



The Sci-Bono Discovery Centre in partnership with the Gauteng education department and the Lego Foundation ran a stadium-building competition to make the most of Fifa World Cup fever. Groups of six to 10 grade 7 learners at primary schools throughout Gauteng participated in the competition. Each school had a budget of R25 000 to purchase Lego blocks, which were then used to build replicas of stadiums. Out of 43 model entries, there were five winning schools. Glenanda Primary School created one of the winning models (above), to which learners are seen putting the final touches. Photo: Sci-Bono

Spelling it out

Teacher Reporter

Well Worn, an interactive theatre company with a strong environmental ethos, has produced an educational play to help learners and teachers deal with mounting environmental problems such as climate change, energy and water shortages.

The aim of the production is to promote concern for creating a better and more sustainable environment. The company, based in Westdene, Johannesburg, is taking the play on a tour of schools around Gauteng throughout this year and into 2011 and is funded by the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund.

Assistant project coordinator Sine Msomi said the company "aims to create original and stimulating theatrical work around the themes of climate change and global warming, sustainable and holistic development, social justice and the ever-growing 'eco-consciousness' taking over the planet".

Said Msomi: "We strive to encour-

age in South Africa's youth an intelligent and eager theatregoing audience and socially responsible generation."

With a talented and skilful cast, including Craig Morris of *Blood Orange* fame, the production is both exciting and engaging.

Msomi said it is hoped that learners will become good ambassadors in creating awareness of the need to care for the environment. Each school gets a free resource pack and tool kits after the play – the only cost is the school's commitment to tackling climate change by starting a water- and energy-saving project, said Msomi.

"Educators or principals wishing to book this excellent and informative play and programme for their school should get in touch with the company as soon as possible as slots are filling up fast."

For more information, visit www.wellworn.org.za, phone Sine Msomi at 011 023 9440 or email wellworn-theatre@gmail.com

Cash prize for feedback

How should we improve the content of *theTeacher* to serve you the reader?

What issues should we be covering? Send your input to the editor, Primarashni Gower, at: primg@mg.co.za or fax 011 250 7502. The writer who produces the best input will win R5 000.

initiative

to purchase the laptop according to the directives of his or her provincial education department. Each province will determine its own roll-out programme, which may include issues such as the granting of subsidies according to seniority, availability of funds, and so on.

Educators should not rush out and buy laptops, but rather wait until their provincial education department informs them that they qualify.

The following process applies when a laptop is purchased:

- The department identifies and informs teachers who qualify;
- A written notification from the department is issued to the teacher;
- The teacher approaches any accredited supplier at an authorised outlet as identified by the supplier;
- The teacher has the choice of comparing the different packages offered by different suppliers;
- The notification letter is presented to the accredited service provider;
- The legitimacy of the letter and the identity of the teacher are validated on a central registry;
- Once the teacher chooses a package that will suit his or her needs, the teacher and accredited service provider enter into an agreement;
- The service provider issues the teacher with a certificate of purchase that contains all the information about the package. Everything from serial numbers to connectivity is captured. The certificate is accompanied by a unique number that will be verified on the central registry;
- The teacher will be required to sign a code of conduct;
- The certificate serves as proof of purchase and will be used to acti-

vate the teacher's email account. It will also be forwarded to the department to enable the allowance and the monthly stop order for the repayments.

Can I buy the laptop for cash and will I still qualify for the subsidy?

Yes. If a teacher buys a laptop for cash from an accredited provider and it complies with the specifications of Government Gazette 32207, the teacher will still qualify for the allowance.

But there will still be monthly costs involved relating to insurance and connectivity, as these are some of the prerequisites determined by the gazette.

I have never used a laptop before. Will I be offered training?

Yes. It is imperative that teachers be properly trained to use the laptops and the accompanying applications to their fullest capacity, ultimately to ensure quality learning and teaching in the classroom.

To this extent, the strategic partners to the initiative are investing time and resources for the training and development of teachers in information and communication technologies and computer literacy. A committee has been established for this and, with our strategic partners, a training and development strategy has been formulated.

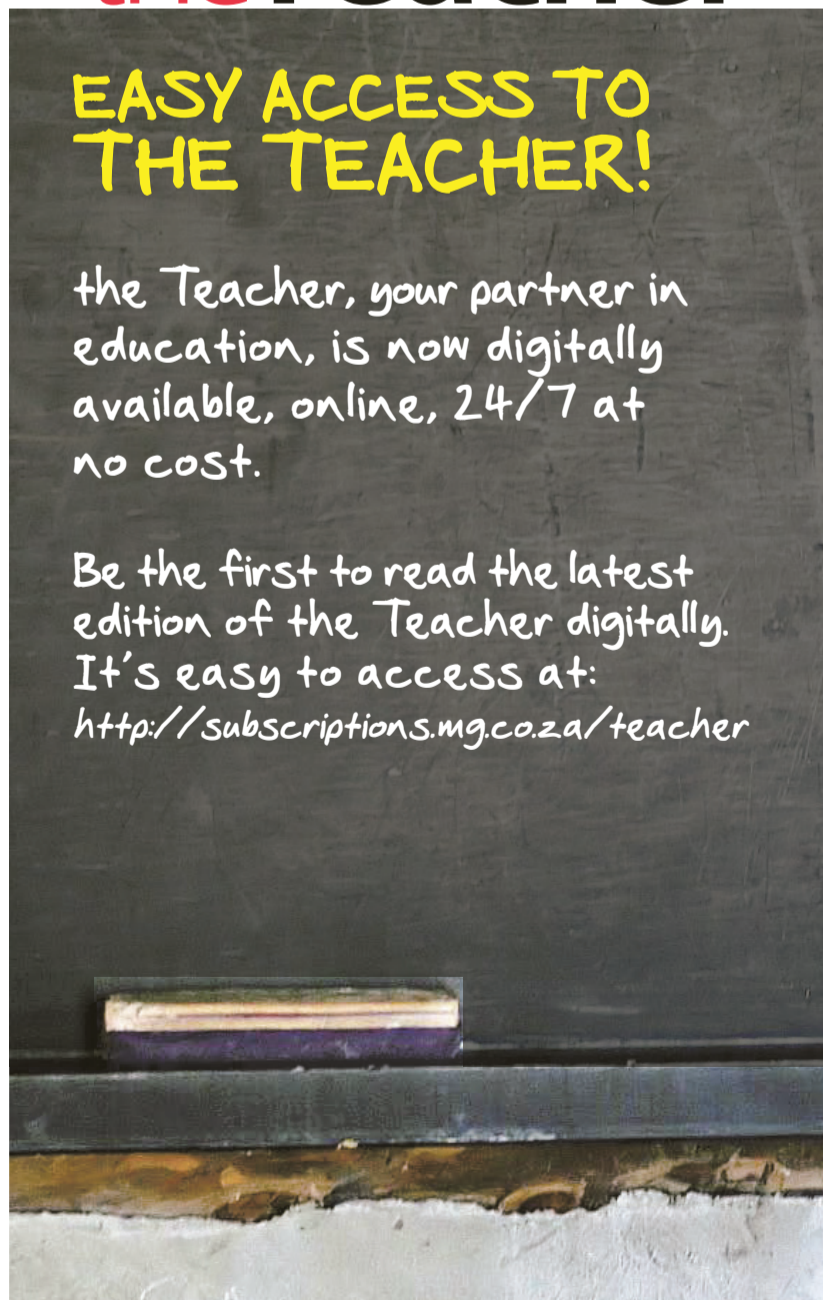
The strategic partners to the initiative are the software suppliers Microsoft, Symantec and Adobe, as well as Cisco Systems, Intel, SchoolNet and Mindset, who are investing in the initiative for the professional development and training of teachers.

