

**South Africa Final Project Report on CRC February 2008**  
**Programme: Child Rights Classroom and School Management (September 2006**  
**and Vietnam April 2007)**  
**SIDA and University of Lund, Sweden**

**A. Country team:**

Claire Dyer: Chief Education Specialist: Directorate: Race and Values,  
Department of Education

Nokuzola Masinga: Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Directorate EMGD,  
KwaZulu -Natal Education Department

Sipho Ndlovu: Principal, Dover Combined School, Empangeni, KwaZulu-  
Natal

**Project title**

Deepening understanding of democracy and democratic participation in South African Schools in the context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

**1. Local background to the Project**

With the abrupt end of the apartheid state and the transition to a democracy, South African society has undergone enormous and profound change. In order to entrench the new democracy, a wide ranging legislative framework, rooted in the South African Constitution of 1996, was developed, and still continues. South Africa has also international obligations to fulfil, in for example, the implementation of the principles of the Convention of the Rights of The Child. The rapid democratisation of society over the past twelve years has, in some instances, caused a gap between legislation and policies on the one hand and practice on the other.

The education system itself has undergone a complete transformation, underpinned by legislation and policies that are rooted in the SA Constitution. One of the critical outcomes of the new National Curriculum Statement is the need to develop learners who are responsible, active participants in the democratic process in South Africa as future citizens at all levels of society, exercising their democratic rights as defined by the South African Constitution.

The project team believed it important that it is necessary through a variety of interventions to close the gap between policy and practice, and in particular to focus on deepening the understanding among learners of their democratic rights and responsibilities at school and to increase their effective responsible participation in the life of the school, through the participation in classroom, learner representative councils and the school governing body. Part of the thrust of the project was to deepen the understanding of the school community (teachers, principal and broader school community) of, and a commitment to the principles of the rights and responsibilities of

learners as stated in the South African Schools Act (1996) and the Convention of the Rights of the Child, leading to the democratic transformation of the school.

The Project team also aimed to use a variety of platforms at national and provincial level to promote an understanding of the principles of the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

## **2. Formulation of the Problem. Aim and Objectives.**

### **2.1 Short term**

- To increase awareness and understanding of democracy and democratic practices in schools in the context of the South African Schools Act (1996) and the Convention of the Rights of the Child in South African schools through provincial and district officials in identified provinces;
- To focus on three schools per province in KwaZulu-Natal and Free State Province to deepen the understanding among learners of their democratic rights and responsibilities at school and to increase their effective responsible participation in the life of the school, through the participation in classroom, learner representative councils and the school governing body as a pilot study by developing learning and teaching support materials and engaging with schools in workshops in order to encourage meaningful participation in school representative election process and school governing bodies.

### **3. Long term**

- To assist learners to become responsible, active participants in the democratic process in South Africa as future citizens at all levels of society, exercising their democratic rights as defined by the South African Constitution.

## **3. Implementation of the Project**

### **3.1. Defining the Task, Target group(s)**

The tasks were defined by the roles of each member of the group. The constitutional delegation of responsibilities between national and provincial governments informed the type of activities each member of the group could take responsibility for. The National Education Department is responsible for policy and the provincial departments are responsible for implementation. It is the responsibility of the provincial department to manage the schools.

The target groups were the following:

#### **a) Target Areas:**

- National Department of Education through the Directorate: Race and Values;
- Provincial Departments through the Heads of Education Committee Sub Committee Equity in Education; and

- Local School level: Three schools in KwaZulu- Natal, Empangeni District, including a rural school, a farm school and a former Model C school.

**b) Target Groups:**

- National Department of Education Directorates Race and Values and Education Management and Governance;
  - Provincial Departments representatives in the HEDCOM Sub Committee Equity in Education;
  - Provincial officials in several provinces at provincial workshops organised by the Directorate: Race and Values of provincial and district officials, including curriculum specialists;
  - Local School level: learners, teachers, principals and broader school communities at three school in Empangeni District, KwaZulu- Natal and three school in the Free State, Xariep District.

The intention was to cover a number of provinces and schools. However, it became clear that given the fact that on the return of the team from Sweden that no workshops could be held owing to a moratorium on activities during the last quarter of the year with provincial and district officials and activities involving learners, that the broad intended advocacy strategy had to be curtailed. The focus became on KwaZulu–Natal Education Department and one school, Dover Combined Farm School.

