



Improving SA Education for Lasting Peace

UNESCO's sixth International Day of Education, themed 'Learning for Lasting Peace,' is set to be celebrated on January 24, 2024. In a world witnessing a surge of violent conflicts and a concerning rise in discrimination, racism, xenophobia, and hate speech, the impact of these issues transcends geographical, gender, racial, religious, and political boundaries, both offline and online. This global scenario is mirrored in South Africa, a country grappling with a unique set of challenges stemming from apartheid, compounded by modern issues such as the rising cost of living, lack of clean water, limited access to electricity and the inequality of access to a quality education for all.

With this in mind Deb Zelezniak, CEO at Santa Shoebox Projects, highlights the crucial role of early childhood development (ECD) in shaping young minds. "The importance of collective efforts from the public and private sectors, as well as by the citizens of South Africa, to enhance early childhood educational centres is essential. This involves actions like government funded teacher training and infrastructure, support from businesses using their SED or CSI budgets, private citizens donating time or money to education-focussed NPOs, and initiatives by more affluent schools, teaching students the value of giving."

Should you wish to explore these topics further, Deb is available for an interview to discuss:

- The current challenges faced by SA's youth impacting their education;
- Why starting from the foundation phase (ECDs) is essential for young people to learn for lasting peace;
- How South Africans, businesses, and the government can actively contribute.

About the Santa Shoebox Programmes

Traditional Santa Shoebox:

Over the last 18 years, 1 226 756 Santa Shoeboxes each containing eight specified items of treats and essentials have been given to underprivileged and socially vulnerable children throughout South Africa and Namibia. From 01 September each year, Santa Shoebox donors choose their beneficiary child/ren by name, age and gender and are given the child's clothing size. Each personalised shoebox reaches the very child for whom it was pledged. Using the Santa Shoebox app, donors are able to track their shoebox from the moment it is pledged to the magical moment it is handed to the child.

Virtual Santa Shoebox:

These shoeboxes are purchased online by donors and are available year-round, meeting the needs of donors who live too far from drop-off points, are too busy to shop or have health issues. Components are chosen by the donor on the Santa Shoebox website, the shoeboxes are packed by the Santa Shoebox Team and delivered to children attending far-flung rural facilities. A Virtual Santa Shoebox contains the eight specified items, as well as additional items, such as a lunchbox and books. A Virtual Santa Shoebox costs R450 plus an optional delivery fee of R30.

Santa Shoebox Legacy:

All Santa Shoebox Project operating costs are covered by corporate sponsors. Privately donated funds have been accruing under the SSB Legacy Fund which are now being used to bring permanent change to the lives of Santa Shoebox beneficiary children and the impoverished communities in which they live.

Fiduciary information: As a Level One Contributor to B-BBEE, the Santa Shoebox Project earns 100 points on the generic scorecard, and with Section 18A status, is able to provide a tax-deductible receipt in recognition of donations. The Project is an initiative of the JOG Trust (IT2671/2009). The Trust is registered as a Public Benefit Organisation (PBO-930031301), a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO 102-098) and holds a current ICPR in support of 100% SED compliance.

Social media:

TikTok: @santa.shoebox

Facebook: /SantaShoebox

X: @SantaShoebox

Instagram: /santashoebox

YouTube: The Santa Shoebox Project

Pinterest: /santashoebox