



Edu-peg

# THE SACTWU EDUPEG PROJECT

## 1<sup>st</sup> QUARTER REPORTS 2008



*"The Youth of our country are the valued possession of the nation. Without them there is no future. Their needs are immense and urgent."*

Nelson Mandela - From his address to the House of Parliament, Cape Town, 24 May 1994.

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EDUPEG PROJECT**

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2008**

**WESTERN CAPE**



Name of school	Pupil enrolment	Teachers & Principal
Formosa Primary School	1010	22
Harkerville Primary School	132	4
Kranshoek Primary School	363	7
The Craggs Primary School	407	15
Phakamisani Primary School	1060	22
Wittedrif Primary School	170	7
Fraaisig Primary School	944	28
Sunridge Primary School	1173	28
Chris Nissen Primary School	584	16
Thembalitsha Primary School	1283	32
	<b>7126</b>	<b>148</b>

The success of our visits to the schools in these clusters varied. Although the letter that advises schools of our visit has been revised, it is written clearly and concisely, in both English and Afrikaans. A number of schools claimed to misunderstand the letter, although in most instances lessons were able to be arranged. The training into schools has now progressed to where educators are required to utilise the information and methods that have been shared and demonstrated in both workshops and in the classroom. Some teachers find this very challenging. This can be attributed to some teachers lacking confidence and self-esteem, but it can be reminiscent of "inspections" by officials. Once teachers are re-assured that our trainers are present in a supportive role, to assist if necessary, these fears are usually allayed.

There were highs and lows throughout the visit, with the apparent lack of leadership at Kranshoek Primary School being mentioned as a cause for concern, by both our Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase trainers. We had a wonderfully warm reception at The Craggs Primary School and in many schools the trainers received warm appreciation and thanks for the comprehensive sharing of knowledge and support given.

Leadership in schools is obviously closely linked with the general functioning and ethos in a school. Unfortunately many principals are still in the process of gaining the skills to cope with the comprehensive and demanding tasks that fall under their jurisdiction. Demands on teachers in schools have changed, and some teachers need support and encouragement with regard to interventions into schools, changed teaching styles and methods, etc. Lack of internal pedagogical discussion within schools also diminishes opportunities for staff members to share problems, gain information and knowledge, improve their skills levels and interact as a cohesive team. What is noticeable in some schools, was that there was a lack of understanding, (by the learners), between the relationships of knowledge taught and the given consolidation activity. Learners often displayed difficulty when dealing with questions which required any form of deduction. Many learners also generally displayed a lack of confidence when expected to work on their own (in both Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase). Pupils also appeared to be unused to working with resources and some obviously battled with basic maths concepts, including the four mathematical operators.

Teachers were able to observe that Edupeg activities provide positive opportunities for learners to access knowledge and skills, with learners busy and productive, with tasks appropriate to the development level of the learners, and which correlated with core curricular requirements. Teachers were reported to be thrilled to see how relevant activities, pictures, graphs or rubrics brought the lesson and their teaching, to life. They saw that their learners were more engaged and how consolidation and assessment can be achieved.

Whole class teaching is why many of the educators that we encounter, are having difficulty assessing the children. Many of the classes are very large, and these circumstances are such that it is virtually impossible to achieve sound continuous assessment practices, with such large groups of children.



Lack of ability groups can also encourage inert/passive learners who become "passengers" in the class and who are never called upon to be involved in the lessons. We also saw some exciting and stimulating classrooms, where educators have obviously made a concerted effort to create an attractive and positive learning environment. Where learners were given opportunities to engage with activities, and when they realised that they were able to answer, they gained enthusiasm and a level of excitement and expectation was evident in the classroom. The range of ability levels within classes is also often vast, which creates additional challenges for the educators.

Storage at some schools needed to be addressed. If the resource materials are not readily available for educators, they will not make use of them. The imperative to take care of these valuable resources was also shared.

It has been suggested that we try to work more closely with the Bitou 10 Foundation intervention in the Plettenberg Bay region. This will be of value to both projects and we look forward to meeting the trainers and to planning to work more cohesively.

We are looking forward to being part of the progress in this cluster and are grateful to our sponsors, SACTWU and Vukani/V-Slots for their generous funding which has made this support possible.



