

WHAT HAVE OUR COMMUNITIES BEEN UP TO?

While we have been busy accessing new communities in the Bojanala region, and introducing them to CAMP (Community Asset Mapping Program), our dear friends at UNISA's Department of Geography have been following up with communities that we have been working with for a while now, such as Mathopestat, and Reagile.

The Department of Geography launched a pilot workshop in mid-February, with teachers in the Bojanala area, specifically related to Geographical Information Systems (GIS). GIS has been part of the Gr 10 – 12 curriculums for high-school learners since 2004. It has become more and more apparent, that teachers are struggling with this part of the subject, and through this pilot workshop, the challenges were identified. Says Chris Vlok from the Department of Geography: "The main problem with GIS, is that teachers and schools in the rural areas do not always have access to technology such as computers, or the correct programs. We realised that an approach different from what we had in mind, was required. Towards the end of the day we reached consensus that we should rather present the theory of GIS around a real world problem with which teachers and especially learners can associate. We also agreed that a paper-based GIS project developed around the theme of water provision will make a lot of sense." Following the pilot workshop then, another workshop was held in the village of Mathopestat, with high-school learners from Lesele Secondary School. Since early 2010 the Department of Geography has been involved with promoting community vegetable gardening in Mathopestat. A reality is that very few households have running water on their properties. Water thus has to be carried in containers from the communal water points to the houses or gardens. The aim of this workshop was to engage the Geography learners with fieldwork aimed at mapping all the properties, water points and vegetable gardening initiatives in Mathopestat. Here is a short rendition from Mr Vlok, on his experience of the day:

"As on the day of the pilot workshop in Rustenburg quick thinking on . Due to the number of learners interested in the day's activities, the school's stoep and courtyard had to serve as a temporary classroom to explain the purpose of the survey and the logistics of the day. The courtyard was soon buzzing with activity as the learners were divided into nine groups to survey the nine zones we your feet was required have identified. After appointing a group leader for each group we set off with the group leaders to one of the zones for a training session on how to complete the survey forms and plot the water points and property boundaries on large scale aerial photographs. Believe me it not easy to plot a specific house on an aerial photograph when all houses (the training was in the zone of RDP houses) are of the same shape and size and there are no trees or tarred roads than you can use as reference points. The cooperation from the learners was really special. Within a week they completed the survey and Ms Konopi (their teacher) could pass the aerial photographs and survey sheets on to the GRCF office.

The next step would be to start capturing the information in a GIS. Hopefully we can share maps of water points and where vegetables are being grown in Mathopestat in a future edition with them. The intention is also to go back to Lesele Secondary School to give the learners the opportunity to capture the information they have gathered in a GIS. The learners have provided us with experience on how to map other communities in the Bojanala district and authentic material which can be used in the teaching of Geographical Information Systems."

Says Melanie Nicolau, chair of the Department of Geography: "Of even more value, perhaps, is that the learners had participated in a process of creating a map of their own community, which will be used by the community in a variety of vegetable garden initiatives. They can be truly proud of their contribution of developing their community into a sustainable community."

Thank you to Unisa's Department of Geography, for their dedication, and enthusiasm in helping us make Rustenburg the place we love to call home!



... but wait, there's more!

While Chris Vlok educated the villiage of Mathopestat on GIS, Retha Coetzee, also from the Department of Geography at UNISA, hosted a workshop in Reagile on HIV/AIDS, and the de-stigmatisation of this crucial issue in our communities. The workshop was attended by 20 community members, ranging from the ages of 22 to 75, all caregivers and counsellors from the area. The aim of this session was to support the people living with HIV/AIDS, their families and the community. The main objective was to facilitate the people to develop their own knowledge and skills to meet the challenges of HIV/AIDS. Through this session, it was identified that one of the problems are a lack of mentors/educators on grass root levels in the community. People need advisors/mentors from their own community, speaking their language, understanding their culture, and belief systems. The outcome was that together with UNISA's department of Geography, regular sessions will be held with the community to discuss topics related to HIV/AIDS to increase knowledge of related issues regarding HIV/AIDS . They also agreed on:

- Sharing their knowledge and skills and develop strategies on how to convey their knowledge to people in their families and community
- Combining knowledge and skills to empower them as facilitators/mentors, this can empower them to focus on the different needs of people affected by HIV/AIDS.
- Addressing smaller groups or even individuals will make a difference in the long term 'a drop in a pool of water creates a ripple effect'
- To equip the facilitator/mentor with skills and knowledge to empower her/him to convey their knowledge to people
- Compiling a package consisting of material to assist them in their task to provide the community with knowledge on HIV/AIDS
- This package will be compiled by the group themselves, will be language specific, and aligned to the needs of the community.

