Community Education in a Community School

**TOOLS AND INFORMATION FOR
EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES
FOR COMMUNITY EDUCATION**

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higher education
& training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**Education
Policy
Consortium**
TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

C O N T E N T

THE COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAMME TEAM

The Community Education Programme (CEP) is based at the Centre for Integrated Post-school Education and Training at NMMU on the Missionvale Campus. The CEP works with communities to develop non-formal learning programmes for adults with incomplete school education. New policy on adult and community education proposes that non-formal learning should open up the chances for youth and adults to participate in the new Community Learning Centres linked to a Community College.

The Community Education Programme Team includes academics and community educators, who were invited to join the programme through Public Adult Learning Centres and a local environmental organisation.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Our work starts from the knowledge and interests of community members. Community members understand their communities best and have hopes and dreams for a world that is based on equality, solidarity and care for each other and the natural world. This means that community members have ideas about how to transform the existing world and build places of new possibility.

To connect our education to the interests and knowledge of community members, our education starts with getting community members to talk to one another. We also walk through the community taking pictures and making notes on what we see and hear. As a community learning and investigating circle, we then bring together all this information to develop community education that is by the people and for the people.

PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION

IMFUNDO YABADALA EKUHLALENI: Imfundo yantoni?
ADULT EDUCATION IN THE COMMUNITY: Education for what?

Ezinye zezizathu sisebenzisana nabantu abadala kwimfundo yasekuhlaleni kunye nezinto esinqwenela ukuzenza.
Some reasons why we are working with adult and community education and what we hope it will do.

- **Intsingiselo nenkolo ezichaphazela imfundo mazicace zibenomvuzo kubantu bonke - mazibe nobunt**u.
  The values and beliefs which underpin education must be made clear and must be for the benefit of people – it must be humanising.

- **Imfundo mayakhe iphuhlise ukuzazi komntu ukuze izenzo nenkolo zabantu zaziwe kwaye, ziphakamise imibuzo.** Education must be able to build/promote self-awareness so that the social basis for our actions and beliefs can be known and questioned.

- **Imfundo yasekuhlaleni kufuneka ikufundise ngoxanduva lwakho ekuhlaleni kwaye incedise ngokuba yinxalenye kakho ekuhlaleni.**
  Community education must teach you to be responsible in your community and help to involve you in community.

- **Imfundo mayiphuhlise intsebenziswano - isebenzela umvuzo womntu wonke.**
  Education must promote working together – working for mutual benefit

- **Imfundo mayibe ngeyasekuhlaleni, yenziwe ngabantu basekuhlaleni, kwaye sisebenze kunye namanye amaqela asebenza ngoluhlobo ukuze ihlale injalo.**
  Education should be for the community, by the community. We will work with other groups working in this way.

- **Imfundo mayenze utshintsho lokulingana nobulungisa.**
  Education should enable social change for equality and justice.

- **Imfundo ejongene nendidi-ngendidi zobuchule ezinokusetyenziswa ngabafundi nasekuhlaleni, ezibangela abantu bakwazi ukufunda ilizwe labo.**
  Education that is based on a broad range of skills that are useful to learners and society, that help people to 'read the world'.

- **Kufuneka kubekho isikhokhelo kwezemfundo nenkqubela phambili yobomi kubafundi abadala nolutsha.**
  There must be career guidance available for adult learners and youth.

FORMING A COMMUNITY LEARNING AND INVESTIGATION CIRCLE (CLIC) HOW WE WORK TOGETHER

INTLONIPHO NENDLELA ESISEBENZANA NGAYO.
RESPECT AND OUR WAYS OF WORKING TOGETHER.

Kancinci nje ngendlela esisebenzisana ngayo siliqela nange mithetho-siseko esiyifakayo kwiindawo esifundela kuzo.
A bit about our way of working as a group and the principles within our learning spaces.

• **Lungiselela ukusebenza phez'kwemeko zokungavisisani.**
  Be prepared to work beyond/through misunderstandings.

• **Sifuna ukuxhasana omnye nomnye xa umsebenzi unzima, ukhathazekile nasemphefumlweni.**
  We want to support one another when the work is hard, emotional or difficult.

• **Kufuneka sibebuthathaka, kuluvo nemida yabanye**.
  Need to be sensitive to others feelings and personal boundaries.

