# *ELEVATING THE LITERACY LEVELS OF SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH*

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ILLINOIS SCHOOL OF INFORMATION SCIENCES

& THE MORTENSON CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL LIBRARY PROGRAMS

# CONTEXT

The South African Context – Librarianship in Schools

Project 21

# SOUTH AFRICA

# “WHAT IF I WASN’T SCHOOLED HERE?”

# MY PROFESSIONAL LIFE

From Deep rural to the most Prestigious universities

15 years in Academic Libraries – UCT & Rhodes University

Information Literacy gap between Leaving High School and entering University

Carnegie Exchange program to Yale University

Personal Librarian program introduced at Rhodes University to First Year Students modelled to Yale

M.Ed Education study was "Studying Student's Engagement Around Literacy in a Book club setting"

2019 Librarian of the Year in the Eastern Cape

Librarian of the Year 2nd Runner up

Project 21 Emerged

Hubert H Humphrey Fellow at Penn State

RACIAL SNAPSHOT

***60 MILLION TOTAL POPULATION***

**21.85 MILLION** 19 YEARS OR YOUNGER

**24%** OF THE TOTAL POPULATION IS SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

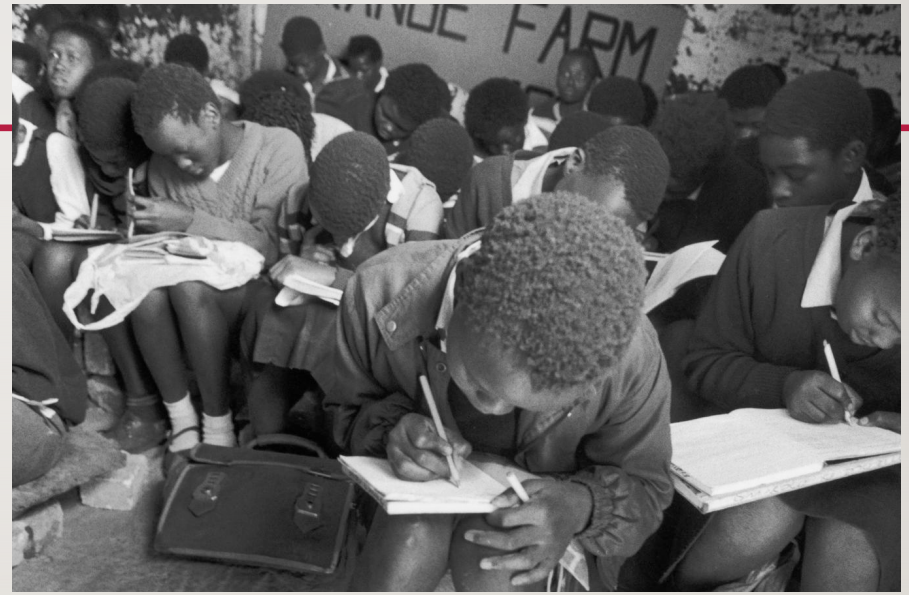
**Black South Africans - 76.4%**

**White South Africans - 9.1%**

**Coloured (Mixed) South African at 8.9%**

**11 official languages –**

**English is a dominant language**



# Institutionalized Segregation evident in schools

*crowded classrooms for Black children*

# Mandela was fighting for an Inclusive Society and an inclusive Education in South Africa

"EDUCATION IS THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON WHICH YOU CAN USE TO CHANGE THE WORLD."
– *DR NELSON MANDELA*

# CURRENT EDUCATION SNAPSHOT

2013 - South Africa cited as the country with the worst educational system of all middle-income countries.

Deeper analysis and a look beyond the surface into the Grade 12 results of the country:

Reported that in every 100 pupils that start school, only 50 will make it to Grade 12

Only 40 will pass, and only 12 will qualify for university.

