

EDSA

EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY IN SOUTH AFRICA (EDSA) Registered charity No 1003795

Annual Report for the year to end 31st March 2012

EDSA was set up as a registered charity in 1989 for “the advancement of education and relief of poverty of disadvantaged children & young people in South Africa.

Apartheid has ended however there are still great inequalities as well as much impoverishment within the townships of South Africa. It is very timely to quote one of the inspirational messages from Nelson Mandela, “that hope can drown out sorrow and that progress can overshadow hatred”. It is because of his amazing example that EDSA has continued to work for the last 24 years supporting partner organisations in South Africa.

EDSA aims to support not for profit community based organisations reaching disadvantaged children and young people from urban and rural townships and those attending isolated farm schools.

EDSA does this by:

- encouraging township children and young people to achieve their full educational potential,
- enabling them to participate meaningfully in the democratic process of South Africa through their involvement in informal educational programmes,
- encouraging the development of music and a wide variety of creative arts for after school and holiday projects in the townships to raise self esteem and confidence of participants and encourage their progression,
- enhancing the healthy lifestyles of children and young people from townships around the issues of HIV/AIDS, drug and alcohol misuse and crime, as well as supporting their access to good nutrition during holiday projects,
- supporting the training and development of paid staff and young volunteer leaders from within the township to work with their peers.

During 2012-13 EDSA focused on the continued support of the work of Net vir Pret, a community based project in the Smitsville township of Barrydale in the Overberg District of the Western Cape.

“Net vir Pret aims to work with children and young people from deprived communities in the Barrydale/Overberg (Swellendam Municipal) Area. It targets those from farm schools along the route 62 farming locale as well as from the 2 local village schools. Net vir Pret aims to encourage self-esteem, confidence and a sense of responsibility among these children by providing activities which will help break the cycle of poverty, domestic violence and/drug misuse within the family and community.” Peter Takelo 2010 (Youth and Community Director). It is an S.A. registered Non-Profit Organisation.

You may be interested in appendix 1 to this report which has further detailed information and statistical evidence of the needs of the township and the District within the Municipal area.

Report by EDSA Director

The work of Net vir Pret has continued at such an amazing pace that it has been just fantastic to be part of its development. EDSA is only too aware that the funding situation for NvP is still very fragile in spite of the amazing work of Derek Joubert Administrator and fundraiser at NvP who has managed to extend their funding base but is still struggling with cash flow issues. As with many charities it is always difficult to fund the core work including the staffing salaries and EDSA is focusing on this area in the next financial year 2013-14.

EDSA has continued to send funding across to the project in SA, which has been very gratefully received, but our trustees are also finding it more and more difficult to raise funds here in the UK for the important work in the township and the isolated rural areas of the Overberg in SA. The role of EDSA in 2012-13 has also focused as much on offering support and advice as on being a cash funder and we have worked closely with Derek Joubert to this end. EDSA chair and founder, Ann Harries Brown is in regular contact with Derek and he has been our week to week link with the project via e mail, phone calls and a really useful monthly NvP report with photos. Derek co-ordinates all staff and programmes of work and instigates necessary training. He also kindly provides necessary accommodation for visiting EDSA trustees and he always ensures that any volunteers from the UK are well looked after. Derek works closely with Peter Takelo, NvP youth and community director, to advise on the future agenda for NvP and to ensure that the management committee are well informed and that the finances are reported and audited annually. This link together with our monitoring visits makes us certain that all donated funding is used wisely and carefully.

EDSA Trustees held three formal meetings in the 2012-13 year to receive reports and to decide on expenditure. On behalf of EDSA trustees I was able to make two self funded visits to Net vir Pret in my role as Director both at the beginning and at the end of the 2012-13 year. The first visit was for over 3 weeks and I worked alongside the NvP staff during after-school sessions and on the holiday project both in the Smitsville township and also in two of the most isolated areas. A new volunteer, Ceri Thomson joined me in some of these NvP sessions and found the work so inspiring she has now become a Trustee and supporter of EDSA. Gary Lock a long standing trustee of EDSA also visited the project and met with all the staff and volunteers and was able to observe the youngsters playing in the “blikkies band” and taking part in activities in the NvP headquarters. He made a close inspection of the garden development and was so impressed he decided to self fund additional gardening equipment to enable more children to enjoy and learn this useful skill. Food is divided between them and distributed in the community.

