



Lentsu La Sechaba

THE VOICE OF THE CE COMMUNITY

Spring: Volume 11 – October 2021



Bags of hope project

Hafsa Essop (Lecturer: Department of Radiography)

At the University of Pretoria, community engagement is one of the key drivers and is embedded in the curriculum to provide an opportunity for students to do community engagement. In the Department of Radiography, the newborn starter pack project was initiated, which was later renamed the 'Bags of hope project'. The reason for this was that through the engagements with the community and hospital staff, it was evident

that the bags were not just a starter pack but brought about a sense of hope and joy to the beneficiaries. The Tshwane district is inundated with abandoned babies who are left in places such as bins, pavements, fields, etc. depending on whether or not the mother wanted the baby to be found. If found, the babies are first sent to the nearest district hospital, where they are managed in a neonatal ward for urgent medical care and the Social Worker

arranges for temporary placement. Radiography students who practice in these district hospitals, namely Pretoria West Hospital, Mamelodi District hospital, and Kalafong hospital, are sometimes called on to perform radiographic examinations on these babies, who often present with chest infections or injuries as a result of the nature of their abandonment. The radiography

continued on page 2

students were therefore invited to be part of the project supervised by the lecturer and a volunteer group was formed with 20 students from third and second year. The project was carried out in three phases:

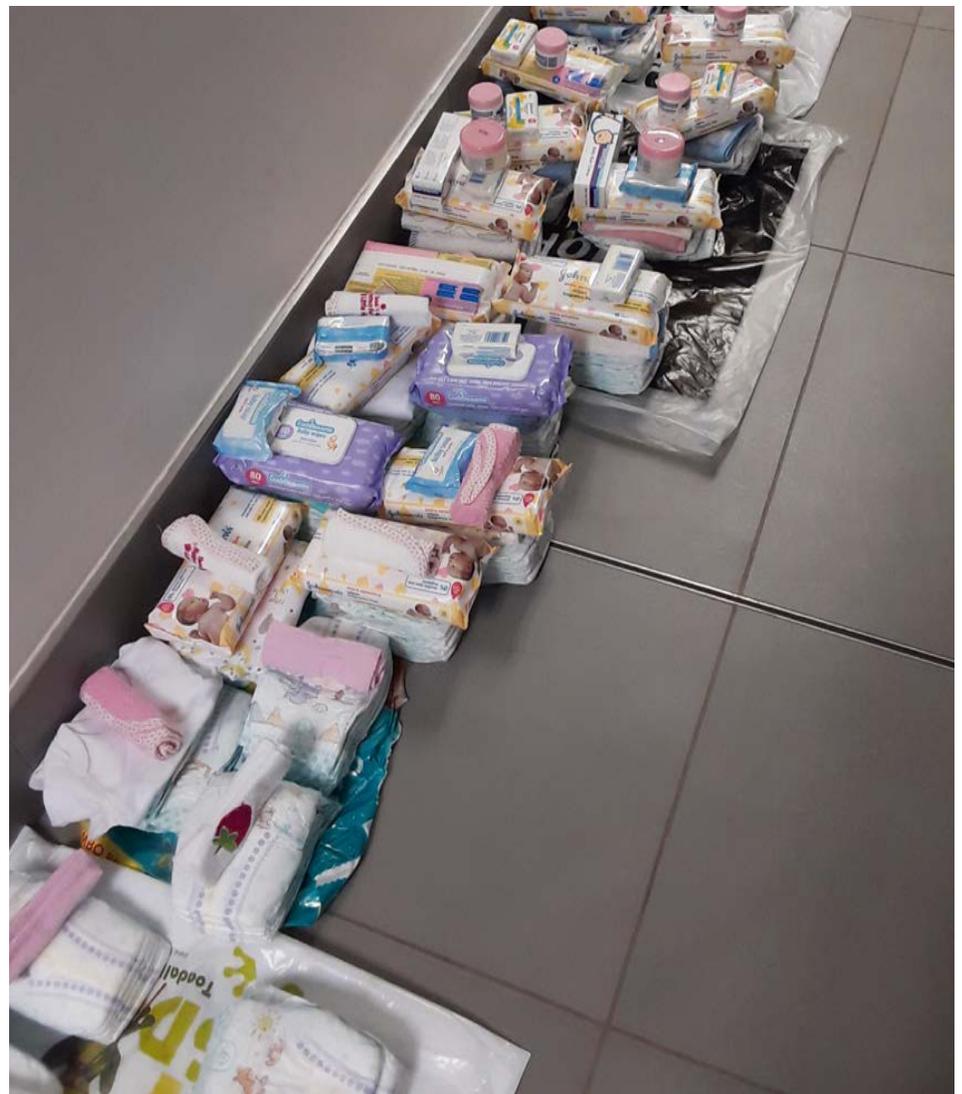
Phase 1: Donation drive: The lecturer created a flyer, which indicated the nature of the project and requested donations and volunteers. The flyer was only sent to the radiography students and Radiography Departments within the district hospitals. Within three months there was a large amount of donations that were collected and stored in the lecturer's office.

Phase 2: Creating the bags: Students who were available from the volunteer group came to the Department of Radiography to sort out the donations and create the packs in a very systematic manner to ensure that the bags were uniform, in terms of their contents.

Phase 3: Distribution: Once the bags were completed, the students who were going to their training hospitals then took bags, which were then stored in the radiography department. The students were then requested to engage with the neonatal sisters and social workers within their training sites to identify which babies were in need of packs. When a baby was identified, the Social Worker would then alert the Radiography Department, who would then go with the student to dispatch the bag and completed the register.

To date 30 packs were made and distributed to three hospitals mentioned above. About 30 babies have received bags thus far. About 15 more bags were made and are currently being distributed to the three hospitals as well as Nelson Mandela's Children Hospital. This makes a total of 45 bags.

The aim of the project encompasses three main aspects, namely to expose the students to project management skills, to encourage interprofessional collaboration between the community and hospital staff, and lastly to equip the students with skills on how to start their own new-born bags of hope projects in their communities when they qualify, and thus creating a ripple effect of community service throughout the country.



Editorial letter:



Diverse community engagement interventions through various platforms

Dr Eugene Machimana (Senior Education Consultant: Community Engagement)



Community engagement (CE) is embedded in teaching, learning and research and remains pivotal in driving positive change in society. UP and community partners continue to make remarkable strides in collaborative CE interventions. As alluded to above, UP is able to navigate COVID-19 level restrictions by using virtual platforms to continuously engage with the community.

Recently South Africans celebrated two important days in the country's calendar, namely Nelson Mandela International Day and National Women's Day. The COVID-19 pandemic remains a challenge worldwide, but this has not stopped the University of Pretoria (UP) community from celebrating these important events.

such as oppression of women, high rates of teenage pregnancies and unemployment. The recent violence and vandalism of key infrastructure

“ Today we should all ask ourselves: What have I done to improve the surroundings in which I live? Do I litter or do I protect my surroundings? Do I buy stolen goods or do I help reduce crime? ”

Nelson Mandela “

Various virtual events were organised and successfully implemented. Where possible, on-site events were hosted but within observing the COVID-19 regulations and guidelines. These events were meant to bring hope in a society that has been ravaged by social ills

that was witnessed in Gauteng and Kwa-Zulu Natal has deepened the challenge of unemployment under which women suffer the most. In the midst of these challenges, UP prides itself with the positive contribution that it is making in building a cohesive society.

The community partners appreciate and take ownership of interventions that are geared towards building a better society. This newsletter reports many successful interventions that were embraced by society such as coding projects, drama performance, early childhood development, literacy enhancement and people's health. I invite you to read more about these CE activities

in this newsletter. I also invite you to identify any opportunities in which your department/ organisation could collaborate in advancing UP's vision and mission through CE. Please also report on your activities by submitting a short article to be published in an upcoming newsletter.

