

REAP

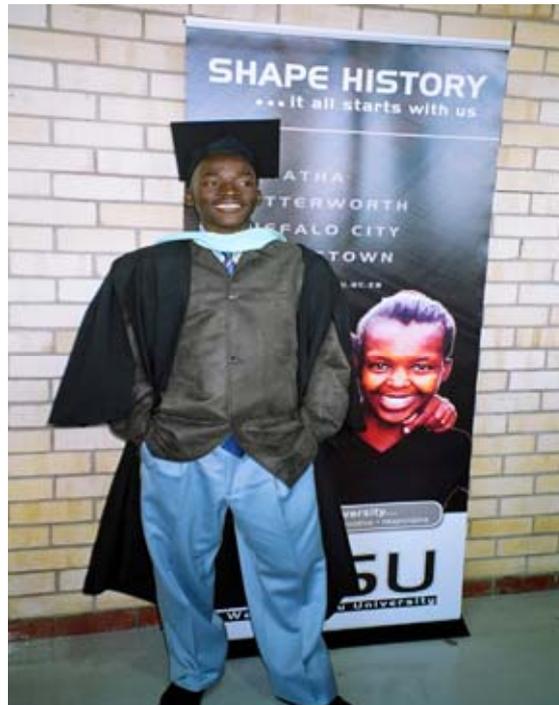


RURAL EDUCATION ACCESS PROGRAMME

A key to an alternative future

PROGRESS REPORT

Jan ~ June 2005



Accessing higher education for rural youth from poor communities

Funders of the Rural Education Access Programme

Development Cooperation Ireland

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Shadi (2nd year MB ChB at University of Witwatersrand) writes:

My positive experience of being a REAP student is really something that I am proud of because really without REAP I wouldn't be where I am today, or who I am at this moment. REAP doesn't only look on building/supporting a student academically but also has so many opportunities for their students to be socially creative. The workshops that Jacqui arranged for us really are helping me to building my personality, self esteem and learn how to study. I realize that they really improve my ways of studying towards a better goal. I realize that REAP is the 'Mother' to me when I am in difficult situations e.g. studies or money to go home, Jacqui is always there for me but with reasonable reasons and really that's how a responsible mother should act like. I thank REAP. I will always say this even when I finish my degree that without you guys I won't have now. Thank you very much! Really I don't have any complain about being your student, what I can say are we looking nice in our t-shirts. Try to bring more workshops as you can guys because they are really doing more than you thought.



1 INTRODUCTION

In the middle of 2005 there are 397 students on the Programme, an increase of 14% on 2004 numbers. REAP plans to stabilize numbers now, sustaining support for continuing students and taking on a new cohort of about 150 per year, funds permitting. The gender breakdown is just 50% with 199 female student and 198 male. The new intake for 2005 was 140, slightly down on the planned 150. We believe this is due primarily to more stringent criteria for entry to institutions of Higher Education (HE) The new intake had a perfect gender balance of 70:70!

Two new staff members joined the Programme team at the start of 2005. The 397 students are now supported by four student advisors, a programme coordinator (who also carries a small student caseload) and a programme assistant. The team is made up of three women and three men who, between them, speak at least six South African languages.

Preliminary mid-year pass rate – 87.5%

2 STUDENT PROFILE

A visual presentation of student demographics is provided in the centre spread of this report and details are provided in tables at the end of the report.

Of the students on the Programme 44.8% are studying for a degree while 55.2% are studying for national diplomas. With the mergers of institutions it is no longer appropriate to differentiate between universities and technikons. In some instances universities and technikons have merged to form one institution conferring both diplomas and degrees.

The highest concentration of students is in KwaZulu Natal, followed by Gauteng. The KwaZulu numbers are the result of well developed networking and recruitment processes in the region as well as the efficiency of a central application process for HE institutions. Gauteng is the economic hub of South Africa serving as a magnet for rural people seeking opportunity. The highest new intake was at Western Cape institutions. In addition to students of the Western Cape, students from the Northern and Eastern Cape, and a student from KwaZulu Natal chose to study in this province. Business and commerce are the chosen streams of 30% of the students. Male students still dominate the engineering fields by 3:1.

As would be expected, 65% of the REAP cohort are continuing students. Nine (9) students are still registered as first years, although they commenced their studies in 2004. This is due, in most cases to the repetition of first year courses, but in one case to a change of course. The REAP Forum assesses these students carefully before permitting them to continue on the Programme. CEAP¹ history has shown that discerning allowance for repetition and change, given the students' background, can enable success.

The number of students for 2005 might increase slightly for the second semester as some students return to their studies from in-service training.

¹ Catholic Education Aid Programme – a very similar programme that preceded REAP.



3 FIRST SEMESTER ACTIVITIES

A full first semester student support programme was delivered. The activities included: the facilitation of registration; orientation to tertiary study and campus life; loan contracting; regular telephone counselling; regular allowance and study expense payments; two face to face counselling sessions with each student; workshops; introducing REAP students to each other and performance monitoring. In addition the content of the first REAP newsletter was put together and is now ready for printing. Application forms for 2006 were distributed to regions and in some cases local training sessions were held with the volunteer regional representatives in preparation for improved recruitment and selection.

The average caseload for student advisors is 97 students with the new student advisor caring for a smaller case load as he develops competencies and gets to know the Programme. One thousand two hundred and forty-four appointments were booked for the first semester, in addition to the ad-hoc calls!

3.1 Insight from student counselling

The intention of the Programme is to develop young people able to cope with the bigger world. REAP's practice is not to provide instant solutions for student dilemmas but to facilitate students themselves finding ways of resolving their difficulties. Student advice and counselling happens during monthly toll free line telephone conversations and face to face sessions during visits to institutional hubs. Student advisors visited students in March and again in May. These one on one conversations provided opportunities to explore academic progress, familial, social and other concerns. Where further support was needed students were referred to on-campus student counselling departments. REAP maintains relationships with personnel in these departments. A variety of issues arose giving insight into the circumstances of REAP students.

Diversity

The need for cultural diversity workshops is not only of importance at historically white institutions. Discriminatory beliefs are held by different ethnic or language groups. These surfaced at the University of Limpopo.

