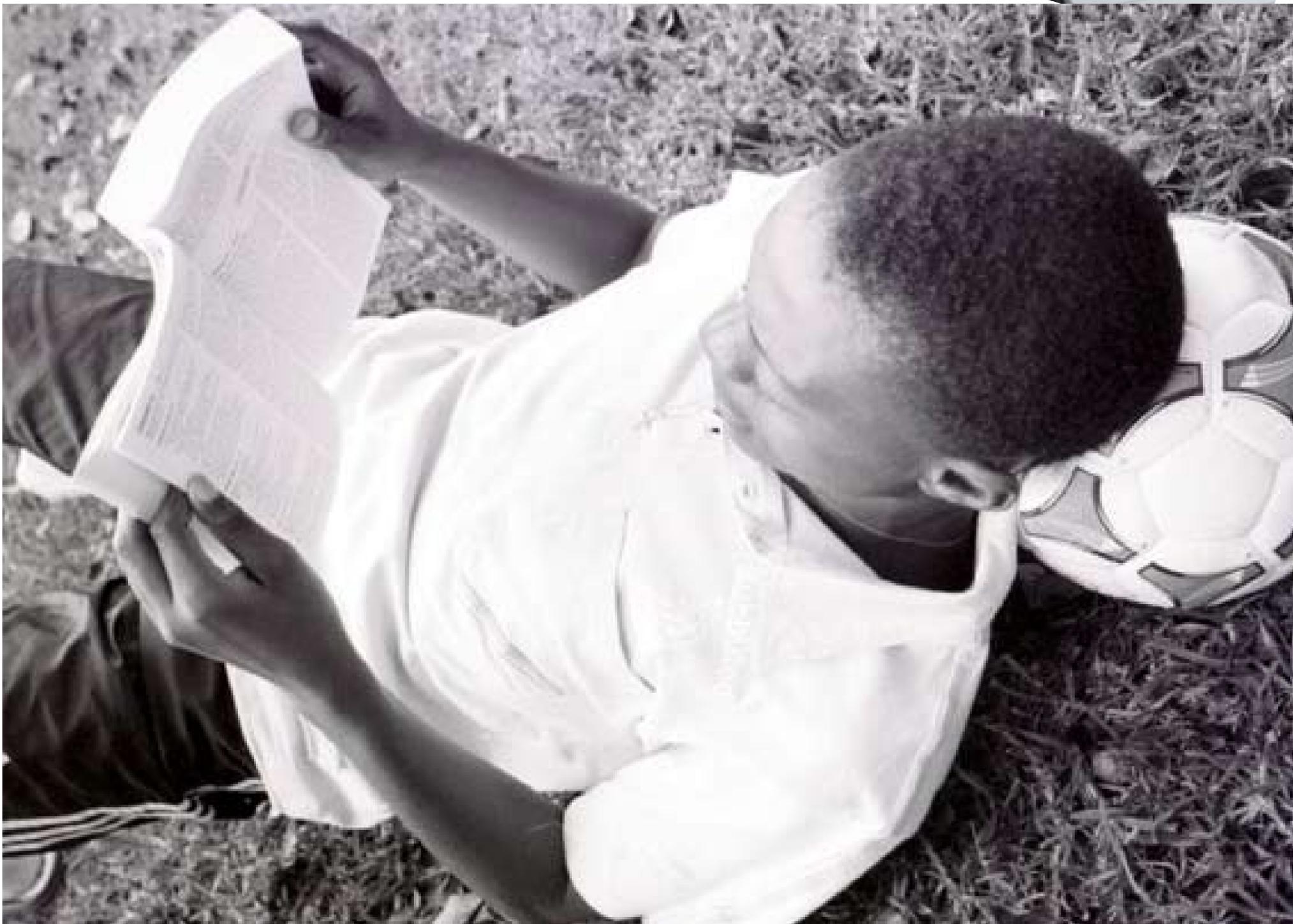




‘Abstinence – a personal choice’



Matric student Stanley Malindi believes being a “real man” is being your *own* man

How do you think your generation sees sex?

The general perception youth have is that you have to be sexually active if you want to fit in with the “cool gang”. It increases your status among other boys and girls.

It’s about becoming the most talked-about topic on Monday mornings, following a hectic weekend of drinking, partying and getting laid.

Your view?

Choosing to abstain has been the choice I’ve embraced.

I’m motivated to do so by my religious beliefs.

