



**SAEP**  
*South African  
Education Project*



*Embracing*  
**change**

# SAEP Newsletter

**March 2021**

One year since lockdown, things look more hopeful – we have a mild autumn season, which may predict good rainfall for the year; vaccines for COVID-19 are available and will be delivered in the next few months. We appeal to our partners and donors to stay engaged with us, support us and contribute to our work; it is needed now more than ever.



**Stay engaged with us**



**Support us**



**Contribute to our work**

- Donovan Fullard joined us as Chief Executive Officer in February 2021; he shares his vision and plans for SAEP.
- We celebrate Jane Keen who shares her hopes for the future of SAEP, and staff and board members pay tribute to her leadership.
- SAEP programmes continue their amazing work, adapting and developing.



## Donovan's *vision*

Upon reflecting on my first two months, it has been an inspirational learning journey thus far, as I navigate through the SAEP landscape, getting to know staff, programmes and all stakeholders. We are at an exciting stage in the history of the organisation, with the departure of the previous director, Jane Keen handing over the mantle (after 18 years) to me, to lead the organisation into a new era.

This is indeed a difficult period for all globally as we are still in the grip and lockdown of a devastating pandemic and patiently waiting on vaccinations to reach everyone locally. **The impact of the pandemic has challenged everyone to think differently and innovatively about their work and particularly their implementation strategies.** It has been especially challenging for NGO's working in the education sector, but I am extremely proud to be associated with SAEP who have shown their adaptability and flexibility in terms of responding to the socio-economic issues within the community of Philippi and immediate surrounds that we support. **Through the Thuso relief fund we managed to support our ECD centres, schools and post matric programme participants in various ways**, be it through food security, PPEs, and other required resource support.

*We are currently in the process of working towards finalising our 3-year strategic plan and exploring exciting opportunities to expand and grow the programmes, albeit in this difficult period.*

Together with the board we have decided to have a more **community based and community responsive approach**. This approach would mean returning to our roots as SAEP and focusing on working in Philippi for all or most of our programmes and looking to grow our reach within Philippi and immediate surrounds:



- ✓ Increasing the number of beneficiaries
- ✓ Working with families more broadly
- ✓ Increasing the number of institutions (primary and high schools)
- ✓ Engaging more with government departments to ensure access to services
- ✓ Engaging with other organisations, forums, political structures working in the area
- ✓ Providing a more holistic experience.



As part of going back to our roots, we are using a garden analogy to best describe our work and aptly referring to and introducing relevant concepts such as organic, growth, nurture, indigenous and sustainability into our thinking processes. Thus, **revisiting, linking and incorporating environmental issues and aspects into our current work and going forward.** We are thus hoping that we can, together with all our partners, beneficiaries and communities grow this indigenous garden into a beautiful space of sustainability and resilience to collectively withstand the challenges that we face in this period. **So let's not fear change, but rather embrace it...**

*Donovan*

# Celebrating Jane

She led SAEP for 18 years and retired in February 2021. In parting she said:

// *It is not possible to retire from an organisation one has helped to build for 18 years without having full confidence in the team who are going to take it forward. I feel immensely fortunate that we have such a committed and competent board under Isabel Essen's leadership, a great new CEO, Donovan Fullard, and a wonderful staff team who are passionate about making a difference. To support them all we have our generous funders, including the SAEP USA board (which is largely made up of past volunteers) and many partners.* //

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to SAEP over the years, in time, talents and financially. It is not always possible to measure the impact of our work (as hard as we may try through monitoring and evaluation), but the stories of past students and ECD principals are always heartwarming when they reflect on how far they have come with our support.

In this time of COVID, the children and young people we serve are facing even greater challenges, and need SAEP's programmes and support more than ever. I may be retiring from full time leadership at SAEP but I will always remain a supporter and ambassador and hope you will do the same.



Staff gathered, observant of COVID-19 protocols, to take leave of Jane and welcome Donovan: the mantle of leadership was handed over.

The board of SAEP joined SAEP US (virtually) to thank Jane for her service and leadership; the chairperson of the board, Isabel Essen, said:



The time has come to say farewell and Thank You to Jane - SAEP's magnificent and extraordinary Director of 18 years – who is moving on into her much deserved retirement! [Click to read more...](#)

[Click below to view the staff tributes to Jane](#)

[Masithembe Mqoto](#)



[Ethel and Abongile](#)



[Click to view Jane Keen through the years pictures](#)



# Early Childhood Development (ECD):

## *Safety in the time of COVID-19:*

There have been many challenges and for ECD centres to reopen safely is a triumph. SAEP has supported centres with material resources, information and mentoring, providing focused, appropriate measures to sustain safe, healthy and nurturing spaces for young children in Philippi.



