Wild Coast Schools
Students Teaching Abroad Project

DEVELOP TEACHING & CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT SKILLS IN CHALLENGING RURAL SCHOOLS

Chintsa, Eastern Cape, South Africa

A part of the Wild Coast Schools Education Program

Project Aims & Summary

Volunteer Africa 32° South (VA32) are offering universities a partnership opportunity, developing the skills and experience of their students whilst supporting the aims of the well established Wild Coast Schools education program. Students will develop their skills and challenge their perceptions through hands-on teaching experience, resource planning and professional development workshops whilst delivering an agreed specialist project to the learners of the Wild Coast Schools.

Students and professors will work with experienced education co-ordinators to develop a 3-5 week specialist teaching project which focuses on the development of Computer Literacy and English skills in rural South African schools, in alignment with the Wild Coast Schools education project. The project will also provide invaluable experience for student teachers in project and lesson planning, delivering of objectives and teaching aims, resource planning and development, classroom management and more.

Student teachers work in schools in the morning delivering their specialist project in the classroom. Afternoons are dependent on an agreed schedule according to university and student teaching objectives—this time can be used for additional lectures, lesson planning, individual projects and resource development or students can take the opportunity to take part in afternoon community development initiatives in Chintsa such as youth sports development, adult computer literacy classes and visits to a local home of safety for children.
Wild Coast Schools Education Program

Computer Literacy Skills Development

Program objectives are to:
1. Equip rural and peri-urban schools with networked computer labs (a multi-phase project) or provide access to a mobile computer lab for regular computer lessons
2. Continue developing appropriate teaching aids and support structures for both teachers and learners
3. Teach basic computer skills in a classroom environment

Background

The rural schools of South Africa have found themselves in the restrictive scenario of “equal education” policies in a country consisting of vastly different levels of development. One of the major areas to be overlooked within the education system is that relating to the technology fields.

Computer Literacy, considered in today’s developed societies as a basic human right, is only in its infancy in the Wild Coast region. In the few schools that have electricity, very few have computers, and those that have computers have been left to develop in a vacuum with inappropriate and non-existent support structures for the maximising of the resource potential they have. VA32 is committed to resource schools with computers and put into place the necessary training and continued support for these schools to allow them to produce competitive learners for the demanding technological world of adulthood.

It is into this challenging and exciting arena that VA32 places international students and volunteers to support, through appropriate skill provision, the attainment of these targets.

VA32 currently works with various rural schools in the impoverished Southern Wild Coast area. It manages the labs & computers and teaches over 600 learners from pre-school to primary school.

The Big Green eMachine

The most recent innovative development to the project is a fully self-sustainable 4x4 mobile computer lab that operates on solar power. It is equipped with 11 laptops and a server. This directly addresses the lack of technology in the extreme rural areas. Furthermore, the mobile lab has proved to be the solution to the lack of space, security risks to assets and the unreliable or nonexistent electricity supply. The “Big Green” allows the Wild Coast Schools Project to expand teaching opportunities, and identifies the potential expansion into adult community classes.
The Wild Coast Schools

Bulugha Farm School
Situated about 10 minutes’ drive from the volunteer base in Chintsa, Bulugha Farm School provides primary education to children from much of the surrounding area. This includes a large overflow of students from Chintsa were the primary school is over-subscribed. The school has around 180 students in grades R-7.

The acting head of the school, Mr Cakata is friendly and committed. The school are very keen about the computer literacy courses provided year round and greatly appreciated the course run there last year by Texas State University teaching students.

This school has a wonderfully decorated computer laboratory providing a warm and welcoming learning environment for the students. Computer literacy levels and English language levels are generally very good for their grade.

Chintsa East Primary School
Situated in the centre of the Chintsa East Township, Chintsa East Primary provides primary education for many of the Chintsa East resident children. The school houses roughly 200 students split over grades R-7. The head teacher at the school is Mr Sobandla.

Chintsa East has a dedicated computer laboratory where all students receive at least 1 hour of computer literacy classes per week.

Chintsa East has previously been the beneficiary of courses run by Texas State University students. The students have good computer skills but slightly lower English language levels than those at Bulugha Farm School.

Chefani Primary School
Chefani Primary School is situated around a 20 minute drive from Chintsa East and provides education for students from the greater Chintsa rural area. Volunteer Africa have previously worked with the school in the form of sports and construction projects.

The headmistress, Lungiswa, is very excited and enthusiastic about the school being involved in VA32 projects and very receptive and friendly.

