

EDUCATION REPORT

What is often very apparent in schools, is the varying degrees of leadership in a school, and the impact and effect that is evident in the entire institution. In an increasing number of the schools that we visit, the principals are more frequently present at school, and keen to engage with our trainers. If principals are due to be absent, to attend a workshop or meeting, they have more frequently delegated the responsibility for our visit to the deputy principal/phase champions, and thus all runs quite smoothly. During our visits, some principals teach lessons themselves, some accompany the trainers to classrooms and observe lessons, and all enjoy and welcome feedback on our visit. Virtually all principals complete our feedback forms, and their comments are much appreciated and acted upon where possible.

Caroline Faulkner, is a lecturer on educational leadership and management at The Wits School of Education. She is conscious of the intricate and often unique character of school environments and states, "schools are highly complex organisations that require skills, professional leaders and managers". Principals in schools today have duties that encompass many spheres, and the demands on principals in the poorer schools, to perform and show improved results, has escalated. When taking into account that principals need to deal with, just in connection with teachers:

- teacher capabilities
- subject knowledge
- teaching methods
- time on task
- application
- availability, use and storage of teaching resources, etc,

just with regard to a single aspect within their management framework, one is reminded anew, how difficult are their tasks.. Principals face ever increasing challenges to steer their schools through an escalatingly, complex, and changing environment. "Self management and the ability to manage others well, is critical to success, as is a high degree of innovative and creative strategic thinking and the ability to adapt to the needs of the unique environment in which the institution is located", states Mark Mitchell, director of the Business Acumen programme for Educational Leaders, at UCT Graduate School of Business.

Worldwide there is awareness that to find sustainable long term solutions to challenges facing educational institutions, courses need to be offered to use creative approaches to develop the skills required. Using the expertise of South Africa's leading business schools to create opportunities for transfer of knowledge and skills, from business leaders to educational leaders, is an exciting possibility. Business leaders are often forced to seek creative changes under huge demands and pressure, which are what many school leaders face (the demands and pressures).

Transformation in education is presently a worldwide phenomenon, which encompasses both first and third world countries. Programmes that seek to unlock self-knowledge and leadership have the potential to make a huge impact on education in South Africa. Past imbalances in education have been addressed over the past 14 plus years and education is an option for millions more of young South Africans today. Education is one of the most important and most challenging processes for social and economic upliftment of our South African youth, and the link between learner achievement and school leadership is inextricably linked. We are proud to be a part of this process, and grateful for the generous funding from our donors, who make possible the work we fulfil in primary school educational institutions.

FEEDBACK SUGGESTION

We would love to have a quarterly section of our newsletter dedicated to "feedback from donors". We urge all our donors to please send us something to include in this proposed section.

OFFICE NEWS

Our more secure funding in 2008 has enabled us to make a small investment in upgraded office equipment, as well as the services of an additional part time administrative assistant.

TRAINER NEWS

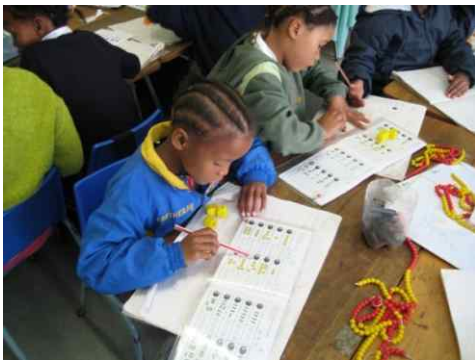
Our training team is well settled and all are presently enjoying a much needed rest.



