

EDUCATION REPORT

What may surprise some people, is that it is relatively easy to donate resources/materials. The greater challenge is to assist the recipients of the valuable equipment, to acquire the skills to utilise these materials, and to gain capacity and mastery of what may previously have been unfamiliar.

The generous funding from our donors, allows us to return to our nominated schools, where, through relationship building, trust is developed and where educators are willing to try new methods, which often differ vastly from “talk & chalk” and the memorization of formulae which we so frequently experience. Working with educators in their classrooms as co-teachers/facilitators, educators become aware of the joy and pleasure of being part of a learning experience where children are fulfilling differentiated tasks at the correct developmental level, and where harsh discipline becomes unnecessary.

The on-going commitment of our donors allows us to work with educators, to support and encourage the incorporation and use of resources in teaching to enhance the learning experience and ultimately, knowledge, of the learners. Edupeg places in the hands of both educators and learners, pictures, diagrams, text and rubrics, which can help to demystify concepts frequently taught by rote. The pictures also bring aspects of the broader environment and world, to children who are often encapsulated in their small and often rural communities due to social and financial restrictions. For the educators, Edupeg can become a tool to create an active learning environment, where teachers learn how to access, choose, and use a resource to enhance their teaching and where the learning can take place. Monitoring and effective assessment can be simply and logically fulfilled and the learning environment is nurturing, creative and fulfilling.

Sincere thanks to all who make possible the work we do in schools.

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.

BOTSWANA

Total schools to be supported in 2008: 9
 Total schools to be supported in 3rd quarter: 9

It has been a very positive term at our sites in Botswana. The teachers have all grown to trust and appreciate Jason, and his visits to their schools. He is frequently asked for advice and support on a variety of issues and his genuine willingness to assist and make a difference, has endeared him to the staff at all of the schools that we serve. That Jason is able to converse in mother tongue with the learners is also an obvious added advantage.

What I hope to be able to initiate during my fourth quarter visit, is a situation where the teachers will begin to teach lessons with Jason’s support. At present it is he who is doing most of the teaching and demonstrating, using the Edupeg resources. It would appear that the international volunteer at Bana Ba Metsi is very keen to utilise Edupeg and he incorporates it into his lessons regularly.

Bana Ba Letsatsi also continues to thrive and the weekly Edupeg sessions are very well received. Jason also takes the children on nature walks, or fishing and he also encourages game playing and sporting activities.

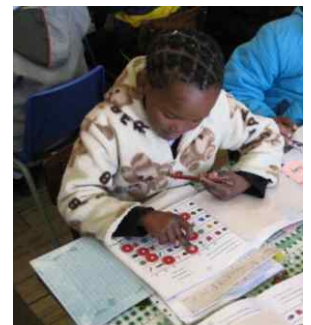
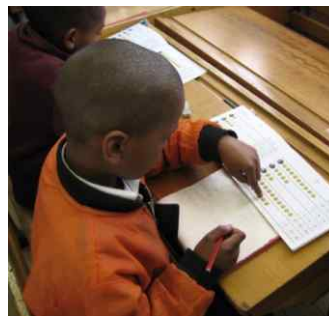


Total schools to be supported in 2008: 143
Total schools to be supported in 3rd quarter: 43

“In order to embrace change, we have to be flexible, innovative and resourceful.” Desiree Paulsen CDRA. Many of the teachers with whom we work, lack confidence and self-esteem themselves and the multiple curriculum changes that have been initiated over the past few years have created pressure and confusion for many educators. This can result in a defensive attitude, which one needs to deal with understanding and a non-judgemental attitude.

All of our schools are well known to our trainers and many of the staff know us well. Staff changes can create difficulties as few school where we work, have any mentorship programmes or professional development. What remains uniform, is that the learners love to work with our resources. It is indeed humbling to witness children who, have been afforded an opportunity to engage more intimately with learning resources, and who have been provided an opportunity to develop reasoning and thinking skills, are able to solve a problem. So frequently we come across learners who try to memorise formulae to solve problems, rather than engage with the question. Using concrete and sem-concrete resources is not methodology well known to many teachers, who often rely on abstract teaching only.

We are privileged to have the trust of the educators we serve, who allow us to observe them at work with their learners. This is something we cherish and value.

