

Ring! Ring! The Call that Changed the School

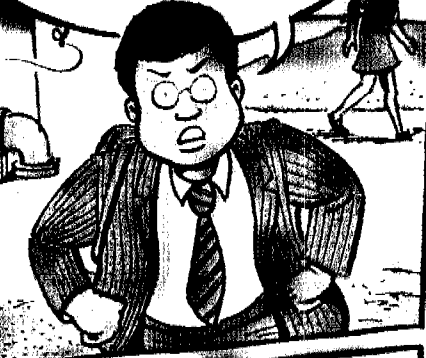


I'll see you guys in class. I have to shaya 69.

Vusi, are you crazy? Can't you smell? No one goes near those toilets.

Except for Dingaan and his gang.

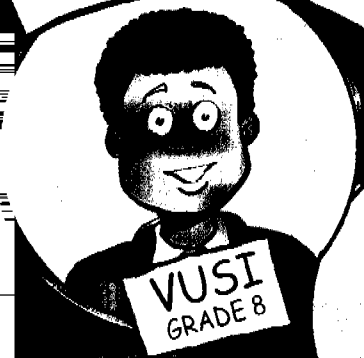
Jerome! Mzi! What am I supposed to do? Use the girls toilets?!



Hold it in or go to one of the houses outside the school.



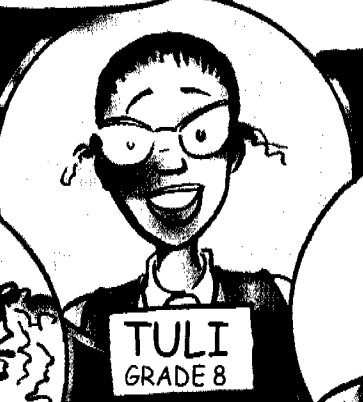
Aikona, it's my constitutional right to use the school toilet.



VUSI
GRADE 8



JEROME
GRADE 9



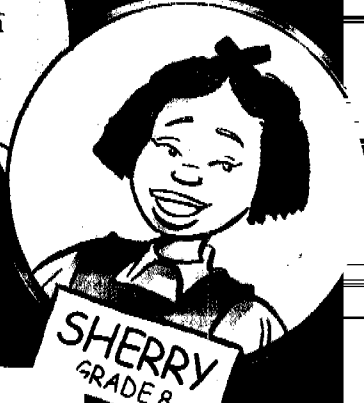
TULI
GRADE 8



MZI
GRADE 8



SHANA
GRADE 9



SHERRY
GRADE 8

824-ZA99-19303



In 1996 the Gauteng Department of Roads and Public Works did a survey of schools in the Gauteng area. They found many schools with inadequate toilets. Together with the Departments of Health and Education they began a joint project to improve the condition of toilets in schools. This project was called the Gauteng Integrated Schools Sanitation Improvement Programme (GISSIP).

GISSIP commissioned research to find out how learners perceived the water, sanitation and health situation in their schools.

The research showed that:

- Learners saw toilets as a problem in their schools.
- Dirty toilets were not the only problem – they were also used as a hangout for bullies and gangs.
- There was strong pressure in schools to stop learners taking action to improve things. Anyone who tried to change the situation, whether teacher or learner, was soon pulled down.

It was clear, therefore, that any education programme around water, sanitation and health in schools needs to look at toilets in the broader context. The programme should try to change the climate in schools from one that discourages action to one that encourages change.

The Call that Changed the School comic story was written to capture learners' interest and get them talking about things they could change in their schools. This resource places the issue of toilets in the broader context of learners taking action to make their schools better places. We hope that this resource will help learners to look critically at their schools, analyse

what they can do and then to "Take Action for Health".

It is important that everyone plays a part in keeping school toilets clean and working. The government can make sure there are proper toilets at all schools. The school principal can make sure the toilets are cleaned and working properly but learners can also play their part. This comic story tells you why it is important to keep toilets clean and how you can stay healthy.

We hope you enjoy reading it!

Acknowledgements

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IN THE BOYS' TOILETS ...

Hola majieta

Look what's just walked in - a Grade 8 laitie.



You must pay to use our facilities.

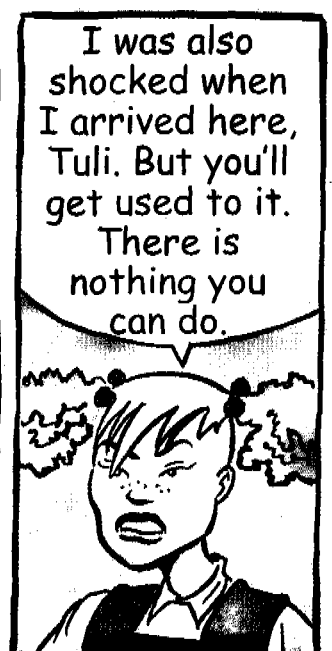
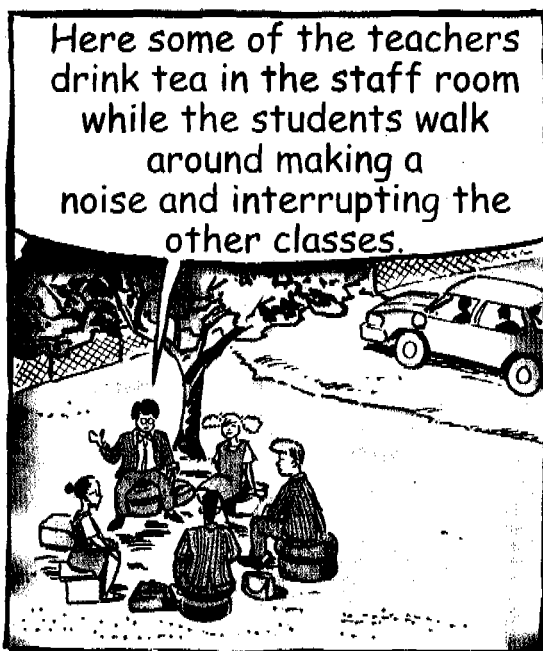
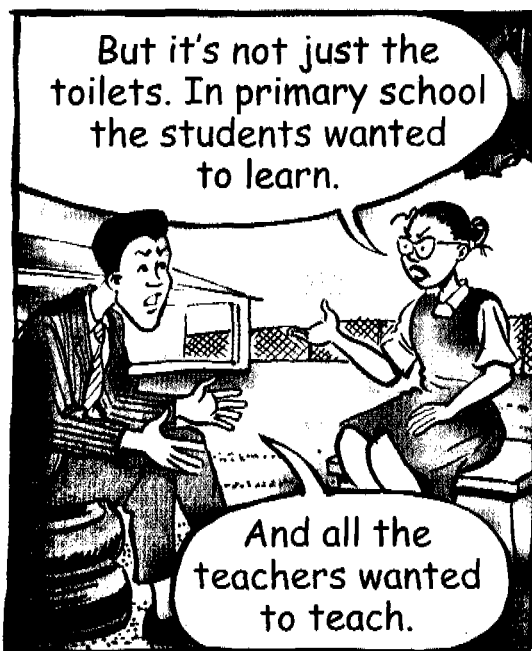
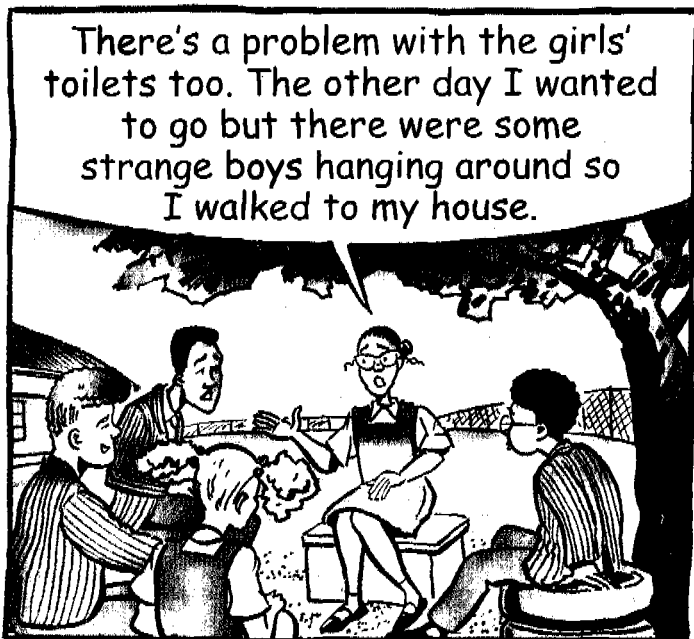
I'm not paying anything! These are school toilets!

