



OCTOBER 2017

Newsletter



**Inclusive
Education**
SOUTH AFRICA

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From the Director's Desk

October is always a favourite month at IESA! We see it as an opportunity to recognise the outstanding work done by our inclusive teachers as we celebrate World Teachers' Day on the 5th October. For all of us working in the South African education sector, we are well aware of the significant challenges facing our teachers – large classes, an inflexibly implemented and monitored curriculum and an overwhelming admin burden. Yet, for many teachers, their passion and commitment to ensure that “no child is left behind” is what spurs them on to develop inclusive teaching skills and provide learning opportunities for each and every child.

It is a privilege for all of us at IESA to work with these teachers across the country. They have opened their hearts, minds and classroom doors to us to partner with them in developing the skills to differentiate the curriculum and assessment and allow each child to reach their full learning potential. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the teachers who see the potential in children and not just their deficits. Those who teach children at the pace and level at which they are, and

not just where the curriculum says they should be. And who take the time to get to know their learners and support all of their learning needs, be they academic or emotional.

The theme of this newsletter is “Support” and we remind teachers that support does not only mean support to individual learners, but also support for teachers! So take the time to take care of yourselves, to replenish your reserves and stay motivated. Inclusion is not one big thing. It is many small things, such as developing the skills to teach inclusively. But they also include finding the support you need!

Remember, inclusion is a journey and as the famous quote says, “The journey of a 1000 miles begins with a single step”. So too does your journey towards good inclusive classroom practice.

Director
Robyn Beere

**Inclusive
Education**
SOUTH AFRICA

Did you know?

IESA's Resource Centre operates a hotline that responds to a wide range of enquiries. Parents, teachers, hospital clinics, social workers and other professionals generally enquire about support for learners with disabilities, or those who experience other barriers to learning.

We aim to encourage and enable parents to engage in their child's schooling, as informed and active participants. We strive to mobilise and assist teachers to provide meaningful support to learners in their care.

IESA is here to assist you with information and advice about inclusive education policies and the schooling system. We hope to be sources of support to children, and to the adults responsible for their learning and care.

**INFORMATION & SUPPORT
HELPLINE**



When necessary, we accompany parents, families and their children, or mediate on their behalf, either at school or the ECD centre.

As part of our support, we may assist in the development of an Individual Support Plan (ISP). This can be a useful guide to assist teachers to accommodate and support a learner, in line with the school programme and the education department's inclusive education policies.

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Letting the Sun Shine on All



Effective support for ECD practitioners means effective support for all learners

The parent meeting was scheduled for 7 pm; however, with an icy wind swirling up the fine sand all around Delft, and serious rain threatening, I wasn't holding my breath for a good turnout! How wrong I was. Breastfeeding mums, hoodied dads, track-suited grandpas and rugged up grannies – they all came. We crammed into the 3-4 year old classroom, our close proximity protecting us from the chilly wind whistling through the garage door. Sunshine Educare is an ECD centre in Delft, which for the past six months has resembled a building site.

Her staff was feeling a bit apprehensive and unsure about how to handle young Hope, who has CP.

The centre first opened on 1 February 2010, when Lora, the principal, decided to take care of two children, accommodating them in her lounge. Two weeks later, the number had increased to fifteen and she got her daughter in to assist her. The numbers just grew and grew, resulting in Lora renting a Wendy House close to home and employing another teacher. As more and more parents approached Lora to accept their children, she realised she would need bigger premises. She and her husband decided to build onto their existing home and have the crèche downstairs and their living space above. Renovations started in 2016, but because of the inclement weather and a couple of other factors, Sunshine remains an area under construction.

I first met Lora, the principal, a year ago, as she was one of the students at Northlink College, who participated in IESA's inclusion training for the best part of 2016. At the end of the course, Lora approached me and asked whether IESA would be able to assist the other Sunshine staff members by doing our intensive training at her centre. They had recently accepted a young learner with cerebral palsy and her staff was feeling a bit apprehensive and unsure about how to handle young Hope. After an extensive interview with Lora and an initial meeting with her staff, I agreed to take Sunshine Educare on, as one of my ECD centres funded by DSD. In terms of ticking the "Inclusive boxes", I was taking quite a risk. Being a building site, the environment isn't particularly accessible to all children, nor is it especially welcoming, with few posters on the walls, furniture wrapped in plastic and building rubble clearly visible. However, the work they are doing with Hope prompted me to stick to my decision. And I wasn't wrong.