theTeacher

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Right climate for change

South African schools urgently need to incorporate the teaching of how to live sustainably in our changing natural world, writes **Caitlin Ross**

Almost 200 “climate ambassadors” recently attended a United Nations Children’s Fund (Unicef)-funded conference in Zambia to discuss ways of surviving climate change and to develop strategies for dealing with the effects of global warming. But the delegates were not heads of state or policy-makers but proactive teenagers between the ages of 12 and 18.

During the conference, the teenagers designed action plans for implementing informed policies in their communities across Zambia. The Zambian Children’s Climate Conference was set up to educate young activists about what they could do about climate change in their home towns and how to develop effective solutions.

But although the Zambian children seem to be environmentally conscious, communicating in the vocabulary of the most recent climate science, the level of sustainability discourse in South Africa’s school curriculum is lacking.

“In subjects where sustainability should feature, it’s not in any way explicit,” said Andrew Petersen, science education specialist in the schools development unit at the University of Cape Town (UCT). Petersen was a member of the team that wrote the current school curriculum in 2002.

At that stage, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation’s Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) had not yet been launched.

Unesco’s DESD emerged at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in September 2002, from a suggestion put forward by the Japanese delegation to highlight



There was “very limited” talk of climate change when the current curriculum for South African schools was written in 2002. Photo: Reuters

the need to promote change in approaches to education so as to integrate the principles and practices of sustainable development. In December 2002 the UN General Assembly adopted the resolution, spanning from 2005 to 2014.

There are now moves afoot to adapt the existing South African curriculum to align with the DESD.

“Governments, international organisations, NGOs, educational institutions and schools are now variously engaged in campaigns to promote education for sustainable development on a global scale,” said Petersen.

The government of Japan is supporting attempts to integrate this into the general framework of primary and secondary school education and is financing research with the schools development unit at the University of Cape Town to develop

a module for classroom application, he said.

UCT’s development unit, in collaboration with the department of environmental affairs and planning, has also developed a climate-change education and awareness programme for secondary schools in South Africa, which they have begun implementing in certain schools.

Petersen and the development unit have also developed a training package for teachers in secondary schools, in cooperation with the department of environmental affairs and development planning and the City of Cape Town, to learn how to integrate education in sustainable behaviour into the syllabus.

So far, two four-day workshops have been attended by about 150 teachers.

Dr Kevin Winter, a lecturer at UCT’s department of environmental

and geographical science, said that when the current curriculum was developed in 2002, there was “very limited” talk of climate change.

“It only features in geography now and not in other subjects,” said Winter. But there was an argument for not getting on the “bandwagon” of climate change, and it made more sense to educate children in the practicalities of sustainable living. The problem, he said, lay in the details of how to change behavior relating to climate-change mitigation.

“Sustainability education would include ideas that enable one to deal with concepts such as pollution and lower energy usage. One of my major gripes is that this is not included in subjects such as economics and agricultural sciences, which would naturally encompass those values and practices,” he said.

Although environmental educa-

tion has been in place in South African schools for 40 to 50 years, Winter said teaching the science of how the environment is being affected is important but there is “an urgent need” to think critically about politics and the implications of living in a consumer society.

“It’s not about the science. There’s a sense of hopelessness. The carbon is up there already. So critical thinking on how to eat, consume and dispose needs lots of attention,” said Winters.

Linda Cilliers, head of research and publications at OneWorld Sustainable Investments, said policy-makers often underestimate the importance of involving children in climate talks. “It’s not only for the education of the child but also for the power of the child to educate an adult,” she said. — *West Cape News*

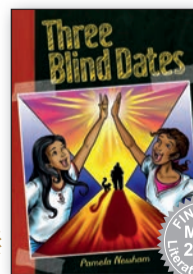
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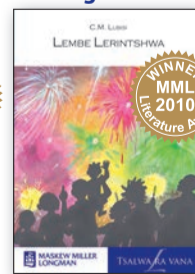
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**CHILDREN'S
LITERATURE**

In this issue, we celebrate the role of women in our society and highlight a few whose achievements are making a huge difference in some of our lives

In search of a mentor

Someone to give working women advice on dealing with “glass ceilings” and juggling work and home responsibilities is a boon, writes **Sameerah Karolia**

Dr Sabie Surtee, director of her own company, Gnavitas: Coaching and Consultancy Services, describes a mentor as someone you would usually admire or respect or would like to emulate. “A coach asks the coachee the right questions to get the latter to find the best solutions or plan of action to proactively meet goals or address challenges. In contrast, a mentor shares his or her solutions that were used successfully to address similar goals or challenges.”

Surtee, who holds a PhD from the University of the Witwatersrand and a masters degree in sociology from the University of Toronto, is also director of Hers-SA, an organisation that runs leadership courses for women academics.

She believes it is important to have a life coach or mentor because “both ... take a person out of victim mode and encourage the individual to take responsibility to meet goals or objectives”.

You can find a suitable coach through word of mouth or by approaching a coaching school or college that would have details of practising coaches.

Says Surtee: “Believe in your potential to live your best life. Get a coach to help you clarify what your best life would look like and what plan of action you would need to take to get there. After this, never stop believing that it is within your grasp.”

