

## **Community Involvement: Update on Makana Schools Project**

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Guy has asked me to give you an update on developments with regard to the Makana Schools' project. The latest information I have is that the University is still strategizing its intervention and the Dean of Education, Prof George Euvrard, is compiling a concept document to take it forward.

At this stage it seems that it will be vital to source a coordinator to pull together the many University projects, which have the Makana schools as their focus. This person will be part of the Rhodes Education Department and will work with stakeholders at the various schools. There are political issues attached to all stakeholder groups, namely the District Office, principals, teachers, learners and governing bodies; and it is important that we don't align ourselves with just one group. This means many man-hours consulting with all involved, in order to come up with a way forward.

Timeframes for this are a little tenuous, but the profiling of a co-ordinator will be complete within the next month. This post will require external funding and interested parties could have a proposal in this regard by mid-October. The coordinator will work on a two-year contract to provide a holistic picture of what is required in, and provided to, the Makana schools. This will result in the coordinator giving recommendations (with supportive data) on the way forward. Towards the end of the contract period, the shape and role of the coordination and development of the Makana Schools Project will become clearer. For the time being, Corinne Knowles from our division, Prof Euvrard and Ingrid Andersen, the University's Community Engagement Manager, are monitoring and reviewing all the University projects at the local schools.

Three examples of projects currently under review are:

1. A Psychology Masters program, which will focus on 3 high schools and provide psychological interventions over the next three years as a pilot study.
2. The Mobile Laboratory, which will focus on 7 secondary schools as well as six schools, which operate to Grade 8, and provide practical science lessons to all Grade 8 learners and their teachers for the next three years as a pilot program.
3. An Environmental Education project which will provide extramural practical lessons at the Albany Museum on environmental issues such as indigenous plants and their uses.

All three of these projects are hoping to start in 2008, and we feel that at least two of them are in a strong enough position to do so. We welcome the interest and support of external funders to the project and will be happy to provide updates on the process, as required.