



STUDY OF THE PROCESSES AND METHODS USED  
TO ACHIEVE IMPROVED LIFE CONDITIONS FOR  
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

EDITED NOMINATIONS FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN  
COMPONENT



Team Co-ordinator:

***Washeila Sait – MPhil Disabilities Studies (UCT)***

***WBANIEN CONSULTANCY***

In collaboration with:

***Professor Petra Engelbrecht – University of Stellenbosch***

***Dr. Theresa Lorenzo – University of Cape Town***

***Judy McKenzie – University of Fort Hare***

***Bernadette Liedeman – Disabled Children Action Group***

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## **Table of contents**

Introduction	3
A brief overview of projects	3
Astra Centre	5
CLASSIC (Computerized Learners Assessment and Syllabi System for the Intellectually Challenged	10
St Joseph's Marist College Special Needs Unit/Inclusion Class	15
Foden Educare Centre	19
Sunfield Home Logwood	23
Intellectual Disability Quality Lifespan Development Project	26
Whizz Kidz Special Needs Centre	30
Happy Home for Children with Disabilities	35

## **Introduction**

In order to examine the processes and methods used to achieve improved life conditions for persons with disabilities, invitations for nominations to participate in the study were distributed among organisations and networks known to the national teams. Both NGOs and government authorities were invited to nominate projects for consideration by the team. The nominations consisted of a motivation and an assessment form in relation to the selection criteria. The incentive for nomination in the study was the prospect of having the project exposed through publication of a booklet, as well as possible selection for an in-depth review of the project. In South Africa a total of eight projects were nominated. They are accordingly presented in this document.

### **A brief overview of projects**

The self-nominations are presented here in a similar format to the nomination form with minimal editing. They are largely expressed in the terms that the project nominators used. They represent a range of responses to intellectual disability and broadly-speaking some similarities and differences can be noted.

All the projects are highly dependent on the dedication and commitment of staff members as well as volunteers and sponsors. The nominations are notable for the enthusiasm that is so clearly expressed. There is a general feeling from all the projects that it takes perseverance and determination to keep these projects going. All the projects experience funding difficulties and all require at least some contribution on the part of the participants of the project. There is generally a great deal of emphasis on social inclusion and the need to address negative public perceptions and attitudes. All the projects express the conviction that people with intellectual disabilities are able to do far more than is currently expected of them, if only they can get the right kind of help at the right time. Many of the projects acknowledge the importance of multi-disciplinary teams and have developed strategic partnerships with other organisations and government structures. There is a general recognition of the importance of preparing individuals for employment and supporting them where necessary to succeed in their jobs.

However, the projects have different objectives and strategies to achieve them. They differ in terms of the age of the clients they serve. Some projects work with early intervention and pre-school, others cover the age range up until preparation for employment, while others provide workshop facilities. Some projects are residential, while others have a day facility. Two of the programmes support the educators and personnel working with people with intellectual disability; one through research and the other through a structured computerised learning programme. The strategies for improving social inclusion varied from teaching social skills within a programme, developing alternative and augmentative communication, working with able-bodied people and including able-bodied children to a specialised education programme. Only one project developed social inclusion in mainstream education.

The economic circumstances of the project beneficiaries also varied widely: some projects are relatively well off and others represent the poorest of the poor. There is a good racial cross-section, as well as a mix of genders, where the numbers are known. The

relationship to government varies across the projects. Some get no response and have very little relationship with government at all. Others might not receive funding but they are aware of government policy and are trying to fit in with policy in the hope of supporting government efforts and also of being funded. Only two projects are substantially funded by the state: one of these accesses research funding and the other from gets funding from Social Development. Finally, the projects differ on the level of support needs, which they aim to address. Only two of the projects focus on severely disabled/high support needs children. Both of these projects cite this as one of the features that makes them unique.

# Astra Centre

**Name:** Astra Centre  
**Location:** Cape Town  
**Project Postal Address:** 20 Breda Street, Gardens Cape Town 8001  
**Contact Person:** Mrs. M. Furman  
**Telephone Number:** 021 465 4200  
**Email:** worka@iafrica.com  
**Type of implementing agency/organisation:** Sheltered Employment Centre  
**Name of person in charge of the project:** Mrs M Furman (Director)

## 1. Project objective

The objective of this project is community enablement – to enable the people with disabilities to achieve a sustainable livelihood with an improved quality of life.

## 2. Project activities

The activities that are carried out by this project are:

- Learnerships – The project is developing capacity to be a host employer for the Western Cape Disability Learnership Partnership and they are registering as a host employer for a learnership in job coaching once this has been approved by the relevant SETA.
- Supported employment – The project provides pre-vocational training and support that follows a comprehensive work assessment. They desensitise corporate and businesses to the employment of people with disabilities and educate on the benefits of employing people with disabilities. In addition, they work on the engagement and placement of trained and skilled persons with disabilities at identified companies. They provide ongoing care and support to the newly employed person and employer, with 16 people currently benefiting from this programme in the open labour market.
- Skills development – Within the project there is ongoing training in catering, baking, basic kitchen work skills and waitrons skills. This is done in the coffee shop attached in the centre and involves about 15 workers. There is also ongoing training within the centre of workshop skills and life skills. Training also extends to development and training of a volunteer resource base of about 15 volunteers.
- Manufacturing and selling – There is an ongoing multi-level manufacturing and selling of world class high quality products, which are distributed locally, nationally and internationally.
- Gifting – There is a business partnership between the centre and another organisation which generates income through a profit sharing arrangement. The gift service also purchases stock from the centre.
- Coffee Time – The centre runs a coffee shop, which caters for the general public and this, allows for social integration opportunities. It is open daily for tea and lunch as well as for small functions and meetings.
- Group homes – There are 2 houses associated with the centre that cater for 10 and 8 people respectively. These provide supervised living with some degree of independence.

### **3. Impact of activities on improved life conditions of person with disabilities**

#### **Self-determination:**

No one is legally committed to the centre. They are there voluntarily and by choice. They have some choice as to which department they would like to work in at the centre.

To a large extent, they determine their own progress and development. Opportunities for personal and work advancement are provided and they decide whether to make use of these opportunities or not.

#### **Interpersonal relationships**

Social isolation is overcome through daily interaction with others at the centre. There are many visitors from the public to the centre. The workers are required to interact with them either while working in our coffee shop or when visitors visit the workshops. The supervisors in the workshops as well as the professional staff assist the workers in maintaining appropriate interpersonal skills with each other, as well as with staff and the public through regular counselling and support.

#### **Social inclusion**

Those workers who live in the group homes are given opportunities to participate in outings, thereby being included in the wider community. The supported employment service facilitates job placements on the open labour market thereby ensuring that the people with disabilities are given equal opportunities to secure purposeful work and achieve economically active positions. Our coffee shop facilitates interaction with the public and helps to destigmatise disability.

#### **Rights**

Workers are treated with dignity and respect. Emphasis is placed on seeing the person first, destigmatise disability and maximising each person's individual potential. Workers are included in decision-making where possible. They have the opportunity to speak up about the bad and the good things and to be a part of the problem-solving process around this. Workers are encouraged to develop their skills and to function at their full potential. The centre maintains a high level of confidentiality for the workers protecting their rights under the mental health act.