# INEQUALITIES IN EDUCATION

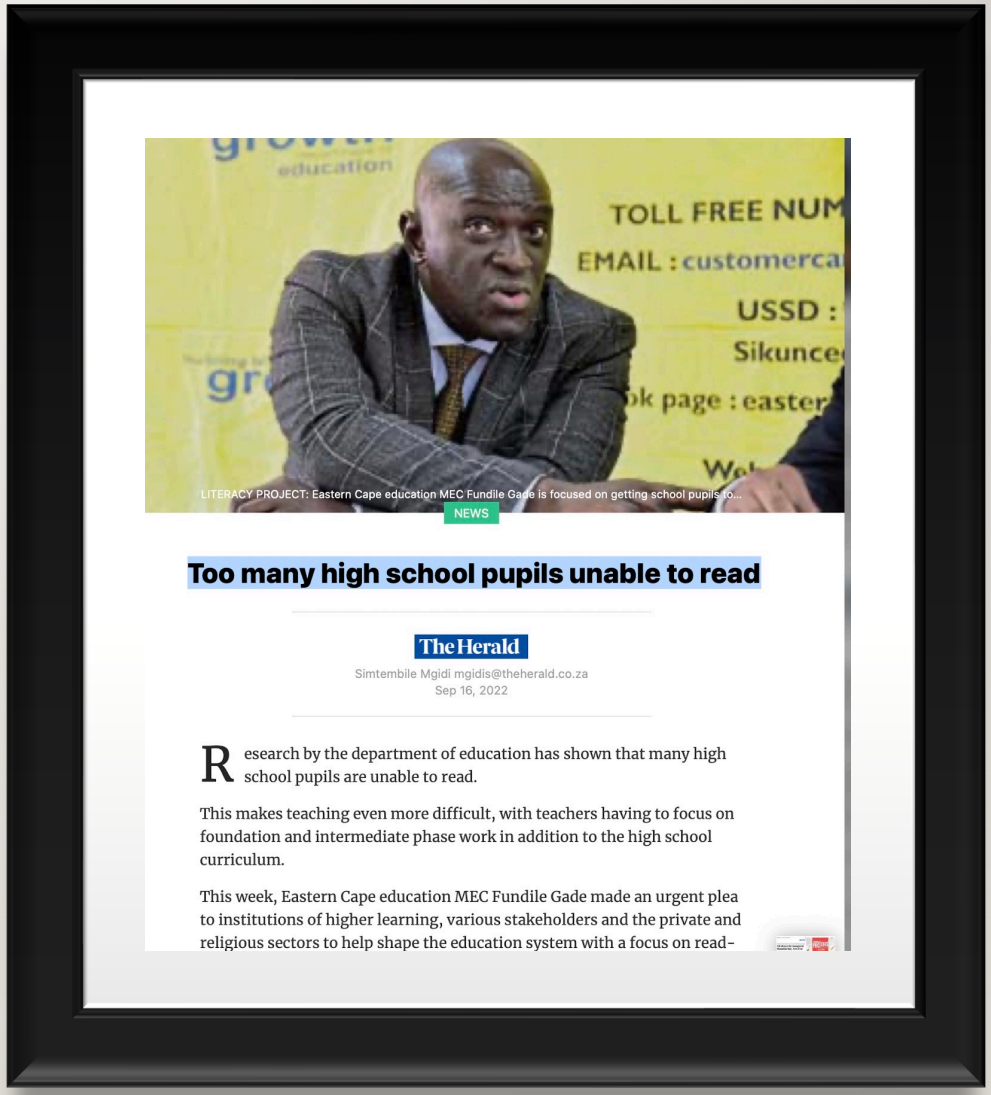
South Africa has nearly **26 000 schools**, 400 000 teachers and close to 13-million learners.

