



PROJECTS 2021

SANSCAPE / BUSINESS ACADEMY



Preface

The success stories of the three projects contained in this report (publication) have been made possible through the gracious sponsorship of Sandra and the Sanscape Team.

The projects initiated this year have had a significant impact on the lives of an estimated 2500 individuals in the Bochabela Village in Qwaqwa, Eastern Free State; brought joy to 30 historically disadvantaged children in the Genadendal village near Greyton, and empowered the three owners of a small catering business in Gugulethu, Cape Town to grow their business to new heights.

Business Academy was the service provider that spearheaded these projects. Their vision and passion towards the upliftment of historically disadvantaged communities combined with their success in training and coaching small entrepreneurial businesses, have made them a suitable and trustworthy partner for these projects. In addition to the above-mentioned projects, the Sanscape sponsorship further allowed for the development of learning material on the Business Academy Online Campus.

The focus of the projects was to help people identify the challenges and needs which they share and to discover and optimise the resources that they already have. It required promoting knowledge, skill, confidence, and the capacity to act together to deal directly with issues they think are important and grow the relationships between the various stakeholders they deal with.

The feedback confirms that the team's endeavours strengthened organisations and leadership within communities; facilitated social and economic change; and promoted increased participation and involvement of various stakeholders. Most of the work was done by the beneficiaries of the sponsorship and they need to be commended for their vision and dedication throughout the process.

Content



BOCHABELA VILLAGE TRANSFORMATION PROJECT	01
SMJ CATERING & EVENTS PROJECT	07
GENADENDAL ART PROJECT	14
ABOUT SANSCAPE	19
ABOUT BUSINESS ACADEMY	20
PROJECT TEAM	21

Bochabela Village Transformation Project

The Bochabela village is one of forty-nine villages located at the foot of the picturesque Sephokong / Qwaqwa mountain in the town of Qwaqwa in the Eastern Free State. The town lies between Harrismith and Golden Gate Highlands National Park which is listed as one of the most spectacular natural heritage sites in South Africa. Bochabela is the village closest to the University of the Free State, Qwaqwa Campus and accommodates over a thousand students in private student housing facilities in the community.

There are approximately 240 households with an average of six people per household. According to a 2019 survey conducted by the village council, the village has an unemployment rate of 90% and most of the residents depend on social grants for a living.

Mofumahadi Mamotebang (Mpho), Chief Tsolo Mopeli's wife, encountered the services of Business Academy during a Management Development Course that she attended.

Her experience with the programme and the prospect of seeing its impact on her community motivated her to approach the facilitator with the request to assist their leadership in transforming the village and meet the socio-economic needs of their community.

The gracious sponsorship from Sanscape then enabled Business Academy to respond to their call and they were assigned a qualified coach to guide them towards their vision of transformation.

Chief Tsolo holds a law degree and is currently pursuing recognition as an advocate of customary law. Mpho, a teacher by trade, works alongside her husband and together they make a formidable team with the drive and commitment to improve the overall quality of life for their community.



Situation

During the last quarter of 2020 Business Academy engaged with Chief Tsolo to determine the needs and challenges experienced within the village. This process led to the design of a coaching blueprint that outlined some clearly defined outcomes that would ultimately lead to the desired change envisaged by Chief Tsolo and his leadership.

At the launch of this project the village has not had a constant supply of running water for a period of six years. The residents depend on municipal water tankers that deliver water once fortnightly. Resources within the community were underutilised and small industrial activities were operational within residential areas. The vacated student accommodation, due to the global pandemic forcing the country in lockdown, robbed the village from the normal hustle and bustle of student life and made it seem tranquil against the mountainous backdrop.



Objectives

The first phase of the transformation process started with the leadership identifying objectives that would address the immediate needs of the community.