Hope is 4 years old and prior to coming to Sunshine, had not been to an ECD facility. Her granny, who is her main carer, approached Lora and asked whether Sunshine would be prepared to accept Hope for mornings only. She was worried that Hope, apart from not being exposed to formal early learning opportunities, had also not had many opportunities to socialize. Lora agreed, her teachers however,

Hope's independence has increased.

were very reluctant; in fact, one of the teachers confessed that she was a little bit frightened of Hope, as she had no idea how to deal with her. Needless to say, everybody including Hope, was a tad nervous on day one! Lora, because of her knowledge of inclusive education, had prepared the other children for Hope's arrival and they were all wonderfully accommodating. Hope, understandably, was a little overcome by her new surroundings and spent her first few weeks sitting in her pushchair just observing the goings on. She had to be carried to the toilet and the teachers had to feed her.

The children have accepted Hope unconditionally.

As time progressed and both Hope and her teachers relaxed, her independence increased. She now insists on doing most things for herself, including

crawling to the line as the children prepare for their toilet routine, and she readily takes part in all the classroom activities. The children have accepted Hope unconditionally. In fact, during morning ring when the children would usually stand up for an activity, they insist on staying seated so that Hope can be included. Her granny attended the parent meeting and commented on the incredible difference in Hope since she has been attending the Centre. She is more communicative, is excited to go to school in the mornings and refuses to sit in her pushchair, opting instead to be placed on the mat in the classroom.

After the parent meeting, another parent, who has a two year old with a visual impairment, approached Lora and asked whether Sunshine would be willing to accept her daughter. She had thought that because her child was visually impaired an ECD centre wouldn't be able to accommodate her. She was so inspired by what Hope's granny had shared about Hope's progress that she plucked up the courage to enquire about Sunshine accepting her daughter. Lora has agreed and the young learner joined the Centre at the beginning of September.

I have come to realise, through working with Sunshine Educentre, that despite not being able to tick all the "inclusive boxes", there are many other boxes, which can indeed be ticked. In Hope's case, to cite just a few:

- Families' visions of a typical life for their children can come true;
- All children deserve a chance to develop a positive understanding of themselves and others;
- Friendships develop when children are able to socialise;
- All children learn by being together and are empowered to deal with life, by an increase in self-respect and confidence.

Thank you, Hope – you were so aptly named!

Kim Andreoli

ECD and Schools Project Facilitator

Mind your language



Talking about children with disabilities

There is a strong link between language and thinking. The language we use reflects the way we think about things and, in turn, ways of thinking are made possible by the language we use.

A report released after South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which gave survivors of apartheid the chance to share their stories and perpetrators the opportunity to testify and request amnesty, said:

Language ... does things: it constructs social categories, it gives orders, it persuades us, it justifies, explains, gives reasons, excuses. It constructs reality.

What this means is that how people talk about others is very important, not least when they are people with disabilities, difficulties and disorders. This was acknowledged in the US, for instance, when President Barack Obama passed Rosa's Law in 2010. The law removes the term "mental retardation" from legislation and replaces it with "intellectual disability". Obama quoted Rosa's brother, saying:

What you call people is how you treat them. If we change the words, maybe it will be the start of a new attitude towards people with disabilities.

The words we use to disable

We easily recognise offensive terms such as "retard/retard", "spaz", "crip" or "midget". But we don't always recognise the more subtle work language does in constructing categories of others.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is an example. ADHD has become something of a household term as many parents and teachers have become familiar with this condition. The language used to describe children with an ADHD diagnosis is a constellation of terms from medicine, behaviour management and education.

When children with an ADHD diagnosis are described in medical terms, the language is of disease with symptoms, diagnosis and treatment regimes. The child who struggles to pay attention becomes a patient. His – boys are more likely to be diagnosed with ADHD – behaviours are scrutinised and compared with what is regarded as "normal".

