

EV2 NEWS



WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION OF THE EMERGING VOICES 2 NEWSLETTER

This exciting new venture introduces the Centre for Education Rights and Transformation's (CERT) involvement with the Emerging Voices 2 (EV2) project. The main focus of this edition is on the emerging voices of the EV2 Youth Research, Learning and Advocacy (YRLA) team members in Gauteng and Limpopo. Stories and updates from the Eastern Cape EV2 projects will be featured in the next edition of the EV2 newsletter. This newsletter will be produced thrice a year during the course of the EV2 project.

As the masthead above shows, this newsletter serves as megaphone for the voices of the grassroots visions of community members who are critical scholars in their own right. They show their deep understanding of the role that relevant education and real employment opportunities need to play in changing their lives and communities for the better. Research participants are also encouraged to tell their stories in their mother-tongue to enable better expression and accessibility to their stories. We hope to publish more of these mother-tongue stories in the next edition of EV2 News.



While the first Emerging Voices project, Emerging Voices 1, focused on education in rural South African communities, EV2 has both a rural and urban focus to attain its objectives. This is reflected in the different communities and sites that are part of the EV2 team in the Vaal region where CERT works.



Communities reimagining post school education

CERT is part of the University of Johannesburg's (UJ) Faculty of Education. Its goals are anchored in the ideals of social justice and its vision and mission speaks to:

- Combining careful academic research and scholarship with social action
- Creating connections between research, teaching and community engagement
- Making a positive contribution to knowledge creation and social transformation

CERT encourages public intellectual engagement and community involvement. Community engagement occurs through research and advocacy projects, close relations with civil society, social movements, local community organisations, and serving on ministerial committees appointed by the Basic and Higher Education Ministries.

The EV2 newsletter is aimed at women and men of local communities, activists, students, educators, lecturers, the youth, workers and the unemployed, at those involved in community projects, the adult education sector, colleges, universities and anyone who wishes to engage with the post-schooling sector and 'developing a new vision for post-school education that better meets the priorities and interests of all South Africans'. All readers are encouraged to engage with the contents of this newsletter and its contributors and to encourage others to read about it and become involved in this discussion.

OVERVIEW OF THE EV2 PROJECT

Background: Today, more South Africans than ever before, over 1.3 million, are enrolled in post-school education. However, despite record enrolment, there is a great sense of frustration with post-school education. With high unemployment, especially among youth, many people with a matric, a post-school qualification or a learnership experience are wondering if the struggle toward post-school education and qualification was worth it.

In parallel with the enrolment surge, there has also been a dramatic increase in the number of youth (over three million) who are not in education, employment or training. Among youth in poor and historically marginalized communities, unemployment borders on 50%. Twenty years into the new dispensation and mass poverty and inequality persist – especially in poor and working class communities. Many youth have struggled to get some post-school education or get a job, but they face many obstacles and at the end of the day many feel stuck.

What is Emerging Voices 2: EV2 is a research project which will run from 2014-2015. The project seeks to engage communities in creating a new vision for post-school education. Post-school education includes community education, adult education, FET colleges and higher education.

Why do we need Emerging Voices? The EV2 project is designed to build a progressive network of researchers and community advocates and task this network with developing a new vision for post-school education which better meets the priorities and interests of all South Africans. In this research, we are asking the following questions: (i) what is the current reality of post-school education? (ii) is post-school education meeting the needs and interests of individuals and communities – particularly the interests of poor and working class communities? (iii) what is a new vision of post-school education that will better serve human and community development in South Africa? and (v) what do we need to do to bring that vision to life?

What are the goals for EV2? The main goal of EV2 is to *engage with communities to create a new, community-oriented, vision for post-school education.* This goal includes:

- gathering perspectives from key stakeholders and community members on the EV2 research questions
- mobilising communities around post-school issues that are important to them, to create linkages between different post-school institutions in the community and to stimulate action
- building advocacy and research capacity in communities and at universities

What is the main aim of the project? The vision of EV2 is that more research is not enough. Rather, for post-school education to better meet South Africa's diverse community and human development needs, especially among marginalized populations, we must engage in sustained and inclusive collaboration and dialogue to develop and advocate for a new vision from the grassroots up

Who is implementing EV2? EV2 is funded by the Department of Higher Education and Training and being implemented by members of the Education Policy Consortium. Research is taking place at four sites: two in the Eastern Cape and one each in Limpopo and Gauteng. Research is being implemented by three university-based research centres (though CERT at UJ, the Nelson Mandela Institute [NMI] at the University of Fort Hare and the Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training [CIPSET] at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University [NMMU]) and the Centre for Education and Policy Development (CEPD). CERT is implementing EV2 in the Sedibeng community in partnership with the Vaal University of Technology (VUT), the Sedibeng FET College, Public Adult Learning Centres, the Sebokeng Library and several community-based education organisations, such as the Sebokeng Reading Club, the Community Literacy and Numeracy group (CLING) in Kwa-Masiza, Nal'ibali and the Vaal Environmental Justice Alliance (VEJA).

What are the main EV2 Activities? Through EV2 activities, CERT will work with community research teams to implement individual interviews and facilitate community dialogues, workshops, and seminars and advocacy activities where community members discuss the current reality of post-schooling and discuss issues of youth development, community development and skills development and unemployment as they relate to post-school education. EV2 also plans to engage with local media, including local newspapers and community radio stations.



EV2 Events Calendar

Sedibeng FET College Institutional Dialogue on re-imagining post-school education

Sponsored by Sedibeng FET College, Sebokeng Campus and CERT

Featured speaker: Mondli Hlatshwayo, Researcher, CERT, University of Johannesburg (Invited)

Location: Sedibeng FET College, Sebokeng Campus

Date and time: TBD – June

Sedibeng FET College Student Debate: Does an FET college education prepare you for more than just a job?