We'll teach you how to behave in high school.

Let me go!







The problems are caused by the outsiders who come into the school because they are bored.



Most of the guys in Dingaan's skeem aren't even in the school.



Ja. They come and hang out and smoke dagga in the toilets.



Hey wena, come here.

Jerome, why doesn't the Principal go into the toilets and chase the outsiders out of the school?



It's obvious. You saw what a mess the toilets are, Mzi. No one goes near them.



What if the toilets were cleaned up? I bet that would make a difference.



Who will clean the toilets?

The students could work together ...



The students?! Are you crazy?! You would never get them to clean the toilets.



Can't the Principal get them to do it?

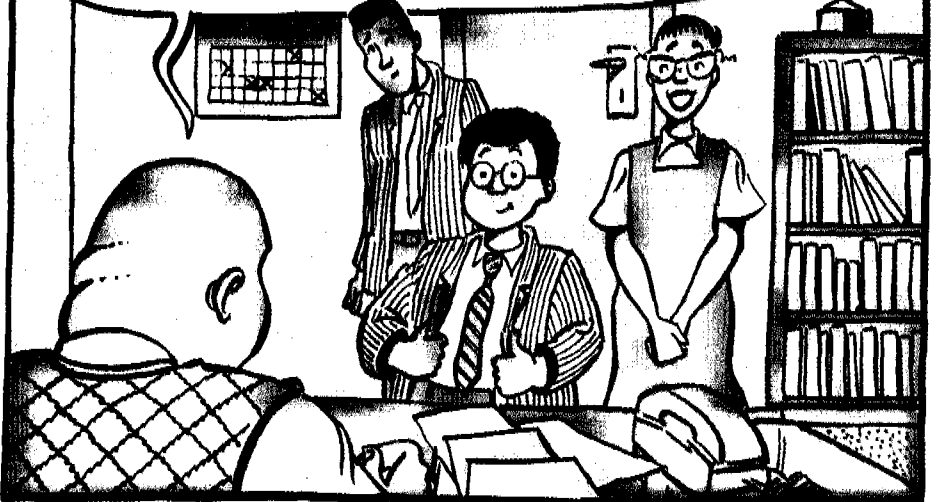


THE NEXT MORNING

Student action to clean the toilets? What a great idea!



I'll announce a special cleaning period after big break. And I'll ask the teachers to help out.



AFTER BREAK..

Only two students have turned up to help.

The whole school will be mocking us now. Why is it so difficult to do a positive thing?



Where are the teachers? They are supposed to be supervising.

Okay, let's get started on the toilets ...



Forget it! We're not going near them!

Come on guys. It can't be so bad.

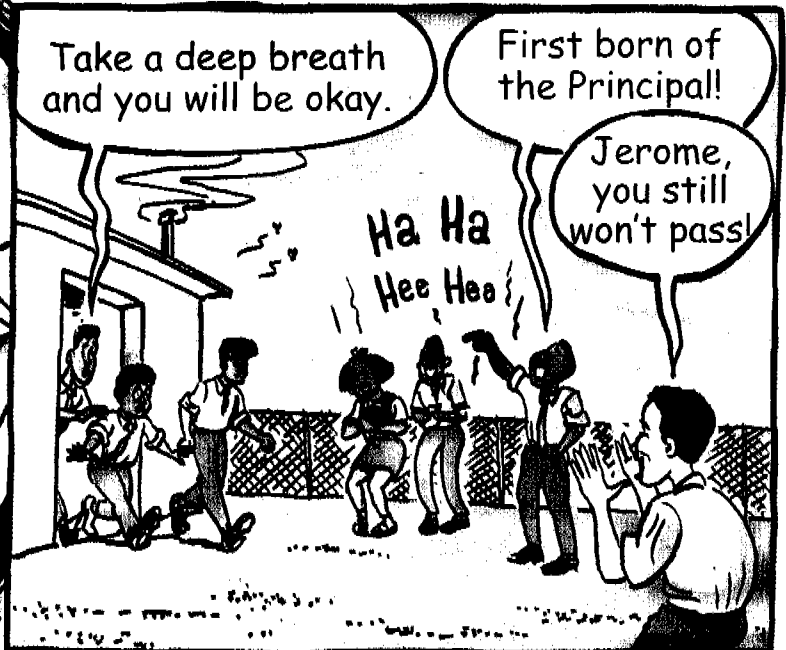
AAAGG!



Take a deep breath and you will be okay.

First born of the Principal!

Jerome, you still won't pass!



Ha Ha Hee Hee



A LITTLE LATER....

What were they trying to do?

Sherry will never go with me now.

It wasn't such a bad idea.

The girls weren't much help either.



