



# Intentional Action Inspired Impact

**impact**  
trust

*Inspire. Inform. Ignite.*

## REPORT TO SOCIETY 2020

*There are gaps between the needs of people and of the planet.  
There are gaps between what people know to do and what people know how to do.  
There are gaps in our wanting to flourish in a resilient, sustainable world and our actual flourishing.*

At the Impact Trust, we identify the gaps inhibiting a thriving, dynamic and resilience society. And we work responsively, collaboratively and innovatively in an effort to bridge them.

The Impact Trust is a north-south research, advocacy, policy design and social development advisory organisation committed to the development of multiple literacies and their enactment in behaviours that drive sustainable resilience and development. We strive to build systemic resilience by connecting communities, companies and capitals for change. From individual livelihoods to purposeful collective action at institutional, community or government level, we seek to work in the gaps, supporting policy and practice research as well as applied programme design and testing. As a social change enterprise incubator we have a track record of venture creation and a willingness to be "in the arena".

This report reflects some of the key events of 2020, our programme activities, challenges, changes and achievements – including hard lessons – as well as provide an outline of our future plans. We are grateful to all those who supported us, challenge us, benefited from us and gave of themselves to enable us. We are because you are. And we thank you

## PROGRAMME: Routes to Resilience



With its roots in our participation in a Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL) programme for CEOs, Routes to Resilience started as an initiative of the Trust in a unique collaboration with CISL. Its mission to provide deep learning experiences that would develop the knowledge and skills needed to enable young people make more informed and sustainable life and career choices and develop the confidence in 'how to' take effective action for change.

*Today, Routes to Resilience is a social enterprise and known provider of CDP Accredited programmes in sustainability leadership and resilience building. Our programmes blend learning, experiential*

*encounters and real-world practical applications to help participants develop a deep understanding of the interconnectedness between people and planet, expanding their view of the world to understand systemic relationships rather than discreet events, and to gain a strong sense of their own purpose and role in forging a better future for both.*

Our programme offerings serve teens and young as well as their educators, trainers and professionals in the workplace and our curriculum is modular, flexible to tailoring for age, audience and purpose. Currently there are two key programmes scaling significantly in support of young adults: the Sygnature Award and the Resilient Futures Programme.

The *Sygnature Award* comprises three modules designed to inform, inspire and ignite young people (15-25 years) to act as catalysts for sustainable change. Based on a head (think - inform), heart (feel – inspire), hand (do -ignite) model, it includes the Sygnature Skills, the Sygnature Experience and the Sygnature Action, which are integrated into configurations to suit our partners, and develop a sense of mastery of action related competence.



We created the *Resilient Futures* programme to advance the sustainability and resilience lens in application to work readiness and employability offerings intended to equip school leavers and early career professionals with the skills and competencies they need to put sustainability – and passion - at the heart of their work and life decisions, readying them for future lives and livelihoods, developing the strategies they need to be resilient, agile and adaptable.

### Achievements in 2020: highlights

#### ***Our product delivery and organisational structure are maturing***

- As part of the need to pivot to online and distance learning resulting from the Covid pandemic, as well as for our accreditation process, we narrated our programme content into beautiful and engaging student workbooks. This involved a detailed interrogation and evaluation of both the knowledge we provide and the activities, dialogue and reflective exercises that constitute our unique pedagogy. The workbook is designed to integrate into the 27 sessions of the Sygnature Skills (including place-based encounters and residential immersion journeys – the Sygnature Experience), or into the 37 full-day sessions of the Resilient Futures programme. We feel this is a significant step in the consolidation and clarification of our offerings.



SAILI Deep Time outing Silvermine Reserve; Go for Gold intern engineers understand urban ecosystems Liesbeek River; School 21 at Wakehurst.

- As of the end of 2020, Routes to Resilience’s South Africa activity will consolidate under its own auspices as a Non-Profit Company and we are delighted at the success of this incubation. The Trust will continue to support its work, most especially access for poor students through offering a hybrid funding model between fee-paying participants and those unable to pay.
- Our commitment to growing black leadership in the field of sustainability is strategically important and a political imperative: we want to ensure that black voices are heard, and are aware of the emotional, psychological and time commitment needed to make that happen. Our programme growth allowed us to appoint two young black and female professional staff in development positions, being mentored for future leadership roles. The increase in our diversity has already reflected brilliantly for our students from all communities and for ourselves. We believe this is a significant achievement for a young organisation but one that reflects the commitment to the future we want to see.



