

## Educating Future Leaders

**Country of Project Implementation:** Swaziland

**Sponsoring College:** Methodist University

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**Blog HTML:** <http://www.seccaserca.wordpress.com/>

The project goals are to produce a free monthly children's newspaper for Swazi children between the ages of 8 and 10 in order to facilitate their learning by reigniting their drive to meet their goals.

**Fundraising:** We hope to gain revenue by selling advertising space and allowing companies to sponsor pages. This has proved to be difficult as we are starting out and September is our first issue but we are working with key companies such as Coca Cola Swaziland, Unicef and the Deputy Prime Minister of Swaziland in order to gain support and trust. We want this first issue to be a great reflection of our aim so that we can attract consistent sponsorship. By doing this we intend for the newspaper to be a sustainable educational resource for the children.

**Overview:** After getting a group of writers, a designer and an editor together we worked to find the appropriate place to print the newspaper, design the logo, create the theme and write the articles for the newspaper. It is called Next Generation News and we are printing 10000 copies of our first issue. 9900 of these will be sent out to schools on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September and the other 100 will be used to gain more sponsorship. The theme of our first issue is Nature and all articles and sponsored pages are related to our theme in some way. Articles that are present in our first issue are available on the CD. The 100 schools that we are delivering the newspaper to are a mixture of private and public schools. We intend on increasing the amount of schools we reach once we have established good support from companies in the country. Currently at 10000 copies we are the second largest newspaper in Swaziland after the Times of Swaziland.

**Successes:** Getting a good team together that is both passionate about the project and its goals was an easy task, we wanted to get a group of young people together in order to give them an opportunity to work on something innovative and rewarding. All current members of the team either have a Bachelors degree or are perusing one and have had related work experience to their position.

Nercha Swaziland, which is a NGO that works with children in Swaziland, has agreed to distribute the paper at no charge because they already regularly interact and visit schools in the country. This has saved us on distribution costs which we originally feared would be costly.

**Challenges:** Working with September 22<sup>nd</sup> as our goal has been challenging because it didn't give us enough time to put together all the pieces required to make this as successful as we intended, especially for our first issue's release. We didn't have enough time to get a team together, come up with the content and sell the advertising space that we intended. With all that said, we did accomplish two out of the three things required and are hoping to focus on getting more sponsors and selling more advertising space for the October issue. We were challenged because we were working at a fast pace in a country where people tend to take their time to make decisions.

Gaining support at first was challenging and we made slow progress but started to get recognized after people saw that we were serious. We used Enactus as a base for our contacts and companies were more open to acknowledging us as they had previous experience with the Enactus group in Swaziland.

Working with the Deputy Prime Minister has also helped in regards to support as he is a key supporter of the education of the youth in the country.

Cost was also a challenge, the company that we chose to print the newspaper with (because they were the most reasonable in price) raised their prices closer to the date of printing and thus we have had to negotiate with them tirelessly to get to the bottom of the problem. This inconsistency with what we are being charged makes it difficult to budget accordingly.

Finding an appropriate designer was also a challenge and Next Generation News had to replace two because their quality of work was not up to the standard that we required. We are now using a company to design the layout and cover pages of our paper to ensure that we release on time. In the meantime we will be looking for a more suitable person to fill the design position. This setback has cost us more as the company that is designing the paper costs considerably more than what we would pay our in-house designer.

**Sustainability:** There is a future to this project, we have set our pricing for advertising space and sponsored pages to exceed all the costs associated with the printing of the newspaper therefore allowing longevity.

**Peace:** I believe that peace is being able to wake up every day and not having to worry about where your next meal will come from, being able to receive an education without feeling threatened. Peace is living happily in a supportive, encouraging environment where there is no conflict.

Our project strives to show children that their goals are attainable through dedication to their education. Education will allow them to achieve goals such as a better job and lifestyle for themselves and for their family. In the short term Next Generation News aims to get children excited about learning, engage their interests and encourage them to strive to continually get better at their school work. In the long term we hope that through this refocused dedication children will grow into responsible adults therefore lowering the HIV/AIDS prevalence that plagues our country, changing the mothers mean age of first birth to a more responsible age and pulling our country out of a mind frame that change is bad.

**Reflection:** The project has made me see my country in a different light; I never realized how afraid we are to change. I never thought that poverty rate is as high as it is. Knowing the facts makes me as a UWC student want to drive change in my country, help those who cannot help themselves and I feel that this is best done through educating children. If you change the way they view the world and their place in it then they can in turn do that for others and ensure a better life for themselves and others. It is difficult to work in a country that is so determined to stay the same, to be entrepreneurial in a place that is in its comfort zone. This is why Next Generation News is important to me as its publisher because it is my way of teaching children that change is inevitable and that they need to take responsibility for their education. We as a less economically developed country cannot grow or change if we continually loose our educated citizens to more economically developed countries. This is a trend that has been and continues to grow and as a country we continue to stay stagnant in a world that is moving ahead.

**Quote:** "Education enables people to help themselves and in turn help others. Next Generation News is a resource that Swazi children can use to better themselves. We are proving the resource and encouragement that they require, now it is up to them!" Natalie Mathews

