



**TURNING EVERY SCHOOL IN SOUTH AFRICA INTO A CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
WITHIN FOUR YEARS**

Despite millions of rands being invested in initiatives to improve educational outcomes the majority of public schools remain underperformers.

In South Africa our population is rapidly evolving into two worlds – those with education, jobs, money and a future for themselves and their children, and those with little education, no jobs and no prospects. And these people are increasingly hungry and angry.

We just don't have time to turnaround one school at a time.

We don't even have time to turn around 20 or even 50 schools at a time.

The **BCF Districts Centre of Excellence Programme** has the *technology, track-record* and *cost-effective pricing model* which enables the District Directors of each education district to sustainably reinvent their district offices and all their schools in their districts to become centres of excellence within 5 months.

There are **70 education districts** in South Africa.

BCFs current facilitation team could turn **12** education districts into centres of excellence each year. With appropriate funding BCF will expand its facilitation team and enable every district office and every school in South Africa to operate as a centre of excellence within four years.

Founder and CEO
The Billion Child Foundation



Principals and Deputy Principals developing strategic plans to reinvent their schools to become centres of excellence while attending the SA Schools Centre of Excellence Programme in the rural village of Batlharos approximately 40 km south east of Hotazel in the Northern Cape Province. Note the attire. Hotazel despite its name is very chilly in winter.

Key supporters: Gordon Brown UN Special Envoy for Global Education, Emeritus Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Prof Jonathan Jansen

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SA Districts Centre of Excellence Programme

This Programme is a culture change intervention which trains and empowers

- ◆ District Directors to turn their district offices into centres of excellence while
- ◆ Circuit Managers to simultaneously train and empower the principals of all the schools in their circuits to reinvent their schools to become centres of excellence.

How this programme is delivered

BCF facilitators

- ◆ Train and coach the District Director and his/her top management team in each district office to reinvent their district office to become a centre of excellence.
- ◆ Simultaneously train circuit managers to train and empower principals of every school who report to them to reinvent their schools to become centres of excellence.
- ◆ Observe training conducted by circuit managers of principals at four workshops one month apart.
- ◆ Visit schools with circuit managers between workshops to monitor implementation and where necessary to coach Circuit Managers as they conduct one on one coaching and counselling of principals to ensure full implementation at each school.

This culture change programme is completed in each District over a 5-month period.

This Programme was first presented in Lesotho where it was funded and monitored by UNICEF.

The Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training reported to UNICEF that

- ◆ **66%** more learners graduated from previously under-performing primary schools compared to the control group of schools which were excluded from the Programme.
- ◆ The role of the Inspector changed from being largely a **compliance officer** to that of a **respected Change Leader**.
- ◆ District officials, Inspectors, school-based management and academic staff in each District worked as **a single cohesive, synchronised team** to ensure that each school operates as a centre of excellence.
- ◆ This resulted in **closure of the (often hostile) gap between district officials**, including inspectors and subject advisors, **and school leadership and academic staff**, and the ending of silo mentality.
- ◆ **Greater acceptance and improved implementation at school level of policies and guidance**, provided by Inspectors, Subject Advisors and other District officials.

The full report by the Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training to UNICEF who funded the Programme is available upon request to alan@billionchild.org



Principals and Deputy Principals celebrating completion of strategic plans to reinvent their schools to become centres of excellence while attending the Schools Centre of Excellence Programme in Soweto

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The SA Schools Centre of Excellence Programme

This Programme was designed in partnership with the Free State Department of Education in response to a request from them for BCF to design a programme to turnaround underperforming schools during 2010.

Since then it has been attended as follows

Table 1: The number of schools which attended the SA Schools Centre of Excellence Programme 2011 – 2017

	Free State	Gauteng	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Total
No schools	144	74	43	30	291

High schools

As is demonstrated in Table 2 below, between 2015 and 2017 these schools increased the percentage of learners gaining a Bachelor or Diploma pass from **53%** to **70%**. This clearly indicates that there is a culture of effective teaching and effective learning in these schools and that they are well on their way to becoming centres of excellence. It also indicates the sustainability of the programme as many of the principals of these schools were trained between 2011 and 2014.