Further, activities in 2007 were hampered by the teachers’ industrial action in May and June 2007, that prevented provincial activities from continuing and denying access to learners as the majority of schools were closed. After the visit of the Mentor, the team was further challenged by the decision of the Minister and the Council of Education Ministers to implement a recovery plan, whereby no activities involving learners could take place, and provincial officials were required to monitor the catch-up strategies of schools to deliver the curriculum.

### **3.2 Choice of Methods – How we implemented the Project**

A variety of methods were employed in implementing the project:

**National:**

At national level, a number of workshops were organised, and continue, that highlight the issues of the rights of learners, particularly focusing on issues of discrimination, including racism, denial of access by learners to schools of their choice, discrimination on the basis of language, class, gender etc. The schedule of workshops was postponed as a result of the situation as described above. (Schedule of workshops attached until end of financial year 2007-2008 in March 2008). Further workshops are planned for 2008 –2009 with the remaining provinces.

In addition, a very successful advocacy campaign was organised involving schools from all provinces, in partnership with EISA, an organisation whose objective is to strengthen democracy and democratic practices in Africa,. The campaign took the form of a

competition, *Hands up for Democracy*, that involved learners across all grades in reflecting on issues of democracy, rights and responsibilities. The Minister of Education attended the award ceremony.

### **Provincial**

At provincial level, the advocacy work on child rights continued with a number of activities:

A presentation by the provincial team member, Ms Masinga, and Mr Ndlovu to the Superintendent –General of Education in KwaZulu-Natal and members of the senior management team.

A presentation by all three team members at a workshop for provincial officials organised by the national department focussing on CRC and the implications.

The National Children's Day was attended by the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal and his Cabinet. Learners were invited to present their concerns about Children's Rights through dramatic presentations on the following issues: child trafficking, drug abuse, poverty and unemployment.

A campaign to introduce girl learners to a variety of careers, part of the national campaign *Take a Girl Child to Work*, was organised by the team member in the Obonjeni District (a Presidential nodal district) for 200 girl learners from Grades 9-10.

As part of the project, 120 learners were invited to conduct a situational analysis on human rights in the KwaZulu-Natal province. Learners expressed their experiences regarding the implementation or non-implementation of human rights in the province.

The team member was also involved directly in the 2008 Learner Admissions Advocacy Campaign to inform learners and their parents of the right of access to education and the need to register for admission.

The team member also held regular meetings with a forum of non government organisations and other provincial government departments on issues of rights of the child.

### **School level**

The work of embedding children's rights in whole school practice was strengthened through the participation of learners in the learner representative council, in classroom representation and involvement in the School Governing Body (made up of the senior management team, elected parents and elected representatives of educators and learners). The school continued with the school feeding scheme and uniform practice, as well as ensuring the implementation of the school Code of Conduct, ensuring the protection of the rights of learners.

### **3.3 Pilot Project**

After the Pilot Project:

#### **National:**

At national level, a number of workshops were organised, and continue, that highlight the issues of the rights of learners, particularly focusing on issues of discrimination, including racism, denial of access by learners to schools of their choice, discrimination on the basis of language, class, gender etc. The schedule of workshops was postponed as a result of the situation as described above. (Schedule of workshops attached until end of financial year 2007-2008 in March 2008). Further workshops are planned for 2008 –2009 with the remaining provinces.

In addition, the Directorate monitored through the national press the number of reported cases of abuse of human rights in schools, in order to inform practice and intervention strategies.

Further, a very successful advocacy campaign was organised involving schools from all provinces, in partnership with EISA, an organisation whose objective is to strengthen democracy and democratic practices in Africa. The campaign took the form of a competition, *Hands up for Democracy*, that involved learners across all grades in reflecting on issues of democracy, rights and responsibilities. The Minister of Education attended the award ceremony (Speech attached). This competition, depending on availability of funds, may be extended in 2008 to include learners from all SADC countries.

