Equal Education

Annual Report

2008
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Chairperson's Letter

This annual report marks Equal Education's first year. In this year, we have seen what was previously the exciting prospect of a people's movement for educational quality and equality, emerge into a small but concrete reality. Possibilities and challenges lie before us.

Based in Khayelitsha, a community of approximately 600,000 mainly unemployed and working class people, Equal Education is developing a new model for activism and community involvement in education. Through attending weekly meetings, young people have become passionate about their own education, and are willing and able to articulate the deficiencies in the system, what they can do, and where they need help from their schools, community, or government. The learners call it EE, and for them it is more than an activist organisation; it offers them a safe social space, role models, and a political home.

Through meetings with parents and teachers, Equal Education is broadening its membership to involve all sectors of the school community. As we move forward it will become increasingly important to build alliances with teachers and their unions, and to win support from civil society, government and community structures. Moving beyond Khayelitsha in order to involve other sectors of our society is also high on the priority list.

The types of campaigns that Equal Education has taken on in its first year tell the story. A campaign to fix 500 broken windows in Luhlaza High School culminated in a pledge by Western Cape Education MEC Yusuf Gabriel of R671,000 for the school, the largest victory for learner activism in post-apartheid South Africa. Through this campaign the poor conditions of schools, and the neglect of infrastructure in poor neighbourhoods was highlighted. More recently, a campaign against late-coming has demonstrated that EE members take responsibility for their own education, value it, and want to be a part of the solution. The launch of our campaign for school libraries in poor communities is fast approaching.

I want to thank the Equal Education board, staff and above all, the volunteers, for their hard work and dedication. Our donors have put trust in us and we hope that this report indicates that resources are being well-used.

As we move into our second year I am optimistic that Equal Education can make a significant impact on the problems facing schools in this country.

Warm Regards,
Prof Mary Metcalfe
Vision and Mission

Equal Education (EE) is a social movement dedicated to campaigning for quality and equality in South African education, particularly public schools. EE's members are learners, teachers, parents, activists and community members. The organisation uses research as the basis for activism. The organisation is dedicated to making everyone's right to education real.

Background

14 years after the fall of Apartheid, the education received by young people in South Africa remains vastly unequal. Despite attempts to overhaul the system, class and race-linked inequalities remain entrenched. Education was the foundation upon which inequality was fashioned during the years of apartheid, but unequal educational opportunities still remain amongst the greatest obstacles to equality, dignity and freedom in today's South Africa.

What is Equal Education?

Equal Education is a research driven, community and membership-based organisation. EE advocates for quality and equality in the South African education system and engages in evidence-based activism for improving the nation's schools. We promote the right to equality and education, with the firm belief that these will enable the poor and marginalised to an equal opportunity in life.

Education is an end in itself. Also, the right to education helps one to understand, demand and use other socio-economic rights ingrained within the Constitution of the Republic. Lead by young activists, EE seeks to improve the poor quality of education in South Africa by working together with communities, schools, teachers and principals, learners, parents, academics, researchers and the Government. We intend to build an understanding of the educational system, whilst drawing attention to problems faced by schools and their communities. Equipped with this knowledge, EE offers a new way for people to participate in the democratic system and bring change to education and society.

The organisation began in 2008 by conducting research in schools in Khayelitsha (a working-class community in Cape Town, with a population of approx. 600,000 and 54 schools). Schools in Khayelitsha are under-resourced and overcrowded - factors which have a significantly negative impact on academic performance. The National Department of Education recently stated, in its Report on the National Senior Certificate results for 2008, that in general, the less resourced a school, the worse its performance. Khayelitsha, where EE is based, was among Cape Town's worst performing areas in the 2008 Matric results, with a 54% pass rate. EE aims to support the many hardworking teachers and determined learners within the community who are battling in difficult conditions.

Equal Education's most active members are called 'Equalisers'. They are high school students in grades 8 to 12. Equalisers have a leading role in the activities of the organisation. They work with EE to improve schools in their communities, and they set an example to their peers through their dedication to their own education.
Organisational Structure

Board
The Board governs and advises the organisation, sets its direction and ensures that management performs their duties as expected.

Coordinator
The coordinator is responsible for organisational development, staff, convening the management team, fundraising, budgeting and for providing leadership. Support must be given by the Coordinator to all departments.

Policy, Research and Communications (PCR) Department
PCR is the mind of Equal Education, and its voice on key issues. It is a resource for the entire organisation and the public.

Its functions can be divided into three categories:
• Policy: It tracks changes in education policy and law, and their implementation, and interacts with parliamentary and governmental committees. It reviews reports on education and children’s issues.
• Communications: Its communications function is to ensure that Equal Education is heard as a voice on policy issues, and also that EE serves as a vehicle for public information on education through newsletters and pamphlets, media, study groups and seminars. PCR also ensures that EE’s staff and membership are well-informed.
• Research: Equal Education conducts its own research. For example, EE is currently undertaking the Schools Infrastructure Audit for Khayelitsha (SIAK) which will give accurate data on every aspect of resourcing in all 50+ Khayelitsha schools.