Money management

For the first time REAP allocated set access budgets to categories of students. While REAP is aware that actual expenditure might exceed or fall short for individual students requirements the standardized allocations enabled students to tailor their budgets to their needs, within REAP parameters. For example REAP will allow meal allowances between R300 and R400 per month. The cost of commuting where students are living in private accommodation or attending satellite campuses close to home can be onerous. Even faxing information to REAP has a cost. Senior students have appealed to REAP to pay for driving lessons, motivating that many jobs have this as a requirement. The request has been discussed and will be reviewed in the second semester once we are clearer about annual expenditure to budget.

Circumstances not conducive to study

At the Universities of Limpopo and Venda students complained of inadequate resources and overcrowded lecture rooms. Students have voiced their concerns about student protests around merger issues at affected institutions, the loss of valuable time and feeling threatened when not participating. Students at Vaal University of Technology (VUT) (Sebokeng campus) feel isolated as they are far from town and not part of the main campus.



The common concerns of students at merged/merging institutions were about the hike in tuition costs, increased registration fees, the distribution of resources, no shuttle services for class attendance on other campuses, the lack of transformation and management manner in addressing student needs.

Financial aid

Senior students are expected to access study loans through their institution. By March students were still awaiting the outcome of their financial aid applications. Senior students at WITS² University are on the institution's waiting list for financial aid as REAP processed their NSFAS application the previous year. Senior students in private accommodation voiced concern about the late payment or non-payment policy of the institution.

At the beginning of the year twelve students who did not meet institutional requirements for financial aid managed to register with their own funds or appealed to REAP for minimal support with registration. Student advisors met these students in March and placed them on conditional status³ until June. Should they pass all their courses they will be reinstated with full support for the second semester.

The University of Free State automatically de-registered one of our final year students when she failed to ensure the required payment of R7500 due at the end of April. She applied for the university's financial aid and was placed on the waiting list as preference was given to students with even greater financial need. Despite REAP paying R3500 to reduce the amount, the university insisted that the family pay the full expected family contribution. The student advisor negotiated with the heads of financial aid and finance for the student to continue her studies. The finance department wanted a written undertaking from REAP that her full fees will be settled before allowing her to re-register. All parties agreed that REAP would assist the student in applying for a NSFAS loan. This caused enormous stress for the student who was told that she would have to vacate her room in residence and return to Kroonstad.

It might seem strange for REAP to document financial problems given that it is a support programme. REAP is however in partnership with NSFAS and tries to integrate students into normal support mechanisms post their first year. The problems experienced by REAP students who receive support, must be the tip of the iceberg for marginalized students from poor rural communities.

A number of students with financial aid packages from their respective institutions or other external bursaries do not require REAP's full access allocation. The challenge is for REAP to determine how students can benefit and best utilise their access support. It is interesting that some students had no idea of the nature of support from the institutions (i.e. the type of loan offered, the cost of their studies for the year, etc). On doing the REAP budgeting exercise they realised the importance of monitoring their accounts and ensuring that they do not exceed the support they will receive from the institution. The down side of this has been students' lack of contact with REAP once they secure other sponsorship.

² Witwatersrand

³ Students are required to attend specific support sessions at their institution & pass all subjects at end of semester



In-service training

Fourteen (14) students secured in-service training for the first semester. Often the stipend received from the host company is small. Students sometimes have to relocate to secure an in-service placement leading to increased living costs. Companies such as Volkswagen offer training but payment is required. In-service students required continued support from REAP. Electrical Engineering (light current) students, in particular, struggled to find in-service training. In the Eastern Cape five students (three Electrical and two Civil Engineering) who completed the theoretical course component were unable to register for the academic year without securing in-service training. Students have approached REAP with requests to sponsor them registering for practical courses at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) and Durban Institute of Technology (DIT). On completion these will be recognised as the experiential component of their diploma. This is not an encouraging situation and such costs are not covered by financial aid. REAP plans to engage with SETA's⁴ to explore practical options.

Along with the challenges there are success stories

Michael is a final year tourism student at the Durban Institute of Technology. His in-service training with Sabie Tours took him on excursions to Lesotho. Jacqui, his student advisor, was impressed by the knowledge and skills he gained in this working environment. He is working towards a code 10 (trucks & buses) driving licence and has been invited back to Sabie Tours for vacation employment. His goal is to own his own company and he is seeking advice on a business plan.

Performance concerns

During the May visits student advisors assisted students who were suffering from anxiety prior to mid-year examinations. Semester students already had an indication of whether they were eligible to write their examinations. A few students raised the point of wanting to change their course of study. This self doubt is triggered by the feeling that they are not coping academically and not obtaining good results. It will be interesting to see whether there is any correlation between academic performance and change in course of study.

Family stress

Students shared openly concerns and frustrations about the hardships their families were experiencing back home and its effects on their studies. They related stories of spousal abuse, siblings stealing mom's pension, absent fathers creating emotional and financial strain on the family and fathers avoiding contact. Another concern was the family's lack of contact with students. Orphans are particularly vulnerable. It is difficult to imagine the depth of their problem. A student who had just lost his grandmother, who cared for him and his sibling, did not know who was going to provide them with the emotional and financial security they needed.

In the Eastern Cape, a continuing student could not meet her student advisor after being informed telephonically of her Cape Town based mother's HIV positive status. The student advisor managed to locate, counsel and refer her to student counselling for further support and counselling. A first year student lost two older sisters within a space of three months. His family arranged for him to attend the first funeral but could not afford the bus fare to the

⁴ Sector Educational & Training Authorities responsible for the support of skills development



Eastern Cape for the second, as they were still recovering from the expenses of the first. His father advised him to stay at the institution. The family now has to provide for an additional four children in their household. REAP helped him with the travelling costs so that he could attend the funeral and offered emotional support.

It would be interesting to monitor the progress of affected students to see the correlation between emotional problems and academic performance i.e. whether their circumstances hinder their academic progress or serve as a driving force for achieving.

It seems imperative for REAP to link students with student counsellors upon their arrival at institution. Hopefully proactive intervention would assist students in coping with the demands of tertiary life.

