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## Yvonne Coulson

Swaziland Report 2017 - Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March to Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> April.

Work on the NCP project and help with the homework clubs.

I had good information about project from Sarah (*at All Out Africa, our local partner*) and accommodation from Cecilia (*a previous volunteer*).

The orientation was excellent included a walk around the area, information about the 2 shopping areas, and an introduction to the first NCP at Zulwini and the 2 young volunteers already there. There was a printed time table of where I should be and the times. We had an introductory Swazi lesson.

What you did well was find this project which is excellent for early learning volunteers, very well organised, possibly the best organised of all the projects I've been on.

The first 2 weeks at Zulwini was interesting. I learnt how the system works and how to use the curriculum and the resources provided. This meant the next 2 weeks when I was on my own at Mvutjini with only the cook to help with translating went quite smoothly. The teacher was missing due to her husband's death and the illness of her son. The cook had been attempting to run the NCP and I was able to help her work the system and use the resources better.

Note – this was unfortunate, but such crises sometimes happen when there is no provision in the system for emergency or substitute teachers. Yvonne is a frequent education support volunteer and was certainly able to cope along with support from our local partners.



At Zulwini - lunchtime



classroom



playground

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I left behind copies of Handa's Hen which have been written into the curriculum. Also Monkey Puzzle, some other fiction and nonfiction for the slightly older children went into the box of books for homework club.



swimming lessons



homework club – finding out about the UK

They have a good supply of crayons, glue sticks and plain paper. They need coloured card for display and I had taken a few tubes of glitter. The children had never seen this before and really enjoyed getting it all over the pictures, themselves and ME. Anyone going out pre-Christmas take plenty they will love using it.

The NCPs have a really structured syllabus and a copy of the relevant term a volunteer is going to be there would be helpful to think of items to take. There are things available to buy in the 2 shopping malls which are near and the exchange rate makes them cheap. The office has a store room where Eunice has collected a variety of boxes, tubs etc for model making and crayons if you need replacements.

Work on getting the children to look at picture and story books needs attention, difficult as group work not easy in the NCP's with large numbers, even with 2 or 3 young volunteers.



At Mvutini: crafty classroom work



games after homework club

I felt I had contributed more to Mvutjini, but maybe it was only because of what I had learnt at Zulwini. I did enjoy working 3 afternoons with the older ones at homework club having the same children on a 2:1. I saw the children 4 times.

The highlight was probably the trip to the Safari park, the children enjoyed the ride in the Combies to the park and then round it. The noise was incredible especially when they saw the zebras, they really loved the zebras.



our Safari Park trip – so exciting & the zebras were favourites

I would recommend volunteering here to any one, especially early years' teachers.

I spent time at the malls and I could have done some exploring but enjoyed the trip to Swazi Candles and the craft market.

**NOTE – here are some wonderful comments from our local partners following the input from Yvonne, as well as from Dianne and Cecilia:**

*It really feels like progress has been made with our early education centres. The hard work Dianne and Cecilia and our own staff, Tjengisa and Eunice. put into the curriculum is also it is having the impact on making the volunteer experience more structured and also definitely helping the teachers and the children are really enjoying it. We're conducting benchmark assessments so we hope to see tangible results of the curriculum on the children's skills and knowledge at the end of the year.*

*Cecilia said that the parents of the children at Ezulwini were coming in to see the children's work - so it's fantastic to see the parents engaged too! We decided that the children will take all of their work home at the end of the term to show parents. This should then nicely lead to term meetings where the teacher, some parents, chief representative and AOA staff attend to discuss last terms achievements and plans for the next term.*

*Responsible Travel are sponsoring trips for our children, such as the Mlilwane one, and these tie into the curriculum too. So it's been great to get the kids out of their area and exploring the opportunities in their own country.*

*Super proud of how things are going and I think we're leaving a legacy here !*

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