

## JGT update May 2019

### Offering a new Formula for the Future South Africa.

Almost halfway during our second year of existence, we would like to start our update by sharing some quotes of respected views on JGT.

***“What you are doing is the answer for South Africa.”***

Chief Executive of SACAI and Curriculum expert of SATU,

Dr Gustav Niebuhr

***“Your project is a disruptor in the true sense and I want to put Jakes Gerwel Technical School in the same category as innovations such as Uber, Takealot and Discovery Health, but with a major social impact on a marginalised society.”***

Mr André Thops, chairperson of the Prestige Agriworkers Association of the Western Cape

***“I call this the miracle school.”***

Western Cape MEC of Education,  
Minister Debbie Schäfer

***“Your model could change the trajectory of our country.”***

Me Khayakazi Namfu, Programme director for public

Whilst we are in the ring side seats marvelling at what has been created in our midst, we ponder about the possible bigger impact of this.



We realise basic education is due for an upgrade worldwide. In South Africa, most schools offer a curriculum which include great foundational subjects for tertiary university studies. However, most learners do not go to university. The reality is that of every ten learners at school in South Africa, six drop out on their way to Grade 12. Of the four learners completing school with a Grade 12 certificate, chances are good that up to three of them will do job searching with subjects of little value and they will not study further after school. Only one out of ten may go to university. Thus, basic education is custom made for only 10% of our children, whilst 90% spend 12 years and more on school benches, yet are not developed according to their potential. They are often judged to be substandard, like the classic wrong of judging how good a fish is at climbing trees. At JGT we develop every single learner that walks through our school gates according to their giftedness, interest and potential. With schools like JGT the future economy can be built with quality and efficiency. It may be time to formulate a new future.

Here are some reasons why we believe schools like JGT will heal the community, build the economy and restore South Africa:

1. JGT is a micro cosmos of the South Africa we all want to see. It is a space where the rich and the poor, the academic achiever and the gifted artisan all live and grow together and all are valued. JGT is a school for everyone in and around Bonnievale. It is an inclusive, no fee school of excellence.
2. JGT has the backing and involvement of the whole community. There is sacrificial commitment to this vision and deep unity has been forged in the process.
3. When a learner is enrolled we don't ask questions about his/her past. We believe in a new present, a new future. We take in even illiterate learners and ones who have dropped out of school years before. If they are one of our community it is better to have them under our wing than out there somewhere without hope.
4. At JGT the priority is restoration of self-worth and finding their identity. They need to discover their value. The feeling of worthlessness creates a very low invisible ceiling. We inspire them to rise above their circumstances, the things of their past or the limitations in their thinking. We see them all as you would see someone at a top private school with excellent prospects. Who knows who is the next Nelson Mandela or the next Jakes Gerwel?
5. As much as we offer aspirational vision and encouragement, we deal with the realities they face and mop up behind us. We go after them and find them when they lose their way. We deal with situations of drug overdose, rape and much sadness as any good parent would care.
6. JGT sets a high standard for their staff. The principal is an experienced leader. We appoint teaching staff with a calling on their lives and we search for teachers who can identify with our learners. JGT educators need to be inspirational, they need to be role models and are deployed as mentors. Every learner is in a mentorship group

with a mentor who coaches and cares. Showing learners good character and excellence is better than teaching them good character and excellence.

7. JGT has an atmosphere of respect and learning. The facilities are modern and spacious and we invest in appointing extra personnel so class sizes remain small enough for quality education. It may never be perfect, but considering all, we have made giant strides in school discipline and even small things matter. The discipline of JGT could be described as very firm, yet very supportive.
8. The JGT curriculum is designed for everyone. We have a zero drop out target. Not one of our children should fall through the cracks. The JGT curriculum is entrepreneurial, less abstract, with practical subjects aligned with scarce skills for ready-to-work employability. Ten years from now all these learners must be in a position to care for their families and contribute to the economy by being on a career path or an entrepreneur. From the academic achiever who aspires to become a professional engineer, to the practical handyman, there is a route for everyone. JGT is three schools in one, a mainstream technical school, with subjects like civil, electrical and mechanical technology, an agricultural school with subjects like agricultural management practices, agricultural technology and consumer studies and a school of skills, with skills like civil maintenance, welding and food production.
9. At JGT priority is given to character development. It doesn't help you reach distinction in matric, but you lose the plot one day because you mess up relationships, can't be trusted, or do not get up when you fall. We invest in inner strength.
10. JGT has inclusive, expert governance and there is a value driven culture of accountability. Our teachers are dedicated, present, on time, work as a team and go the extra mile.



### **Launching secure citizens**

When our learners step out of school we want to launch them as secure young citizens, young world changers of character on a sure career path.

Crime research shows that although many young people suffer during childhood and teenage years, it is during the age of 15 to 25 years when most lives derail. We believe this has much to do with the 60% drop-out rate of schools in South Africa. Imagine how the vision of schools like JGT around South Africa could solve the challenges and cost of unemployment, government grants, social services, police services, justice system, security

services, medical services and correctional services. At JGT we offer hope to everyone and its hope will heal broken communities.

We realise JGT has started to chart blue waters. This may well be the beginning of something that could change the future of South Africa. We are humbled, as we were simply acting in faith. We did what was needed to heal our local community. Now it seems to have a ripple effect beyond our thinking. It may be a formula to shape a future South Africa.

However, whilst the vision and its possible impact become very broad now, we are still most excited about what happens on individual level. At JGT the statistics and brokenness have individual names and faces. We have come to love these youngsters and we do not want to lose one. It is our passion to see hope return in their eyes, to see them finding vision. We believe in them. We respect them. We trust them. They are the future.



### **Facilities for entrepreneurial learning**

The JGT technical workshops and training kitchens are being equipped now and there is excitement with each installation. The facilities for the agricultural subjects are taking shape and JGT will be a top learning facility for future food security. Learners will be taught both commercial food production on farm land and how to become a food producing entrepreneur on a small plot of land or rocky backyard. For this they learn modern organic practices, efficient utility of resources and the use of renewable energy while the business and entrepreneurial principles are coached using hydroponics, aquaponics, sheep feed lot and wine grape growing. In March our facilities suffered a flash flood which caused damage and much cleaning up to do, yet in the process the learners learned valuable lessons of risk, insurance, precautions, nature and the discipline of fixing things immediately.





### **The final phase of construction**

In July we are commencing the final building phase to create the much-needed school hall, 4 more workshops, 19 more classrooms and ablution facilities. This will enable us to accommodate the almost 1200 Bonnievale learners that would be in need of a high school in 3 years from now. The total projected cost of this final phase is R28 million and we are already 75% funded. We need another R7m to complete this miracle. Thanks to the ongoing commitment of many of you and the collaboration with the WCED, phases 1, 2 and 3 of construction was completed without any loan, without any lottery money and without making any creditor wait for payment. We want to invite anyone who believes in this vision to help heal South Africa to contact us if it is in your heart to make a contribution. The only permanent investment is an investment in people.

