

Trailblazing South African school named in Top 10 shortlists for World's Best School Prizes 2024

- **Christel House South Africa named in Top 10 shortlist for World's Best School Prize for Overcoming Adversity**

An inspirational South African school has been named in the Top 10 shortlists for the [World's Best School Prizes 2024](#). The five World's Best School Prizes, founded by T4 Education in collaboration with Accenture, American Express, and the Lemann Foundation, are the world's most prestigious education prizes and this year's winners will share a \$50,000 prize fund.

Christel House South Africa, an independent kindergarten through secondary school in Cape Town, South Africa, which provides free character-based, career-focussed education to children from severely under-resourced communities in Cape Town, has been named in the Top 10 shortlist for the World's Best School Prize for Overcoming Adversity.

The five World's Best School Prizes - for Community Collaboration, Environmental Action, Innovation, Overcoming Adversity, and Supporting Healthy Lives – were established in the wake of COVID in 2022 to give a platform to schools that are changing lives in their classrooms and far beyond their walls, sharing their best practices to help improve education everywhere.

The winners of the five Prizes will be chosen by an expert Judging Academy based on rigorous criteria. In addition, all 50 shortlisted schools across the five Prizes will also take part in a [Public Vote, which opened today](#). The school which receives the most public votes will receive the Community Choice Award and membership to T4 Education's [Best School to Work](#) programme to help them support teacher wellbeing and solve the teacher recruitment and retention crisis.

Vikas Pota, Founder of T4 Education and the World's Best School Prizes, said:

“Unless we solve the urgent challenges global education faces – from learning gaps exacerbated by COVID to chronic underfunding and the growing teacher wellbeing, recruitment and retention crisis – we will have failed the next generation.

“Trailblazing South African schools like Christel House South Africa, which have cultivated a strong culture and aren't afraid to innovate, show the difference that can be made to so many lives. Schools everywhere can now learn from their solutions, and it's time governments do so as well.”

About the school:

Christel House South Africa, an independent kindergarten through secondary school in Cape Town, South Africa, provides free character-based, career-focussed education to children from severely under-resourced communities in Cape Town.

The school's mission is to prepare its graduates to achieve upward economic mobility, demonstrate good citizenship, and become empowered to identify and realise their goals, dreams, and human potential.

Overcoming adversity is difficult in a country with the highest Gini coefficient globally and where 55.5% of the population lives in poverty. Christel House South Africa focuses on affording children from the poorest households quality education and long-term support to ensure lasting success. It admits students who come from homes where the combined family income is no more than R1,500 (\$75) per person per month. Many students first arrive at Christel House South Africa under-nourished, facing adversities and barriers to learning which often include food insecurity, overcrowding, unemployment, community discord including rampant gang violence, exposure to substance abuse, and gender-based crime.

At Christel House South Africa, these barriers to learning are removed by providing holistic quality education that includes free healthcare, daily transport, nutritious meals, school uniforms and school supplies. In addition, psychosocial and family support, ensures students are physically and emotionally prepared to succeed. These comprehensive services are crucial in creating a supportive environment where students can thrive and overcome adversity for good.

A key factor in the success of Christel House South Africa is the innovative blended learning model that integrates technology at all levels of education. Recognised as one of the five Microsoft Showcase Schools in South Africa, Christel House South Africa leverages technology to enhance teaching and learning experiences, ensuring students are equipped with future-ready skills, especially in the ICT arena where over 60% of the world's new jobs are believed to be found by 2030.

Despite the adversities faced by its students, the school boasts a 100% Grade 12 pass rate, with 97% of alumni either pursuing higher education or becoming gainfully employed. The school's success is attributed to its trauma-informed teaching practices, extensive support services to both students and their families, and strong community involvement. The school's community involvement extends to a youth unemployment initiative, called Youth Bridge. Drawing on the lessons from Christel House South Africa's successful model, Youth Bridge boasts an impressive 71% average placement rate.

The school's comprehensive approach includes partnerships with external organisations for physical health assessments and interventions, and active parental engagement through workshops and activities.

Next steps:

The Top 3 finalists for each of the five World's Best School Prizes will be announced in September 2024 followed by the winners in November. The winner of each Prize will be

chosen based on rigorous criteria by a [Judging Academy](#) comprising distinguished leaders across the globe including academics, educators, NGOs, social entrepreneurs, government, civil society, and the private sector.

A prize of US\$50,000 will be equally shared among the winners of the five Prizes, with each receiving an award of US\$10,000. Meanwhile, the winner of the Community Choice Award, as determined by the Public Vote, will receive membership to Best School to Work - an independent, evidence-based mechanism to certify schools for their culture and working environment. Membership comes with detailed feedback, actionable insights, and benchmarking data to help schools transform their culture to attract and retain the best teachers.

ABOUT T4 EDUCATION:

We believe every child, everywhere, deserves a good education. We are building the world's largest community of teachers and schools to achieve this. Together. Our digital media platform provides opportunities for educators to network, collaborate, share good practices, and support each other's efforts to improve learning and school culture. We work to amplify teachers' voices because the world we want to see will only be built by listening to those at the heart of education.

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