I’m also well aware of the many risks linked to sex. There’s unwanted pregnancy, and being exposed to sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV.

These consequences have a ripple effect on the rest of your life, and all because of a moment’s pleasure.

What about peer pressure?

I’m not afraid of making choices different to those of my peers.

I trust myself to make the choices that are right for me.

As clichéd as this may sound, I do believe that when I respect myself, others follow suit.

There’s nothing enlightened about shrinking so that others won’t feel insecure around you.

If you bow down to pressures that require you to have to sleep with someone to be seen as a “real man”, then that’s the kind of man you are – weak.

How can there be ‘love’ without sex?

The journey is so adventurous, fun and exciting as a couple (although it’s difficult at times!), without feeling pressured to sleep with each other.

I find there are many rewards taking it one step at a time.

Are you ever going to do ‘it’?

Sex is such a special, intimate moment.

I don’t want to spoil it by regretting my actions afterwards.

So when I’m good and ready is when I’ll explore a sexual lifestyle.

For me, being good and ready means I know how to protect myself; I know my HIV status and my partner’s status; and I know where to go for help if I need it. It also means I trust my partner to be as faithful to me as I will be to her.

PREVENTION:

Everyone's first

Making sure that unplanned learner pregnancy doesn't happen in the first place should be the primary aim of their parents or guardians, and of all who educate them. Here are some pointers to help teachers guide learners.

The national Department of Education (DoE) believes in the ideal that women and men should only become parents when they're ready for the practical and emotional realities that go with having a child.

What's more, the DoE believes that, as young adults, all learners should be focused on achieving education success, planning for bright futures, and simply enjoying their youth.

For these reasons, **prevention** is the primary strategy outlined in the DoE's *Measures for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy*.

THE AIM IS TO BE 100% SAFE

Abstinence is one of the central pillars of the DoE's **prevention** strategy.

The message that educators should therefore be giving to all learners is that they should **abstain** from having sex until they're finished with their high school education.

This should form part of school programmes which educate boys and girls about the likely outcomes of engaging in sexual activity, and also encourages them to:

- Attend school every day;
- Stay in school;
- Practise healthy lifestyles; and
- Make appropriate and informed decisions about activities that will impact on their future health and educational prospects.

NO ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL APPROACH

There is no single formula to prevent unplanned learner pregnancy.

But there are a number of approaches and strategies that schools can use, many of which are already formal parts of the education system.

The challenge is for educators to use their creativity and experience to arrive at an approach that works for them in their own schools.

Here are some existing programmes and approaches that are recommended in the DoE's *Measures for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy*:

LIFE ORIENTATION IS AT THE HEART OF IT

The curriculum of Life Orientation (LO) covers concepts and areas of learning that are key to equipping learners to make informed, healthy choices for themselves.

Starting from Grade 1

In the General Education and Training (GET – grades 1 to 9) curriculum, the main thrust is to enhance a learner's sense of self-in-society.

The knowledge, skills, attitudes and values expressed in the five focus areas in this learning area are designed to prepare learners to become well-functioning adults in society:

1. **Health Promotion:** Healthy lifestyles; sexuality; HIV/AIDS; and safety.
2. **Social Development:** Human rights; cultures and religions; civic activities; and relationships.
3. **Personal Development:** Self-concept formation; emotions; coping skills; and relationships.

4. **Physical Development and Movement:** Physical activities; physical fitness; rights; and ethics.
5. **Orientation to the World of Work:** Abilities, interests and aptitudes; career options; and further study.



WORLD TEACHERS' DAY ● TEACHERS MATTER ● 5



goal

teenagers themselves, as well as of
ers to brighter futures.

LO in higher grades

The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) for Grades 10 to 12 in LO builds on what is taught in the GET phase.

This learning area identifies four Learning Outcomes that learners need to achieve.

These are:

1. Personal well-being: Includes self-awareness; self-esteem; different life roles; puberty, sexuality and life style choices; and power relations between males and females.
2. Citizen education: Covers social and environmental justice.
3. Recreation and physical well-being: Promotes well-being through responsible recreational and physical activities.
4. Career and career choices: Explores self-knowledge; decision-making; further study; and career options.

Learning Outcome 1 (see above) is more directly concerned with matters related to sexuality and lifestyle choices, while the other Learning Outcomes cover other kinds of life skills.

But each of these Learning Outcomes plays its part in preventing unplanned learner pregnancy.

