

# Annual Report

## Jan-Dec 2011



visionafrika



*"Offering a social-support system to South-African youth from underserved communities, which challenges existing perspectives on life with youth reaching their potential by taking responsibility for their own dreams."*

### **Our mission**

This is a relationship-driven programme that seeks to:

- Challenge and eradicate the mentality of helplessness and dependency in underserved communities.
- Motivate youth to appreciate the value of education and support them in taking responsibility for their own academic achievements/progress.
- Utilise life skills training and critical thinking to empower youth to pursue dreams of alternative futures for themselves, their community and country.
- Create platforms for youth to research, discuss/debate, plan and take action against perceived social ills and injustices in their communities and Challenge existing value systems and emphasise a value system which includes: integrity, perseverance, teamwork, respect for self and others, responsibility, ubuntu (humanity), humility and servitude, and
- to develop leadership skills in youth in order for them to become role models and agents of change in their communities.



# Management Report

## Highlights summary 2011

- Vision K changes its name to Vision AfriKa after 7 years of successful operation in Kayamandi, taking the dream to other areas. [Read more on page 4](#)
- Academic support to learners by offering them safe places to study and using the alternative of electronic media and the internet for tutoring. [Read more on page 4](#)
- Vision AfriKa fights the mentality of learned helplessness in the community by fostering responsibility. [Read more on page 4](#)
- A well-attended parents' meeting highlight the importance of and need for parent participation. [Read more on page 5.](#)
- What is happening with all the participants who finished the programme? [Read more on page 5](#)
- Vision AfriKa supporters and partners. We thank you! [Read more on page 5](#)
- Staff changes and additions. [Read more on page 6](#)
- Management Committee. The trustees of the organisation. [Read more on page 6](#)
- Fundraising and financial status in a bleak environment. [Read more on page 7](#)
- The way forward for 2012. [Read more on page 7](#)
- Learners comment on the programmes and organisation. [Read more on page 8](#)
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- Feedback on the grade 11 programme. [Read more on page 11](#)
- Feedback on the grade 12 programme. [Read more on page 12](#)

## What's in a name?

In April 2011 the new name, Vision AfriKa was launched at a picnic fundraising event. The new name launched an organisation that no longer works only in Kayamandi, but hopes to expand and inspire dreams in many new places!

The successful implementation of a pilot expansion programme in the Vlotenburg farming community (called Vision V) proved that the Vision AfriKa model can be replicated. A challenge is to look at communities as unique entities with unique challenges to address sometimes necessitating adaptations in the programming.

In the light of this the name-change was also more than a face-lift. The Vision AfriKa team also embarked on a journey of strategic planning to ensure that the programmes, vision and mission remain relevant and continue making a difference in youth's lives. The new Vision AfriKa vision is:

*"Offering a social-support system to South-African youth from underserved communities, which challenges existing perspectives on life with youth reaching their potential by taking responsibility for their own dreams"*

For more information, visit our brand new funky website ([www.visionafrika.com](http://www.visionafrika.com)) developed by Liné van Wyk of Life is Awesome.

## Academic support, added space and the use of technology

Academic growth is important to our participants and therefore also to Vision AfriKa. With the growth in numbers across the branches, finding enough people willing to help with the academic tutoring of participants is becoming difficult. This prompted Vision AfriKa to explore other avenues which can be utilised to assist the youth with their academics.

Technology and the usage of computers and computer programmes turned out to be one of the options.

Material that will be utilised include past exam papers, internet based literacy and numeracy programmes, online "classes" on various subjects, a brain training programme and two English literacy programmes developed by Marieken Swart (retired lecturer, University of Stellenbosch).

With funding from a longstanding partner, the Rotary and Rotaract Lüneburg and a networking sponsorship facilitated by Stichting Projecten Zuid Afrika ([www.spza.org](http://www.spza.org)), Vision AfriKa was in the fortunate position to acquire laptops to stock a computer centre of 20 units. The obvious benefit of the laptops is that they can also be moved readily to serve the other branches.