Body mapping



Welcome to our new staff members, Nwabisa Mjoli and Miselwa Mzanywa.

### ***We are expanding and deepening partnerships***

- Since our first programme in 2017, we have now reached over 1,200 young people and over 100 educators participating in our various offerings.
- We have agreements in place with four schools or scholar programmes for the Sygnature Award in South Africa, two of which are now going into their second and third year of successful collaboration. We now run three parallel programmes with our first partner, Go for Gold, and are in discussion with their board around increasing the integration between our respective programmes with their students.
- The building of relationships with the London Schools Eco-Network during this year, and the Impact Trust's Collab (see below), will open access for learners and professionals to our programmes in the UK in 2021, most especially with the Trust's "Challenging changes at work" applied research project.
- In the UK we launched the Sygnature Skills programme to our first cohort of a group of Year 12 learners from School 21 with a Deep Time walk at Wakehurst Place demonstrating the interconnectedness of the world's systems. Whilst Covid lockdown curtailed the programme, we worked to engage these learners in zoom based "fireside chats" on both the pandemic and other issues around sustainability. We hope to revisit opportunities in the 2021/2022 year.
- Our relationship with the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership in South Africa (CISL-SA) continues to thrive and contribute to R2R's work. We most especially thank, once again, Elspeth Donovan whose commitment is unparalleled and whose mentorship of our new team is going to grow exceptional leadership skills for R2R.



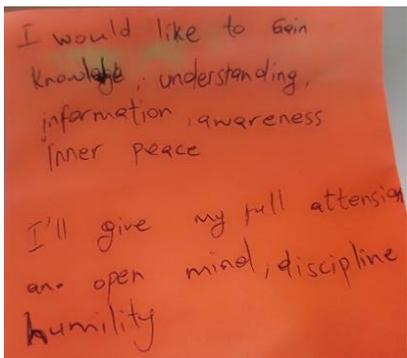
### ***The Sygnature Award has growing recognition***

- Hilton College's Headmaster approved a pilot programme for consideration as an official school offering to parents. On the strength of parent and scholar reviews and the teachers' own observations - despite roll-out of the programme largely online - our Sygnature Skills is now offered to all boys from Grade 9-11. Three cohorts will complete the programme in 2021.



- The Sygnature Skills programme achieved accreditation (72 CPD points) with the UK based Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Standards Office. Whilst our youth market does not benefit from professional development points (!), this nevertheless confirms the quality of our offering. Of great importance, though, is that accreditation makes our programmes more attractive to teachers.

The full Sygnature Skills is more than the CPD requirement for UK teachers (30 CPD points), and this provides us with an opportunity to accredit modules within the programme that could be run for teachers over shorter periods of time. In South Africa, CPD for teachers is becoming mandatory and monitored, which opens new avenues for growth of the Sygnature offerings.

	<p><i>"This immersion programme was great because we learnt a lot of things. Not only about nature but also finding ourselves in the world and having a purpose."</i></p>	
<p><i>"I am more aware of my surroundings. My knowledge regarding nature and insects has immensely increased and this programme has changed my perspective on a load of things. It was really worth it and awesome"</i></p>		<p><i>"The session of the body mapping enabled to think back from where I come from and the goal, I set to achieve for myself. I could measure how far I still need to go."</i></p>
	<p><i>"It is a wonderful experience and learning opportunity. It opens your eyes on the environment around us and how sustainable living is way better for the future"</i></p>	
<p><i>"This was nothing short of an amazing time, and just being blessed with an opportunity to be out in nature was amazing"</i></p>		<p><i>"Thank you for the experience"</i></p>

