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Finding solutions for Africa



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Hearing the students' voice

By Ben Turok

There is an unnatural vacuum in our society: the voices of our youth and students cannot be heard. Even the ANC Youth League has gone relatively silent since the departure of Julius Malema. Do they have nothing to say?

In the apartheid era, the National Union of Students (NUSAS) was often in the public eye. Based largely in the white universities and driven by liberal and social democratic values, NUSAS fought against many injustices and reactionary measures. Internationally, student movements have led public opinion, from the anti-Vietnam War protests in the US to the young activists of the Arab Spring.

In South Africa today, our students seem to be noticed only when they trash a campus or throw bricks at security guards. These exercises in futility seem to reflect a general lack of political and social consciousness and, above all, a lack of solid organisation. Few SRCs rise above the day-to-day administrative tasks given them by university authorities. Few campuses have student organisations that represent the real problems of students.

Many black students arrive from rural or township schools, ill prepared to maintain their places in fast-flowing university courses, resulting in devastating drop-out numbers. A vice-chancellor told me that the university was obliged to admit many students

from previously disadvantaged backgrounds to demonstrate their willingness to transform, while knowing full well that many will not make it. Where are the students discussing this kind of thing?

When are we going to see students protesting against the corruption and cronyism plaguing our country? Week after week, exposures of wrongdoing shock us into anxiety about where the country is heading. Students will face these conditions when they graduate and find places in business or government. Are they not concerned about the dangers?

A further problem is the culture and orientation of our universities, which have yet to remodel themselves to fit the context of Africa. Too many courses follow curricula and texts rooted in the UK and the US; too many lecturers were trained in the West; too few recognise the talent to be found in the rest of the continent. No wonder our African students find it difficult to settle in.

And so this issue of *New Agenda* is dedicated to our students, to examining where they come from, what moves them, what their aspirations are, and how their problems may be addressed. This is an urgent matter that requires the attention of all of us, not least the ANC itself. We must ensure that hundreds of thousands of young people are willing and able to help make our country a better place for all. 🇿🇦

Fadzai Chitiyo performed the bulk of editorial work for this issue. **Dr Thierry Luescher-Mamashela** also contributed a great deal by soliciting articles and advising on content.



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More than just roads

Reflections of a young leader:

The answer is in yourself

By **Fadzai Chitiyo**, guest co-editor

Fadzai Chitiyo (B.Soc.Sci. in economics and international relations) is a graduate student at the University of Cape Town

Over the past couple of months, I have been intimately involved in a project to understand the values and aspirations of South African youth. Such a task was both exciting and daunting because it called for a level of introspection that I was not sure I was ready for. Locating myself within the discourse, I was confronted with an image of myself that I recognised was not my true self. So many young people struggle with the challenge to see ourselves differently from our lived realities. The struggle with unemployment, the challenge of articulating our values in a globalised world that informs and conforms our culture, the battle of ideas that goes on within higher education institutions and naturalises a capitalist ideology: all of this gives me, and others like me, a fractured mirror to reflect on who we are. We are given a jaded view of ourselves.

Last year, as the UCT-SRC undergraduate academic chair, I attended the New Hope summit hosted by the SRC of the University of the Western Cape. A raging debate consumed me. After seven months in office, I attempted to articulate my role as a young student leader in Africa and the contribution I could make. Reflecting on this in a quiet space, I wrote:

There is a sense of disillusion that I get when I question how real our impact as leaders really is. I guess we have some impact; if these institutions were left to their own devices the students would feel it. Who would fight for excluded students? Who would provide the student view on teaching and learning? Who would argue for affordable fees? But is this all that my role comes down to: responses to bureaucratic concerns? The impact of that kind of leader is short-lived. But a leader whose voice and knowledge carries beyond their

own understanding, whose concerns are greater than their personal space; a leader on the ground, not cooped up in the office; a leader and student who is conscious and aware of their debt to society? Such a leader should be able to make an impact in society.

I have realised that there is a distinction between short-term and long-term vision. Our youth leaders have learned how to plan for short-term goals and to strategise around their year in office in the same way the state has changed our economic policy countless times (RDP, GEAR, NGP and now NDP). We unconsciously practise an inability to articulate the future of our nation and indeed our continent. As the youth, we have lost the ability to think and critique those in our communities who do not represent us with integrity. Why does this happen?

I come to the conclusion that neither the old nor the young really know what OUR hopes, aspirations and values should look like. The question really is: what kind of leaders are we? What hope do we carry into this summit, and into our future?

This was at the back of my mind this year as I pursued this project of learning from both the older generation and fellow students what generation X is all about. What I heard frightened me.

Overall, the message from the older generation is that our generation's mandate is to unite our society, to be successful (often measured materially), to confront the challenges of building a democracy and new



universities – but with no real advice on how to go about this. They are just as perplexed as we are. A huge parenting or mentoring gap exists whereby the values and leadership of the older generation do little to inspire the youth to look towards the future.

On the other hand, the youth and youth leaders spoke of the challenges of poverty and unemployment. Confronted with these problems, the youth have embraced the capitalist dream of pursuing material self-interest without a second thought for the future effects it will have on their communities. The question of values and aspirations is far from the minds of most of our young people. Instead, the pressure to make money and to be successful cripples them.

If there is such a disjuncture between the two generations – a clear case of chaos, with no transfer of responsibilities – then what is the hope for the youth in Africa? I was left with greater confusion and a fear that the boiling pot would soon spill over.

Once again, I looked at myself in the mirror and a sense of emptiness and frustration came over me. But, while standing in this emptiness, I understood something very significant. The exercise I had embarked on was not futile. Not only would it assist others to understand the challenges and opportunities of this generation, it allowed me to recognise that the answer

to the challenges of our time is not “out there”. The answer is not what is reflected in the mirror of our current situation. The answer is me looking at the mirror, me confronting the image and choosing to look beyond it. The answer is inside you and ahead of all of us. It is this generation becoming conscious of our realities and choosing to find solutions from within our experiences.

As young leaders, we must recognise that the frustration we feel needs to be there. It must be felt. But leaders do not stop at an emotional response to present reality. We must go beyond that for the sake of those to follow us, for the sake of our society and the future of our children’s children. As leaders, we may join in and spearhead campaigns, but that response alone is far too short sighted. Our role is to guide with our eye, to inspire the movement and keep it going with our thoughts.

Your role as a leader is to define the vision, but not stop there: yours is to articulate, instruct, teach and voice the character of the alternative reality you seek. Yours is to speak long after the campaign is gone and say where the people should go next. And while I propose no answers yet, I have been awakened to a new understanding of what my role in society should now be. I hope that in reading this issue you will also find yours. ✎



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Responding to changing student needs at UCT

By **Crain Soudien** and **Max Price**

Soudien is deputy vice-chancellor and Price is vice-chancellor at the University of Cape Town

How has the University of Cape Town changed in the post-apartheid period and how has it responded to the needs of its current cohort of students, especially its disadvantaged students? This brief review looks at how the university has changed in the last ten years and how it has responded to these changes

Enrolment patterns at UCT show that the institution has become increasingly more diverse. Since 1994, African South African students increased by 114 percent while white students increased by 16 percent, with the proportion of white students dropping from 54 percent to 35 percent. International students, particularly from other African countries, constituted 17 percent of the student body in 2011. Also of interest is the socio-economic diversity of the student body, with 64 percent of the African students being recipients of financial aid.

The significance of these changes in terms of students' aspirations and values has not been the subject of direct research. Data is available, however, which may indicate what is influencing students' decisions about their higher education careers. The work of Michael Cosser (2010) on the aspirations of students across the country provides a sense of the issues that arise from this changed profile of students. Also useful is an unpublished report of an undergraduate survey conducted at the University of Cape Town.

WHAT STUDENTS WANT

In a Student Retention and Graduate Destination Study, Cosser (2010) sent questionnaires to 34 548 students who had left their institutions in 2002 about their aspirations with respect to higher education.

The study drew from seven institutions (UCT not included) and had a response rate of 15 percent among graduates and 16 percent among those who had left without completing their studies.

While the study predictably showed a strong correlation between socio-economic status and the kinds of choices students were making, such as which institutions they wished to attend, the programmes they sought and the kinds of jobs they aspired to (Cosser, 2010:11), of most concern was the students' lack of knowledge of the world of higher education. Of the 5 491 respondents, only 1 395 students had answered the question requiring them to indicate their institution of choice. As Cosser (2010: 22) says, "At face value, this suggests a large degree of uncertainty, if not ignorance, about the higher education landscape at the pre-enrolment stage."

The study found an interesting disparity in students' indications of their first choice of institution and their actual registrations. When presented with a list of three possible reasons why they did not study at the institution of their choice, about 45 percent said it was too expensive (this would also refer to the costs of attending a university away from home), 41 percent said they could not meet the admission requirements, and 13 percent said the institution did not offer the programme of study they wanted to pursue. Cosser found that socio-economic status (SES) was significant for students' ultimate enrolment, with institutions such as Wits and Stellenbosch having the highest proportion of high SES students of the seven institutions in the study.

The aspirations of students who registered at UCT might be assessed from their answers to the question



of why they chose UCT (most would have had offers from other universities, too). The different population groups are influenced by similar factors and, in most cases, to similar degrees. The differences are primarily that the costs-saving of studying close to home and the availability of financial aid are much more important to African and coloured students than to white students (35 percent versus 5 percent) and, while UCT's academic reputation and the choice of programmes on offer were the most important factors for all groups, they weighed significantly more heavily for white, coloured and Indian students than for African students (79 percent versus 50 percent).

HOW HAS UCT RESPONDED?

Long aware of the challenges associated with explicit policies to admit students from disadvantaged socio-economic, educational and cultural backgrounds who are relatively under-prepared for university, UCT decided in the 1980s to provide such students with tailored academic assistance. It set up an academic development programme (ADP), which had grown by the end of the 1990s into a large department within the Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED). The central role of CHED is to provide support for the teaching and learning endeavour in the university. It does this by researching tests to identify learning under-preparedness; working with faculties to develop appropriate curricula and pedagogies; researching and piloting new teaching technologies to enhance the practice of teaching and learning for all students, but especially for ADPs. CHED is also involved in conceptualising and defining the so-called "graduate attributes" – the qualities UCT would like to see in all its graduates.

Critically, CHED staff members are located in faculties where they use discipline-based approaches to better understand and respond to the specific difficulties students bring into the learning experience. They have been central to the provision of expanded programmes in the faculties of commerce, science, engineering, health sciences and humanities. The purpose of these expanded programmes is to provide students who do not meet mainstream entry requirements with opportunities to receive intensive support in courses with low success rates and to progress through to qualification at a more regulated pace.

The university also established a unit that has evolved into a large department called the department of student affairs (DSA) to support the extra-curricular and psycho-social experience of students. The DSA works in the areas of student development, student wellness, financial aid and housing. It is responsible for the provision of orientation programmes, in

conjunction with the faculties, and overseeing the general wellbeing of students. It provides leadership training to aspiring student leaders in clubs, societies and student government, and supports individual students as well as organising group activities.

In spite of this accumulated experience and the ADP programmes, many disadvantaged students continue to under-perform compared to those from more privileged backgrounds. While the success rate of African students at UCT between 1996 and 2006 did increase from 62 percent to 65 percent, this was well below that of white students (around 77 percent).

In the course of evaluating the effectiveness of these initiatives, the university realised that it has to do even more and has undertaken new interventions in recent years.

We have realised how critical it is for students to be in residence – especially first year students. This is because they have 24/7 access to computer labs, the internet (in the residences) and to the library. Those who live far away, especially in townships, are deprived of this access, not to mention having home conditions that are not conducive to study. The residences also create the opportunity for study groups, on-site mentors and tutors. Thus there is a major campaign to increase residence capacity to catch up with the growth in student numbers.

More attention is being given to diverse modes of delivery and the use of technology to improve effective interaction and, by extension, student success. A large proportion of our students are not first-language English speakers and this severely compromises their ability to follow lectures and take adequate notes, especially in first year. In response to this, we are equipping lecture theatres with video facilities so that students can watch lectures again online, as often as they like and at their own pace, to review and get assistance with the specific parts they did not understand, thus freeing them to follow the lecture without fear of falling behind in note-taking.

Another example of using technology to address learning problems is the establishment of on-line Q&A fora that allow students on a course to ask questions anonymously and get answers from other students and tutors. The fear of asking "stupid" questions and being embarrassed is particularly great for students who are less assertive and less confident about their preparedness, and often also less articulate, especially if they are learning in English for the first time. The ability to ask questions anonymously removes these inhibiting factors and allows them to really test their understanding – if necessary, over and over.



The university has recognised the extent to which university-level study in the 21st century requires excellent internet access. Students who don't own computers are thus compromised and we have embarked on the Laptop Project to provide computers to students on financial aid as part of their package. Wireless access has been extended to the whole campus. A range of teaching interventions is also being developed.

The Student Wellness Service provides a comprehensive counselling facility and has been continuously expanding, although it is still not coping with the demand.

Many departments are re-examining their curricula to see whether they can make adjustments to the volume and pace of work, offer courses to fill knowledge and skill gaps, offer additional vacation catch-up programmes, and rethink the content to decide what's really necessary and how best to teach it.

A major research and discussion programme is reconsidering the standard three-year curriculum, with an increasing view that the standard course should be four years. This could allow those students who need longer to adjust to university to do so without being labelled failures and having to repeat courses, which is highly inefficient. It could also incorporate into the basic curricula other courses, competencies and activities (such as service learning) that will help achieve the graduate attributes we aspire to. Such developments will depend on revisions to the government's funding approach.

Another option under consideration is the creation of a "third semester" (i.e. offering repeats of courses during the winter or summer vacations) to provide students with additional opportunities to take courses so that their progress is not delayed by a year.

The department of higher education's 2011 decision to introduce earmarked funding in the form of teaching development grants affords the opportunity both to offer more staff training in these areas, as well as to experiment with and evaluate new teaching approaches.

Taking our cue from a number of other universities, the First Year Experience project focuses on promoting first-year success by working with faculties and service

structures to improve student learning. It involves changes to orientation programmes; early class tests, in order to pick up problems in time to intervene; the involvement of mentors and wardens; residence-based study groups; workshops in time-management and other personal management competencies.

Mentoring has expanded significantly in UCT's faculties and residences. By the end of 2012, 308 students were trained as mentors and senior mentors, and these numbers are to increase by 50 percent in 2013.

Student failure and drop-out are also due to non-academic factors, such as financial problems, time management, social integration or isolation, dealing with the new freedoms that come with leaving home and living with other young people, sexual and relationship issues, and the difficulties of coping with the demands of higher education for students who have generally never experienced failure before. These need intervention and support systems well beyond the classroom. The Student Wellness Service provides a comprehensive counselling facility and has been continuously expanding, although it is still not coping with the demand.

We have a number of initiatives to promote particular graduate attributes. These include special optional courses in global citizenship and leadership; mandatory courses on HIV/AIDS in some faculties; promoting volunteerism in the student development agencies, which we attempt to valorise with formal recognition alongside transcript records; and promoting active and engaged citizenship by creating on campus an ethos of engagement with the political and social issues of the day. This is, however, still poorly developed and we have a new task team looking at how the formal programme structure can promote the attributes.

The effectiveness of these initiatives has yet to be proven. The important point on which to close, however, is that they have been developed to provide disadvantaged students with a range of purposeful opportunities. With these, it is hoped that they will be able to better manage the challenge and exploit the opportunities of a university education. ✎

REFERENCE

Cosser, M. 2010. "Uniformity and disjunction in the school-to-higher-education transition", in M Letseka, M Cosser, M Breier and M Visser (eds). *Student Retention and Graduate Destination: Higher Education and Labour Market Access and Success*. Cape Town: HSRC Press





**Mdu Shabane, Director General of the
Department of Rural Development and
Land Reform.**



rural development & land reform

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Rural Development and Land Reform – the toolkit!

The Director General of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, Mdu Shabane, discusses the thinking behind policy development designed to bring about meaningful change in skewed land ownership patterns.

The land ownership and land tenure situation inherited by the democratic government in 1994 was distorted and highly prejudicial to black South Africans. In many areas conditions were chaotic. This was hardly surprising. The circumstances influencing ownership and/or occupation of land by black citizens had been largely moulded by the 1913 Natives Land Act, which effectively debarred 'natives' from owning land in 93% of their own country. (The remaining 7% was largely in the least fertile areas of the country, and although this space was later increased to some 13%, it was totally inadequate to support the inhabitants.) Furthermore, black citizens were only permitted out of their enclaves if they were in the employ of whites, which, in many cases, meant that they were obliged to labour, for pitifully low wages, for the very people who had dispossessed them of their ancestral homelands. It has been plausibly argued that this act formed the foundation of Apartheid.

Although it was repealed in 1991, catastrophic damage had been done during the 78 long years the act was enforced. Dispossession and relocation led to endemic poverty, rootlessness, landlessness, unemployment and widespread food insecurity.

The department charged with responsibility for restoring balance to this disorder is the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. It was constituted in May 2009, that is some four years ago and its work has been declared one of five national priorities.

The department started implementing its flagship programme, the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme, weeks after it opened its doors. Based on lessons learned in the early days of this programme and the discourse motivated by the Green Paper on Land Reform, an ambitious Rural Development Policy Framework has emerged. This involves nothing less than the overhaul of the entire policy, institutional and legal infrastructure that has underpinned land and agrarian reform in the past 19 years.

Our clear intention is to reconfigure the existing property relations and substantially address landlessness, tenure insecurity, the exclusion of the black majority; rural underdevelopment, and to introduce production disciplines into the vital question of food security.

The strategic thrust of the department's policy reforms

The policies and instruments proposed seek to provide a basis to achieve multiple outcomes, prominent among are:

1. Ensuring equitable access to quality and strategically located land; and
2. Providing secure tenure.

The latter finds its application in four areas:

- **State Land** – long-term leasehold and exceptions for progression to freehold tenure are being considered, as is a State Land Lease and Disposal Policy.
-
- **Private land with limited extent** – strategic land identification through, among other initiatives, production of commodity-based geo-climatic and agronomic studies for targeted land ceilings, and land unbundling for mixed (small and commercial) agriculture, as well as job creation and food security.

In this respect, the proposed instruments will include:

1. An information base to guide government uptake of offers of land by the land market, and by commercial farmers and other land owners (including state and public land);
2. Rights of first refusal;
3. Moratoriums on consolidations;
4. Price and compensation offer determinations; and
5. Selected expropriations.

- **Land ownership by foreign nationals with precarious tenure** – promotion of land access by nationals, citizens and permanent residents promotion of national economic and developmental interests and provision for a compliance monitoring and management institution with an inter-ministerial and technical capability within the Land Management Commission.

In this case the instruments will include:

1. Private Land Audit. Information base;
2. Strategic, sensitive and controlled land determinations and designations;
3. Compulsory disclosures of substantial interest in land;
4. Land information management framework and system;
5. All future land acquisitions in long-term leasehold tenure;
6. Compliance with laws of the land, and the job creation and economic development and empowerment programmes of the country;

7. Selected lands in designated areas that are currently under freehold ownership by foreign nationals or juristic persons shall be acquired through either offers to purchase, expropriations or rights of first refusal.
 8. There will be exemptions to excess that could be applied for, however, meeting the national interest would be a key determinant.
 9. Economic, social and human development partnerships in strategically located agro-enterprises and agro-processing and mineral beneficiation establishments (certain properties, including restored claimed lands, that have mineral, forestry tourism and high value agricultural commodity potential).
- **Communal land tenure with institutionalised use rights** - will apply to customary and community property association lands.
1. Seeking to secure the interests of the vulnerable by determining and securing the rights to and in land for the households.
 2. Towards the commons and the corporate economic enterprises.