Table of contents

Bags of hope project	1
Editorial letter: Diverse community engagement interventions through various platforms	3
UPCT 2021 celebrates Mandela Day!	5
Resilience and persistence can change your life trajectory	6
Serving a widely spread community	8
Moja Gabedi: volunteering in community-based projects opens the doors of possibility	9
The Importance of Interprofessional Collaboration Between Occupational Therapy Students and Dietetics Students in Early Childhood Intervention	10
Sharing is caring	12
Housing first: Enabling a multi-purpose approach to homelessness and substance abuse	13
Keep that gold shining coding project	15
Social work student socially responds with a Child Protection campaign in Steve Biko Academic Hospital	16
Health-People-Places Chair will strengthen UP's science leadership in Africa	18
How far or how long?	20
Career Hub at the Mamelodi Campus	21
Auntie Covidia and the Curious Calamities of COVID-19: using drama for scientific communication	22
COVID-19 struggle, the challenges and yet progress is made through collaborations	24
Community engagement and employability during COVID-19	25
Literacy enhancement project in collaboration with the World Literacy Foundation and Sun Books	27

Matters of interest

- The next Community Engagement Forum will be held on Wednesday, 24 November 2021.
- Visit the University of Pretoria's online Community Engagement Management System (CEMS) for updates on community project opportunities.
- Casual Day will be celebrated on Friday, 2 September 2022.
- The Unit for Community Engagement invites you to report on community engagement activities by submitting articles for publication in the next newsletter (Summer 2021).

Contact person: Dr Eugene Machimana

Senior Education Consultant: Community Engagement, Department of Education Innovation

Email: eugene.machimana@up.ac.za
Tel: 012 420 5199 (w)

Contact details for the Unit for Community Engagement

**Gernia van Niekerk, Manager:
Community Engagement:**

**Dr Eugene Machimana,
Senior Education Consultant:
Community Engagement:**

eugene.machimana@up.ac.za;
+27 (0) 12 420 5199; +27 (0) 83 687 0181

Albert Matlheketha, Project Coordinator:

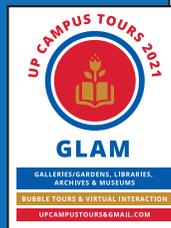
albert.matlheketha@up.ac.za;
+27 (0) 12 420 4068; +27 (0) 82 908 3345

Londiwe Mahlangu, Community Liaison Officer:

londiwe.mahlangu@up.ac.za;
+27 (0) 12 420 2826; +27 (0) 76 523 2619

UPCT 2021 celebrates Mandela Day!

Nina Sieber (University of Pretoria Campus Tours 2021)



Nelson Mandela once said that “The power of education extends beyond the development of skills we need for economic success. It can contribute to nation-building and reconciliation,” and this is what the University of Pretoria Campus Tours (UPCT) set out to do on Mandela Day. The 18 July, which is Nelson Mandela’s birthday, was declared an International Day by the United Nations General Assembly. The idea was that by giving 67 minutes of your time – one for every year Mandela fought for human rights and the abolition of apartheid – individuals could give back to the world around them. It is therefore a global call for all people to recognise that they have the power to create change and leave an everlasting footprint.

In collaboration with UP Archives ([Alida Green](#)), UP Museums ([Nicole Hoffmann](#)) and Jason Sampson ([the UP Gardens and Aloe Walk](#)), a virtual tour was conducted as a taster of not only what UPCT has to offer, but what the University has to offer as a whole. UPCT proudly presented 67 slides in 67 minutes for Mandela Day on the morning of Sunday 18 July 2021. Although International Mandela Day is an annual event on UPCT’s calendar, this is the first time the event was held on a virtual platform. The virtual session gathered over 50 people to celebrate the day. The UPCT team took the visitors on a virtual tour of all nine of the University’s faculties to showcase what they have to offer and what they have achieved.

The University’s spectacular gardens, including the lavish ‘green’ Hatfield campus and the indigenous aloes on Hillcrest campus, were added to the visual beauty of the tour. Lastly, the participants were given a taste of the sculpture route on Hatfield campus highlighting the romanticism associated with pieces such as the ‘Conversation’ and ‘Burning Man’.

This has been one of many virtual tours which the UPCT team have presented to the public. They recently offered a presentation celebrating International Museum Day (IMD), wherein the team showcased what the UP Museums have to offer. International Museum Day represents a unique moment for the international museum community to celebrate and share their collections.

The objective of this presentation is to raise awareness about the museums. All over the world, more and more museums participate in IMD. Last year, more than 37,000 museums participated in the event in about 158 countries and territories. The theme was ‘The Future of Museums: Recover and Reimagine’ and by showcasing the museums more interest and awareness were created.

UPCT forms part of a practical component of the Honours degree in [Heritage and Cultural Tourism](#) in the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies, in the Faculty of Humanities under the auspices of Prof Karen Harris. UPCT offers a range of tours on the Hatfield campus

ONLINE & VIRTUAL OPPORTUNITIES
MANDELA DAY 2021

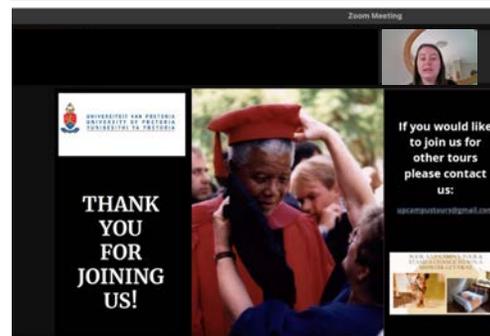
UPCT INVITES YOU TO CELEBRATE MANDELA DAY

JOIN US FOR A 67 MINUTE COMPLIMENTARY TOUR OF THE UP CAMPUS

DATE SUNDAY, 18 JULY 2021
TIME 10:00
LINK <https://zoom.us/j/98257807110?pwd=ZWJZbkVsWC9nMnQveWlhV0JXVjdQz09>
MEETING ID 982 5780 7110
PASSCODE 898852

#MANDELADAY

LET'S MAKE THIS MANDELA DAY COUNT



for all who are interested, including foreign dignitaries, visiting academics, prospective students, university staff, international students, school groups and members of the public. The honours students are seen as ‘ambassadors’ of the University. Under COVID-19 regulations the UPCT team moved to interactive virtual tours and then devised ‘Bubble tours’ which comprised of one tourist guide and four guests adhering to social distancing in the open-air environment. Tours usually take about an hour and the cost for a tour on weekdays is R85.00 per tourist guide (inclusive of the 4 guests). Customised virtual tours of specific faculties are also on offer. Booking a tour with UPCT before the end of October also gives you the chance of winning a mid-week break in November 2021 for four persons at MABALINGWE. We look forward to welcoming you on a UPCT tour soon.

For tour bookings please e-mail us at upcampustours@gmail.com.

Resilience and persistence can change your life trajectory

Dr Nontembeko Bila (Senior Lecturer: Department of Social Work and Criminology)



From an early age I have proven that I was a resilient and persistent young girl. A girl hailing from the dusty streets of New Brighton, Port Elizabeth, currently known as Gqeberha. My childhood seemed grim; however, I have shown that your life history cannot determine your future. When I was growing up with my eight (8) siblings life was not easy at all. We struggled to make ends meet, as our parents were unemployed.

The neighbours did not see any good in us, due to the low socio-economic status of our family, coupled with the fact that my parents were illiterate. As a result, we were called '*abantwana bamaqaba*' meaning children of the illiterates. It was very painful to be called names because of your background. Then, going to school was another ball-game, I did not have a good quality school uniform, it was torn and my school shoes were similar.

I was the laughing-stock of my school mates due to the state of my school uniform, besides that, I was not discouraged by their mockery. I was persistent and I managed to pass my post-primary studies. The challenge came when I passed my Grade 12 with an exemption. I did not have funds to pursue my tertiary education.