#### **Emotional well-being**

Workers have access to professional staff in terms of their emotional needs. Through the dignity of labour, they experience the value of being productive members of society, which has a huge impact on their self-image, self-esteem and emotional well-being. The centre sees the person first, not the disability. The workers' mental health takes priority over the business needs of the centre. They are able to be productive because they are working in a nurturing and therapeutic environment.

#### **Personal development**

Workers attend group sessions at the group homes that are aimed at furthering their development. Training and education is an ongoing process at the centre in order to maximise the individual potential of each worker. They have access to an occupational

therapist and social worker who provide ongoing assessment, intervention and opportunities for growth.

### **Material well-being**

Although not market-related, each worker earns a monthly wage. They have the opportunity to earn bonuses depending on their performance and the performance of the organisation.

The group homes provide subsidised accommodation for those who cannot afford the full rental. Those who are assessed as able and willing have the opportunity to work on the open labour market (through our supported employment service) thereby achieving economically active positions.

### **Physical well-being**

The staff is aware of the physical well being of workers and can identify when there is a problem with medication, personal hygiene, appearance and behaviour. They refer concerns to the appropriate professionals for intervention when required. All concerns relating to the physical well being of the workers are discussed at a monthly medical meeting headed by a professor of psychiatry and other GPs.

## **4. Number of persons with disabilities benefiting from the project**

Because the project has been functioning for over 54 years, it is not easy to determine the number of persons who have benefited from its services over time. Currently about 60 individuals, men and women over the age of 18 are involved in the project. There are about equal numbers of men and women. About 3 individuals of school going age currently benefit from work experience and assessment.

The project caters for people with psychiatric and intellectual disabilities and they aim to cater for people across the spectrum of severity but most of their workers have mild and moderate disability.

## **5. Indicators that the project is having a significant impact**

The project is recognised by the University of Cape Town Occupational Therapy and Social Work Departments and the centre accommodates their students for training purposes. The centre has been cited as a model of good practices and has received recognition from international medical experts and the disability sector.

## **6. Sustainability of the project**

The project has been going for 54 years. It runs on a budget of approximately R1.8 million, with contributions coming from the following sources:

Community contributions	11%
Government	3%
Sales/ interest/ fees	44%
Donations	31%
Gift service fundraising	4%

There is a shortfall of 7%

### **7. Interesting features of the project**

- The recognition by the community of the need for such an organisation to exist. The community's willingness to support the organisation both financially and through the donation of their time, skills and expertise.
- The dedication of staff and management. There is a very small turnover of staff.
- The skills of the professional staff and the wide range of skills and resources that we can draw on from our committee members.
- The workshop supervisors are recruited based on their expertise in craft and technical skills, not only on the basis of their experience with people with disabilities. Workers are therefore afforded the opportunity to develop their abilities and skills. This contributes to the organisation being world class in terms of the quality of products manufactured.
- The organisation is run according to the philosophy that this is a workplace and not just a therapeutic or occupational centre. The workers see the fruit of their work, adding value to their lives and facilitating a sense of motivation and dedication to work.

### **8. Difficulties experienced in the project and strategies to overcome these difficulties**

- The interface between being a business to generate funds to sustain the organisation and being a place of work for people with disabilities can be problematic. In order to remain competitive in the market, a lot of pressure is placed on supervisors and staff to fulfil the increasing production demands. It is therefore difficult to find the balance between the business and therapeutic practice.
- Funding – the organisation is constantly looking for ways to generate income through increasing production, generating new ideas for products, consulting with experts in design and craft work, cutting costs wherever possible.

### **9. Future vision and planning for the project**

Our vision, which is really a dream, is to access land and to develop a market that would involve projects from all previously disadvantaged groups in Cape Town. This would be a financially viable tourist attraction, as well as a place for locals to support and enjoy. Currently we need to begin by getting architect's drawings and sketches and to secure the land. We also need to secure funding from government, business and donors and plan in consultation with tourism and community projects.

### **10. Lessons learnt from this project**

- The Coffee Shop project can be used to destigmatise disability. Lessons were about setting up the coffee shop and how to overcome barriers so that the workers are able to carry out their jobs successfully.
- The Supported Employment Service offered lessons on how to set this up, the model that can be used, the services offered. They learnt about strategies used in terms of negotiating with employers and overcoming the stigma of disability for both people with disabilities and employers.

- They have learnt that the philosophy of maintaining the centre as a workplace and not just a therapeutic or occupational centre results in improving the motivation of the workers and their overall sense of well-being.

### **11. Outstanding features of the project that make it suitable for selection for the study**

*“We believe that we have become a world class organisation in terms of our high quality of products produced as well as the wide variety of services offered, specifically our coffee shop and supported employment service. Our coffee shop is an upmarket setting where people with disabilities have been fully integrated into society. Our supported employment service offers a model that has been recognised as a leader in this field.”*

# **CLASSIC (Computerised Learners Assessment and Syllabi System for the Intellectually Challenged)**

**Name:** CLASSIC (Computerised Learners Assessment and Syllabi System for the Intellectually Challenged)

**Location:** Implemented in schools for the severely intellectually challenged mainly in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa and some in other provinces

**Project Postal Address:** PO Box 101363, MEERENSEE, 3901

**Contact Person:** Marthie Combrinck / Thys van der Merwe

**Telephone Number:** Marthie – 082 879 9249 / Thys – 083 441 3108

**Email:** [marthie@yebo.co.za](mailto:marthie@yebo.co.za) / [teknovis@cis.co.za](mailto:teknovis@cis.co.za)

**Type of implementing agency/organisation:** Close Corporation (CC)

**Name of person in charge of the project:** Marthie Combrinck / Thys van der Merwe

**Date of registration:** September 1988

**Sponsor's name and addresses:** Rotary International and Rotary Empangeni have sponsored the programme in specific schools. The first 22 programmes were sponsored at schools for the severely intellectually challenged in KZN through Operation Jumpstart (The old KZN Lotto). Otherwise they do not deal directly with sponsors and it is the responsibility of the school / institution that is purchasing the programme to get sponsorship.

## **1. Project objectives**

- To teach the intellectually challenged learner in all spheres of life (social, work, functional academics, life skills) for him/her to be able to be as independent possible when finishing his/her school career.
- To be able to assess the learner on a continual basis and work with him/her on the appropriate level of development / ability.
- To empower teachers to work with confidence and skill with the intellectually challenged learner.
- To make the parent and community aware of the positive attributes the intellectually challenged learner can have in society.
- To create a database in schools or institutions for the intellectually challenged that medical records, class lists and learner data can be easily accessed, kept and updated.
- Financial benefit for the CC.

## **2. Project activities**

- Training in using the manual programme and the computer-based programme making users proficient in its use. The success of this is evident in the fact that schools are still using the programme 18 months after training and show high levels of proficiency and enthusiasm in its use.
- Telephonic and computer-based support on the computerised section of the programme. The idea will be to eventually have a full-time support team to deal with questions and problems ensure sustainability.

### **3. Impact of activities on improved life conditions of person with disabilities**

#### **Self-determination**

The main goal of the programme is to make the learners as independent as possible in all spheres of life. This is achieved on a daily basis and it is good to see how the visual grafts of the learners develop through time in all spheres of life. (Their progress is grafted on a circle diagram based on the Gunsberg model). It is a comprehensive visual summary of the abilities of each individual.

