



# Newsletter

First Semester 2024



# Making a good start:

*SAEP boosts local ECD capacity with essential resources and training*



The South African Early Childhood Development (ECD) sector has recently benefited from ongoing business and technical assistance to registered and registration-ready centres. This support has reached 86 centres, equipping them with essential skills in business management, legislative compliance, and quality service delivery.

The comprehensive training and mentoring programme covers ECD governance, human resources, and financial management, along with compliance training for labour laws, SARS regulations, and the Non-Profit Organisation Act.

This holistic approach helps centres navigate the complex regulatory environment and focus on their core mandate of providing high-quality services to children.

Registration is a critical step for ECD centres to access government subsidies, essential for sustainability and quality improvement. The assistance provided prioritises registration, empowering centres to meet the necessary requirements and unlock vital funding. Currently, 61 centres have active registrations, 25 have submitted portfolios for renewal, and nine new centres are being processed for certification by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED).

Centres that have received support are achieving higher registration statuses, with some attaining silver (three-year) and gold (five-year) registration. This extended registration positively impacts on their ability to secure and retain funding, ensuring compliance and resilience.

Seven unregistered centres have received essential upgrades to meet environmental health and fire compliance standards, including children's mattresses, fire extinguishers, cold storage facilities, stoves and classroom improvements. This paves the way for registration, empowering centres to become sustainable, compliant, and high-performing institutions, strengthening the foundation for SA's future generations.

# Helping ECD centres flourish

*Providing ongoing training and support to put children on the right track*

This semester, the focus has also been on curriculum and classroom support for Pre-Grade R learners (ages 4-5), ensuring classrooms are conducive learning environments. A key aspect has been the professional development of centre practitioners, with 240 Pre-Grade R practitioners completing a 4-day refresher in-service curriculum training to enhance their expertise in the National Curriculum Framework (NCF). Practitioners also received in-class mentorship to effectively apply the NCF.

In addition, 64 practitioners received accredited training in Diversity and Inclusion to identify early signs of disability and learning barriers. 61 practitioners completed First Aid Level 1 training to enhance centres' emergency response capabilities, and 30 centres were equipped with First Aid kits. SAEP's continuous evaluation receives positive feedback. An ECD principal remarked that the in-service training not only enhanced practitioners' understanding of the curriculum but also renewed their motivation to innovate and implement it effectively.

By investing in practitioners' professional growth, SAEP is investing in the future of children, creating nurturing environments that foster a strong foundation for lifelong learning.



# Fostering resilient communities

*Much-needed psychosocial support transforms individuals, families and the community*

The Psychosocial Support Department has been working hard to foster resilient communities by providing critical support to Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres. Recent efforts have focused on addressing reported cases of child neglect, abuse, and exploitation.

During this period, the department conducted 40 ECD centre visits to follow up on reported cases. Thirteen home visits were also made to investigate concerns and provide support. While investigations are ongoing, the assessed cases were streamed into various categories, including 11 child neglect cases, primarily due to unsupervised children, substance abuse by parents, and misuse of child support grants. Two cases of child neglect and misused grants were referred to the Department of Social Development (DSD) for further action. Ongoing monitoring and parental training interventions for cases requiring additional support. Two cases were referred to the authorities to protect children from harmful circumstances, demonstrating SAEP's commitment to safeguarding the emotional, physical, and psychological well-being of vulnerable children.

Early identification and intervention are critical in preventing long-term damage from neglect, abuse, or exploitation. By addressing these issues promptly, we can mitigate the effects of trauma, promote healthy development and foster resilient communities.



Nine late birth registrations cases were facilitated, allowing children to access early childhood development services. Additionally, the team assisted six children, who presented with speech challenges and another three with developmental delays.

Two hundred and forty ECD practitioners were capacitated with knowledge on Child Protection, Children's Act 38 of 2005 Norms and Standards, and importance of reporting child abuse. The aim was to educate them with information that would enable them to comply with the Act towards child protection and safety.

A mental health support workshop was conducted by the social worker for practitioners to promote self-realisation of their own mental health status and to encourage those who are suffering to seek help and find a support system. This support is ongoing.