On my second visit I was able to assist with the annual performance appraisal of all NvP staff. It was a most humbling experience. The staff all live in the township and each has a story to tell about the trials and tribulations of their work and their home life and we were able to spend some time considering strategies for coping and for supporting each other. The work they carry out with children and young people, many of whom live in impoverished conditions; live with families who are heavily involved in alcohol and drug misuse; may be involved or on the edge of criminal activities; have health issues or even a combination of all of these. This work is clearly



very important, may often be problematic, can be very taxing and stressful, and is always expecting of complete dedication. Staff is very involved, and are sometimes overwhelmed from the demands of the work as well as of their own life circumstances



however they are also very caring, have inner strength and work well together as a team especially when there is a problem when they are able to offer clear and creative approaches. I was delighted to observe and be a part of the daily work of NvP especially the holiday project with the theme of “bullying”. All sessions had some content which encouraged thinking around this topic.



I also spent a lot of time in the new NvP headquarters, purchased by EDSA for the NvP management committee, observing some great story telling sessions facilitated by Donna one of the staff of NvP and I saw for myself how important it is for the children and youths of the township to have their own space. The kitchen is however tiny and the toy room needs more space as well as many more toys.



The building is full to capacity and it is very clear that an extension is desperately needed and will enable so much more work to be carried out and so many more youngsters to be involved. A specific building account has been set up to fund this extension and it has been very poignant that the work of Lyn Allinson, who was an NvP



management committee member prior to her death, has been acknowledged through several donations in her memory. Planning permission has been gained, drawings completed and the work will begin as soon as sufficient funding is in the building account.

I specifically want to mention the sports development work which is being led by Angelo with Hermann. They manage to get some fantastic results from children including those in the rural townships who have absolutely no access to pitches or playing fields (the guys coach cricket, football, netball and even rugby on very rough gravel).



There are few shoes and no play and sports facilities for these children from the farming areas. Without Net Vir Pret input there would be no footballs, rugby balls and no cricket paraphernalia, which they love so much. Sport is helping to raise the self esteem of both girls and boys and EDSA wants to continue to develop



this area of work.

Net vir Pret is an impressive and important community based project which is well run and is making a difference. It can become an exemplar project which could and should be replicated in other isolated rural coloured and black communities. EDSA is delighted to be involved and we will continue to offer support, advice and monitoring to this project. *Judy Brown. Director EDSA*

EDSA Income and Expenditure

In 2012/13 EDSA had an income of £12040.

This funding came from a variety of sources including several regular donors who give on a monthly basis which is so helpful to EDSA. Many thanks also to other donors including the Burton Trust £1000; Bodicote Trust £250; Burton Trust £1000; Sharon Dean & Lynn Hilton (who raised a fantastic £2000 from their own fund raising); Dragon School in Oxford gave £1000 towards the NvP extension fund as did a number of people who have paid into the Lyn Allinson memorial fund (£550). The Barton family donated £500 towards the bursary fund and a special mention must go to Marcos, for his wonderful flamenco guitar recital raising over £1800.

Fundraising is never easy for EDSA year after year however trustees are spurred on by the fantastic work which is happening with the children and young people of Net vir Pret and the continued support of our fantastic donors.

In 2012/13 EDSA provided the sum of £11376 to the Net vir Pret project in SA. Funding was ring fenced towards various parts of the project including the new extension fund and the bursary fund which is funding 3 young people to attend College. EDSA funding has also supported the core work and staffing of Net vir Pret. Core funding for NvP remains problematic and is a focus for them and for EDSA however we will also continue to seek further support to extend and develop the new building as well as offering support and supervision when required.

Net Vir Pret is reaching many hundreds of children and young people from a predominantly “coloured” township and from a wide rural and isolated area and is making a huge difference to the lives of children and young people in the area as well as to the wider community. NvP is lucky to have such a committed staff team led by Derek and Peter. Derek’s fundraising experience is undoubtedly of great importance to NvP and gives it better future potential and sustainability.