Sponsored by Sedibeng FET College, Sebokeng Campus and CERT

Location: Sedibeng FET College, Sebokeng Campus

Date and time: TBD – June

Radio Programme [Emerging Voices: A community dialogue on post-school education and livelihoods]

Sponsored by Thetha FM and CERT

Location: Thetha FM station in Orange Farm

Date and time: Thetha FM will produce four episodes of the radio programme in May and June

Emerging Voices Youth Day Event

Event Theme: TBD

Sponsored by EV2 YRLA and CERT

Location: TBD

Date: June 16, 2014

Art Exhibition: Don't Be Afraid of the Shadows

An exhibition of artworks by Philippe Bousquet. Exhibition is designed to stimulate reflection and dialogue about where we are as a country and our vision for the future.

Sponsored by EV2 YRLA team and CERT

Location: Sebokeng Zone 13 Library

Dates: Thursday, June 5th (Opening Day Event) - Thursday, June 19th

Past events

Basic Research Training

Sponsored by CERT and EV2 YRLA

Featured trainer: Mondli Hlatshwayo, Researcher, CERT, University of Johannesburg

Location: Sebokeng, Zone 13 Library

Date: March 7, 2014

Human Rights Day Event for children in Sebokeng

Sponsored by Thetha FM, CERT and all the EV2 YRLA teams: This was a day of storytelling, educational games, music and lots of fun for the children, and a presentation on post-schooling and social issues for the parents.

Location: Sebokeng

Dates: Friday, March 21 (Human Rights Day), and all day event

Tour of Sebokeng with new CERT people and the YRLA team to the Sebokeng Library, Sebokeng Adult Centre, RYDO, and VUT

Sponsored by EV2 YRLA and CERT

Date: April 3, 2014

Writing Workshop

Trainers: Itumeleng Moabi (CERT) and Bonile Ngqiyaza

Training of EV2 team members on writing skills

Sponsored by CERT and EV2 YRLA

Location: Sebokeng, Zone 13 Library

Date: May 2, 2014

"Education, skills and employment" seminar by Salim Vally

Sponsored by CEPD, CERT and EV2 YRLA

Location: CEPD offices

Date: April 30, 2014

Youth Dialogue on Education and Social Issues

Sponsored by Rekaofela Youth Development Organization and CERT

Location: Sebokeng Zone 13 Library

Tuesday, May 27th, 2014

10:00 – 14:00

VUT institutional dialogue on re-imagining post-school education

Sponsored by VUT Social Justice and Transformation Unit and CERT

Featured speaker: Salim Vally, Director, CERT, University of Johannesburg

Location: VUT Main Campus

Thursday, May 29th, 2014



Members of the YRLA team



Human Rights Day Event in Sebokeng



The Youth Dialogue on Education and Social Issues event at RYDO

Site-based Research, Learning and Advocacy Team (SRLA)

What is the YRLA team?

The SRLA Team is a group of 8-10 community members who are involved in post school education, interested in EV2 Research and want to be involved in advocacy in the post-school sector. Members of the SRLA Team in Sedibeng include representatives from the Vaal University of Technology (VUT), Sedibeng FET College (FETC), Sebokeng Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs), Sebokeng Zone 13 community library and members of the community interested in issues of post school education sector.

The objectives of the SRLA are: (i) To engage in an ongoing dialogue and advocacy on EV2 research question. (ii) To build networks with and learn from other communities, and (iii) To strengthen the capacity of SRLA team members especially in areas of advocacy. The team will "accompany" EV2 activities and support implementation across Sedibeng so that they can facilitate, in a coordinated way, the answering of EV2 research questions and the implementation of EV2 activities.

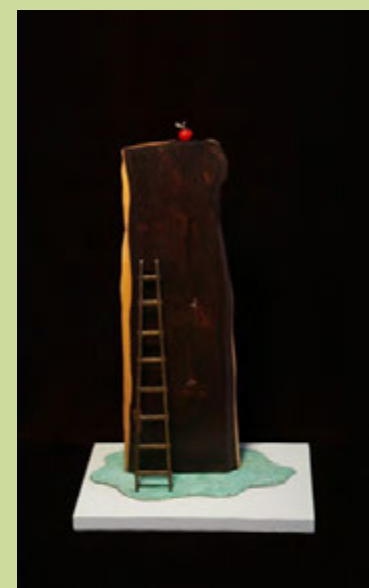
What to look forward to from the SRLA Team?

Collectively with CERT Researchers the team is organizing to facilitate several dialogues and seminars in May and June. Please see the Emerging Voices 2 Events Calendar.



Something to think about:

Perhaps you might want to start by sharing your thoughts on the sculpture to the right. Do you experience a gap between your 'hunger' for learning and the opportunities available to you? What feels 'out of reach'? And why? In your own life, what is the apple (your dream or goal) and what is the ladder that doesn't extend far enough to get you there? What would need to happen to extend the ladder for everyone? What are your thoughts.....?



I am hungry ; by Philippe Bousquet

Thank you to all the CERT team members who have helped put this newsletter together. This includes Nompumelelo Cebekhulu, David Balwanz, Sandile Zwane, Itumeleng Moabi, Mondli Hlatshwayo, Salim Vally, Mudney Halim (Layout), Yoemna Saint and Fatima Gabru (Managing Editor). Thank you to Carrie Pratt (an EV2 coordinator) and Brian Mandipaza (CEPD) for the use of their notes, graphics and pictures.

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To find out more about the EV2 project, visit the EV2 blog: <http://ev2news.wordpress.com/>; and the EV2 Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/emergingvoices2>

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Youth Research, Learning and Advocacy (YRLA) Team

What is the YRLA team?

