

## Velangaye Secondary School is in crisis

### Where is this school?

The school is situated in a very rural area in the District of Nkandla in KwaZulu Natal. Access is by dirt road, often impassable after rain. This award winning school has a very high academic record, sending many students each year on to university. Many youngsters want to go to this school, rightly believing that it will give them a good start in life. They travel many miles, some from neighbouring countries like Botswana and Mozambique, to enroll at Velangaye.



One of the girl's dormitories

A few years ago the Principal, Dr Mahaye, was confronted with a problem of students having travelled so far to attend his school that they could not return home at night and he allowed them to sleep in a disused classroom. Each year more and more students sleep at the school. Last year there were 90 teenage girls sleeping two to a single bed and cooking on dangerous electric rings. We were able to supply them with three cookers, two fridges and pay for a safe electrical installation. The girls were concerned about security so we have arranged security gates to be installed.



Girls sleep 2 in a single bunk

### Velangaye becomes residential

The problem that has become a crisis is the school was already overcrowded with 1220 students in 2008 but **1650** have been enrolled this year. No extra staff have been provided nor facilities for the boarders. Many children are now having to sleep on straw mattresses between the overcrowded beds and with 70 to 80 in a classroom, some have to stand during lessons. There is one outside shower that seldom works so children have to wash with river water in a bucket.

### What Crisis?

With sufficient funds we could build them a badly needed shower and toilet block, and provide more bedding. I have been to this school and met these youngsters. They are so grateful for what we have done so far. They do not complain at all. They just want to study and are prepared to put up with poor conditions just for the chance of a good education and believe me they are poor conditions.

### What can we do?

Let's try to help them to enjoy it more.



I greet Dr Mahaye



30 girls had to share cooking on this



Lucky students can share a desk  
Others have to stand at the back

John Moss