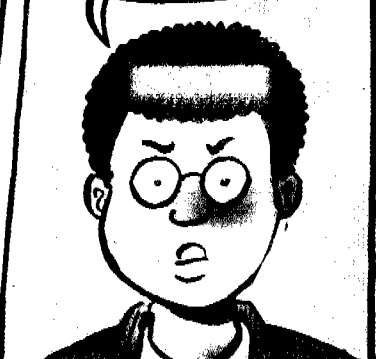
One of the older girls even kicked over our bucket.

Why do they pull us down? We are trying to do something to improve the school for everyone's benefit.

The students are suspicious. They think we are trying to get in the Principal's good books.



I blame the Principal and the teachers. Why didn't they come and give their support?



I told you it was a waste of time to go to this Principal.

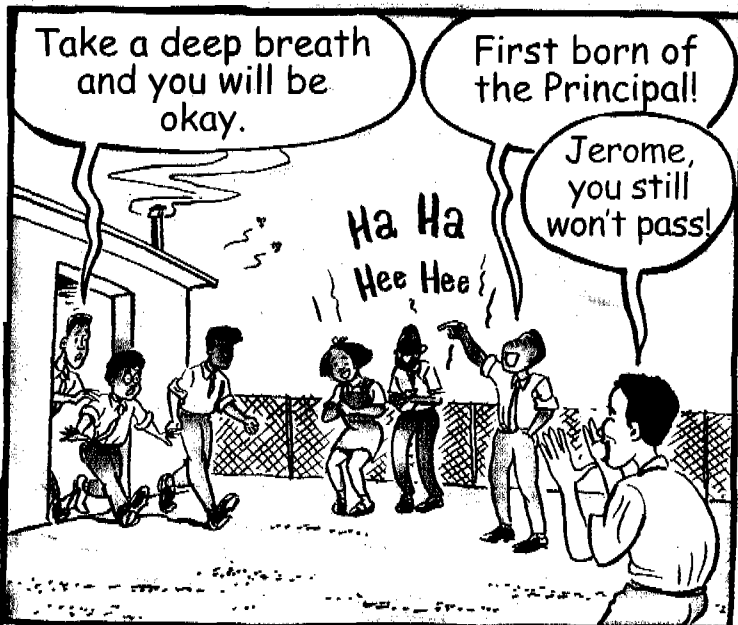


He is only interested in cleaning when there is a visitor coming!





CHANGING THINGS IS NOT EASY



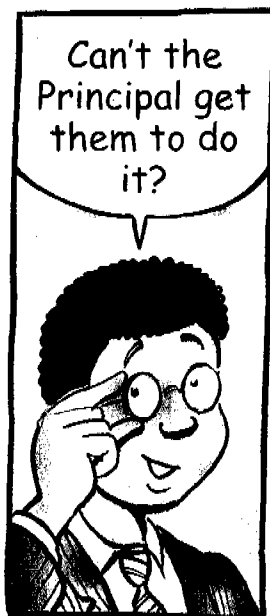
Are there some things that you would like to change? Would this happen in your school if you tried to take action to solve a problem like Vusi and his friends did?

Some people in our schools do not like change and are always negative towards positive action.

- Why is this the case?
- Why is it not 'cool' to do something to change our schools?
- How do you think we can change this situation?

The rest of this book will help you find out how to take positive action in your school.

One of the reasons why Vusi's group did not succeed at first was because they did not start by making everyone in the school feel that the project belonged to them. They relied on the Principal only.



Do you have a problem you would like to take action to solve in your school?

Think about how you could involve:

- ◆ the principal
- ◆ the teachers
- ◆ the LRC
- ◆ students/learners especially the influential and powerful learners.

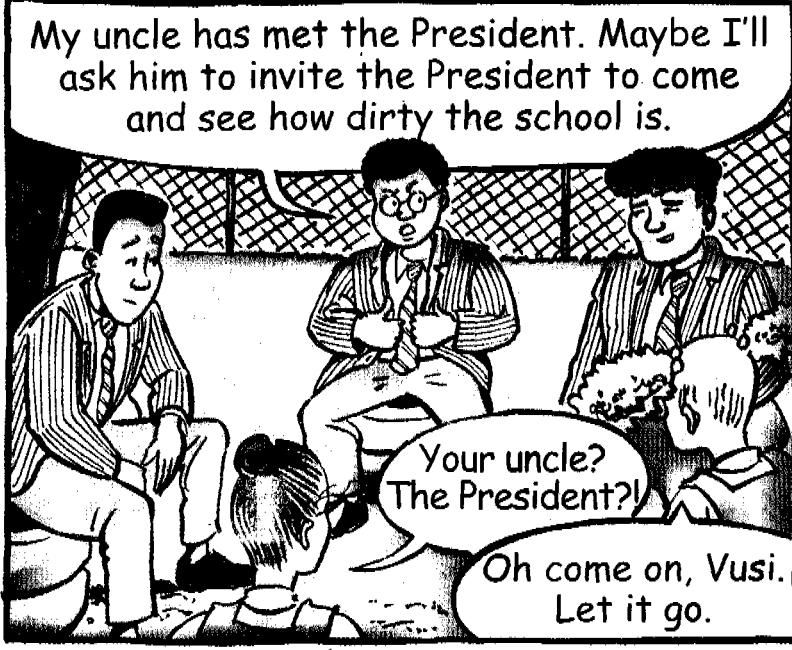


It would serve the Principal right if a very important person turned up tomorrow to inspect the school!

RRRRRRRRRRRING!



Come on Vusi, let's talk about something else.



My uncle has met the President. Maybe I'll ask him to invite the President to come and see how dirty the school is.

Your uncle? The President?!

Oh come on, Vusi. Let it go.



I'm going to go home and forget that today ever happened.

Me too.



LATER....

Ag, yaa



When did your uncle meet the President, Vusi?



Well, Mzi, he didn't actually meet him, but the President did pass him in his car once.

THAT NIGHT VUSI HAS A DREAM.

I've never seen such dirty toilets! They are a disgrace.

I ... I ... I'm sorry Mr President.

You are a disgrace to your profession, Mr Mahlangu, you will have to resign.

Vusi, please, talk to the President. I have a wife and children..

That was such a wonderful dream.

VUSI...

VUSI..WAKE UP.... VUSI...

VUSI!

Vusi wake up! It's time for school.

