



Case stories

One year on: sowing **ecl** seeds in South Africa

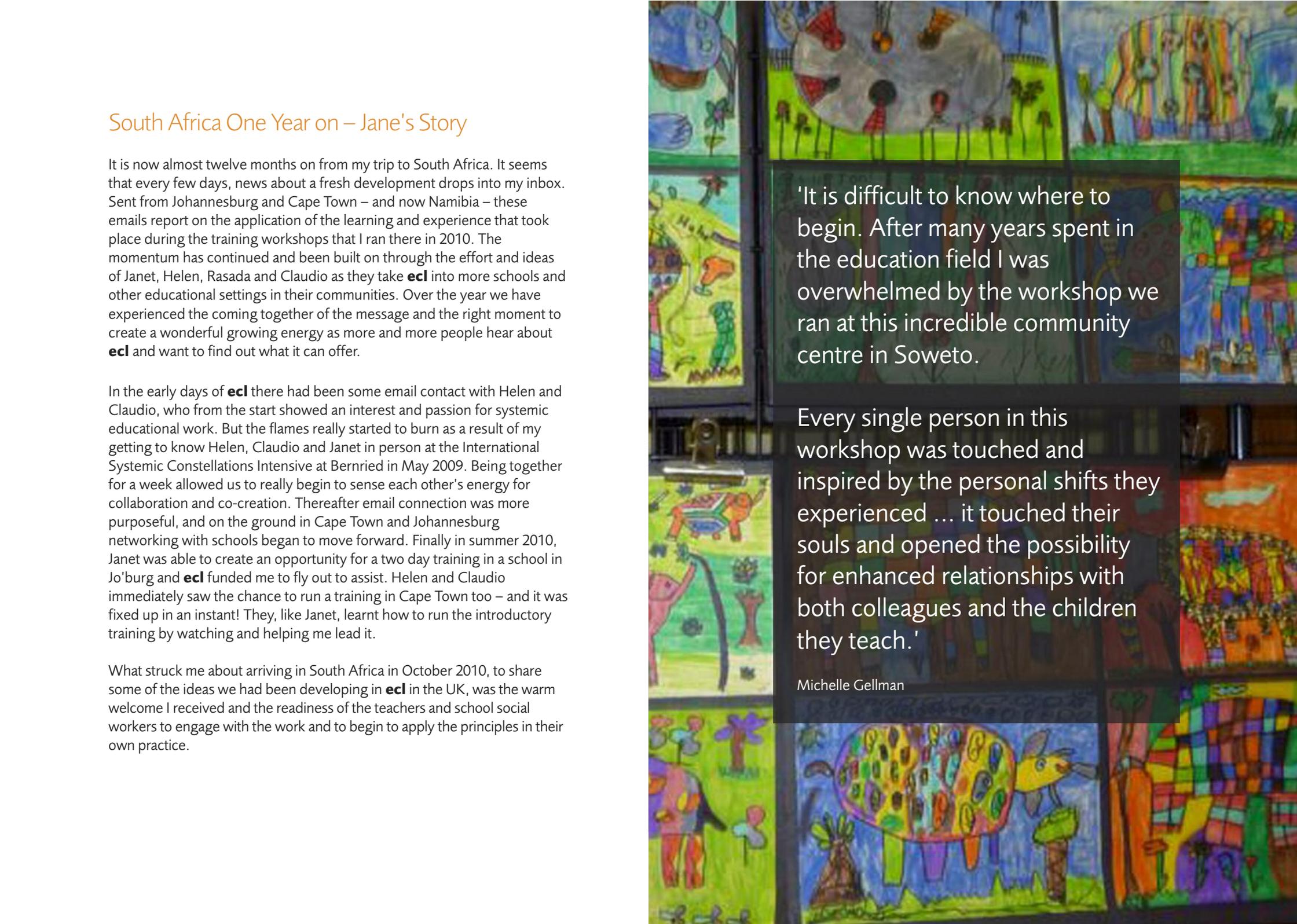
Jane James – September 2011

South Africa One Year on – Jane's Story

It is now almost twelve months on from my trip to South Africa. It seems that every few days, news about a fresh development drops into my inbox. Sent from Johannesburg and Cape Town – and now Namibia – these emails report on the application of the learning and experience that took place during the training workshops that I ran there in 2010. The momentum has continued and been built on through the effort and ideas of Janet, Helen, Rasada and Claudio as they take **ecl** into more schools and other educational settings in their communities. Over the year we have experienced the coming together of the message and the right moment to create a wonderful growing energy as more and more people hear about **ecl** and want to find out what it can offer.

In the early days of **ecl** there had been some email contact with Helen and Claudio, who from the start showed an interest and passion for systemic educational work. But the flames really started to burn as a result of my getting to know Helen, Claudio and Janet in person at the International Systemic Constellations Intensive at Bernried in May 2009. Being together for a week allowed us to really begin to sense each other's energy for collaboration and co-creation. Thereafter email connection was more purposeful, and on the ground in Cape Town and Johannesburg networking with schools began to move forward. Finally in summer 2010, Janet was able to create an opportunity for a two day training in a school in Jo'burg and **ecl** funded me to fly out to assist. Helen and Claudio immediately saw the chance to run a training in Cape Town too – and it was fixed up in an instant! They, like Janet, learnt how to run the introductory training by watching and helping me lead it.