Youth and Campaigns (Y&C) Department
Youth & Campaigns is responsible for building membership and activism at the community level. Y&C is currently operating in Khayelitsha and Kraaifontein. There are over 300 members in Khayelitsha, divided into two age groups (grades 8 & 9, and grades 10 – 12) and approximately 50 in Kraaifontein.

There are two principal tasks of the Youth & Campaigns Department:
• Youth group meetings which happen weekly (almost daily) in Khayelitsha and/or Kraaifontein.
• Coordinating and leading campaigns on local issues from broken windows to absent teachers to late-coming etc.

It should be noted that the weekly meetings are used to build the capacity to undertake campaigns in a productive manner, and then to arrange the campaigns.

Administration Department
The Administration Department is the backbone of the organisation. It ensures that all money spent is accounted for, all membership properly recorded, and all events planned and run effectively. Its responsibilities include finance, record-keeping, office management, contracts, rosters, venues and facilities, and internal communication.
Mary Metcalfe, Chairperson
Professor Metcalfe is Dean of the Faculty of Education at Wits University. She was previously MEC for Education in Gauteng, and Deputy Speaker of the Gauteng Provincial Legislature. During this time she was a member of the ANC PEC in Gauteng. Prior to democracy she worked on education policy for the ANC. She has a history of activism with the Black Sash, Detainees Parents Support Committee and the National Education Crisis Committee, amongst other organisations. Mary is a qualified teacher and has worked in teacher training.

Crain Soudien
Professor Soudien is Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor at the University of Cape Town. Previously he was head of the School of Education at UCT. His interests include sociology of education, race, class and gender; policy shifts in education; museum and heritage education. To date, Soudien has published 56 journal articles and 55 book chapters. He is the founder of the Southern African Comparative and History of Education Society, is a member of the American Educational Research Association, and was the president of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies in 2007. In 2008, Crain was a committee member for the Ministry of Education’s Teacher Education Advisory Committee, and chair of the Ministerial Review Committee into transformation in higher education.

Zackie Achmat
Zackie Achmat became an activist in 1976, and thereafter became a leading figure in the youth activism that developed in the Cape. As an anti-apartheid activist and ANC member he was repeatedly imprisoned and spent time underground and in exile. He later formed the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality which successfully campaigned for non-discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. He spent time working at the AIDS Law Project, and in 1998 formed the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) which campaigned prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS and for the rights of HIV-positive people. This won Zackie numerous awards, including a nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize. Recently he founded the Social Justice Coalition (SJC) which works against social inequality and violence.

Matseliso Dipholo
Matseliso Dipholo is currently Vice President of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), in the portfolio of Education. SADTU is the largest public sector union in South Africa. Tseli joined the union in 1994 and is currently a member of the Khayelitsha Branch in the Western Cape. She teaches English at the Noluthando School of the deaf, her priorities in the next four years are to promote the expansion of ECD and ABET and to monitor the implementation of the new FET curriculum.

Nathan Geffen
Nathan Geffen holds a Masters Degree in Computer Science from UCT. He joined the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) in 2000 and has since served as its National Manager and Director of Policy, Communications & Research. He is presently Treasurer of TAC. In his position as Director of Policy, Communications & Research, Nathan oversaw all TAC publications, the development of its advocacy around medicines, and the development of materials for mass public education on HIV. His activist interests have included Zimbabwe, Palestine/Israel and the rights of foreigners. His book on the history of AIDS denialism will be published soon.

Doron Isaacs
As the coordinator, Doron represents the staff on the EE Board. See page 6 for more about him.
**Equal Education Staff**

**Doron Isaacs, Coordinator**
Doron grew up in Durban and attained degrees in finance & law at UCT. He has previously led Habonim South Africa, and Students for Law and Social Justice (SLSJ). He is responsible for the overall management and operations at Equal Education.

**Yoliswa Dwane, Head of Department: Policy, Communications & Research (PCR)**
Yoliswa grew up in Dimbaza Township in the Eastern Cape and went on to study Media, Film & Visual studies at UCT. She completed a law degree at UCT in 2007. Yoliswa monitors all education research, news, and law reforms, and is responsible for ensuring all work and activism is based on reliable evidence.

**Michelle Adler, Head of Department: Administration**
Michelle grew up in Johannesburg and received a B.Com at Wits University where she completed an Honours in Business Economics. Michelle has recently moved to Cape Town after working in London and Johannesburg. She is responsible for overseeing administration, finances and internal organisational development.

**Joey, Head of Department: Youth & Campaigns**
Joey grew up in Zimbabwe, after which he came to South Africa to pursue his studies in the social sciences. He has previously worked for Treatment Action Campaign, the trade union sector, and a research-consulting group. Joey is responsible for the overall operation of the youth group, seminars, camps and EE’s program of informal education. His department plans campaigns that raise key issues and build the membership of Equal Education.