Self-esteem and relationships

Some students are still struggling with self-esteem problems and therefore struggling to find relationships, so important to young people. A continuing student expressed concern that he could not find a girlfriend and asked his student advisor for advice. The importance of students' involvement in extramural activities provides a key to building a social network of friendships.

Accommodation

The lack of campus accommodation and the difficulty of finding affordable private accommodation offering a conducive study environment is still a major challenge for students. Students are over-charged and at times live in overcrowded conditions with little security.

Reports from students in Durban highlighted these problems. A first year student studying at the Durban Institute of Technology had to share a balcony converted into a room with four others. She had to study on her bed with a torch light. Another's landlady informed her just before the mid-year examinations that she needed to find alternate accommodation as her husband would be returning home. They have applied for residence for second semester. REAP has noted the more favourable private accommodation facilities for future referrals.

Students at the Vaal University of Technology will be encouraged to apply for on-campus residence given REAP's observation that there was less control and high noise levels during the week at off-campus residences which are not favourable for study.

Other challenges

Other difficulties and requests related to students not being able to sell their books, the stress of coping with the workload leading to doubts about their correct choice of field of study and peer pressure. Access to computers is a problem and REAP has received requests for help to purchase personal computers. Imagine studying actuarial studies without constant access to a computer! REAP discusses requests and explores ways and means of assisting where appropriate. Individual requests have to be weighed in terms of what is replicable for other students. Students also raise safety and security concerns such as incidents of harassment, mugging and theft. Communication and networking with service providers is an ongoing component of our support work. Following the May visits REAP has grappled with policy issues highlighted by disclosure and non-disclosure of pregnancy and a student's engagement in criminal activity as a means of financial support.



Student advisor comment

REAP believes that the well being of students impacts on their performance. We hope that providing spaces to talk through some very challenging problems relieves student stress enabling sustained study.

Student advisor Phumelele: "The individual session is a good tool to allow students to talk about things that they would find difficult to talk about in a group or over the phone. Students are able to see the sincerity and genuineness of the student advisor. It is a good tool to gain the student's confidence and assess the student's problems at a closer level".

Eugene's conclusion of the May visit: "It was great to have quality time to spend with the students as they opened up about issues that they struggle with. They felt comfortable in sharing personal issues that relate to their families, because they realized they were given good attention. I was challenged by the confidence that they put in me as their advisor. More importantly I was challenged by the courage the students showed to work against all odds to achieve their dreams. It is exciting to see REAP students taking leadership roles at institutions and seeking alternative sponsorships for their studies. This would make them less dependent on REAP and develop their character. I felt good that I could be available for students to share their exciting and challenging experiences. However, I also felt emotionally exhausted after the field trip, hence I propose that REAP consider offering support to student advisors".

REAP will be considering debriefing and support sessions for student advisors following field trips.

3.2 Workshops

The needs and expectations of continuing students differ from those of first years. While first years need assistance with adaptation to the new environment and clarity on the nature and terms of REAP support, senior students are concerned about finding in-service placements, sustainable financial support and equipping themselves for future employment.

Peer support

Early workshops were however, an opportunity for senior students to share their personal experiences as tertiary students with first years. They highlighted the importance of maintaining contact with REAP, participating in workshops offered and tapping into the support systems on campus. They highlighted the importance of believing in oneself and one's ability. Visioning and setting of personal goals served as their primary motivator coupled with hard work for success. Students shared their experiences of how community service has helped overcome their shyness and boosted their self-confidence. Students themselves are benefiting from community service!



Eugene, a REAP student advisor, related a wonderful example of how at the beginning of the year a first year student approached a senior student wearing a REAP t-shirt explaining his problem. He did not have R50 to open a bank account. The senior student rallied support from other REAP students and he was able to open a bank account and receive monies for meals and books from REAP.

Senior students sharing their experiences and the presentation of motivational workshops reinforced the nature of REAP's support and expectations of students. The many useful tips the seniors shared with the first years is to be captured in REAP's first student newsletter due for release in August.

First semester workshop schedule

Institutional hub	Topic
All centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation to HE • Contracting: REAP obligations & financial aid incl. NSFAS
Durban & Pietermaritzburg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation & Goal Setting • Work preparation • Know your status
Gauteng	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know your status • Preparing for the world of work (seniors) • Motivation (1st yrs) • Goal Setting (seniors) VUT ⁵ Students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know your status • Substance Abuse • Motivation & Goal setting (1st & 2nd yrs) • Communication Skills & Assertiveness • Preparing for the world of work (final yrs)
Pretoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation & Goal Setting • Motivation & Exam preparation • Time Management
Polokwane (Univ of Limpopo)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation, Goal Setting & Planning • Communication Skills & Assertiveness • Cultural Diversity & Gender Issues
Bloemfontein	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for the world of work: CV Writing • Motivation (1st yrs) • Budgeting • Motivation & goal setting (seniors) • Know your status • Caring and support for HIV + people • Cultural Diversity • Communication & Assertiveness
Cape Town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time Management • Study Skills • Examination Preparation • Motivation & Goal Setting
Port Elizabeth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal Setting & Planning • Study skills
East London	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal Setting & Planning • Study skills • Know your status

⁵ Vaal University of Technology



3.3 Newsletter

We hope to include a copy of REAP's first student newsletter with this report if it comes of the press in time! It is planned to have it on the website and publish at least twice in 2006.

3.4 HIV/AIDS and student health

REAP T-shirts with the slogan "*Know your status*" were given to all students at orientation workshops early in the year. In response a number of students indicated they had been tested but have not disclosed their status. With the exception of a few students reporting their negative HIV status, there has been no further disclosure of students testing positive. REAP is encouraging students to go for testing, in particular when tuberculosis is diagnosed. Student advisors have to reassure students of continuing support and in some cases have accompanied students to testing centres. Testing is easier said than done! REAP staff have shared amongst themselves the fears and apprehensions of going for a test. Workshop facilitators' disclosure of their positive status shocks students but hopefully goes some way to destigmatising.

Our HIV positive students need support in coping with the response of others to their disclosure, assistance with vitamin supplements, tackling the issue of failing health and the decision to commit to a lifetime of antiretroviral treatment.

