

# Stories of Change

Collaborative Meeting  
on Participatory Democracy  
and Movement Building

October 14<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> 2014

*An important element of the context is the difficulties experienced by Civil Society Organizations to be heard. There is a growing trend from the side of some politic or economic authorities to discredit those organizations, to silence them and even to criminalize them. International solidarity needs also to be built between those civil society organizations in their different forms (social movements, NGOs, community based organizations...) and divisions need to be avoided thanks to a respectful and adequate relationship with each other.*

Claude Mormont, 2014

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# Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement

## **Mission**

To improve the lives of the impoverished people living in the Shacks, Farms, Flats and Rural areas as well as to bring back their dignity by lobbying the society and pressurising the government to build houses with dignity for them.

## **Vision**

Abahlali baseMjondolo struggles to build a just and equal society based on respect and dignity for all Human kind.

## **What is the meaning of Abahlali Basemjondolo?**

Abahlali is an IsiZulu word meaning residents. Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement is also an Isizulu word that means the residents of the shack dwellings, but according to our explanation everyone who lives in a house, flat and rural dwelling without title deed or PTO of land ownership, that is how we explain Abahlali baseMjondolo.

## **Why was Abahlali Basemjondolo formed?**

Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement was formed to fight, protect, promote and advance the interest and dignity of the shack dwellers and the impoverished in South Africa.

Abahlali was formally formed in Kennedy Road, after the residents realised that the eThekweni municipality betrayed them, they then took to the streets and protested. During that protest 14 comrades were arrested. After that protest the neighbouring informal settlements then noticed that eThekweni Municipality is very manipulative. They decided to join Abahlali and moved on with a lot of protests including the protest to the Ward Councillors, but we were not recognised as people who count the same in this society. After noticing that at a Ward level we are not recognised as we are labelled as people who cannot think wisely because we are living in shacks. We then had a legal protest to the City Hall. Our march started at King Dini Zulu (Bothers Park). All our protests were not successful because the then City Manager Dr

Mike Sutcliffe said we were jumping the queue, whereas eThekweni Municipality has no housing database.

We have developed what became known as the “W questions”, The ‘W ‘ questions entail the following questions:

- When are they going to build our houses?
- Where are they going to be built?
- What assurance do we have and what role are we going to play in the construction of our own houses?
- How many houses are they going to build?
- Who is the contractor of that house?

In 2006 we started to launch a campaign which became known as “NO LAND, NO HOUSE, NO VOTE” hoping that eThekweni Municipality is going to deliver.

### **Strengths and Achievements**

Abahlali baseMjondolo started to grow stronger and became powerful in 2006. We have been joined by the flat dwellers, farm dwellers and we have been joined by academics and other social movements who were willing to work with us. These were the Western Cape Anti Eviction Campaign and Landless People’s Movement.

In 2009 we won the then “Slums Act” in Constitutional court. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of February 2014 Abahlali had to go to the Constitutional court to fight to set aside the MEC’s eviction order which we were not informed off. That order led to unlawful evictions of Lamontville (Sisonke Village) residents more than 25 times, while residents in Cato Crest(Marikana) were unlawfully evicted more than 23 times. The Constitutional court judgement found that the MEC order was in breach of the Constitution and therefor invalid. Abahlali membership is growing despite all the challenges that we have, now we have 23 active branches in kwa-Zulu Natal and 1 in Cape Town.

### **Weaknesses**

- Our leaders are being co-opted during National and local government elections
- Community projects and employments are being politicised.
- We won the then Slums Act but our members are still living in transit camps.

- In these 20 years of democracy we are still living in shacks.
- We are still fighting for housing DATA BASE.
- We lost our comrades' lives, and have been injured and intimidated by the State.

## **Challenges**

- We are facing a lot of evictions.
- Shack fires and floods.
- Communicable diseases (HIV & AIDS / TB).
- We have been removed from housing lists and placed on to a DEATH list and there have been no arrests of the murderers of our members.
- Unfair housing allocations, lack of an allocation policy and no democratically elected allocation committee.
- State repression and the assassination of our members.
- ANC and SACP members are demolishing our homes, replacing the Land Invasion Unit of the Municipality.
- In 2009 Abahlali leadership in Kennedy road were attacked and their homes were demolished.
- Lack of employment leads to us losing good comrades in the movement.
- Financial instability of the Movement leads to comrades leaving us and looking for jobs somewhere else.

## **Invitations to Wrong Meetings only to be Threatened – or Killed.**

- In 2011 we were invited to a meeting with the Ethekewini Municipality, which we thought was for discussion on how to deal with the Housing Backlog but instead, the Chairperson of Housing Portfolio Committee at ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY openly intimidated Abahlali President SBU ZIKODE in front of HONORABLE JAMES NXUMALO but he didn't protect us.
- In 2012 Kwa-Ndendezi Ward Councillor threatened to kill Abahlali members after their protest to the Councillor's office on 16<sup>th</sup> January.

**SAPS of today are no longer peace keepers but they are turned in to a State killer.**

- On the 15 March 2013 Thembinkosi Qumbela was assassinated after a big community protest on housing, corruption and misallocation.
- On the 26<sup>th</sup> of June 2013 Nkululeko Gwala was assassinated after the threats that were made by the eThekweni Mayor and the chairperson of the ANC at eThekweni Region Dr Sbongiseni Dlomo .They said Gwala was disturbing them from eating and 2 hours later Gwala was shot dead.
- On the 30 September 2013 a 17 year old girl (Nqobile Nzuzwa ) was killed in Cato Crest by the police during a housing protest.
- Ndabo Mzimela our General Secretary was threatened on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2014 at the City Hall in front of the MEC for Human Settlements, Mr Ravi Pillay, and again we were invited in that meeting with the hope of resolving the negative relationship with the ANC leadership in eThekweni.
- After all these threats, Thuli Ndlovu the Chairperson of Abahlali KwaNdengezi and an Executive member of Abahlali was shot in cold blood on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 2014.

**The struggle for justice, equality and dignity is the priority for the democratic South Africa .**

**Killing and intimidations of our comrades won't stop the struggle for Land, Housing and Dignity**

**“WE HAVE NOT TESTED OUR FREEDOM YET.”**

Ndabo Mzimela  
Zandile Nsibandé

## Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion (CSEI) and Ambedkar Student's Forum

Dalits, also known as “untouchable”, broken class and Scheduled Castes, represent a community of 170 million in India, constituting 17% of the population. One out of every six Indians is Dalit, yet due to their caste identity Dalits regularly face discrimination and violence which prevent them from enjoying the basic human rights and dignity promised to all citizens of India. The extant and inter-generational chronic poverty among Dalit communities and families is a direct and continuing impact of their out-caste position in society and has direct bearing on Dalit children and youth. Historically, Dalits have been denied access to land and other asset ownership, been forced to remain in menial and polluting occupations, prohibited to access learning, are restricted in social participation and interaction with other communities resulting in present-day deprivation and endemic poverty of Dalit communities. Dalit girl children bear the additional burdens of gender discrimination and violence both within the community and outside. Stereotypical patriarchal attitudes to women's role in family and community govern the self-image, development and participation of girl children at home and in the community.

Though India's Constitution abolished “untouchability,” and several safeguard mechanisms are being provided, meaning that the dominant castes could no longer legally force Dalits to perform any “polluting” occupation and legally cannot stop Dalits from getting educated and participating in public life and growth process. Yet sweeping, scavenging, and leatherwork are still the monopoly of the scheduled castes, whose members are threatened with physical abuse and social boycotts for refusing to perform demeaning tasks. Dalit children and youth drop out at a very large scale from school and higher educational institutions due to caste based discrimination of various types, their low esteem and stigmatised identity put them back into a vicious cycle of poverty and they are unable to see a better future for themselves.

Caste-based social organization extends beyond India, finding corollaries in Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh, as well as other countries outside of South Asia (see below). More than 260 million people worldwide

suffer from this “hidden apartheid” of segregation, exclusion, and discrimination.

It is in this context that as a Dalit youth, I have struggled past many obstacles to work my way through to higher education and employment. Graduated from one of India’s premier university JNU, post-graduation from TISS and now PhD, I have had to face several forms of discrimination on educational campus and in life due to my Dalit identity but all these helped me to understand, and motivated me to keep going. I have also grown to understand the Dalit rights movement that has fought for and ensured the present legal/constitutional safeguards against exclusion of my people from the right to peace, justice and safety in citizenship.

After my studies, I decided to initiate an organisation named Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion (CSEI), primarily focusing on education, employment/entrepreneurship and governance related issues of Dalit children and youth. As I had already faced all those caste based issues in education, the next step for me was to evolve innovative ways through which we could help our children and youth to build a positive identity and understand their citizenship rights and participate in democratic institutions such as school/college/university.

Ambedkar’s three principles, *be educated, be organized and agitate*, occupy a significant place in the all-round development of the Dalit community. Despite several social and economic barriers faced every day by Dalit children and youth, they have been able to challenge this reality by choosing education as a prime medium to break out from the vicious cycle of poverty, exploitation, indignity and unemployment. Keeping education as the central theme of intervention, CSEI attempted to integrate Ambedkar’s three principles with the everyday experiences of Dalit children and youth and their right to education aspects by creating a community based organisation of all Dalit students named “Ambedkar Students’ Forum (ASF)”.

It was very important to integrate every day teaching – learning aspects and advocacy for a “discrimination free education” by the affected students themselves. We started forming Ambedkar Students’ Forum in all our intervening villages by bringing 30-40 high school/college/university going students per habitation. Each group of ASF was provided with one education resource centre full of books and other reading and writing materials. The idea of building students’ organisation in the form of ASF got

much attention and we were able to organize more than 2000 students in a very short time.

Now we had a challenge to train leadership among these students so that they would be able to take ownership of ASF and take up other advocacy issues towards building a movement on “discrimination free education”. We collaborated with Play for Peace, an international organisation working with youth and citizenship rights, and conducted several leadership trainings, exposure visits, advocacy related activities and exposures etc. All these together led to the emergence of a group of Dalit students who are able to take this movement ahead. Now there is a general body of this people’s organisation, which elects its core committee annually, undertakes advocacy on educational rights of Dalit children and youth and engages with all possible stakeholders to achieve its dream. CSEI has separated itself from ASF and is playing the role of mentorship most of the time.