The NvP PROGRAMMES IN 2012-2013 (from the NvP Annual Report 2011/12; D.Joubert)

The year under review was a busy and productive one for Net vir Pret with delivery of a range of programmes for the children and youth of Barrydale and the surrounding farms.

Programme	Activities	Time frame	No. participants
After-school care programme	Story-telling, reading, art & crafts, puppet-making, play-building, drumming, riel dance, toy-library	Mon - Fri 14h00-17h00	40 children daily (age group 5-12)
Sports programme	Summer: cricket, handball, bowling, tug-of-war, tennis Winter: rugby, soccer, netball, bowling, table tennis Matches on Saturdays	Mon - Fri : Farm schools 10h00-12h00 Barrydale: 14h00-17h00	Barrydale: 30 (ages 5-15) Farm schools: 200 (ages 5-12)
Garden programme	Cultivation of plants & vegetables	Mon 14h00-17h00	25 (ages 5-12)
Nature programme	Excursions, trail clearing, research on local plant, animal & insect life	Thurs 14h00-17h00	25 (ages 5-12)
Holiday Schools	Arts & crafts, play-building, games, sports	During the school vacations	150+ (ages 5-17) plus 90+ farm outreach
Skills training	Bicycle repair, welding, woodwork	Wed 14h00-17h00	12 in total (ages 10-15)
Farm school outreach	Story-telling, reading, art & crafts, play-building 4 farm schools visited once a week	10h00-12h00 Mon-Thursday	200 children over the 4 days (ages 5-12)

Young Leaders	Structured 2-year course in weekly workshops. Occasional residential weekends & educational excursions.	Wed 14h00-17h00	26 participants
Matric outreach	Final year high school students are offered individual counselling on career paths and are assisted with applications to tertiary institutions & for bursary support.	Group motivating sessions; individual counselling throughout the year.	25 participants
Diversion programme	Structured (level 1) residential camps for youngsters referred by the courts who have had their first brush with the law	8 residential weekend camps (Fri-Sun) annually	57 participants in total (ages 8-16)

Examples from some of the above programmes: (from the NvP Annual Report 2011/12; D. Joubert)

Four **Holiday Schools** were run during the year, catering for as many as 130 children and youth at a time. To cope with these numbers, staff leant heavily on the assistance of the Young Leaders who played a central role. They helped with cleaning, the preparation of meals and the marshalling of children but were also assigned leadership roles, taking charge of their own groups in building plays, for example, or puppet construction.

The **December Holiday School** is in many ways the highlight of the year, with the December 16 Day of Reconciliation parade at the centre.



The theme was Things with Wings and in an attempt to bring the event more into keeping with the spirit of reconciliation, it had been decided to mount two parades - a giant peacock would parade through the township



while a giant ostrich would come up through the village.

The two met and ended in a joyful dance. NvP involved many other groups from within the wider community and the event was an unqualified success. It brought the two sections of the community together in harmony and celebration; it provided the children with a transforming experience which will surely always be with them; it provided an opportunity for everyone to see what wonders our children are capable of; it provided the Young Leaders with strong evidence of their central role in our small community and what faith and commitment can achieve. All this was done with the amazing support of the famous Handspring Puppet Company who trained and worked with staff and children."

This was both a great opportunity and a big learning curve and hopefully an ongoing liaison.



Eight Diversion Camps for youngsters who had their first brush with the law were held over separate weekends during the year at the municipality Farmhouse. A total of 57 youngsters



attended over the 8 camps and the work focused on behaviour change, anger management and conflict resolution. In the evaluations they wrote at the end of the camps, the young people all expressed their appreciation of the experience. The staff is to be commended for undertaking these weekend duties on top of their busy weekday schedules. It is also gratifying to know that four of the senior Young Leaders help at the camps.

Skills training included a new innovation during this financial year - the establishment of the **Bicycle Repair Workshop** run by local handyman Bob Wolf. Participants not only fixed their bikes but also made kites and learned to use lathes, drills and other tools.



Also a new programme in 2012, the **Garden group** met on Monday afternoons and planted and cultivated a variety of vegetables which were later harvested and the produce taken home to their families.

