

## A Word from the Managing Director

Welcome to the June edition of the **OVSA Voice Connection newsletter** celebrates **YOUTH DAY** and honours all the young people who lost their lives in the struggle against Apartheid and Bantu Education. On this special day, we commemorate the start of the 1976 Soweto riots, which were initially sparked by a government edict that all instruction in black schools would be held in Afrikaans. Many will associate this day with the tragic death of Hector Pieterse, a black schoolchild who's shooting by the police, brought to light the pervasive brutalities of an Apartheid regime.

The valiant efforts of hundreds of young people as they marched for a better education, 37 years ago, has led to the democracy we enjoy today. Young people truly are the leaders of today and tomorrow, and far from being seen but not heard, their voices have carried change to the far corners of our country. Today the inherent power of their voices is emerging loud and clear. Representing a significant part of our population, young people are an invaluable asset as they continue to push critical health and lifestyle issues onto the national agenda. Despite growing up in a country besieged by a seemingly unrelenting HIV/TB epidemic, educational systems still recovering from previous inequalities, issues of poverty, unemployment and continual political jostling - their commitment to change is proving pivotal to building a healthy nation.

Skills Development, in particular, continues to be a priority among our young people. Projects such as OVSA's Enterprise Project provide livelihood skills and knowledge to young people in the targeted areas of career guidance and entrepreneurship. Funded by ABSA, this series of in-depth workshops with Grade 9 and 11 learners, encourages them to think about their futures early and play a catalytic role in leading our communities, modernising our economy, building our society and living healthy and meaningful lives.

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## A Spotlight on: SIT Study Abroad

OVSA's partnership with The School for International Training (SIT); a study abroad community health institution, continues to flourish. Through placement with a host organisation, visiting students (mainly from the US), conduct their research studies on public and community health issues in South Africa - while also assisting their host organisation with their work.

Early in March, OVSA welcomed SIT student, Irene Brucken, who's study on 'Tactics of Proper Implementation of HIV Prevention Programmes' reviewed the most effective means of implementing HIV prevention, sexual and reproductive health and rights and life skills programmes in schools. Extensive interviews with the OVSA Facilitators formed the basis for this study—which highlighted that the Facilitator's main priority is to support learners with life skills that will help them make appropriate decisions regarding their sexual and reproductive health, *even if* they were not currently engaging in sex. Very early on, it became apparent that understanding the Facilitator's intentions and tactics, could not be isolated from what they understood to be the challenges and realities faced by young people today. They also expressed their belief that their role is significantly different from that of a teacher; as they engage learners on what they already know, correct misinformation, challenge stigma and play a supportive role when learners do not feel comfortable approaching their teachers about a pressing issue.



## Schools Programme Update

### UPDATE

Winter is setting in, we're half way through our year-long partnership with young people, and the Schools Programme is in full swing!

### GRADE 8 LIFE SKILLS PROJECT

The Grade 8 Life Skills Project is progressing well and in some schools Facilitators are set to finalise Assessment 2 when learners return from the June holidays. As part of Assessment 2, OVSA will assess learners' knowledge of healthy living, managing HIV and AIDS, puberty and healthy relationships. To date, this project has reached some 2500 learners; although it is expected that this figure will increase due to the late incoming registrations from some learners.

### GRADE 10 LIFE SKILLS PROJECT

The launch of the Grade 10 Life Skills Project was celebrated at JL Dube High School in May, when funder, Sibaya Casino and Entertainment Kingdom and OVSA, hosted a 'handing over' ceremony at the school. Some 350 learners are currently partnering on the Grade 10 Life Skills Project. Learners have completed Assessment 1 in this school, and are about to write Assessment 2. These assessments test learners' knowledge and attitudes including learners' knowledge of human rights, gender roles and goal setting.

### ENTERPRISE PROJECT

Learners taking part in this project, are currently focussing on identifying their strengths and weaknesses, developing a personal career plan and practical entrepreneurship education (the latter highlights conceptualising and starting running a business, contents of a business plan and trade skills and informal sector SMMEs). We have reached approximately 2000 learners so far, and our target upon completion of this project will be around 3600.