#### **Interpersonal relationships**

The CLASSIC incorporates whole sections on socialising, communication and interpersonal relationships. The learner is taught in a graded manner how to share, take turns, etc. as a young child, and later on, outcomes such as having conversations about known topics, making small talk, dealing with children, older people and the opposite sex are targeted. There is day-to-day improvement on all these issues as they are repeated and practiced on a daily basis by the children.

#### **Social inclusion**

In the senior programme for the older learners, there is a specific section on prevocational training. What makes it unique is that it gives guidelines to teachers, but is still adaptable to the facilities available in the area, needs of the individual learners and practical availability of resources. As this enhances the school-to-work link, more effort is taken by the parents and educators to fight for a future for the learners after school. The future employers are also made aware of the **abilities** of the learners – thereby creating an atmosphere of acceptance in the community.

#### **Rights**

The **right of participation** in the same activities the average mainstream learner has at school and at home, is encouraged by the programme. There is good carry-over of this participation into the community. It would be interesting to know to what extent and how sustainable this participation is in the long run.

#### **Emotional well-being**

Reporting is done on the **abilities** of the learners. Their educators, parents and the community are therefore made aware of their positive attributes to society. This has an amazing filtering down effect to the learners, as often for the first time, comments are made to them that are positive and encouraging.

#### **Personal development**

Each learner follows the programme at her or his own pace according to her or his own abilities. This encourages maximal personal growth. The personal circle diagrams for each learner show clear year-to-year progress in all spheres of life for most learners.

#### **Material well-being**

As independence in all spheres of life is the main goal of the programme, work-related skills are taught to the learners on a more organised basis. These skills are often linked to possible job opportunities in the area and therefore encourage future material well-being.

Employers in the open labour market are more open to employing somebody who can show an **ability-profile**.

For learners who will not be able to work in the open labour market, skills such as vegetable gardening, washing cars, etc. are taught so that they can contribute positively in their societies and do odd jobs in the neighbourhood. It is hard to see the success of this as learners are often from rural areas and we do not have a good follow-up system in place to trace the school leaver.

### **Physical well-being**

Physical activities, gross and fine motor skills, sports and leisure activities are all sections represented in the programme. Learners are exposed to these activities throughout their school career and encouraged to carry on with these activities in their communities. We find that because teachers feel more empowered, learners are also more enthusiastic about actively taking part in sports and other leisure activities.

### **4. Number of persons with disabilities benefiting from the project**

The school going population of persons with intellectual disability aged between 6 and 21 is targeted. It is estimated that there are about 3 000 learners currently exposed to the programme. The exact ratio of male/female is not known.

### **5. Indicators that the project is having a significant impact**

- The programme staff have seen a marked increase in referrals from the community to special schools for the intellectually challenged – giving an indication that awareness of the positive effect of special education has increased.
- The programme staff have more positive feedback from parents and more realistic goal setting by them when they come for parent meetings to school.
- Teachers are more motivated and enthusiastic. They comment on feeling empowered. This creates an atmosphere of work at the school and therefore a positive attitude towards learning under the children.
- There is evidence of more realistic job-placement according to the abilities of individual learners.

### **6. Sustainability of the project**

The project has been running for four years and was approved by the Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal as a tool for outcomes-based education in terms of the national curriculum guidelines. The cost of the programme was not submitted in the nomination but it is funded by the schools or institutions that purchase the programme.

After the initial launch with the gross sponsorship of Operation Jumpstart, the programme was sold on a continual basis (as the need is very real). The schools find it hard to get the funding for the programme (It costs R5 000 without VAT) for the full programme and therefore the process takes time. The programme was not advertised actively in the last two years because of a shortage of funding but with active advertisement it is anticipated that the user numbers will increase. Indications that the programme is sustainable are evident since there is continual enquiry by schools about

the programme – pointing to the need of such a tool at schools. In addition, not one of the schools that has actively started to use the programme has stopped using it. As they get feedback from the users, the programme is adapted. This ensures that users stay interested and involved in the project.

### **7. Interesting features of the project**

- It is easy and quick to be trained in the use of the programme and therefore easy to implement and maintain at a school or institution. Financial maintenance from the users is minimal.
- It is a tool to teach and assess learners but also has the capability of gaining quick access to the school / organisation's statistics, records, medical information of learners, class lists, numbers of learners, ages etc. when used in the computerised format, thus increasing contact time with the learners. It also has a built in capacity for research because of this facility.
- It is currently translated and used in three South-African Languages (Zulu, Afrikaans and English) and is developed to be of use to learners across the borders of language, culture, disability or gender.
- It can be utilised by people with little facilities in the rural areas of South Africa (or anywhere in the world for that matter), where it can be used in its manual form or it can be used in first world circumstances in its computerised format.
- It was developed to fill a need and is still being adapted according needs. It is therefore a dynamic project where research can actively lead to change.

### **8. Difficulties experienced in the project and strategies to overcome these difficulties**

- Funding: As this is not an NGO that can lobby for funding, individual schools/organisations who are interested in using the programme must look for sponsorship. This is often hard for them to do and it takes a long time for them to get the programme.
- The use of centralised training facilities helped to get to larger numbers of participants but to do this requires a lot more funding.
- As this is an educational tool, it took a long time and many presentations to the Department of Education gain approval of the tool. Currently development of the RNCS (Revised National Curriculum ) is putting a halt on the national distribution of the tool, but it is still possible to distribute to interested parties.

### **9. Future visions and planning for the project**

The vision is to see the CLASSIC being used in all schools for the intellectually-challenged in South Africa and to have a practical, cost efficient way in which to continuously develop the tool according to needs of the users. This will make it sustainable and have a truly positive impact on the lives of the learners. To make this vision a reality it will be necessary to advertise actively to target users, namely special schools in South Africa and have practical annual work shops for users to come with needs, comments and feedback. It will also involve translating the tool into more languages as the need arises.

**10. Lessons learnt from this project**

True awareness of a disability group is created best by direct contact with the group. Funding is then also more forthcoming. It is important that users of a programme contribute financially and / or in other ways to the project to let them take ownership. This assures usage and sustainability.

**11. Outstanding features of the project that make it suitable for selection for the study**

The project is different in the sense that is a simple tool that can be used across borders of language, culture and disability. It targets the disabled child and creates the opportunity of a better future as a disabled adult. It is different in the sense that people must purchase the tool – thereby creating a sense of ownership by the user. It is interesting in the sense that a basic database is already part of the tool, making it easily accessible for research purposes and to retrieve information. It is a dynamic project that is still new enough to change, but practical enough to study. Research can be dynamic an ongoing.

# St Joseph's Marist College Special Needs Unit/Inclusion Class

**Name:** St Joseph's Marist College Special Needs Unit/Inclusion Class

**Location:** Rondebosch, Cape Town

**Project Postal Address:** PO Box 27, Rondebosch 7700

**Contact Person:** Alison Newby (Occupational therapist)

**Telephone Number:** 021 689 8714

**Email:** mwdnewby@mweb.co.za

**Type of implementing agency/organisation:** Independent school/Specialist management committee (parent-driven)

**Name of person in charge of the project:** Ann Kraft – Principal educator

**Date of registration:** N/A

**Sponsor's name and addresses:** N/A – parent-funded or private sponsorship of 1 or 2 learners

## 1. Project objectives

Education in an inclusive mainstream school setting for learners with intellectual disabilities following individualised education plans. The project provides 2 specialised classes on a mainstream school campus that caters from pre-school to Matric. The project currently accommodates 17 learners between the ages of 13 and 20 years. Some had been included previously in mainstream primary schools; others had attended special schools.

