



Fundisa for Change Conference

The 2013 Department of Education final examination diagnostic reports show that important educational topics such as environmental impact are being 'left out' and are not being taught in schools. This is not surprising as they are new to teachers. **There is clearly an urgent need to support teachers to teach the many new environmental content areas and concepts that are included the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS).** The Fundisa for Change National Teacher Education Conference aims to raise this debate, and to seek solutions amongst those involved in teacher education. The conference will address key issues such as how to integrate transformative environmental learning into teacher education and how to offer sustainable continuous professional development to teachers. Additionally the conference will debate teacher education methods, and the Fundisa for Change teacher education materials will be launched at this event.

According to Thomas Mathiba, Director of Sector Education, Training and Development (Department of Environmental Affairs), "This

Fundisa for Change and the **Department of Environmental Affairs** (as the lead organisation for environmental education in SA) are joining hands with support from other partners to organise and host the first **Fundisa for Change Teacher Education Conference**. The objective of the conference is to strengthen the national system of engagement for transformative environmental learning and education for sustainable development through teacher education.

Date: **27 and 28 February 2014**

Venue: **Emperors Palace, Johannesburg**



environmental affairs
Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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NEWSLETTER

This newsletter was compiled by Janet Snow, with contributions from Zintle Songqwaru, Heila Lotz-Sisitka, Thomas Mathiba and Kim Ward.

Fundisa for Change is a collaborative programme that aims to enhance transformative environmental learning in South Africa through teacher education.

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Fundisa for Change partners are:

Delta Environmental Centre • Department of Basic Education • Department of Environmental Affairs • Department of Water Affairs • Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH • Eco-Schools South Africa • Environment Learning and Teaching • GreenMatter • The Lewis Foundation • Murray & Roberts • Rhodes University Environmental Learning Research Centre • South African Council for Educators (SACE) • South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) • South African National Parks • University of Cape Town • University of Fort Hare • University of KwaZulu-Natal • University of Pretoria • University of South Africa • University of Stellenbosch • Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA) / Share-Net

conference is very important for South Africa. Nationally, the National Climate Change Response White Paper of 2011, and other national policies point to the importance of mainstreaming environment and sustainable development into South Africa's national education and training system. This cannot be done without our teacher education institutions." Internationally, the African Ministers of Environment Conference are producing an Action Plan for Environmental Education for the Continent to address the serious challenges people in Africa are facing as their natural resources continue to be depleted. Mathiba goes on to say, "Additionally, the Global Action Plan for Education for Sustainable Development that will be debated by governments around the world at the November 2014 Nagoya Conference for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (which comes to an end in 2015), advocates for the importance of Teacher Education." Teacher education institutions are key agents of transformative change as they update the knowledge and skills of in-service teachers, create teacher education curricula, provide professional development for practising teachers, contribute to text books, consult with local schools, and often provide expert opinion to regional and national ministries of education.

Mathiba states further, "Institutions of teacher education also perform similar services for school principals who have significant impact on what occurs in schools." Nationally the DEA supports and endorses this initiative aiming to strengthen the national system of engagement for transformative environmental learning and education for sustainable development through teacher education. The Department of Basic Education too have been working towards strengthening Education for Sustainable Development, as shown by a seminar hosted by the DBE at the end of 2013. Additionally the Department of Water Affairs continues to support teachers to engage with water knowledge in the curriculum, and has also recently joined the Fundisa for Change programme activities. Mathiba says "We are very encouraged by these collaborative engagements as environmental issues and their responses are a multi-sectoral concern, as is also pointed out in the National Climate Change Response White Paper for South Africa."

INTERVIEW:

From teacher to a national teacher education co-ordinator

Zintle Songqwaru

Fundisa for Change Co-ordinator

Zintle has been involved in the initial stages of the development of Fundisa for Change programme and was appointed as the programme's co-ordinator at the beginning of 2013. A year later, here are her comments.

You were a teacher before taking up the position of co-ordinator for the national teacher development project. What 'path' led you to this position?