I had to hustle through as my parents could not afford to pay my fees. I was employed as a receptionist in a general practitioner's consulting rooms. It was not easy at all as I was earning R100.00 per month and that I needed to use for my transport fare as well. This was indeed a meagre wage and my dream of saving for my tertiary education was not possible. The year passed and I did not save the money for my fees as planned.

I had to look for an alternative. This time I was employed as a pre-school teacher where my elder sister was working.

continued on page 7

It was better now as I was able to save money as I was walking to work. I worked in the pre-school for two years and, at this time, I was informed that the City of Ibhayi provided bursaries and I could apply for. I applied and indeed got the bursary. God works in miraculous ways, and I was elated as I had already applied at the University of Fort Hare. I had gained acceptance for a Social Work degree and the only challenge was the fees.

I went to Fort Hare after the City of Ibhayi had promised to send me a letter of confirmation that they were going to pay my fees. However, another woe emanated whilst I was at Fort Hare - The 'bursary' failed to pay for my fees, and I was told to pack-up and go back home. I was heartbroken as I thought that I would be able to pursue my academic dreams. I left my bags behind, as I went to source the money to pay for my fees. I was confident that I would come back and continue with my studies.

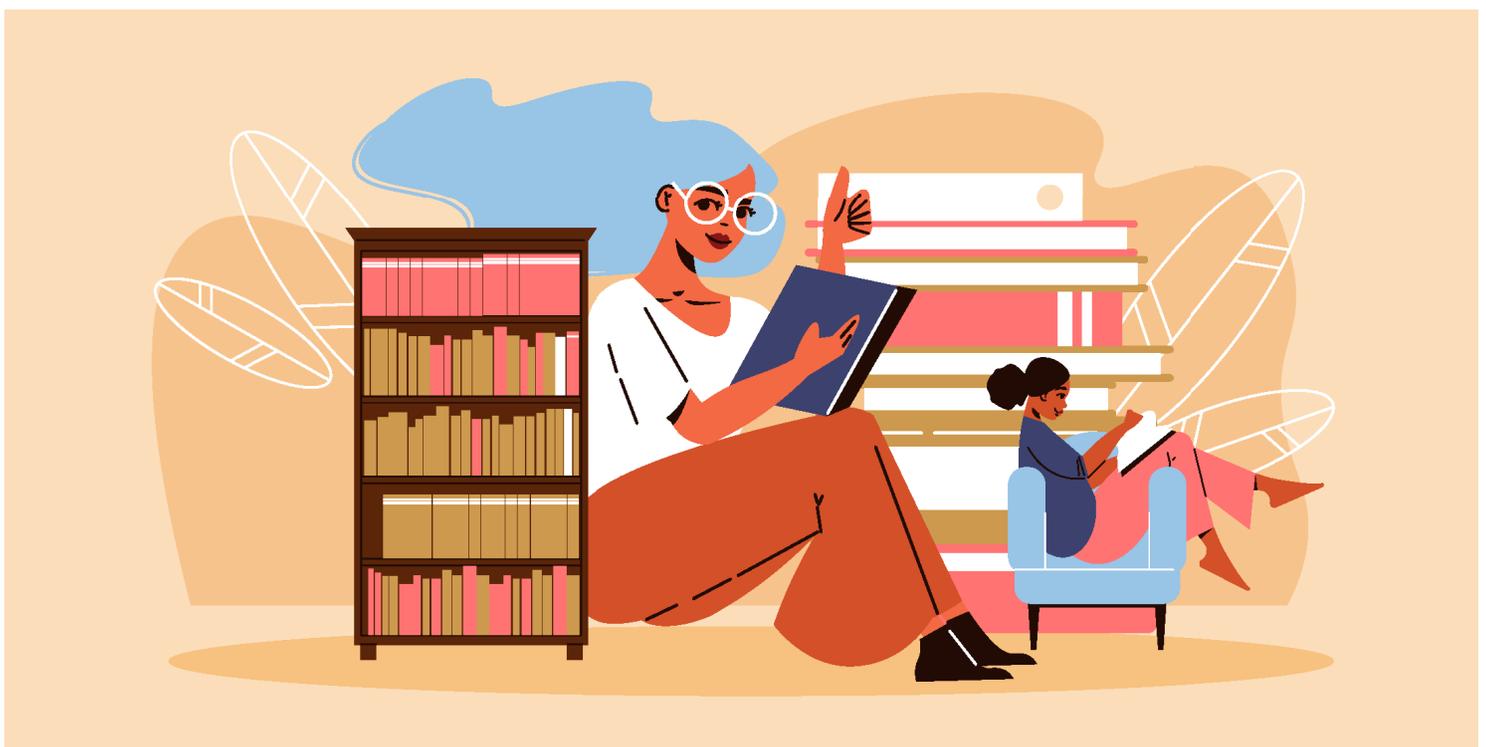
It was so difficult, and I was crying all the way in the taxi to Gqeberha as I did not know where I was going to get the money. Indeed, if you are resilient and persistent, you will get

what you want. I managed to raise the money through the assistance of my siblings and the church, and I was able to go back to the university. The following year, I applied for the bursary, and I was able to study the four years required to complete my studies in BA (Social Work). I completed my studies whilst my peers were working as I only joined the university four years after matric. My tears were wiped and that was the greatest achievement ever. I was a first-generation student. I was the first graduate in my entire family, and that was a breakthrough to my siblings as most of those coming after me managed to gain tertiary education.

When you are resilient and persistent you are able to change your life trajectory. That poor young girl who passed matric and hustle through, is now in possession of a doctoral degree from the University of Pretoria and she is also a Senior Lecture in the same institution. My doctoral research was based on mental health and recovery-oriented mental health practice. Hence, I am passionate about mental health, and I am a big advocate of mental health and promoting mentally healthy lifestyles.

With this story, I want to encourage a young girl from rural areas or townships who feels that she cannot amount to anything due to her circumstances. She does not see any breakthrough; I want to say that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. I am a classical example and the epitome of success. If you are resilient and persistent you are able to achieve your dreams. You have to shoulder on and push until you succeed in life.

You need to bounce back in life - that is the meaning of being resilient. As a result of my life history, I am a founder of Sasanani Empowerment Organisation. My heartbeat is to see young people succeed. As a result, I have taken it upon myself to advise young people about the university admission procedures and financial assistance. My story has made me compassionate towards the education of young people. I also visit schools and distribute sanitary towels to schools in the informal settlements. I do not want to see a girl child skipping a day due to the lack of sanitary towels. I am also sponsoring Kamcare to manufacture reusable sanitary towel to distribute to girls in the informal settlements.



Serving a widely spread community

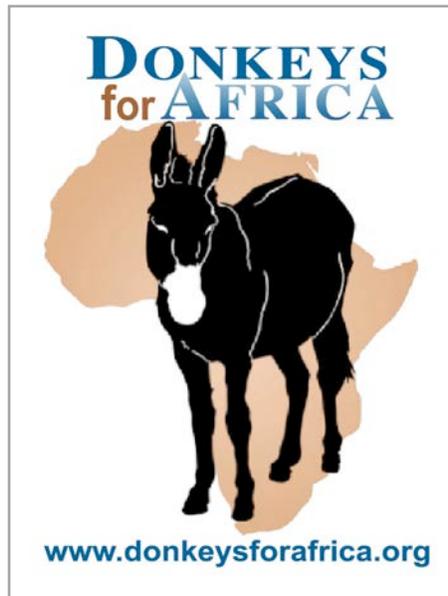
Annemarie van Zijl (Editor: Donkeys for Africa)

In 2015 a watershed African Donkey Welfare Conference was held by The Donkey Sanctuary (UK) at Bela Bela, for delegates from 25 different organisations in 11 countries across Africa. After the inspiring 10-day gathering everyone returned to their regions to continue facing their problems. We realised that there were numerous common challenges and for those ten days there was a feeling that 'we are not alone' and could learn from each other, exchange successes and failures and benefit from shared experiences.

