers’ full quotes on how TSP changed their teaching.](#)

# Strong Partnerships

Partnerships are essential to PAT's mission of transforming education. In 2024, we continued working alongside organisations that share our vision for empowering school leaders, educators, and learners. These partnerships enable us to expand our impact, strengthen key focus areas like leadership development and literacy, and create lasting change in schools and communities.

Below, we highlight five key partners whose support and collaboration have been instrumental in driving our work forward.

## Western Cape Education Department

→ The **Western Cape Education Department** (WCED) remains a valued partner to PAT, offering ongoing support, guidance, and collaboration in our shared mission to strengthen school leadership and improve learner outcomes. This partnership plays an important role in aligning our work with broader education priorities in the province.

In 2025, PAT will deepen this collaboration through the launch of a new support programme for Principals in their first year in the role. PAT will work closely with these leaders to help them settle into their positions, grow in confidence, and build the foundations for strong, sustainable leadership from the start.

## DataDrive2030

→ We partnered with **DataDrive2030** to strengthen early learning by using their Early Learning Outcomes Measurement (ELOM) assessment tools. These tools provide valuable data on school readiness, helping to evaluate and improve early learning programmes. By harnessing data-driven insights, this partnership supports our shared goal of ensuring young children—especially those from underserved communities—develop the foundational skills needed for lifelong success.

## Huddle Education

→ **Huddle Education** joined us as a new partner in 2024, bringing a bold vision for high-quality, low-cost education in South Africa. Their blended learning model combines expert teaching, engaging digital content, write-in learner workbooks and draft assessments into classrooms—to make great teaching easier. By integrating Huddle's technology-driven approach in selected schools, this partnership helps us explore innovative ways to strengthen teaching and learning in under-resourced communities.

## Capitec Foundation

→ **Capitec Foundation** continued to be a valued partner in 2024, sharing PAT's commitment to strengthening education leadership and mathematics instruction. Since our first intake in 2013, Capitec has been a key sponsor of the GSB PMDP short course, supporting school leaders to drive meaningful change.

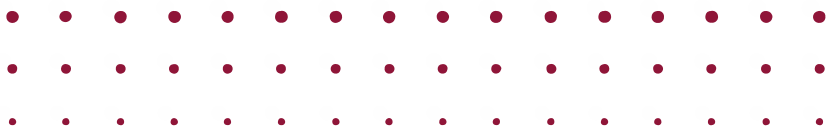
Since 2022, our collaboration has also shaped the Capitec Model—a whole-school approach focused on improving mathematics teaching and learning. This partnership remains central to PAT's mission of achieving lasting impact in schools and communities.

## Wordworks - TIME Programme

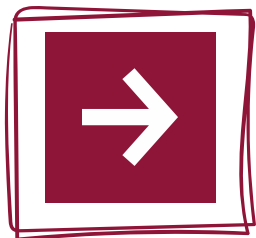
→ The Together in My Education (TIME) programme continues to play a vital role in supporting early learning through structured home-based activities for Grade R and 1 learners. Endorsed by the WCED, this programme, implemented by **Wordworks**, promotes parental involvement in building foundational Language, Maths, and Life Skills. The resources—available in Afrikaans, English, and isiXhosa—are designed to strengthen learning beyond the classroom.

In 2024, PAT distributed 2 419 booklet packs, to enable families to continue to strengthen learning at home.