### Financial viability

SAEP staff supported ECD principals to apply for grants available from the Presidential Stimulus Package, helping with internet access, processing documents and explaining the requirements. To date **93 centres have registered** for the scheme with our help. SAEP is now tasked with verifying the centres, an arduous and time-consuming task.



### Food

For many children, daily nutritious meals at their ECD centres are essential for health and development. Generous donors enabled SAEP to provide food for centres to feed the children as they reopen after the long downtime.



### PPE and sanitizing supplies

All the centres in our programme – **149 in total, have received PPE**, some more than once as their operations show the need. Donations in kind came from many sources, and we are grateful to them all: **Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDAT)** provided sanitizing packs which included water containers – absolutely essential for those in informal settlements. **Department of Social Development (DSD)** provided PPE through us and **Masks for Medics** provided masks, sanitizing supplies and dispensers. This is vital to protect the children, ECD centre staff and the community in which they live.



### Sithembele ECD is being rebuilt

Supported by Prudential Investment Managers CSI, we have completed the first phase of the rebuild and will start the second shortly, hoping to finish before the winter rains, creating a high quality, safe space for children to grow.



# Post-Matric Programme

After the disruption of 2020, lockdown and virtual learning, many students and young people are seriously disadvantaged. **The Bridging Year Programme (BY)** is committed to **helping students catch up the skills and knowledge lost and focus on their future studies and careers.** Starting late this year because of the late release of matric results and late start of the academic year in tertiary institutions, recruitment is almost complete, orientation started on 19 March and classes began immediately afterwards.



*For this year, we received more than 100 applications for BY of whom 50 were accepted and included in the orientation process. There are 20 on a waiting list.*

Our students will have the best possible chance of improving their academic standing and choosing the best possible courses for their interests and abilities in future. Lessons from 2020 have been applied in the course design for 2021 – **we will run online classes parallel with classes in person; to develop the skill of online learning** which will be essential for all students in the foreseeable future and to allow seamless transition to virtual learning if the regulations change to restrict contact classes. More than ever, young people need hope and encouragement to **develop themselves and make progress in the world.** BY walks beside them in the early stage of this journey.

*If I may say so myself, the success rate is very impressive this year (2020), given the difficult year we had and other challenges that came with that...*

*Our hard work has paid off, and it is a team effort.*



Nosisa Mhlati, Programme Coordinator

We celebrate our students, their success and resilience



The Tertiary Support Programme is celebrating 10 graduates from 2020 and still confirming results of others.

We have confirmed that 25 BY students from 2020 are registered and studying at tertiary level.

There are 53 students registered for TSP, registration continues and orientation will take place in April, when advisers will be teamed with students.

We expect 80 students for 2021.

## You are invited



**Our virtual AGM will be held in May as usual**

The date and invitations will be sent out close to the time. We hope friends and supporters will attend.

In July 2021, our newsletter will show you the work we do in schools through **Siyakhathala Primary Programme** and **Hope Scholars Programme.**

Look out for it!

# Become an Angel

*Sustain our work in Philippi*



Thank you to all the individual donors who contribute significantly to our work through donations in cash and in kind and through using their networks to expand our donor base. Their support has sustained our work through 25 years and rising.

## Be an angel and sign up for regular donations

For those who aren't yet angels, please click here to join this special group and make regular payments to sustain our work.



## Appeal - Support our work in 2021

Your gift of R500 (\$34) would contribute to:

- ✓ Start-up kit for 1 ECD Centre, including sanitizing and protective materials, and food for nutritious meals for the children;
- ✓ Data and stationery for 1 post-secondary student, or contribute to the cost of a laptop;
- ✓ An outing for one learner in secondary school – Hope Scholars Programme.

## DONATE NOW

send us notice of the payment and use your name and Sustain as the reference.



*Thank you for making a difference.*

### Amazon smile

If you shop at Amazon, choose us as your charity



### MySchool My Village My Planet

Local shoppers can support us every time they swipe their MySchool My Village My Planet cards – choose us as your charity.



## Contact Us

[www.saep.org](http://www.saep.org) 

[info@saep.org](mailto:info@saep.org) 

021 447 3610 



Our regular individual donors are the Angels who sustain us: **CLICK HERE** to become an angel and sign up for regular donations

*Thank You!*

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 providers.