The school is similar in size to Bulugha and Chintsa East but does not have a computer laboratory. At this school the Big Green e-Machine will be used as the computer laboratory. Due to the size restriction on the Big Green classes in this schools are often split with the computer aspect of project taking place in the Big Green, and lectures, written work and group work in other areas of the school.
Student Specialized Project

Students and professors will work with our experienced education co-ordinator to develop a tailor-made project which suits the aims and objectives of your faculty students. This joint development of the project ensures that both the learning objectives of the teaching students, and the aims and objectives of the Wild Coast Schools Program, are being met.

In keeping with the Wild Coast Schools program, the main focus of projects will be on:
1. Developing Computer Literacy skills
2. Developing English as a second language

The Wild Coast Schools offer a great opportunity to challenge teaching students in under-resourced classrooms where the teachers creativity, demeanour and ability to connect with learners, really do make a difference.

There is the opportunity to take part in team teaching as well as going solo in a supportive and constructive classroom atmosphere.

VA32 can provide feedback sessions, lesson observations, teacher workshops and professional development training.

By the end of the project we hope that students will gain insight into dealing with everyday challenges in under-resourced schools and classrooms, be strong and confident in their abilities as a teacher —able to think in the moment, keep calm and be creative with the resources and environments available.
SPECIALIST PROJECT: Computer Literacy Aspect

The VA32 Computer Literacy Program focuses on one subject per term—often environmentally or life skill orientated. The specialist project will preferably fit inline with the current subjects being focussed on at the schools. Below is an example of the 2014 subject breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM 1</th>
<th>TERM 2</th>
<th>TERM 3</th>
<th>TERM 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Living</td>
<td>Community and Heritage</td>
<td>Local and Global Issues</td>
<td>Nature and Biodiversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitation and Hygiene</td>
<td>My Local Area</td>
<td>National and Global citizenship</td>
<td>Animals and Tourism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The Wild Coast Schools Program concentrates on developing basic computer skills in Microsoft programs including word, publisher, powerpoint and excel. Other software can be included in the training, for example, a group of students in 2013 introduced “Prezi” to the children to develop animated presentations. This use of alternative software needs to be discussed with our co-ordinator and must be freely available to schools/students and VA32 to make the training worthwhile.

SPECIALIST PROJECT: English Support

In terms of English language objectives the Wild Coast Schools use the national CAPS curriculum—this curriculum can be provided on request for reference. Many learners may not be currently attaining the levels set out in the curriculum and thus the objectives for specific grades may be beyond student capacity. Student knowledge and skill also differs greatly between the schools. These factors need to be considered when designing the project and differentiation should be included in the resource planning.
Orientation

A pre-project familiarisation and orientation, will take place upon arrival in Chintsa. This will involve an introduction to the local area, volunteer routine and house as well as a familiarization chat about life and what to expect in South Africa.

A project specific orientation is also provided before students are placed in the schools. It includes: a project overview, in depth introduction to VA32, introduction to the teaching curriculum, teaching methodology unravelled, lesson preparation, available resources and a day being introduced the schools.

Orientation is designed to help volunteers to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible and to understand where their energy and enthusiasm can be used best on project.

Accommodation

VA32 has a volunteer house in the small seaside village of Chintsa East. Students will stay in shared accommodation (two or six per room) in the “vollie” house overlooking Chintsa beach & lagoon. The house is within a few minutes walk of the beach & there is access to canoes, boogie boards and beach accessories through local backpackers Buccaneers. Accommodation has most mod cons (including daily visits from the monkeys!) and is fully serviced and managed by our house manager Nomakwezi.
Meals

Breakfasts are early and healthy. There is access to a self-help breakfast which will include fresh fruit, toast and jams, cereals, tea and coffee. Please note that yoghurt and fried breakfasts are not included.

Lunch is in the form a packed lunch which includes a sandwich and a piece of fruit prepared by house manager Nomakwezi. White and brown bread, cheese, tomato, lettuce, cucumber, jams and peanut butter are available as sandwich fillings.

Dinners are scrumptious, home cooked, sit down meals. These will be prepared by VA32 staff and we cater for vegetarians at all times. There is also the opportunity to enjoy traditional Xhosa foods at our once off Xhosa Dinner Party. Other theme menus include a Mexican evening as well as a truly South African weekly “braai” (BBQ).

Important Note: Participants must advise VA32 of their dietary needs (e.g. vegetarian, allergic to nuts etc.) upon bookings. Participants with very specific dietary needs may be required to supplement their meals at their own expense.