The concept *Donkeys for Africa* (DfA) was born.

It is a communication portal serving a community that is a little different from others featured in this Community Engagement (CE) Newsletter: The international community of people and organisations with the commonality of promoting donkey welfare. It is not a geographically defined community, except perhaps in the broader sense of being from the African continent, but certainly has the cohesive factor of holding at heart the welfare of an often invisible and forgotten species: donkeys.

Since being launched in 2017 the reach of DfA has expanded dramatically. We now have contacts in 21 African countries, with multiple contacts in many countries. Donkey welfare problems experienced in Africa are also followed with interest by welfare organisations, educational institutions and individuals from across the globe.



Tertiary institutions including the Faculty of Veterinary Science (Onderstepoort campus) have made the website, library and newsletters recommended reading for students. DfA publishes newsletters bi-monthly. We feature relevant research, international conferences, webinars and symposia. Topics covered have included donkeys as therapy animals, Humane Education, the Five Freedoms, ethical treatment, climate change and donkeys, the impact of Covid-19, the power of communication, and succession planning.

The regular profile of a selected organisation provides recognition of their work and inspires others. Recently we added a page dedicated to harnessing and hitching challenges – one of the most common causes of poor donkey welfare. The Harness Help page on the website contains practical information and training material and provides a platform for debate.



The manual 'One Health, One Welfare' available in the DfA library, mentions the CE programme Medical and Veterinary Rural Integration and Collaboration (MAVERIC) run by the Faculties of Veterinary Science and Health Sciences at the University of Pretoria.

The August 2021 newsletter focuses on the burgeoning donkey skins trade throughout Africa. Donkey abattoirs are opening and closing in a confusing fashion, with appeals for and against their operation to lawmakers and governments. The backing of big money and huge profits in the skins trade has to be countered by the practical implications of owners and communities losing their hard-working animals through ignorance, theft or desire for short-term monetary gain.

We welcome contributions related to donkey welfare. Students and staff are invited to submit material for consideration.

Donkeys for Africa plays a significant role in raising awareness and promoting communication and engagement about donkey welfare – before it is too late to ensure the future of this hardy, long-suffering but faithful friend of mankind.

<http://www.donkeysforafrica.org/>
<https://www.facebook.com/donkeysforafrica>
Email: editor@donkeysforafrica.org

A group of diverse people, including men and women of various ethnicities, are holding a large, circular blue sign with a white border. The sign is held up against a background of green grass. The text on the sign is in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font. The text reads: "Moja Gabedi: volunteering in community-based projects opens the doors of possibility". Below this, in a smaller white font, it says "Francois Gilles de Pelichy (Faculty of Humanities)".

Moja Gabedi: volunteering in community-based projects opens the doors of possibility

Francois Gilles de Pelichy
(Faculty of Humanities)

The Department of Visual Art at the University of Pretoria (UP) is committed to developing both artists and art entrepreneurs. A good way for art students to get experience in their field is to volunteer in community-based projects, where they can sharpen their skills, meet other artists, and work with students from other disciplines. In 2020, the first BA Fine Arts cohort volunteered at the Moja Gabedi community garden in Hatfield.

Community gardens like Moja Gabedi provide an opportunity to learn new talents and abilities. It enhances students' education by facilitating the acquisition of new knowledge, but also by opening new opportunities. Volunteers with creative mindsets, like visual artists, may develop skills that they never expected to be important to their careers. Students pursuing degrees

in the fine arts are accustomed to collaborative situations on campus, where their projects are developed using a service-learning paradigm aimed at improving people's lives. Moja Gabedi provides a similar and important collaborative environment for students who are currently producing art alone as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic. The collaborative character of these events serves to teach both students and community members what it means to be an entrepreneur, as the community members frequently know the theory while the students, who are not yet entrepreneurs, have the practical experience.

Previously, Moja Gabedi was an area where homeless men congregated and abused substances. With UP's assistance, these men are now tending to the garden as part of their occupational therapy.

They collaborate with students and to date they have helped install eight artworks in the lush urban garden and participated in countless art workshops led by art students. This project's value is contagious: the community now participates in a variety of programs aimed at keeping the city clean and improving public parks.

Volunteering can be an uplifting experience for all those involved. By fostering their own learning in a space that welcomes everyone who inquire, 'How can I help?' creative minds, such as our visual arts students, can witness the tangible results of their work. Indeed, the doors of opportunity are flung wide open. Learn more about the Moja Gabedi community project here: https://www.up.ac.za/news/post_2949083-ups-moja-gabedi-from-rubble-to-a-meaningful-garden

The Importance of Interprofessional Collaboration Between Occupational Therapy Students and Dietetics Students in Early Childhood Intervention

Nadia Brewis, Lebogang Radebe, Megan Jamieson, Clarette Swart (Occupational therapy students) and Nthabiseng Ramodisa (Supervisor)

Daspoort Poli-clinic is a multidisciplinary health-care clinic that is supported by the University of Pretoria, in partnership with the Gauteng Department of Health. The clinic provides rich experience in working in a multidisciplinary team, as the staff consists of students from different health-care disciplines from the University of Pretoria. One of these disciplines includes occupational therapy students, who have recently come to appreciate the value of a multidisciplinary approach to delivering health care.

On 27 May 2021, the occupational therapy students along with their supervisor, Mrs Nthabiseng Ramodisa, started an Early Childhood Intervention Clinic. The purpose of the clinic is to screen for developmental delays and neurological or genetic abnormalities in infants who are brought to the clinic for immunisations on Thursdays. Recently there was an incident where a toddler was screened by one of the students who determined that there were no points of concern. However, after the toddler was assessed by the dietetics students, it was brought to the attention of the occupational



continued on page 11

therapy students that the toddler was malnourished.

Occupational therapy students and dietetics students seldom work together and hardly ever learn about their individual roles in the multidisciplinary team at the clinic. In the absence of seeing a dietitian, the toddler would have been sent home without the necessary referrals and interventions. This occurrence caused the occupational therapy students to realize the importance of the role of dietitians in early childhood intervention.

Research shows that food insecurity is a common pathway to non-optimal early childhood development, affecting cognition, language, socio-emotional and physical health.^{1,2} Therefore, early detection of malnutrition in infants is crucial in preventing secondary disabilities.³

Lichelle Kemp, a dietetics student from the University of Pretoria, outlines five clinical signs that occupational therapists can observe in order to identify infants that require a referral to the dietitians.

These clinical signs include: oedema in the feet, rashes on the head and face, skin discoloration, wrinkled skin around the armpits, neck and knees or a distended stomach.

She further explains that there are questions that should be asked to the mother regarding breastfeeding such as: "Are you breastfeeding?", "Are you exclusively breastfeeding?", "Is the baby attaching well to mommy's nipple without soreness?", "How often does the baby feed?", "How is the baby's appetite?". If the answers to these questions are not consistent with that which is expected from a baby of a specific age, then a referral to a dietitian should be made.



The World Health Organisation has identified ten steps for treating a child with severe acute malnutrition. Step nine entails sensory stimulation and emotional support which includes nurturing, stimulating play and maternal involvement in occupations, as children are dependent on external support in order to grow well and catch up on delayed development.⁴

In step nine dietitians commonly refer infants to occupational therapy

as these aspects fall precisely within the scope of occupational therapy.

Subsequently, occupational therapy students should be educated on the importance of dietitians in early childhood intervention, as adequate nutrition is a cornerstone in the optimal development of infants.

In this way early detection of malnutrition and appropriate referral is promoted and eventually health care outcomes are improved.