The intention is to recognise and position key role-players and stakeholders:

- a) The household;
 - b) The community institutions/sectors societies, cooperatives, stokvels, saving schemes, burial schemes and so forth;
 - c) The government – local government and state owned enterprises;
 - d) The traditional authority;
 - e) Communal property associations in customary lands;
- A further consideration is the promotion of fellowship (as opposed to competition) amongst these stakeholders. The effort to build communal property ownership, to create rural vibrancy and sustainable communities, is in line with the Agrarian Strategy of fundamentally changing relations to land, livestock, cropping and community. The emphasis is on finding social solutions to social problems rather than over-reliance on legislated solutions.

Some of the key instruments being considered are:

- a) Addressing tenure relations, particularly between the outer boundary land and the household and the vulnerable, intergenerational matters.
- b) Decongestions through accessing state and additional strategically located lands in the private land (87%) through the instruments outlined earlier.
- c) A tenure grant.
- d) Providing dispute management capacity.
- e) Addressing relations to investors (49/51%) in favour of the community.
- f) Protecting the communal lands from land forfeiture through rights of first refusal by the communal land executive/ traditional administrators or the state.
- g) An improved registrar of CPAs

A new branch (Land Administration) is being considered to afford these state and communal land matters the attention they deserve.

Our intention is that these initiatives should go hand-in-hand with other strategic policies, including:

- Restitution policy, the most recent development being the announced reopening of the lodgement of land claims, for those who did not claim during the first window of opportunity. There are two aspects to this announcement, the first being the reopening of the lodgement process itself; and the second, the creation of exceptions to the cut-off date for claims relating to the 1913 Natives Land Act, specifically for heritage sites, historic landmarks and opportunities for the descendants of the Khoi and San to claim;

- Spatial Planning and Land Use Policy-that is addressing Apartheid-era spatial geography and regulatory imbalances to confirm with national development objectives;
- The Land Management Commission, to manage both land information fragmentation, and effective intergovernmental and corporate governance frameworks, including the issue of fraudulent land acquisition;
- The Office of the Valuer-General, which is long overdue and seeks to bring the concept of 'fair play' to a process in which the state has tended to pay above market-related prices when it acquires land; to apply constitutional provisions to these processes; and to promote land access at a just and equitable level; and
- The Land Rights Management Board, to manage land disputes and infringements in tenure rights in commercial farming areas.

In brief summary, this is the department's thinking at this time, and to support it, the following course of action is planned:

POLICY FOR LEGISLATION DEVELOPMENT IN 2013

- i. Restitution Policy
- ii. The Land Management Commission Bill
- iii. The Land Valuer Bill
- iv. Amendment to ESTA
- v. Land Ownership by Foreign National Bill

POLICIES FOR ADOPTION BY CABINET

- i. Policy on Private Land with Limited Extent
- ii. The Rural Development Policy Framework
- iii. Communal Land Tenure Policy
- iv. Policy on the Rural Development Agency.
- v. Policy on the Rural Cooperative Finance Facility.

In order to accelerate the process a programme of research will be undertaken:

1. Complete Private Land Audit and Position State Land Audit.
2. Strategic land identification.
3. Land Prices Information and Monitor – market related versus what state ultimately buys for.
4. Studies in support to establishment of LRMCs.
5. Tenure rights, quality of life and community congestion studies on commercial farming areas.
6. Product/commodity versus agro-climatic conditions to determine land unbundling through targeted moratoriums, rights of first refusal and selective expropriations.
7. Lands to be designated for South African nationals, citizens and permanent residents, as well as security and environmentally sensitive lands.
8. Identification and studies on the value of category 1 and 2 farmers to household food security and local economies.
9. Comparative studies on Rural Development Agencies and Rural Finance Schemes and systems.
10. Studies towards facilitating factual and objective - based solutions to (customary) communal land tenure.

It is proposed that all this would be accompanied by a strategic positioning of Provincial and District offices, to take on additional management and coordination tasks, and to build on the information and knowledge they have assembled over the years.

Land is essentially both the wealth of our nation and its foodbowl, and as such the issues surrounding it are always complex, the more so since the majority of our citizens were debarred from involvement in land for so long and at such cost. The legacy of the 1913 Natives' Land Act is a disturbing one, and it is a legacy that we must reverse, and I encourage all who can contribute to achieving a successful reversal to join us in the effort.

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From entitlement to action

An interview with Yershen Pillay



Pillay is the executive chairperson of the National Youth Development Agency. He was interviewed by Fadzai Chitiyo

Fadzai Chitiyo: What was your path to the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA)?

Yershen Pillay: I started my political career at the University of Cape Town. I joined the ANCYL [African National Congress Youth League] and was elected into the branch executive committee, and this was my first leadership post. Then I became the chairperson of the branch of the YCL [Young Communist League] and I moved on to serve on the SRC [Student Representative Council] as the secretary-general in 2005. I served on many of the university committees and, at the same time I think, made my transition in the YCL to the provincial treasurer in the Western Cape. I concluded my student involvement when SAUS [the South African Union of Students] was launched and I served on that national executive to co-ordinate student affairs nationally. I spent most of my time in student politics in the YCL, ANCYL and SASCO [SA Students Congress]. I was elected national treasurer of the YCL in 2006, and in 2009 President Zuma appointed me as the deputy-executive chair of the NYDA. In 2010, I was elected as the chair of the YCL. Now I serve as the national chair of the YCL and the chair of the NYDA [appointed in August 2012].

FC: And what does the NYDA do?

YP: From 1994, the government took a deliberate role to prioritise national youth development. It started with the National Youth Commission and the Umsobomvu Youth Development Fund. Then the two were merged, largely because the NYC's legislative policy work around youth development wasn't really speaking to the implementation of skills development programmes and finance for young entrepreneurs, which was what Umsobomvu was doing.

So the NYDA was established in 2008, basically to co-ordinate mainstream youth development. There are a lot of organisations involved in youth development work – for example, loveLife [HIV prevention initiative] – but there is not much co-ordination of that work. And of course if the work is better co-ordinated, then the impact is greater and greater resource mobilisation

is possible. The NYDA was created to do that. Its objective was to provide an enabling environment for youth development, but not really to lead young people. That is always a distinction we have tried to make: leadership of young people is by the youth themselves. Young people must take the initiative to empower their own lives, whether it is through their studies or starting a business. The NYDA's role is to then provide support, and those interventions can vary from providing loan finance and business support to mentorship and guidance.

FC: What would you define as an “enabling environment” for a young adult? What is lacking and how is the NYDA attempting to address that?

YP: Broadly, the government's *National Youth Policy 2009–2014* speaks to some strategic interventions that the private sector, the state and civil society can make for student development. For example, the National Youth Service: how can we increase the culture of volunteerism among the youth? Or one can look at how other young people make use of co-operatives as a form of enterprise. A co-operative is a group of young people getting together and sharing their skills and profits. It is a form of social enterprise very different to companies, based on the principles of democracy and equality. It is practised quite widely – for example, in Kenya, 31 percent of savings are held in savings co-operatives. In South Africa we have not really maximised it.

FC: How many of these exist at the moment?

YP: The department of trade and industry has registered just over 2 800 co-operatives. The problem is that they exist on paper, but not many of them are actually doing well.

FC: In this kind of example, where would the NYDA intervene?

YP: On the one hand, the NYDA would make submissions in relation to the Co-operatives Act, to give a youth perspective on the enabling legislation. For example, to say that young people may prefer workers' co-operatives



to other types, like distribution or production cooperatives. On the other hand, we provide start-up capital and help them register the co-operative. They may need business development support in terms of drawing up a business plan and marketing strategy and so forth. And there are other areas as well: SMMEs [small, medium and micro-enterprises], micro-finance, and so on.

FC: What partnerships does NYDA have?

YP: Partnership is the most critical element of our work. If you look at the current budget, we have only R149 million or so, and you have 6.1 million young people not doing much. You can't provide opportunities for 6.1 million young people with R149 million. But what you can do is use partnerships to leverage funds. Sometimes it is financial partnership, like partnering with FNB for a progress fund for youth and women. Or it is non-financial: for example, National Youth Service Programme has a good partnership with loveLife.

The biggest challenge is that a lot of young people do not understand what the NYDA does. The misconception is that the NYDA will give us a job, or the NYDA will give us a loan, or the NYDA will make our lives better, but that is not true. You may apply for a loan, but you may not necessarily get it, because you have to compete with other young people and we have to determine who needs it the most. But if we have the understanding that you as a young person must lead your own development, the NYDA will support and provide an enabling environment.

FC: What is your role as the chair of the NYDA?

YP: My role is to lead the board, and it is an executive chairmanship, meaning that I have executive powers as well. It's largely twofold: to provide political guidance – in the sense that you have many divergent views, and all those views need to be assimilated and the best decision taken – and then to provide the strategic leadership of the agency, look at what kind of strategies should we employ today. What type of assistance should we provide, how do we best address issues of poverty alleviation, and so on. I would be in charge of leading and implementing the strategy on rural development, for example, and the management team would decide how that is to be done. And, of course, general oversight of our monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

FC: In terms of meeting targets, how successful has the NYDA been?

YP: Look, I think the NYDA has been fairly successful. Much of it has been overshadowed by unfortunate

events, and we have to correct that. You may have heard about the international youth festival in 2010. It was actually an excellent idea – what many people didn't understand was that it was the 17th [World Festival of Youth and Students] and not the first! A large part of the problem was that there was a new board and a change in the management structure and the miscommunication was substantial.

But if you look at job creation: 73 208 since 2009. There are just over 138 000 names on the national youth service database. If we look at young entrepreneurs, we have supported over 28 000. The multiplier effect from the jobs created with NYDA support is something to also take into consideration. Right now, about 500 000 young people have received career guidance services from the NYDA. So there is a whole range of products and services that have gone out to people, and a lot to brag about. But we need to do more. There is a long way to go. We are not going to address all the challenges overnight, but if we can improve on those figures, I am sure we'll start to make a dent.

FC: You mentioned previous mismanagement. What improvement can we hope to see in the NYDA?

YP: There are three areas. First is the promotion of good governance. And as the chairman of the board, that is my primary area of focus. That relates to looking at your systems, your committees of governance and reviewing them. The second area is ethical leadership. If we stick to doing the right thing all the time and leading by example, we will have ethical leadership. And the last one is a zero-tolerance approach to underperformance and non-compliance. It is my firm belief that if we get those three things right, we will be on our way to restoring credibility, managing our resources effectively, and spending a good amount of money on helping the few young people that we can.

FC: And placing people in the right positions?

YP: Politicians lead, but you need technocrats to assist. There are public policy experts who share similar values and vision, and they need to be placed in positions where they can drive that process. Especially at the local level, we need more young public-policy experts. SASCO and COSAS should encourage young people to take up scholarships. Those are state and community resources that are being used for you to be there. All our institutions are state subsidised, so those communities are counting on you to go and graduate, and then come back and assist the development of the community itself.

We intend to assist the department of basic education to improve both access and excellence in education.



If a matric qualification is of high quality, then that will help employability.

FC: What would be needed for that to happen?

YP: The board has not agreed on this and these are my own views, but I would focus on scholarships. For example, students in the rural areas who have excelled did not know where to access scholarships. We could change the nature of scholarships and make mass-based state scholarship available through the NYDA, which would encourage excellence in education and be granted automatically.

FC: What is your engagement with the department of basic education?

YP: We have to work together. For example, there is a high number of student dropouts. The NYDA would want to focus on targeted interventions for out-of-school youth. But also: how can we assist in providing better sanitation, better infrastructure in schools? How do we help with sports and social cohesion in schools? We have just done several programmes where we offered career guidance services at a very intense level. So it is really a complementary effort with schools and the department.

FC: What is your sense of the values and aspirations of the youth in South Africa?

YP: I think we have got to shift the focus in the youth organisations from what appears to be a growing culture of entitlement to a growing culture of action. It seems that the youth movement right now is embroiled in a sort of materialistic mentality that puts money first, above passion, above one's needs – not realising that, in fact, social development is linked to one's own development. I think we need to make a transition, start to espouse the values of *ubuntu* and collective leadership, democracy and sharing and service. We have to move out of this short-term syndrome, move towards a long-term vision of a country we can be proud of. A more humane one, where basic services are there and no young person goes to sleep hungry. We have to make that shift from a culture of entitlement to a culture of service.

FC: And where does the NYDA contribute to imparting this to young people?

YP: The flagship programme is the National Youth Service (NYS) Programme that was started years back. We need more young people to get on this programme. If you are part of the 6.1 million who are unemployed, why don't you join and contribute by

doing some voluntary work? Also, you learn values of social cohesion at the same time.

To give you an idea of what I am talking about, in Ivory Park, right here in Midrand, there is the YouthBuild Infrastructure Development Programme that gives out-of-school youth a second chance.¹ That is the type of programme that makes up the NYS and you start to value this culture of service – you don't just feel "the state owes me everything and the state will deliver".

FC: What channels do you use to communicate with young people? Where are your offices, how accessible are you?

YP: The head office is here in Midrand, but there are branches in all the major cities. You also have youth advisory centres, or YAC Points. They do not offer the full products and services of the NYDA, but they do exist in areas where you can't access the NYDA easily.

FC: In rural areas?

YP: During my term as the deputy-chair, I led the rural youth development strategy. Just recently we had a programme in Prieska, in the Northern Cape. A building was donated there, and the NYDA utilised that space to allow co-operatives to function. That is where the importance of partnerships comes in. If we can partner, we can reach out to more people.

FC: Do you have any closing thoughts?

YP: Youth development is very important and has to remain a priority of the state. So I think the NYDA is necessary. What we have got to get right is our planning. We can't move year to year, with new leadership creating new strategies every time. If we have a plan that is long-term – say, we want to halve youth unemployment by 2050 – that is a target we can work toward and every intervention we make is based on this long-term goal.

But even with the best plans, we still need young people to drive them or we will still not succeed. So it is a two-way relationship at the end of the day: between the institution and the masses themselves. ☘

NOTE

1. In the 2010 YouthBuild Ivory Park programme, 80 unemployed participants gained technical skills such as electrical engineering, carpentry, bricklaying and plumbing, completed their senior certificate, and used the acquired skills to do community service and make a difference in their communities. It was a partnership of YouthBuild International, the department of human settlements and the NYDA. (source: NYDA Media Centre)





Mildred Oliphant, Minister of Labour

Ensuring stability in industry:

An interview with Mildred Oliphant, Minister of Labour

Ben Turok: As minister of labour, your portfolio is one of the difficult ones, I imagine.

Mildred Oliphant: Yes, it is very difficult and challenging, but working together with organised labour and organised business and the community constituency that are all part of NEDLAC [the National Economic Development and Labour Council], I think we will be there one day. I am very happy to say that both business and labour are part and parcel of whatever decisions we take as the department of labour.

BT: Which business associations do you work with?

MO: At the moment, we recognise two main ones, Business Unity South Africa (BUSA) and the Black Business Council (BBC), because they are the convenors of the smaller affiliates of organised business.

BT: You don't deal with organisations like Business Leadership or SESA (Steel and Engineering Association) – you would rather deal with the umbrella body?

MO: I have to deal with the umbrella body because of the policy we have agreed at NEDLAC. When they elect their delegation, they select a convenor of that group and that is the one we will communicate with.

BT: And on the side of labour, who do you deal with?

MO: At the NEDLAC level, they have elected Bheki Ntshalintshali from COSATU as overall convenor, but whenever I have to meet with the federations, I meet with all of them: COSATU, NACTU and FEDUSA. They come with their delegations.

BT: Is NEDLAC the main focus of your activities?

MO: In most cases. Whatever we are doing as government – legislation, policy, finances – all stakeholders will come and we'll brief them on what is happening. NEDLAC has advised me that they want to see the minister for rural development and land reform. The minister for co-operative governance will go to address them, and also the ministers for economic development, trade and industry, mineral resources, and

so on. They want to participate in all those policies. For example, immediately after the national budget is presented in the National Assembly, the minister of finance will address NEDLAC. In the first week of September, the deputy-president chairs NEDLAC's annual summit, where they report on what they have done, including the financial report.

BT: One hears a fair amount of criticism of NEDLAC: people say it doesn't work, or it is more a negotiating body than a consultative body. Would you say there is a problem?

MO: I must say, everybody has agreed that there was a problem, but that problem was not created by government. It was created by both organised labour and organised business, in particular when they were selecting their representatives. When there are serious matters to be discussed, for example, you find that they have sent junior officials. Then they have to go back and consult and then that delays the passing of the particular legislation. We have discussed this with the federations in particular. Last year I had to call the convenors to say that if they are failing to process legislation within a three-month period, in terms of NEDLAC policy, then I will just have to take those policies to parliament.

BT: Why were you called upon to intervene in the Marikana case and the Western Cape farmworkers' strike?

MO: In the mining sector – in particular, Lonmin, Amplats and Ashanti – the companies had made promises to the committees of workers themselves, leaving out the recognised unions while there were agreements on the table. And that is why I had to intervene, because the companies were now unable to implement what they had agreed with the committees of workers. I had to call all the unions there, telling them they have to decide whether they are reopening the negotiations. The companies were willing to put something on the table. I said that even AMCU and the committees of workers must go and observe those negotiations. But the power lay primarily with the recognised unions and the companies in that particular situation.

BT: Was this a divide-and-rule tactic of the companies?

MO: I agree, it was. You can't negotiate with a structure that is not recognised, because then you are not even respecting your own company policy or the laws of this country.

BT: Do you have statutory powers to intervene like this?

MO: As the minister, it is my responsibility to ensure there is stability in the industry and I have to do it on behalf of the government.

BT: Can they choose not to come to the table?

MO: I think they can, but it would depend on how I negotiate with them. At the same time, I have to report to the deputy-president and to the president on the challenges we are facing and make recommendations on what action should be taken. I didn't want to take that particular route.

In terms of the farming sector in the Western Cape, the department does sectoral determination reviews, with public hearings to look at the conditions of the farmworkers and to engage with the farmers on whether there is a possibility of rectifying the situation, if there were challenges, and then come up with an agreement. The Employment Conditions Commission consists of employers, organised labour and us – but on our side we also have experts in this field – so that, whatever the outcome of that discussion, it should be agreed upon by all stakeholders. And then they will recommend that to me. We must make sure the labour laws of this country are protecting the workers but at the same time give employers the opportunity to participate and create conditions in the workplace in such a way that everyone should benefit.

BT: I believe you have two pieces of legislation coming before parliament. Where do they tie in?

MO: Proposed amendments to the Labour Relations Act (LRA) and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) focus particularly on the abusive system created by labour brokering. What is happening now in our country is that most companies are outsourcing and subcontracting their work. In the mining sector, we find companies giving a subcontract for some employment while employing other people directly as well. And those employed by the subcontractor are not earning the same as those employed by the company. So we are trying to rectify that and also to align the legislation so that the labour brokers have to employ people in terms of the LRA and the BCEA and in terms of existing bargaining agreements, including

thesectoral determinations. Changes to the BCEA were adopted at the last sitting of Parliament

BT: This should put an end to the hire-and-fire system, shouldn't it?