WESTERN CAPE

Total schools to be supported in 2008: 150
Total schools to be supported in 2nd quarter: 46

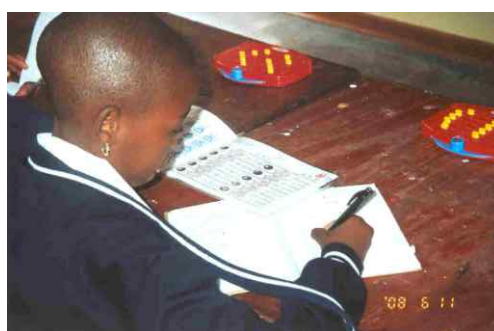
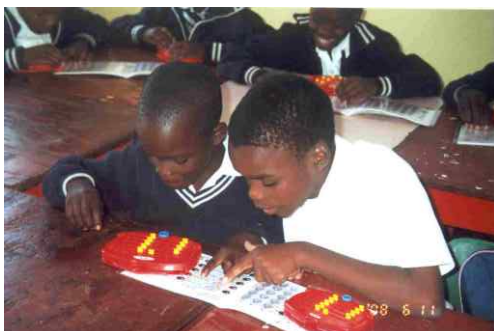
We were able to successfully support 46 schools during this quarter. The impact of WCED input is evident in virtually all the schools into which we work. Change is slow, as we also look to initiate improved teaching methods and techniques from the "inside out", i.e. through demonstration, suggestion, etc, rather than through an imposed "top down" philosophy. The need for Shirley du Plessis to attend to urgent family matters required that we cancel our planned visits into 8 schools. These have all been re-scheduled for the 3rd Term.



BOTSWANA

Total schools to be supported in 2008: 9
Total schools to be supported in 2nd quarter: 9

After some challenges due to administrative requirements in Botswana, we are pleased to report that our training here is now back on track. During a recent visit, I am happy to report that I was able to visit 5 of our institutions in Maun, where the warmth and appreciation for the support that Jason is able to bring to the schools, is very evident. All schools are visited twice, monthly, except for Bana Ba Letsatsi, which enjoys weekly visits.



EASTERN CAPE

Total schools to be supported in 2008: 90
Total schools to be supported in 2nd quarter: 33

"75 % of families needing assistance in South Africa live in the rural areas, with 32 % of households in the Eastern Cape living on an income of ± R200.00/month" Angus Gillis Foundation report.

Virtually all of the schools into which we work in this province fall into the category of rural/semi-rural. Here we are exposed to the full brunt of poverty, hunger, malnutrition and marginalisation that accompanies being poor, with limited or no access to media and print material, technology and even electricity, water and sanitation. We worked into 33 schools, some of which are operating, or trying to function, under very challenging conditions. The morale of teachers is often quite low, and the demands of attending workshops in school time, there being no substitute teacher to teach their classes during these absences, and the obvious negative impact on the routine and content of the pupils' learning is of a concern to all, including those teachers who are not attending the workshops and who have to "double-up" already big classes. Children being told to stay at home denies them of any educational input, and it is obviously not always safe for them to do so. I am well pleased with our dedicated trainers Vuyo Mgadla and Nompucuko Zakaza, who service this area, and whose sensitive attitude and approach to their training has endeared them to all with whom they interact.



KWA-ZULU NATAL

Total schools to be supported in 2008: 60
Total schools to be supported in 2nd quarter: 31

Generally, teachers in Kwa Zulu Natal seem to be actively trying to embrace new teaching methods. Classrooms are virtually always described as having educational wall charts displayed, as well as learners' work. Vegetable gardens at schools are well established in this province and the produce is used to enhance the daily school feeding fare. Most classes have the children sitting in groups, but whole class teaching is still very much apparent. Our very caring and sensitive trainers are working to try to influence a change, through discussion and demonstrations.

We have had very positive feedback from all school principals in this region, many of whom are more fully engaged in our programme and it's potential benefits. We have successfully worked into 31 schools this term.





Thanks

I have enjoyed being able to visit all of our provinces this quarter. For the past two years our funding challenges placed some restraints on my being able to personally visit all clusters. In the first quarter, medical restrictions due to my back injury late last year at work, also curtailed my first quarterly visits. It has been wonderful to work with all of our trainers, in the schools, and to give them support, recognition and feedback during the past three months.

Special thanks to all of our donors for your valued contributions.

To our trainers: much of the strength of this project lies in the calibre of yourselves, our trainers, your integrity, commitment and sensitivity. Sincere thanks for all that you do and for the many hours spent away from home and loved ones.

To our administrative and warehouse staff heartfelt thanks. To Tia and now Les, much appreciation for all that you do, with creativity, attention to detail and willingness of heart and spirit.



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