• A**kukhomntu kufuneka enyanzelwe ekwenzeni into- abantu mabathathe inxaxheba ngoku- khu-lulekileyo.**
  No one must be forced to do anything. People will participate freely.

• **Sizaku zihlonipha thina, nabanye abantu kunye nexesha labanye abantu**
  We will respect ourselves, one another and other people's time.

• **Sizakunyaniseka kwabanye siziphathe ngendlela efanelekileyo.**
  We will be honest with one another and behave in way which is appropriate.

• **Sizakuba nobuntu komnye nomnye**
  We will be kind to one another.

• **Sizakuzihlonipha iimfihlelo zomntu wonke.**
  We will not invade other people's privacy.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The monthly market at Seyisi Primary in KwaZakhele sells seedlings, vegetables and plants grown at the school to the local community. The income from the market is used to support the school and garden.
Photo: Joseph Chirume. Source: http://www.groundup.org.za/article/vegetables-make-primary-school-kids-clever/

A community school is not just a school that has a good relationship with parents and community members. A community school brings together the whole community to fight the effects of poverty. It does this to make sure that students from working class backgrounds have a better chance at schooling. It addresses poverty's effects on students, such as hunger or violence at home and in the community. It also works to improve school infrastructure and after school activities for students. It starts school gardens and community projects at school.
It invites and supports parents' involvement in the school. Activities to develop the school and its community, also encourage space for adult and community education. It supports teachers to develop their capacity and passion for teaching. It thinks about how to connect what students learn to their lives. It is a school that works for and with its students and community.

COMMUNITY MAPPING: PLANNING OUR TRANSECT WALK

We talk to one another about the community where we will walk. We draw our own map of the community. To do that we think about:

*   The boundaries of the community
*   Important roads and buildings
*   Open spaces
*   Important places like churches, schools, clinics

Then we add information that is important for our understanding of a community school

*   Safe spaces for playing
*   Services to support children and youth
*   Community projects
*   Places and sites that might endanger children and youth in schools

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ORGANISING OURSELVES FOR THE WALK

In getting ready for the walk, we make a check list that helps us prepare ourselves.

- We think about a good place in the community to meet on the day and where we can write our notes afterwards.
- We consider who needs to know that we are doing this walk and what permission we might need.
- We think about the equipment we will need.
- We work out the time it will take us to follow the route we have chosen. We plan our transport and drop off and meeting points.
- We talk about organising ourselves as a group that can work together – do we need a group leader; should we walk as a big group, or in smaller groups?
- How will we communicate with each other across different routes?

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PREPARATION IN THE COMMUNITY

We speak with community structures about our plans.

We write letters and make appointments with the relevant people to inform them about our plans.

Sometimes we even talk on the radio about our plans.

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THE WALK: we observe what is happening

We use all our senses to observe what is happening along our route. We use fresh eyes and open our ears. We smell the air and feel the wind and dust, the sun baking down, or the cold and rain.

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THE WALK: We conduct interviews

We talk to community members who are interested in what we are doing. If they give us permission, we write down or record what they tell us.

We use digital cameras and cell phones to take pictures. When we take close up pictures we ask for permission. We are careful about taking pictures of children without proper permission.

We take photographs

Playing marbles at Emfundweni Primary School, Veeplaas.

THE WALK: Writing field notes

After our community walk, we meet and write our field notes. We help each other
with with writing. Some of us write our notes by ourselves and others write our notes
in groups.

MAKING SENSE: Organising information by themes

We organise our photographs by themes.

REPORTING: We write photo stories

We found that there were many stories to tell from what we saw and heard on the transect walks.

We used the photographs that we had taken and added them to our field notes to write stories. We worked in small groups and pairs to give each other feedback on the stories.

PHOTO STORIES: Grade 12, no work

Eleven years back, Bulelwa was doing grade 12 at Khwezi Lumso Comprehensive school, where she passed her matric. She lives with her parents, 2 brothers, 1 sister and their children. She survives through her child's grant and her father being a care taker at the local primary school.

When I interviewed her these were her hopes:

She hopes that the Government will give young people skills training because she said: "Nowadays as young people we have matric but we can't find work because we don't have the skills that are wanted."

She hopes that everyone could go to school even if they have studied the old syllabus.

She worries that the unemployment rate and poverty in her community lead people (more especially young people) to crime.

There are public spaces in her community that are known as land marks of crime and rape.