The YRLA team is a group of 8-10 young people in the community who commit to researching two of the main themes of Emerging Voices 2: (i) A critique of the post-school landscape and (ii) To collecting youth perspectives to re-imagine future possibilities of post-school education.

Members of the YRLA Team in Sedibeng include representatives from the community organisations namely, Sebokeng Zone 13 Library Reading Club (SRC), Kwa-Masiza Community Literacy and Numeracy Group (CLING), Nal'ibali (PRAESA programme) and the Vaal Environmental Justice Alliance (VEJA). YRLA members and research participants include unemployed youth, FETC students, University students and other individuals interested on the issues of post school education and training.

What are the objectives of the YRLA team?

Based on the broader research question ***'What vision of post-school training will better serve human development in South Africa? What do we need to do to bring that vision to life?'*** The team formulates its own methodology and through creative activities implement the research and ultimately capture the emerging voices of young people in relation to post school education and training. YRLA Team activities include; interviewing young people and capturing livelihood stories, organising and facilitating youth dialogues, and advocate through writing newspaper articles and sparking radio dialogues.

The YRLA team receives support from CERT including coaching on research, writing and advocacy, mentoring from senior researchers and media experts from CERT.

What to look forward to from the YRLA Team?

- The team is bringing the Human Rights Art Exhibition to Sebokeng during Youth Month (see Emerging Voices 2 Events Calendar).
- Radio dialogue on Theta FM on various issues coming out of their interviews and youth dialogue activities.



YRLA Team with DJ Mochacho



INTERVIEW WITH DJ MOCHACHO

Meeting at Theta FM with DJ Mochacho (Charles), with Mpumi and David on EV2, to discuss his views on post-schooling.

When DJ Mochacho matriculated from Beverly Hills High School in the Vaal he was directed and encouraged by many, particularly his accounting teacher, to pursue a career in accounting because he was good in the subject. Like many other young people after Matric, Mochacho wanted to further his studies and start a career but experienced economic challenges. Fortunately for him, his uncle stepped forward to help pay for the tuition at Vaal University of Technology (VUT). But, after spending a semester doing accounting (as encouraged by many people during secondary school days) he realised that he actually didn't like the course and that he was developing a strong interest in Media. He wanted to switch to some kind of a media course, but it wasn't offered at the University, which only offered communication and PR courses. He wanted to something in the field of radio personnel. He then told his uncle to stop paying the fees because the accounting course was not doing any good for him and quit VUT. He did this without telling his parents - his mother was a domestic worker at the time, and his father who was working at the nearby Iscor steel manufacturing plant.

However, Mochacho had already identified a media college where he could go and pursue the 'right' and desired career in media, so he did some part-time work and went to work at a local record store. When he had saved up enough money he enrolled for a degree in media studies/radio at Damelin. "Such courses are only offered by private institutions, and are expensive", said Mochacho. He only told his parents about his change of study direction the day he graduated from Damelin. Thankfully, his father was just glad that he had now had a degree in "something." But, it was still not all plain sailing from there. Even though he had this degree in media studies, he still could not find a job.

It was through a family member that Mochacho managed to get a job at the then parastatal steel company ISCOR (now international steel producer ArcelorMittal) doing inventory and driving a forklift. He shares that he had no experience in these jobs, nor did he have a qualification for it, except his driver's licence. During his time at Iscor he moved around from job to job within the company learning different skills, none of which he had ever been introduced to during his schooling years. He stayed with at Iscor for five years, as it helped pay the bills. While working at Iscor, DJ Mochacho continued to DJ at local events not because this was his passion. His Iscor salary helped him to acquire his own equipment. His passion for working as a DJ started to impact on his work at ISCOR, as he started missing work more and more because of his DJ commitments. Finally, he quit ISCOR, continued with his work as a DJ and went to work at Theta FM. As he rose through the ranks in this job and acquired new skills on this journey, again he noticed that all these skills were nothing that schooling had prepared him for. While this way of working towards his dreams took a long time, he was determined and stuck with it to make his dreams come true.

Reflecting on his career and finding his dream, DJ Mochacho says that he went back to his accounting teacher from school and told him "You misled me". Remember that Mochacho was advised to get into the field of accounting, be a chartered accountant or any profession as long as it was in line with accounting - one of the narrow fields of skills that current education systems and advocates tell students to follow. DJ Mochaho says that this narrowness leaves no space for schooling or learning for informal careers.

Commenting on one of his friend's, Mochacho says that "this guy got a degree in a type of civil engineering at VUT in 2003, and he is still waiting for a job." Another friend of the DJ has been working at SASOL since he graduated. "He hates chemicals, he gets sick, and he doesn't look at work beyond the paycheck/month end. All of these guys had interests in media. But" he adds, "You know these old guys [ISCOR employees] don't have the qualifications while they do have skills and experience in the working environment. And these young guys with engineering degrees get into the work environment with their qualifications and they are paid more than the older skilled and experience guys."

Mochacho feels that this is unfair. He asked if there is a blocked pipe, "Who do you call? The very same old employee with skills and experience and not the guy who just obtained his Degree. They may have trouble reading or with numbers, but they can still get things done that the young men with degrees can't. And what do they get R20 000/month compared to the old men getting R8 000". Relating to informal learning and livelihoods he also highlights how a mother in the township is selling 'vetkoek'/'Magwinya' and sending all her kids to varsity from the profit she makes.

"Yet, some of those kids are coming back home and living with her after qualifying". This is because they cannot get jobs. Then, he tells us about the "Guy who builds a motor bike using a bicycle. This," he adds, "is without any formal qualification. For lack of a better word, we need to talk about the 'informality of qualification' - where you can have the skill without the qualification".

