



'INK CHESS FOR KINGS' PILOT PROJECT

One of the main objectives of the Durban Metro Chess Academy ('DMCA') is to promote and popularize chess mainly amongst the previously disadvantaged communities, in particular, primary school learners from the townships. The ultimate goal is to have chess recognized as a school subject in South Africa. The above objective is spurred on by the well documented advantages enjoyed by learners who play chess.

Of particular concern to DMCA is the dearth of chess-playing learners from the townships like KwaMashu, Ntuzuma, Umlazi etc. This 'sorry state of affairs' is evidenced by the recently held KwaZulu-Natal Junior Trials, wherein out of more than 100 participating learners, not more than 5 were from the township schools. A number of reasons, some historical, contribute towards this unacceptable situation, the main one being that most (if not all) primary schools in these townships have not been introduced to the wonders of chess. The senior chess players who hail from these townships are largely to blame for this omission. Against all odds, DMCA is attempting to turn this around by taking chess to these township schools.

We have identified and obtained commitment from 10 schools in Inanda, Ntuzuma and KwaMashu ('INK') area to participate in the 'INK CHESS FOR KINGS' pilot project. The project mainly entails DMCA members visiting these schools to present a Basic Chess Course to the educators and learners and provide each participating school with, at least, 20 chess sets to be utilized during training/practice sessions. From time to time DMCA members will visit these schools to monitor the progress and provide further training to those learners with potential. Depending on the success of the pilot project, we intend to expand this concept to other townships in Durban and surrounding areas. Eventually the rest of KZN townships must catch the chess fever!

As one of the methods of sowing the chess seeds and obtaining a database of township primary schools, DMCA proudly participated in the Rural Maths, Science and Technology Symposium held at Inkosi Msinga Mlaba Sports Complex on 29th July 2008, courtesy of invitation by Ethekewini Municipality. The attached photographs speak volumes about the excitement generated by chess in learners and educators! We have no doubt that chess will be welcomed with open arms in these schools.

The main challenge facing DMCA in realizing the aforesaid noble objective is lack of funds to sustain a project of this magnitude. DMCA is a registered non-profit organization with very limited capacity to raise funds. It is for that reason that we humbly appeal to the government and corporate world for sponsorship of any kind. Among other things, we require chess sets, chess clocks, demonstration boards, chess books, computers and training software. Another obstacle facing us is that we have recently lost the venue we were using as our head quarters. One of DMCA's founder members had generously donated the use of a portion of his building to DMCA. Unfortunately, due to personal reasons, he had to sell the building. So, currently, DMCA is homeless!

Those kind enough to donate or provide sponsorship to DMCA may contact the writer at durbanmetro.chessacademy@gmail.com or 0761980213.

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