Infinite Family

Video Mentors Who Inspire Black Teens to Education and Life Success

January 2020
Video mentoring ignites and inspires South African secondary students to create life-long opportunities through choices, actions and hard work.
25 years post-apartheid, most black South African teens are still growing up surrounded by constant toxic stress created by violence and poverty.

96% Township teens are personally assaulted

40% Township teens that have experienced 5 or more forms of violence by age 22

2 out of 3 South African children live on less than $3 a day

65% South African teens live in a household missing one or both parents
Decades of research confirm that the most common predictor of overcoming childhood adversity and learning to manage stress is “at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive adult.”

Students with high life stress often project avoidance actions that reinforce expectations of failure and learned helplessness. By sharing life experiences, Video Mentors influence students to initiate approach actions and own their performance.

**Example Avoidance Actions of Students Living in Stressful Conditions**
- Misses class
- Stays very quiet / keeps to her/himself
- Rarely asks or answers questions
- Appears bored, not engaged
- Maintains minimal eye contact
- Does not attend extra classes
- Regularly involved in physical or verbal conflicts

**Educators’ Comments About Changes In Net Buddy Mentees’ Approach Actions**
- Consistently arrives on time to class
- Is more confident
- Participates in class
- Asks questions
- Shows increased engagement
- Works better in groups
- Discusses assignments outside class
- Plans and prepares ahead
- Attends extra classes

According to a worldwide study of millions of 15 year olds since 2000, student mindsets – *i.e. motivation and self-belief* – is the most important indicator of education success.

*How to Improve Student Educational Outcomes: New Insights from Data Analytics*

*McKinsey & Company, September 2017*
Since 2013, 96% of Infinite Family’s video mentored 12th grade students qualified for college or university, compared to the national average of 59%.

Without my Video Mentor, I would have done what I thought was good enough.
-Net Buddy Alumni Andrew Johns, Senior at St. Michael’s College, Connecticut
South African students who achieve Diploma or Bachelor’s degrees earn a lifetime average of five to eight times that of a secondary school dropout.

Elsina: Alexandra to Engineer
LaunchPad: Designed for Future Focus

The LaunchPad inspires respectful attitudes and planning ahead.
Almost 80% of mentee monthly scores for 2018-2019 were Outstanding, or Meritorious.

**Net Buddy Mentee Monthly Performance, 2018-2019**

- 70% - Outstanding Achievement
- 12% - Elementary Achievement or Below
- 8% - Moderate to Adequate Achievement
- 4% - Substantial Achievement
- 6% - Meritorious Achievement

Total 1,777 Individual Monthly Scores
Twenty-five years post-apartheid, the majority of Black South African teens make short-term, bad decisions because they make sense in their worlds. **Infinite Family’s teens make different decisions because they see themselves in different worlds.**

Nokalunga lives in a shack in Phola, Mpumalanga where planes only fly overhead. Via Infinite Family, she was inspired to set her goals unusually high.
Infinite Family agrees with the NDP 2030 that sustainable change starts with increasing collective capabilities to support good jobs, which in turn reduce poverty and improve individuals’ health and well-being.

**Sustainable Development Goals**

#1 No Poverty
#3 Good Health and Well-Being
#8 Decent Work and Economic Growth

#3 Economy and Employment
#9 Improving Education, Training and Innovation
Infinite Family is a Level 1 BBBEE company with ICT Sector credentials. Working with us qualifies our partners for CSI, Skills Development or Black Ownership points.

**Qualifications and Partners**

**Youth Host Partners**
- Alexandra Child Care and Support Centre
- Nkosi’s Haven
- Velokhaya Life Cycling Academy

**Mentor Network Partners**
- ForGood
- National Mentorship Movement
- VolunteerMatch
- Volunteer New York

**Corporate Partners**
- Adobe Systems
- BT
- Clarix Technologies
- Dial-a-Nerd
- Holiday Inn Sandton
- Internet Solutions
- Patterson Belknap
- Pick n Pay
- Salesforce.com
- Webber Wentzel

GlobalGiving awardee since 2014.
Video mentoring is driven by an all Black South African staff from the communities where our Net Buddies live. We learn from everywhere and have proven we can deliver in extremely challenging environments:

• Overcoming poor Internet connectivity and repeated cable theft to bring video conversations to isolated teens in 7 township and rural communities;

• Working with Video Mentors in 17 countries;

• Maintaining corporate and community partnerships that have endured since 2007;

• Repurposing shipping containers into low environmental impact, safe, clean and professional LaunchPad computer labs;

• Creating two cloud-based platforms and numerous online interactive learning resources;

• Meeting the highest financial transparency and regulatory requirements for non-profit corporations in two countries; and

• Repeatedly improving monitoring and tracking performance systems until they deliver consistent, dependable, and reliable results.
We Thank You

Infinite Family
Mentoring Africa’s Future

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Infinite Family Website  
CNN 2011 Top Ten Hero  
Christina’s Story – An Orphan’s Exit from the Poverty Pipeline  
Video Mentoring–It’s an Amazing Team