



'STRONG CHILDREN IN KENYA' MARGRIET SCHUT & ELS PRONK



Empowerment project 2011-2012 in Kenya

We are looking forward to participate in the first phase of an empowerment project in Awassi Kenya in the spring of 2011.

The project includes a workshop for children and a training for teachers and social workers.

In this project we would like to support a group of children to become more empowered to live their own future. By also training and supporting the teachers, principals and parents, we stress the importance of incorporating the direct environment of these children. Though support of this social network they will be able to truly achieve this goal.

Empowerment for us means strengthening children socially and

emotionally and to grow their self confidence, to allow them to stand firm in their daily environment.

**WORKING FROM TALENTS
AND INVOLVING THE SOCIAL
ENVIRONMENT IS REALLY
EMPOWERING.**

In the training we start from a appreciative approach.

This means that we focus on strengths and talents of children and their helpers. And take those strengths as a starting point for development of empowerment.

The idea and initiative for this workshop emerged from three other experiences, in Kenya (2007)

and Ghana (2008 and 2009). We have learned from those experiences that a project like this is a very powerful way to encourage children, teachers, social workers and parents to gain self confidence and new perspectives for their future.

Margriet Schut is a consultant and coach at Kessels & Smit, *The Learning Company*. She has many years experience in supporting learning processes in organizations and education.

Els Pronk is a trainer and coach for children, parents and teachers, working together in many ways on empowerment and self confidence of children.



What is the project about?

First Step

In the spring of 2011 we suggest to start with a small group of teachers, health and social workers to work on appreciative education and also design a workshop together for about 50 children. This can be a two day session.

After that we start a three day empowerment workshop for these children, together with a part of the group of the first days.

The last day we would like to use for evaluation with the same group of people, to decide how we will continue this project.

IN THREE PHASES

SUSTAINABLE CHANGES FOR CHILDREN, TEACHERS, SOCIAL WORKERS AND HEALTH WORKERS.

Second step

Half a year later we will cooperatively design another workshop for children. In this workshop interested teachers can participate to work together with us and to experience working from this approach. During this visit we propose to start with a conference for teachers, principals, social and health workers about their own professional development. We conclude this conference with a networking opportunity for all interested partners in the region.

The third step

The third step will be about supporting local staff in continuing the workshop themselves. We will offer learning opportunities, coaching and encouragement. Furthermore we will organize a regional conference about appreciative education for empowerment.

VISION

In the workshop we focus on the strengths and talents and we appreciate that what is already working well. Self confidence grows from encouragement and compliments. When you focus attention to negative things and problems, they will probably increase. You can also choose to pay attention to love, strength and blessings. From deliberately taking this perspective the children and also the adults experience the possibility to look at their lives from a different angle: to the opportunities available and how to use their talents.

This approach to teaching is quite new for many teachers and principals. It is important for them to experience it themselves in the workshop, the effects of this appreciative way of working, for themselves and for the children.

We also value the commitment of the social environment of the children, to work on a sustainable change in behavior.

OUTCOME

For the **children** the outcome of the workshop is new skills in the area of positive communication, self confidence, assertiveness. They are able to take on more responsibility, ask for help, give support and because they know what their talents are, they have better self esteem. This also may have a positive effect on their learning results.

The **teachers** experience that appreciative education leads to a better learning climate. They learn that paying attention to the personal development of the children and of themselves has a direct effect on the learning results. And they learn new skills in the area of positive communication, self confidence, how to use their talents in their work. Furthermore they are coached in using new teaching methods, aimed at an individual and equal approach of pupils.

CONDITIONS



The commitment of the teachers, principals, health workers and social workers is of great importance to the sustainable effect of this project. This means that we will look for as many as possible ways to engage people of the community in preparation, organization, design and implementation of the project. So that means that when we leave after the three steps, it will have been taken over by the local people.