Reflections on the Go for Gold Grootbos immersion, December 2020

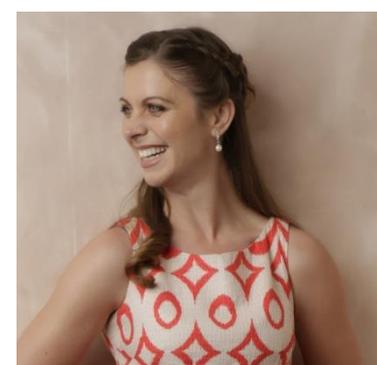
## Resilient Futures was born - and taken to scale

- We launched the 3-month Resilient Futures pilot with Afrika Tikkun Services in South Africa (ATS) in March 2020 with a cohort of 58 participants. We are thrilled that six of the graduates are working or interning at some of the sustainable / social enterprises that they were introduced to through our marketplace, while others are in roles they have actively pursued or even in micro-businesses they have created themselves.
- One way to scale the impact of our programmes is to empower others to teach them. With this in mind, we developed a 'train the trainer' programme (workbooks, facilitator manuals, resources) and delivered the first pilot of this with 13 of the Afrika Tikkun Services facilitators in 2020/21. R2R will provide ongoing coaching to the ATS facilitators and mentor them through their first programme delivery to some 200 young people, at the five Afrika Tikkun centres across South Africa between March and July 2021. ATS provides four training programmes per annum, reaching over 1000 youth.
- We are excited that the Resilient Futures is currently going through its CPD accreditation process which is anticipated to be completed by the end of April 2021. This is anticipated to generate 280 CPD points across the programme collectively with three of its core modules being independently accredited providing unique short course opportunities to support employability and professional skills development. These include
  - i. Knowing my Competent Self (Module 1 of the full programme, but also delivered as a standalone course)
  - ii. The Global Context and Sustainability (Module 2 of the full programme, but also delivered as a standalone course)
  - iii. Getting Ready for Work (Module 5 of the full programme, but also delivered as a standalone course)

Sign up for our newsletters at [www.ImpactTrust.org.uk](http://www.ImpactTrust.org.uk) or at [www.Routes2Resilience.org](http://www.Routes2Resilience.org) to be kept abreast of progress and next workshop.



Life graphing with Whole-hearted Art's Trilby Krepelka.



Routes to Resilience CEO and designer of the Resilient Futures programme, Ann de Passos