REPORTING BACK

We share what we found out with community members through a open education event

WE USE COMMUNITY THEATRE

We've also told the story of what we learnt from our transect walk as community theatre.
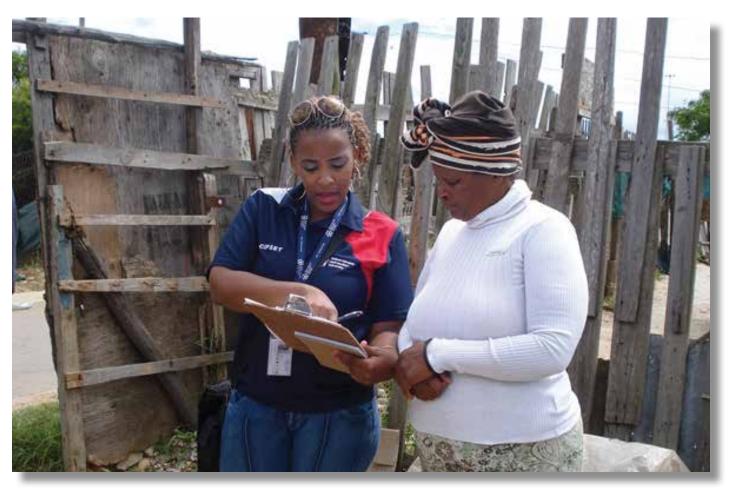
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CHECKLIST

1. Workshop on doing interviews and taking field notes

2. Preparing for the transect walk in the community

3. Doing the transect walk and writing notes

4. Making sense of the information

5. Developing a plan to present to schools

6. Getting agreement with schools

7. Starting the workshop, a school garden and a buying club with parents

RESEARCH SKILLS - ETHICS

Obtaining informed consent during a transect walk, Veeplaas

There are many reasons why community members may feel that research is exploitative:

- Communities feel "over-researched"
- Communities don't see or hear about the finished research.
- Communities feel forced to participate in research
- Communities feel they are not true partners in the process – they are just consulted
- Communities feel that researchers are not truthful
- Communities feel that researchers are not sensitive to their concerns or issues
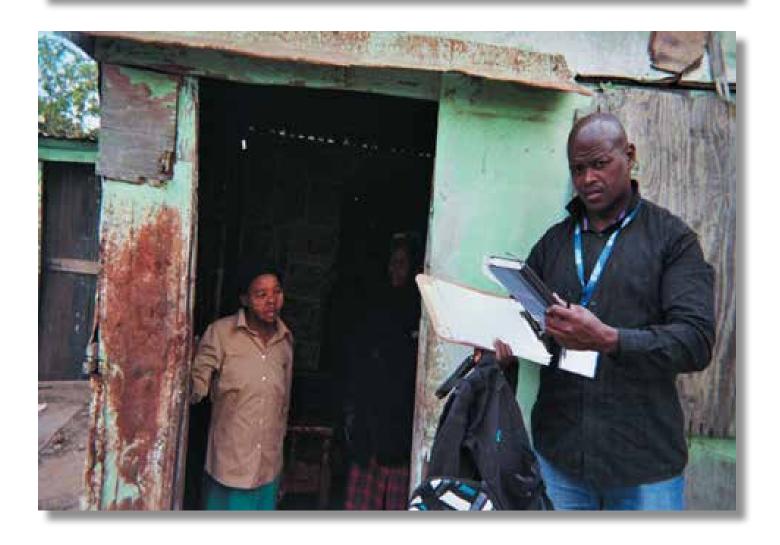- Communities do not see the benefits of the research to them

All these issues raise questions about power, participation, ownership and decision-making processes. Ethics in community-based research is complex and is about more than voluntary participation by individuals and anonymity if the participants choose this.

Community-based researchers have to build long term relationships of trust.

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RESEARCH SKILLS - INTERVIEWING

Make sure that you have the cooperation of the participant you are interviewing. Approach the person you want to interview, introduce yourself and ask for permission to interview. Explain why you want to do the interview. Explain that the interview if voluntary. Explain that the information will be used to help develop an community education programme linked to schools.

Think of the interview as a conversation. The participant should speak freely. Your role is to listen deeply and prompt the person to say what s/he likes. Remember you are interested in the participant's views.