**Lukhanyo Mangona, Researcher PCR**
Lukhanyo grew up in Mxaxo in the Eastern Cape, and completed High School at Bululko High School in Khayelitsha. He has a background in the mining industry where he worked as a Mineral Processing Technician. He has always been involved in providing academic support and is passionate about education. Lukhanyo helps conduct research into education and is responsible for keeping the organisation up to date on law reforms, policy developments and the monitoring of all education news.

**Lumkile Zani, Administrator**
Lumkile grew up in Alice, Dimbaza, Zwelitsha and East London. He completed school at KwaMundo High School in Khayelitsha. He studied photo-journalism for a year, and later became a chef. He supports the organisation on administrative matters, particularly record keeping of membership, finances, supplies and contact lists.

**Nokubonga Yawa, Youth Development Officer for Grade 8 - 9**
Nokubonga grew up in Nyanga, Cape Town. She is a presenter on Siyanqoba Beat It. On SABC. She, along with Lwandiso, plans and leads the youth group meetings, camps, and seminars. She also takes a leading role in campaigns and serves as a direct channel of communication with members.

**Lwandiso Stofile, Youth & Development Officer for Grade 10 - 12**
Lwandiso grew up in Bulumbu in the Eastern Cape. He completed school at Harry Gwala High School in Khayelitsha. He has over seven years of volunteer experience in the fields of sexual and reproductive health and in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Lwandiso is passionate about his work and especially enjoys his leadership role at EE. He, along with Nokubonga, helps direct the camps and seminars, in addition to planning and coordinating the biweekly youth group meetings.

**Luzuko Sidimba, Equal Educator**
Luzuko grew up in Cape Town and finished school at KwaMundo High School in Khayelitsha. He started his work at Equal Education as a youth group member, participating in meetings and attending the camps and has recently joined the organisation as a full-time intern. Luzuko is a role model, mentor and counselor for EE’s members and serves as a leader of the youth groups.

**Zingisani Nkanjeni, Equal Educator**
Zingi grew up in the Eastern Cape but finished school at Esangweni High School in Khayelitsha. He has previously worked with Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa and the Treatment Action Campaign. Zingi enjoys politics and is actively involved in the Young Communist League. He also actively works alongside youth group members, acting as a role model and mentor.

**Adam Sack, Youth Worker**
Adam grew up in Cape Town. He completed his Bachelors of Social Sciences in Economics and Politics and is currently studying Law at UCT. Adam works with grade eight and nine youth groups. He provides support and assistance during the meetings and assists with the production of EE’s education curriculum.

**Daniel Mackintosh, Youth Worker**
Daniel grew up in Cape Town and graduated from UCT with an Honours Degree in Social Science Politics, Philosophy and Economics. He worked for Habonim Dror and was actively involved with Face-to-Face, Faith-to-Faith. Daniel is currently studying Law at UCT. He helps facilitate the youth group meetings and also assists with the production of EE’s education curriculum.
The organisation has achieved a great deal in one year. We have set up an office, recruited and selected staff and volunteers, are in the process of developing a coherent policy platform and are continuously building a large membership base. We have held a number of high-quality seminars, campaigns and events and have an ambitious yet achievable plan for the year ahead. Those counted as members are involved in and committed to the organisation on an ongoing basis. The early success of the organisation has been built on a basis that we intend to extend and deepen: the effective integration of policy, communications and research work with grassroots activism. Below is a description of some of the events that occurred in the past year:

### Policy Communications & Research

#### Policy Monitoring

Equal Education has attended and participated in various meetings of the Western Cape Provincial Legislature Committee of Education and Sport. We have taken particular interest in their discussions of school-financing and literacy and numeracy testing. Equal Education has become known as an organisation that participates in education policy debate.
Research Projects

Equal Education has conducted two research projects of its own. The first was a period of observation in Khayelitsha schools, which was key to the early development of the organisation. Now the PCR Department is coordinating SIAK (the Schools Infrastructure Audit for Khayelitsha), a project which will map all the needs of Khayelitsha schools.

Staff Seminars & Lectures

PCR runs seminars for EE members and staff on education policy. These have covered debates around teacher training, school finance, curriculum and the Education For All (EFA) campaign. These events are always lively, robust affairs.

Study Group

Periodically, PCR has organised workshops on education policy, hosted at UCT School of Law, involving academics and EE members active in grassroots education work. Leading researchers and activists have been invited to present at these sessions including EE Board member Zackie Achmat and Prof Brahm Fleisch whose 2008 book is entitled Primary Education in Crisis: why South African school children underperform in mathematics and literacy.

Education Crisis Seminar

Equal Education hosted a weekend seminar in Fishoek titled South African Education in Crisis. It brought together university students, post-school youth and leading academics. Professors Peter Kallaway, Jo Muller, Crain Soudien and Paula Ensor presented at or participated in the weekend, as did Rob Petersen, Ursula Hoadley and representatives from SAEP, SHAWCO, Ikamva Youth, Inkanyezi and Equal Education.