## 2. Project activities

- Educational programme, which includes functional literacy, numeracy, computer skills, general knowledge, life skills, physical education. As a result, 2–3 learners who were unable to read at all at previous institutions are now able to do so. There is a general overall improvement in terms of basic skills. Learners show ongoing interest in general knowledge and pursue special interests.
- Participation within mainstream campus: chapel; break time; extra-mural programme; market-days; sports days; camps; opportunities for mainstream class integration; etc. This aims to encourage age-appropriate social integration and a sense of belonging wherever possible and with academic participation if and when possible. Consequently, learners have become integral participative members of the school community and have learnt to negotiate mainstream social interaction. Class integration for academic subjects has generally not been successful and learners have preferred to pursue academics in the unit.
- Job-sampling programme with supported job-site training with a view to supported employment placement aims to teach the learners work concepts/habits/skills Every learner over 16years attends a job-site 1 to 2 times per week.
- MAP (making action plan) programme with families assists families to build awareness of the child's interests and potential and to plan for the future. It is partially successful depending on OT time and parents' availability.

- School-to-work transition programme works toward the successful transition from school to adult life. This is in its early days. So far there is one fully employed individual (supported / sheltered work combination) with another possibly attending a mainstream vocational course. Other learners are in the process of making the transition.

### **3. Impact of activities on improved life conditions of person with disabilities**

#### **Self-determination**

The learners are starting to make real choices relating to their interests, preferences and arenas to participate or work in.

#### **Interpersonal relationships**

The learners demonstrate more understanding and acceptance of self and others. They are learning about appropriate relationships with mainstream staff and learners and work-site staff.

#### **Social inclusion**

There is evidence of parallel interactions with mainstream learners, for example, soccer at break; going to chapel; extra-mural and within programme activities, for example, the marimba band; cricket; talent show.

#### **Rights**

The learners are aware of a sense of belonging in school and they know when boundaries of rights are violated.

#### **Emotional well-being**

The learners are generally on an even-keel. They know that their emotions are taken seriously and there is one-on-one input available where necessary.

#### **Personal development**

Each learner has his or her own IEP (individual education plan) and MAP (making action plan) process with a circle of support individuals. Each learner has grown in maturity and self-control in little steps through these processes.

#### **Material well-being**

Each learner is well resourced with possibly one exception.

#### **Physical well-being**

This is generally good (as above). The learners have specific assistive devices where needed. They have access to diverse extra-mural activities

#### **4. Number of persons with disabilities benefiting from the project**

There are 20 learners involved in the project, 9 of these are over 18. There are 6 girls and 14 boys. Unspecified numbers of mainstream learners/educators have been reached by interaction with learners in unit. The disabilities that are accommodated in the unit include Down Syndrome, cerebral palsy, epilepsy and traumatic brain injury.

#### **5. Indicators that the project is having a significant impact**

The mainstream staff includes the unit on all levels and are very supportive. Mainstream learners show willingness to include unit members in various activities and acknowledge participation and achievements of unit learners.

The unit parents are very committed and involved in activities of the whole school.

The local community work-sites are very receptive to job-site training and employment on premises.

The learners have not plateaued in their development in any area.

#### **6. Sustainability of the project**

The project is four years old and runs on a budget of about R28 000 per year. There is no government contribution to the project and it is fully funded by the parents and community. Parents remain committed to paying the fees and fundraising where necessary.

#### **7. Interesting features of the project**

- Parents of learners started the unit. They owned and directed the initiative, although this would have been meaningless without the wholehearted support of the principal of the school.
- The project started small (initially three learners) and allowed steady manageable growth. It had its own small governing body. The process was nothing hasty – but has courage to explore further possibilities of integration where possible.
- All had a we are on a learning curve approach. There was lots of mutual respect, consultation and flexible roles.
- There is a multi-disciplinary team, all receptive to trying same things in new ways. There are not too many experts but there is specialist support particularly from the education support consultant and the occupational therapist with interest in supported employment.
- The project has depended on communication, teamwork and humility.

#### **8. Difficulties experienced in the project and strategies to overcome these difficulties**

- The problem of diversity of needs was overcome through a process of individual plans, continuous review and trying new and different activities.
- Difficult behaviour (interpersonal and intrapersonal), of both unit learners and mainstream learners was overcome by addressing difficult situations (for example, conflict) immediately. They made use of weekly team discussions and trying different management approaches. There was support from the school where needed.
- Balancing supportive help with potential for self-determination (both on the part of parents and staff) was overcome by constant communication and vigilance.

### **9. Future visions and planning for the project**

To provide a comprehensive transition programme for learners between approximately 14 and 19 years of age that results in a meaningful lifestyle after school that is community-based, sustainable and balanced in work, leisure, social and independent living. This vision will be achieved through careful planning, Ongoing communication with the learner and supportive people around them, as well as providing lots of opportunity to practise negotiating real-life situations, work and community interactions.

### **10. Lessons learnt from this project**

- The concept of inclusion in a mainstream setting should focus on social and interactive skills as much as academic learning. The mainstream campus provides natural learning opportunities for those with intellectual disabilities, whose participation in turn provides learning opportunities for those without disabilities.
- The importance and benefits of focusing on individuals who differ enables acknowledging diversity within a group of individuals who are intellectually disabled and allowing differing needs, strengths and interests to be accommodated.
- Venturing out into the community surrounding the school creates a multitude of learning possibilities.

### **11. Outstanding features of the project that make it suitable for selection for the study**

- Mainstream learning opportunities for adolescents with intellectual disabilities have not to our knowledge been explored in this model, which we feel could be duplicated where special schooling was either not available or not a chosen option.
- The contribution of mainstream school inclusion to open labour market employment placement needs to be explored and monitored.
- The concept of a bridging or graded transition programme is in its infancy in our project and we would like to share our experience of this over the next year-

# Foden Educare Centre

**Name:** Foden Educare Centre

**Location:** 57 Belgravia Crescent, Southernwood, East London 5201

**Project Postal Address:** PO Box 11149, Southernwood East London 5213

**Contact Person:** Mrs. Beth Burton

**Telephone Number:** 043 7221811

**Email:** [diffable@iafrica.com](mailto:diffable@iafrica.com)

**Type of implementing agency/organisation:** Non Profit Organisation

**Name of person in charge of the project:** Zininzi Mpurwana

**Date of registration:** 4 November 1999

**Sponsor's name and addresses:**

1. Association for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disability (REHAB)  
PO Box 11149,  
Southernwood  
East London 5213
2. Affiliated to: SA Federation for Mental Health  
Private Bag X46,  
Braamfontein 2017
3. Affiliated to: National Council for People with Physical Disabilities SA  
PO Box 426,  
Melville 2109
4. Affiliated to: National Council for the Blind  
PO Box 11149  
Hatfield 0028

## 1. Project objectives

- Transform the Foden Special Care Centre into an inclusive Educare facility which serves as a best practice model for promoting inclusive education in the Amathole region of the Eastern Cape
- Provide a safe and secure inclusive Educare facility for 21 children, where the parents identify their children's future education needs and facilitate appropriate placement and support
- In co-operation with tertiary educational institutions, provide practical experience for ECD practitioners to ensure the promotion of inclusive education in Educare

## 2. Project activities

- Transforming a Special Care Centre into an inclusive educational facility by implementing an educational programme and promoting the policy of inclusive education in recognition that all children have a right to education. The education programme is holistic and can be adapted to each individual child's needs. This activity is still in the process, which involves an educational institution in implementing educational programme. After which there is a plan to re-launch facility. Up until this point it is evident that disabled children have definitely benefited from interaction with able children and vice versa.

