



THE STORY OF THE UNION WITH A SOUL | PSA - A DECADE OF CHANGING LIVES

THE STORY OF THE

Union with a Soul

PSA – A decade of changing lives

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PSA donates school bags to Kwezi



Members of the Public Servants Association of South Africa (PSA) in Mthatha donated school bags to 42 Grade 7 learners from the Kwezi Junior Secondary School in Port St Johns. Read the full story on page 5. PHOTO: BABALWA NDANYA

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Foreword

Service to people is the main driver of the PSA. The Union has, since its formation, been deeply aware of the social needs in our country. Even in its early days, the PSA assisted public servants with their social needs. The former PSA Welfare Fund (1958), for example, benefitted many members, public servants and their families. The PSA's Bursary and Loan Scheme (1957) assisted thousands of members and their children. The former Public Servants Friendly Society and Telpos Friendly Society were established in the early 1990s to make funds available on the death of an official to assist the household with their urgent needs. These initiatives were, for various reasons and by agreement, terminated by the end of the 1990s.

The Union's humble initiatives over many years, however, failed to address growing and pressing social issues in South Africa, such as poverty and HIV/Aids. An awareness of the significant role the Union has to play in social responsibility investments was the driving force in "formalising" this commitment. In October 2006, the PSA established a section at the PSA head office to offer sustainable solutions to social needs by initiating and coordinating projects across the country.

As a non-profit organisation, and despite having limited funds and resources, the PSA has, over the past decade, with the support of its Provincial Offices, shop stewards, and business partners, launched various national projects that have made a positive, lasting impact on communities. These projects focus on creative, sustainable, empowering, and "hands-up" initiatives with long-term benefits rather than being mere handouts. Projects aim to transfer skills, thereby contributing to income generation, an improved standard of living and full accountability to PSA members.

People affected by HIV/Aids, senior citizens and children are the primary beneficiaries of the PSA's projects.

The PSA, as it celebrates a decade of formal commitment to social upliftment, is leaving a distinctive and expanding footprint across South Africa – underlining the fact that the PSA is indeed a Union with a Soul.

Ivan Fredericks
PSA GENERAL MANAGER



The Ten-Year Story

Introduction

The PSA (Public Servants Association of South Africa) was established on 7 July 1920 in order to address issues such as salaries and terms and conditions of service with the state as an employer. The Union is the largest, politically non-affiliated, fully representative union in the Public Service. With a proud history of service to its members, the PSA represents more than 230 000 public sector employees. In 2020, the Union will celebrate a century of regulating the relationship between employers and employees.

In 2007, the PSA's Board of Directors and management approved social responsibility as a core objective to develop and support its members and their communities. From these humble beginnings, the PSA has provided ten years of social responsibility activities and assisted many communities to survive and to move beyond their difficult circumstances.

FAST FACT

The PSA is one of very few trade unions in South Africa that attends to the individual disputes of members free of charge.

The PSA is committed to encouraging and supporting social transformation. In the PSA's interventions, stakeholders are encouraged to help develop communities and create economic opportunities, thereby improving the quality of life for many disadvantaged communities in South Africa. The PSA's social responsibility initiatives are aimed at communities in all provinces in South Africa in the form of empowerment projects, joint ventures with relevant stakeholders, charitable donations and donations in kind. These investments take the form of support, charitable donations, staff time and skills development. Many of the projects have focused on the needs of children, as they are the most vulnerable members of our society and the future of the country.

Focus areas

The PSA understands the challenges that the poorest of the poor face and, therefore, focuses on social initiatives that will benefit these people.

Imagine living through the winter months without warmth or walking without the comfort of school shoes. The PSA focuses on the old and neglected senior citizens who have nobody to turn to in their time of need as well as South Africa's young people, street children, orphans without support, the abandoned and the abused. Another focus area is on the communities affected by and infected with HIV/Aids.

The PSA is committed to meaningful and sustainable social responsibility partnerships and adheres, with great sensitivity, to the economic and social needs of all touched by the Union's activities.

Making dreams come true

All people have dreams. Rich, poor, young and old all have a special wish tucked away in their hearts. The PSA Star project was one of the first projects to be launched in May 2007. PSA Star boxes were placed at all 12 PSA Provincial Offices so that members could nominate beneficiaries who have a dream. This was done by completing a nomination slip and then placing it into the "dream" box. The slips were then evaluated and the most deserving dreams were granted.

Continuing the Madiba Magic

Nelson Mandela International Day was launched in 2009. This global movement honours Madiba's legacy on his birthday – 18 July – and invites ordinary people to make a difference and to change the world for the better.

In 2011, the PSA took on the challenge. Provincial Offices could decide what they wanted to do with their 67 minutes (one minute for each year of Mandela's public service) to make a gesture of solidarity and to create goodwill among those who are disadvantaged in their community.

Chapter 2 highlights some of the special Mandela Day initiatives that were undertaken by the PSA in the various provinces.

The PSA social responsibility objectives:

- to develop meaningful and sustainable social responsibility initiatives.
- to direct social responsibility projects and to create awareness of the PSA's understanding of social needs, which also impact on members in their work environment.
- to utilise shop stewards and member structures through Provincial Offices to identify community projects and be involved in HIV/Aids-related projects.
- to encourage structures to identify needs in their communities and to participate in related projects.
- to effectively communicate and involve all relevant stakeholders.
- to encourage joint ventures with business partners.

PSA social responsibility timeline:

1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Stiglingh Memorial Bursary has been granted since 1993 to students who want to pursue careers in Medicine or Natural Sciences. This was made possible by the late Mr JH Stiglingh, former PSA member.
2007 – launch of the social responsibility initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Porridge sachets, lap desks, blankets and collection of non-perishable items by staff members.
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Food gardens, lap desks, vending trolleys, porridge sachets.• PSA care bears distributed to children's wards and police stations.
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sewing centres, food gardens, baby cots.
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School desks, permanent structures, food gardens support in the form of seeds and garden tools, vending trolleys, school shoes and bags.
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incubators, school shoes and bags, permanent structures, special wheelchair, soccer kits.• Mandela Day is supported by PSA employees and becomes an annual event.
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easter eggs, saving boxes, permanent structure and staff celebration of Mandela Day.

PSA social responsibility timeline (continued):

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 2013 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Food garden training, donation of sewing machines and fabric, school jerseys and uniforms, support to an Early Childhood Development Centre (ECD), donation of a structure to Itsoseng Clinic in Mamelodi, Mandela Day celebration and planting of trees.• The “No Hungry Student” project involvement with the University of the Free State commencement for three years. |
| 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support to ECDs continued, school jerseys, school library with books, Mandela Day celebrations, fencing of school premises, one-day food gardens training, Christmas hampers, support to orphanages, sponsoring of hearing-aid, artist upliftment. |
| 2015 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support to ECDs continued, school jerseys, food garden, school library, donation of a computer and security system, donation of an embroidery machine to a cooperative and distribution of disused computers to centres and learning institutions. |
| 2016/17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School bags with stationery, school jerseys.• Mandela Day joint venture with <i>Sanlam Sky</i>, supporting a cooperative doing beadwork. |
| 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ten-year celebration of PSA's social responsibility activities.• Two sewing machines donated to a cooperative to support school bag production. |



CHAPTER 1

In the Beginning

“When the head aches, all the members partake of the pain.”

– MIQUEL DE CERVANTES

Grappling with inequality is a problem that South Africa faces despite the hope that was generated during and after the 1994 elections. Inequality impacts society’s wellbeing and demonstrates itself in increased crime and resentment between different socio-economic classes. The sad reality is that the cycle repeats itself with each generation. Children who grow up in poverty-stricken homes often do not break out of that cycle. Many of these children drop out of school before reaching Grade 12.

Promoting equality is a powerful strategy to drive economic growth. Therefore, social grants are important in an unequal society. Recent studies by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) suggest that a welfare system that reduces inequality boosts annual growth by an average of 0.5%.¹ A simple act of providing food and jerseys to impoverished learners can go a long way to closing the gap. It is the duty of caring citizenship and established organisations to close the inequality gap.

Challenges facing the PSA’s social responsibility activities

The PSA is a non-profit organisation with a limited budget. Often a request is sent about the plight of a group of people within society who are desperately in need of help. It is for this reason that the PSA creates an awareness about the importance of sponsorships and creates partnerships with organisations and companies in the private sector to alleviate the difficult circumstances of poverty-stricken communities. Despite these challenges, the PSA’s social responsibility programme will continue to bring the plight of the needy to the attention of those who can assist.

FAST FACT

South Africa ranks 29th in the world rankings with 52% of its population aged 15+ participating in the labour force. Source: www.eighty20.co.za

Who qualifies?

The PSA considers the following categories of beneficiaries, on merit, for receiving discretionary donations/sponsorships by the General Manager, subject to the availability of funds and the extent of need:

- Registered welfare/charitable organisations.
- Children of members who cannot afford participation in a national or international event (e.g. sport, cultural or academic) – supporting documents are required.
- Members who will be undertaking a venture that stands to potentially promote the PSA image.
- Donations should not directly financially benefit PSA members and should not be for personal gain.
- Institutions/persons should not have benefitted from a PSA grant in the previous five years.
- Other cases considered as deserving by the General Manager.

Social responsibility by numbers

Project numbers have a way of telling a story. Although there are projects that had small numbers and were excluded in the list below (such as providing trolleys to vendors), like the proverbial pebble thrown into the pond, small activities can produce a rippling effect in society.

However, there were several social responsibility actions that provided bigger numbers. A few examples provide a glimpse into some of the bigger and some ongoing projects.

Baby cots: A cooperative manufactured 90 steel cots that were donated to hospitals in Mpumalanga, the Northern Cape and Gauteng.

Blanket project: More than 320 blankets were donated to orphans and impoverished adults.

Blood pressure monitors: 16 monitors were handed over to hospitals in the Free State.

Education: The following activities benefitted many disadvantaged schools:

- 3 000 lap desks were donated to 20 schools lacking formal educational structures.
- 20 school desks were handed over to Jongintaba Secondary School in Mthatha in 2017.

- A total of 686 school bags were handed over to selected schools in Limpopo, Mthatha, Free State and the Western Cape with another 1 000 destined for distribution in 2017.
- Schools were provided with security and classroom structures.
- Libraries were provided and stocked with books in North West and the Eastern Cape.
- The PSA assisted with school fees for members' children in the Back-to-School recruitment drive.
- Thousands of school jerseys provided warmth to learners.

