

# Menston charity helps students achieve exams



The students at Mnyakanya High School in South Africa celebrate exam success

By Claire Lomax

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THERE were joyous scenes at Mnyakanya High School in South Africa recently when students and staff celebrated some quite remarkable Grade 12 Matric examination results.

The national Matric exam is the final assessment for high school students and is based on students having to gain passes across a wide range of individual subjects. Of 126 students, 91 (72 per cent) passed, with 49 obtaining the higher 'Bachelor Pass' which is the entry requirement for university. Twenty-seven students achieved the 'Diploma Pass' which is the entry requirement for technical colleges and 16 students gained the 'Higher Certificate' which can give them access to vocational colleges.

Life is challenging enough at the best of times at Mnyakanya School, which serves one of the most deprived areas in KwaZulu-Natal. This last year has been particularly difficult. School closures due to Covid-19, as well as major issues with both water and electricity supply, meant that teachers had to work exceptionally hard in order to complete courses and prepare examination classes.

Teachers at the school provided additional weekend and evening classes. Mrs Pk Zondi, Bambisanani, co-ordinator at the school, reported some classes going on until 3am in the morning, with many students walking two hours to get



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to school.

Mrs Zondi and the principal, Mr Ngubane, praised the contribution of the Menston-based Bambisanani Partnership charity to these results, notably through the water project, which brought clean water to the school (allowing it to reopen) and through the computer suite (jointly funded by Aireborough Rotary Club, Eshowe Rotary

Club and Rotary International) which has proved to be a significant aid to teaching and learning.

David Geldart, from the Menston-based partnership, said: "Massive congratulations to all the students and teachers at Mnyakanya on these wonderful results. Their hard work, dedication and commitment is both amazing and inspirational; the success that they have achieved has not come easily and is most thoroughly deserved.

"We know that this is another challenge but we sincerely hope that as many students as possible will be able to pursue their education further; they deserve that opportunity.

"Mr Ngubane aims for the school to be 'competing with the very highest performing schools in South Africa' and we wish him and his team all the very best in their mission to provide their young people with the education they deserve. As Nelson Mandela said: 'Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world'."

The Bambisanani Partnership was founded by St Mary's School, Menston, and Mnyakanya School in 2006 and now involves both the University of Leeds and Leeds Trinity University in a range of projects in South Africa. Over the past 15 years, the charity has gained international acclaim with more than 10,000 young people from both countries participating in Bambisanani education and sports programmes.