

Platfontein Youth Empowerment

**THE STUDENTS OF PLATFONTEIN
with visiting Platfontein Leader Mario Mahonga**

Project Manager:
Rommel Roberts

Assistant Manager:
Robin Roberts

Office Administrator:
Melvina Smith

Trainers:
Daniel Boyles
Jolin Oktober
Nozuko Mgwebi
Wendy Alexander
David Ngetu

Platfonteiners:
Annamie Dorcas Beregho
Arnesto Kabiyo
Augusto Andratte
Ghumba Katchorro
Louis Karupangwe
Makena Tjebara
Maria Madara
Maria Muronga
Matumbu Nissa Mojo
Namitchana Chicamba
Nepa Katombera
Rosivita Kativa



Computer Literacy and IT Training

The subject of Excel with its rows, columns, calculations and unique type of sums and how to use it will be mandatory for the purposes which can be applied when back in Platfontein on their projects which will prove to be a very valuable skill. The students have had a great amount of focus and some have put in extra hours after class to practice, staying in the workshop to the benefits of knowing it well. Accuracy is the main focus and not watching the key board. The students fully understand the benefits to knowing how to type. The basics of good posture and hand placement show just how serious they are and the very good progress, with many of the students their commitment and dedication is clear. The students use the Mavis Beacon Typing Tutor Programme, 4 evenings a week from 7:00pm to 8:30pm and also during class time during the day for one hour.

Motherboards, one of the main areas of focus and indentifying the components, also the risks in mistreating the motherboard and the maintenance, how to trouble shoot and identify if something is wrong with any one of the components. In May they studied electricity and the components, how they link up and relate. The importance of electricity, an intensive subject that was studied for a 2 ½ week period of study and analysis. Terminology of Computers was covered within 10 days covering practical explanations all of the students understanding this very well, which reflects in their test results.

Computer Literacy & IT Training



Platfontein Leadership Visits Hilltop

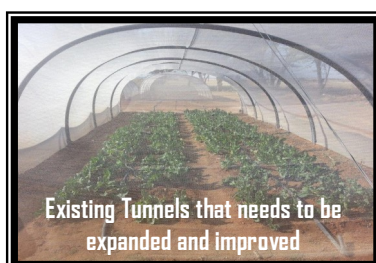
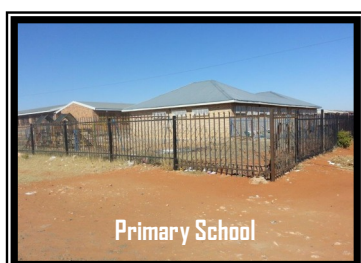
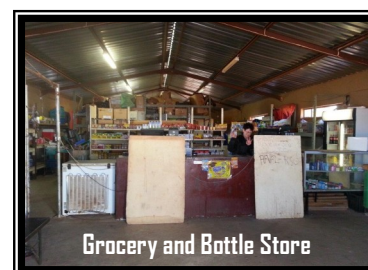
The community leader of the Ixun tribe, Ds. Mario Mahonga drove from Platfontein to Hilltop to visit for the weekend and spent the night at Hilltop. Mario was very curious to see for himself the progress of the students. He asked many questions and was delighted to see just how much the students have learned since they arrived. The students identified a few aspects of their learning in Computer Literacy and gave him more information about their knowledge with IT components and being able to show him practically the icons in a document and methods of formatting. Mario was very impressed and appreciated seeing the students in person and meeting the IT staff also Rommel and Robin.

Development Meeting in Platfontein with Representatives of Platfontein, Hilltop and IDC (Industrial Development Corporation)

Hilltop played the role as implementing agent and facilitator while also representing Swiss funders, including the 2-hr-run Committee. The meeting included a presentation of a concept document drawn up from various inputs from leadership and youth and was added to and endorsed in the meeting by all of the leadership. IDC together with local stakeholders and Hilltop representatives, did a general assessment of physical resources.

The meeting objective as to meet with IDC as a funding body and look at support structures and businesses that could be developed in support of the current Platfontein trainees at Hilltop. The longer term development objectives in terms of overall Platfontein development also featured, but seen as a different focus with the inclusion of major stakeholders from government and other organisations, currently involved in Platfontein.

The outcome was the endorsement by IDC and the meeting that we focus on the development of a comprehensive business plan that includes the different initiatives planned for the current trainees and the community—this for the purposes of seeking funding and implementation of the first phase of the development plan.



Additional Training

Business Accounting and Administration with Wendy Alexander

Since commencing with the course, the following learning areas were covered:

- How to register Companies, Cooperatives and Non Profit Organisations online through CIPC (Companies and Intellectual Properties Centre).
- Started with the Bookkeeping Fundamentals Course. This comprehensive training programme covers the basic bookkeeping terms and concepts. This course also shows how to deal with basic bookkeeping documents and how to use them in a manual accounting system. It has been designed for learners who are required to work with accounts, and who have little or no exposure to bookkeeping. The duration of this course will be approximately 6/8 weeks.

The learners are very optimistic, eager and a pleasure to facilitate says Wendy.



Agricultural Training

The students have a large plot of 1,300 meters where a variety of seedlings were planted in April. The seedlings planted are flourishing and growing beautifully. A pilot project to show how food production can create food and an income stream. The students erected a secure fence which has proven to be helpful, guarding the plants from animals such as cattle, horse and goats that occasionally enter the property from our local village looking for fresh grazing areas. The garden is looking great! All of the students are satisfied with the progress of the garden. They are able to see from where they began at the start to where the garden is now. The students can see for themselves the steps and methods for the success of the plants growing well and the group is managing and maintaining the garden consistently. The cabbages are forming heads and in six to eight weeks they will begin to harvest the produce from the garden. The group is very proud and happy of this achievement.



