

An inclusive, empowered society: Cyril Ramaphosa Foundation is working to get it right

As South Africa closes out a difficult 2020, the struggle of the year is clearly evident with the unemployment rate hitting a record 30.8%, millions of families battling food insecurity and learners who had no access to digital education resources during lockdown facing uncertain results. It's a bleak picture, not made prettier with the second surge of Covid-19 infections in South Africa. 2020 forced the country to see its inequality in plain view. Questions are raised about what individuals, businesses, government and social upliftment organisations can do to get to the heart of the key issues surrounding education and employment, while considering long-term strategies that truly uplift communities.

Issued by [Cyril Ramaphosa Foundation](#) 11 Feb 2021



Government's National Development Plan (NDP) aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. The plan indicates key capabilities that individuals need to live decent lives. Of these, it notes education, skills and work opportunities as where progress is most needed.

For the Cyril Ramaphosa Foundation, progress in education and enterprise development is the most direct means of improving the quality of life for South Africa's people and advancing the foundation's purpose to develop an inclusive and empowered society.

In its recently published [2019/2020 annual report](#), the foundation profiles the programmes it has implemented to support and improve education, grow sustainable small and medium enterprises, promote youth development and support vulnerable children and women. As of end February 2020, Cyril Ramaphosa Foundation had, since its inception, directly contributed over R402m and leveraged R1.3bn through its partner entities to effect real change in education and enterprise development.

The foundation advances its strategic focus on education and small business development through tried and tested programme models that are implemented by its partner entities. [Adopt-a-School](#) and [KST](#) implement whole school development models, the latter at district level in partnership with the Free State government and FirstRand Empowerment Foundation, which aims at improving the governance, academic, infrastructure and social environment in schools. Adopt-a-School also pilots the Foundation's [Thari programme](#) to address

women and child abuse in school communities. [Cyril Ramaphosa Education Trust](#) (CRET) provides bursaries for tertiary study and holistic wrap-around support for students. [Black Umbrellas](#) supports emerging Black businesses, enabling them to emerge as independent, viable businesses.

Well over a million learners, students and emergent entrepreneurs have participated in and benefited from the programmes of the foundation.

Since inception, Adopt-a-School and KST have worked in close to 500 schools, where 22 science laboratories were built, over 30,000 eye and hearing tests were conducted and over 5,000 educators benefited from skills development. A further 110 schools are to be supported by KST through a partnership with Anglo-American South Africa and Jet Education Services. The whole school development approach of Adopt-A-School yielded an average pass rate of 86% in 2019. Fezile Dabi, one of two districts in which KST operates in the Free State, obtained a 90.3% pass rate. The Motheo's matric pass rate increased by 2.7% with two schools obtaining 100% pass rates and seven schools achieving between 90% and 99%.

Cyril Ramaphosa Education Trust (CRET) has supported 253 students since inception, including with work experience opportunities, accommodation and psychological support to aid students transitioning from high school to university.

Black Umbrellas has incubated some 1,775 small businesses, which have created close to 12,000 jobs and turned over R3.079bn. By 2030, the National Development Plan projects 90% of all employment opportunities are to be created by the small business sector.

The CEO of the foundation, Mmabatho Maboya, highlighted the 2019/2020 innovations built on the ongoing work of the foundation. These included Adopt-a-School's piloting of 'green' building models and energy-saving insulation and lights in its infrastructure development of schools. CRET's promotion of alternative skills development routes like tourism and aviation, as well as driver training for final-year students to facilitate their employment prospects. And the foundation's contribution, as part of its 15th anniversary commemorations, to the national discussion on inequality, inclusion and cohesion through a public art exhibition. Black Umbrellas also celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2019, opened the doors to its first township-based incubator in Soweto and was named the recipient of the 2019 International Business Innovation Association (InBIA) awards in the USA. The prestigious award, awarded for the second time to Black Umbrellas, ranks it among the foremost incubation programmes in the world.

Maboya notes that the achievements of the foundation is a direct result of its ability to harness the power of partnerships to create and shape solutions for South Africa's developmental challenges.

"The foundation has helped transform many disadvantaged lives through the continued support and commitment of its stakeholders and partners. For this, sincere gratitude and tribute is due. The foundation plans to deepen and expand its partnerships, especially in the context of the socio-economic challenges resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic," she says in reflection of the report's findings.

Read the foundation's 2019/2020 annual report [here](#).

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