MO: Yes, it should do exactly that. We are trying to deal with the issue of permanent "casual workers" who get no employment benefits. What we find is that they employ a person for one or two months, fire them and replace that one with someone else, and then send the very same person to another company to do the same job. There was a woman who had worked for Shoprite for almost 20 years, but when she retired she did not get a pension. She was given the wage for that particular Friday, and that was it.

BT: In the textiles industry in Cape Town, when a worker has worked for a year or two, the union requires that she go up a grade. Then there is a threat of her being fired and replaced by another one with less experience.

MO: There are labour brokers doing that: they will take you from one industry to another industry, doing one and the same job, so that you cannot be promoted. That abusive behaviour is what we are trying to prevent.

BT: You also said something about the "informalisation of labour". What does that mean?

MO: You find that businesses don't want to employ workers permanently. They are trying to get them for three months or six months and sometimes that is the reason for outsourcing and subcontracting. We are saying that whoever has reached three months in the same job, that person should be deemed "permanent".

BT: And what security comes out of that?

MO: What has been happening is that those employed by labour brokers were not protected under the Unemployment Insurance Act and the Compensation Act when they are injured at work. They were not getting pension and retirement benefits. That is the protection we're seeking for workers.

BT: Can you say something about your objective of promoting decent work?

MO: It means that all workers should be protected and, in terms of the ILO [International Labour Organisation] resolutions, we need to create an environment where workers can work freely, participate in discussions within the company and be allowed to negotiate with the employer.

When you have a decent work environment, there will be no need for fighting between employer and employee. There were some farmers, in the Free State and in North West, saying, "Whether I am here or not here, I know that everything will go normally and I will get exactly what

I need in terms of production. And if there are challenges, they will just call me and we sort it out." They have created housing for those people and the workers are also happy to be there. That is what the workers were saying.

BT: So decent work is also about the working environment?

MO: Yes, because that environment will include things like being paid for overtime work and essential protective clothing. If people are happy they will do everything. And we need that type of relationship between the employer and the employee.

BT: There is a view that workers are demanding excessive increases, but COSATU argues that, with unemployment so high, every worker has many mouths to feed.

MO: I think that when you are negotiating, particularly when you talking about living wage, that should focus on that particular worker. The other challenge is to educate workers about their rights and the employer's rights. At the same time, the companies need to educate their workers about administration when it comes to their salaries, and to look at what is happening in terms of their sectoral charters. For example, there is a mining charter that deals with living conditions of mineworkers. Those are some of the things that should also be incorporated when negotiating.

BT: Do you want to say anything about the unemployed?

MO: I just want to encourage them to register as job seekers with the department of labour. We are trying to look at retraining for those who are retrenched, but at the same time looking at the skills needed within the country and trying to match qualifications with vacancies. We also encourage employers to register with us. For those who want to be entrepreneurs, there are funds out there for

start-ups. We can deal with unemployment, I think, by doing so as a country. We can't do it alone as government.

BT: Do you co-operate with labour departments and organisations in the rest of Africa?

MO: Yes, that is happening. In SADC [the Southern African Development Community], there is a tripartite structure where government, labour and business sit together and discuss how they should approach things. It works like NEDLAC. And there is ARLAC, the African Regional Labour Administration Centre. We participate in the ILO and we assist other countries. For example, the ILO requested that we assist the workers and government in Swaziland, where the workers have applied to the ILO Standards Committee, saying that they don't have the rights to organise and other things. So the ILO co-ordinated a meeting for Swaziland to come and see how we deal with issues at NEDLAC and how we can assist them in establishing a structure for social dialogue. Namibia and South Sudan have come as well, and I was approached by both Mauritius and China at the recent ILO conference.

China wants to formulate its own Labour Relations Act and they want to see how our legislation is working.

We have said we will open our arms – but also we are agreeing so that we have the opportunity to visit some of the factories owned here by Chinese companies so that they can see what is happening. We are saying to those coming to invest in this country that they must respect the labour laws of South Africa, because most of those laws emanate from ILO resolutions and their countries are member states of the ILO.

BT: So you are promoting the NEDLAC model?

MO: Yes. It is a good model. The ILO has confirmed that NEDLAC is the best model in the world, and that is why countries want to come and learn.

BT: Is there anything you want to add?

MO: I just want to say good luck to your publication. I encourage the public to buy *New Agenda* so that they can see and feel what is happening in our country.



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Closing the gap at foundation level:

An interview with Collen Malatji

Tsholofelo Collen Malatji is president of the Congress of South African Students (COSAS). Fadzai Chitiyo interviewed him 12 April 2013

Fadzai Chitiyo: How long have you been involved with COSAS?

Collen Malatji: I started with the Congress at the age of 13 as regional secretary in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng. Then from 16 to 17, I was the provincial secretary and later the chairperson of the province of Gauteng. Currently, I am the president of COSAS. I have been with the organisation for five years. I grew up in the organisation.

FC: Are you studying now?

CM: I have just graduated from high school. Because of my commitments in other things, I am doing a diploma in public relations. But the vision is that, later on, I will do my LLB degree fulltime.

FC: What is the mandate of COSAS?

CM: We represent students in pre-tertiary institutions. Our mandate is to make sure that the interests of students are championed. For example, making sure that there is proper infrastructure in schools, normal learning and teaching, fighting against drugs. Monitoring the curriculum has become part of our responsibility.

FC: How many people are members?

CM: In the early stages, in the '80s, there were many other student organisations at pre-tertiary level. At the moment, COSAS is the only one. The others were assimilated into COSAS. We took a decision that we were going to represent all students, those who are our members and even those who are not. In Gauteng, we have 45 000 members, but we want to expand our membership. We have especially lost touch in the former model-C schools. Our membership is mostly in townships, because of the historical imbalances there, but currently we are working towards recruiting members everywhere. I can say that the members in the Western Cape are mainly Indians, coloureds, whites. We are not a student

organisation of the ANC. Yes, we might be aligned to them, but we are willing to work with everybody who is willing to work on our objectives.

FC: Do you have members from private schools, or schools that were not previously accessible to most students in South Africa?

CM: To be honest, it is growing very slowly. It is not easy to change something that has been historically built. Children, whether black or white, who go to private schools live in certain areas and may think that they are better than others. Now we are trying to come up with programmes to unite everybody and to behave as a united society.

I am from not a disadvantaged school. I attended Queens High School. I can say is that this is a societal issue, being conscious that I am in this school because my parents can access certain resources. This gap between the rich and the poor, it also divides our people. If you can see how people behave, where people shop, it is not as if someone from Bedfordview will go shopping in a township mall, whether they are black or white. It is not racial anymore.

Now we believe that COSAS can play a role in that gap because we are at the foundation stage. We are preparing the people that must reclaim our society. Before they become that top CEO, they must pass through pre-tertiary. We believe in mobilising everyone to play a role. If our society continues this way, we will never achieve a rainbow nation.

NON-RACIAL, NON-SEXIST

FC: The COSAS constitution promotes the values of non-racialism, non-sexism, equity and redress. What does a non-racial society look like to you?

CM: When we speak of a non-racial society, we speak of a colour-blind society. In the past, yes, it was mainly a black consciousness movement, but we understand that we are living in a society with different racial groups that need each other. When we speak of these



values, we are fighting against those that are racist. Now, in our structures, we emphasise that the balance must be there. Our leadership of COSAS must be a reflection of the country.

FC: And non-sexism?

CM: In the past, women were seen as not being able to play a leadership role. COSAS had a 20:80 ratio of females to males. But now we are trying to get it at least to 40:60. We believe that everyone, no matter what gender, can lead.

FC: Your national executive committee reflects this?

CM: Yes, it does.

FC: What types of issues are addressed by women in your leadership?

CM: In our NEC, a gender issue is not only an issue for women. It is also an issue for males. We want people to come into our meeting to speak about these issues; we will not encourage women to only focus on issues of women.

FC: What is your relationship with government, with the department of education? What kind of support do they provide?

CM: We are always going to the department about issues that affect us on the ground and our relationship is informed by their responses. Whenever issues affect our learners and the department doesn't respond, we are expected to act on that. It is also a complementary relationship. Their directors are in offices and they don't mainly understand what is happening on the ground. We play the role of monitoring the system and being a voice of the students.

FC: What types of issues do you address with them?

CM: At the moment, it is the issue of making history a compulsory subject. We believe that, to understand where you are going, you have to know where you come from.

History is a subject that can be used to fight many social ills. Young people have lost direction in the country. They are not taking it seriously because they are not informed. We say that a subject like history must be utilised to remind them about the people who played a role for them to be here. Secondly, the need for maths schools, and for more teachers of mathematics and physics. We are even losing accounting teachers. As a country, we will not go anywhere if we do not produce engineers.

FC: What is your sense of the aspirations of the youth in South Africa? What would you like to see?

CM: I would like to see a South Africa that is informed, educated, and a South Africa where the young people are playing a role in the economy of the country. We have to stop this mentality of young people as consumers: we need young people who can produce. I will give you an example. You will find a 20-year-old queuing up for an RDP house. Now we need to eradicate that mindset. They must be saying, "Now there are opportunities, let us go out and let us make something of these opportunities." The only thing that will lead to this is to produce conscious young people. To go back to the issue of history studies, that will play a big role in formulating the attitude of a child.

MORE OPPORTUNITIES, LESS ENTITLEMENT

FC: But sometimes the youth would argue that they are entitled to certain things, because of that history. What would you say to them?

CM: At some point, that thing will have to stop. We, the born-frees, will not have the excuse of saying we need those houses because we were in exile or we need those houses because we were disadvantaged. If you look at the new policies of government, they are at a point where these things are being removed. Now they are opening more opportunities in education. There are the NSFAS [National Student Financial Aid Scheme] bursaries, and so forth. I think every young person, even those from informal settlements, can change their life today because of those opportunities. So this issue of entitlement, it has to end. Ten years from now, it won't be there. Some of us believe that, very soon, by the time we take over the ANC, RDP houses must be stopped. We will open doors of education to everyone. Everyone must go to school and everyone must get to a point where we don't even have cheap labour in South Africa. We have to import such labour because everybody will be educated. Because we can't be a developing country forever. At some point we must be a developed country.

FC: A lot of the students you engage with are young – 16 or so. What are their values, aspirations and views?

CM: Some of us were fortunate that, at 16 or 17, we were made conscious. But my peers at school at the age of 16? The only thing you think about is partying. Most of us were ignorant. But many countries, like Cuba, have programmes. By our nature, young people have energy, but we are not always able to use that energy wisely. It always goes back to social issues. An education system programmes you to be something.



With the department of education, we are saying that now we are getting 70 percent pass rates and so on, but as a matriculant, all I have is a paper. I do not have any skill. I can't do woodwork. I can't build a house. I can't do anything. Why don't we promote technical subjects, so that those who don't do very well at matric can at least do something? They can open a garage and fix cars or do something. There are many ways to fight unemployment. We can say that it is compulsory to study up to grade 9, and then they can take a technical route so that by the time they leave they at least have a skill and they can go to the government for assistance to open up a garage, and they can survive on that.

COSAS CAMPAIGNS

FC: How do you try to encourage students to read, to look at other options for their lives?

CM: We have always had a campaign called "Each one teach one", where we try to get students involved in peer learning in schools. The department of education gives us resources and we get students to teach one another.

FC: In which schools does this happen?

CM: It happens across the country. We have employed 13 co-ordinators who are going to monitor and analyse the progress of our projects. We have programmes that can help our people but sometimes the information doesn't get to them. And some provinces don't do what they are supposed to do. This is a problem. We are becoming irrelevant and not known. We have seen that and we feel that now it is time to restore the significance of COSAS in all the corners of the country.

We will have our 34th anniversary in June and we are working on a drug awareness campaign to be launched at that time. We have been saying that COSAS is going to clean our communities, and on April 26 and 27, we are launching the campaign. We will have students cleaning in areas like Noord Street, Johannesburg, to encourage our people to live in a clean area.

FC: What is the programme of reconstruction that you speak of in your constitution?

CM: We are going to implement a school-based structure and the information between structures will travel faster. We now have five structures – sub-branches, branches, regions, provinces and national – all of which are in operation on the ground. National is the administration and monitoring level, while our provincial structures work with government departments.

FC: How do students contribute directly to their society through these new structures?

CM: We rolled this thing out in December, so we are still putting structures on the ground and have not yet felt the effect. But we hope that these structures, being in the community, would work with NGOs.

FC: What NGOs do you work with?

CM: We are an organisation that is open. We work with anyone who wants to work with us. We are ready to take advice – because we are also young. We take advice from everybody. Our doors are always open for anyone to come and work with us. We get guidance from all corners of society.

FC: I have one final question on transforming society. That is a big issue. It is a challenge just to get people to mingle because of where the schools are placed. What responses have you had from the department of education in terms of trying to bridge this gap and encourage a crossover between previously disadvantaged schools and schools that are more advantaged? Have you suggested any programmes – for example, sports – that might be a way to bridge the gap?

CM: To be honest, we have engaged with departments on this, but we feel that government is moving more slowly than we expected. We always say that education must be used to unite society. Students still have township-based school leagues. In Vosloorus, they have their own league. And in Sunward Park, they have their own league. You will find that the two are five minutes away from each other, but Sunward Park would rather go and play with Boksburg. That division is still there, and I think that we must have leagues monitored by the departments. That is where [Sports Minister] Comrade Fikile Mbalula should come in with the programme for school sports. We are still in engagement with them, and we hope that by the end of the year we will have results. Everybody understands that such things will happen, the problem is always in the implementation.

FC: Do you have any closing words?

CM: I would like to say that we need young people who are informed in society, young people eager to learn, and young people who take responsibility. We need young people who are willing to fight against anything that stops them: for example, drugs and other social ills. We cannot do it alone. We have organisations like COSAS and young people need to take part and get direction from us. 🗣️



Sisa Ntshona: Absa Head of Enterprise Development for Business Banking, Africa

Absa Group's Enterprise Development unit goes beyond banking



Statistics SA's latest employment data shows that employment has begun to grow again, with the gain of 44 000 new jobs in the first quarter of 2013. Over the 12 months up to end of March this year, nearly 200 000 new jobs were created albeit in difficult domestic and global circumstances.

While we see positive trends in the creation of new jobs, unemployment remains high.

In a concerted effort by Absa, the group's Enterprise Development unit has gone **beyond banking** in order to ensure that it facilitates the creation of new jobs. This is being done through the support for the sustainable growth and development of small and medium-size enterprises.

"We go beyond traditional banking and find other ways of assisting with nurturing small enterprises from their start-up phase right through their growth, development and expansion stages", comments Sisa Ntshona, Head of Absa Enterprise Development, Business Banking Africa.

Absa offers non-traditional funding and business support to small and medium-size enterprises for development and sustainable growth. Absa's offering to SMEs considers business from three different but interconnected perspectives – **access to markets, access to funding and access to business support.**

Access to markets

Absa believes that the lack of access to business opportunities is a big challenge for SMEs. That is why Absa created a virtual marketplace, called the Procurement Portal. It allows suppliers (SMEs) to be visible to corporate buyers. They can search for specific suppliers in a particular region, of a certain profile and with a particular capacity. The Procurement Portal also encourages corporates to buy more services and products from

SMEs, facilitates financial independence and offers a range of non-traditional funding solutions. So, find the market and the money will find you.

Access to funding

Cashflow is the lifeblood of any company and especially of SMEs. Absa Enterprise Development has developed a range of non-traditional lending solutions that will assist SMEs with their working capital and expansion funding requirements.

The funding decision is not based on the traditional collateral requirements most banks have, and caters for start-ups and established businesses.

Whether the challenge is funding to deliver on a corporate contract, bridging finance for farming crop or sufficient capital to buy a franchise, Absa has a non-traditional lending solution that is suitable for business owners.

Access to business support

The reasons for failure of SMEs are not the technical inability of the SME (e.g. a bad plumber), but rather a lack of general business skills. Research has shown reasons range from a lack of management competence, poor bookkeeping and record management, and poor financial management, to sales and marketing problems.

To address this, Absa has established nine Enterprise Development Centres (EDCs) throughout the country with the exclusive purpose of providing a supportive environment for SMEs. The centres offer equipment and computers as well as knowledgeable staff to assist where necessary. Absa's view is that you do not need to own a computer but you need to have access to one.

Defending the interests of working class students:

An interview with **Ngoako Selamolela**

Selamolela is the national president of the South African Students Congress (SASCO) and a graduate student in development studies at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. Fadzai Chitiyo interviewed him

Fadzai Chitiyo: What is the South African Students Congress?

Ngoako Selamolela: We are an organisation that accepts all students in South African higher education institutions, irrespective of nationality, gender or creed. An organisation that represents the aspirations and interests of all students, but in particular those of poor, lower class background.

It also participates in community outreach programmes and community struggle. Knowing that we are members of the community before we are students, SASCO has a history of solidarity with other struggling people in the world, in particular students. We have pledged solidarity with the people of Palestine, Swaziland, the Western Sahara and many others who seek liberation from oppressive regimes. We believe that our future is linked to the entirety of humanity.

FC: Who does SASCO see as an oppressor in South Africa?

NS: The oppressor remains white monopoly capitalism.

FC: So anyone who promotes specifically white capital is an oppressor?

NS: Historically, South Africa had an oppressive colonial system that allowed predominantly male-owned white monopoly capital to rule in the interest of transnational companies. So the oppressor is in this case the transnational companies, white monopoly capital and the allied forces – the South African capitalist state and the so-called “national bourgeoisie” whose fortunes depend on transnational companies. These strata that have kept the country as it is to ensure a high level of unemployment and that nobody is able to get a hand on the economy. To us, that is the oppressor and it is reflected everywhere, including in our institutions of higher learning.

We have three forms of universities. We have the traditional white English and Afrikaans universities and we have the black universities that were formed by the bantustan authorities. Those universities were formed, then and today, to maintain apartheid policies and the colonial structure of the South African economy. This is very visible in what they teach, how they teach, and their interaction with society. Take the University of Venda. It is in the middle of the food basket of the country; the majority of our fresh produce is from there. But UniVen is hardly involved in studies of agriculture and agro-processing, which means that it is not intended to contribute to the expansion of the South African economy.

FC: So where does SASCO fit in to address those challenges?

NS: That is a broad question. We believe that, because we are students, we ought to be concerned about student issues. We believe in vigorous campus work to reform and transform the structure of our institutions and ensure they are conducive to their primary role of teaching and learning and research. Acknowledging that this is a reformist attempt, the organisation must participate in all policy development. Students must engage with institutions and all levels of government around curriculum transformation, admissions policies, residence policies. Recently we had a huge uproar about the residence policy of the University of Free State, and SASCO was in the centre of that struggle.

We also believe that, as students, we ought to go to school and master what is taught, whether it is in line with our ideological convictions or not, because this is a serious expense to the country. If you are remaining in the same institution and not progressing, you are taking that desk and chair from another person.

Our aspiration as an organisation is to transform higher education within the ambit of the national democratic





revolution, for the creation of a society that is non-racist, non-sexist, united, democratic and prosperous – and the “prosperous” part is very important.

FC: How does SASCO engage with those who might have benefited from the apartheid system?

NS: Everybody is welcome to join, participate, be a supporter. We do not chase people away, but we don’t change our mandate. If a student at Wits says, “I am not from a poor background like these other students; my concern is the quality of teaching, or that there should be more recreational facilities”, we are also concerned about that. All students stand to benefit from our work.

FC: How does SASCO differ from other youth movements? From DASO [the Democratic Alliance Student Organisation], for example?