Here are some pictures of the day's activities:



Children from Reagile doing a welcome dance



Melanie Nicolau from UNISA and Corne Theunissen from the GRCF in deep conversation with a Reagile Community member



Reagile community members showing off their food gardens

Photos: Compliments of UNISA's department of Geography

News from Losperfontein

In 2010, the GRCF, in collaboration with Quantum Step human Development, took on the huge task of piloting a personal development training program, with 12 maximum security inmates at the Losperfontein correctional facility just outside Brits. These men were identified as they have initiated their own NPO from within the prison walls, and approached the GRCF for assistance. Over the past 18 months, we have become very attached to these men, specifically, because of the impact they have had on their fellow inmates. Recently, we received a heartwarming letter from Rudi Pretorius, Lecturer at UNISA's Department of Geography, regarding a student that is currently being detained at the Losperfontein correctional facility. This is what it said:

" I have recently been pleasantly surprised by the quality of assignments received from a Losperfontein inmate, as well as the enthusiasm which he puts into his work. Despite being confined behind prison walls and with limited resources at his disposal, Pierre Joubert performed better than most of the other students in an assignment requiring a lot of hands-on work, research, initiative and "out of the box" thinking. This came as a surprise to me – I did not think it would be possible for a student working under such constraints to do so well. This also showed to me that access to the internet is not necessarily the golden key to success, and that self-motivation and pride in the work one does, is more important. He also went the extra mile by sending me some worked activities and self-tests, which I gladly commented for him. I wish him best of luck with his studies. He sets a remarkable example for his fellow students of what in fact is possible to achieve."

For us at the GRCF, this is tangible evidence of the impact that the anti-crime awareness campaign has had in this facility. We are proud of you Pierre, and the Losperfontein inmates for their true commitment in creating a better life for all.

EVENTS CALENDAR

3 June

World Environment Day

10 – 12 October

CAMP for Change Conference



Pictured above is Nohline Geyer and Alma Delpport from Quantum Step Human Development, with the group of Victim Counsellors at Immanuel Hope Centre in Reagile. This group has undergone a series of three workshops in personal development, and training to assist them in their task of counselling.

Visit our website on www.grcf.co.za to learn more about our projects!

STAFF NEWS

Another two of our leading ladies....

Lubbe Oosthuizen

has been the Financial Manager of the GRCF since its inception in 2000. Although she was born in Kimberley, she grew up in Brisbane Australia, and has



been living in Rustenburg now since 1999. She has two sons, Irving (41) and Delmar (38). Through her career she received in-service training at various corporate companies before being appointed at the GRCF. She says it was a great opportunity for her, as it was a complete new challenge, and different from what she was used to. If she could change one thing in the world, it would be to have more peace and harmony. She is an avid dog lover, and her perfect days are spent on a boat fishing, or reading historic matter. Her life motto is to stay young at heart, and to always be optimistic.



Thembi Khetse has been with the GRCF for almost a year now, and is particularly applied in the Ke Rona Arts & Culture project.

Before she was appointed at the GRCF, she was involved with an organisation in Ledig called Masisizane Oldies & Orphans, where she already showed her compassion and love towards her community. She says, that being with the GRCF, provides her with an even better platform to work with the community, where she can give her gift of love and fulfil her dreams, helping other people realise what they can do for themselves if they just believe in themselves. The only thing she would change in this world is how countries are run, and change people's attitudes towards work. Thembi is a devout Christian, and says she loves reading her Bible. Her life motto is to always have a smile on your face.

PO BOX 21553
Protea Park 0305
Rustenburg, North West
South Africa

E: grcf@grcf.co.za
P: +27 14 592 1525
F: +27 14 592 1506
web: www.grcf.co.za

Making Rustenburg the place we love to call home