Self-assured, informed youngsters with a sense of purpose and direction are less likely to make irresponsible choices for themselves, and more likely to lead well-functioning adult lives.

VALUE OF PEER EDUCATION

Peer education is proven to be an effective method for teaching.

This is especially true when it comes to handling sensitive issues, such as sexuality, with learners.

Because they are from the same generation, learners tend to be more open with one another. They can also positively influence each other's attitudes and behaviour.

Turn to page 4 for more on making peer education work at your school through the Girls & Boys Education Movement.

DO YOUR BEST TO BE AN EXCELLENT WORKER

Dr. Jack 760310



Education must be your first love



Principal Phuti Ragophala shares her ideas on ways to protect learners

You may think that education about unplanned teen pregnancy and HIV/AIDS has no place in a primary school.

In 2006, we at Pula Madibogo Primary had the experience of a learner who fell pregnant. She was only 13 years old, and was staying alone at home most of the time.

This is when I realised that, even at primary school, our learners are also vulnerable.

EDUCATION ALWAYS COMES FIRST

Of course, learners in the lower grades are too young for the kind of sexuality education that learners in Grade 7 receive through Life Orientation (LO).

But there are messages that the whole student body hear from me when I address them in school assembly and such like.

I always tell them, "If ever you want to be married, don't make the mistake of ignoring your education. Education always comes first – so make education your first life partner."

FOR OLDER LEARNERS

LO is the learning area that's at the heart of teaching our children to make healthy choices for themselves.

It's not just the sex-specific content that does this. It's also what they learn about self-esteem, healthy relationships, how to handle peer pressure and conflict – all these areas are pillars on which children can build their bright futures.

I therefore encourage my LO educators to teach the learning area fully. I'm happy to say they've been well trained by the education department on how to impart this knowledge.

DRAWING ON LOCAL EXPERTISE

I've also developed partnerships with local structures to support us.

For example, our school is not far from the University of

Limpopo. We engage student social workers to talk to our youngsters. I find my learners listen more carefully to their peers – maybe because they associate me with the one who maintains the discipline!

We have also joined the "Adopt a Cop" programme with our local police station. Our "cop" comes regularly to give words of support to our students to stay away from drugs, and to avoid the dangers that come from engaging in sexual activity at a young age.

FOCUS ON HEALTH

This last August, we also ran with the idea from the education department of starting our own Health Advisory Committee (HAC).

Remember that it takes the whole community to raise a child – schools can never go it alone.

Our committee has eight members: two parents; two school governing body members; two LO educators; myself as principal; and a nursing sister from our neighbouring hospital.

We use this committee to come up with strategies to motivate our learners – and especially our girls, who are more vulnerable – to think about related issues, whether it's HIV/AIDS, rape, or other such things.

GET THE WHOLE SCHOOL THINKING

We also have many other programmes that get learners thinking about these issues, while at the same time building other skills and giving them wonderful opportunities.

Most of these are cultural activities, such as poetry, or speech and drama. For example, the learners are given topics such as HIV/AIDS around which they create their own plays or group poetry.

We also take part in competitions, such as the provincial Language Festival, where our learners entered their drama based on the theme "teen pregnancy".

PARENTS MUST BE INVOLVED

Parents have a large part to play if our work is going to succeed.

Yet I find many parents still need to be workshopped so that they prioritise things in their life such that their children come first.

I always remind them: "Remember, it's about the future of your child".

I find ways to lure them to join us for school functions. For example, I invite them for events where we have a guest speaker to inspire us, so there's a happy mood.

I make sure I don't just contact them when there's trouble or problems.

I also encourage parents to monitor what their children watch on TV. There are some things that, really, our young children should not be watching.

I remind parents to take the warnings about age restrictions or parental guidance for TV programmes seriously.

It is also advisable not to equip children's bedrooms with TVs.

PREPARING LEARNERS FOR LIFE

I firmly believe information about such things must be introduced to primary school learners so that they are fully up-to-speed with these matters from a young age.

When they themselves reach adolescence, there should be no dark surprises waiting for them.

Phuti Ragophala has been a teacher for 18 years and a principal for four years.

She was a finalist in this year's Shoprite-Checkers Woman of the Year Awards in the Education category.