References

- Zaslow M, Bronte-Tinkew J, Capps R, Horowitz A, Moore KA, Weinstein D. Food security during infancy: Implications for attachment and mental proficiency in toddlerhood. *Maternal and Child Health J.* 2009;13(1):66–80.
- Aber L. Chapter 1: *Poor and Low-Income Families, Infant/Toddler Development, and the Prospects for Change.* *Infants, Toddlers, Family Poverty Research Implications for Early Child Care.* 2012;3-18.
- Muzigaba M, van Wyk B, Puoane T. Management of severe acute malnutrition in children under 5 years through the lens of health care workers in two rural South African hospitals. *African Journal of Primary Health Care and Family Medicine.* 2018;10(1):1–8.
- Ashworth A, Schofield C. Book Review: *Guidelines for the Inpatient Treatment of Severely Malnourished Children.* *Food Nutr Bull.* 2005;26(2):245–245.

Sharing is caring

Dr Nkhensani Susan Thuketana (Lecturer: Department of Early Childhood Education) and Nadine Krusekopf (Final year - BEd student)



The University of Pretoria uses Community Engagement (CE) projects as a principle of global citizenship in many ways to produce professionals with attributes fit for purpose.

Firstly, student teachers experience a theoretical knowledge application platform in the school's context, contributing to their work readiness. Secondly, it empowers student teachers to reflect on their teaching philosophy and make amends where necessary. Thirdly, the university incorporates community engagement into some modules to offer students opportunities to enhance, among other things, their problem-solving skills.

Additionally, and most importantly, Community Engagement projects aim at making a difference and uplifting underprivileged societies. Resources shortages are common in most South African schools, and innovation is necessary for teachers to enhance learners' creativity. Creative art is a subject within Life Skills identified to increase Foundation Phase learners' motivation and confidence.

Since the University of Pretoria teaches, among others, creativity in students, they are expected to share the skill with in-service teachers. During Work Integrated Learning (WIL), the student gave an art lesson about saltwater animals at a central Pretoria school. She

brought along the paper plates to class, and instructed learners to cut and colour the plates to produce animals at sea as the product.

Not only were learners excited about the task, but the student teacher could also interpret some learners' presentations of the project. In the JLD 400 (Learner Support) module, pre-service teachers are taught how to interpret drawings and projects to identify issues contributing to learning difficulties in Foundation Phase learners.

Additionally, while teaching the art lesson, the pre-service teacher shared the skill with the class teacher to make resources from recyclable material, enhance teaching pedagogy and sharpen learners' curiosity and creativity.



Housing first: Enabling a multi-purpose approach to homelessness and substance use

Sukholuhle Tshuma

(Social Worker: COSUP, Reliable House - Department of Family medicine (UP))

It is natural for humans to want to lean on a stronger structure, to relax and let go with the expectation that the structure will balance you and give you some stability. Imagine the pain when the supposed stronger structure immediately stings as the frosty cold surface gets one jolting back to reality, against a tired, hungry, and worn-out body, desperately yearning to give in to nature, slumber, and rest! After a long tiring day, putting

out maximum effort with little or no return. This is the reality of most homeless, unemployed men in the area. In this cold weather, there are men who find themselves huddling away from the walls under the bridges, in dilapidated buildings, on pavements, away from the walls which should be acting as some sort of shelter, some sort of refuge from the stinging cold, the rain and/or the wind. No, not in this frosty weather. Not until they find themselves at the

gates of Reliable House. A former dumpsite, unbelievable for its location, just a few metres away from the Hatfield Centre, surrounded by different embassies and a walking distance away from the University of Pretoria, Reliable House had risen to be a haven for the homeless men in Hatfield. With a capacity of 32 beds, this establishment has seen to restoring humanity in the homeless

continued on page 14



community, especially during this COVID-19 pandemic. With a place to sleep, eat, wash, and safely keep their belongings, the beneficiaries see their lives, slowly but surely returning to 'normalcy'.

For a change, a new beneficiary can be observed waking up to some sheltered routine, the greetings, washing, going for breakfast, a norm most take for granted, this new normal is luxury to some. Street life has one waking up to hustle, as that day's provision is based on how much they make or else their needs will not be met, even more so, if one uses substances, the need for substances, the cravings will mean an additional burden of hustling. Another social challenge that has a cause-and-effect relationship with homelessness.

In partnership with another University of Pretoria's project, Community-Oriented Substance Use Program (COSUP), Reliable House has become a Centre driving a multipurpose service provision to the homeless community. Boasting of a multi-disciplinary team comprising of social workers, clinical

practitioners, a peer educator among others, a beneficiary is assured of the comprehensive service provision to meet all their needs. Living in the streets can alter one's basic life skills comprehension.

Assessments by the multi-disciplinary team helps to identify the developmental needs for each client, collectively creating an Individual Development Plan (IDP) with the client, which becomes a road-map through the transitioning

“What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead”
Nelson Mandela.

process. The multi-disciplinary (MDT) team helps the client with individual developmental goals which become their tools to trace progress of their plans as they transition towards community or family reintegration as well as self-sufficiency. For instance, all clients are enrolled for basic life skills sessions which include but are not limited to anger management,

interpersonal relationships, basic etiquette, (keeping one's room, and bed clean, cleaning up after oneself, washing body, clothes, and linen), tailor- made to meet their unique needs. The beneficiaries are also offered primary health-care services or (referrals) as well as substance use intervention from the COSUP team. All these services empower them to start mapping their lives and work towards successfully implementing their plans.

After the client has successfully grasped basic life skills they are then prepared for work/entrepreneurship. The Unit for Community engagement has various projects and Reliable clients are privileged to be considered for these opportunities. Clients are also prepared for entrepreneurship and skills development which pave way for work experience and sources of income which eventually allow for self-sufficiency.

During this process clients receive financial skills such as budgeting, saving and are taught how to buy their basic needs and prioritize their children for those with children at home. Family interventions are also offered so that while the client is working on self-sufficiency, they also iron out their social issues and mend any broken relationships. The project like book club and sewing also help identify and nurture talent for future use in their own personal lives.

With these and other services available to previously homeless individuals, their lives start shaping up and hopes for a better future are revived. In conclusion, we can safely say, 'A shelter above one's head, is a gateway to realizing many potential opportunities that might be otherwise impossible to achieve while dwelling on the streets'.

Keep that gold shining coding project

Thabang Ngwenya (Junior Research Officer: Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering)

KeeP That Gold Shining has launched a coding project on the 7 August 2021 at Makhosini Combined Secondary School in Soshanguve. The project is sponsored by ETA Operations. A total of 20 bright learners in grade 8 were selected to be part of the KTG Robotics School.

The programme will run every Saturday from 10h00 to 12h00. Three Community-Based Project (JCP) groups under supervision of Manchala Sithole (one of the Keep That Gold Shining [KTG] Directors and Co-Founder) will facilitate the project. The curriculum will include TANKS (coding game that teaches learners to code without the need for computers, this is by use of smartphones) as an introduction for 2 to 3 weeks, BOATS (coding game) for the additional 3 weeks.

The games will only be used to introduce the learners to the coding principles and will further expect them to apply these principles



in real life situations to solve problems. Moreover, they will do some mechanical stuff where they will be introduced to different types of research methodologies. The research method will be more advanced but will not be strict on sources as YouTube and other learning platforms will be allowed to be referenced, as well as help from home will be allowed to be fully referenced.

The learners will be involved in light mechanical work, where they will be building moving components and parts. They will have to use what they have learnt from TANKS to prove that they understand a step-by-step process of problem solving and building a product. It will take 4 weeks.

The learners will be expected to use their coding experience to apply it to real life situations. This includes identifying the current challenges faced by the community and to arrive at possible solutions. Additionally, they will be introduced to the basic electronic side of things where they will be taught some of the important components used in robotics, this includes Arduino, Raspberry Pi and coding principle, (they will be taught how to write a basic code in python).

They will further engage in a project of building a fully functioning computer; given a computer screen, a Raspberry Pi and all of the components. They will identify all of these components and build their own Personal Computers (PCs), under supervision.