Make sure your questions are clear and easy to understand. Use silence to encourage your respondent to speak. Encourage your participant to say more. Ask for clarity if you feel you did not understand a response. Don't let your values interfere with the interview by reacting negatively to the respondent's views. There is no right or wrong view.

RESEARCH SKILLS - OBSERVING

Observations at Emfundweni Primary School, Veeplaas

Most research relies on our senses, especially sight and hearing, to decide on the reliability of an observation. If we can see something, hear it, smell it, feel it against our skin or even taste it, we generally believe that is must exist. For example, we can quite easily describe a shoe that we see in terms of its colour, shape, material that it is made of and whether parts of it show wear. This is especially easy when we have the shoe in front of us, and we can pick it up and examine it. However, once we have to describe the shoe after having seen it only once, we might be less specific and detailed. The more time passes between our first observation and the description we document, the more difficult our task becomes. We might nevertheless still capture some information fairly accurately.

Observation is often complicated by our prior knowledge of something. If we have never seen a sports shoe before, we might be able to describe its shape, colour and perhaps the material it is made of, but may not be able to say with certainty what the purpose of the shoe is. Nor whether it is a man or woman's shoe, or a cheap or expensive shoe. Adding this information requires our experience of the thing that we are observing. It is at this meeting point between what our senses perceive and our experience tells us, that observations made by people with different backgrounds could end up showing very different things.

RESEARCH SKILLS - TAKING PHOTOGRPAHS

Creative play at Emfundweni Primary, Veeplaas

Set your camera to one of its **AUTOMATIC** modes, if you have a choice.

Keep the **LENS CLEAR** of caps, thumbs, straps and other obstructions.

COMPOSE your shot thoughtfully. The background serves as your subject's stage set. Frame the photo in your mind . You can use your hands to make a viewfinder. Get rid of distracting backgrounds and clutter. Move positions to avoid unwanted background elements. Change angles to get the best shot.

Fill the **FRAME** with your subject. Do not be afraid to get closer to your subject.

Try an interesting **ANGLE**. Instead of shooting the object straight on, try looking down to the object, or crouching and looking up.

Use **SCALE** - make objects appear longer or taller, by changing your angle – below or above the object you are photographing..

Create **PERSPECTIVES** that catch the eye.. Human figures in a landscape help us get the idea of size.

FOCUS. Poor focusing is one of the most common ways that photographs are ruined. Use the automatic focus of your camera. Focus on the eyes when taking a picture of a person.

KEEP STILL. To avoid blurring, because your hand shakes, rest your arm on something or hold it still with your other. Keep your elbows close to your body, and use this position to support yourself firmly.

RELAX when you push the camera button. Also, try not to hold the camera up for too long; this will cause your hands and arms to be shakier.

RESEARCH SKILLS - TAKING FIELD NOTES

Documenting from field notes, Veeplaas

Whilst you are in the field you will need to jot down short words or phrases in a small notebook that will help you remember things you would want to write about later.

You can supplement these notes with sketches of a physical setting or with a photograph. When making notes, write something about the place or setting, the activities or behaviour that you observe, objects that you see and how they are used; what people tell you using their own words; who are the people involved and what the relationship is between people involved and others in the same environment.

Make sure that every observation is separately recorded. Write down:
- Date, time, and place of observation;
- Specific facts and details of what happened;
- Sensory impressions: sights, sounds, textures, smells, or tastes;
- Personal responses to the observation;
- Specific words, phrases, summaries of conversations, using the words of the speaker you interviewed.
- Keep a separate space for writing down your own views.

TOOLS FOR SCHOOL TRANSECT WALK

The purpose of this walk is to find possible starting points for building community education with a school at the centre of activities.

We want to understand how a collaborative relationship with the school can be built through community education.

What connections between parents and other residents, and the school could strengthen learning for both young learners and adults?

How will we get information?

We will observe, take photos and ask questions.

We will be looking for opportunities and resources that exist in and around the school.
For example, broken school furniture is a problem for learners and teachers, but there is also an opportunity to learn how to repair furniture - residents could learn furniture making skills while repairing school furniture.

We want to focus our observation by looking at:

•   The physical environment and resources of the school

•   The resources and activities that connect community members to the school

•   Community members perceptions and experiences of the school

•   The tools which follow are a guide and should be adapted to suit local purposes.

