



KGOLOLO
ACADEMY
Your Dreams Free

2021

Kgololo Academy

Annual Report



“I first heard of Kgololo from a friend whose child had been attending the school and my friend was very happy with the level of education that her child was receiving.

When Thato first joined Kgololo, I was amazed that during the first few weeks they taught scholars the school values and mission before heading into academics.”

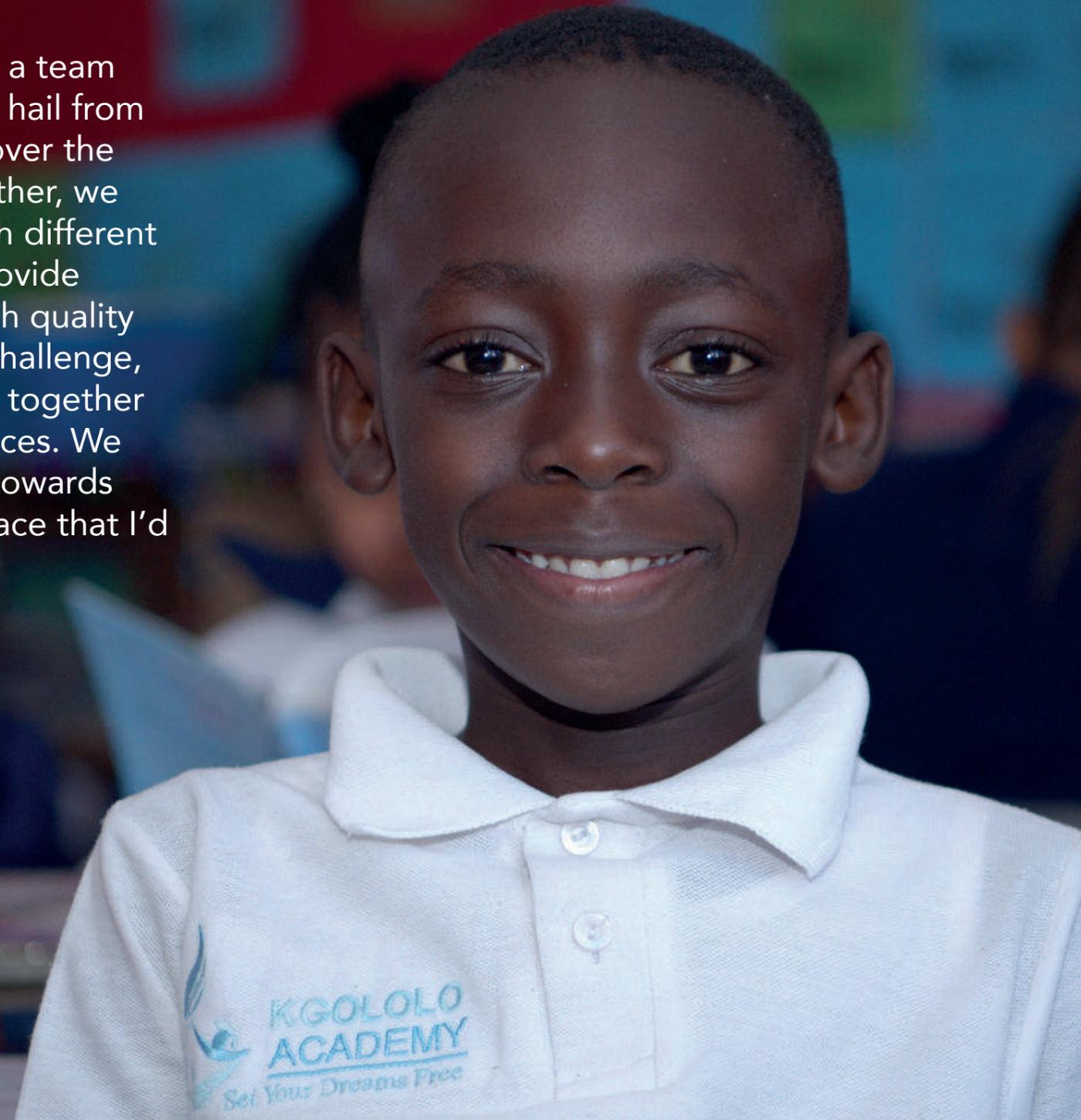
Ms. Philadi, Thato Philadi’s mom

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“ At Kgololo Academy we are a team composed of members who hail from all over the country and all over the world. When we come together, we do so as one big family, with different roles and one mission; to provide scholars with access to a high quality education. We encourage, challenge, celebrate, comfort and stick together regardless of the circumstances. We work relentlessly as a team towards our vision and there is no place that I’d rather be!”

Pamela Gijima, Operations Associate



Message from the Head of School

Dear Friends,

For the past six years, Kgololo Academy has been committed to serving as a model of excellence in South Africa, by providing the children of the Alexandra Township community with access to a world-class education at an accessible cost. It has truly been one of the greatest honours of my life, to serve Kgololo Academy as its founding principal for our first six years. We have grown from a team of five to a team of 16 women, who make it their daily mission to ensure that our scholars (as we like to refer to them) have all of the tools that they need to succeed in university and in life.

Our scholars prove what’s possible each day by showing up and showing our community and our world that all children are capable of achieving at high levels. We know that proving the possible can only be accomplished when all children have access to competent and loving teachers who believe in the inherent potential of all children to achieve and grow, and when all teachers are provided the training and the tools that they need to deliver high-quality instruction everyday. In addition, it is equally important that we ensure that all children are provided the social-emotional support that is necessary to navigate the challenges of childhood.

The year 2021 was our seventh year in operation, and it was with great enthusiasm that I have moved into the role as head of school to pave the way for founding team member, Ms. Nelisiwe to serve as Kgololo Academy’s second principal. Ms. Nelisiwe is from South Africa and resides in the Alexandra Township. As an African American, I have been made to feel at home in South Africa and for moments, I can forget that I am not a native South African.

As a Black woman leading and learning with other Black women, I am sure that I have inspired them as they have inspired me; however, when Ms. Nelisiwe was introduced as the new principal for Kgololo Academy, I saw that her appointment resonated differently with our staff, students, and our community. Ms. Nelisiwe’s new role proves what is possible for the team of 16 women that she leads, who have their own hopes and dreams wrapped up in her success. Our students look into Ms. Nelisiwe’s eyes and see their beautiful images reflected back. For that I am truly grateful.

I would like to thank you for your commitment to this journey. We are able to meet our mission and ensure that the future is indeed bright for our scholars and for our world through your support.

In love and light,

Wahida Tolbert-Mbatha
Co-Founder and Head of School





Alexandra Township

Alexandra Township, located in Johannesburg in the Gauteng province, is considered one of the most economically disenfranchised urban communities in South Africa. When Alexandra was initially constructed in 1912 as a White community, the formal structures were built to accommodate 70,000 residents; however, Alexandra's close proximity to Sandton, South Africa's economic hub and Wynberg an industrial hub, made it an appealing location for Black working-class South Africans.