Topics included the history of Education and inequality in South Africa, a study of current outcomes, educational philosophy and pedagogy, past movements for educational change and financing of schools. It was an inspiring weekend. Participants left this seminar feeling informed about key challenges in education and determined to learn more.

A Voice in the Ongoing Public Debate on Education Policy

Equal Education participates in public debates and discussion on the direction of South African education. Joey Hasson was hosted by the Legal Resources Centre Summer School, in discussion with Judge Dennis Davis, Education Director General Duncan Hindle and EE Board Chair Prof Mary Metcalfe. Yoliswa Dwane and Doron Isaacs spoke, along with Dr Mampele Ramphle, at the Social Justice Coalition’s Grootboom Lectures, and more recently at the launch of Inkanyezi UCT. EE Board Member Zackie Achmat gave the 2009 opening address to the Wits University School of Education. Yoliswa Dwane and Lwandiso Stofile have been regularly interviewed on Zibonele Radio about the state of education in Khayelitsha. All these offered great opportunities to demand that quality and equality become top priorities for education policy.

Using the Media

Equal Education is getting increasing exposure in the press. Major campaigns like the Luhlaza ‘500 Broken Windows’ Campaign and the Chris Hani ‘No Science Teacher’ Campaign have been well-covered in print, online, and on radio. Pressure through the media has been crucial to pressuring government departments and school principals to act. Op-ed pieces by members and staff have appeared in the Cape Times, Mail & Guardian and Business Day.

EE Schools Newswrap

PCR produced a series of news summaries, representing the key news stories and themes each week in education news in South Africa. This was useful in gaining an understanding of education trends, and how the media relate to the subject-matter. The newswraps were received by a large readership. At present, this service has been deprioritised.

Equal Education Magazine

A major tool for public information on education policy and education activism, and an instrument to build membership interest, is the Equal Education Magazine. The first edition was released by PCR in January, and was thoroughly enjoyed by youth group readers.
The campaign began with meetings with the school and learner leadership, as well as government officials. It progressed to a mass petition, articles in the press, radio interviews, a rally in Cape Town, ugly reactions from government officials, further press, activism and meetings, and ultimately a public meeting in Khayelitsha at which the MEC for Education, Yousuf Gabru, announced that the school would be fixed and that R671,000 (rather than the R7,000 we had been campaigning for) would be allocated to the job. It was a victory for Khayelitsha, for learner-activism, for participatory democracy and for Equal Education. The windows are fixed, but we are still pushing for a full accounting of the money promised by the MEC. (For more on this campaign, see the case study on page 9.)

The Fix Our Schools Campaign is an ongoing campaign: for example, at present Equal Education is assisting Harry Gwala School in getting the Education Department to fix a leaking roof.

**Youth and Campaigns**

**Weekly Youth Group Meetings**

The meetings build social and political consciousness and encourage debate among members, using current affairs, politics and examples from history. Sometimes they focus on local issues and become campaigns. These are often initiated by members.

Youth group members are called 'Equalisers' and the facilitators are called 'Equal Educators'. Equalisers are Equal Education's entry point into communities. The Youth Group connects Equal Education to parents, teachers, community leaders and other young people in the local community structure.

Since the first meeting of seven young people on 24 April 2008, there have been consistent meetings every week. Attendance grows constantly. There are now over 300 members in Khayelitsha, split into two age groups, and a smaller group in Kraaifontein.

**Fix Our Schools Campaign**

This is a campaign led by Equal Education members in Khayelitsha. It began with EE responding to the problem of 500 broken windows at Luhlaza School. All Equalisers, from all schools, were active in this campaign.

The Fix Our Schools Campaign is on an ongoing campaign: for example, at present Equal Education is assisting Harry Gwala School in getting the Education Department to fix a leaking roof.

**Leadership Seminar**

On the 28-30 November 2008 the organisation hosted a leadership weekend with a purpose of training Equal Educators. It was attended by about 30 activists. Training was given in planning and running youth group meetings, and in relating effectively to the Equalisers.
Camps

In 2008 EE held two camps for Equalisers.

The first camp, in June, was held at the Habonim Campsite in Hermanus, and was attended by high school members (Equalisers) from across Khayelitsha. It was an introduction to the unique power of camping as a means to bond young people as friends and political comrades. A diverse range of issues including gender equality, the nature of knowledge, and the mechanics of organising a schools campaign were dealt with.

The second camp, in December, held at Back-2-Basics near Grabouw, brought together 94 members from Khayelitsha and Kraaifontein for five days. The Equalisers were busy with activities about politics, history, inequality and education. Some of the highlights were reading about Ashley Kriel, and holding mock national elections.