Christmas gifts: An annual project that includes entertainment and gifts to old age homes as well as to orphanages:

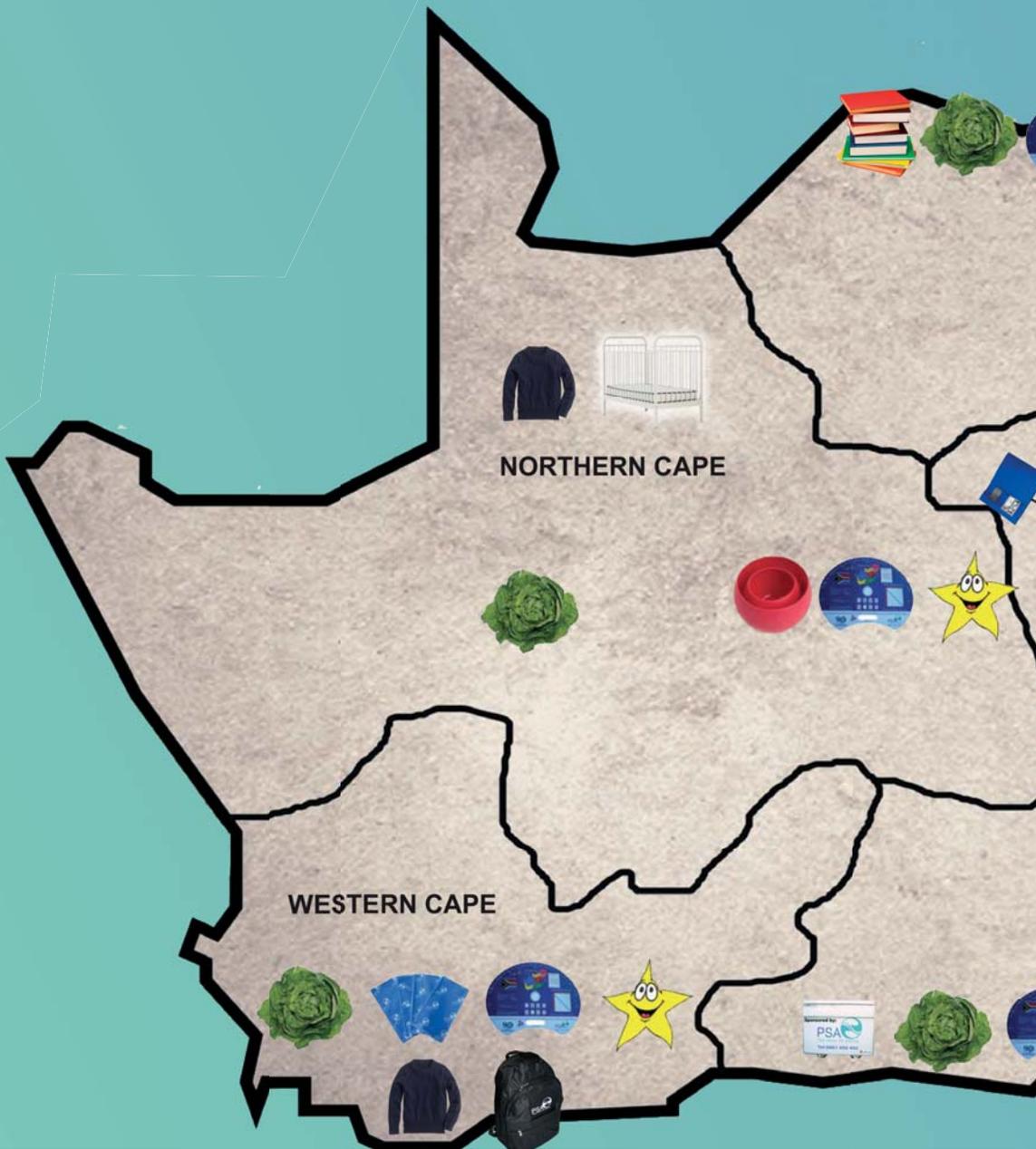
- Tshwane Children's Welfare in Olievenhoutbosch received a donation of R10 000 towards Christmas gifts after their gifts were stolen in a burglary in December 2007.
- 39 gift boxes were distributed to children at Kleuterland Pre-school in Pretoria.

Food gardens: This is an important initiative for the Union as it is part of the "hands-up" strategic view to helping disadvantaged communities move beyond merely surviving. Twelve food gardens were established in various provinces.

Saving boxes: In a project that was rolled out on Teachers' Day, educational flyers were developed for teachers to help children learn the benefits of saving from an early age. Some 11 000 co-branded money boxes were given to children in semi-urban areas in various provinces with *Old Mutual*.



PSA social responsibility footprint 2007–2017





	Food gardens		School bags		PSA Care Bears
	Bandanas		Steel cots		Porridge
	Lap desks		Blankets		Blood pressure monitors
	Library		Trolleys		Jerseys
	Star project				

Overview of annual and ongoing projects

Annual and ongoing projects focus on supporting learners and needy communities in line with the focus on upliftment. These include school jerseys and school bags.

“The Local Economic Empowerment (LED) City of Tshwane Municipality regards the relationship established with the PSA with high esteem to empower men and women to create jobs for local communities. The PSA, together with the LED Department, supported cooperatives with the necessary equipment for them to expand their businesses.

Thanks to the PSA for being able to see beyond their Union business to address the needs of communities. It is through the support of such companies, like the PSA, that South Africa will be able to fight unemployment and poverty with their social responsibility joint initiatives.”

— ANNIE MATIME — CITY OF TSHWANE: DEPUTY DIRECTOR: LED

Our society. Our vision

Women are considered the nurturers of society, especially in impoverished communities. Supplying the basic needs, such as food, for their families is often an uphill battle as many live below the breadline. After the launch and success of the pilot project of porridge sachets in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, this project was rolled out to Gauteng, providing beneficiaries with much-needed nutrition. This includes people who are susceptible to ill health because of HIV/Aids as well as those living in poverty.

Considering the following hierarchy of needs (adapted from Maslow), on page 18, it is important that the PSA’s social responsibility continues. It is only when the bottom tier – the basic needs – are fulfilled that a person can progress to the next level. It is with this consideration that the PSA decided to move from the “hand-out” approach to a “hands-up” focus. This strategic shift was implemented from 2008. Prior to this, projects were characterised by a “hand-out” approach. This was changed to a “hands-up” approach with the opening of the first PSA-sponsored food gardens at four schools in Gauteng, the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and Limpopo.

FAST FACT

Females are more impoverished than males in South Africa, with a poverty headcount of 58.6% as compared to 54.9% for males. Source: www.statssa.gov.org

The food gardens were successful and the Union received many letters of gratitude from beneficiaries. The various PSA Provincial Offices not only provided gardening tools and products but they also provided these communities, including schools, with sponsored training. This enabled these communities to provide their families with nourishment. For more details about this initiative refer to Chapter 7: Feeding the Nation. Once communities can access the basic requirements for survival, they can improve the quality of their lives, which includes the psychological level of self-esteem and self-actualisation through accomplishment.

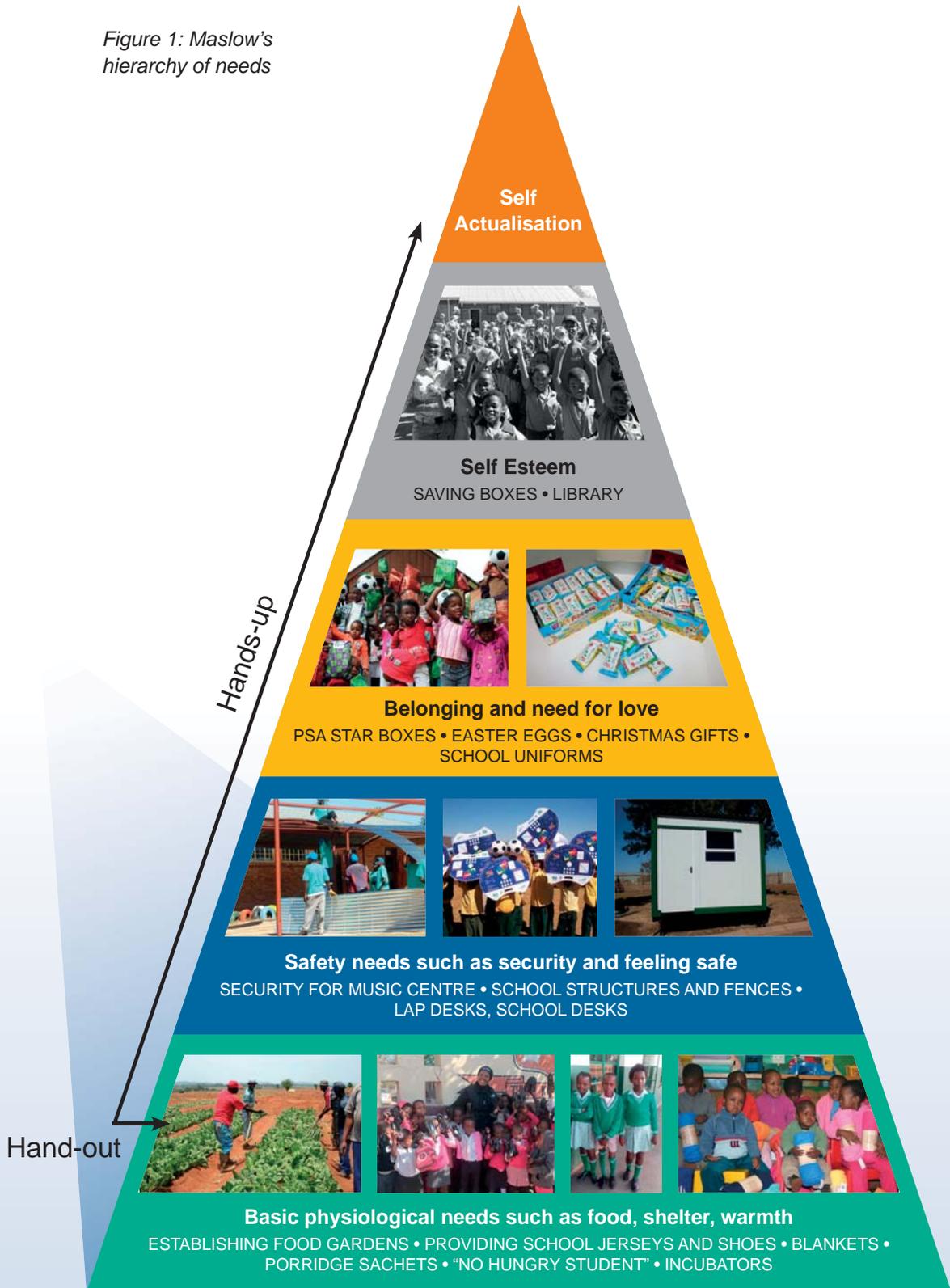
A letter of thanks

One of the winners in the PSA magazine's food garden was Elizabeth Spaangenberg of the Department of Correctional Services in Upington in the Northern Cape.

Elizabeth won seeds and assistance to start a food garden and members from the Provincial Office as well as members from the community attended the planting day. Elizabeth promised to help her neighbours with her produce.

"Food is very expensive if we must buy everything. Medical professionals encourage us to eat vegetables. The only cost towards growing a good vegetable garden will be water. That cannot be compared with the prices that we pay ... every week," said Elizabeth.

Figure 1: Maslow's hierarchy of needs



Getting to know the soul of the Union: The PSA Provincial Offices

The quote “charity begins at home” is particularly apt to the people who make the initiatives happen for PSA’s social responsibility programmes. An organisation requires people to be the face of these interventions; people who care about others and who share the world with them. The 12 PSA Provincial Offices are testimony to the PSA’s dedication and commitment to social responsibility. The Provincial Offices are important to represent the PSA and to identify the needs of their communities. They are the arms of the PSA so that the Union can stretch to all corners of South Africa and embrace those who are most in need of its attention and time.



CHAPTER 2

Creating a Staff Legacy

"It is better to do a kindness near home than to go far to burn incense."

– CHINESE PROVERB

Introduction

If you visit the Mandela Day web page, you will be greeted by the slogan: "Take action. Inspire change. Make every day a #MandelaDay."² The website further states that "... no matter how big or small, [people] should consistently focus on the realisation ... and empowerment through contributions." Somehow, the 67 minutes became more than just a Mandela Day contribution for the PSA. Some staff members devote an entire day on 18 July as they feel that 67 minutes is just not enough time to make a difference.

Since 2011, Mandela Day has become an annual event for the PSA and each Provincial Office decides what special contribution they want to make for their 67 minutes. The following are some of the memorable initiatives that employees have undertaken to celebrate Madiba's legacy.

Provincial managers were also asked to highlight some of their favourite projects and to explain why these projects made an impression.



Eastern Cape

Interview with PSA Provincial Manager: Mthatha Madoda Maxakana

Why the PSA social responsibility programmes are close to my heart

The Mthatha area in the Eastern Cape is mostly rural and the unemployment rate is high. The PSA not only contributes to its members but also supports the Mthatha communities. What I like best from all our contributions is how they have improved the lives of our children. I feel that we are investing in the future of the country.

The two projects close to my heart:

1. The library project was one of a kind. It not only benefitted Buntingville Junior Secondary in Ngqeleni, but also the surrounding schools in Mthatha.
2. The staff and learners of Buntingville Junior were filled with gratitude when we donated school desks on behalf of the dedicated shop stewards.

What have you learned from these interventions?

When you see the faces of the beneficiaries, especially the children, it is a special moment. The excitement they show about the little things and the value they place on these things, then you know that what is given is appreciated. I also feel that all these interventions are contributing positively to the whole province.