In the last six month, this group has been able to evolve several innovative programmes/campaigns for the educational upliftment of Dalit children and youth where they provide career guidance, higher education link support, campaigns to end discrimination, leadership training on citizenship rights and movement building etc.

Ambedkar Students’ Forum aims to build an independent and sustainable platform of Dalit and Adivasi students where they will continuously strive to access education, take up higher education, get socially, legally and politically aware to fight against their exclusion and discrimination based on caste and class towards living a life with respect and dignity.

Through this intervention, we have been able to integrate teaching, learning, organisation and movement building on citizenship rights/human rights, and the educational growth of Dalit children and youth. This movement has been able to facilitate and strengthen an Educated Dalit youth platform towards expanding their opportunities for self-development through support systems and mechanisms, where they also emerge as “Change Agents” towards addressing the issues affecting the education process of Dalit children and youth.

Satyendra Kumar

# Children Rights Centre(CRC)

## **Introduction**

In South Africa, many of our current generation of children have lost their opportunities to play. Poverty, violence and poor education continue to plague us as a country and these and other challenges, such as HIV/AIDS and rapid urbanisation, have had a negative impact on play opportunities for children. In fact, our children may be less likely to have the full range of play opportunities they need than did their parents and previous generations.

Play is a right of all children because it is vital for their development and wellbeing. This is recognised in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 31) and in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Article 12) which states that children have a right to play, recreation, leisure, art and cultural activities. Both documents assert very clearly that play is not an “optional extra” – it is essential in children’s lives in order for children to reach their maximum potential and be the best they can be, physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually and aesthetically, they need opportunities for play, leisure and rest. They need space to just “be” every day.

## **Background Information**

The Children’s Rights Centre is a registered charitable trust (IT 2242/99/PMB) and Non-Profit Organisation (Registration 059-178-NPO), with Section 30 PBO status (PBO Exemption No 930 008 582). The Children's Rights Centre started as the Durban Children's Rights Group in 1988. The organization has Section 18A status, which allows tax exemption on donations made to Children’s Rights Centre. The organisation’s strategic goal is to advocate and educate for children’s rights in South Africa.

## **The Story**

The journey started in June 2013 when the Children’s Rights Centre together with other stakeholders was invited by the Clermont Resource Centre to talk to the community on children’s rights. The first step of this journey revealed a multitude of rights violations and showed that South Africa lagged far behind in meeting the needs of many of its people, especially children. The Ezimbilini area is an informal settlement within the Clermont Township which is situated within the Ethekewini Municipality. This initial visit to

Ezimbilini showed the neglected state of health of children: they were covered with scabies and sores. There was no safe play area for children nor were there any ECD facilities where children could be constructively occupied during the day. Thousands of people were sharing one tap for clean water. There is no proper housing and sanitation - human waste runs between houses.

The Children's Rights Centre's journey with the Ezimbilini community continued in July 2013, when the organisation together with local councillors and youth embarked on a clean-up campaign of the Ezimbilini Area as part of the celebration of Mandela Day. The campaign included a talk on children's rights, with emphasis on children's right to play resulting in an idea to establish a safe play area for the children of Ezimbilini. The Department of Health also presented a talk on immunisations and cleanliness and committed to continue assisting the community with health related issues. The Department of Social Development agreed to assist in developing a safe play area for children as they are responsible for Early Childhood Development and also assist with social grants registration and other aspects of social assistance.

As part of its capacity building training, CRC conducted a workshop for about 20 people. The vision of the workshop was "Do it Right for Children" and aimed to get community members actively involved in meeting children's needs and to build a community that served the best interests of children. The workshop also promoted an understanding of human and children's rights.

Several meetings were scheduled between CRC programme staff and the ward councillor of the area. The meetings were meant to discuss a way forward for the project; confirm the designated area for the safe play space; decide on which other partners needed to be part of the project for sustainability and the training of the play leaders.

During the journey we experienced various roadblocks in the form of non-commitment from the local authority and other government departments. This lack of support and interest resulted in the process coming to a halt. Scheduled meetings were not kept and often had to be postponed or cancelled at the last minute. When CRC was finally able to secure the land for the safe play area, it was discovered that there were sale negotiations in progress between the owner of the land the local municipality. This showed

a total lack of commitment from the local municipality in terms of providing basic infrastructure and services for people.

CRC as an organization, learnt a hard lesson – people have become complacent! They have accepted government’s lack of service delivery, support and involvement as the norm. There is no urgency amongst people to change their situations as was evident in Ezimbilini. Another lesson learnt through the journey of this project is that it is essential to establish a steering committee comprising community members who take sole responsibility for a particular project. A project has to be owned by the community it serves. Lack of ownership and interest is a sure means of failure. There has to be commitment and dedication to ensure change – this cannot be forced onto communities.

The challenges within the Ezimbilini community continue and it is unfortunate that CRC had to withdraw from the community. This story was significant for the organisation as it only emphasised the continued need for human and children’s rights advocacy, especially at grassroots level. People of South Africa need to be empowered and instilled with a desire to want change in their lives. The Children’s Rights Centre will continue in its struggle to advocate and educate for human and children’s rights in South Africa – the journey is far from over.

Sunitha Eshwarlall

## Coalition Paysanne de Madagascar (CPM)

### **Storytelling about Citizen Participation, Democracy and Movement Building: Mobilization of farmers in District Soalala to defend their rights and interests in terms of securing land in the face of mining**

CPM (Coalition of Farmers in Madagascar) is a Platform of Farmers Organizations established in 2001 to defend the rights and interests of farmers and to help improve their living conditions. CPM operates in 22 regions of the country including Boeny region. The District of Soalala is in Boeny, which is an agricultural area. A large mining project (iron mine in the district of Soalala) is developing there, which raises the issues of the rights and interests of farmers.

In 2013, the surrounding farmers were afraid of being expelled from their land and asked CPM to support them to fight together to secure their farming land. CPM's proposed solution is to secure their land by obtaining land certificates. But to have a land certificate is mandatory to set up a "Communal land office" (Guichet foncier communal), for which only the municipality is authorized by law to set up a Municipal land office. So farmers engage in advocacy in the municipality for the implementation of CLO, in order to get land certificate to farmers.

For this purpose, the CPM strategy is to inform and train farmers in the Region on land and mining laws. After this training, it draws up advocacy issues and the priority is to do lobby and advocacy to municipal Authorities like the Mayor and Councillor. The result is positive because the CPM member farmers have been able to obtain three municipal deliberations from the municipality council.

CPM encountered a challenge in establishing the Local Plan for Land Occupation (PLOF), because of administrative delays and high costs. After lobbying to the Ministry, the problem was solved.

Lessons learnt include the following:

- Maintain solidarity of peasants to defend their rights and interests. Involve farmers' organizations as the basis for all development processes.

- Provide training before engaging in lobbying and advocacy.

The following are important changes that have taken place as a result of our work together:

- Capacities of affected farmers are reinforced in terms of land and mining laws, and they are able themselves to defend their rights.
- Farmers' organizations have realized the experience of lobbying and advocacy.
- Local authorities (municipalities) are interested in the development of land offices.

CPM wants to contribute to these changes for the farmers in all districts of Madagascar and African countries if possible. For CPM, this experience is a success and she wants to develop and share with other organizations that share the same vision.

Jean-Berthin Rabefeno

## **Background: Formation and Development of Delta**

DELTA was started as a Catholic Welfare and Development organisation in 1992 by famous authors of the Training for Transformation community development books, Anne Hope and Sally Timmel. It became independent in 1995 with its own management structure.

In 1998 DELTA started in Libode through the interest of local women working with abused children. These women then felt that they needed some kind of intervention to strengthen their capacity to support victim of abuse and violence. 1998 DELTA started its programme of social analysis so that women could understand the root caused of the abuse and violence within rural communities. More and more women came from the outlying communities to be part of the gender and leadership development program which is the vehicle for the social analysis work. Since then Delta has focused on the Nyandeni Region which includes Libode, Ngqeleni and Port St. Johns, as well as . From the beginning women from Lusiki-siki refused to be excluded, although they were not part of Nyandeni as they fall under a different traditional region. In 2005 DELTA started in Tsomo and Cofimvaba.

Through the gender and leadership program DELTA focuses on issues and challenges that face a particular community and links those to the broader environment so that there is an understanding of how people think about solutions to their problems. The gender and leadership program is the core program from which emanate the other programs of food security, HIV/AIDs, Democracy Education and capacity building of community projects. The head office of DELTA in Cape Town closed down in 2007 (due to financial constraints), and the organisation relocated to the Eastern Cape under new management. Presently DELTA secured an office in Cofimvaba from 2009 to date.

Working with women has many challenges as rural women are not working, cultural beliefs, and their multiple tasks make them in some cases not available for community meetings and workshops. But what I like about women is that they are pillars of strength within their families.

DELTA's strategy is based on the understanding that there is no equitable participation between men and women in all spheres of decision-making, be it at home, the community, workplace, or broader society. The strategy for

DELTA therefore is to move society to an understanding of the values of cooperation between men and women so as to reduce the condition of inequality, through working with women to develop a consciousness of their own power.

OUR GOALS are to:-

- + Build social cohesion through transformative ways of working with communities.
- + Develop the leadership of women at grassroots level through building bonds between women of different cultures, life situations and organisations.
- + Strengthen the networks of women especially in rural areas so that they understand their role in building a new society of unity, trust and healing free from oppression based on gender, culture and profession.
- + Develop capacity building for training and development work by women within their own and other communities.
- + Develop social awareness within communities, so that the process of participatory democracy is realized and that active citizenship is encourage and developed.