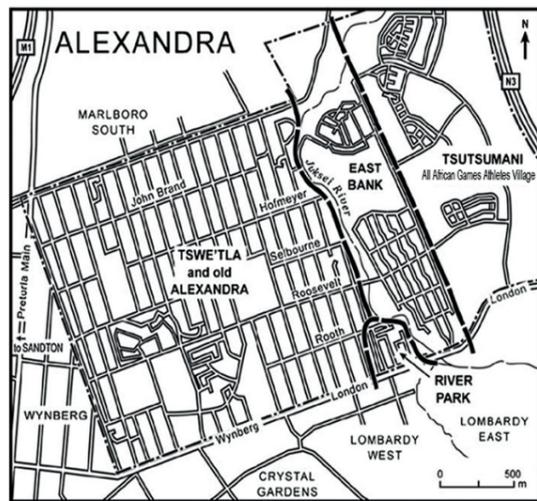
The residents of the Alexandra Township are relatively young, with over 70% of Alexandra residents under the age of 35 (Persky). Alexandra, affectionately called Alex by residents, is a densely populated community, covering just over seven kilometres, with population estimates ranging from 350,000 to 750,000. Population density in Alexandra is extremely high and in the oldest

part of Alexandra, Old Alexandra, estimates suggest that there are more than 88,000 people per square mile (Persky).

Alexandra Township can be divided into three different sections which include Old Alexandra, located west of the Jukskei River; East Bank, considered the middle-class section of Alexandra and located east of the Jukskei River; and Far East Bank, most commonly referred to as Tsutsumani and composed of subsidized homes, which were the products of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) that were developed to provide housing for the homeless.

The Alexandra Township is a linguistically and culturally diverse community with Zulu being the primary language spoken (30%) followed by North Sotho/Pedi (26%), Tswana (12%), Xhosa (10%) with Shangaan/Tsonga, South Sotho and

Map of Alexandra:



Venda comprising the rest (Isserow and Everatt 1998).

At present, there are 13 public primary schools, one private primary school, five public high schools, one public library, and one technical college in the Alexandra Township. Three of the public high schools are located in Old Alexandra, which is the most densely populated section, while the other two are located in the East Bank and Far East Bank.

Some of our greatest leaders such as President Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first president after democracy; Hugh Masekela, the father of South African jazz; and Kgalema Motlanthe, the former vice president of South Africa, lived in Alex at some point during their lives.



“At KA we get the opportunity to spread our wings and fly. A day missed at KA is missing out on growing opportunities. Working in such a stimulating environment allows me to give it my best and serve our scholars with excellence. My daughter, niece, and nephew go to the school. I enrolled them at KA because of the fact that KA focuses on the whole child. I am happy with their progress and I love it here. I call KA my happy place.”

Nelisiwe Mhlongo, Foundation Phase Principal

The Kgololo Academy Model



Providing children from Alexandra with a world-class education at an accessible cost

In South Africa, one's demography often defines his or her destiny. In the Alexandra Township, less than 30% of scholars who matriculate from secondary school do so with a Bachelor's Pass; the pass needed for acceptance to a university. The average Bachelor Pass rate in schools that serve scholars from the more affluent suburbs of Johannesburg is 99%. At Kgololo Academy, we recognize that true-equal opportunity begins with ensuring that ALL of our children have access to a world-class education.



Bachelor Pass Rate for **Alexandra Schools**
30%



Bachelor Pass Rate for **Affluent Schools** less than 10km away
99%

KA is a combined low-fee private school. We currently serve 125 scholars in grades 1-6. Over the next six years, the academy will expand into an R-12 school serving more than 700 scholars. Our mission is to provide scholars from the Alexandra Township with access to a world-class education at an accessible cost. KA is located in the Alexandra Township because we believe that children should be able to access a world-class education within their communities.

Kgololo Academy was co-founded by Waahida Tolbert-Mbatha and Alexandra-native, M. Thulani Mbatha. Their eldest son Themba attends the academy and is in the class of 2028. KA is composed of a founding team of inspirational teachers, parents, and community members who believe in the unlimited potential of Alexandra Township's children. Our team reflects the community's greatness and will, and is committed to providing a world-class education for ALL children.

Our school is inspired by the success of the education reform movement in the United States. Schools such as KIPP and Uncommon Schools have proven what is possible in low-income communities. For the past 20 years, their schools have served a population that is comparable to ours and have increased the university-graduation rate of their students to more than 50% versus 8% for students from similar demographics.

We are building a school that leverages many of their effective practices in a way that is consistent with the South African context. These practices include:



More Time

Most scholars enter Kgololo Academy without having had access to high-quality early childhood education. To support our scholars' growth, KA has an extended-day that runs from 7:30-3:00 four days per week and from 7:30-13:00 one day per week. More time allows the scholars to receive 25% more instructional hours than scholars at most public and private schools in South Africa.

In addition, more time enables us to:

- Provide scholars with the opportunity to participate in extra-murals such as art, physical education, and choir during the school day
- Provide scholars with two healthy meals each day
- Provide scholars with individualised instruction based on their current literacy levels



Rigorous and Culturally Relevant Curriculum

KA's foundational beliefs regarding its curriculum are to replicate what works by following the data. We use Common Core State Standards from the United States in our primary school as the data suggests that they lead to better outcomes. Common Core standards are not specific to the culture and context of the United States (they

focus on standards that students need to master across content areas) and thus we have been able to embed them with ease into the South African context.



Dual Language

We believe that it is essential for scholars to learn to communicate in a Black South African language and in English. Our language vision allows students to develop their oral and written fluency in English and in isiZulu.



Strong School Culture

Scholars learn in a space where their voices, culture, language, values, and life experiences are valued by their peers and teachers. In our learning space, scholars are pushed to be critical thinkers and are challenged to recognize and address injustice in the world. Our class sizes are also small (25 or less) allowing all scholars to be known, loved, and treated as individuals.



Data-Driven Instruction

Scholars are formally assessed once per quarter in literacy and once or twice per quarter in Math. Teachers leverage data to note trends

that inform instruction. In addition to formal assessments, teachers also conduct formative assessments on a daily basis to gauge whether students comprehended the content and are able to apply the standards covered.



Talent Development

KA believes in empowering both scholars and teachers with the knowledge they need to excel. All instructional staff members receive on average 300 minutes of professional development inclusive of classroom observations, feedback and training per week. In addition, instruction is also supported through the following:

- KA's School Leadership training and ongoing support
- KA's partnership with an international network of high performing, university preparatory schools in the United States, Chile, Mexico, and South Africa known as The 1 World Network of Schools
- KA's school founder was awarded a prestigious one-year fellowship through KIPP Schools United States focusing on leadership and school design. The founder also receives weekly coaching from 1 World along with four yearly school visits.
- KA's principal is a graduate of the Instructional Leadership Institute, which prepares leaders to run outstanding schools in low-income communities.



Family Engagement

Families are engaged as partners in their child's education. They commit to volunteer hours and we host frequent events that provide families with opportunities to learn how to support their child's academic and social growth.



Social and Emotional Support

The 20-plus years of research conducted by KIPP Schools, our source of inspiration in the United States, tells us that the number one cause of student struggle in university and in adult life is unresolved emotional conflict. Thus, we are committed to providing social and emotional support early and intensively for our scholars. Kgololo Academy has an in-house school counselor who provides support to scholars and their families.