Table 2: Bachelor and Diploma matriculation results achieved by 121 secondary schools in RSA 2015 – 2017

Province	District	Year training conducted	No high schools	% Learners gaining a Bachelor + Diploma matriculation pass		
				2015	2017	% increase 2017 over 2015
Free State	Fezile Dabi, Xhariep and Lejweleputswa	2011-16	77	58	74	28%
Gauteng	Soweto, Pretoria and Benoni	2015	20	56	67	20%
Northern Cape	John Taolo Gaetsewe	2015	10	39	57	46%
Eastern Cape	King Williams Town, Mount Frere and Ntabankulu	2015	14	28	44	57%
Total South Africa			121	53	70	32%

Results supplied by DBE.

This Programme is endorsed by the SA Council for Educators (SACE) enabling principals, deputy principals and HODs participating in the programme to claim professional development points.

Primary schools

The success of this Programme can be demonstrated by the results achieved by 20 primary schools in the rural village of Batlharos which is situated in the Northern Cape province of South Africa approximately 50 km north west of Kuruman.

Table 3: Percentage of learners passing mathematics, English and being Promoted to the next grade in grades 5, 6 and 7 at 20 primary schools whose principals and deputies attended the SA Schools Centre of Excellence Programme during 2016

	2014	2016	2017*
Mathematics	39.4%	59.3%	65.1%
English	53.7%	71.5%	86.6%
Promoted to next Grade	54.9%	70.2%	88.3%

* Results had not been received from all schools as at date of publication

As the **SA Districts Centre of Excellence Programme** provides greater reach per investment, this Programme will in future only be presented where provincial departments of education so wish.

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Perhaps the most important learning from the above statistics is that if you want to improve maths and English marks, first train the principal. Between 2014 and 2017 no specific additional training was offered to maths or English teachers in this District. When principals provide effective leadership and teachers feel they are part of something greater than themselves – reinventing their school to become a centre of excellence - and receive praise when they achieve goals set in their monthly management performance contract (a BCF innovation) and receive additional support when they don't, they prepare lessons effectively and deliver a culture of effective teaching and effective learning in the classroom.

About the Billion Child Foundation

- ◆ The Billion Child Foundation (BCF) is a South African NPO (079-704-NPO) which offers benefits in terms of section **18A** of the Income Tax Act and BBEEE.
- ◆ BCF programmes comply with DBE Nine Key Areas for Whole School Evaluation
- ◆ BCF programmes are endorsed by SACE – the SA Council for Educators which enables trainees to claim professional development points.
- ◆ BCF has trained principals, teachers and parents from schools attended by over **1.5 million learners**.
- ◆ BCF is probably the **biggest, most innovative and successful** NPO working with provincial departments of education to turn around education in Southern Africa.

Key supporters

Gordon Brown (UN Special Envoy for Global Education) in his letter of support writes *“Thank you very much for your dedicated work towards improving educational outcomes for children and youth in Sub-Saharan Africa. The work of your organization is very important in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4, quality and inclusive education for all.*



Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu who in his letter of support writes *“The establishment of universal national parenting skills training programmes has the potential within one generation to provide millions of children, who are otherwise condemned to live in poverty, the opportunity to escape and become engineers, doctors, teachers, other professionals and artisans.”*



Professor Anthony Jansen respected educationalist, in his letter of support writes *“What the Foundation recognises is that resources are not the primary source of the crisis in South African education; it is about restoring our core values around teaching, learning, managing and leading young people. With credibility, ambition and capacity, the Foundation has fired up the imagination of some leading voices in South Africa to get behind this important project.”*



What Principals say about BCF Centre of Excellence Programmes

[Mr Ryan Ntintili](#) principal of Dr Nhlapo Intermediate School reports on progress his school has made while attending the BCF Outstanding Public Schools Programme.

[Me Mashiko Tlhabane](#) principal of Selang Primary School which is a very small school situated in the rural area of Themba reports on her successes after attending BCF training.

M&E

Measurement, assessment and evaluation are cornerstones of our programmes.

Donor organisations and provincial departments of education provide regular praise for the value they experience in BCF project reports.

Contact

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