

Extra-Mural Education Project
beyond the school wall

5 December 2005

The Danish Parliament

The Education Committee (Uddannelsesudvalget)
Christiansborg Slotsplads 1 DK 1240
COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

Honourable Colleagues

SUPPORT FOR INNOVATIVE CENTRE FOR GENERAL EDUCATION (SPF), FROM PARTNERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT

The Extra-Mural Education project (EMEP) is an independent public benefit organisation (PBO) working in close partnership with national, provincial and local government in South Africa. Our work is to help schools grow as learning and recreational hubs within their communities. Through the development of in- class and extra-mural learning, we help to energise the curriculum, tackle inequality, build social inclusion, link learning to the economy, and develop healthier and more creative lifestyles. EMEP is one of South Africa's leading community school learning organisations.

Since 1997, EMEP has been working closely with SPF both to train and mentor our school partners as well as to introduce the South African Government to SPF's unique practices, innovations and benefits in order to inform our transition to democracy and equity (still continuing, as it is throughout the developing world). This has involved numerous visits to SPF and from SPF to South Africa. The positive results of these visits (enhanced school and classroom management, curriculum design and delivery, learner performance) have led to great interest from the authorities here to learn more from the Danish educational system and strategies, generally, and from SPF in particular. This led in 1999 in a delegation to SPF of government and civil society leaders led by the then Deputy-Minister of Labour, Ms Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka, and the Chief Director of Schools in the Western Cape Province, Mr John Lyners.

- Ms Mlambo Ngcuka has recently been appointed Deputy President of the Republic under President Thabo Mbeki. She remains keen to see an SPF/Youth Town built here under SPF's mentorship
- The provincial government of the Western Cape hopes to build on these links and send a delegation of senior officials to visit SPF in 2006. The purpose is two-fold: to learn how best to institute democratic teaching and learning in the 1760 schools in this province, and set up a local version of SPF/Youth Town to research, develop and spread more effective methods.

Other highlights of our work with SPF include:

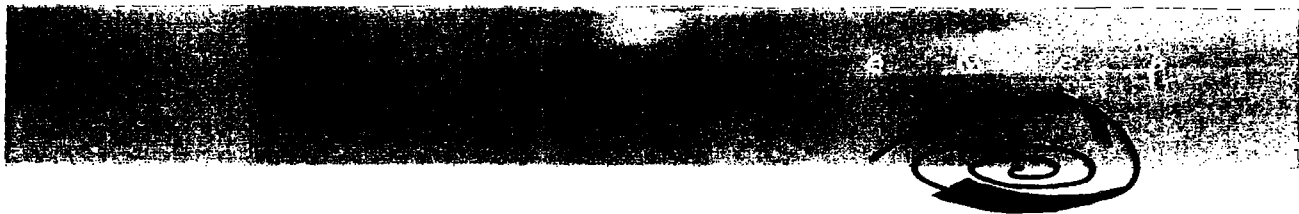
2000: a team of four SPF teachers facilitated a series of workshops on the theme of 'Democratic Learning Processes in a Democratic Society' for teachers from three EMEP

Tel +27-21 448 0660 Fax +27-21 448 0661 E-mail: info@emep.org.za 52 Trill Road Observatory 7925
PO Box 122, Observatory 7935 Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA

PATRONS: The Hon. Deputy President. Ms Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka, Mrs Doris Lessing

TRUSTEES: Prof. Fink Haysom (Chairperson), Mr Wayne Alexander, Ms Vivienne Carelse, Mr Solly Makosana, Ms Shirley Moulder, Mr Randall van Voore, Ms Siyanda Zondeki.

EMEP Educational Trust IT 3047/98 EMEP Fundraising IT 3048/98 Non-Profit Organisation Reg. No: 020-093-NPO



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schools, effecting an annual enrollment of 3 000 learners. These were about Evaluation, Home-School-Partnership, Story Line, Creative Learning, Conflict Resolution and a special leadership workshop for the principals and senior management teams of the South African schools. The project was launched by the Provincial Minister of Education

The project culminated with a year-end study-visit of 12 school leaders of each of the three schools plus two EMEP practitioners from 22 September to 4 October 2000. The evaluations by the participants were very positive and the impact on the schools after their return was enormous in terms of school and class management and curriculum design. All of the schools have since included modules of Danish society in their curricula.

2001: the results were confirmed in a follow-up visit by an evaluation team from SPF (Marianne Munis + Poul Erik Christoffersen) from the 18 to 22 September 2001.

Since then, collaboration has been regular with contact in 2004 and 2005, including a second round of follow-up visits to the EMEP schools in March 2005. We are hoping to bring more school and government officials to SPF in 2006 and beyond.

As a result of the enormously positive impact of SPF's work, example, training and mentoring, we are most concerned that this unique institution might be closed. Its influence educationally is inestimable world-wide. Furthermore, SPF serves as an enormously effective ambassador for Danish culture and innovation.

Background to South African Support of SPF

1. Moving from apartheid to democracy in 1994 heralded major changes in South African policy and provision. One of these key changes was to move to a nine-year compulsory system with an outcome-based educational curriculum. This required substantial changes to curriculum design and methods, the roles and responsibilities of educational roleplayers, and the training/retraining and support of teachers and officials
2. There were no international best practice models for this, except in Denmark with SPF
3. Denmark is the only country in the world that, going through similar changes, anticipated the need to set up a school of innovation that would serve to research, develop and test new methods and models and then spread the learnings in the sector
4. Furthermore, after evaluating its first implementation phase, the Danish parliament and SPF reflected that a remaining gap was the link between the world of learning and the world of work. The result, another global first: Youth Town
5. For the developing world, this is a critical contribution: with few jobs in the formal economy, the greatest need of our children and youth is entrepreneurship. For this they need to be exposed to and to understand both the range of work possibilities and the needs of good citizenship

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6. Youth Town makes a range of learning for the economy and citizenship available to children and youth before they make their critical career choices; SPF ensures the curriculum is pedagogically innovative and sound. They both draw in key players in business and industry to support and fund this. It remains the only such institution of its kind in the world.

On behalf of our Board and partners in government and community, we respectfully encourage you to reconsider any suggestions to close SPF. Moreover we ask you to continue to build your support of this uniquely Danish institution, so that SPF may increase their roles as educational pioneers and role-models even beyond your borders.

With good wishes

Yours in educational development

Sincerely

Jonathan Gevisser
Director

Tel +27-21 448 0660 Fax +27-21 448 0661 E-mail: info@emep.org.za 52 Trill Road Observatory 7925
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