Surtee has had her own challenges. “Having entered the labour market during the apartheid era immediately upon my completion of high school, [I found that] gender and racial discrimination prevented me from breaking through the glass ceilings I encountered. Career advancement at the time was virtually impossible for a white-collar worker such as myself.

“I then embarked on a journey of self-discovery and had exposure to a vast body of knowledge through university studies. The attainment of knowledge, a critical mind and the accompanying self-esteem was instrumental in helping me to smash through glass ceilings that previously limited my career advancement and entry into certain professions.”

Striking a balance in life is essential. “It is a challenge to juggle different spheres in one’s life to strike a healthy balance. But, through the



“It is a challenge to juggle different spheres in one’s life to strike a healthy balance. But, through the right support from a mentor, coach, family, friends, and colleagues, it is possible.”

right support from a mentor, coach, family, friends, and colleagues, it is possible.”

Surtee believes that “me time” is very important. She describes this as allocating time to recharge your batteries and become more grounded and calmer. This could involve saying daily affirmations, keeping a journal and engaging in various spiritual practices.

“If this ‘me time’ is not done regularly, you could more than likely end up feeling as if life is spiralling out of control, which in turn leads to other challenges to one’s health, relationships, career, finances, and so on ... It is therefore absolutely important to make the time to step off the treadmill to catch one’s breath and hop on again with more energy and assertiveness.”

Kim Meszaros, marketing executive at Kelly, says she believes that the most common challenge women face is finding balance. “Knowing where and how to place your energy without relinquishing your femininity is an insecurity many women face. The ‘balance’ is different for each woman and the tactics required to reach a balance are not always straightforward.”

Meszaros says it is, “always ‘work

hard, play hard’ for mothers when both home and work are demanding, and both are important”.

She advises women to:

- Believe that if you truly put everything into your work, you will be recognised for your efforts and be successful;

- Good work is the first step to be being recognised for a promotion. In instances where good work is not being recognised or rewarded, it is important that people find the confidence to take charge of the situation and arrange a professional discussion with their manager to discuss their performance. Lack of reward can sometimes be a case of unmet and perhaps even unknown expectations on both sides. Through clear communication of work objectives and the expectations attached to achieving those objectives, there is no need for staff to have to alert their management.

- Knowledge and self-investment are essential components of remaining assertive in the workplace. Only by gaining a holistic understanding of an organisation can you find the confidence you need to secure your success in it. It is also important always to keep sight of the journey ahead: “I have always viewed all of my jobs,

even the unpleasant ones, as stepping stones to something bigger.”

- People have different ways of showing emotion and there are several strategies people can use to help them redirect this energy. Being “emotionally intelligent” means being able to manage uncontrolled and inappropriate emotional states, which is a valuable skill to have in the workplace.

- If you become emotional at work, take a break and think about it. Your emotional state is a decision you make. This means that, when a person feels that “decision time” is coming up, they have the power to take a break and choose the direction of their emotions.

- Plan as much as you can. It is true that unexpected demands creep up, but surrounding yourself with competent and supportive staff and planning for the unexpected as much as possible will go a long way towards helping you to manage your time.

- Always be sure of yourself, of who you are and where you want to go. By being conscious of your values, what is important to you and what drives you, you will always have the security you need to push yourself towards success.

Gender equality

Human rights have a long way to go

Mfanozelwe Shozi

The constitutional mandate on gender equality is clear, and the legislative process is providing the building blocks for a gender-equitable society. But government faces major challenges in ensuring the law is translated into real improvements in the lives of women and girls.

With the establishment of the ministry for women, children and persons with disabilities, there is a need to restructure the national gender machinery and amend the gender policy framework because it does not clarify the ministry’s role.

- The issues lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transsexuals (LGBT) face are not properly dealt with. Government should design programmes in schools to raise awareness on LGBT rights. The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) has realised that

communities regard awareness of LGBT rights as “promoting” gay and lesbian practises rather than simply protecting the rights and dignity of people in the LGBT community.

- A United Nations Development Programme report that maps gender equality progress in South Africa states that “women outnumber men in higher education. In the past five years, there has been a steady increase in the number of graduating female students and more women than men graduate. However, the total number of graduates from science, engineering and technology, remains significantly low as compared with the need to address South Africa’s scientific and technical skills shortage.”

Government needs to draw up programmes to change gender demographics in these subjects.

It is also noteworthy that the dropout rate of girl children is increasing,

particularly because of pregnancy. Women still remain the majority of those who cannot read and write.

- The state-run adult basic education and training initiatives, such as the Kha ri Gude programme, do not appear to have closed the skills gap. Sector education and training authorities have not been robust in empowering women and development agencies need to come up with a clear programme that will speed up the skills development of women, particularly those in rural areas and informal settlements.

- There are indications that there are gendered aspects to xenophobic attacks in South Africa. During the 2008 attacks, in almost all the centres the CGE visited, we found heavily pregnant women affected by dislocation and distress. Women who were not accompanied by male relatives, husbands or partners were

more sexually vulnerable than those who had male protectors.

- There are still major challenges when it comes to the effect and feminisation of both poverty and HIV/Aids. Women are most likely to be the ones who care for HIV/Aids patients. The uneven distribution of care work between men and women is something civil society organisations, chapter-nine institutions and government need to consider seriously.

- The CGE welcomes the fact that the government has made combating the high levels of violence against women and children a priority. But we are concerned that the availability of gender statistics in South Africa is still not satisfactory.

The lack of provision of comprehensive health services for survivors of gender-based violence is of concern and indicates that policies are not backed up by enough resources.

- Employment Equity Commission reports show that between 2006 and 2008 women were more represented in administrative than decision-making functions.

The CGE report states that most women are employed in the informal sector, and that moving women from subsistence-level economic activities to growing their own businesses and improving their earning power is still a challenge. Women still occupy lower positions in the labour market.

Working with men is critical to attaining gender equality. The involvement of men in policy interventions to transform gender norms is on a small scale, but it shows tremendous potential. Men’s behaviour and attitudes are beginning to change.

Mfanozelwe Shozi is the acting chairperson of the Commission for Gender Equality

Moving up slowly

Thabo Mohlala

More women have taken up leadership positions in various business and government structures, but there is a great deal that still needs to be done, a census commissioned by the Business Women's Association of South Africa (Bwasa) has found.

Bwasa – the largest forum of busi-

ness and professional women in the country – first came up with the idea of a census in 2004 as a way of tracking progress women are making in the corporate world and some of the obstacles that they still encounter as they climb the corporate ladder.