My journey into the field of environmental education started when I co-ordinated the Eco-Schools programme in my school in 2004. I enrolled for the Advanced Certificate in Education in Environmental Education course in 2005-2006. I then did my B.Ed (Hons) in 2008-2009 (with Environmental Education as one of my electives) and Project Management with Rhodes University business school in 2010. In 2011-2012 I did my master's study in Environmental Education. My research focus was: 'How Life Sciences teachers can be supported to understand and work with environment and sustainability content knowledge in the CAPS grade 10 Life Sciences curriculum'. At the time I started the field work, Fundisa for Change was piloting a Biodiversity module with teachers in KwaZulu/Natal and I saw that as an opportunity for a case study to answer my research question. [Zintle is currently reading for her PhD through the Rhodes University Environmental Learning Research Centre].

Can you describe some of the highlights of your first year as co-ordinator for Fundisa for Change? Co-ordinating a national programme was and still is overwhelming! I have never travelled so much in my life as I have in the past year! I have spent almost all my life working with learners and this past year I worked with teachers. It was different and a learning experience for me. Teachers come with a lot of practical experience which needs to be acknowledged. Added to this, it was quite an experience working with subject advisors, teacher educators and environment educators towards a common goal of improving teacher practice for quality education.

With your experience and understanding of the teachers' profession, how do you personally feel the Fundisa for Change programme will impact on the learning and teaching in our country? The Fundisa for Change programme focuses on key aspects of teaching: subject content knowledge, teaching practice and assessment which are what every teacher deals with on a daily basis. What also stands out for me is the applied assignment they have to submit as part of their portfolio of evidence. This

allows teachers to 'try out', reflect and share with colleagues some of the new insights they have gained during the contact sessions. This sharing of practice is important as teaching can be a lonely profession. I believe as teachers reflect on their own practice, share and learn from colleagues, they will improve their subject content knowledge and practice.

Another aspect of the Fundisa for Change programme that I find valuable is in asking teachers to 'know their learners' through looking at what learners come with and what they struggle with in terms of content knowledge, resources and skill e.g. questions they struggle with during assessment. I believe that as they do this exercise they will be in a better position to direct their teaching to meet the learners' needs, thus catering for diverse learning styles which will improve both teaching and learning.

Fundisa has an ethos of collaboration between organisations (non-profit and governmental) and teacher education institutions. Could you expand on how this has impacted on your co-ordination role?

The partnership model in the Fundisa for Change programme has been challenging. Having many partners with diverse perspectives about the same thing, based on differing experiences, is challenging to co-ordinate. I had to learn a lot about and from each organisation, department and institution to understand the partners and how they worked. What I respect the most about the partners is that everybody is focusing on the same goal: quality teaching and learning in South African schools through environmental learning. All the partners are working together and bringing their expertise to provide the best programme for our teachers in

order to benefit our learners. The partnerships are still growing and I hope more partners will get involved this year.

Can you comment on the development stages of the resource material and the reasoning behind involving many stakeholders and universities?

Fundisa for Change is a partnership programme and as such all the stakeholders have something to contribute in the partnership. Partners from the environmental sector provide environmental content knowledge, partners from DBE provide school curriculum expertise and partners from higher education institutions provide teacher education knowledge. All of the combined expertise has led to the development of high quality teacher educator resources. We have also appreciated the support from Murray & Roberts which has allowed us to fund the materials development work and to bring multi-author teams together.

We thank Zintle for the significant role she has played in the Fundisa for Change programme. Her calm, professional and efficient approach to co-ordinating an array of representatives has ensured that the programme has grown significantly during her first year in office. We are also indebted to the Lewis Foundation for the financial support it provides for the co-ordination of the programme.