Interview with PSA Provincial Manager: Port Elizabeth Piet van Aardt

Why is the PSA's social responsibility programmes close to your heart?

To participate in these programmes is very satisfying, especially the school jersey and blanket projects. To see the joy and surprise on the faces of those who receive these items, especially when they have not asked for these items, shows that the money we spend is worth it. These projects make us aware about how privileged we really are.

What have you learned from these interventions?

The needs of our people are enormous and any assistance, no matter how small, is making a difference to the lives of school children and the homeless. We cannot change the world but we can improve the lives of individuals.



Mandela Day initiatives by Eastern Cape staff

- PSA staff provided soup to patients at Motherwell Clinic.
- The Mthatha office visited Siyakhana Rehabilitation Centre, a home for children with disabilities in Engcobo to donate food and toys.
- The Port Elizabeth staff visited a centre for abused women and children and donated toys.
- The Mthatha office also assisted Empilweni Home for the Aged. PSA business partners were approached to donate hats and gloves for the residents.

Free State



"It is through the loyal support and dedication of staff members in this office that we were able to make a difference to the lives of others."

– GERHARD KOORTS, RETIRED PSA PROVINCIAL MANAGER

As part of its contribution to Mandela Day, the PSA staff donated fleece blankets to the little cancer patients at the Childhood Cancer Foundation House (CHOC). The Foundation provides accommodation to cancer patients and their parents from the Northern Cape, Free State and Lesotho who travel to Bloemfontein to be treated at the Universitas Hospital. Treatment may take weeks, sometimes even months in more severe cases. The Hospital provides guidance and counselling to the patients and their parents. Gerhard Koorts implemented many social responsibility initiatives at the Free State Provincial Office. One of his legacies, amongst others, was the annual Golf Day, which recently raised money for a drone that would help combat the scourge of rhino poaching.

Mandela Day initiatives by Free State staff

- The Provincial Office visited the Estoir Squatter Camp in conjunction with *Old Mutual* where they donated food parcels to ten families.
- In Sasolburg, shop stewards participated in Mandela Day celebrations by contributing their own money to buy paint. They identified two care centres in the community where they used their 67 minutes to paint rooms at the Boiteko Care Centre for Children and More Domme & Zamdela, a home for the elderly. Residents, who are still able to work, recycle paper, cardboard boxes and plastic bags to generate an income for the centre.

- The Free State Provincial Office provided soup and bread to residents of Bloem Shelter (a haven for babies and abused or homeless women with children), caring for more than 60 people, and Emelia House in Botshabelo, a day-care centre for 20 disadvantaged children with multiple disabilities who need special care 24 hours a day. Occupational therapists from the Department of Health conduct daily therapy sessions with the children aged between three and 18 years. Both non-governmental organisations rely on donations to keep them operational.

Gauteng

Interview with PSA Provincial Manager: Pretoria Thami Makuzeni

Why are the PSA's social responsibility programmes close to your heart?

The programmes make a difference to the needy in our society and bring hope to the community. This creates long-term relationships with the communities and shows that the PSA is not just a trade union but also an organisation that puts the needs of the community first. Furthermore, these programmes introduce the PSA to a wider network, gaining recognition and respect for the Union. Finally, it shows that we at the PSA live by our motto: we promote the interests of our members.



What project stands out for you?

Assisting schools in need as education must be encouraged at all costs.

What have you learned from these interventions?

The PSA is a caring union striving to make a difference to everyone, including the community at large. The more we interact with needy communities, the more the PSA's achievements are recognised, which encourages new members and grows our membership.

Mandela Day initiatives by Gauteng staff

- The PSA visited Dimphonyana Place of Safety in Olievenhoutbosch near Centurion to paint rooms that needed some brightening up. Staff donated school bags, story books, toys and groceries to the children.
- PSA staff members and cooperatives took part in the cleaning of a dumping area in Olievenhoutbosch in Gauteng.
- In support of staff involvement in social responsibility interventions, wire baskets were placed in the PSA head office and staff members were encouraged to donate non-perishable food, clothes and toys for donation to beneficiaries.
- The PSA head office staff visited the Mental Health Unit at Mamelodi Day Hospital, situated east of Mamelodi, in a joint venture with *Sanlam Sky*. The staff planted flowers and contributed garden furniture, toiletries, two radios and indoor games to be used by patients.
- PSA staff joined hands with members at Kopanong Hospital in Vereeniging for a painting project.



KwaZulu-Natal

Interview with PSA Provincial Manager: Durban Claude Naiker

What project stands out for you?

A major portion of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) is rural. When I travel towards northern KZN early in the morning, I see kids walking to school along the side of the freeway. I learned that these kids sometimes walk up to ten kilometres just to get to school. The sad part was that during winter, these kids sometimes walked barefoot and owned no warm clothing to wear during the cold weather. Therefore, the jersey project was important to me when we sponsored three schools. These were not luxury items nor were they designer clothes, yet they were precious items for these kids.

I have kids of my own and I know that they take these items for granted. It is sad that these kids do not have these basic items but this project also made me realise that if everyone takes the initiative to assist the needy in some little way, it will go a long way towards creating a better nation.

What is your aim going forward?

The Durban office has decided that our social responsibility projects will have one theme in mind and that is to help a child. We will be embarking upon a “feed the child porridge project”.

*Interview with PSA Provincial Manager:
Pietermartizburg
André van Schalkwyk*



Why are the PSA's social responsibility programmes close to your heart?

The PSA is a union operating in a very competitive and shrinking market in terms of recruitment. We are involved in a constant battle with the employer trying to protect the rights and interests of our members. Because of this, we involuntarily succumb to the rat-race and tend to forget that there are people in our society with serious needs. Getting involved with social responsibility interventions is like an anchor tying us directly to the communities within which we operate. It serves as a way of opening our eyes and our hearts to people who are in a constant battle to survive. Seeing joy and appreciation on the faces of people when we do handovers makes us feel good and often tugs at our heart strings. We always wish that there was more that we could do.

What project stands out for you?

There were many social responsibility interventions over the years that have touched our hearts. Because the PSA has made a difference in one way or another, it is difficult to identify one intervention that stands out. Trying to answer this question is very much like asking a musician which is his or her favourite song or asking a professional sportsperson which game was the best.

Our office has been involved with social responsibility interventions, from providing lap desks to schools and building a prefab office for an old age home. Then there was the nutritional porridge sachets and school jerseys given to learners, toys for crèches and computers provided for community schooling. If I am pressed to identify one project, I would say that the food garden project that we established at a local school and developed further, at a later stage, was the project that stands out the most. We saw school children, teachers as well as the principal of the school uniting to make this project work. What was different from the other interventions is the fact that it was not just receiving a donation, but more about getting involved in the project. The entire school worked side by side during school time to prepare the various vegetable patches under the guidance of the food garden project leader. When they saw the "fruits of their labour" and the certificates that they received, they were extremely proud.

What have you learned from these interventions?

I have learned that the PSA does not exist in isolation and that our social responsibility activities, no matter how small, do contribute to improving the lives for those groups of people who we have assisted. It is something that we should keep doing, despite financial constraints.

Mandela Day initiatives by KwaZulu-Natal staff

“The smiles on the faces of those who received the contributions made us realise just how fortunate many of us are.”

- Staff assisted with cleaning wards at the Addington Hospital Children’s Ward on Mandela Day.
- Distributed toiletries and food packs to the children, staff members and shop stewards.
- Donated food parcels to people on the streets who were up early looking for employment, as well as the thousands of homeless people who were braving the cold weather to beg for food.
- PSA staff and an electrician visited Gezubuso Orphanage in Sweetwaters to repair electrical faults, thus making a difference to those who prepare the food. The team also cleaned the yard.
- Paying homage to street cleaners and their hard work was done by contributing 67 minutes to picking up litter in Jabu Ndlovu Street. The PSA staff wanted to show the street cleaners that their hard work and efforts of keeping the province clean and tidy were appreciated.
- Staff members cleaned the banks of the Msunduzi River between the bridges at Camps Drift and Alan Paton Road.



Limpopo

Interview with PSA Provincial Manager: Limpopo Pieter Koen

What projects stand out for you?

There are two projects that have made an impression on me:

- The baby bassinets we donated to Ngwana House in Polokwane. Although I had heard of Ngwana House, I never knew that the babies found in dustbins, public toilets, around taxi ranks or in the open veld were taken there. If it had not been for a few women who dedicated themselves to care for these abandoned babies, most of these babies would probably have died. Ngwana House was established to give these babies a second chance. The babies are cared for with such passion, which is astonishing as some of the staff work as volunteers. The centre has limited resources, yet it provides hope to the children. The bassinets donated by the PSA were a significant improvement to the baby section of the House.
- The school jersey project also brought smiles and warmth to many children. Most of these children are orphans. Most of them have never owned a new piece of clothing and are dependent on hand-me-downs. To open a plastic packet and take out a new jersey is something special to most of them, but which I have taken for granted.



These and other social responsibility projects are humbling experiences.

Mandela Day initiatives by Limpopo staff

- The Provincial Office visited Ngwana House Orphanage and served staff lunch on Mandela Day.
- Staff celebrated Mandela Day at Leseding Centre for Handicapped Children, assisting with the needs for the newly established hostels that accommodate 46 learners.
- R1 000 was collected by staff and PSA business partner *Dignity Funeral Schemes* contributed R1 500 to feed job-seekers with bread and soup in the Polokwane area.
- The PSA staff spent the day at Zingisa Rehabilitation Centre known as Santa. Staff contributed money and bought snacks, which they distributed during their lunch time. The centre accommodates 140 physically disabled, the aged, people living with HIV/Aids, and mentally ill patients.

Mpumalanga

Interview with PSA Provincial Manager: Mpumalanga Phumzile Zulu

Why are the PSA's social responsibility programmes close to your heart?

The social responsibility programme is close to my heart because it is about taking care of those in need. It displays humanity. I feel that the programme highlights the PSA's caring nature.

What project stands out for you?

The donation of furniture to the Zamokuhle Centre for disabled people in Machadodorp.

What have you learned from these interventions?

People are really in need and we, as the PSA, must grab opportunities to assist them; to show that we care. We see the challenges that our people are facing and it helps us to develop the spirit of caring for people who are in need.



Mandela Day initiatives by Mpumalanga staff

- The Mpumalanga office's staff, together with *Old Mutual*, visited the Thuthukani Early Child Development (ECD) Centre in Ntunda Trust. A food garden was established and vegetables were planted for the centre.
- The Provincial Office joined hands with the South African Police Service to paint the Child Protection Unit in Acornhoek. Toys were also donated to the unit.
- Staff visited the female inmates at the Department of Correctional Services in Nelspruit. The female section holds inmates who have small children. The children live with their mothers until they are two years old. The staff cleaned the section where children play during the day and gave them toys, plastic chairs and snacks.

Northern Cape

Interview with PSA Provincial Manager: Northern Cape Steve Ledibane



Why are the PSA's social responsibility programmes close to your heart?

This programme gives the PSA latitude to plough back to our communities and to the institutions that struggle for basic resources like printers, seats, desks, computers, mobile classrooms, food gardens, incubators and school jerseys. It also gets our name out to future public servants.

The programme is close to my heart because it keeps the Union committed to the social landscape of the country. It generates interest about others – those who are less fortunate. We learn to appreciate the imbalances in our societies and it keeps us grounded. Mandela Day is an example of selflessness. Sometimes it's not about giving an item to a person, but rather about serving them. We get to appreciate, for example, the struggles of the elderly at retirement homes. The reward of having them smile at you after helping them is priceless.

What project stands out for you?

The school jersey project is the one for me. It gives the less-fortunate children hope. They can face winter with something warm to wear. Most of these children find themselves in a situation they did not create. Unfortunately, children can be cruel by teasing those who are not properly dressed at school, not realising the challenges faced by the less privileged. This project gives fulfilment to children, providing proper school uniforms so that they are part of the school and do not look different to their peers.

What have you learned from these interventions?

I've learned that a little help can be all that people need to stand on their own and to be independent. We have two successful food gardens in the Northern Cape. In Keimoes, the garden produces enough vegetables for consumption and for sales. In Seeding Village near Kuruman, the intellectually challenged children were taught how to make beds for the seeds and how to maintain them.

