

## Bambisanani Partnership and Rotary Club of Aireborough help transform teaching and learning in rural South African school

### The Bambisanani Partnership

**S**t. Mary's School, Menston and Mnyakanya High School in KwaZulu-Natal started the Bambisanani Partnership thirteen years ago and throughout that time the Rotary Club of Aireborough have supported the now charity that operates in one of South Africa's most deprived rural areas.

The local Zulu community had identified a pressing need to bring computers and the internet to the school in order to transform the education at the remote rural school of Mnyakanya which is situated in an area of extreme poverty and deprivation. Three years ago, working with the KZN Department of Education, the partnership discussed an ambitious plan to create a computer based classroom (Media Centre) at the school. Following extensive research and consultation, long term Bambisanani supporter, Tony Moodley, Senior Advisor at the KZN Department of Education, produced a comprehensive three phase plan proposing a 'Computer Technology solution' at Mnyakanya.

Back in the UK Catherine Chattoe, Bambisanani Coordinator at St. Mary's began discussions with Bill Hudson, Graham Davies and Janet Kerr from Aireborough Rotary Club about the possibility of applying for a 'global grant' to implement Phase 1 of the plan from Rotary International based in the USA. The total estimated project cost was £30,000 with Aireborough Rotary Club committing to £10,000. Further liaison took place with Graham Chennells and Nick Phillips from Eshowe Rotary Club in South Africa who had also been long term supporters of the partnership. Eshowe Rotary Club consequently offered to support the project and Catherine, Graham and Janet began the rigorous process of the grant application. Late last year, following considerable hard work and commitment, the 'in principle' grant

for the remaining funds was approved by Rotary International. Over the last year the installation plan at Mnyakanya School has been put into place with the project managed by Nick Phillips supported with technical expertise from Eric Kruse.

Following three years of extraordinary international collaboration the Media Centre was opened at Mnyakanya High School this month. The purpose built classroom with enhanced security has full internet connectivity for twenty modern computers with associated software and additional hardware including projector and screen. The grant will also fund significant training for teaching staff together with technical support and connectivity fees for the next five years.

*"This is a great achievement for The Bambisanani Partnership, Aireborough Rotary Club and Eshowe Rotary Club. Providing twenty computers and access to the internet will make such a difference to the students and teachers at Mnyakanya High School. The teachers will be able to use the facility to improve their teaching and students will be able to use the computers to aid their learning and access valuable information that may impact on their futures."*

Catherine Chattoe



*"We are pleased to have been able to facilitate the funding of this project which we know will have a massive positive impact on the lives of both the students and the teaching staff at the school. We are looking forward in conjunction with the Bambisanani Partnership to seeing how they have all progressed."*

Graham Davies,  
The Secretary of the Rotary Club of Aireborough

The Media Centre is known as 'Mary's Room' with respect to St. Mary's School and to Mary Jowett, former teacher and Deputy Head at Saltaire Secondary School, Bradford, who left a legacy to Aireborough Rotary Club which helped to fund the project. The Rotary District Governor in KZN Jaco Stander visited the school recently to officially open the new facility.

The opening of the Media Centre has already had a major impact on the teachers and students, many of whom walk two hours to and from school each day:

*"We thank everybody concerned for the new Media Centre which will help transform our school for both learners and educators. We have already applied to the Department of Education to introduce Computer Application Technology as a subject across all grades to ensure that our learners are well equipped to face the real world and play their part in it."*

Ronnie Ngeleka, Principal

*"The New Media Centre is opening a new page of life for the Mnyakanya Community. It will make the life of educators and students easier. Students will start to learn how to use the computers as early as from grade 8 and will learn how to complete school work on them. This had been a big challenge for ages. Our learners will have a better chance of reaching tertiary institutions and will not be disadvantaged when they get there. This Media Centre will also help to train young people from the community how to apply online and search for employment opportunities without having to always travel to towns and cities to search for jobs."*

**This will really change life for our community.**

*This Media Centre is marking the beginning of a computer literate society and an introduction of the importance of technology in our community. We as Mnyakanya School would like to pass our massive thanks to the Bambisanani Partnership and the Rotary Clubs of Aireborough and Eshowe."*

Pk Zondi,  
Bambisanani Co-ordinator at Mnyakanya



**“With this new Media Centre our community is equipped with a tool to communicate with the world.**

Our community will live the lifestyle of a well-developed society where technology is a fundamental part of the society. Our students will have easy access to information. They will find the learning process as interesting as playing the games. This will lead to a bright future for learners, educators and the community at large. The Media Centre will pave a way to easy success to tertiary institutions and to job opportunities.”

Boh Mbambo,  
Mnyakanya teacher

**“Our New media Centre will really change our lives at Mnyakanya.**

Our standard of education will rise with the best, even if compared with those of urban schools. This Media Centre will attract many students to come to Mnyakanya because very few schools in rural South Africa have computers. This Media Centre will save time for educators because, less work will be written by hand on chalkboards. This will also save school funds in buying more chalks and exercise books.

**This is really amazing!**

May this partnership grow stronger.”

BM Mthenjana,  
Mnyakanya teacher



“We like to thank the Bambisanani partnership and the Rotary Clubs for opening this technology opportunity to us. I am a grade 12 student this year. I am so excited to get an opportunity to learn how to do typing from the computer. The Media Centre has helped me to search for different institutions where I can pursue my studies next year. It is a great opportunity for all young people who will come to Mnyakanya after me and even for our generations, to become a computer literate society.

**“I would like to thank all involved in making this dream come true.”**

Valentia Mkhwanazi,  
Student

“It is really unbelievable that I am using a computer at school to write my school assignments and projects and also to browse for information. It’s amazing! Life is becoming so easy! Learning is so interesting. This new Media Centre will encourage even those learners who feel schooling as a boring journey. They will start enjoying to come to school. Those who dropped out earlier will come back to school. This will lead to a more educated society with technology. Siyabonga Kakhulu (thank you very much) to the Bambisanani Partnership and Aireborough and Eshowe Rotary Clubs.”

Lindelani Zuma,  
student



Rural KwaZulu-Natal

Discussions are already underway at Mnyakanya School to use this initiative as a catalyst for further development that will further raise educational achievement. Priscilla Guliwe from the KZN Department of Education is recommending that the school is reclassified as a Technical School which will bring curriculum development and enhanced resources. Nick Phillips is also discussing the possibility of employing a specific Computer Application Technology teacher at the school as from January 2020.



Mnyakanya High School, KwaZulu Natal,  
South Africa

David Geldart, Founder and Chairman of the Bambisanani Partnership was full of praise for all involved in bringing the project to fruition:

“An exceptional amount of hard work has gone into this, with Bambisanani friends, supporters and colleagues in both countries collaborating to make it a reality. My special thanks must go to Catherine, Graham and Janet for driving the proposal forward to a successful outcome. The new facility at Mnyakanya is modest by UK standards but simply massive in the context of this remote rural area. It has the potential to transform education at Mnyakanya School and give already extensively disadvantaged students some of the same opportunities that we take for granted. In an area that has 90% unemployment this initiative will give the community a boost that will inspire hope and aspirations.”

David Geldart,  
Founder and Chairman of the Bambisanani Partnership



For more information about the Bambisanani Partnership please see:

[www.bambisananipartnership.org](http://www.bambisananipartnership.org)