



TSEBO AND CHRISTEL HOUSE SA - A PARTNERSHIP THAT HAS BEEN MAKING A **SUSTAINABLE DIFFERENCE TO THE LIVES OF UNDERPRIVILEGED YOUTH FOR OVER A DECADE**



INTRODUCTION

Having started in January 2001, Christel House South Africa in Ottery, Cape Town ensures the holistic education and development of learners from impoverished communities, where basic educational support from caregivers is frequently lacking. A firm focus on career development is established early on when children of four years and up join the school from Grade RR and continues well beyond their matric year until they've made their way through university or college.

When Fedics, the Tsebo Solutions Group's over 50-year strong pioneer in contract catering, was contracted to provide meals and run the kitchen at the school, it quickly became apparent that they had a shared vision and passion for uplifting local communities, and it wasn't long before the partnership grew to new heights.



CHALLENGES

Children from impoverished households often come to school hungry or receive basic meals at home that lack the nutritional basis to grow healthy minds and bodies. Issues such as domestic violence, unemployment, alcoholism, gangsterism, and drug abuse are rife in the areas surrounding Christel House SA and its scholars are often subjected to these issues directly or indirectly. Unemployment and financial difficulty are a constant source of stress for many of the scholars' families. Each of these children **survives on less than R1500 a month** and would otherwise not have access to this type of high-quality education.



SOLUTION AND BENEFITS

Aside from its commercial contract where it provides two delicious, healthy, nutritious meals and two snacks per day to ensure that learners are well fed and have the sustained energy to make it through a full day of learning and extra-curricular activity, Tsebo supports the school in a variety of ways:

Bursaries

In 2017, Tsebo started a learner-sponsored programme at the school to empower young women. Each year, Tsebo sponsors five of the girls who attend the school. With a predominantly female workforce, Tsebo places a strong emphasis on developing women and supporting women's empowerment initiatives.

COVID-19 support

When South Africa was plunged into Level-5 lockdown in early 2020, many people lost their jobs or sources of income. Christel House SA identified 300 of its learners' families that were at severe risk. Through its Ubuntu Initiative (which invited Tsebo employees to donate a portion of their salaries to support colleagues or Christel House SA families in need), Tsebo was able to contribute to the cause financially. With the donations received from Tsebo and other sponsors, the school was able to support 300 families with food and basic necessities for six months during lockdown.



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Siyakhula is a beautiful relationship because it touches on so many different aspects: enterprise development for Tsebo, a potential income stream for us, and providing educational material for our children. So, it's really a beautiful story.

- Adri Marais: CEO of Christel House South Africa

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Siyakhula agricultural enterprise initiative

The idea of starting a small-scale farm for the school came from Tsebo's interest in sustainable food paired with available land. The produce from the farm is used to generate income and is added to the value chain.

The farm had to be moved from its original location due to drought and contamination of the groundwater in the area. The entire Siyakhula initiative is now situated on the school's premises.

Tsebo currently sponsors 16 tunnels which are used to grow Tsebo sponsored seasonal vegetables, working closely with Christel House SA to make sure the farming initiative is a success. The structure provides greater control over essential inputs, like water, fertiliser, pest control and temperature. The protection from harsh weather, especially wind, reduce lost crops, allowing the initiative to get more produce to market. In addition, Tsebo recently built and sponsored a cold storage packhouse to ensure that the suitable crops yielded remain fresher for longer.

The farm also provides an opportunity for employment for the children's parents. They are guided by individuals and businesses with farming know-how to assist them every step of the way. In this way, parents are also able to benefit from the same initiatives afforded to their children.

OUTCOMES

By providing the cornerstones of emotional and physical wellbeing through nutritious meals, on-site nursing, and health support, as well as counsellors and social workers, Christel House SA sets its scholars up for success well beyond their schooling years.

Twelve buses bring children to the school each day, and they have recently built a pop-up dormitory. This is utilised during matric exams to ensure that children have a safe, warm, quiet space to study during this important phase of their education.

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To change the world, you need to enable change. You need to enable education. All of this can only be done if you have the tools to succeed. You need a full stomach; you need to get to school; you need glasses to see. Our magic sits in being able to put children in a position where they can learn and not worry about any of these things.

- Adri Marais: CEO of Christel House South Africa

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Tsebo's Siyakhula Initiative meanwhile provides jobs in the school's community and ensures a sustainable supply chain of fresh, wholesome produce for ongoing school meals. Tsebo has also identified a commercial partner who buys produce from the school's farm to supply sites across the Western Cape. Christel House SA will use the funds to support the centre, providing opportunities for further education for many more students. Today, the Siyakhula initiative is the Tsebo Solutions Group's **showcase agricultural enterprise development initiative and its flagship community programme**.

Tsebo and Christel House SA – Celebrating over a decade of creating a sustainable difference together

Tsebo and Christel House South Africa have had a partnership for more than 10-years that has allowed them to truly make a difference in many lives. Driven by a mutual goal of transforming and enriching the lives of children at all stages of their development, it's easy to see why this is a remarkable partnership that will continue to grow.

By working together and building on this collective knowledge and heritage, partnerships like these can be used to change lives across the continent and make a real difference to the lives of people in our communities.



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