



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Address by the Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, MP, at the launch of the GreaterGood SA Teachers' Dream initiative, Sandton Conference Centre, Johannesburg, Friday 19 August 2005

Tamzin Ratcliffe (GreaterGood SA)

Distinguished guests

On behalf of the Department of Education I would like to commend the three institutions involved in this project (The SA Council of Educators, the Shuttleworth Foundation and Greater Good SA) for joining hands in this innovative teachers' dream initiative.

I had not quite realised, until I thought about it, how widespread the dream metaphor is in our many languages.

The aspirations and dreams of millions of South Africans tend to remain out of reach. Any dream that is achieved fills the dreamer with pleasure and satisfaction. All of us saw that when Mark Shuttleworth fulfilled his dream of being the first African in space.

There is not much that is pleasurable for our teachers, many of them work with dedication in difficult conditions, often ignored and unappreciated. For these teachers the opportunity to realise dreams is an exciting reward for their dedication.

For many of our teachers the fear that dreams cannot come true has been a haunting brake on ambition.

Opening the door to teachers is the gift offered by Teachers Dream.

Teachers' Dream initiative is so clever, so intuitive, and so easy to use.

Teachers' Dream is a web-based funding channel dedicated to the improvement of education in South Africa.

The Teachers Dream website (www.GreaterGoodSA.co.za) facilitates the donation of money, time and goods to teachers and schools.

The unique advantage of www.GreaterGoodSa.co.za is that it uses the internet to ensure that the giving process is transparent and accountable. GreaterGood South Africa makes sure that all donations, no matter how big or how small, reach the intended beneficiary.

Every beneficiary responds with a report back that tells the donors how their gift has made a real impact.

Teachers Dream is inclusive; its reach transcends geographical space enabling school communities that are remote or rural to be as connected to South African giving communities as their urban counterparts.

The project is an easy and secure way for concerned citizens and corporates to help our schools access the resources that educators need to enhance their lessons for the benefit of the children.

On the web site there are inspiring proposals from educators who have brilliant ideas of how to make Maths and Science come to life; or how best to demonstrate Life Skills; or how to introduce children to the Arts. Many of these 'teachers dreams' can easily become reality with the support of relatively small grants.

Donors can browse through these proposals and choose to support a 'teachers dream' that has meaning to them. They can choose to fund a dream entirely or to make a contribution they can afford. Donors can also invite their friends, colleagues and family to participate in a joint effort to fund a specific dream.

Now I think that is very clever; it allows all those people who think giving is for other people, it allows them to make a real contribution.

The truth is that at the moment the school allocation, that proportion of government funding that is devoted to non-capital and non-personnel expenditure in our schools, is too low. Not enough is available to spend on school maintenance, security, and sport.

Despite our pro-poor funding, and the enormous strides we have made in the last ten years towards equity of provisioning in the school sector, the legacy of apartheid has still not been overcome.

We are working hard to change this situation. We believe that we must address social and educational infrastructure and the professional development needs of teachers.

I have proposed the adoption of legislation that will assist us in supporting the poorest schools. No fee schools will allow a basic minimum package to be paid to poor schools, so that they will no longer have the task of setting and trying to collect from parents who cannot pay.

There will still be the need to draw in community funds for school outings and this where the Teachers' Dream initiative is so important.¹

¹ The Costs of Education implementation plan (2003) states as follows: "The amounts that will be normed as minimum permitted school allocations will, in the case of the vast majority of poor schools in the country, be greater than the sum of public NPNC funding *plus school fees* in 2002. The net effect of the norms will therefore be improved funding for schools *even if school fees are not collected* ... For now, Government believes that our best option is to

Teachers Dream promotes public-private partnerships.

Through partnerships such as this one, we will be able to improve schooling and the work day lives of our teachers.

It is interesting to note that the initiative requires that the teachers' proposals be linked to the new curriculum.

This approach makes the proposal very relevant to what the teachers are doing in the classroom and as such promotes creativity and innovation on the part of teachers to make learning as lively as possible for the learners.

The Department of Education supports and will continue to support any initiative that is aimed at sharpening our teachers' skills, and contribute towards the effective implementation of our new curriculum.

This will surely contribute towards the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning in our schools.

We also hope that this project will give pupils an opportunity to realise their full potential by exposing them to a variety of career prospects.

Improving education in South Africa is a national priority that requires involvement and engagement throughout all levels of our society.

Which is why we need new and innovative channels where the business sector and individual citizens can easily participate in the

strongly discourage or limit the charging of school fees in poor schools, on the basis of improved public funding, but to allow communities with good motives for charging fees, and with a good system of exemptions in place, to retain the right to charge fees. We believe that currently this is best approach in balancing our commitment to free education with the rights of communities.”

effort to ensure that all South African children and youth have access to an education of the best quality.

May I take this opportunity to wish all the teachers who have already submitted their proposals good luck. May their dreams come true!