The 2010 census reveals that “while women make up 51.6% of the adult population in South Africa, only 44.6% of working South Africans are women”. More telling is the fact that

“women constitute only 19.3% of all executive managers and as low as 16.6% of all directors in the country”.

Some of the findings of the census indicate that women held 16.6% directorship positions. In terms of race “women of colour” (Africans, Indians and Coloureds) held 10.3% of all director positions. Interestingly, South Africa leads some of the developed countries such as Australia (10.7%), Canada (16.9%) and

the United States (13.5%) in terms of the number of women directors.

There has been an increase in the number of women on the boards of JSE-listed companies (2.4% from 13.2% to 15.6% year on year). While women's representivity has decreased marginally on the boards of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) women are still far more represented on the boards of SOEs than those of JSE-listed companies.

Most women executives are in the consumer services and financial sectors, with the most significant increases in the number of women executives seen in the technology and industrial categories.

But Bwasa said: “clearly additional measures must be put in place if we wish to achieve significant progress in the development of women in business” because “women in business are catalysts for change”.

'Every great and creative person had a great teacher'

Linda Chisholm

Sameerah Karolia

Dr Linda Chisholm, special adviser to Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga has spent most of her career trying to make a difference to the education system.

She contributed to the changes that the school curriculum is currently undergoing. The decision to alleviate the workload of teachers is partly because of the research that Chisholm and others were involved in.

Chisholm was chair and professor of education at the then University of Natal, Durban, when, in 2000, former education minister Kader Asmal invited her to lead a team to review and revise Curriculum 2005. This was the first time the newly introduced outcomes-based education curriculum was reviewed.

The revised version was implemented as the Revised National Curriculum Statement in 2002. It was reviewed again in 2009.

Before joining the then University of Natal, Chisholm was director of the Education Policy Unit at the University of Witwatersrand. She holds a PhD in history from that university and a masters in history from the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies. She obtained a postgraduate certificate in education from the University of London's Institute of Education.

Between 2002 and 2009, Chisholm held the position of director at the Human Sciences Research Council where she supervised and conducted several education-related research projects. Highlights were projects on rural education, educator workload, gender equity and teacher education. For her work with interns, she won the 2008 HSRC award for capacity building.

She has been a member of among others, the ILO/Unesco Board of Experts on Teachers; Education International's research institute in Brussels; and the Umalusi Council (formerly the South African Certification Council).

Chisholm is the author and co-author of several books and monographs and was editor of the *Southern African Review of Education* from 2004 to 2009. She says her career choice was inspired by, “the 1976 Soweto student revolt;



Dr Linda Chisholm, the special adviser to the minister of basic education

teaching at Athlone High School in Cape Town, the schools' boycott of 1980 and teachers' struggles in the 1980s”.

“With other activists, I developed an understanding of the role of education that showed me that I had a choice either to become part of the system or part of the process to

change it,” she adds.

She says the main obstacles she faced in breaking the glass ceiling was others' “lack of faith” in her capacities. Chisholm advises women in leadership and management positions, “to enable women's development through training, mentorship and giving them responsibility so

that they can prove themselves”.

She says she believes that, in her field of work, more could be done to support women in their careers through better mentorship as well as by closing the gap between home and working life.

The thing she enjoys most about her job is grappling with and over-

coming challenges, especially when this involves working with others to do so.

What education system in the world is she inspired by or has learnt from?

“I have been inspired above all else by South Africans. I think South Africa has a lot to offer the world. Our Education Labour Relations Council, for example, is a model for countries such as Japan, where teachers have minimal rights. I have been inspired less by particular countries than by people across the world who strive for a better world.”

Chisholm says she has conducted much research on how South Africa has borrowed ideas from abroad and the consequences of this. “Every country's education system is unique to it and grows out of its own history and social experience. Whether good or bad in their context of origination, borrowed policies, ideas or systems have always become ‘indigenised’ in the local context by the social realities that prevail here. I have learnt that internationally borrowed policies, in other words, have a tendency of being reinterpreted and recontextualised in national contexts in much the same way as national policies are reinterpreted and recontextualised at local and school level.”

She explains that schools and teachers “talk back” at national policies in the same way that national policies “talk back” at the international environment.

“I am cautious about ‘borrowing’ from other countries, or thinking there are any magic policy bullets. What there are, are magic teachers and schools.”

She says she believes that teachers have a special role in society.

“Each one of us will always remember the teacher that made the difference to our lives. Every great and creative person had a great teacher. Only read Chris van Wyk's *Eggs to Lay and Chickens to Hatch* to see this.

“If we had more teachers who are remembered in this way, our education system would not be despised but revered. That is also why I have always thought the role of unions is important. Unions have an important educational role to play. And they should be aware of their power to educate teachers, as their members, about many things.”

Save now for secure future

The economic crisis afflicting European economies stems from an imbalance between savings and consumption. If South Africa wants to enjoy sustained economic growth, we must address our woeful savings culture, writes **Gareth Stokes**



personal FINANCE

There are three contributors to national savings: households, companies and the government, but each saves for different reasons. Households save to meet future expenses and for retirement, companies save after-tax profit for future expansion and the government needs surplus funds to meet its social and infrastructure commitments.

If we save too little as a nation we seriously undermine our ability to invest in infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, ports and power stations – the assets essential for long-term gross domestic product (GDP) growth. Right now South Africa Inc is struggling to maintain a gross savings-to-GDP ratio of just 15.4% and households, which are included in that figure, are guilty of not saving.

If South Africa hopes to return to the savings and investment boom of the late 1960s and early 1970s, it has to encourage individuals to save. To this end, several organisations and companies in the domestic financial services industry dedicated last month to instilling a savings culture. The aim of National Savings Month was to educate individuals about the importance of saving and to encourage households to

provide adequately for both short-term emergencies and long-term retirement needs.

“At the individual or household level, saving has to do with risk management,” says Elias Masilela, a board member at the South African Savings Institute (Sasi). “Someone who is sufficiently ‘saved’ will be better prepared to deal with unforeseen circumstances than one who is not.”

Wilhelm Janse van Vuuren, a wealth manager at FNB Private Clients, agrees: “One of the most important reasons to save is to prevent your family from suffering financial hardship.”

Short-term savings also make it easier to engage in financial transactions. “Someone who is cash flush tends to get a better deal than somebody with nothing to his name,” says Masilela. Cash is a fantastic bargaining chip for big-ticket purchases such as motor vehicles and houses. The strict application of the National Credit Act, for example, means that banks favour mortgage applications by prospective buyers with significant cash deposits.

