



# PSP NEWSLETTER

Keeping you up to date with PSP teacher development

2020 TERM 2

## From the Director

### Managing the Covid 19 crises

The challenge of how to continue supporting teachers despite the Covid-19 global health crisis, national lock down and closure of schools has catapulted PSP into a new and exciting phase of development.

These disruptions have changed the face of teaching and learning, forever. The online space opened opportunities for many, including PSP. In a period of three months, facilitators, with support from the technical team, shifted all our training workshops and also school support onto the Microsoft Teams platform, making these accessible for teachers. We have received excellent response from principals, teachers and education officials thus far.

However, the majority of children and teachers do struggle to access online resources due to a lack of connectivity and/or the new skills that are required. Also the interrupted teaching and learning time has intensified the inequality in education in South Africa, with potentially long term consequences for this cohort of learners.

We continue to monitor developments very carefully as they unfold with a view to amend and adapt our support of teachers flexibly going forward.

Our thoughts and prayers go with all the families who have suffered in so many ways during Covid-19.

Dr. Zorina Dharsey

## Classroom support

Facilitators have also been invited to enter classrooms virtually to provide guidance and appropriate strategies for specific on-site challenges.



Our **10 facilitators** have become skilled **online practitioners**, drawing in and training many teachers on the MS Teams platform.



PSP developed a **technical team** made up of our administrative staff and led by Programmes Manager, Novosti Buta to support the facilitators as they present and run their courses.

## PSP moves online

PSP facilitators underwent intensive training on how to use the Microsoft Teams platform and adapted training and course materials accordingly. Teachers were also provided training on how to access and use these platforms.



Mindful of the trauma, fear and uncertainty experienced by teachers, parents and children at this time, facilitators participated in a 'Trauma Informed Teaching' course, presented by Judy Strickland of Hope House. We also tapped into the expertise of a consultant on 'Teaching in uncertain times'. Strategies learnt from both are incorporated into PSP's material and helped facilitators when interacting with and guiding teachers.

Natural Sciences & Technology/Natural Sciences (NST/NS) material was developed in PowerPoint format and sent to Grade 7 teachers when the schools re-opened for Grade 7 and Grade 12 learners in early June. Similar support has more recently been provided to Grades 4, 5 and 6. Schedules for workshops and small group support sessions to address particularly challenging content areas are discussed with teachers and developed to suit their contexts.

The situation in schools is fluid - PSP understands this and we have responded in a flexible way, for example:

- the NST/NS curriculum has been 'trimmed', so our training is adapted to the latest 'fundamental' topics.
- learners may not do practical investigations themselves in the classroom. PSP therefore guides teachers by means of the online workshops and PowerPoint presentations.

Our 'Practical Maths at Home' booklet was made available via WhatsApp to teachers, with explanatory voice notes in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa, for them to pass on to parents to help with learning at home.

Since 5 June 2020 we have reached 542 teachers from 80 schools online, across our projects to date.



*The new face of teacher development and classroom learning.*



ACCESS PSP SCHEDULE OF COURSES ON YOUR SMARTPHONE



Remember to register your school for online courses.



# PSP serves on Civil Society Task Team of experts



PSP Director, Zorina Dharsey was invited onto a Civil Society Task Team of the NECT (National Education Coalition Trust), to work with Prof Linda Chisholm (University of Johannesburg) and Prof Anil Kanjee (Wits University) to give input on impacts of Covid-19 on curriculum implementation in 2020, and put forward points to consider for restructuring education for the best possible medium and long-term outcomes for learners. Prof Chisholm will collate important discussion points which the NECT will share with the Department of Basic Education when making crucial strategic decisions. PSP's contribution was based on our experience of how the curriculum can

best be implemented in difficult circumstances for all children to benefit.

Amongst the questions and strategies discussed were:

- ✓ the impact of lockdown and the lost days on teaching and learning and potential strategies for catch-up,
- ✓ how to stabilise schools for effective medium and long-term teaching and learning, knowing that there is no one quick-fix strategy,
- ✓ implications of different learning needs and allowing greater flexibility for teaching and learning, how teachers plan their lessons and how children learn.

We believe this is an opportunity to redesign education, looking to the future as we work towards a more equitable and productive education system.

## PSP BELIEVES...

With the right support children can work through challenges and learn to cope. This way they build greater resilience to deal with change, failure, adversity and even trauma.



## PSP ONLINE: WHAT OUR TEACHERS SAY...

*"I just feel optimistic knowing that I can contact my PSP ladies every time I need them. I now know exactly what should be done, because I was really unsure. I will use MS Teams for classroom support."*

*"As a keen witness of PSP's endeavours to teach and support parents, teachers and learners, I commend the PSP's passion and efforts in support of education." From a senior Subject Advisor (WCED).*

*"So glad I came to this session as I now feel confident to teach the Periodic table. I have also learnt new strategies to improve my lessons e.g. the WALT & KWL chart. I now have a full understanding of the assessments and new ATPs."*

## UPDATE ON PSP RELOCATION

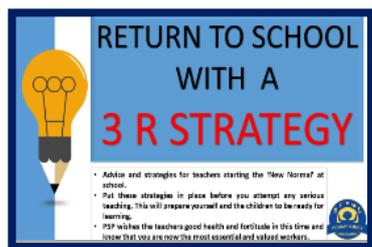


The PSP's office is moving from Edith Stephens Nature Reserve to a new base in Plumstead and will be operating from there by the end of

September. Watch this space!

**NOTE:** Teacher courses and HOEP environmental education classes will continue at Edith Stephens Nature Reserve, Philippi - after we return to 'normal'.

# PSP develops a 3 R Strategy



To assist principals and teachers to find their feet once schools began opening, we developed a helpful guide: **Return to school with a 3 R Strategy.**

This was used with teachers and sent to schools and WCED officials, with positive feedback.

*"It will be a source of comfort to them indeed."*

*"This is so relevant and innovative – thank you."*

*"The 3R Strategy is fresh, unique and clear."*

## Reconnect

Establish your connection to each teacher and/or child.

## Reassure

Calm emotions and provide a sense of continuity and stability. Always tell children the truth about Covid-19. Remember that most people recover and we celebrate that.

## Reorientate

Build an emotional foundation. Strengthening the relationships between you and the children will lead to the successful resumption of effective schooling.