Student advisors visited student health departments on campuses to gain insight into the services provided. HIV clinics unfortunately seem to be under utilized. REAP encourages students to use campus facilities before opting for a private service provider. St John's Ambulance eye clinics have continued to provide affordable spectacles to those students in need and in Limpopo contact was established with Planned Parenthood Association as well as Torga Optical to explore a working relationship with them.

3.5 Study choice training – preparing applicants

Given the recognized dearth of school based career guidance leading to uninformed study choices, REAP has been attempting small initiatives to benefit applicants in this regard. Having identified our senior students as an appropriate resource REAP arranged for Maya Sutherland, a student counsellor at University of KwaZulu Natal to facilitate a training workshop for twenty REAP students in Durban. The workshop took place just before students returned home for their mid-year vacation to ensure an almost immediate implementation of the knowledge and skills gained. The students represented all the KwaZulu Natal and three Eastern Cape regions (Queenstown, Port Elizabeth and Mthatha (Umtata).

These students were linked with regional representatives so that workshops could be organized for new applicants. Students were also encouraged to contact their local high school or parish and volunteer their services. One student of the Ingwavuma region has already presented the workshop at the Star of the Sea School in Khozi Bay, with very positive feedback. REAP will ask students and regional representatives to evaluate this initiative to determine whether it is a useful way of addressing the absence of tertiary study guidance in their rural communities.



3.6 Institutional networking

The strengthening of relationships with institutional staff and external workshop service providers is key to the success of our holistic support programme. Student advisors met with financial aid officers and student counsellors during the period. Discussions took place on the status of senior students' financial aid applications and the need for advanced payment for private accommodation. There is still uncertainty about financial aid allocations for senior students especially at those institutions where mergers have taken place⁶. This is an area REAP needs to monitor closely as it could require some intervention to ensure the settlement of students' fee accounts.

At a meeting with Vaal University of Technology's (VUT) residence officer REAP was able to negotiate the possibility of reserving residence places for students. At the Border Technikon REAP students have been invited to join a pilot programme in the student counselling department. Student portfolios are being put together to track academic development.

During the May visit, meetings were scheduled with co-operative units at institutions to learn about their placement practices and how students requiring in-service training could tap into their services. There are institutions that have a department with a team of people responsible for placing students in their different fields of study. At other institutions the primary focus is preparation for work placement enabling students to market themselves by providing training and assistance in CV writing and interview skills.

Student advisors visited satellite campuses in March to assess facilities and support services. REAP is reluctant to support students where a reasonable level of resources and support is absent. The management faculty of Vaal University of Technology (VUT) has moved from Vanderbylpark to the old VISTA campus at Sebokeng. This campus has sufficient support given the close proximity of the main campus two kilometers away. The Klerksdorp campus of VUT however is not suitable. REAP was happy with the Nelspruit campus of Tshwane University of Technology. Although servicing students far from a central hub is costly for REAP it can be cheaper and more appropriate for students from the surrounding rural areas.

3.7 REAP and the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)

At their annual awards dinner in April NSFAS, in the presence of the Minister of Education Naledi Pandoor presented REAP with a certificate of recognition for its contribution to education and student financial aid in South Africa. NSFAS provided an annual loan allocation of R2.2 million, primarily for first year REAP students. REAP administers this process and a total of 67 loan application was submitted by the end of June. Standardising REAP access support at the start of 2005 has made loan processing a lot easier. REAP staff and volunteers have also participated in NSFAS convened meetings in Limpopo and KwaZulu Natal where they wish to encourage rural applicants into Higher Education. A similar meeting in the Eastern Cape is anticipated.

A dilemma is however that NSFAS does not currently provide loan finance to support access courses. Three (3) of REAP's short listed applicants were accepted for access courses. REAP needs to engage with NSFAS on this to understand their thinking.

⁶ For example: the university of Port Elizabeth and the Port Elizabeth Technikon which is now the Nelson Mandela Metropole University,



4 INTERIM RESULTS

Total students on the Programme	397	Preliminary pass rate	87.5%
No mid year results (<i>In-service training etc</i>)	5	(using 369 results recorded)	
Pass	323	Female pass rate	89.7%
Failed	46	Male pass rate	85.8%
Results outstanding	23	University pass rate	84.6%
Withdrawals	0	Technikon pass rate	90.4%
		First year pass rate	83.8%
		Continuing student pass rate	90.3%

REAP uses the institutions' criteria for promotion of 50% of courses passed. We are aware however that more detailed reporting on courses passed and credits gained is required to predict degree or diploma completion and graduation. We shall be working on ways of capturing data that more accurately reflects progress towards graduation.

5 STUDENT FEEDBACK

At the start of 2005 continuing students were asked to write about their experiences as a tertiary student and the impact of REAP's assistance on their lives. Two hundred and fifty-two (257) donor feedback forms were distributed. The return rate was 77% (197 forms). Student advisors have followed up with the 60 students who have not submitted. It appears that some forms could have been lost in the mail.

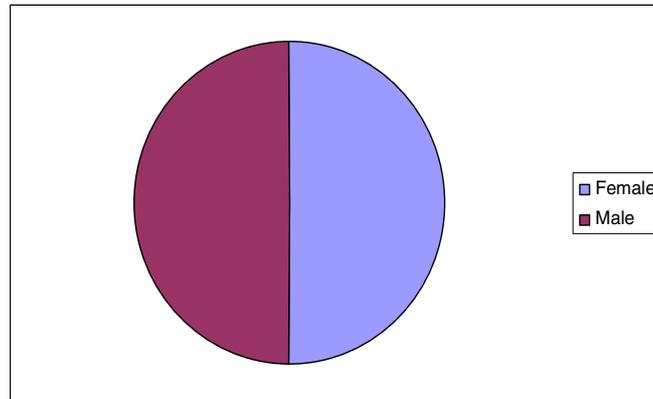
The first year students concerns were about being away from home and family, adapting to a new environment and lecturing styles, coping with the workload, language and fast pace of lectures. The concerns of the intermediate students related to maintaining good progress whilst for final year students it was about managing their workloads and finding in-service training and employment. Some students' experiences of embarking on tertiary studies are captured below.