“We need to get the message across that the immediate, visible benefit of saving money is financial security,” says Leon Campher, chief executive of the Association of Savings and Investments SA (Asisa). “However, another crucial benefit of a strong household savings rate is a stronger economy, job creation and ultimately a lowering of interest

rates and inflation.”

One of the most neglected aspects of personal financial planning is saving for retirement. The July 2010 Old Mutual Savings Monitor laments the lack of financial discipline, including the preference of employees to spend their retirement benefits when changing jobs. “This creates a time bomb of individuals who haven’t provided for their retirement,” it says.

The government has a number of incentives in place to encourage savers, including tax exemptions on the first R22 300 (R32 000 if you’re over 65) of interest income in the 2010-11 tax year and concessions for contributions to pension funds, provident funds and retirement annuities. But the financial services community is in two minds about whether these rebates are sufficient.

“In the past eight to 10 years, the government has ‘returned’ approximately R8-billion per annum to individual taxpayers,” says Masilela.

People worldwide are learning the hard way that governments aren’t going to be able to support them through their retirement

But that extra cash hasn’t found its way into savings accounts. Instead, we’ve seen a decline in household savings over the period. The government has to go beyond incentives to encourage savings. “As the savings institute, we’re asking government to join us in various training and education exercises to change the savings mind-set of South Africans.”

Education is of particular importance because of the shift from defined benefit retirement funds to defined contribution funds. In the past the employer was responsible for meeting stringent financial conditions to provide its pension fund members with a “salary for life”. Now this responsibility rests on the employee and to a lesser degree the trustees of the pension fund.

Another area in which the government hopes to bolster saving among households is through the long overdue national social security system.

The financial services industry is behind any solution that will improve the social wellbeing of households, provided it is properly researched and sensibly implemented.

A practical and flexible solution could run alongside the country’s already established retirement industry. “If we are forced [through regulation] to contribute a percentage of our income to a central retirement fund, it will definitely contribute to an improved savings pool,” says Janse van Vuuren.

The Old Mutual Savings Monitor reveals, particularly among lower-

income groups, an expectation that children or the state will provide support for retirement. This persists despite the desperate plight of old-age pension recipients.

South Africa is already cracking under the pressure of paying 12-million welfare grants from the income taxes collected from just five million taxpayers.

“Another major problem is our high unemployment rate,” says Janse van Vuuren. There are far too many individuals who are unable to contribute to the national savings pool or provide much-needed revenue to the state.

Rian le Roux, chief economist at Old Mutual Investment Group SA, says: “The burden on future generations of taxpayers is going to go through the roof, especially if we combine the poor savings situation with the bizarre decision to lower retirement ages. While economies across Europe wrestle with hiking the official retirement age to 70 years, South Africa is forcing this target down from 65 years to 60.”

People worldwide are learning the hard way that governments aren’t going to be able to support them through their retirement. “People will have to care for themselves and this will likely require much higher savings during their working years,” Le Roux says.

The plea from organisations such as Asisa and Sasi is for all South Africans to “save today and own tomorrow”.

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In honour of women in SA

"Empower a woman and empower a nation"

"A woman would not hold out her hand and wait for someone; she would go into the garden, she would do something to ensure that there is a meal on the table. My point is that when you empower women, you empower a nation."

- Ms Noluthando Mayende-Sibiya, - Minister for Women, Children and People with Disabilities

Women take on so many roles in society. Traditionally they have always been mothers, wives and homemakers - seen as the ultimate nurturing force. The modern woman is still all of these things but she is capable of so much more. Nowadays women are also soldiers, entrepreneurs, politicians, athletes, astronauts, judges and leaders of nations. Women are powerful - they are the bedrock of society.

With more than 63% of our members being women the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) would like to take a moment to pay tribute to women in South Africa and in Government specifically.

Women in our country have travelled a long road to get to where they are today and have fought hard for their rights. That is why on 9 August every year our nation celebrates National Women's Day, a commemoration of the march of women on this day in 1956 that petitioned against pass laws.

Since that day women have shown that they have the ability to do great things, and today make up more than half of the South African Government at 55.8%. Women truly have begun to prove themselves and make their mark - indeed, recent research has indicated that teams made up of 50% women and 50% men are the most creative and productive, while teams made up of only men are the least creative.

Despite the advancements that women in South Africa have made, they still face many challenges such as physical abuse, HIV/AIDS, and a lack of spousal support. Another issue affecting women all over the world, including South Africa, is the problem of cultural expectations where women are expected to stay at home and take on the traditional roles of wife and mother.

The pressure that is put on women to perform their traditional roles often leads them to abandon their own dreams. It is also often the case that women are not provided with the support and infrastructure that they need to pursue their goals, preventing them from becoming the independent and powerful individuals that they are so capable of being.

However, things are looking up for women in South Africa. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap index, South Africa is now ranked as number six in the world. It was previously ranked number 22. This index measured economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, political attainment, health and the survival of women in 134 countries.

Our country was also ranked

first in the world for employment opportunities for professional and technical female workers, as well as registration in primary, secondary and tertiary education. With a population that is 52% female, improved access for women to education and employment is much needed and will without doubt reap positive rewards for our nation.

When one takes into account that more than 49% of South African men between the ages of 15 and 65 are economically active, while only an approximate 37% of women are able to find work, it becomes clear how important it is to create better opportunities for women. As Sibiya also pointed out: "We need to see the quality of life improving for all women in the country."

GEMS is committed to giving women the opportunities that they need to empower themselves. Indeed, women form the foundation of GEMS. With more than half of our members and 70% of our total staff complement being female we have much to be proud of. Add to this the fact that two thirds of our executive committee members are female and there is little doubt that women are a force to be reckoned with at GEMS, South Africa's youngest and fastest growing medical scheme.

GEMS would like to salute the women of South Africa this Women's Day. We thank you for always being the rock that has supported this nation, and now the beacon that leads us, lighting our way into tomorrow.

For members who have any questions on Women's Day, please phone the GEMS call centre on 0860 00 4367 or send a SMS to 083 450 4367. GEMS will assist you in every way possible to ensure your family's health and wellbeing.

Sources:

Stats SA - www.statssa.gov.za

Unicef - www.unicef.org

The Business Women's Association of South Africa

- www.bwasa.co.za

Top Women in Business and Government, 6th Edition

According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap index, South Africa is now ranked as number six in the world.



Noluthando Mayende-Sibiya, the minister of women, children and people with disabilities



More and more government employees are catching on to a good thing...

The Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) already covers well over one million South Africans and this number is growing fast. Every day more than 500 Government employees are making a move in the right direction by joining GEMS.

