



Schools Improvement Initiative

Fostering partnerships ■ Harnessing resources ■ Improving schools



Why we need a Schools Improvement Initiative

The crisis in South African public schools has a direct impact on universities. Many learners who attend township and rural schools perform poorly in the matric examinations, which results in relatively few of them qualifying for university entrance. In order to break this cycle of under-achievement and failure, the quality of education will have to improve dramatically. This is a monumental task and one that needs all stakeholders to get involved. This is why the Schools Improvement Initiative (SII), based at the University of Cape Town, came into being.

What we do

Through the SII, UCT engages practically, developmentally and critically with the problems of schooling in this country. With a strong focus on interdisciplinary collaboration, we draw on university-wide resources and initiatives - including student organisations. We are also committed to forging links and working in partnership with education-related groups outside of the university, including the local education departments particularly Metropole East Education Department.

Where we focus our efforts

The SII focuses its interventions on schools in the township of Khayelitsha in the Cape Town Metropole. In addition to working in a range of areas with six partner schools (three primary and three secondary schools), the SII works across all 20 secondary schools in Khayelitsha through the 100UP project, which helps learners bridge the gap into university.

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN				
School of education-based engagement		Broader institutional engagement		External engagement
OBJECTIVE 1 Teacher professional & school organisational development	OBJECTIVE 2 Professional practice schools	OBJECTIVE 3 Staff engaged scholarship students volunteerism & service learning	OBJECTIVE 4 University recruitment 100-UP	OBJECTIVE 5 Partnerships & collaborations





Since the first group of Grade 12s matriculated from the programme in 2014, 100-UP has resulted in a threefold increase in annual enrolments from Khayelitsha schools into UCT.

Working with the Western Cape Education Department

With the following objectives in mind, we collaborate with education officials working in Khayelitsha to ensure that our services are offered to schools that will benefit from them most.

1 TEACHER PROFESSIONAL & SCHOOL ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Successful school organisational and teacher professional development lies at the heart of our work. This is located within a broader curriculum and whole-school development approach. To this end, the Schools Development Unit (SDU) and UCT's School of Education run university-certified professional development programmes. Aside from a number of two-year, part-time Advanced Certificates in Teaching (ACTs) a range of short courses have also been developed to meet teachers' professional development needs, particularly as they relate to the new national

curriculum. We also engage in a range of school-based interventions, both at the primary and the secondary level. One example is the Ikwezi Lead Teacher Mathematics and Language project, now in its third year of implementation in the primary schools and closely linked to the Department's District Improvement Plan.

2 PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE SCHOOLS

Working with the School of Education, the SII has implemented a Professional Practice School model in a number of the Khayelitsha primary schools. This has seen a greater level of support offered to student teachers and staff. Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) students complete their Teaching Practice in the partner schools. The SII also collaborates closely with the Faculty of Health Sciences, particularly Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Physiotherapy and Audiology. In each of these disciplines students undertake their practice learning in the SII partner schools.

3 BROADER UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENTS

The SII is committed to interdisciplinary collaboration. It encourages and facilitates a greater level of engagement by a range of UCT initiatives, including student organisations (SHAWCO & Ubunye), in the partner schools. This interdisciplinary collaboration is currently being researched and funded as a three-year National Research Foundation (NRF) Community Engagement Project.

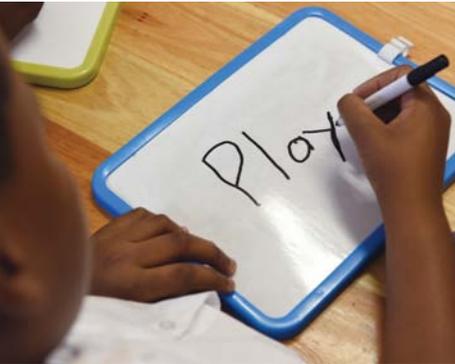
4 UNIVERSITY RECRUITMENT

100-UP is a three-year support programme that focuses on building the academic and life skills of a selected group of 100 school learners (five per school) drawn from all 20 secondary schools in Khayelitsha. The learners are encouraged to pursue degrees in all fields of study at UCT or at one of the neighbouring higher education institutions. A longer-term objective is to use 100-UP to build institutional knowledge and

experience, which can better inform the university's bridging programmes and school-based interventions. Between 2014 and 2016, over 220 Khayelitsha matriculants have entered our institution.

5 PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

The SII works with community-based organisations, such as The Bookery, Nal'ibali and Rotary, to ensure the placement and support of library assistants in the partner school libraries. The SII- COSAT Wellness Centre established in 2015 facilitates a range of services and interventions that reflect its three main pillars: psychosocial wellness; personal & developmental wellness and physical wellness. Psychosocial support is offered to COSAT learners on a daily basis by a Social Worker as well as by third and fourth-year Social Work students from UCT's Department of Social development.



Our Vision

Strong and responsive university-school partnerships contribute positively to long-term change in the classroom, the school and in the broader community.

CONTACT US

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