

New eco-sustainable school for Hangberg community

Hangberg Pre-Primary School, situated in the Hangberg community of Hout Bay in Cape Town, opened its doors this month. Rotary Club am Kap, Cape Town's German-speaking Rotary Club, spearheaded the funding of the early childhood development centre and built the school together with the Hangberg Education Trust and with support from the Departments of Education and Transport and Public Works. The much-needed learning facility will provide guidance and care to 120 children.



In attendance at the inauguration of the school were provincial minister of Transport and Public Works, Donald Grant and provincial minister of Education, Debbie Schäfer. Both dignitaries expressed their optimism at the potential of the school to ease the plight of the most vulnerable in the community.

There are approximately 2900 school-going children and approximately 1200 pre-school children in the area with only two registered play schools catering for some 200 children. For many of the children, the streets are their playground. By the time the children enter school, many are struggling to cope.

Raising funds through the global Rotary network

“When our club got approached by an NGO, the Hangberg Educational Trust (HET), we just loved their plans,” says Rotary am Kap’s Mike Schroder who was responsible for service projects. “The problem was the funding: the total outlay of R5.7m initially looked very steep. But Rotary Club am Kap has well established contacts with several Rotary Clubs in Germany, and some of these had already been participating in educational projects within the Cape Town area.”

Rotary Club am Kap brought together four Rotary Clubs in Germany, namely the Rotary Clubs of Neuss, Germering, Landshut-Trausnitz and Eggenfelden-Pfarrkirchen.

Together, just over R5,2m was raised to make this project reality of which just over R3,2m was raised by Rotary. The foreign Rotary organisations donated €200,000 with Rotary Club am Kap donating R350,000. Says Friedrich Schäfer, president of Rotary Club am Kap, "This project proves Rotary International's global impetus as a humanitarian service organisation, focusing on action and making a difference in the lives of people around the world. And we are very proud that we as Rotarians were able to harness this power."

The Hangberg Educational Trust, which supports neglected pre-school children in Hangberg, Hout Bay, had strong support from the adjacent Sentinel Primary School as well as from the departments of Education and Public Works in approving plans to build the early childhood development facility.

Hangberg Educational Trust founding member Marquerithe Schreuder says, "We saw that there was a big need in the community of Hangberg and we proceeded to found the Hangberg Education Trust (HET), from the community for the community. At Hangberg we are providing high quality education and this will make a huge difference to the lives of these children and their families."

A self-sustainable school thanks to the power of the sun

Construction of the school started in January 2016 and was completed in only eight months. The building is rather unusual: situated at the entrance to the Hangberg location, it is highly visible to the whole community and it stands out due to its shape - a double story in an L-shape - and the intense use of bright colours, which were taken from the local kingfisher bird. The building is environmentally friendly and built predominantly of timber rather than concrete or bricks.

SolarWorld Africa donated a solar system that produces more power than it needs and thus is able to feed the excess power into the neighbouring Sentinel Primary School. The solar system includes 18 SolarWorld 255 Mono solar modules as well as the mounting structure. The solar system was installed by SolarWorld Africa's partner, OneSolar who also donated the solar inverters. Gregor Küpper, SolarWorld Africa's MD, said, "It is an honour to contribute to a facility that promises to uplift the lives of young people in this community. And what a way for children and the community to see the positive effects of renewable energy first hand."

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