

**EDUCATION REPORT**

An article in the Cape Argus on 27 November 2008 provides disturbing food for thought. In the poorer and less affluent areas in South Africa, the drop out statistics of learners is quite high. Now, with rising costs of living and the increasing impact of the global economic crisis, money is in ever increasing demand. Some parents can no longer afford school fees, and even when these are waived, parents are finding the cost of school uniforms, travel costs and associated learning costs too great, and children are thus dropping out of school. Some families need increased income to survive and thus the Grade 9,10,11, and 12 children are more frequently being asked to prematurely terminate their schooling, and to turn out to work to supplement the family income.

These are trends which will need to be watched, and support and assistance will need to be given where possible, for what South Africa so desperately needs, is a well educated youth, with the skills and capacity to enter tertiary institutions and advance to eventually play meaningful roles in industry and commerce, to enhance and promote a strong and healthy economy.

With the end of the year in sight, it is always a good time to reflect on the past year. **We** continue to learn and grow through our interaction with teachers, principals and learners in the often marginalised communities that we serve. We feel that we have supported the educators to grow in awareness and understanding and have created opportunities for learners to develop skills and greater proficiency across numerous Learning Areas. We are deeply indebted to our sponsors, trainers and admin staff, each of which play a pivotal role in the work we do.

Wishing all a peaceful and restorative festive season and a new year filled with hope and positive expectation.

**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 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter: 9

We have had a very successful quarter in Botswana, where all teaching personnel are delighted with the improved results that have been achieved at all schools. All school principals that I have spoken to, have put the increased maths scores, down to the support and intervention provided by Jason Knott, our trainer. Jason has given all of the Standard 7 teachers and classes, support in the fourth quarter, and ran Study Skills lessons for these primary school learners, at all schools. We hope to introduce Study Skills sessions from the first term in 2009, and will look to incorporate the Standard Sixes as well.

There is also keen interest at some schools, to start an Edupeg after school club, so we will look into this for next year as well.

Both of our street children projects continue to greatly appreciate the assistance that they receive from Jason. We will continue to support all existing sites next year, and will look to add an additional project in Shakawe, which will focus on girl children in need.



Total schools to be supported in 2008: 143  
Total schools to be supported in 4<sup>th</sup> quarter: 7

We have had a very positive rounding off of 2008 in this province. We visited the aftercare sites of The Anna Foundation, and the response of both care givers and children, was extremely positive. It was uplifting to be part of the very caring atmosphere at these centres, where one can see how responsive and motivated are the children who are given opportunities to learn and grow in safety.

We had a similar experience at Ikhaya Trust, and it was a delight to have an opportunity to engage and interact with the very positive care givers at this community project. What is obvious through these visits to schools, is that the level of mathematics functioning and comprehension remains low and that it is imperative that children are enabled to utilise concrete equipment to thus better understand concepts, and that written recorded work must be done daily, not just the completion of photocopied sheets. The multitude of Edupeg activities, most of which are suitable for written work, help to facilitate this. The increased understanding and awareness of concepts is able to be observed, as children grapple with challenges and move towards solving them.

Good results were also achieved at the Yabonga schools, and Die Bron in the Overberg. We have had our initial introductory session into Capricorn Primary in Capricorn Park, and look forward to a positive relationship with this school.

We are very grateful to our generous donors whose funding has enabled us to return to schools to assist both teachers and learners.



## **EASTERN CAPE**

Total schools to be supported in 2008: 90  
Total schools to be supported in 4<sup>th</sup> quarter: 16

The necessity to upgrade educators' teaching skills has resulted in teachers in this province being taken out of the classrooms for extensive in service training. Many teachers have been anxious about the time that they have been away from school, and the impact on teaching and learning. If teaching skills and methods improve, this will prove valuable in the years to come, but it does appear that quite a number of teachers are unsure how to implement what they have learnt. Teamwork and mentorship are not well established at most of the schools that we service. What is encouraging are the cluster meeting groups where support can be given to teachers. Our trainers have been positively received in schools, and their genuine patient and caring attitude has resulted in good relationships being developed with educators. Teachers are realising that they gain valuable skills and insights when they teach lessons for our trainers, and then receive feedback on these.



## **KWA-ZULU NATAL**

Total schools to be supported in 2008: 58  
Total schools to be supported in 4<sup>th</sup> quarter: 30

Training this quarter was in the semi-rural areas of Isandlwana and Umbumbulu. Schools in both of these areas are in need of refurbishment and we hope that the renovations observed in a number of the areas into which we work, will soon reach these more remote clusters. The patience of the teachers and principals is indeed a lesson to those of us who are used to the hurried rush of urban living, and more immediate gratification.

Overcrowding is a problem in quite a number of schools in these clusters, where teachers are struggling to teach up to 70+ pupils. In many instances, the teachers are not able to move freely around the classroom, and are thus unable to see what the learners are doing, or to assist or assess the pupils. This is obviously far from ideal.

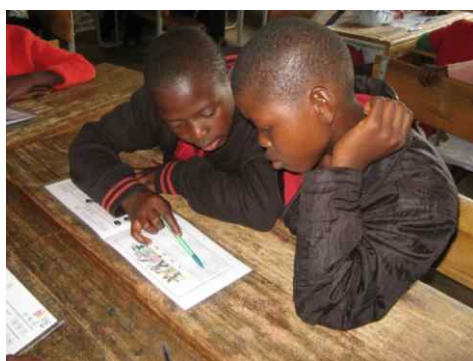
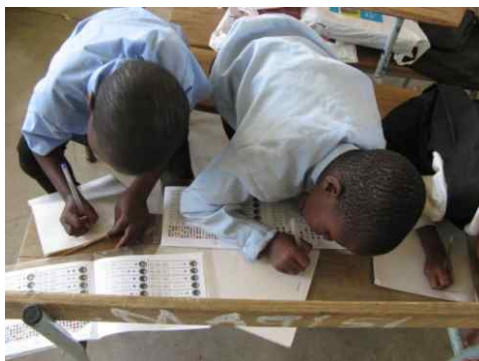
What is also amazing, is how neat, clean and motivated these children are. They are often initially shy, but now that many of the children know our trainers, they are more responsive and they display a great willingness to learn and progress.

Generally cleanliness, structure and organisation in all classrooms visited, seems to have improved, and thus makes the classroom environment more conducive to learning. In the Umbumbulu district, many classrooms have classroom libraries which are well used.

Brenda Vilbro, our KZN Facilitator, was selected as SA Trainer of the year! Brenda will travel to Las Vegas in 2009 to compete internationally for trainer of the world!

We've had a very positive quarter and year in this province, and thank our donors for making available the generous funding which has enabled us to fulfil work here.

We thank our trainers for the sterling work done.



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