Social work student socially responds with a Child Protection campaign in Steve Biko Academic Hospital

Elmien Claassens (Lecturer: Department of Social Work & Criminology) & Charles Tapala (Social Work Student)



In the fourth-year practice module, social work students are placed within organisations across Tshwane, to gain work experience and grow as professionals. In the practice placement, an emphasis is placed on different social work methods, including working with individuals and their families, community work as well as community-based group work. Our students become integrated within the organisations, and in essence they function like staff members, and spend a total of 500 hours during the fourth year of their studies.



One of our placements, Steve Biko Academic Hospital, has three final-year social work students in their Social Work Department. On the 1st of June 2021, one of the social

continued on page 17

work students, Charles Tapala, was part of a team in the hospital running a Child Protection campaign, with the emphasis on anti-bullying. This campaign coincided with International Children's Day that is annually celebrated on 1 June, since 1950. Bullying has been a major concern from the Department of Social Work and identified as a social ill, as social workers saw the harm to children's development and leading in some instances to children committing suicide.

In this campaign, the student used community education as a model, empowering the children, and the adults with the knowledge to make a significant difference in addressing bullying in our communities. The Community Education Model has the main goal of empowering individuals, groups and communities with knowledge and skills to take control of their lives and contribute effectively to the environment in which they live, as well as eliminating ignorance (Weyers, 2011:251).

The developmental approach to social work provides the means as a practice model making a significant contribution to achieving SDGs and eradication of poverty and reducing inequalities (Muleya, 2020:471). The principle of empowerment that was applied by the student, ties in with the developmental approach to social work with empowerment, partnership and participation as some of its key principles (Department of Social Development, 2013:10).

The campaign mainly focused on bullying, children's rights, and the responsibility as a community to stand up for our children and protect our children from bullies. The aim was to raise awareness and educate parents, care givers and children at the Paediatric clinics and wards within the hospital. The ultimate goal of the campaign was to empower children with knowledge on how to speak out against bullying and to equip adults with knowledge on how to create safe spaces for all children without the fear of bullies.

For the whole day, the student, together with other social workers, spent time in the hospital clinics, distributing pamphlets with sweets, and talking to the children, as well as the adults accompanying the children to the hospital. Utilising media as a powerful tool, the student and his supervisor, even had a radio talk on Steve Biko's radio station on the day of the campaign. The radio station was so impressed with the content of the interview, that they offered the Social Work Department a weekly slot on the radio. This platform will grant the Social Work Department an opportunity to reach the wider community within the hospital to promote social justice.

Reflecting on this process, the student stated that:

Participating in such a project made me realise that society needs to be taught about all the variables that lead to a child's surroundings being unsuitable, so that they can understand their parental responsibilities and know what actions to take in safeguarding their children from any form of harm. In addition, I believe that child safety is everyone's responsibility, thus the notion of Ubuntu is critical since it displays interconnection and asserts that '*I am because we are*', implying that a child should be considered the responsibility of the entire community.

In terms of the sustainability of the project, the Child Protection campaign will continue throughout the year, and other topics will be addressed that also pertains to the safety of children in communities. Due to COVID-19 the format of the campaign had to be adapted, to avoid large groups of people gathering, but the upside of this approach meant that social workers and students were able to engage with people and children on a one-on-one basis. So not even COVID-19 could stop this team from executing their campaign!

We leave you with a quote of Nelson Mandela, who shared our concern for the protection of our children: "*We owe our children – the most vulnerable citizens in any society – a life free from violence and fear*".

References

- Department of Social Development. (2013). *Framework for provision of developmental social welfare services*. Pretoria. Government Printers.
- Muleya, E. (2020). Developmental Social Work and the Sustainable Development Goals in South Africa: Opportunities and Challenges. *The International Journal of Community and Social Development*, 2(4):470–486.
- Patel, L. (2015). *Social welfare and social development in South Africa* (2nd ed). Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa.
- Weyers, M.L. (2011). *The Theory and Practice of Community Work: A South African Perspective*. (2nd ed). Potchefstroom: Keurkopie.



Health–People–Places Chair will strengthen UP’s science leadership in Africa

Xolani Mathibela

“A strong focus is mentoring young academics in this transdisciplinary space and expanding resources,” says Prof Wanda Markotter. Prof Markotter, Director of the UP’s Centre for Viral Zoonoses, has been appointed as Future Africa Research Chair on Health-People-Places.

“The focus of my Chair is to create a platform and opportunities to foster transdisciplinary research focused on a One Health approach. An essential

distinction of this Chair compared to existing initiatives is that it is not linked to a specific faculty or a specific research programme,” says Prof Markotter.

“The Chair is focused on an all-inclusive, strategic approach to enhance our overall profile in One Health through transdisciplinary research. This will strengthen direction and communication and increase opportunities within and beyond the institution, focusing on Africa.

continued on page 19



There is already a significant One Health focus associated with outputs in the UP community.” She will be the Health-People-Places Chair and a member of the Future Africa institute and campus board until 2026.

The University of Pretoria (UP) has invested substantially in the development of the Future Africa Institute to respond to the needs for intensification of transdisciplinary science leadership in Africa. This is also in line with the UP 2025 vision and Africa strategy. The new Research Chair initiative could place the university at the forefront of research development for sustainable development on the continent.

Health-People-Places is one of five research chairs driving these priorities forward and leading and representing Future Africa through research excellence, representation in national and international arenas, engagements in institutional collaborations, policy interactions, strategic planning and evaluation of the relevance of our research activities and communication.

Prof Markotter says her Chair’s purpose is not to change any of this but to raise the profile of the initiatives, bring them together, enable them to learn from each other and strategically communicate and plan the way forward, including with external stakeholders. “A strong focus is mentoring young academics in this transdisciplinary space and expanding resources”.

According to UP’s Future Africa Director, Professor Cheikh Mbow, the appointment of Prof Markotter as the Health-People-Places Research Chair is a great moment for Future Africa. “Prof Markotter is well positioned to drive in-depth research on the requirements and applicability of sustainable solutions that embrace the diversity of

knowledge to save lives, secure livelihoods, and prepare for better wellbeing of people in Africa,” says Prof Mbow. “At Future Africa, Prof Markotter will benefit from our Pan-African networks to harness valuable lessons for better health for all, improved knowledge management for policy and practice. I wish very good luck to Prof Markotter.”

Within a year of her appointment, Prof Markotter says she believes that Health-People-Places will have established a strategic One Health platform within Future Africa that all UP staff and students can embrace and will be recognised on the continent and globally for excellence. “This must translate

into transdisciplinary projects linked to mentoring of young academics and increased resources,” she says.

Her goals for this year include facilitating a One Health strategic, all-inclusive platform that spans all UP faculties, enhances communication, and expands transdisciplinary research and resources. This platform would then be expanded nationally, to drawing in external stakeholders and strengthening involvement from the rest of the African continent.

During her five-year term as a chair, she will identify and initiate mentoring of young academics to continue with these activities and strengthen Health-People-Places’ relationships and communication with policymakers, communities and other external stakeholders.

She says upon receiving the news of her appointment as a Chair, she was overwhelmed at first that UP’s Executive, Future Africa leadership and the Health Sciences faculty leadership have such confidence in her ability to establish and strengthen this platform.

“This has now developed into excitement, and I am delighted to be part of this new opportunity. COVID has really influenced our mindsets on how to approach the future. As a virologist researching potential zoonotic pathogens in bats, I strongly believe that the only way forward is interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches and incorporated in the One Health approach.”

Prof Markotter is also a cluster lead for the current United Nations for Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Future Africa project known as One Health for Change (OHC). It consists of 11 transdisciplinary projects focusing on major health problems such as COVID-19, malaria, zoonoses, food nutrition, climate change, family medicine and plant health.

How far or how long?

