Improving the lives of children

MIET AFRICA: ANNUAL REPORT 2011
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MIET AFRICA: ANNUAL REPORT 2011
One day a child will make the nation proud.
A message from the chairperson

We overlook just how large a role we all play—and by “we” I mean society—in determining who makes it and who doesn’t.

Malcolm Gladwell
Outliers: The Story of Success

During the past year, MIET Africa has continued its pioneering work in laying the foundations for creating environments where every child is given the opportunity to become great.

While funding for NGOs will always be challenging, MIET Africa is determined to ensure that its funding base grows and matures, in order to enable it to implement programmes that impact on quality education delivery. A number of new funders have come on board, and existing funders continue to support the organization. However, its champions are constantly at work to ensure its sustainability.

MIET Africa’s work across the board continues to support and strengthen in areas where the education rights of children, particularly the most vulnerable, need to be recognized. All of its programmes have at their core the goal of empowering children—be it through the RHIVA pilot programme that aims to reduce HIV in adolescents, or projects that encourage learners to “Speak Out!” against abuse. Whilst ensuring that schools are inclusive centres of learning care and support, MIET Africa has not lost sight of the fact that support for learners in areas such as Mathematics and Science remains crucial for them to enter the world of work.

Disturbing trends were revealed in 2011 when the statistics of national literacy and numeracy assessments were released—they showed that the literacy rates of Grade 3 and 6 learners stand at around 30 per cent. The School Realities Report for 2011 noted that there are over 12 million learners in the country—a massive number that highlights the enormous task faced by government to ensure that those learners are motivated, that their teachers are properly trained, school leadership is effective, resources and infrastructure are adequate, and that parents and other stakeholders are involved in every child’s education. This is a task that is too overwhelming for government to tackle alone.
During 2011, 21 per cent of the national budget was set aside for improving the quality of education, but this seems to have done little to address the massive challenges that we face as a nation when it comes to the education, and the future prospects of our children. And, if the foundation of quality education does not exist, there is little hope of a top-quality and productive workforce emerging to contribute meaningfully to the country’s economic aims. Basic Education has as its tag-line “Every child is an asset”, but sadly it seems we are not sufficiently protecting this asset, or nurturing it so that it grows and matures into something superior.

This year the Department of Higher Education and Training developed its green paper on a policy framework for the country’s post-school education and training system. The preface of this document points to the desire for the “doors of learning to be opened”, in the hope that those entering the labour market are qualified and competent enough to take up employment and the income generating opportunities that exist.

With this in mind, MIET Africa agreed to host an international conference in 2012 that focuses on partnerships in education and how these can contribute to “learning to earn”. As a nation, it has been widely acknowledged that unless we as South Africans “walk together”—as government, business and the general public—we will continue to fail in our attempts to make any significant gains when it comes to improving education delivery to those that need it most.

Essentially, it is up to “us” to ensure that every child is given the best chance possible to reach his or her full potential and become a productive and contributing member of our nation.

As always, I must stress that without the genuine passion and dedication of its staff members, its strong leadership and the consistent enthusiasm from a committed Board of Trustees, MIET Africa would not be able to continue to thrive and remain true to its vision of improving the lives of children.

John Volmink
CHAIRPERSON, MIET AFRICA

Children have unlimited potential. Through education anything is possible.
One day a child will conserve our natural heritage.
A message from the CEO

There is general agreement that the current state of education in South Africa leaves much to be desired—the many critics of government ensure that this point is driven home regularly. If we are honest, many of these criticisms are valid.

Any proper discussion on this subject must take into account the enormous challenge with which the post-1994 government was presented: 19 separate racially segregated education departments of disparate quality had to be amalgamated into one non-racial, non-sexist education system. This was no easy task.

Criticism without suggestions for improvement or positive action is of little value. Attacking government from the sidelines without actively joining the game is energy poorly spent, and is based on the belief that education is the sole responsibility of government.

While ensuring access to quality basic education for all children is the mandate of the Ministries of Education, it also requires a collective effort: parents, civil society and the private sector all have a role in providing the children of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region with the best opportunity to achieve their full potential.

This partnership approach is one that has worked well for MIET Africa over the 16 years of its existence, and 2011 has been no exception. Based on the belief that through partnering we can achieve more than when we work alone—the 1+1=3 equation—MIET Africa has placed partnerships at the centre of its work.

Partnering with government has enabled us to influence education policy and policy implementation. It contributed to the sustainability and scale-up of our interventions. A good example is MIET Africa’s Schools as Centres of Care and Support model (now called Care and Support for Teaching and Learning), which began as an NGO pilot project and is now a government-led programme in Member States across the SADC region.
Partnering with international and local donors and other development partners has allowed MIET Africa to innovate and remain at the cutting edge of development approaches.

Partnering with school communities, particularly those from impoverished rural areas, has ensured that we accurately represent the most disempowered citizens.

Maintaining effective partnerships is not a “walk in the park”. It requires patience, perseverance, understanding, respect and, most importantly, a commitment to achieve a shared vision. These are qualities that are consciously and continuously promoted within MIET Africa.

Our partnerships have contributed significantly to the successes enjoyed by MIET Africa during 2011. We thank our many partners for sharing our passion and commitment to improving the lives of children in Southern Africa.

Lynn van der Elst
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, MIET AFRICA
# Financial statements

**Statement of Financial Position 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asset Type</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-current assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property and Equipment</td>
<td>228 520</td>
<td>246 663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment Property</td>
<td>1 468 006</td>
<td>1 468 006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>1 122 764</td>
<td>1 000 000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Current assets</strong></td>
<td>18 868 093</td>
<td>30 556 594</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounts receivable</td>
<td>7 043 879</td>
<td>5 384 775</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents</td>
<td>11 824 214</td>
<td>25 171 819</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
<td>21 687 383</td>
<td>33 271 263</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Equity and Liabilities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equity and Liabilities</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capital and reserves</td>
<td>11 211 924</td>
<td>10 522 458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust capital</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revaluation Reserve</td>
<td>122 764</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accumulated surplus</td>
<td>11 089 060</td>
<td>10 522 358</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Current liabilities</strong></td>
<td>10 475 459</td>
<td>22 748 805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts payable</td>
<td>6 069 215</td>
<td>3 858 365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred contributions</td>
<td>4 406 244</td>
<td>18 890 440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total equity and liabilities</strong></td>
<td>21 687 383</td>
<td>33 271 263</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Education is more than a luxury; it is a responsibility that society owes to itself.**

Robin Cook  
Physician and Novelist
**INCOME STATEMENT**

- Donations and interest received and expended: 81,741,927 / 77,802,038
- Recoveries: 104,829 / 220,950
- Other Revenue: 245,568 / 120,220
- Fair Value Adjustment: 122,764
- Expenditure: -82,379,978 / -78,097,258
- Profit/(loss) on disposal of property and equipment: 17,157 / -13,875
- Interest Received: 837,199 / 331,270
- Surplus for the year: 689,466 / 363,345

**CASH FLOW STATEMENT**

- Cash flows from operating activities: -13,269,278 / -4,359,008
- Cash Receipts from donors and tenants: 84,957,209 / 83,222,332
- Cash paid to suppliers and employees: -99,118,242 / -89,057,728
- Cash utilised: -14,161,033 / -5,835,396
- Interest Received: 891,755 / 1,476,388
- Cash flows from investing activities: -78,327 / -124,354
- Acquisition of property and equipment: -118,120 / -129,501
- Proceeds of disposal of property and equipment: 39,793 / 5,147
- Net increase/(-decrease) in cash and cash equivalents: -13,347,605 / -4,483,362
- Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year: 25,171,819 / 29,655,181
- Cash and cash equivalents at end of year: 11,824,214 / 25,171,819

Auditors: RSM Betty & Dickson (Durban)
We are pleased to report for the financial year ended 31 December 2011.

The Audit Committee is a committee of the Board of Trustees and is governed by the Trust Property Control Act 57 of 1988.