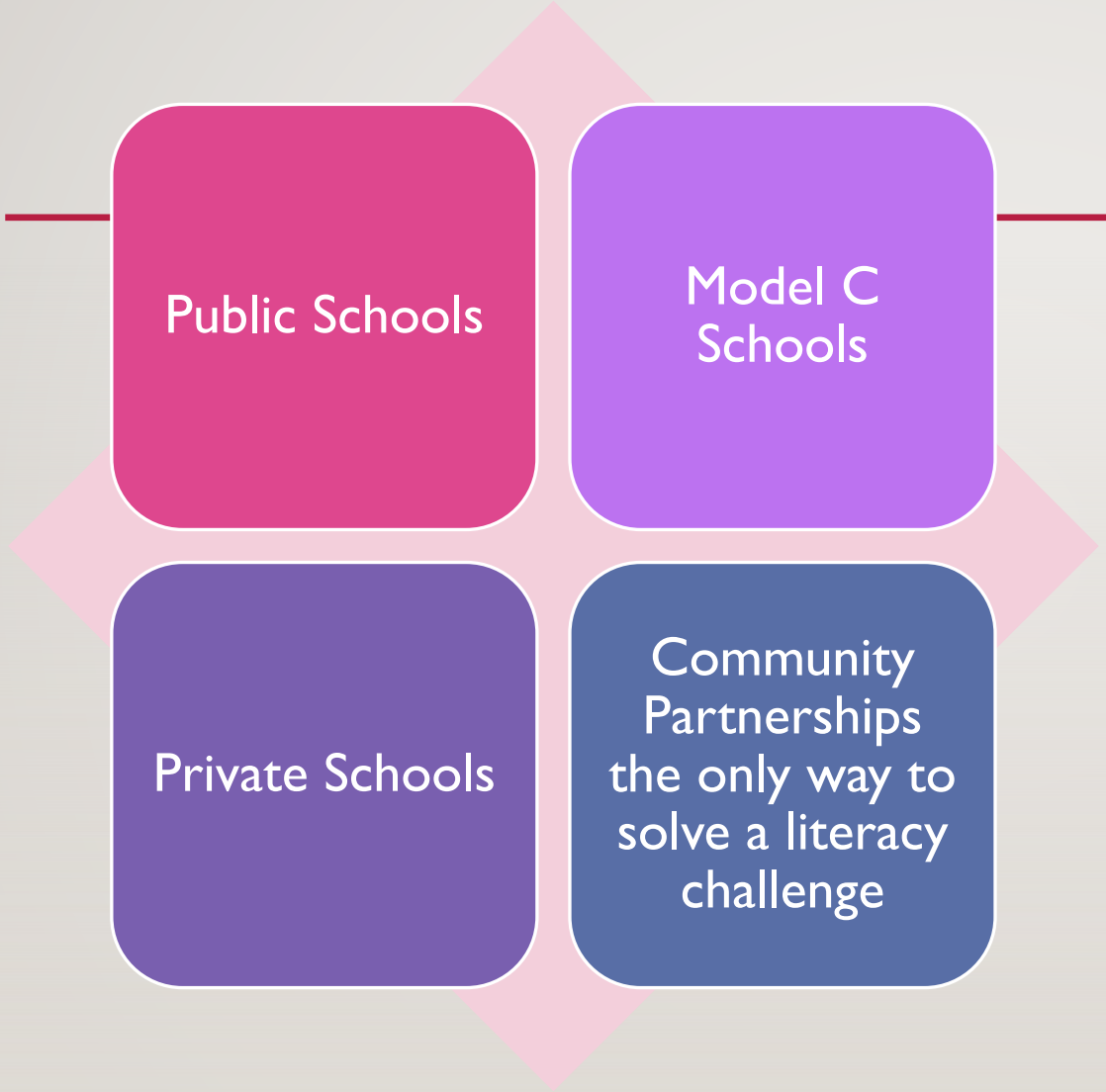
**Less than 2 000 independent schools** in the country cater to just over 400 000 students

26 Universities - hard to get into universities for Black students because of illiteracy challenges

Only 11% of black youths and 7% of mixed-race youths in the 18 to 24 year age bracket are in university.

# TOO MANY HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS UNABLE TO READ – A NEW SURVEY FINDS






# HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE EQUITY IN SCHOOLS?

# SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

With the overhaul of government in 1994 all teacher librarian post were abolished

Private funds - one of the few ways to ensure professional school librarian staffing

# DEVELOPING PROJECT 21

# LEARNING FROM MY TRAVELS

There are two things I'm absolutely passionate about:

- *Building libraries and*
- *Researching new ways to enhance the user experience*
  - Do we even understand <u>what</u> they want?
  - What about <u>how</u> they learn?

