

BOTSWANA

2009 - STATISTICS

Number of schools	9
Number of pupils	5038
Number of teachers & principals	166



We put plans in place to have Jason Knott, our resident Botswana trainer, to travel to Cape Town to work alongside our Western Cape trainers, Shirley du Plessis and Ingrid van der Spuy, in the Robertson cluster, in early February 2009. This proved to be a very positive training experience and there was very good interaction, cross-pollination of training ideas, styles and methods. This is a process that I will look to repeat.

We were also able to purchase and set up a laptop for Jason, which he will pay off by mid-year. This will give him much more reliable computer access, as previously he had to rely on the internet café in Maun.

Training in Botswana began in January, and Jason spent some time at most schools, tidying and checking up on our resources. In some schools these resources had been totally re-organised and at Boyei Primary School, Jason needed to "rescue" our materials from the store room, following the collapse of the ceiling due to the accumulated weight of bat faeces.

Jason has used the Edupeg resources to demonstrate lessons in various standards at all of our schools. In all instances, the children have responded very positively, and they have enjoyed using the programme as part of their set activities. It is encouraging to note that the educators all appear to be well pleased with the content and level of the planned lessons, and all seem keen to try to incorporate our books in future lessons. Some of the schools that we support, have very high pupil enrolment, and some classes are conducted in "outside classrooms", under the trees. Some school buildings need restoration and maintenance, and certain schools also need new and/or additional desks and chairs.

It would appear that all of the required school stationery, and text books had not arrived at schools in time for the commencement of lessons this year. Additionally the Botswana system of teachers being placed on transfer has resulted in quite a number of teachers not being in their 2009 positions. This is obviously very challenging, as many of the classes commenced the academic year without a teacher. Some classes are doubled up, to try to alleviate this problem, but the amount of pupils, desks and chairs squashed into a classroom, and the pressure on the single teacher, are all detrimental to good quality teaching. Bana Ba Letsatse continues to run efficiently and effectively, and Jason is a much valued weekly visitor to this amazing establishment. This little project, which has grown substantially over the years, is truly testament to what can be achieved with passion, planning and commitment.

Bana Ba Metse, up on the Okavango pan handle also continues to function well. The young volunteer there, Mr Falmer, is an Edupeg devotee, and he incorporates Edupeg in both Maths and Language activities. He and Jason co-teach during Jason's visits, as well as run extra classes for learners who are struggling. These two men work together with mutual respect and support of each other. Botswana has a specific "Games" period in Mathematics, and I purchased a number of resources that Jason will include in this time-tabled slot. It is my plan that the fun type of activities in Edupeg will be included during these sessions.

I also purchased some chess sets, with the idea of Jason starting a chess club one afternoon as well, at each of our Maun schools. My objective is to improve concentration, thinking skills and strategy. Jason has begun these clubs, which have been well attended, which are popular, and where already some competent chess players have already been identified. Jason has also been involved in developing study skills with the Standard Seven classes, to assist these pupils to become better prepared for their year end examination.

I am well pleased with what we have achieved to date and commend Jason for his commitment and dedication to the children and teachers with whom he interacts.



2009 - STATISTICS

Number of schools	112
Number of pupils	43755
Number of teachers & principals	1810



We commenced our training and support visits, in Robertson/ Ashton/ McGregor this year. The Department of Public Works has been very pro-active in these clusters and many of the schools have been beautifully refurbished/restored/renovated and/or maintained. Schools have been re-painted, have repaired/replaced roofs, floors have been replaced and window panes repaired. Almost all schools have also had storage facilities improved (in classrooms where adequate storage supports better classroom organisation). The atmosphere in schools is more vibrant and positive and we have had a warm Welcome at virtually all of our schools this year.



It is obvious that the time dedicated to building a relationship of trust with both educators and principals, has proved to be valuable, and in almost all instances, educators were keen to be observed, had prepared lessons, and were eager to gain feedback and support. What is also most encouraging, is that the lessons that were taught related not only to the curriculum, but also had a strong correlation to what was being taught in class. This is huge and pleasing progress, where teachers are using the resource for planning within the Learning Areas.

In the Foundation Phase, some classrooms have invested in mats/carpets, where a small group of learners can be withdrawn to introduce/revise/consolidate a concept taught, and where concrete equipment can be part of this process (in numeracy). We are seeing that learners have got greater access to concrete equipment, e.g. counters).

We strongly encourage meaningful written activities, which consolidate concepts taught and which promote concentration, thinking skills, manipulation of tools, spatial development and independent thought. Teachers are beginning to realise the value of the above and that Edupeg has a wealth of activities that are suitable for such tasks.

In the Intermediate Phase, it is worrying that many of the learners are very mute and do not fully engage in tasks/verbal interaction. These children have been "lost", in a teaching process where the whole class is taught the same concept, at the same time, at the same pace. The inability of many of the learners to comprehend and to keep apace of the lesson, is a hugely contributing factor to these withdrawn children who obviously lack self-esteem and a positive self-concept. Their experiences of success are so minimal that it is my sense that many of them have given up trying.

We are privileged to have the services of trainers such as Shirley and Ingrid, who have patience, compassion and caring, along with their expertise and years of teaching experience. The comments from both principals and teachers affirm the extremely valuable role that these ladies play in the school communities into which they work. We have still much to achieve, but I am well pleased with what we have accomplished to date, this year.



EASTERN CAPE

2009 - STATISTICS

Number of schools	72
Number of pupils	14770
Number of teachers & principals	571

Our quarter commenced on an uncertain note this year. In early December last year, we were advised that The Eastern Cape Gaming Board had decided to spend the funding allocated to them by Vukani, on their own selected projects.

