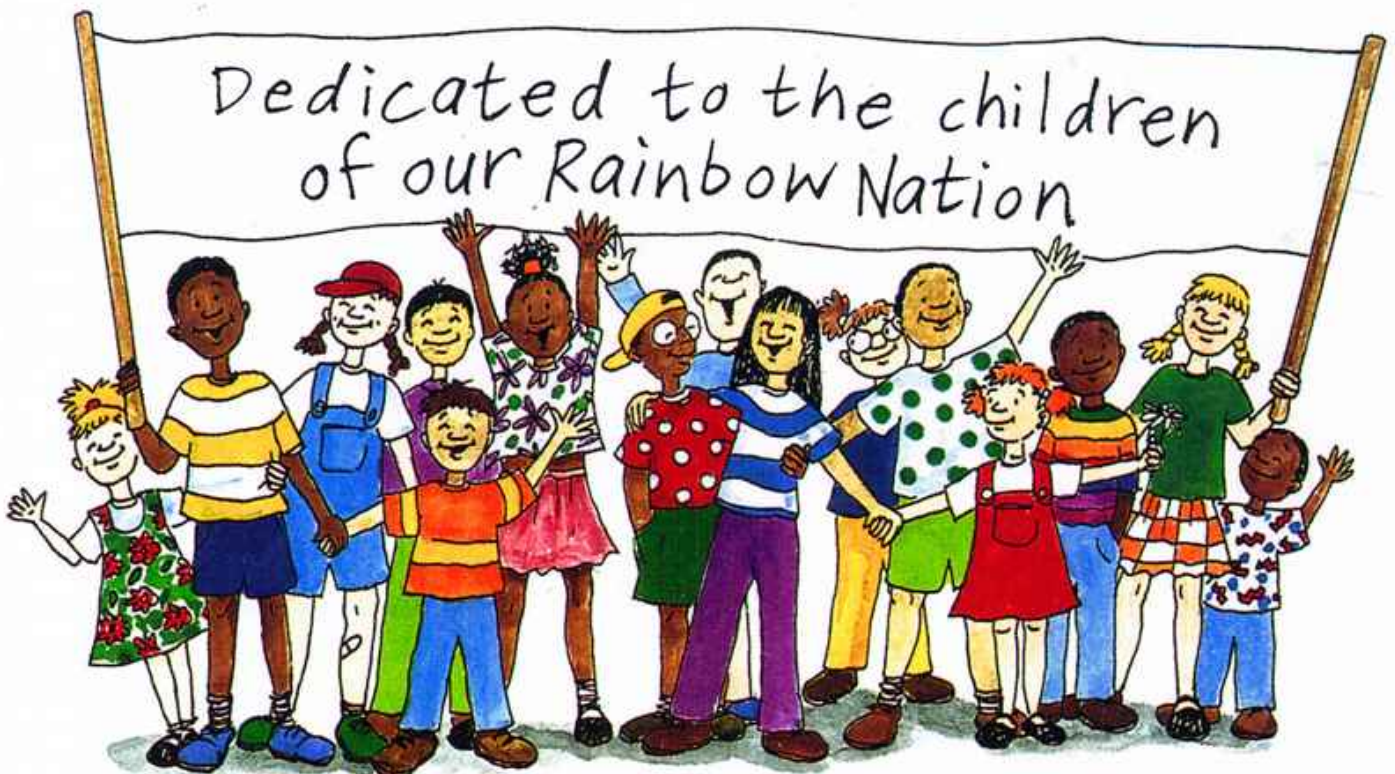




Edu-peg

THE SACTWU EDUPEG PROJECT

2nd 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.

Compiled by: E.A. Swerky - Project Manager & National Coordinator



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BOTSWANA



A more aggressive immigration policy in Botswana, appears to have been put into place/enforced. Our trainer, Jason Knott was advised that his papers were not in order and he was declined permission to work, as Edupeg is not a registered company in Botswana. I suggested to Jason that he form his own consultancy business and that we could then become one of his clients. This idea appealed to him and he has for the past few months, needed to comply with the numerous demands of immigration services, as well as Botswana law, with regard to establishing a company.

With things now all virtually in place, Jason has been able to resume his training (as of May), and has been warmly welcomed back into all of the schools. Jason began with an audit of all materials in schools, and a tidying up of the resource storage area, and is in full swing with lessons again in the schools.