North West

Interview with PSA Provincial Manager: North West AB Shandu

Why is social responsibility close to your heart?

The programme is close to my heart because it can change the lives of communities who are disadvantaged. It brings smiles and hope where there seemed to be no future in sight and can unite community members, regardless of their different political affiliations.

What projects stand out for you?

Two projects stand out for me:

- A donation of a mobile classroom, desks and school shoes to Koster Combined Primary School.
- A donation of mobile library and books to Moedwil Combined School near Swartruggens.

What have you learned from this intervention?

I have learned that the PSA is the only Union that excelled in this field. There are other unions that have failed to achieve what we have achieved. Our interventions create a distinctive path of social responsibility across South Africa. The PSA, through the social responsibility programme, is sensitive to the economic and social needs of our country. All those touched by these interventions show that the PSA stands out as the best among the rest.



Mandela Day initiatives by North West staff

- Celebrated Mandela Day by donating blankets and food parcels to two SAPS officers from Vryburg who had lost their houses in a fire.
- Picked up papers and cleaned Mandela Drive in Mafikeng as well as Molopo Street and adjacent places next to the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development.

Western Cape

Interview with PSA Provincial Manager: Western Cape Koos Kruger



"A union is about people and about helping them."

Why is the PSA's social responsibility programme close to your heart?

It is an opportunity for our Union to touch the lives of our members and their communities and to make a difference. Less fortunate and vulnerable communities cannot be supported only by the government. Therefore, we as part of the more-privileged sector of our society should share in the responsibility to reach out and to assist as best we can. With the PSA's social responsibility programmes, it becomes a combined effort that has a bigger impact than what we can do as individuals. It is even more meaningful because children are often the beneficiaries. Children are close to most people's hearts and they cannot fend for themselves. Helping them, even in a small way, makes you feel like you've done something meaningful.

What project stands out for you?

- Our Mandela Day initiatives stand out, because staff and members contribute their own time and resources to reach out to fellow citizens in need. It is a memorable and humbling experience.
- The project at a Mossel Bay school, where we handed out jerseys, because the children's faces showed how happy they were to receive a jersey. They walked around in their new jerseys, even though it wasn't the least bit cold that day.

What have you learned from these interventions?

That we can make a difference, one child or person at a time. It really is more of a blessing to give than to receive. I like to think that if our members are aware of our interventions, it would give them a sense of participation within a much bigger picture; their Union doing something good in the community.

Mandela Day initiatives by Western Cape staff

- The Western Cape Provincial Office's staff members together with the SAPS painted the Sharon House of Christine Revell Children's Home in Hazendal, Athlone. Toys were also donated to the home's children. PSA business partner, *Old Mutual*, contributed building material and other items.
- The Office, in conjunction with members from the Crossroads Community Health Clinic, provided soup to residents of Kakgat Informal Settlement in Jane Avenue and aided at the clinic.
- Full-time shop stewards painted a swimming pool wall at Porterville Community.
- In Cape Town, staff visited the Red Cross Children's Hospital and spent time with children who were severely burnt, mentally disturbed, physically and mentally abused, and/or physically disabled. PSA caps and water bottles were given to the children.

It is obvious that the PSA's social responsibility is about making a difference to the lives of the beneficiaries and that many activities have touched the hearts of the PSA staff. Mandela Day has become more than devoting 67 minutes to a worthy cause. It has become a daily commitment to make an impact to the many disadvantaged communities in South Africa.



Health is Wealth

“The health of the people is really the foundation upon which all their happiness and all their powers as a state depend.”

– BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Introduction

Since 1994, more than 1 600 clinics have been built or upgraded in South Africa as part of the government’s plan to improve access to primary healthcare and yet there are still major challenges in the healthcare system. South African public hospitals groan under the weight of illnesses that arrive at their doors daily. Based on the lack of resources and overworked staff, often the health of those who visit public hospitals is hampered.

Maintaining good health is an important factor for any economy and it is the most vulnerable citizens, such as the elderly and children, who are at the highest risk. The public is not aware of the numerous challenges that healthcare providers face each day. Some of the challenges that public hospitals face include a lack of resources and overworked medical staff. Doctors must work long shifts to attend to the overwhelming demand for their services placed by the public.

Although a bi-annual catch-up week is arranged, during which more than 50 children are operated on in five days, which helps to reduce the backlog, there are other problems that come with under-resourced hospitals. Imagine the disappointment when a surgeon must tell a parent, who has taken the day off work to take a child for a hospital procedure, that they need to come back another day because of some or other challenge. The stress that is placed on the parent goes beyond losing a day from work. It often results in a distraught child who is not only sick, but also has not eaten all day in preparation for the operation. Simple projects such as providing blankets or incubators can be small actions that help alleviate the public health challenges the country faces.

FAST FACT

While the state contributes about 40% of all expenditure on health, the public health sector is under pressure to deliver services to about 80% of the population.

source:
brandsouthafrica.com

The PSA often receives requests not only for assistance in improving the lives of communities but for individual beneficiaries as well. Some of these initiatives have inspirational stories, such as the unusual request received for a dancing wheelchair or the heart-warming story of a pensioner who needed a hearing aid.

Dancing on wheels

A request was received from a PSA member at the Department of Home Affairs for financial assistance to purchase a special dancing wheelchair for her daughter.

Gladys Ameer sent the PSA an email about Roxanne.

“[Roxanne] was born premature,” Gladys wrote. “She was in intensive care for about three months and then got a nerve attack and her body [was] deformed under her waist.” Gladys explained that Roxanne could not crawl like other children of her age and had to move around by sliding across the floor using her arms to propel her forward.

She explains that during apartheid, there were no specialised schools that she could send Roxanne to. Eventually, in 1994, she managed to enrol her daughter at the Pretoria Cerebral School. Roxanne then attended the New Hope School and it was there that she started taking part in wheelchair dancing. Roxanne’s mother explained that although she loved the sport, using a standard wheelchair made it difficult to create the fluid movements required for her competitions.

“It makes it difficult when she is not able to make her turns the way it [should] be done [so] she [had] a friend that had a dancing wheelchair and practised every week.”

Gladys had to raise funds by selling *vetkoek* [fat cakes] and rotis and she asked the PSA for assistance to raise the rest of the funds. The PSA assisted with the outstanding amount so that Roxanne could fulfil her potential as a dancer.



Hearing your voice

The PSA responded to the request received to assist Mr Samson Khumalo from Elim in Limpopo. Although Mr Khumalo is not a PSA member, the request came from his neighbour who is a PSA member. The PSA was approached for assistance with the sponsoring of a hearing aid as the hospitals had not responded to Mr Khumalo's request for help. The PSA assisted with the cost of administering hearing tests as well as the fitting of a custom-made hearing aid.

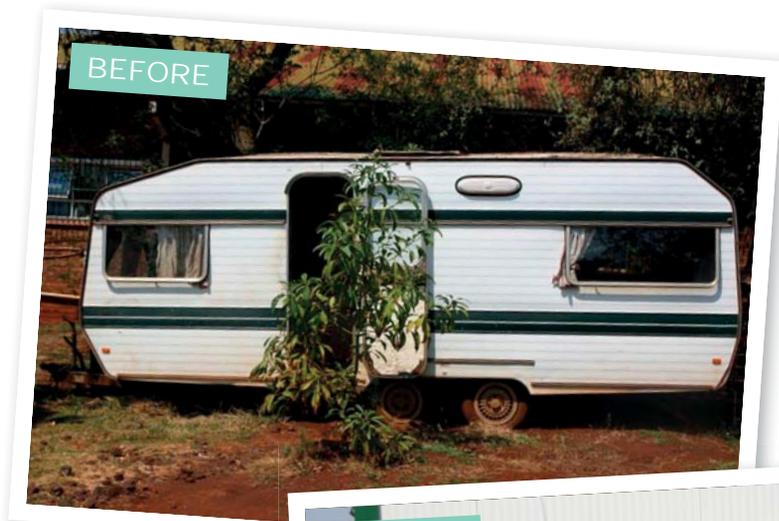


Other health interventions

Baby care

Children's wards in many hospitals have specific requirements to provide the correct type of healthcare for the young members of our society, but often cannot admit children because of a shortage of beds. In support of this need, 90 steel baby cots, manufactured by a cooperative, were donated to hospitals in Mpumalanga, the Northern Cape and Gauteng.

Two incubators were donated, in cooperation with "New Born Trust", to save pre-term babies at Godonia Hospital in Kimberley and Mahadi Hospital in Port Elizabeth based on a huge need. According to the CIA World Factbook, the infant mortality rate (between birth and one year old) is 23 deaths per 1 000 live births. This rate is used as an indicator of the level of health in a country.³



Enhancing emergency services in a rural town

The PSA donated a new structure to the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) of a small village in the southern part of Limpopo, in Roossenekal. The structure was handed over on 26 April 2012 to the MEC for Health to serve as an emergency station. The new structure will enhance the EMS staff's working conditions, while creating a safe environment for those in need of healthcare.

Classroom at a clinic

The PSA donated a classroom structure to Itsoseng Clinic, based at the University of Pretoria's Mamelodi Campus, east of Pretoria. The clinic serves children from an informal settlement. Many of these children suffer the impact of impoverished environments, abuse and neglect.



Blood pressure monitors

High blood pressure (hypertension) is known as the “silent killer” as there are rarely symptoms or visible warning signs. In more advanced cases headaches, visual disturbances, nosebleeds, nausea, vomiting, sleepiness, and even seizures may be experienced. High blood pressure increases the risk of having a stroke. According to the Heart Foundation in South Africa, about one in three South African adults, 15 years or older, suffers from high blood pressure. It is one of the leading causes of heart attacks, strokes, kidney failure and premature death. Blood pressure monitors are therefore a necessity in hospitals but government hospitals often cannot afford this equipment.

Blankets

Winter can be harsh in many parts of South Africa. In a joint effort between all PSA Offices, personnel donated blankets to identified beneficiaries at the start of winter:

- Women for Change in Nelmapius, near Pretoria.
- A community care centre, Rona Re Ashoma in Lotus Gardens, west of Pretoria.
- Orphans from Dr Monare School in Mamelodi also benefitted from this project, as did three institutions in Mpumalanga.
- Orphans were provided with blankets with the assistance of Rona Re Ashoma Community Care Centre in Gauteng.
- Blankets were distributed to beneficiaries at a centre in Marabastad in Gauteng. The centre was established by the Social Development Unit of City of the Tshwane Municipality and houses women and children.



BLOOD MONITORS 16 Blood Monitors will be handed over for the following clinics:

- 1 x Westdene
- 1 x Bloemspruit Clinic
- 1 x Fauna Clinic
- 1 x Bainsvlei Clinic
- 1 x Thusanong Clinic
- 2 x MUCPP
- 1 x Fichardt Park Clinic
- 1 x Kagisanong Clinic
- 1 x Bayswater Clinic
- 1 x Gabriel Dichaba Clinic
- 1 x Universitas Hospital – Clinc
- 1 x Zamdela Clinic - Sasolburg
- 1 x Harry Gwala – Sasolburg
- 1 x Timahole Clinc – Parys
- 1 x Redybohile Clinic –
Heilbron

DID YOU KNOW?

The PSA participated in the “Winter Warmer Corporate Challenge” project in June 2010, organised by Jacaranda FM, to raise more than R1.3 million in cash and blankets.

HIV/Aids

Local clinics and healthcare centres must cope with many community members who are affected by this pandemic. The following poem written by a learner from Stanza Bopape Secondary School in Gauteng, Letta Monyeke, captures the essence of this challenge after the PSA donated a food garden to her school.

HIV & AIDs
I am invisible
I am incurable
I am uncontrollable
I am ungovernable.

I move from Cape to Cairo
I move from Africa to America
I move throughout the globe
I move by trains, cars, buses and planes, but I like the tricks.

I have taken the world by storm
I have taken the government by surprise
I am an international president
I control you whether you like it or not
ABC will never defeat me
ABC will never protect you
What I want is D&G
Death is my destination and the Grave is your resting place.

