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UCT's 100UP programme embarks on massive fundraising drive to help disadvantaged pupils



UCT's 100UP programme is on a drive to garner much-needed support from ordinary South Africans.

Photo: J'enine May/UCT

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The University of Cape Town's (UCT) 100UP programme has embarked on a massive fundraising drive to garner much-needed support. Despite still receiving good financial support, many corporate funders have been left out of pocket and have had to withdraw from the programme as a result of financial difficulties brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

100UP is one of UCT's flagship programmes and seeks to address the low numbers of disadvantaged children from marginalised communities in the Western Cape who enter university. In 2018, together with UCT's Schools Improvement Initiative, the programme received the university's Social Responsiveness Award for its work with children in under-resourced communities.

Ferial Parker, an education specialist and 100UP's programme manager, said that after 10 years the programme hangs in the balance. She said that 100UP's corporate funders have had to reluctantly withdraw from the programme, citing the present unstable financial climate as the primary reason.

"Education is one way of helping to turn the tide for children in very poor and vulnerable communities, and we've been able to achieve this with the 100UP programme. But sadly, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic effects, local funders have been unable to commit to the programme this year," she said.

Parker said that the circumstances of youth in under-resourced communities often prevent them from accessing education beyond high school. In light of this, the programme broadens pupils' access to opportunities at higher education institutions and provides academic support, mentorship and individual career guidance. Since its inception, more than 2 500 pupils have participated in the programme and in turn many have been exposed to university life.

"Transforming young minds is an investment in our country's future. It is through changing mindsets that the project develops children's confidence and provides them with the skills they need to prepare themselves for university and, ultimately, for the workplace," she said. The programme has a proven track record. Over the years, there's been an increase in pupils from Khayelitsha, Mitchells Plain and Philippi (the communities in which 100UP operates) who have attained admission to higher education institutions across the country. "100UP really changes lives," Parker added.

With the help of UCT's Development and Alumni Department, Parker said that 100UP has embarked on an enormous fundraising campaign to raise the money it needs to keep the programme afloat. Alumni and ordinary South Africans are encouraged to donate to this worthy cause.

Donors can support in a number of ways, including sponsoring individual learners, supporting residential camps, Saturday tuition programmes or several other outreach programmes.

"Every little bit helps," she said. "We welcome any donation that will help us to continue this important work in communities in the Western Cape."

[Donate](#) or email giving@uct.ac.za for more information.

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