#### **A local story of change:**

For the past six month DELTA has been struggling to work in ward 9 of Intsika Yethu Local Municipality, where we have been working effectively and peacefully since 2012 July. After a while we discovered that community members, women in particular, were in the fore front of decision making. So, to strengthen them further, in May 2014, we asked our partners Khanyisa and Zingisa to facilitate lobbying and advocacy training for the women. As a result, the community members became more active. In one meeting, the councillor was made to account for service delivery failure and he couldn't challenge the community members. DELTA was expelled in December 2013. But community members invited DELTA back and promised to secure our facilitators, as they confidently acknowledged the power they have after the lobbying and advocacy workshop. There are Food Security programmes happening in that community and some are in a process to register cooperatives. Community Capacity Enhancement is taking place by promoting community participation through community dialogues, and those who are in power are really frustrated by these community dialogues as community members, especially women, are speaking up.

They have been at the Municipal offices and asked for the Local Development Plan and the annual report and in all delegations women are

leading and they go in their numbers. The empowerment of women to lead and give guidance in issues of development can change the present situation in our country, as they challenge corrupt officials and politicians, abusive leadership, unaccountable community leadership and, abuse of power by those who are in power. In that community if the community was not empowered enough DELTA would not have been invited to help, we could not be able to continue working - and without violence we are still there.

Whenever community members invite us to an advocacy action, we communicate with the Ward Councillor beforehand and advise him not to challenge the community members who are empowered, and to listen to the facts that they are bringing, so that they can work together. As DELTA we



have learnt that communities do have power to call any leader to account and be in the fore front in changing their lives. A good example of this is the Ward 9 situation. Today the councillor knows very well that he cannot lie about service delivery, as women challenge that, and the

confidence women have makes him think twice before telling lies. Building a movement is part of DELTA's mission to make sure that women are participating fully in community decision making and implementation.



Changing community for the better needs the whole community to participate collectively. In both photos community members are exploring their concerns to take informed decision that was the start of community dialogues at

Ward 9, Mabhentseni Village Tsomo Intika Yethu Local Municipality Eastern Cape, with women where ever they go they don't complain, in this picture there are also children and that shows a need of a crèche and they are the majority group. Their strength is that they don't give up.

MALIBONGWE IGAMA LAMAKHOSIKAZI

Nosandla Malindi

Veliswa Magayi

## Story of People's Participation

Kandhamal is bestowed with the beauty of nature. It has wild life, scenic beauty, and healthy climate. It has attractions, like panoramic coffee gardens, pine jungles, Serpentine Ghat roads, hills and waterfalls, virgin forest and typical tribal village life. Kandhamal one of the districts of Odisha, India is situated at the attitude of 1100 meters above the sea level. Almost 66 percent of the land area of the District is covered with dense forests and towering mountains rich in green meadows, the terraced valleys thronged with these colorful tribal in their natural heritage, dancing and sporting has its own appeal. On the other hand most of the inaccessible hilly terrains, narrow valley tract, crystals streams flowing through the hill tops has guided the socio economic condition and development of the district. Most of the habitants are Adivasi (Tribals) and Dalits. People depend on rich forest produce and scarce cultivable land for their livelihood. Per capita income of the people is US \$ 79 per annum. Kadhamal is one of the poorest districts in the country.

Christianity took its routes to Kandhamal a century ago. The entire population of the district is seven hundred thirty one thousand out of which Christians are one hundred seventeen thousand. Thirty percent of the Dalits are Christians. Dalits are poor and have very little access to resources. Kandhamal once known for its peace loving people, witness co-existence, brotherhood, and rich culture is now known for its wrong reasons. Settlements of the people from neighboring districts to this land of tribes and dalits for alternative livelihoods and political interests since long have shattered the social fabric of the district.

The unprecedented outbreak of violence in the year 2007 and 2008, by the fundamental forces of "Hindutva" ideology resulted homeless to thousands of Adivasis and Dalits belonging to Christian community. In Kandhamal district alone, more than 600 villages ransacked, 5600 house were looted and burnt down to ashes, 54000 people were left homeless and about 100 people were killed, 13 schools, colleges and offices of nonprofit organizations were ransacked and looted. About 30,000 people were uprooted and lived in relief camps, sheltered in nearby towns and escaped to other states for fear of life. The extremists forced 2,000 Christians to reconvert to Hinduism. More than 10,000 children had their education severely disrupted due to displacement

and fear. Fundamental forces of the “Hindutva” ideology committed such heinous crimes against Christians in the name of religion when a Viswa Hindu Parishad (VHP – a Hindu right wing organization) leader was killed by the Maoists.



The violence of 2007 took place during the month of December, the coldest month of Kandhamal. Sufferings of the children, women and aged people in the relief camps in the shivering cold were unbearable. The violence of 2008 erupted in the month of August during the heavy rains

was another curse and added suffering. People had to take shelter in camps where heavy rains poured through the roof tops and wet all their belongings and with stinking surroundings. Alas! This experience left deep wounds in the lives of the people. The relief, rehabilitation, and compensation were inadequate to start life afresh.

Jana Vikas, a grass root level organization, promoted by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Bhubaneswar committed to the cause of marginalized people of Kandhamal for empowerment and development since 1988 also had to face the ravage. However, the organization took no time to revive and play active role in relieving people.



Dalit Adivasi Vikas Initiative (DAVI) is a consortium of seven other organizations promoted by Jana Vikas to address the issues of Adivasis and Dalits.

Jana Vikas took the lead with the consortium organizations to mobilize the community to sensitize, analyze and organize

for justice. With an initiative of the consortium the leaders from all the Christian denominations, intellectuals and traditional leaders came together.

It was realized by all that Christians have right under the constitution of democratic India and one should demand for it. Strategies and plans were made to demand the rights under the constitution of democratic India. Several rounds of meetings were held at church and community level also at the level of intellectuals. A decision was taken to commemorate the sixth year of the sufferings and pay homage to the demised souls at the district headquarters of Kandhamal. On 27<sup>th</sup> August 2014, thousands of Christians, intellectuals and likeminded people gathered at the district headquarters and marched through the streets and placed their demands before the administration to act upon the injustice of inadequate compensation, punishment to the culprits and protection of Christian minority community. A memorandum was submitted to the Hon'ble president of India. The people contributed liberally for the travel and food expenses. Each individual sensed the ownership while leading the demonstration. A ray of hope arose among the victim survivors. A new confidence generated to live with courage and dignity. Unity, brotherhood, values among Christians developed despite different denominations. Sympathy, concern from other community could be felt during the demonstration. In spite of many challenges from administration to get permission for demonstration, new restrictions on mass gatherings, protest from vested interest groups could not stop people from their enthusiasm and vigor to go ahead in demanding their rights.



Resource crunch and geographical inaccessibility stood as some of the other challenges in mobilizing people for democratic values. People were once timid, fearful, took it for granted to bear persecutions have now realized their rights under the constitution of India. People have joined hands together

even some of their rivals supported them. People have stepped forward with a hope to revive, regain the lost peace in Kandhamal and to eradicate the ill motives of the vested interest group. People envisage with a hope: We shall overcome one day!!!

Fr Manoj Nayak

## Justice and Peace Commission: Land Desk

### **The Story of Change – Challenging Mines**

Justice and Peace serves as a platform that enhances the capacity of the Catholic dioceses in South Africa, Botswana and Swaziland to undertake advocacy projects that tackle the structural roots of poverty, inequality and injustice, so that through faith the society can be transformed and hope be built. On our website [www.sacbcjusticeandpeace.org](http://www.sacbcjusticeandpeace.org) this mission is stated clearly as ‘Faith transforming the society and building hope’.

Our work with social movements is ongoing and is about enhancing their capacity for effective advocacy in protecting land rights and right to food sovereignty for rural poor and challenging the mining sector to be more transparent and accountable to the poor. For the past 6 months, Justice and Peace has been engaging with and supporting the work of Rural Network in challenging the mines.

There are two mines that the Rural Network is challenging at present. The first is the Somkhele Mine situated some 20 km west of Mtubatuba town. It mines anthracite coal. Another Mine is Jindal Africa, a part of the Indian conglomerate, Jindal Steel and Power. Although this one has not started mining yet, exploration is already under way in many different areas of Makhasaneni. Iron ore has been discovered there.

Please see attached report by Reverend Mavuso about what has happened. We did have a meeting with him on the 18<sup>th</sup> September and agreed that he was to present the story.

#### **Mining Advocacy: Background and Introduction**

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of August 2014, the local headman, Mr. Dlodla delivered a letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2014 from Golder Associates Pty Ltd. It was received as a copy from eNtembeni Traditional Council. It was an invitation for submissions by communities affected by Jindal Mining’s operations that had already begun in the areas of Nkwalini, Makhasaneni, Matshansundu, Mfanefile, Sabiza and Thunzini. Golder Associates is a consultancy that was appointed by Jindal to do an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (EISA). Usually, an environmental and social impact studies ought to be

done before projects begin, but in this case, it seemed like an after-thought on the part of Jindal.

Be that as it may, Rural Network decided to respond as instructed. It (the network) decided on a rapid assessment process. Such process was going to entail visiting the affected communities in order to gather first-hand information about people’s experiences in relation to operations that were already taking place, and also to express their fears and hopes.

**Rapid Assessment**

This process was planned to take place over a period of 3 days, plus 2 days to put the submission together and to deliver it to the Traditional Council and to Golder Associates Pty Ltd. The team that was to conduct the assessments decided on visiting the Mtubatuba community that hosts a coal mine, known as Somkhele Mine. The purpose of this was to learn from this community’s experience and observe some of the visible impacts, so as to develop guiding questions for the interviews they were to conduct with the communities they had planned to visit over the days to follow.

**Mtubatuba – Somkhele Mine 25.82014**

People affected by the mine at Mtubatuba, related their unpleasant experiences of a series of broken promises. They highlighted the following:

**Jobs**

<b>Promised</b>	<b>Delivered</b>
80% of labour to be sourced from local communities.	Although no figures are on hand, the community’s perception was that there were more labourers from other areas and other provinces than from their community. It was difficult to ascertain these figures because there was no baseline. It was not revealed during negotiations how many jobs the mine planned to create, so that the 80% would be determined more accurately.