The objectives needed to meet two criteria namely change the day-to-day living conditions within the village and, secondly, create economic activity for community members that could lead to employment or entrepreneurial opportunities. Based on these criteria, objectives were outlined as follows:

- Establishing a recycling facility addressed a number of issues in the village while simultaneously allowing widespread participation

- Establishing economic activity with the potential of facilitating widespread participation from community members in entrepreneurship
- Providing training to community members on nature conservation with the view to promoting eco-tourism in the area
- Establishing tourist attractions to stimulate the local economy
- Establishing vegetable gardens within the village
- Providing running water to the village community

Project

The thought process guiding the transformation project maintains that all change and subsequent development needs to be initiated, planned, implemented, and managed by representatives from the community. It is the belief of the project management team that only when full ownership is experienced will a community participate in bringing about desired change. The Mopeli couple, along with community representatives, developed a clear vision of how they wanted to improve the village, living conditions and the atmosphere in it. As a result, the following activities took place in the months during coaching:

- Business Academy brought in an architect to assist the leadership in their plans to establish student accommodation that will meet the requirements as set out by the leaders
- The local primary school offered a large tract of land for the first community vegetable garden to be planted and the first seedlings are already showing great promise
- In addition to the Village Council, Chief Tsolo added seven departmental heads to oversee Economic Growth, Social Development, Service Delivery, Education, Tourism, Finance and Arts and Culture
- A tourist centre, consisting of eighteen accommodation units, that have been dormant for the past 21-years, are being revived with its first tenant, a Coffee Shop, already being operational. Funding for the completion of some of the unfinished construction and furnishing of the facilities has been obtained



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- Business Academy facilitated a 2-day strategic planning event in Qwaqwa that enabled the seven new departments to formulate strategies and action plans towards fulfilling their respective goals
- SANParks were approached to offer training to volunteers on nature conservation with a first phase of clearing alien vegetation which resulted in the banks of the river being cleared making room for indigenous trees to be planted
- The newly established village arts and craft department sourced the services of local ladies experienced in the design and manufacturing of African hand-made articles. Space has been allocated to them at the tourism centre and manufacturing will commence shortly
- Business Academy further engaged the help of an NPO specialising in the recycling of plastic materials to provide training to 50 unemployed youth with the view of creating an entrepreneurial enterprise in the recycling industry
- The infrastructure to capture water from the natural spring in the nearby mountain, that collapsed six years ago, are being repaired with additional water tanks being added to provide running water to the village below



Conclusion

The second phase of the coaching and development process came to an end in June 2021 with the foundation of future successes firmly in place. The next phase of the project will be initiated after a final assessment has been conducted, ensuring that all quality standards and commitments of previous tasks have been met and are upheld. This next phase of the transformational process may include some or all of the following milestones:

- The implementation of a well-structured leadership development programme to upskill the council and departmental heads in their respective tasks
- The expansion of the tourism centre to include elements as per the approved village plan
- The establishment of a training facility to accommodate a Business Academy online campus. This is necessary as the current high unemployment rate does not allow potential learners to purchase enough airtime to manage the online lessons on their phones
- The establishment of a virtual business incubator to facilitate the development of small entrepreneurial businesses with the view of alleviating the high unemployment rate in the village



Testimonial

We were looking for someone to give us direction in terms of modern community leadership, and Ntate Dries came at the right time to steer us in the direction we needed to go. He taught us different leadership skills ranging from time management, delegation, to public management. We saw an immediate increase in our self-discipline through the practical tasks that Ntate Dries gave us.

We also saw a revival of community confidence in our leadership as we were more organised and available to assist when needed. Ntate Dries not only spent time with us via digital platforms, but he took time out of his schedule to visit and spent several days with us as a leadership to fully understand our situation and equip us for the road ahead. We appreciate his dedication and willingness to customise his training to fit our unique circumstances. The Bochabela Village Council greatly appreciates the lessons learned and certainly recommends the services of Business Academy through Mr. Dries De Kock. A final word of thanks must go to Sanscape for making this opportunity available through their sponsorship. Our village will be ever grateful to you.