The early weeks

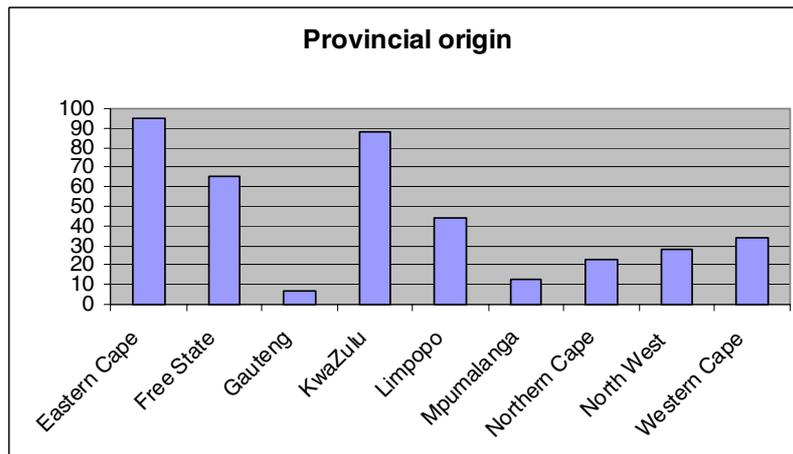
- ❖ Thabo: *"Leaving my parents whom I had lived with all my life to come to a place where I knew no one except God was a big challenge, but that was nothing compared to sharing a room with a stranger. In terms of academics I had to struggle to find the rhythm and speed of lectures"*.
- ❖ Peter: *"I felt so scattered around like a missing person on my first day, I moved around looking for auditoriums and laboratories, at the library it took me 45 minutes to find one book. I did not know that I could use a computer to look for a book"*.
- ❖ Lekhahla: *"I learnt to take charge of my life because in tertiary there are no parents to give me guidance"*
- ❖ William: *"I had to change my lifestyle in order to make it within very limited time and at the same time university expected me to do whatever they wanted. I felt like I would never fit in or I was not going to make it. Somehow I had inner strength that I never thought I have"*.
- ❖ Thantashwa: *"One of the things that we get to struggle with is the high standard of living students maintain. Students get to judge others a lot or compete with what they wear, eat or even who they date. Living in such an environment is not"*

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC 2005

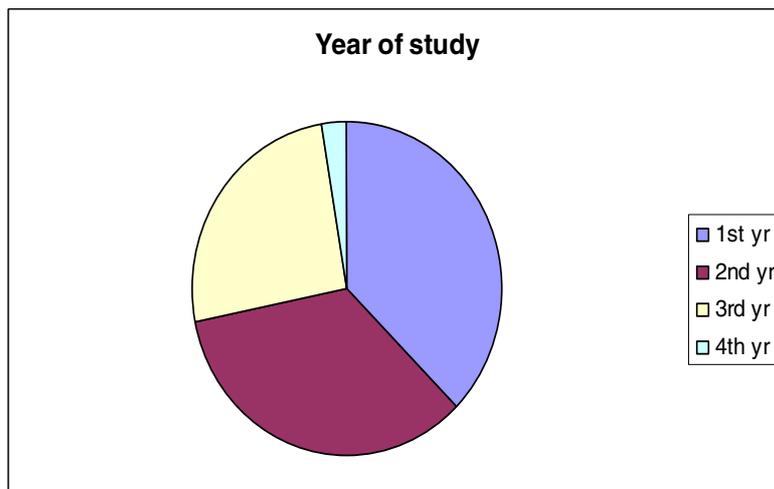
Gender



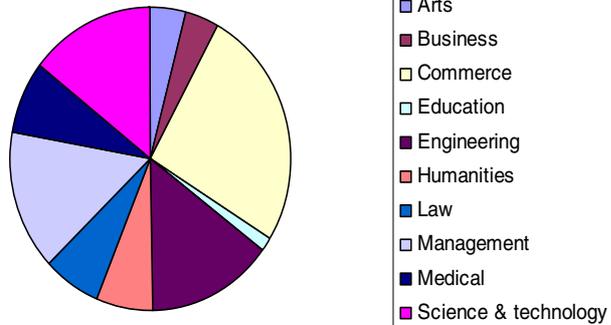
Provincial origin



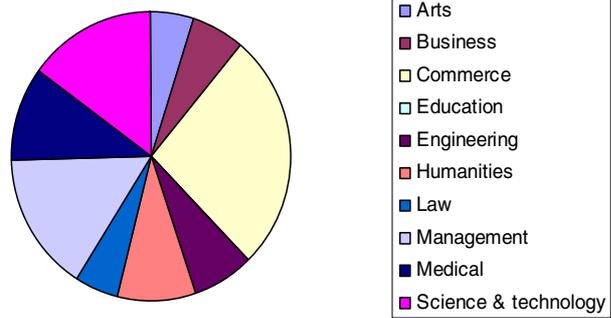
Year of study



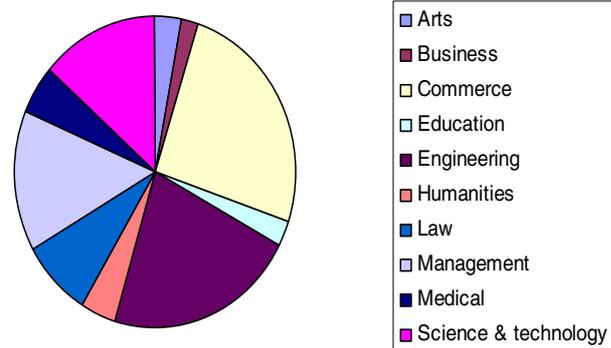
Study streams



Streams of study: females



Streams of study male





nice at times especially if you are struggling financially. To overcome this I try my best to do what suits me and not frustrate or bother myself with everything. I hang out with friends that make a positive impact in my life and make me comfortable of who I am”.

REAP support

The highlights for many of the students were the realization of the dream of studying at a tertiary institution.