Message from Kgololo Academy

Co-Founder: M. Thulani Mbatha

It has been six years since the idea of establishing Kgololo Academy (KA) emerged as Waahida and I challenged ourselves to consider the role that we could play in creating better educational opportunities for the children of the community of my birth, the Alexandra Township.

We wanted to establish a school within the township that provided children with the opportunity to receive a world-class education at an accessible cost. On a personal level, we wanted to establish a school where we could send our eldest son, Themba, and know that he would have access to the type of education that would support him in achieving his hopes and dreams.

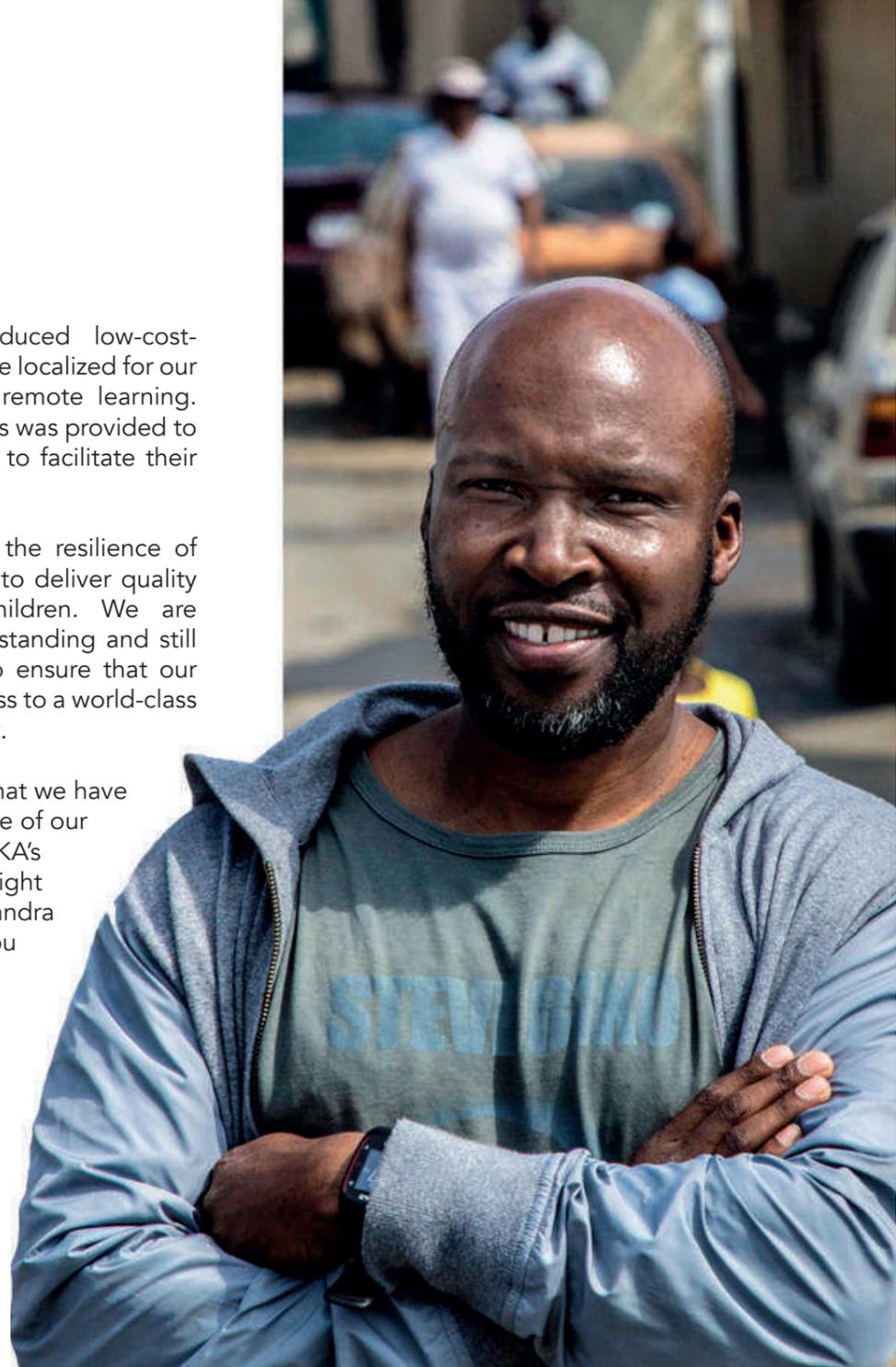
As I write this message, South Africa, like most parts of our world, is dealing with the crippling effects that the pandemic has had on our daily lives. Although it has been a challenge for KA to recover, we have been fortunate to have support from a group of local and international donors.

Through the generous support from individuals, foundations, and corporate-social investment, we were able to limit the interruption of learning for our scholars and safeguard the jobs of our teachers and support staff. At the height of the global pandemic in 2020, we retooled our

education model and introduced low-cost-innovative approaches that were localized for our community to accommodate remote learning. Access to mobile data and tools was provided to our scholars and their families to facilitate their access to education.

COVID-19 has greatly tested the resilience of Kgololo and our commitment to deliver quality education to Alexandra's children. We are proud to say that we are still standing and still stand strong in our resolve to ensure that our students continue to have access to a world-class education at an accessible cost.

In conclusion, I am delighted that we have this annual report to share some of our highlights over the past years. KA's work continues to shine as a bright light in our community of Alexandra Township, and we hope that you feel a sense of purpose for the role that you have played in making this academy and the education of our children possible.



Believe in Dreams

"Set your dreams free...I guess I believe in dreams—in big ones and doing the work to realize them."

Written by Kim Robinson



I became involved with Kgololo Academy before it came to fruition – when it was a strategic plan. From the beginning, the concept moved me: demonstrate that children in a low-income community can learn and thrive in their own neighbourhood with children from the same neighbourhood, when they are placed in an environment of respect, excellence, and love.

I was in. I became involved because Kgololo was the school that I wish that I had the opportunity to attend.

Recently, I leveraged my passion for Kgololo Academy through my work with the Event Planning Committee. I used the annual November Friendsgiving event to reach out to my network to share my excitement about our achievements and how my cohorts could support our work. It was a joy to see my friends and family from throughout South Africa and the United States engage with us at the event and give generously.

Kgololo is unique. It is unapologetically in Alexandra for Alexandra and driven by teachers from Alexandra. There is absolute clarity that every child is welcome and can aspire to and achieve what is required to succeed at university. No entrance exams. No exclusionary selection process. Love is an explicit value. The founders

have deep skin in the game—their son Themba attends Kgololo Academy. At Kgololo Academy, children are treated with dignity; their inherent potential is recognized; and they are expected to be seen and heard. Parents are expected to engage in the education process. Excellence is exercised and exhibited every day.

At Kgololo Academy, the understanding is that there is nothing wrong with children who happen to be poor. Rather, the education process takes place with the knowledge that every child can learn and self-actualize. The inherent potential of every child is recognized and tapped. If there is a gap in learning and progress, it is not the failure of the child. Instead it is an opportunity for the teacher to discern how to help that student learn.