NS: SASCO is an independent organisation of students, accountable to students and no one else. SASCO is not aligned to any political party, but it is left-leaning. The DA and DASO want to create an “open opportunity society”, some weird creation like that. It says, “Forget your history, forget where you come from. Here are these opportunities. Let’s see if you can grab them by competing with a person who has gone to different schools and acquired some assets while you have to struggle with taxi fare.” That is weird reasoning, if you ask me.

The ANC Youth League is an integral part of the ANC, but we are not part of any organisation, and we believe we ought to remain independent. Of course we form alliances with ANC and its youth league, the SACP and its youth wing, and other concerned organisations like COSATU [Congress of South African Trade Unions] and its affiliates – organisations concerned with the wellbeing of the working class and restructuring our economy.

FC: How does SASCO envision its call for free post-school education?

NS: Our people have not only been deprived of access to the economy. They have also been deprived of access to knowledge, and there has been destruction of indigenous knowledge by the colonial regime. To rectify this situation, we must do two things. The first is to liberate education from the stranglehold of liberalism. It is not correct that, when you go to an economics class, you learn Adam Smith’s Wealth of Nations and some distortion of Marxism. Make available knowledge that has been produced by the entirety of humanity. The department of higher education must subscribe to journals all over the world through online networks and make them available to students.

The second part is related to price of education. Education is a societal good, and it must be produced for everyone, in the interest of all. What we say is very simple. There are those who have made serious wealth out of the country and continue to do so. So what is their role: to offer bursaries for one hundred students per year and get tax breaks from government? It can’t be that. Let’s take the example of the mining sector. It has extracted billions of dollars from the economy and done little in skilling our people. We have proposed that there must be a specific tax on high-earning South Africans. That will include Comrade Ben Turok if he is still in parliament, cabinet ministers, vice-chancellors and CEOs of parastatals and private companies, because they benefited from higher education and they have an obligation. To us that is a sustainable way of funding education.

FC: I remember reading in the press that SASCO is against the graduate tax proposed by the ANC. Why is that?

NS: In a country where more than a quarter of young people are unemployed, where 600 000 graduates are unemployed, a graduate tax would be illogical. Graduates, especially those from African families, also have obligations to their families. Graduate tax is an attempt to put our people into a cycle of poverty



and our struggle is against poverty. I think the people who came with the proposal did not think carefully.

FC: Returning to campus, what challenges has SASCO faced around admissions policies?

NS: The question of admissions is very important in all institutions. The University of Pretoria has some policies that I do not believe should exist in a democratic country: that black students get a quota of 40 percent of admissions. The University of Cape Town has just announced that they are removing race as part of the admissions criteria. This has been a very difficult exercise because it speaks to changing the composition and institutional culture of those institutions.

FC: How do you address challenges of academic exclusion and trying to assist students who are struggling academically? Some institutions have considered prolonging undergraduate degrees to four years – but that has a financial cost.

NS: The gap between the lecturer and the student can be bridged by the use of tutorial classes and we have proposed compulsory tutorial classes for every undergraduate student. If we can't do it for all undergraduates, then at least for first-year students. There are other mechanisms: for example, online tutorial sessions.

If you prolong a degree, there will be a lot of costs incurred, but will that investment yield returns? The graduate rate – people who actually finish their degree – is about 34 percent. The FET colleges are even worse. Less than 10 percent of students who enrolled for the NCV [National Certificate Vocational] entrance level have completed all their subjects – despite the investment of government in that sector. At the end of the day, what are these resources used for?

FC: Is it a problem from the government's side or from higher education institutions?

NS: It is both. Government just puts resources into institutions like they are putting them in a pit. It might also be a problem of institutional autonomy. I am not opposed to institutional autonomy, but there needs to be some form of accountability to the public. Institutions of higher learning have also been investing resources where they are not needed. For example, in universities that have resulted from mergers, there are a lot of resources in the main campus relative to others campuses, which were previously the bantustan campuses and still attract the majority of black students. Look at TUT [Tshwane University of

Technology] in GaRankuwa or Soshanguve. You find institutions deliberately pushing black students away from the main campus, but there has been continuous investment in that area.

And our thinking that all a student needs is a library, computer lab and a room has been wrong. You need to go to church, you need to play sports, whatever it is that sustains you. Investment in infrastructure is not addressing those issues. In former black institutions, you have a perennial problem of squatters, because there is nowhere on campus where you will get affordable accommodation for the majority of our poor students.

Incompetent management in the former black institutions is a big problem. At the University of Limpopo, for example, the appointment of senior management is an extremely political matter. Even senior leadership in government and/or political parties would ask: what is in the interest of the people who want to do business in institutions? The infrastructure that has been developed collapses because of shady deals for tenders, and the university ends up incurring the cost of repairs. Or the university has prioritised removing and replacing speed humps in order to pay patronage to someone to protect their appointments. Go there and you will see what I am talking about. A report on the same university found that managers in schools and faculties had paid themselves overtime of more than 150 percent. That report is publicly available on the department of higher education website. And the management is sitting very comfortable there.

On the other side, in former white "Broederbond" universities like Stellenbosch, it is the same people sitting in the council – except for Russel Botman, the vice-chancellor. It is window-dressing, actually, to put a coloured vice-chancellor there, so that those of us who are concerned about race would say that there is one of our own. It does not work that way.

FC: If you were to picture SASCO 15 years from now what would you see? Let us say in a hypothetical world where some of the issues you raised have been dealt with.

NS: Every struggle is fought in stages of advancing and defending. The issues of students will still need to be advanced by somebody. SASCO should continue to grow like any organisation. For me, the organisation must remain a champion of student interests with a working class bias and continue to produce organic intellectuals. ✎





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The Department of Trade and Industry (**the dti**) aims to stimulate and facilitate the development of sustainable, competitive enterprises through efficient provision of effective and accessible funding mechanisms (i.e. incentive schemes) that support national priorities.

Through the Business Process Services Incentive, the dti has generated a total investment of R1.3 billion during the 2012/13 financial year, which created 3 838 jobs in the sector.

12i Investments 2012/13



Investment: R144m
Allowance: R83m
Jobs: 96

Bio Diesel Project



Investment: R2.8bn
Allowance: R909m
Jobs: 264

Cape Town Steel Works for DHT Africa Holdings

Investment: R220m
Allowance: R123m
Jobs: 360

12i is an incentive scheme from the Department of Trade and Industry (**the dti**) that has been established to promote industrial upgrading and new investment in manufacturing. During the 2012/13 financial year 12 projects were approved with an investment value of R10 billion. The incentive has helped to create 1, 357 direct jobs and 44 221 indirect jobs.

Projects Approved: 12
Investment: R10bn
Total Allowance: R3.35bn
Tax Forgone: R940m
Direct Jobs: 1 357
Indirect Jobs: 44 221



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Access, success and redress in higher education:

An interview with **Thabo Molotja** and **Tebogo Thothela**

Molotja and Thothela are, respectively, the president and vice-president of the South African Union of Students (SAUS). Fadzai Chitiyo and Thierry Luescher-Mamashela interviewed them in Johannesburg

Thabo Molotja: I am from Carletonville. I pursued a B.Com. degree in economics at the North-West University, where I finished in record time. In my first year, I was elected chairperson of the Young Communist League; the second year I was president of SASCO [South African Students Congress] and subsequently went on to become the secretary-general of the SRC [student representative council] of that campus. Currently I am on the national executive committee of SASCO and also I am the president of SAUS. I passed my honours in economics and am currently doing a short programme in African international economics at UNISA through the Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute.

Tebogo Thothela: I am a born-and-bred Soweto boy who spent some time in rural Thaba Nchu in the Free State, then came up here to do my studies. I was fortunate enough to go to Parktown Boys School and during my stay I fell in love with the aspirations of the African National Congress. I got to Wits University, and before I signed my acceptance letter to the university, I went to the SASCO table to sign my form there. After that, much like Thabo, I was elected to be chairperson of the SASCO branch, then to be the SRC president at Wits, and now I serve under Thabo as the deputy-president of SAUS. I am studying for a B.Com.Law. I am doing my final year with the hope of coming back next year to do my LLB and B.Com. degree. My aspirations are for access, success and redress to ensure that the poorer people are able to make it into institutions of higher learning

Fadzai Chitiyo: What is the South African Union of Students?

Thabo: It is a national body where all the SRCs in the country, the 24 institutions, come together to share challenges and make recommendations to committees of higher education.

Fadzai: What are your main objectives in 2013?

Thabo: Our main objective this year is to clearly define the role of the Union. We want to ensure that SAUS can co-exist with political organisations while keeping a student-oriented mandate and programme of action. We want to introduce nationally co-ordinated project-based initiatives, as opposed to focussing solely on policy. We want to champion the development of a Student Charter that would speak to all aspects of student needs, rights and responsibilities.

At the level of functionality, we want to devise a standard communication strategy and effective management of public relations for the Union. We also want to create a financial model to ensure that the Union is sustainable in the medium to long term. And we will capacitate members and affiliates with the necessary skills to lead effectively.

Fadzai: Finance and resources have been a stumbling block for SAUS in the past. How is it going to be different this year?

Tebogo: We inherited an organisation with a poor bank balance. The previous national executive committee (NEC) did not present an audited financial report as resolved at the national congress in 2012. As such, we do not have sufficient information in terms of income and expenditure to compile a sound financial report. To remedy this, affiliation has been increased to R10 000 for the 2013 academic year and expected income from affiliation fees will improve to R240 000. However, since the increase to date, only three out of the 24 institutions have affiliated to SAUS.

The DHET [department of higher education and training] has been promising to assist. They are not willing to fund the organisation directly, but will rather fund programmes. Our immediate task is to



establish a finance committee. Its composition should extend beyond NEC members to include influential stakeholders in the higher education sector who possess the requisite skills for the task at hand.

To assist in establishing SAUS offices, we have been meeting with an international company that acts as a link between people who want accommodation and property owners, which might be able to act as an investment arm for the Union. After signing a contract with them, the Union could be in a better space to function properly.

Fadzai: What resolutions came out of your recent strategic planning workshop?

Tebogo: The Union will host a policy conference during the winter break. Its purpose is to develop a uniform view around institutional policies in the higher education sector. There will be a national march against student victimisation. Operation Sangena, an on-going programme where students visit high schools in disadvantaged communities to share their experiences of university life with students, will continue.

The Ubuntu Campaign is another all-year campaign we resolved to run. Its ideals and objectives include building a sense of togetherness among student leaders and encouraging networking, promoting transformation, encouraging student leaders to engage in community service initiatives beyond the boundaries of their institutions.

We also resolved to enhance our contribution to addressing scarce skills; increase the number of research-oriented postgraduate projects co-ordinated by the Union; enhance the quality and profile of SAUS leadership; and expand and enhance SAUS's contribution to South Africa's development challenges.

Fadzai: How are you going to strengthen the organisational structure to make it a strong voice?

Thabo: We have resolved to use operational forums inspired by the HESA [Higher Education South Africa] structure, focusing strongly on inter-disciplinary communities of practice (CoPs). These forums may include finance, academic, transformation, a secretariat and a students' strategic forum. They would be structured similarly to project groups, in that they serve the formal decision-making committee system and have no authority to make decisions in their own right, but are different from project groups in that they deal with generic issues (rather than individual, specific and ad hoc issues). As a consequence, they have an indefinite existence with stable membership, which develops a shared understanding and knowledge of a field of work.



Tebogo Thothela, current Deputy President of the South African Union of Students (SAUS).

Fadzai: Your constitution mentions areas of concern like the "institutional and physical separation of students at universities, technikons and agricultural, nursing, police, defence colleges" and so on. What are your views on this?

Tebogo: We have to take an honest introspection. We have not been able to solidify one unified student view. Before you can advance the issues, you need to gain the confidence of those you are leading. For example, transformation is a policy area that we need to address and consolidate across all sectors. We cannot narrow it down to a transformation in residence policy at the University of Pretoria and a transformation in language policy at UCT.

Thabo: We need to address issues around institutional autonomy where there are emerging institutions and those that are well established. At the University of the Free State, the student who comes from the Qwaqwa Campus and the student from South Campus are two different types of student with different curricula. There was a similar case in North-West University and the so-called "Potchification" of the Mafikeng campus – cases where institutions are blended together with no real address of the differences between these institutions.

You also have the problem of non-alignment in programmes. For example, a student comes with an FET diploma but their qualification is not accepted by a university. They still want a matric certificate. The challenge is that the higher education mandate has been mostly directed to universities and all these colleges suffer, including agriculture and nursing ones.

Fadzai: You sound like you have a lot on your plate. As leaders, what would you like to achieve by the end of your term?



Tebogo: For me, it would be for the organisation to regain its confidence. I think that is quite important. I would like to see a SAUS congress with a series of rigorous debates that affect society. We have not used our postgraduates – people who are doing their PhDs and Masters – to help us articulate our views and direction.

Thabo: I think we need the re-branding of SAUS, to put it back at the centre of higher education initiatives. And two, we need a balance between affiliation with political organisations and the responsibility to serve on higher education committees. We all need to agree that, when someone is acting in the capacity of a SAUS representative, they represent all students across cultural and political boundaries. I think the issue of responsibility to a political organisation is dealt with in caucus, similar to government. That would be the approach. When we come into SAUS, we are united students with one voice.

Fadzai: What is the response from vice-chancellors and other people who may be watching SAUS?

Tebogo: There are some institutions we have a very good relationship with, for example UNISA [University of South Africa] and UJ [University of Johannesburg]. Our strategic planning was funded completely by UJ, and UNISA's vice-chancellor gave the inauguration message at our inauguration of SAUS. We have extended an invitation to solidify our relationship with HESA, saying that we want to engage and see where we might make tactical agreements.

Thabo: Part of our campaign is to meet with vice-chancellors. The communication between the institutions and the Union needs to improve. We need to be an organisation that communicates with all institutions. We had a very successful campaign as part of the Palestine–Israeli Apartheid Week, working with the institutions.

Fadzai: How do campaigns like that come about? Is it a consultative process with your constituency?

Tebogo: We want a situation where the SRCs own SAUS, so when we go to congress we speak about issues and come to resolutions. For example, last year we spoke about the issue of outsourcing labour and the issue of Israel and Palestine. When those commissions make resolutions, it is up to the NEC to say how we take up those issues.

Fadzai: What was the response from the SRCs?

Tebogo: Most of our affiliates responded and our posters were on campuses all over the country. The aim

was to create dialogue around an issue that is debated internationally, and I think that we achieved that.

Fadzai: Did students know that this was a SAUS campaign, or was it championed as an SRC–SAUS campaign?

Tebogo: It was both – and we partnered with numerous organisations.

Thabo: There is another issue about communication. We have very active Facebook and Twitter pages in order to allow engagement with everybody. Higher education is big and we are not the only ones who can contribute.

Fadzai: Who knows about these platforms?

Tebogo: That is the challenge, and not only for SAUS but even for SRCs: how to get students to know about them. How do we become relevant to this generation X, to all students and not just our Union? We are trying to use Twitter to bridge the gap, because that is where students are. The deputy secretary-general [of SASCO] is big on technology – Skype, MySpace, and so forth – and we are looking at going there.

Fadzai: At the SAUS Congress at UKZN last year, Higher Education Minister Blade Nzimande said, “The character of student organisations needs to change. We are not hearing your voice on a number of issues that we are grappling with. Are you adjusting to the times or remaining trapped in practices which remain in the past?” What would be your response?

Thabo: When we are in touch with people of the movement who are older than us, they think that we are not doing things right. I normally say, “It is not that we are not doing things right: we are doing things right in a different way.” We might not be as aggressive or as militant as they were. I think the student leaders now are more in touch with their constituency and with the public, and meeting their demands.

Tebogo: I understand it in the context of the difference between “modernisation” and “westernisation”. And the line is quite fine. I think it is quite important that you always remember the background so that you can map a way forward. I don’t think it should dictate how we do things, but we repeat so many things because we choose not to learn from history. So many times people want to do something new, when in actual fact you don’t have to re-invent the wheel – and so much time is spent trying to reinvent the wheel, when instead we should just be doing things differently. 🌀



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The “problem” of black youth and race relations in South Africa

By **Mzukisi Qobo** and
Nokubulela Zovuyo Lindani



Dr Qobo is a senior lecturer in the department of political sciences and deputy head of the Centre for the Study of Governance Innovation and Ms Lindani is a researcher in the department of political sciences, both at the University of Pretoria.

After almost twenty years of democracy, much progress has been made to improve the living conditions of the majority of South Africans. There are, however, fundamental gaps in critical areas of public service delivery, educational standards and outcomes, economic participation and race relations. Black youth, in particular, are at the receiving end of the government’s failure to address pressing social and economic challenges. They are not only recipients of poor education but also face bleak employment prospects. Further, they have to contend with the reality of growing up in a country marked by racial tensions, where the colour of one’s skin is still, by and large, a marker of privilege or exclusion. Despite the fact that South Africans who were born in the late 1980s and early 1990s did not experience apartheid, they are not quite born free. The legacy of apartheid remains deeply etched in everyday reality for black youth in townships and white youth in suburbs.

Comparatively, those who have grown up in social conditions that are structurally poor, with inadequate infrastructure and low quality amenities and social services, face an uphill battle in advancing towards a future that works for them. They have no endowments from their parents or any form of economic security that would represent a stepping stone out of marginalisation. Their plight is vastly different from those of their peers living in the relative comfort of suburbia, who can access collateralised loans for their further studies and are surrounded by an enabling environment that includes better study conditions and role models to inspire success.

This bifurcated structure is not natural but the result of conditions created by the apartheid government precisely to ensure the outcome we have today – hierarchical socio-economic development based

on race. Accordingly, those who are successful take their success for granted as purely the result of hard work and genius, and those who trail behind tend to internalise it as their lot in life. This is not an anomaly that will simply change with the passing of time. In this article, we observe that conditions of privilege and under-privilege have continued to reproduce themselves in the post-apartheid period, with race and inequality still intricately linked.

Race features alongside material inequality and contestation between political parties as a driving force behind present-day social divisions in South Africa (Hofmeyr, 2012: xi). While the apartheid-legislated social barriers that made it difficult for blacks and whites to interact on an equal footing may have disappeared, social integration remains elusive and shallow.

We therefore argue that the fundamental step towards creating a strong base for racial integration should begin with more effective forms of economic empowerment to build confidence among black youth and deliberately enable their meaningful participation in society. Such an approach will need to be accompanied by a new nationwide dialogue about moving to the next phase of South Africa’s democratic consolidation.

WHAT IS LEFT OF THE NON-RACIAL DREAM?

In the early years of South Africa’s democracy, the concept of non-racialism gained wide currency. Diffusing from politics to sports, it had something transcendental about it and seemed an appropriate undertaker to bury the memory of apartheid. Although



this was undoubtedly a noble starting point to cast the building blocks for a new society, it also took attention away from the reality that, although apartheid is legally dead, its spectre continues to hover above South Africa and is clearly evident in spatial planning, race-based inequalities and differential access to economic opportunities.

It is safe to suggest that non-racialism has lost much of its force in the past 19 years and is without deep meaning among those who are socially excluded. Its weakness in the first place lay in the fact that it was not posited with any strong and credible framework of socio-economic redistribution. On the one hand – and this seems to have been an expectation among sections of the white community – harmonious relations among different races were to be an end in themselves. On the other, suppressed aspirations for fundamental socio-economic change were to find expression in a large-scale improvement in the material conditions of the black majority.

It is for this reason that the non-racial dream of Mandela and his ANC elicits little excitement among those who have been marginalised. In future, they may even consider it to be responsible for their continued social marginalisation as it promoted the soft components of nation-building, including notions of reconciliation and forgiveness, at the expense of radical economic redistribution.