- ❖ Sthandiwé: *“Being at a tertiary institution is everyone’s dream, however only a few can manage to achieve it”*
- ❖ Petrus: *“I am where I am today because of all the support I got from REAP. You believed in me, made me feel like I am really worth it, and always encouraged and had trust in me during my first year of study”*
- ❖ Ronald: *“REAP to me is a confidence builder, it is the nation builder. It is the RDP of the mind. I was colonized but REAP decolonized me. I was dehumanized, but REAP humanized me. REAP made me rise like the rising sun. REAP has restored my lost esteem and dignity. I’m telling you, REAP has inspired the down trodden.”*

The responses were generally positive with few complaints. Student appreciation was expressed through poetry and sincere letters, referring to REAP as their family.

Positive and negative feedback for REAP to consider

- ❖ **Workshops:** Most students felt the workshops they attended enriched their lives in many different ways. Tshepo: *“workshops were also very positive for me, they proved to be effective for me because they are relevant to campus life”*
- ❖ **Toll-free line:** The students appreciate having a student advisor who listened to their problems without having to pay for the call. Rosemary: *“Having Student Advisors who are a call away is quite a good experience and using REAP’s toll free line is much interesting because we are students, we can’t afford to pay telephone charges every time”*
- ❖ **Problems raised:**
 - Fees not paid in time, delays in getting results
 - Managing the limited meal allowance of R300 pm
 - Most students feel it is not necessary for them to call the office if they need money for food or books. They want the money deposited on a specific date every month. REAP maintains this practice for very sound monitoring reasons which will be conveyed to students through the newsletter and engagement.
 - Not receiving money on the promised date (meals’ money) because of bank delays
 - The timing of REAP workshops: Although the students appreciate the workshops, they feel the timing is not always appropriate. Most of them have to miss lectures and compulsory practicals to attend workshops. REAP is addressing this. A number of workshops are now held on Saturdays and even public holidays.
- ❖ **Suggested improvements:**
 - Having someone available when the student advisor is away on a field trip
 - Being able to speak to a student advisor in the case of an emergency
 - More face to face contact with student advisors; student advisors present to oversee workshops
 - To give some recognition for achievements



- Request for pocket monies
- REAP to help with placement in employment/in-service training
- Certificates for workshop attendance
- Arranging workshops over weekends
- Having regional vacation camps for all students to meet and attend workshops
- Early confirmation of renewal of support to facilitate registration for the new year – sending registration letters to home addresses

REAP took this feedback into the end of June review and planning session. Some issues are non-negotiable, like payment without requests, others can be considered and addressed and communication improved, especially through the newsletter, to ensure students know what is available.

6 VOLUNTEER SUPPORT & RECRUITMENT FOR 2006

REAP recruits rural matriculants through a network of regional volunteers based in twenty-four dioceses of South Africa. In 2003 REAP held a national meeting for regional representatives where experience was shared and training given. In 2004 five regional meetings were held with the focus primarily on study and career advice for applicants. A national meeting was planned for 2005 but a review of the 2004 selection process showed that different support and guidance for particular stages of the application and selection process was needed. It was decided that meeting with regional committees individually to address issues of relevance to them would be the preferred approach, especially given that two new regions, Eshowe and Kimberley, would be joining the Programme.

During the May field trips meetings were set up with regional representatives from Ingwavuma, Rustenburg, Klerksdorp, Tzaneen, Polokwane, Mthatha (Umtata), Port Elizabeth and Queenstown to address issues of common concern and to agree on a way forward. The issues focused on the distribution of application forms, the importance and nature of preliminary interviews and the recording of information that will assist REAP in selecting candidates for the final interviews.

Regional representatives expressed frustration about learners' late applications to higher institutions and were concerned about potential candidates who did not have money for the application fees at higher education institutions. The issue of career guidance is still a major concern in all areas. They were keen for current REAP students to be involved during the selection process especially when it comes to career education.

The two new regions as well the Keimoes (including Namaqualand) and Bloemfontein region will receive training in August.

This voluntary nation-wide network of over sixty volunteers is an invaluable asset to the Programme. It is through their efforts that marginalized rural youth gain an opportunity of tertiary education and a key to an alternative future. They are committed to developing and improving the process of recruitment. Student advisors maintain regular contact with the representatives in their provinces of responsibility providing support and information.

Two thousand five hundred application forms were distributed to regions in May.



7 THINKING & PLANNING

A two-and-a-half-day workshop in late June used strategic questions about the programme, generated by earlier interviews with all ten staff members, as the basis for thinking about the future. The chair of the Executive Committee had also taken up the invitation to add her questions prior to the workshop. The staff prioritised twelve of these questions, representing a broad cross section of the philosophical, service delivery, professional practice, and pragmatic choices facing REAP. Each question was treated to a thinking session, which produced strategic options.

Strategic Questions in order of weighting

1. **Sustainability:** How do we ensure that funding is in place for the next five years - so that REAP takes responsibility for new students right through until they graduate? So that we work towards our vision rather than on a year-to-year basis? How can staff get more involved in fundraising and raising the public profile of REAP?
2. **Sizing:** How big will we grow? (Do we have a growth vision?)
3. **Selection practice:** Is there another way to do selection interviews? What can we learn from the entrance process to the institutions? How can we rely more on those regional representatives who are ready?
4. **Employment:** How do we ensure that our students get jobs? We know this isn't our core business but ...
5. **HIV/AIDS:** What is a systematic way forward with the issue of HIV/AIDS? Are we doing enough?
6. **Decentralisation:** Should we be more decentralised? Could REAP sustain this? What are the costs and benefits? How do we take this forward?
7. **Staff support:** Are there opportunities for regular support and debriefing for student advisors?
8. **Impact:** Does the REAP programme make a significant difference to the graduation rate?
9. **Practice:** Are there more creative ways to manage a caseload?
10. **Motivation & energy:** How can we rotate annual projects and ad-hoc tasks (such as NSFAS liaison, regional meetings, selection process) to bring fresh energy and ideas to them and so that we use each person's skills and strengths most productively?

Small task teams were set up to take these themes forward with individual staff taking responsibility for leading the teams.