Cooperation with Habonim

Habonim is a Jewish youth movement. It has been the first partnership for EE with middle-class youth. Habonim members, the same age as the Equalisers, have attended meetings in Khayelitsha, supported our protests, and in December invited 10 Equalisers to spend two days at the Habonim Camp. Habonim leaders are now working on supporting our Academic Support Programme. It is a good partnership that EE will pursue.

End of the Year Event

On Saturday evening 6 Dec 2008 the organisation (staff, members, parents) came together at Chris Hani School in Makhaza for an end of the year dinner. This was a moment of celebration for the organisation’s growth and success in 2008. The members put on a great show and one of the parents, Ms Vuka paid tribute to EE.

Youth & Campaigns Department Planning and Restructuring

The department has reorganised in order to improve its work and grow. In Khayelitsha, the youth group has been split into two age-groups, each with its own leadership, and team of Equal Educators. In addition, a youth group curriculum is being finalised, which will be the basis for the coming year’s meetings. This curriculum contains pre-planned activities on social and political history, human rights and local educational problems. All activities were planned by Equal Education, mainly at a one-week retreat that the entire staff and volunteer body attended in Gordon’s Bay in January 2009.

New Projects and Challenges

Further recruitment of local volunteers, who can be trained as Equal Educators, is underway. Planning discussions for the establishment of a branch in Mitchell’s Plain during 2009 are in their early stages. An elected body of Equalisers, high school learners who will be chosen by their peers to lead the young membership of EE, is being set up. A number of campaigns are about to launch: a campaign to deal with learners coming late to school, and another to build libraries for all schools in Khayelitsha, are high priorities.
Administration Department

Registration

Equal Education is a registered Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) (068-288-NPO) and a registered Public Benefit Organisation (PBO) (9366/370/18/1) with S18A(1) status.

Bookkeeper

Razanna Fataar has been appointed as a part-time bookkeeper. Ms Fataar did five years of articles at Braude Gordon & Co Chartered Accountants. She has six years post-articles experience and works for herself. Ms Fataar will reconcile the finances for the 08/09 financial year and assist the admin department with maintaining the financial records, processing payroll, registering employees and the organisation with SARS and ensuring that the relevant deductions are made and paid over.

Staff

The admin department is staff by Michelle Adler (Head of Department) and Lumkile Zani (Administrator), who have introduced a professional approach to organisational management.

Since the start of 2009, and the appointment of two fulltime staff members in administration, much progress has been made:

- Every employee has a written job description and personal files have been created for each staff member containing a copy of their ID document, a bank statement with proof of bank details, a Letter of Appointment (LOA), job description and signed confidentiality agreement.
- LOAs have been signed by each employee and the Coordinator confirming conditions of employment and salaries for the 2009-2010 financial year.
- A petty cash box and system have been introduced with claim forms for cash transactions made. Taxi drivers deployed for youth group meetings are now given a form to sign indicating that they have been paid. Staff members using taxis to attend meetings are also required to fill out a claim form before cash is given for the journey. All refunds and claims for personal expenses incurred are also recorded through a form being filled out and signed off by a manager before the amount is paid.
- A policies and procedures manual has been drafted.
- The annual calendar system is in use.
- Registration lists are now being taken at every youth group meeting. They are updated every week to include new members and ensure that the records are always up-to-date. These lists are contained on a central spreadsheet, separated according to school.
Case Study:
It Starts with Broken Windows

Fixing 500 Broken Windows at Luhlaza School

Why did Equal Education (EE) choose broken windows as its first campaign in mid-2008?

There are many problems that schools face in Khayelitsha - a township of 600,000 people in Cape Town. Some of these problems are easy to see, while others are much more difficult. After 3 months of research, sitting in cold classrooms with teachers and learners in the middle of winter, Equal Education wanted to help fix some of the problems we were observing in schools. By using democratic means to fix the problem in one school we hoped to offer an example to all schools battling with poor physical infrastructure.

As one of its first projects, members of the Equal Education Youth Group were asked to go into their schools and take photographs of anything that they thought affected their learning at school. One EE youth group member, Zukiswa Vuka, returned with a photograph which revealed the devastating state of windows at her school, Luhlaza. On further investigation we found that at Luhlaza High School there were 500 broken windows that had been broken for more than 4 years. Teachers and learners alike agreed that it was extremely difficult to concentrate in a cold classroom.

The problem of broken windows represents well, the importance of having an environment conducive to learning at school. Learners at the school also explained that it was hard to be proud of their school when it looked the way it did. At this, point it became clear that Equal Education’s first campaign had to be about broken windows. We also wanted a successful first campaign to galvanise the Khayelitsha schools community with a belief in their own ability to bring tangible changes to their schools.

How did EE work with School Management?

Equal Education worked closely with school management and learners to raise the issue of broken windows at Luhlaza High School. The campaign began with meetings with the school principal, teachers and leadership, consultation with the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) and discussions amongst Luhlaza learner structures such as the RCL – representative council of learners. EE had regular meetings with Mr Robin April, the then Acting Principal at Luhlaza, as well as members of the School Management Team (SMT). It is very important to EE that we have a good relationship with the management of the school, the parents, the community and the learners.

