



**TEACHERS DIPLOMA IN PSYCHOSOCIAL CARE, SUPPORT
AND PROTECTION**

OVERVIEW AND OUTLINE

Rationale for the Diploma:

The 2010 Situation Analysis of Orphans and other Vulnerable Children and Youth in SADC¹ found that access to education has improved, but many children are still not in school, or attending irregularly; begin school late, repeat grades or leave without completing five years of primary education. Contributing factors include: food-insecurity, violence and sexual abuse against girls², corporal punishment, teenage pregnancy and early marriage, and caring for sick relatives. However, children and youth identified education as key to their psychosocial health and long-term success and believed that they prioritise education more highly than their caregivers do.

The SADC Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) Programme, which was adopted by SADC Ministers of Education in 2008, supports education systems to respond to the challenges facing learners³ thus improving enrolment, retention, and achievement. Psychosocial Support (PSS) is one of the pillars of the CSTL programme as global research has shown that addressing children's social and emotional health has a beneficial impact on their academic performance, retention and progression. A recommendation of the CSTL baseline was that teachers should be trained in PSS⁴ but there are few training programmes or materials to support teachers to address the PSS needs of learners.

The 18 month certificate in "Community Based Work With Children and Youth" (CBWCY), which is accredited by the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN), is delivered by REPSI with national academic institutions in several countries. The programme is delivered by off line, situated, supported distance learning (SSDL). Participants do not leave their communities and meet for facilitated group sessions to supplement self study. This enables participation from many who are often excluded from tertiary training – including women with family responsibilities and those who did not complete high school or have been out of formal education for some time. The independent evaluation of the pilot⁵ of the course, which engaged 553 students from eight countries, found that the methodology was a great success with an unprecedented student retention rate of 88%. Students reported acquisition of knowledge and skills particularly in the areas of children and youth participation and protection. There has been demand from teachers to participate in the CBWCY as this addresses a need for PSS.

The Teachers' Diploma has been developed to address the dearth of PSS training materials and courses for teachers and the demand from teachers for such training. The delivery methodology is modelled on the successful CBWCY certificate.

¹ The Situation of Orphans and other Vulnerable Children in the SADC Region, unpublished report, SADC Secretariat, April, 2010. Pg 13 – 14.

² Evidence from 'Are Schools Safe Havens for Children? Examining School-related Gender-Based Violence', USAID's Office of Women in Development, September 2009 and the 'UN Study on Violence Against Children', Paulo S Pinheiro, 2006

³ CSTL is founded on the experience of other programmes such as Schools as Centres of Care and Support (MiET Africa); Circles of Support (HDA); Caring Schools (the Children's Institute and Save the Children UK)

⁴ MIET Africa: *Care and Support for Teaching and Learning: Regional Report on Baseline Study Conducted in five SADC Member States: 2009* pg 7.

⁵ Evaluated by the South Africa Institute for Distance Learning (SAIDE) Evaluation available on request

Philosophy of the Diploma:

The *Teachers Diploma in Psychosocial Care, Support and Protection* is intended to transform the way in which a whole school interacts with learners, their families and the broader community to help all learners to achieve the potential. The objectives of the course are to enhance access, retention, achievement and progression of children within the education system. This is achieved by mainstreaming psychosocial support into the whole school. Psychosocial support is key to holistic child and community development as psychosocial wellbeing and general wellbeing are inseparable.

The course has several cross cutting themes:

- Children's rights
- Child and caregiver participation
- Safety, protection and discipline
- Addressing stigma and bullying
- HIV and AIDS; Gender and disability
- Understanding and using data of different forms to inform decision making
- Networking and building partnerships with the community and other structures
- Application of learning in the school with other teachers, learners and the broader school community

Implementation of the course is achieved through the teachers that are enrolled in the diploma engaging with school management and leadership, other teachers, the learners, their caregivers and community members. Teachers enrolled in the diploma share aspects of what they are learning and mobilize the wider school community to participate in the transformation of the school and its culture.

Overview:

Through this course teachers improve their capacity to support the **cognitive, social and emotional learning** of the learners in their school. This is achieved by teachers developing an understanding of: themselves and how to enhance their own potential; The development of children and the way in which children learn; How to arrange and organize their classrooms and their teaching styles to be more participatory, learner centred, inclusive; How to manage the social and physical environment of the school and How to enhance the relations between the school and the community around it.

The course consists of six modules:

1. Building blocks for a caring school
2. Realizing your potential as a champion for children
3. Realizing the potential of children & youth
4. Realizing the potential of your classroom
5. Realizing the potential of your school
6. School and community partnerships to realize children's potential

The course materials were developed by a team of experts on mainstreaming PSS into Education led by REPSSI, the Children’s Institute of the University of Cape Town, and MIET Africa⁶. The materials were reviewed by teacher trainers and education officials from Lesotho, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zambia.