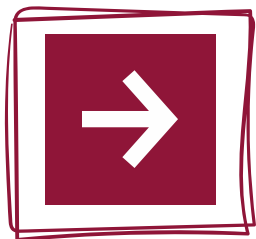


# Finance and Funding



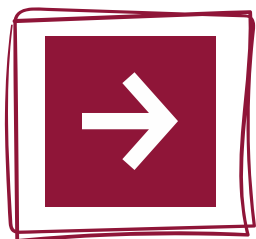
**R 12 463 396**

2024 Revenue



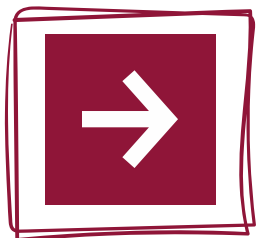
**R 9 001 101**

2024 Expenses



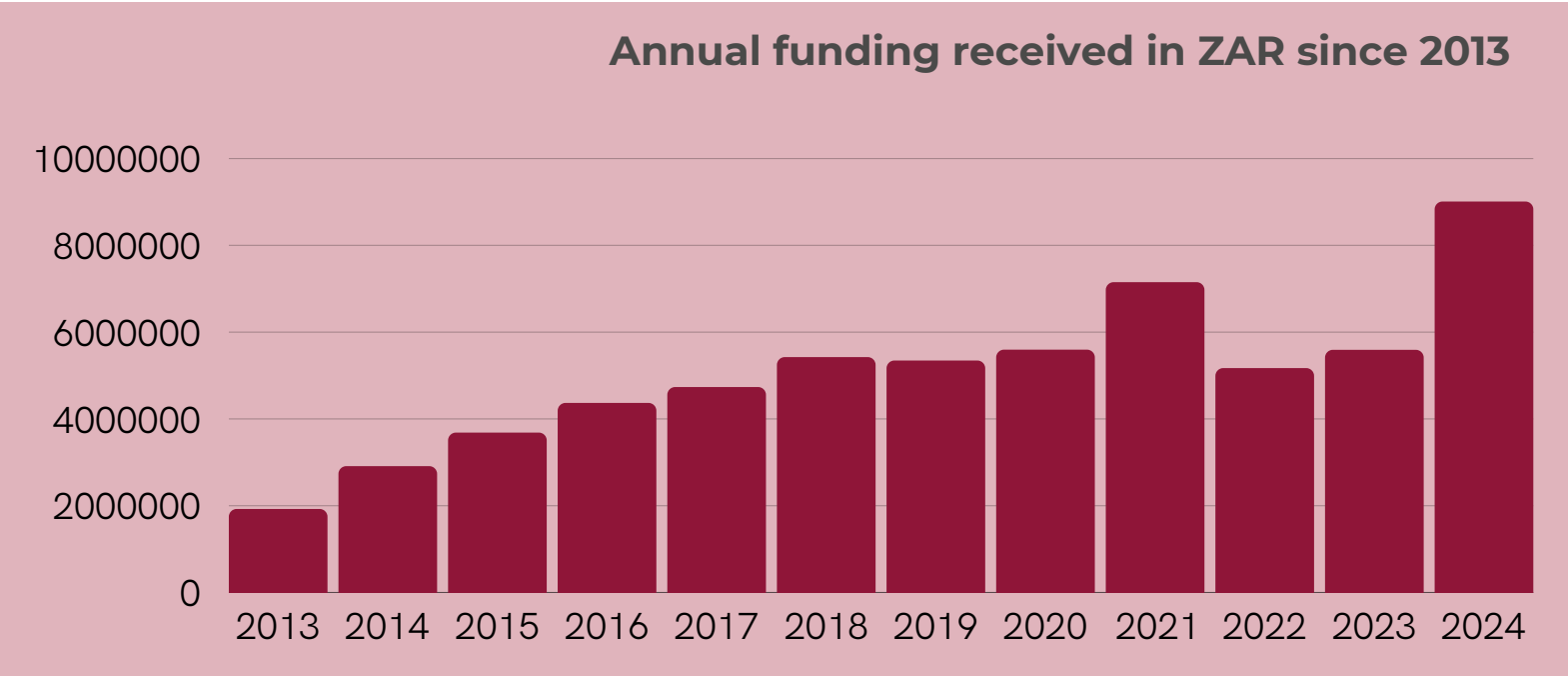
**34**

Funders

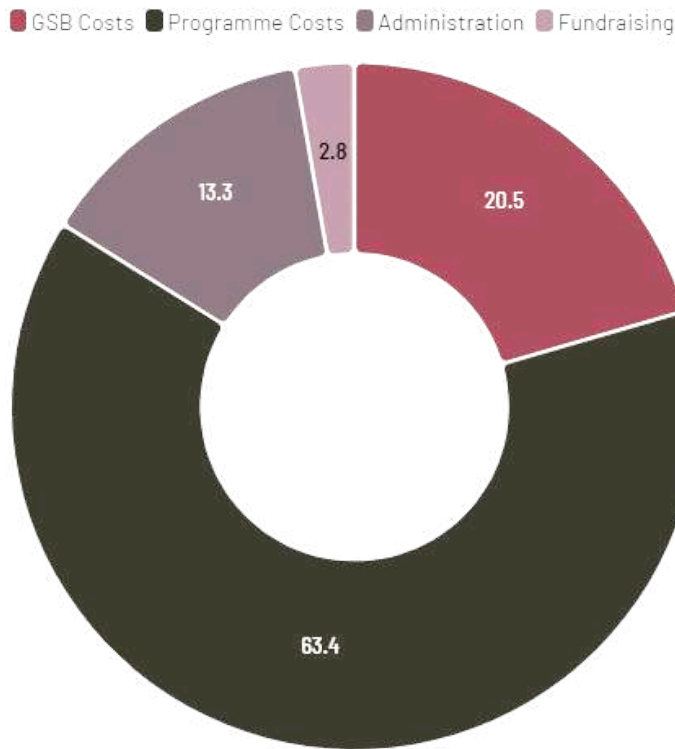


**83.9%**

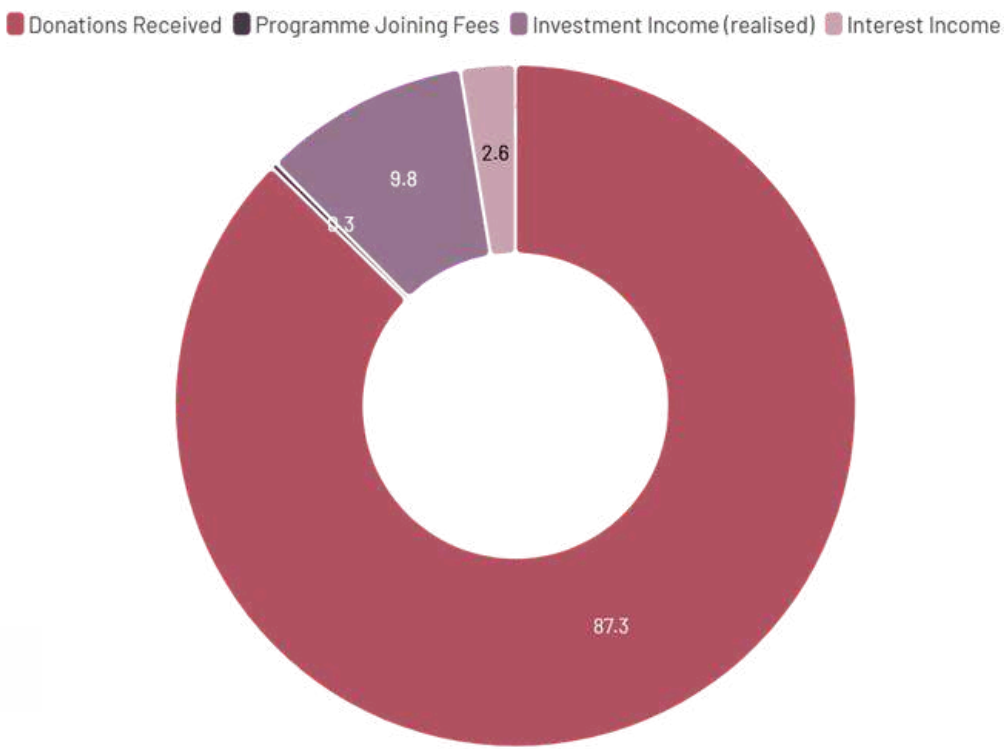
Of budget spent on  
Programmes and GSB



Breakdown of 2024 Expenses (%)



Breakdown of 2024 Revenue (%)







# In Memoriam: Dhanan Naidoo

It was with a grim foreboding that we heard the news on Saturday 16th November 2024 that Dhanan Naidoo was missing. Our worst fears were confirmed when his body was discovered the following Wednesday on one of his favourite hikes on the mountain near Kirstenbosch. It had only been a few weeks earlier where he had emailed me saying how much he was looking forward to his hikes on the contour path. Medical tests showed that he had suffered a heart attack and the end was quick.

He had been one of our Coaches at the Principals Academy for an all-too-brief eleven months. During this time, we came to appreciate his warm personality, his sense of humour (which was reflected in the chuckle which emanated from the depths of his torso), his wisdom and his calmness in dealing with all issues.