Emphasising the issue of informal/unrecognised learning, the DJ has set up an intern program at the radio station to help young people who have passion in media and are financially challenged, to register in formal institutions. "What do these kids come in with - no qualification. But all of them can learn different skills within the media industry. There is always a team of 4-5 people - developing a script, thinking about angles, events, marketing etc. and they don't need formal qualification to be accepted in the programme". Out of the 25 learners that DJ had on this programme, some of them have now been successfully employed at other radio stations. Others have been given short-term contracts, or are learning other skills within Theta FM. To add to these challenges of work and skills requirements, DJ Mochacho points out the problem of corruption and the buying of jobs. "Also," he adds that "the boss won't hire you if you have higher level of skill / qualification".

Sharing his thought on what he thinks would be interesting for Theta FM to engage the community on is the issue of "Izikhothane". He asked about the lavish spending that happens in the township and whether it does anything for anyone at the end of the day or if people benefit from this kind of lifestyle. Concluding his story Mochacho states that while he is earning less than what he used to earn in the corporate world he is happy where he is (Theta FM) and he loves what he is currently busy with and asks "What is success without happiness".



THANDI MABONA

My name is Thandi Mabona. I'm a Story Sparker of Nal'ibali, which is a reading for enjoyment campaign that is a project under PRAESA, University of Cape Town. I am also a member of the YRLA Team that researches post-schooling and advocates for young people to come up with better ideas to use their knowledge and skills. I am involved in the CLING library in Evaton North where we deal with literacy and numeracy for children. I am also an Activate! Member that empowers young people about leadership and knowing themselves better.

What stands out for me is that being part of this team is we want skills that makes us change drivers and not followers.



YRLA Strategic planning meeting in Sebokeng

BONGANI MTHEMBU

I am Bongani Mthembu, a father of three (two boys and one girl). I ventured into politics in 1992. Student politics interested me and I was recruited to join the Pan-African Student's organisation (PASO) when I was doing Standard 6 (now Grade 8) in 1994 at Mohaladitoe Secondary School. When I was doing Matric at Dinokaneng Secondary School, I became the secretary of the Learner's Representative Council. I did Matric in 2001 and tried to further my studies at BMT College in HR Management in 2002, but did not finish because of lack of financial resources. During 2006 I attended a basic paralegal training by Black Sash. During the 2010 World Cup I attended a customer service skills workshop from Ulwazi Tsebo Consulting Company.

In 2004 I co-founded the South African Unemployed Youth Forum as its chairperson. In 2006 I became part of the Sedibeng Social Development Youth Forum as an organiser. Then, in 2007 I was elected as the regional Secretary of the Anti-Privatisation Forum, and later as the regional Chairperson in the Vaal Region. In 2005 I participated in PAC politics and was elected as Regional Secretary of PAYCO and AZANIA. I am a founder of the Ulwazi Environmental Youth Project, serve as its coordinator. I also serve as the Chairperson of the Westside Park Community Crisis Committee.

The following is Bongani's Emerging Voice on post-schooling issues based on his life experiences:

I came up with a number of challenges that seem to prevail in a number of areas within the education sector.

- Lack of good basic education which leads to high dropout rate from foundation educations, which is ECD, sports and recreation.
- Educators do not teach during month end.
- There is a high dropout rate at universities.
- Many learners are good in sports, but due to lack of sporting facilities they are channelled to do wrong things by the system.
- In most Gauteng province schools even if the facilities are there, professionals are not there to assist.
- In most schools learners are forced to do science even if they are not interested.
- Life orientation should provide guidance or it must be replaced by a sport one sporting code.

My recommendations:

- I noted that FET schools should implement skills development courses like bricklaying, carpentry and mechanical skills, jointly with Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) institutions.
- Free education should be prioritised – particularly for promising students and disadvantaged youth.
- GDE should ensure that from the Foundation Phase (Grade R) that teaching and learning is good.
- Teaching colleges should be re-opened.
- Popular education should be recognised in order to assist our communities.

PINNO MOROKOANE

My name is Pinno Morokoane. I was born on July 4 in 1981. I was raised by my father and mother, Ephraim and Lydia Monokoane and I have two brothers and 1 sister. I am the last born in the family. I started attending primary school at Makgetha Primary then went to Setjhaba-sohle Secondary and El-Shaddhai Christian School. While at high school I found myself very interested in activities like debates and public speaking and I also joined the ANCYL and became a BEC member. Later, I joined the ANC. After high school, I got a job at the Riviera on Vaal hotel as a car washer, where I worked for a year and a half. After that I joined the banqueting department and later became a bar tender and a skipper (boat driver) at the same hotel. I then realised that I like working more on community projects, because that is where I see many problems and challenges. I have been a member of LoveLife and Toastmasters International. I recently joined the YRLA research group of CERT, where we are researching post-schooling.

NICO SEROBE

My Name is Mozandele Abednock Serobe. I was born in 07 March 1976. I attended my primary at Maboelleng for two years, and then moved to Lesabasaba Primary. For secondary school I moved to Mohaladitoe Secondary school where I completed my Grade 8 to Grade 12. Once I had completed my grade 12, I went to Vaal University of Technology (then called Vaal Technikon).

At high school I did commercial subjects (Business Economics, Accounting, Maths, English, Southern Sotho and Afrikaans). I then did Human Resources Management at Vaal University of Technology, and then did Information Technology Technical Support level 4 at Jonda Learnership Academy (while supported by Isset Seta). I also did a call center training Course at Cornerstone H.R. (at Randburg) where I did an Inbound, Outbound and Computer course. Finally, I have done a course for an Estate Agent's course through Ditasa, Learnership Academy, where I obtained my NQF level 4 as an Estate Affairs Agent. Currently, I am a member of Toastmasters International, where I have been for more than ten years now, where we deal with leadership and communication skills. Socially, I am a member of a local School Governing Body. I have also served as a treasurer, secretary and now as the Deputy Chairperson of the Community Library Committee, and serve as a Chairperson of the Sebokeng Library Reading Club. This is a project for children under NGO called Ulwazi Youth Environment Project. I got to hear about EV2 through the Librarian Mr Radebe and am involved with the project as a member of the Sebokeng YRLA team.