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### **3.4 Full implementation of the Project**

The project at national level has been extended to include all provinces through workshops that will continue in 2008, with the objective of establishing provincial, district and school teams that will deal with issues of human rights abuse in schools with the goal of transformation of institutions into fully democratic ones, in which teaching and learning will take place through participative democratic practices and in which school governance is also democratic and participative, with a particular focus on learners' rights and responsibilities. The teams at various levels will intervene in or apply sanction in institutions when the need arises, but will support schools and establish reporting mechanisms in order to monitor progress. Reports will be compiled via districts and provinces to national level on a quarterly basis and a report will be compiled for the Minister.

In addition, the Directorate will continue to monitor through the national press the number of reported cases of abuse of human rights in schools, in order to inform practice and intervention strategies and strengthen partnerships with organisations such as the Human Rights Commission and the Commission for Gender Equality to assist with intervention and support of institutions.

At provincial level, the work will continue through the provincial Education Governance and Management Directorate that will be represented at the national Race and Values Inter- provincial network, a co-ordinating structure that meets quarterly to implement the strategic objectives of the Directorate: Race and Values in the provinces.

At school level, the focus on CRC will continue even in the absence of Mr Ndlovu who is on sick leave. The provincial official will liaise with the district in order to use the best practices of the school in other schools in the area. The school will be profiled as an example of good CRC practice.

### **3.5 Participants in the Project Work**

Participants in the project included members of the Directorate: Race and Values at national level, provincial officials in the KwaZulu-Natal Education Department, particularly in the Education Management and Governance Directorate at provincial and district levels, and the principal, senior management team, School Governing Body and educators and learners at Dover Combined Farm School with members of the broader community. Further, non government organisations have supported the work at national and provincial levels.

### **3.6 Resources for the Project**

At national level, financial resources were used from the budget of the Directorate: Race and Values for travel, costs of workshops and accommodation. Materials used in workshops were selected from the Directorate's own guideline documents such as the Strategy for Integration and Human Rights Education, Educating for a Common Future, the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy.

At provincial level, publications from the Education Management and Governance Directorate were used as source materials.

At school level, curriculum based documents including text books were used, particularly for the Learning Area: Life Orientation that focuses on issues of rights and democratic practices for all Grades R –12.

### **3.7 Drawing up a Work Plan and a Time Table**

The initial work plan was developed for the pilot project. After the visit of the mentor, the programme was disrupted for reasons explained above, but in the last quarter of the financial year, activities have speeded up.

## **4. Evaluation or Assessment of the Results of the Project**

The project should be seen as a long term intervention at all levels of the education system. One of the positive features of the design of the project was that all levels of the

education system in South Africa were involved and that the message can be taken forward using Dover Combined Farm School as a model of CRC good practice.

## **5. Conclusions**

What is clear from this project that the work of spreading the message about CRC, as well as the Bill of Rights, and the specific section on the rights of the child, in the South African Constitution is on going. In the workshops that we have conducted around the country it is clear that principals and often officials struggle to translate principles into practice. Education legislation and policies have established an excellent framework for taking forward the principles of the Rights of the Child. It remains a challenge to ensure that all those in the system, including officials, educators and learners

## **6. Appendix**

1. Schedule of planned provincial workshops January – March 2008
2. The speech of the Minister of Education at the EISA *Hands Up for Democracy* Award Ceremony

**DRAFT SPEECH FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EISA'S  
AWARD CEREMONY FOR THE *HANDS UP FOR DEMOCRACY*  
*COMPETITION***

Mr Denis Kadima EISA Executive Director  
The National Finalists,  
Distinguished guests, teachers, parents, learners, ladies and gentlemen

It is a great pleasure to be here this evening. The *Hands Up for Democracy Competition* is a very important initiative between the Department of Education and EISA to create the opportunity for learners to relate to issues of rights and responsibilities and democracy in their own lives. I am particularly pleased that this award ceremony is being held at Constitutional Hill – a site that reflects both the struggles for and the celebration of our democracy.

Congratulations to all the finalists who have reached this stage of the competition. I also wish to congratulate their teachers for encouraging our young people to enter. I understand that over two thousand entries were received and that the entries reflect the diversity of our young people.

So often youth in our society are overlooked and their opinions are not taken seriously. It is often assumed that our young people dismiss our past struggles for democracy while enjoying the fruits. It has become very clear from the number of entries received and the issues raised by learners that young South Africans do indeed engage with the ideals of human rights and democratic values and practices. Learners from a young age show the capacity to express themselves on these vital issues and are able to make the connections between the ideal and the reality within their own experience.