— Chief Tsolo Mopeli



SMJ Catering & Events Project

SMJ Catering is a family business operated by three sisters from a facility based in Gugulethu, Cape Town. Their story started many years before the sisters, Wendy, Zanele and Zine, came together to launch SMJ Catering in 2020. The girls grew up in a home where both parents were successful entrepreneurs striving to build a better life for their four daughters.

Their mom Buyiswa Fulumeni, put the girls through school with profits made from the tuckshop run from their garage at home. Her famous fish recipe was the main attraction and became so popular in the community that she not only managed to sustain the family with the income, but also made renovations to the house and added rooms for the girls, which she later rented out when the girls left.

Wendy, the oldest of the three partners, relocated to George in 2009 and spent several years there where she first converted her home into a Hair Salon and when that did not yield the returns she desired, turned it into student accommodation where she took care of fourteen students.

Wanting to hone her skills as a business owner, Wendy enrolled at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology where she is one module away from obtaining a National Diploma in Entrepreneurship.

Chef Zanele, as she is commonly known, has built up extensive experience working for several restaurants including a 1- year stint in Texas in the United States of America during 2018 – 19 where she functioned as the Lead Line Chef. On her return she worked for De Beers Golf Park Empact until she was retrenched due to the pandemic that took the world by storm.

Zine, the millennial, heads up the marketing at SMJ. She obtained a National Diploma in Marketing from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and a Diploma Public Relations from UNISA. She was employed by the Western Province Blood Transfusion Service until she resigned in May 2021 to focus her full attention on the growth of SMJ.



Situation

In 2015 the ladies returned from George and found employment in Cape Town. When the pandemic struck in 2020 Zanele fell victim to the virus and was retrenched from her employment. As a means of securing an income for her and her family she started baking – something she had not tried before. This venture turned out to be so successful that it attracted media attention and she featured on the morning breakfast show Espresso.

It was during this time that the sisters came together with the view of taking their 15-year hobby and experience in cooking and establishing a catering and events company and so SMJ Catering & Events was born. The letters, SMJ, is an abbreviation of Sizalwa ngooMadiba nooJambase, the clan names of their father and mother. The words translated means being born by these two clans.

The family has a rich cultural background and the ladies wanted to incorporate their ancestors in the name of their company as a sign of honour and respect to them.



Objectives

The objectives were quickly identified and set out for the initial phase of the development. This process included the following:

- Setting up a fully functional kitchen
- Establishing each of the role players in their areas of responsibility
- Developing unique strategies for each of their market segments
- Developing and launching products for each of their segments



Project

The first coaching session between the SMJ Partners and Dries from Business Academy took place virtually due to the country wide level 3 lockdown. At the time the organisation had no structure with no role definition or allocation. Relationships were strained due to everyone being in each other's space and confusion reigned. Markets had not yet been defined and suitable products had not been decided upon and no targets or records had been considered.

The preparation of meals took place in mom's kitchen and then transported to the client's location. Risk factors were high and income low. The ladies knew instinctively that radical change was required to establish the business, and they were keen to start the process. During the first session in February 2021, they formulated a coaching blueprint that would map the coaching journey for the months to come.

Chef Zanele was already a fulltime staff member with both Wendy and Zine in the employment of other entities. With divided loyalties came divided time allocations which did not favourably coincide with expectation. This brought about unnecessary conflict which needed to be curbed early.



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The SMJ Team managed to secure township funding to purchase the initial confectionery equipment and plans were discussed to move from mom's kitchen to mom's garage – converting the garage into a kitchen.

Construction started soon after and on 21 March 2021 the first meals were served from the fully functional industrial kitchen. The partners realised that role definition and allocation came almost naturally as each individual already had the inclination to fulfil certain functions.

Once areas of responsibility were unpacked everyone had the confidence to play their respective part and harmony set in. Target markets have been identified and strategies formulated to effectively address the requirements within each segment.