## Education/scholarships

Promised	Delivered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community members to be trained on skills relevant for the coal mining operation and will be employed. No known scholarship has been given to the children.</li> <li>Children completing matric to be given scholarships.</li> <li>School to be demolished to make way for the mine to be rebuilt nearby as a double-story structure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To a limited extent this happened. A few of the people who were trained got the jobs in the mine, but many are still unemployed 9 years later.</li> <li>Although, according to the responses to the memorandum the community presented during their march in 2012, the Mine claims to have taken 1 child through tertiary education, the members of the community met did not know the child.</li> <li>A school was built, but not the specification (double story).</li> </ul>

## Development

Promised	Delivered
Tarred access roads to be built	None, the only tarred roads are ones leading from main road to the mine.
Demolished houses to be rebuilt as fully serviced modern houses within the same community.	Done, but already cracking from mine's heavy blasting.
Reburials to be conducted in the manner the original funerals were held (animals for rituals to be provided by the mine)	Done, but poor workmanship has caused erosion of new graves. The mine took responsibility for rehabilitation thereof.
Earth dams for livestock	None, instead livestock is dying from polluted streams.
Crèches	One delivered

## **The mining operation:**

### **Heavy blasting**

The evidence of cracked houses, including the ones built by the mine, is everywhere through that community, and yet the mine's response to the people's memorandum where they raised this as one of their major concerns, the mine claimed that their blasting was within the allowable limit. Therefore they would accept any responsibility for cracked walls.

### **Environmental pollution**

Pictures of streams that look poisoned were shown. The community claims that their livestock is dying from these. Once again, the community does not have resources to prove this scientifically, and yet their animals are dying and the mine won't accept any responsibility.

The black dust from coal is visible to the naked eye clear days, and yet the mine claims that it operates within acceptable environmental standards.

In addition to these partly fulfilled and unfulfilled promises, people also related health (respiratory and skin diseases) among some community members. Yet again, people know that it has to do with the mine, but they can't prove it scientifically. It's a 'DAVID VS GOLIATH' situation.

### **Unpacking lessons from the Mtubatuba 26.8.2014**

According to Reverend Mavuso, the team that travelled to Mtuba was not properly prepared. On picking this up, Reverend Mavuso decided that the next day (26<sup>th</sup> Aug) was going to be used to debrief the Mtuba experience and prepare the team for the next trips.

- ***Mfanefile & Matshansundu 27.8.2014***
- ***Mfanefile***

At Mfanefile It was observed that the land had been drilled extensively, and roads had been opened up. One of the holes was drilled on water stream that people use for consumption. People expressed fear that they will eventually be relocated. They clearly did not like what was already happening but kept quiet because of the promise of jobs.

- ***Matshansundu***

On arrival at Matshansundu, company vehicles were used to block the road into the community. The team decided to leave the car, some distance away, and walked into the village and conducted interviews in individual households. The unanimous view was that people were unhappy.

**Drafting the submission 28.8.2014**

The 28<sup>th</sup> of September was spent drafting and finalising the submission which was to be delivered the next day, the 29<sup>th</sup> August 2014.

Philani Mkhize

Reverend Mbhekiseni Mavuso

## **Background and purpose of the organization**

Khanyisa Education and Development Trust (Khanyisa) was established in 1990 by the Board of Trustees as a response to the need to improve black education as it was neglected by apartheid. In 1993, changed its mission and thus: seeks to build institutions of the poor to address poverty and underdevelopment through building capacity of local leadership and community structures to understand their socio-economic and political rights, by identifying natural resources and lobby and campaign for policies that deepens social transformation. (Khanyisa) main goal is the establishment of a society that is responsive to the needs of the poor and the marginalised.

## **Areas of Operation**

Khanyisa operates at local level working in three different local municipalities, i.e. Sundays River Valley, Kouga and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan municipality. The main beneficiaries of the organisational activities are social and economically marginalised members of the communities in areas where we operate. The organisation has in the past few years put special focus to women and youth as sectors of the population that needs be involved

## **Activities of the organisation**

- Lobbying and advocacy for access to land and water and support for farming
- Food security (establishment of nurseries, gardens and training on Agro-ecological farming methods)
- Movement building
- Establishment of women and youth forums
- Trainings/workshops on social and economic justice
- Documentation and publication
- Leadership workshops
- Gender and leadership development program
- Research on farmworkers

Training activities are implemented in areas where we operate and where we are located (due to availability of facilities). Our partners include sister

organisations and partners (Zingisa, Masifundise and Umthathi), networks such as other NGO's, legal support services trade unions and universities (NMMU, Rhodes, CANRAD, CIPSET, Numsa,)

### **What has changed?**

Members of communities involved in our programmes have greater awareness about government programmes and activities.

Number of women assumed leadership responsibilities and roles in communities where they come from as shown by their participation in community forums and structures such as community police forums, health committees, social welfare programmes and school governing bodies and in community initiated structures and initiatives, etc.

In some instances, beneficiaries of our programmes have been nominated to serve in positions such as ward committees and ward councillors.

Participants in our programmes have been able to take leadership role in confronting community issues such as violence against women and children, social support to vulnerable individuals/members of communities, challenging the implementation of unjust government policies at community level.

Increase in confidence and articulation of issues by members of communities we are working with.

We have a pool of trainers on Agro-Ecological farming practices.

### **Challenges**

- There is unevenness in the level of organisation of the groups and leadership is uneven.
- Inconsistency in the participation among members of the groups as some have to engage in livelihood activities such as seasonal employment.
- There are also group dynamics in some of the projects that we support.
- Leadership of the ruling party at local level sees our intervention as a threat.

## **Lessons learnt and responding to challenges**

- We design specific programs responding to these matters such as leadership and organisational development and conflict management workshops. Facilitate exposure visit.
- We are increasing the pull of participants to manage inconsistency in participation.
- Community mobilisation is a painstaking and long process and thus requires huge investment and patience.
- Community mobilisation provides challenges and thus requires ongoing support and intervention.
- Offers opportunity to reflect on our work and think about the best way forward.

Simphiwe Dada

Mzikazi Mjako

## Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR): Security of Farmworkers Project, Upington

Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) are an independent human rights organisation with a 35-year track record of human rights activism and public interest litigation in South Africa. LHR consists of different units. The LHR Upington Office with main focus on the Security for Farmworkers Project is incorporated under the Land and Housing Unit which is situated in the LHR Pretoria office/ head office.

The Upington office has been working with the environmental rights unit of Lawyers for Human Rights to bring a case aimed at improving the quality of drinking and household water supplied to farmworkers. Many farmworkers receive water for household use through the open irrigation canals designed for farming activities. The water is untreated and contains a large amount of pollutants and impurities. During 2012 while working and traveling on farms, LHR became aware of this situation and took the initiative of addressing this. LHR Upington Offices consulted LHR Environmental Rights Unit in this regard. Surveys were done in different areas close to Upington to establish the extent of this problem but due to a shortage of funding, LHR could not proceed with this matter. However in 2014 we were fortunate to proceed in addressing this problem. The group of applicants (consisting of women, men, children and elderly persons) live on De Jager Boerdery BK, one of the biggest commercial farming operations in the Upington area.

This story relates to something that happened while working on the case.

While busy with this case, management on the farm approached two families, removed the doors to their houses, removed some of their possessions and dumped animal manure outside the windows. The actions of farm management appeared to be (came down to) a form of constructive eviction. The two households form part of the group of applicants in the case aimed at improving the quality of drinking and household water supplied to farmworkers. The households are headed by Cecil April and Katriena Morris.

The clients phoned the offices of Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) and explained their situation, stating that their living conditions are intolerable due to these actions, and requesting help. Due to financial difficulty and

distance, clients could not visit the office. We therefore had to go the clients. Some clients could not get the day off from work, meaning that we had to wait until they knocked off between 17h00 – 18h00 before we could start working on their case.

The Uppington office brought an urgent spoliation application. We were contacted by the attorney for De Jager Boerdery BK shortly after serving the court papers with an offer to settle the matter by restoring the doors, all the removed possessions, and removing the manure. This was accepted.

The clients later informed us that everything is back to the way it was and thanked LHR for their assistance in this regard. Both families are still occupying the houses and have since not had any further problems.

A shift is believed to have taken place in the sense that over the years people have become more aware and educated of their rights in terms of different legislation and are boldly accessing these rights by obtaining legal assistance and advice and approaching the courts in order to confirm these rights and obtain protection under the law.

Celestine Selbourne

## NAMKO

NAMKO is situated in South Africa in the Northern Cape Province in the Namaqua District in the Nama Khoi local Municipality. The office of NAMKO is in Okiep 11km from Springbok on the N7 to Namibia. NAMKO as an organization are currently working in the central Namaqualand in the following towns:

- Okiep
- Nababeep
- Carolusberg
- Concordia
- Bergsig
- Maaitjieskloof.

### **Story of Paulina**

Paulina is a 52 year old woman married to her husband for more than 25 years. They have 3 children, ages 22, 18, 11, and lives on the outskirts of Concordia. She was trapped in an abusive relationship and alcohol abuse totally destroyed her family's lives. Her husband was an aggressive alcohol abuser and domestic violence was the order of the day.

The situation deteriorated to such a level that her husband lost his job at the mines, her oldest daughter dropped out of school at grade 10. She and her mother looked for employment to see to the family's needs, while the father continued with his abusive actions. Paulina and her children were terrified because the police and social services did not even try to assist them. Paulina became an aggressor as she started to fight back and try to humiliate him in front of other people, but that approach ever worsened the situation.

In November 2009, she joined the Inspired Women's Program, as a shy woman with a very low self-esteem. She could hardly talk in the group, and was in the beginning a bit unwilling to share with the group members.

NAMKO invested in her development over the past years; she attended training programs facilitated by NAMKO and other partners. The members in the Inspired Women's Program provided her with love and support, which enabled her to talk about her situation. She now knows her rights and she knows how to demand her rights, and she occasionally invites her daughter to attend some of the trainings and other gatherings.