From Kgololo, I expect children to become adults steeped in the values of courage, love, respect, curiosity, and excellence. These are the values that should drive the development of South Africa. If every child in South Africa could attend a school such as Kgololo, our nation would have millions of young people, who were not only literate, numerate and capable of continued learning, but also who loved themselves, believed in themselves, and were committed to and equipped to build their communities and country.



Thabiso Kai Mashishi

Thabiso Kai Mashishi is a 5th grade scholar at Kgololo Academy (KA). Although he enjoys all of his subjects, his favorite is social studies, where he learns about geographical structures such as mountains, plateaus, rivers, coastal land, etc. Thabiso also enjoys playing soccer with his friends and plans to join the soccer intramural as soon as he can.

KA has succeeded in helping Thabiso understand himself better and grow as a person. He has learned how to treat others with respect, an aspect of his life that he feels he struggled with prior to entering the academy. He sees his teachers as models of this behavior. They make him feel valued, and he appreciates that other people care about his progress in school.

The values outlined by KA - courage, curiosity, excellence, and love - have played an important role in defining and

developing Thabiso's character. He feels he embodies "curiosity" the most, as he constantly asks questions during class, and shows genuine interest in the curriculum. He feels courageous and energised when he is able to solve difficult math problems on his own, but he is also able to ask for help from his peers or teacher when required.

Thabiso feels his teachers are role models when it comes to embodying love, and strives to replicate their behavior. As for excellence, he is already a strong student, but like any strong student he wants to "pass with flying colours." He pushes himself to always work hard in school.

In class, Thabiso appreciates how the teachers are able to teach all the students at once. He prefers this over group work because he likes the idea of everyone learning together; it makes him feel more connected to his peers, but also helps him understand that everything is not about him. It is in these moments that Thabiso appreciates the privilege of attending KA.

He realises that many children in Alexandra do not have the quality education that he has, and at some point in adulthood, he plans to return to his home to help other children attend the academy. The sense of community at KA is something he hopes to replicate for other future scholars in Alexandra.



Leonah Rakgoale

Leonah is a sixth-grade scholar at Kgololo Academy (KA). Her favorite subject is math, where she learns how to calculate distance and percentages. Out of the many exciting things she does every day, one of her favourite activities is physical education. She also enjoyed attending her extramural activity, dance class, before the Covid-19 pandemic. During that class, her teacher taught students how to dance to different types of music and how to use music as a way to become calm and focused.

To support Leonah in overcoming some of the challenges that she has faced, she meets with the Kgololo Academy school counselor, Ms. Tilly. When she meets with Ms. Tilly, Leonah feels loved. She appreciates how deeply Ms. Tilly cares about her and the other students, and how much work she does to comfort them. From attending these sessions, Leonah has learned to love and respect her classmates as well as to take affirming-and-adjusting feedback.

Fefolo is Leonah's mom. She grew up in Limpopo and went to school there. While she recalls enjoying learning in her youth, she did not feel that the quality of her school was at all comparable to the educational quality her daughter experiences at the academy. In comparison, Fefolo's teachers did not make any effort to build relationships with the students, and instead of treating them

lovingly, they would often resort to beatings as a method of discipline. Now, Fefolo lives in Alexandra with her husband and five children and works as a street vendor.

Fefolo learned about KA through the Alexandra newspaper and decided to have Leonah attend as a first grader because she could tell it was a unique school. KA was the best school Fefolo had ever seen; a variety of subjects in addition to math and English were offered, and the teachers were all dedicated and qualified. The first time Fefolo met Leonah's teacher, she instantly felt that she would help her daughter grow into the best scholar she could be. And that is Leonah's current path—the path of excellence! Of the four values emphasised at KA, Leonah feels she models "excellence" the most, because she strives to do her best in school, so she can achieve her life goal of being a doctor.

Leonah wants to encourage Alexandra township students to do their best in school as well, so they can achieve the lives of their dreams.





Precious Sabela

Ms. Precious Sabela is a lead Grade 2 teacher and Professional Development (PD) facilitator at Kgololo Academy (KA). After joining the KA team in 2019 as a teacher, Ms. Precious spent three years becoming familiar with the methods and objectives of the school. Now, as a PD facilitator, she is able to pass her knowledge to new teachers who join the KA community. Working collaboratively is an important value at Kgololo Academy. In terms of professional support, Ms. Precious receives individual feedback from internal coaches, weekly training and weekly classroom observations, all designed to support her growth as an educator.

Ms. Precious enjoys her role as a lead teacher and PD facilitator. As a teacher, she values interacting with the students and getting to know them. This helps her create more personalized lesson plans and learning activities for her scholars, as she knows their strengths and weaknesses, as well as what makes them excited to learn. She hopes she can inspire a true enjoyment for reading in her students, as well as the motivation to constantly improve their language skills. As a PD facilitator, she understands the importance of training teachers, since they are the ones who help the students grow. By drawing on her own knowledge and experience, she is able to guide new teachers through the learning process.

In her childhood, Ms. Precious followed the

traditional South African curriculum which benefited her, however, she was enthralled by the KA curriculum as it provided scholars with something different. Ms. Precious felt that the KA approach provided a wholesome education and catered well to each student's needs. As a passionate teacher who loves challenges, this new curriculum was appealing to her. She was on the front lines of educating students using a new method, always with the end goal of university in mind.

Enriching the lives of her students is a benefit on its own, but at Kgololo Academy, Ms. Precious has also experienced many personal benefits. In general, she has learned to listen to feedback and work collaboratively, and in her role specifically, she has learned how to be a good manager and how to communicate with different people. She has developed a broader understanding and perspective of what makes a good teacher.

Of the four KA values, Ms. Precious embraces "excellence" the most, because she feels she is a model for her scholars. She understands that they look up to her, as well as hold her accountable and, as a result, she strives to do better for them.

Recently Ms. Precious was accepted to be a participant in the highly selective, Instructional Leadership Programme. As an emerging leader, Ms. Precious is looking forward to learning new skills and strategies that will support her peers and Kgololo Academy scholars.



Pamela Gijima

Ms. Pamela joined the Kgololo Academy (KA) team in December 2014 and is one of the first members of the KA team. She plans to send her children through KA when they are old enough to attend school because she knows that they will receive a high-quality education and that the teachers have positive attitudes towards learning. She has witnessed firsthand that scholars are able to grow and flourish and would like the same opportunities for her children. When the scholars graduate, Ms. Pam hopes to see them go to university, succeed in their careers, model the values taught at KA (excellence, love, courage and curiosity), and eventually return to Alexandra Township to make it a better place.

As a child, Ms. Pam did not have the opportunity to attend a quality school. For this reason, part of her motivation for joining the KA team was because she wanted to be part of something "new and great in Alex." Her ability to advocate for herself and take advantage of the opportunities afforded her is what has enabled her to progress to her current position and why she feels that "courage" is the value that defines her the most. As a professional, Ms. Pam is someone who speaks her mind and works collaboratively with others.

Initially, she was a pre-grade R teacher and then an office assistant. For the past three years, she has worked as an operations associate and ensures that the academy functions smoothly each day by managing and providing school resources and assisting parents with school fees.