- Implementing a holistic programme working with parents especially around children's future educational needs. Children move on to access mainstream education wherever possible. Children are as independent as possible. Two children admitted to mainstream crèche and one pre-primary, seven children have learnt to feed themselves leading to independence.
- Inform parents of new legislation and help them to lobby for rights both individually and as a group. Parents know the channels they should take. Parents with children with severe disabilities are known to the Department of Education but have not yet been successful in gaining admission for their children.
- Children with disabilities use public school transport to attend Foden. Children with disabilities are integrated and accepted by other children. Parents have taken responsibility for making transport arrangements. Taxi drivers and other children are caring and accepting.
- Training of Educare practitioners so that they run an integrated programme and include children with disabilities is in the process of being implemented in conjunction with ITEC. The aim of this is so that ultimately all children can access Educare facilities in the community.

### **3. Impact of activities on improved life conditions of person with disabilities**

#### **Self-determination**

Children are individuals and there is recognition of their individuality. Parents are seeing slow but positive progress.

#### **Interpersonal relationships**

Children benefit from interaction with others both at school and on the transport.

#### **Social inclusion**

Parents used to be embarrassed and hid their children away – Foden transport used to fetch kids from their homes. The majority are now using public transport and are very accepted by the other school children and taxi drivers.

#### **Rights**

Promoting children's right to education

#### **Emotional well-being**

Children are happy – education in a caring and safe environment

#### **Personal development**

Parents have clearer goals for their children and understand what steps they need to pursue to ensure their child's development.

#### **Material well-being**

The children presently attending are too young to consider providing for their own material well-being.

## **Physical well-being**

Children who come from poverty-stricken families benefit from receiving two meals per day.

## **4. Number of persons with disabilities benefiting from the project**

Since implementation the project has admitted a total of 45 children under the age of 7 years. Some older children have also been admitted. According to inclusive education policy, these learners are not classified according to disability but they are grouped according to support level needed. 16 have had low level support needs, 9 have needed a medium level of support and 27 have required high level support. The centre also impacts on 20 mothers of disabled children and their families. In addition to the learners at the school, the project has the potential to benefit 15 ECD practitioners.

## **5. Indicators that the project is having a significant impact**

It is still early to assess the impact of programme especially as training of ECD practitioners is just being implemented. The educational programme is also being revised and implemented with the assistance of ITEC.

This is the only facility for Children with Disabilities implementing this approach in the Eastern Cape. There is an influx of parents with children with disability requesting placement.

## **6. Sustainability of the project**

The project has been running as a special care centre for 12 years and the new approach has been implemented for about two years. The funds required to run the centre are about R176 000 per year. To meet this cost, parents pay fees according to their means. The government contributes 50% of the funding and there is a sponsorship campaign to adopt a child who cannot afford fees. Donors contribute less than half of the funding. The contribution from each of these sectors has remained constant over the past two years, except for a slight decrease in donor funding. The project is in line with state policy and the goal is that it is used as a best practice model to promote the policy throughout the region.

## **7. Interesting features of the project**

The project is in the process of changing from an exclusive facility, which cared for severely disabled children to an inclusive facility promoting an educational programme for all children according to their needs.

Networking and utilising experience of both parents and professionals.

Providing a caring safe educational environment – educators have the support of a team of professionals.

The dedicated and welcoming attitude of staff means that parents are comfortable to leave their children and see progress however small.

## **8. Difficulties experienced in the project and strategies to overcome these difficulties**

- There are no resources for children with severe disability who leave Foden and whose priority need is a full day care/residential facility. Parents have been

unsuccessful in lobbying for admission to the local special school and are now organising themselves to start a facility to meet their children's needs.

- It has been difficult to get parents of able children to attend Foden. The attempted solution is to re-launch Foden with new name and educational programme implemented and supported by ITEC.
- It is very difficult for children with disabilities to gain admission to mainstream Educare facilities. The project is addressing this by targeting Educare practitioners for training and ensuring that they have an understanding of the educational policy and know how to run an inclusive facility.

### **9. Future visions and planning for the project**

By setting an example as an inclusive Educare facility and assisting in training ECD practitioners, children with disabilities will be accepted / can access education in their local Educare facility which will then lead them into mainstream education or appropriate educational facilities with their peers. In order to achieve this vision, the centre will adopt the following strategies:

- Implement an inclusive Educare centre at Foden which is in line with the Inclusive Education policy (White Paper 6) and promote the facility.
- Collaborate in the development and training of ECD practitioners by working in partnership with The Institute of Training and Education for Capacity Building (ITEC).
- Assist parents to lobby for the provision of resources to ensure the education of their children with disabilities – particularly those with multiple / severe disabilities who presently have no access to resources.

### **10. Lessons learnt from this project**

The project can share lessons about the following processes:

- The process of changing from a care to an inclusive educational facility
- Promoting inclusive education in the community through the training of ECD practitioners
- How to address the negative attitudes of educators and parents

### **11. Outstanding features of the project that make it suitable for selection for the study**

It is useful to have an outside person evaluate objectively. This is new territory for us and we are in a process of trial and error. We can learn a great deal from this type of research as well as networking and sharing information with others.

It is an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of established programmes High Scope and COACH within an inclusive education paradigm. This will be unique to the Eastern Cape where resources are traditionally scarce for people with disabilities.

# **Sunfield Home Logwood**

**Name:** Sunfield Home Logwood

**Location:** Muldersdrift / Johannesburg

**Project Postal Address:** PO Box 110 Muldersdrift 1747

**Contact Person:** Tony Turrell

**Telephone Number:** 011 659 0510

**Email:** info@sunfieldlogwood.co.za

**Type of implementing agency/organization:** Residential Centre for the Intellectually Disabled

**Name of person in charge of the project:** Tony Turrell

**Date of registration:** Self-initiated – October 2002

**Sponsor's name and addresses:** Self-funded

## **1. Project objectives**

To involve Intellectually Disabled persons with able persons in order to develop their people and life skills

## **2. Project activities**

- Storekeeping is done to encourage a sense of responsibility and being responsible for one's actions. This is effective in about half the cases.
- Assembly work develops a form of discipline and setting goals/objectives. It requires responsibility in a team environment. This has been fairly successful, however, depends on the level of each person.
- Quality control and packaging promote an awareness of customer's needs and requirements. It is partially effective.
- Supervision and team leading teaches the workers to be able to stand up and ensure that the right things are done to meet the overall goals. While this is partially successful, it needs constant intervention in order to be maintained.

## **3. Impact of activities on improved life conditions of person with disabilities**

### **Self-determination**

The workers have decided how their time at work can improve quality of life.

### **Interpersonal relationships**

They can stand up for themselves and are more confident to ask for things.

### **Social inclusion**

The workers are able to mix easier outside of our restricted environment.

### **Rights**

They understand more of what is right and wrong and the consequences of actions.

### **Emotional well-being**

They appear to be much better balanced since mixing with the community.

**Personal development:**

Workers are making better decisions with regards to what will benefit them. They are most opposed to negative actions.

**Material well-being**

Through improved work habits, they have earned more and therefore have been able to purchase goods not previously accessible to them.