She also learned how to handle her husband, and as of January 2013 her husband has never taken a drop of alcohol. The two attended the NAMKO food garden training and started their own household garden. It is wonderful

to see that all the family members help in the garden and the relationship has improved in such a way that the father has taken up the role of breadwinner. He is currently employed at a local construction company and his doing every good.

Before Easter 2014 Paulina underwent training in Alcohol and Substance Abuse/ Counselling training which she has implemented in her situation.

### **Changes in Paulina's Life**

Because of all her challenges Paulina underwent different training programs conducted by NAMKO and NAMKO's partner organizations, and through these trainings the following changes have taken place in Paulina's life.

- She has a better relationship between her, her husband and her children.
- She can talk now about her challenges more openly.
- She is giving advice to people in the same situations.

Through all the challenges which Paulina has faced she has continued to save weekly as an active member of her savings group, and she and her husband have opened their own small brick making business.

Brendon Andrews

## **Community participation in Child Protection in Zimbabwe**

### **Our History**

Project started at Chinhoyi University were founders were part of the peer educators team. Founding team Mia Goos, Michel Triest and Precious Nyamukondiwa

### **Our name**

Pamuhacha came from an indigenous tree called muhacha . The tree has healing properties- We believe that when a person has an encounter with our organisation their lives will never be the same again. They will be healed psychosocially and physically. We believe in herbal therapies and psychosocial support. In days of old muhacha tree was a common meeting place. *Ngatisanganei pamuhacha*. We believe in people coming together doing something for themselves. We are not office based. People used to request for a meal from their ancestors at the muhacha tree. The same way people come to Pamuhacha and we go out of our way to help, and refer to other partners in technical areas.

### **Our Vision**

Bringing Hope to lives affected and infected by HIV

### **Our Mission**

Help communities to start up initiatives that prevent the further spread of HIV in their environment.

### **Our Values**

Participation, Empowerment, Ownership, Sustainability, Holistic prevention

### **Our Programs**

Child protection , Community and home based care ,Herbal remedies for healing and nutrition, Palliative Care for children and Adolescents, Psychosocial support for adults and children living with HIV , Adolescent Sexual and reproductive Health, Psychosocial support groups, Mainstreaming gender issues in all programming areas.

## The Team

The Pamuhacha comprises of the following team member Director, Monitoring and Evaluation officer, Finance Officer, Program officer, Economic Strengthening officer, Support group facilitator, Interns

## Child protection and community participation- the story

Children are the key to our future and Pamuhacha has been working with communities to realise this. Pamuhacha works in a district called Makonde. Makonde district has in the past formed child protection committees as a requirement by the Government of Zimbabwe with the department of social services. However these committees were not functional and protection of



children was only left in the hands of law enforcement agency the police. Communities never saw this as their role too to protect their children and have them participate in issues that affect them.

Children during a child rights session

Pamuhacha came in the picture in 2003 with a bid to help communities start up initiatives that prevent the further spread of HIV in their environment. Firstly Pamuhacha mobilised communities using a tool called Talk time and engaged them in conversations around HIV and what they can do about it. Communities then asked if testing facilities could be availed to them and testing was done. Some of the people were found to be HIV positive and Pamuhacha formed support groups. Support groups were first for adults living with HIV coming together and giving each other psychosocial support. They would meet once every week to share experiences and encourage one another to adhere to treatment.

After 2 years the adults support group asked if their children could get tested. The testing facilities were provided and some children came out HIV positive. These were commenced on ARVs. Pamuhacha then formed

support groups for children called Masimba support groups. Masimba means 'the Power to live is in us'. Masimba means great power. From this background it was noted that there was a lot of stigma and discrimination among children who are HIV positive and also orphans in the area.

Pamuhacha then resorted to revive the child protection committees. The main aim of the committee was to stand and protect the rights of children. The committees were made of various stakeholders including police, teachers, community caregivers, faith based groups, health people, business people and children themselves. 8 such groups were formed in 8 different communities. They meet and discuss the following issues:

- Sexual abuse
- Confronting people emotionally abusing children. Emotional abuse of children is very high and its not easily proven in court like physical abuse or sexual abuse. However the after effects of it are seen.
- Physical abuse
- Neglect. Here situations of neglect are seen where guardians do not provide the basic needs of children. Living children unattended and vulnerable to strangers etc.

Some issues are solved directly by intervention of the community child protection committees but some have to be referred to the police.

Pamuhacha trained community caregivers to manage cases that arise from the child protection committees. They document the follow up process and ensure that the children get a service.

### **Challenges that arise in the struggle**

- Because these committees are based in the community some members within the committee try to conceal some issues because of their relationships with the perpetrator. However this normally comes up when disciplinary action is taken.
- Children at times do not speak out fearing for their lives.
- There are not many place of safety for children and Pamuhacha feels a need to tread on these grounds so that it can care for child emergency cases that can arise. For examples some children and their guardian fail to attend court session because they have no place to stay near the courts. This is usually experienced by the children from rural areas. Some children end up sleeping in the streets when they ran away from home because of abuse. Some just need space to breath fresh air and

come to terms with their challenging life. Such space is not readily available.

- Political interference in managing community conflict derails progress in solving cases on community level.
- Lack of resources to ensure the needs of children are met unto completion

### **Moving ahead and significance**

To ensure child voices are heard, Pamuhacha began child rights program in schools. The programs are there to raise awareness of child rights and responsibilities in children. The activities are done once a term. Pamuhacha has also placed suggestion boxes in the schools so that children can report cases in anonymously. Children clubs have been formed and it's also a space



where children can share their issues and get assistance. The clubs meet regularly. There are also children camps that are held once an ear to create space for children to report cases and get psychosocial support.

Creative art display from children

Pamuhacha also formed child led Protection committees. These are based in secondary schools and currently they are two. They are there to have children deliberate issues of child rights on behalf of other children and then do advocacy around these issues.

Pamuhacha sees an opportunity to be a safe place for children to come for help. We are working towards this area and hope that one day we will have a stop shop for children to access services.

Precious Nyamukondiwa  
Mutxe Mauhy

# Pietermaritzburg Agency for Community Social Action (PACSA)

## **PACSA and the NHI Research Team**

### **Background**

Pietermaritzburg Agency for Community Social Action (PACSA) is a faith-based social justice and development NGO that has been in operation since 1979. PACSA focusses on socio-economic rights, gender justice, youth development, livelihoods and HIV & Aids. We work with 18 community-based organisations (community partners) in the uMgungundlovu district, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Our work and our practice seek to enhance human dignity and supports the building of power of groups in struggle through providing spaces for praxis and being in critical solidarity as they work towards their development goals. We believe that we need to model the principles we would like to see achieved in the future now. This means that if we imagine a world where everyone has space to speak, everyone is listened to and treated with dignity, where people make their own decisions around their lives and development, and a world where there is justice and equity – then we need to model these principles everyday in our daily work. The principle that has become very important to us is that everyone can think, speak and act. This story looks at what this might mean in practice.

In 2013 PACSA was approached by Monash-Oxfam (Australia) to develop and test a model of public policy engagement to increase awareness of, and accessibility to, policy with communities across the uMgungundlovu District, KwaZulu-Natal South Africa. We were to use the National Health Insurance (NHI) as an instrument for the basis of work. The NHI is a new government policy to ensure that all citizens have access to free and good quality public health care.

As PACSA we were excited about the project as it provided us the space to shape a contextually appropriate type of action research model on the principles which we as an organisation were becoming much more vociferous in reinforcing every day. Could we shape something which ensured integrity in what we stand for, and could we also use the opportunity to critically reflect on our learnings through the process to reinforce our principles? We agreed that the project could provide us with seemingly

endless possibilities to learn about our own practice as an organisation as well as about our relationships with community partners, whilst experimenting with new methodologies which put ordinary people at the centre of action research which provides value to their struggles.

Moreover, we were also excited because it provided the opportunity to hear what people were saying about how they were experiencing democracy as well as to learn about a health policy which based on our very limited knowledge appeared to be something that might bring about substantial changes in the lives of South African citizens reliant on the public health sector.

### **The NHI Research Team's story in a nutshell**

In 2013 PACSA took the idea to 3 community partners organically engaged around health care, to chat around whether the project would be useful for them. All 3 partners were rooted in the communities they worked in, and where in a position to optimise the use of information and dialogue on the NHI for future public policy engagement and advocacy. The 3 organisations: Abanqobi Men's HIV Support Group, uMphithi Men's Network, and Springs of Hope HIV Support Network agreed to be part of the project. The three partners elected 3 members each to be part of the project team. With PACSA, we were 10. None of us had worked together before and did not know one another very well.

The PACSA staff member involved has managed the project and as is consistent with our practice, has used 'process facilitation' in accompanying the team. The PACSA staff member had no experience around public health care and knew nothing about public health policy. The 9 team members had substantial experience around the public health care system, but like PACSA not a lot around policy. At their first meeting, they shared their worries. The PACSA staff member confessed that she was the least experienced to provide guidance around the content of the context and policy. They spoke about what this might mean and agreed that they were all able to think and so would find a way to navigate through the process together. They then did what every self-respecting group does when not sure how to proceed – they gave themselves a grand sounding name "the NHI Research Team." Xolani Nsele, who happened to be sitting at the head of our table, was elected as the 'chairman,' their chief, their captain. Xolani was the 'opener' and 'closer' of their meetings. We had a name and some semblance of order. Before they

closed their meeting they agreed on one absolutely critical principle. This principle was that we should always have fun. This was something we needed to check on every time we met.

At their next meeting they analysed the competencies they would need to successfully deliver the project outputs. As a team they were confident in being able to develop a new model around consultation which was contextually appropriate and one which created real spaces for people to think and speak. Because 9/10 team members had substantial experience around the public health care system, we knew that we would be able to ask the correct questions to open up the space for participants to reflect deeply on the challenges they saw with the current public health care system, what was causing them, what remedies could be sought and what an improved public health care system might look like.