*He coached at two of our schools and their reaction sums up his impact. 'He was like a father to me,' said Harlend Felix, Deputy of John Graham Primary School. 'Every session with him was a different experience where he both challenged and inspired me. Our planned one hour sessions invariably became two hours. What really resonated with me was that he urged me to lead with courage— courage to make decisions, courage to deal with situations. He made me believe in my own capabilities.'*

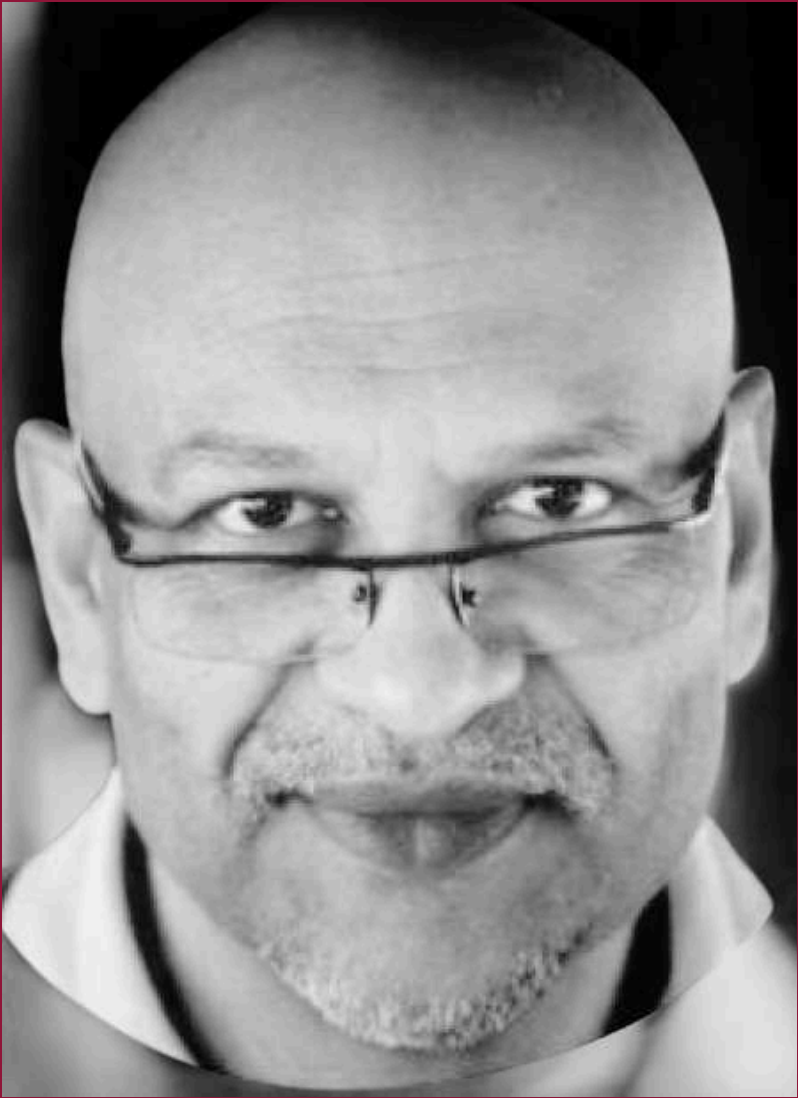
*'I used to chat with him when he came to see Harlend,' said Andre Engel, Principal at John Graham. 'He spoke fondly of his time as Principal and how he was able to contribute to society. I appreciated it when he warned me not to become too consumed by my principalship. He told me of the times he had to miss his own children's special days because of the demands of the school he was serving. He reminded me that I would never get those special moments back. Although it was sad to listen to this—it was important to hear as his advice was so meaningful and sincere. I appreciated him talking to me about personal matters which made a lasting impression on me.'*

Angie Naidu, Principal of Cape Academy of Maths, Science and Technology was equally appreciative. *'He was amazingly insightful, calm and caring. He fully understood the complexity of my school and he empowered me by giving me a sense of accomplishment even on difficult days. His kindness and fatherly advice made all the difference.'*

What a privilege for all of us at the Principals Academy to have had our lives touched by Dhanan Naidoo. Our hearts go out to his family who shared him with us—albeit too briefly. As can be seen by the comments above, he undoubtedly added value, enhancing our lives and making them more fulfilling.

These are quality comments which sum up a man who enriched all those who came into contact with him. Perhaps Andre's astute insight is the most significant tribute with which to conclude: *'Dhanan visited our school to provide professional advice and support, but by taking time to talk to me on personal matters and through his willingness to be vulnerable, his humanity always shone through.'*

— By Keith Richardson





**To support both the leadership teams and the teachers in the classrooms through our programmes, we rely solely on the support and generosity of our partners.**

**For this, we are incredibly thankful.**

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