The **teenage art group** which had held a successful exhibition at the end of 2011 had fallen into abeyance mainly because of the departure of their convener from Barrydale. An attempt to revive the group met with great success. 12



participants gathered in December for an intensive session. The programme was led by Young Leader **Clarissa**



Jonas who, under the guidance of local artist **Nigel Hewitt**, is herself developing into a skilled and talented painter. The group as ever displayed wonderful creativity and flair now meets on a weekly basis to work towards an exhibition.

EDSA Trustees

Ann Harries Brown (chairperson); Ann Applegate (treasurer); John Applegate; Prof. Gary Lock; Judy Brown; Ceri Thomson

EDSA Director (Voluntary position)

Judy Brown

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Charity Registration No

1003795

Independent Examiner

Michael Watkinson MBE

Constitution EDSA is a charitable trust, constituted by deed executed on 24 June 1991. **EDSA has no paid staff and no other overheads**

To Donate to EDSA

Investing in the informal education of these children and young people changes many lives. It benefits families, and communities and it is an investment in the future of South Africa. This work engenders tolerance, justice and hope.

To continue to work with small partnership groups in SA we depend solely on grants and the generosity of individual donors.



Ways in which you can donate:

Charity Card Donations: To donate on line with a Charity Card, log on to www.allaboutgiving.org and select EDSA.

Just Giving: Donate on line at <http://www.justgiving.com/>. Type EDSA into Charity box.

Cheques: Cheques can be made out to "EDSA" and sent to the address below

Electronically: Account: Education for Democracy in South Africa
Bank: CAF Bank Ltd., 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent. ME19 4JQ
Sort Code: 40-52-40

Account Number: 00007666

(The bank is named the Charities Aid Foundation registered as CAF and is itself a charity no.268369)

Your donation may qualify for Gift Aid, please complete and return the following:

Please treat as **Gift Aid donations** all qualifying gifts of money made

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Please tick all boxes you wish to apply.

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Surname -----

Full home address -----

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If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Please return this form to:

EDSA Director
14 Riverside Road
Oxford OX2 0HU

Tel: 0044(0)1865248189

edsa@lockbrown.com

www.edsa.org.uk

Thank you for your consideration, it is much appreciated

Appendix 1. Evidence of needs put together by Judy Brown from observations made during visits over the last 12 years and referenced reports on the web.

Net vir Pret is located within the coloured township of Smitsville within the white village of Barrydale which is served administratively by the **Swellendam Municipal area** within the Overberg District of the Western Cape. Barrydale nestles within the Langeberg Mountain range and Smitsville is surrounded by a ring of mountains. The area has problems with flooding during the heavy winter rain periods and can be very cold in the winter months and shrouded in mist. The temperature sores during November – February.

Social and economic circumstances within the Municipality and Barrydale/Smitsville

All Statistics below (unless otherwise referenced) are from Western Cape Government Provincial Treasury, Regional Development Profile, Overberg District. 2011 Working paper.

“The population of the Swellendam Municipality was 28077 and had reduced to 22831 by 2007 with a further reduction predicted for 2011/12. Many factors can account for this but these do include a high mortality (HIV/AIDS, TB etc), reduced fertility (poor nutrition), increased burden of disease and poor service delivery, all contributing to negative population growth.”

*“The population distribution across the Swellendam Municipal area by race is:
White 14.3%; Coloured 78%; Black 7.7%; Indian or Asian 0%.”*

These are based on the classifications which were put in place during the apartheid era and are still in use. The coloured residents of Smitsville have Afrikaans as their mother tongue but English is taught in the schools and spoken by some. Many coloured people have ancestry from the original Khoi San indigenous peoples of the area. Others are more mixed and may have ancestry from African slaves and/or white farmers.

Although there is no formal segregation within Barrydale since apartheid ended there is a stark contrast between the homes of the white population and those of the predominantly coloured population as well as obvious differing levels of poverty.

There is still a huge dividing line between the two communities and the physical manifestation of this is a steep hill behind which the township known as Smitsville is located and almost all of the coloured community live there. The roads are unmade and dusty in Smitsville. There is a liquor store but no other shops of note. The only supermarket type stores are located within Barrydale and are therefore used by both white and coloured members of the community. As with all rural stores these tend to be slightly more expensive than those of the towns and cities, a problem for low paid Smitsville residents.