Chintsa

There are several small restaurants and bars in the village that do specials for volunteers and students. Friday night is “fun night out” as all VA32 volunteers and participants from the different projects usually meet up.

Local tour operator African Heartland Journeys (mother company to VA32) run surf schools, beach horse rides, game drives and quad biking which are all bookable through the VA32 office at a reduced rate.

Local backpackers Buccaneers also welcomes VA32 volunteers to use their swimming pool, boogie boards, canoes, take part in their afternoon free activities and use their bar. A great place to meet like minded travellers and plan future adventures!

The VA32 Office & Support Centre offers:

- 24 hr personalised contact person
- Professional, full time VA facilitators for planning & mentoring
- Weekly feedback, troubleshooting and planning sessions with co-ordinating team
- Transport to and from projects
- Access to the VA32 internet café and telephone
Interactive Sport’s Development

The VA32 sport’s development initiative is an exciting drive to introduce and develop on-going growth and appreciation in the sporting arena in socio-economically challenged areas of the Wild Coast. For the most part, schools lack the resources and the capacity to provide effective sports opportunities for their learners.

It is into this void that the VA32 volunteer team employ their energy, enthusiasm and skill.

The initiative strives towards creating a formal sporting framework where new sport’s disciplines, teamwork and the understanding of sport etiquette are developed. In a country such as South Africa, sport is able to encourage not only a healthy lifestyle, but also develop necessary social skills and peer understanding that is essential to the stability and well being of our society.

The sports development initiative relies heavily on volunteers to drive this program forwards. Twice weekly volunteers run sports sessions in the village; drills, skills practise and games in football, rounders, rugby, volleyball, netball, cricket and any other sport which appeals. The recently developed Chintsa Sports Centre hosts these sessions with access to a football pitch, netball and volleyball courts.

Gardening Project

Monday afternoon is reserved for gardening! VA32 assist local learners and volunteers in helping to care for the plant and vegetable gardens at Chintsa East School and teach the children how to look after and harvest their plants, flowers and vegetables.

Children’s Home of Safety

Volunteers visit a children’s home of safety one afternoon a week where extra hands are desperately needed to help the fulltime staff in this under-staffed, under-resourced children’s home. Typical activities involve playing sports with the children, structured play, reading and helping children to complete their homework.

Volunteer Africa 32° South

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VA32 and local non-profit organisation Friends of Chintsa work in partnership. The organisation manages any financial donations which are given to the Wild Coast Schools and other projects, and channels them into initiatives which address current social and environmental issues in and around Chintsa.

A few ways to get more involved!
- Join the UNSTRESSED Surf School at the weekend which is run by the local surf community and teaches local children the basics of surfing and ocean awareness
- Assist with the daily running of the Chintsa East Feeding Scheme during school hours
- Be an active part of the regular sports development initiatives going on in Chintsa

Environmental Education & Transforming Learning Environments

The computer literacy curriculum is closely linked to Environmental Education through our innovative & structured teaching modules. Topics covered include My School Environment, Water and Sanitation and the study of indigenous birds and trees amongst other relevant topics.

Volunteer presence in the Chintsa area has also allowed VA32 to partner with the WWF/WESSA Eco-schools programme by providing booster support to existing environmental projects under the guidance of the Eco-schools team. VA32 has become increasingly involved in environmental aspects of the Wild Coast Schools. This partnership continues to grow and involves supporting a range of targets and projects from Marine and Coastal Education, Water and Sanitation and vegetable gardens to general aesthetic improvements, the building of new facilities and playground development.

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The Wild Coast Schools Education Project was the World’s first Fair Trade certified Volunteer Program.

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Project Fees, Dates & Group Numbers

VA32 can host groups of 5 - 15 students per university, at one time, to ensure adequate contact time with students and co-ordinators.

The Wild Coast Schools Education Program is available during South African school term time—it does not run during the school holiday. Please see the attached dates sheet for these dates.

Project fees vary according to the number of students per group and the specific support requested. Please contact info@volunteerafrica32.com for more information.

What’s included in the program fee?

- Airport transfers upon arrival and departure
- Accommodation in shared volunteer house
- Three meals a day whilst on project
- All project related transport
- Support of our experienced on-site project co-ordinator both before and during the program
- Welcome pack with all project info, and meal and drink vouchers for local Chintsa restaurants and bars, 1 free hour internet upon arrival, free VA32 T-shirt

What’s not included?

- Flights
- Personal Insurance

The Booking Process

Contact us on info@volunteerafrica32.com or +27 (0)43 738 5523 for more information about booking and tailor-making this experience.