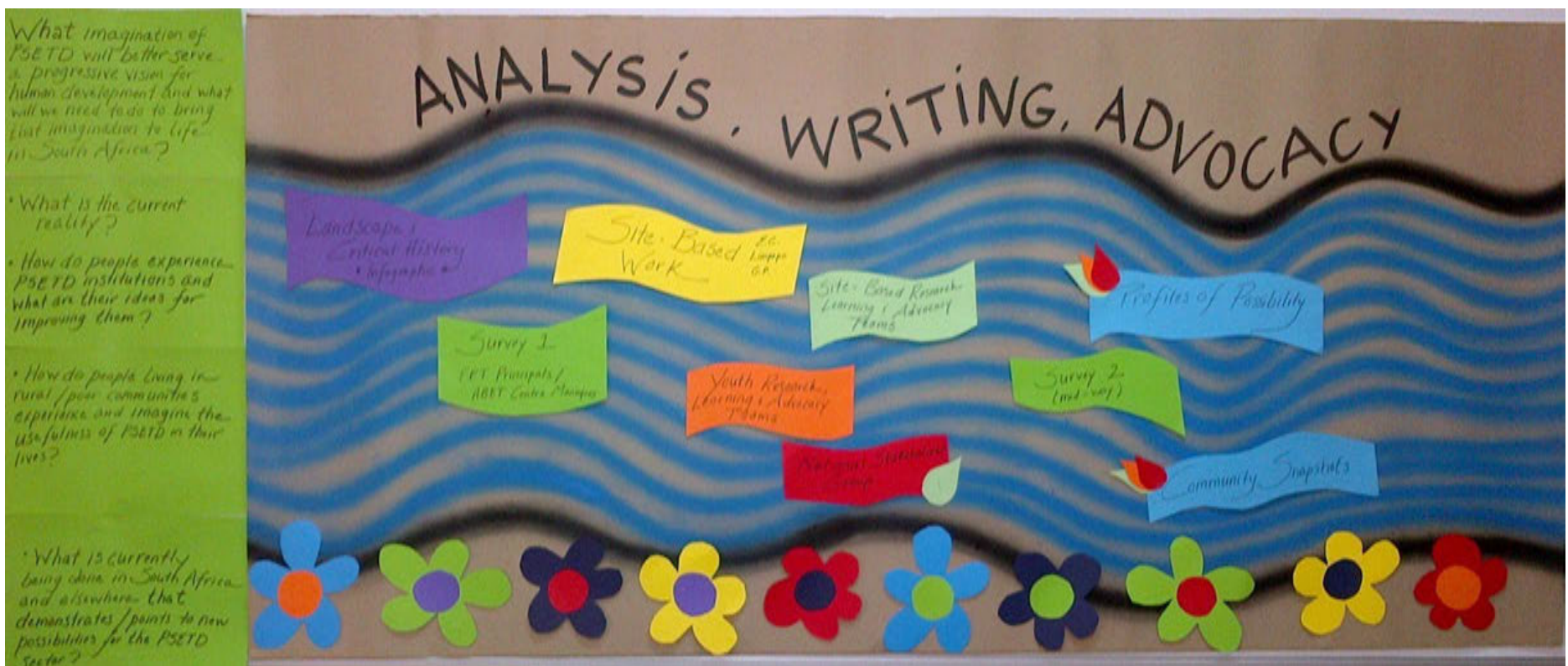
JEREMIAH MBELE

I was born on 16 December 1997, in Polokong on the outskirts of Sebokeng. I live with my mother, my sister and two of my sister's children. My mother works as a domestic worker, while my sister is a self-employed hair dresser. I attend school at Botebo-Tsebo Secondary and I am the co-founder of the school's debating team called the Leadership 2020. I work in partnership with a girl by the name of Aletta. We took the initiative to start this team because we saw the need for it.

The team has over 30 members and is ready to challenge other schools. We help young people to become good speakers. My mentor, Mr. TL Mosia, introduced me to several organisations that have helped me build my confidence. These organisations include Toastmasters, and Emerging Voices 2. I am planning to open a book club and to have young people shape their lives and bring back good into their lives.

I am a Christian and a singer at the church I go to, and I do some public speaking training for the little children there. I have a passion for speaking to make differences in people's lives. I believe that I am a very talkative person and that talking should build broken hearts and not destroy them. I always encourage the people I train to speak to make a change. I would like to be an internationally recognised speaker. I can achieve this with the help of the people around me. I see myself as a future host/film director/actor. All in all a leader, and a GREAT leader. I have gone through hardships in my life, but all I did was to pick up the pieces and carry on. I have a love for music, and I wish I could say dance, but I was told that I am too stiff and I can't dance. I also love reading books and watching great movies. I recently read a book on leadership.





ABOUT THE CLING KWA-MASIZA READING CLUB

The CLING Kwa-Masiza reading club operates out of the Kwa-Masiza hostel in the Emfuleni municipality, in the Vaal. This hostel was built in the late seventies by ISCOR (steel manufacturer) to provide men-only accommodation for their migrant workers. It has since become an overcrowded facility which is in the midst of major renovations to make them into safe, family units.

This CLING group operates out of an old shipping container and works on mentoring between 50 and 70 children, aged between 7 and 12, by assisting them with homework, providing storytelling, playing games, as well as facilitating the reading club. The reading club has established a relationship with the local library.