Howard Zondo (International
Author/ Speaker & Coach -
www.zondohoward.com)



I have always wondered what makes other people succeed even when faced with adversities that are seemingly impossible to overcome. It is my assumption that at least the majority of the people who are successful were faced with this reality: having to build from the bottom without financial backing and having limited resources.

Although one can amass to be resourceful by having the right phone book, read books that are relevant to the subject of their pursuit, find a mentor and burn the midnight oil... but there's just something that makes the 3% of the bell curve to succeed in a way that is absolutely impeccable and has enduring prosperity and happiness.

I thought perhaps the three percentile eventually bump to the best ideas or they become the first ones to enter a particular industry and are therefore more 'blessed' than others. However, It turns out that it is not the *'it thing'* which makes their ambitious prosper. Here's my sentimental believe, we can all achieve the success we desire if only we are willing to ask ourselves why we aim for certain goals and have ambitions in life.

Therefore, let me offer the two variables which can lead you to join the three-percentile group in what you do. They are these two questions: 'How far or how long?'

People who ask 'How long?' are what I define as hungry but not enduring. The truth is we never how long it will take for our dreams to manifest but we know that someday

they shall. These are the people who plant a seed today and expect to see a tree the next day. This question separates those who 'wish for it' and those who work for it. Thus, it is not that our dreams or ambitious are unattainable to achieve but whether or not we have the patience, the tolerance for pain and ability to endure the discomfort needed in the process of fulfilling them.

Those who ask 'How far?' rephrase that question to 'How far can we go or How far can I go'. Above all else, this is a question of commitment and ties the dreamer with reality. It is very easy to get caught up in trying to reach for the 'big audacious goal' that we overlook breaking it down into small tangible pieces which we can achieve on daily basis.

'How far' is not for people who aspire to achieve quick success, such attitude does not prevail in the long game and often produces amateur results. If anything, life has taught us that, man does reveal his true character when you give him power and money; these are the 'How long' people but definitely not the **'How Far'** individuals, for they understand there's more to success than just status and self-preservation. 'How far can I go', challenges everyone to see beyond shortcomings, contend with uncertainty and remind people why they do what they do.

I believe how we answer these two variables I shared with you, will ultimately determine if you will join the three percentile or not, regardless of what your pursuit is.

Career Hub at the Mamelodi Campus

Dr Martina Jordaan, Ida Meyer and Bridgette Makgareetsa (Mamelodi campus)

The University of Pretoria's Mamelodi Campus hosts a Career Hub, which is available to learners from Grade 9 to Grade 12. It aims to assist learners in the lower grades to choose the correct school subjects for further study, and helps learners in the higher grades to identify a career field that will suit them. It also assists learners to identify their strengths. Ms Ida Meyer, Manager of the Career Hub, indicated: "We realised there is a need in

our community. The learners do not know which subjects to choose and what to study. Nor do they know where to find bursaries or where and how to apply at an institution of higher learning via a website, WhatsApp or email."

The Career Hub also provides empowerment sessions for Grade 10, 11 and 12 learners, and assists them to prepare for job-seeking by creating a CV and other activities. Information on the following topics is available on the University of Pretoria's Mamelodi Campus website (<https://www.up.ac.za/mamelodi-campus/article/2950980/career-hub>):

- Career choices
- Where to find bursaries
- Where to study
- Leadership and public speaking skills
- How to study according to your personality
- How to love Mathematics
- How to handle exam stress

As part of the Career Hub, Grade 9 learners are assisted with regard to making subject choices. The Career Hub uses the Department of Higher Education and Training's online National Career Advice Portal (NCAP). The purpose of the assessment is for learners to choose the right subjects according to their personality and interests.

Ms Bridgette Makgareetsa, responsible for assisting the Grade 9 learners with their subject choices, reflected: 'During March, more than 1 200 learners from the Mamelodi precinct wrote the NCAP, and we managed to give them assistance with their subject and career choices via written feedback'.

The Career Hub may be contacted through a WhatsApp number, 072 784 0699, or via email at mamelodi.careerhub@up.ac.za.

The poster features a blue background with a yellow speech bubble containing a list of services. Below the speech bubble is an illustration of three graduates on a five-step staircase. The steps are labeled: CHOICES, SKILLS | TIPS, SUPPORT | GUIDE, and ADVICE | EMPOWER. At the bottom, it says 'Let us help you... Visit Career HUB' and provides contact information for Mamelodi Campus.

MAMELODI Career Hub

Make today matter

- Grade 9 **subject choice assistance**
- Grade 10, 11 and 12 **Empowerment sessions**
- Preparation for **job seeking**
- **Guidance** about careers
- **Information** about study directions

CHOICES

SKILLS | TIPS

SUPPORT | GUIDE

ADVICE | EMPOWER

Let us help you... Visit Career HUB
Mamelodi Campus | mamelodi.careerhub@up.ac.za

Auntie Covidia and the curious calamities of COVID-19: using drama for science communication

Prof Marié-Heleen Coetzee (School of the Arts: Drama Department)



In May 2021, Drama students participated in a show on the use of appropriate hand sanitisers during the COVID-19 pandemic and addressing the myths about COVID-19 vaccinations at *Moja Gabedi* in Hatfield.

The show is as a result of Drama's partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) One Health programme at university and the Department of Science and Innovation/ National Research Foundation (DSI-NRF) Centre of Excellence in Food Security and UP Partnerships in Progress. Audience members came from Mamelodi, Hatfield and Eersterus, facilitated by Ms Gernia van Niekerk and Dr Eugene Machimana with UP Partnerships in Progress.

The creation of the show follows an article for *The Conversation* about how South Africans are not being protected against fake sanitiser and sanitisers with harmful ingredients by Prof Lise Korsten, Co-Director of the DST-NRF Centre of Excellence in Food Security and Dr Willeke de Bruin.

The show also dealt with how sanitisers are misused, with detrimental effects to people's health. Prof Korsten said that the show "*focuses mainly on the downstream simpler word impact of hand sanitisers on the environment ... and healthcare systems*". At the time of creating the

continued on page 23



Applied drama Honours students Alicia Badenhorst and Marista van Eeden created transmedia extensions, for example social media content. Workshops after the shows, facilitated by Alicia Badenhorst and Prof Coetzee, made use of participatory audience engagement to unpack the content of the show and to confirm important information.

The feedback from audience members was very positive, including that they were *'quite surprised'* with what the show offered and that they *'enjoyed it tremendously'*. For students, the show presented a steep learning curve with regards to targeted theatre-making and audience engagement.

This kind of drama work falls in the domain of applied drama. Applied drama can take many forms, from a show to dramatic presentations in a classroom, to workshop or performance context that are mediated by varying degrees of participation and facilitation for the purposes of education, communication, critical interrogation and intervention. Applied theatre programmes centre on three key processes, namely unpacking the topic under scrutiny, creating room for alternative possibilities and understandings to surface by means of symbolic world-creation, and recontextualising the topic under scrutiny. The interface between these processes emphasise learning, care, reflexivity, harm reduction, and the interweave between topics, participants and contexts.

show, myths and misinformation about the COVID-19 vaccinations were rife. In the interests of public health, the show also included scenes where these myths were debunked.

Over the course of five weeks, students and lecturers created and rehearsed the play. Prof Marié-Heleen Coetzee directed the show, with choreography facilitated by Ms Kristina Johnstone. The student cast (Manqoba Sithole, Teana Chiba, Kirsten Dickenson, Bongwiwe Jiyane and Abulele Peterson) contributed much to generating the performance text as a whole. Ms Nomzamo Maseko from the drama wardrobe designed the costumes that was inspired by streetwear and Sjo Madjozi! The helpful staff at *Moja Gabedi* made students feel at home.

The show centred on letters written to Auntie Agatha Covidia, an agony aunt for a magazine. The letters included problems readers experience with sanitisers and their perceptions about COVID-19 vaccinations, which were then transformed into scenes. The transmedia extensions on Facebook and Instagram allowed audience members to share low-data visual material containing important information that was presented in the show.

