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SUPPORT PLAN FOR WORK OF VOLUNTEERS IN SCHOOLS IN THE EASTERN CAPE 2020-2021

This plan describes ways in which volunteers can help this project to develop their aims and goals.

Comments are based on the work of volunteers in the period up to December 2019, and are derived from questionnaires completed by the projects and reports written by the volunteers. New aims and actions, if any, are shown in green and these have either been identified from requests made by the projects or have arisen from the work done by volunteers.

AIMS	ACTIONS AND COMMENTS
<p>1. To help the teachers to improve literacy and numeracy levels within their schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some volunteers have worked in the Foundation classes (grades R – 3) to help to develop understanding of the basic techniques of literacy and numeracy from an early age, and future volunteers could be used to continue this work. Volunteers with appropriate skills in teaching pre-school children could also work on pre-writing skills with teachers at schools which include ECD classes. • Volunteers could continue to help teachers to prepare simple resources to aid in the teaching of literacy and numeracy and to support the school workbooks. One volunteer commented that it is most helpful to the educators if volunteers use the textbooks as a starting point, even if they expand on this with additional resources and teaching strategies, as the curriculum is very prescriptive and they are under pressure to keep up with the prescribed work week by week. • Volunteers could continue to help develop strategies to encourage children to listen to and speak English, particularly pair and small-group work. Several volunteers mentioned the use of debates and discussions in their lessons. One volunteer demonstrated that language learning should start with listening rather than speaking or writing, and introduced the Read Aloud system of story-telling a way to familiarise children with English. He also encouraged teachers to get children to speak in pairs rather than expecting them to give whole class responses – a less threatening approach for them. A further volunteer used class discussions as a basis for creative writing and

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	<p>poem performance. One school credits oral work done with volunteers as the reason for their school's success in winning all categories in a recent public speaking competition. The Principals of two schools have requested that volunteer help be focused in the Foundation phase so that learners are confident in speaking and understanding English before all teaching goes into English in the Intermediate phase (from grade 4) – a volunteer pointed out that ideally young children should be taught full immersion into a foreign language to make them fully bilingual but that this is not possible when all teachers are native Xhosa speakers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some volunteers have begun to help the teachers with strategies to teach phonics.• Volunteers have begun to help develop methods to help children write effectively such as the use of writing frames. One volunteer did a unit of work on descriptive writing and others helped to develop the teaching of grammar in a more interactive way, using visual learning strategies. One volunteer encouraged children to write on post-it notes – less intimidating than a blank sheet of paper.• Volunteers could help to develop games and activities to support the learning of maths, and school would welcome further support in this area.
<p>2. To help the schools to make good use of their libraries and to encourage children to read for pleasure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some volunteers could help the teachers to develop a programme for the use of the school library. In several schools volunteers have helped to organise and catalogue the books and sort them into loan boxes for different classes. One volunteer introduced a system of library monitors and started a book club for more advanced readers. Another created a network between the librarians at two schools, enabling them to give each other support in the future.• One volunteer brought with her several story books set in southern Africa which the children greatly appreciated – another produced his own big books of songs.• Volunteers could work with the teachers to help children understand the books they have read. In one school this has provided the successful focus for the work of two volunteers. One volunteer was asked to assess comprehension across the school as the head-teacher was

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	<p>concerned that children were reading without understanding. The Principal of this school attributes his pupils' success in reading competitions organised by the local librarian to the work of these volunteers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteers could help children to develop other activities out of the books they have read e.g. plays, posters.• Volunteers could help to encourage the children to enjoy reading through strategies such as shared reading.• At one school volunteers have focused on several placements on teaching a love of reading through the use of Big Books and stories linked to songs.
<p>3. To help to develop over time a variety of teaching and learning methods in order to make lessons more interactive and interesting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteers have demonstrated a range of active teaching methods during lessons as appropriate (for example flashcards, stories, role-play, games, card-sorting, songs, art and craft activities, creative writing, dramatisation etc.). Several volunteers commented on how receptive the teachers were to new ideas and how keenly they tried out these methods with other classes. One volunteer highlighted how pleased she was when a teacher realised that active learning methods actually reduce workload as the learners are thinking for themselves! Volunteers could also work in pre-school classes to develop strategies for learning through play. One volunteer commented how important it is for children to see that learning English can be fun!• In discussions with teachers volunteers could continue to suggest different possible ways of delivering the content of the curriculum in a more interactive way. One volunteer focused on the importance of oral participation in lessons and aimed to show that children who are actively engaged in lessons learn more. One teacher commented on how much the children appreciated another volunteer's communicative approach to language teaching and what a great improvement she is seeing in her class's learning now she is continuing to use this method.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteers could help the teachers to make teaching materials as appropriate within the constraints of available materials.• One volunteer introduced the use of PowerPoint presentations as a means of showing the learners the word outside their immediate environment; the teacher she was working with highlighted this as the teaching method she most wants to make use of in future.• Volunteers could help the teachers to develop strategies to ensure all children in large classes remain focused and involved in learning. One volunteer introduced pair and group work to the class she was working with, techniques new to that teacher.• One volunteer organised a trip for all Grade 3 children to a Marine Bird rehabilitation Centre, which she used as a basis for discussion and written work with her group. Future volunteers could encourage all teachers to regard experiences such as this as stimulus material for classwork.
<p>4. To help the teachers to develop different methods of differentiation in order to help children of all abilities to succeed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Several volunteers have worked with small groups of slower learners or children who have fallen behind to develop their confidence and help them to catch up with the rest of the class. Two volunteers ran extra classes for a selected group of children before the start of the main school day. A number of volunteers have provided one-to-one support for individual children, tailored to their specific needs. Several schools stressed the importance of this work, in a school system where all classes are mixed ability, and future volunteers could continue to provide this type of support.• If appropriate, some volunteers could work with gifted and talented children to push their learning forward in a particular area of the curriculum.• Several volunteers have helped the teachers with strategies for differentiating work within the normal curriculum to help children understand the work at a level appropriate for them. One volunteer also ran workshops for teachers on the subject of differentiation. Another volunteer reported her delight at seeing a lesson where the follow-up tasks included three different tasks