"ADHD behaviours" are described as being highly problematic and disruptive to the smooth running of classrooms. Research into the way language is used for ADHD shows children with this diagnosis being called "boisterous" and "difficult to manage".

One textbook warns teachers that these children have a tendency to do unruly things like "throw tantrums" or "throw stones". Other sources for teachers and parents speak of children with ADHD as "monsters" or "brats". Perhaps it is little wonder that some teachers have a low tolerance for children who don't sit still and concentrate for extended periods.

But people don't just talk negatively *about* children with an ADHD diagnosis. Language is used to ensure that ADHD is more than a diagnosis: it is an identity. Sometimes it defines children, like when we say, "the ADHD child". In some cases, ADHD becomes a child's identity: parents and teachers say the child "is ADHD".

These observations are not meant to deny the very real experiences of children and their families who struggle to cope with the demands of schooling in its current form. Learning and social interaction can be severely affected by concentration difficulties, whatever their cause.

The problem I am highlighting is how we talk about others, or other people's children, particularly when they're not regarded as fitting into what's considered "normal". Judging "normal" usually involves deciding how "like us" others are.

Speaking of children with disabilities as foreigners

A report compiled in 2015 by Human Rights Watch accused South Africa of being complicit in the educational exclusion of children with disabilities.

Section27, a public interest law centre focusing on health and education rights, released a report about educational provisions for children with disabilities in special schools. It noted that understanding disability relies a lot on how it is spoken about in society.

The language used to speak about children with disabilities is not unlike the language South Africans use to talk about foreigners. During the xenophobic violence witnessed at the beginning of 2015, a journalist commented that South Africans are:

... accustomed to talking about the "other" ... the idea of something called "us" and something called "them".

In introducing White Paper Six, South Africa's policy on inclusive education, in 2001 the then-education minister said:

Let us work together to nurture our people with disabilities so that they also experience the full excitement and the joy of learning, and to provide them, and our nation, with a solid foundation for lifelong learning and development.

In this statement, people with disabilities are clearly "they" and "them" as opposed to "us".

Like visitors or foreigners, who do not belong by right of birth, children with disabilities must be "welcomed" into the education system. There they must be "accommodated" and their needs "catered for". In some cases the parents of children without disabilities resist this in a kind of educational xenophobia. It has been reported that some parents complain that children with disabilities take up too much of the teacher's time at their own children's expense.

Language matters

It matters when language is used to speak about others as problems, challenges or as the object of pity or charity.

Changing our language will not immediately change the conditions of children with disabilities in South Africa nor the country's attitudes towards disability. But the conditions and attitudes are unlikely to change if our language does not.

Elizabeth Walton

*Senior lecturer in Inclusive Education,
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<https://theconversation.com/mind-your-language-talking-about-children-with-disabilities-42773>

Remarkable Partnerships for Inclusion



Partnerships that extend support to the most marginalised communities

It's often said, that there has never been a better time for non-profit organisations and companies to partner. This year, there have been many examples that reflect the power and potential of partnerships. Partnerships that are helping us spread inclusive practices to the most marginalised communities in South Africa.

Partnerships offer valuable opportunities for NPO's and companies. These include building credibility; financial support; the sharing of resources; reaching new audiences; innovation; exposure; enhancing relationships; demonstrating a bigger purpose and, most of all, making a real difference.

NPO's and companies partnering together to 'do good', is not a new idea. One of the earliest examples was in 1983, when American Express ran a sales promotion linked to the restoration of the Statue of Liberty Project. The NPO managed to achieve its goal, while American Express contributed to an historical landmark and received wonderful exposure.

Closer to home, corporate social investment spend in South Africa over the last few years has been averaging R8 billion, with close to 90% of this expenditure dedicated to support education. This includes high investments in maths and science

projects, classroom technology, reading programmes, teacher curriculum training and school infrastructure.

We believe that models and investments that seek to improve education outcomes focusing solely on improving curriculum content knowledge of teachers, particularly in mathematics, science and literacy, have shown limited improvement in results. What these interventions lack is an understanding of the barriers that stand in the way of learners being able to learn and the whole-school strategies needed to address these barriers.