That is because they know a good thing when they see it. After all, it says a great deal about a medical scheme when surveyed members say that **the one thing** they value above all else is the continued service excellence of GEMS.

Why don't you make your move by joining GEMS?

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- Email us at join@gems.gov.za
- Fax us on 0861 00 4367
- Send a "please call me" to 083 450 4367
- Or visit our website at www.gems.gov.za and download a GEMS membership application form

Learn to love latex

sense and SAFETY

theTeacher and BroadReach Healthcare explain key facts about the HI virus in the third part of a series

What is prevention?

There are things we can do to help prevent HIV being transmitted from one person to another. One is to practise safer sex. Safer sex refers to sexual activities that don't involve any blood or sexual fluid from one person getting into another person's body. Examples include cuddling, mutual masturbation or clothed sex. Safer sex is used to refer to a range of sexual activities that involve little or no risk of HIV infection.

Why should I practise safer sex?

People who engage in unprotected sexual activities are at risk of becoming infected with HIV or other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or having unwanted pregnancies. STIs are passed easily from one infected person to another during sexual activities. Being infected with an STI can make a person more vulnerable to contracting HIV. Often people living with HIV do not know they are infected – you cannot tell whether someone has HIV just by looking at them.

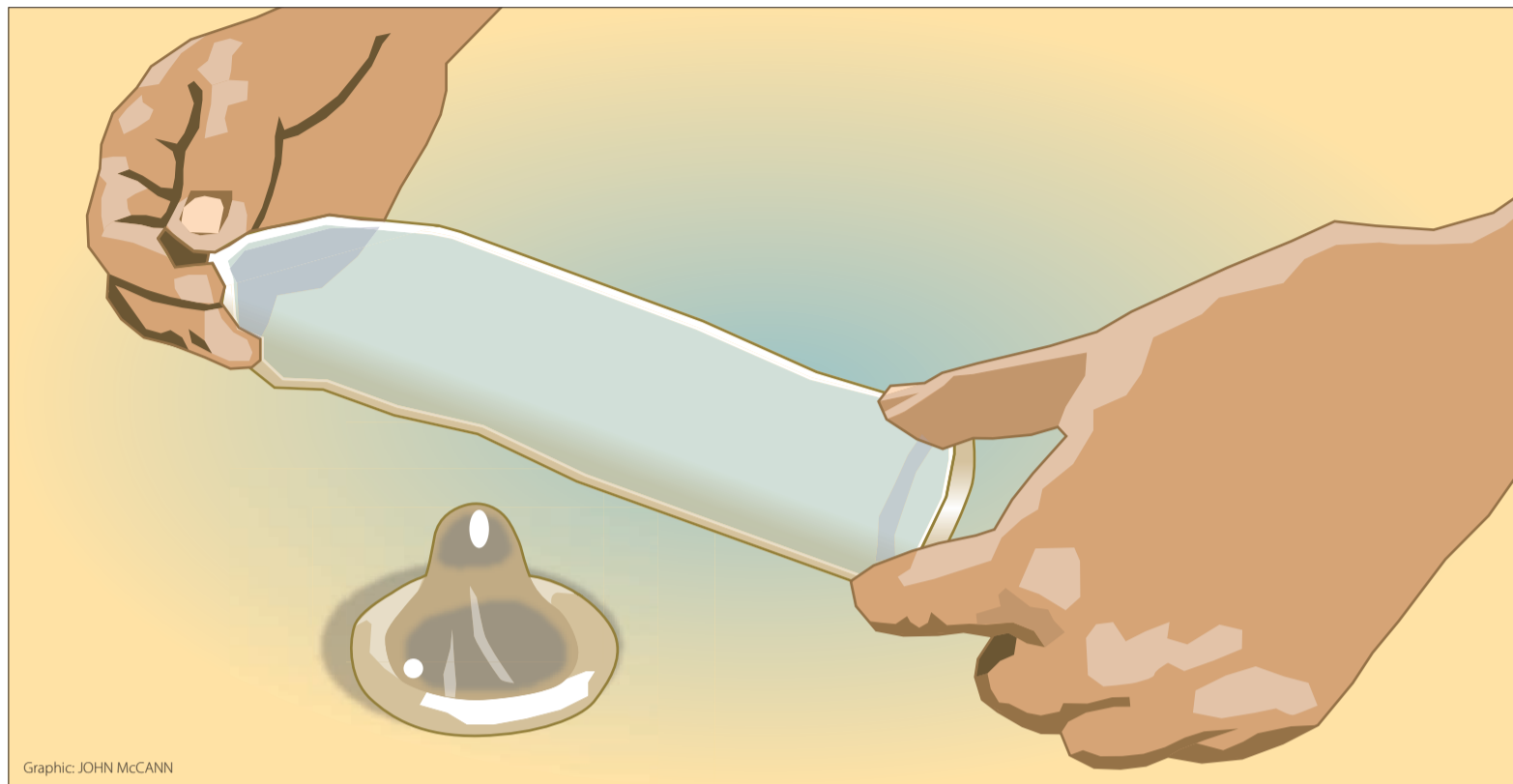
How do I practise safer sex?

Safer sex is often taken to mean using a condom during sex. Using a condom makes it hard for the virus to pass between people when they are having sex. A condom, when used properly, acts as a physical barrier that prevents infected fluid getting into the other person's body. There are other ways to practise safer sex. They include:

- **Abstaining from having sex:** Abstinence is when a person chooses not to have sex. This is the only way to make sure that you can't become infected with HIV, provided you are not already infected. It also prevents you from becoming pregnant or contracting STIs.

- **Delaying having sex for the first time:** The longer you wait to have sex for the first time, the less chance you have of exposing yourself to HIV or other STIs. If either you or your partner makes this decision, you both need to respect this choice.

- **Not having multiple concurrent partnerships** (reducing the number of sexual partners you have): This means that you should not be having unprotected sex



Graphic: JOHN McCANN

with more than one partner over a period of time. By simply reducing the number of sexual partners you have, you will reduce your chance of becoming infected with HIV. Ideally, reduce the number of partners you have to one whose status you know – and they should know yours.

- **Constant and correct condom usage:** Condoms have proven to be 98% effective in preventing the spread of HIV if they are used correctly every time you have sex.

What is a condom?

A condom is a thin layer of rubber (usually made out of latex or polyurethane), covered with a lubricant (slippery substance to make penetration easier). It can be worn by either a man or a woman during sex to help prevent becoming infected with HIV or other STIs. It also helps to protect against unplanned pregnancy. Because a man and a woman's bodies are different, there are two types of condoms: the male condom, which fits over the penis, and the female condom, worn inside the woman's vagina.

