

EDUCATION, A TOP PRIORITY

Grade R learners at Kaapmuiden Primary School, in Nkomazi, have had their lives enriched by TRAC's construction of a new, environmentally friendly block and educational playground.

Constructed at a cost of R2.5-million, the new block took six months to complete. It runs off the grid with Jojo tanks to collect rain water, a borehole and solar panels as an alternative to costly electricity.

It has one room, which can be used as a single classroom or be converted into two smaller classrooms if needed, a kitchen and bathrooms.

The adjacent play area is an educational playground. Learners have tons of fun zipping around the little road, which even has miniature road signs, donated by LeNash Signs, whilst simultaneously learning all about road safety.

TRAC stepped up to assist the school as it is the only English-medium primary school in the Nkululeko Circuit and it was too small to accommodate learner demand.

The new block accommodates 60 learners and was the first step towards the school being able to accommodate high school learners, another significant need in the area because children had to attend high school in Barberton or Mbombela (Nelspruit). Desperate to address this gap, the school was overjoyed when its application to have its status changed to that of a combined school was granted. It can now accommodate learners from Grade R to Grade 12.

During the handover ceremony, Chief Education Specialist Jabulani Khoza thanked TRAC for its support and the school's role-players for their initiative. "The province's pass rate for the foundation phase is 49% and is on the decline. This needs to improve and facilities such as this go a long way towards ensuring this," he said.





LITTLE ANGELS ON CLOUD NINE AFTER REVAMP

Not only did TRAC initially donate a building to the Little Angel School well over a decade ago, it has now totally revamped the school to cater for the growing community's needs.

It was a joyous occasion for the learners of Little Angel School in Matsulu, Mpumalanga, when TRAC totally revamped the school in 2016 and gave them a reason to look forward to a brighter future.

Fifteen years ago, a shortage of English-medium schools in the area prompted TRAC to donate a building, which its contractors originally used as a site office during roadworks, to the Little Angel School.

As a feeder school for the only English primary school in the area, the school has grown considerably since then and now caters for 145 learners from Grades 0 to 3. The school's excellent reputation increased demand from the community, but as it only had four classrooms it was unable to accept more learners.

The needs of the community prompted TRAC to revamp the school in 2016, doubling it in size.

Besides building another four classrooms, TRAC also renovated the existing building and replaced the perimeter fencing to ensure that the little angels are safe.

As the school only caters for foundation phase learners in the area, TRAC decided to also make learning more fun and contracted well-known Lowveld artist Ghost to create his masterpieces on the outside walls.

The official handover was attended by teachers and learners and our management and staff. Learners were given special t-shirts and treated to a visit by TRAC's mascot Sipho.

TRAC CEO Graham Esterhuysen praised the work being done by the school's staff and the eagerness of the pupils to learn and highlighted the company's full commitment to boosting education. "It is with great pride and admiration that I walked through this school today. I saw it when it was initially

built, and I am astounded by the progress. This could never have been achieved without the passion and commitment of the school's staff, who give their all every day to secure a prosperous future for the children they serve.

"It is due to the dedication of those who run and make use of this facility that TRAC will continue to support it. As the concessionaire of the Maputo Corridor we pride ourselves on being part of this success story and will continue to support it as an investment in future," he said.





NEW KITCHEN FOR PHUMELELA

TRAC's funding of the construction of a new kitchen for Phumelela Secondary School has restored over 800 disadvantaged learners' dignity, given them a reason to look forward to going to school and ensured that they have at least one cooked meal a day.

Middelburg-based Phumelela Secondary School, which caters for disadvantaged learners in and around Nasareth, was declared a no-fee institution in 2014 as most of its learners come from low-income households.

The school falls under the National School Nutrition Programme, with the responsibility of serving a daily meal to over 800 learners. This is a challenging task for any school but for Phumelela, which didn't have adequate kitchen facilities to meet its needs, it was practically impossible.

The increasing number of non-fee-paying learners meant that the school simply did not have the budget to upgrade its facilities and could not cater for the demand.

It had to do the best it could with what it had, which was a small tin hut from which meals were cooked.

TRAC came on board to fund the construction of a new kitchen which could adequately meet the school's needs. Designed by Klippie du Toit from EarthSwitch Architects, construction of the ultra-modern, self-sustainable kitchen commenced in May 2016 and took five months to complete.

The environmentally-friendly kitchen comprises of two self-contained, converted containers which run on solar electricity, rainwater tanks and gas, alleviating the school's monthly water and electricity overheads.

Meals are now properly served to learners via the restaurant-style kitchen, through a hatch, restoring their dignity and giving them another reason to look forward to going to school. Whilst this may seem like a small difference to those from more affluent communities, it has made a tremendous impact on these children's lives. It has given them a sense of pride and a glimmer of hope.

The architects, who fully understood the multifaceted needs of the school, wisely designed the kitchen so that it can be transformed into an outdoor classroom or meeting room.

Learners, staff and representatives from the Department of Education and TRAC attended the official opening in November 2016, where principal Daniel Makuse couldn't contain his excitement. "We are extremely grateful to TRAC for this unit. Being able to cook for our learners in a proper environment is essential as, for most of them, the meal they get at school is the only solid meal they can rely on. This kitchen is a testimony for our learners to believe that there is always a way to achieve one's goals and dreams," he said.

TRAC CSI manager Adri Fourie highlighted the company's social and economic development mission, explaining that we are committed to assisting vulnerable communities. "We want to

make a positive, lasting difference to those less fortunate, as we believe it is the only way to secure a prosperous future for the entire country.

“We believe this kitchen will eradicate one of the school’s biggest challenges, making the learners’ and employees’ lives a little bit easier,” she said.

Instilling pride of their school in children’s hearts and putting food in their stomachs are two of TRAC’s biggest privileges.



HAWKERS' CUSTOMERS QUADRUPLE

One of TRAC's main objectives is to ensure economic development along the N4, by assisting informal traders and small companies to develop their businesses through increased traffic, via a highway that is on par with international standards.

After partnering with RCL Foods to establish the Nkomazi Fresh Produce Market, at the turn-off to the Kruger National Park's (KNP) Malelane Gate, TRAC turned its attention to helping the Matsulu hawkers, who operate at the Matsulu intersection near Mbombela (Nelspruit).

The hawkers were operating from a dilapidated facility which posed various road safety hazards and was not conducive to trade. "TRAC thus wanted to establish a landmark that would promote enterprise development, whilst also ensuring road safety. We were confident that the renovated facility would attract road users, many of whom are tourists heading to the KNP. We also hoped it would attract more local hawkers, which in turn would diversify trade," explains TRAC CSI manager Adri Fourie.

Mbombela-based architectural company Earth-Switch was contracted to upgrade the facility to 32 accessible stalls and make it aesthetically pleasing and modern. The upgrade included the building

of an information centre, bathrooms, a designated entrance and a shaded seating area. A covered walkway was constructed, with seating in front of the stalls, to protect the hawkers and their produce from the winter sun. As the bathrooms couldn't be connected to municipal water, two 5000-litre water tanks were erected.

Although the site is owned by the Mbombela Local Municipality and the day-to-day maintenance and running of the facility falls under its jurisdiction, TRAC remains closely connected to the facility and is proud of what has been achieved since its official opening in 2016.

"The transformation has been incredible in terms of sales figures. Prior to the upgrade, about 20 cars stopped daily. This has quadrupled. We are confident that we have achieved our goal of making the area a landmark for traders and road users alike," concludes Fourie.