If you don't abstain
If you are not faithful
If you don't condomise
Death will strike and the Grave will be your home.

I am not afraid of nurses and doctors
I turn teachers into patients
I turn doctors into patients
I will put everybody on the bed as I like
I have boys working for me – I will send them to kill when I like
TB will do the job and pneumonia will give you the final kick.

Doctors are afraid of me
They will never blame me for your death
They will always blame TB and pneumonia
What you see is the beginning
You will never believe your eyes and ears
Cause I will sweep families and friends like dust.

I will keep hospitals full, I will keep mortuaries full, I will keep the graveyard full
I am the champ of champs, I am the undefeated
I am the undisputed World Champion Disease.

I AM HIV & AIDS

Children of the Nation

“Let us reach out to the children. Let us do whatever we can to support their fight to rise above their pain and suffering.”

– NELSON MANDELA

Introduction

According to Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), approximately 60% of young children receive child-support grants and about 36% of young children attend an Early Childhood Development Centre (ECD). It is beneficial for a child’s education to have at least two years of pre-school to enhance their cognitive, physical and emotional development. ECD is recognised as important for breaking the cycle of poverty in South Africa. However, there are many other challenges. The living conditions of children show that nearly 30% of young children live in households that use the most basic sanitation facilities, including pit toilets. These young members of our society are at their most vulnerable in their first five years and should have access to proper nutrition and healthcare. Often these young children face food shortages, which not only affect their physical development but their psychological and mental development as well.

Many PSA staff members have highlighted the projects that involved children as the ones that stood out the most. It is the gratitude of these children, when they are provided with a meal or an essential item such as school shoes, that affects staff members. It will be difficult not to be moved by the excitement on a child’s face when receiving their first Easter egg or Christmas present. Providing a little bit of magic into these young lives makes the challenge of fundraising worthwhile.

The community within which the child is raised is important. If a community is well-established and has access to basic amenities such as clinics, secure and well-resourced schools as well as food sources, then the child can also benefit. Improving the wellbeing of the child’s surroundings creates a sense of security and hope for the future.

FAST FACT

In 2012, there were 5.3 million children aged below five years in South Africa, representing about 10% of the population in the country. While the majority (93%) of these children had both their biological parents alive, only 36% lived with both parents.⁴

Feeding our children

Porridge sachets

The Amandla Nutritional Porridge Project was one of the feeding projects launched with the assistance of PSA Provincial Offices in KwaZulu-Natal, as well as in the Eastern Cape. Many children in these areas are orphans who experience food shortages. The nutritional porridge that was donated is a necessary energy booster for young children and can be taken as a meal replacement. This intervention is best suited for poverty-stricken communities as well as very ill patients who need energy for survival.

PSA shop stewards were closely involved in these projects to identify beneficiaries. The following projects were part of the PSA's social responsibility initiatives:

- The Good Hope Centre in Tembisa, a community centre that cares and supports HIV/Aids orphans and sick children.
- St John the Baptist Catholic Clinic in Winterveldt, Gauteng, where a one-stop health service is provided to HIV/Aids and other patients.

Early childhood development

This initiative was implemented in 2013 when the Minister of Social Development, Ms Bathabile Dhlamini, called on organisations to support these centres. According to the Minister, ECD is recognised as one of the most powerful tools for breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty in South Africa. Ensuring healthy childhood development is an investment in a country's future and its capacity to thrive economically and as a society.

The PSA supported children at Early Childhood Development Centres (ECD) along with the *National Development Agency* (NDA) and the Department of Social Development in a campaign to create a solid foundation for development and lifelong learning in poor communities. The PSA has already supported four ECD centres.



“As a union, we are supporting these children to be better people in the future.”

– PSA GENERAL MANAGER, IVAN FREDERICKS

Support was given to Lindokuhle Centre near Heidelberg in Gauteng, which serves 56 children, aged between two and six years old, that are from an impoverished community. The PSA conducted a needs analysis at the centre and provided the following:

- A permanent structure to serve as a classroom.
- One-day food garden training to establish a vegetable garden for the centre's feeding scheme.
- The PSA partnered with *Food and Trees for Africa* (FTFA) to plant ten trees to provide fruit and shading (with tools, seeds, planting materials and educational material to assist with the maintenance and further development of the food garden).
- A jungle gym to help children with their physical development and to serve as a recreation facility.

ECD support was also given to Morning Star Day Care Centre, north of Pretoria. The PSA supplied this organisation with a jungle gym and mattresses for its young charges.



Other ECD initiatives

Classroom structures, food gardens and jungle gyms

Donations were provided to the following centres:

- New Brighton in the Eastern Cape.
- Masakhane Learning Centre in Clanwilliam in the Western Cape.
- Boresetse Learning Centre at Gamorona Village, 75 km from Kuruman in the Northern Cape.
- Thuthukani Centre, in Ntunda, near Nkomazi in Mpumalanga.
- Moloisi Centre near Polokwane in Limpopo.

Easter eggs

Easter egg hunts are a magical experience for children. For children who are not exposed to luxuries such as chocolates, the 5 000 Easter eggs that were provided by the PSA to children in rural areas allowed them to experience a little bit of magic.

Wrapping paper

This project provided hours of fun for nursery school children who were tasked with decorating sheets of paper. The PSA “bought back” these sheets to use as gift wrap for Christmas presents for senior citizens and orphans.

Christmas gifts

The initiative, "Joy in a Box - from me to you" is a gift that is donated annually to children by a group of volunteers. The PSA partnered with this group to bring joy to Kleuterland Preschool in Pretoria when they were given gift boxes that consisted of a toy, toiletries and stationery.



CHAPTER 5

Education

“Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world.”

– NELSON MANDELA

Introduction

Young learners in urban and established areas tend to take their school uniforms for granted. Drive along a rural road in an impoverished area and you may notice children walking barefoot to school. They do not have a choice. Their families are using every last cent to put food on the table and to keep a roof over their heads. Absenteeism during the winter months or rainy seasons is often high. The reason for high absenteeism is because sitting in an unheated classroom with wet clothes or trying to keep warm is not conducive to learning. What many South African children take for granted, these children have never owned. Simple things such as wearing a pair of shoes or a jersey can improve a learner’s concentration in class. Even owning a school bag to protect books from wear and tear is seen as a luxury in these impoverished communities.



According to data from Statistics South Africa, the higher the parent’s education level, the more likely a child will achieve upward educational mobility. The results from Stats SA research show that past structural inequality is still at play in educational mobility. However, differences in intergenerational mobility have remained significant across population groups. The same families tend to constitute the most educated group from one generation to the next. Economists refer to this as the under-education trap, as some families remain unskilled from one generation to the next.⁵

Inequality in education is not, however, just about knowledge. It is about providing children with a secure and resourceful learning environment.

Providing children with the basics such as classrooms, learning resources and desks are important for schools; many of which are struggling to find the necessary funds to upgrade their environment. Lacking everyday requirements, such as having shoes or owning a jersey, can hamper a child's ability to focus on learning. When a child's basic needs are met, he or she will be in a better position to focus on schoolwork and to achieve upward mobility. School uniforms, desks and libraries are some of the initiatives that the PSA provided for some of the many disadvantaged schools in South Africa.

DID YOU KNOW?

The PSA contributed 5 000 school bags to learners in 2017. A further 1 000 bags will be distributed in 2018.

School bags and school fees

Learners in rural Limpopo were surprised when, at the beginning of the 2017 school year, they were presented with a gift of school bags. The joy was even greater when these learners discovered that the bags were filled with stationery and mathematical sets (for Grade-7 learners).

These learners carry their books to school in plastic bags, which provide little protection against bad weather and therefore books can easily be damaged. This creates a disadvantage for the learners as they are unable to replace these books. This amounts to loss of work and the learners are then further disadvantaged.

The PSA also donated school bags to learners whose parents entered a member recruitment competition. Furthering the "hands-up" strategic focus, Jelentref Cooperative was enlisted to manufacture the school bags. The City of Tshwane Municipality developed these cooperatives to operate in the informal and marginalised sectors of the economy and this initiative empowers self-owned businesses.

Another competition gave members the opportunity to win an amount to be paid towards their child's education fees. Despite disadvantaged schools receiving government subsidies, these school fees provide much needed extra income for the schools.

The following schools benefitted from the school fees project:

- MH Joosub Technical School (Lenasia)
- Afrikaanse Hoërskool (Bloemfontein)
- Living Light Christian School (Beaufort West)
- Op die Voorpos (Upington)
- Laerskool Nelspruit (Nelspruit)
- Harry Oppenheimer School (Limberg)
- Kuswang Primary School (Greenfields)
- Mowat Park High School (Montclair)
- Vryheid Comprehensive School (Vryheid)
- Holy Angels School (Lusikisiki)
- Laerskool Zeerust (Zeerust)
- Kgomotso High School (Soshanguve)



Merriam Seliane (back, second from left) with union members and pupils with their new bags in the library.
b m

Now kids won't lose their books!

By **MATSEKO RAMOTEKOA**

A LIBRARIAN brought happiness to kids who needed schoolbags.

Merriam Seliane from Botshabelo realised there were needy kids who did not have any bags.

She has been working with children for almost 20 years in the library at E section, Botshabelo.

"Many young pupils come here who are eager to learn.

"Some told me they were unable to buy proper school bags and ended up losing their school text-

books."

She and colleagues Thembinkosi Mkhebe and Katleho Matjelemane decided to ask for help.

Merriam, who is a member of the Public Servants Association, said she wrote to the union's head office last year.

She was overjoyed when she received a positive answer.

With the help of the principals of five local primary schools, she identified about 50 pupils from disadvantaged families.

And finally, on Wednesday, the pupils accompanied by their teachers were given the donated schoolbags.

"Only 36 kids arrived to fetch their bags, but I will keep the remaining bags until their owners come for them," she said.

Boitumelo Molehe (9) said she was grateful for her new bag.

"My old one was in bad shape and as my mother is unemployed, she could not afford to buy me a new one."

Daily Sun, 10 February 2017, page 9

Other education interventions

Lap and school desks

The PSA is aiming to make a difference to schools in rural areas; schools that are trying to educate our future leaders without classrooms or school furniture.

Lap desks are a practical solution to many schools that are without formal classrooms. These learners are taught under trees while sitting on the ground. At a young age, children need to learn how to write. It is very difficult to teach this important skill when learners are forced to hunch over their books placed on the ground. This causes discomfort and can hamper the learning process.

The PSA, with the assistance of shop stewards, distributed lap desks to learners at schools where everyday needs are not as fulfilled as might be assumed. These learners do not have access to basic commodities such as desks and chairs. The lap desks are manufactured from recycled materials.

DID YOU KNOW?

3 000 lap desks were distributed to 20 schools. Schools in the Free State, Western Cape, Northern Cape, Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape, North West and Limpopo benefitted from this initiative.

The PSA, in collaboration with *Metropolitan*, visited the Dr Mathole Motshekga Primary School in Ivory Park, Gauteng, one of the schools that benefitted from the lap desk project. The children also received hats to wear as protection from the sun during break times.



Answering to the pressing needs facing South African learners, the PSA donated school desks to rural schools. These custom-made, durable (with an expected life span of approximately 60 years), weather-resistant desks are manufactured from recycled plastic, making them ideal for schools without formal classrooms. Feedback from PSA provincial managers has hailed these desks as an ideal solution for rural schools.



FAST FACT

Schools' quintile ranking is important as it determines the amount of funding that it receives each year and whether or not the school can charge fees. Learners attending quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools do not pay school fees. Therefore, in order to compensate these schools for their loss in fee income, the state provides them with a larger Norms and Standards allocation than schools classified as "fee-paying" schools in quintiles 4 and 5. Quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools receive the same amount per learner.¹⁶

School uniforms

The PSA undertook a joint venture with *Ackermans* to donate school uniform hampers, which included a backpack, pencil bag, stationery, shirts, trousers, socks and school shoes, to learners. Based on the motivation received from a PSA member who won a PSA Back-2-School Competition, Rivoningo Primary School benefitted from this project. The School is situated some 40 km from Louis Trichardt in Venda in a rural area. These learners are from a poor background and most parents are unemployed.