With every meeting that came new issues were identified. One major gap identified was that of their competencies: they needed to develop their own knowledge around the content of the NHI to structure the consultation correctly and to deliver a training component on the NHI so that participants were provided the tools to engage and critique the NHI. When the project started a consultant for Monash-Oxfam (Australia) was sent to give us a quick snapshot of the NHI which summarised the NHI policy. The brief training and literature was not sufficient in delivering complete information nor was it enough to enable the team to formulate substantial questions to really engage with the policy. The team spoke about this at length, discussed how they could bring in another expert on the NHI to train them and share more complete literature. This option was contested. “Can we really trust this person to do a better job than the previous expert?” The team grappled with what this option would mean for them. What if the new expert was not really an expert? Even if the new expert was proficient, how would they feel about bringing in an outsider to run the training sessions in the consultations? How would they feel about not doing the training ourselves?

The discussions then moved to what they thought about thinking and learning and who or what makes an expert. Their previous conversations around what is real consultation and how they were experiencing democracy assisted them. They were not empty vessels and consultation was not simply

about receiving information. It was actually about critiquing it and questioning it (not just around “clarity seeking questions”) but about real questions about process and content and context, and ‘would this thing actually work,’ it included our worries and concerns. They asked themselves hard questions, such as: “Can we not think? Are we unable to learn? We have experience. We can make meaning, we can theorise and reflect. Is it impossible for us to learn about the NHI? We can read and we can think about what we are reading. We can also question what we are interpreting.” A decision was made to finally learn about the NHI themselves, but furthermore the team drew on the pedagogical theory of Jacques Rancière and set about learning together. In essence such an approach posits that one does not need to know the subject to teach it. One simply needs to facilitate the space, provide support and ask questions to enable learning to occur. They structured themselves to meet weekly to reflect and learn together and to commit to reading and critiquing the available NHI literature in the context of ‘our democratic experience’ as a type of study group. Every week they committed ourselves to reading policy or other NHI or health-related documents and returning the following week to have a discussion – not about what they had read (information) but about what questions they had about the things they had read; about what it meant to them and how it related to our experiences.

The result of this joint learning was that everyone in the team was able to articulate questions on the NHI and public health care. Hence, although each of us was able to ‘explain’ the NHI and identify challenges within the public health care system; the process which focused on questions instead of information enabled spaces to really start critiquing what we were reading and moved our conversations beyond health into citizenship and democracy. This approach ensured that the NHI content delivered in the consultations and the questions asked on it were as a result of joint learning, interpretation and critique. The content was embedded in our context and experience.

The consultations were with a further 2 community groups whose work centres on the right to health. These consultations were conducted in a manner that began to share information and methodologies that they too had learned to begin to engage the NHI policy in the ways that brings power to these groups who want to learn about the NHI and infiltrate the ideas, questions and concepts of the NHI into their communities. This team has also been very active in going to clinics where the NHI pilots have begun,

sometimes as passive observers and other times as active engagers with the officials. All of which they bring back to their meeting spaces to share, reflect on and find new ways of engaging whether this policy is indeed translating to what it should for ordinary citizens to get health services that bring them dignity.

Building people's power has to be conscious of where they are located and from there movement can be made. The debate about citizen participation sometimes is muddled with the idea of attending spaces and being fed information without engaging it. However, there are challenges with that form of citizen participation as it does not always mean that the citizenry understands what they are being engaged from and the level at which the information is pitched is usually not from a place that citizens can relate. One of the biggest learnings from the NHI consultation this year has been about understanding the difference between being informed and being consulted. Another monumental one, talks to their ability to develop their own training tool and consultation methodology. And yes this way means that the NHI Research Team has moved slowly, but deliberately in building a conscious citizenry and working with other one step at a time towards their goals.

The social change that they experienced as a team shaped how they planned, approached and implemented our consultations. We structured the consultations around the same principles around which we had organised ourselves and found such liberation. We provided real space for people to think and speak. We embedded the discussions in the experiences of each of the participants. People felt confident to delve deep. When it came time to deliver the training on the NHI, we did not present ourselves as experts but people who had learnt slowly and reflected on what the policy had meant for us. We were gentle with the information that we provided and made space for rich dialogue around questions that participants had, not so much on the content but on the type of questions the information provoked.

Madalitso Mtine  
Siyabonga Ntuli

# Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory Work in Africa

## **The Peer Leader's Project - A Pilot Project**

Sinomlando is a Zulu word which means “we have a history”. The vision of Sinomlando is that people with forgotten, silenced or traumatised memories retrieve their history and develop resilience.

## **Sinomlando Memory Work Approach**

In many cultures children are taught not to ask questions. Parents and primary caregivers often assume that their children are “too small or immature even to comprehend their HIV status”. Memory Work operates on the assumption that it is good for the child to know his/her family and personal history or story, however painful this might be, on condition that this history is recounted in a warm, non-judgmental environment. In that setting a dialogue between adults and children around difficult and challenging issues like sickness, death and loss can be beneficial. It is the right of children to have their families create “safe spaces” for conversations about issues that are pertinent to children’s lives to take place.

It is by making sense of their lives, however traumatic these may be, that the children develop resilience. Resilience is the ability of children to develop to their full potential even if they are HIV+ and even if their parents are themselves HIV positive, sick or dead. This dialogue helps children to gain control over their lives and start to reconstruct their life stories.

Memory work as an approach to psychosocial support functions on the basis of the following concepts: intergenerational dialogue or communication, validation of feelings and meaning making.

Intergenerational dialogue – The role of a supportive primary caregiver is vital for dialogue or communication to happen between the caregiver and the child or adolescent. In most cases the primary caregivers are the ones who know the story or the history and the HIV status of the child or adolescent.

Validation of feelings – A diagnosis with HIV conjures up all kinds of emotions and some of those are fear and a sense of loss. This involves loss of the original state of being or the state before the diagnosis, loss of sense of intactness and loss of hope for the future. Children become afraid of being rejected and losing friends and family. Validation of these feelings by a supportive adult is important.

Meaning making – Communication taking place in a “safe space” and validation of feelings by a supportive primary caregiver or adult helps the child or adolescent to gradually gain control over and reconstruct their lives. This process helps them to make meaning of their lives and find life manageable.

### **The Peer Leaders Project**

The advent of antiretroviral (ARV) treatment has enabled children who were born HIV positive to survive into adolescence and beyond (WHO, 2010). This means that the population of adolescents who were infected perinatally is growing. Of great concern is that a big number of this population is not aware of their HIV statuses, hear of it by chance, or informed very later after years of being on antiretroviral treatment. Sometimes the children or adolescents are given wrong information about their ARVs and told that they are tablets for energy or multivitamins. Disclosure of an HIV status of a child’s or adolescent’s to her/him is a very essential component of care for HIV positive children and adolescence. Lack of this disclosure can have negative outcomes and increases the risk on the lives of the adolescence and those around them.

Since 2001 Sinomlando Centre pioneered a model of psycho-social support for children who have suffered loss– particularly but not exclusively in the context of HIV/AIDS – called memory work. This model uses the methodology of oral history in a novel manner, combined with other techniques such as life story work, narrative therapy. The approach of Sinomlando to memory work as a form of psychosocial support is family centred and child focused. As in other instances Sinomlando involves the primary caregivers of the peer leader’s in the peer leader’s project because of a multi layered nature of disclosing an HIV status of a child or adolescent. This process requires cooperation from all role players.

In 2010 Sinomlando was awarded a grant to offer memory work as a form of psychosocial support to HIV positive teenagers and their primary caregivers through a project called Onjengami. In 2013 Sinomlando piloted a peer leader's project for HIV positive adolescents. The peer leader's project was initially planned to be piloted with 5 girls instead it was started with 8 boys. The teenage boys responded quicker to the recruitment than girls.

The criteria that was used to recruit the adolescents to project were that the adolescents were HIV positive and on antiretroviral treatment. They must have attended a four to five day memory work camp. With time more girls were recruited. Currently the peer leader's project is made up of 8 girls and 12 boys, aged between 12 and 20.

The aim of the peer leader's project is to provide support to HIV positive adolescents as they are growing into being young adults. Adolescence is a complex stage of development characterized by behavioural, psychosocial, physiological and cognitive changes. This complicated stage is made worse by an HIV positive status because adolescence have to manage and adhere to structured regimens. This support is offered through a training programme which includes; children's rights, responsibilities, respect, leadership and team building skills. These skills will equip the peer leaders to adjust and adapt to changes in their lives and support other HIV positive adolescence and children. The peer leader's project encourages child participation which allows adolescents to be involved in the design of the projects and activities that are intended to support them. Empowering and capacitating HIV positive adolescents will ensure that this project will be sustainable.

For the success of the project the primary caregivers are also trained and supported so that they can be aware of the ways in which they can support the peer leaders.

## **Testimonies**

### **1. Collective**

After a few workshops and training sessions, the peer leader's visited the local clinic as a group to recruit other HIV positive adolescents for camps. In the process recruitment they voluntarily disclosed their HIV status to the peers who they found at the clinic. There was an overwhelming response

from other HIV positive children who signed up for the camps. Some adults who were at the clinic also showed interest in attending the sessions for HIV positive adults.

During one of the peer leaders' clinic visits there was a primary caregiver who was struggling with disclosing an HIV status of her grandchild to her. On hearing this, a seventeen year old teenage boy volunteered to have a discussion with the primary caregiver if she had no objection with that. The primary caregiver was willing to receive counsel from the peer leader.

The peer leader respectfully explained and shared his own experience of the pain of not knowing his own HIV status for a long time. After a session of about thirty minutes the primary caregiver was prepared to disclose the HIV status of her grandchild to him.

## **2. Individual**

Sipho Hadebe (not his real name) is 13 years old. He looked like a nine year old because he was stunted and could hardly open his mouth to say anything. At the beginning of the camp he did not even seem to understand the instructions. During feedback sessions he hardly said anything. He was withdrawn. On the third day of the camp he began to open up. On the morning of the last day of the camp during a check in session, he reported that he was not feeling well but was happy that he was at the camp with other children who were like him.

