



The African Psychotherapy Resource Centre & Educational Trust

1,10th Road, Kew, Johannesburg
P O Box 425, Highlands North 2037, South Africa
Tel: +27 11 786 5085 Fax: 088 11 887 2727
E-mail: ububele@telkomsa.net Website: www.ububele.org.za
Registered Trust (010-472NPO) Public Benefit Organisation (930002474)


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Award for Community
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Affiliate of the World
Association of Infant
Mental Health

February 2009

UBUBELE NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends,

2008 was a full and rich year of hard work for all of us at Ububele. We hope that this newsletter will give you some idea of the nature and importance of the various activities. We believe that mental health and distress play a vital role in our new democracy. The emotional aspects of life are easily overlooked or considered insignificant. This is especially true when it comes to young children. It is at this developmental stage that interventions are most effective and have life long benefits.

UBUBELE-PERSONA DOLL PROJECT



This past year was another busy time for the Ububele- Persona Doll project. The Dolls are used as a group therapeutic intervention to facilitate the children's emotional literacy. The practitioner, [the nursery school teacher or child psychologist], brings the doll to a group of pre-school children. Themes emerge that are emotionally powerful & significant. The children then have a safe space to articulate their painful feelings. There have been many moving responses to difficult material such as death and dying, illness and violence.

Once again, a sewing group of HIV+ woman from Alexandra Township were brought together on the Ububele premises, under the direction of our creative crafts woman Resa Selsick who volunteered her time. They manufactured a large number of Dolls. Each is unique in features and clothing, just as children are. The women are paid for their time by Ububele, as part of a job creation and empowerment endeavor. The Ububele-Persona Doll training manuals were completely restructured and revamped incorporating feedback from past trainees.

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Mrs. Amina Cachalia; Dr. Lillian Cingo; Mr. Fakhry David; Mrs. Hillary Hamburger; Dr. Kedibone Letlaka-Rennert;
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The new training programme was then successfully piloted with six trainees. At a practical level, debriefing sessions were run at a nursery school in Alex that had been held-up by a group of armed gunmen. The children had been witness to one of the teachers being shot. The sessions with the Dolls gave the children an opportunity to talk about and confront the traumatic incident.

A new partnership was established with Rembrandt Primary School. One of our intern psychologists, Atiyya Mohamed and Lindiwe, her Ububele-Persona Doll ran sessions with Grade 1 classes every Friday.

This project was led by Lee-Anne Eastwood, assisted by Juliette Grant.

UBUBELE UMDELZANE PARENT- INFANT PROJECT **[UUIP]**



Led by Katharine Frost & assisted by Brenda Sephuma, there have been impressive developments in the UUIP project, which focuses on attachment and bonding between parents and their infants. The baby mat project that started out in 2007 at the Alex Clinic has now extended into the Linda Twala Primary health Clinic in Alexandra. More than one hundred caregivers with their infants have been given a space on the mat to talk about the challenges and issues impacting on their relationship with their infants. We are currently still seeing mom's and babies at Alex Clinic on Fridays. We are hoping however to extend this service into Wendywood Clinic from January 2009 and much hard work has gone into the initial preparatory stages.

The Peri-Natal Workshop that assists stressed obstetric nurses was evaluated by Educational Psychology students [Ububele interns] from the University of Witwatersrand. They also adapted the project to run training with Usindiso staff (a home for abused women and children) in an effort to give the staff support and some skills in helping the women and children in their care.

Ububele was also very fortunate in October '08 to host the UUIP's main trainer, teacher and supervisor Tessa Baradon. She led another important set of workshops, assisted by Katharine Frost the head of UUIP at Ububele. Tessa is a child analyst and an internationally recognised PIP [Parent-Infant Psychotherapy] expert from the Anna Freud Centre in London. She is a loyal and enthusiastic supporter of the UUIP project. The participants, who came from all over Johannesburg and not only Ububele were thoroughly enriched by her input. UUIP organises a Saturday morning study group for over 30 practitioners. Ububele helped found GAIMH, a



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member organisation of WAIMH [World Association of Infant Mental Health].

UBUBELE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE (ECC) PROJECT



In disadvantaged communities, social services offering emotional support to young children barely exist. When one considers that the first seven years of life are the most important - this inadequacy is critical. The purpose of the ECC Practitioner Project [headed by Nicole Canin] is to train community workers who will be able to work with children under seven and their families. The goal is not to create 'lay' psychologists. Rather to develop child practitioners that can promote optimal development in children. After three years of preparation and research we are finally ready to roll-out. We have spent the last two years developing a training course, and are in the final stages of securing accreditation. Training is set to begin in July 2009 with the first group of ECC practitioners. The course, which will run for one year, is the beginning of a pioneering project that will hopefully offer much needed resources in community settings further a-field.