Delivery and Accreditation:

The Diploma course will be delivered and accredited by a recognized teacher training institution in each country. All those involved in the face to face sessions, marking of assignments and moderation of marking will be qualified teacher trainers who will be oriented on the objectives of the Diploma course and implementation within schools by a REPSSI team.

Duration and Delivery Mode:

The course is an in-service programme which involves both schools and specific teachers in those schools. These teachers will receive a diploma upon successful completion of the course and will spearhead implementation within their schools.

The Diploma course will be delivered by mixed mode, i.e., supported, situated distance learning plus blocks of face-to-face contact over sixteen months.

Situated Supported Distance learning: All teachers from within the same cluster or zone that are enrolled in the diploma will meet at least once a month as a Community of Practice to discuss the issues that they are learning in the modules and to discuss how they are implementing what they are learning within their schools. The sessions will be facilitated in turn by different teachers in the group. A facilitation guide will be provided to each Community of Practice. Each Community of Practice will elect a CoP leader and deputy leader who will be responsible for ensuring that the group meets and will report any challenges to the District education officials as well as the Teacher Training institution.

Contact Sessions: Face-to-face contact sessions will be conducted at the teacher training institution that is responsible for delivery. There will be between one and five blocks of face-to-face contact sessions during the school holidays throughout the course of the delivery. Each block will be approximately 5 days long.

The course is very practical. Implementation of what is being learnt will begin and continue within the school throughout the sixteen months of study. Schools will be supported in implementation by district education officials and will commit to a subsequent year for full implementation and reporting.

Assessment of the course will be:

- Two assignments per module – one practical to demonstrate ability to implement and the other theoretical to demonstrate understanding of the theory in the module. These will be sent to the teacher training institution for marking. The Assessment philosophy is to

⁶ MiET Africa is an NGO based in Durban, South Africa that implements the Care and Support for Teaching and Learning programme with SADC.

encourage teachers on the course to implement the new learning in their schools. This will be reflected in the manner and timeliness in which assignments are marked and the comments that are provided to the teachers enrolled in the diploma. Assignments will be returned promptly with positive comments to support improved implementation.

- Students will keep a private journal in which they record their responses to short reflection exercises, referred to as Learn and Reflect Exercises in the modules, record meetings and discussions which are part of the process of change, reflect on specific children or incidents, keep photographs and other visual materials, as well as reflections by children, other staff, and caregivers. In each module there are specific Learn and Reflect Exercises, which will be responded to in the student's Portfolio of Evidence and be shared in the peer group meetings or shared between the teachers from the same school who are on the course.
- Where necessary for accreditation purposes, there will be a mid term and final examination.
- The weighting of marks between assignments and examinations will be determined to suit each country's context

Criteria for selection of teachers to be enrolled:

Selection of the schools and teachers to be enrolled in the diploma will be guided by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with School Heads and teachers. It is critical that teachers are selected from schools in which the school head is willing to support implementation of the new knowledge. Schools will be selected within clusters or zones to support the establishment of a Community of Practice between the schools. Approximately seven schools will be selected within each cluster or zone.

An average of two teachers will be selected from each school. It is suggested that the two teachers should be a teacher in the management of the school and one that has a guidance / counselling role in the school. The teachers will be selected with active support of the school head and should be prepared to devote time to studying and assignments as well as to spearhead the implementation of what they are learning within the school and the community within which the school is based.

The selected teachers must hold a Teachers Certificate (or other national basic teaching qualification) and experience in teaching OR a minimum of Grade 12 certificate, with several short courses on teaching and a minimum of 3 to 5 years of teaching experience (particularly in the case of teachers from community schools). Selected teachers must have time to devote to the programme as it is demanding and be very committed to working with learners, other teachers and the broader community to change their school environment.

COURSE OUTCOMES PER MODULE

MODULE 1: Building Blocks for a Caring School

Module outcome: the teacher is able to use key psychosocial support theoretical concepts and assessment to analyse the school's psychosocial environment and develop a plan to improve it.

Unit 1: Psychosocial Support, Care and protection: Outcome: Teacher is able to use key psychosocial concepts (psychosocial support, mainstreaming PSS through education, psychosocial wellbeing, vulnerability, resilience, risk and protection) to enhance caring and protection of learners in the school.

Unit 2: Using rights to promote wellbeing: Outcome: Teacher is able to apply their knowledge of children's rights to unlock services and promote child wellbeing.

Unit 3: Strengthening support systems for children: Outcome: Teacher is able to apply a theoretical understanding of eco-systems and community building to strengthen the circles of support around children and establish an effective referral system.