How to use a condom

- If the packaging is leaking lubricant, it could be a sign that the condom is damaged;

- Do not use Vaseline, cooking oils or lotions or any other substances other than KY Jelly or water-based lubricants;

- Do not use more than one condom at a time. You may use either one male condom or one female condom, but not both at the same time;

- Always check the expiry date. If the expiry date has passed, rather throw the condom away;

- Do not flush condoms down a toilet as it will clog the toilet; and

- Ensure that you do not leave condoms where children can pick them up.

How do I encourage my partner to use condoms?

If you are in a relationship, it is important to speak to your partner about the risk of contracting HIV and other STIs and how to prevent getting them. Below are some of the scenarios you can use to explain to your partner why it is better to use a condom:

- If either of you has ever been sexually active with other people;

- If either of you has been sexually active with other people without using a condom, one or both of you may be living with HIV. By not using a condom, you are putting your partner and yourself at risk of infection or re-infection;

- If neither of you has had a recent HIV test;

- If neither you nor your partner has been tested, you do not know your status and, therefore, you or your partner may be at risk of becoming infected with HIV if either of you is HIV-positive;

- If you are unsure whether you or your partner has an STI;

- Using a condom will protect you against many STIs. The only way you will know whether you have an STI is if you go for a test or produce symptoms of a particular STI; and

- If your partner has other sexual partners in addition to you.

Some people may think that, because you want to use a condom, either you are not faithful or your partner may think you do not believe he or she is faithful. But if you think your partner is not being faithful or you do not have enough history about your partner's sexual activities, or if either of your HIV statuses is unknown, it is suggested that a condom be used at all times.

You are living with HIV and want to protect your partner who is HIV-negative (discordant couples)

If you are living with HIV, it is recommended that you discuss your status with your partner. The only way to practise safer sex and not put your partner at risk of becoming infected with HIV is to use a condom correctly every time during sex, or practise other safe-sex methods.

You are living with HIV, are on ARV treatment and don't want to get reinfected

By using a condom during sexual activities, you will prevent yourself from becoming reinfected with another strain of HIV should your partner also be living with HIV.

Where can I get condoms?

Condoms are available at clinics, pharmacies, from your doctor and from supermarkets. They are usually available for free from government clinics.

Use a condom correctly every time during sex

Do you need to use a condom if you have been circumcised?

Circumcision is not foolproof, so having protected sex is encouraged each and every time you engage in sexual activities. If your risk of being infected is reduced, it does not mean that there is no longer a risk. Remember that men can also infect women – circumcision offers no reduction in the risk to women.

Prevention among positives

If you and your partner are both living with HIV, it is very important to continue to use condoms and practise safer sex. This is to prevent re-infection with another strain of HIV. Simply put, reinfection occurs when a person living with HIV gets infected with a different type of HIV. Reinfection occurs because the type of HIV that lives in each individual's body is slightly different.

If a person is on ARV treatment and becomes reinfected with a different strain of HIV, the medicines they take may not work if they become infected with a new strain of the virus. This is because HIV can become resistant to ARV treatment.

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THE FINANCIAL SERVICES BOARD

INVESTING IN SHARES

Johnny Getrich learns about the stock market

One day in the company canteen ...

I don't want to be poor all my life. I'd like to be wealthy one day!

I work hard and I save all my overtime pay. But that will never make me rich.

Johnny's friend Malika shares her secret ...

Do what I do – invest in shares. On our wages it's a slow process, but ...

Johnny is amazed.

SHARES? You have to be rich to buy shares!

You're wrong, Johnny.

Really? So how do I get started?

First, you need to find out all you can about how the stock market works.

I'm sure the library will have some books about shares!

Malika explains ...

I opened a savings account a few years ago and used the money for collective investments because they seemed less risky. That was how I started! Then, after talking to someone who owns shares, I became aware of another way to invest. I decided to buy shares and consulted my advisor. They do go up and down, but I take a long-term view.

Malika's right. The stock market has over time been a good place to put your money, provided you picked the right shares and spread your investment. Your stockbroker will help you if necessary.

Johnny visited his local community library to find out more about stock markets. Upon request for a book on this topic, the librarian directed him to the Financial Services Board (FSB) where he will find answers to all his questions. She explained to him that:

"The FSB licenses stock exchanges (also called capital markets) and the persons/companies who provide financial services to their clients, as part of its consumer protection function. The Consumer Education Department of the FSB has a mandate to promote consumer financial education. This department participates in workshops conducted for schools, universities, churches, trade unions, hospitals and many other community organisations throughout South Africa to inform and educate their members on financial matters such as money management, budgeting, investing in shares, etc free of charge."

She advised him rather to call the FSB at its toll-free numbers: 0800 20 20 87 or 0800 11 04 43 and get the facts. Johnny did not waste time.

Johnny: "Good day, sir. I had a chat with a friend earlier today but still don't understand what shares are. Can you explain that in a simple way to me?"

FSB: "A share that you buy on a stock market is exactly that. If you own shares in a company, it means you own part of that company."

Johnny: "Now, why is it that companies are selling shares to the public?"

FSB: "Companies issue shares to raise the capital they need to expand and grow their businesses. Most big companies choose to raise capital in this way instead of borrowing money from the banks"

Johnny: "So, take me slowly through the process of how to get started ... I mean how do I buy shares? Where do I start?"

FSB: "If you want to invest in shares, you first have to open a share trading account with a registered stockbroker. In other words, the stockbroker must be registered with the JSE Limited. Investors do not buy shares directly from the JSE but through a stockbroking firm that is a member of the JSE Limited. You can phone the JSE Limited at 011 520 7127/8/9 to find out whether the stockbroker firm is indeed an authorised user of the JSE."

Johnny: "How would I know if I have chosen the right shares in which to invest my money?"

FSB: "When you approach a registered stockbroking firm, they will allocate one of their stockbrokers to you. The stockbroker will discuss and advise you on a proposed investment. You then need to decide which shares to buy and how much you can afford to invest. It will be advisable to hold onto your shares for a medium or long-term, generally not less than three years and ideally five years and longer. You must remember Johnny, that shares are not get-rich-quick-schemes. If your particular company's shares go down, ask your stockbroker to explain why. The downturn might be temporary so it may be of greater benefit to you not to sell your shares but to see how they perform over the longer term."

