



# HOWZAT!



The Rotary Club of Newlands

*The Club that Appeals*



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*Apologies before 10:00 on a Monday to Melinda Stapleton, please.*

COMMENT: THE WRITING *IS* on the BLACKBOARD (Jordan Griffiths - Daily Maverick)

*(Please read, then see request to Newrots, Page 6)*

The state of early childhood development education in South Africa is largely informal and at times totally unregulated. For many parents, the core goal of an early childhood development centre or preschool is to keep their children occupied for most of the day. So, when children enter Grade 1, there are stark differences in cognitive and comprehension abilities.

When thinking about education, and particularly education policy in South Africa, the focus is predominantly on assessing results in three spheres, namely primary, secondary or high school, and tertiary education such as university or college.

Currently, South Africa's basic education system is delivering some of the worst educational outcomes in the world. For example, in 2016 South Africa ranked last out of 50 countries in the Progress in International Reading Literacy study. The study will be conducted again in 2021 and will cover 60 countries, so it will be interesting to see how well South Africa performs.

In 2016 it showed that most South African pupils in grades 4 and 5 could not read at the level required of them. During 2016 the World Economic Forum released a report on the quality of South Africa's mathematics and science education, with the country placing 137 out of 139 participating countries. South Africa has repeatedly scored near the bottom of this ranking.

Extensive research and analysis have been done on the state of South Africa's education and the problems that plague it. In February of this year, Amnesty International published a report, [Broken and Unequal: The State of Education in South Africa](#) which painted a bleak picture of state education in the country.

Amnesty International indicated that 75% of children aged nine could not read for meaning. In Limpopo, this number was 91%, while in the Eastern Cape it was 85%. On average, out of 100 learners who start school, Amnesty International reckons 50-60 make it to matric, of which 40-50 will pass and only 14 are likely to carry on to university.

The Amnesty International research highlighted stark inequalities in the system. For example, students in the top 200 schools in the country achieved more distinctions in mathematics than the next 6,600 schools combined. Worse still, approximately 4,358 schools have illegal pit latrines for sanitation while 239 have no electricity and 37 no sanitation at all. Yet, in 2013, Minimum Norms and Standards for education facilities was approved by the government, requiring that by November 2016 all infrastructure failings be addressed. Seven years later the government has catastrophically failed to alleviate distress at numerous schools in the country.

There are a host of interventions which would improve education standards in South Africa, such as desperately needed infrastructure upgrades, smaller teacher-to-learner ratios, more accountability and professionalism in the teaching profession and less unionisation, to name but a few.

However, this article is not about these matters, it is about the importance of early childhood development (ECD) and how focused ECD programmes can lead to better outcomes and help adults as well.

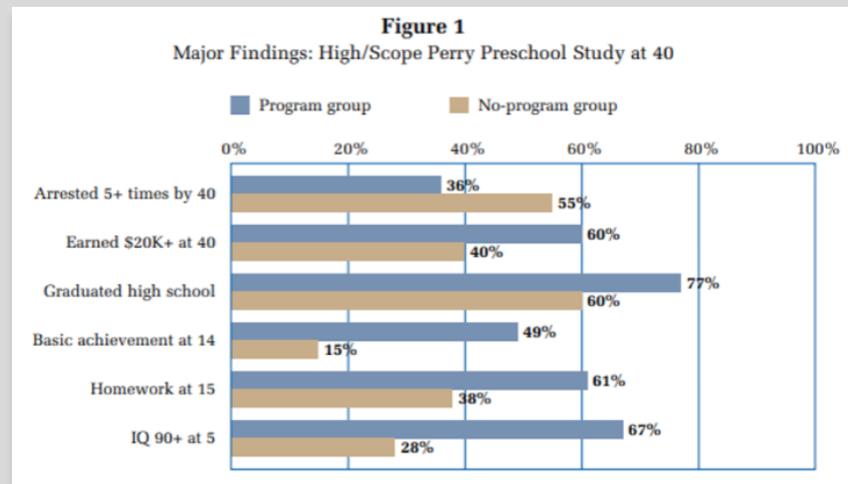
ECD refers to the period when children are between the ages of one and six, before they enter primary school. It is a period of immense importance in a person's life and can holistically shape their intelligence, personality and social behaviour. It plays a huge role in shaping who you are from childhood through to adulthood.

