

Gary Kirsten Foundation recognises Khayelitsha's budding cricketers

Talented young cricket stars are quickly being identified in Khayelitsha schools following the creation of comprehensive cricketing ecosystems by the Gary Kirsten Foundation last year.



Sivuyile Mfunelwa (Gary Kirsten Foundation and GKCA coach), Michael Botha and Gary Kirsten. Photographer: Ryan van Nekerck

In a drive to provide gifted individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds with the tools to develop their sporting skills, the Gary Kirsten Foundation initiated the Township Cricket Net Installation project. Learners from Chris Hani Secondary School, Siphamandla Secondary School and Impendulo Primary School are benefiting from the holistic initiative whereby each school received two quality cricket nets, a complete cricket kit as well as a cricket coach trained under the Gary Kirsten Cricket Academy.

On a recent visit to Siphamandla Secondary School, Gary Kirsten immediately took note of one youngster who is showing incredible talent. The talented cricketer has been taking full advantage of the nets and, under the tutelage of his coach Sivuyile Mfunelwa, has developed into a competitive fast bowler. However, as is the case with many of these learners, the youngster didn't have any cricket shoes and has been honing his skill in school shoes. To remedy this, Kirsten approached Adidas, who donated quality cricket shoes.

"We are really so grateful to Adidas for responding to this need without hesitation," said Kirsten. "It is absolutely amazing what can be achieved when these children are just given the opportunity."

Kirsten, who visits the township schools regularly, said this project was some of the most meaningful work he has done.

“I am so excited to get back to the schools and see what new talent has emerged,” he said. “South Africa is so alive with possibilities and the progress made through the net installation programme proves that there are gifted sports stars everywhere, we just need to invest in them.”

A fourth school has been identified as a recipient for the Township Cricket Net Installation. Sivile Primary School at Site C in Khayelitsha will soon benefit from this advantageous outdoor practice facility.

To ensure the sustainability of each donation, the Gary Kirsten Cricket Academy trains a coach from the area who is then provided with a position at the school, overseeing all sporting activities, creating a comprehensive sports' programme and coaching the youngsters. The coaches work closely with both the Gary Kirsten Cricket Academy, as well as Gary Kirsten himself, keeping up-to-date with all elements of the cricketing arena.

“Job creation, skills development and general community upliftment are all key to the success of the net installations and we want to continue expanding this programme into as many South African schools as possible,” said Kirsten.

Each net installation costs approximately R80,000, excluding the cost of cricket equipment and the hiring of coaches. Any organisation or individual interested in supporting the Township Cricket Net Installation initiative can check the [Foundation page](#).

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