It assists the Board through advising and making submissions on financial reporting, oversight of the risk management process and internal financial controls, external and internal audit functions and statutory and regulatory compliance of the Trust.

The Audit Committee Charter aims to ensure compliance with the Non-profit Organisation Act 71 of 1997 as amended and the revised Code of and Report on Governance Principles for South Africa (King III), 2009.

Terms of reference—Audit Committee Charter.

The Audit Committee has adopted formal terms of reference that have been approved by the Board. These terms of reference are regularly reviewed and updated where necessary. The Audit Committee has executed its duties during the past financial year in accordance with these terms of reference. The Audit Committee has adopted and approved a formal Annual Audit Committee Plan for 2012 onwards.

Composition.

The Audit Committee consists of five independent non-executive, and two executive members. S R Bean continued as the chairperson of the Audit Committee during the period under review.

Meetings.

The Audit Committee held four meetings during the period under review.

Rules and functions of the Audit Committee.

In the execution of its statutory duties during the past financial year, the Audit Committee:

» considered the audit firm RSM Betty and Dickson (RSMBD) for appointment as auditors of the Trust. Since, the opinion of the Audit Committee, RSMBD and the audit partner, O Chetty, are independent of the Trust, they were nominated to the Board as auditors of the Trust for the year ended 31 December 2011;

» determined the fees to be paid to RSMBD;

» determined the terms of engagement of RSMBD;

» believes that the appointment of RSMBD complies with the Charter;

» pre-approved all non-audit service contracts with RSMBD. The nature and extent of these services have been reviewed to ensure that the fees for these services do not become so significant as to call into question the independence of RSMBD;

» received no complaints relating to the accounting practices of the Trust, the content or auditing of its financial statement, the internal financial controls of the Trust, or any other matters;

» reviewed the draft financial statements;

» met with the external auditors to discuss the
annual financial statements prior to their approval by the Board;
» made submissions to the Board on matters concerning the Trust’s accounting policies, financial controls, records and reporting;
» concurred that the adoption of the going concern premise in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Risk management. The Trust has no formal risk committee. Responsibility for risk lies with the CEO, trustees, directors and management. The Audit Committee is responsible for overseeing risk management and internal processes and conflicts. The Audit Committee has:
» received assurance that the process and procedures followed by the trustees are adequate to ensure that financial risks are identified and monitored;
» has satisfied itself that the following areas have been appropriately addressed:
  - financial reporting risks,
  - internal financial controls,
  - fraud risks as they relate to financial reporting,
  - IT risks as they relate to financial reporting;
» reviewed tax and technology risks, in particular how they are managed.
A formal risk identification workshop will be held in March 2012, under the guidance of an RSMBD Risk Management Specialist.

Internal financial controls. The Audit Committee has:
» reviewed the effectiveness of the Trust’s system of internal financial controls, including receiving assistance from management and external audit;
» reviewed significant issues raised by the external auditors in their reports;
» obtained assurance from the external auditors that adequate accounting records were maintained;
» reviewed policies and procedures for preventing and detecting fraud, as well as the safe guarding of electronic data, both internally and off site.
Based on the processes and assurance obtained, we believe that the significant internal financial controls are effective.

Committee structures.
a) Remuneration Committee (RC)
There is no separate RC. Instead, the RC functions as a subcommittee of the Audit Committee and is chaired by the chairperson of the Audit Committee. The members of the RC are: the chairperson of the Board of Trustees, the CEO and one other trustee. The directors submit their proposed remuneration and related matters to the RC for consideration, after which the RC makes final recommendations to the Board. The CEO is to recuse herself when her remuneration is discussed. The RC meets at least once a year.
b) Investment Committee (IC)
There is no separate IC. Instead, the IC functions as a subcommittee of the Board of Trustees. The chairperson of the Audit Committee is to be a member of the IC, in order to advise and assist in all investment decisions. A formal investment and withdrawal policy document is being finalized for presentation to the Board for approval.

Regulatory compliance. The Audit Committee has complied with all applicable legal and regulatory responsibilities.

External audit. Based on processes followed and assurance received, we have no concerns regarding the independence of the external auditors. Based on our satisfaction with the results of the activities outlined above, we have recommended the reappointment of RSMBD.

Finance function. We believe that the director responsible for Finance and Administration possesses the appropriate expertise and experience to meet the responsibilities of the position she holds. We are satisfied with the expertise and experience of the staff in the Finance Department, and with the adequacy of the resources within the finance function of the Trust. Based on the processes and assurance obtained, we believe that the accounting practices and systems are effective.

Annual Financial Statements. On 22 March 2012 the Audit Committee recommended the Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2011 for approval by the Board.

On behalf of the Audit Committee:

Selwyn Roy Bean
CHAIRPERSON: AUDIT COMMITTEE
22 MARCH 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of fees</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audit services (Provision 2011)</td>
<td>180 000</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
<td>32 226</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>212 226</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One day a child will write the soundtrack to our lives.
About MIET Africa

MIET Africa is a not-for-profit organization based in South Africa with a strong presence in the SADC (Southern African Development Community) Region.

**Our purpose**
Improving the lives of children by addressing barriers to learning

**Our vision**
Children attaining their full potential through quality education

**Our mission**
To be an African leader in developing and providing innovative education approaches

We realize our purpose of improving the lives of children by contributing to quality teaching and learning. We pride ourselves on being an African NGO and an innovator of education approaches that focus on the challenges faced by children in rural areas.

We have pioneered many new models and programmes, and our influence now extends beyond South Africa and into Africa.

**OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTION**
MIET Africa’s strategic direction is guided by the following three objectives:

1. **Developing and implementing innovative education approaches.** We continue to be a pioneering organization in education development; where obstacles are identified in the delivery of education, we design and test innovative ways of removing these.

2. **Establishing partnerships to strengthen education delivery.** One of our key goals is that our projects are taken to scale by government. For this reason, we pilot innovative projects in partnership with government.

   We acknowledge too that we cannot achieve our vision alone: it is through strong and trusting partnerships that success is achieved. Our key partners are education departments and ministries, at provincial and national level in South Africa, and at national level in other African countries. Other important partners include school communities, NGOs, other government departments, international agencies, United Nations organizations and funding partners.

3. **Influencing policy in education.** We recognize that our key role is not the delivery of quality education; rather it is supporting government in its role to do this. Therefore we focus on influencing the development and strengthening of policy where it pertains to education. In this way we are able to maximize our impact.
Children have unlimited potential. Through education anything is possible.

OUR WORK

MIET Africa focuses on supporting education development, as well as health and socio-economic development where they impact on education. All our programmes and projects are developed within the framework of our two main focus areas:

1. Addressing barriers to learning. MIET Africa developed the Schools as Centres of Care and Support (SCCS) model. This model helps schools and their communities provide care and support to address the barriers to learning that the ever increasing numbers of vulnerable children face. The barriers that learners face in realizing their education rights may be categorized as: systemic (e.g. inadequate facilities at schools); societal (e.g. severe poverty); pedagogic (e.g. insufficient support for teachers); intrinsic (e.g. physical, psychosocial and health related problems).

Specific MIET Africa programmes that focus on addressing barriers to learning include:

- **Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL)** is aimed at mainstreaming care and support into education systems in the SADC Region, including South Africa.

- **Reducing HIV in Adolescents (RHIVA)**, a cash incentivized HIV-prevention initiative, encourages learners to engage in positive behaviours and make healthy lifestyle choices.
Learn About Healthy Living IV (LAHL IV) uses a human rights-based approach to address, among other things, the issue of children’s education rights, facilitates community dialogues around issues of sexual abuse, and aims to capacitate schools and communities in addressing barriers to learning.

Education Support to OVC researched barriers to learning that orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) face, and then implemented special interventions to address those barriers.

Siyanakekela aims to help parents become more involved in the education of their children by making schools “centres of community life.”