Later during the recruitments of peer leaders he got interested. On the first day of the first meeting of the peer leaders he joined one of his peers who had been recruited and came with him to the meeting. During that meeting he was different. He looked confident and articulated himself clearly, expressed his delight in being allowed to participate in the peer leader's project.

In a meeting with the primary caregivers of the peer leader's, Sipho Hadebe's mother gave a testimony about the change he was observing in the life of her son.

*"I do not know what you did to him but he has changed. He was so withdrawn that I did not know what to do with him. He had always been a loyal boy but would never open up to me about anything. Now we talk and laugh together. He cooks for his siblings when I*

*am not at home. He even talks about his school work, about what he finds challenging in class and the like. This is a new experience for me, thank you”.*

## **Conclusion**

The peer leader’s project attracted more boys than girls which was not a common thing to happen in most of the camps that have organised for HIV positive adolescents. The peer leaders are showing great interest, commitment and ownership of the project.

The peer leader’s project is receiving great support from the primary caregivers and other family members of the peer leaders. Sinomlando is working hand in hand with the families so that they can create a supportive environment for the HIV positive teenagers on treatment which will hopefully be a good transition into adulthood.

The long term vision of Sinomlando for the peer leader’s project is to replicate the approach to projects of other vulnerable children.

## Sunflower

Greetings to all

The **Sunflower Excellence Centre** is a not for profit organisation. It's based in a township called Mpumalanga in Hammarsdale. Hammarsdale had the problem of the political violence in the late 80s and early 90s. We, the Sunflower Excellence Centre organisation offer various activities to the youth by introducing them to *sports and cultural activities*. The organisation was formed by Mr SV Malinga who is an educator in a public school. He started with a soccer team and soon after he asked members to join in with the hope of developing into a centre for the children and the youth of Hammarsdale community.

The organisation does not only offer activities but it works as a shelter (Ingede school) for the youth that has too much time in their hands. We are working together with most of the local schools, police stations, clinics, local councillors and our local municipality to combat drug abuse, unplanned pregnancy, and peer pressure, by keeping the youth busy.

As it was the holidays, the organisation was up and running because we didn't see the need for the youth to be away as the holidays only lasted for a short while. The members held meetings and there were activities just to keep the youth busy. We had a bit of a situation where some of our youth we were supposed to work with just didn't show up during the holidays. We couldn't even keep the working relationship going with the educators as they were away.

The youth didn't come to the daily activities if they did show they would be so late and some even came in drunk which made it hard to engage to the activities. Drug abuse is a huge challenge in our community as a whole so in that way it has an impact on the organisation as well.

Just after the holidays the organisation decided to have a meeting where it was compulsory for every member to attend. We consulted with the different stakeholders and invited them to attend the meeting, at Ingede Senior Primary Hall. We involved all the stakeholders because we wanted their input as to how we can improve the organisation.

## **The challenges we faced**

- Time management
- Drug abuse
- Attendance

From the meeting alone we had great input from the stakeholders and that showed us that if we work together we can accomplish a lot. The meeting was very fruitful and all in all it taught us to be firm when we speak to youth and to always follow up and to check the youth in their homes during the holidays just to make sure that they are behaving well. The youth and members have started to show more interest in the activities and what is more special is that we didn't even have to force them.

This has changed the way we communicate in the organisation; it has now shifted to being more formal and to keep in mind that not all members will be available to attend as we all have our own commitments. We couldn't have emphasised it more on how time management is vital. We took this as a step forward also keeping in mind that Rome wasn't built in one day.

Drug abuse is still a huge challenge but we have somehow managed to educate our youth and to engage them in more activities so that they don't have more time being bored on the streets. We invited more youth to be a part of our centre and we are patiently waiting and hoping the community will do their best in spreading the word and referring the youth to our organisation.

All in all this has made us very close with the people we work with, we now do house calls just to check up on the children and monitor their progress and what exactly they do after school, and to instil respect and the importance of being in their respective homes as the rate of drugs and crime is high in our community.

Thank you all.

Thulile Hlengwa

Thobile Cibane

## Surplus People Project (SPP)

### **Citizen participation, democracy and movement building**

#### **Land Occupation and the fight for alternatives by the Ithemba Farmers Association**

The members of the Ithemba Farmers Association (IFA) have occupied and informally settled on state-owned land in the vicinity of Old Faure Road, Eersteriver in the Western Cape for more than 10 years. The farmers are mainly unemployed and “un-housed” people from the surrounding areas in Eersterivier. The IFA was established in 2007 to organise the small scale farmers and protect the rights and interests of the farmers. Most of the farmers are subsistence farmers that produce vegetable crops, livestock (like dairy cattle, pigs, goats) poultry, etc.

The Department of Human Settlements (DHS) of the provincial government of the Western Cape (PGWC) owns the property and regards the small scale farmers who have settled on the property as illegal occupiers. DHS has attempted to identify alternative land for the occupiers as they want to avail a portion of the property to the City of Cape Town (CoCT) for the establishment of a Temporary Relocation Area (TRA) in terms of the Less Formal Township Establishment Act (No. 113 of 1991) for the provision of emergency housing. In 2010 the DHS wanted to evict the Ithemba small scale farmers and members of the IFA brought an urgent application to the Western Cape High Court in June 2010 in which they sought to restrain the provincial government from taking steps to implement the housing development which would have affected approximately 157 farmers and approximately 315 people.

After a long process of negotiation with the Ithemba farmers the provincial government settled the court proceedings. The negotiations included the PGWC, DHS, CoCT and the Directorate of Planning and Building Development Management of the CoCT, the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) and Surplus People Project (SPP). SPP was approached by IFA in 2009 to assist them to fight a pending eviction by the DHS. SPP works on agrarian transformation for food sovereignty and agro-ecology in the Northern and Western Cape Provinces. Part of the settlement entered into with the IFA was that they would be relocated to other property that belongs to the DHS. Apart from

negotiations, the IFA also used other forms of direct action to highlight their plight. This included a march to Parliament under the banner of the Right to Agrarian Reform for Food Sovereignty Campaign, a social movement fighting for agrarian transformation in the Northern and Western Cape Provinces. In addition, they blocked off the road to the Ithemba farm to prevent MaccSands, a sand mining company, from continuing with its sand mining on the farm. After a number of negotiations with the role-players the task of looking for alternative land was given to the DRDLR (Department of Rural Development and Land Reform), which then facilitated the process on its own for the last two years. In 2013 the DRDLR appointed Phulisani, a development consultancy to explore alternative land, do a land rights enquiry and write a status quo report. Prior to this two other land rights enquiries had been conducted and status quo reports completed.

After a number of meetings between the DRDLR and Phulisani the IFA became disillusioned with the process because no feasible alternatives were developed within the last year and no suitable land could be provided by DRDLR and Phulisani. The IFA was opposed to “another” land rights enquiry to be conducted by the consultant. Around April 2014, as a result of this deadlock, the IFA requested Phulisani to facilitate meetings with the broader role player group as at the initial negotiations. However, Phulisani did not respond to this request and the IFA approached the DRDLR to give an update on the process. DRDLR reported that they met with all the other role-players and discussed the options/ recommendations that were proposed by Phulisani in their interim report. Four options were proposed: (1) A negotiated settlement which secures the occupiers rights where they are (2) Utilising Section 4 of ESTA which makes provision for subsidies or tenure security grants (3) acquiring alternative land and (4) referring the matter back to court.

In September 2014 the DRDLR facilitated a meeting with all role-players where a number of issues were ironed out. IFA suggested that they would prefer option 1 with the addition of looking for suitable alternative land. The main question that needs to be clarified is whether the CoCT still need the Ithemba land. This will be answered within the next month and then the IFA can then strategise about the way ahead.

The story is significant for three reasons (1) importance of always ensuring that proper process is followed and (2) consistently involving all relevant stakeholders in development processes and (3) if successful in acquiring the land for an in-situ agricultural development, this case could provide new models for urban agriculture - and particularly of how to integrate settlement and production.

Harry May

Rosemie Pedro

### **The Rising Sun! Our Story of Change**

In 2011, Umthathi Training Project had just moved into their new premises, away from the centre of the town, straight into the centre of their activities, in Extension 7, Joza Township, Grahamstown. These were exciting, positive, hope filled days for the organization. The move was getting them nearer to their beneficiaries and proximity was meant to translate into maximum impact.

As a training organization that focuses on healthy living it was only ideal that the community around be a reflection of what the organization stood for. As they say, charity begins at home and in this case it was going to begin in Xhorha Street. Management and staff convened a meeting. It was decided that the first step would be the greening of Xhorha Street. Every home would have a backyard garden thus taking the first step towards healthy living and breaking the cycle of poverty. Staff members went into homes, gathering reasons as to why people did not have backyard gardens. The response was that people did not have enough land, those who did have land did not have fencing and wandering livestock was a problem in the area. It was back to the drawing board for Umthathi. The desired goal was to get people into gardening regardless of the challenges. The answer came with the Municipality allowing the organization to lease some hectares of land. The idea of Linomtha Gardens was born. It was the ideal space for people to start gardening. This idea of a communal garden was presented to the community. It was land that had never been tilled before and all those interested had to put in the effort and start from the beginning. This seemed like a good idea except for the fact that people did not have staying power. They soon got tired of the hard labour that goes into overturning hard soil for purposes of planting.

Umthathi had to step in and get a tractor to make quick of the job. Afterwards it was all systems go, but only if Umthathi agreed to people having individual plots. An agreement was reached, that all those who got individual plots and showed commitment would then be given the option of getting additional plots. The end goal was for people to plant their own vegetables, feed themselves and their families, follow nutritious diets

to ward off sicknesses and keep them healthy while not forgetting to follow good hygiene practices. In a year these goals were met and surpassed. Due to agreed-upon commitment levels, everyone at Linomtha had more than one plot. Not only were they feeding their families but they also had surplus to sell as well.

This success though had come with its own challenges: There was theft and lack of water. The same people who had to be coaxed into committing to this were now so emboldened by the success of their own initiative that nothing could stop them. They no longer looked to Umthathi for all solutions. They elected some members to go to the Municipality and tabled their water problems. The Municipality had to visit the garden and come up with a solution. This was quite a victory for the community: getting the Municipality to respond to the needs of the community. They dealt with the thefts the same way, by calling a community meeting with the councilor and police present to help them come up with a solution. It worked in that it raised awareness on crime and its negative impact in the community.

