

Winner of the RuReSA Rehabilitation Worker of the Year Award 2019

Undine Rauter is originally from Germany, and is employed as the Chief Physiotherapist (CPT/ MECI) at the Gelukspan District Hospital, Radithuso, North West Province for 24 years.

Undine recognised early in her time at Gelukspan that there was a huge unmet need for better rehabilitation of children with CP. She initiated and set up the the Parents' Guidance Centre (PGC), also known as Reakgona ('we can') at Gelukspan. This service includes training and follow-up for the primary carers (usually mothers) of children with CP that incorporates handling, stimulation and promotion of development and provision of assistive devices and advice on schooling. The residential course format appears to be unique in SA and enables carers to attend from remote areas. This enables carers to learn and share their experiences as a cohesive group, which is particularly useful when they live in remote rural areas with poor transport links and isolation from other carers and supportive health professionals. The training emphasises life skills, understanding and coping. Working with a team of physiotherapy assistants and community-based volunteers – including parents who run disability centres in their own villages – Undine has shifted the focus from institutionalisation to integration and inclusion.[1] The 'model' is so successful that the care received at PGC is highly sought after, not only from local children and their carers but by carers and referring health professionals from other parts of the North West Province. She provides paediatric development services on an outpatient (OPD) basis, covering 23 nearby villages, neighbouring schools as well as Ngaka Modiri Molema district hospitals and associated clinics in the Northwest province. She says "These villages are near the Botswana boarder Disaneng and Phitsane/Makgobistad and people are really far from everything...at present this is the part of my work which I enjoy the most because it just makes sense in its very nature..." Clubfoot Ponseti Management extended the training to Ruth Mompati District and have a partnership with STEPS the National Clubfoot Charity. In addition to her work as a physiotherapist Undine mentors young rehabilitation therapists in her district hoping that they will stay and build a strong rehabilitation service for the district.

Undine also runs and manages GBT Mongoose, a disabled basketball team who, despite funding difficulties and their rural location, compete at a national level and which has produced players for the national squad, 2 National coaches and a spirit of never give up around our rural locality. She was instrumental in setting up a wheelchair repair workshop at Gelukspan which employs disabled people, and works tirelessly organizing sports events, to promote disabled/able-bodied integration and raise funds, such as recent fun runs.[2] Determined to create an environment that is more accepting of people with disability she facilitated the publication of a book in 2001 called "CP ga se Boloji" in Setswana and 'CP is not Witchcraft' in English. Another book on Reakgona Parents Guidance Centre was published in 2016. Undine is a fluent SeTswana speaker, highly regarded among the disabled and general community in Mafikeng where she lives, and is known to everyone as 'Mmatumelo' (mother of faith) she is that rare therapist who has committed them self as completely, and has so effectively uplifted, supported and inspired rural disabled people. If Undine takes on any task you can guarantee that it will be done, done well, done on time, and done with a sense of humour - in German, English or Setswana

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