An expanded partnership with our landlord (and partner), the Greater Stellenbosch Development Trust resulted in Vision AfriKa occupying a much larger portion of the Ikhaya Trust Centre as when we moved in. This enabled us to open the dedicated computer centre and to offer more Kayamandi learners (Grade 9) the opportunity to join the programme.

## Responsibility

How much can you expect from a learner who are not used to taking responsibility for their own actions and future? There seems to be at least 2 lines of thought. The one school says that you have to nurse participants as you will lose them if you pressurise them and then you won't have success. The school of thought to which Vision AfriKa subscribe, acknowledges the detrimental effects of learned helplessness and actively wants to eradicate this tendency in underserved communities. A "tough love" approach has seen more conflict and the "loss" of a few participants in the programmes but is also slowly cultivating a sense of responsibility in the participants. This approach also nurtures a deepening and "realness" in the relationships between the participants and leaders.

## Parents' meeting

Choosing a weekday and a notoriously difficult group of people to gather, our parents just showed that their children are important and that they value the work of Vision AfriKa enough to make an effort to attend meetings.

The meeting, held in partnership with Child Welfare South Africa had 2 main themes: Affording parents a chance to hear what it is that Vision AfriKa does exactly and to get more information on the possibilities for financial support for their children's further studies.

Many parents and youth believe tertiary education to be inaccessible to them due to a lack of personal funding to pay for studies. This widespread misconception, resulting in a lack of motivation to work hard at school in order to pursue further studies, was challenged by one of the guest speakers. Xolani Gobelo from the National Student Financial Assistance Scheme (NSFAS) explained to all that financial assistance is available and that learners should not use a lack of funding as an excuse not to finish their High School training to the best of their abilities.

An ex-Vision AfriKa learner, Ntombizanele Sikhonyana, who is now a Town and Regional planner, echoed Xolani's sentiment and confirmed that Vision AfriKa did a lot to motivate her to make a success of life through proper knowledge and support towards the realisation of her dream.

A very successful evening ended with a barrage of relevant questions from parents and a confirmation that more meetings would certainly be appreciated by our parents.

Parents at the meeting also expressed a desire to be more involved and to also share in their children's growth. This request was also an appeal from parents who realise that their children are living in a different world and that old-school parenting models are just not working anymore.

In the light of the importance of child rearing, a Dutch sponsor was found (or perhaps we should rather say a sponsor found us) enabling Vision AfriKa to conduct a parenting course aimed at reaching as many as possible interested parents in 2012.

## Keeping track of ex-Vision AfriKa learners

Despite the fact that they are the "proof" of the Vision AfriKa success, a lack of time and capacity often led the organisation to lose touch with some of our ex-members. This has been turned around by Mlandeli Dingile who took on the responsibility of tracking the where-and-what-about of former participants. Statistics around former participants will also be kept and updated in future using social platforms like Facebook. (The Facebook group of Vision AfriKa currently has more than 89 active members of Vision Afrika and is constantly growing.)

## New strategic partners and sponsors

Vision AfriKa has developed new partnerships with various organisations adding to the value of the programmes. These partnerships range from networking partners to the delivery of services to financial contributions. Vision AfriKa is extremely grateful for the support received and want to acknowledge these partners:

1. The National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF). Visit the National Lotteries Board website to find out about other projects supported by the NLDTF (<http://www.nlb.org.za/nldtf.asp>)
2. The Learning Trust.
3. SPZA (Stichting Projecten Zuid Afrika)
4. Lumosity
5. Annemarie and Jan Doove Foundation
6. The Serenity Foundation

7. Rotary Barendrecht
8. Community Chest of the Western Cape.
9. Distell
10. CISA
11. USIKO
12. The Stellenbosch Academy for Photography and Design
13. Incredible Connection

Vision AfriKa is also thankful to our existing long-term partners. Vision AfriKa received continued support from:

Rotary and Rotaract Lüneburg, Investec Bank, Stellenbosch Municipality, Cluver and Markotter Inc., Cape Winelands District Municipality, Ripple Effect for Vlottenburg, the Blessing Bucks, Kleinbosch Cottages, the Rhodes Food Group, Life is Awesome, the University of Stellenbosch and a multitude of individuals who will know who they are...