Now it is 2014. The Linomtha members have been approached by an organization that has an emphasis on economic empowerment. This is in recognition of their thriving garden which has been recognized as having the potential to develop into something more. This something more is a Fresh Produce Market that is planned to begin in December. The organization that planted this idea met with the Linomtha members. 30 out of the 85 members bought into the idea and had input into how it should be realized. In return these members will put a lot of effort into ensuring that this works, not only for themselves but to motivate the rest of the community into seeing and believing that **IT IS POSSIBLE**. To this end Umthathi will continue supporting them past their teething problems.

The first hurdle has already been identified, which is to get them past the comfort of working as individuals from their individual plots but into a more communal space where they can do more, produce more through consistent and coordinated group work. Already there are rumblings about whose spinach will be bigger and better and by virtue of that then sell more. The reality is that at this stage of the plan this kind of competition might not be healthy for group cohesion. The group has

spoken about this and the potential it has to demotivate some members. They also concede that different talents are going to be needed for this to become a viable business. People who are good at selling will be assigned to sales, those who have green fingers will do their bit, good organizers will take care of the logistics and money savvy members will coordinate the savings club. All of this cannot happen when individual interests come before group interests. That is the current challenge. Nevertheless it does not take anything away from the fact that for two years community members have worked together, past generational and class gaps, moved past subsistence gardening to livelihoods stage. There have been challenges along the way but once they committed to it, they stuck to it and dealt accordingly with challenges that posed a threat. This is the success story of **LINOMTHA GARDENS**.

Monica Canca  
Zolani Zondani

## You and Your Money (YYM)

### **Disclaimer:**

The brief for the stories of change, calls for an event or community interaction that occurred during the last six months, c.Easter 2014. You and Your Money has been going through some very severe changes and difficulties during the past year and thus we had very limited interaction with communities. However, in its 13 years of operation, we can draw from a number of experiences and interactions with organisations and communities. We would like to make use of this opportunity to focus and reflect on one such interaction.

Further, YYM works with partner organisations and not directly with communities per se. This will hopefully become clearer in the rendering of our story.

### **Introduction**

You and Your Money (YYM) has been established in 2001 by three women who has worked in various levels of the developmental sector. They found that there was a need to create an organisation that will focus on the problems and challenges that confront households with regards to their finances. As such, we are still one of a few organisations that focus on issues relating to household debt, budgets and finances. In time, the organisation expanded to include three separate but related programmes that focused on: debt advice, debt activism and financial life-skills training. In 2007, the organisation was accredited by the National Credit Regulator to assist with the training of debt councillors. Finally, the organisation has been passionately involved with advocacy efforts and contributed to various parliamentary processes and participated in direct meetings with national and regional stakeholders.

### **Story: Witzenberg Rural and Developmental Centre**

In 2013, YYM received an invitation from the Witzenberg Rural and Development Centre (WRDC). WRDC is located in Ceres, a small picturesque town in the high lying part of the Boland. The area is especially famous for its deciduous fruits and is well known as one of the premier food baskets in the country.

The flip side of this society is plagued by high levels of unemployment, social ills such as alcoholism and drug abuse, and tenure problems at farms. Very little support to community members and organisational infrastructure is present in the community, hence the need for the establishment of the WRDC.

The WRDC has been called into existence to address these and other concerns. It operates on the basis of a traditional advice office dealing primarily with labour issues and social grant assistance. It is staffed by two paralegals with administrative support. The WRDC is governed by a Board and management structure.

A former staff member of one of YYM's partners, RDSP, who now is one of the paralegals at WRDC, contacted YYM to conduct the Financial Life-Skills training. The result was that YYM presented the training to the staff members and select board members in November 2013.

### **The Debt Activism model**

The interaction between YYM and WRDC is a typical depiction of the model YYM adopted known as its debt activism programme. In terms of the model, contact is established with the organisation that is in line with the aims and objectives of YYM. The staff and members of the particular organisation is trained in the financial life-skills programme. Regular contact with the organisation is maintained with the undertaking of at least one annual visit. Representatives of the organisations are invited to attend the annual debt activist forum. The organisation refers cases to YYM if they are unable to resolve an issue themselves.

### **Concluding Remarks**

As stated above, the relationship between YYM and WRDC represents the typical interaction between us and our activist partners. Upon reflection, it is a model that has worked for us since 2003. It would be interesting to hear other partners' experiences of their interactions.

WRDC and indeed our other partners, can now offer debt related services to their constituency along with their other services. During the past few months, they have referred several cases to us and we were in a position to assist them.

Johann Magermann

# Zenzeleni Community Project

## History of the organization

Although our history goes back to 1992, our building dates back to 1993, when a group of local youth, local leadership and local church ministers in Mpophomeni Township came together and formed what was then called the Joint Working Committee(JWC). It was after very long and brutal faction fights between Inkatha Freedom Party and the United Democratic Front (UDF), because of a Sarmcol strike of 1985. The faction fight had created hatred amongst families and communities, and some people could not even enjoy visits to one another. These fights made the area to be sometimes a no go zone to others as well. Professor Phillip Dennis, Chris Khoza, the late Mr. Clifford Mabaso, the late Rev. Dan Lecordeur, the late Rev. Bonga Khawula, Siphon Zuma, Edward Dladla, the late Chippa Zuma and also the late Peter Zondi talked about peaceful measures to re-unite the community and bring back the lost love for one another. It was difficult because others had lost their loved ones already, but they overcame that bridge. Then with the help of Entraide et Fraternite they were able to send some youth that were fighting to Thembaletu Trust to be trained in bricklaying, carpentry and plastering, and they came back to build a reconciliation building called Zenzeleni Community Centre which is still there as we speak.

Zenzeleni was then named, which means ‘do it yourself’ in isiZulu. This was to be a centre to teach community members how to do things on their own. The idea was to start different projects in the area and let people grow



Group members answering questions about what civil society formation means, and its importance.

themselves out of it - forming their own organizations to carry its flag. Zenzeleni has been able to form: Zulu Mpophomeni Tourism Experience, Mpophomeni Computer Centre, Peace Project, Vukuza Project, Young designers, Mpophomeni Gender Paralegal and Masibambisane Support Group.

## **Our story is about our participation with the Pilot Project- Effective Public Participation**

When working in our community we always learn about good, challenging and also bad social injustices. In our area, we have seen different challenges amongst community members, since it has a long history relating back to forceful removals from other areas created by the *Native Land Act of 1913*. This means if you do know our area you might be able to associate it with previous South African history. When assisted by Entraide et Fraternite during the Peace Project there were a lot of cases of fighting for plots of land by residents. We resolved some cases but some were then resolved



Another group also trying to reflect on civil society and social injustice.

legally by a Court of law. Because we then learned more issues we engaged with the Foundation for Human Rights to further these issues again. Then we started what is called **EFFECTIVE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**. This was to promote how people should act in case of social injustices or otherwise.

### **This Project was designed as follows:**

#### **Goal**

By 2014 a process of building a strong KZN social movement is in place aimed at challenging various forms of social injustices.

#### **Three Objectives**

- To enhance a culture of experiential learning and critical reflection in our struggle of social justice.
- To strengthen the capacity of participating members and the organization to address social justice issues.
- To build solidarity of participating organizations through shared experiences of campaigning.

## Challenges and Learning

- Leadership of Civil Society.
- Women & Youth.
- Lack of service delivery.

The Project was more focused on learnings around **Effective Public Participation**. It started with a workshop of 10 representatives from 10 organisations, most of them from Community Based Organizations. I expected them to want to talk about and work towards a vibrant social movement, but to my surprise they mostly talked about Party politicking . The other thing is that most representatives ignored the understanding of the country's Constitution. It was clear in the discussion around the Bill of Rights, Freedom Charter and Chapter 9 Institutions that most of them could not link these with the need for accountability of all spheres of leadership in the governance of our country as such.

The **process** involved 10 fieldworkers going to 250 households in a door to door campaign over 10 days, compiling all the facts, and drawing up a report which was presented to the Council.

The main **aim** was to ensure that they check for issues of electricity and water. When they were finished a report was produced. When we were engaging with their reports, we learnt some important facts. For example, some people were mistakenly charged for two meters even though they have belonged to one homestead. Other community members were not buying electricity at all because their meters were struck by lightning, and they had been told by ESKOM staff that they were coming back to fix them but did not do so- and then at a later stage others were charged with electrical theft.

Although the process was very challenging for community members, at last a solution was found - scrapping of the debts they had had, through filling in indigent forms and the dropping of any legal charges against residents. Perhaps this was coincidence because while we were learning about these problems the Municipality decided to send out their own fieldworkers as well. But the change happened and brought relief to the community.

The community also had a concern that their leaders stay far from them once they had been elected, and you will only see them during the election period. For me this was a lesson that our leaders leave a big space within their constituencies.

This story ended when we made our Presentation to the uMngeni Local Municipality to share with them for them to learn about the challenges of community members out there.

When looking back at the history of Zenzeleni Project I feel it is so great for one to reconcile in whatever way possible, because the hatred that had prevailed before is no longer there, but peaceful initiatives like this one have been born.

While we had some challenges in undertaking the research and preparing the presentation, we tried to move quickly and worked even without adequate equipment, to ensure our scheduled dates met the dates of the local Municipality meeting. The presentation to members of the Executive Committee (EXCO) and Management Committee (MANCO) was challenging because it included all councillors as well. But the timing was great to do this Presentation.

The important lesson from this project is that whenever you do this kind of work, it is important to use the space given very effectively and promptly because you are the master of your own good.



Our story has not yet ended, because our organisation has been invited to send a further proposal, around how consumer education could be done with house owners to avoid any other problems of title deeds etc. So it has given us a good foundation for future advocacy.

Ten field workers who participated in the door to door process

Bonginkosi Ndlovu