Virginia sourced money within The HCI Foundation to fund the first quarter costs. Although I have followed up with this situation, to date, I have been given no clarity on the way forward. This obviously created a problem with regard to the signing of contracts with our trainers for 2009. I lost a preferred candidate who had taken up a teaching position. We desperately need clarification on our funding for this province.

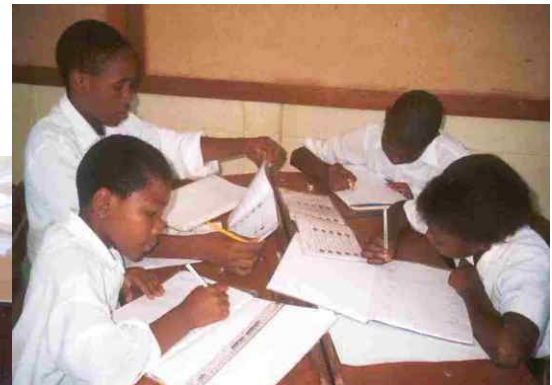
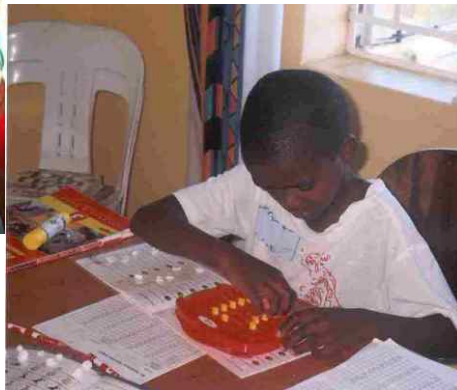
Notwithstanding the above, we have had a very good start to the year in the Eastern Cape. This province remains the most challenging into which we work, with obvious lack of service delivery across many sectors of schools almost all of which require maintenance/restoration/refurbishment, as well as teaching resources and stationery. Many of the roads are also almost impassable and on one occasion our trainers needed to walk the final kilometres to reach the school we were to visit.

Principals, educators and district officials have welcomed our trainers warmly, and in virtually every school, the educators have been ready to teach lessons and eager to get feedback and support following these lessons. The comments from teachers and principals (following our training), are insightful and encouraging and it is my sense that it is a huge achievement that we have been accepted by these often proud educators, who are aware that they lack skills and capacity, and have become willing to expose these weaknesses in order to get assistance, advice and input on how better to cope with the challenges facing them.

Pupil: teacher ratios still remain high in many clusters, although some schools in our more rural areas show a decline in pupil numbers. The Eastern Cape Department of Education puts this down to children being sent to the Western Cape primarily, as well as other provinces, with the goal of getting a better education for their children. Parents have also moved to the bigger cities in search of work, as in the rural areas where we work, there can be virtually 100 % unemployment.

School absence by teachers to attend funerals and memorial services remains a massive problem in many of the schools we support. I have personally witnessed teachers coming to school, signing the attendance register and immediately departing to attend a funeral/memorial service. No work/activities are provided for the learners in the absence of the educator and no supervision of the children usually takes place. I was in a classroom last week in the Eastern Cape, where the Grade 1 teacher had a total of seven pieces of recorded work completed, after seven weeks of school, i.e. 1 piece of written work, across all Learning Areas, per week! She was attempting addition sums with her learners, e.g. $2 + 5 = ?$, although they had completed no initial perceptual activities and no preparatory numeracy activities, e.g. $?? 2, ????? 5$, etc. In a private school in KZN this week (who have a disadvantaged school as an outreach project), the Grade 1 class was exploring the number 7, and obviously have not come close to commencing with addition. The lack of sound teaching principles, structure, planning, organisation and the use of concrete teaching materials at Foundation Phase level, contributes hugely to the lack of understanding of mathematics in later phases of education.

Although we have experienced much uncertainty with regards to our funding in this province, I remain positive that this funding will be secured for this very valuable programme. We have, I feel, achieved much for which we can feel proud and satisfied, although we have very much more to do.



KWA-ZULU NATAL

2009 - STATISTICS

Number of schools	68
Number of pupils	30390
Number of teachers & principals	774

Our resident KZN facilitator arranged very successful principal/H.O.D. workshops in each of the clusters (Umbumbulu, Ndwedwe, Camperdown and Umlazi), in late January 2009. These were very well attended and the level of enthusiasm and interest was high. Principals enjoyed a "hands on" opportunity to interact with the materials and this proved to be a very positive relationship building exercise.



Our trainers have been warmly welcomed into schools in each of the cluster to which they have travelled this quarter. There is definitely an increased level of understanding amongst the educators and a greater willingness to try new teaching methods. It is my sense that the Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Education has also been pro-active in schools, and it is most pleasing to see appropriate learning material displayed on walls of the classrooms, to see library corners in both Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase, to see evidence of more concrete equipment and use of this and a little more recorded work.

That the Department of Public Works has restored/renovated/improved many schools, has also had a positive and motivating impact on teachers, as schools are now more aesthetically pleasing, and teaching and working conditions have improved.

Correct and adequate school stationery does still appear to be an issue in some schools, and lack of pencils is a challenge. Lack of capacity of some teachers and non application of their task is also a problem. Lack of strong leadership, of good integrity is also noticeable at times. Resources which are supplied, need to be used. This does not only relate to Edupeg resources, but also the magnificent text books, games, early reading material, etc that lies unused in boxes/cupboards/on shelves.

In a Grade 2 class last week the 8th week of term, I was in a class where not one piece of recorded maths had taken place! No lessons had been prepared for the entire day, although the teacher was aware of our visit. To address such educational deprivation (of the pupils), is in such cases, huge!

In general however, I am well pleased with what we have achieved in the province this quarter.



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