## **Staff**

Two factors contributed to staff movements in 2011. Expansion plans (both with new branches and expanding existing branches) necessitated more staff members. Vision AfriKa also has a policy of finding and growing local potential.

Neil Fortuin joined the staff to take over the responsibilities regarding the grade 11 programmes. He will also be overseeing the Vlottenburg branch in 2012.

Zukisa Xegwana will be heading up the pilot group of grade 9 learners in Kayamandi while also partaking in the internship programme.

Magdelien Spies left after a very successful year implementing a totally re-constructed grade 11 year programme. She is getting married in April and moved to Gauteng with her fiancé.

## **Management committee**

The following persons served on the management committee during 2011:

Gordon Boonzaier (Chairperson)

Elmarie Costandius

Karin Viviers

Carl van der Merwe

Cliffie Gordon (Vlottenburg branch representative.)

Gerrit Laning (ex-Officio, Operations Manager)

Lizelle Vos (ex-Officio, Financial officer.)

### **Resignations in 2011:**

Deane Hill (ex-Officio, Founder member and Programme leader) after nearly 6 years of volunteer involvement Deane accepted a position outside of Stellenbosch prohibiting his further active involvement in the organisation.

Ronél de Vos also had to resign due to work obligations. She served the organisation with distinction over a number of years in various capacities.

Siviwe Mawonga has also been part of the Vision AfriKa family for many years even while studying Medicine full-time. The strain of studies however prompted his resignation in 2011.

#### **New appointments to the management committee:**

The dream of a larger community ownership of the various branches is one step closer with 2 ex-Vision AfriKa learners joining the management committee.

Ntombizanele Sikhonyana and Phathuxolo Jozana agreed to join the management committee to represent the interests of the Kayamandi branch.

### **Fundraising events and financial status**

Despite a difficult economic year, Vision AfriKa managed to expand by adding another year group to the Vlotenburg branch. This branch is still more expensive than the Kayamandi branch per participant due to high transport costs.

Costs for tertiary enrolment have also been higher due to more students enrolling and also some of the older students needing financial assistance to re-enrol.

An external audit was performed by Loubser Du Plessis (LDP).

2 Fund-and-awareness functions were held during the year. Although the Picnic and photography exhibition did not bring in huge amounts of money, they both amounted to effective awareness raising events.

#### **Plans for 2012:**

- **Initiate an internship programme for local community youth leaders to build capacity in the organisation and to have active community based management.**

Content of the internship will be divided into

A. A formal leadership training component tailor made to the needs of the group. The internship programme will be designed to challenge interns to assume responsibility and to take leadership initiative where ever possible.

B. The content of both the grade 10 and 11 programmes will also be presented to them and discussed as if they are the participants on a weekly basis. Working through the entire life-skills programme will stimulate interns' capacity to think critically, ask relevant questions and to be aware of alternative approaches to the status quo. Interns will also participate and assist in weekly contact sessions with Vision AfriKa members. As their facilitation skills increase, they will gradually assume more responsibility until they are able to lead the sessions independently. Thoughts, experiences and inputs from the interns will feed back into the life-skills programme in order to improve it and ensure that it remains relevant. Interns will eventually assume responsibility for the documentation, design and expansion of the life skills programme. Interns will be provided with as much as possible exposure with regards to multi-cultural interaction, facilitation, leadership, etc.

C. Organisational skills development- Interns will learn organisational and soft skills, and will be expected to transfer these skills to the youth and other people. These skills will range from organisational philosophy to proper soft skills like computer and internet skills, CV compiling, telephone etiquette, keeping meeting minutes, public speaking, compiling progress reports, compiling and editing newsletters, and effective communication with youth and their parents.

