

The right to education is pivotal to creating an inclusive South Africa

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On this Human Rights Day on 21 March 2019, the Adopt-a-School Foundation (AAS), a partner entity of Cyril Ramaphosa Foundation (CRF), draws attention to the rights of children to quality education.



It is estimated that one fifth of children are orphaned and vulnerable, and at least 64.5% of children live in low-income households and are impacted on by the cycle of poverty. Children also experience food insecurity, struggle to access basic educational resources and services such as sanitation and water, and are exposed to high levels of violence. - South African Human Rights Commission.

While everyone has the right to basic education in South Africa, the fulfilment of this right is challenged by poor standards, factors of social and economic inequality, and exclusion. Through a holistic, inclusive model called Whole School Development, Adopt-a-School aims to ensure the rights of children through education and address the academic, infrastructural, social and security environments in adopted schools such that they are conducive to teaching and learning. AAS implements this inclusive model at 497 schools across the country.

"As a result of this holistic approach we are able to meaningfully address the obstacles that stand in the way of quality education provision. Children's needs and rights are critical to observe and require great accountability," said Steven Lebere, AAS Executive Director.

"The prevalence of school-based violence and sexual abuse is also concerning. It impacts the vision of safe, fun learning spaces that schools are meant to be," Lebere continued.

In account of these circumstances, Cyril Ramaphosa Foundation with the implementation support of Adopt-a-School has since September 2017 piloted the Thari Programme in Botshabelo in the Free State and in Diepsloot, Gauteng. The programme is aimed at providing psychosocial support services and safe spaces at schools for vulnerable children, youth and women. It empowers schools and communities with a safe environment that is inclusive, free from violence, academically effective and gender-sensitive - while promoting health and well-being for all.

For CRF and AAS, overcoming South Africa's central challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality through education both promotes and is dependent on an inclusive and empowered society in which all fully and equally enjoy all

human rights and freedoms.

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Adopt-a-School Foundation is a non-profit organisation that supports the creation and enhancement of a conducive learning and teaching environment in disadvantaged schools.

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