The Department of Education makes every effort to help learners to understand the great gifts that they are enjoying from past struggles. We are encouraging all schools to engage in the commemoration of a number of historically significant events in 2007. These events include the commemoration of the ninetieth anniversary of the sinking of the SS Mendi on 21 February 1917, and the sixtieth anniversary of the Three Doctors' Pact

signed on 9 March 1947, and Ghana's 50th year of independence, the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Alexandra Bus Boycott, and the commemoration of the fifth anniversary of the launch of the African Union (AU) in Durban.

This week we commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the meeting in Dakar, Senegal, from 9-12 July, 1987. Remembering this historic occasion when a group of committed South African Afrikaans speaking individuals went to meet leaders of the African National Congress in exile to discuss the future of South Africa. We also celebrate the eighty-ninth birthday of our former President, Nelson Mandela who remains such a wonderful example to the world. I have watched the news on television of young people from all over the country sending birthday wishes to Mr Mandela and explaining in their own way why Madiba is so special to them and South Africa.

This commemoration campaign gives South Africans the opportunity both to celebrate and to review the progress we have made as a nation in building a united South Africa. It is both a time for looking back to where we have come from and for looking ahead to set the goals that we as a nation and as individuals wish to attain in the future.

Our children do indeed have the capacity to engage with issues of democracy, good governance and their Constitutional rights and responsibilities. I wish to take a moment to reflect on what some of the young people have written about these important principles. In my Budget Vote speech in Parliament in May this year, I mentioned how the education system seems to tolerate and assert the rights of young people who are abusive, violent and disruptive. My department is developing a guide for schools to develop codes of conduct for learners that not only reflect their rights but also their responsibilities.

It is therefore very gratifying to read the words of young Lebogang Letsoalo, a Grade 9 learner from Phusela High School in Limpopo , when she says:

*I have the right to make mistakes and the responsibility to learn from my mistakes. I have the right to be educated by my teachers and the responsibility to listen to what they say so we can understand each other.*

And also the words of Olivia Sefothelo a Grade 7 learner from Onze Rust Primary School in Bloemfontein when she says very clearly:

*If you don't want to have a responsibility, then you don't have a right.*

One of the critical outcomes of South African education is the development of young people as active, responsible citizens of South Africa and the global community. The work of our the young people that has emerged from this competition strengthens our confidence that young South Africans are indeed on the way to becoming those citizens, carrying forward the ideals and hopes of all of us in building on the foundations of the democratic transformation of our country and building a strong confident, democratic state.

We can look forward with hope and encouragement that we will attain the excellence in our education when all in the system recognise that while our Constitution protects the right to education, it is our responsibility to ensure that as learners, educators, parents and government we give of our best to ensure that excellence is our goal.

**SCHEDULE OF DATES OF RACE AND VALUES DISTRICT WORKSHOPS  
AND INTER PROVINCIAL MEETING**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>PROVINCE</b>	<b>DISTRICT</b>	<b>Proposed venue</b>	
<b>11 – 12 January 2008</b>	<b>Free State</b>	<b>Motheo District Maselspoort Resort (051 441 7848 )</b>		<b>Completed</b>
<b>11 - 13 January 2008</b>	<b>Free State</b>	<b>Oral History Workshop Aldam Aventura Resort, Ventersburg</b>	,	<b>Completed</b>
<b>16 January 2008</b>	<b>Free State</b>	<b>HEAD OFFICE Maselspoort Resort (051 441 7848)</b>		<b>Completed</b>
<b>25 - 26 January 2008</b>	<b>Free State</b>	<b>Lejweleputswa and Fezile Dabi District Aldam Aventura Resort (057 652 2200)</b>	<b>Fly 24/01 DBB H/INN Mimosa Mall Drive 25/01 160 kms to Aldam Aldam Aventura Resort (057 652 2200) 25/02 DBB Return Bloem 12:30 26/01 Fly 16:10 to OR Tambo</b>	<b>Paul Claire Mava</b>
<b>25-26 January</b>	<b>North West</b>	<b>Oral History workshop</b>	<b>Orian Starting time 15:00</b>	<b>Completed</b>
<b>30 January 2008.</b>	<b>KZN</b>	<b>GET workshop National Symbols Marine Parade</b>	<b>Fly 29/01 afternoon DBB Marine Parade Fly Bloemfontein 30/01 17:00? DBB Bloemfontein Holiday Inn Mimosa</b>	<b>Completed</b>
<b>31 January –2008</b>	<b>Free State</b>	<b>Gariiep District</b>	<b>Drive Bloemfontein - Trompsburg 31/01 Sleep Philippolis Paul to drive 170 kms to Bloemfontein Flight for Paul approx 10:00 01/02</b>	<b>Completed</b>
<b>08- 09 February</b>	<b>Free State</b>	<b>Thabo Mofutsanyana</b>		<b>Postponed</b>

