

FOCUS

THE PRIVATE HOTEL SCHOOL ISSUE 1 | VOLUME 9 | YEAR 2009

Bathandwa www.bathandwa.org.za

On Saturday 15 August, a number of our students welcomed children from the Bathandwa Day and Night Care Centre. The centre cares for abandoned, HIV positive and physically or mentally disabled children of Cape Town, and is located in Makhaya, Khayelitsha. PHS wanted to reach out to those closest to home, to show love, care and attention to those who most need it.

When the children first arrived, the Khoi fish pond was the main attraction – they were fascinated, and were thrilled that they got the chance to feed them. Then came out the hot chocolate, most of which was absorbed by their clothes! The games that we had in store were the egg-and-spoon race, the sack race, the three-legged race, and finally musical chairs. The children showed much enthusiasm and excitement, displaying bursts of uncontained energy after which we all ended up panting on the floor. It was such a joy to see how they were enjoying themselves. After all the excitement we had all worked up quite an appetite, we indulged in hotdogs and cupcakes, sat in the garden and enjoyed the lively company that the children brought.

Before we said goodbye and waved them off, we gave each of them a small gift, one that will remind them of their experience at PHS. We will be seeing the children again in October and November for another fun-filled day of activity and laughs.

A special thanks to Justus and Tammy for providing transport and accompanying the children.

Sabine Gellè



Education sector failing SA workplace, survey finds

The global economic crisis, together with rapidly increasing competition within the marketplace, have rendered fully work-ready employees a top commodity. Companies have however raised serious concerns about the quality of graduates they take on each year, according to a survey conducted by Edexcel.

One of the largest qualifications bodies in the world, and part of Pearson South Africa, Edexcel took on the challenge to research the cause of the low quality of students that leave higher education institutions each year. They focused on two issues – what are the key challenges involved in developing workforces that fulfill the needs of businesses, organisations, industry sectors and economies around the world? And how can practical solutions be built that result in truly effective education for employment provision?

“Feedback from interviews in over 25 countries has consistently drawn our attention to one key point – that there is a significant disconnect between education systems and the needs of 21st century employers, both public and private. The match between what employers, individuals and governments seek and what respective education and training systems provide appears ill-fitting in many countries,” states Ian Yoell, Regional Director of Edexcel. He adds, “Effective education for employment is defined as the development and assessment of the requisite skills, knowledge and behaviours that constitute an effective employee in the 21st century.”

To enable engagement with a wide range of leaders in business, education and policy and to ensure a cross-section of opinion, a series of round-table discussions were conducted in Brazil, China, India, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates. Those taking part included government representatives, policy-makers, business leaders from corporations and small to medium-size enterprises and individuals working in education provision and academic study. These people were chosen for their depth of expertise, insight into the challenges faced by their own education systems and economies as well as their current engagement in shaping the future of education for employment.

According to the survey, South Africa needs to address the following key challenges in order to deliver effective education for employment:

- Develop shared employment profiles that connect employers to educators;
- Incorporate knowledge, skills and behaviours into education and training programmes;
- Build programmes that effectively stretch and develop these qualities for effective use in the real world;
- Develop transferable qualities explicitly to connect academic with professional learning;
- Build comprehensive, progressive learning frameworks;
- Develop and extending the quality of teaching;
- Assess and certificate learners appropriately;
- Share and promote best practice.

The gap between educational outputs and industry requirements is simply too large. Typically, course content is not sufficiently related to the workplace, particularly in academic education. Mechanisms should be put in place to allow businesses to be more involved in the design and delivery of professional education.

“It has become increasingly important for industry to be more engaged in education. Firstly, there must be a way for employers to convey what they need from educators. Secondly, in-work education should be improved across the board and should be scalable to the wider population rather than delivered behind closed doors. And thirdly, there are insufficient links between education and career progression,” concludes Yoell.

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Notes to editors

About Edexcel: Edexcel is the UK’s largest awarding body offering the joint currencies of academic and vocational qualifications in the UK and across 112 countries worldwide. In 2004 nearly 6 million entries were made for Edexcel’s qualifications, which include GNVQs, NVQs, international GCSE, A/S and A levels, and the suite of BTEC qualifications including the BTEC Higher National Certificate and Diploma.

Editorial contact:

Traffic Integrated Marketing

Elizabeth Senger

Telephone: 021 425 7111

E-mail: elizabeth@trafficintegrated.co.za

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Tel: +27 21 881 3792
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