The RCL said they had been raising the issue of windows with the school management for years. The school
management told us that they had written to the Education Department about the windows and other problems, but the response had been slow.

Equal Education created a petition. The petition called for the windows to be repaired, but also requested that learners commit themselves to keeping them that way.

The mass petition was signed by 2000 community members, teachers, learners, caretakers and parents, and others including Robin April (the Principal of Luhlaza), Duncan Hindle (Director General of Education), Mampela Ramphele, Zackie Achmat, Judge Dennis Davis, Professor Mary Metcalfe, and Noel Robb.

How did EE engage with the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) prior to organising the Rally?

During its campaign to have the Luhlaza Windows repaired, EE engaged a number of Department of Education officials. We began by meeting the relevant Circuit Manager at the Metropole East District Office, who is responsible for Luhlaza High School. We explained the situation of windows at Luhlaza, and pledged to work with the department to get them fixed. The Circuit Manager claimed that the issue of broken windows had never been brought to his attention by the school, and referred us to an official at the WCED head office.

EE then met with the head-office official responsible for scheduled maintenance at Western Cape schools to try and find out when the windows would be repaired. He too assured EE that the issue had never been brought to his attention, and said that there were many schools with much more serious problems than broken windows. He then explained to us that scheduled maintenance was planned for the school; that this maintenance did not include the repair of broken windows; and that this maintenance would take place in September 2010 – meaning a wait of two years.

Equal Education had received quotations to fix the windows and the best price was R17,000. The school could contribute R5,000 and EE could contribute R5,000 so we asked the Department for R7,000.

Equal Education also met with Western Cape MEC for Education Mr. Yousuf Gabru and a few senior officials at the WCED Head Office. At the meeting, we explained all of our previous meetings. We were most encouraged to receive the support of the MEC for the windows campaign and the work of Equal Education generally. He said that involving learners in publicly raising the difficulties they face was a worthwhile thing to do.

At this stage, after a few months of work on this issue, it was clear that it needed greater public attention. A rally in Cape Town was organised that involved 450 Khayelitsha learners from 18 schools, as well as learners from Philippi, Wallacedean and the City Bowl area.

At the same time high school learners, who were EE members, wrote articles for the press, were interviewed on local radio, and spoke to their families and friends.

How did EE prepare members for the rally?

While all of these meetings were taking place, members of the EE youth group – which then had a membership of 150 Khayelitsha learners from over ten schools (now 500) - began to mobilise their school-friends, explaining to them the situation at Luhlaza High School and enlisting their help. The campaign stressed the importance of schools working together to solve their problems. Although the campaign focused on Luhlaza, learners representing almost all high schools in Khayelitsha gave their active support.

During youth group meetings, members discussed campaign methods and objectives, highlighting the importance of non-violence. Youth group members had fun practicing poetry and songs as a creative way of putting their message across to the WCED. Members created placards with clear messages written on them in preparation for the rally. In the lead up to the rally, learners collected more than 30 kilograms of broken glass from the play-grounds of Luhlaza. This glass was later washed and used with coloured beads to make necklaces, bracelets and other items.

Marshals and spokepeople were selected from amongst the learners, and were trained as to their role. More radio interviews were given, newspaper articles written, and memoranda and speeches were carefully drafted. On the day before the rally the learners prepared food, received their matching EE scarves, and attended to last-minute preparations.
How was the rally received?
There was a good public response from people in Khayelitsha and in the newspapers. People appreciated responsible school children raising their concerns in a respectful and lively manner.

Unfortunately the official who addressed the rally on behalf of the WCED, told the learners, who were from schools across Khayelitsha, that Luhlaza was the only school with broken windows. The learners knew this was false. The official also said the learners broke the windows, but the truth is that the windows were broken for nearly 5 years. She said the school must fix the windows from its maintenance budget. But the school’s maintenance budget for the whole year is R28,000, which is not enough to fix the windows and look after the school.

What was the follow up?
EE held a follow-up meeting with WCED Metropole East. They promised the windows would be fixed. EE wrote to them requesting a timeline, but did not receive one. On November 13 EE held a public meeting at Desmond Tutu Hall in Makhaza, Khayelitsha, which was attended by over 200 members of the community. MEC Gabru and a dozen education department officials came to that meeting. They announced that the windows would be fixed and that R671,000 would be invested in the school. This was a great achievement by everyone who was a part of the campaign!

It appears that QIDS-UP (Quality Improvement, Development, Support and Upliftment Programme) were tasked with dealing with the situation.

During the December / January summer holidays every broken window at Luhlaza was fixed. This is the real victory.

However fixing the windows cannot cost anything close to R671,000. Equal Education has therefore written repeatedly to the department and QIDS-UP asking for a breakdown of how the R671,000 will be spent, and asking (as was suggested by the department) that EE be involved in meetings relating to the spending of this money. These letters have not been responded to.