- **Grade 9 programme pilot 2012**

The grade 9 programme marks the beginning of a 4 year journey where students begin planning their future. In order to effectively make these important life decisions we believe it is vital to understand and know one's strengths, talents, and the necessary skills to develop to the greatest potential. The Grade 9 programme therefore focuses on knowing oneself in order to prepare for the future and to begin formulating a path to realize the dream of what a student desires to become.

Vision AfriKa is committed to educational support and development for youth on its programmes. A large component of the grade 9 programme (and all the other year programmes) is therefore an after-school care facility. This includes a safe, quiet place where Vision AfriKa members can study every day after school, tutoring for various subjects, free access to computer and internet facilities and specific life-skills modules concerned with effective study methods. From experience we have noticed the value of study groups, positive peer pressure and the establishment of a learning culture on the academic results of participating members.

The Vision AfriKa programme is developed and sustained on pillars of encouragement, personal ownership and responsibility. This approach enhances and complements the academic support offered to participants by enabling them to develop and pursue an internally motivated and purpose driven life. This sets the Vision AfriKa programme apart from a purely academic support programme.

- **Emphasis on educational support**

In 2012 Vision AfriKa will be even more committed to educational support and development for youth on its programmes. Results from our grade 12 learners in 2011 was high compared to other years but the unfortunate reality of larger numbers of grade 12s getting good results mean that our youth will have to do constantly better than the average if they are to stand a chance at formal tertiary education.

A large component of the grade 9 programme (and all the other year programmes) will therefore comprise of an after-school care facility. The additional space acquired in the Ikhaya Trust Centre offers a safe, quiet place where Vision AfriKa members can study every day after school, tutoring for various subjects, free access to computer and internet facilities and specific life-skills modules concerned with effective study methods. From experience we have noticed the value of study groups, positive peer pressure and the establishment of a learning culture on the academic results of participating members.

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## **General comments from the learners about Vision AfriKa:**

In measuring the success of the Vision AfriKa programme, feedback from the learners on the programme means more than any well-polished report:

1. What have you personally learned throughout the year (2011)? [Answers were not edited; please excuse any spelling and grammar mistakes-Ed.]
  - I have so many things such as how to be responsible and self-respect and also self-confidence
  - What I have learnt is that in order to achieve what you want you have to believe in yourself and that you have to take a responsibility of your life and try to get rid of the obstacles
  - I learned how to communicate with other people and how to work together as a group.
  - To be able to live with other people. To talk with others

- I learned that you don't have to be rich to make a difference. I realized this when volunteering at trust centre helping kids with home works.
  - I learnt that life is not always about finding out what is good for you, but that at times you have to look for what is needed by other people and try to help where you are able to.
  - I have learnt a lot from Vision AfriKa but mostly how to be independent and how to make your voice/ opinions be heard.
2. What inspired or motivated you to give back to your community? [A question posed specifically to the grade 11s].
- I grew up in it, I saw things they suffering through and they are trying to work on them and that motivate me because I see they are responsible they don't wait for somebody from the outside to help them
  - I think are the VisionAfrika facilitators when they teaches us about our communities
  - The people form Vision AfriKa; when they are talking about the things that I can do in order for me to help my community.
  - I wanted to make a difference so that other children could grow in a better community.
  - Vision K because people in here are so dedicated in making a difference in other people's lives.
  - Vision AfriKa did inspire me to give back to my community not only to get bursary but to see the challenges that our communities face in these days and to help those in need so that they can have a good life

**Gerrit Laning (Operations Manager)**

# Programme report

## Grade 10-Life Skills groups

Group leaders (Kayamandi branch): Bernie Treptow, Mlandeli Dingile, Nicole Lindsay, Elzanne Cilliers, Ntombizanele Sikhonyana, Thembisile Mtintsilana and Dillon Wademan.