**2. Enhancing the quality of education.** MIET Africa initiatives that focus on enhancing the quality of education include:

- **Education Centres Supporting Rural Development** has established a network of education centres across the province that serve as decentralized hubs for the delivery of quality education support to schools and their communities, especially those in rural areas.

- **Phongola Science and Mathematics Enhancement Project** aims to improve the marks of Grade 11 and 12 learners in these subjects, as well as upgrade the content knowledge and teaching skills of teachers.

**OUR VALUES AND PRINCIPLES**

Everything MIET Africa does is underpinned by the following values and principles:

- Respect for human rights
- Inclusiveness
- Integrity
- Professionalism
- Caring
- The best interests of the children, especially the vulnerable, are paramount
- Partnerships are established for maximum impact
- Approaches adopted are relevant, appropriate and participatory
- Ownership by government is recognized to ensure scalability and sustainability

**OUR PEOPLE**

The people of MIET Africa are its greatest asset—it is their dedication and passion that drives us and keeps us forging ahead with innovative new projects.

MIET Africa’s Board of Trustees governs the organization, drafts policy and determines its strategic direction. In addition it oversees the maintenance of adequate accounting records.

Partnerships are key to our success, and we recognize the contribution our many partners have made to the achievements of our organization. As we move into even more challenging phases, strong collaboration with key stakeholders becomes even more critical.

Lynn van der Elst
Chief Executive Officer
and the preparation and integrity of the annual financial statements. It also ensures that the organization has excellent systems of internal financial controls, and that the audited annual financial statements accord with the accounting policies of the Trust. There are currently ten trustees (of whom nine are non-executive members) under the leadership of the chairperson, Prof John Volmink.

The trustees have appointed a senior management team in the form of a directorate that is responsible for the execution of policy and for the implementation of MIET Africa activities and operations. This directorate is led by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). She is supported by the Deputy CEO responsible for Human Resources and Quality Assurance, and three other directors (Finance and Administration; Programmes; Knowledge Management and Communications).

An internal audit committee oversees the organization’s finances and addresses issues of governance. The external auditors are RSM Betty & Dickson, the South African member firm of RSM International. MIET Africa has always received an unqualified audit report; its annual financial statements continue to meet the reporting requirements of all funding partners.

Trustees at 31 December 2011
» Prof John Volmink (chairperson)
» Ms Thandi Chaane (vice chairperson)
» Mr Lucas Chachine
» Ms Nicole Copley
» Ms Fathima Dada
» Mr Rindai Jaravaza
» Dr Thula Mbatha
» Mr Nhlanhla Ngubane
» Mr Roy Paulson
» Ms Lynn van der Elst

OUR SERVICE OFFERINGS
As an African leader in developing and providing innovative education approaches, MIET Africa has extensive experience and expertise in the various areas of child and youth education. MIET Africa realizes that this expertise has applications in almost all emerging markets globally, particularly on the African continent, to help children reach their full potential.

MIET Africa offers its services globally to make the largest impact it can in contributing to children attaining their full potential.

Services offered can be utilized individually or as a combination to meet the needs of the client or partner and will be applied within our two main focus areas—addressing barriers to learning, and curriculum enrichment and teacher development.

Within these areas of focus we provide the following services:
» Training
» Project Management
» Materials Development
» Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)
» Innovative Research and Development

OUR PARTNERS
MIET Africa acknowledges that it cannot achieve its vision alone; it is through strong and trusting partnerships that success is achieved. Although education is its primary focus, the need for a multi-sectoral approach when addressing the holistic development of vulnerable children and youth has resulted in the organization strengthening its links with other government ministries.

Collaboration with school communities, including teachers, parents and caregivers, learners, community- and faith-based organizations and other stakeholders, is essential at grassroots level.

These partnerships provide valuable lessons and knowledge for the development of MIET Africa’s programmes and inform the content and direction of its work.

Our Government partners include:
» National education ministries in SADC
» Local government and municipalities
» Other government departments
» The National Department of Basic Education in South Africa
» Provincial education departments in South Africa

Our funders include:
» Anglo American
» AusAID
» DG Murray Trust
» Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
» Sugar Industry Trust for Education
» Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
» USAID
One day a child will provide food for our families.
OUR PROJECTS:
Care and Support for Teaching and Learning—SADC (CSTL)

The focus of CSTL is on addressing those barriers to learning that hinder children and youth from accessing their right to education. This is achieved by promoting the mainstreaming of care and support in education systems in the region.

Funded predominantly by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) is a SADC (Southern African Development Community) programme currently being implemented in five Member States: the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland and Zambia.

During Phase 1 of the programme (originally due to end in December 2012), implementation concentrated on supporting Education Ministries to fulfil their commitments to and intentions of providing quality education to all children. To do this, the programme works at regional, national, sub-national and schools levels, to address barriers to teaching and learning—in particular socio-economic and health-related barriers—so that all children access education and remain in, and achieve at, school.

Background
Emboldened by a firm endorsement in a SADC communiqué signed by all Member States in 2008, the CSTL programme was launched to support education ministries across the region to fulfil their obligations to Africa and the international community as articulated in various statements, protocols and declarations. Among these are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Education For All and Millennium Development Goals and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. At a regional level, CSTL supports the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan, the Protocol on Education and Training, the Protocol on Health, and the Maseru Declaration call for Member States to address HIV and AIDS through a multisectoral approach. These commitments and intentions are aimed at providing quality education to all children.

In a nutshell, CSTL (SADC) strengthens the protective factors that promote the wellbeing of children, and reduces the risk factors that make children vulnerable.

Maureen King
CSTL Master Trainer
The importance of the SADC-wide nature of the CSTL model is underscored by the fact that—despite local variations—social, socio-economic and other conditions in the region have much in common. Poverty, for example, is widely prevalent across the region with up to two-thirds of the SADC population living below the international poverty line of US$1.25 a day, while many Member States have low Human Development Index ratings.

Vulnerable groups—such as households headed by the elderly, the ailing, the unemployed and children—experience particularly acute levels of poverty. Children living in poverty are exposed to poor living conditions and unsafe environments, and have compromised access to food, shelter, education and care. Poverty has a negative impact on learner attendance, with children from poorer households less likely to attend school and to make progress academically. Poor children are more likely to be enrolled at inadequately resourced schools, thus increasing the inequalities in their access to quality education. In addition, poor children are more likely to be at risk of lower health access and outcomes, which further compromise their ability to access education. And tragically, poverty also increases the child’s vulnerability to abuse, susceptibility to substance abuse and exploitation.

Children under 18 make up more than half of the SADC Region’s estimated population of 250 million. According to UNAIDS and UNICEF, approximately 17 million children are orphans (approximately 17 per cent of children, and seven per cent of the whole population). The region is one of the world’s hardest hit by the HIV and AIDS pandemic. UNAIDS reports that in 2008 an estimated 1.9 million people living in sub-Saharan Africa became newly infected with HIV, bringing the total number of people living with HIV to 22.4 million. HIV and AIDS have increased the educational challenges that children face. For affected children and their families, AIDS results in increased poverty; trauma and bereavement; chronic illness; stigma and discrimination; adverse or changing family environments. All of these can negatively affect these children’s ability to access their education rights.
Taking a multi-faceted approach... is effective in reducing learner dropout, learner absenteeism and increasing positive behaviours in learners for HIV prevention.

What does the CSTL programme aim to do?
The goal of the CSTL programme is that the education rights of vulnerable children in the SADC region are realized through schools becoming inclusive centres of learning, care and support.

The objectives of the programme at a regional level are to strengthen and harmonize care and support policies and programmes to support improved education outcomes in SADC Member States, as well as to increase learning and knowledge on care and support strategies across the region. Objectives at Member State level are to improve the enrolment, retention and achievement of vulnerable learners: this is done by strengthening the responsiveness of education systems, through mobilizing school communities to provide care and support and through integrated service delivery.