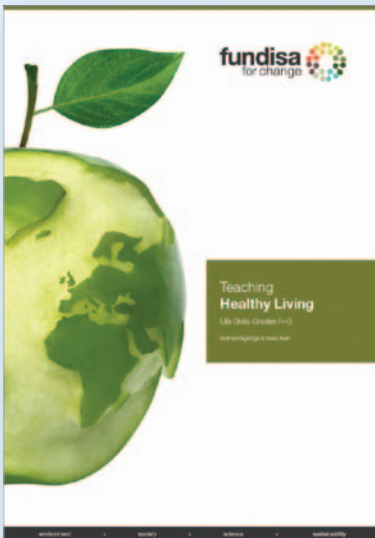
In the last six months of 2013 an additional six sets of teacher education materials have been developed. Professor Lotz-Sisitka claims that “Good quality teacher education materials appear to have been neglected in the national system of education development. Teacher education materials are not the same as classroom practice materials, and are quite complex to develop.”

Kim Ward, editor of the materials, noted that following the inclusive approach of the Fundisa for Change project, different authors from different organisations and universities were requested to contribute material. She says, “This might have resulted in complex editorial

procedures but does allow for a range of diverse materials that involve a variety of partners, providing quality material for teachers”. The development and production of these materials was generously funded by GreenMatter and the Murray & Roberts Corporate Social Investment division.

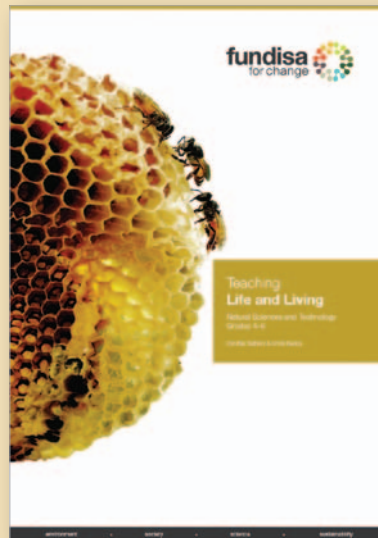
In addition to the existing generic materials (Core Text; Methods and Processes; Framing Active Teaching and Learning) and the two subject specific modules (Teaching Climate Change – Geography, Grade 10-12 and Teaching Biodiversity – Life Sciences, Grade 10-12), the following new sets of resource material are available for use in 2014:

FOUNDATION PHASE

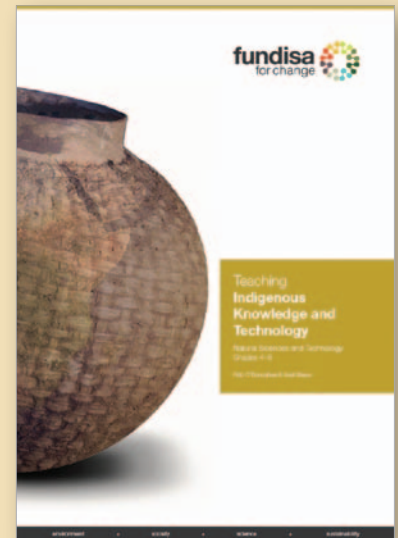


Life Skills – Teaching Healthy Living
Nomisa Ngxingo & Mary Kerr
Department of Basic Education and independent primary school educator and writer

INTERMEDIATE PHASE

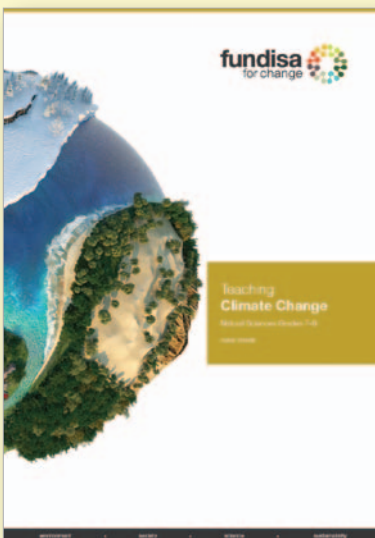


Natural Science – Teaching Life and Living
Cynthia Slattery & Chris Reddy
University of Stellenbosch