Interventions need to include a critical examination of the school ethos and policies, promotion of inclusive school leadership and the establishment of strong school-based support structures. IESA closes this gap. We engage key partners and companies, to improve the outcomes of their education investment.

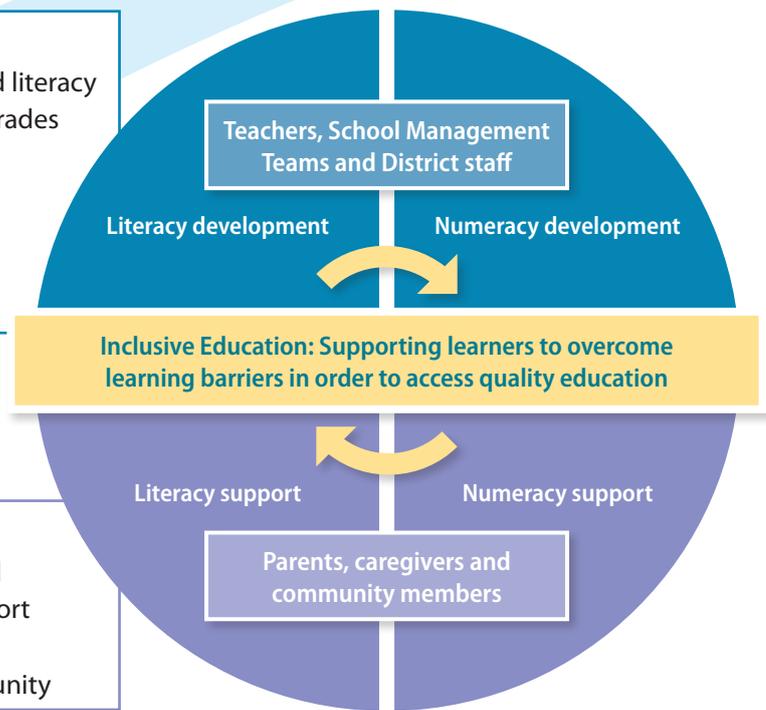
An example is our success in the Eastern Cape, Grahamstown – a province where education outcomes remain extremely poor. These learners experience significant barriers to learning that are often rooted in socio-economic circumstances and their rural location. Teachers are often not equipped with the necessary skills and training to support these learners.

In-school support (Goals)

- Improved performance in numeracy and literacy
- Improved grade promotions across all grades
- Improved teaching skills and content knowledge
- Improved curriculum management and delivery
- Improved district support to schools

Community support (Goals)

- Children's interest in learning stimulated
- Parents/ caregivers empowered to support their children to learn
- Develop education facilitators in community



One of our funding partners made an initial investment in a local NPO, with the aim of improving the curriculum understanding of educators in maths and science in 7 schools. They soon realised that curriculum understanding was not sufficient to realize their desired impact. The need for teachers to differentiate their teaching of these subjects was equally important. Through mutual discussions, IESA was brought on board to develop the ability of educators to meet the different needs of learner. Through our added intervention, the schools are thriving and children are being supported to learn to their full potential. This partnership works to improve the quality of teaching and learner results.

Another exciting partnership that IESA has embarked on is with the Kagiso Shanduka Trust (KST) – IESA complements KST's initial work on

whole-school transformation. IESA is working in 36 schools in the Motheo district, Free State to ensure that inclusion is part of their whole-school development. We will keep you posted on this partnership in the coming months.

IESA seeks to ensure that all investments made in education in South Africa, have inclusion as its cornerstone. Partnerships offer a great opportunity to ensure that investments and programmes offer great value to beneficiaries. We are looking forward to more conversations and creating strong longer term partnerships in the coming months.

*Become
our partner in
advancing support
in education.*

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**Nishen Naicker &
Farai Mushazhirwa**

Survival of the Fittest



Support for parents through the process of school application

This is a time of year when parents may find themselves faced with school rejection letters or simply silence. The accompanying anxiety and stress of uncertainty about their child's future education becomes unbearable. It is difficult to avoid the feeling that when it comes to making school application, it seems to be a case of "survival of the fittest" – a competition. Some children will be successful and others will not. And when your own child is turned down, you may feel hurt and devastated.