Partnerships—a cornerstone of CSTL
The CSTL programme is given direction by the key programme partners including the SDC, the SADC Secretariat, UNICEF ESARO, UNESCO and MIET Africa, which is also the regional implementing partner. The key implementing partners at country level are the Ministries of Education in the Member States.

Multisectoral collaboration is crucial, and is promoted through National Coordinating Units (NCUs) in Member States. Advocacy has played a major role in attracting different role players and stakeholders for support, especially in strengthening the NCUs. Partners in the NCUs contribute in different forms, depending on the expertise and resources that each has available.

2011—building from the foundations
In 2011 MIET Africa’s regional team provided technical support to Member States through in-country capacity-development workshops for building skills in school-level implementation, knowledge management and reporting.

The Regional Support Pack (or the National Support Pack, once customized for use in the countries) contains 12 action steps to guide Education Ministries to mainstream care and support into policies, programmes and processes. It was shared with in-country NCUs and other ministry officials, through workshops conducted at national, district and school levels. Head teachers and life skills teachers were capacitated on using practical tools, such
Because of the multiple manifestations of vulnerability, multi-stakeholder partnerships are essential for the provision of care and support.

Conceptual Framework

as vulnerability identification and the documentation of good practices. They also learnt how to harmonize CSTL with the work of other organizations, so that they can transform their schools into inclusive centres of learning, care and support.

After consultations with Member States and technical revisions by monitoring and evaluation specialists, the Regional Monitoring, Evaluation and Research (MER) framework and the research agenda were approved by the CSTL Regional Steering Committee. In 2012 Member States will develop in-country MER frameworks. The knowledge management strategy is being revised, but is currently being used in Member States as a working document.

Work on developing the CSTL regional policy report and framework review has continued; drafts of the document were critically reviewed by programme partners and Members States officials. (The regional policy report draws together all the findings on issues of care and support in Member States, and will provide a clear sense of whether there is an adequate policy environment in the region.) The policy framework is informed by the policy report: it reinforces the harmonization of policies and approaches within Member States—as well as across the region—taking into consideration the essential elements of care and support identified as necessary to fulfil the mandate of the education sector.

Sexual harassment and violence against children has been cited as one of the major health and human rights problem affecting school-going children in the region. It presents barriers to learning and deprives learners of their right to education and impacts negatively on their learning outcomes.

To address this problem, MIET Africa, with funding support from the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), embarked on an intervention for the prevention and management of sexual harassment and sexual violence. The project is currently being implemented in four of the participating Member States (namely the DRC, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zambia). School community focus group dialogues were conducted, which in turn led to the development of materials that address the issues raised. The process followed was participatory and consultative, which assured the ownership of the products produced. They have been customized (and, where necessary, translated) for each country. Training and awareness days on using of the materials are still in progress. In South Africa the Speak Out! campaign, funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, assisted in raising awareness amongst schools communities about the sexual and other abuses committed against children and youth.

Annual sharing meetings continue to be a highlight of CSTL. They provide the chance for Member States—Phase 1 and the others—to come together to share experiences and learn from one another’s good practices and challenges, in order to improve delivery and implementation of care and support programmes in the education sector. In 2011, all 14 SADC Member States were represented at the meeting, and each came prepared with country case studies and display materials. The meeting was regarded as a great success, worth all the effort MIET Africa put in to organize it.

Looking ahead

Looking to the future, the CSTL SADC programme will continue to focus on supporting Member States at both national and school levels, strengthening relationships with Ministries of Education and stakeholders working at different levels. National officers will focus on advocacy for strengthening coordinating units and school support teams by conducting various meetings and through training.

The regional policy report and framework is expected to be finalized by April 2012 and will then be presented to the SADC Ministers’ Forum for approval. Thereafter Member States will begin aligning their policies to the SADC policy framework. In the interim, the MIET Africa regional team, together with the SADC Secretariat, submitted a conference paper on the CSTL policy review for the ADEA Triennale on Education and Training in Africa, taking place in Burkina Faso in February 2012. The paper will increase international awareness of CSTL, and the Triennale provides a platform for SADC and the regional CSTL team to share knowledge and expertise, and to network with a wide range of stakeholders.

CSTL Phase 1 came to an end in December 2011, but a second phase of funding has been provided by the SDC until June 2013.
One day a child will heal her community.
OUR PROJECTS: Reducing HIV in Adolescents (RHIVA)

Reducing HIV in Adolescents (RHIVA) is a groundbreaking, school-based, HIV-prevention initiative being implemented in fourteen rural schools in Vulindlela, KwaZulu-Natal, by the Department of Education and MIET Africa.

A rigorous impact assessment of the intervention is being conducted by CAPRISA. With funding from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN), the intervention commenced in August 2009 and will end in December 2012.

Background
For some years now KwaZulu-Natal has been at the epicentre of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. While HIV prevalence among women attending antenatal clinics in the country has shown a decrease, in KwaZulu-Natal the mother-to-child infection rate increased from 38.7 to 39.5 per cent in 2010, the highest recorded rate among all South Africa’s provinces. Of grave concern is the impact on young people—young women in particular. In 2008, 8.7 per cent of South Africans aged 15 to 24 were found to be HIV-positive, with females more than three times more likely to be infected than males.

KwaZulu-Natal remains one of the most economically disadvantaged provinces in the country, with 71 per cent of children living in households with a monthly income of less than R350 per person. In addition, 24 per cent of children in the province live in households that experience child hunger (defined as households in which children report going hungry sometimes, often or always). One out of every four children in the province has lost one or both biological parents, many due to AIDS.

A baseline study conducted by MIET Africa in the RHIVA schools showed that substance abuse in schools and teenage pregnancy are extremely high: learners have little hope for their future prospects. Learners said that many of their peers resort to crime, prostitution or relationships with significantly older partners (“sugar daddies”) to get money.

Why the RHIVA intervention?
These socio-economic and HIV-related concerns pointed to the urgent need for an innovative HIV-prevention initiative: randomized controlled trials assessing behavioural

I have observed learners improving their self-confidence. They are now able to speak to each other about their daily challenges they encounter... even on “touchy” issues such as sexually transmitted diseases.

Youth facilitator
Children have unlimited potential. Through education anything is possible.

The programme educates our children on HIV matters and how to behave appropriately.

Parent

intervention have not shown any significant effect on HIV incidence. This suggested that a conditional cash transfer programme might be an effective way to provide income support, while bringing about behaviour that will reduce risky behaviour—and hence the rate of new HIV infections. We anticipate that RHIVA will do this, while at the same time giving learners a sense of hope for the future.

The primary objective of RHIVA is to assess the effectiveness of a cash-incentivized prevention intervention in reducing HIV-incidence rates in adolescents.

Implementing the RHIVA programme
Conditional cash transfers are used to encourage learners to engage in positive behaviour and make healthy lifestyle choices, thereby reducing the number of HIV infections in learners.

Participating learners (originally in Grades 9 and 10) in the seven “intervention schools” receive cash incentives for achieving milestones that encourage them to embrace behaviour that will contribute to improved self-confidence and hope for their futures. Their counterparts in the “control schools” receive all components of the intervention but do not receive cash incentives.

Learners can achieve three milestones:
- academic progression at school;
- knowing their HIV status (annual voluntary HIV testing);
- attending and actively participating in an extra-curricular sustainable livelihood programme—called My life! My future!

These incentives serve as catalysts for engaging young learners in healthy lifestyle behaviours. Because the learners from the seven control schools do not receive the cash incentives, it is possible to assess whether the incentives have an impact on risky behaviours and new HIV infections among learners.

The My life! My future! sustainable livelihood programme is being implemented in both control and intervention schools. By participating, learners receive entrepreneurship skills and guidance on planning for their futures and managing their finances, as well as learning about the opportunities that are available to them. Through the programme they have access to education about sexual and reproductive health and youth-friendly health services. These adolescents also benefit in the long term through increased knowledge and economic prospects.