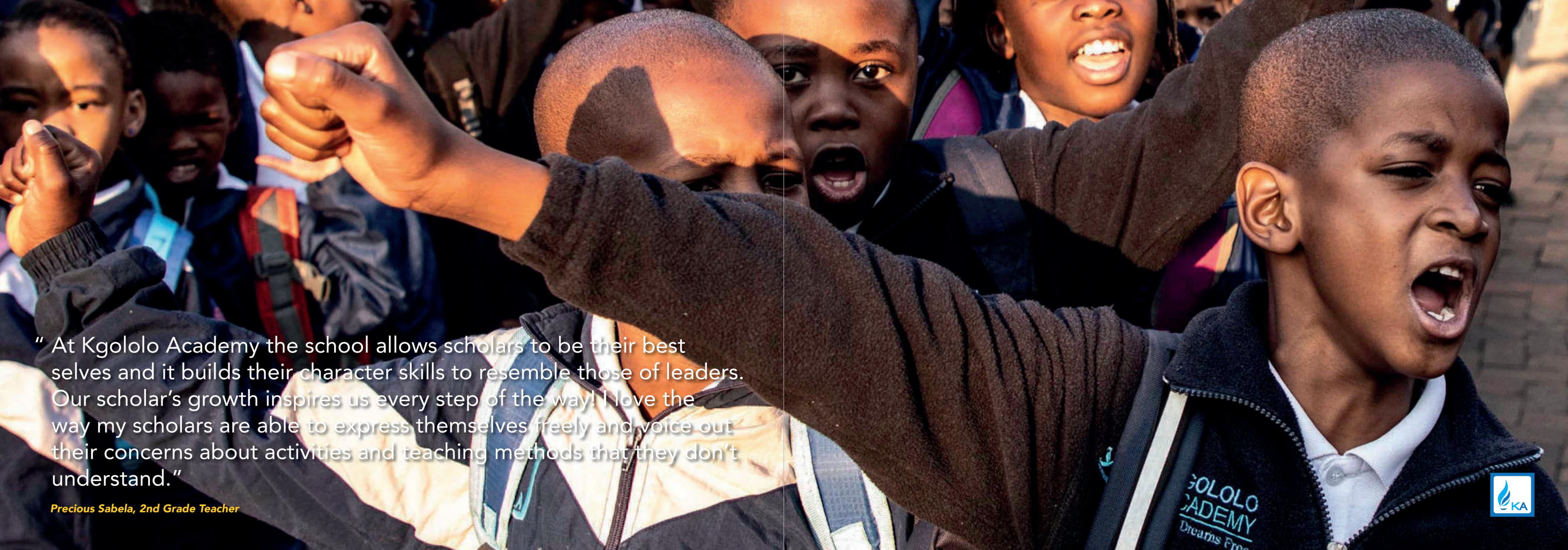
Her goal is to become the operations manager. The favourite part of her current job is being involved in the students' daily activities. Ms Pam feels a deep connection to Kgololo Academy and shared that "it feels like KA is her baby."

KA is a family. The teachers and staff who support this academic community are carefully selected, to ensure that our students receive the best. As a family, KA members are invested in each others' personal well being. For example, when Ms. Pam's new baby was born, KA lovingly hosted a baby shower for her. She recalls that there have been many other personal situations where the KA staff has selflessly acted on her behalf.

Throughout her career at KA, Ms. Pam has received professional coaching to help her acquire new skills and be promoted to progressively more senior-level positions. These one-on-one meetings with internal and external coaches gave her affirming-and-adjusting feedback to help her become more skillful and proficient in each position. Her years of experience has now allowed her to provide her co-workers with professional development ideas and feedback.

She ensures that the teachers have the materials necessary for them to successfully teach each scholar. In this capacity, Ms. Pam works to uphold the academy's mission and vision, which is to work as a team to develop the staff and student body in educational and personal ways.





“ At Kgololo Academy the school allows scholars to be their best selves and it builds their character skills to resemble those of leaders. Our scholar’s growth inspires us every step of the way! I love the way my scholars are able to express themselves freely and voice out their concerns about activities and teaching methods that they don’t understand.”

Precious Sabela, 2nd Grade Teacher



KGLOLO
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Kgololo Academy Academic Results

ANA Initial Data Comparison

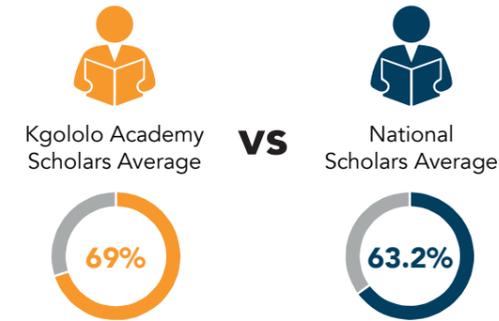
Background: The Annual National Assessment was designed in order to provide the Department of Education and its stakeholders with data on the performance of foundation, intermediate and senior phase students in Math, Home Language, and First Additional Language.

The assessment is no longer being administered due to political issues, however, we decided to administer the assessment to our scholars in order to see how they would perform on an externally set standardized assessment.

It should be noted that the assessment that we administered, assesses scholars on English Home Language and though only one of our scholars uses English as a Home Language, all of our scholars took the English Home Language version, which is a more challenging assessment for non-native English speakers. It should also be noted that we do not use CAPS (SA curriculum) for English, but instead use Common Core, which is a USA-based curriculum.

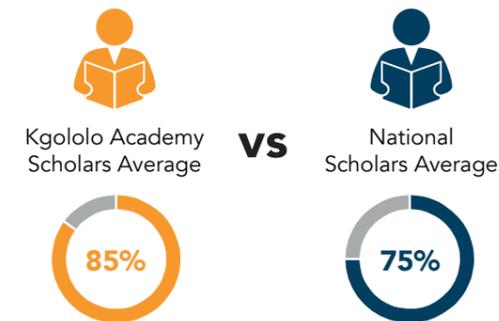
Scholar Performance Comparisons

Grade 1 Language:



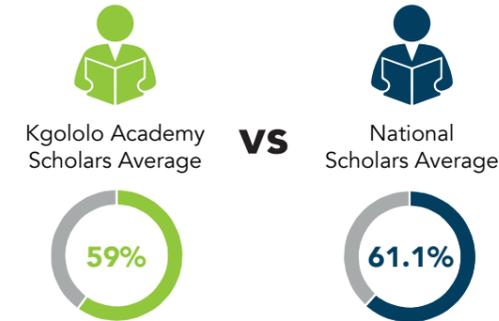
Grade 1 Achievement in Language:

The percentage of Grade 1 scholars with 50% or higher on the Home Language ANA Assessment



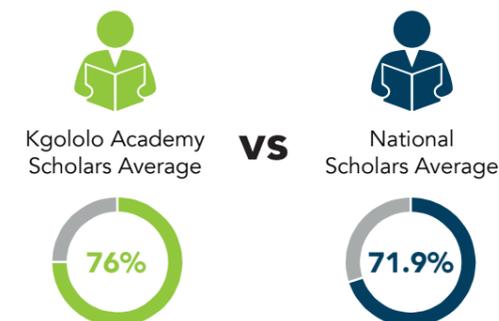
NB: Scholars all wrote the assessment in English, even though it is not their Home Language.

