



A Scotsman in South Africa (Part 2)

This is my second and probably final report on being a gap student for the Izzi Trust. The past three months have continued to be eye-opening and very rewarding for me and it seems like so much has happened since I wrote about my first experiences of life in South Africa.

For the majority of the time my schedule has remained the same, which has allowed me to form very close relationships with all four of the outreach schools that I have been working with. The work I have been doing has continued to be very varied and I will try to outline some of this below.

Re-E-Lwele Primary School's small size has enabled me to interact with all 70 learners on a regular basis. It is always an enjoyable start to the week as I am made to feel incredibly welcome. My work has focussed on reading and computing. For reading, I have split learners from grade 4 to 7 up into groups of about 5, so that readers of a similar ability can work together. Over the last few months I feel that there has been a very noticeable improvement in reading abilities and this can only be improved further by more practice. This would be greatly helped by organising the school's library properly, as there are plenty of reading books but the majority are currently inaccessible to learners. On the computing side of things, all pupils throughout the school have been having computer lessons with me. At the beginning of the year there were four machines but now, thanks to a very kind donation, there are twelve.



The computers were also used by the children to complete a project that I have implemented in all four of my schools. The Izzi Trust has partnered each of its outreach schools in South Africa with a school in England. The aim of the project is that each child will have a pen pal in a foreign country and over time the children will be able to communicate with each other and gain the valuable experience of learning about life in a different country so that their horizons

may be broadened. My job has been to put together packs of information for each school including letters from some learners. All of the packs have now been posted and hopefully we will soon receive something in return from our new pen pals in England.

The school I visit on Wednesday, Philena Primary School, has undergone something of a transformation during my time there. At the beginning of the year the school taught from

grade 1 to 7, however in February, it was amalgamated fully with a nearby school in Olievenhoutbosch. Philena is now split across two campuses and I have stayed with grade 1 to 4 at the original site. Despite teething problems which were to be expected with the new set-up, I feel I have contributed to the school. I work mainly with grade 4 classes, assisting with English classes and have also focussed the Pen Pal project on this grade.

At Madibatlou Primary School on Thursdays, I have also been assisting with English classes. I have attended classes with the English teacher for grade 4, 5 & 6. I have done lots of reading with these classes, but unfortunately due to the large class sizes I have been unable to have the close contact that I've managed at other schools. In spite of this, I feel that I have learnt a lot from dealing with such big classes, often taking lessons by myself. The teachers at Madibatlou have also communicated their appreciation for my assistance and that the learners are always more enthusiastic on the days that I am there.

I have thoroughly enjoyed all of the Fridays that I have spent at Laerskool Skeerpoort. As I am living so close to the school, I really do feel part of the local community and part of the school. Fridays have continued to be English speaking days and I think this has been very beneficial to both the learners and the English teacher, as she admits herself that she would like to improve her ability in this language. My lessons have been focussed on verbs, tenses and sentence structure and you only realise how confusing English as a language is when you have to try and explain the future continuous tense! I have continued to do afternoon sports sessions and this term the sport of choice has changed from rugby to soccer with the World Cup just around the corner.



As the end of the second term approaches, so does the end of my time spent with Izzi Trust's outreach schools. I return to Scotland after the World Cup and I will really miss life and work here. Before I leave I will be organising Scottish day's at all four outreach schools. I have already had one at Laerskool Skeerpoort and the children enjoyed laughing at my skirt (kilt) and learning some Scottish dances. I was presented with a T-shirt signed by all of the pupils and staff and also beautiful handmade cards from all of the learners. This hit home how many lives I have touched and how many special memories I will have of my time here. I cannot thank the Izzi Trust enough for organising everything for me, transporting me and in general making my gap year such a success.

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