I visited Botswana in early June and I too was warmly welcomed in the schools that I visited. It is pleasing to note that there is quite a lot of activity in a number of schools, with regard to renovations/building projects. The holes under the roof eaves where bats creep in (and defecate, with a resultant atrocious odour), were being repaired, classrooms were being repainted and at Moremi Primary and Gxhabara Primary beautiful new classrooms (at the former) and teacher accommodation (at both), are virtually completed.

At present many of the schools have a large number of broken classroom windows, through which the cold winter wind blows. It is hoped that repairs to these windows will also be on the refurbishment agenda. Also, in all schools visited, the desks and chairs in many classrooms were broken, and in some instances the classroom furniture available for the students was entirely inadequate. In one school, some mature Standard 4 children were working at desks under which they could not fit their legs. They then needed to almost double over completely at the waist, to write on the low desk tops. When I enquired if it may be possible to swop these desks with a class of younger learners, it would appear that there are no larger desks in the school.

I was struck anew, by the bright, open, enthusiastic faces of all the pupils that I saw. The Botswanan government supplies school feeding for all primary school children, and one feels the benefit of the nutritional meals that they receive at school, does play an intrinsic part in the alert nature of these children. The Botswanan people are warm and friendly, and the children respond to Jason with great warmth and humour, when he communicates with them in mother tongue. They often rock in their seats in mirth, their faces wreathed in smiles and laughter, as he shares colloquial dialogue with them.

The mode of teaching in Botswana, is traditionally "talk and chalk", with all children, regardless of ability, taught the same lesson, at the same time, and given the identical task to complete. Teachers seat a weak child alongside a brighter

REGION: Botswana

Name of school	Pupil enrolment	Teachers & Principals
Bana Ba Letsatsi	203	4
Matshwane Primary School	200	9
Letsholathebe Primary School	969	28
Bana Ba Metsi	53	4
Xnamaseri Primary School	522	16
Gxhabara Primary School	920	31
Etsha 13 Primary School	920	26
Moremi Primary School	195	12
Boyei Primary School	1020	33
Botswelelo Primary School	432	16
Wilderness Safari	*	*
	5434	179

*This sponsorship is for the Wilderness Safari "Children in the Wilderness" initiative, where numerous disadvantaged children are exposed to a wilderness/ environmental/ learning experience, i.e. no finite number of children.



Early morning routines at a school - so pleasing to see. Litter collection, emptying the bins, and early morning assembly.

child, and it becomes the responsibility of the brighter child, to guide/teach the weaker child. This method is far from ideal, as the weaker children frequently copy the answers, with no idea of how the answer was attained. Teachers also have an inaccurate assumption about the capabilities of the children, as with most answers correct, they incorrectly assume that the children understand, and then move on to the next concept.

It is a privilege to be invited into the classroom of a teacher, and they need to be approached with respect and dignity. We were able to sensitively suggest to some teachers, to try grouping their pupils according to their ability levels, at least some days per week. All the teachers warmed to this idea and on return visits, Jason will try to model such lessons.

Children also have no experience of handling concrete equipment, so essential to the understanding and internalisation of maths concepts. I did suggest to one teacher that he collect bottle tops or bread bag tags, and that he keep these, in quantity, in his classroom for counting purposes.

In one school we noticed that no written work had been recorded since early May, while in another school children had filled at least one exercise book, and where written maths was a daily occurrence.

In no schools, did I observe that children showed their working out alongside or as part of the calculation. Scraps of paper, the back/covers of their exercise book, or their hands, were where calculations were done. Again I sensitively suggested that teachers encourage that all working out is shown. When marking, pupils can score marks according to their calculations. Additionally teachers are able to access the level of a pupil's ability when they have sight of the rough work/calculations.

All of the schools into which we work, educate the children of middle to lower class working parents, or the unemployed. The children all wear a school uniform of sorts, many of which are much repaired or of the incorrect size for the child. Most children are in shoes and socks, although many had no jerseys in the colder wintery months.

All had exercise books, although many lacked pens/pencils. I am told that the school does order these from the state for distribution to the pupils, but the vast array of different writing utensils does not bear this out. It would appear that at times teachers fail to use their common sense. One or two sharpeners and erasers on the teachers' desk could be used communally and replaced. One child bowed his head and attempted to chew a point onto his pencil. One is often humbled by the independence of children such as those in the schools where we work, and their lack of expectation when one compares them with white western children.