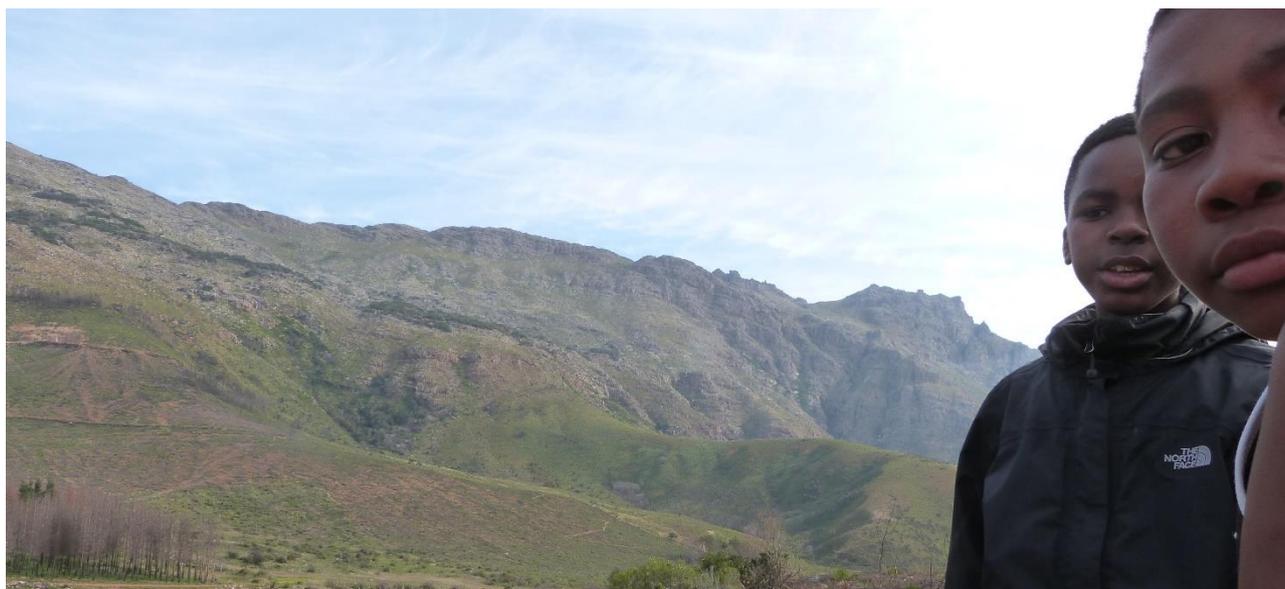
## PROGRAMME: ALERT



ALERT (Accessing Learning through Responsive Teaching) is an initiative that recognises that developing teacher content and pedagogical depth is crucial if we are to systemically improve education. It aims to establish a ‘pedagogy incubator’ in collaboration with education researchers at the University of Cape Town’s School of Education. This incubator will assemble a range of teachers to collaborate within a community practice, drawing on research insights from education partners and working with the most marginalised children to give them a successful, joyful education.

### *Silverlea Primary School: An ALERT programme feeder school*

A small project that the Trust, through its ALERT Programme, is supporting is the Silverlea Primary School, located in the Apartheid-designated Coloured township of Silvertown, and servicing the broader surrounding (Apartheid-designated) Coloured and African townships of Cape Town. The communities served by the school suffer from a range of social deprivations including desperate levels of unemployment, drug abuse and gangsterism. The resulting lived trauma faced by so many of the children prevent them from accessing school knowledge, and constraints on parental involvement in the lives of their children make the task even more difficult. Silverlea Primary has not enjoyed the facilities that many consider to be at the heart of building a sense of community – school library, school hall, and school grounds that allow for safe play and differentiated play spaces. These services are not provided by the state in most South African schools.



This school is intended to be a feeder school into the ALERT programme but in the meantime is being supported in the development of its library and literacy teaching programme. One of the strategic learning areas that the Library Project has provided for the ALERT project more broadly is in the realm of how to work with the dynamics within school institutions and to engage teacher routines and resistances in making room for new practices.

The leadership provided by ALERT has meant that, unlike many schools which have had libraries provided, only to see them unused, the partnership has established an understanding of the critical ingredients for a successful, low-cost library and the project has been built around those. The library was established with an initial 6 x 2m container donated by Breadline Africa, which housed the books (library lessons take place outside because of these space constraints).



## Achievements in 2020

### *Improving project conceptualisation of the pedagogy incubator*

- ALERT was unable to act on its 2020 implementation plan, mostly because of the need to clarify the focus and relevance of the project for education in South Africa *at a systemic level*. To this end we established two research and advisory partners in the form of researchers and associates at the University of Cape Town's School of Education. Discussions and review of the initial proposal have shifted its orientation from an intervention for learners at risk to an intervention with willing teachers to theorise their practice, in the context of teaching "pedagogically neglected" children.
- The theoretical underpinnings of the pedagogy have been enhanced by preliminary analysis of curriculum in relation to how it may need to be restructured for ALERT. This will be taken further in 2021, with the aim of developing curriculum and lesson plans in line with the pedagogical approach at the core of the intervention.
- We have researched the use of ICT (Information and communications technology) as a pedagogical tool and developed a prototype of how digital technologies would be incorporated into low-tech, low-cost education (simulating the average South African school). This includes the LightSail digital reading application, which will be incorporated into the pedagogy incubator project. We have completed an evaluation of the LightSail digital library as a relevant and appropriate resource for literacy and provided a selection of reading material appropriate to the South African multilingual context.
- We are currently in discussions with an anchor funder for the programme; our goal for 2021 is to get a firm commitment for the funds, and then focus on preparing for implementation in 2022. These preparations will include curriculum restructuring and institutional arrangements, such as where to find teachers and which children will attend the school. It will also need to formalise the recognition from the Department of Basic Education.