Unicef understands this, highlighting that during these early years brain development is incredibly rapid and critical. A lack of quality stimulation or support during this time can significantly impair a child's development.

Children who receive support in their earlier years are more likely to achieve strong educational outcomes at school, achieve higher economic status and income, live a healthier life and avoid criminal activity. Importantly, Unicef highlights the need to improve ECD as an investment and not a cost. Its estimates indicate that for every dollar spent on early interventions the returns can be four to five times what was initially invested.

There is extensive academic research to support these views: the most notable studies are the [High/Scope Perry Preschool Project](#), the [Abecedarian Project](#), and the [Jamaica Project](#), all of which demonstrated how ECD interventions can play a critical role in shaping improvements into adult life.

Take the High/Scope Perry Project, for example: researchers identified 123 low-income children who were assessed to be at high risk of school failure due to their socioeconomic background. They were all entered in to a high quality ECD programme at ages three and four and then were tracked for a period of 40 years. The graph below summarises the key findings:



As can be seen, across multiple areas the programme group significantly outperformed those who did not receive high-quality ECD interventions. Educational and economic outcomes, in particular, highlight stark differences. These studies are increasingly forcing policymakers around the world to focus their attention on the importance behind building a strong ECD platform.

In South Africa these lessons and their importance are still to be learnt and implemented. There is no significant oversight or interrogation on the quality of ECD education in the government. Research on the sector in the country is limited. Research by Elsa Fourie from North West University highlighted grave concerns about the number of children who are receiving quality ECD education, with estimates that it is as low as 20%.

The state of ECD education in the country is largely informal and at times totally unregulated. For many parents, the c to keep their child occupied for much of the day. However, truly interrogating the education outcomes may well be an afterthought. So, when children in South Africa enter Grade 1 there are stark differences in their cognitive and comprehension abilities. This can only deepen inequalities in the educational system.

A lack of standardisation or oversight of expected outcomes from ECD is going to place tremendous strain on teachers, particularly those at a Grade 1 level who will be attempting to fill any education gaps in their students before they can progress. This is also clearly not working — as indicated by the country's poor performance in literacy tests.

While there are a multitude of problems in South Africa's educational system, there is no doubt that ECD is a core area where the right levels of support could have a lasting and sustained impact on improving educational outcomes. Yet it is totally understated in government policy and receives little to no attention from the state.

The government is unknowingly sabotaging higher education outcomes. ECD must receive the prominence and attention it deserves if the country is to advance.

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*Jordan Griffiths was an elected DA city councillor in the 2016 local government elections before moving into the role of policy adviser in the mayor's office in the City of Tshwane, serving under the Msimanga and Mokgalapa administrations. He writes in his personal capacity.*

## MINUTES of the MEETING on ZOOM (26<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2020; 19h00)

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*Scribe: Mike Walwyn*

The meeting was opened by Sergeant Richard Burnett. (Thanks Richard for taking on this duty at short notice, in place of the gallivanting John Stephenson, who DID provide plenty of advance warning 😊)

President Jenny being indisposed, PP Johan Beukman took the chair, leaving Chris to present the quiz he had designed and act as quizmaster (never an easy job with Newrots, who are always available to query things).

The quiz was very well thought-out and the answer-sheet could actually be printed out on a single page if you use the "fit to page" command. There were questions for the left brain, the right brain and all brains, as well as a medical category and some gen, as well as a medical category and some general trivia to finish it off, so something for everyone.

Scoring was out of 50, with the top three all scoring over 40, and it seems that there may be some chocolates in the offing as prizes – we shall see.

A number of spots were presented.