**4. Number of persons with disabilities benefiting from the project**

This project benefits 45 men and 28 women over the age of 18. Within these numbers, 16 people are classified as having a mild disability, 31 a moderate disability and 1 as severe.

**5. Indicators that the project is having a significant impact**

All who have attended appear to have improved to some measure, obviously some more than others.

**6. Sustainability of the project**

The project has been running for about 3 years. The current budget is ±R400 000 to R500 000. The project does not receive funding from outside sources as it is currently self-funding. They recognise a need to extend capacity, so as to further meet the needs of the community and also provide more fulfilling jobs for the intellectually disabled.

**7. Interesting features of the project**

- They have always achieved deadlines and goals agreed upon with clients.
- Clear instructions and targets are given to the staff.
- Effective controls to measure productivity and goals are in place.
- In all negotiation they have tried to create a win/win situation.
- The project is transparent in all dealings with all personnel.

**8. Difficulties experienced in the project and strategies to overcome these difficulties**

It has been difficult getting the right price for a job to ensure that the people carrying out the work would earn a reasonable income, plus obtain a contribution to the home. This was resolved through a win/win approach.

They struggled to ensure that all people involved with the workshop project achieved what was required, as most of the concepts were unknown to them, so continual supervision and support was needed.

**9. Future visions and planning for the project**

The vision is to create a viable working model, which will stand-alone and be run by those who have become part of the project. The strategies to achieve this include putting potential managers and supervisors through training, ensuring all stakeholders are part of the plan and to continually measure performance against goals.

**10. Lessons learnt from this project**

- The importance of goal setting and measuring progress
- The importance of monitoring activities and take appropriate action timeously
- The need for all to understand what and why various goals were set

**11. Outstanding features of the project that make it suitable for selection for the study**

Over the past few years it became apparent to us that because of the involvement of the intellectually disabled, mixing with others carrying out similar tasks, they have all become more productive and many are now more confident.

# **Intellectual Disability Quality Lifespan Development Project**

**Name:** Intellectual Disability Quality Lifespan Development Project

**Location:** Department of Educational Psychology, University of Stellenbosch

**Project Postal Address:** Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Education, University of Stellenbosch, PO Box X1, MATIELAND, 7602

**Contact Person:** Professor Rona Newmark

**Telephone Number:** 021 808 2229

**Email:** rnew@sun.ac.za

**Type of implementing agency/organisation:** University of Stellenbosch

**Name of person in charge of the project:** Professor Rona Newmark

**Date of registration:** 2001

**Sponsor's name and addresses:**

5. NRF Thuthuka  
PO Box 2600  
Pretoria  
0001
6. Research Sub-Committee A  
University of Stellenbosch  
Private Bag X1  
Matieland, 7602
7. Prof T Partk, Dean Faculty of Education, University of Stellenbosch  
Private Bag X1  
Matieland, 7602
8. Mr van Op't Hof, Private funder

## **1. Project objectives**

- To establish quality lifespan development (development over the full lifespan) of learners (from birth to adulthood) with intellectual disability through the development and implementation of support programs
- To produce quality research towards Down Syndrome and intellectual disability at a national and international level
- To establish collaborative research relationships with other universities and organisations

## **2. Project activities**

- **Advocacy and Awareness:** Through collaboration and interaction with schools, communities and professionals, advocacy is facilitated for individuals with Intellectual Disability.
- **Support Groups:** The project facilitates monthly meetings, which also serve as support for individuals from the community, schools and professionals. These meetings are open meetings and create a forum where needs are raised. The projects team then follows up on these needs.

- Counselling: Educational psychological support is facilitated for individuals with intellectual disability when needed.
- Self-help groups: We are in the process of planning a peer counselling group where individuals with an intellectual disability will be trained in counselling skills as to provide peer support for each other.
- Legal work: Once the project has established itself, active legal work will be facilitated. Contact has been made with legal advisors.
- Social work, job placements: Contacts have been established in communities to initiate the needs assessment from which social work activities and the efficiency of this process will also be assessed. Job placement opportunities also form a core part of the project.
- Research: There are 5 completed research projects and 5 currently in progress. Research meetings to which community members were invited were held very successfully. A literature review on research was conducted, including topics: Down Syndrome, QXCI, Subtle Energy Healing, and quality of life. There has also been the establishment of research collaboration nationally and internationally.
- Participation at international and national level at the Psychological Society of Northern Greece and the International Association for Cognitive Education in Southern Africa
- Publications: 12 articles have been published in refereed/peer reviewed journals
- Setting up of database An electronic data base on Down Syndrome will be initiated at the University of Stellenbosch

### **3. Impact of activities on improved life conditions of person with disabilities**

#### **Self-determination**

The individuals with Down Syndrome who have been included into mainstream school have shown progress in their assertiveness and general self concept.

#### **Interpersonal relationships**

The children with Down Syndrome have developed social skills because of inclusive placements. The lady with Down Syndrome who joined the project for a job placement increased her skills in interacting at a professional level.

#### **Social inclusion**

Children between the ages of four and eight have increased the social circle because of inclusive placements.

#### **Rights**

The community in which the project functions, has become more conscious of the rights of individuals with a disability and the individuals themselves are becoming more assertive in exercising their rights.

#### **Emotional well-being**

Emotional well-being has generally been facilitated through greater acceptance of the individuals involved in the project. At times difficult decisions have also been made, to protect the emotional well-being of participants.

**Personal development**

Personal development is a focus of the projects and the development of participants is usually monitored closely. The focus of the project is on holistic development. More detail can be observed in the outcomes of individual projects.

**Material well-being**

This area still needs much attention, and this project facilitates processes enabled through the funding, but a true contribution is still limited.

**Physical well being**

Generally individuals show good responses to opportunities, such as the Quantum Xrroid Interface System. Currently we need funding to do further research on this matter.

**4. Number of persons with disabilities benefiting from the project**

The project directly benefits 3 women over 18 and 10 boys and 15 girls under 18. The type and severity of disability will be clearer once a needs analysis has been completed.

**5. Indicators that the project is having a significant impact**

The number of individuals participating at all levels increases at every meeting. Organisations and schools are showing growing interest and we are invited to consult with schools and professionals continuously. The participants include the co-ordinator, the Thuthuka mentor (Professor Lena Green, UWC), 13 students from the MEdPsych Programme (University of Stellenbosch), representatives from Down Syndrome South Africa, various stakeholders from the community, academics from other universities and a research assistant.

Ten research projects have been completed through supervisors on this project and 8 articles have been published in accredited journals. Funding has been received from the University of Stellenbosch and the National Research Foundation. Collaborative relationships between researchers and students and the relevant university faculties have also been established. A variety of research questions are currently being studied.

An extensive literature review on a clinical approach to Subtle Energy Healing as well as the Quantum Xrroid Consciousness Interface (QXCI) System will be included to establish if these approaches may contribute to quality lifespan development of learners with Down Syndrome.

**6. Sustainability of the project**

The project was initiated in 2001. The funding comes from government through the University and the NRF. This has increased over the past two years. Donors provide less than half the funding. The project has been approved by the National Research Foundation and supported by the Research Committee and by the Dean of the Faculty of Education.