The decision hangs on the learner's level of development or academic progress.

Often there is quite a degree of thought that goes into making application to one or more schools of your choice. To have that option taken away from you because your child has not been found "suitable", is difficult to process. The sheer volume of applicants is often the over-riding reason given for exclusion, but at times there is a sense that the decision hangs on the learner's level of development or academic progress. This is often felt even more deeply when we know that a child is struggling with some kind of learning barrier and may be in need of additional support. Feelings of rejection surface and may be difficult for the whole family to deal with.

How then do we move forward when we find that it nearing the end of the school year and there is no confirmed place in school?

Practical steps to take

General

Bear in mind that not all places will be accepted by those offered first time round and that you may receive an offer once the initial admissions have been finalised.

- Contact each school to find out about this process if it hasn't been explained clearly in a letter.
- You are also free to write your own letter of motivation to support the second round. Usually this happens during August, so you would expect to be informed during September if space has become available.
- Parents who have been fortunate enough to receive multiple offers are urged to remember to inform the schools which they choose to decline. In this way parents who are on a waiting list can be informed timeously that there is still place for them!

Grade R

Although increasingly government schools have Grade R classes incorporated into their primary section, there are insufficient spaces for all.

- Try not to despair if placement in the Grade R at one of your schools of choice is unavailable.
- Independent pre-schools with Grade R classes follow the same curriculum and are required to be registered with the Department of Education, so can also prepare your child adequately for Grade 1.
- Prepare to make your Grade 1 applications as timeously as possible in next year to secure a place

for 2019 (W Cape applications open in February).

- Remember, the Department advises parents to apply at three schools in order to optimise possibility of placement.

Grade 1

They are also required to give equal opportunity to children in need of support

- You should be **informed in writing** if and why your child has not been accepted, and should ask for this if the school has not done so. You have a right to appeal if you feel the reason given is unfair or discriminatory.

- Government schools are **not allowed** to subject children to any **admission test** or base admission on **ability to pay fees or a registration fee**. They are also required to give equal opportunity to children in need of support and show due consideration of meeting their support needs.
- You are advised to obtain **written notice of refusal** from three schools. Take these notices to the Education District office serving your area. You will have to complete a form indicating that your child still needs placement. Once again, any special motivation can be added.
- In terms of geographic location, the WCED does not apply any catchment requirements, and parents may choose to apply to schools close to their place of work, rather than home.
- School Governing Bodies may however determine their own catchment areas.

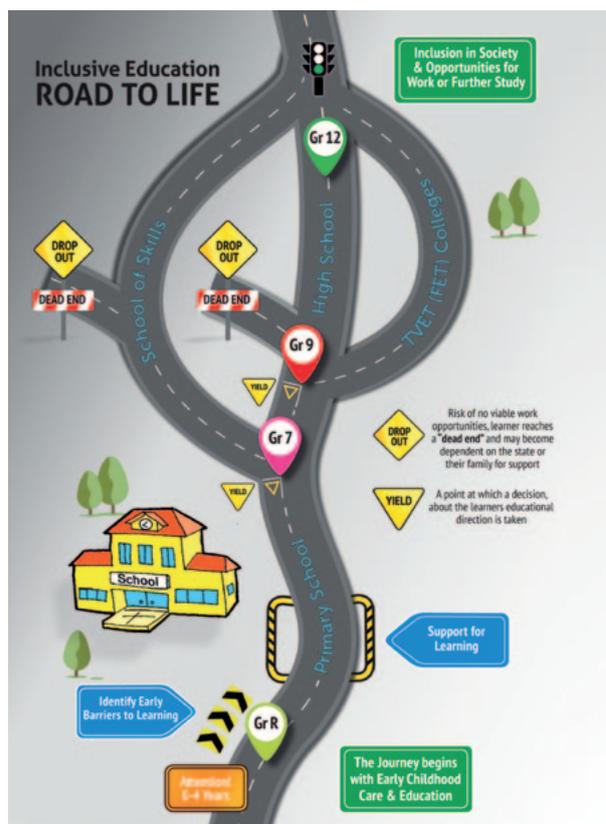
Grade 8

In terms of process, much the same applies as to Grade 1.