## A library in lockdown



- The library was suspended from operating from March 2020. The time has been used to improve the digital book management system with the help of two volunteers and an intern from the YES programme.
- The new but unfitted container was purchased with funds raised through the Impact Trust. This will accommodate actual classes of children, giving them a real experience of book browsing, essential to their identity as readers for pleasure. Additional monies raised during 2020 have allowed design plans, specifications and appointment of contractors to complete the refurbishment, with a mid-2021 date for a grand re-opening, covid willing.
- A positive development has been the establishment of a formal library committee with a number of school staff members. This is a crucial step forward in ensuring the school take ownership of the library and the decisions around its ongoing management and development. It is their resource.



*“My daddy says I will hurt my eyes, but I read every night in the pot [bathroom] because the light is best there.” Grade 5 borrower, Esmeralda*

*“I love working in the library, especially when I get to help check out or return the books on the computer.” Grade 6 monitor, Anna*

## PROGRAMME: Intentional Resilience at Work

Business is a powerful driving force behind the prevailing culture and conscience of society. It connects to, and helps determine the allocation of resources, the lifestyle ideals of citizens, the priorities and actions of governments, and the relative value of educational attainment. With foresight and forecasting of changes to come, business drives the direction of skills needs, employment opportunities and access to livelihoods.

For some years now the Trust has been convinced that the world of tomorrow – a world that is, indeed, already here today – demands a different mindset, one that is evidenced in behavioural practice in service of the principles of Ubuntu, behaviour that reflects alignment with the principles of nature and the compassionate needs of an interconnected, social world.

We believe that there is a significant role for the private sector – those who profit from the endeavours and efforts of human beings - reciprocate to inspire, influence and cascade this resilience mindset and behavioural change at scale. Resilience can only be established if the socio-political and economic context is well understood and the critical determinants of a systemic societal resilience are *intentionally* established in policy.

There is increasing pressure for business to embrace this role and pursue it through employee engagement, wellbeing and sustainability initiatives. These efforts are under the spotlight not only because of the fast-changing demands of the workplace but also in light of the current Covid-19 pandemic and the significant implications it has for the nature and needs of work post-pandemic. Programmes that enable and encourage employees to attune to change, to engage with the skills of resilience and thriving, will be essential, not only for businesses specifically but for society overall.

### Achievements in 2020

The Trust has been in exploring this concept since 2019. In 2020 we made significant headway in understanding the gaps in resilience thinking and employee development programmes and are now working in collaboration with academic institutions, corporate partners and third sector enterprises to understand more about how to address this growing need.

The premise behind this work is that companies – all organisations - develop, support, and empower their employees collectively to ensure their capacity to continue with optimal functioning, even whilst navigating the challenges of change. They do this with varying degrees of intentionality. Strategies may be clearly laid out policies or standard practices or be part of company culture that has been inculcated into employees as members of the collective of the organisation. These ways of doing things may roll down or cascade to individual employees (intentionally or through acculturation over time, and unconsciously) who then themselves act in ways that are supportive both of the company and of themselves in their own lives.

Understanding what practices might build the collective capacity of human capital resources, enabling them to navigate the challenges of change whilst still functioning positively is the core focus of this work. Thereafter the programme seeks to define ways in which the world of work might practically introduce and engage with implementing, monitoring and expanding its intentional efforts to implement resilience building strategies at work.

## PIVOTING IN THE PANDEMIC: NEW INITIATIVES

### PROGRAMME: theCollab

Covid-19 has impacted not only on the way we work, meet, engage socially, but also on the education of millions of young people who have been unable to attend school. Like so many other organisations around the world, the Impact Trust's initiatives were forced to change course dramatically when the pandemic struck. Our programmes and projects, which focus on immersive real-life experiences and face-to-face interaction, were forced online as people across the world were required to stay home. Never a team to step back from a challenge, we were able to draw on the very skills and mindsets which our programmes aim to impart - resilience, creativity and agility. We have found ways to not just replace our courses with online experiences, but to enrich them. However, there are limitations of a 2D environment, especially for immersive, experiential "real-world" learning with its serendipitous moments or happenstance that provide opportunities to connect with someone one may never have had a chance to meet before. Time and again throughout the pandemic we have found ourselves wishing that online meeting platforms were more engaging, that it allowed learners to interact more freely and naturally with us and with one another.