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	<p>geared towards children's different abilities. Several volunteers have worked with small groups simply as a means of giving children more individual attention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some volunteers have begun to help the teachers to focus on different learning methods for different groups of children within their lessons. In one school a volunteer focused on the need to plan programmes for individual learners, within the guidance provided by the Department of Education.
5. To develop subject specific areas of the curriculum within the schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteers with a specialism in Science should continue to help develop techniques for practical sessions within the constraints of the materials available locally. Two volunteers demonstrated how to do a range of enjoyable and memorable Science experiments using readily available resources. The Principal of one school has prioritised the need for support in Science as she wants to improve her students' chances of getting into the Science stream in High School.• Volunteers with an expertise in Maths should help schools to develop teaching strategies and resources to help in the teaching of this subject throughout the school. Similarly, support in this area would enhance students' chances of accessing Maths streams at High School.• A volunteer with expertise in Drama worked with a teacher to introduce improvised group work based on life skills.• Several schools have requested volunteer support in teaching Creative Arts, which now forms part of the curriculum for grade 7 learners. Similarly support from volunteers with expertise in Music would be welcomed, although musical instruments are not routinely available in schools.

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- Volunteers with expertise in working with children with special needs could work with children identified by the school to help them progress – several volunteers have focused on this area of work.
- Volunteers with expertise in IT worked with the Technology department of one school, team teaching the Systems and Control unit and helping to write a scheme of work, and future volunteers could continue this work in other schools as appropriate. They also provided staff training in the use of educational software. Further volunteers have continued to provide IT training for staff in other schools. The Principal of one school would like volunteer support in training teachers into ways of using IT-based apps and resources as part of their everyday teaching. At one school a volunteer ran some training sessions for teachers in how to use their laptops. Another volunteer suggested the children would benefit from small-group teaching on word processing and the use of the Internet, and this could be an area where future volunteers could contribute.
- A volunteer with sporting skills spent time coaching the rugby team of the school where he did his placement, leading to some success in the district sports competition. Future volunteers with skills in various sports could continue to contribute in this way.
- Volunteers in one subject area (Science) have supported local initiatives to work with teachers from a cluster of local schools, presenting model lessons and joining in discussions as required. It may be possible for future volunteers, in this and other subject areas, to take part in similar activities, and this would be welcomed by the schools as a way of enabling volunteer skills to be shared by staff from more than one school. They have even discussed the possibility of Skype sessions and the creative use of youtube!

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<p>6. To provide support to teachers and learners within the schools in a variety of ways that are wider than the school curriculum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteers will provide support and motivation to the teachers by working alongside them and showing an interest in what they are doing.• Volunteers will help to open the minds of learners by exposing them to people from new places.• One volunteer worked as a counsellor for staff and children at the school. Parents miss this support for their children, so the school would welcome a volunteer with counselling skills who could provide training for local staff to enable this to be offered as a permanent service.
<p>7. To assist, where relevant with information sharing with parents. The purpose is to support parents in being better equipped to support their children in their education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteers could help with educating parents on effective support for their children. Some volunteers have given talks to large groups of parents about ways they can support their children's literacy and have provided them with strategies they can use at home. In one school volunteers have also recruited and trained a group of parent-volunteers who are now coming into school to support children's literacy. <i>At one school volunteers held an after-school event for families to share the songs and stories they had been using with the children, and showed them how a family can enjoy looking at a book together even without the ability to read it.</i>• One school would welcome volunteer support in preparing workshops for parents on a variety of life skills issues, ranging from the importance of good nutrition and exercise to ways of controlling your teenage child without resorting to violence.