



# TeachOut Annual Report

## 2007-2008



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# **1 Introduction**

TeachOut is a student-run organisation, with student volunteers, and as such its core business is run on a quarterly basis, following the four terms of the University. It is useful to look at the terms in sequence.

## **1.1 Term 4: 8 September – 3 December 2007**

At the end of UCT's third term, the new committee was elected and began preparations for office. This was done primarily during the vacation period between terms.

The tutorial sessions of the fourth term were not as productive as in previous terms. This is typically the case, because learners are preparing for grade 12 (Matric) exams and students are preparing for university exams, and school and university holidays take place at different times, making it difficult to schedule sessions. Having a new committee and having to build new relationships with teachers was problematic during the first few weeks, but was resolved during mid-term teacher meetings.

In this period, together with the Township Debating League, TeachOut delivered on an SRC mandate to provide stationary and textbooks to Sophumelela Secondary in Samora Machel. These were gratefully accepted, and the initiative was much appreciated.

## **1.2 Term 1: 4 December 2007 – 25 March 2008**

This period covered the long vacation, during which the majority of the curriculum development is done.

An important aspect of the start of the year is Orientation Week, where TeachOut presents itself to first year students and recruits them to sign up to volunteer. This involved manning a stall for three days and making presentations at faculty (and residence?) orientations. 103 volunteers were recruited, interviewed and trained in this period.

Sessions began on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February and went well in the first term. TeachOut had decided to begin tutoring a new subject, Functional English, which involves working with learners in younger grades to develop their ability to speak and communicate ideas and opinions in the English language. This was a great success.

The first term also saw the Ubunye Launch. Ubunye is the umbrella organisation that governs TeachOut and three other projects (Township Debating League The Media School, and Inkanyezi). At the launch all three projects showcased themselves at Intsebenziswano Secondary, one of the five schools at which TeachOut conducted its sessions this year. This was a great success, involving a showcased debate by some of TDL's learners. At the end of the day lunch-packs for all the learners.



**Figure 1:** The Ubunye Launch

### **1.3 Term 2: 26 March – 4 July 2008**

As there is only a short break over the Easter holiday, there is little break in momentum from the first term and TeachOut can begin operations again without having to reconfigure too many of the sessions or engage in meetings with teachers. Overall, the term went well, apart from some difficulties experienced at Sinethemba after a spate of teacher resignations.

At the end of the term, during the holidays, TeachOut was indirectly involved in assisting with the SAEP Winter School. SAEP is an organisation with which TeachOut regularly collaborates. This mainly involved the sharing of subject material, as most of the volunteers were on holiday.

### **1.4 Term 3: 5 July – 5 September 2008**

Due to the long break and new university courses being taken by the volunteers, a new schedule needed to be drawn up. This involved meeting teachers and recruiting volunteers for the new semester. Overall, the third term was the most successful for TeachOut, with only one session being cancelled.

The final activity of the term is the recruitment of the new committee. Positions were advertised, and applications requested. Upon receiving these applications, interviews were scheduled. From these, positions were filled. TeachOut was very lucky in that all positions attracted competent and motivated individuals who will positively add to TeachOut's impact in the year ahead.

## 2 Operations

A summary of TeachOut's operational figures for the past year, on a weekly basis, is as follows:

- 79 active volunteers during the 4<sup>th</sup> term of 2007 going out to 18 sessions tutoring approximately 420 learners;
- 67 active volunteers during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> term of 2008 going out to 15 sessions tutoring approximately 350 learners; and
- 33 active volunteers during the 3<sup>rd</sup> term of 2008 going out to 9 sessions tutoring approximately 220 learners.

The drop in volunteers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> term is typical of TeachOut's volunteer figures in the past. This is the result of a number of factors: volunteers' schedules change due to the new semester; UCT students have a greater focus on academic work as they prepare for their end of year exams; international students return home after the first semester; and there isn't a second University-wide recruitment period like Orientation Week, as is the case in the first semester.

The drop in figures between 2007 and 2008 is problematic. Normally TeachOut would begin the year with more volunteers than were left at the end of the previous year. Poor weather resulted in poor recruitment figures on the first day of recruitment during Orientation Week, traditionally the most successful recruiting day.

Initial figure for the start of operations in 2009 are promising, with 176 volunteers signing at the Orientation Week stall. According to statistics from previous years, we expect that 75% of these sign-ups will become active volunteers

In evaluations carried out in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Term volunteers reported that they were impressed with the TeachOut committee's operations (see 3<sup>rd</sup> Term Quarterly Report for details).