The reading club faces a number of challenges which include the need for a more appropriate venue, that the toilets are leaking and are not being cleaned, that its members do not feel that they have the capacity to teach children who do not attend school and do not know how to read and write. Additionally, there is a shortage of SeSotho literature books, a safe place to keep its books, including book shelves. The group also does not enjoy the support of some of the parents in the area. Members of this group have outlined that the "new" education system is poor and that most of the children do not know how to read and write, even those that are in higher grades. It also does not have sufficient stationery supplies, such as writing pads, pens, pencils, drawing books, and so on.

Some of the successes of this group include the request from supportive parents to extend the hours of the reading clubs. The initial club time was from 10:00 to 12:00 on Saturdays and now this has been extended to 13:00. The group is also supported by the local Block Committee. A Nal'ibali supplement in the local newspaper, Vaal Stir, also assists in encouraging parents to read with/for their children.



YRLA team members— Sedibeng post schooling education sector tour

THE VAAL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ALLIANCE (VEJA)

VEJA was formed in 2004 and launched on 10 August 2006. This group is an alliance of community-based organisation from Bophelong, Sharpville, Sebokeng, Sasolburg, Boipatong and Evaton. One of VEJA's main objectives is to promote the culture of environmental awareness and sustainable development in these areas. Activities include workshops, protests at polluting companies, and the monitoring of school programmes each year. VEJA has 4 teams or departments, which are the water team, the air quality team, the waste management team and the environmental health team. The group is recognised by the environmental department and other international organisations. VEJA engages on different levels: local, national and international, and is currently working on implementing a 3-year water research programme in the area.



Informal businesses on Moshoeshoe Street, Sebokeng

VOICES FROM SEKHUKHUNE

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Sekhukhune EV2 project is supported by the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD) and the project is currently working with the Ikaheng ABET Centre, and the Nchabeleng YRLA team, in the Sekhukhune municipal district, Limpopo province.

Contact has been made with the **Ikaheng ABET Centre** and the project has been discussed with the circuit coordinator, teachers and the learners at this Centre. The team has also introduced the project to the ABET teachers and captured pictures of the ABET teachers and learners. The ABET teachers have promised to make contacts with ABET graduates in the surrounding area for EV2 fieldworkers to introduce the project to them, as well as recruit those who are interested to contribute and be part of EV2. The reason that the team chose the ABET Centre was the opportunity it offers to work with the nearby Sekhukhune FET college, and to see how these institutions view the PSETD.

The Nchabeleng YRLA team took pictures of their community that best describes their life as youth in relation to PSETD. The group members also wrote their ideas on what the current post schooling system 'feels like' to them, which includes a critique of the post schooling system and their best ideas for the future of PSETD. They have also shared their written work and poems amongst themselves and discussed these ideas. The Nchabeleng YRLA team plans to tour the schools in the surrounding area to share their ideas of PSETD.

Thus far the outputs that have been completed include the pictures of the community and their written work. This is an indication that the youth have embraced the EV2 project and see it as exciting and having the potential to change their lives in different ways. To date, the coaching for the Nchabeleng YRLA team was on how to write a script for a photo documentary. The writing coach took the group through the process and stages of writing a script.

Lessons learnt thus far include using group leaders to lead sessions; that advocacy work is growing from engagement with EV2; and that community radio stations in this region has limited reach and ability to help change the situation. Challenges identified are keeping the group together for the duration of this year. There is serious drop-out happening and one reason is research fatigue. The youth also want to be doing something that helps them in terms of acquiring skills or work that will help them earn a living.



Members of the YRLA team from NMI in East London, CIPSET in Port Elizabeth, CERT in Johannesburg and CEPD in Limpopo, while visiting Constitutional Hill in Johannesburg

EVANS SHAKU

Post-Schooling

Mindful that the issue addressed herein involves a highly complex process requiring the interactions of a number of actors, viz., the national, Provincial and Local Departments of Education, as well as traditional authorities and youth brigades, it has become common knowledge that the issue of post-schooling has so far affected the morale and thwarted the aspirations of the youth in general. The majority of young people in South Africa were born into poverty and we still live in these circumstances. We have made great strides in improving our educational levels so that we may be able to break out of the cycle of poverty.

Yet, young, unemployed men and women with Matric and varying tertiary qualifications are scattered all over our country with a continual worry about their situation. This has led them to be more despondent about government politics concerning unemployment, poverty alleviation and skills development programs. Government has periodically introduced measures aimed at assisting the despondent youth, but such efforts have been found to be wanting. But the reality is that while all this information is being written in black and white documents, the reality is that the implementation is a big problem.

The results of this crisis has some frustrating consequences in our lives. A person who is unemployed his/her personal pride and dignity is affected adversely and the standard of living declines. Some resort to illicit business practices as our sisters become prostitutes, crime, drug abuse and trafficking. More suicides, murders, fatal heart attacks and admissions to psychiatric hospitals are the broad consequences that are fueled by an increase rate of unemployment. This further poses a big risk of social living in the future.

In conclusion, there should be plenty of implemented programs aimed at the championing the challenges that prevent young people from finding work exposure and youth skills training. FET (Further Education Training) colleges should be closer to the rural communities as a key component of empowerment and reconstruction in rural areas. This would help young rural matriculants to further their studies and hence to fill the gap of skills shortage and of educated and qualified people in South Africa.



A closed and unused Fetakgomo Hydroponic agriculture project in Sekhukhune, Nchabeleng community

ODELIA DEBELIA

Life is so hard for me after Matric (staying at home)

I fell pregnant during my Matric year, but managed to pass. It was not the way I wanted to pass, but it was something. At first it was alright because, I was willing to take care of my child. The second year I told myself that I'm going to look after myself and my child, but the year after I was going to further my studies. It then happened, but I recently started to like being a mother. Although deep in my heart I had this envy of people who are my same age and who matriculated in the same year as me. They are going further in their studies and I want to be doing the same as them.