**GEORGE/KNYSNA/PLETTENBERG BAY**  
**11-21 FEBRUARY 2008**

**PRINCIPAL COMMENTS**

- Edupeg werkswyse in die 2 fases is uitgeklaar (Formosa Primêre Skool)
- Ek dink dit is tog belangrik om meer te kom; hierdie aspek van die Leerareas bly kern tot opvoeding. (Kranshoek Primêre Skool)
- Baie dankie vir u vriendlikheid en gewilgheid om te ondersteun. Sterkte. (The Craggs Primêre Skool)
- The Edupeg ladies Shirley and Ingrid visited the school for giving support. They were very influential towards educators and advised them more about using Edupeg books. (Phakamisani Primary School)
- Baie goeie professionaliteit openbaar deur opleiers – sal graag ‘n gedetailleerde verslag wou hê. (Sunridge Primêre Skool)
- The presence of the ladies here at Chris Nissen Primary is to give an educator the opportunity to develop their skills in a resource that can make a big difference in Numeracy and Literacy. We appreciate and value your support. (Chris Nissen Primary School)
- Edupeg is filling the need to explain the basic essential concepts of Mathematics and other Learning Area’s in a practical and easily-understood manner to the learners. (Thembelitsha Primary School)
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We were approached to assist at this Overberg school during a meeting on improving the levels of literacy at primary school level.

A band of local citizens were inspired by The Sunshine Project, and have initiated a similar reading support programme at this school in Stanford.

The principal is enthusiastic and obviously very committed and dedicated to being pro-active, with regard to improving the resource base of the school and the equipment to which the learners are thus exposed. Because of Ms. Oktober's absence, due to ill health, some of the arrangements made were not fully in place, but the commitment of the staff was obvious, and what needed to be organised was promptly put in place. The central storage area was set up, and a borrowing system explained. This will need to be monitored, as it appeared that the educators found the system suggested by the school, a little difficult with regard to easy access of resources. We will obviously check on this aspect during our next visit.

There was a pleasant atmosphere in all of the classes where demonstration lessons took place, and some educators were particularly encouraged to be able to stand back and observe how their learners coped with more individual style tasks. Indeed, one particular teacher was pleasantly surprised to observe how well her weakest group of learners were able to cope with their set task.

A number of the classes appear to be very over-crowded, and such conditions make using concrete equipment very challenging. The handling of concrete equipment is essential at primary school level, particularly at Foundation Phase. The lack of teaching using concrete equipment, contributes largely to the very low level of maths functioning seen at many schools.

The number of children in a class, often dictates that teachers stay with the more classical style of teaching, as discipline and control (of a large number of students) is often perceived to be more easily manageable. The converse is frequently true, where when children are afforded the opportunity to engage in tasks at their own developmental level, and where such tasks are active, and learner-centred, personal discipline couples with more intense absorption, interest and activity.

The classical type of education is often very tiring for the teacher, where she needs to exert on-going control, and can result in exhaustion. The latter option requires more initial planning and organisation, but once implemented, allows the educator to become more of an observer and co-ordinator and where constructive continuous assessment can take place in a relaxed, yet educationally sound environment.

We are looking forward to being part of the progress in this school and are grateful to our sponsors, SACTWU and Vukani/V-Slots for their generous funding which has made this support possible.



Primary School children today, in working class communities, can be most vulnerable to elements within the broader community. Many homes have single-parent families, where the parent is employed, and if two parents are in evidence, it is far from unusual that both parents are working.

Many primary schools educate numbers of learners, far in excess of the number of children that the school was designed to accommodate. The result is that frequently children are in over-crowded classroom situations, where the ability of the teacher to meet the needs of individual pupils, is severely challenged. This environment can give rise to feelings of insecurity and inadequacy in children, as they are unsure of concepts taught, often lack a solid foundation in particularly maths and literacy and these children lose interest in school due to the many challenges which begin to face them.

In numerous working class communities in the Western Cape, alcohol abuse contributes to the high incidence of Foetal Alcohol Syndrome in children in communities. These children present with special needs, which can seldom be met in a busy, full and often crowded classroom environment.

The concept of after-care clubs, where children get an opportunity to complete homework under supervision, where reading material is readily available and where children are supported and encouraged to read, is obviously very beneficial. The children are safe and contained, and are exposed to positive, enriching experiences and on occasion, outings.

Edupeg forms part of the stimulating resources which are available for the children to use, individually, or in small groups. Many of these learners will have poor exposure to Perceptual Skills, and in the safe, secure and accepting environment of the clubs, they are able to work through activities that are congruent with their developmental level.