Net Vir Pret has a small base within Smitsville and is the only voluntary project to do so and to offer regular creative afterschool and holiday project work. It desperately needs to extend its building which is always very full of children.

Smitsville contains a group of fairly new, concrete houses which are small but on the whole neat and tidy and with water and electricity. There are many more houses of an older construction which are more flimsy and have only cold water and no bathroom. There are others which are more shack like and in very poor condition, some without water and electricity, although a recent scheme has given solar powered hot water tanks to many of the poorest houses.

The majority of children have no toys or books in their homes except for the occasional homemade wire toy. They have access to a small toy library and play sessions through **Net vir Pret** but more toys are desperately needed. There are 2 schools to serve Barrydale, both of which have a majority of coloured children in attendance. White children seem to be sent out of the area for their schooling. Coloured children from outlying areas, most previously at small isolated Farm Schools, have to board at a local hostel in order to attend school from the age of around 14 plus.

One of the biggest issues within the schools seems to be the lack of aspiration of the children and their families for them. **Net vir Pret** has developed links with several bursary giving agencies and is working hard to engage with school leavers to encourage them to move on to further and higher education. This is a work in progress and it is proving to be harder than thought to break down the barriers which exist for young people whose parents are predominantly packers and pickers on farms and who have little experience of ongoing educational opportunities.

“Literacy rates across the wider Swellendam District are at 67.1%.” There are no figures for Barrydale however Net Vir Pret staff report a high incidence of foetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) within the cohort of children they work with which mitigates against high literacy levels.

This occurs because of mothers who drink throughout their pregnancy and there is a legacy of alcoholism amongst these rural farming communities - “Most farm workers earn the minimum wage or well below, with many in the Western Cape still paid partly in alcohol even though white farmers claim that the 'dop system' was done away with years ago.” From The South African Civil Society Information Service (Johannesburg); South Africa: The Farm Workers' Strike - It's Far From Over by Anna Majavu, 15th November 2012.

“FAS children have poor growth and development, facial and limb dysmorphism, and lower intellectual functioning. Frequent, severe episodic drinking of beer and wine is common among mothers and fathers of FAS children. Their lives are characterized by serious familial, social and economic challenges.” ...“Significantly more FAS exists among children of women who were rural residents usually among workers on local farms.” From a research paper of the Dept of Human genetics University of Witwaterarand (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16331845>)

There are 18 schools across the Swellendam Municipality and 4 of these are fee paying. **Net vir Pret** works with small isolated Farm schools within striking distance of their Smitsville base (with thanks to the Jepherson foundation for funding towards a vehicle). These include Weltevrede VGK Primary; Wleiplaas NGP Primary; Akkerboom Primary; Lemoenshook NGK Primary as well as occasional work at other schools such as Suurbraak Primary and their regular input with children from BF Oosthuizen and Barrydale HS both in Barrydale. Without the **NVP** input into holiday programmes for children from these schools there would be virtually no contact with any educational or other projects during the holiday periods. The children rely on **NVP** to visit them regularly and they offer sports, craft, music and other creative arts activities which are not available on the curriculum, as well as a much needed daily meal in these holiday times. Children whose parents work as fruit pickers and packers on the farms live in small houses which are dotted around the mountainous landscape. They may have to walk up to 5 kms to school along a busy highway with no pavements. Houses are tied to the work and work may be spasmodic depending on season and harvest. **Recent unrest has begun amongst the farm workers who are striking for better pay.**

The Daily Maverick headlines on 15th November 2012 were “The Day the Cape Winelands Burned” http://allafrica.com/stories/201211150464.html?aa_source=acrdn-fo “By Wednesday, the Cape winelands had morphed into a battlefield. As fires smoldered across the famously scenic fruit-growing region, in the embers of the ongoing labour dispute we found ordinary people who were tired, angry, injured and frightened.” The strikes and unrest had quickly spread to Robertson a short 60 kms from the Akkerboom School and the picking and packing plant. This situation is about the minimum wage being paid to many of the farm workers especially where work is only seasonal. There is a promise that this will be renegotiated but things are volatile “the question for many may be: where will the sparks ignite next?” This could be bad news for the children of the farm workers and for the NVP staff who are working hard to encourage them to see beyond the traditions of farm labouring and to gain a good education.

