

# Peace Lessons Programme to be repiloted

The Grahamstown District Office of the Education Department this week signed an agreement with the General Motors South Africa (GMSA) Foundation who first piloted the programme - a project to improve life skills teaching in primary schools - in the Port Elizabeth District to repilot it in 10 Grahamstown schools.

The Peace Lessons Programme empowers life skills teachers in the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4 to 6) with training and lesson guides to impart valuable skills such as self-awareness, problem solving, interpersonal relations, leadership, decision making, and effective communication.



Kathy Balshaw, Amos Fetsha, Nombxolo Nanga, Carol Scheepers and Bongani Stamper

"The value of life skills as a school subject has been increasingly recognised in recent years. However, teachers often do not have sufficient training or the experience required to make their life skills lessons effective. The result is poor curriculum coverage by teachers and a lost opportunity for the learners to acquire important skills for life," said GMSA Foundation Project Manager Kathy Balshaw.

She said the foundation had developed a set of simple, structured lesson guides to enable teachers to make life skills a valuable part of the curriculum for holistic learner development, encouraging the use of stories and active learning to bring across essential concepts and skills.

## Part of a larger project

The Peace Lessons Programme is part of a larger Peace Promoting Schools project initiated by the foundation to assist teachers, learners and families in dealing with the conflict and violence in society that is often mirrored in school environments.

Supported by tailor-made learning and teaching resources aligned to national education policies, the programme equips parents and teachers with positive discipline skills, trains learners to mediate conflict amongst their peers, offers peace and life skills lessons aligned to the curriculum, and develops compassion, empathy and tolerance.

District Director, Amos Fetsha, was positive about strengthening the partnership between the foundation and the Grahamstown District, and indicated that he would like to see other peace education programmes being offered in the Grahamstown region. "The models developed by the foundation would enhance other programmes currently being implemented by the department", he said.

Initially implemented in partnership with the Port Elizabeth District Office, the project is being replicated further afield and was selected in 2013 by the Education Management Association of SA (EMASA) as one of 30 transformative projects making a significant impact in education in the country.