WORKING WITH GROUPS

Once again, we can look back on another successful year on the "Working with Groups" course, a course that seeks to develop group facilitators at various levels of expertise. The head of this project at Ububele is Jake Mathlong. Jake together with three other group facilitators from Ububele's teaching faculty, went to a group conference in Dublin in August 08. This reinforced our links with the International Group Analysis



Association [London] who have recognised Ububele's Introductory course of the Ububele Group training. This training has continued in a format of 6 extended weekend blocks per annum. The training attracted a large number of trainees. At the graduation ceremony in November there were many indications that the course had been both professionally and personally significant. An important component of the training are experiential groups. It is rare for South Africans from all classes, walks of life and occupations to meet and share difficult, mostly repressed inter-group feelings. For many this forum is a life changing experience.

Many mental health workers, both professionals and lay counsellors, are called upon to work with groups. Aside from our "Working with Groups" courses, there are virtually no similar ones available in South Africa. Therefore these courses address a serious shortcoming. 2009 will see Ububele running a special

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advanced course. More about this in our next newsletter.

THERAPEUTIC PRE-SCHOOL



The 50 children enrolled in the three classes in 2008 provided the steady heartbeat of Ububele. We remained focused on a curriculum and activities that were geared to building up the children's emotional and intellectual resources. This helps them deal with the extremely dislocating experiences of many of their family lives. The Persona Dolls are regular visitors to the Nursery school. The input of our psychologists both to support the

teachers and to give individual therapy to our more troubled children proved to be invaluable. In addition the children enjoyed a number of outings throughout the year to broaden their horizons – e.g. a visit from the Bramley police and regular visits to the police station, a few visits from the fire station and trips to the library. We also had a very special visit from a German NGO who came dressed in clown suits and had the children rolling on the floor in laughter. A highlight was a trip to the zoo, which is always a firm favourite with the children. The vitality of the nursery school was evidenced in our end of the year concert. This included the graduation of those moving on to primary school. The children contained and tutored by their loving teachers danced and sung their hearts out. The talented Grade R's put on a play called "Kindness" which highlighted the very meaning of Ububele. All in all, it was a rewarding year with a group of special children and dedicated staff members.

ALEXANDRA COMMUNITY OUTREACH



Ububele has many endeavors that help us to retain and strengthen our links to the Alexandra Community. We attended many community meetings and conferences and a number of exciting projects developed through this.

Once a week, one of the Ububele staff presents a half an hour slot on Alex FM, a community radio station. This is enjoyed by both the staff and the Alex FM DJ's who are always keen to get involved in the subject being discussed. Matters spoken about vary from hard-hitting topics, such as the prevalence of child on child sexual abuse, to more enjoyable topics like story-telling. Parents are encouraged to tell their children the stories that their parents & grandparents had told them during their own childhood.

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Gordon Primary School and Ububele joined forces in making an educational remedial project a success. Under the facilitation of Ububele and together with the University of Witwatersrand help and support was afforded to children with speech and hearing difficulties. Ububele has extended their outreach programmes from one remedial group in 2007, to four in 2008. Learners with scholastic difficulties from grades 4, 5, 6 and 7 had sessions of one and a half hours a week with an Ububele Educational Psychologist, an Intern Psychologist and an Honours student. It was agreed by all the learners and the facilitators that 2008 was a significant year.

Lastly, the Alexandra Multidisciplinary Team continued to meet once every two weeks. This group involves women from the Alex Police station, the Bramley Police station, ADAPT, Nokatula Special Needs School, Gresswold Remedial School and the Alexandra Justice Centre.



Ububele recognising the importance of this type of NGO and organizational network that wishes to make a difference in communities, has taken on the organizing role.

In conclusion we would like to thank the Minister of Social Development, Zola Skewiye, who visited us in the middle of 2008 for his inspiring acknowledgment of our work. He told us after we gave him an extensive overview of the work that our country needed many Ububeles.

We always need help. If anyone can give it to us, either by making a financial contribution or volunteering their services we would be immensely grateful.

Ngiyabonga! Thank You!

Ububele is a registered trust in terms of Section 6{1} of the Trust Control Act 1988 {Act 57} Trust number 010-472 NPO. Ububele is also registered as a Public Benefit Organisation Number 930002474. All donations are tax deductible in terms of Section 18A of the Income Tax Act.

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Tony, Hillary, Jake, Gael, Katharine, Lee-Anne, Nicole, Juliette, Atiyya, Brenda, Amanda, Bianca, Marinda, Anne, Sophie, Evelyn, Hope, Hazel, Gladys, Lerato, Resa, Tholakele, Nicholas, the WWG faculty and the Ububele trustees.

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