## **7. Interesting features of the project**

- The project is based on dedication to individuals with disability and in particular to individuals with an intellectual disability as well as a commitment to an inclusive society. The project leader has a high work ethic and large capacity for work and approaches everything she does with energy and enthusiasm.
- The project leader has committed her to support and research on intellectual disability and this is her core research focus. She is an educational psychologist with compassion for educational psychology.
- She has initiated trusting collaborative relationships nationally and internationally.

## **8. Difficulties experienced in the project and strategies to overcome these difficulties**

The project leader has a heavy academic and administrative workload: She aims to free herself to research more comfortably.

There has been a lack of funding but the project leader managed to obtain funding and will continue to source further funding.

There has been general resistance from communities toward individuals with disabilities: Various strategies have been used to advocate disability and this is part of the goal of the project.

## **9. Future visions and planning for the project**

On the basis of a pilot project, a support unit for learners with Down Syndrome will be formed at the Unit for Educational Psychology. A literature review of existing research on Down Syndrome in South Africa and the Quantum Xrroid Consciousness Interface (QXCI) System as well as Subtle Energy Healing (a clinical approach) will be completed. There will also be a continued drive toward research collaboration nationally and internationally, which will facilitate the creation of a database on Down Syndrome at the University of Stellenbosch. The strategies to achieve this vision will include personal research, collaboration with various participants and developing funding proposals.

## **10. Lessons learnt from this project**

Researchers and academics are not the specialists, rather we learn most from community members and individuals with disability.

One's personal commitment and intention needs to be for and with individuals with an intellectual disability.

Individuals with disability need to be involved together with all their significant others.

## **11. Outstanding features of the project that make it suitable for selection for the study**

*"I feel that the strategies such as subtle energy healing could facilitate ground breaking well-being for individuals with intellectual disability, but I need the opportunity and funding to do this research.*

*I am motivated to include as many individuals with disability in the project as possible, I do not wish to voice my own ideas, but theirs.*

*I feel the general planning and vision of my project could contribute meaningfully."*

## **Whizz Kidz Special Needs Centre**

**Name:** Whizz Kidz Special Needs Centre

**Location:** Pinetown, KwaZulu-Natal

**Project Postal Address:** PO Box 10206, Ashwood, 3605

**Contact Person:** Mrs. Shelly-Ann Tooth

**Telephone Number:** 031 7011490

**Email:** shelly@planetpastel.com

**Type of implementing agency/organisation:** Care and education of multiply disabled children

**Name of person in charge of the project:** Mrs. Shelly-Ann Tooth

**Date of registration:**

**Sponsor's name and addresses:**

The Ken Mackenzie Foundation

PO Box 116

Pinetown 3600

Westville Round Table

PO Box 163

Westville 3630

Victor Daitz Foundation

PO Box 50510

Musgrave 4062

Standard Bank Financial Shared Services

PO Box 3124

Johannesburg 2000

### **1. Project objective**

The project offers an effective educational programme geared towards meeting the specific needs of each pupil, regardless of cultural background, ability and language.

### **2. Project activities**

- Early and timeous intervention for children in the age range 0–3: The project offers interventions to enable learners to develop basic receptive and expressive language skills, mobility, orientation and other life skills necessary for independent living and participation in further learning. Each child is assessed to develop an appropriate educational programme with the participation of all those involved in care of the child. The objective develops over time and is ongoing.
- Pre-school education for children aged 3–6 years: The project develops individual education programmes for each child to enhance academic and holistic development. The objective progresses over time as each child progresses at her or his own pace.
- Play is an important part of the daily routine.
- Therapy: Therapists and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) specialists as well as experienced teachers and facilitators will decide to what

extent the child will benefit from being schooled at the centre. Therapy is not included in the monthly fee and is provided on a private basis. The communication between the home and the school enables carry over of progress. The objective is achieved insofar as parents are able to cover the costs.

- Provide self-care and independence skills: All children at the centre require training in tasks such as toileting, feeding, dressing. Training in self-care increases independence and makes the child less reliant on care givers. Children are able to participate more fully in life. This objective has been partially fulfilled.
- Provide social and emotional development: The lack of public awareness and understanding create barriers to participation for children with severe disabilities. They are stigmatised for physical differences, abnormal behaviour patterns and limited communication. By improving their skills, developing their self-esteem and equipping them with tools to compensate for some of their disabilities, they gain the means to participate more fully in society. This objective develops over time depending on the child's level of development.
- Promote communication development: The implementation of a multi-modal AAC system allows those children with little or no functional speech to develop communication abilities. AAC is applied throughout the centre and this is one of the biggest AAC programmes in KZN. This objective is achieved and ongoing. Each child develops at his or her own pace.
- Provide functional scholastic skills development: Offering an educational programme, which incorporates functional reading, mathematics and writing will establish a foundation for learning. Functional academics and the development of basic concepts form part of the daily school routine. This objective is achieved and ongoing.
- Promote the development of leisure and recreational skills: Cognitive delay and disability can limit the development of play, which is part of the learning process. Children are encouraged to participate in creative activities and play. The objective is achieved and ongoing.
- Provide training and education to staff, parents and the community: teaching staff and assistants receive ongoing in-service training by qualified professionals. Aides and facilitators are trained to assist in the implementation of the education programme and carry over of therapy. Parents and caregivers require ongoing guidance in the implementation of programmes to assist with carry over for the maximum benefit of the child. Training and of the community takes place through general awareness activities/exposure done at the school. This objective is achieved and ongoing.

### **3. Impact of activities on improved life conditions of person with disabilities**

#### **Self-determination**

Through early intervention and promoting functional and independence skills, the project is reducing the risk of children developing learned helplessness / passivity. This increases self-determination.

#### **Interpersonal relationships**

Most of the children at the centre, with a range of disabilities, have significant delay in the areas of communication, social and emotional development and as a result seldom develop interpersonal relationships. Through the use of AAC these areas are facilitated.

**Social inclusion**

Open days at the school, outings and community service done at Whizz Kidz by other mainstream schools in the area all contribute to developing social inclusion. In general children with severe disabilities still have a long road to travel towards full social inclusion.

**Rights**

There have been very few changes in the area of rights for these children despite current legislation promoting inclusion. Various barriers that reduce the possibility of success still exist.

**Emotional well-being**

Providing a structured nurturing learning and care environment does much to promote the emotional well-being of the children at Whizz Kidz. Acceptance and love enhance this. Parents and family are also provided with support to increase general well-being.

**Personal development**

The complex nature of each child's disabilities encourages a high standard of care and education to promote personal development.

**Material well-being**

The children at Whizz Kidz are between 18 months and 15 years. At this stage there are no aims to gain material well-being for these children. Care and education are the priority.

**Physical well-being**

Efforts to improve each child's physical well-being through therapy and specialised techniques and strategies are done on a daily basis. Assistance is also offered in areas of health, nutrition, medication and medical related aspects.

**4. Number of persons with disabilities benefiting from the project**

There are 25 boys and 15 girls in the age range 18 months to 15 years. All are considered to be severely disabled.

**5. Indicators that the project is having a significant impact**

- There is interest and commitment shown by the community, both immediate and further afield.
- There is progress made by each learner.
- There is interest and queries are made by other facilities dealing with children with severe disabilities from teachers, assistants, parents, students, etc.

## **6. Sustainability of the project**

The project has been running for 5 years and runs on a budget of R400 000 to R500 000 per year. Of this the community contributes a small percentage, the government nothing and sponsors and donors make a small contribution. School fees do not cover running costs and there is no assistance from government so that the school relies on donors to make up the short fall.