# Fostering a love of reading ...

*... that carries over into all aspects of a learner's educational journey*



**'The programme has been a significant success; it started with 120 learners and now includes 1,084 Grade 4 learners. Through interactive sessions and collaborative activities, teachers gained practical insights and strategies to enhance their teaching practices.'**

# Enhancing literacy programmes in schools:

The recent PIRLS report highlights that most learners in South Africa can read, but struggle to comprehend what they are reading. The objective of SAEP is to build confidence and competence in teachers to address this reading crisis.

SAEP hosted a series of literacy workshops at various primary schools in the Philippi area, including Vukani Primary, Khanya Primary, Weltevreden Valley Primary, Kwa-Faku Primary, Naluxulo Primary, and Entshona Primary. These workshops are designed to enhance teachers' skills in delivering effective literacy instruction and to support them both in and outside the classroom.

The workshops focus on training teachers to create engaging learning experiences for primary school learners. Teachers were reminded that not all learners absorb information in the same way, and that phonics and reading can be taught according to different learning styles. This was a revelation for many, as they realised that using a single approach for the entire class can disadvantage some learners.

Participants explored innovative methods for teaching reading and writing, including SAEP's renowned Learning Gym methodology, which helps learners build confidence by using their "brain muscles," and various phonemic methods. These approaches aim to make literacy instruction more accessible and enjoyable for young learners. The programme has been a significant success; it started with 120 learners and now includes 1,084 Grade 4 learners. Through interactive sessions and collaborative activities, teachers gained practical insights and strategies to enhance their teaching practices.



SAEP's expert facilitators provided guidance and support, addressing challenges and sharing best practices in reading and writing, thus empowering teachers to deliver high-quality literacy instruction.

To positively impact the educational journey of primary school learners, SAEP facilitators have begun implementing the active literacy programme within classrooms as a support system for teachers.

# Conquering new heights:

## *Sophumelela High's empowering rock climbing adventure*

In partnership with the Mountain Club of South Africa, Sophumelela High School learners recently embarked on an unforgettable journey to City Rock Cape Town. This exciting experience not only pushed them to new physical heights but also instilled invaluable life skills.

The day began with a rock climbing course, where learners learned essential techniques and safety protocols. It was the rock climbing session that truly tested their abilities, with each handhold and foothold they confronted helping them to overcome their fears, doubts, and limitations.

The determination displayed by each individual was truly inspiring. As they supported and encouraged one another, a sense of unity and team-building deeper connections among the group.

The rock climbing adventure was more than just a fun outing, it was an empowering experience that taught valuable lessons in perseverance, trust and self-belief. By facing and conquering their fears, these youngsters developed a growth mindset, realising that they were able to overcome even the toughest challenges.

SAEP is grateful to our partners for facilitating this transformative experience. We celebrate the achievements of Sophumelela High school learners and look forward to many more adventures that inspire and empower our young people to reach greater heights.



*"Every mountain-top is within reach, if you just keep climbing."*

— Barry Finlay

# Stars shining brightly:

*SAEP scholars excel in environmental competitions*



Hope Scholars, Owam Magazi and Yamkela Magwa are making significant strides in prestigious environmental competitions.

Owam Magazi, a dedicated student from Sophumelela High School, was nominated for WESSA's Young Reporters for the Environment Programme Competition on 8 April 2024.

Her insightful article addresses the pressing issue of illegal waste dumping in her community, reflecting her deep commitment to environmental justice.



Equally impressive is Yamkela Magwa, who shone in the SA Climate Youth Competition. On 7 April 2024, Yamkela was honoured with an award for Young Reporters of the Environment. His powerful article, "Confronting Deforestation: Understanding the Impact of a Lack of Trees," captivated the judges. But Yamkela's efforts didn't stop at raising awareness; he also spearheaded a tree distribution project to promote reforestation and combat climate change.

These remarkable accomplishments are a testament to the impact of SAEP's mentorship and support. We are immensely proud of Owam and Yamkela's achievements and their potential to inspire positive change in their communities and beyond. **Congratulations, young environmental champions!**



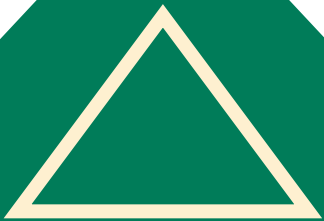
# Unlocking futures:

## *Biodiversity Careers Expo inspires Grade 9 learners*

At Sophumelela Secondary School, Grade 9 learners embarked on a journey of discovery at the Biodiversity Careers Expo. Organised by SAEP, this engaging event brought together 11 leading organisations and inspiring professionals, all passionate about sharing their experiences and expertise.