I wanted to become a paramedic after completing my Matric. After I had my children things changed with my parents. Now, they have calmed down and they want to give me money for my Driver's License and I wish I could find information about paramedic schools and even if there is an internship, it will be okay. Studying at home is not an option, it's boring. Sometimes I wish I had something to do in the meantime. I also want to go back school so that in future I do not have to depend on any other people. I want to have to live a life that where I don't bother anybody when I want anything, and I want to have and give my child a brighter future.

Through my research I have identified various reasons why students remain unemployed after graduating:

- *Many graduates were found to be not suitable to fill shortages at management level, or struggled with a lack of soft skills such as time management, communication, creative thinking and to work independently. The most salient reason for graduate unemployment, however is the lack of practical experience. And now, five years after the curriculum if you have the OBE certificate you can't use it. That is why many people are jobless with degrees, degrees and certificates.*
- *Many people feel that more energy should be put into skills training programs for youngsters who are not in school or who cannot find work. However, it is not easy to do this as non-governmental organisations find it difficult to get registered and find funding for these kind of programmes.*
- *Fourteen people said that they were forced to have sex against their will, and did not complete their studies because of the responsibilities of looking after their children. They think that staying at home won't help them, as being a parent doesn't stop them from wanting to fulfil their dreams. Most of them are starting to enjoy parenting, but they want to go back to school and need to find someone to look after their children. That is a big problem as it is not easy to leave their children at home. They said that it was not their dream to have a child now. But it happened and they are willing to accept it and willing to do everything for their child. I think that everything for everyone must happen with education, and that is why they are willing to study and try hard to get what they want.*

NTESENG PHAKWAGO

Current post-schooling system issues of young people

We often find that the young people affected by this come from poor family background, as families who come from these backgrounds struggle the most when it comes to concentrating in class and participation in school activities. Young people also sometime feel helpless even after their secondary education, due to lack off financial aid to further studies. Also the lack of information about how to access financial aid schemes and bursaries makes these young people more depressed. The other factor affecting youth in schools is peer pressure, which may lead young people to engage themselves in alcohol and drug abuse. This affects their studies in a negative way because they won't be able to fully concentrate on their studies.

In other cases, abandoned facilities e.g. Sekhukhune College of Education also fuels this issue, because some of the learners who passed their Matric/Grade 12 their families can't afford to send them to FETs and universities. These higher institutions are expensive with other costs such as books, study materials, residence and travelling. Then, if facilities like Sekhukhune College of Education can be opened, this will help most young people from poor family backgrounds to be closer to access higher education, as this facility is closer to most villages here in Fetakgome. Young people are saying this will help them to cut expenses like residence and travelling.

Meanwhile, the other serious matter barricading young people getting a proper higher/tertiary education is the issue of study fees, as we know that most of us from the rural areas of Fetakgome are from poor families, who can't afford to send our children to tertiary institutions. This results in most of the young people feeling helpless and roaming the streets without a good direction of where life will lead them to.



Unemployed youth in Sekhukhune (Nchabeleng) holding their certificates.



ABET learners & Teachers



Youth in Nchabeleng community resorting to music as a way of keeping themselves busy.

Ideas for the future of PSETD

Considering how much South Africa is in need of certain skills to enforce its economic development, our government and other private sectors must take charge in order to develop and equip young people from rural areas with different skills. By building training centers this will help young people to acquire skills, mostly in the technical and information fields. By doing this these centers will also enable young people to access the internet and other essential information.

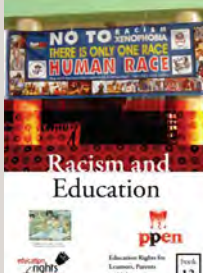
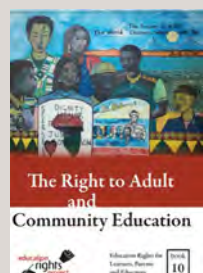
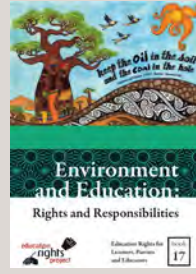
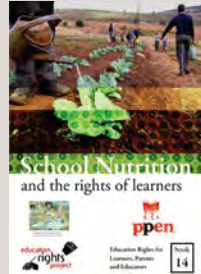
Accessibility to bursaries for young people from the rural areas of the Sekhukhune district will also help our learners to get a good education, which will enable them to play a vital role in economic development and transformation. Financial Aid schemes like NSFAS must also strive to fund young people in their studies. By doing this they will give courage to young people to take their education more seriously, no matter what their family background is. This will give them access to education and help them make their own career choices in their lives.



Sources of livelihoods in Motetema include crop and chicken farming.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE THROUGH CERT:

In support of the Education Rights Projects, CERT has produced the following popular booklets, which are available for free download at <http://erpbooklets.wix.com/> or <http://erpbooklets.wordpress.com/> edu4all. Hard copies are available in limited supply; please contact CERT by email or telephone for copies of the booklets or the DVD on the Vulindlela Reading Clubs, which outlines a practical way on how and why to form a reading club in your area.



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SEMINAR ADDRESSES BARRIERS TO EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT IN SOUTH .

ALIA HALIM

Is unemployment caused by a lack of education and skills, or is this a myth? Emerging Voices 2 (EV2) in conjunction with The Centre for Education Rights and Transformation (CERT) and the Centre for Education Policy and Development (CEPD) held a seminar themed “Education, skills and employment” on 30th April 2014 to address this question. Students, educators and members of civil society organisations gathered at the CEPD offices in Park Town to participate in discussions on the relationship between education skills and unemployment. The director of CERT, which is based at UJ’s Bunting Road campus, Salim Vally led the discussion.