The ANC gained much of its moral capital by making a strong case for non-racialism. It needs to be underscored that, despite its long-standing profession of non-racialism, in particular since the adoption of the Freedom Charter in 1955, it was only at its 1969 Morogoro Conference that the ANC showed proper fidelity to the notion of non-racialism by opening its membership for the first time to racial groups other than Africans. For many years, the organisation was in the grips of African nationalism, where “African” was racially defined and taken with a dose of suspicion for minorities (Ellis, 2012).

Without a doubt, there is a powerful rationale to non-racialism in a country that has endured many decades of legislated discrimination and where tensions along racial lines still persist. However, it is increasingly becoming clear that building a non-racial future will have to give primacy to economic transformation, with less rhetoric and more practical policy shifts, including improved governance and the elimination of corruption.

With growing resentment around race and inequality, and a growing sense among sections of the black community that Mandela’s rainbow vision was an

unreciprocated gesture that reassured the white population at the expense of black aspirations, populist nationalism has a much greater appeal to discontented black youth today than ever. Non-racialism is not something that features in their daily conversation as they stand by a street corner waiting for a bakkie to transport them to a construction site or their next menial job, if they are lucky.

Non-racialism is a discourse far removed from the grinding struggle for their daily bread. As research shows, there still exists a large degree of mistrust between racial groups in South Africa and a lack of understanding of other groups’ cultural repertoires (Gibson, 2004). And because of apartheid spatial planning, their worlds hardly intersect. Beyond this, there exists a great deal of mistrust between different races in the country. If black youth from townships and rural villages have any relationships at all across racial boundaries, these reveal unequal power relations, where the white person occupies the position of an authority figure endowed with material success and a benefactor who creates jobs. This also holds true when they see the demographic profile of corporate leaders and general income differentials in the economy.

Thus the hope for social stability and racial integration lies primarily in addressing the material conditions of young black people. With 71 percent of those aged between 24 and 35 years unemployed (Rankin et al, 2012:24), the majority of whom are black, it is difficult to shine a positive light on race relations.

THE BLACK YOUTH CHALLENGE

Whenever the theme of the youth challenge in South Africa arises, it almost always refers to one particular cross-section – black youth. They have a central place in the government’s rhetoric about social change or the creation of a developmental state. As such, the “youth problem” in South Africa is the “black youth problem”. It surely is not edifying to be at the centre because you are a problem and solutions are required for you. The attention to the problem of black youth has also somewhat obscured the multiple social difficulties that are generic to both black and white youth, such as growing unemployment and crime.

Black youth, most of whom live in the townships, perform poorly at school and have relatively higher drop-out rates, although this has been improving since 1994. Very few progress to higher education and succeed. Even those who manage to rise further than their peers are more likely than their white counterparts to be brought down by the absence of employment opportunities. The majority of those



who don't progress to higher education are almost guaranteed a place in the pool of the unemployed, with even bleaker futures awaiting them.

The paradox of political change – and indeed of the ANC rule – is that, despite its promise of liberation and a better life for all, the majority have little hope that their fortunes will improve anytime soon. South Africa is more unequal today than it was under apartheid. In fact, it leads the global charts in inequality. The traces of apartheid's social architecture are still evident in human settlements, differential educational standards and outcomes, capacity for resilience in the face of economic adversity, and the extent of participation in economic activity. In their social environments in the rural areas or urban townships, black youth see few role models who have pushed through the barriers to success. Instead, most become absorbed into the informal economy or are idle, surrounded by images that are unlikely to inspire confidence in a brighter future: criminal gangs, violence and jobless graduates. At every turn, they see the odds are stacked against them.

It is not just the lack of a framework for equal opportunity that is a problem – a point selectively argued by the Democratic Alliance, for example, in its economic policy document – but the crucial fact that insufficient attention is paid to addressing the conditions that give rise to uneven opportunities in the first place.

While an equal opportunity society is an ideal worth striving for, today's reality is yearning for more intelligent solutions. These should necessarily entail measures to direct more state resources to ameliorating the conditions of youth as well as to refine effective equity policies. What limits progress is not only the poor quality of education – a hugely important means to change one's social circumstances in the long run – but the lack of complementary policy tools to tackle structural barriers to success.

Improving educational standards is necessary, but the structural mismatch between what our education system produces and the needs of the economy must be addressed. Education as a be-all and end-all response to socio-economic challenges is certainly not sufficient. Given the inequitable distribution of material resources, education may not alter relative inequalities in the long run.

The starting points of the participants – and the resources they have at their disposal to enhance their chances in life – are vastly different. If equity policies are not recalibrated to catapult black youth

up the socio-economic hierarchy, then the patterns of race-based relative inequality may still persist, with a slightly improved social station for blacks. As such, they will forever be playing a catch-up game.

South Africa's racially patterned social structure was engineered for two purposes: to ensure inequality between the black and white races, and to secure a better quality of life for the white section of society. Even if legislation is no longer required to do this work, the logic of the apartheid process reached a point of self-automation or reproduction. To reverse these conditions and equalise the playing field requires measures that boldly promote positive discrimination in the allocation of social and economic opportunities spanning the education and economic sectors. Accordingly, both race and class remain relevant as measuring devices.

GOVERNMENT LEGITIMACY

It needs to be underscored, though, that even the best intentions to create socio-economic change to benefit black youth in the future will fall flat under weak forms of governance. We should not be preoccupied only with uprooting the social legacy of apartheid, but also with scrutinising the political and bureaucratic agencies at the helm of such an endeavour. The mismanagement of education by the ANC government, widespread maladministration in government as revealed by various auditor-generals' reports, and the rise of corruption have, more than anything, narrowed the scope for seriously addressing historical ills.

The crisis of legitimacy arising from governance weakness that confronts the ruling party today makes it harder for it to persuade broad sectors of society to support an agenda for socio-economic change. By rationalising its failures, the ANC has presented itself as shackled by the post-1994 political compromise expressed in the country's liberal constitutional order, as if it had not been a party to its negotiation. Not only that, it is disingenuous to say that the constitution constricts the government's ability to deliver material benefits to the majority of the population when in fact it leans to the side of socio-economic rights.

It remains unclear how the government has been constrained from implementing the economic changes that would reverse the legacy of apartheid. Surely, if so much could be invested in the arms procurement programme – to the tune of R43 billion, with some accounts suggesting this has climbed to more than R70 billion – it should have been possible to make a case for a new economic compact to help lift millions out of poverty and joblessness?



Large-scale changes in economic policy in the form of, for example, a land reform programme or a more extended role for the state in the economy, aimed to achieve results beyond the reach of market mechanisms, require advancing better arguments, engaging persuasively with a diversity of social actors, and demonstrating clear benefits. Just as the cost of social instability can affect all sectors and classes of society (albeit to varying degrees), the benefits of inclusive social and economic policies are likely to make everyone better off in the long run.

The short-term trade-offs that may be called for could be more than compensated by a growing and more dynamic economy and social stability. This is not to suggest it will be easy – some will stubbornly defend their privileged access to opportunities – but it is not impossible. What is required is a properly managed dialogue to set in motion a deeper economic transformation.

THE FUTURE OF NATION BUILDING

There is a general sense that the euphoria that greeted South Africa's transition to democracy in 1994 is waning in the face of continued economic disadvantages felt by young black South Africans, the limited avenues they have to assert their grievances, and the racial expression of privilege and social exclusion. The notion of a rainbow nation no longer

carries as much weight as it used to, as the promise of a better life assumes the shape of a mirage. Mandela's gesture of reconciliation was symbolically viewed by the majority as part of a bargain that leads not only to racial integration, but also takes a giant leap to facilitate social and economic inclusion through redress and redistributive measures.

South Africa remains a fractured society, both in terms of class and race. The project of nation building will take many decades to complete. At its heart should be the amelioration of inequality and broadening opportunities for black youth to participate in the economy. As long as privilege and underprivilege are starkly defined by race, the non-racial nirvana will forever be elusive. ■

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Post-apartheid South African schools: The perfect setting for a clash of generations? By Cherrel Africa

The author is head of the department of political studies at the University of the Western Cape

While we cannot minimise the remarkable positive changes that have occurred in South Africa, problems and conflict often provoke a default to our stereotypical understandings of each other. Schools are one such arena. In this article, I present the experience of one learner, my son, in a desegregated school. Our story provides some insight into the inner workings of these "laboratories of integration".

BACKGROUND

The apartheid government used the education system effectively to segregate race groups. More sinister than physical separation was the use of the education system to mould the minds of learners into accepting the roles allotted to them. South Africa has of course moved on. Unfortunately, as Adam and Moodley (1999: 15) indicate, a "subtle social



SECOND
QUARTER 13

NEW AGENDA

racism” replaces cruder forms of contempt and discrimination, which is difficult to combat because attitudes cannot be legislated.

After five years of democracy, the South African Human Rights Commission (1999) concluded that racist practices – including derogatory name calling, harassment and fights – remained ubiquitous. A majority of learners (60 percent) said that their schools had done very little, if anything, to eliminate or address this (SAHRC 1999: 4).

“All over the world, schools are the laboratories for racial harmony or conflict, a micro-cosm of society at large”

Adam and Moodley

Vandeyar (2010) investigated how teachers were facilitating the integration process. Three of the 18 participating teachers were extremely interested in creating a welcoming and inclusive classroom atmosphere, using every opportunity to discuss cultural differences with their learners and encourage tolerance and acceptance. However, there was a sense of general apathy and non-commitment among the majority of teachers interviewed.

In the literature, assimilation, multi-culturalism and anti-racist education constitute the three basic responses to integration, which “represent a continuum of possibilities” (Soudien 2004: 95). *Assimilation* is based on the presumption that subordinate groups represent a threat to the standards of the dominant group and that the dominant group is culturally superior (Soudien 2004: 95). Claims of “colour-blindness” often serve to hide institutionalised racism or discriminatory attitudes, while members of the group being assimilated are “expected to give up their identities and cultures and, critically, to acknowledge the superiority of the culture... into whose social context they are moving” (Soudien 2010: 96).

Multi-cultural education sets out to create equal educational opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds by acknowledging difference. However, this approach has been criticised for ignoring the structural dimensions of racism. Lastly, the *anti-racist* approach calls for “not only confronting and opposing overt attitudes, practices and customs but insists on opposing subtle racism, stereotypes and

patronising attitudes” (Vandeyar 2010: 345–6). Most studies of integration in South African schools reach the same conclusion: it has “followed a decidedly assimilationist route” (Soudien 2004: 96).

OUR EXPERIENCE

What is missing from these studies is the perspective of learners, which brings me to our story. My husband and I first sent our children to a small, private, racially integrated school and then to a public, formerly white, primary school. After our positive experiences, we did not even include race and identity issues as relevant criteria when searching for a high school. We wanted a co-ed school that offered high-calibre education close to where we lived. Duly impressed by the reputation of one school in particular, we attended their open day and applied to enrol our son there. I was struck by the photos of grade 12 classes, which had steadily evolved from all white to a fairly diverse mix of learners. I reflected that we were very fortunate to benefit from the new political dispensation that allowed our son to attend such a prestigious school. He began grade 8 at the school in 2012.

Unfortunately, his (and our) experience was a fraught one. While he enjoyed interacting with his peers at school, he was constantly in trouble, his grades plummeted and he was sick much of the time. Initially I thought that it was due to the transition from primary to high school. I met with the school principal to discuss what was happening. Some of the problems involved the usual low-level misdemeanours which are typically met with a demerit or detention. Of greater concern to us were the abrasive signs of prejudice that started to creep in. He was, for example, told by a sports co-ordinator that he was of no worth to the school if he did not play rugby or hockey. Another incident involved receiving instructions in Afrikaans about using the restrooms during exam time, and then being shouted at for not following them properly. Taken on their own, most incidents would not warrant further attention. Some could be a learner not meeting the school requirements; others could be the frustration of any teacher attempting to deal with their workload. My son said that the younger teachers seemed to understand him better.

When I reviewed all of our experience, I felt that there was a more systemic problem at the school – a racialised clash of generations. I approached another school in the area and, after extensive discussion with the principal, we decided that it would be better to move him. He started at the new school halfway through the year and settled in quickly. In the meantime, I sent the first principal my



analysis of what could be happening at his school. The following are extracts from my letter:

In plain language, there has been an influx of “students of colour” into the school. It is entirely feasible that this reality (and indeed the reality of living in a constitutional democracy where every person has equal rights and freedoms) has not been fully embraced by portions of your staff. This is not really the case among the younger teachers, perhaps because their experience and training are different, but there is a disjuncture between your vision for the school and the norms and practices of some of your teachers. This disjuncture manifests as everyday problems between teachers and some learners.

These staff members may not even be fully aware of this. I can use the analogy of children who are adversely affected by the divorce of their parents. On the face of it, one might simply observe a troubled child. The child may not know or be able to articulate the reasons for his/her troubles. Teachers who struggle with the transition to democracy may feel a similar sense of betrayal and/or a loss of power, and may inadvertently target students who are not white.

On the face of it, those learners look troublesome. My son did receive several demerits. These were for minor infringements and I took issue with the validity of some of them. Indeed my son is quite forgetful, but he is very respectful and compliant. You can verify this with his primary school teachers. In some instances, learners are also spoken to in an unnecessarily abrasive manner.

It was really disheartening to watch his spirit being broken slowly but surely, and him coming to believe that it was his fault. This demoralising situation is not conducive to learning. Given the complexity of the problem, it seemed to us as parents that it would be better to extricate our son from a situation that may take many years to resolve.

The tragedy is that other families may be making a big financial sacrifice to put their children in such a terrible situation and are likely to blame their child rather than the system. Many of these parents may not even be aware of the problems. The implications of this situation (if I am correct) are quite far-reaching because a cohort of learners is being broken or turned off from education by a systemic problem beyond their control.

Of course, you simply cannot know everything that is occurring in your school. While it is

understandable that you would not have been aware of this situation, it is by no means acceptable for this to now continue. Furthermore, I know that the initial reaction of your teachers to these claims may be defensive and I have no desire to engage with individual teachers about any of the incidents that I mentioned. I am not raising these issues to point fingers at any individual member of staff but to ask you to engage in a process of critical reflection in order to minimise the damage to children.

The so-called “born free” generation of learners is oblivious to the issues that teachers grapple with. They are assertive and have been taught about their democratic rights, rendering them less amenable to the assimilation model of integration.

I realise that what I am asking is not easy but I do believe that it is critically important. I would recommend that you consider diversity training for your entire staff... This has been a traumatic process but we hope that through our difficult experience there may be a positive outcome.

STONEWALLED

The letter was met with absolute silence. After several months, I learned that the principal of my son’s former school had written an open letter to President Jacob Zuma about a range of issues. I then wrote an open letter to the principal indicating my displeasure that he was demanding accountability but was not willing to provide it to others. I gave some details of our experience and challenged his assertion that his school promoted respect for diversity. Several parents, pupils and past pupils posted comments in an online forum, saying that this was not their experience, that the problem must have been with me and my son rather than the school, and that they were offended by what I had said.

Many learners wrote that they had a positive experience at the school and had not experienced any form of racism. I responded that the positive experience of many does not cancel out the negative



experience of a few: “Is it then about numbers? What percentage needs to be affected by an issue before we start to have empathy for each other?” Below are other extracts from my response.

Thanks for your feedback. Let me clarify a few matters. Firstly, I did not discount the positive experiences of many past and present pupils as well as teachers... Secondly, I never said that my son is angelic. Also, my son never said that anyone was racist. Indeed, my analysis of the situation is that subconscious racism was occurring at the school. Our experience was our experience and all the positive experience of others doesn’t change what happened... I think everyone should do introspection about how they react to others. I am not going to engage on the specifics of the situation because the reason I put this into the public domain is to generate a broader discussion. Perhaps then we can start to shed our prejudices and move forward. Racism is not always overt but can underpin our opinions and actions. In many situations, people across the racial spectrum stereotype each other without even knowing it. I understand that people get defensive about a matter like this. The point is that, as South Africans, we have never truly dealt with the major transition that occurred in 1994.

Parents and past pupils were highly defensive. At no point did the principal attempt to engage with me. I then began doing research on desegregation and discovered that our experience is not unique at all. I had been unaware of the theory of assimilation, yet it certainly sums up our situation.

To understand the situation in South African schools today, as well as the experience of my son, we must return to South Africa’s historical context. The idea that whites were the civilised race and that white interests should supersede those of subordinate races was core to apartheid. As history tells us, those who were subjected to this philosophy rebelled against it, but it resonated with many of those it aimed to elevate. The contradiction of life under apartheid was that, despite living in an isolated and highly militarised society, ordinary white South Africans could go easily through their daily lives. Life in these conditions was “normal” for them. Additionally, the destructive rhetoric of the National Party served to exacerbate white fears and resistance to change.

The psychological impact of apartheid no doubt continues to affect us. This includes teachers. Teachers are meant to play an integral part in

facilitating integration and ensuring that learners of different races respect one another, yet it is entirely possible that many teachers remain angry or depressed about the changes that have occurred in South Africa. Every day they have to come to school and engage with learners who remind them of everything they lost. Educational reforms, which set new and challenging demands for teachers, may be in conflict with their personal beliefs and values (Vandeyar 2010: 345). On the other hand, the so-called “born free” generation of learners is oblivious to the issues that teachers grapple with. They are assertive and have been taught about their democratic rights, rendering them less amenable to the assimilation model of integration. This provides the perfect situation for a clash of generations.

Our experience was extremely difficult. Most of the dynamics were not overt, and it is likely that teachers were unaware of what was occurring. We felt powerless as a family. My son’s grades plummeted and he was sick for a significant proportion of the school year. For those learners who fit the assimilationist model even less than my son, the consequences must be devastating.

Based as it is on a sample of one, my analysis raises more questions than answers. Hopefully this could be the starting point for a systematic study to test its assertions. ☞

NOTE

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Hardship and hope:

The attitudes of South African youth to democracy

By **Thierry M Luescher-Mamashela**



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Education, economic and civic participation are key focus areas in the National Youth Policy (2009–2014). With improved participation in these areas, young South Africans will gain opportunities to take charge of their lives and realise their potential to contribute fully in the social, economic and political spheres of life. The following data, which is drawn mainly from Afrobarometer surveys of 2012¹, provide evidence of the political attitudes of South African youth against the background of their socio-economic circumstances. It covers youths' attitudes towards (1) the economy and their beliefs about their own living conditions now and in the future; (2) democracy in South Africa and the prospects of further democratisation; (3) the trustworthiness of political parties and who they would vote for; (4) how they participate politically and connect socially. The data shows that South African youths are growing up under tough conditions and yet are surprisingly resilient and hopeful.

THE TOUGHEST AGE

To be young in South Africa is tough. By the end of 2012, the official unemployment rate among youth aged 15 to 24 years reached 50.9 percent, and over 3.3 million of the 10.4 million in this age group were “not in employment, education or training” (StatsSA 2013). This means that unemployment among young South Africans is *more than double* the general unemployment rate of 24.9 percent. The Afrobarometer surveys add more detail to this picture of youth as a tough time: young people between 18 and 35 years go more often without food, water, or cooking fuel than the older generation; almost 40 percent frequently have no cash income, and two-thirds experienced times without electricity in 2011/12.

The younger ones (under 25) tend to feel less safe at home. Only half of them consider their neighbours as trustworthy; over 50 percent feel it is often unsafe to walk in their neighbourhoods, and almost 40 percent frequently fear crime in their own home.