The career expo provided a unique opportunity for learners to delve into the fascinating world of science, exploring diverse fields such as marine biology, environmental science, and more. Each booth offered an immersive experience, making learning both fun and interactive.

By connecting with role models and learning about various career paths, learners gained valuable insights to inform their future choices. The expo aimed to spark curiosity, foster a love for science, and empower learners to pursue their dreams. SAEP remains committed to creating platforms that inspire and educate, shaping the next generation of leaders in the scientific community. The positive impact of this event is evident, and many more enriching experiences for learners are eagerly anticipated.





## Congratulations:

*Kwa-Faku Primary School shines at WESSA Eco-Schools Awards*

SAEP is beaming with pride as its partner school, Kwa-Faku Primary School, received a Bronze Award at the recent WESSA Eco-Schools Awards. This remarkable achievement was celebrated at Beaumont Primary School, recognising the school's tireless efforts in securing sustainability and promoting environmental education.

The Bronze Award is a testament to Kwa-Faku Primary School's dedication to nurturing young environmental champions. Their commitment to eco-friendly practices, waste reduction, and conservation sets a shining example for others to follow.

SAEP is honoured to support Kwa-Faku Primary School in its sustainability journey. The organisation believes that empowering young minds is crucial for creating a better future. This achievement reinforces SAEP's mission to foster environmental awareness and action in schools.

***“We look forward to continuing our partnership and celebrating many more successes on the path to a sustainable future.”***

# Celebrating World Wetlands Day with purpose



This year, Vukani Primary School stepped forward in an inspiring collaboration with South African National Parks, Table Mountain National Park and the City of Cape Town to honour World Wetlands Day in a truly meaningful way.

The learners took to the wetlands with hearts full of determination, participating in a clean-up initiative that not only served the environment but also brought to light the pressing issues their communities face. Masiphumelele has been caught in a human-nature conflict, with many settling on wetlands due to housing shortages in Cape Town. This seasonal wetland, which fills up during the winter, has seen many homes suffer from localised flooding. Through this event, SAEP aimed to shed light on the critical balance between the communities' needs and the preservation of natural ecosystems. The clean-up was not just about removing waste, it was a powerful statement of care, awareness, and the urgent need for solutions that respect both human and environmental well-being.

We thank the South African National Parks, Table Mountain National Park and the City of Cape Town for their collaboration, and to our incredible learners for their hard work and commitment. Together, we are taking steps towards understanding and mitigating the impacts of our actions on the precious wetlands that are vital to our environment's health and resilience.

# Diving into discovery with SAEP at Save Our Seas

Recently we embarked on an unforgettable marine adventure with 30 incredible Grade 8 students, plunging into the mysteries of marine life and the importance of conservation. We kicked off with an eye-opening introduction to marine biodiversity, setting the stage for a day filled with discovery.

Rocky Shore Talk, Our young explorers were captivated by the vibrant life forms that thrive in the rocky intertidal zones, learning about the resilience and adaptability of coastal ecosystems.

Dalebrook Exploration, armed with curiosity we explored Dalebrook's rich marine habitats, witnessing first-hand the beauty and fragility of our oceans ecosystems.

Snack Break with a view, recharging with snacks, we shared stories and laughter, with the ocean's expanse inspiring dreams of conservation and exploration.

Shark Talk, the highlight for many, this session demystified sharks, showcasing their vital role in marine ecosystems and debunking common myths.

The day concluded with a heart-warming feedback session, where students shared their awe-inspiring takeaways and renewed commitment to protecting our oceans. The young minds were inspired, from the curious eyes gazing into tide pools to the thoughtful discussions about conservation, every moment was a step toward a deeper understanding and respect for our marine world.



# Sustain our work in Philippi

Your gift, of any amount, creates positive and lasting changes in children's lives through SAEP's programmes. Every rand counts.

*Your gift contributes towards:*

- Data for online lessons
- Food parcels
- Recommended reading books
- Stationery
- Student transport allowance
- Tertiary application fees
- Toiletries
- Laptops/chargers
- Uniforms for courses with practicals
- Application fees



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The South African Education Project (SAEP) is a non-profit organisation (NPO 028 310), based in Cape Town, South Africa.

Since 1994, we have provided education, life skills, and psycho-social support programmes for children youth and education provider.