Product and service offerings have been clearly defined complete with calculations to meet the projected sales targets.



Conclusion

SMJ Catering and Events has already become a sought-after brand in the community and in the broader Cape Town area. The commitment of the partners to work together towards mutually agreed upon goals, accommodating each other's personalities, and fulfilling their respective roles are commendable.



Testimonial

In our business, we had no formal structure and had issues with communication and working together as sisters. From a business operations viewpoint, we had not asked the right questions to move our business forward. Although we had some of our own ideas, we lacked the perspective to think ahead. Then Coach Dries came along.

During the coaching process we were confronted with some tough questions which were very necessary and that made us realise we were ill-equipped for business. Some of these questions required research which contributed greatly to our learning experience.

The coaching process turned communication into a necessary business tool and has helped me become more motivated and focused on what needed to get done. The coaching methods used were extremely educational and inspirational and I found the information regarding business finance particularly beneficial. The various assignments were very educational and necessary to develop our thinking skills in order to operate a successful business.

Coach Dries is the most attentive coach that listens as much as he talks. During our group coaching sessions, he has been patient with each of us individually. He provided just enough information as he felt could come in handy which is exceptional of him. He is a great motivator and educator, always encouraging you to keep pushing forward. Thank you, Sanscape, for making it possible to be coached and establish our business.

— Zine Fulumeni



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Prior to us having a coach, we had no external person guiding us on the various roles we had to fulfil in the business. We were just working and had no clear indication on our roles and responsibilities. When Business Academy came along, it was more than just coaching. Our coach believed in us and he was always positive reminding us that we have something beautiful and we must work hard to create experiences that people would not forget. The coaching process helped us to really see our strengths and weaknesses. It showed us how we could work through our differences and maximise our individual skills.

We learned how to embrace each other weaknesses through the discussions we had with our Coach. He allowed us to voice our fears and always encouraged us to value relationships both inside and outside of the business. Working with Coach Dries has been a blessing and we would always remind ourselves of the lessons we have learned in the sessions. I would recommend Coach Dries because he hit the right topics and he challenges you not to limit yourself especially when he sees that you have something excellent. His approach is so motivating, and you can see that he has been doing this for years. It is comforting to be coached by someone who understands the ups and downs of starting and operating a business. I personally would advise any person who venture into business to get a coach that could journey with you and share your challenges and your excitements.

Dries is born for coaching and I regard him an excellent coach. He is always willing to empower and share his knowledge and experience yet balanced by pointing out both positives and negatives. Thank you, Sanscape, for making this possible. You helped make SMJ Catering a winning entity that is going to be embraced by generations to come as a family business.

— Wendy Fulumeni



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Prior to the coaching experience I was not aware of how different personalities impacted on a business venture. As sisters and business partners we were constantly arguing and missing vital information in our communication. We tried to solve our issues by calling meetings, yet it never really seemed to work and certainly did not make us more effective.

If we did not get coaching our business would not have been here now and we probable would have been seeking fulltime employment. Initially my concerns were that the coaching would not work as we did the coaching sessions virtually due to the global pandemic affecting business throughout our country. However, not only did the sessions change the way we engaged in business, but our communication greatly improved.

Dries' approach is straightforward, and he truly has our business' best interest at heart. The financial insights added most value to the experience for me although I still have so much more to learn. I would recommend coaching to each and every young business. They most certainly will not regret the experience. The financial investment from Sanscape made the future happen for us. Thank you, Sanscape.

— Zanelle Fulumeni



Genadendal Art Project

This project took place in a small village called Genadendal, which means "Valley of Grace", located 5 kilometers outside of Greyton, in the Western Cape. This interesting and historic village of Genadendal boasts the oldest Moravian mission station in Africa, with Church buildings and a School that dates back to 1738.