As part of the intervention, teachers from schools in both the intervention and control groups receive training on the Department of
RHIVA enables our children to take initiative and focus on their school work. They also prioritize homework above everything else and have improved on their scores since they joined RHIVA.

Parent

Education’s standardized Enhanced Essential Package, which includes:

- *Education for all: A guide to building schools as inclusive centres of learning, care and support,* with additional material emphasizing HIV and AIDS;
- material on HIV prevention and sexual reproductive health to be incorporated into the Life Skills programme;
- information on local resources and sites where condoms, HIV counselling and testing (HCT), and circumcisions can be accessed;
- informational materials such as posters, pamphlets and AIDS hotline details.

A parenting support programme is also being offered as part of the intervention to empower parents to encourage the desired behaviour in their children.

2011—a warm and positive response to the RHIVA intervention

2011 kicked off with the implementation of the *My life! My future!* sustainable livelihood programme with learners.

Based on reports from the youth facilitators who conduct the after-school *My life! My future!* sessions, learners have responded positively to the programme and actively participate in the activities. The youth facilitators have also seen a positive impact on learner attitudes and behaviour.

Learners have shown growing confidence and an ability to speak about sensitive issues.

Learners in the intervention schools are attending more extra-curricular sessions than learners from control schools. The cash incentive is cited as being the reason for this difference.

Focus groups have been held with parents of learners enrolled in the RHIVA programme. They have given positive feedback about the improvement in attitude toward education that they have seen in their children. Parents noticed an increased commitment to studying and staying in school.

Related to the positive changes in academic commitment, parents have also noted a changed attitude toward planning for the future. They say learners are now better prepared for tertiary education and have a better awareness of options available to them, including starting their own businesses.

Parents in the focus groups said that the change they have seen in their children is most notable with regards to accessing HCT. They speak enthusiastically about their children seeking testing, and then receiving the cash incentive for doing so.

As part of the parenting programme, well-illustrated and accessible materials have been developed, which cover elements such as parenting skills, the needs of adolescents, homework support and involving themselves in their children’s schools.

RHIVA has had further unanticipated benefits for parents: they are learning to read and write in English. Parents at two of the RHIVA schools have formed small study groups where they use the *My life! My future!* material to practise reading and writing in English, assisted by volunteer teachers. This self-initiated activity has also given parents the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the programme content.

Impact and the future

Evidence from the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the RHIVA project has shown positive trends in behaviour change—in the lives of adolescents, their families and their communities. Although it is too soon to scientifically evaluate the impact of the project on new HIV infections in adolescents, the early evidence of positive impact of the project is very encouraging. After the programme ends in October 2012, the impact of the RHIVA interventions will be fully evaluated.

At present MIET Africa is exploring options with the Southern African Development Community, the EKN and other potential partners for testing the replicability of RHIVA in other Member States.
One day a child will inspire the nation.
Our projects: Education Centres

The programme commenced in 2005, with the aim of establishing a network of education centres across the province that would serve as decentralized hubs for the delivery of quality education support to schools and their communities, especially those in rural areas. The programme was funded through all its phases by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN).

Evolution of the EC idea

With funding support from the EKN, from the late 1990s MIET Africa had been supporting the KZNDoE in piloting multimedia resource centres. Based on the findings of the pilot project, in 2004 a decision was taken to roll out a network of 120 education centres throughout the 12 education districts in KwaZulu-Natal.

The Education Centres programme commenced in 2005. The main objectives were to increase access to educational resources; to strengthen service delivery by providing training for teachers, centre managers and members of the community; to enhance resource delivery and communication between the Department and schools. By March 2009, when the programme was to have come to an end, it was envisaged that there would be 120 fully functional education centres across KZN. Apart from the construction and equipping of education

Dr C Lubisi
formerly Superintendent General, KZNDoE

Our institutions have become islands, and seemed not to be part of the community... [Education centres assist] us to reinstate our education institutions as part of the broader community.

Poverty is one of the most important factors that impede rural education development. Rural communities also face the burden of illiteracy and unemployment, and often they cannot contribute, either intellectually or financially, to the improvement of schools and the quality of education provided to their children. Many rural schools lack resources, infrastructure, facilities, access and skills. Teachers often lack the opportunity to improve their subject knowledge or their professional competence. The KZNDoE and its districts are stretched to manage and support education effectively.
Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

Nelson Mandela
former President of South Africa

centres, as well as training of centre managers, the project would also include a component that focused on teacher support.

The project experienced some unavoidable delays. Nevertheless, by March 2009, 103 centres (22 free-standing, 37 school-based and 44 communication centres) had been established as basic nodes of support. Ninety-three of the centres were partially equipped, and 46 were staffed with fully trained centre managers. The remaining 57 centre manager posts had been advertised and were expected to be filled, and all free-standing centres had administrative staff and ICT specialists. Accordingly, the EKN granted a series of extensions until June 2011 so that all aspects of the project could be completed.

2011—completion and handover

The first half of 2011 was particularly satisfying as outstanding work was completed, and the project was brought to a successful conclusion.

Component 1 (infrastructure, equipping and capacity development) activities saw the completion of the construction of six free-standing centres that were handed over to the Department. Two of the centres were officially launched and opened by the MEC for Education—events that did much to raise the profile of the centres themselves, and the potential of education centres in general.

The equipping programme at all free-standing and school-based centres was completed: in total, 2333 computers and 93 data projectors were supplied to the centres. There is the potential for education centres to become important vehicles for the enhancement and promotion of Science education. Twenty-three strategically located free-standing centres were equipped with simulation software for teaching of science; 65 centres were equipped with science kits to support the teaching of Physical Science (especially the practical component); 22 centres were provided with Life Sciences kits that support the teaching and learning of aspects of the curriculum.

Library book scanning software was installed in 18 centres. This helps mobile library services to loan books to more schools and children. And all centres have also been equipped with first aid kits to handle emergencies that may occur.

Children have unlimited potential. Through education anything is possible.
Importance of bus
A Sine of force energy
A material
Shock absorption
Structured consistent
High level of education
In order to increase
Increase of 30%
In schools
Training was completed for 54 centre managers (using the four EC training modules that had been developed by MIET Africa) on how to manage centres and programmes at the centres. A cadre of 20 centre managers and other officials has also been established and trained. They will be responsible for the training of new centre managers as they are appointed.

Component 2 (teacher support) activities were focused mainly on addressing the challenges of sexual harassment in schools—an initiative developed during the extension of the programme.

School and community dialogues were conducted in schools in seven education districts. These dialogues focused specifically on sexual harassment and teenage pregnancy, and used the education centres in the district as hubs. Subsequently, the programme facilitated reflection and review sessions at 59 schools, with the aim of sharing learning and experiences gained through the dialogue process.

Materials of various kinds were produced to promote the prevention of sexual harassment and abuse, which include Let’s Talk that introduced the dialoguing approach; wall posters and pocket posters for learners on the national guidelines and procedures for dealing with sexual abuse; advocacy materials with arresting slogans like ‘Don’t look away!’ and “Let’s break the silence.” In June a national seminar was hosted at which the aims of the project and the lessons learnt were shared with 51 delegates representing the education departments of all nine provinces.

**Education Centres—the achievements**

The KZNDoE has reported a marked increase in activity at the education centres. The Department now is able to hold meetings and training sessions at education centres rather than having to hire expensive venues or hotels. Many department-initiated programmes now use education centres as hubs—for example, the Hey Maths! Programme at several centres, and the MEC’s Science and Mathematics teacher development programme. Centres offer a range of programmes to teachers, learners and community members. Of particular note are at the centres at Phongola (the Science and Mathematics Enhancement Project) and Pungashe (ICT, Science, Mathematics and career education).

Education centres now fall under the direction of the education district offices. The effect of this decentralized control is that centres are more readily address local needs. Community groups are using the centres to access information and services, while some centre managers have developed creative programmes for communities, including adult education programmes.