Break time at Emfundweni Primary, Veeplaas

THE SCHOOL AND ITS PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Name of School		
Address of School		
Number of learners at school		
Number of teachers at school		
Number of empty classrooms		
Is the school facing closure?	Yes	No

Describe the school buildings
Consider if the school is a single or double storey building, the type of building materials, the roofing, plastering, size, general state of repair, facilities such as a kitchen, hall, library, administration building, etc.

Describe a typical classroom at the school
Consider general cleanliness, the condition of the windows, walls, ceiling, door, blackboard, desks, chairs, tables, storage space (if any), available learning material, damp, natural light, availability of electricity, etc.

Describe the school grounds

Consider general cleanliness, fencing, gardens and trees, areas for play and sport, unused areas, water points, rain water collection, paved areas, areas for parking, gates and other access points, etc.

Describe the immediate surroundings of the school

Consider general cleanliness, state of housing around the school, businesses around the school, state of roads around school, availability of transport, streetlights, open fields, presence of taverns, waste dumping sites, etc.

Classroom at Emfundweni Primary, Veeplaas

Passage Ceiling at Soweto-on-Sea Primary

Describe repairs needed at the school	
Doors	
Windows	
Plastering	
Desks	
Painting	
Ceilings	
Roofing	
Toilets	
Taps	
Drains	
Electricity	
Fencing	
Other repairs	

What are you seeing and hearing about safety at the school?
Consider lighting, fencing, streets, buildings and activities happening around the school, visible evidence of vandalism, perceptions of teachers, learners and community members, etc.

Draw a map of the school buildings, the school grounds and the community immediately surrounding the school

STRUCTURED ACTIVITIES CONNECTED TO THE SCHOOL

Is there a working vegetable garden in the school grounds?	Yes	No

Speak to a teacher or community gardener to understand the history of the garden.

Below are some questions to get the discussion going:

How did it start? Who is working in the garden? What happens to the produce in the garden?

Describe the school resources that support the garden

(fencing around the garden; access to water; composting; tools, seeds, etc)

Describe the garden?

(think about sun in the garden, how the beds are laid out, what is planted, kind of soil etc)

How are the gardeners organised?

Who did they come to be gardeners? How many gardeners are there? How often do they garden at the school? What support do they get from the school?

What are the needs of the gardeners?

Working in the garden at Ntyatyambo Primary School

Planting seedlings at Soweto-on-Sea Primary School

If there is no working vegetable garden, was there a garden before?	Yes	No
If yes, why did gardening stop?		

Evidence of a past school garden at Emfundweni Primary School, Veeplaas

SCHOOL FEEDING

If there is a school feeding scheme?	Yes	No

If yes, describe how the school feeding scheme is organised.
(How is food purchased? How are meal menus decided? Who is doing the cooking? What does a typical school meal look like? What did children get served on the day of the visit?)

What are the views of school groups about the school feeding scheme?
(teachers, principal, SGB members, children at the school, parents)

What are the needs of cooks in the school feeding scheme?

The school feeding scheme at Emfundweni Primary School, Veeplaas

Community members cooking at the school feeding scheme, Emfundweni Primary School, Veeplaas

What other foods are sold in the school grounds and/or directly outside the school?
Fruit; sweets, cooldrinks, chips, amagwinya, etc)

How did the sellers come to set up their businesses inside or outside the school?
Consider the space they use, what they sell, where they get their produce from, the number of people selling, how new sellers can enter the space, how they are connected as sellers, how they are connected to the school, etc

What other goods are sold at the school? Who sells these goods?
(clothing, school stationery…)

What are the needs of food and vegetables sellers?

Selling chips and sweets at Emfundweni Primary School, Veeplaas

ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT SCHOOL LITERACY

Is there a reading club at the school?	Yes	No

If yes, how is the reading club organised?
(Who facilitates the reading club? What happens at a reading club session? How often does the reading club happen? Who participates, etc.)

Is there after school homework or care support at the school?	Yes	No

If yes, how is this organised?
(Who facilitates? What happens? How often? Is it free or do parents pay? Who participates)

Is there in class teaching support by community volunteers?	Yes	No

If yes, how is this organised?
(How did it come about? Who is involved? What does in class teaching support mean?)

If no, did any of these activities ever happen at the school?	Yes	No

If yes, why did it stop?