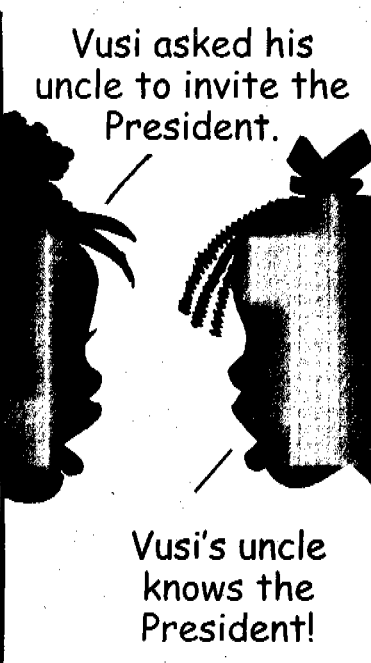
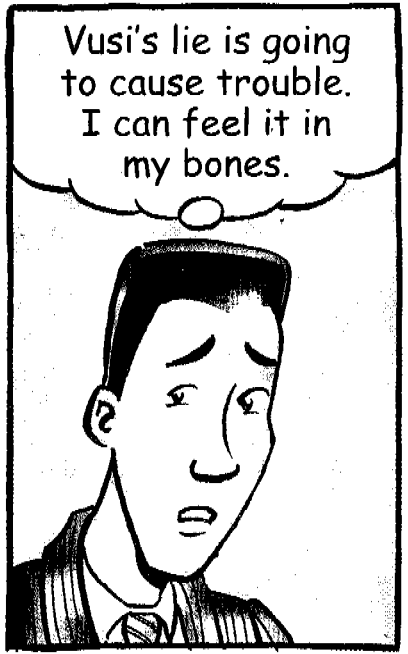
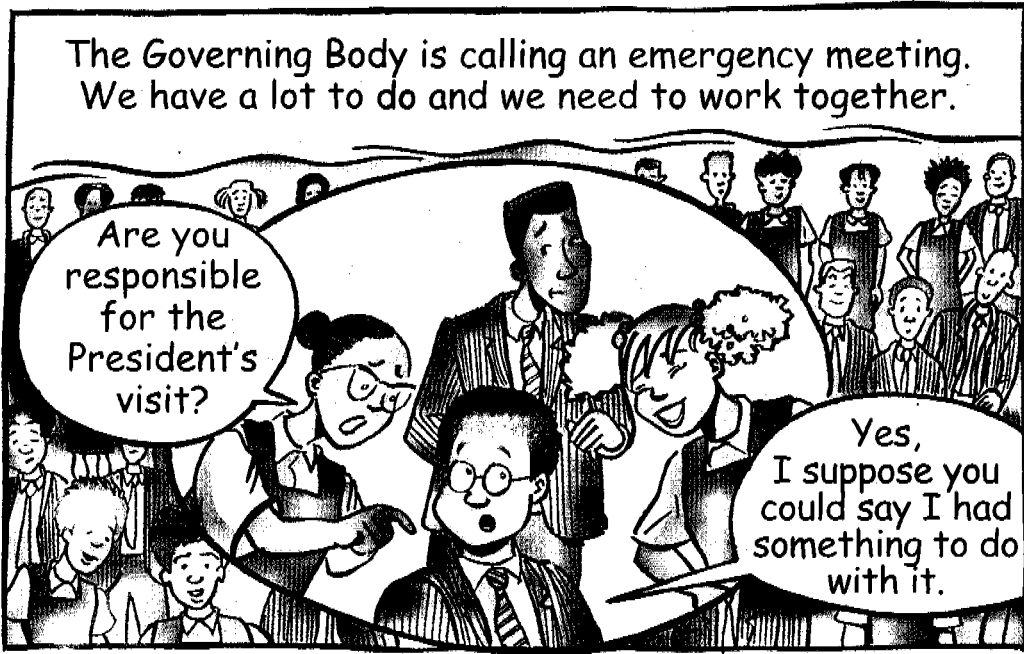
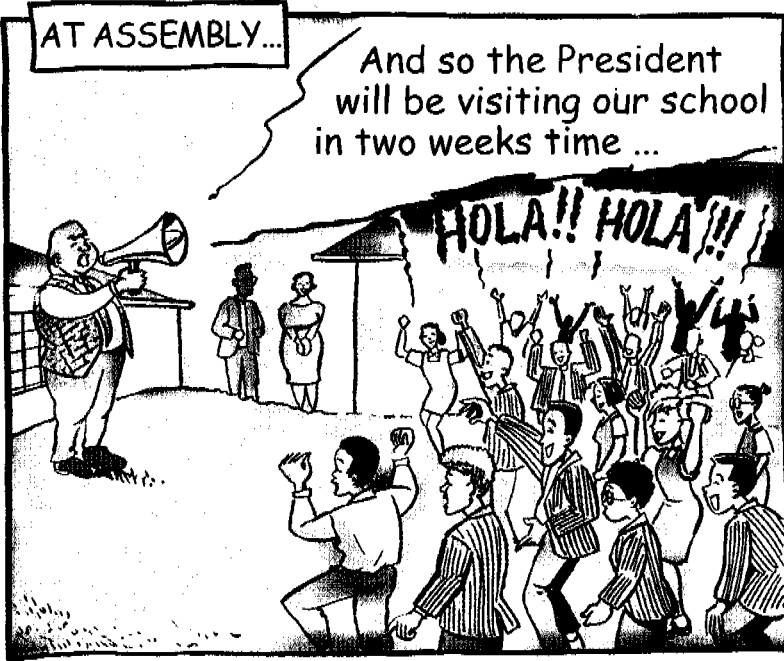
UJUK
TPOK
YAN

Wait a minute. I have a brilliant idea!

Is that Mr Mahlangu? This is the office of the President. He will be visiting your area in two weeks' time and ...

MUFFLE
MUFFLE

The President will be visiting our school?!!



THE NEXT EVENING
OUR FRIENDS AND
THEIR PARENTS
ATTEND THE
EMERGENCY MEETING

As the Governing
Body we declare that
next Saturday needs
to be a general
maintenance day.

Please, parents,
come and help
us fix up the
school.

Mr Mahlangu,
my daughter is
always
complaining
about the
toilets ...

Don't worry about
the toilets. I'll
make sure the
students clean
them.



I must object. My nephew,
Mzi, has just taken me to
the boys' toilets. They are
too polluted for
children to clean. We
need professionals ...



Now, now, I'm
sure we won't
need to waste
money on that



I invite you all
to come and
see how bad
the boys'
toilets really
are.



Wait! I hear what
Mkhulu is saying.
I'll phone the
professional
cleaners
tomorrow.



We students propose that
we paint the toilet walls
a bright colour.

Great idea!
I own a paint
shop. You can
have all the paint
you need.



