

Purpose of 'Soar!'

To build resilience and confidence in the South African youth, and empower them to make informed choices about their future

- In South Africa, **one in four university students suffer from depression**, according to the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG).¹
- Teenagers aged 15 – 19 are most at risk for suicide
- Girls attempt suicide more than boys at a ratio of 3:1²
- Various studies in the US show that by the time they get to university, **girls are far more anxious, depressed and insecure than boys**. Their need to be perfect and succeed is starting to become a mental wellness issue.³
- Through my work, I uncovered that **some girls are aware of just five career choices available to them**. This is shocking, considering we are entering the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

How can we help build resilience and self-confidence in SA's youth, so they are able to cope better and have a real sense of their own self-worth?

I have set out to help make a difference in the lives of youth across South Africa by publishing a book aimed at high school girls (the boys' book is in progress) that gives them valuable information they can use to make decisions about their futures⁴

Not all learners have access to WiFi or unlimited data to research careers, therefore a printed book seemed most practical. In addition, numerous tools included in the book require the learners to physically write or draw in the book.

The idea behind the book is to expose young learners to a wider range of career options, provide mindfulness practices to better understand and cope with teenage stressors, life guidance, and share inspirational stories of a new generation of South African role models to whom they can relate to and aspire to.

The book is aimed at all teenagers; however, it's intended recipients are under-resourced schools and communities.

Content of the book – 'Soar!' for girls

Career insight

The book will help young girls gain insight into 50 careers across various fields, including business, the arts, medicine, trade, IT, education, and sport.

To make the information relevant to high school learners considering a career or field of study, students who are currently studying in these fields, or recent graduates, were approached to share their perspectives, experiences, motivation, and advice.

¹ <https://www.parent24.com/Family/Health/1-in-4-sa-varsity-students-have-been-diagnosed-with-depression-20181010>

² <https://www.sancda.org.za/teen-suicide-prevention-week-feb-11-14/>

³ Source: *Enough As She Is*, Rachell Simmons, 2018 Introduction: Not enough as she is, pgs x, xiv, xix,

⁴ Note: initial distribution of the book will take place in Gauteng; however, the intention is for the book to be distributed nationally.

List of careers covered in the book:

1	Actuary	21	Geneticist	41	Quantity surveyor
2	Anthropologist	22	Geologist	42	Social worker
3	Aeronautical engineer	23	Hairstylist	43	Somatologist
4	Biologist	24	Hospitality manager	44	Speech therapist
5	Biotechnologist	25	Human Resources Manager	45	Sports communication specialist
6	Business manager	26	Information designer	46	Statistician
7	Chartered accountant	27	Information technology: software engineer	47	Supply chain manager
8	Chef	28	Instrumentation technician	48	Teacher
9	Chiropractor	29	Journalist	49	Translator (linguistics)
10	Clinical psychologist	30	Lawyer (attorney / advocate)	50	Veterinarian
11	Chemical Engineer	31	Marine scientist		
12	Civil engineer	32	Marketing strategist		
13	Coder	33	Makeup artist		
14	Consumer scientist	34	Metallurgist		
15	Dental technician	35	Nurse (registered)		
16	Digital marketer	36	Occupational therapist		
17	Doctor	37	Optometrist		
18	Event manager	38	Pastry chef		
19	Film: costume, makeup and set designer	39	Physiotherapist		
20	Firefighter	40	Political scientist		

Life skills

In addition to career guidance, the book includes:

- Mindfulness and reflection exercises (with input from a clinical psychologist)
- Inspirational stories of South African women who have succeeded in predominantly male-dominated fields (from brew master to shipbuilder; SA National women's football captain to MD of Shell SA, and more!)
- Short articles on relevant topics such as menstruation education basics; how to deal with bullying; anxiety and depression; digital citizenship do's and don'ts; types of funding for tertiary education; the Fourth Industrial Revolution; and entrepreneurship; and
- Practical resources such as contact details for helplines and organisations like SADAG

A similar book for boys is in design, with a focus on gender equality (treating women with respect, etc.) and what it means to be a 21st century man.

“It is not beyond our power to create a world in which all children have access to a good education. Those who do not believe this have small imaginations.”

~ Nelson Mandela

Making a difference ... one book at a time

To date over 1 500 books have been handed over to girls at schools in Gauteng and through an NPO (in Mamelodi, Pretoria) aligned with UN Women, with centres across the county. The distribution of the books has been made possible through the support of predominantly individual donors. The sustainability of providing under-resourced schools / communities with these books is only possible with the collaboration of corporate / SME clients.

Voices of Change aims to “inspire organisations, irrespective of their business purpose, to work together towards common goals.” I believe that this platform is aligned to my personal vision of one of those goals. Creating gender parity ... not only in the workplace, but in society too. And what better place to start, than by inspiring the minds of young South Africans.

‘Soar!’ is intended to create awareness and hope for the future generation of young professionals, leaders, and entrepreneurs with the belief that there is a better future, and that men and women are equal. However, in the absence of this knowledge and information and a different perspective or narrative, they will not see the possibilities for themselves.



“I read a book
one day and
my whole life
changed.”

~ Orhan Pamuk
(Nobel Prize for
Literature, 2006)





Appendix: Layout and design