Tables of TeachOut's schedule for the past year are provided below:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Zisukhanyo</b>						
Grade 10			English			Maths
Grade 11			Maths			
Grade 12						Bio/Science
<b>Sophumelela</b>						
Grade 10	Maths					English
Grade 11					Maths	English
Grade 12		Maths				
<b>Sinethemba</b>						
Grade 10	English				Maths	
Grade 11				English		Maths
Grade 12		English		Maths	Biology	Science

**Table 1:** Sessions during 4<sup>th</sup> Term 2007

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Phillipi High</b>						
Grade 11					Biology	Maths
<b>Sophumelela</b>						
Grade 9				F.E.		
Grade 10		Maths				
Grade 11	Maths				Maths	English
Grade 12						Biology
<b>Intsebenziswano</b>						
Grade 11						English
Grade 12	English				Maths	
<b>Sinethemba</b>						
Grade 11					English	Maths
Grade 12					Maths	Science

**Table 2:** Sessions during 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Term 2008

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Zisukhanyo</b>						
Grade 11						Maths
Grade 12			Maths			Science
<b>Sophumelela</b>						
Grade 9			F.E.			
Grade 10		Maths				
Grade 11	Maths					
<b>Intsebenziswano</b>						
Grade 11						English
Grade 12	English				Maths	

**Table 3:** Sessions during 3<sup>rd</sup> Term 2008

### 3 Finances

Finances were reported on a quarterly basis in each quarterly report, according to the cash basis system. A yearly summary is provided below.

<b>BANK BALANCE 8 September 2007</b>		R 13,789.50
<b>Income from this period</b>		
<b>Sponsorship</b>	R 27,000.00	
<b>Interest</b>	R 489.54	
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>27,489.54</b>
<b>Expenses from this period</b>		
<b>Transport</b>	R 23,830.00	
<b>Printing &amp; Binding</b>	R 1,493.90	
<b>Communication<sup>1</sup></b>	R 924.23	
<b>T-Shirts</b>	R 810.00	
<b>Ubunye Launch</b>	R 580.00	
<b>O-Week</b>	R 260.56	
<b>AGM Refreshments</b>	R 200.00	
<b>Textbooks</b>	R 129.85	
<b>Banking fees</b>	R 68.41	
<b>Website</b>	R 50.00	
<b>Stationary</b>	R 12.35	
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>28,359.30</b>
<b>Deficit for period</b>		<b>-878.41</b>
<b>BANK BALANCE 5 September 2008</b>		<b>12911.09</b>

TeachOut has been lucky to have received generous sponsorship from Swiss Re over the year. This sponsorship has allowed TeachOut to focus on its core business and not be distracted or inhibited by financial constraints. TeachOut is extremely grateful for the funding that it has received.

<sup>1</sup> Banking fees of R8.65 were incurred on the day the 2<sup>nd</sup> Term Quarterly Report was published which wasn't reported in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Term Quarterly Report. This discrepancy has been corrected in this summary.

## **4 Overview and Reflections**

On the whole, the year went well. There were problems and challenges, mentioned briefly in the previous sections, with more information available in the quarterly reports. However, these challenges provided a chance for the committee to learn. At the end of the year, all committee members were asked to provide a reflection of the past year and recommendations for the year ahead. The next paragraph outlines some of the issues raised.

The importance of the teachers cannot be underestimated and it is vital that they are fully informed and kept up to date on proceedings. While phone calls to teachers are effective, a good idea might be a bi-weekly written report on how things are going, that can be put up in the staff room and perused by any interested parties. This same level of good communication also applies to the committee, who should strive for weekly meetings to ensure that they are all fully aware of what is happening. This extends to volunteers too, who can be very temperamental, especially when they feel they are being left in the dark. Regular contact about what is and what is not happening, and why that is the case, is very important for the maintenance of their moral and enthusiasm. Letting them know upfront at training what to expect is also very important. The learners also need to be kept informed, so putting up posters in the schools and even getting some of their numbers onto the sms list is a good idea, in order to let them know when TeachOut will be coming out.

It is important to be constantly evaluating the efficacy of what is being done, and to utilise the resources at UCT for help in this regard. For example, TeachOut should make contact with the Schools Development Unit, or some other research body or interested academics, in order to get ideas on how things could be improved or done differently.

Ensuring that the relevant material is being covered is always a difficult challenge, and many things have been done to try and coordinate this, to varying levels of success. One possible way to deal with this challenge, although already being done to some extent, is to structure the lessons more like a 'hotseat', and not have lessons following a specific worksheet. Preparing the volunteers to answer any questions the learners may have, instead of having them to go through worksheets with set questions could potentially work well.

The age at which the learners are first exposed to TeachOut could possibly be lowered. This has already started happening, and it would be good to investigate what stage would be the most beneficial.

## **5 Conclusion**

By and large, the year went well. TeachOut carried out its operations successfully and a difference was made. The work done by TeachOut over the year could not have been possible without the hard work of all involved. A heartfelt thank you must go to the learners, teachers, volunteers and committee members for all the great work done and everything that was achieved.