And they have less cool stuff. While almost all youths have a cell phone, only just over 10 percent of those between 18 and 24 years own a car, as against 20 percent of youths aged 25 to 35 years and 31 percent for the over-35s.

The youngest are also the toughest in a different sense. Young South Africans are considerably more positive about the economic situation in the country than the older generation, especially when comparing the under-25s with the over-35s. Fewer think it was so bad 12 months ago; over 40 percent think that the economic conditions currently are actually fairly good or even very good; and almost two-thirds of young South Africans (as against only just half of over-35s) think that the economic situation will be better or much better in 12 months time (see Figure 1).

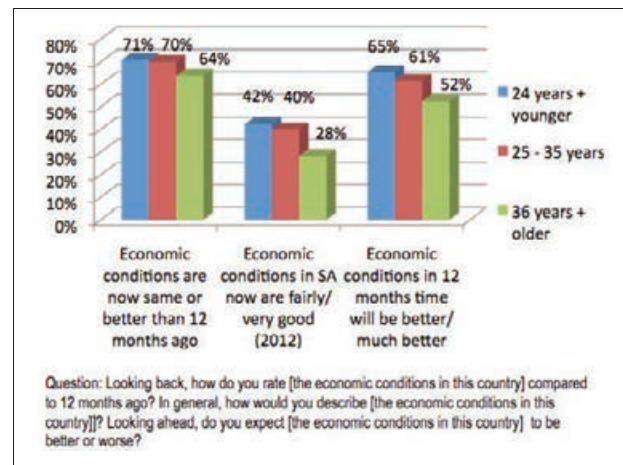


Figure 1: Attitudes to economic conditions in South Africa by age cohorts

Despite the hardships, South African youth are surprisingly positive and hopeful when looking at their own living conditions. Almost half of the 18- to 24-year-olds find their living conditions fairly good, if not very good; and about a third of all South African youth consider their living conditions better than what they were 12 months ago. Almost two-thirds also believe that their living



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conditions will improve further in the next 12 months (see Figure 2).

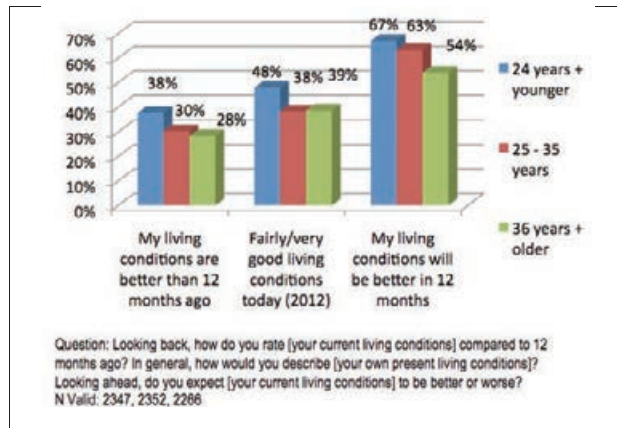


Figure 2: Attitudes to own living conditions by age cohorts

HOW DEMOCRATIC IS SOUTH AFRICA?

The youths' hopeful outlook on their socio-economic prospects is complemented by similarly positive expectations for the further democratisation of South Africa: 72 percent support democracy and almost two-thirds (63%) are fairly or very satisfied with the way democracy works in South Africa.

South African youths are optimistic that democracy continues to improve, and they believe that South Africa – from having been almost completely undemocratic under apartheid – will become a model democracy in the future (Figure 3).

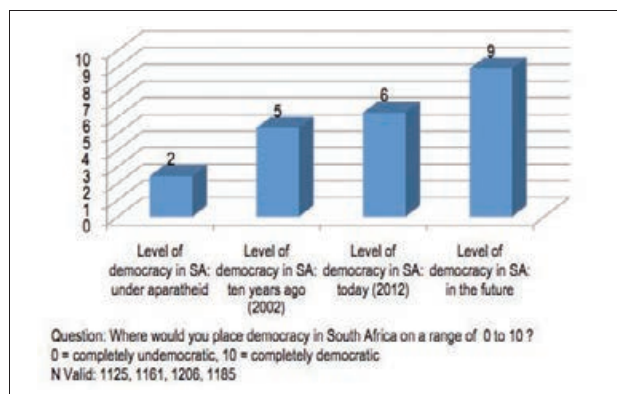


Figure 3: Youth attitudes to the level of democracy in South Africa

Giving democracy under apartheid a clear "fail" (2 out of 10), they rank democracy in 2002 at 5 out of 10 and in 2012 at 6 out of 10.

South Africa's democracy is also doing fairly well in comparison with other countries, (see Figures 3 and 4) and the expectation is that South Africa will become completely democratic in the future.

In fact, youths see South Africa's democracy outshining countries like the USA and the UK in the next ten years, while today they are still seen as more democratic than South Africa.

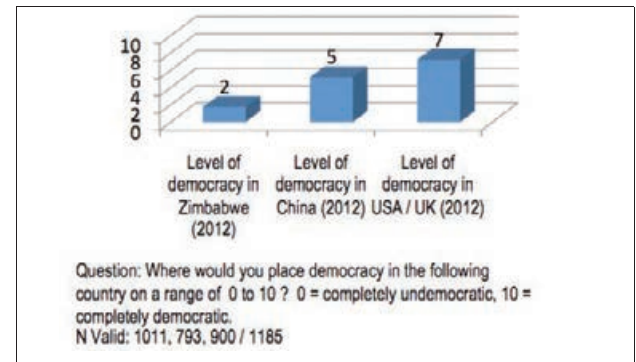


Figure 4: Youth attitudes towards democracy in other countries

WHO WOULD YOU VOTE FOR?

A representative democracy requires parties that are seen as trustworthy by the voters. The vast majority of South African youths trust the main political parties: over 70 percent trust the ruling party and 63 percent trust the opposition parties. While trust in the ANC is the same between voting age youths and South Africans older than 35 years, trust in opposition parties is higher among the youth than the older generation. At the same time, South African youths also feel marginally closer to a particular political party than the older generation.

If a national election had been held in 2012 to vote for a president of South Africa, the majority of youths (59%) would have returned the ANC's candidate into office. In contrast, less than 10 percent said in 2012 they would vote for the DA and very few for the IFP (1.5%), COPE (1.1%), AZAPO (0.6%) and ACDP (0.5%). Other parties, like the FF+, Minority Front, PAC, UDM and UCDP would have got less than 0.5% of support from the youth (Figure 5).

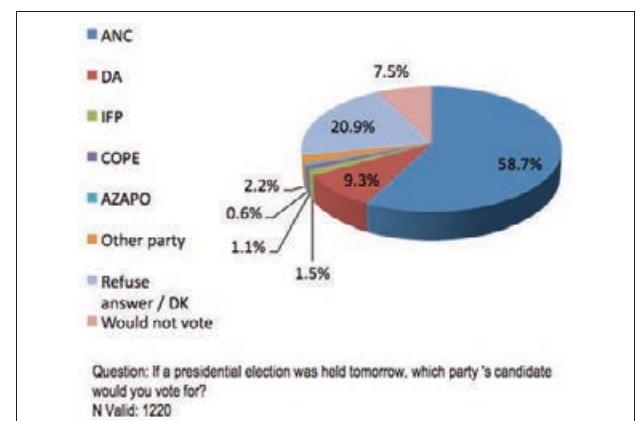


Figure 5: Youth support for political parties



If an actual election had been held, the proportions would, of course, have been somewhat different. Firstly, because 21 percent of youths in the survey said that they did not know who to vote for or didn't want to disclose their choice; secondly, another 7.5% said they would not go to vote; lastly, in an actual election, all South African voters – not only the youth – would, of course, be eligible to vote.

MAKING THE CONNECTION?

Historically, youths have been critical in bringing about democracy in South Africa. However declining levels of political and electoral participation have been observed and are typical in consolidating democracies internationally. Nonetheless, the challenge of deepening democracy while building social capital and social cohesion is to encourage youth to continue to be involved in civic and political activity (National Youth Policy, 2009).

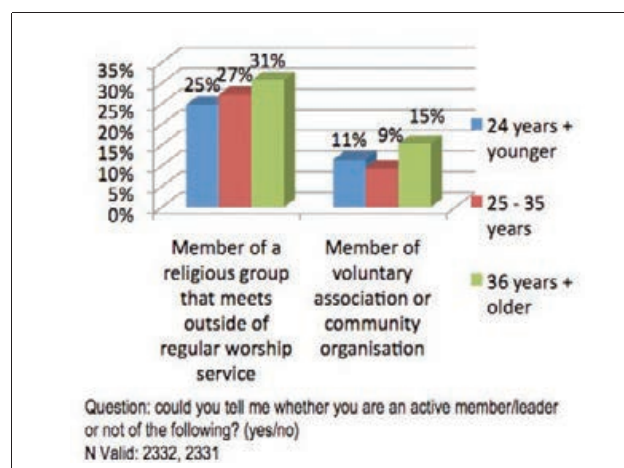


Figure 6: Membership of religious and non-religious organisations by age cohorts

At the same time, the spread of ICTs is rapidly changing the way South Africans connect with each other. Those under 25 years in particular are more connected than older youth and the older generation. About 30 percent of youth of 18–24 years use the internet regularly (as against 25 percent of 25–35 year olds and less than 20 percent of over-35s); almost 95 percent of youth have a cell phone and over 82 percent use it at least daily (compared to 70 percent of over-35s). Almost all youths have used SMS or other forms of texting like Mixit, Whatsapp and BBM, and 75 percent of them use it every day (and all day).

However, when it comes to face-to-face interaction and political participation, the picture is quite different. Youths tend to be marginally less involved than over-35s in religious groups and community organisations (see Figure 6). Youths are also significantly less

involved in community meetings or in raising issues with others, while youth attendance at protest marches or demonstrations – and self-reported use of violence for political causes – is as low as among the elder generation (Figure 7).

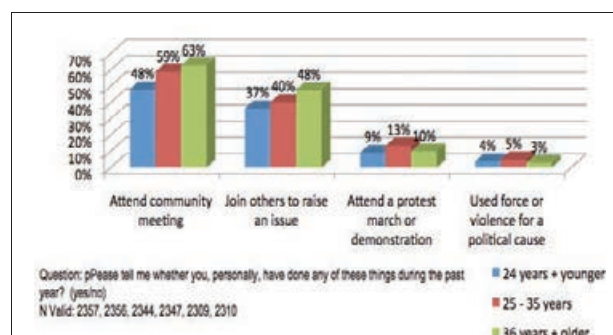


Figure 7: Political participation and use of political violence by age cohorts

Survey data on the political attitudes of South African youth thus show areas of both strength and weakness with respect to the National Youth Policy's objective of strengthening democratic citizenship and economic, political and civic participation among youth. Perhaps the most striking is that in the face of relatively tough living conditions South African youth are hopeful, seemingly having bought into the promise of "a better life for all". The critical task for social and economic policy makers is to ensure that the expectations of young South Africans are not disappointed, but that educational and economic opportunities and the deepening of democracy in South Africa progressively become a lived reality. ☘

NOTE

1. The Afrobarometer survey is conducted about every four years in South Africa (and in more than twelve other African countries). It focuses on political, social and economic development. The last survey in South Africa was conducted in 2012 with 2 400 South Africans, of which 1 220 were youth between the ages of 18 to 35 years (www.afrobarometer.org). The original data was provided courtesy of the Democracy in Africa Research Unit at the University of Cape Town. It has been analysed and interpreted for presentation by TM Luescher-Mamashela.

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Africa Union at 50

Achievements, Challenges and Reflections



ANC Youth League NTT Co-ordinator: Magasela Mzobe

The African Union recently celebrated its 50th anniversary, at an executive council meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – the city where the AU's predecessor, the Organization of African Unity, was born in 1963. The Ghanaian anti-colonial revolutionary, Kwame Nkrumah, was the pilot of pan-Africanism in that period. He envisioned a continent unified by a common market, currency and central bank, a single passport, a unitary foreign policy and a military defence system – a kind of United States of Africa. This unified, prosperous and peaceful continent was to rise from the ashes of the obscure colonial domination of African people. There can be little doubt that the African Union (Organization of African Unity) and the noble sons of the soil, who founded it, did in fact achieve the lofty objection of ridding the African continent of the yoke of colonialism through political, financial and at times military support of liberation movements throughout the continent.

However, a half century since the establishment of the African Union, deep structural challenges persist. The African

continent remains the poorest on earth despite the fact that we are generously imbued with mineral resources. We are price takers of our resources. Consequently, the majority of the inhabitants of our continent suffer from the worst afflictions known to mankind. We have the highest mortality rates; we suffer from diseases that have vacated most of the planet for nearly a century; the dietary profile of the majority of our people is dismal; we have weak institutions and poor infrastructure.

More ominously is the new scramble for the domination of the African continent by industrialised western countries led by the United States of America, and China. To this end the US in 2007 established AFRICOM Military Command for the expressed purpose of '... tailored capability that helps shape the environment and facilitates the deployment of forces' according to the Pentagon Africom White Paper of 2011.

The build-up of AFRICOM, particularly under the leadership of the first African American president, Barack Obama, is a corollary of the Obama administration's 'pivot to the Pacific'.

This is a zero-sum strategy to intimidate and militarily encircle China, the chief geopolitical adversary of the US.

China has surpassed both the U.S and European Union as Africa's leading partner. In the last decade alone China's investment in the continent has grown by over a 1 000%, particularly in the mineral resources industry. China has been gobbling up the continent's resources to feed its insatiable industrial expansion. Unable to compete with China in capital outlay, the West, led by the US, has resorted to offsetting its apparent terminal historic decline through military force.

Libya, where AFRICOM played a co-ordinating role for NATO's bloody campaign in the removal and murder of Muammar Gaddafi, China had invested billions of dollars in the oil and construction industries. The new NATO-installed Islamist regime in Libya has cancelled Chinese contracts and duly handed Libya's wealth to the Western 'liberators'.

This was a dress-rehearsal for the violent struggle for Africa's resources between the NATO countries and China.

The challenge for the AU and its current leadership is confronting this brewing menace through ensuring the development of coherent sovereign-resource control policies. Failure to do so will be a betrayal of our children's future and Nkrumah's dream of self reliance.

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Appreciating the female mind and our natural talents

By Insaaf Isaacs



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“For millions of years, men and women did different jobs, tasks that required different skills. As natural selection weeded out less able workers, time carved differences in the male and female brain.”

Helen E Fisher

I have been involved in student governance and leadership for most of my university career, spending most of my spare time moving between meetings as a result of a blazing desire to be involved. Needless to say, most of my work and learning has taken place in a male dominated environment.

I don't shy away from ostentatious praise for females who excel in industry and take to the helm of leadership, and I freely express my frustration about the inequitable treatment between the sexes in the political, economic and social environments, but I do not regard myself as a feminist. I recognise my existence, talents and other aspects of my being as complementary to my male counterparts. The world is changing in ways that can profit from women's skills as well as those of men.

In 2011, I served as the chair of academics in UCT's student representative council (SRC). In 2012, I was SRC president and was part of *Elle* magazine's "Female Factor South Africa". I currently serve as the deputy secretary-general of the South African Union of Students (SAUS), am a member of the South African Congress of Students (SASCO) Western Cape provincial executive committee (PEC), and am also acting as the head of public relations and human resources of the Muslim Students Association (MSA) Union. I would awkwardly admit to being a workaholic. Moreover, I would admit to having been privileged to have had an opportunity to experience leadership and its unspoken undercurrents in ways that many haven't.

The responsibilities of a SRC can be broadly defined as follows:

- ensuring quality education for all students and making sure that the curriculum is consistent with national education standards
- monitoring the academic environment within the university and protecting students against

prejudice and discrimination based on race, gender or any other barriers

- appealing on behalf of students who are academically or financially excluded, ensuring equal and fair treatment for all students
- undertaking quality assurance on all services offered by the institution to students, such as library services, residences, and efficient transport services, etc.
- running entertainment programmes that enhance the social development of students at all levels
- organising leadership, empowerment and capacity-building workshops for all student societies and organisations to equip them with professional and life skills.
- participating in dialogue regarding transformation within the university on behalf of the students, and aiming towards developing a clear plan of action. (UCT, 2013)

My involvement in student governance and leadership has given rise to profound lessons I think are worth sharing. One the most intriguing and unexpected lessons is the misunderstanding – held by both men and women, young and old alike – that underpins female participation in governance structures in the global community.

However, before unpacking my rather late appreciation for the female mind and our natural talents, I think it is only appropriate to acknowledge that:

- no two human beings are alike
- countless cultural forces influence how men and women think and act
- each one of us is an elaborate mix of both male and female traits
- each sex has its own range of abilities; each is a living archive of its distinctive past.

DO FEMALES HAVE LEADERSHIP CAPACITY?

Our environment is becoming increasingly uncertain in the face of rapid technological advancement. This shift ought to translate into a change in the profile of effective decision- making and representation, but



to what? One of my surprising finds was a growing school of thought among social scientists and business analysts that women are better able to tolerate ambiguity – a trait that most likely stems from our ability to hold several things simultaneously in mind.

Multi-tasking is a characteristic that most females share simply because the space to practice this art has existed for centuries. Although the circumstances vary, having to rear children, manage households, maintain healthy social lives and – an added dynamic to the modern family – manage a career has allowed the community of females to exercise intuition in more ways than ever before. While the relevance of intuition in a leadership or organisational context is debatable, it plays a productive and invaluable, if often unrecognised, role in decision making.

Our capacity to lead is evident in our thinking as well. Psychologists have found that, when women deliberate, we gather details somewhat differently than men do. Women tend to weigh more variables, consider more options and see a wider array of possible solutions to a problem, showing a mental flexibility that our male counterparts do not, as their linking processes are different to ours. “Women tend to generalise, to synthesise, to take a broader, more holistic, more contextual perspective of any issue” (Fisher, 2010).

Fisher cites psychologist Herbert Simon, who maintains that, as people learn how to analyse business behaviour or follow a political issue, they begin to recognise the patterns involved and mentally organise these data into blocks of knowledge, a process Simon calls “chunking”. Mental flexibility is an essential trait of leadership in our dynamic global economy, and women tend to excel at this.

SPACE FOR THE TALENTS OF FEMALES

In our quest to contribute meaningfully to society’s development, I believe there is a case to be made regarding the space for females to freely and authoritatively express the talents we possess. Our environment and its new ambiguous character require a special mix of visionary out-of-the-box thinking, a kind of thinking I believe is attainable with an appropriate mix of the sexes, largely because of our instinctively different approaches to analysis, interpretation and problem solving.

While females have a strong mental capacity to handle the growing levels of ambiguity and to think holistically, there is an equally important need for a logical, systematic approach to problem solving. Fisher (2010) describes this approach, predominantly

used by our male counterparts, as “step thinking”. Using neuroscience to support her findings, she draws a basic distinction between the male and female brain.

Male	Female
The male brain is more compartmentalised, so sections operate more independently.	The female brain has more nerve cables connecting the two brain hemispheres.
Testosterone tends to focus one’s attention.	Women’s lower levels of this hormone may contribute to their broader, more contextual view.
Men tend to cast themselves within hierarchies and often view power as rank and status.	Women form cliques and most regard power as an egalitarian network of supportive connections.

I would like to pause here and stress that the space for both male and female leadership exists and is necessary. In circumstances where the sexes co-exist intellectually, outcomes would be significantly improved.