**Number of participants selected end 2010= 32**

**Number of participants successfully completing 2011=32**

Group leaders (Vlottenburg branch): Bernie Treptow, Karen Davids, Laurika Williams, Frans & Michelle van Eeden and Helen de Wet.

**Number of participants selected end 2010= 16.**

**Number of participants successfully completing 2011=16**

### Activities

#### 1. Sessions

Over all the sessions were all very well executed. The programme ran smoothly and was very successful in the administration and logistics. Almost all targets set were reached and have enriched the learners' lives through the modules and topics given to them. Minor changes will be made next year to the Grade 10 Programme. Some of the momentum was lost after the camp at the beginning of the year and some of the content will be re-arranged to ensure a smoother flow. Changes that will occur include the discontinuation of the current financial module as well as upgrading of Study methods module. Modules will be moved around to build even more momentum in the beginning of the year as well as trust between the learners and the leaders.

#### 2. Camps

The year started with the goal setting and team building camps. The camps have always been one of the highlights of the learners and this year was no exception. The camps were very successful as the learners were challenged and stretched through the outdoor programmes that Back to Basics offers. There was only one camp per branch this year as the second camp was conceded to the Gr. 11 year.

#### 3. Outings

The outings are a large part of the grade 10 programme. Although the learners thoroughly enjoyed the ice skating, there were two minor falls that could have been more serious. 32 learners ice skating for the first time was quite a sight to see! Unfortunately, climbing Table Mountain was not possible due to bad weather. The outing was changed to a movie day where both Vision K and Vision V went to watch The Smurfs. The visit to the planetarium and Iziko Museum was very interesting and the experience of seeing Cape Town was enjoyed a lot.

#### 4. Volunteers

The volunteers were a great help this year, although some were slightly unreliable at times. They were not always pulling their weight. The programme cannot succeed without the help of volunteers. In order to make the volunteering programme more meaningful to both parties, more time will be spent with volunteers for training and relationship building.

#### 5. Learners

The year comes to completion with all the learners still in the programme. The attitude of the group was great throughout the entire year and there is healthy group pressure within the group. There are a few individuals that show great potential. They are taking ownership of their lives and future. The Kayamandi group are often found working or studying at the Vision AfriKa facility and are always trying to better themselves. Not all are at this point but there is visible positive change in every individual.

The Vlottenburg group was a quiet group; they participated well in most of the sessions but at times needed encouragement to participate. We found that they worked well in the smaller groups but did not react or open as frequently and openly in the big group.

Bernie Treptow (Grade 10 coordinator)

## **Grade 11 Personal Development Programme.**

**Number of Kayamandi participants starting programme in 2011=24.**

**Number of participants successfully completing 2011=22**

**Number of Vlottenburg participants starting programme in 2011=12.**

**Number of participants successfully completing 2011=12**

### **Activities**

#### **1. Programme**

This year saw a re-formatted, formal Gr. 11 programme. The Kayamandi Gr. 11 year focused on one's identity and role within the community. As a group, the Gr. 11's decided on an issue that they feel strongly about (poor education in Kayamandi) and started their own community project aimed at improving this problem. The second component of the programme, linked to the first, is organizing/management skills development. These skills were obtained through action learning, theory and observation. As is often the case with new things, some sessions worked well and some did not. We look forward to refining and improving this programme in 2012.

Being a very small group of learners (12), the Vision V programme was more flexible and adaptable to the needs of the learners. The programmatic content focused on one's role and responsibility within one's community. A large component of personal development was introduced along with career guidance and computer skills.

#### **2. Camps**

The first Gr. 11 camp ever was held at Karmel, near Franschoek in October 2011. The theme of the camp was "Truths, Lies and Assumptions", aiming to discover which truths, lies and assumptions guide our dreams and our perceptions about the future. The camp was very meaningful, but also a lot of fun. It was a great way to close off the year.