I gave out to children, all the pencils that I had with me, and their faces were wreathed in smiles as they accepted these very simple resources. I intend to look at supplying more pencils to all of the schools.



In many schools, some classes are taught outside, due to a shortage of classrooms. Some schools sink old car tyres into the ground for the seats/desks.



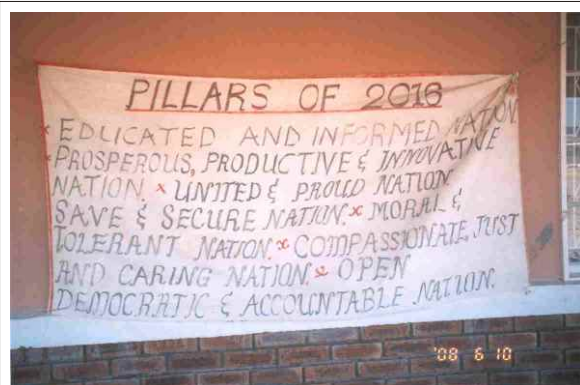
Jason working with a teacher.



Re-packing the classroom after the renovations.



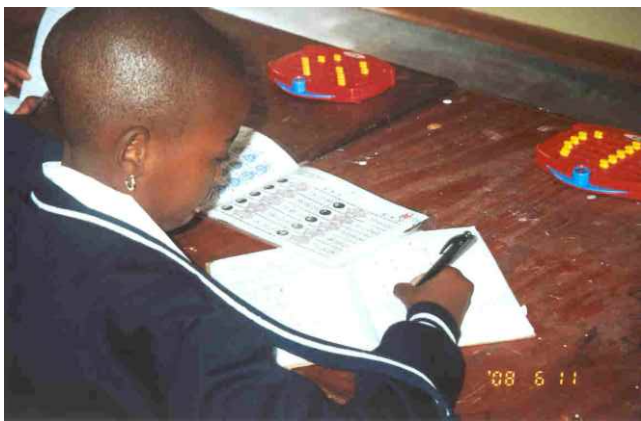
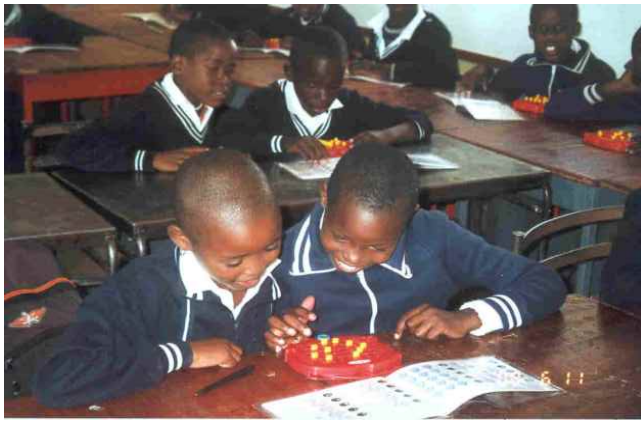
The children in a school playground.



A motivational banner at one school.



C h i l d r e n e n g a g e d w i t h E d u p e g



We try to sensitively suggest and promote neat and organised storage areas, which helps to promote a positive teaching and learning environment. Teachers do teach in often challenging circumstances, but lack of structure and organisation makes their difficulties increase.



Water is available at usually a single point in the school grounds .

I had a most uplifting visit at Bana Ba Letsatsi, the street childrens' project in Maun, that we support. Lillian has left, being the founding director and fulfilling this role for a number of years, Fiona Miller, her replacement, is bright, vibrant, enthusiastic and will certainly continue to expand and develop this very worthwhile project. (Fiona was "frog marched" to Air Botswana and forced to purchase a ticket out of Botswana due to a small, rectifiable incorrect detail on her contract/immigration papers and was made to fly back to England while this was dealt with. She was greeted with aggression by the same immigration official on her return, at Maun airport, which seems absurd when one looks at the selfless and amazing social work done by the project with which she is involved).

After a late start, we are back on track and I look forward to improvement, although being Africa, I know that this may well be slow.

Sincere thanks to our generous funders, SACTWU and The Wild Foundation, for their continued support, which makes possible the work that we do in this region.