



www.startingchance.org.za

7th April 2020

Dear Friend of Starting Chance

RE: COVID-19

Greetings to you. We have had many requests from friends of SC to let them know how our schools are doing with the Covid-19 crisis. Thank you for your concern. Our schools are in the informal sector of society and as such many are not registered and have no access to government support. We thought we would like to update you to let you know what action we have taken as a Trust and our thoughts going forward:

- **Our field workers and our Education Coordinator** have been set up to work from home. This has been quite problematic as often network is quite sketchy in the townships and it has not been easy for them. However, we have continued to work as a team. We have virtual meetings twice a week. We have trained our team on how to use google hangouts and it has been a positive and interesting learning time for us as a team. At this point we are still able to pay our team their full salaries and we hope to be able to continue this way.
- We have **our principals and teacher rep team on WhatsApp groups**. We have posted “Hints from Home” which are ideas for parents and teachers as to what they can do at home with their children using recycled waste. We have bi-weekly contact with both groups checking in with how everyone is faring
- We have done **an in depth investigation with our principals of our 9 schools** that are in our full programme, to ascertain whether they have been able to pay salaries. In the township environment, parents pay at the end of the month for the month that has passed. In the event that something happens in the month, e.g. school closes due to Covid-19 and their children don’t get a full month of school, they don’t pay their fees. This has indeed happened with a number of our schools
- **The results of this investigation was as follows:**
 - *The results of this survey showed that the wage bill for the 79 team members across the 9 schools is approximately R250 000/month*
 - *Those schools that are unregistered and receive no subsidy are struggling to obtain fees from parents and consequently have minimal income*
 - *Access to Government subsidies via UIF registration precludes most if not all of our schools from applying because although they have tried to register it has proved too difficult to complete the process*
- In the light of the above we have made the decision to **pay each of the 32 teachers/principals** who did not receive any salary in March a Covid-19 subsidy of R1000 each. This has been paid directly into their bank accounts.

Starting Chance Trust Registration No IT002472/2015
NPO Reg No 164-217 • PBO No 930051444 • VAT Registration No 4450272614

Trustees

Dr Ian Corbett CHAIRMAN Cell: 083 701 9977 ian@startingchance.org.za	Ali Corbett EDUCATION & SECRETARY Cell: 082 491 1171 ali@startingchance.org.za	Belinda Inglis EDUCATION 071 355 4676 belinda@startingchance.org.za	Ken Inglis SHACKTO CHIC 082 809 2879 ken@startingchance.org.za	Carl Nielsen TREASURER Cell: 083 275 6935 carl@startingchance.org.za	Alister Payne EDTECH CONSULTANT Cell: 083 792 6377 alister@startingchance.org.za
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- We have also done a **survey of all our 21 TTinT schools** to ascertain what has happened in their schools.
- **The results were as follows:**
 - *Only 3 schools are registered with the Department of Social Development (DSD)*
 - *19 schools were unable to pay their staff or the principal – in all a total of 88 people were unpaid*
 - *We estimate that the wage bill across the TTinT schools is about R150 000/month*
- In the light of the above, we have **applied for food parcels for all the teachers** in the TTinT schools and 9 hub schools who did not receive any money in March. We await the results of our application and pray we are successful.
- In the event that the South African lock down continues after 16th April, it is almost 100% certain that no fees by parents will be paid to the schools. **This will mean that we have 30 schools with approximately 180 staff all with families and children with no access to food at school, with no salaries in April.** So we are anticipating that 100 to 140 people could be without any income at all. The schools that receive Department of Social Development subsidies, might be able to pay some part of the salary, providing the DSD pay the subsidies.
- This will be a dire situation indeed and we are working hard to find ways to support our schools in April and potentially May as well.

Should anyone feel they would like to support Starting Chance in this quest to try and support staff and their families, please feel free to contact us or donate directly into the account below with the reference Covid_19 and your name or organisation.

- **Starting Chance Trust**
- **First National Bank**
- **Hout bay Branch 250655**
- **Account: 6257 2802 504**
- **OR**
- **Go to the website: <https://www.startingchance.org.za/take-action/>**

Thank you in advance for joining us to support these amazing people in these difficult times.

We will update you again at the end of April but please be assured we are doing our level best to be as supportive as possible.

Kind regards

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Dr Ian Corbett
CHAIRMAN
Cell: 083 701 9977
ian@startingchance.org.za

Ali Corbett
EDUCATION & SECRETARY
Cell: 082 491 1171
ali@startingchance.org.za

Belinda Inglis
EDUCATION
071 355 4676
belinda@startingchance.org.za

Ken Inglis
SHACKTO CHIC
082 809 2879
ken@startingchance.org.za

Carl Nielsen
TREASURER
Cell: 083 275 6935
carl@startingchance.org.za

Alister Payne
EDTECH CONSULTANT
Cell: 083 792 6377
alister@startingchance.org.za