- High schools may generate more of a sense of **competition**, with academic and sport performance seemingly given priority of placement. One colleague described how

articles about top-performing prior students was placed at the top of the information pack they were given.

- Parents negotiating this milestone report that the **lack of information** creates extra stress alongside the concern that their child is also anxious and aware that they may not be "making the mark".
- Schools seem to take hugely different approaches to how they inform parents and the experience can be unsettling and confusing.



Schools of Skills

These schools have their own unique application process that is handled by the child's primary school and Education District office during the year the child turns 14 years.

- The 4-year skills-based curriculum is an excellent option for many learners who are more **practically or socially talented** and have struggled to keep pace with the academic curriculum.

- Applications also invariably far exceed the number of places and are allocated during September.
- **Do not remove your child from primary school** with the intention of getting a placement when your child turns fourteen. The child loses out on very important academic and social

It is illegal to take your child out of school before he/she turns 16.

development, which impedes your child's chances of accessing these schools. It is also illegal to take your child out of school before he/she turns 16.

- Unsuccessful application can be extremely worrying to parents and teachers alike. It means continuation within the mainstream schools. Your child would need **support based on inclusive education policies** and guidelines to cope and succeed in the higher grades, at least until Grade 9.

Special schools

Health professionals may have advised parents that their young children have specific and high-level support needs. They may have recommended that these children attend special schools.

- Special school placements are managed centrally at the provincial education departments.
- Children already in a school, where special school placement has been recommended, will be handled by the school and Education District initially, but will be referred to the provincial education department for special school placement.

- Unfortunately, parents are often left believing that placement is guaranteed, only to discover late in the year that this is not the case.
- Special school waiting lists are long and communication to parents is minimal or at times non-existent. Parents may feel their stress levels are registering on the Richter scale!
- Parents should keep a record of all applications (and rejections), and approach the MEC for Education about securing a place in school for their child. It is the MEC's responsibility to provide a place in school for all children according to the Schools Act.
- As implementation of the inclusive education policy, with its commitment to deliver increased support for children at their ordinary local school, improves, application to mainstream schools is a real option for their child. This can be an essential alternative to their child remaining at home.
- Some ordinary schools are now referred to as full service or inclusive schools, receiving extra support from their District Team. These are a good starting point for parents seeking an alternative.

Wherever you are on this nerve-racking journey of school-going, remember that children learn and grow best when they feel fully accepted for who they are, not where they go to school, and that any stumbling blocks are not because of them.

If your child has been excluded from school, contact:

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Caroline Taylor & Natalie Watlington

Sharing Good Inclusive Practice



Collaborating to support teachers through IESA's Mini Symposium

The African proverb says 'it takes a village to raise a child'. In the context of the current education system, it takes a tremendous amount of collaboration to educate one. Inclusive Education South Africa (IESA) knows this only too well. Collaboration in sharing

good practice was the underpinning principle of a recent IESA Mini Symposium held at its 2017 Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the Vista Nova School, Rondebosch, in August. We provide a selected synopsis for those who were unable to attend.

Keynote address: Our reality – the impact of poverty on learning

**ROBYN
BEERE**

The child's development and well-being is a reflection of our society. In the words of the late Nelson Mandela, "There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children". IESA Director, Robyn Beere, painted the picture of the current reality in South Africa through her presentation on the impact of poverty on learning. Inclusive education recognises the interconnectivity of socio economic factors and learning. The child's learning is affected by his or her home and family circumstances; the society or community in which he or she grows up, and the type of early learning opportunities they have access to. By far, the majority of South African learners experience one or more

barriers to learning throughout their education. Some are permanent and some temporary. The system must be able to identify these barriers and put interventions and support in place in order to allow learners to access and participate meaningfully in learning. Overall, children trapped in poverty experience systemic barriers relating to the education and other systems in society, socio economic barriers and those related to physical security within their communities. Some of the most vulnerable children live in unsafe and violent communities. In addition, children face pedagogical barriers stemming from teachers' poor content knowledge or inappropriate teaching approaches.

