



A TRANSFORMATIVE TRIP TO eGOLI

Over the years, SGS Consulting has contributed to the growth and development of community foundations in South Africa, and the Southern African region. Initiative for Community Advancement (ICA) is one of the organisations that SGS is currently supporting. One of the capacity development strategies is SGS hosting organisations in Johannesburg. The ICA staff spent a week with the SGS team and a number of key stakeholders. Below are some of their reflections.

Paving the Way for ICA's Future

By Jeremy Maarman, Executive Director of ICA



As the Executive Director of the Initiative for Community Advancement (ICA), I had the privilege of embarking on a transformative trip to Johannesburg. Alongside three colleagues, we engaged in exposure visits to two esteemed donors, the CS Mott Foundation, and the Southern Africa Trust (SAT), and were fortunate enough to encounter an individual investor who showed tremendous enthusiasm and interest in the work of ICA. Among the highlights of our journey was the encounter with an individual investor whose genuine interest in ICA's work touched our hearts. Her passion and belief in our mission was evident, and her support served as a powerful reminder of the significance of our efforts. This process was guided by Shaun Samuels of SGS Consulting, who led us through a strategic review process to chart the path of ICA's development over the next three to five years. Our visit not only served as a tremendous learning experience but also provided us with practical exposure, enabling us to effectively advocate for the noble mission of ICA.



Yolisa Lawrence (second from left), Program Coordinator with the ICA team

The week spent in Johannesburg was undeniably one of the most memorable learning experiences for our team at ICA. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to SGS Consulting for their guidance, support, and expertise throughout the strategic review process. Shaun Samuels displayed exceptional leadership, skillfully navigating us through key areas of development and consideration for the Community Foundation's future growth. Under his guidance, we gained valuable insights and honed our vision for ICA's upcoming ventures.

Meeting the donors and an investor in person allowed us, as a team, to strengthen our relationships, share our mission, and convey the positive impact of ICA's work in the communities we serve. The opportunity to engage directly was both humbling and empowering, reinforcing our commitment to creating meaningful change.

As we returned to the Bergrivier Municipal area, we carried with us a wealth of knowledge, insights, and newfound inspiration. The exposure gained during our trip has positioned us favorably to craft a comprehensive and impactful 5-year strategy and implementation plan. We are eager to implement the lessons learned and forge ahead with renewed determination to empower communities, create positive change, and make a lasting difference in the lives of those we serve.

Promising Horizons

By Lauren Philander
Community Impact Coordinator

In the heart of Johannesburg, a transformative voyage took place as we embarked on a work trip that left a memorable mark. As a Program Coordinator, I had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the profound impact of our work on the community by reviewing our work and sharing what we do with others, as well as the unwavering commitment of our generous donors and stakeholders. This enlightening experience has opened new doors of opportunity and excitement for ICA's future.

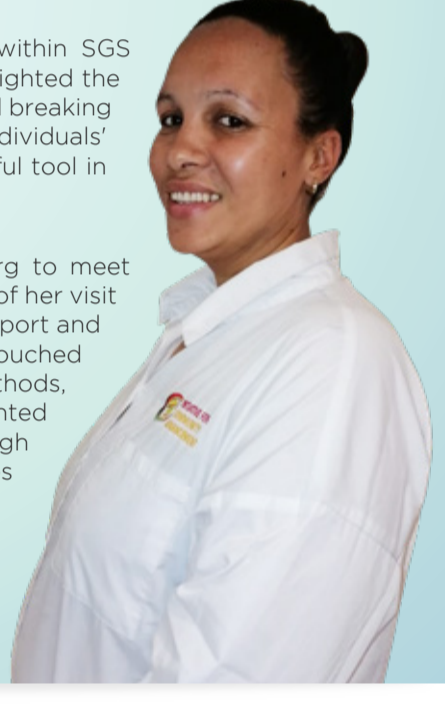
The purpose of our journey was twofold: to engage with our esteemed donors and to unveil the far-reaching impact of ICA's initiatives on the vibrant and diverse communities of the Bergrivier area. The trip presented a unique occasion to showcase the tangible changes that the organization has been making, with the help of the dedicated partners, in uplifting the lives of those in the Bergrivier area.

Power of Education for Socio-Economic Progress

By Norma Erumas, Affiliated Fund Development Coordinator

Troshini Naidoo is the Programmes Manager of the Education portfolio within SGS Consulting. Norma reflects that in their engagement with Troshini, she highlighted the transformative role of education in driving socio-economic development and breaking the cycle of poverty. She emphasized the importance of education in shaping individuals' lives and its potential to uplift communities, specifically, how it acts as a powerful tool in driving socio-economic progress.

Troshini, subsequent to our visit, traveled to Piketberg to meet with the local Secondary School in June 2023. The idea of her visit emerged from our discussions to assist ICA to offer support and value to the school. The areas of priority that were touched on during the visit, included infrastructure, teaching methods, resources, and student support systems. Troshini highlighted possible areas of support that could be addressed through collaboration and learning from similar support processes unfolding in the country. Collaboration with the local school's Alumni group was posited as key to supporting the school. A strong emphasis was made on the need for initiatives to support reading among learners.