## **7. Interesting features of the project**

- Professionalism: Administration has been very organised and professionally run. The project has managed to maintain a high standard of care and education.
- Passion and commitment: all staff of various levels are extremely dedicated, passionate and committed to making a difference in the lives of the children at Whizz Kidz, despite non-market related salaries.
- Limited options to education for children with severe/ multiple disabilities: no other school exists within the community offering placement to multiple disabilities and there are very few options in the province as a whole.
- Resources: thanks to donors and sponsors we have become well-resourced. Our staff are relatively well-trained across the board. Assistants to teachers are in a position to impact on other communities because of this.

## **8. Difficulties experienced in the project and strategies to overcome these difficulties**

- There has been no assistance from government with funding. The education department does not pay for school fees or running costs.
- There are very few trained staff available to cope with incredibly demanding children in a very labour intensive working environment.
- There is generally a low level of skills in the province in working with children with multiple disabilities.

## **9. Future vision and planning for the project**

To maintain a high standard of care and education for children with multiple disabilities and to improve the quality of life for the children and their families. To increase public awareness and generate further interest locally in the project. To achieve this vision there will be in-service training of all members of staff, caregivers and parents. There will also be public awareness campaigns through open days and outings where the children are placed more in the public eye. There will be aggressive and ongoing initiatives to secure funding and sponsorship of running costs.

## **10. Lessons learnt from this project**

There is disability not inability. Despite their difficulties, children with severe disabilities have the same rights as everyone else and are valuable members of society.

There is a need to have faith in human nature. There are people and businesses within the community that are willing to help. Integrity does still exist.

Never give up. When involved in a project to improve the lives of others, all obstacles will be overcome. Have faith and be positive.

**11. Outstanding features of the project that make it suitable for selection for the study**

Most of our learners have been written-off by the system. They can learn, they can progress and we can still make a difference. It takes creative and adaptive methods.

The centre is one of the biggest AAC programmes in KZN

Various disabilities are integrated in the classes, which are divided according to age and not ability.

## **Happy Home for Children with Disabilities**

**Name:** Happy Home for Children with Disabilities

**Location:** Mthatha, Eastern Cape

**Project Postal Address:** 895 Errol Spring Ave., Southernwood, Mthatha

**Contact Person:** Mrs. Vivian Duma

**Telephone Number:** 047 5322348

**Email:** vuyelwaduma@telkomsa.net

**Type of implementing agency/organisation:**

**Name of person in charge of the project:** Mrs. Vuyelwa Vivian Duma

**Date of registration:** 1999

**Sponsor's name and addresses:** SANLAM

### **1. Project objectives**

To empower educable, moderately disabled children and their parents.

To accommodate disabled children from disadvantaged rural communities so as to offer them education, skills development and protect them from abuse.

### **2. Project activities**

Support groups: During bereavement and loss of financial support from children's grants, funds are used from other parents. This has helped with funeral expenses since parents are not working. It also helps with counselling and support to the family.

Self-help groups: in the formation of local groups, people get to know each other and help in seeking grants, etc. People are helping each other to try and solve their problems together and building unity.

Empowerment programmes: Training of parents and mildly intellectually disabled in sewing skills and basic business skills. The children have been equipped and this has boosted their own self-esteem. They can take decisions and show initiative.

Income-generating projects: the children above school going age do Poultry farming and agriculture. This generates income for the centre. The community and other NGO groups visit the centre to see what the children and parents do. Children are being fed fresh milk from the cow.

### **3. Impact of activities on improved life conditions of person with disabilities**

#### **Self-determination**

The parents who are voluntary workers and children are so motivated. They take pride in the development of the centre.

#### **Interpersonal relationships**

There are good human relations prevailing at the centre, no quarrels or petty disputes.

#### **Social inclusion**

At the centre the children from the community who are not disabled, are included, playing in sports, playing together with our kids and singing.

#### **Rights**

The rights and responsibilities of the children are observed and respected by both workers and leadership.

**Emotional well-being**

Emotional well-being is also observed. The parents who do not take care of their children are called to order. Good clothes and other needs of the children and teenagers are looked into.

**Personal development**

Children are learning as they grow, subjects like HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases are discussed.

**Material well-being**

Children have the television in each room. They own cell phones, they have their toothbrushes and toiletries. They take good care of them. They have pocket money.

**Physical well-being**

Besides disabilities, the children are healthy. Two local doctors are doing voluntary services at the centre. When children get sick, they get the medication. We have never had any outbreaks at the centre since its inception in 1999.

**4. Number of persons with disabilities benefiting from the project**

The programme has reached about 500 males and 800 females over the age of 18. This would include the parents of disabled children in the support/affiliated groups. About 500 boys and 600 girls under the age of 18 have benefited either at the centre or in the support groups. About 80% of disabled children have mild disabilities, and the rest have moderate disabilities with a handful (less than 1%) having severe disabilities.

**5. Indicators that the project is having a significant impact**

The 2 children who are abandoned have a home since the inception of the place. The AIDS orphan who is intellectually disabled was taken over by the centre when the relatives could no longer manage. The hostel for Thembisa Special school is indispensable since children come from afar. Parents cannot buy houses or rent for their children since they depend on social security grants for the entire family.

**6. Sustainability of the project**

The project has been going for 5 years and runs on a budget of about R100 000 per year. The community contributes material things such as stoves and blankets and the government makes no contribution. Half of the budget comes from sponsors, especially SANLAM. The sponsorship from the community and donors has increased over the past two years. The garden is being developed to feed the children and make the centre sustainable. The poultry farm generates both eggs for the children and for sale. The milk from the cow improves the nutrition of the children as well as generating income from sales to the community. Traditional attire is produced by the sewing group for sale.

## **7. Interesting features of the project**

- They have a multi-disciplinary team as board members who help with ideas and free advice. They include lawyers, doctors, psychologist, traditional leaders and parents from the management team.
- Parents are involved at all stages so that at all stages they take decisions and they are represented at the top.
- This is a community-based project, driven by parents and their children. Parents do fundraising; there is no government subsidy.
- The project is run on a part-time basis by a parent who is the founder of the centre but the community supports her to do this.
- In a disadvantaged area this project is one of the most successful community initiatives.
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## **8. Difficulties experienced in the project and strategies to overcome these difficulties**

The lack of financial support by government means that the children have to pay fees of at least R250 per month. This is addressed through fundraising for food from local supermarkets and butchers.

It is difficult to transport the children to school and for medical attention. This problem has not yet been overcome.

The parents are illiterate. They need empowerment and skills development programmes.

The project has started programmes to help parents with this.

## **9. Future vision and planning for the project**

- The project would like to see children with mild disabilities employed at the centre and employment of the parents who are now skilled.
- They would like to run satellite centres in the rural areas.

In order to achieve these goals they will form local branches in each location. Parents should form groups or centres. They will then visit the centres and help them to develop. These centres will also visit Happy Home and go back and do the same in their areas. They hope to employ 20 children with mild intellectual disabilities in two years' time.

## **10. Lessons learnt from this project**

They have learnt about project management and gender issues in rural communities.

## **11. Outstanding features of the project that make it suitable for selection for the study**

People see this project as a tool that can eradicate poverty. It has put the young child with intellectual disability in the picture. People in the community respect them and attitudes have changed. Ultimately this will put the intellectually disabled child in the picture for the whole country, thus creating opportunities in a real sense.