Grade 2 Language:



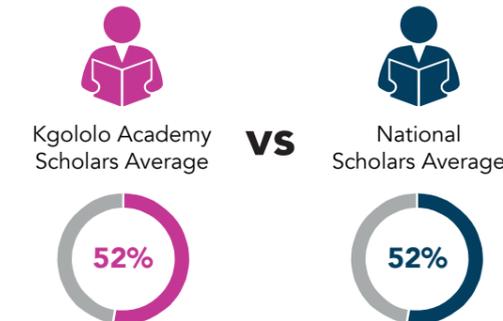
Grade 2 Achievement in Language:

The percentage of Grade 2 scholars with 50% or higher on the Home Language ANA Assessment



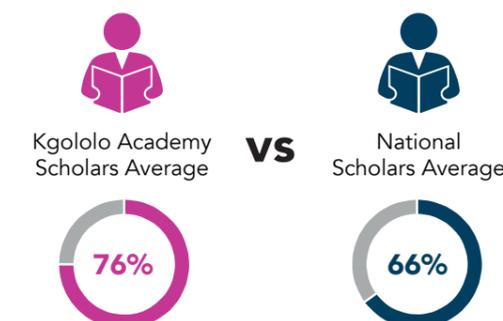
NB: Scholars all wrote the assessment in English, even though it is not their Home Language.

Grade 3 Language:



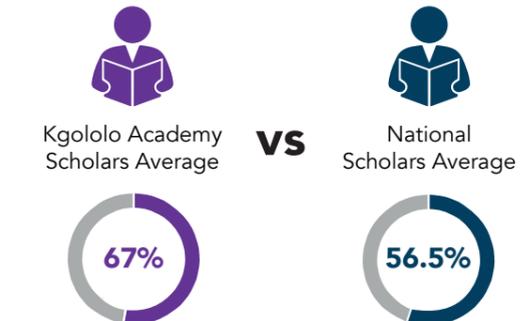
Grade 3 Achievement in Language:

The percentage of Grade 3 scholars with 50% or higher on the Home Language ANA Assessment



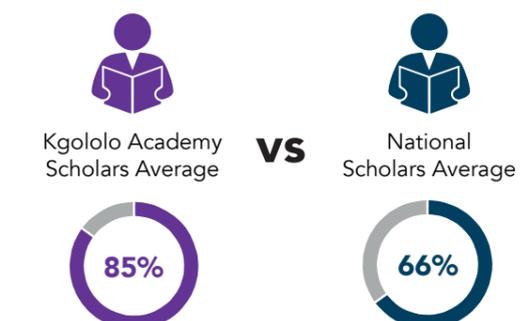
NB: Scholars all wrote the assessment in English, even though it is not their Home Language.

Grade 4 Language:



Grade 4 Achievement in Language:

The percentage of Grade 4 scholars with 50% or higher on the Home Language ANA Assessment



NB: Scholars all wrote the assessment in English, even though it is not their Home Language.

In grades 1 and 4, Kgololo Academy scholars outperformed their peers, based on the Annual National Assessment results, for the average percentage mark based on the last ANA published data.

In grade 2, our scholars performed below their peers, however, it is to be noted that scholars in South African schools write the ANA in their mother tongue. At Kgololo Academy all scholars wrote the assessment in English even though it is the mother tongue for only one scholar.



In Grade 4, our scholars outperformed the country for the percentage of scholars with a 50% or higher by 20 percentage points, in Grades 1 and 3 by 10 percentage points and in Grade 2 by 5 percentage points.

"At KA we always work to set our scholars up for success. We work as a team to ensure that they are prepared to go to varsity and beyond. I am honoured to be part of a team that strives for excellence each day. Our scholars are indeed in good hands."

Noxolo Zulu, isiZulu Teacher

"Kgololo Academy, such a unique environment, pushes both the teacher and student to be the best they can be. I am as well privileged to be part of this history-making team at Kgololo, hard-working and determined. The knowledge passed to our scholars stands out the most. Kgololo Academy, even the sky cannot be the limit!"

Sandisani Mhizha, 1st Grade Teacher

"Kgololo has done wonders for my daughter. She's confident, articulate, and highly opinionated. She's curious about life, her community, and is solution-oriented. She's a happy child and loves her teachers. There is great teaching culture at Kgololo which allows me to positively promote the school. TO THE FUTURE!"

Ms Phumzile, Reneilwe Sithole's mom

"I love how the school ensures that scholars are in safe hands by having staff members who work collectively with one another and who have the scholars best interests at heart, which means scholars are the number one priority."

Ayanda Vilakazi, PE Teacher



List of Donors

Grassroots Donors: Gifts from \$1 to \$999

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Anthony Bremer
Aretha Richardson
Audacity Digital Marketing
Aurora Chen
Ayanna Martin
Azhar E Bham
Bentley Kapten
Beth Masters
Beth Rakouskas
Boitumelo Sebambo
Bruce Agins
Bulelwa Kota
Calvin Holmes

Camille de Jorna
Carl Nel
Carla Bremer
Carol Dwin
Caroline Nicholls
Carolyn Somerville
Charity Tshivhengwa
Chloe Dugger
Christopher Walker
Dameatrice Dunbar
Dana Banks
Dave Stonehill
David Biaz
David and Melissa Stonehill
Dawn Smith
Denise Gowdy
Deshaun Mars
Desiree Haynes
Dia Vinyard
Dinah Felipe
Edmund Rutta
Eleby Washington
Eric Burnett
Eric Thompson
Eshanda Fennell
Evan Hendon
Faith Brightbill
Forrest Branch
Franceska Minikon-Reece
Frederik Karlberg
Frona Guerra
Gene and Dona Kubina
Giulio Frigenti
GL French and Associates

Graham Browne
Health Focus
Hendon Rental Properties
Hewette Moore
Imani Anwisy
Imani Cheers
J. David Whaley
Jabu and Zodwa Salazar
Jackie Okeyo
Jamal Wright
James Gandre
James Smith
Jamilia Canty
Jane Ryan
Janice Land Hudson
Jason Gamble
Jaunese Harris
Jayci Sadio
Jean-Christian Grimaud
Jeniece Fleming
Jennifer Bombard
Jennifer Taub
Jeri Love
Jo Francis
Jocelyn Sturdivant
John Morrell
John Peter
Joi and Raymelle Duvall
Jon Santiago
Judy and Chris White
Justice Edwin Cameron
KDSL Global
Keesha Dancy
Kenna Williams

Khary Dickerson
Kholisa Thomas
Kia Crittenden
Lisa Robinson
Lovely Dhillon
M Morgan
Mable Tablin
Mandisa Maketa
Marc Wegerif and Teresa Yates
Margaret Perkins
Maria dal Santo
Maria Miralles
Markesha McCants
Marina Rifkin
Meritaton Kirigha
Marry Harris
Melissa Bollow
Merrill and Penelope Moore
Molefe Lenyai
Monica Mark
Mpeleheng Mpholo
Mphokolo Makara
Nana Andoh
Nancy Ngum
Nansu and Zach
Neva Mayer
Nick Canning
Nico Nel
Nicole Terry
Nia and Klay Thompson
Nielette Nel
Niranjan Konduri
Nomhle Gumede
Nupur Parikh