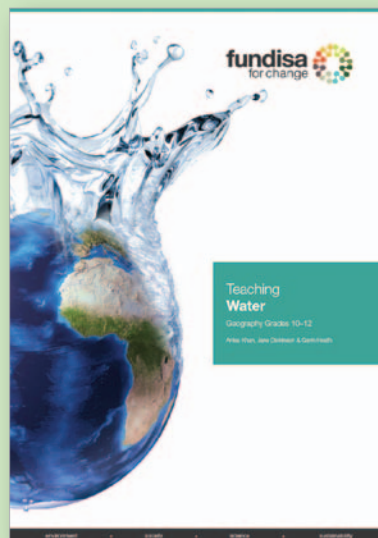
Natural Science and Technology – Teaching Indigenous Knowledge and Technology
Soul Shava & Rob O'Donoghue
UNISA and Rhodes University

SENIOR PHASE

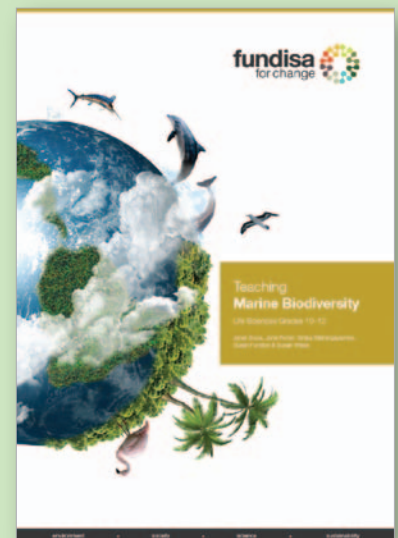


Natural Sciences – Teaching Climate Change
Susan Brundrit
Affiliated to the Schools Development Unit, University of Cape Town

FET PHASE



Geography – Teaching Water
Anisa Khan, Jane Dickinson & Gavin Heath
WESSA, independent and University of KwaZulu Natal



Life Sciences – Teaching Marine Biodiversity
Janet Snow, Jone Porter, Sirkka Tshiningayamwe, Susan Funston & Susan Wiese
Environment Learning and Teaching, SAAMBR, Rhodes University and Gauteng Department of Education

Teachers awarded first accredited certificates

In 2013 two Fundisa for Change pilot courses were conducted using the draft Biodiversity and Climate Change materials for FET. One was conducted in Mpumalanga, focusing on Climate Change for the Geography teachers at Grade 10-12 level. The second was held in the KZN Midlands for Grade 10-12 Life Science teachers. A certificate ceremony was held towards the end of 2013 in which teachers were awarded Certificates of Competence from the ETDP SETA and Delta Environmental Centre, who were responsible for the assessment of their impressive portfolios. One teacher, Antonia Mkhabela, has continued with Masters level studies in Life Sciences and Environmental Learning, showing the potential of Fundisa for Change for creating learning pathways for teachers.

Top right: Three of the certificate recipients (from left to right): Ingrid Stead, Antonia Mkhabela, Janet Snow (co-trainer) and Thandiwe Mfuphi. **Bottom right:** Antonia and Ingrid (centre and right) handing in Portfolio of Evidence to Shanu Misser, co-trainer and portfolio assessor. **Below:** Participants deliberate at a workshop session.



OTHER NEWS & EVENTS

TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONAL SEMINARS

During 2014 Fundisa for Change representatives are planning to visit ten of the Teacher Education Institutions where information on the programme, the teacher education materials produced and collaboration between the partners will be shared.

ENDORSEMENT OF THE PROGRAMME BY SACE

The Fundisa for Change partners will also be submitting the programme and its materials for endorsement by the South African Council of Education (SACE) in 2014. SACE have responded very positively to the programme, and have provided useful guidance.

ADDITIONAL TRAINING OF TEACHERS AND TRAINING OF TRAINERS PROGRAMMES

The Fundisa for Change programme will seek to offer further Training of Trainers programmes to support the use of the Fundisa for Change teacher education materials and programmes amongst partner organisations. Information on these will be posted on the Fundisa for Change website.

WEBSITE

The Fundisa for Change website provides updates on the programme and shares news on the programme's activities.

See www.fundisaforchange.co.za