

Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo's Bhelesi Foundation brings hope to Mbumbulu School whose classrooms were destroyed during a recent fire

19 September 2018

There were smiles and cheers all-round as Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo's Bhelesi Foundation announced a sponsorship of R150 000 that will be used to build a multi-purpose hall at Putellos Primary School at Mbumbulu this morning.

The mood was markedly different today, compared to the clouds of smoke and cries of despair that swept through the school's premises in July 2018, when its library and arts centre were gutted by a mysterious fire.

Announcing the sponsorship today, Dr Dhlomo said the Foundation was pleased at the opportunity to make a difference at the school, which he first attended as a little boy in 1965.

Earlier this year, Bhelesi Foundation also donated school uniforms to 100 needy children from the same school.

Today, flanked by Bhelesi Foundation treasurer Ms S'ne Dhlomo, officials from the KZN Department of Education and local community leaders, Dr Dhlomo said: *"This school laid the foundation for who I am today. Unfortunately, I have not come to add on to what already exists, but to replace a building that was burnt down. But we are nevertheless pleased to be making a difference."*

He said the joint donation, from Bhelesi Foundation and the Batho Batho Trust, will cover the costs of building two classrooms which will be double up as an arts centre or hall, as and when required.

"We are grateful for the support we've received, as we plough back to the school that made me who I am today. Through this donation, and our presence at the school, I also wish to stimulate these youngsters, to let them realise that if this school could produce a medical doctor, they too must look up and see that one day they can be good citizens of our country, who'll be ready to contribute."

Dr Dhlomo said there are plans to build tennis and cricket facilities at the school.

School principal Mrs Thenjiwe Mhlongo expressed her heartfelt gratitude on behalf of the school, and entire community.

"We accept this gift with open arms. Things were very tough when the buildings were burnt down. I remember crying, and wondering who we will turn to for help. Little did I know that I when I spoke to Dr Dhlomo about our plight, he would respond so favourably, and act so quickly. We are also very pleased to learn that there are plans to build tennis and cricket facilities at our school. Now our tears have been wiped away. Dr Dhlomo is showing us all that is it important to go back where you've come from...to thank those who've made you, and also find a way to uplift others. We are extremely grateful. I can assure the public that we as educators will produce doctors, nurses and engineers from this school."

Ward Cllr Mbuyiseni Mkhize welcomed the donation, describing it as a major boost for the school and community at large. The building will be completed in November 2018.



Dr Dhlomo with, from left, Squmfe Mkhize[induna]; Mbuyiseni Mkhize[Cllr]; S'nethemba Dhlomo, Thenjiwe Mhlongo[Principa], Sbu Mngadi, Ntokozo Cele [Mhloli]



Soil turning