Health Care A satellite health clinic is located in Barrydale which is staffed during normal working hours for 4 days /week. There is no resident Doctor in the Village, the nearest is in the Swellendam Municipality, 1 hour away across the Tradouw Pass in the town of Swellendam where there is also a District Hospital. To this all Barrydale residents have to travel across the beautiful but very isolated, craggy and arduous Tradouw Pass, part of the Langeberg Mountain range. It is a journey of approximately 1 hour by car one way and is impossible to do otherwise. There are no buses or taxi service in Barrydale and few of the coloured community have vehicles. The District Hospital deals only with basic health issues in an emergency it is necessary to travel to Worcester which is a further 2 hour drive from Swellendam. There have been several tragic deaths because of this lack of health facilities in or near Barrydale.

HIV/AIDS Treatment and Care

“An estimated 5.6 million people were living with HIV and AIDS in South Africa in 2009, more than in any other country. It is believed that in 2009, an estimated 310,000 South Africans died of AIDS. Prevalence is 17.8 percent among those aged 15-49, with some age groups being particularly affected. Almost one-in-three women aged 25-29, and over a quarter of men aged 30-34, are living with HIV.” <http://www.avert.org/aidssouthafrica.htm>)

“The highest HIV prevalence estimates remain amongst the age groups of 25 - 29 and 30 - 34 years.” (Department of Health, Annual Performance Plan 2011/12: 18)

Overberg District had the third highest patient load at the end of June 2011 (in Western Cape). Overberg District health provides anti-retroviral treatment (ART) to over 3259 persons as at June 2011. The HIV transmission rate to infants is highest in Cape Agulhas and Swellendam municipalities within the Overberg district. The high transmission rate of infants indicates that more needs to be done to create awareness amongst pregnant women to reduce the risk of transmission from mother to child. The number of treatments sites (in the Swellendam Municipality) increased from 4 in 2010 to 6 in 2011.

NVP is very aware of the high risk and the high incidence of HIV within the area and they constantly work to raise children's self esteem and to give them information and support around HIV and AIDS. Much more focussed work could be carried out with better targeted funding. TB is also an issue amongst those living in overcrowded and poverty conditions.

Net vir Pret knows that the incidence of **severe** malnourishment is not high within the children they work with however chronic hunger is an issue. Many children eat only discarded fruit during the season (bruised peaches and apples) and it has proved to be very important to offer breakfast and lunch to children on holiday projects. These children do get fed at school but of course there is no access to feeding schemes during the holiday periods. It is humbling to see children queuing for a bowl for porridge and eating it with such gusto before taking a full part in the holiday schemes. NVP staff and the volunteers take especial notice of children who they know have not been fed and will ensure that siblings also get food.

The affects of the use of alcohol has been described above and it continues to be a huge issue at weekends when many of the coloured community still binge drink setting a very bad example for the children. **NVP** are very aware of the ensuing domestic violence situations which occur, most of the staff live within the township themselves. The fact that the **NVP** building is in the township does mean that a safe haven is there for the children given a crisis situation. However the building needs to be extended and better facilities including heating, showers etc need to be included.

Other drug related crime has been shown to be generally on the increase in Overberg district: incidents rising from 2241 in 2008 to 3143 in 2011. Net vir Pret works with children to discuss issues of drug misuse and to warn them away from drugs such as tik (crystal methamphetamine). The use of this pernicious drug which causes addiction after just a couple of hits has reached epidemic proportions in the Cape Flats area of Cape Town (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2008) and has rapidly spread to the rural communities along the Garden route. NVP staff report its use in Smitsville is growing with resulting anti social behaviour.

People Living in Poverty The poverty rate is the percentage of people living in households with an income less than the poverty income. **The poverty income is defined as the minimum monthly income needed to sustain a household and varies according to household size, the larger the household the larger the income required to keep its members out of poverty.** The poverty income used is based on the Bureau of Market Research's Minimum Living Level (BMR report no. 235 and later editions, Minimum and Supplemented Living Levels in the main and other selected urban areas of the RSA, August 1996).