Personally, I can’t help but wonder what would transpire if the global community of females were “to come together purely and simply for the benefit and good of mankind”. According to Matthew Arnold: “it will be a power such as the world has never known”. I couldn’t agree more. Here are some examples of the commendable efforts and growing presence of females in leadership:

- Malala Yousafzai brought the attention of the world to the plight of women in Pakistan. The teenaged activist has even galvanised the Pakistani government into the most concrete action on gender issues in years
- Park Geun-hye became the first woman ever elected as president of South Korea in December 2012
- in Africa, Malawi’s Joyce Banda found herself in office in April last year, following the sudden death of former President Bingu wa Mutharika
- women control the massive economies of Brazil (Dilma Rousseff) and Germany (Angela Merkel), and a woman – Christine Lagarde – helms the International Monetary Fund.

I AM A LEADER

As my journey as a student leader draws towards its end, I have realised that my gender created challenges for me in ways that did not affect my male counterparts. However, those challenges gave rise to an opportunity to express the talents that are part of my natural disposition as a woman.



While my thinking may not be as logical or systematic as my male counterparts, our existence is complementary, as my ability to comprehend ambiguity, coupled with my natural inclination to think holistically, makes me distinctly different.

My egalitarian approach to leadership is anything but problematic because I have reaffirmed that I am a member of my community before I am a leader thereof.

Despite the challenges that have confronted me, I have committed myself to a positive outlook in all of my endeavours, respect for my counterparts' opinions, and the recognition that my success will only be realised if my core is sincere.

I have come to learn that the careful exercise of patience and understanding are among the fundamentals needed by both male and female leaders. And I was exposed to these fundamentals by my mother through her expression of her instinctive nurturing efforts.

Acknowledging that disagreements are inevitable, I have committed myself to recognising each opinion as valuable and to accommodating the different views and abilities that I encounter in my interactions with my colleagues, just as a mother would when trying to teach her family the ways of life.

Keeping in mind that a healthy sense of humour is important, while acknowledging that the line between humour and disrespect should be distinct, I have committed myself to exercising self-control and to taking the time to educate my male counterparts of this distinction.

In the spirit of sharing, I also acknowledge that my goals will always remain within reach, provided that I conduct my affairs with integrity, accountability and transparency and do not allow the conditioning of society to affect my ambition.

My name is Insaaf Isaacs. I am born and raised on the Cape Flats, Cape Town, South Africa. I am born from economic disadvantage, but in the warm embrace of a mother who is a living testimony to the natural leadership characteristics discussed here and who has inspired me to be everything I ever wanted to be.

As a woman, I have protected my comrades against prejudice and discrimination based on race, gender or any other trait. As a woman, I have fought fearlessly to ensure equal and fair treatment for all students. As a woman, I have participated in dialogue regarding transformation within the university and broader society and have inspired practical changes to help make the lives of those who come after me more pleasant. My gender was an issue because I allowed it to be.

I am a change-maker. Through my strength, I will be the strength of my country. I am a woman. I am a leader. And if you are a woman, you are, too. ♀

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Build a new university, build a new student!

By David Maimela



The author is a researcher at the Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (MISTRA) and a former president of SASCO (2006–2008)

Historically, students have been an important part of motive forces of change all over the world. Examples of the bravery of the May Fourth movement in China, campaigns opposing the Vietnam War and, locally, the 1976 student uprisings, the black consciousness movement, the international "Free Mandela" campaign and many others are well

documented. This article proceeds from the belief that, while there can be no university without students, it is possible to have students without a university. The discussion attempts to characterise students not only as recipients of knowledge but as creators and creative disruptors. Centred on the aspirations and values of students, it presents their



experience and activism as shaping both knowledge and institutions. And, therefore, it addresses the tasks facing students.

SITES OF KNOWLEDGE AND STRUGGLE

Institutions of higher learning are simultaneously sites of knowledge and of struggle. There are intense knowledge struggles and there are also robust social and global struggles. Struggles around knowledge force a rethink about what is learned, how it is learned, for what purpose, and why we consider what we call knowledge to be knowledge. By definition, a struggle is a contest of opposing forces, striving to shape the world or a phenomenon from their own image. For instance, as nurtured products of the education system, graduates reflect the nature and intensity of both institutional and societal struggles.

The current and recurrent global economic crisis, indeed a crisis of capitalism, has cast doubt over mainstream economics, especially its neo-liberal variant. As part of the struggles around knowledge, questions arise – or at least they should. How should institutions of higher learning, as centres of knowledge and struggle, respond to the fundamental knowledge question of our times: what is wrong with economics and what is to be done?

If we assume that higher education institutions (HEIs) undergo perpetual change, we would expect that a subject such as economics would by now be taught differently, with new insights from the global economic crisis; one of which would be that capitalism has failed humanity. So far, we have not seen plans to revise the teaching content of economics. Logically, this could mean that HEIs are conservative, static and unchanging; they are not learning organisations. Alternatively, the hold of mainstream economics and its politics might be so strong as to make it impossible for alternative economics to emerge.

HIEs harbour what is arguably the most critical section of the youth in society: students. Due to their exposure to vast libraries, highly qualified academics, research material and so on, they tend to have greater knowledge, are equipped with skills, and are generally mobile. In short, it could be said that they are enlightened. To be enlightened is not a neutral process in the knowledge space. People can be enlightened to preserve the status quo or to change reality for the good of humanity.

This brings us to the age-old philosophical debate about whether the purpose of education is public good or private gain. This debate has had a far-reaching impact in terms of shaping public policy in such areas as access to education, funding, governance and institutional forms. In South Africa, as is the case the world over, the debate is not settled.



STUDENTS AS ACTIVISTS AND AS GRADUATES

One cannot think of their struggles, aspirations and values outside of the framework that shapes students – as the future leaders in various spheres of life. What kinds of students are produced by institutions of higher learning? And conversely, what kinds of institutions do the students leave behind upon graduation? We have already established that students have always played a role in shaping their own and other people's struggles; they have been and continue to be active rather than passive subjects in their institutions and processes of change.

Sadly, a "new management" or corporatist approach on the part of HEI managers (also informed in part by the larger political economy) holds that student political activity is disruptive to the knowledge project. The struggles of students, which in many regards mirror the cleavages of broader society, have been reduced to criminality. Today there are stringent rules and procedures at university aimed to reduce or even prevent protests and other forms of political organisation and activity. In some universities, students cannot gather freely without permission from the institution's management. Even student representative councils (SRCs) have been forced to be apolitical. This "new managerialism" runs roughshod over the constitution of the country in many ways.

Notwithstanding these threats and restrictions, students must continue to shape institutional and community struggles and, in the process, produce new knowledge, new forms of struggle and help to change society. Student activism should be seen as itself a site of knowledge, from which change can emerge. The new university must produce a new student whose hallmark would be to refuse to take things as God-given. And the new student must shape an institutional culture that makes the production of such a student possible.

Students as a composite part of the youth are a stratum in transit. They enter HEIs to acquire skill and higher forms of knowledge before emerging into the broader community and the workplace. Not all students are conscious of their potential to play a revolutionary role in changing their circumstances and those of society. Without organisation and association, it would be difficult to transform the base knowledge of students into political consciousness.



The nature of the political economy presents students with the narrow idea that they must train to supply the labour market with the skills it demands. This idea is further cemented by the corporatist management, already mentioned, that views students as “clients” and shifts the relationship between the university and the student into a buyer-seller relationship. Of course, in a society where labour is a commodity, graduates must sell their skills in order to reproduce themselves as human beings. However, there is a difference between narrow career orientation and broader consciousness. Progressive politics will engender the latter!

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

A new student will be produced through a struggle to change institutions of learning and the content, form and delivery of knowledge, at the centre of which must be students shaping it.

Education must be useful in the service of humanity and respond to the needs of human development. As things stand, most of what is taught – especially in economics – means the preservation of the world as we know it. It seems to me that universities can only change on three conditions:

- if academics are honest and brave enough to change
- if students are courageous enough to protest against knowledge that does not improve the human condition
- if revolutionary changes in society force changes in the outlook of universities.

It seems that the global economic crisis is not sufficient to force change, or that the defenders of the status quo have imposed reforms with a lulling effect. As the agency of organised students is important, so are the conditions under which these struggles take place. In order to have a wider impact, students must forge alliances with other motive forces in society, and workers are the most reliable of these forces. This requires an organic link between student, worker and community struggles. The slogan that “students are members of the community before they are students” remains relevant today.

Universities must also be made accessible in other ways. For instance, there is no reason why universities continue to allow only registered students to attend lectures. Access to knowledge should not be defined in terms of how much money one has. Even before the day of free education arrives, some of the exclusionary traditions must be abolished.

With access to recent forms of knowledge and learning techniques, and their organic appreciation of reality beyond the university campus, students have a greater role and ability to fashion a new university. After all, in most instances, students are not beholden to sectarian interests in society and thus have the potential to exercise their revolutionary duties without let or hindrance.

A new university and a new student are possible, under South African conditions, in our lifetime! ✊

Transforming historically white universities:

Students and the politics of racial representation

By **Shose Kessi**

The author is a lecturer in the department of psychology at the University of Cape Town



Africa's institutions of higher education are interrogating the practices that promote effective transformation in order to redress the inequalities of the past. In historically white universities, these debates include important issues such as race-based admissions policies and academic support

programmes, which represent significant responses to the disparate experiences and lived realities of students in South Africa today.

Nevertheless, these same initiatives remain contested and marked with resistance in their implementation



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with some being described as “vehicles of racialisation” in the Report of the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions (2008) commissioned by the department of education. Hence, transformation practices can have contradictory effects: on the one hand, they are designed to address racial discrimination; on the other hand, they can reproduce racialised beliefs. This ambivalence is an indication of how racialisation continues to marginalise the concerns of black students and their successful performance at university. Transformation practices must begin to address these complexities and, in particular, our representations of what it means to be a competent student and graduate.

Despite growing numbers of black students graduating from historically white universities in South Africa since the transition to a democratic society in 1994, stereotypical images of underperformance and overcrowding not only persist but are increasingly cluttering academic, policy and media debates. Black students are referred to as “disadvantaged”, “under-prepared”, “not entering on merit” or “last in class” (Newling 2012; Price 2012; The Economist 2010; Luckett and Sutherland 2000) to mention a few. These images underpin the more deep-seated beliefs that black students lack the necessary competencies to embark on a university education as they “struggle to keep up” (Newling 2012) with the rest of the (white) student population and that they are overcrowding and undermining the higher education system. *Afrik-News* ran a headline on 18 January 2011 stating that the “rise in black enrolments overwhelm [sic] South African universities” while a *BBC News* headline referred to “South Africa’s lethal scrum for university places” (10 January 2012). Earlier this year, the *Mail & Guardian* reported the view of North-West University’s vice-chancellor of that proportional racial representation was “dangerously mechanistic” (John 2013).

Such representations are stigmatising and reminiscent of recurring debates into race and IQ in academia (Raditlhalo 2007). They also culminate in a persistent discourse that equates growing numbers of black students with a lowering of university standards and curriculums, while obscuring the discriminatory processes that continue to exclude black students from admission into higher learning and from successful performance while at university. In this context, affirmative action and academic support programmes translate into the rehabilitation of the defective student rather than mechanisms to address the institutionalised stigma that excludes these highly competent students who would not be accepted or succeed otherwise.

Indeed, affirmative action has been accused on the one hand of “re-institutionalising apartheid divisions” (Erasmus 2010; Soudien 2010) and on the other hand of “stigmatising black students who are seen as lacking in competencies as a result” (Ncayiyana 2012). National and international media have contributed extensively to the debate with headlines and statements describing race-based affirmative action as a “racial antidote to apartheid poison” (*Times Higher Education*, 2 February 2012) that is “depriving the country of the talent it needs” (*The Telegraph*, 5 October 2012), or equally perturbing headlines such as “UCT unable to accept only top matriculants” (*Cape Times*, 22 March 2012). As a result, black students often distance themselves from these racialising images in order to protect their self-worth. As a UCT student remarked in a recent article, referring to race-based admissions: “It doesn’t affect me because I worked hard to get good marks. I wouldn’t like to think I only got in based on race...” (Maregele, 2013).

In a context where institutionalised racism is no longer recognised, black students themselves become complicit in this denial and internalise the images attributed to them. In my experiences of teaching and mentoring students at UCT, I have encountered situations where black students silence themselves in classroom debates or engage in self-negating discourses. At other times, they complain of the stigma of being questioned by others about how they got accepted into various programmes of study or the stigma associated with being assigned to “extended degree programmes”. Black students who are accepted into previously white universities are usually top students in the schools that they come from. But once at university, their grades tend to drop and the isolation and lack of encouragement that they experience reinforces their predicament. A student once said to me that part of the problem was that nobody believed in her and that it was only when she was invited to join the mentorship programme for black students in her final year that she got her first distinction in an assignment.

Claims of racialisation from different camps, whether in support or against affirmative action programmes for transformation, are based on divergent understandings of the lingering impact of apartheid racism. Supporting arguments tend to acknowledge the institutionalisation of racism in the practices of previously white universities that linger on in internalised forms. However, these arguments can also entail paternalistic perspectives of “helping others to catch up”, thereby denying the capabilities of black students and their entitlement to university education. This ambivalence is a central mechanism of discriminatory power as it



allows us to support transformation programmes on a rational level while harbouring less visible and deep-seated beliefs about the lack of knowledge and capabilities of black students.

Opposing arguments, on the other hand, are often based on the denial of institutionalised racism – as if it were something that happened in the past – or on a more complex understanding of the impact that contemporary forms of racialisation can have on black students themselves. It is this complexity that should concern academics and policy-makers, in particular the damaging representational politics that stem from and thrive on these dubious claims to morality.

What is nevertheless common to all of these views is the focus on the rehabilitation of the deficient student. Racialising representations have the effect of putting the responsibility for transformation onto black students by locating the problem of underperformance in their characteristics as individuals while exonerating the role of institutional practices. Hence, the stigmatising representations and lack of recognition of black students within higher education discourses not only conflict with policy aims but also absolve existing institutional practices.

Further research is needed to address these concerns and contribute to the dearth of studies into black students' perspectives on transformation in higher education. Little is known about how they navigate this situation on a daily basis. How do they cope or resist? What are the strategies and tactics that they use? What we do know is that the ambivalent discourse of transformation, which aims to address inequality but is simultaneously associated with representations of incompetence and low standards, can reproduce attitudes and behaviours in students that re-enact these expectations. The impact of these representations is therefore central to understanding the complicity of higher education thinking and practice in shaping the activities in which black students achieve positive outcomes.

Currently, black students' legitimacy to participate in the construction of knowledge about transformation in higher education in post-apartheid South Africa appears limited. As mentioned above, black students have been formally and increasingly included in institutions of higher learning since 1994, but their position in the representations of educational achievement remains precarious. This lack of recognition prevents them from participating in the process of re-imagining the transformation of their universities, a situation that is not only determined by institutional prerogatives but one that is also a matter of everyday social relationships and interactions and

that relates to their power to re-present legitimate knowledge about themselves and their concerns.

Further research and transformative action should therefore promote a critical engagement with these issues and engage students to challenge, resist and produce alternative representations of themselves, thereby taking on a central role in the transformation process. In light of emerging discussions into multilingualism (Mbulungeni 2010), Afrocentric curriculums (Nhlapo 2011) and alternative epistemologies (Hall 2007), there is an important and timely opportunity to engage students in what are potentially more effective discourses of transformation that can expand the possibilities for alternative academic frameworks and re-define what it means to be a competent student and graduate – and, more importantly perhaps, a transformed university. Black students and institutions of higher learning have been at the forefront of socio-political changes in South Africa in the past. As such, their involvement in generating understandings of black experience in historically white universities should continue to guide current and future transformation efforts without marginalising them from full participation in the academic community. 🐘

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Organise, organise!

A call to young activists

By **Graeme Bloch**



The author is a UCT Council member, visiting adjunct professor at the Wits School of Public and Development Management and a senior researcher in political economy at the Mapungubwe Institute (MISTRA)

I found some old articles and magazines recently: a Cape Times article dated 16 June 1976, announcing the first six dead, with a police commandant preparing for the worst and a picture of some brave Soweto school students on the march. Also I found some radical analyses of the bourgeois (read "any") university, and a poster of my banning in 1976 along with eight others, including Willie Hofmeyr, Mary Simons and John Frankish. We had formed Students for Social Democracy (SSD), an organisation somewhere between Lenin's social democrats and the US's Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). We set about winning support for our views.

In those days, if we wanted the engineering faculty to support our 3-day closure of the university, it better be just before the holidays (it was and they did). No one except me ever seemed prepared for or spoke out in tutorials, so I have no romantic views of a majority supposedly committed to change. We had to mobilise and speak to the majority. Indeed they respected us for it: in 1976, I topped the poll for SRC from detention.

In those days, a single stroke of the pen by a minister could mean some 20-year-old like myself must move to another magisterial district; could not be in a gathering of more than two people; could not be quoted or speak out. Now, at least, I can say whatever I want about education, and no minister can stop me or put an end to my constitutional rights. Young people are surely expected to speak out, not spend the rest of their lives growing cabbages? Criticism is something to encourage, along with the required discipline.

The point of all this is not just to reminisce but to say I am happy with young people, with our democratic freedom, with the space and opportunities a new democracy gives us. We have achieved much but made many mistakes. We were perhaps too impatient and hopeful. The youth of today have an opportunity to right our wrongs, have the space to speak out and organise. Why are they not using this?

I do think the world is more complex today. The temptations of elitism are still here. The colour of prejudice is still very apparent in the differential achievements of black and white, and their continued and unequal living conditions. But jobs are scarce, the world is rocky, there is a huge global recession, and politicians fortunately are not much to believe in anywhere. Maybe apartheid was better – but only because it gave us a clear enemy to mobilise against. Now we have to choose how to apply our commitments to transformation and social justice.

I think our young people are fine; we need to give better leadership and firm up on the equality and the range of their opportunities. We need to acknowledge that all the ills of the world are really their problems for them to own. While we cannot step aside, perhaps we should make sure we don't step too much in the way.

Why stay at school these days, when it's politics or a gang that will get you ahead? Why go to university if not for privileged access to certificates and jobs? Yet young people do go to school and university, do work hard, do achieve, and do commit to a better society



SECOND
QUARTER 13

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for all, not simply try to get ahead for themselves only. Despite the many temptations and the dire poverty and difficult circumstances many come from. Despite the tendency of social media like Facebook and Twitter to individualise the responses. I meet young people every day who are committed to justice. They don't want special treatment, only acknowledgement of their efforts.

There is nothing wrong with the ambition to seize opportunities. Many have to support extended families and parents and grandparents who have sacrificed. A new democracy does mean that new spaces have opened up for achievement. These spaces also carry rewards and many will choose to do business studies or engineering and go for lucrative options. Now with the growth of FET colleges, skilling oneself also means preparing for the high trades. Ensuring good skills acquisition is surely a needed aspiration.

I think our analyses of the university have hardly changed over the years; there is still much that must be done. A university tends to breed elitism, offering elite knowledge for individuals to get ahead. It is assumed that individual advance is enough, that benefits will "trickle down" to all. Despite the voice of critical thinking, university and tertiary colleges are institution of society. They reproduce that society's schisms and gaps. So they need to be challenged, from below, and especially in the classroom. In parallel with doing well at the subjects and advancing through the institution.

I don't think the university is now "the enemy". I don't think it simply perpetuates privilege. I am also aware we have a new minister for higher education and training. We don't have to believe everything he tells us. We don't have to agree with everything in his Green Paper to expand tertiary education. Surely, however, this is now our government and is part of the landscape we need to address. Things have changed, sometimes not enough, but they have shifted.