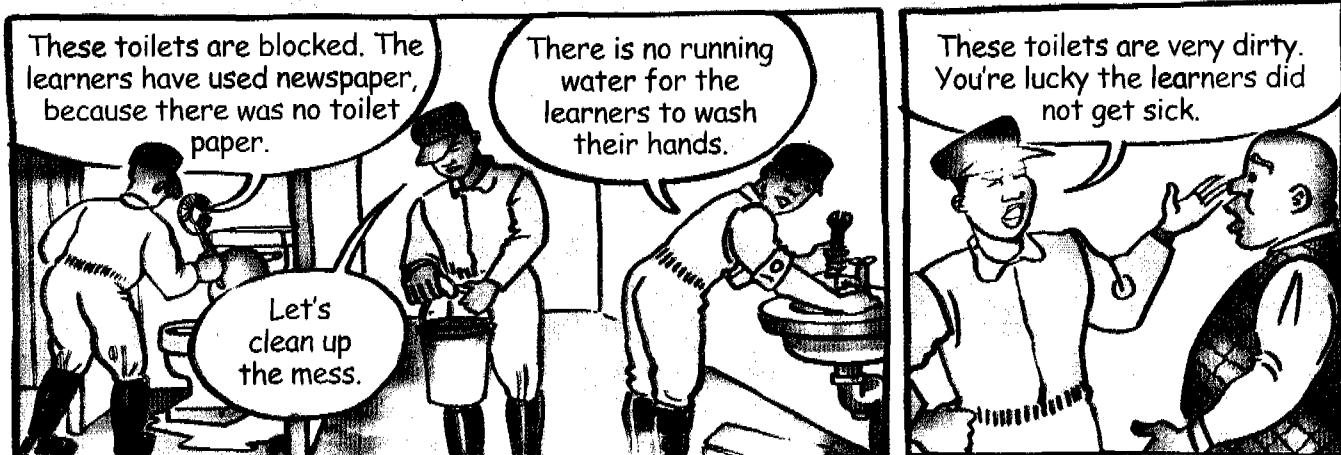
AFTER THE
MEETING...

Um...
Sherry... Er... will
you come to the
movies
on Saturday
night?



Vusi,
I would love
to!





Dirty toilets can cause disease.

Bacteria (germs) are found in human faeces. These bacteria can cause diarrhoea (running stomach) and cholera. If school toilets are dirty and you do not wash your hands after using the toilets, bacteria can get onto your hands. If you then eat food with your hands, the bacteria can make you sick. Flies also carry bacteria from faeces to humans and make us sick.

Why did Vusi's school bring in professional cleaners?

It is difficult for caretakers or school staff to clean toilets if they are very dirty. It is sometimes necessary to bring in professional cleaners. Once the toilets have been deep cleaned, regular cleaning and maintenance is easier.

Looking after school toilets

Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) Works Section is currently responsible for all maintenance of toilets and toilet buildings. Toilet blockages, broken or leaking taps, toilets that won't flush and such problems can be reported to the district office who will decide how to handle it. Schools can also order cleaning materials and toilet paper from district offices. The principal should keep a register of all materials and maintenance requests and should follow up where support is delayed.

The new school governance regulations mean that School Governing Bodies (SGBs) will begin taking full responsibility for school maintenance. Those SGBs that meet the requirements for full governance will be granted a budget for all maintenance and will be able to ensure that their school is properly maintained. If there are serious matters to be handled (e.g. deep cleaning of toilets and toilet buildings that have become too dirty for use) GDE Works Section will be available to help. Even at present the Works Section is committed to cleaning out toilet buildings once per term in every school.



All toilets should have running water and soap so you can wash your hands.

- ◆ Are your school toilets clean?
- ◆ Are the taps in the basin working?
- ◆ Is there toilet paper?

Contact the GDE District Office in your district for assistance with:

- ◆ Deep cleaning of toilets
- ◆ Cleaning materials
- ◆ Maintenance



THE NEXT MORNING IN THE GIRLS' TOILETS ...

It will make such a difference to have a mirror in our toilets.



AH!

OH NO!

TRUSTEDS Sell-outs!



AND IN THE BOYS TOILETS ...

MAMAS BOYS

Sell outs

This must be Dingaans work.



THE LRC LEADERS CALL A STUDENT MEETING ...

Dingaans and his hobos have written slogans all over our newly painted toilets.

Our new toilets?

What?



I say it is the outsiders who come into our school and hang around the toilets.

But the fence is broken. How can we stop them?

We must stop them. They are anti-education.



We need volunteers to guard the fence until the Governing Body has done some thing about it.

I'll volunteer!

Me too!



Since we are discussing problems, I want to raise another problem.



What can we do about those teachers who sit in the staffroom all day drinking tea and talking about us?





Taking action for a better school.

The Education Department is working hard to promote a culture of learning and teaching and to make our schools better places. By starting an action project you can play a part too.

At Vusi's school the students decide to clean up the school. They also plan to improve their library. Could you start an action project in your school? Here are examples of projects other students have done in their schools.

A LIBRARY

"We had no school library. We started by organising the books we had into a proper school library. We are now raising money to buy new books."

MUSIC AND DRAMA

"We formed a cultural group. We invited local musicians to help us and we have written a musical drama to perform to the community."

S T U D Y

"We have a study group. We work together after school to learn. We are also starting to help younger students. The Grade 12s are teaching students in Grade 11 after school."

D E B A T E S

"We wanted to learn more about issues that concerned us, so we formed a debating group. We do research and write speeches and debate with other schools."

P A I N T I N G

"We decided that our school would be better if we painted it. We got a local paint company to sponsor paint and we got the whole school involved in painting."

SANITATION AND HEALTH

"Our school toilets weren't working properly so we formed a committee and asked the Principal to have them fixed. Then we organised a cleaning roster."