Early identification of barriers to learning and development in the ECD Centre

**CINDY
OLIVIER**

Cindy expanded on the early identification of barriers to learning and development. A barrier is anything that stands in the way of a child's ability to learn. In addition to societal and socio-economic barriers, there are barriers in the classroom such as class activities which are too fast or too slow-paced;

classroom layout which may not be easy to navigate; inappropriate approaches to difficult behaviour; rigid, inflexible assessment; and assessment which tests memory rather than understanding. Once a barrier to learning has been identified, a child can be better supported.

The Resource Teacher Model: Making the most of limited learning support resources

ROBYN
BEERE

No school has enough resources to be inclusive. However, there are ways that a school can be innovative in order to optimise the use of available resources. Robyn Beere discussed one of these methods in a presentation, promoting the model of the Resource Teacher (RT). It is based on the idea of having one Learning Support Teacher allocated to a school. IESA successfully piloted this approach at the Kleinsee Centre for Learning and Development (KCLD), in the Northern Cape. In the RT model, school teachers can inform the Resource

Teacher about the learner needs in advance. The Resource Teacher researches appropriate support strategies for that learner and provides learners with intensive support, individually, or in groups. The Resource Teacher then shares these strategies with the class teacher and co-teaches and supports the learner and teacher in class, as well as through a fluid withdrawal model. This model destigmatises support associated with the 'special' or 'unit' class model.

Professional Learning Communities (PLC): Why collaborative learning works

ELIZE
COETZEE

The continuous professional development of teachers is crucial to the way teachers manage their classrooms and their professional lives as educators. Elize Coetzee shared IESA's learnings in setting up Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in the Northern Cape. PLCs are promoted by IESA as an important channel for continuous professional development. The PLC model was piloted in the Northern Cape in the towns of Kleinsee, Springbok and Steinkopf. These areas are

quite far from each other. Through IESA interventions, the schools in this area managed to set up a PLC in order for the participating teachers to share their learnings about dealing with children who require various forms of support. Eighteen months later, the PLC in the Northern Cape is still going strong with teachers exhibiting a high level of commitment. They travel vast distances to meet up with their peers to exchange and share knowledge.

The mini symposium drew a lot of interest from the educators and other professionals and stakeholders present. Knowledge and ideas were exchanged and lively discussions added substance and food for thought to the event. Many educators were interested in building a network of teachers with a common interest in inclusive education. We are formulating plans to make that happen. Through such collaboration, teachers will empower themselves to make inclusive education a reality for all learners.



Anona Ah Poe
M & E Specialist

How Far Have We Come in Providing Support for Teachers?

Investment in teachers is an investment in education outcomes

In 2014 I met with Liz, a school principal on the Cape Flats, to offer her staff a free workshop on inclusive education. Naturally the discussion progressed to challenges in education. She related her experience of trying to access support for Shirley, one of her teachers, who had been away from school periodically due to 'severe stress'. Shirley had returned to school each time because the education department refused to grant her an extended leave of absence. Liz had repeatedly approached Oscar, her circuit manager, to accommodate Shirley, whose erratic behaviour had become a challenge to learners, the school management and the rest of the staff. Her appeals fell on deaf ears. One day teachers urged Liz to go Shirley's class. As she approached the classroom, she heard

terrified and angry screams and squeals emanating from Shirley's classroom. When Liz entered the classroom, a dishevelled and highly-strung Shirley was twisting the ears of a terrified eight-year old boy, to the horror of his classmates. Liz immediately called Oscar and demanded that he come to the school before a parent laid criminal charges against the education department. He arrived and signed the forms to be submitted to the department. The teacher and the school had a temporary respite. But, Liz pointed out, this was a Band-Aid on the psychosocial challenges that learners and teachers experience daily, at home and at school.

This, and other accounts in the media, illustrates that teachers and learners need support to manage psychosocial and other challenges. What is available to them? We have a host of guidelines and policies, but as a department official recently acknowledged, policy and practice are often worlds apart.