### LIS

In May, the OVSA Schools Programme Team continued with the 6-month post-intervention data collection for our Longitudinal Intervention Study (LIS). Mostly learners who had previously partnered with OVSA on this study, re-joined the collection team. The data was uploaded at the end of May and results are expected by the end of July. The LIS evaluates the knowledge, skills and attitudes of learners who have been exposed to our programme, over an 18-month period.

### 6th SA AIDS Conference

Last, but certainly not least (!) - OVSA Facilitators will be manning the OVSA Exhibitor Booth at the 6th SA AIDS Conference in Durban, 18-21 June. Thanks to the generosity of the Foundation for Professional Development (FPD) and its partners, OVSA was awarded the opportunity to exhibit, network and learn at this dynamic conference!!! Thank you FPD and please come and visit us at the conference!!!

**Maxwell Mabaso**  
Acting Schools Programme Manager

## MRC/OVSA Research Paper Presented at The 19th Union African Region Conference on Tuberculosis and Lung diseases

A research paper, co-authored by The Medical Research Council's (MRC) A Dilraj and T Mthiyane, and OVSA's M van Berne, looking at the results of a 1-year pilot project collaboration on 'a schools-based approach to increase awareness and case finding of TB in South Africa' will



be presented by Dr Dilraj at the 19th Union African Region Conference on Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases, held in Kigali City, Rwanda from 20-22 June 2013.

**Background:** Increasing case finding of TB, improving cures rates and implementing an integrated approach to TB and HIV management have become focus areas for the National TB Programme. Children in close contact with TB smear positive cases are at high risk of TB infection. To this end, a schools-based project funded by the USAID Tuberculosis Program South Africa, was conducted by the MRC and OVSA in 2012, to support an increase in the awareness of TB-HIV and to enhance early case finding of TB. The 1-year pilot study concluded at the end of 2012 and findings were finalised earlier this year.

**Objectives:** To conduct workshops with learners, teachers and community groups to improve their knowledge about TB-HIV, be able to recognise symptoms of TB in themselves and/or others and seek appropriate care.

**Methods:** The learner programme consisted of 14 workshops to Grade 8 learners and school assembly talks on TB-HIV at 15 rural and semi-urban schools in three sub-districts. Teachers and Community Health Workers (CHWs) at and around these schools were also trained in the detection and referral of TB suspects. Community Advisory Groups (CAGs) in each sub-district and mini-CAGs at each school were formed to support the CHWs and teachers. Screening and surveillance tools were developed and implemented to monitor the number of suspects found and tested for TB at local clinics, and the number that tested positive and started TB treatment.

**Results:** 2486 learners in the school calendar year were reached under the workshop programme and 14250 by assembly talks. An assessment of the Grade 8 programme showed that 83% passed with a minimum of 50%. Teachers showed an increase in their knowledge of TB increased from an average of 75% to 84%. 81 Community Health Workers were trained in the detection and referral of TB suspects.

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Three Community Advisory Groups (CAGs) and 17 mini-CAGs were formed. Of the 576 suspects identified, 16 learners and 110 members from the community tested positive for TB. All started treatment.

**Conclusions:** The assessments and feedback from learners and educators indicated that the intervention had a positive impact at schools. The screening and monitoring of TB suspects showed that education on TB to learners and teachers, use of screening tools and support from local CHWs led to the early detection of many TB cases at schools and the surrounding community.

### TB Advocacy Projects linked to Research Study



*TB Advocacy Project—Community Outreach with Grade 8 learners at Isifisusethu High School*

## Communications and Fundraising

### MySchool/MyVillage

Thank you again for your valuable support over the past three months. We are very proud to announce that we have received the following financial contributions during the past months:

Jan: R294.32

Feb: R253.14

March: R255.76

April: R357.53



**See across the page for more information on this amazing fundraising campaign!**

## Funder Focus

### Sibaya Casino and Entertainment Kingdom



*Viva Sibaya Casino and Entertainment Kingdom, OVSA and the learners and educators from JL Dube High School in Kwamashu!!!!*

An article was recently published in the DurbanZone online magazine, showcasing the new partnership between OVSA and Sibaya Casino and Entertainment Kingdom. Sibaya Casino is funding the Grade 10 Life Skills Project at JL Dube High School in KwaMashu. The support of Sibaya Casino has come at a crucial time – and has allowed OVSA to expand its Schools Programme to include Grade 10 learners. Thank you Sibaya Casino and Entertainment Kingdom!!