T R E E S A N D G R A S S

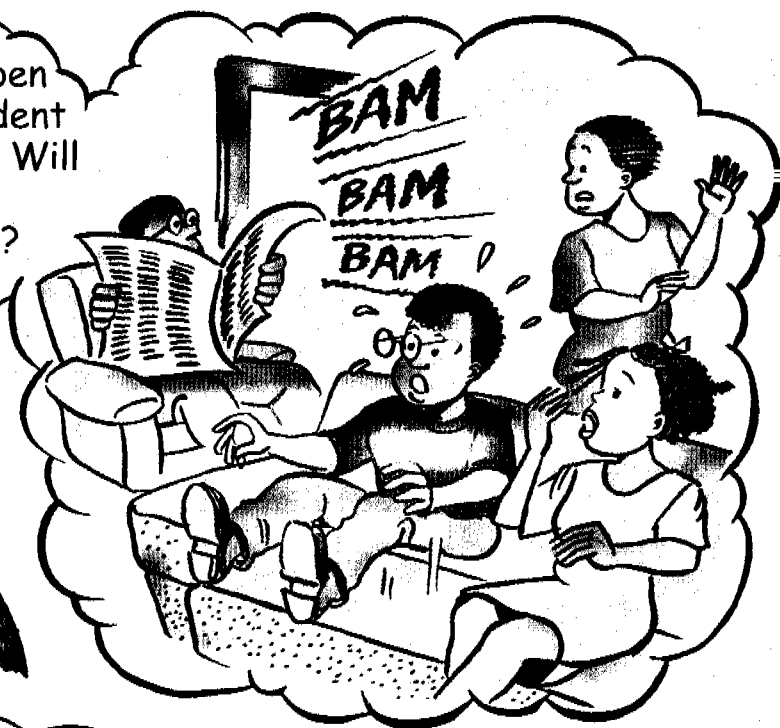
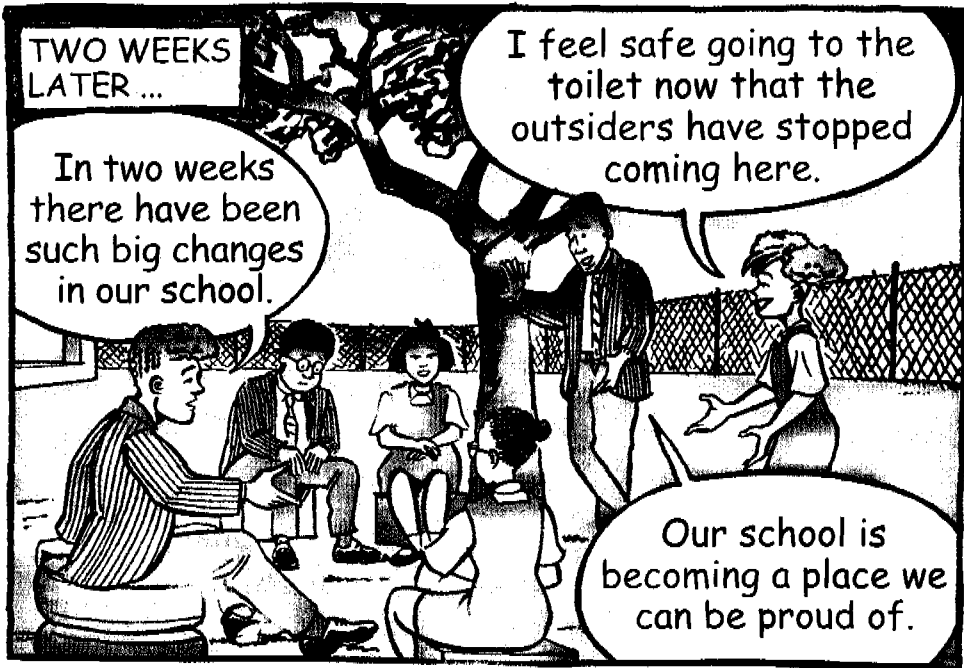
"We formed an environmental action group to plant trees and grass. Our school is now a pleasant place to be in."

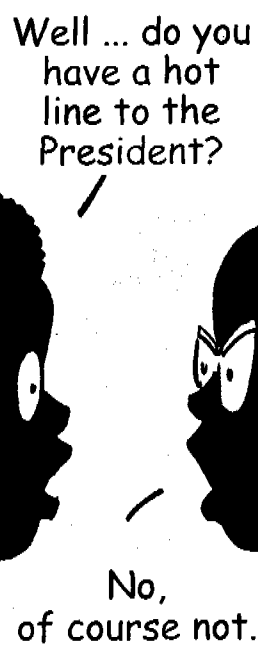
P E E R C O U N S E L L I N G

"We wanted help with some of the problems that we face in our personal lives. We invited an organisation to train a group of us as peer counsellors. We can now counsel our friends."

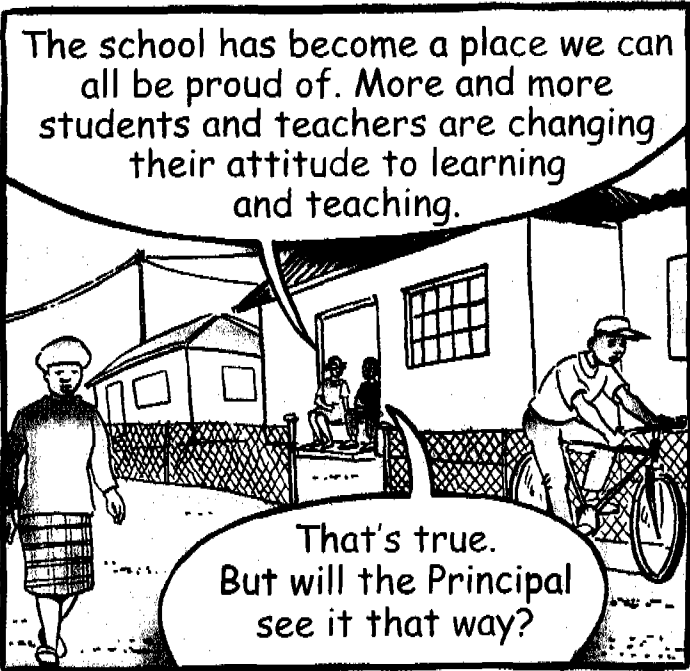
Look on page 24 for organisations to help you with these projects.

Think about your school. Could you address some of the problems you have through an action project?