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION HELPLINE

0800 202 933

Contact details:

Website: www.education.gov.za

Thutong Education Portal: www.thutong.org.za



GIRLS & BOYS EDUCATION MOVEMENT CLUBS

I'M MY BROTHER'S AND SISTER'S KEEPER

Have you heard about the GEM/BEM clubs?

These are school-based clubs made up of boys and girls. They're motivated and thinking youngsters who are committed to the promotion of equal human rights, dignity for all, and mutual respect between boys and girls.

WHERE IT ALL STARTED

GEM/BEM is an international movement begun in Kampala, Uganda, back in 2001.

With support from both the national Department of Education (DoE) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), it was launched as a national programme in South Africa in 2003.

GEM/BEM clubs form part of South Africa's Child Friendly Schools (CFS) programme.

FOR LEARNERS, BY LEARNERS

These clubs should be started, organised and run by learners themselves.

In this way, these young adults will learn to become self-reliant and active participants in life.

Of course, they will need the support and guidance of a number of adults, including their educators, and members of business and NGO communities.

IT'S ABOUT DOING THINGS

GEM/BEM clubs are part of a movement – so they're about taking action, not just talking.

Some of the activities South African GEM/BEM clubs are involved in include:

- Starting campaigns to keep school premises clean and safe;
- Setting up recreational activities like drama, art or sports at schools;
- Edutainment events that include gumboot dancing, choirs, drama, poetry and story telling, which use talent and entertainment to get important social messages across;
- Debating, especially on topics to do with healthy living and gender equality;
- Charity activities, such as collecting and donating clothes and food to those in need in a community;
- Forming walking teams to ensure the safety of learners on their way home; and
- Inviting speakers to present information on different topics in their schools.

OPEN DOORS TO OPPORTUNITIES

Besides these activities that learners set up themselves, members of GEM/BEM clubs also have access to enriching experiences through support from the provincial education departments, the national DoE, and UNICEF.

Some examples of the support GEM/BEM clubs receive are:

- Training on a range of life skills, including rights and responsibilities; self esteem; leadership; and the importance of equality and equal access to education for girls and boys.
- Information around issues related to gender inequality; gender-based violence; sexuality; learner pregnancy; HIV/AIDS and drug abuse; and other topics.

'As chairlady of my club, I teach my club members that being a Gemmer is about knowing who you are, loving and appreciating yourself, so that you don't go and look for attention in the wrong ways!'

Grade 11, Gauteng Province



- Information on how to form a club and make it work, thereby learning to be proactive in ensuring their own educational progress.
- "Technogirls" are GEM/BEM members who are exposed to additional information and workplace experience related to careers in the Maths, Science and Technology fields. This is to encourage girls to enter these fields from which they historically have been excluded.

HIGHLIGHTS '08

As part of this year's *Women's Month celebrations*, GEM/BEM members from all nine provinces were brought to Pretoria to take part in a dialogue with the former Deputy Minister of Education, Mr Mohamed Enver Surty.

It was an opportunity for the learners to be taught more about the role women played in the struggle to end apartheid.

It was also an opportunity for the girls to highlight gender-related issues they face in their own environments, and bring them to the attention of high-ranking officials.

In particular, these learners highlighted problems such as teen pregnancy; sexual violence and harassment; and

'My school is full of delinquent boys. They write on walls and do drugs and treat girls disrespectfully. I was once like that too, but when I joined the GEM/BEM in our school, I decided I'm going to clean up the mess!'

Grade 7 learner, Eastern Cape

incidents where teachers have been guilty of pursuing sexual relations with learners.

All provinces carry out a number of GEM/BEM activities during the year, including *GEM/BEM camps*. These are two- to three-day gatherings of GEM/BEM members, which broadens their horizons through travelling to a new place, and being exposed to all kinds of activities that promote healthy living and explore gender-related issues. A national DoE camp will be held in Pretoria this December. South African GEM/BEM members will be joined by learners from countries such as South Sudan, Uganda, Botswana, Liberia and the Bahamas.

START YOUR OWN GEM/BEM CLUB

For more information on how to set up GEM/BEM clubs at school, request a copy of the GEM/BEM Guidebook for Schools from: Gender Equity Directorate Tel: (012) 312 5383 Fax: (012) 312 5218 Email: ramatlo.c@doe.gov.za; Hlatshaneni.d@doe.gov.za

... AN EDUCATOR MAY NOT FORM ANY SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH ANY LEARNER ... EDUCATORS MUST TAKE REASONABLE STEPS TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF LEARNERS ...