Be cautious about buying shares in unlisted companies as these companies are currently not regulated to the same extent as listed companies. You may therefore not enjoy the same protection as investors of listed companies."

Johnny: "How can I make sure that I give my money to people I can trust?"

FSB: "As I said earlier, you can contact the JSE Limited and find out more about the history of the stockbroking firm. In this way you will be able to find out whether you are dealing with an authorised user of the JSE. person that you dealt with"

Johnny: "What steps can I take against a stockbroker if I am of the opinion that I suffered a loss due to negligence?"

FSB: "First discuss the matter with the stockbroking firm that acted on your behalf. If the firm does not resolve the matter, you are free to take it up with the Surveillance Department of the JSE Limited for further investigation. If you are still dissatisfied with how your complaint has been addressed, you may approach the FSB".

Contact details you may need when investing in Capital Markets:

A: In case of financial services providers:

The Ombud for Financial Services Providers
Tel: 0860 324 766. Fax: (011) 348 3447
E-mail: info@faisombud.co.za

The Financial Services Board
PO Box 35655, MENLO PARK, 0102
Physical address: Riverwalk Office Park, Block B, 41 Matroosberg Road, Ashlea Gardens, Ext. 6, MENLO PARK, 0081
Toll-free: 0800 20 20 87 or 0800 11 04 43
E-mail: info@fsb.co.za
Website: www.fsb.co.za

B: In case of authorised users (broking firms)

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Private Bag X991174, SANDTON, 2146
Tel: (011) 520 7127/8/9. Fax: (011) 520 8605
E-mail: education@jse.co.za

A book library on your phone

Yoza is encouraging young people to enjoy reading by publishing stories they can access on their cellphones



Readers can leave comments on book chapters and vote in opinion polls related to stories published by Yoza. Photo: flickr.com



Steve Vosloo

This month, a new library of cellphone stories — also known as mobile novels or m-novels — will be launched by the Shuttleworth Foundation as part of its m4Lit (mobiles for literacy) project.

Yoza is the name of the m-novel library, kicking off with two new titles in the soccer and teen chick-

lit genres, as well as its flagship title *Kontax*. Yoza is available on *www.yoza.mobi* and also on MXit.

The m4Lit project began in 2009 to test whether teens in South Africa would read stories on their cellphones. Most of the reading and writing that happens on cellphones is short, for instance, SMSes and chat messages on MXit. We published a story called *Kontax* — 20 pages in length — and actively invited reader participation.

Readers could leave comments on chapters, vote in opinion polls related to the story and enter a writing competition.

The uptake was tremendous. By

the end of May, another *Kontax* story was published. In seven months, the two stories had been read more than 34 000 times on cellphones. More than 4 000 entries had been received in the writing competitions and over 4 000 comments had been left by readers on individual chapters. Many of our readers asked for more stories and in different genres. Encouraged by the high readership of the stories, we decided to launch Yoza.

Yoza has a new *Kontax* episode — in the teen adventure genre — as well as a soccer story and a teen chick-lit title. An HIV/Aids story series is in the pipeline. Yoza will

also have a classics section in which public-domain titles such as *Macbeth* will be published.

Current story languages include English and isiXhosa, and we would like to publish stories in more languages.

We want m-novels published on Yoza to be compelling, entertaining reading for teens. The stories are written in conventional language; “txtspeak” is used only when a character is writing or reading SMSes or instant message chats. Enjoying stories with good language is part of the Yoza experience.

Yoza is also about openness. We want as many people as possible to read, enjoy and share our stories. For this reason, stories are published under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share-Alike licence. This means anyone can freely copy, distribute, display and remix the content, as long as they credit the original and subsequent authors.

It is worth talking about two objections we often hear about teens, cellphones and language. Firstly, that teens don't read books because they are always on their phones (which Yoza will only encourage more) and, secondly, that texting is destroying good language.

In response, I always say we want young people to read and write: if they are doing it on their cellphones and not on paper, then the result is still achieved. We do not want to see the death of books. Books are durable (you don't need a battery to read them and they last for many years), tough (they still “work” if you drop them) and timeless in many ways. But books are also scarce and prohibitively expensive for most South Africans.

Equal Education is trying to solve this problem through its One School, One Library, One Librarian campaign. This is a worthy campaign that must have our full support, but it is a struggle that is not going to be won overnight — and, without libraries, our youth can't access books.

In the “book-poor” but “cellphone-rich” context of South Africa, indeed

of Africa, the phone is a viable complement, and sometimes alternative, to a printed book. If we want our youth to read, we need both printed books and books on cellphones. We need to move beyond the paper versus pixels debate and focus on reading and writing — whatever the medium.

In a piece I wrote for *theTeacher* last year titled “Txt savvy 4 2morrow”, the texting issue is addressed. Yes, there are legitimate concerns about “txtspeak” creeping into school assignments and even job applications — this is not a good thing at all. It is essential to teach learners to know which writing style to use for different occasions.

On the upside, research in the United Kingdom has shown that texting actually supports literacy because the writing is economical, playful and inventive. It also develops phonological awareness.

The key point is texting is not going to go away because cellphones are not going to go away. The only way to tackle this issue is to teach about writing for an audience.

The first two *Kontax* stories clearly demonstrated that cellphones are a viable platform for teen reading and writing. With Yoza, our goal is to build a mobile library of stories of multiple genres and in multiple languages that is available to teens not only in South Africa, but ultimately also throughout Africa. We are considering localising and publishing some of the stories in Kenya as a start. For the foreseeable future, the cellphone, not the Kindle or iPad, is the market leader in Africa. We will exploit that to improve Africa's literacy levels. How you can get involved:

- Encourage your learners to read the stories, write comments and story reviews and enter the writing competitions. We have partnered with READ Educational Trust and are giving away prizes for the best story comments in August. This is part of the 2010 Readathon event.
- Bring Yoza into the classroom by using one of the stories as prescribed reading and have learners write assignments on it.
- Write a story for Yoza, or encourage your learners to submit a story. If we like it, we'll publish it.
- Translate Yoza stories into other languages. If you translate a story, we'll publish it.

Steve Vosloo is the fellow for 21st-century learning at the Shuttleworth Foundation. He has a technology background and focuses on youth and digital media. Email vosloo@shuttleworthfoundation.org or phone 083 208 9891

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Information session to be held 21 October 2010. Deadline for application is 29 October 2010

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Tel: (011) 717 3409

Fax: 086 536 4359

E-mail: Minkie.Nkwanyana@wits.ac.za

<http://web.wits.ac.za/academic/humanities/education/Marang>

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