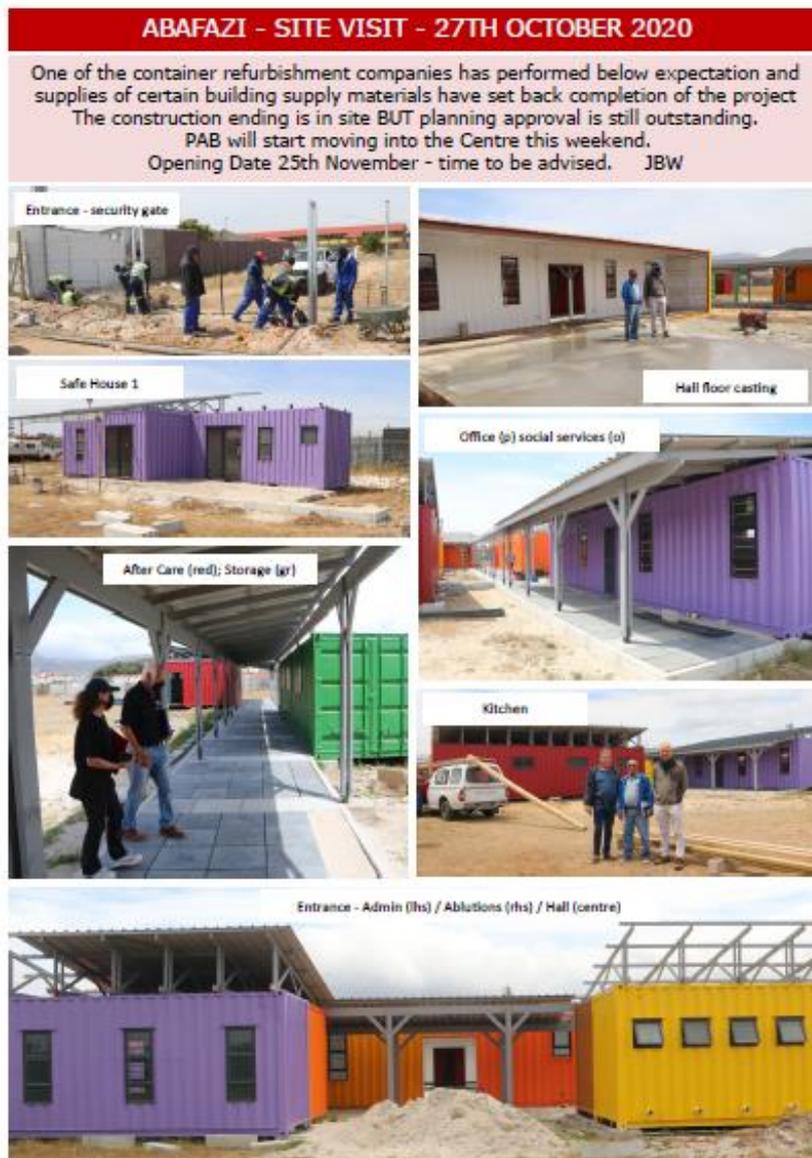
- It seemed that President Jenny was going to have to endure some surgery after all, and the Club's best wishes were expressed.
- Geraldine Nicol paid tribute to Chris Beech, who would shortly be relocating to the UK. His willingness to serve and bring his considerable skills and talents to bear were emphasised, exemplified, as Ian Pursch recalled, by his willingness to step into the breach last year when Ian was unable to return from England in time to run the Cycle Tour.
- Mike Walwyn explained that the "stirrer's" spoon was in fact going to be passed on. Jana Forrester had asked that it should be awarded *in absentia* to Chris in recognition of his dedicated service.
- On the subject, it needs a new name to reflect that it is now awarded for good deeds rather than trouble-making. Any suggestions from members in this regard will be welcome. As the spoon has now been awarded virtually for several months, its physical whereabouts are uncertain so guidance in that regard will also be appreciated.

- Jeannine Ibbotson relayed President Jenny’s thanks and appreciation for all the support and good wishes that had been sent to her by members.
- Jeremy Opperman discovered that when voice typing ‘Beech’, it came out as ‘bitch’ – no offense intended!
- John Winship reported the very happy news that plans for the Masiphumelele training centre had been approved and reminded members of the Philisa Abafazi Bethu opening function on 25 November.

AP Johan reminded members of the memorial service for Paul de Groot, to be held in the Marsh Memorial chapel on 28 October. Thanks to Covid, this would be restricted to family, but it would also be broadcast live as clearly outlined in *Howzat!*

Sergeant Richard reminded members of their duties for 2 November and closed the meeting on a happy note!

### NEWLANDS ROTARY CLUB NEWS *(John Winship reports...)*



## REQUEST to NEWROTS

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Dear All,

The Daily Maverick article (see Comment, above) is, as always, excellent and, with Corinne and Graham, I believe it makes valuable reading for the club to understand the essential values of Early Childhood Development (ECD) and to validate the work and funding that Newlands puts into ECD.

However, once you've read about the true value of ECD, you may ask, "well, what can I do?" I would like to suggest something small that each Newrot can do.

There is a *Dear South Africa* campaign challenging national government on its latest Children's Amendment Bill that dilutes much of the hard work done in ECD over the past few years.