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Omar Lopez
Pamela Yetunde Krwigema
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Paul Raymond
Paula Gordon
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Phoebe Boardman
Precious Murchinson Gittens
Priya Cariappa
Reden Sagana
Richard Hayes
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Rohan Jeremiah
Rory Birmingham
Ruth Hill
Samantha William
Sanaa Rahman
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Shirino Flynn
Sherry McLean
Siseko Peter

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Stacy Hall
Stefan Lallinger
Tasha Blanton
Terri Maggott
Theodora Mashishi
Theresa Tolbert
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Tiwana Merritt
Tobias Salinger
Traci Higgins
Tracy Higgins
Travis and Tiffany Vinson
Trevor Sancho
Udoka Akwiwu
Vivian Williams-Edison
Warren Green
Will Gomaa
Walter Alarkon
Xiomara Brown
Yewande Omatoso

Gifts from \$1,000 to \$4,999

Carolyn Stremlau
David Tokoph
Dell and Reva Hendon
Dr. Imani Cheers
Dr. Michael Cheers
Elle Oberle
Fritz Malan
George and Lisa Land

Jay Heavner
Jennifer Erie
Kathryn Akural
Kim Robinson
Lauren Robinson
Michael Karl Littejohn
Michael Sudarkasa
Vhonani Mufamadi

Gifts from \$5,000 to \$9,999

3Sixty Health PTY
Ariane De Bonvoisin
Carsten Boers and Eliza Kennedy
Chris and Glenn Etow
E.M. Gitt
M. Thulani Mbatha and
Waahida Tolbert-Mbatha
Muralidhara Foundation

Gifts from \$10,000 or more

Donaldson Filtrations Solutions
ENS Africa
Even Ground
Jonathan Ball Publishers



Kgololo Academy Board & Advisors



M. Thulani Mbatha
Co-Founder and Board Member

Thulani is an Independent Public Health Consultant hailing from the Alexandra Township. Thulani is extremely passionate about education and the Alexandra community. He has led programmatic and management operations in partnership with the South African Government to expand HIV/AIDS and TB services. He has capacity building, Pharmaceutical and Supply Chain Management expertise along with strategic partner coordinator, and proposal writing experience and has extensive fieldwork experience in Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Malawi, and South Africa.

Thulani holds a Masters in Public Health from the University of Tennessee and holds a Bachelors Degree in Economics from Berea College, Kentucky, USA. Thulani is the proud father to Kgololo Academy scholar Themba, class of 2028 and future Kgololo scholar Amari, class of 2037 and Lethukukhanya, class of 2039.



Kim Robinson
Council of Advisors

Kim Robinson is a Harvard educated attorney, Fulbright Scholar, internationally accredited commercial mediator, and member of the California Bar. Ms. Robinson leads Renaissance Strategic Solutions, www.renaissance-ss.com, a Johannesburg based consulting firm with an African and global reach. Renaissance provides legal, strategic, and creative consulting services.

Prior to founding Renaissance, Ms. Robinson was Executive Director of Student Sponsorship Programme, a South African non-profit trust. Previously, she was the Coordinator, Organisational and Leadership Development at the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy. From 2001-2005, Ms. Robinson served as in-house counsel to the U.S. Agency for International Development in Botswana covering legal, policy, management, and development issues throughout Southern Africa. Ms. Robinson's experience in the region dates from 1991 when she was a Human Rights Intern at the law firm of Smith, Tabata, Inc. She returned to South Africa as a Fulbright Scholar. Later she clerked for Justice Johann Kriegler of the Constitutional Court of South Africa. Ms. Robinson was an associate at the law firm of Bingham McCutchen (now Morgan Lewis) in San Francisco and clerked for Chief Judge John T. Nixon of the U.S. District Court, Nashville, Tennessee.

Ms. Robinson is a graduate of Harvard Law School and Hunter College of the City University of New York.



Evan Hendon
Board Member

Evan is the Dean of Instill Education, South Africa. He received his M.A. from Teachers College, Columbia University's International Educational Development program where he studied transitions from secondary to tertiary education in Jamaica, Kenya, and Brazil as well as education finance, with a special focus on public private partnerships in financing educational institutions. In addition to coursework, Evan was the Program Coordinator at the George Clement Bond Center for African Education. Evan's keen interest in urban educational development throughout the African Diaspora began during his time at Brown University, as an African Studies and Political Science double major, and further developed as a secondary teacher in Kansas City, and an intern in Accra working with a startup NGO to create internship programs for Ghanaian college students. Outside of education, Evan has had various exposure to campaigning through his work on a U.S. House of Representatives and US Senate campaign and his work with the U.S. Congressional Black Caucus.

Before moving to South Africa from the United States, Evan worked as the Director of Operation of Relay Graduate School of Education's Newark campus, where he managed five graduate-level teacher education programmes for 165 working teachers in Newark, New Jersey area traditional public and charter schools. Evan is currently working with a team of educators and entrepreneurs to create world-class accredited higher education programmes serving South African school leaders and teachers.



Boitumelo Sebambo
Board Member

Boitumelo's belief in transformational education prompted her to be a friend of Kgololo Academy. When she first visited the school struck by the leadership team's warmth and dedication to building an excellent academic institution in a black community.

Boitumelo has over 15 years experience as a strategist and change manager in the management consulting industry. She has a broad range of business, and professional expertise acquired while providing consulting and outsourcing solutions to diverse clients. Clients served include an internationally recognized securities exchange, state-owned entities, governmental departments in South Africa, various banking and insurance companies.

Currently, as CEO of 3Sixty Biomedicine, a privately held, South African biotech company, Boitumelo is spearheading major commercializing of the natural extract-based women's health portfolio. Previously, as Senior Engagement Manager, Boitumelo led various social innovation projects for Systemic Logic.

Boitumelo holds an MBA from Hult University in Shanghai and a BSc in Computer Science from the University of Cape Town.



Pamela Gijima
Operations Associate & Board Secretary

Pamela is the Operations Associate at Kgololo Academy and joined the KA team in 2015. When Pamela joined Kgololo Academy, she was a lead grade Pre-R teacher and then moved to a new role of Office Assistant in 2018. In 2019, she was promoted to Operations Associate. Pamela is the proud parent of future Kgololo scholar Unathi, class of 2035, and Lwandle, class of 2040.

In her free time, Pamela enjoys watching reality shows, baking cakes, trying new recipes, and going out to parks with her family. Pamela loves working at Kgololo Academy because she gets the opportunity to grow every day in her profession and challenge her peers to be their best selves.



Financial Statements for the year ending 31 December 2020

Statement of Comprehensive Income (Figures in R)	2020	2019
Revenue	2,666,291	3,228,005
Other income	1,001,722	472,961
Administrative expenses	(211,685)	(249,905)
Other expenses	(3,624,049)	(3,089,914)
Surplus/(deficit) from operating expenses	366,414	(172,988)
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	352,056	(172,988)

Statement of Financial Position (Figures in R)	2020	2019
ASSETS		
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	37,514	69,044
Current assets		
Trade and other receivables	211,130	6,670
Cash and cash equivalents	195,936	51,718
Total current assets	407,066	58,388
TOTAL ASSETS	444,580	127,432
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Equity		
Accumulated surplus	375,952	9,538
Liabilities		
Non-current liabilities		
Loan - Private	375,952	117,894
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	437,303	127,432

Message from the School Principal

I joined Kgololo Academy in 2015 as a Grade R teacher (Grade R is equivalent to Kindergarten). KA opened my eyes to a different world, where teaching does not only focus on academics but on the whole child and also on the personal development of staff. As a member of the Kgololo Academy team, I was introduced to teaching values and building strong relationships with each student.