What difficulties has EE had in this process?
As a new organisation we have had to win the trust of many people. It is clear that many parents, teachers and learners want to work with EE. Many people in the Western Cape Education Department have also been helpful. Unfortunately a very few officials have tried to prevent EE from working. The circuit manager tried to get principals to prevent their learners from participating in the gathering in Cape Town. An EE member, a learner at Luhlaza, Zukiswa Vuka, incidentally the person who took the photograph of the broken windows, was interrogated by another official about her role in EE. Zukiswa wrote to MEC Gabru about this. Lwando Mzandisi, who wrote an article in Cape Times, was told by the circuit manager that a black child from Khayelitsha was not capable of writing such an article. We include these incidents here to show the challenges young people will face in building activism for better schools.

Even now, when the windows are fixed, indisputably because of the EE campaign, the new Principal at Luhlaza is unsure about working with EE, and has been encouraged not to do so by the circuit manager. We are continuing to engage with the principal and those in the WCED that work with principals, and we are confident of reestablishing the relationship.

What are the lessons and things for EE to improve upon?
More effort must be expended at bringing the teachers and parents into the campaign work. Many teachers signed the petition and some privately expressed their support to EE leaders in person, but most felt silenced and closed ranks around WCED officials and school management who turned against the campaign. More recently, we have been building support among parents and teachers.

Equal Education has only one agenda, to improve the quality of schools, and to ensure that all schools are equal, with excellent facilities and education. We want to work with government, principals, school governing bodies, parents, learners and teachers in order to achieve this.
In its first year Equal Education has grown into a very active, dynamic, and significant organisation. Policy work, campaigns, and public information about education are being generated at an increasing rate. 12 full-time or part-time staff members are supported by a few hundred volunteers, mostly high-school learners, but also community members, parents, teachers, university students, academics and other activists.

Key challenges include the following:

• Policy: Equal Education aims to become a leading voice on education policy in South Africa. This will require enlarging the Policy, Communications & Research Department under the leadership of Yoliswa Dwane. It will require Equal Education to develop clear policy positions on a number of key questions. The development of the Equal Education Charter is the key to clear policy positions. This Charter will be the result of the full range of EE members and partners collaborating to form consensus positions on school financing, curriculum, governance, socio-economic factors that impede education, and the teaching profession. A further key challenge will be the development of a communications strategy using print and broadcast media, and EE’s own publications both online and offline.

• Growth of community activism: Where and how should Equal Education expand? Should EE focus on Khayelitsha as a model district, or spread to other parts of the Cape Peninsula to involve a broader range of communities? At what point does the organisation establish itself beyond the Western Cape? These are key questions at the forefront of the organisation’s thinking and strategic development. The next year will demand an answer.

• Moving beyond youth: Equal Education is the most loved organisation amongst the youth of Khayelitsha, and parts of Kraaifontein. We are beginning to involve parents more and more. It is now time to bring parents, teachers and other constituencies into the regular activities of EE.

• Campaigns: There is a continual challenge to pursue effective campaigns. Thus far EE’s campaigns have been successful, but focused on specific problems. To move forward, campaigns need to deal with systemic issues. Some campaigns must expose neglect and poor governance, and be directed at the state or school management, while others must promote education in communities as an ideal and a value, and in that sense support the state and school management in their efforts to provide quality education for all.

• Youth Group development: Under Joey Hasson the Youth & Campaigns Department has been one of the most dynamic aspects of the organisation, and something that everyone in the organisation has given their energy to. A challenge is to distill the superb programmes and meetings into a handbook that can be used to decentralise the creation of new EE youth groups whilst ensuring the same quality and values.

• Management and governance of EE: Equal Education intends to combine a commitment to grass-roots politics of and for its members with professional financial accounting, employment structures and management processes. Michelle Adler has brought a new accountability and rigour to this aspect of Equal Education.

• Membership: Equal Education is currently formalising the process of membership. Members will pay an annual membership fee and will receive a membership card and badge. Equalisers will wear this with their school uniforms so that EE members are identifiable in all schools. A database and website system that catalogues all members, and enables EE to contact them through e-mail, sms, phone and post is being developed.

• Funding the organisation: It is important that a share of the organisation’s resources is generated through membership fees. Also, EE intends to source funds from South African business and through small contributions from a broad range of individuals. At present the organisation is lucky to have the support of some of the most progressive and intelligent international charitable bodies.

• Partnerships and relationships: Equal Education strives to create good working relationships with community structures, school management, government departments, other educational organisations, teachers unions, and civil society at large. Addressing this challenge is a priority.

The members and staff of Equal Education look forward to addressing all of the above. There is a strong spirit of optimism, growth, hard work and possibility in all parts of the organisation.
The most fundamental challenge we face is the need to improve the quality of education in our schools. The key challenge is the effective teaching of literacy and numeracy in most of our primary schools. Many tests, both national and international, show that our children lag behind their peers in other countries, including developing countries.