STRATEGIC MOVES TO HELP ADDRESS THE SCOURGE OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Kgaogelo Mashiloane led the session on social justice, and subsequently visited the Bergriver Motivated Women (BMW) organization in Piketberg.

Kgaogelo, is the project manager of the SGS Resource Hub, a Ford Foundation-funded programme dedicated to supporting and capacitating grassroots social justice organisations in Southern Africa. She spearheaded a strategy session with us as ICA staff during our visit, focusing on identifying and mobilizing resources to support marginalized communities and address local social justice challenges, particularly gender-based violence. The session emphasized the importance of investing in key resources, such as financial aid, education, healthcare, legal assistance, and community development programs, to empower individuals and uplift communities.



"Social justice lies at the core of any transformative endeavor. We must ensure that no one is left behind and that every individual has the opportunity to lead a meaningful life and contribute positively to society."

In continuation of her commitment to creating a just society, Kgaogelo visited us and the organisation BMW in Piketberg. BMW is dedicated to tackling the pervasive issue of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in the communities, a top priority area of support for the organization. They have been working tirelessly to implement measures to eradicate violence, and provide support for survivors.

"Gender-Based Violence is a grave concern that demands immediate attention. Together, we can create a safer environment and support survivors on their journey towards healing and empowerment."

The visit to BMW was to explore how it can help to advance the intent of ICA to extend its Hoopvonds programmatic footprint to address GBV in nine towns by possibly working towards accessible safe houses, and improving victim friendly rooms in five police stations.

The visit to Sparrow FET College was a remarkable experience

By Behance Julies, Administration Officer

Sparrow FET College is an award-winning skills development training solutions partner, specialising in artisan skills and disability solutions. One of the highlights of the visit was observing the incredible accomplishments the College has achieved over the years. It provided an opportunity to witness firsthand the positive impacts they made through technical skills training.

The exposure visit to Sparrow FET College offered us an intimate understanding of the challenges faced by youth in Gauteng, and the remarkable progress made through its interventions. From education initiatives that empower the youth to technical training programs that equip youth with valuable skills, we observed lives being transformed, hope being reignited, and dreams being realized. This experience inspired us to do so much more in our own communities.



Among the many impressions made during the visit, the passion and dedication of Melanie Malema, stood out. Melanie's commitment to transforming lives through technical skills education was truly inspiring. Her unwavering determination and the impact she has made on the lives of countless individuals served as a motivation to consider similar initiatives in our own community.

Overall, the visit offered inspiration, and a potential roadmap for establishing a similar endeavor in Piketberg (Pietie Fredericks Centre), with the ultimate goal of empowering youth, and contributing to the development of the community. The Pietie Fredericks Youth Centre is an emerging skills development centre, and our intent is to explore how we could emulate Sparrow.

The linkage between Sparrow and the Pietie Fredericks Youth Centre could be one of collaboration and mutual support in the effort to empower and uplift the youth in our communities. Here are a few possible ways these two entities could be linked:

1. Shared Resources	2. Mentorship and Guidance	3. Joint Community Projects
Sparrow FET College and Pietie Fredericks Youth Centre may collaborate by sharing resources and facilities. For example, Sparrow could consider a decentralised training site in Piketberg, or could help to establish the Pietie Fredericks Youth Centre as a bona fide technical skills training centre that offers local market-informed skills training to youth in the West Coast.	Sparrow FET College could provide mentorship and guidance to the youth centre's members who are interested in pursuing technical careers. Experienced instructors or alumni from the school could act as mentors, offering advice and support to young people wanting to join the workforce.	Both institutions could collaborate on community-focused projects that require technical skills. For example, they might work together to renovate a local community centre, demonstrating the practical application of the skills taught at the youth centre in meaningful community initiatives.

Lauren reflects on the flame of innovation that is possible within ICA, and cautions that the work is far from over!

The trip not only solidified our appreciation for the work we do but also sparked the flame of innovation. Exploring opportunities for ICA's evolution, we brainstormed fresh ideas to address emerging challenges and to expand the scope of our impact in the Bergrivier. Collaboration was the buzzword, and the enthusiasm among our team to forge new partnerships was visible. As we departed from the vibrant city of Johannesburg, we carried with us a renewed sense of purpose and passion. The journey gave us the gift of perspective - an understanding that our work extends far beyond mere statistics and figures. It is about the human connection, the stories of resilience and hope, and the unwavering commitment of our stakeholders.

The excitement for ICA's future is Huge! Inspired by the dedication of our donors and stakeholders, we envision a future where the ripple effect of our collective efforts will reach even greater heights. Our work is far from over, and with the support of our community, partners, and the wider public, we are ready to face the challenges ahead with determination and compassion.



ICA staff attended Africa Day celebrations hosted by CAPSI