The focus on a healthy mind, as well as a healthy body, is obviously also very valuable and children are given carefully organised opportunities to develop physical skills, specifically with regard to running.



We thank our valued sponsors SACTWU, Picardi Rebel Liquors and Vukani/V-Slots for their generous funding, which makes the support of this project possible, and we look forward to the feedback from this viable and exciting farming community project.

It was pleasing to note on this visit, that virtually all schools are securely fenced and that the majority of schools have also made a concerted effort with their gardens, entrances, courtyards, etc. These create a positive first impression, as well as create a pleasing work environment for both educators and learners. Learners are also encouraged to take pride in their school and its surroundings. Many schools were in the preparatory stages of preparing for a demarcated play area for the Grade R children. Climbing equipment is to be placed here, to encourage the very necessary development of large muscle groups and gross motor control.

Some, more prevalently Intermediate/Senior Phase classrooms, do still appear to have piles of books, resources, equipment, etc in the classroom. Such items are unattractive, impede learning as they are a distraction, as well as prevent easy access around the classroom and are not a positive example to young and impressionable minds.

Some teachers have begun to utilise monitors to assist with handing out equipment, books, etc and also gathering these in at the end of a lesson. Some Foundation Phase classrooms also have attractive and well used, activity centres.

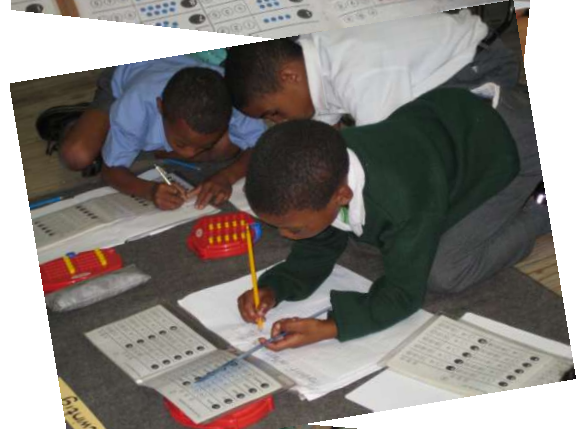
Four of the schools that are in this cluster, that we were scheduled to visit last year, needed to be re-scheduled due to the teachers strike action. These schools were accommodated in early October, not an ideal time-slot, but that was what available. All schools cancelled these appointments due to pre-progression and final assessment commitments. All four schools show a diminished use of the Edupeg programme. "Many factors affect the success of a program in a school, such as the quality of the leadership in the school, the amount of internal discussion and co-planning taking place, the number of staff changes in the school, (directly impacting on the number of educators who know how to use the materials and also linked to discussion and co-planning in the school), the quality and enthusiasm of the Edupeg champion and the viability of the borrowing and access system. If one or any of these factors is absent or weak, the life of the programme is threatened unless, it seems, it is sustained by regular in depth visits from us". Quoted from Shirley du Plessis's March Report, 2008. We are aware that developmental work is slow, that it is indeed a process and that patience and sensitivity are vital.

In this particular region, many of the teachers in De Doorns do not have their own transport and make use of a contract taxi service which we are told apparently departs from Worcester at 06h00, and arrives at De Doorns at 07h20. This is obviously a very early commencement to the day. Apparently this same service collects teachers shortly after the close of school. This system precludes any early morning staff meetings/planning sessions, as school commences at 07h30. It also prevents any after school development gatherings or professional growth opportunities as the contract transport departs shortly after school closes. Marking, assessment and general classroom tidiness and organisation are also obviously impacted upon. Coupled with this, it would appear that some schools have two breaks prior to 12h30. With the Grade 1 + 2 children being dismissed at ± 12h30, it is questionable if these learners are exposed to their full, school time requirements.

In most instances, the very large classes are also mentioned, to be a challenge to teaching and learning. Most Foundation Phase classes appear to be too large to allow for floor space for a teaching mat. This largely precludes concrete teaching, so essential to the development and understanding of sound mathematical concepts. Many children also require a visual component to instruction, and a singular auditory approach is inadequate for these learners.