In 1838 the first Teachers' Training College in South Africa was built there. Genadendal also opened the first guest house and pharmacy, and in 1830 it had one of the best public libraries at the Cape Province. Genadendal flourished until the end of the nineteenth Century. However, in the 1860's, when factories started mass production, people turned away from the hand-crafted items Genadendal was known for. Some of the residents left the Village and headed to the City in search of work. In 1926 the Department of Education closed the Teachers' Training College. Sadly, this once vibrant community, with its 3500 registered occupants, has become a forgotten, remote, and underdeveloped Village.

The project manager, Leandre, identified L.R Schmidt Primary School as uniquely positioned to benefit from the arts project. Mr. Simon Speelman, the Principal at the school, was elated about the project and the opportunities it offered to the learners. He mentioned that opportunities such as this are not readily available to the learners in the area.

Most of the children grew up in single parent families and often under difficult circumstances. As a result, teachers have to do their level best just trying to keep learners in school and out of mischief.

Luandri, an artist by trade, described the project as follows: "What a privilege to reach out to these children. Everyone needs a role model to look up to and to show them what can be achieve through creative thinking. It is so important to teach young children creative skills and seeing how their art reflects what they think and feel. Creative activities such as these are known to foster mental growth in children, building confidence to try out new ideas, and create different ways of thinking and solving problems."



Objectives

The objectives were quickly identified and set out for the initial phase of the development. This process included the following:

- Setting up a clean and productive environment conducive for teaching and creating
- Conducting creative art sessions for the learners
- Providing the children with the necessary art materials to execute the project
- Teaching the children various fine art skills through the medium of drawing, painting and sculpting
- Providing concept ideas for the attendees to think about and work on
- Setting an environment of creative thinking and problem solving



Project

The art project was conducted over three weekends at the L.R Schmidt Primary School in Gendental, where thirty learners engaged in a structured creative thinking and skills-based development programme. The first course focussed on developing drawing skills.

Elements that were demonstrated included the various techniques on marking, using different pencil gradients to achieve a three-dimensional effect and paying attention to shapes and finer detail.

The learners playfully engaged by drawing without looking at the page, only focusing on the object in front of them. In this way the young artists pay attention to what they are seeing rather than what they are drawing. This method teaches the mind to focus on one thing before shifting to another.

The second step was to look at the page and the object all together, but without lifting their hand from the page while drawing. This time around the mind will focus on multiple things, such as looking at the object, looking at the page and creating what you see. It also forces the artist to look at different perspectives and how to complete a shape which the mind is unfamiliar with.

The final step paid attention to becoming aware of different gradients. The young artists were challenged to look at the shape and form of an object and become aware of the different tonal values. This exercise enhances their focus on the finer details and allow them the creative freedom to explore what they see and how they see it.



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The second weekend of the project was all about painting. A well-known artist from Greyton, Mariana Emslie, came in to surprise the learners and co-facilitated the session. She engaged the learners in a fun-filled creative process while sharing a variety of painting techniques. Again, the concept of free expression through the medium of painting was emphasised. Allowing them to experience the value of colour mixing the paint seemed particularly popular. The colour mixing process seems magical in a way while simultaneously teaching the science behind primary, secondary and tertiary colours. Learners had the freedom to express their emotions through colour and to explore the meaning behind it.

The final session introduced our young artists to the three-dimensional world of sculpting. Although there are different materials for sculpting, the facilitator chose the very safe option of air-drying clay for the learners to create their masterpieces. No topic was given for them to work with, and Luandri allowed them to use their own initiative in creating something from the block of clay provided to each one. This added even more fun to the programme as the learners sat outside and started to let their creative juices flow.

Luandri reported that she wanted to see what designs they would come up with and, in the end, was pleasantly surprised by their craftsmanship. They understood the process of creative thinking and which techniques to use to get the desired outcomes. The result of the arts project was thirty learners with a new level of confidence in their ability to create something – a valuable skill they will use over and over again.