The initiative also continued on Valentine's Day. Learners at Boerefors Laerskool in Pretoria received school jerseys, sports bags and sweets.

In 2016, 3 535 school jerseys were distributed to learners. Based on the huge need for school jerseys in rural schools in the Free State and KwaZulu-Natal, additional jerseys were supplied, bringing the total amount of school jerseys donated to 12 466. At the beginning of 2017, 5 000 jerseys were donated.





The *Limpopo Mirror* published the following article on 27 January 2017:

For most learners in the rural areas, tattered uniforms are the order of the day as parents are unemployed and cannot afford new clothes. School bags are a luxury to these children and they resort to using plastic bags to carry their books to school. For learners at Mafharalala Primary School at Tsianda, all this is history. Realising the need, the Public Servants Association (PSA) in Vhembe handed over school bags and stationery to 23 identified needy learners. The PSA officials, led by the provincial liaison officer, Mr Lawrence Muvhango, and Limpopo provincial chairperson Mr Mbangiseni Rakhangana recently visited the school and they handed over the much-needed item to the learners.

Based on the huge need, the project was extended to several schools in other provinces. Some of the initiatives that stood out:

- In North West, the PSA donated school jerseys to needy learners of Onkgopotse Tiro Comprehensive School in Klippan, Mafikeng. Onkgopotse Tiro was a military camp that was converted into a farm school in April 2004. The school caters mostly for children whose parents are employed on farms in the Ngaka Modiri Molema area, 34 km from Mafikeng.

- In Mpumalanga, less fortunate learners from Louieville Combined School received jerseys as identified by the PSA's SANDF chairperson. The School is in rural Low's Creek and most children do not have a complete school uniform.
- The Mthatha Provincial Office took jerseys to Magwa Senior Primary School where, owing to the situation in the community, each learner received a jersey. The school is situated in a deep-rural area where the community used to work for Magwa Tea Corporation, which is now closed. This closure resulted in job losses, which have affected the largely unemployed community who now live on donations from tourists visiting Magwa Falls.
- The Western Cape Provincial Office identified St Luke Primary School for the donation of 227 jerseys. The parents of learners are dependent on government grants; some of them being seasonal workers at fruit exporting companies. The school is classified as a "No-fee School" by the Education Department.

Learners from the following schools received jerseys:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| • Hani Park Primary School | • Kuyasa Senior Primary School |
| • Sonwabo Primary School | • Thuthukani Tswelelopele School |
| • Nondumo Combined School | • Louieville Combined School |
| • Nompumalanga Special School | • Ukhanya Junior Secondary School |
| • Labry Senior Primary School | • Prince Primary School |
| • Tshikambe Primary School | • Andisa Primary School |
| • Luxolo Intermediate School | • Lulekani Primary School |
| • Reitokile Combined School | • Westernburg Primary School |
| • Boerefort Laerskool | • Matatadibeng Primary School |
| • Tlotlisang Intermediate School | • Tsatsi Intermediate School |
| • Vukuhambe Special School | • Botrada Junior Secondary School |
| • Bongudunga Secondary School | • Konfoor Combined School |
| • Sinzeka Primary School | • Magwa Senior Primary School |
| • Mogopela Primary School | • St Luke Primary School |
| • Onkgopotse Tiro Comprehensive School | • Kamogelo Primary School |
| • Thembaletu Primary School | • Louna Primary School |
| • Ndindimeni Primary School | • Mankuruane Primary School |
| • Sigcawu Special School | • Gamasego Primary School |
| • Gcuma Primary School | • Gakgatsana Primary School |

“We thank the PSA for the donation of school jerseys to our pupils. The school is a non-fee school because most parents are poor and don’t have consistent income. We appreciate what your organisation has done to contribute to formerly disadvantaged communities like ours.”

– VB THWALA – PRINCIPAL: LOUIEVILLE COMBINED SCHOOL, LOW’S CREEK

Letter of appreciation from Nelspruit

Hosia Aphane Combined School would like to thank you for the generous donation of jerseys.

We faced a difficult situation with learners who were without jerseys and thus they could not concentrate due to cold. You gave them something that made them feel wanted in the school environment. We would like to extend our kindest gratitude to you and looking forward to a healthy relationship.

*Faithfully
SS Mokoena
(Principal)*

School libraries, classrooms and security centres

It was reading time and the eager Grade-2 learners crowded onto the small red carpet at the front of the classroom. Each one had to take out a book to read. But there were a few learners who did not have books. In the more privileged schools, the teacher would instruct the learners to go to the library to find a book to read. Sadly, this school did not own a library. Soon the group of children became disruptive as boredom took hold of them.

According to Equal Education, fewer than 8% of schools have functional libraries.⁷ Literacy is key to the functional development of a country's people. People who are literate are able to secure jobs and provide for their families. About 32% of South Africa's adult population is illiterate and this will further affect the future of their children.⁸ The need for libraries and to promote the enjoyment of reading is an essential criterion in schools. The need to sponsor a new library with books to a rural school was identified by various PSA Provincial Offices, to give support to teaching and learning as well as access to information to learners and the community.



The PSA Provincial Offices identified the following schools with low literacy levels and in need of libraries:

- Buntingville Junior Secondary School in Ngqeleni near Mthatha in the Eastern Cape.
- Moedwil Combined School on a farm in Swartuggens, near Rustenburg in the North West. This initiative will also empower learners from neighbouring farms. The library was formally handed to the school and the community by the PSA in April 2016. The Education Department's Circuit Manager and a mayoral representative were also present to receive the donation.

Book lovers who care

Rutland Books, a Pretoria bookstore that sells and exchanges second-hand books, generously donated books to the PSA for the Union's library project. The owners, John and Alida Rutland, received a certificate of recognition from the PSA for their generosity. The donated books were used to stock up PSA-established libraries at schools in rural areas.



John and Alida Rutland, received a certificate from the PSA for their gesture and generosity.

Classrooms

While lap desks are a short-term solution for schools without formal classrooms, creating a formal structure for children to learn is important. Vlakpan Primary was a beneficiary of a classroom as well as 20 school desks.



Safeguarding valuable equipment

The *City of Tshwane* handed over the Tshwane Music Centre in Eersterust, east of Pretoria, to be used for music training for children. The building was not in use and by turning it into a music school for disadvantaged children it would provide a vital social service by keeping children off the streets. The Centre accommodates children between the age of seven and 18 years who are interested in music.



Tshwane Music Centre brings music to young people.

Security is important for schools and buildings such as the music centre, many of which are based in high crime areas and are vulnerable to losing precious resources. The cost of replacing stolen equipment is an unnecessary expenditure, especially when there are so many other pressing needs. The PSA donated a security alarm system worth about R26 800 to protect the centre's equipment.

When the PSA installed an alarm system at the School of Music, their letter of gratitude was heart-warming. Freddy Arendse, CEO, had this to say:

"We know this has been a 'long walk to freedom' but we are so grateful that we were able to secure our space with your kind contribution. Thank you once again for your commitment to community transformation. It will help us to reclaim our environment from the social evil and disorder so prevalent in our environment."

Like the Music Centre, schools are also exposed to criminal elements, especially those based in rural areas. Simple needs such as erecting a fence is an expense that the schools cannot afford.

The PSA responded to the request of the Principal of Mamosala Secondary School in Limpopo to assist with the fencing of the school premises. The school is situated approximately 45 km from Tzaneen in a mountainous, rural area of Hweetji, Mashiloane and Masoma Villages. The demographics in the area create many challenges for the community. Learners have to travel long distances to attend school. Unemployment levels are extremely high and most people rely on seasonal employment on neighbouring farms. The community depends on pensioners' and orphans' grants. Despite the duty of the Department of Education to protect the school premises, the PSA decided to assist. The project addressed, amongst others, the proper control of learners' movement and ensured that the school buildings were secured. The fence was officially handed over in February 2015 by PSA officials. School bags were also donated to 42 Grade-12 learners as encouragement for them to study hard.

At the handover of the school fencing, the school's Principal made a request for a computer for Grade-12 learners, resulting in the PSA donating the equipment.

“No Hungry Student” Project

The PSA sponsored students attending classes at the University of the Free State with minimal finances. These students' financial situation often does not extend beyond paying for accommodation and their studies, which results in them attending lectures on an empty stomach. Sometimes they will send their meagre savings to their struggling families. After a while the situation becomes unmanageable which often forces talented students to leave university before completing their qualification to seek employment. The “No Student Hungry” programme was started in 2011 by Prof Jonathan Jansen, former Vice-Chancellor and Rector of the University of the Free State, by offering students a small daily food allowance. The cost per student for 185 days is R5 500. The PSA pledged to support the project for three years.



Financial assistance for tertiary studies and the Stiglingh legacy

The Fees Must Fall (#FMF) social movement in 2015 and 2016 has made South Africans aware of the plight of students studying at tertiary institutions. Many of these students are the first in their families to obtain degrees. Adam Habib, Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Witwatersrand, told the media about a student whose village had scrimped and scraped for money so that he could study further. His family and community were proud of him as he and his grandfather embarked on the long trip to the university situated in the heart of Johannesburg, ironically referred to as *eGoli* (Place of Gold). This student provided hope, not only for his family, but for his village. Unfortunately, there are still too many matriculants who do not have the financial means to study further and must then compete with a large group of unemployed youth for scarce jobs.

The PSA recognises the need for students with the ability to succeed at tertiary education but lack the financial means to further their studies. The PSA understands how important education is to break the poverty cycle. Furthermore, the demand for educators as well as medical and natural science graduates is high in South Africa. The PSA provides study grants to these students who want to obtain a qualification in these fields. This is made possible because of a former PSA member, Mr JH Stiglingh who was the secretary of the former administrative section. The Stiglingh Memorial Bursary came into effect in 1993 and is managed carefully to optimise the investment that was left by Mr Stiglingh.

The PSA, since 2016, also assists students studying towards a qualification in education and policing by means of a study grant. The stipulation for obtaining a bursary or grant from the PSA is that the qualification must be obtained from a registered college or tertiary institution. Because there are always many more applicants than the available bursaries, not all who qualify academically can necessarily receive an award. Similarly, applicants with the best academic achievements are not given preference since proficiency remains the decisive factor.



Job Creation

“When you create more small businesses, you create small entrepreneurship. Out of that comes self-determination and employment.”

– JESSE JACKSON

Introduction

Almost 70% of people who start an informal business do so because they are unemployed and have no alternate source of income. This was just one of the findings of the Survey of Employers and Self-Employed (SESE) released by Statistics South Africa.

The SESE, conducted every four years, collects information about non-VAT registered businesses, most of which are in the informal sector. In 2013, there were 1.5 million people running an informal business, an increase from the 1.1 million recorded in 2009. This is still less than the 2.3 million recorded in 2001. These statistics demonstrate the negative effect the global recession has had on this sector. Informal businesses are predominantly run by black Africans between the ages 35 and 44 years, and those with lower levels of education.⁷

In order to provide dignity and a sense of purpose to the impoverished and unemployed communities, the PSA provides equipment and training to help these entrepreneurs. Vending trolleys and sewing machines are some of the worthwhile initiatives that the PSA has supported. Talking to people who have benefitted from sponsorship, it is clear it is an initiative that is working towards the “hands-up” focus.

Vending trolleys

When the PSA initiates projects to improve the lives of communities, the lives of many others are touched as well. Two ladies who provide a food take-away service near the PSA head office in Pretoria were sponsored with custom-made vending trolleys and given assistance to get their trade licences approved. These women are mothers and provide for their extended families. Vending trolleys were donated to a further eight informal traders based across the country to enhance their small businesses.