8 ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS

As previously reported two new staff members joined at the start of the year bringing the programme team to six and the total number of staff to ten. The new staff members are settling in well and have added capacity to the organization. No further growth is planned. REAP has made a short term agreement with an experienced freelance fundraiser with the objective of broadening and increasing South African corporate support.

All staff undertook a one day Personal Mastery course and all programme staff received report writing training. Individual staff members received training in project management, cash flow management, coaching, minute taking, event management and office administration. Three staff members have received small contributions towards private part-time study in counselling, business and HIV/AIDS management.

A full Board meeting took place in April the highlight of which was welcoming Zoliswa Mashinini as a new Board member. Zoliswa was supported through high school and university (UCT) by the Catholic Education Aid Programme (CEAP) and is a chartered accountant in the corporate sector.

9 FINANCE

REAP's expenditure for 2005 is likely to match income. The challenge is finding long term partners given the nature of the programme. REAP will pay further attention to strategising for sustainability. We believe in the value of the programme. The education of young people is an investment we shall all reap the benefits of! Effective networking is an acquired skill and talent!. Planning for the production of a DVD to illustrate the impact of REAP on young peoples' lives has started. We request our supporters to pass the word of our work around and introduce us to new partners!

10 WAY FORWARD

A full programme of second semester activities is scheduled: workshops, August student visits, selection for 2006 and tracking of past students. The website has found a space in cyberspace but needs input. REAP will explore ways of facilitating student access to in-service and employment opportunities. The planning of a national meeting in April 2006 has begun and the topics identified at the planning session must be followed up.

11 CONCLUSION

It was a proud moment for Phumelele, a student advisor, to witness, during his May field trip in the Eastern Cape, the graduation of eight students whom he supported and nurtured for two and a half years. Sustained support was at last bearing fruit! As the programme gets older (it is four years old) different challenges materialise. At first it was getting students into universities and technikons. Then it was enabling success and continuation of study. In 2004 in-service training issues started to emerge and now it is the prospects of employment.



A few quotes from the staff members at the mid-year planning session demonstrate the energy for continued programme development.

- ⌘ "We're very clear now about what the programme is about. The how changes because students' needs aren't static."
- ⌘ "There are a lot of new ideas coming up. If we can plan them properly, there's huge room for growth."
- ⌘ "I find people very open and positive to any changes that need to be made."
- ⌘ "If there's anything extra to do, you help because you can. You don't say 'No, it's not in my job description'."

This report attempts to capture the work of REAP and demonstrate accountability. What it fails to illustrate are the faces of the 397 students being assisted this year. These are the young people you need to meet to appreciate the value of the Programme and enjoy being part of it. REAP invites you to attend workshops or meet with students and student advisors. Give us a call, we look forward to seeing you.

Glenda Glover

With acknowledgement to Lynette Harding and the student advisors

August 2005



REAP staff on their way home from a Robben Island retreat
(Jacqui took the photo so is missing)

STUDENT STATISTICS – 2005

1. Gender

Gender	New	Continuing	Total
Male	70	128	198
Female	70	129	199
Total	140	257	397

2. Year of Study

Year of study	Female	Male	Total
Year 1	74	75	149
Year 2	62	73	135
Year 3	54	49	103
Year 4	9	1	10
Total	199	198	397

3. Student provincial demographics

Province of origin	Student nos.		
	<i>New</i>	<i>Cont.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Eastern Cape	26	69	95
Free State	23	42	65
Gauteng	2	5	7
Kwa Zulu Natal	35	53	88
Limpopo	12	32	44
Mpumalanga	5	8	13
Northern Cape	15	8	23
North West	7	21	28
Western Cape	15	19	34
Total	140	257	397

4. Home locations

Eastern Cape

Addo, Alice, Alicedale, Aliwal North, Barkly East, Beacon Bay, Bethelsdorp, Bisho, Bizana, Burgersdorp, Butterworth, Cofimvaba, Duncan Village, Elliotsdale, Ezibeleni, Fort Beaufort, Ginsberg, Graaf Reinet, Grahamstown, Ilinge, Indwe, Jamestown, Kingwilliamstown, Kokstad, Libode, Lindile, Lusikisiki, Mdantsane, Middelburg, Misty Mount, Mount Ayliff, Mount Fletcher, Mount Frere, Mqanduli, Peddie, Phelendaba, Port Alfred, Port St John, Queenstown, Qumbu, Sterkspruit, Stutterheim, Tsolo, Umtata, Whittlesea, Zwelitsha

Free State

Bethlehem, Bohlakong, Botshabelo, Brandfort, Fouriesburg, Hertzogville, Jagersfontein, Kroonstad, Ladybrand, Parys, Sasolburg, Thaba Nchu, Thabong, Trompsburg, Tweespruit, Villiers, Winburg

Gauteng

Brits, Garakuwa, Mabopane, Shoshanguve

KwaZulu Natal

Bergville, Bhonweni, Dalton, Dassenhoek, Elandskop, Empangeni, Enkanyezini, Escourt, Eshowe, Ezakheni, Ezimbokodweni, Glenside, Harding, Highflats, Hlabisa, Hluhluwe, Ingwavuma, Isipingo, Ixopo, Kwadengezi, Kwangwanase, Ladysmith, Madadeni, Maluti, Mariannhill, Matatiele, Merryvale, Montebello, Mooi River, Mtubatuba, Nagina, Newcastle, New Germany, Nqutu, Osziweni, Oswatini, Pietermaritzburg, Pinetown, Qotho, Richards Bay, Scottsburgh, Shakaskraal, Sobanto, Ubombo, Umlazi, Underberg, Wartburg

Limpopo

Gamabotja, Gamaraba, Giyani, Humulani, Koloti, Lackau, Letaba, Lebowakgomo, Jane Furse, Mahado, Mahwelereng, Malamulele, Mashashane, Mkhuhlu, Mogaladi, Mognang, Mushing, Noganyaka, Perskebult, Polokwane, Radium, Ramokgoba, Sambo, Sekhukhune, Seshego, Sovenga, Warmbaths

Mpumalanga

Groblerdal, Hazyview, Moganyana/Moganyaka, Schulzental, White River

Northern Cape

De Aar, Friersdale, Kanoneiland, Keimoes, Komaggas, Mankurwane, Nababeep, Okiep, Port Nolloth, Springbok, Steinkopf, Upington