Unit 4: Action Learning: Outcomes: Teacher is able to use assessment of the school's psychosocial environment and action learning to develop a plan to improve the school.

MODULE 2: Realizing your Potential as a Champion for Children

Outcome: Teacher is able to apply social and psychology theory and skills to review self identity and balance personal, professional and community demands.

Unit 1: Champion for Children as Social Actor - Focusing on the "social" in psychosocial: Outcome: teacher is able to use social knowledge to articulate a vision for themselves as a Champion for Children.

Unit 2: Psychological dimensions of the Champion for Children - not forgetting Yourself: Outcome: Teacher is able to apply Depth and Narrative theories of self and the concept of emotional literacy to review their own personal and professional identity.

Unit 3: Deconstructing disability, gender, violence and poverty: Outcomes: Teacher is able to critically deconstruct discourses around Ability, Disability, Gender, Violence and Poverty and use these to review their own personal and professional identity.

Unit 4: HIV and AIDS: Outcome: Teacher is able to apply HIV and AIDS knowledge to advise and refer learners and their caregivers appropriately.

MODULE 3: Realizing the Potential of Children and Youth

Outcome: Teacher is enabled, empowered and motivated to effectively partner with their learners to help them develop socially, emotionally and cognitively to become healthier, happier and more fulfilled.

Unit 1: Child development: Outcome: Teacher is able to apply relevant and practical understanding of psychosocial and cognitive development theory to effectively partner with children and youth as they complete their developmental tasks.

Unit 2: Children's rights: Outcome: Teacher is able to apply practical and relevant knowledge of the linkages between children's rights and needs to meet children's needs and ensure participation and protection of all children.

Unit 3: Social and emotional learning: Outcome: Teacher is able to apply knowledge and skills in experiential learning and multiple intelligences to enhance social and emotional development and cognitive learning of learners.

Unit 4: When learners need more help: Outcome: Teacher is able to apply knowledge of children at risk and skills in working with children to create meaningful helping relationships with learners.

MODULE 4: Realizing the Potential of your Classroom

Outcome: Teacher demonstrates social and emotional learning skills in creating a caring and protective classroom culture that promotes learning, interaction, participation, expression and support by all children.

Unit 1: Developing the basics of a caring classroom culture: Outcome: Teacher is able to apply knowledge of social and physical classroom culture to develop positive disciplinary practices.

Unit 2: Bringing down barriers to participation: Outcome: Teacher is able to identify and address barriers to participation while teaching.

Unit 3: Creating an environment that responds to learners' diverse needs: Outcome: Teacher is able to create a classroom environment that responds to learners' diverse needs and draws on their unique abilities and enthusiasms to realize their potential.

Unit 4: Developing some key practices of a caring classroom: Outcome: Teacher is able to organize effective co-operative group work and develop lesson plans to respond effectively to a diverse range of learning styles, needs and psychosocial issues amongst learners.

MODULE 5: Realizing the Potential of your School

Outcome: Teacher demonstrates skills and knowledge to mobilize school leadership, governance and management to realize the potential of the school as a centre of learning and care.

Unit 1: School leadership, governance and management: Outcome: Teacher is able to apply skills and knowledge to mobilize the school leadership, management, governance and partnerships, to develop an enabling school environment that promotes health, inclusion, gender equity and safety.

Unit 2: The school as an enabling physical environment: Outcome: Teacher is empowered to apply skills and knowledge to establish as an enabling school physical environment that promotes the wellbeing of staff and learners paying attention to gender, accessibility, safety, health, nutrition, sport and policy.

Unit 3: The school as an enabling social environment: Outcome: Teacher is able to use skills and knowledge to advocate for school social culture, which promotes safety and positive relationships, connects home and school life.

Unit 4: Implementing Policy: Outcome: Teacher is able to apply knowledge of the role of policies in nurturing a healthy social and emotional learning school culture to ensure that the school has policies that are implemented.

MODULE 6: School and community partnerships to realize children's potential

Module outcome: Teacher is able to apply skills and knowledge of their role as a community development facilitator to engage the community in dialogue and document and share the stories of change in their school community.

Unit 1: Participatory community development: Outcome: Teacher is able to use skills and knowledge of community development principles to develop partnerships between the school and community.

Unit 2: Widening the circle of support: Outcome: Teacher is able to plan a community meeting which mobilizes the relevant role players to address the situation of learners.

Unit 3: Community Dialogue: Outcome: Teacher is able to apply community development skills and knowledge to facilitate a community dialogue which engages key stakeholders to strengthen school-community partnerships to agree on continued action to address the issues confronting learners.

Unit 4: Sharing our stories: Outcome: Teacher is able to use skills and knowledge to document and share the story of their school's journey to become a more caring school community.