ADULT EDUCATION

Are there after hours adult education classes at the school?	Yes	No

If yes, how are the classes organised?
Consider: How did it happen that adult education started at the school? What classes are offered?
Are teachers from the school involved? How many learners are there? How many teachers are there?
What facilities can be used, who pays for electricity and water, How is the relationship with the school
structured? Etc.

What challenges are faced by the adult education learners?

What challenges are faced by the adult educators?

Community education at Emfundweni Primary School, Veeplaas

Community education, Veeplaas

RECREATION AT SCHOOL

What sports are played as part of organised activities at the school?

Does the school hire out facilities to sporting codes?	Yes	No

If yes, what sporting codes use the school facilities?

What sports are played informally after hours at the school?

What are the needs of those involved in organising sport at schools?

Who are the main participants in sport activities at school?
Consider gender and age.

School playground, Emfundweni Primary School, Veeplaas

Boys playing on the school fields, Emfundweni Primary School

OTHER ACTIVITIES

What other recreational activities happen at the school?
(Consider possibilities: drama, dancing, art, choir, music teaching, debating societies , etc)

Who are the participants in these activities?

What other structured activities are offered at school?
Consider activities offered through a local church, NGO, graduate volunteers, etc.

How is the activity organised?

What activities are organised at school by other government departments (local and national)

PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL IN THE COMMUNITY

What do residents say about the school?

Consider the views of a range of residents – pensioners, working adults, unemployed young people, young people and adults enrolled in post-school education.

Ask them to describe the strengths and challenges facing the school.

Ask them what relationship they have (if any) with the school/ and or what relationship they would like with the school.

Community investigators write field notes at Soweto on Sea Primary School.

Community researchers and care taker at Soweto on Sea Primary School

EXAMPLE OF REQUEST TO PRINCIPAL FOR SCHOOL ACCESS

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
for tomorrow

Centre for Integrated Post-School Education & Training (CIPSET)

Community Education Programme
CIPSET
NMMU - Missionvale Campus
Tel: +27 (0)41 504 1360
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_____ date

The Principal
Soweto-on-Sea Primary School

RE: Community Education in schools
The Community Education Programme (CEP) is involved in exploring, through practice and research, policy options for offering community education in the new post-school sector. The CEP is based at the Centre for Integrated Post-School Education & Training, Missionvale Campus, NMMU.

We start our work from the knowledge and interests of community members. To connect our education to the experience of community members, we start with getting community members to talk to one another. We also walk through the community taking pictures and making notes on what we see and hear. As a community learning and investigating circle, we then bring together all this information to develop community education curricula and possibilities to act and learn together.

We would appreciate the opportunity to talk to you and the school governing body more about our work and to request that your school considers developing a collaborative relationship with us. We believe that through such a relationship, benefits from the community education we offer, might flow to the school. Young people and adults who are returning to education through our programme, are eager to learn skills that could assist with the upkeep and development of the school.

Please consider arranging a convenient time when we could make a short presentation about our work to you and the SGB. We would also appreciate having access to the school during and after school hours on date, to collect information about the school and its resources and community. This will help us develop a proposal on community education to put to you and the SGB.

Your response will be highly appreciated
Kind regards

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

We looked at the issues our research in schools raised through the following lenses:

- What activities are happening that could be strengthened in support of the school?
- What activities are not yet happening, that could happen that will build community links to the school?

We sorted our responses into the following categories

- Activities that ensure safe spaces for children
- Support for structured activities at school
- Activities that help children and families have a healthy start
- Activities that build skills and help schools resolve problems with infrastructure and resources
- Activities that build opportunities for residents to volunteer in support for the school

Drawing school maps after transect walks in Veeplaas and Soweto-on-Sea

We organised feedback sessions with the SGBs and general meetings with parents at the school

In our learning groups, we explored activities that made educational games for children in primary schools. We supported the development of school gardens and we offered woodwork classes at schools, that repaired school furniture and built new furniture from recycled materials. The photographs that follow show some of these activities.

Building skills for woodwork, Emfundweni Primary School, Veeplaas

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Furniture making at Soweto-on-Sea Primary School

Furniture from recycled pallets, Soweto-on-Sea Primary School

Planting seedlings, Ukukhanya Pre-primary School, Zwide

Women gardening at Ukukhanya Pre-primary School.

The first harvest, Soweto-on-Sea Primary School.

Children at play, Emfundweni Primary School, Veeplaas

NOTES

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COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAMME

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