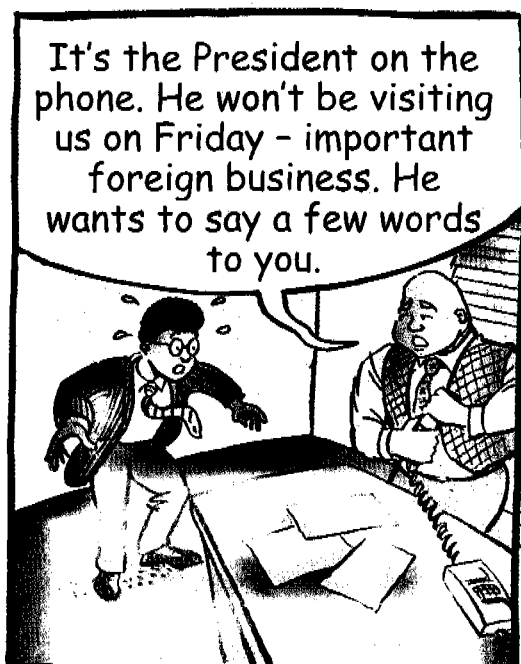
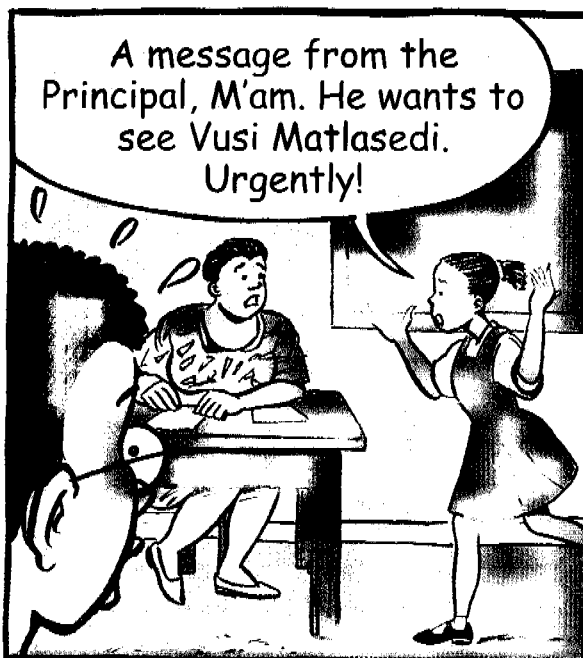
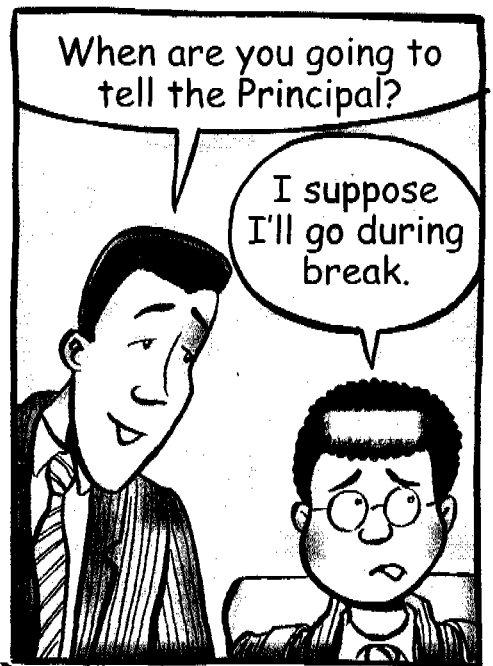
Vusi tells Tuli that the President will not be visiting the school on Friday. He tells her how he phoned the school and pretended to be a spokesman from the President's office.



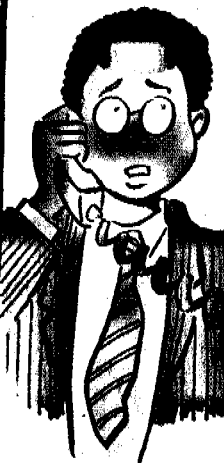


Tuli told me about your problem. I want you to know that you have my support.

Thanks Mzi.

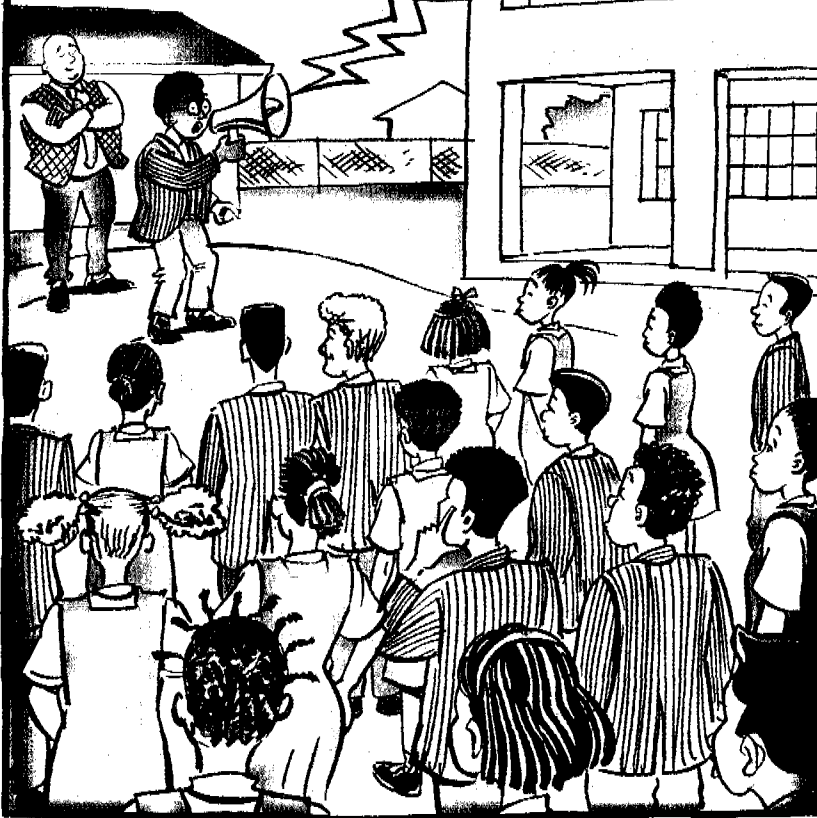


Hello, M ... M ... Mr President.



VUSI ADDRESSES THE STUDENTS AT ASSEMBLY ...

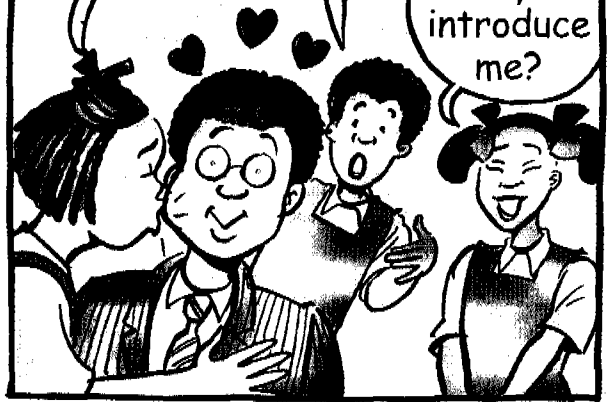
Hey, listen up!!
The President won't be coming to our school. But he is proud to hear how we have transformed our school. He says we are a model for students everywhere.



Vusi, I'm so proud of you.

Vusi, how do you know the President?

Vusi, will you introduce me?



AFTER ASSEMBLY ...

Thanks guys, for saving my skin.

What do you mean?

You know what I mean.

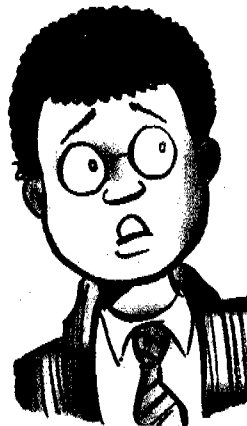


That wasn't the President on the phone, Mzi. It was your grandfather.

How did you work that out? Everyone says he sounds just like the President



At first I thought it was the President ...