# WHAT WE DID AT ST ANDREW'S COLLEGE "LIBRARY OF THE FUTURE"

- Smart teams – Teachers committee, Architects, Engineers etc., St Andrew's College boys teams
- So we Let them (the users) design their own space
- As a result we are experiencing a healthy growth in usage and a healthy appetite for reading

# BEFORE

# TEMPORARY MOVE

# AFTER

THE CAWSE LIBRARY
Centre for Reading, Learning, and Innovation

SPRINGBOK

# OUR MOTTO – GIVE THE LIBRARY TO ITS USERS

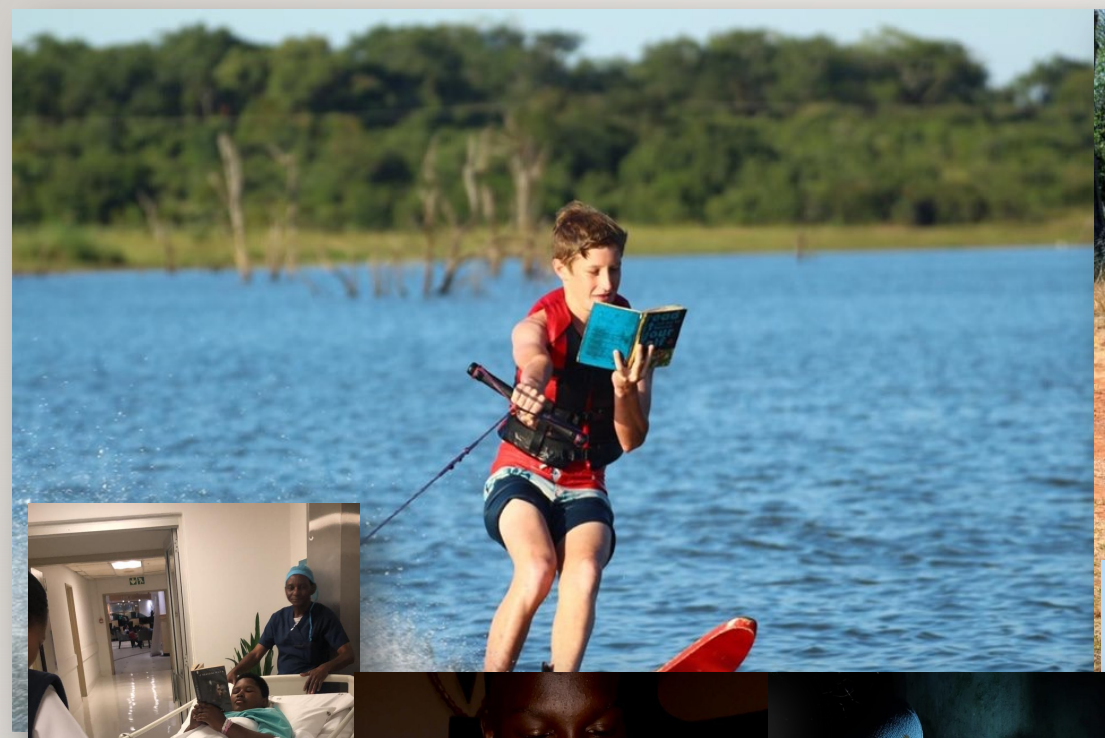
- The Reading Club takes charge in book purchasing – We support local so we take trips to the bookstore – Major benefit here is that children's appetite for reading is growing rapidly
- Also do exciting initiatives e.g. Extreme Reading competitions, Blind date with a book (new initiative) etc…
- So we ask them – our users what they want and our job is so much easier and more enjoyable

