“Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal.”
— Martin Luther King, Jr.

The value of Life Skills as a school subject has been increasingly recognised in recent years. However, teachers often do not have sufficient training or experience required to make their Life Skills lessons effective.

The result is poor curriculum coverage by teachers and a lost opportunity for learners to acquire important skills for life.

A study conducted in the Western Province concluded that many learners and teachers felt that while Life Skills was sometimes fun, it was often a “waste of time... ‘cos you don’t learn anything from it.” (Anonymous South African Learner).

It became clear to the GM South Africa Foundation that teachers needed a set of simple, comprehensive lesson guides to enable them to make Life Skills a valuable part of the curriculum for holistic learner development.

**Goals and objectives of the programme**

The overall aim of the *Peace Lessons* programme is to provide teachers with structured and guided lessons, which can be used to teach essential concepts and skills to their learners.

The lessons have been designed to encourage the use of stories and active learning in the teaching of Life Skills. Used effectively, the set lessons empower teachers to impart valuable skills such as self-awareness, problem-solving, interpersonal relations, leadership, decision-making, and effective communication.

**Programme background**

The *Peace Lessons* Programme is one of seven projects in the Peace Education Model initiated by the GM South Africa Foundation. After extensive consultation with the Life Skills curriculum advisor in the Port Elizabeth District Office, set lessons were developed. The programme was conceptualised in 2011 and the *Peace Lessons* were piloted in 2012.
Programme structure and content

Ten lessons have been developed for each grade in the Intermediate Phase, i.e. Grades four, five and six.

These lessons fall under the topic Development of the Self (as per the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement for Grades four to seven).

The lesson themes are as follows:

- **Grade four lessons** give learners the opportunity to acquire skills needed to make good choices by reaching a win / win solution. Learners will begin to understand their own conflict style and learn effective means of solving disputes. Topics like fairness, emotions, feelings and bullying are also covered.

- **Grade five lessons** explore the fairytales of “Little Red Riding Hood” and “Goldilocks and the Three Bears” to help learners identify certain feelings and build healthy relationships.

- **In the second term the Grade five lessons** covers topics such as stereotypes, discrimination, bias, and the rights, needs and wants of children.

- **Grade six lessons** equip learners to understand the physiological origins of emotions, and the important role they play in initiating and resolving conflict. Learners also gain important problem-solving and mediation skills.

Partners and stakeholders

In this initiative the GM South African Foundation has partnered with the Port Elizabeth District Office of the Department of Education and participating schools.

Guidelines and support

The following resources are available to assist schools and organisations in implementing Peace Lessons:

- A detailed lesson guide for teachers.

- A structured approach assists teachers in their preparation, allowing them to meet CAPS requirements.

- Facilitators to provide initial preparation, ongoing training and support, as well as mentoring to schools and officials during rollout of the programme.

Feedback from participants:

- “The material is excellent it matches the CAPS and I think all the grades should use it”.

- “I applied all the lessons in my own life and I feel empowered to deal with conflict better”.

- “We role-played the lesson “dealing with conflict” in the school assembly and have seen definite positive changes in the behaviour of learners”.

- “Material so practical and easy to use”.

- “I never had lessons like this given to me and assessments all worked out! Thank you”.

For further information, kindly contact the GM South Africa Foundation as follows:

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