North West

Bhapong, Berseda, Doornfontein Farm, Jericho, Jouberton, Klerksdorp, Luka, Maboloka, Mogwase, Paardekraal, Rietfontein Farm, Rustenburg, Sonop, Tlhabane, Tsitsing

Western Cape

Ashton, Beaufort West, Bongoletu, Bridgton, Calitzdorp, Ceres, de Doorns, de Rust, Dysseidorp, Eendekuil, Gansbaai, Hawston, Ladismith, Laingsburg, Oudtshoorn, Paternoster, Piketburg, Prince Albert, Robertson, Sandhills, Saron, Velddrif, Wolseley, Zwelethemba

5. Students per Higher Education institutions

Province	Institution	Total	New		Continuing	
			Male	Female	Male	Female
Eastern Cape	Border Tech	22	2	2	7	11
	Eastern Cape Tech	14	2	3	5	4
	Nelson Mandela Metropole Univ (PET)	13	1	2	5	5
	UPE	9	2	2	3	2
	Vista Univ	1	-	-	1	-
	Fort Hare Univ	2	1	-	-	1
	Rhodes Univ	2	-	1	1	-
	Unitra	1	1	-	-	-
	Total	64	9	10	22	23
Free State	Central Univ of Tech	39	7	6	17	9
	Univ Free State	26	5	7	10	4
	Total	65	12	13	27	13
Gauteng	Wits Univ	17	3	-	8	6
	Univ of Jo'burg (RAU + Wits Tech)	4	-	-	2	2
	Pretoria Univ	14	4	-	5	5
		4	2	1	1	-
	Tshwane Univ of Tech	10	2	1	2	5
	Tech Northern Gauteng	10	1	-	6	3
	Vista Univ (Mamelodi)	3	1	1	1	-
	Vaal Univ of Tech	22	5	3	5	9
Total	84	18	6	30	30	
Kwazulu Natal	Durban Inst.of Tech	38	6	9	11	12
	Mangosutho Tech	10	-	2	6	2
	KZN Univ (Westville)	19	-	-	5	14
	PMB + Berea campuses	18	2	8	2	6
	Univ Zululand	5	-	-	1	4
Total	90	8	19	25	38	
Limpopo	Venda Univ	1	-	-	1	-
	Univ of the North	15	4	4	3	4
	Medunsa	3	1	-	-	2
	Total	19	5	4	4	6
North West	North West Tech	2	-	-	1	1
	North West Univ	1	-	-	-	1
	Potchefstroom Univ	9	4	-	3	2
	Total	12	4		4	4
Western Cape	Cape Peninsula Univ of Tech (Bellville)	18	1	9	5	3
	Cape Town campus	7	3	-	2	2
	UCT	3	3	-	-	-
	Univ. Stellenbosch	13	5	4	3	1
	Univ Western Cape	22	2	5	6	9
	Total	63	14	18	16	15

6. Study Streams grouped by field of study, gender and institution type

Stream	University	M	F	Technikon	M	F
Arts (16)	BA Media Studies	1	1	Graphic Design	1	-
	BA Communication	1	-	Journalism	2	1
	BA	1	4	Lang Practice	-	1
	BA Journalism	-	1			
	B Music	-	1			
	BA Lang & Culture	-	1			
Business (16)	B. Business Mgmt	-	1	Marketing	4	5
				Small Business Mgmt	-	4
				Retail Business Mgmt	-	1
				Business Studies	-	1
Commerce (103)	B Commerce	14	10	Accounting	16	18
	B Accounts	8	11	Internal Auditing	2	4
	B Economics	1	2	Cost & Mgmt	5	5
	B Bus Sc	1	-	Taxation	-	2
				Financial Information Systems	3	-
				Commercial Admin	-	1
Education (6)	B Education	3	-	B Ed	1	-
	BA Education	2	-			
Engineering (57)	B Eng (all fields)	2	1	Civil	7	2
	B Sc QS	1		Electrical	17	6
				Mechanical	4	1
				Industrial	1	1
				Metallurgy Eng	2	-
				Chemical	-	2
				Building	2	1
				Computer Systems Engin	7	-
Humanities (26)	B Social Science	2	3			
	BA Social Dynamics	-	1			
	BA Politics	1	-			
	BA Intern. Studies	1	-			
	Social Work	4	13			
	B. Psychology	-	-			
	Com Development	-	1			
Law (25)	LLB	13	8	Policing	1	-
	BA Law	1	2			
Management (60)	B Administration	5	3	Office Mgmt & Tech Management	1	10
	B Com General	1	-	Public Admin	4	1
	B Com Beh Science	1	-	Human Resource Mgmt	3	1
				Travel & Tourism Mgmt	5	5
				Hospitality Mgmt	6	5
				Sport Admin	1	1
				Logistics	1	2
				Public Relations	1	-
				Labour Relations	-	2
					-	1

Stream	University	M	F	Technikon	M	F
Medical (31)	Medicine	4	3	Radiography	1	3
	Physiotherapy	-	2	Biomedical Tech	2	4
	Nursing	2	4			
	BSc Dietetics	-	2			
	Pharmacy	1	2			
	B Sc (Biomedical)	-	1			
Science (41)	B Science	10	7	Food Technology	1	3
	B Sc (Chemical Sc)	1	1	Analytical Chemistry	2	2
		-	1	Environmental Health	-	6
	B Sport Science	2	1	Forestry	1	-
	B Agriculture	-	1	Horticulture	-	2
	B Sc Food Science					
Technology (16)	B Sc (IT)	3	2	Information Technology	7	4



Nompilo Mtshali
B Cur, University of KwaZulu Natal

Zandile Mnyanda
ND Public Relations
Durban Institute of Technology



Forster Sambo, a Mechanical Engineering student, and Amanda Mansago, a Commercial Administration student, at Tshwane University of Technology



Eastern Cape technikon graduates May 2005: Unathi Sigata ND Internal Auditing and Nozuko Ndinganiso ND Accounting



REAP

Rural Education Access Programme

An Associate Body of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference

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