A real-life story

Johanna Mabena, is one of the street vendors who operates near the PSA's head office. She operates her business with quiet dignity. It is difficult to conceive of the professional demeanour of this woman who had to struggle to operate her business from a makeshift cardboard structure. Ten years ago, she was provided the opportunity to legitimise her business. People often comment about how well she understands her target market. Not only that, she provides an invaluable service to busy office workers who do not have the time to travel to downtown Pretoria to buy food. This is her story:

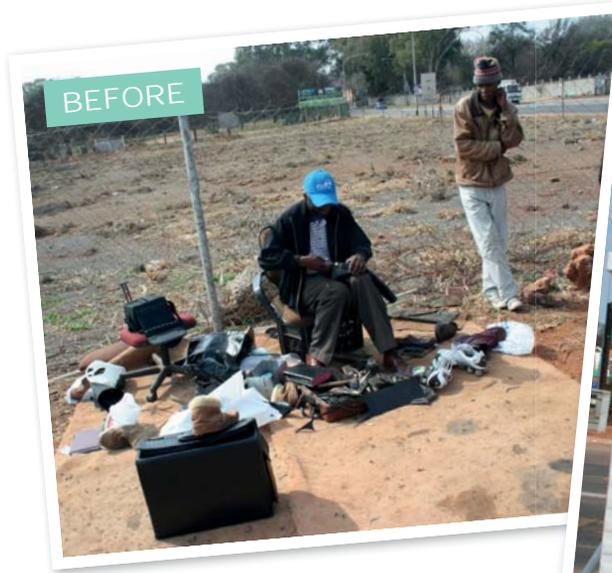
I started selling here [corner Belvedere Street, Arcadia] around [the] year 2000, it was hard and the Metro police used to harass me, demanding permits for me to operate here. I sold “magwenya” (fatcakes) out of makeshift cardboards and it was hard, especially when the Metro officials would confiscate my utensils but with the little money I made I would just go and buy new material and start again. I woke up at midnight every day, bake my fatcakes to catch the first bus to town at 02:00. For my family’s sake, I had to persevere. It is funny because people used to tease my first-born son and call him “Magwenya”. It’s bittersweet thinking about it because that’s what helped raise my son, all four of my kids actually.

The PSA noticed how I was struggling and offered to help. They donated a mobile trolley in 2007 that I can use to run my business. The PSA also assisted me and others to get permits from the Tshwane Municipality for a certain fee per month, so we can earn a living freely. The best part is that when I knock off, I can park my trolley at the PSA offices, which is very comforting knowing my equipment is safe.

I intend expanding my business to include lunch meals such as pap by end of the year. Ngithokoze Khulu, PSA

— JOHANNA MABENA





What a day!

Despite strike action that took place during 2007, the PSA still continued looking after community members trying to make a better life for themselves. Job Chego, a shoe repairer in Lyttelton, in Pretoria, was overjoyed to receive his trolley from the PSA. Job is popular around the area and has been repairing shoes for many years, often without shelter from the winter cold and rains.

The PSA helped him obtain a licence to comply with the municipal by-laws. Anton Meyer, from the Living Word Church in the vicinity, offered to allow Job to store his trolley during the night and over weekends on their premises.

DID YOU KNOW?

A shop steward is a democratically elected workplace union representative.

Sewing centre

The PSA wanted to celebrate their 92nd birthday by providing a community with job opportunities. On 7 July 2009, the Union launched and funded Phasha Maluka Sewing Centre in Gauteng. This entailed providing a roof for an existing disused structure.

The PSA provided employment opportunities to community members by donating sewing machines so that women could develop their skills and earn a living. It was a dream come true for many women. Training was also provided by another cooperative, Moeding Trading & Skills Development, that awards certificates as proof of the training. These certificates are displayed proudly – often the only indication of education that these women have received.



This cooperative was one of the many initiatives that worked with the PSA to create job opportunities. Another cooperative that has featured in earlier chapters of the Union's story, is the Tetta Women's Cooperative. The Small Enterprise Development Agency was approached to recommend an existing cooperative to manufacture school uniforms for local schools. Tetta Women's Cooperative in Mpumalanga was nominated to undertake the task and four industrial sewing machines were donated to the cooperative. Fabric for school uniforms, amounting to R40 000, was also donated to the cooperative to help trigger production. This worthwhile initiative not only provides employment but also supplies uniforms for young learners at nearby schools. School uniforms provide a sense of belonging which is a psychological benefit to learners. Furthermore, it provides dignity to the school goer and enhances the school's branding.



Other sewing centre initiatives

- A sewing centre in Sekampaneng, north of Pretoria, received three sewing machines and an overlocker. The centre serves as a community clinic and often has so many patients that the waiting room is filled, with patients having to sit outside in the sun or rain. A small roofed area was also donated by the PSA to address this need. A play area was constructed to occupy children visiting the centre with their parents.
- Two centres, Women for Change, east of Pretoria, and Didintle Sewing Centre in the north of Pretoria were assisted. The centres employ women to assist them, which provides both employment to the community and sewing skills to the women.

- The PSA provided an embroidery machine in further support to Tetta Women Primary Cooperative in KaNyamazane in Mpumalanga. The PSA supported the cooperative to grow and expand its business in 2013 by donating sewing machines and fabric to sew school uniforms. This cooperative has provided many sewn items to the PSA, including aprons and pouches.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Public Service strike of 2007 had several spin-offs, including the birth of the PSA's very own bandana. In line with the Union's commitment to social responsibility, the PSA shop stewards identified people with disabilities, schools, and centres to seam the bandanas. The finished bandanas were "bought back" by the PSA, providing much-needed income to communities. The bandanas were used in several PSA projects.

Artist upliftment

What would you get when you put together old newspaper, a bar of soap and a spoon? A masterpiece, according to Hammanskraal artist, Phillip Nhlanhla. An article written about this remarkable artist, who is trying to carve out a career, covers the incredible work that Phillip does. And what would our society be without the talent of people providing us with wonderful artefacts? Unfortunately, many talented people, like Phillip Nhlanhla, do not have the means to purchase materials for their craft. Phillip sculpts faces of prominent South Africans. The PSA purchased some of these sculptures as prizes for an event. When it was discovered that the artist had to rely on the sun to dry his sculptures, the PSA donated a mini oven. Because of this donation, Phillip no longer has to depend on Mother Nature to complete his handiwork and is able to produce products far quicker to fulfil his orders.



CHAPTER 7

Feeding the Nation

“The war against hunger is truly mankind’s war of liberation.”

– JOHN F. KENNEDY

Introduction

The PSA’s search for sustainable, self-empowering social responsibility initiatives with long-term benefits resulted in a joint venture with the *Food Gardens Foundation (FGF)*. The *FGF* is a non-profit organisation (NPO) established in 1977 that operates through a group of volunteers.

The *FGF* method is based on organic, trench-bed gardening using normal domestic and organic waste to revitalise the soil and feed the growing vegetables. This low-cost, easy and environmentally friendly method of gardening is suitable for people with very limited resources. It makes optimum use of small areas and scarce water resources and restores fertility to poor and arid soil. Each trench-bed may be used for five years before re-digging is required.

The concept, which can be implemented in urban and rural areas, provides a higher level of household food security, resulting in improved standards of nutrition and health. Training was provided as part of the PSA programme to implement skills that enhanced community income through self-employment.

This socio-economic project teaches people to grow essential food using sustainable organic principles. The *FGF* promotes community development and social upliftment by helping people improve their health and their quality of life, allowing them to escape the grip of poverty. This is an important initiative as it fulfils the PSA’s strategic “hands-up” approach.

When the PSA approached the *FGF* to establish food gardens at schools, the initial venture was based on educating learners and their teachers about nutrition and food gardens. The *FGF* provided the training and managed all other interventions, including regular reporting to the PSA.

Food gardens at schools

The first food garden was established at Stanza Bopape Secondary School in Mamelodi, Gauteng. This school faces many challenges including child-headed families, single parents who are unemployed and orphans in the care of grandparents. It is situated next to an informal settlement with a high rate of unemployment. The school first started a feeding scheme by collecting money from vendors selling food to learners. Vendors contributed a certain amount of revenue from their sales to operate at the school. This was, however, not sufficient to meet the needs of the many hungry children. Furthermore, there was no government funding for the project. The PSA agreed to establish a food garden at the school to set the school on the path of food independence.



Another project that touched those who were involved was at the HS Ebrahim Special School in Pietermaritzburg. The school is a special education facility for severely handicapped children and caters for 223 learners. The establishment of the food garden at this school proved that any challenge can be overcome when learners actively participate in the gardens.

"The garden project at HS Ebrahim Special School in Pietermaritzburg [is] where I witnessed a vegetable garden ready for harvesting in just three months. It was amazing to be invited by the school to see their first harvest. They took me to the kitchen to show me that the vegetables were being cooked for the children."

— ANDRÉ VAN SCHALKWYK



Other initiatives

The following schools benefitted from the food gardens project:

- Ngangenyathi Primary School in Mthatha in the Eastern Cape. The initiative was received with a lot of enthusiasm by the school, parents and the community.
- Flora Phophe Primary School in Thulamahashe in Bushbuckridge, Mpumalanga.
- Leseding Centre in Jane Furse, Limpopo.
- A garden was also established in KwaZulu-Natal at Mjele High School in Appelbosch near Durban. The community of this largely rural settlement came out in their numbers to support the establishment of the garden. The school embraced the idea of food gardens and requested that it be included in the curriculum to assist future generations benefitting from skills provided by the PSA and the *FGF*.
- The *FGF* made sure that learners and parents were fully trained before the launch of the gardens at Sejangkabo Secondary School in the North West. With the use of a small piece of land and minimum water, the new food garden was to be maintained by learners, staff and the community. These gardens are treasured, as they provide fresh food while educating children on the importance of giving back to the soil.
- When a food garden was established at Gugulethu Intermediate School in the Free State the atmosphere was filled with excitement. Everybody was willing to lend a helping hand and to learn more about food gardens.

DID YOU KNOW?

The PSA has launched 12 gardens at schools. The gardens bring hope and security to the communities where poverty is rife. Teachers, community members and learners often get involved once the gardens have been established. Women, especially, show enthusiasm when learning about food gardens. With the skills learned, they can put nourishing food on the table for their families.

- The budget allocated by the Gauteng Department of Education is not sufficient to cover all the requirements at Vlakfontein Secondary School in Gauteng. They needed to provide food to their learners who had very little food to sustain them. Skills and knowledge were provided to learners and the community to assist with poverty alleviation.
- Khanyisa School for the Blind in Kwadwesi in the Eastern Cape provides for 117 visually impaired students from Grades R to 12. The launch of the garden was a highlight for the learners who depend on the school for accommodation, food and education. As the school and the community of Kwadwesi descended on the food garden, it was clear that nothing could deter the determination to make the garden a success.
- Hlengisa Junior Secondary School's food garden started out with typical rainy Cape Town weather but as it turned out, the school, situated in the community of Nyanga, was unfazed by the possibility of wet weather, intent on food gardening. Community members came from far to appreciate the new vegetable garden sponsored by the PSA.
- Keimoes Intermediate School, near Upington, in the Northern Cape.
- Matheteng Primary School at Mathateng Village, 110 km from Mmabatho, benefitted from the life-skills provided by food gardening. Metsi Mango, a teacher and the Head of Department at the school, showed great interest in the food garden training and was very supportive of learners. When children were asked questions by the trainer, Metsi encouraged them to share their experience and observations. The learners showed enthusiasm and eagerness to learn more about planting vegetable gardens and wanted to take this skill home with them. The PSA also contributed tools for learners to use at the school garden.



Continuing with training and garden support

In support of the PSA's 12 established food gardens that have benefitted feeding programmes of schools across the country, the PSA donated additional garden tools and shade netting to ensure that these gardens continue to flourish. Gardening tools also went to existing food gardens at Banareng Primary School in Atteridgeville, west of Pretoria, and Dukathole Primary School in Katlehong, near Germiston in Gauteng.

Often communities require training or equipment to manage their gardens. Water tanks were supplied to areas where access to water is not always easy. For example, a garden was established in Hlengisa Combined School at Nyanga, Cape Town, and it was resourced with the donation of a water tank.

Training was given to learners, educators and the community of Elim in the Vhembe District in Limpopo in March 2013, where Mashao Primary School was the first to benefit from the training. The school was identified by the PSA's full-time shop steward as well as a shop steward from the province who also attended the training. The PSA organised and funded the training, which helped PSA educators and even educators from other unions who were interested in the training. The school's principal, Dr Rabothata, praised the PSA's contribution of garden tools and skills provided to learners.