For more on the official ‘handover’ ceremony, please visit: <http://durbanzone.co.za/mag/index.php/2013/05/17/sibaya-casino-places-importance-on-life-skills>. The article was subsequently re-tweeted by dynamic DurbanZone host, PeterG, and will be placed on the OVSA website.

### MySchool MyVillage MyPlanet

#### Raising funds for schools, charities and the environment

This is undoubtedly one of SA’s biggest fundraising programmes - which gives OVSA the opportunity to raise valuable funds for the schools that we partner with; and without it costing a cent! With your support, this campaign is able to give back more than R3 million every month to over 9000 schools, charities, environmental & animal welfare organisations - and boasts 12 national partners where you can swipe your card. Partners include Woolworths, Engene, Waltons, Reggies, Supaquick, Altech Netstar, and Kalahari.com Please remember to fill out a membership form and apply for your card at your nearest Woolworths store or by visiting [www.myschool.co.za](http://www.myschool.co.za)

Help us strengthen our Schools Programme and support young people in KZN!!

## Special Features

### Website Facelift:

The OVSA website has seen its fair share of visitors over the past few years.. Generally viewed as an organisation or company's 'calling card' - the website plays an important role for NGO's. If well-thought out, a website can give visitors an immediate 'up-close-and-personal' view of your organization's activities. Awareness of your services, programmes and products is easily communicable and it provides a good platform for fundraising campaigns, and donations. As a good website can also build an organization's reputation, it is important that it stay 'fresh' and is updated regularly. Thanks to supporter, the FOLDER FABRIEK, OVSA will soon boast a new and fully-sponsored, website. Watch this space!! For more information on the FOLDER FABRIEK and their services, please visit: <http://www.folderfabriek.nl/>

### OXFAM Site Visit Fun!



**A successful site visit with OXFAM at Zwelibanzi High School!**

**From l-r: OVSA Facilitator, Sane Dube and OXFAM Programme Coordinator, Nolucky Nxasana, with OVSA's acting Schools Programme Manager, Maxwell Mbaso.**

## Staff Update

### Staff Training:

Quality staff is essential to the development of OneVoice South Africa and the intervention it offers. Having quality staff members can however, be a significant challenge in the NGO field; where pay tends to lag behind other service industries. Development of our staff is important for a number of reasons not least of these, retention of staff; maintaining programme quality; upholding ethical standards; and keeping up-to-date through refresher trainings .

**Quality:** The quality of the intervention that an organisation such as ours offer, is directly linked to ongoing professional development. In the case of OVSA's Facilitators, for instance, their holistic development as individuals and as professionals, helps them to better and more realistically related to the young people they partner with.

**Ethics:** Teaching and maintaining 'standards' - personal, as well as professional, is an ongoing 'must.' OVSA staff need to be kept updated on policy developments and legislation so that they can continue to provide a high quality intervention to schools. Staff members also need to be able to recognise potential ethical issues and have the practical skills and knowledge to deal with these, when they arise.

**Advancement:** Ongoing training also has the added benefit of facilitating the development of different elements that allow workers to move up the ladder of responsibility. This is also key to supporting ongoing retention and ensuring that when staff do leave, we can send them off with more skills than when they joined us!!

**Trainings:** the 2013 trainings have included Sex and Sexuality - Time and Stress Management - Facilitation Training - Computer training - Pastel Accounting Training - Career Guidance and Facilitation Training - HR Management Training, HIV, AIDS and TB Training, Occupational Health and Safety Training, WASH Training and First AID Training.

29 Esther Roberts Road, Glenwood, Durban, 4001  
Tel: +27 (0)31 202 0555 Fax: +27 (0)31 202 0585

Email: [info@onevoice.org.za](mailto:info@onevoice.org.za) Skype: [onevoicessouthafrica](https://www.skype.com/en/contacts/onevoicessouthafrica) Website: [www.onevoice.org.za](http://www.onevoice.org.za)



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