WHAT IS YOUR PROGRAMME?

This is my first gripe: students and their movements have learned to complain, but this is expressed in trashing campuses, in direct action without analysis, in tight unity that seems to be satisfied with limited participation. Instead of looking outwards, there seems to be a tendency to blame people for not participating. But if people are not interested, how are you getting to them and what levels are you offering them to be part of things?

Not everyone is going to love coming to meetings. Not everyone is going to toyi-toyi or agree with

your rhetoric. But why are you satisfied with being a minority, and often a racial minority at that? How will this advance your cause? What are you doing to attract people, to show them why you believe so passionately in change? What are the nodal points for achieving this change, and how will it benefit us?

Change can seldom be achieved with only a bridge-head. It requires active support, especially in a democracy. We even have to ask whether there are not parts of the university ready to support you. Are there no sympathetic lecturers, no platforms that can be used – whatever their contradictions? Trying to reach and convince more people does not mean compromising yourself or your values. What is your programme? What is your analysis? The Arab Spring and the Occupy movement can presumably provide some contemporary inspiration. It certainly takes activists to stick their necks out. It is possible to reach a democratic majority.

Secondly, a strong part of such a programme must be what happens in the classroom. You cannot ever expect an elitist institution to be at the forefront of change or to actively combat inequalities. How do you expect an institution to adopt your values when it is plugged into world centres, basking in European traditions of knowledge and led by lecturers who are largely white males? Eurocentric elitist models of schooling and curriculum are bound to dominate. If this is to change, every activist has to be prepared and know what he or she is talking about. Loose talk won't get you there; concrete proposals may help. Free education and the shifting of resources our way need to become imperatives.

This is not a call to simply reject the institution. This is not a call to adopt stances that may sound radical but are really geared to make you feel good. Rather, master the subject matter; do as well as you can and then use this knowledge.

Surely people with elite skills must find ways to contribute to the general social development? How can our science help solve African problems like malaria? How does a space scientist look at our southern stars and help our satellite communications? We need artists and sociologists to analyse the flaws in our transition, to move us away from the easy answers of commentators. We need musicians and poets to show how culture can unite us, while at the same time not losing their critical faculties.

Use your knowledge skills to develop a realistic and detailed critique. You are not the first to have been



there, so your critique can stand on the shoulders of other giants. Looking for African critiques is not easy in a situation of external and colonial dominance, but find them. Develop them. Karl Marx raised a critical European voice that perhaps needs to be Africanised. Read Amilcar Cabral and Paulo Freire and Slavoj Žižek, even Noam Chomsky. You don't have to believe everyone, but it will help to know what they have said. Who are the contemporary critics and younger voices who may appeal to your peers? Where are the critical voices that could resonate, in Brazil or China or Tunisia? You surely too have to learn to speak in accessible language.

In short, what I am arguing for is a recovery of the intellectual functions of intellectuals. Although intellectuals, in South Africa and elsewhere, have often aligned themselves against the struggles and needs of the majority, no struggle can advance without theorists. No theory can develop outside of social constraints.

Organisation is still the best way to bind and unify us. Someone has to take responsibility. Apathy seldom

connects and unifies in a genuine way. Organise, organise! Link up with the many who feel the same way. Convince those who don't, and listen if they have a critique of their own.

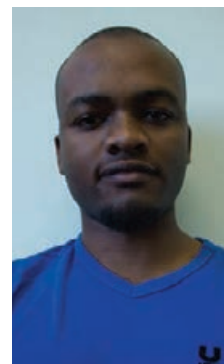
While the ways we can organise have surely changed, while the enemy has surely changed, and while democracy and a sympathetic government have surely opened up new ground, the basic tasks remain. How to get more people onside. What it is one wants them to do. How to build a genuine and grassroots movement that is accountable. How to relate to the new state and its institutions without being subservient. How to be critical and militant as youth, without forgetting where we have come from. How to be difficult without being undisciplined. How to lead while still being part of things.

The questions are complex. We all need the fire of the youth to answer these questions. We all need the values and aspirations of our young and our students, to build a better, a just and an equal world in which we may live. The time is now. 🦋

Break the shackles of mental captivity:

My letter to the youth

By **Ramabina Mahapa**



The author is a student at the University of Cape Town

While in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for people to stand up for what they believe in, for what past generations have fought for and died to attain, who I am to remain silent? I share the sentiments of John F Kennedy when he said that "the hottest places in hell are reserved for those who, in times of great moral crisis, maintain their neutrality".

South Africa today is on the brink of moral crisis. The fractures are starting to show: the high corruption level, teenage alcohol and drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, women and child abuse, nepotism, xenophobia attacks, the Marikana massacre, what happened to Anene Booysen and the Mozambican taxi driver murder give testimony to our country's

moral crisis. As the majority of the working class no longer has trust in their government or unions, and is now taking the law into their own hands, government is losing its legitimacy to govern. We are living in times where the very people who fought for our freedom are living somewhere in the shacks, living by minimum wage, stealing, hawking or begging in the dumps of Khayelitsha, Langa, Alexandra, Soweto, Cape Flats, Vanguard and Gugulethu. Yes, they are able to vote, but being able to cast a ballot is only a fragment of democracy. In the Freedom Charter, promises were made that: "the people shall share in the country's wealth", "the land shall be shared among those who work it", "there shall be work and security", "houses, security and comfort", and there



shall be “equal education for all”. Our Constitution promises us a free and democratic South Africa, but we the people have to make it so. We have to enforce the Constitution and guard it against any force that seeks to use it for personal gain.

I gaze upon our great nation, our leaders and the common man with great love. I write this letter in order to educate not condemn. I thought it was necessary to write to the youth of today, for it seems they do not know their generational mandate. Prior to 1994, the generational mandate was very clear and distinct: the attainment of our political freedom. It was a thunderous cry that echoed through the century. Now we’ve got the ballot, where do we go from here?

What is our generational mandate? It seems that the most vibrant and loud answer has been “Economic freedom in our lifetime!” I offer a caveat to such a notion. There is a danger in pursuing material prosperity in the midst of moral poverty.

Sitting under a marula tree, writing this letter to the youth while protected from the hot African sun, my mind is still pondering the problems facing my beloved continent and country. Three quotations come to mind.

Nelson Mandela:

When I walked out of prison, that was my mission, to liberate the oppressed and the oppressor both. Some say that has now been achieved. But I know that that is not the case. The truth is that we are not yet free; we have merely achieved the freedom to be free, the right not to be oppressed. We have not taken the final step of our journey, but the first step on a longer and even more difficult road.

Steve Biko:

The traditional inferior-superior black-white complexes are deliberate creations of the colonialist. Through the work of missionaries and the style of education adopted, the blacks were made to feel that the white man was some kind of god whose word could not be doubted. As Fanon puts it: ‘Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying

the Native’s brain of all form and content; by a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it’.

Bob Marley:

“Emancipate yourself from mental slavery. None but ourselves can free our minds.”

What is our generational mandate? There have been a number of replies to this question, but it seems that the most vibrant and loud answer has been “Economic freedom in our lifetime!” I offer a caveat to such a notion. There is a danger in pursuing material prosperity in the midst of moral poverty, as is so vividly shown today. That mandate will only serve to perpetuate the crisis, increase corruption and the gap between the rich and the poor.

It ought to be “Break the shackles of mental captivity!” It is only once black people, along with other disadvantaged groups, attain our mental emancipation that we should accelerate our fight for economic freedom.

The only thing standing between a public servant and corruption is the person’s moral standing, and liberation from the shackles of self-enrichment will inevitably transform the nation. We need to reinstall the spirit of ubuntu and make people aware of their black consciousness before we can say we are ready to take up the struggle for economic freedom. Once the people of South Africa understand the old African saying that “a person is a person because of people” – “*Motho ke motho ka batho*” in Pedi and “*Umntu ngumuntu ngabantu*” in Zulu – then we can safely say that South African will be moving in the desired direction.

I agree with those who suggest that we should bury the past and look to the future, but we have to look into the closet of the past to address the injustices that were committed. We should be careful not to look at the past with anger and blame but with the sincere desire to address the problems arising. Let us take a leaf from a speech President Thabo Mbeki gave at the unveiling of the Nkosi Albert Luthuli Legacy Project in August 2004:

as part of the efforts to liberate ourselves from apartheid and colonialism, both physically and mentally, we have to engage in the process of telling the truth about the history of our country, so that all our people, armed with this truth, can confidently face the challenges of this day and the next... This labour of love, of telling the true story of South Africa and Africa, has to be intensified on all fronts, so that as Africans we are able to write, present and interpret our history,



our conditions and life circumstances, according to our knowledge and experience.

With that said, let us look towards our mental emancipation. No race can prosper until it confronts the indignities committed against it. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was a step in the right direction, but we should not have stopped there.

Our vision and aspiration ought to be to address the psychological effects of colonialism, slavery, imperialism and apartheid. All those degrading systems did not just stain the consciousness of the black man; the whites need to undergo mental emancipation, for they built a superiority complex and lost their empathy for the common man. All South Africans, whether white, black, coloured or Indian, need a moral reform.

I believe that learning theory, one of the main components of modern scientific psychology, offers a perspective which will help us in our quest for mental liberation. The work of Ivan Pavlov, Edward Thorndike, BF Skinner and others reveals that animals and human beings can be conditioned through positive rewards or punishments to do certain activities or to hate other activities. We see learning theory applied each day in our homes, when parents “ground” their children for what is believed to be a wrong behaviour, and in the work place, when a company offers bonuses or “best employee” awards. It is also important to note that some conditioned responses can be passed to the next generation through observation. For example, a child who was raised by alcoholic parents has a greater chance of being an alcoholic when he grows up than a child who was raised by non-alcoholic parents.

This is taken from Jan Van Riebeeck’s journal entry for 17 April 1658:

arrangements were started for establishing a school for the company’s male and female slaves... [T]o encourage the slaves to attend and to hear or learn the Christian prayers, it is ordered that after school everyone is to receive a small glass of brandy and two inches of tobacco. All their names are to be written down and those who have none are to be given names...

We can see that it fits into the theory of conditioned learning. By giving brandy and tobacco to slaves, they created addictions so that they could elicit the behaviour of learning Christian prayers and be better able to control the slaves. (Do not be alarmed; this is not an attack on Christianity. Any good thing can be used in a bad way. The coloniser used it to do his own evil acts.)

One might be asking what this has to do with South Africa today. Well, some of South Africa’s problems today – especially the violent crimes, alcohol addiction and police brutality – might have a historic origin, and for us to come up with solutions we need to understand those influences. There are many accounts of Africans being conditioned to behave as the white man wanted. I leave it to you to study those accounts for I cannot include everything in this very brief letter.

Our past has conditioned South Africans today to retaliate with violence when they have grievances with leaders. This violence stems from the violence of the past. Until we address some of our conditioned responses to certain stimuli, our great nation will forever remain at war with itself.

How do we attain our mental emancipation? I have but offered a tip of the iceberg in discussing that question in this letter. In conclusion, I say that Africa is the land of my pride, land of my forefathers, land of my birth. Africa is the land where my umbilical cord fell and was buried. Do not stagger in your quest for freedom, for there shall be a day when we shall join Martin Luther King Jr in his tears of joy. We shall also sing, “Free at last, free at last. Thank God Almighty, we are free at last.”





De Hoop Dam nearing completion

The Olifants River Water Resources Development Project (ORWRDP) consists of a number of phases, including the raising of Flag Boshielo Dam that was completed in 2006; the construction of the new De Hoop Dam that is currently underway in the Limpopo Province; and bulk water infrastructure consisting of pipelines, reservoirs, pump stations, balancing dams and river gauging structures.

The purpose of the Olifants River Water Resources Development Project is mainly to unlock economic potential and improve social development within the Limpopo Province of South Africa. Phase 2A of the project, construction of the new De Hoop Dam, will essentially be the heart of the system, providing life to the project as a whole.

The President of South Africa, in his 2003 State of the Nation Address, announced the construction of a dam in the Olifants River system to unlock the rich mineral deposits in the Limpopo Province and with such a catalyst, also to economically supply water to towns, industries and poorly serviced communities in the Sekhukhune area. The De Hoop Dam was found to be the only feasible option to supply water to the Nebu Plateau where about 800 000 people reside.

De Hoop Dam will be one of the largest concrete dams in South Africa in terms of concrete volume, with a total of more than 1.1 million cubic meters of concrete, including Immersion-Vibrated Roller Compacted Concrete as well as Conventional Vibrated Concrete.

The main features of the dam are as follows:

1.	Gross Storage Capacity [million m ³]	347.4
2.	Catchment Area [km ²]	2 865
3.	Approximate Length [m]	1 017
4.	Approximate Height [m]	88
5.	Total Excavation – Dam Footprint [m ³]	415 000
6.	Total Excavation – Quarry [m ³]	1 300 000
7.	Total Estimated Concrete Volume of the Dam [m ³]	1 100 000

On 8 June 2013, the construction unit of the Department of Water Affairs received awards for the work done on De Hoop Dam. The Concrete Society of Southern Africa NPC's most prestigious concrete awards began as a tribute to the late Dr Sandy Fulton for his outstanding contribution to the understanding of concrete, its development and improvement. The Fulton Awards are presented by the Concrete Society bi-annually and in 2013, 26 projects were entered in six categories.

De Hoop Dam was entered in three categories: Civil Engineering Structure, Sustainable Concrete and Innovative Construction, and was announced winner in two of the three categories: Civil Engineering Structure and Sustainable Concrete.

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The End of Conceit:

Western Rationality after Postcolonialism

Reviewed by **Helen Douglas**

Patrick Chabal
Zed Books: London and New York, 2012.
369 pp

Are our theories getting in the way of our ability to think? Patrick Chabal, professor of African Studies at King's College London, believes so, and he sets out his case in *The End of Conceit*. Put bluntly: the "social sciences we employ to explain what is happening domestically and overseas are both historically and conceptually out of date".

How much of the West's approach to the rest of the world rests on a 19th century belief that Europe is the very model of economic and political evolution: that "Western" and "modern" are synonymous? As if, in order to leapfrog from backward tradition into a simulacrum of industrial capitalism and democracy, African countries had only to develop a certain cluster of institutions and practices. Chabal considers the many ways that this thinking is less useful now than ever.

Closer to (his) home, he discusses how non-Western immigration – particularly of Muslims into France and the UK – is challenging European assumptions about democracy and secularism, tradition and modernity, and even the meaning of what it is to be European. Other examples illustrate the shifting sands under accepted concepts of "individual", "society", "faith", "the market" and "change".

Although ideologues will find plenty of ammunition here, Chabal's approach is completely pragmatic and all the more convincing for it. Regardless of whether one admires or despises Western thinking, he demonstrates that many of its givens are no longer reliable and its processes do not yield predicted outcomes. Think of how often we hear of policies being revamped or replaced due to "unintended consequences". If Chabal is right, the problem may not be in the planning, execution or monitoring of our projects but in the logic that guides their intentions.



Perhaps the push for a more "scientific" approach to the social sciences (especially in economics and psychology) has been motivated by these recurring failures. With a discussion of interpretation, theory and thinking, Chabal shows how misguided this is. Rather than try to mimic the natural sciences, he proposes that we try to "think beyond theory", to find more appropriate criteria – he suggests "plausibility" – and to re-incorporate subjective factors such as local culture, history and language as we try to understand what is going on in our world and how we might usefully respond to the advancing levels of crisis and misery.

This book is not going to be good news for those who still think we can get things right simply by doing more of what we're doing with better (or best) practices. They should read it anyway. *The End of Conceit* will be welcomed by those who sense we will have to look deeper and differently in order to find "the way going forward".

And finally, it must be said, the book's cover is a delight.



SECOND
QUARTER 13

NEW AGENDA

Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform

Reviewed by
Malcolm Wallis

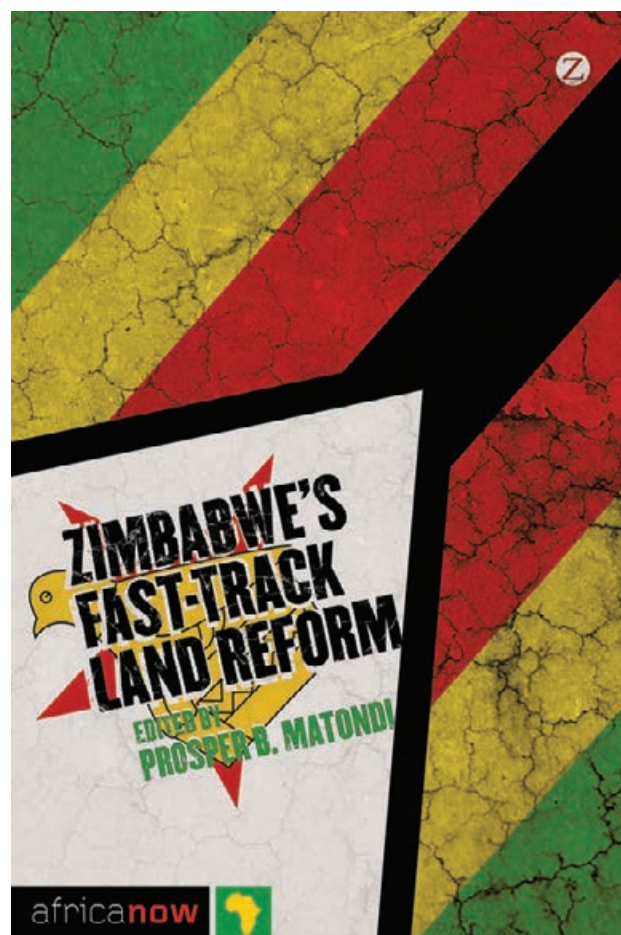
(Durban University of Technology;
Regent Business School)

Prosper B Matondi
Zed Books: London; Nordic Africa Institute:
Uppsala, 2012. 286pp

The author is the executive director of the Ruzivo Trust, an organisation based in Harare that carries out action-based research on a number of development policy topics, including land. Judging by this book, the Trust is providing a very worthwhile service. *Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform* is an excellent account of Zimbabwe's efforts, mainly in the current millennium, to create a totally different pattern of land ownership based upon radical redistribution in favour of the poor and landless. It makes an important and highly informative contribution to debates about the country's development trajectory.

Much of it reports on detailed field work carried out in the Mazowe district near Harare, a location that could have presented some atypical results, given the importance of part-time or weekend farmers who spend most of their time in the city. However, this is largely offset and supplemented by published and unpublished research from other parts of the country or on the greater national picture. The strengths of the book include the level of detail provided and a clear focus on findings that are relevant to the theme. What emerges is the extent to which this reform was very much mobilised from below, with the government's role being to keep pace, often quite frantically.

Another strength of the book is the amount of literature cited, much of which will be unfamiliar to *New Agenda's* readers. This offers considerable benefit to those who wish to further explore issues such as land tenure, changes in rural social organisation, new class structures, gender, and agricultural extension, all of



which are dealt with empirically as well as being cross referenced to the wider literature.

Matondi strives to give a balanced picture, eschewing the sensationalism that sometimes holds sway in the media, while portraying Zimbabwe's unique governance dilemmas, wars and all.

The book might have had a more comparative focus, deploying cases from Latin America and elsewhere. Kenya, for example – albeit on a smaller scale – went through similar processes in the 1960s. There are probably lessons for South Africa in all this, too: the reader is given plenty of evidence in order to draw them.





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