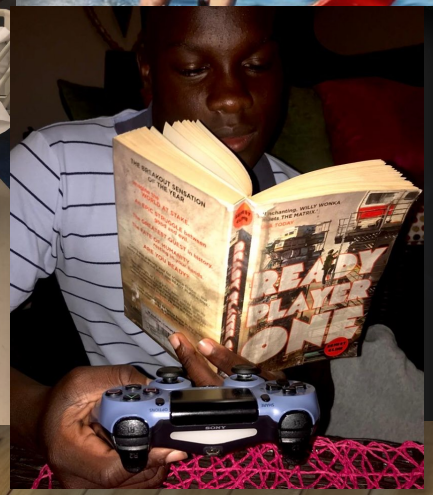
# USING THE LIBRARY

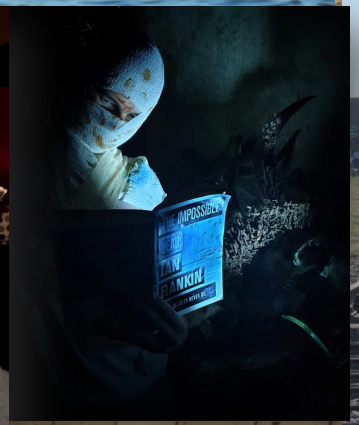
Blind date with a book

Escapism

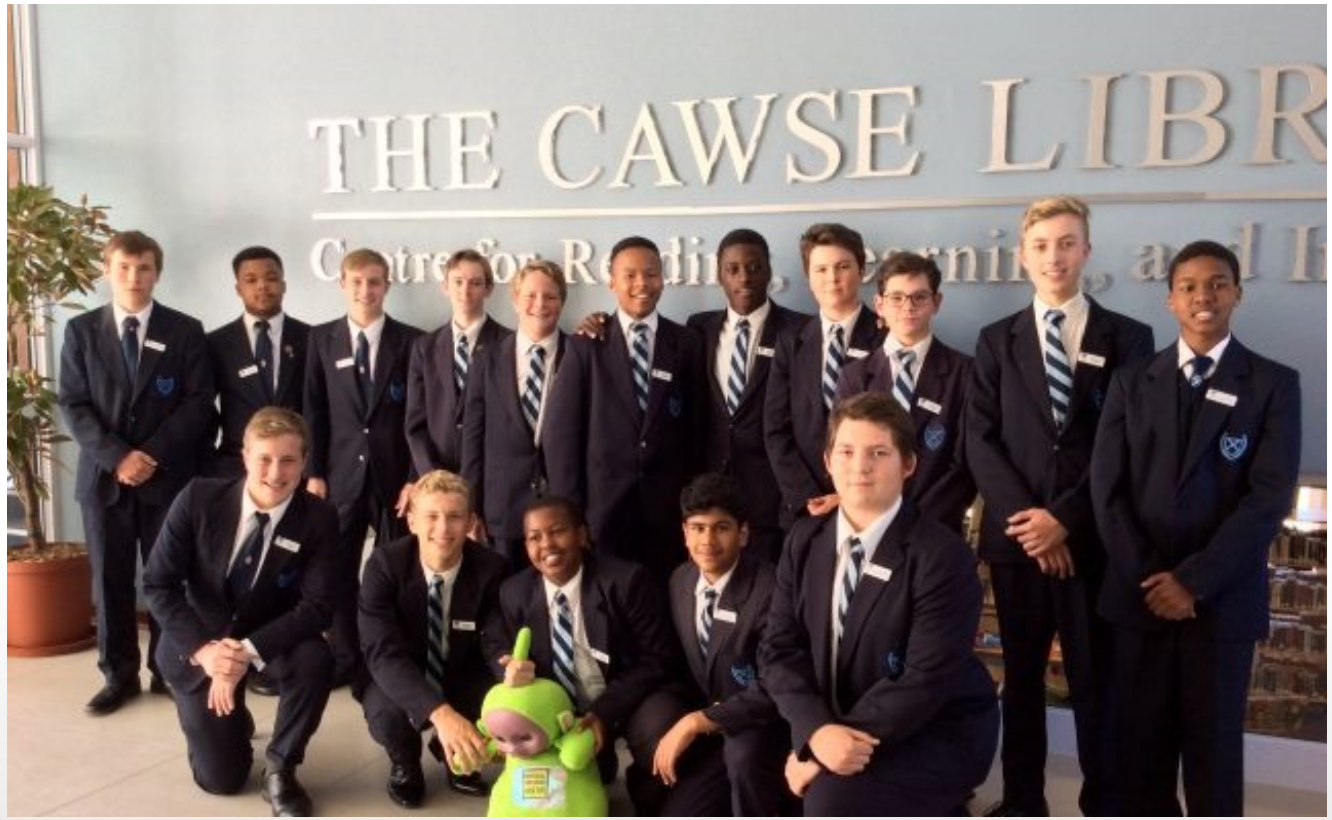
# EXTREME READING COMPETITION





# 2017 LIBRARY GRAND OPENING TEAM



# A STINGING QUESTION WAS ASKED *YOUTH INSPIRED LEADERSHIP*

- **Why do we exist?**

- Who do we exist for?

- What now after building this magnificent building and these wonderful collections?