Other initiatives

- The PSA provided food garden training at Zamokuhle Special School in the Nikwe Municipal Area, in the Eastern Cape. The school's principal, Baby John, was excited to have the learners and the community partake in the training. Although some of the school's learners are visually impaired, this did not prevent them from learning how to make a small garden at home.
- The PSA sponsored a one-day training and skills programme to learners and the community at Magwa Primary School in Mthatha, in the Eastern Cape and Mothusi Primary School, Mangaung, in the Free State. The training was offered by *Food and Trees for Africa (FTFA)*.
- Philena Primary School is classified as quintile 2 (exempt from charging fees), by the Department of Education. The classification designates the poorest institution based on the rate of income and unemployment within the school's catchment area. The school's existing food garden was not doing well so the PSA stepped in and, together with the *FGF*, provided a one-day training session to help improve the existing garden. The *FGF* taught learners who displayed "green finger" skills to grow vegetables that could be used by the school's feeding scheme.
- The PSA also established a food garden at Bo'one Disability Centre in Kuruman.

DID YOU KNOW?

Establishing a food garden is not as easy as it sounds. There are many challenges such as drought, access to water, frost and damage caused by animals.

Despite these problems, positive reports on the gardens continue to be received. The PSA will continue with this venture while also exploring expansions.



CHAPTER 8

The PSA: A Pillar of Support

It is heart-warming to receive letters of thanks. The emotions that echo through these words of gratitude show the impact of the PSA's social responsibility initiatives. With the commitment of the people within the PSA as well as the Union's partners, the PSA will continue with its mission to make a difference in the lives of those most in need.

"No one who achieves success does so without the help of others. The wise and confident acknowledge this help with gratitude."

— ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD



"On behalf of Zamokuhle Disabled People of South Africa, of Emthonjeni location in Machadodorp, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the PSA for positively responding to our request for furniture. As a non-profit organisation, the centre cannot meet all its basic needs owing to financial constraints. However, we strive to serve and meet the human rights and needs of the disadvantaged, disabled people in our community. You are indeed the pillar to this project and now we can operate our centre because of your commitment."

— LUCAS MASINA — PROJECT MANAGER:
ZAMOHUHLE DISABLED CENTRE, MPUMALANGA

"We wish to extend our deepest gratitude to ... the PSA for trusting us with a big order of 1 000 school bags. It was indeed a boost to the company's growth and development and we greatly appreciate it."

— REFILWE NDLELA — JELENTREF TRADING,
MPUMALANGA

"... The vegetable garden is doing great; members are committed to ensuring its success. They are quite excited to have it. I am so impressed."

— MASABATA TAOLE — NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AGENCY, GAUTENG



"I don't have words, [if] it was possible, I would open my chest to show how happy I am with my Union. I am very proud [that] the learners have received their school bags in front of their teachers, PSA staff, shop-steward, stakeholders and library staff.

The teacher was very happy, learners were very happy [and] the Daily Sun newspaper was [t]here ... and interview[ed] some of [the] learners ... I am very happy, all I can say is may the Lord Jesus give you more days to live and may your pots where you cook your food be filled with blessing ..."

– MPHO M SELIANE – LIBRARIAN: BOTHABELO
MULTIFUNCTIONAL LIBRARY, FREE STATE



"Thank you very much for the approval of the bursary. This is such good news."

– CHARMAINE ROSSOUW

"Thank you for granting me this bursary. I am honoured and humbled by the approval of my request. I want to extend my gratitude towards the Stiglingh Bursary Fund for assistance towards completing my Masters' degree."

– MILINDA KRUGER: UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA STUDENT,
GAUTENG

"Your contribution of R55 500 will aid the University in continuing to pursue the objectives associated with its Academic and Human Projects. In striving to be a University known not only for academic excellence, but also human reconciliation, we must remain committed to enlisting friends and partners like you who understand and want to support our efforts tangibly. As we aim to produce and disseminate consequential knowledge alongside meaningful community engagement, your investment extends our reach.

"South Africa (and our world) needs well-educated individuals who are prepared to be critically engaged citizens. Thank you for helping us do our part!"

– MARCUS R INGRAM, PhD – DIRECTOR: INSTITUTIONAL
ADVANCEMENT, UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

“South African youth do not enjoy equal rights and opportunities, particularly in the townships and rural areas. An indication of their frustration has manifested itself in alarming rates of crime, teenage pregnancy, and high risk sexual behaviour, gender violence, HIV/Aids, substance abuse, unemployment and many other social ills.

“The scourge of substance abuse continues to ravage our communities, families and particularly our youth ... it goes hand-in-hand with poverty, dysfunctional family life, crime, high-school dropout, unemployment and premature death.

“As a community-based organisation in Lotus Gardens we would like to thank you for the copy machine donation you made to our CBO and that is highly appreciated.”

– ABEL PEGA – CENTRE MANAGER, GAUTENG



“On behalf of the school community, I would like to express words of gratitude to the PSA for their contribution to the school. This came at the right time: winter, when learners are in need of something to keep them warm. A learner becomes confident once ... he or she is the same as others. It has also changed the image of the school, where all learners are in uniform.”

– LW BOYANA – PRINCIPAL: TM NDANDA PRIMARY SCHOOL, WESTERN CAPE

“The Atteridge – Saulsville Retired Teacher’s Organisation would like to express heartfelt gratitude for your donation of a photocopier machine and four cartridges. The donation will benefit the organisation greatly and enhance the quality of service to the members and stakeholders.

“Thank you, si ya bonga, re a leboga, baie dankie, rho livhuwa and God bless you.”

– MCD SHILOTE – CHAIRPERSON
MP MOLLEFE – SECRETARY, GAUTENG

"We would like to take this opportunity to thank the PSA on behalf of Boresetse Early Learning Centre for their support. This intervention has brought positive change not only to the centre but for the entire community of Gamorona. The structure donated to the centre will greatly assist in terms of enabling the centre to separate children according to their ages and ensure that acquisition and learning takes place in line with norms and standards. The jungle gym will also contribute in ensuring that as these children play, their cognitive and physical fitness are being stimulated."

– LESEDI PIKI – PROVINCIAL MANAGER, NORTHERN CAPE



"Thank you for the generous donation of jerseys. We faced a difficult situation with learners who were without jerseys and, therefore, they could not concentrate due to [the] cold. You gave them something that made them feel wanted in the school environment."

– SS MOKOENA – PRINCIPAL: HOSIA APHANE COMBINED SCHOOL, LIMPOPO



"We are writing this letter to tell you how things have been going in our business ... The people from the PSA gave us four machines and materials which we used to make uniforms. The uniforms sold out at the beginning of the year ... At this time of year [June], the business is not making much money [not selling enough uniforms]. In order to increase cash flow, we are thinking of starting sewing classes where young people can learn the skill of making clothes and they [will] pay a monthly fee."

– TETTA WOMEN'S COOPERATIVE, MPUMALANGA



"I'd like to express my gratitude for the generosity shown through the donation of R5 300 for my son's rugby tour to New Zealand in August 2016. Your contribution went a long way towards my son's dream to become a professional rugby player. I'm happy to inform you that they [his team] flew the South African flag very high and that they won all three the matches that they competed in."

– FJ LUKE – PSA CHAIRPERSON: KGOSI MAMPURU II MANAGEMENT AREA – DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES, GAUTENG



"Thank you for the kind donation of R5 000 towards the success of our Health Awareness Week at the Eersterust Clinic and community. Our intervention would not be possible without your generosity. Your donation will have an amazing impact on the community of Eersterust."

– B DIETETICS IV STUDENTS – UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA, GAUTENG

"We want to thank you for your support, caring and love you showed us. You really rescued us as we are dealing with orphans and vulnerable children in the Tsolo area. Your mark of support will never be erased by anyone."

– N FINCA – COORDINATOR: ONAMANDLA DAY CARE CENTRE, EASTERN CAPE

"Our learners appreciate the fact that they will have uniforms for the drilling competition thanks to the PSA's kind sponsorship."

– GALE ADRIAANSE – PRINCIPAL:
CASCADE PRIMARY SCHOOL, MITCHELL'S PLAIN,
WESTERN CAPE

**Letter of appreciation from the Mamelodi Regional Hospital
to PSA and Sanlam Sky**

We would like to express our sincere gratitude for your generosity in terms of your immense contribution for the Mental Health Care Unit – Ward 10, for the International Mandela Day Celebration. Outdoor concrete furniture for the Mental Health Care users for their courtyard, including planting of flowers to beautify the same area for the therapeutic activities conducted by the nurses and occupational therapists. Other donated items received were goodie packs from Sanlam, which were given to both the in-patients as well as the out-patients, who were accompanied by their families and who sincerely appreciated the kind gesture.

Over and above the contributions (CD players, radios, toiletries, books, games, sanitary towels, encyclopaedias, refreshments and snacks), personnel from both companies also brought love, warmth, caring and compassion towards our patients by interacting with them, hugging and taking photos with them.

*– Sr Nomsa SM Nkuna Boikanyo –
Approved Acting OPM: Mental Health Care Unit, Ward 10*

DID YOU KNOW?

In March 2008, the PSA donated R10 000 towards an initiative to equip police vehicles in Gauteng with satellite navigation systems to improve their crime-fighting capability and response time. In 2009, the PSA became an official Crimeline partner, in cooperation with various other partners, as part of a Primedia Broadcasting project endorsed by the South African Police Service.



Letters published in this chapter have been edited.

CHAPTER 9

Our Partners

“The best partnerships aren’t dependent on a mere common goal but on a shared path of equality, desire, and no small amount of passion.”

– SARAH MACLEAN

Introduction

Many initiatives would not have been possible without the help from our partners. The “hands-up” strategic focus to enable communities to find dignity and a sense of achievement, would not be possible without the help from the *Food Gardens Foundation* as well as *Food and Trees for Africa*. *Ackermans* has been instrumental in assisting our learners with the necessary school requirements. We want to thank these companies for their continued support and for showing that they also care about those who need it most.



Message from the CEO of Food Gardens Foundation (FGF)

Over the years that I have been the CEO of the Food Gardens Foundation, I have had the pleasure and honour of serving our communities with a Union that really lives up to its motto of being “a union with a soul”. It does not only have a heart but its heart is one that beats for its members and the communities it serves such as teachers, police, etc. The PSA, despite being a Union, has gone beyond its line of duty in funding projects where we have seen the quality of life change for the better and where families never lack fresh vegetables.

I can truly say in my humble opinion the PSA and its members really understand what social responsibility means and know how to impact communities with real change for better lives.

– FGF CEO Hilda Pheto

Message from the National Development Agency (NDA)

The NDA appreciates the partnership between our Agency and the PSA, which contributed tremendously in the Early Childhood Development (ECD) sector in more than five provinces, by providing movable classrooms, food gardens and signage. This assisted in providing hope to needy communities such as the one in Rathanda, Heidelberg.

*– NDA: Provincial Manager: Gauteng
Mapula Phora*

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In 2007, the PSA's Board of Directors and management approved social responsibility as a core objective for the Union in developing and supporting its members as well as their communities. From these humble beginnings, the various initiatives have made an enormous impact in the lives of those who are faced with the challenge of surviving. From providing jerseys and school equipment to thousands of underprivileged children to funding a dancing wheelchair to fulfil the dreams of a young talented person, the Union has brought hope and relief to many South Africans. This book reflects a decade of stories from the PSA's social responsibility contributions.

"The PSA gets on with the business of protecting and providing a service to its members rather than chasing headlines. The fact that the Union remains one of the largest trade unions in the land with more than 230 000 members is evidence that it is good at what it does. I am honoured to be asked to pen this tribute to mark yet another milestone for the Union; ten years of social responsibility commitment. It is another example of the transformation that has occurred within the labour movement and which the PSA has epitomised in its almost 100 years of existence."

Terry Bell, writer, editor and Inside Labour columnist for Fin24 and City Press