In many instances, in both Foundation Phase and Intermediate/Senior Phase, it is noted that educators are unable to move around the classroom due to the number of desks in the class. Individual assessment is thus virtually impossible, when learners are actually

Name of school	Pupil enrolment	Teachers & Principal
Worcester Moslem Primary School	211	8
Glen Heatlie Primary School	312	9
Sandhills Primary School	298	11
Iris Qwela Primary School	132	6
Bonne Esperance Primary School	372	12
Sibabalwe Primary School	215	6
Rabie Primary School	432	12
F.J. Conradie Primary School	1064	27
Hexvallei Secondary School	340	7
	<b>3376</b>	<b>98</b>



involved with an activity, as they cannot be observed by the teachers, or their methods noted, (or that they rely on copying their closest peer!).

It was also noted that there was an alarming lack of maths "know how" at some schools. At one school Grade 6 learners had no idea how to convert, R3.00, to cents and a teacher shared the knowledge with the class that a dozen, was 6 items. (Knowledge of a dozen was intrinsic to answering the exercise set). Some children are also completely unused to reading data for themselves and relying on their own ability to find an answer, from utilising the information presented in the resource.

Other learners have no experience in setting out a written mathematical activity, neatly and methodically, and then applying one or more of the basic operations to solve the problem posed.

Teacher absenteeism was also noted in the area, some teachers being booked off indefinitely due to stress. Temporary teachers are in place at a number of schools, which can also contribute to the lack of inter-communication between staff. Some schools may not share knowledge of resources in the schools, as their sense is that the teachers are only present in a transitory role. A habit of non-communication can then develop.

Non-withstanding all the challenges, some very positive experiences were reported in the Foundation Phase. "I have never seen a better implementation of the very basic written tasks as was being done by these Grade 1 learners. It was a delight to see the enthusiasm and confidence with which they tackled the tasks. This educator works in a thorough, quiet way and is an example of what can be achieved in an overcrowded class of immature Grade 1 learners". (Ingrid van der Spuy's Report Glen Heatlie Primary School).

In the Intermediate/Senior Phase too, there were reported some real successes and a comment after the visit to Sandhills Primary was: "What a pleasure to encounter such an enthusiastic and competent educator." Shirley du Plessis said about Mr. van Wyk.

We do need to continue to encourage teachers to get to know the resources in their schools, and to plan how to use these, so that they correlate with, and add value to, the lessons to be taught. Teachers also need to learn to more fully rely on their own common sense and their ability to reason and think logically, as well as depend on their known knowledge. These methods will assist to diminish their daily classroom pressure, as well as to promote confidence and self-esteem as teachers begin to feel more capable and competent.

We are looking forward to being part of the progress in this cluster and are grateful to our sponsors, SACTWU and Vukani/V-Slots for their generous funding which has made this support possible.



## **WORCESTER/DE DOORNS**

**3-6 MARCH 2008**

### **PRINCIPAL COMMENTS**

- Pragtige id e – prakties uitvoerbaar. Ons leerders en onderwysers baat beslis daarby. Doen so voort! (Worcester Noord Prim re Skool)
- Thank you for on-going support. We try to use Edupeg to full capacity. Integration of the Learning Areas in the Intermediate Phase still needs attention. (Worcester Moslem Primary School)
- Ek het die Edupeg boekies gebruik om ‘n Afrikaanse lesse aan te bied. Die boekies is regtig baie handig veral by die inleiding en om die LLE se woordeskat te verbreed. (Worcester Moslem Prim re Skool)
- It is strongly recommended for groups. Edupeg makes learners more enthusiastic. (Glen Heatlie Primary School)
- Edupeg vorm deel van ons daglikse beplanning – en word deur alle leerders geniet en groot welslae word behaal. Dankie ons kan u ontvang! (Glen Heatlie Prim re Skool)
- Baie leersaam. Baie dandie. (Sandhills Prim re Skool)
- We as the staff of Iris Qwela Primary appreciate your on-going support. However, we would like you to visit us more, even it is once a term. (Iris Qwela Primary School)
- It is nice to have a visit from your instructors because they gave us new ideas on how to use the resources. (Iris Qwela Primary School)
- Daar is nog ruimte vir verbetering. Dankie vir u ondersteuning. (Bonne Esperance Primary School)
- It is used as one of the schools resources and is not only used for Maths, but for all Learning Areas. (Sibabalwe Primary School)
- Baie prakties en dit vergemaklik leer. (Rabie Prim re Skool)
- Baie dankie vir u besoek. Dit word baie waardeer en dit wys dat u belangstelling toon in die werk wat ons doen. (F.J. Conradie Prim re Skool)