- Are we just going to enjoy it for ourselves and that's it?

What about the Community we live in?

***"Nothing about them without them"*** – their motto

We are yet to exist for others

BOOKS EVERYWHERE!
EVEN ON THE FLOOR

Nombulelo Before

Nombulelo During Project

# INTERACT CLUB = COMMUNITY LEADERS

Africa Matshingana

**I wasn't able to make reservations at the library. They were completely booked!**

Jacob Erasmus

**Books are better than TV, if you fall asleep you won't miss the ending!**

Ayomide Israel-Akinbo

**"Google can bring you a 100,000 answers. A librarian can bring you the right one."**

**Neil Gaiman**

Libhongo Mazwana

**Just consider me a search engine. I have all the data!**

# WHY ENGAGING WITH YOUR COMMUNITY IS IMPORTANT!

## Change

Breaking the barrier of the socio-economic divide between the different communities in our area.

## Relation-building

We are trying to link ourselves and build relationships to bring forward a better standard of life.

It is also a partnership, it is not purely about giving, it is about developing a relationship, for example Nombulelo kids volunteering at the South African School library conference 2019

## Development

Help improve the state of Libraries in our community one at time

Through development we can achieve

- An enjoyable environment
- Leadership areas
- Values

## PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

**PROJECT 21 LAUNCHED IN 2019**

"AIMS TO PROMOTE LITERACY IN SOUTH AFRICA"

Setting up Libraries in schools that do not have libraries & Paying it forward – ***closing literacy gaps***

Providing **alternative schooling** with resources to close the poverty gaps – our example 'Nombulelo Academy 'and 'Peer Tutoring Project'

Plant **"Libraries of the Future"** in marginalized communities to provide access to information

**Shared Resources** – this speaks to a brighter future of education of our country

# 4 MAIN LEGS

**Renovate**

- Renovating and re-establishing school libraries in marginalized communities – promoting student leadership and ownership

**Build**

- Building relevant collections that reflect its community users through the input of its users - school learners

**Clubs**

- Setting up book clubs – Use of fiction to start conversations with learners

**Train**

- Training School librarians and placing them in the schools to ensure sustainability

# PROJECT XXX

# Promoting Literacy in South Africa

Vuyokazi Jamieson

2021-2022 Humphrey Fellow

## Our Four Pillars

### Renovate

- Renovating and re-establishing school libraries in marginalized communities - promoting student leadership and ownership

### Build

- Building relevant collections that reflect its community users through the input of its users - school learners

### Clubs

- Setting up and supporting student led book clubs - initiating conversations with learners through fiction

### Train

- Addressing deficiencies and gaps by developing training to ensure quality and sustainable school librarianship - training and placing librarians in schools

## Project 21 Defined

Building strong reading clubs to elevate literacy levels amongst youth in South African High Schools

Building literacy models that can be exported and adapted across South Africa

Advancing ventures in line with The United Nations Envision2030 Goals: 4 & 17

Based on the model we implemented at The Cawse Library, St Andrew's College

Inspired by a partnership between St Andrew's College Interact Club and the Nombulelo High School's school library renovation project

## Keeping in line with The United Nations #Envision2030 Goals

**Goal 4: Quality Education**
Ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.
Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

**Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development**

## The South Africa We Want!

Drawing from over 21 years in the library profession, Project 21 aims to help rebuild libraries in the Eastern Cape using a model I have implemented in collaboration with students to build their school library, with the ultimate goal of strengthening libraries across South Africa.

NOTHING ABOUT THEM WITHOUT THEM

Sabinet www.sabinet.co.za

PennState

St Andrew's College

LIASA

# KEEPING THE END GOAL IN MIND
# WHAT ABOUT THEM?

# TRAILBLAZERS CHANGE THE LANDSCAPE

"Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

# CONTACT DETAILS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- **Follow me on 'Library of the Future' Conference blog**

https://southafricanschoollibrariansconf19.blogspot.com/p/blog-page_13.html

**Project 21 Website**

Project21.co.za

**Follow me on the Mortenson Center Associates blog**

https://mortensonassociatesprogram.wordpress.com/vuyokazi-jamieson/

BAIE
DANKIE

Thank
you!!

CONNEL
NKOSI
KAKHULU

# QUESTIONS?