What struck me about arriving in South Africa in October 2010, to share some of the ideas we had been developing in **ecl** in the UK, was the warm welcome I received and the readiness of the teachers and school social workers to engage with the work and to begin to apply the principles in their own practice.



'It is difficult to know where to begin. After many years spent in the education field I was overwhelmed by the workshop we ran at this incredible community centre in Soweto.

Every single person in this workshop was touched and inspired by the personal shifts they experienced ... it touched their souls and opened the possibility for enhanced relationships with both colleagues and the children they teach.'

Michelle Gellman



'Thank you for taking the time to come out to South Africa, to teach what **ecI** has to offer. I look forward to implementing all the lessons I learnt into our youth mentorship programme in Soweto and Alex.'

Zandile Nkosi

A large part of the readiness of the 'field' was down to the preparatory work carried out by Janet, Helen and Claudio. Between them they had already spread the word amongst their respective communities. They had gathered participants for the introductory training who were already eager to learn and to be creative in their own settings and contexts.

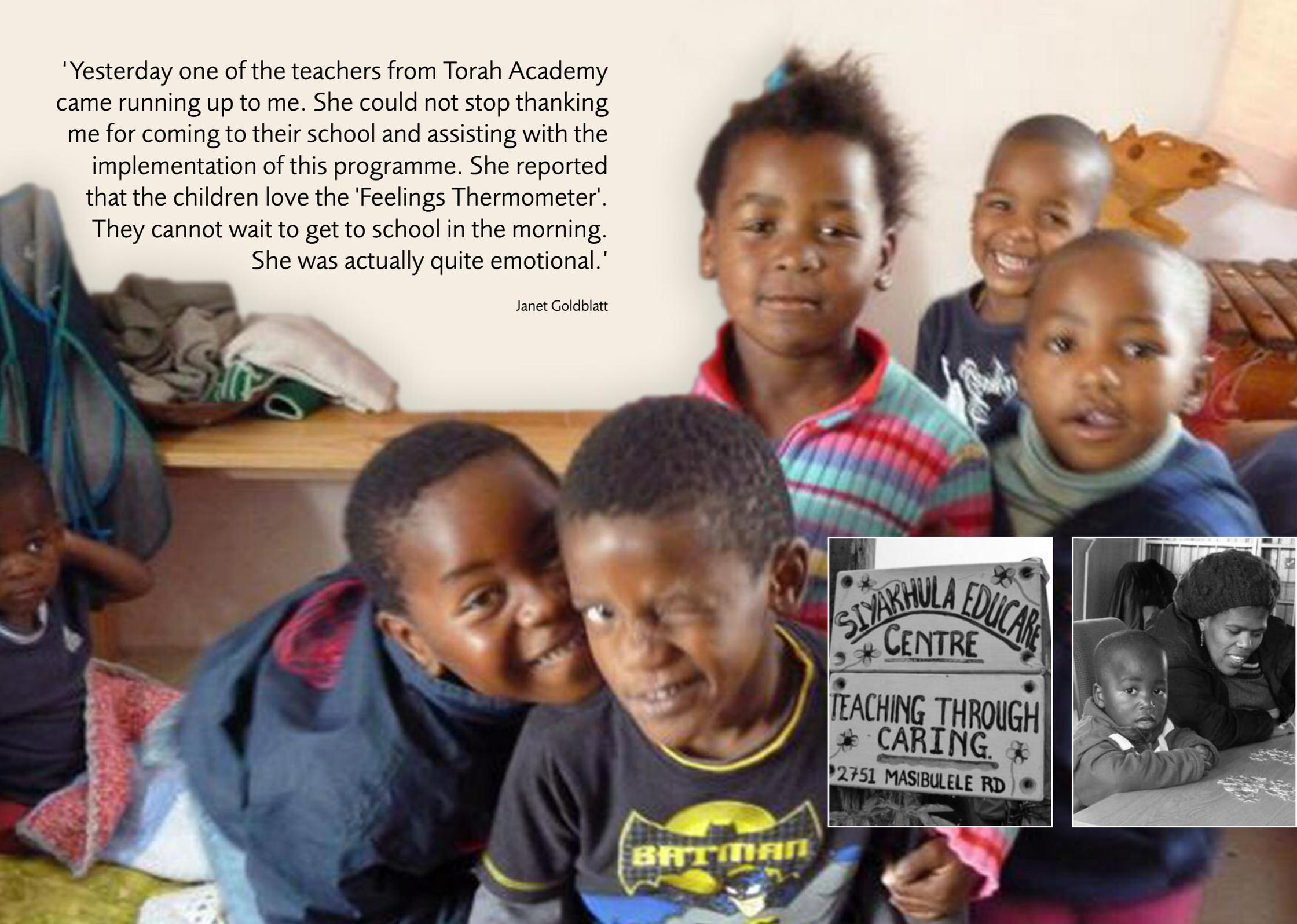
The responses we have had from teachers illustrate the energy and enthusiasm with which **ecI** ideas are being taken up. Some of them are sharing the approaches and activities with colleagues and the viral spread effect of the work is clearly in operation.