The seminar is part of a series of discussions organised by EV2 to broaden the discourse around education matters by providing focussed input to stimulate dialogue among those involved in both formal and non-formal education. The gathering started off with the seating arrangements and set up of a formal speech. Vally then suggested that seating arrangements be changed in order to create a more relaxed environment, as well as to avoid the hierarchy of the dominant speech setting arrangement. Seating arrangements were changed to allow for interaction between participants, and this created an environment more conducive to discussion and interaction.

The seminar was well attended by youth from areas where reading groups are operating, which include Freedom Park, Sebokeng and other areas of the Vaal. When counted along with other attendees, there were over 50 participants interested in the topic at hand and the outcome of its deliberations. The students were particularly interested in the addressing of post-schooling education, with the emphasis on evaluating the present state of education in South Africa and its relevance to creating jobs.

Vally sketched a picture of the current reality of education in South Africa, and observed that the system is found wanting from early childhood development, through basic education and up to tertiary level. He noted that the majority of youth in this country do not have access to the means to acquire skills needed for employment and livelihoods and discussed the issue of basic education infrastructure lacking at the schooling level. “The majority of our youth do not have access to acquire the most basic skills like reading, since 90% of schools do not have functioning libraries and educators who inspire students about the value of books. Multilingualism is part of the policy, but its importance is not understood. Also there are not enough resources and effort devoted to its success,” stated Vally.

A student from the Vaal, and an active member of the Sebokeng Reading Club argued that present electoral promises made by parties who are contesting the elections are not realistic. Parties are promising to create jobs, some as many as 6 million; but they fail to make the link between education and employment; and to spell out their party policy and action in this regard. It was further argued that the neo-liberal economic system will always have unemployment as a consequence, and it is in fact in the interest of capital accumulation to have a pool of unemployed workers.

There is also a disjuncture between the type of education and the skills required for employment. Participants argued that education institutions do not necessarily provide the skills required to be absorbed into industry. The example of the Vaal University of Technology and the large metal industries in close proximity to Vanderbijl Park was cited as an example of this disjointed planning. Discussion ensued whether institutions are geared towards providing skills that are in line with industry requirements. Ironically, it was noted there is an expectation from industry and corporates for the state to supply the skills through education institutions to meet their demands. Yet, people might have the skills; but cannot get the jobs. It was asked whether we should rely on business to make economic decisions. “So should we not question the economic structure of society,” Vally questioned further. He explained why education is about skills knowledge, but much more than that. It is also about humanising society, fighting against discrimination and human rights abuses and invoking critical thinking.

The seminar discussed the question of skills, and that the lack of skills is not always the reason for unemployment. The example of the textile industry in the Western Cape, which had retrenched thousands of skilled people related to that industry was mentioned; the high levels of unemployment in the region is therefore not as a result of the lack of skills, but other factors such as the dumping of cheap imports created through exploitative sweat shop labour practices elsewhere. Corporates also use the power they are given under the guise of providing jobs to negotiate favourable conditions to maximise profits. A case in point is BHP Billiton and its concessions in electricity costs for their aluminium smelters. Vally added that it is clear that bottom line profits for corporates is a determinant factor for unemployment and that they are holding society to ransom.

The outcome of this seminar had evidently provided a wider outlook on the approach that has to be taken in terms of education and unemployment. It was agreed that much more discussion is needed to influence our education system to be more sensitive to people’s needs, and to be geared towards better serving human development requirements. Vally encouraged participants to engage with the CERT booklet “Youth Unemployment” (see “Resources available through CERT” on Page 7).

ABOUT THE NAL’IBALI READING FOR ENJOYMENT CAMPAIGN

Nal’ibali (isiXhosa for “here’s the story”) is a national reading-for-enjoyment campaign to spark children’s potential through storytelling and reading. The organisation is driven by the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA), Times Media and a growing number of partners. Nal’ibali’s mission is to create the conditions across South Africa that inspire and sustain reading-for enjoyment practices in a variety of settings using African languages and English.

In Gauteng, Dube Village resident and Nal’ibali Cluster Mentor, Bongani Godide, is working hard to ensure that the magic of stories and reading is brought to life in the lives and homes of under-resourced communities. Committed to sharing the potential that stories can spark in children, Godide is setting up and supporting reading clubs in his role as a Nal’ibali Cluster Mentor. Through the campaign, and together with the help of a number of Story Sparkers, he has set up reading clubs in Pimville, Vlakfontein and Klipspruit and is now focussed on setting up clubs in Westonaria.

These Nal’ibali-supported reading clubs provide relaxed, safe environments for children to read, tell stories and talk about what they are reading with children of all ages. The group members also have fun writing, singing songs and playing games related to reading and writing, because, as children experience stories and books, they grow to love them and become better at reading and writing, says Godide.

In order to do this, Godide has received specialised training from PRAESA, which is co-driving the Nal’ibali campaign and which has 20 years’ experience in community reading clubs and early literacy development.

“We are all born to tell stories, memorise and make sense of life in story form. So, Nal’ibali uses the power of stories – oral and written, and in as many languages as possible – to inspire children to want to read and write,” comments PRAESA director, Carole Bloch.

Godide works hard at ensuring that the reading clubs he helps set up are sustainable and make use of existing resources and volunteers in the community. He aims to inspire those around him because anyone, old or young, at all levels of reading and in any language can get involved. “Through telling stories we learn how to behave to belong in our societies; we learn about morals, self-respect and identity. Stories are the bearers of culture, language and history and can be used to help shape our children into intelligent, compassionate community members,” concludes Godide.

For those wanting to get reading or wanting to set up their own reading clubs, they can visit the Nal’ibali website: www.nalibali.org; the Nal’ibali mobi site: www.nalibali.mobi; the Nal’ibali Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/nalibaliSA>; and the Nal’ibali Twitter feed: @nalibaliSA. Godide can also be contacted on: Bongani.praesa@gmail.com



Participants at the seminar