The dialoguing process proved truly transformational: it helped teachers develop competency and resilience in dealing with sensitive gender issues; it helped learners become more confident to report cases of sexual abuse. The involvement of school management teams deepened the understanding of the extent of challenges facing teachers in dealing with sexual harassment, sexual abuse and teenage pregnancy.

Many centres are now also being used by other government departments, such as the Department of Health, to reach rural communities. This has increased rural access to services, directly fulfilling the aims of the programme as articulated in its name—*Education Centres Supporting Rural Development.*

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“If real development is to take place, the people have to be involved.”

*Julius Nyerere*

*former President of Tanzania*
One day a child will find the recipe for success.
OUR PROJECTS: Learn About Healthy Living (LAHL)

The aim of the LAHL IV is to support schools to become inclusive centres of learning, care and support, where every learner, especially the most vulnerable, can learn. What made this intervention different from MIET Africa’s other care and support programmes was the piloting of a Human Rights Based Approach at all levels of project planning, implementation and evaluation.

The LAHL IV programme was not a new idea to MIET Africa. It arose from our considerable experience with the Schools as Centres of Care and Support (SCCS) programme, and extends our partnership with the KZNDoE and Department of Basic Education to implement Inclusive Education in all schools across the country. Its aims and objectives mirror those of the Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) initiative. Indeed, the implementation of LAHL IV in Nongoma offers valuable lessons for CSTL as it is implemented across the SADC (Southern African Development Community) Region.

A town like Nongoma

Nongoma, situated 300 kilometres north of Durban, is a sprawling rural centre that is home to a large number of impoverished communities. Many people in these communities depend on pensions and/or child support grants to get by. Levels of adult literacy are low and there are few opportunities available for formal employment.

For children growing up here, the problems of schooling include overcrowding and
Children have unlimited potential. Through education anything is possible.

shortages of classrooms, poor provision of sanitation, water and electricity to schools, and a quality of education that leaves much room for improvement.

The baseline study conducted for LAHL IV found the following: a large proportion of learners in Nongoma schools rely on the care arrangements provided by the older generation (grandparents); many children live in households with up to seven or more other children; the vast majority of learners do not have a biological father present in their lives—where there is a biological parent, it is usually the mother.

The prevalence of HIV in Nongoma has had a significant impact on the functional economy of the region. High infection rates have increased the demand for healthcare facilities, as well as for the educational and financial support of orphans and other vulnerable children.

Why the LAHL IV intervention?
It was in these conditions that a care and support intervention was planned for 24 schools in three clusters in the Nongoma area. The intervention itself evolved from our experience with the SCCS programme. The site of the pilot was chosen because, like many other rural areas in KwaZulu-Natal, the children of Nongoma were particularly affected by the HIV and AIDS crisis, and their basic rights to education, health, safety and protection had been compromised. With the growing number of orphans and vulnerable children—and the devastating impact that HIV and AIDS is having on children, their families and teachers—it was felt that a coordinated and creative response was needed.

The central objective of LAHL IV is to strengthen the capacity of the education system and school communities to respond to the needs of vulnerable children—thereby improving their education outcomes. But as noted, LAHL IV was unique for having piloted the Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) at all levels of the project. The HRBA is based on the recognition that everyone has rights—and that duty-bearers have an obligation to fulfil them. LAHL IV focuses on helping marginalized people claim the rights that are theirs, and seeks to overcome the lethargy that many duty-bearers have when providing services that people have a right to.

LAHL IV targets learners, teachers and community members, and focuses on child and community participation that ensures meaningful involvement with issues that affect their lives.
2011—Living and working in a rights-promoting environment
Project activities in 2011 were aimed at supporting teachers, learners and community members to open lines of communication among themselves, and to increase their awareness of what it means to live and work in a rights-promoting environment.

The project team had a packed training agenda. Workshops were held on positive discipline, classroom management, psychosocial support and learner vulnerability identification, and were aimed at supporting effective teaching and learning in schools. In many cases the eyes of teachers were opened to learners’ issues they had previously ignored: a highlight of the year has been the marked reduction in the use of corporal punishment in schools.

Institution level support teams (ILSTs) have been established in all schools. Working with the KZNDoE’s Learner Support Educators, the project team provided training to all of them on their functions and responsibilities. School Governing Bodies were also trained by the KZNDoE’s Governance and Management Directorate, in order to empower them to function properly in schools.

Community meetings and workshops for parents and caregivers were aimed at helping parents play a meaningful role in the education of their children. During the training “Creating a learning environment for your child”, parents were urged to oversee their children at their homework, even if they (the parents) cannot engage fully with the academic content.

In its work with learners, LAHL IV has promoted Soul Buddyz clubs in the primary schools, while fostering the establishment of Representative Councils of Learners in the high schools. A highlight of the year was seeing learners assert themselves as confident and responsible young adults, using their voices to raise issues of concern to them. In particular, they have been active in organizing community events to raise awareness of rights and other matters of concern (for example, HIV and AIDS, sexual harassment and abuse).

In common with other MIET Africa interventions, LAHL IV actively promotes multisectoral collaboration. The project has brought together various stakeholders to ensure effective service delivery to rights-holders: structures such as the NGO Forum bear witness to this. Children and community members have been able to access services through “jamborees” (service delivery events) organized by the project.

Future consolidation
The project team dubbed 2011 “The Year of Handover”, and a series of meetings was held with the KZNDoE to plan this. However, the extension granted by the funder has provided the opportunity to consolidate further the achievements of the project, and to secure the “handover transaction”. There are positive signs that this will happen—for example the Department’s efforts to ensure that ILSTs are operationalized in the schools, as well as its appointment of the Learner Support Educators who will take the project forward.

Our school is changing a lot . . . We wear our uniforms and take pride in this. We launch campaigns, for example to keep the school clean.

Learner
King Dinuzulu High School
One day a child will fix the world.
OUR PROJECTS:
Education Support to OVC

In April 2009, MIET Africa together with the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZNDoe), the RTI International and JET Education Services, started the implementation of a USAID-funded pilot project in the deep rural Sisonke District in KwaZulu-Natal.

The project set out to research the link between vulnerability and learner performance, with the aim of designing appropriate interventions to address learning barriers experienced by orphans and vulnerable children (OVC).

The Education Support to OVC in South Africa (ESO) project was located in 42 pilot schools in the Kokstad and Umzimkhulu education circuits in Sisonke, using two full service schools as hubs. Findings from a baseline research conducted at the beginning of the project were used to design learning support interventions.

As the implementation partner, MIET Africa’s role was to collaboratively develop materials that would support the delivery of the interventions, to conduct training and implement interventions at ground level and to support the research. The two-year project was brought to a successful conclusion in June 2011. Having directly addressed the issue of learner performance, particularly in the context of vulnerable children, the intervention generated much interest from department officials and communities alike.

Findings from baseline research painted a gloomy picture of the state of education prevailing in the district. Overall learner performance was found to be alarmingly poor. What was apparent too was the impact that vulnerability had on performance: among the most vulnerable 75 per cent of the population, performance was almost uniformly poor, while it was distinctly better among the least vulnerable. The report concluded that strong-performing, effective schools can best help overcome the barriers created by vulnerability. Therefore, one of the most effective ways to help vulnerable learners is through consistent, overall improvement in school effectiveness.

The report also highlighted the importance of multisectoral and broad-based governmental support to these vulnerable communities.
Our focus is now wider. We focus on issues affecting the kids outside of school. And we have formed partnerships with other project schools and stakeholders.

Principal
Nombewu Primary School

Why the ESO intervention?
Through its support to the KZNDoE in establishing its Inclusive Education strategy (Schools as Inclusive Centres of Learning Care and Support), MIET Africa had learnt that it is difficult to determine the direct impact of care and support interventions on learner performance. The ESO project afforded a timely opportunity for MIET Africa to implement interventions that directly targeted learning and teaching. Our participation in the baseline research and the subsequent intervention design workshop was therefore important for trying to impact on learner performance, especially vulnerable learners, as articulated in the goal of the project: improved school performance, access and retention among vulnerable children and adolescents.