The need for systemic work in South Africa is huge: the application of our 'whole child: whole system' approach both fits naturally within the family-based culture of this colourful country, which contains the 'cradle of humankind', and also challenges some of the practices and processes within education which seemed to me to be less inclusive and less affective. However, the positivity of everyone I met – including heads and leaders of the community – was touching. They could see the benefit of the approach and were willing to take risks and devote time and resource to begin to embed them in their schools and educational institutions. What was also apparent was the support for teachers and community workers from the black townships to attend the training too. Janet, Helen and Claudio were able to access sponsorship and subsidy so that schools, projects and pre-school groups in these impoverished areas would also benefit.

In the eight years of working with constellations and systemic approaches in education – we have never had such a quick positive response such as the one we have seen over the past year in South Africa. Already Rowena, who flew from Namibia to Cape Town for the introductory training, is setting about establishing **ecI** Namibia. We are thrilled, delighted and humbled to be connecting with the needs of children across the world. And it is just the start...

'Yesterday one of the teachers from Torah Academy came running up to me. She could not stop thanking me for coming to their school and assisting with the implementation of this programme. She reported that the children love the 'Feelings Thermometer'. They cannot wait to get to school in the morning. She was actually quite emotional.'

Janet Goldblatt



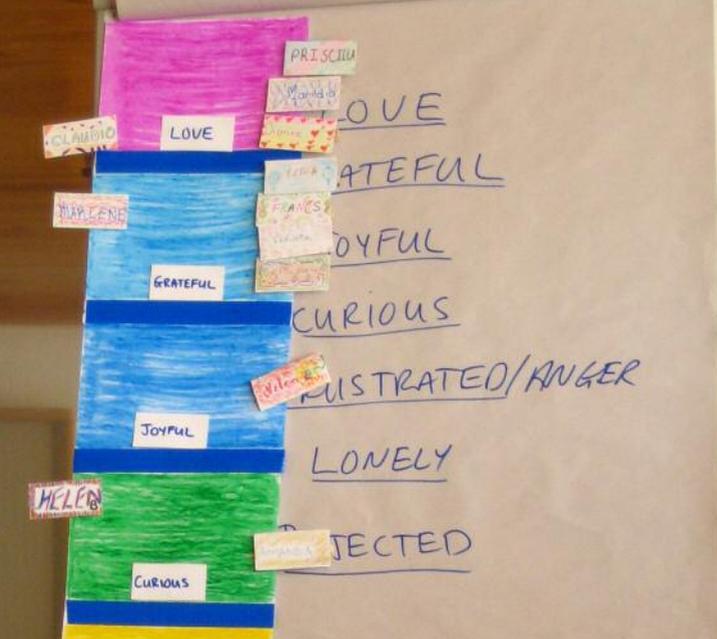
Case Story – Janet Goldblatt

The initial **ecI** training held in Johannesburg was held at King David Victory Park Primary School last year in November. We have had positive feedback, in writing and verbally, from teachers and social workers. Just yesterday I saw one of the teachers who had been on the training. She is so excited about the **ecI** programme and how it has worked out for her class. I also visited the social worker of the Primary School for a follow up session. This is her feedback:

"Yesterday I sat in a session with a Grade 4 teacher and her classroom of boys and girls. We decided to run a session using the 'hula hoop' exercise. The pupils were asked to paint their own stones and place them in the middle of the hula hoop (a ring) as they saw themselves in the classroom. One of the girls placed her stone outside of the ring. An intervention on my part was not even necessary. The process unfolded amongst the children themselves. They engaged in a conversation of enquiry with the child who felt left out, telling her that she is such a nice person and actually well liked by the others. They engaged in conversations around belonging. They discussed amongst themselves how they could re-include this little girl and asked her what they could do to make her feel more included. By the end of the session she had already placed her stone back into the ring."

Thelma, the social worker said that the process was both powerful and empowering. She was able to witness children not only engaging with one another but the way in which they supported one another was inspiring.

Thelma has reported having gone through quite a few sessions with different groups of kids – all of which proved to be very successful and parents have been in contact to say that they have already seen shifts.



'Our three teachers from Alexandra Township were given the honour and opportunity of a lifetime to attend your teacher training course, which was truly a life changing experience for them all.

Each teacher was moved and enthused. They gained so much knowledge and information and were encouraged to put their new found awareness into practice right away. We truly appreciate your helping us in assisting those who are much less fortunate than we are.'

To learn more about **ecl**, email us at
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Or visit www.eclfoundation.org