It was out of this frustration that the Collab was born. In a pilot programme being run by the Trust and Routes to Resilience in partnership with The Virtulab, the Collab is intended to take online learning to a new dimension (literally!). More than this, it will provide a platform to engage and support other educational organisations and service providers who deliver both formal and informal learning, helping them design the virtual spaces they need for meaningful education.

In 2020 we conceptualised and planned how the Collab might work. In 2021, we will be engaging and co-creating this platform along with partner organisations whose knowledge of necessary and desired spaces within which to build a culture of active learning will help us develop a provide a space within which curated 'real world' access to ecosystems, environments and activities that encourage critical thinking, purposeful learning and active solution-seeking will be made possible.



Above all we believe the Collab will enable "the magic of together" to happen despite physical distancing. We don't yet have a logo but the drawing alongside reflects one of our team's doodling. Watch this space for more about this incredible and innovative space and join us in theCollab. World then you can.

We will be testing the Collab environment throughout 2021 in a dedicated series of events called 'The Route to COP26'. This initiative will connect, convene and curate 'collaborators' in dialogues, debates and design programmes, giving a voice to young people and supporting their movement-building and actively advocating for change on the "Routes to COP26 in November 2021".

We believe the Collab will support our long-standing desire to drive research and advocacy efforts into "new" relevant education, education that delivers a more relevant grounding for tomorrow's leaders. We look forward to building support for this programme in the coming months.

## PROGRAMME: Conversations at the Crossroads



The Impact Trust's Conversations at the Crossroads series was initiated in May 2020 as the world negotiated the largest lockdown in living memory. These sought to bring people together from all sectors and at all levels, in deliberative dialogues to explore and understand the experiences (positive and negative), creative ideas, innovations, practices and programmes that did – and might continue to – provide a framework for how to emerge from Covid and promote a different way to engage in the future.

The Conversations are an ongoing commitment of the Trust into 2021 and we believe they form a key component of informal knowledge seeking and education which will add richness to

theCollab. Their outcomes are anticipated at different levels: individual, organizational (for the institutions, organisations or companies represented) and at the systemic level by fostering change in the domestic contexts of the participants.

With a commitment to an open, inclusive society, these conversations strive to engage and reflect a diversity of views, voices and experiences in the hope that they will support, design, create, contest, challenge and regenerate a common future from our collective stories of meaning-making. In all the conversations we host or support, we encourage engagement with provocative perspectives that advance awkward questions by making available an accessible public platform to explore and reflect on the time we're in and the impact of decisions we make going forward. Conversations at the Crossroads now supports various discussion platforms, including the We Contain Multitudes and the OMEGA Resilience Funders Network.

## IN CONCLUSION

### **A team with unwavering passion, commitment and resilience in the DNA**

The Impact Trust is extremely fortunate to be able to rely on an exceptional group of people: our team, our board and the faculty, advisors, specialists, partners, schools and institutions with whom we collaborate. It has been humbling to see them respond to prevailing circumstances with agility, creativity and unwavering passion and commitment. We are grateful for their incredible tenacity, fortitude, agility and authentic care for the purpose and vision of our organisation. They have chosen to rise above themselves, and the impact has been breath-taking.

### **A donor network that has consistently supported dynamic evolution**

We are especially grateful to our donors, especially those who have risen to the challenge, the need and the need to step up at a difficult time for our partners. They are so encouraging of our purpose and so willing to support the need to respond to emerging need and additional directions without sight of the destination. Their trust in our commitment, their willingness to give us opportunities to try – even if to fail – are so deeply appreciative.

### **A turning point – and every wish for 2021**

The pandemic has humbled humanity. It has shown us that, in fact, we are not all-powerful. But it has also given us gifts. It has taught us that we must be better, do things differently and do different things. The opportunities are all around us, we just have to take them. Because now it's urgent. At the Impact Trust, we start 2021 more convinced than ever that our work plays a critical role in filling the gaps that prevent humanity from taking those opportunities.