#### **3. Outings**

The Gr. 11 group went on two outings. The one outing was focused on waste in Stellenbosch, and started with a hike up the Stellenbosch refuse site. Although this was very unpleasant, the Gr. 11's learned a lot about waste and their responsibility to reduce, reuse and recycle. The second outing was to Cape Town, with the purpose of exploring the mother city. The learners completed an "Amazing Race" through the city and ended the day with a theater production about the Mother City (CA 12-6) in the Artscape Theatre.

#### **4. Amabali Ethu**

Amabali Ethu is a partnership between Vision AfriKa and the University of Stellenbosch's Visual Arts Department. This partnership, which brings together students from both programmes, aims to explore relevant social issues using art as medium. Nine afternoons were spent together in total. This is a very fruitful partnership that we hope to grow and develop in the coming years.

#### **5. Photography**

In partnership with the Stellenbosch Academy of Photography and Design, the Gr. 11's put on a photography exhibition as a way to advocate for improved education in Kayamandi. The theme of the exhibition was 'Living and Learning in Kayamandi'. Thanks to the help of our partner organization and generous donors, the evening was a roaring success.

#### **6. Volunteers and Volunteering**

It was very encouraging to have three Vision X members volunteering with the Kayamandi Gr. 11 group. They were dedicated and reliable, and were a great inspiration to the Gr. 11's. The learners also each volunteered at another community organization in Kayamandi for one afternoon per week with the purpose of learning how other organizations work and developing responsibility.

#### **7. Academics**

Gr. 11 is a very important academic year. While some learners from the Kayamandi group regularly came to the Vision AfriKa centre to study, their commitment towards school work can be improved. It seems as if social media such as Facebook and Mxit is a big distraction.

The apparent low quality of education or alternative low levels of learner commitment at Stellenzicht Secondary School (feeder school for the Vlottenburg group) is very worrying, as it creates an ethos of underperformance and being satisfied with the minimum.

#### **8. Learners**

The Kayamandi Gr. 11's showed very good cohesion as a group as well as dedication and loyalty to the Vision AfriKa programme. Three members were asked to leave the programme due to poor attendance and a lack of participation. The group that remains is a group of strong leaders, who are also doing very well academically.

The Vlottenburg Gr. 11 group has been a very challenging group to work with, because of both intra- and inter-personal instability and insecurity. Due to a number of factors, it seems as if the group's social developmental level is slightly lower than normal. This is also why the programme was adapted to include more personal development modules.

Magdelien Spies (Grade 11 coordinator)

## **Grade 12 Academic year**

**Number of participants starting Kayamandi programme in 2011=24**

**Number of participants successfully completing 2011=20**

While academic and career successes are important indicators of the efficiency of the existing programme, Vision AfriKa has always maintained that the outcomes of the programme are broader than just being able to study after school. Success therefore would include youth living according to stronger norms and values as seen in healthy relationships, community interaction and participation and them in general becoming responsible and contributing citizens of the country. Obviously these outcomes are difficult to measure and the real success will only be gauged in a few years' time.

Despite this view Vision AfriKa is proud of the **32 ex-Vision AfriKa learners who have been studying at Tertiary Institutions in 2011.**

**11 of the 2011, grade 12 learners on the Vision AfriKa programme have enrolled as first years at various Tertiary Institutions** like the University of Stellenbosch, University of Cape Town, University of the Western Cape and Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

There are also a number of learners who passed grade 12 in previous years who are starting their studies in 2012.

Academic support was given through a partnership with the Khanyisa Saturday school as well as individual tutoring. Study spaces were also made available to the students upon their request.

As a result of their commitment, structured study sessions for specifically Mathematics and Science were arranged on a regular basis. The white board and tables, books and computers created a

perfect study environment and nurtured positive peer pressure to “hang out” together for study purposes.

The regular weekly contact time with the youth was also extremely useful to build confidence and motivation for this year group to go all out for the matric exams.

Career guidance continues to be a time consuming though very rewarding exercise. Vision Afrika youth meet individually with staff from the programme and are guided to find a meaningful and realistic career path.

Mlandeli Dingile (Grade 12 coordinator)