Badirile came from a family that had more than most families in the little town where she lived. There really wasn’t much to do except go to school, do homework, watch TV and hang out with friends. Most of her friends struggled at school because their parents couldn’t keep up with the fees, had little money to purchase school books, and few of them even had a decent lunch.

This used to depress Badirile because she felt as if there was little she could do to help. Most of the materially successful adults in her town were socially...
and spiritually poor, because they kept their knowledge, and therefore their wealth, to themselves. She didn’t want to grow up to be that kind of person. Her parents were both teachers, but her father had since left the profession to pursue business interests, which was to the family’s material benefit. Teaching was no longer a respected profession because most teachers were underpaid and the state, or whoever was responsible, didn’t seem to care about the needs of schools, especially in small towns and rural areas. That was an unfortunate situation.

One night after supper she shared her concerns with her parents and older brother. They suggested that she share her academic strengths with some of the weaker pupils in her class. She got permission from her head teacher and started a small study group that took place after school. Sadly, most of the children used this time for idle gossip and other time-wasting activities and invariably lost interest. But one girl, Tumelo, was diligent and she and Badirile soon became good friends.

The end of the final high school year arrived quickly and before long it was time to sit for exams. Tumelo became a little sad at this time because she thought that there was little hope for her future as she had no money with which to continue her studies. She told this to Badirile who shared the information with her parents.
It seemed that no matter how hard some people tried, they would always be oppressed by poverty. Badirile’s parents decided to look for bursaries and other ways to assist Tumelo, who wanted to learn how to build houses. In the meanwhile, they advised the girls not to distract themselves with the future as it depended after all on their success in the exams.

Both girls were happy with the outcome of their results. Badirile secured a scholarship at university where she studied business administration. Tumelo was unable to get financial assistance for university so she opted to go to a further education and training college where she gained building and artisan skills. The girls remained close and shared what they knew with each other. Tumelo went on to work for a construction company where she faced plenty of ridicule by men, who dominated the field, but she was happy. She had a place of her own and the dignity that comes with having an honest, worthwhile occupation.

Badirile, on completion of her degree, spent some time in a corporate job but soon tired of it because of all the politics. She also felt that her concerns for those less fortunate were not being addressed and she feared that she was becoming like those adults she despised when she was growing up in her small hometown.

After one of their lunches together the two
young women decided that together they could build affordable homes and still provide themselves with an income. Between the two of them they had sufficient skill and knowledge to transform homes and lives, beginning with those in their hometown.

It was the beginning of a long, tough yet ultimately fruitful journey. Badirile and Tumelo are now co-owners of a successful building company that provides attractive, sustainable homes for those with limited income. Badirile and Tumelo are now successful women who derive spiritual and emotional benefit from giving to those less fortunate than themselves. They also sponsor less fortunate children with school supplies, food and extra tuition.

This because they studied, shared knowledge, sought advice from wise, caring people and applied themselves.

I think this is part of what education encompasses. I wish this story was true – maybe it is, somewhere.