Until I heard pip ... pip ... pip ..., and I realised he was calling from a pay phone!

HA HA! HE HE!





Vusi lied about the President in order to get the learners to make changes to the school. This could have led to more trouble for him. Change is difficult. Sometimes you may also wish for a magic solution like Vusi's. What else could Vusi have done?

In some schools, learners have taken on a small action project and this has led to others and sparked off a process of change. Why don't you try an action project in your school?

How to organise an Action Project at your school.

- 1** Get a project group together

Most effective action projects begin when someone feels very strongly about a problem. If you feel strongly about something, get a group of people together who also feel strongly about the problem. As a group, word a problem statement something like this: "Our problem is that..."

Also try to gain the support of the LRC, school management and other groups in the school.



5 Take Action

You'll attract a lot of interest in your project and make more learners positive if you try to do some of these things:

- ◆ Talk about your problem and listen to what other learners have to say about your idea.
- ◆ Get a small group together and invite the whole school to make comments and suggestions through a suggestion box.
- ◆ Bring in an outside organisation in to assist you with your project.
- ◆ Publicise your project through a local newspaper, a school publication or local community radio.
- ◆ Give regular progress reports to the whole school, possibly in assembly.

All these things will give your group status. Soon more and more learners will want to join your group. Who knows, you may even change your whole school!



2

Research the problem

Now you will need to find out more about the problem. Speak to learners, teachers, the LRC and school management.

- ◆ What is causing it? Could it be other learners, or outsiders
- ◆ What effect does it have on students and learning?
- ◆ What has been done about the problem?
- ◆ What are the possible solutions?

(See page 22 for ideas.)



3

Analyse the research and choose a project

Look at your research. Which of the possible solutions suggested in your research could you take on as a project?



4

Draw up an action plan

- ◆ Know **what** you would like to achieve.
- ◆ Define what needs to be done and **how**.
- ◆ Decide **who** will do different tasks and ensure that everyone is taking part.
- ◆ **By when** - have time-frames for all tasks that need to be performed and constantly evaluate progress.

Use the Action Plan on page 23 to help.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE PROBLEM

(See Step 2 on page 21.)

To find out more about the problem you want to solve, it may be useful to interview learners, teachers and others about it.

Here are some ideas to help you do interviews:

- ◆ Work in pairs. One person can ask the questions while the other can write down the answers.
- ◆ Don't try to write down every word the person says. Capture the main ideas.
- ◆ Read what you have written down to the person. They can then check whether you have understood them correctly.

You can make a form like the one below for you interviews. This is only an example. You should change it to suit your project.

Involve everybody!

One of the most effective ways to get the whole school involved in solving the problem is to involve everybody in the research. Ask:

- ◆ students
- ◆ teachers
- ◆ the principal
- ◆ the LRC

what they think the cause of the problem is and how they would solve it.

Your Name: _____ Date: _____ Place: _____

Name of person being interviewed: _____ Grade: _____

Position: (e.g. LRC member, teacher, class representative, etc.)

Introduction: Tell the person what the project is about and ask if you can ask them some questions about it.

Question 1: Are you aware of this problem? _____

Question 2: If so, how does it affect you? _____

Question 3: What do you think caused the problem? _____

Question 4: What can you suggest to solve the problem? _____

For help with the action projects mentioned on page 15, you could contact one of the following:

The Wildlife and Environment Society of Southern Africa (WESSA) produces a variety of environmental education materials. It runs educational programmes at schools and environmental education centres and manages various nature conservation projects. They also run an active Environmental Clubs programme.
011-486-0938 (T); 011-486-3369 (F).

Trees for Africa supports a wide range of tree planting projects. They provide advice and resources and run workshops.
011-803-9750 (T); 011-803-9604 (F).

The Food Gardens Foundation encourages and teaches small-scale, low-input vegetable growing according to specific environment-friendly methods. They run training courses and provide low-cost seeds for members.
011-880-5956 (T); 011-442-7642 (F).

FAMSA's Education for Living Programme aims at providing the adolescent with relationship skills, a better understanding of self and self worth, the value of positive communication, conflict resolution and exploration of sexuality and responsible decision-making.
011-788-4784 (T/F).

SANCA has a Lifestyle Programme that has the aim of teaching children and young people about alcohol and drugs. SANCA also trains volunteers who can work in schools.
011-726-4210 (T); 482-6183 (F).

READ works mostly in primary schools, but they do have a small section that can offer advice, workshops and courses on secondary school libraries and reading. They also offer workshops on study skills and communication skills for careers.
011-339-5941 (T); 403-2311 (F).

FSM (the new FUBA School of Music), now in the Newtown Cultural Precinct, offers a 3-year diploma in music that helps students develop a life-long career in music. They also have a schools outreach programme (concerts and advice for music clubs) to encourage music activities in schools. Their musical interests are mainly classical, jazz, African music and choral music.
011-838-9417 (T); 011-838-9419 (F).

Township AIDS Project's (TAP) mission is to provide HIV/AIDS information and education in a democratic, non discriminatory and respectful manner. Its programmes are aimed at young people both in and out of school. TAP has an HIV/AIDS resource centre in Soweto.
011-982-1016/27 (T); 011-982-5621 (F).

Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa
PPASA is a non-governmental organisation working in the field of reproductive health. Education and training in sexual and reproductive health is a major part of PPASA's work. PPASA offers training for teachers in life skills and HIV/AIDS and support information for young people.
011-403-7740 (T); 011-403-2385 (F).

The Mvula Trust is a water and sanitation NGO which supports and implements water and sanitation projects, mainly in rural areas. They also provide support in health and hygiene education and policy development for these projects. For more information contact:
011-403-3425 (T); 403-1260 (F).

The National Sanitation Co-ordination Office's (NaSCO) mandate is to develop a national sanitation programme on behalf of the National Sanitation Task Team. This Task Team was set up by six government departments. For advice or more information about sanitation and health issues, contact:
012-338-8275 (T); 012-338-8275 (F).

HELPLINES:

Childline
Childline is there for any child who is being abused in some way. If you feel frightened or need someone to talk to, call Toll-free: 0800-05-5555. If you can't get through, call Lifeline.

Life Line
You can phone Life Line to talk to trained counsellors about any life crisis you may be facing. Your call will be anonymous and confidential.
Johannesburg 011-728-1347
Alexandra 011-443-5026
Soweto 011-988-0155
Pretoria 012-342-2222

AIDS Helpline
You can call the AIDS Helpline to talk to trained counsellors about anything that worries you about HIV or AIDS. Your call will be anonymous and confidential. The AIDS helpline can also put you in contact with other organisations that provide training, advice and other support.
Toll-free: 0800-01-2322



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