2008		District Cranford Inn (058 256 1358)		
11-12 February	Northern Cape	Kgalagadi Kuruman Thembi organising venue	Fly Kimberley late Sunday 10/02 DBB Kimberley H Inn 2 cars (6 persons) 11/02 check out early morning Drive Kuruman Check in Kuruman hotel DBB Check out 13/02	Paul Claire Phindi Wotondwa Dipti Mava/Themba
14-15 February	Northern Cape	Frances Baard Holiday Inn Kimberly	Check in DBB Holiday Inn Kimberly 13-15/02 Return flight Kimberly –Jhburg – last flight 15/02	Paul Claire Phindi Wotondwa Dipty Mava/Themba
18-19 February 2008	Gauteng	Tshwane and Gauteng West	Book hotel Jhburg 18 – 23 /02	Paul Claire Phindi Mava/Themba
20-21 February 2008	Gauteng	Johannesburg	Hotel Jhburg 18 – 23 /02	Paul Claire Phindi Mava/Themba
22-23 February 2008	Gauteng	Sedibeng and Ekurhuleni	Hotel Jhburg 18 – 23 /02	Paul Claire Phindi Mava/Themba
25 –26 February 2008	North West	Rustenburg Venue to be arranged by Thembi	Drive 25 /02 Pretoria – Rustenburg (Kombi) DBB 25/02 Return Pretoria 26/2	Paul Claire Phindi Mava/Themba
28 -29 February 2008	North West	Potchefstroom Venue to be arranged by Thembi	Drive Pretoria – Potchefstroom afternoon 27/02 DBB 27- 30/02 Return 30/02	Paul Claire Phindi Mava/Themba
28 –29 February – 01 March 2008	Northern Cape	Kimberley	Educators/curriculum officials etc	Granville???? Province to make arrangements

<b>04 –5 March 2008</b>	<b>KZN</b>	<b>Pietermaritzburg? Ms Gcabashe Venue to be confirmed</b>	<b>Fly Pmb? 03/3 DBB 3/2 – 5/02 Return Pmb- Jhb 05/03 evening</b>	<b>Paul Claire Phindi Dipti???? Mava/Themba</b>
<b>06-07 March 2008</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>Provincial network meeting</b>	<b>Gauteng</b>	<b>Dates confirmed (Should include History curriculum specialists as per Minister’s Report)</b>
<b>11-14 March 2008</b>	<b>Limpopo</b>	<b>2 workshops with districts : Thohoyandou first? Polokwane Venues to be confirmed</b>	<b>Arrangements depend on which district is first – better to do Thohoyandou first and Polokwane second and then fly out of Polokwane</b>	<b>Paul Claire Phindi Wotondwa Dipti???? Mava/Themba</b>
<b>6-7 October 2008</b>	<b>Northern Cape</b>	<b>Pixley ka Seme District</b>	<b>De Aar</b>	<b>To be confirmed Suggested changed from October to August</b>
<b>9-10 October 2008</b>	<b>Northern Cape</b>	<b>Siyanda District</b>	<b>Upington</b>	<b>To be confirmed Suggested changed from October to August To be confirmed</b>
<b>13-14 October 2008</b>	<b>Northern Cape</b>	<b>Springbok</b>	<b>Springbok</b>	<b>To be confirmed To be confirmed Suggested changed from October to August</b>

**Note: Free State venues booked and paid for by province**  
**Gauteng venues booked and paid for by province**