Figure 3: A Learner Centred, Multisectoral Approach to Care and Support

Care and support for teaching and learning framework

What immediately comes to mind is the *Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) Framework*. The goal of CSTL is to realise the education rights of all children through schools becoming inclusive centres of learning, care and support.

Its objective is to establish a framework to co-ordinate the mainstreaming of care and support within the education system to address the multiple barriers to education that vulnerable children face. Central to this framework is a core of teachers who are empowered to support learners.

The framework acknowledges educator vulnerability and attrition.

'In 2010, there were 12.26 million learners in 25,850 mainstream public and independent schools in South Africa, and over 418,000 educators. The delivery of quality education and the strengthening of schools as sites of care and support depend largely on the ability and buy-in of these 418,000 individuals. Well-trained and motivated educators are key to the achievement of Education for All goals by 2015. Teachers play a central role in the everyday life, education and wellbeing of learners. In fragile communities and households, the teacher often represents the only consistent, supportive adult relationship in the child's life. ... Investing in teachers is an investment in learner support, education and care. Retaining teachers in the teaching profession and encouraging new teachers to join the profession is a key challenge in Africa, and one which impacts greatly on school improvement interventions.'

Educational leaders have the challenge of creating schools as workplace environments that support teacher retention, development and wellbeing. Many South African teachers face the daily reality of teaching large classes, as well as coping with the added pressures of curriculum reform and high performance expectations, with limited resources and support. The increasing effects of poverty and HIV and AIDS on school communities place additional responsibilities on teachers to support the psychosocial needs of learners, in order to improve learner attendance and performance in the classroom. This situation is compounded in rural areas, where schools and communities have limited access to professional support services.

In 2004, the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) commissioned a study to review educator attrition, following worrying anecdotal reports that educators were leaving the education profession in large numbers. The results highlight the need for urgent interventions to better support educators. Efforts to improve educator wellbeing are essential to the integrity of our education system and to improving learner access, retention and achievement outcomes." (*Action Step, National Model, Book 4, CSTL National Support Pack, DBE, 2011, pages 17 and 18*)

'The schooling system cannot pretend that its job is purely to teach because we are not teaching machines we are teaching children who have to be cared for and supported in order for them to succeed.' (Education department official, 2010) The same could be said of teachers.

Compiled by
Vanessa Japtha

CELEBRATING INCLUSIVE TEACHING OCTOBER 2017

Join us at Inclusive Education South Africa (IESA) as we celebrate World Teachers Day on October 5th, by sharing YOUR stories of good practice. We want to hear about individual teachers in ordinary local schools and ECD Centers across the country who are actively welcoming and supporting learners with different needs, at times under quite difficult circumstances. We know there are many of you out there, and we know we can all learn from your experiences and successes.



SHARE YOUR STORY!



So if you have a story to share about an individual teacher, school team, ECD Centre, or school, we are looking forward to hearing from you! These stories will be shared on our website and social media platforms during the month of October.

BEFORE YOU START, ASK YOURSELF...

hmm...

WHAT IS AN INCLUSIVE TEACHER?

- Shows commitment to developing a welcoming and inclusive classroom, valuing equally the different contributions of each child.
- Accommodates a wide range of diverse learner needs by differentiating the curriculum/learning programme and making use of a range of tools/strategies to support learning for all.
- Is committed to furthering his/her knowledge of inclusion and different barriers to learning.
- Encourages and supports fellow educators to adopt inclusive practices in their classrooms.

Flexible,
Creative,
Innovative

WHAT DOES AN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL OR CENTRE LOOK LIKE?

- A welcoming local school/ECD centre responding to the needs of each of its learners and supporting the participation of all.
- Adopts inclusive education as the way forward for the school/ECD Centre.
- Considers the admission and support of ALL children living in the vicinity of the school/ECD centre, irrespective of any learning or other difficulties.
- The whole school/ECD centre, including management, governors, staff, learners and parents work together with the broader community to ensure all learners are encouraged and supported to reach their full potential.
- Co-ordinates support for teachers and learners

Go to www.included.org.za to participate or contact Natalie at IESA for details by Friday 29th September 2017.



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