Even at the outset it was acknowledged that the impact on learner performance could not be accurately measured in the limited timeframes of the project. However, it was accepted that the ESO project had great potential for contributing towards whole school effectiveness by implementing the interventions designed on the basis of the baseline research. This in turn would strengthen the Department’s efforts to transform schools into inclusive institutions of learning, care and support.

2011—supporting schools and school communities
Schoolchildren, parents and primary caregivers, community members, teachers, school managers and district and provincial officials were all beneficiaries of the ESO project. During the course of the project, schools were supported to establish school vegetable gardens. This had a two-fold purpose: to provide additional nutrition support and as a tool in teaching literacy and numeracy. Multisectoral collaboration has always been central to the project. “Jamborees” (integrated service delivery events) were organized, during which help was given to vulnerable learners and their families to access services. A highlight of the last few months of implementation was the participation of the project schools in reading competitions—organized by the project, but in collaboration with the municipal libraries and schools.

In terms of Education White Paper 6 and the KZNDoE’s Inclusive Education strategy, institution level support teams (ILSTs) are mandatory support structures in schools. Important functions of the ILST are the screening and identification of vulnerable learners, and the provision of support in areas of need. The project provided training and support to the

Children have unlimited potential. Through education anything is possible.
42 schools to establish their ILSTs. By the end of the project, ILSTs were starting to function effectively in over 80 per cent of the schools, as was evidenced by the number of children being screened and identified.

The 42 schools were trained in interventions that targeted improving the literacy and numeracy of learners. Literacy training was supported by the distribution of books and reading materials to all project schools; teachers and district officials noted a steady increase in the interest in reading amongst the learners. Numeracy training boosted the confidence of teachers and was supported by the distribution of support materials (handouts and DVDs).

Over and above the specific support to the 42 project schools, training was also provided to the ILSTs of the other 168 schools in the Umzimkhulu Circuit. A positive feature of this intervention was the involvement of district and circuit officials as part of the training teams. This had an added benefit of increasing the sustainability of the main activities after the project ended.

The 42 project schools were given a conditional grant of R24 000, which they used in various ways to support learning and bring relief to vulnerable children, especially girls. Schools that started food gardens with support from the project have expanded them and these have become invaluable assets for schools and learners. Produce from the gardens was used to supplement the school nutrition programme or was distributed to vulnerable learners to take home.

An innovative aspect of the project was the training of parents and caregivers, for which special parenting materials were developed. The training was groundbreaking since it built the capacity of parents and caregivers to support their children’s learning. It was conducted for five groups of parents and caregivers (each with a minimum of 25 participants). The Department’s district Governance and Management Unit has committed itself to cascading the training to more parents and caregivers. The effectiveness and usefulness of the materials is underlined by them having been used extensively in MIET Africa’s other projects.

More children are coming [to the school] because parents see that the school is helping the children in need.

Project Coordinator

ESO—an evaluation

A final project report prepared by RTI (2011: 49) provides a broad overview of the achievements of the project. These include that during the course of this project, nearly 18 000 learners (half of whom were girls) were given improved opportunities to read, write and work with numbers. More than 1500 teachers and school managers were trained in improving children’s reading, writing and numerical abilities, as well as helping children to access essential services. Over 100 members of district and circuit based support teams were trained on the Department’s Inclusive Education strategy, as well as on practical, cost-effective ways to help schools improve learner performance. Finally, nearly 1500 primary caregivers and parents were supported in various ways on how to support their children to learn better.
One day a child will put bread on the table.
OUR PROJECTS: Siyanakekela (“We care”)

The Siyanakekela project is a partnership between MIET Africa, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZNDoE) and the David Rattray Foundation, with funding support from the DG Murray Trust.

Siyanakekela is being implemented in 15 schools in the Endumeni and Nquthu Circuits in the Umzinyathi District of KwaZulu-Natal. Started in May 2010, the project aims to help parents become more involved in the education of their children by making schools “centres of community life”. The primary target group is all learners, including those outside the education system. Approximately 4000 learners and their families, and about 162 teachers, have so far benefited from the project. The project is due to end in March 2012.

Why Siyanakekela?
Rural communities across KwaZulu-Natal, and indeed across South Africa, are characterized by high levels of poverty and poor access to quality health and education services. Many children come from impoverished homes where family support for their education is limited by poor levels of adult education and literacy, and, frequently, a feeling of disempowerment in communities.

The Department of Basic Education’s mandate for Inclusive Education requires that formal structures be set up in schools to provide care and support for vulnerable children. While the strategy works well in other areas, active participation by parents, caregivers and general community is weak: Siyanakekela responds directly to this weakness.

An instructive lesson for MIET Africa from the Schools as Centres of Care and Support programme (implemented in partnership with the KZNDoE) was the lack of real community participation in the affairs of the school: communities could, and should, be more involved in decision-making at schools, and have a role in providing a continuum of care and support to their children. With the support of parents, caregivers and communities, learners stand a greater chance of attaining their full potential in their education.

Siyanakekela aims to build the capacity of both schools and their communities to identify a range of barriers that impact negatively on learners' education.

The Project has capacitated us greatly . . . [It has] opened our eyes on understanding the learners we teach. The project has brought the parents closer to the school and they now have interest in the school. All educators can deal with learners in a very supportive way.

Principal
Siyanda Secondary School

The Project has capacitated us greatly . . . [It has] opened our eyes on understanding the learners we teach. The project has brought the parents closer to the school and they now have interest in the school. All educators can deal with learners in a very supportive way.
Siyanakekela: an annual report 2011

Our Projects: Siyanakekela

Children’s learning, and then to find solutions to address these barriers. It tests a model of school-community partnership that is based on multisectoral collaboration with local government and municipalities for providing essential services to school communities. The intended outcomes are that communities are conscientized about the importance of education of their children, and that they, the communities, participate fully in school activities.

2011—multisectoral collaboration: a key to success

The collaboration of different sectors and stakeholders has been one of the strengths of Siyanakekela: the association with the Premier’s Operation Sukuma Sakhe has been particularly important, with Sukuma Sakhe coordinating integrated service delivery days at cluster schools. Health promotion campaigns run with the Department of Health helped to foster the relationship between departmental health officials and school communities. The 15 project schools were identified as health promoting schools and now serve as satellite health service stations for mobile clinics.

In other activities, teachers and School Governing Bodies were trained on how to screen, identify, assess and provide support for children identified with special learning and/or psychosocial needs. Communities are now working together in some schools to help children who have dropped out to return to school. This is evidence of the trust and improved relationships between communities and the schools.

There have been many reports of improved learner performance; one high school attributed its improved matric pass rate in 2011 to the influence of Siyanakekela, through the encouragement it was giving to parents to actively support their children’s learning. There has also been a noticeable increase in the number of parents visiting schools to check the academic progress of their children, or even in some cases to volunteer to do work to improve the school.

As part of its aims to influence policies on care and support in education, the project successfully motivated for one of the project schools (Mampunga Primary) to be elevated to the status of a full service school. In terms of the KZNDoE’s Inclusive Education strategy, it will now serve as a support centre for the neighbouring schools in order to provide access to resources and services for them.

Siyanakekela plays a vital role in identifying cases that require our intervention.

S H Namba
Department of Social Development

Children have unlimited potential. Through education anything is possible.
One day a child will find all the answers.
**OUR PROJECTS:**

**Phongola Science and Mathematics Enhancement Project**

The Phongola Science and Mathematics Enhancement Project is a three-year (2010–13) project that focuses on improving teacher skills and learner results in Science and Mathematics.

Based at the Phongola Education Centre, the initiative is a partnership between MIET Africa and the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZNDoE), and is funded by the South African Sugar Association. A key objective is to increase the number of children from disadvantaged backgrounds who qualify for tertiary-level studies in Science-related fields. At present, learners from 14 of the 32 high schools in the Phongola Education Circuit benefit directly by participating in a programme of Saturday and holiday classes in Science and Mathematics, which are held at the education centre. In 2011, 80 Grade 12 learners were enrolled for this intervention.