For example, the monthly income needed to keep a 1 person household out of poverty in 2010 is estimated to be R1 315, while for a two person household it is R1 626; a four person household requires an estimated income of R2 544 to stay out of poverty while a household with eight or more person requires an estimated R4 729.

(Global Insight Data provided by the Western Cape Department of Economic Development.)

Global Insight estimates on the number of people living in poverty in the Overberg Region shows a sharp increase from 29 893 to 78 686 between 1996 and 2010. This has implications for equitable share distribution in terms of increasing number of indigent households.

Poverty Rate

Swellendam Local Municipality - In 2010 33.6% of the community were deemed to be living in poverty. This was up from 31.3% in 2007. This has to be viewed alongside the number of "indigent" households. Swellendam municipality had a total of 5737 households in August 2011 with 31.8% of these (1826) being indigent. **It could be assumed that the majority of the indigent households are those deemed to be living in poverty.** The growth of the economy took a dip of 0.8% in the years 1999 – 2009 in the Swellendam municipal area and probably a greater loss thereafter.

Conclusion:

Net Vir Pret is working with up to 300 children per week and more during holiday projects, many from isolated Farm School areas. It is based in small rural township and works with children from up to 6 schools on a regular basis, reaching out from this base. The base is well located and necessary for those children within the township but it is in desperate need of extension and better provision of toys, books, instruments (they specialise in use of djembie drums and a blikkies band) as well as heating and plumbing. The children they work with are all formally classified as living in poverty although there are not many cases of severe malnutrition there is chronic hunger and almost all the children need access to better food. The feeding schemes are an essential part of any project delivery. **NVP** is developing a gardening project to help children to learn about the production of food.

Misuse of alcohol has had devastating effects on a number of the children who have foetal alcohol syndrome. Alcohol and drug abuse is rife and is on the increase, it may be used by those in poverty to seek ways of forgetting their situation. **NVP** does work on these issues but needs more specialists to develop bigger projects. It is important that such important topics continue to be part of the creative educational work of **NVP and ongoing funding is required to deliver this work.**

HIV/AIDS is a devastating illness and was ignored for too long in South Africa. Ongoing work on education as well as support for carers and those who are sick is an inevitable part of any community based project. **NVP** does its best to support children whose lives have been affected by HIV/AIDS as well as to deliver creative educational projects to teach them about safe contacts. Teenage pregnancy is an issue and **NVP** takes this issue on board especially by working with boys to understand their responsibilities. **More targeted work with girls is needed, they can be harder to involve as they get older and they are very vulnerable.**

Local children in the area have surprisingly low expectations and aspirations and **NVP** is trying to support older matriculates to realise their potential through ongoing further and higher education. They are linked with potential bursars and facilitate contacts where possible.

The levels of poverty within Smitsville and the farm school areas are obvious to those working with the children. The importance of **NVP** has been shown through the changes in the demeanour and liveliness of the children.

As Director of EDSA I have observed these changes with children who have found new skills in art and produced remarkable pictures suitable for exhibiting; children organising their own theatre sketches on topics as wide ranging as bullying and teenage pregnancy; children making their own dolls from corn husks and loving having them to take home (especially the 8 and 9 year old boys); children attending the play sessions with toys from the toy library and playing with toy cars and lego for the first time; children taking part in shared reading sessions and telling their own stories; the fabulous Blikkies band who arrange their own marching sessions and play alongside the djembi team and the rheal dancers and the new and exciting liaison with Hand Spring puppets to learn more about this amazing and useful communication method and so much more... (bike workshops, gardening and nutrition, environment sessions). The growth of young volunteers/young leaders who have in depth training is very satisfying and also gives them a taste of the teaching and caring professions, it is essential that this is developed along with internships and possibly apprenticeships.

These children are beginning to gain self esteem and self confidence to realise that there are opportunities for them to work outside of the picking and packing industry if they wish. It will take time but they are slowly beginning to realise the importance of education and progression.

Net vir Pret is an impressive and important community based project which is well run and is making a difference. It can become an exemplar project which needs to be replicated in other isolated rural coloured and black communities.

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