Conclusion

The value to these learners was so much more than just creating something, it was about thinking in a different way, looking at things from different perspectives and solving problems in a creative manner.

This project brought so much joy to both the lives of these children and our facilitator, Luandri. They experienced a world where they could imagine, dream and create something; to see beyond the horizon and creating something with meaning.

In Luandri's words "It touched my heart how the children's faces lit up when they saw colour mixing for the first time, and then used different pencil gradients in a drawing. These youngsters have such natural talent and I hope that they will use the new techniques they have learned to achieve great things. There is so much value in giving children the opportunity to learn creative thinking and problem-solving techniques." Thank you, Sanscape, for helping to bring joy, hope and a different perspective to the lives of thirty young artists-to-be.



About Sanscape

Sanscape was registered as a Company in October 1992 and began in a small builder's yard in Cape Town. Over the years their growth necessitated moving to larger premises to cope with the on-going demand and in 2005 they left their rented premises and purchased their own warehouse facility in Parow Industria, Cape Town. They have created an efficient logistics network that allows them to deliver nationwide in South Africa and to neighbouring countries with the speed and efficiency demanded by their customers. Sanscape's focus has and continues to be signing on agencies and brands specialising in horticultural and agricultural products with exclusive distribution rights to sell to an extensive customer base, who they have developed special relationships with over the years. Their passion for the industry and their ability to nurture and grow firm and long-lasting partnerships has established them as one of the major distributors within their market space. Sanscape's success is founded on the special relationships with their customers who have supported them through the years.



About Business Academy

Business Academy is a cutting edge, Seta Accredited training and performance enhancement centre with a proactive approach to people and organisational development. They focus on providing relevant and professional training and coaching interventions based on the demands of the current world of work. Established in 2003, the organisation prides itself in the measurable results produced in the workplace which allowed for strong credentials and referrals over the years. Their philosophy, that spending on developing staff no longer being just an expense but an investment that would yield positive results to an organisation's bottom line, has impacted on many business and non-profit entities. Testimonials from clients indicate that the interactive approach to training and development created experiences that allowed delegates to make discoveries and connections that significantly increased their personal and work performance. Business Academy has segmented their market into four clearly defined focus areas to deliver tailored products to their clients. They specialise in Leadership Development; Entrepreneurship Development; Soft Skills Development; and empowering and transforming the Education Industry. Business Academy offers both credit-bearing and non-credit-bearing learning programmes customised to the client's specific needs and agreed outcomes. Clients have the choice between in-house or hosted training interventions.



Dries de Kock

Dries is driven by excellence and results. He has more than 30 years' experience in Management and Leadership development and has a track record of operating successfully at senior levels with clients and organisations. As a Life & Business Coach, he is passionate about establishing entrepreneurs and influencing education in South Africa.



Sandra Armstrong

Sandra came to South Africa in 1990 from Ireland, where she became the founder and owner of the Sanscape Group of companies in 1992. Sanscape provides a specialised brand of products to the horticultural and agricultural industry. Sandra has developed special relationships with clients, suppliers over the years and have extended this relationship in funding and developing social responsibility projects where it is needed the most, with the goal of making a difference in other peoples lives.



Laundri Emslie

Luandri is a fine artist and graphic designer, born in Cape Town, South Africa. She studied four years in Stellenbosch, where she acquired her Bachelor degree in Art. She has more than 7 years' experience as a fine artist. During her years as an artist, she accomplished and held a few exhibitions, taught art classes for children and further obtained advance skills as a graphic designer for SME's.



Johan Heyns

Johan is a legal advisor and practicing advocate. He has more than 20 years' experience as a human resource and legal practitioner and has vast experience in labour law disputes which include organisational rights, retrenchments, interpretation of collective agreements, unfair labour practice/dismissals, mutual interest disputes and strikes. He has also acted as a Bargaining Council chairperson and Negotiator.