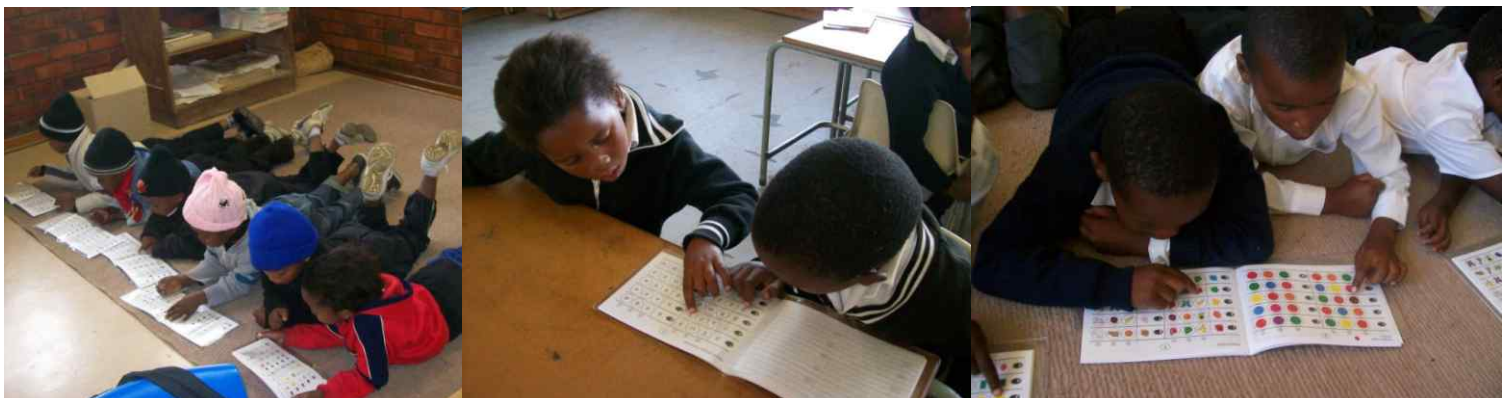


EASTERN CAPE

Total schools to be supported in 2008: 90
Total schools to be supported in 3rd quarter: 36

Many of our trainers tell of the very challenging road access to schools in this province. Teachers share that they too find great difficulty in negotiating the very rutted and potholed roads. However, the reception of our trainers has been uniformly warm and welcoming. Educators have shared that this has been an exceedingly challenging year, with numerous workshops and cluster meetings which have resulted in days and weeks away from school. Many dedicated teachers are extremely anxious about the time that they have been absent from their classrooms and the impact that this has had on teaching and learning, and classroom routine. Some teachers appear to be confused as to how to implement what they have learnt and how this correlates with the NCS and policy documents. Educators have welcomed our trainers into their classrooms and have found value and support from their visits.

What is encouraging is that many teachers are trying to initiate group work and are beginning to try giving different activities to their learners. Educators find planning, organising and supervising multiple activities difficult, but all are profoundly pleased by the positive reception of their learners and the pleasing reception of this type of teaching. Even within a short period, teachers can see evidence of independence, growth of confidence and self-esteem and the beginnings of self reliance. Unfortunately to sustain the above, teachers do need to consistently plan and organise, to best meet the diverse needs of their learners, and this is not always done. Helping to support teachers to become more confident and competent themselves, encouraging the use of resources in lessons and their easy access and safe storage, all form part of our visits. Teachers have grown to trust Vuyo & Hluma and recognise the input and support offered by these sensitive and caring women. We have much to achieve in this province, but I am well pleased with what we have been able to achieve.



KWA-ZULU NATAL

Total schools to be supported in 2008: 58
Total schools to be supported in 3rd quarter: 48

Almost all schools that we visit are undergoing some positive refurbishment. Although this is obviously very disruptive, both educators and principals' have remained very focussed and have taken the construction/decoration in their stride. Schools in the regions where we visit nearly all have vegetable and flower gardens which are well established and cared for. The former help to provide nutritional extras for the school feeding which is in place at most schools. One school even boasts a nursery!

The classrooms are also mainly neat and attractive and in almost all cases, the educators have made an effort to create a centre that is conducive to learning. Many Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase classrooms are reported to have library corners with the books well utilised by the children. Lessons in this province are also more thoroughly and consistently prepared. Our two superb trainers, Sibongile and Nomvuzo continue to be warmly welcomed into the schools, and their great experience, quiet wisdom and ability to listen, has endeared them to principals and educators alike. The learners to whom we are exposed, are all keen and enthusiastic to learn, and they display visual pleasure and enjoyment when working the Edupeg resources. Increased self-reliance, confidence and self-esteem are evident when learners are enabled to work in smaller interactive groups.

A big challenge in Kwa-Zulu Natal is often the very large classes, where over-crowding is rife, and where educators are completely unable to move around their classrooms to assist learners or to assess their progress/understanding. Inadequate and broken furniture is also fairly prevalent.

We have achieved much in the clusters into which we work and I am well pleased with our contribution in this region.



edu-peg

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