In particular, a big effort needs to be made to provide libraries, laboratories and computer facilities to schools.

Statistics from 2006 show that 67.9% of schools had no computers for teaching and learning, 79.3% had no library space.

Government alone cannot bring about the transformation of education, given the many capacity challenges. In this respect the ANC and its alliance structures have an important role to play in mobilising communities to lead the process of establishing community based education committees, mobilising teachers, learners, parents and communities to ensure safe and functional education institutions.

Blade Nzimande (now Minister of Higher Education), Cape Times, 29 Jan 2009

Above all, the huge inequalities in the educational system developed under apartheid persist, although they now align with class, not just race. The upper class is still largely white, which means that, because you can buy a good education these days, race and class will continue to be tied together in the future.

This racial divide reflects deeper and economic inequalities. School fees maintain deep class differences between schools in the leafy suburbs and those in the townships or, even worse, rural areas. Working class children cannot afford the school fees charged at the former whites-only schools. Black learners who can afford a Model C school pass matric; those who can only afford historically black schools are fighting an uphill battle.

Zwelinzima Vavi, COSATU General Secretary, at Nompumelelo High School, Sada Township, Whittlesea, April 26 2008

Those who live in rural areas know that the dream of a better education remains elusive in many areas, as resources are still skewed in favour of urban areas. Some urban schools in historically black areas also still lack facilities, there are no qualified teachers in many, and come December people wonder why matric results do not improve.

President Jacob Zuma, Graduation Ceremony of the University of Zululand, 20 May 2009

The defence of mediocrity is supported by unjustifiable arguments. Some cite apartheid. I acknowledge that the legacy of apartheid continues to affect us, but it no longer serves to explain continued failures on our part.

Naledi Pandor, Minister of Education, Tabling Departmental Budget Vote, 29 May 2007
With the best will in the world, national government sitting in Tshwane or even a provincial government sitting in the provincial capital is unable to monitor teacher attendance, whether teaching is actually taking place or whether students are in class learning. Without the integral involvement of communities, we don't stand a chance of improving the quality of schooling, especially in poor communities.

It is up to the institutional and legal framework to provide the space and guidance for communities to become positive influences over the performance of schools. In many cases, we have been too coy about providing the institutional space for peoples' power to prevail.

When we reminisce about the 1970s and the 1980s, we often remember the mass protests, the community mobilisation, the active involvement of communities in solving their own problems. Communities did not suddenly wake up and start protesting. No, they were organised by groups of young activists, mostly students. Where have all the activists gone? What do the young people who are politically astute and socially aware do these days? Who is doing the mobilising? Who are the catalysts for social transformation?

Democracy is now begging for organised communities to fulfil their responsibilities.

Minister Trevor Manuel, Annual Steve Biko Memorial Lecture, 11 September 2008

Communities must be the eyes and ears of the department. Your best allies in education are the parents and learners in terms of making sure things run well. We want parents and learners to take responsibility for their education and to take a stand when their rights are being violated.

Angie Motshekga, Minister of Basic Education, Interview in Sunday Times, May 17 2009

Today, formal racial inequality no longer exists within our education system. But, poverty and historical injustices deny quality education to all poor youth (black or white) and, particularly, poor youth in historically African and coloured townships. Organising at school, community, technikon and university level for better education is even more important now than under apartheid. It is the only guarantee that political freedom will translate into economic freedom.

In every community today, youth can organise for free education, for computers in schools, for libraries, for sports facilities and science equipment. We can show solidarity with teachers who face a heavy workload.

Zackie Achmat, The Inaugural Ashley Kriel Memorial Youth Lecture, 12 August 2004

Education is an area that needs the attention of all our people, students, parents, teachers, workers and all other organised sectors of our community.

Nelson Mandela's Address to Rally in Soweto, 13 February 1990
### Income Statement for the period: 1 February 2008 to 31 January 2009

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The Equal Education Board and Staff would like to thank the following people:

**General Thanks**


**Volunteers**

Babalwa Momoti, Phumza Hiti, Pamela Hiti, Amanda Hiti, Thanduxolo Sisilana, Ziyanda Makambe, Liziwe Madalo, Nolubabalo Mambidi, Sinethemba Sonandi, Nonqaba Ndiki, Siziphwe Velani, Ziyanda Mbathsha, Thembinkosi Sikinya, Nomfuneko Sitema, Andile Mhendi, Anele Wondo, Rachel Goodman, Doerte Doering, Dmitri Hess, Yana Jetha, Sakina Grimwood, Sean Leechy Feinberg, Sean Wasserman, Jade Jaffit, Ike Itadi, Celina Grisi, Andi Goldberg, Maria Lajewski, Desiree Tucker, Katherine Kopkowski, Khanyiso Hoboyi

**Interim Leadership Committee**


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The Brad Foundation

Heinrich Böll Foundation

And a big thank you to all the Principals, Teachers, Parents & Learners of Khayelitsha, Kraaifontein and other Cape Town schools.
Youth group membership

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