English Skills Training

In this month, a 3 minute speech was given by each student in English which was filmed, in order for them to see themselves and learn more about themselves. Reading English is a continuous part of their IT training daily. Afrikaans is put to the side so that English conversations are required. The students see the value and importance of knowing English, as the computers will show an error message in English and a technician must be able to know it to troubleshoot the problem. The students understand why English is emphasized and is very important.

Egg laying Chickens

In May we purchased 20 chicks from Sunshine Valley Chicks in King Williams Town. Point of lay meaning that they would start to lay eggs within 2 weeks. The Rhode Island Reds and Leg Horns hens are starting to produce 1 egg per day. Being free range they have a large space to roam and peck through the grass at Hilltop and are also being fed kitchen scraps, seeds and chicken feed specifically for egg layers. We continue to care for and observe how these hens will do in terms of watching for the quality of eggs and the numbers of eggs to be laid as a way forward to a profitable project to be duplicated in Platfontein. .



Hilltop's Office Administrator



Our Office Administrator, Mrs. Melvina Smith, has worked behind the scenes in our King William's Town offices for many years. Melvina has a high level of skill and efficiency she makes meaningful contributions to our project work every day. It is without a doubt that Melvina is excellent at maintaining the organization of our office and performs well under pressure. Melvina is a wonderful support person and Office Administrator who assists us greatly in our work.

General Observations

Time keeping and punctuality: We have seriously impressed upon the group to be early or on time. Each student records his or her participation each day in an attendance register. This would also be used for future business and employment purposes in the work place.

Attitude concerning the programme and content: There is an increasing interest and enthusiasm in the course as it becomes more difficult and challenging, at times the students find it hard to imagine how they will actually use these skills. They are working through the course material and daily assignments not really certain or clear how Typing Tutor or learning IT or having skills in Business Accounting for example will play a role in their lives. The students continue to learn and development more skills with a greater sense of self confidence, pleased and actually delighted by their progress.

Days absent: Three students missed 6 days each, needing to return back to Platfontein for personal reasons. Three others had to go back to Platfontein to attend a funeral. Two left Hilltop to attend the community meeting with Rommel and Robin on May 30th in Platfontein, those two student representatives were gone for 4 days. Travelling one way from Hilltop in the Eastern Cape to Platfontein by bus or taxi consists of a full 10 hours of travel time, quite a long journey. One of the students, Fernando Kayundu, found a job and therefore, had to leave the program.

Communication: The students are from two different tribal groups the Ixun and the Khwe using two different tribal languages, Afrikaans being the mutually shared language with English, all communication is linked within these four languages. It is clear that all 12 students are getting along well, without conflict, sharing mutual interests in this learnership programme. Recently, it has become even more clear that there are high expectations from Hilltop, their Sponsors and their community Elders to make the most of this educational experience, taking it most seriously. The students are being exposed to many new ideas and concepts, generally doing well, despite being far away from their families and friends.

Attitude: The students are enjoying the privilege of being at Hilltop and the opportunity to focus on their studies. We have had a few students that at times would rather be cooking, watching TV or picking guavas, then being with the entire class group who are engaged in the given class or project work requirements. The Market Garden which is now beginning to flourish is still a project area where some truly take pride in the actual nurturing and development of the garden, where others would rather take it easy and chat or take a break. Despite some students personal needs and moods their test scores and aptitude reveal excellence and the sincere desire to progress in their course material.

Manners: All the students generally respect their trainers and have shown kindness and respect to the entire management team and for the property of Hilltop and our local community. We have had a few occasions where late coming and discipline has had to be enforced.

Effort and determination: Completing the third month, out of the six month programme has required quite a serious effort to learn and absorb the demanding course curriculum and perform at higher levels of learning, with deeper integral knowledge in the areas of the computer technology and business accounting. There is a serious effort within the group to "get it right" and improve.

Language: Speaking English within the group during class has become more natural and some of the weaker English speaking students are seeing an improvement in their test scores due to knowing English with better comprehension. In the classroom, lectures are at times mixed with some Afrikaans in order to clarify a definition or concept, however English has now become the first language of the course curriculum.

Personal appearance: Many take pride in wearing their blue uniforms and gum boots meant for the garden project to their IT classes. The boots provide extra warmth and generally they all feel very good. It is quite common to see the students smile.

Accommodation and house keeping: There is a very pleasing harmony within the group in class and after hours in their house. The Platfonteiners have a large television for enjoyment in the lounge and two paraffin heaters to keep warm, as it is winter. Inside the house the kitchen continues to be clean, mopped and dishes washed. In the early evenings there is the aroma of delicious food cooking from the Platfonteiner's kitchen.

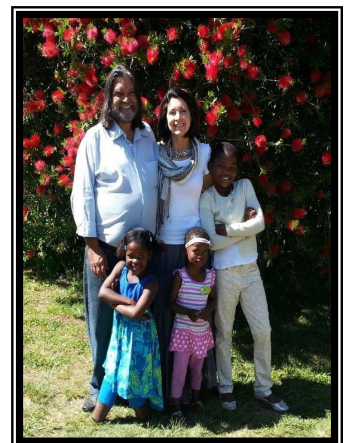
Food supplies and usage: The meal planning and meal preparations have improved. We decided to increase the supply of fresh vegetables and fruits making purchases at a local wholesale supplier and limiting the use of pre-packed powdered soup mixes, a popular feature in modern day traditional cooking, in order to increase the nutritional value, moving slightly away from the heavily processed foods. The Platfonteiners are eating well and our chickens are laying eggs, providing a constant source of fresh eggs. We often go to our local dairy and purchase fresh organic milk.

Media coverage: Find our students on Facebook or e-mail us at: Info@hilltop.org



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Rommel & Robin Roberts