Please [visit the Dear South Africa website](#) and register your opposition, preferably with a comment.

This is not a petition. It is a mandated policy formation process which government is legally obliged to follow. *Dear South Africa* will deliver your input immediately to government and they record indisputable evidence of all public participation (required for a legal challenge, if necessary).

Mass participation is essential. PLEASE HAVE YOUR SAY NOW.

Kind regards,

Geraldine

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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**Gianni Schicchi**  
Virtual performance  
Presented by  
**SA Operatunity**

Last Will  
&  
Testament

**Date: 27 | 28 November 2020**  
**R100 Ticket price**

BAXTER THEATRE CENTRE  
at the UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

OPERA TUNITY

Erin Hall

ARTSCAPE

National Arts Council  
an Agency of the Department of Arts & Culture

Rotary Club of Knysna

Quicket  
QUICKET ONLINE TICKETS

*The Rotary Club of Knysna is a partner in presenting this comic opera in one act, by Puccini. The libretto is based on an incident from Dante's Divine Comedy and this performance features the CTMVC's Lonwabo Mose as Maestro Spinelloccio.*

## RCN FUTURE FIXTURES (*Online, for now.*)

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### NOVEMBER – ROTARY FOUNDATION

- 2 Partners Meeting *Speaker: Tracey Gilmore ([The Clothing Bank](#))*
- 9 Ordinary Meeting *Speaker: Andre du Toit ([The Economics of Positivity](#))*
- 16 Ordinary Meeting *Speaker: Andrew Baxter ([Cape Town Cycle Tour CEO](#))*
- 18 Board Meeting
- 23 DG Carl-Heinz Duisberg's Visit
- 25 Philisa Abafazi Bethu (PAB) Opening
- 30 Business Meeting and AGM

### DECEMBER – DISEASE PREVENTION and TREATMENT

- 7 Partners Meeting *Speaker: Carole Goodman, iZinto*
- 14 Ordinary Meeting
- 21 Annual Break

## UMPIRES and SCORERS

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	2 November 2020	9 November 2020	16 November 2020
	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Ordinary</i>	<i>Ordinary</i>
Acting-President	Terry Lancaster	Terry Lancaster	
Sergeant	Johan Beukman	Vanessa Rousseau	Jamie Hart
Four-Way Test / Object	Geraldine Nicol	Johan Taljaard	Pieter van Aswegen
Grace and Loyal Toast	Bill Holland	Jeremy Opperman	Tony Davidson
Peace Candle and Quote	Janey Ball	Lisa Lombard	Michelle Roos
Minutes	Heidi Andersson	Chris Beech	John Stephenson
Intro speaker	Lew Botha	Henry Campbell	Ian Pursch
Thank speaker	Wendy Goddard	Terry Lancaster	Graham Finlayson
Comment	Jeannine Ibbotson	Wybe Meinesz	Nora See

- *If you cannot make this duty, please arrange a substitute and let the Sergeant know.*
- *Peace Candle duty includes lighting a candle and providing a quote or comment.*
- *Comment is due as indicated above. Publication is the Monday following. Usually. Please submit a text file and, if you have pics, please attach these.*



<b>BIRTHDAYS</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> November	Carol Campbell
<b>ANNIVERSARIES</b>		
<b>JOINED ROTARY</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> November 1993	Johan Beukman
		Lew Botha
		Tinus de Jongh
		Jana Forrester
		Bill Holland
		Wybe Meinesz
<b>WOODEN SPOON</b>		Chris Beech

## CLUB OFFICE BEARERS



**President**  
Jenny Ibbotson



**Past President**  
Terry Lancaster



**Treasurer**  
Peter Ennis



**Secretary**  
Janey Ball



**Environment Chair**  
Tony Davidson



**ECD Project**  
Geraldine Nicol



**Vocational Service**  
Jeannine Ibbotson



**Foundation Chair**  
Mike Walwyn



**Club Services**  
Heidi Andersson



**Youth Service**  
Wendy Goddard



**International Service**  
Shân Biesman-Simons



**Entrepreneurship**  
John Stephenson



**Community Services**  
Wybe Meinesz



Vanessa Rosseau



Graham Finlayson



Shelley Finch

----- **Membership & Publicity Cluster** -----



AND the LAST WORD .....

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Short and sweet.

Well, at any rate, short.

See you on the moro,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nancy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.