**Going to school in Phongola**

Phongola is a small town in a rural area of northern KwaZulu-Natal, near the Swaziland border. The area is a predominantly commercial agriculture zone, offering farm employment opportunities to a relatively small number of the area’s residents. More than 60 per cent of Phongola’s population live in poverty, and adult education and literacy levels are low.

It is a context of extreme household poverty. Many eligible households rely on social grants as the main source of income; others rely on the support of neighbours. Some of the learners attending school in Phongola are from Swazi families settled illegally in the area. A number of households, including those from Swaziland, are headed by children.

Most schools lack the necessary educational resources and equipment for Science and Mathematics: the majority do not have a science laboratory, or even the science equipment necessary for learning and teaching. Accessibility to schools is also a problem; from the main road, the average distance to reach the school is about 30 to 40 kilometres on gravel or mud roads.

There is overcrowding in some high schools, with up to 60 learners in a class, which obviously makes teaching and learning very difficult. Some schools do not have a Mathematics and/ or Science teacher. Others have young teachers, who are often inexperienced or not adequately professionally qualified.

Most schools are located from about 15 to 40

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In these classes you discover your weak points and learn to believe in yourself. It is good to attend these classes because you gain a lot of skills on how to attempt questions which seem to be difficult.

**Learner**

*Langa High School*
The MIET project helped me a lot because now I have knowledge to apply and get good symbols for my matric results.

Learner
OPhongolo High School

Children have unlimited potential. Through education anything is possible.
One day a child will connect the world.
The Ambassador’s Girls Scholarship Programme (AGSP)

The Ambassador’s Girls Scholarship Programme (AGSP) formed part of the American Education Initiative (AEI-AGSP), funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The programme commenced in 2005 as a support programme to add value to MIET Africa’s care and support initiatives. Initially the programme provided scholarships in the form of material support (school uniforms, schools fees, books, food supplements and toiletries) to orphaned or otherwise vulnerable girls, including those from economically disadvantaged families or affected by HIV and AIDS. This was coupled with peer-mentoring to motivate them to attend and remain in school, and to strive for better performance. Subsequently, in response to the requests from local communities and schools, the programme was extended to include boys.

The programme was renewed annually, and was implemented in three provinces—the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and the North West—targeting 200 girls and 100 boys in each province. After 2008 however, no new learners were enrolled into the programme, which came to an end in September 2011.

Background
At the time the scholarship programme started in 2005, MIET Africa was implementing the SCCS (Schools as Centres of Care and Support) programme in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and the North West. Providing scholarships to needy children was seen as an ideal way to add value to the work that MIET Africa and schools were doing in providing care and support to vulnerable children and communities.

The AGSP provided material and mentoring support to vulnerable learners, thereby filling a gap in support provision. A component of the SCCS programme was the screening and identification of vulnerable children, with a view to accessing the support they needed. By providing school uniforms, food supplements, books and stationery—as well as mentoring support—the AGSP alleviated directly the plight of many of those identified as facing psychosocial and economic barriers to learning.

2011—providing material and mentoring support
During the nine months the programme ran in 2011, the AGSP provided support to 262 girls and 118 boys across the three provinces. Materially, all learners received uniforms and nutritious porridge, while books were bought for their schools’ libraries.

Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family.

*Kofi Annan*
former Secretary-General, United Nations
Regular mentoring sessions were conducted with scholarship learners at all project schools. Among other topics, mentoring sessions dealt with “The impact of gender roles” and “Sexual abuse, harassment and exploitation”. Mentors also discussed career choices and building self-confidence with learners. The mentoring sessions proved to be an important vehicle through which vulnerable learners could express their thoughts about their fears and aspirations. Mentoring sessions also focused on children’s rights, which helped to make learners aware of their rights, and responsibilities, at home and at school.

Learners often confided in their mentors on sensitive issues; because mentors had established good working relationships with Life Orientation teachers, issues affecting learners could then be addressed collaboratively by the mentors and the school.

Achievements of the AGSP
Scholarship learners have shown improved self-esteem and confidence levels. Teachers reported that scholarship learners are often chosen as class monitors, and that they regularly stand out from the crowd. Some have assumed leadership roles on councils of learners. One learner at Nxongwane Primary School wrote a poem entitled “I am”: its theme—children being seen as valuable and as individuals whose voices matter.

Teachers also said that learners are concentrating and performing better at their school work. Reading in particular has improved. One boy said, “I never used to like books. After being part of the mentoring session, the stories about role models in sport that my mentor read to me made me look for books to read, especially those about Bafana soccer players.”

Tours and camps have boosted interpersonal relations among scholars: even the shy ones came back with improved communication skills. The food supplement the learners received has contributed to the alleviation of poverty for the learners and other members at their homes.

The mentoring sessions have been particularly valuable. Truancy rates, especially among boys, are reportedly lower and the rates of learner pregnancy among scholarship girls are low. All this is testimony to the impact of the mentoring support that learners received.

Perhaps one of the highlights of the year was a spin-off of the mentors’ interactions with the teachers: reports were received of teachers being more sympathetic to children’s needs. There was a marked drop in the use of corporal punishment, for example. This interaction seems to have helped teachers to realize that children have rights, and these have to be respected.

There are only two lasting bequests we can give our children . . . one is roots, the other wings.

Stephen Covey
Bestselling Author

Children have unlimited potential. Through education anything is possible.
One day a child will build a better future.
MIET Africa, in partnership with DNA Engineering Consultancy, is involved in the building and equipping of eight support centres in different areas of KwaZulu-Natal.

The construction is funded by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZNDoE), and is expected to be completed by June 2012, and forms part of the Department’s programme to provide infrastructure so that schools can become truly inclusive centres for learning care and support.

Why the construction programme?
After the publication of Education White Paper 6 (2001) on Inclusive Education, the KZNDoE—in partnership with MIET Africa—developed its Schools as Inclusive Centres of Learning Care and Support Strategy in order to help it realize the goal of turning schools into caring and supportive environments, where barriers to teaching, learning and development are addressed.

The first phase of the roll-out plan for the strategy involved constructing and equipping 50 full service schools. MIET Africa was involved in the design and development of the project. Phase 1, which commenced in 2009, saw the construction of 12 centres across the province. In Phase 2, which commenced in November 2010, another 14 centres were constructed.

As project manager of Phase 1 and 2, MIET Africa was involved in the project assessment, establishment of project scope, cost estimates, tender documentation, tender adjudication report and presentation, monthly evaluation of work on site, preparation of the final accounts and assistance with the preparation of the project close-out report.

In the current phase MIET Africa manages the social responsibility component of the project, and focuses on the importance of community involvement with the contractors, as well as ensuring that the prescribed procedures are followed when members of the community are employed.

2011—equipping support centres
In terms of its Inclusive Education strategy, the KZNDoE declared that each district should have a reasonable number of support centres to assist in addressing the barriers to learning in schools. Equipping the centres appropriately will help meet this aim. This will also contribute
Children have unlimited potential. Through education anything is possible.

On its [education’s] foundation rest the cornerstones of freedom, democracy and sustainable human development.

Kofi Annan  
former Secretary-General, United Nations

Towards the sustainability of the centres and will ensure that they are used optimally.

In January 2011 the KZNDoE appointed MIET Africa to equip 13 support centres with furniture and electronic equipment. This forms Phase 3 of the construction programme, and will be completed by 30 June 2012.

In this phase, equipping the centres is being done in four main stages:

**Stage 1:** Supply and install cabling and infrastructure (so far 12 centres complete; the other is in progress)

**Stage 2:** Supply and install furniture (complete in all centres)

**Stage 3:** Supply and install computers, printers, servers and projectors (complete in seven centres; in progress in the other six centres)

**Stage 4:** Supply and install security gates at six centres (will be completed by the end of March 2012)