Teaching at KA was different from what I had experienced in the past. At my previous school, I was used to going to class, finding a ready-made lesson plan, and teaching it. At KA, I learned to craft lesson plans from scratch and ensure that the plans are designed with rigor and contextualised for the scholars in my classroom.

In my first years at Kgololo Academy, I often found myself being completely overwhelmed and anxious about my performance. I was being observed frequently and though Ms. Waahida, who was the principal at that time, shared that I was being observed to help me grow, I struggled to lean into this model of observation and feedback due to past experiences.

In my former teaching post, observations were used as a tool to “catch you” doing something wrong and were not used to support one’s growth. Ms. Waahida’s consistency gained my

trust and I started enjoying the observations. I could not wait for my coach to observe me so that she would provide me with feedback that was moving me from being a good teacher to a great one.

My personal and professional development flourished as I taught at KA. I was being coached weekly and received intensive training with my peers for two hours every Tuesday that focused on the gaps that were observed during classes and other teaching strategies. As a result, my confidence grew; the training set me up for success in the classroom.

In 2017, I applied and was accepted as a fellow into the Instructional Leadership Institute, a highly selective programme that is designed to develop school leaders serving students in low-income communities. As a fellow in this programme, I received more instruction on leading adult training and other strategies that would eventually prepare me to be a school leader.

In 2020, I was promoted to the role of Foundation Phase Principal at Kgololo Academy. Being a school leader brings me so much joy. I feel so fortunate to have the opportunity to do what I love and what I do best every day, which is supporting educators, working closely with scholars and seeing our entire school community grow. My work at KA is a catalyst for the change that I would love to see in our country.

Being the first South African leader for our school

means a lot to me, the scholars, and the team. It reminds us of our own greatness, that at times we forget amidst the challenges that still lie before us. Our team and scholars can look up to me and see themselves and be reminded that there are no limits to what they can achieve.



“At Kgololo Academy we dream, and we live our dreams! To work with such a focused team, pushes me everyday to be the best I can be and serve my scholars with dedication and courage everyday. I really enjoy working with the KA scholars, especially the relationship we have built together. KA is a great environment to be in; the positive energy here is really good. I even have three nieces attending here. They improved academically and the level of their confidence. The KA team encourages our scholars everyday to go after their dreams with everything they have. An opportunity like this doesn’t come very often!”

Nothando Mhlongo, Art Teacher





Our Vision for the Future

Starting Kgololo Academy was a result of frustration. My husband, Thulani Mbatha, and I were extremely frustrated with the fact that children from communities such as Alexandra Township had to go to other areas, several kilometers away from their homes, to have access to a high-quality education. In fact, Thulani went to school in Alexandra; however, when he was in high school, he was on a bus studying with some friends and was discovered by a teacher from the American International School of Johannesburg. That teacher, Mr. Carrow, took an interest in my husband and his friends and eventually offered them a scholarship to the American International School of Johannesburg. This really did change the trajectory of his life, however, the transition to AISJ was bittersweet. In order to take full advantage of the opportunity, Thulani had to move away from his community, his friends, his family and everything that was familiar to him, which no scholar should have to do to access a quality education.

Knowing that so many of his friends, who had the potential to be successful adults, were not “discovered” on an abandoned bus while studying, Thulani and I wanted to create an educational environment where a student does not have to be discovered to have access to a high-quality education.

In addition to the narrative that one has to be discovered to access quality education and that quality education only happens outside of low-income communities, there is also the presumption that a student from poor communities has to be a genius in order to earn the right to receive a world-class education. Thulani wanted to interrupt this narrative as children of all income and ability levels have a right to quality education.

With the birth of our first son Themba, our motivation to create a school of excellence continued to grow. We wanted Themba to attend a school where he would see his beautiful reflection mirrored back to him by skilled and passionate educators. We wanted him to learn in a space where we knew that he would be accepted without question, believed in and pushed to do his best. As Africans living in South Africa, we yearned for a space where our son could develop a strong sense of self and be surrounded by excellence that looked like him. We wanted the same for the children of Alexandra and since that place did not exist, we set out to create it.

Future Plans

Kgololo Academy has been housed at the Methodist Church of Alexandra for seven years and we appreciate the incredible relationship that we have established. As our numbers continue to grow, and as we work to expand to high school, we are working diligently to locate a facility that will meet our present and future needs. To accomplish Kgololo’s expansion, we have developed a facility’s committee and have

identified a potential site. Our aspiration is to build a world-class facility that will complement the world-class education our scholars receive. There is still much to be done before we can build a new space and we look forward to sharing more of our vision with you and also sharing ways in which you can support our work this year.

On behalf of every parent, every teacher, and every scholar at Kgololo Academy, I would like to extend our appreciation. Thank you for your commitment. We hope you will continue walking this journey of inspiring children through education with us.





Thank You

While Kgololo Academy is familiar with change and growth, we have never before operated at speed the Covid - 19 pandemic created. The past two years didn't unfold as any of us could have planned, but we have weathered the storm. Remarkably, we made it happen. We adapted, we transformed and transformed yet again.

According to UNESCO, more than 90% of the global student population was affected by Covid-19 related school closures. We were indeed not exempt from this statistic or the social and digital divide created by the need for rolling lockdowns.

In 2020, Ms Nelisiwe, our current school principal, worked with her team to craft a plan for remote learning to suit the needs of our community. Teachers utilized Whatsapp to send voice notes of themselves teaching content. Teachers then shared student directions alongside student worksheets. Parents became teachers, and scholars worked hard from home to complete their daily assignments.

These achievements were driven mainly by the teachers and the leadership team. The school remained open because of you, the Kgololo Academy friends and family, both new and old. You ensured that we continue providing scholars with access to a world-class education at an accessible cost.

On behalf of every parent, every teacher, and

every scholar at Kgololo Academy, I would like to extend our appreciation. We are grateful for your generosity and your inspired ideas.

Thank you for your commitment. We hope you will continue walking this journey of inspiring children through education with us.





“Kgololo Academy is a catalyst that demonstrates what it means to provide high-quality education for all children irrespective of where they are born or live. I love that all teachers believe in every child at Kgololo Academy. I am proud that my son is getting the foundation he needs to equip him to adapt to the challenge of our rapidly changing society. He is learning how to ask questions, find answers, solve problems, and communicate findings.”

*Thulani Mbatha, Co-Founder and
Kgololo Academy Board Member*

“Every time I step onto the Kgololo Campus grounds, I am reminded that we must have institutions of excellence in black communities. Institutions built by and for those communities, particularly academic institutions and institutions led by black women. Kgololo Academy is one such pillar of excellence. The school exists to provide scholars with access to high-quality education, the courage to dream, and a curiosity that drives the need always to learn. I am immensely proud and privileged to be part of this team.”

*Boitumelo Sebambo,
Kgololo Academy Board Member*



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