The show demonstrated that drama is an effective vehicle for science communion as it does not only centre on information dissemination, but also on imaginative, participatory and dialogical engagement with the information being disseminated.

A recording of the live performance, filmed and edited by Marista van Eeden, was presented on 10 June as part of the UNICEF Future Africa Youth Forum. Available:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IR4BtzmO_O8

Meet the drama student-performers at Moja Gabedi:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/12ohZalEk-oNbkIFdHSILwspRnsOIIpWg/view?usp=sharing>

Know your sanitizer:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/13UFBXeVWUherPpvNHYCM8sR2Wz-2MmJU/view?usp=sharing>

COVID-19 struggle, the challenges and yet progress is made through collaborations

Lori-Kay Erasmus (Director: Pet Community Outreach)



a positive outcome. Drugs for sterilisations were already catered and paid for, yet we could not put sufficient teams together to reach our target of 1000+ sterilisations.

Through Partnership and collaboration, media, word of mouth and the incredible drive to 'Help the Communities in Need', we came out with a solution! Other non-profit organisations (NPOs), Private Veterinarians, Compulsory Community Service (CCS) Veterinarians, Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (GDARD), University of South Africa (UNISA) and other, made contact with PCO and made their venues, Veterinarians or drugs available. We pooled all our resources and strategically planned our next outreaches with what resources we had.

The result of such collaborations yielded approximately 500 sterilisations (if we take into account the outreaches still to be executed to date, mid-September). We are eternally grateful to all who have been instrumental in achieving half of the Mandela Mile Global Outreach, Well Done! It was indeed a national outreach with many organisations participating.

PCO and feral cat associations have also come on board and together we have developed the dry feeding crate with a trap inside for trap, neuter & release (TNR).

We understand that when trapping, feral cats may be exposed to the weather elements, so we put the trap inside the dry feeding crate to keep the Ferals dry, safe and secure. Once Feral babies are trapped, we attempt to tame, rehabilitate and foster them. If the fostering is a success, those feral kittens are adopted and a live normal family life in a secure environment. We assist Feral Cat Associations with sterilisations, vaccinations and where needed to rehome rehabilitated feral kittens.

We hope that you enjoyed learning a little more about PCO, the amazing people that support us and hope that you will join our movement.

We have established an online shop where you can find amazing items made by homeless people, local industries and amazing artisans. Find such on our website www.petcommunityoutreach.co.za We hope to see you at our next outreach soon.

The PCO Team and Collaborating Partners.

Pre-COVID-19, Pet Community Outreach (PCO), the spay team and all its Collaborating Partners and Sponsors had many dreams and aspirations of concluding 1000+ Steris for Mandela Month thereby preventing many unwanted litters and suffering of animals. Unfortunately, we were met with every possible challenge, and we had to go back to the drawing-board and make some difficult choices.

Our Outreaches were planned and in the making of firming up last arrangements when Veterinarians, Para- Veterinarians, sponsors and pet owners were either COVID-19 infected, exposed or very ill and outreaches had to be cancelled or postponed and then running the risk of an increase in the number of unwanted litters. We had to quickly converse with our spay teams and make a decision as to how to go forward and still reach

Community engagement and employability during COVID-19



Dr Eugene Machimana
(Senior Education Consultant:
Community Engagement)



In 2019, the unemployment rate among young people aged 15 to 24 years was at 55,2% (Statistics South Africa, 2020). Graduates constituted 31% in this age group. The South African labour market has been under pressure with the dawn of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). The COVID-19 pandemic compounded existing unemployment challenges in South Africa. In 2020, the number of employed people declined by 2,2 million as a result of job shedding linked to COVID-19 (Statistics South Africa, 2020). The COVID-19 situation seems to have an impact on the ideals of South Africa concerning non-discrimination and equal opportunity in the workspace. This informed the author how community engagement (CE) could be used to address socio-economic challenges that may lead to new employment opportunities.

Community engagement is defined as "...the planned purposeful application of resources and expertise in teaching, learning and research in the University's interaction with the external community to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes in ways that are consistent with the institution's vision and mission" (University of Pretoria, 2013, p. 5). In essence, CE is about partnerships. It is crucial for CE partnerships to be driven by principles that enhance sustainability, which include commitment, equity, capacity-building and respect for existing networks. In light of the goal of global citizenship education for developing global citizens, I argue that it is important for higher education (HE) to move from service-

continued on page 26

learning as charitable undertaking to global citizenship as form of social justice that focuses on community issues and global problems (Bowen, 2013).

Burnett, Hamel and Long (2004, p. 181) refer to this paradigm as moving away from the “missionary ideology” of working “for” the community to working “with” the community. Moreover, the goal of CE within the social justice framework is to develop global citizens who are equipped with knowledge, skills, values and the will to engage with their communities and develop a better world (Oxfam, 2006). As HE engages with communities in a socially just way, all the partners (including community partners) will build the capacity and skills necessary to gain employment in future.

Doyle (2010) suggests that cultural activities are commercially valuable, and they are prominent in socio-economic policy, social inclusion and CE. Furthermore, the cultural work of two youth-led organisations in Canada, namely Beat Nation and the 411 Initiative for Change, supports the notion of linking cultural activities in an effort to address socio-economic challenges (Porfilio & Gorlewski, 2012). It would be a significant positive for South Africa to exploit its diverse cultural heritage through CE to provide gainful employment.

Esther Mahlangu, a world-renowned Ndebele artist, is a good example of many South Africans who use culture for economic benefit (Ndebele BMW art car). I suggest that youths could use cyberspace (4IR) and art in the form of music to challenge the economic depression with which the global community is confronted. This could be done by guiding the youth towards gaining an understanding of the reasons for social inequality as well as learning the significance of working jointly in CE to challenge injustice.

Literature identifies the benefits of CE for students as increased academic performance, self-efficacy, and broadened values and career choices (Falk, 2013). CE partnership has the potential to promote social justice issues that are drawn to the attention of students during their academic careers. I believe that students who participate in CE during their studies are more likely in their adult lives to be involved in community initiatives that may turn into small business enterprises in some instances. I presume that the opposite may nevertheless also be the case as students who are apathetic and disinterested in CE may develop a negative attitude towards community endeavours, and therefore fail to achieve the benefits that they might otherwise have enjoyed.

When university students engage with learners, they serve as agents that facilitate growth by means of offering learners career guidance. Students who are active in CE are advancing the social justice agenda by contributing positively to community development. It is crucial to expose learners to new career opportunities as COVID-19 and/or 4IR now exposed that some careers have become redundant. CE can serve as a platform to introduce all the partners to new careers (career exhibitions).

May I conclude by reiterating that CE has the potential to enhance the prospect of upward career trajectories. The relationships that are established during CE partnerships are invaluable for growth in careers and as global citizens.

References

- Bowen, G. A. (2013). A civic engagement agenda for Caribbean higher education. *Journal of Community Engagement and Higher Education*, 5(1), 74-81.
- Burnett, J. A., Hamel, D., & Long, L. L. (2004). Service learning in graduate counselor education: Developing multicultural counselling Competency. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 32, 180–191.
- Doyle, L. (2010). The role of universities in the “cultural health” of their regions: Universities’ and regions’ understandings of cultural engagement. *European Journal of Education*, 45(3), 466–480.
- Falk, A. F. (2013). Service-learning students’ perceptions of citizenship. *Journal of Community Engagement and Higher Education*, 5(1), 3–12.
- Porfilio, B. J., & Gorlewski, J. A. (2012). Promoting active citizenship through the arts and youth: Canadian youth-led organizations as beacons of hope and transformation. *International Journal of Progressive Education*, 8(3), 48–61.
- Statistics South Africa. (2020). SA economy sheds 2,2 million jobs in Q2 but unemployment levels drop. Retrieved from <http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=13633>
- University of Pretoria. (2011). *Strategic Plan: The vision, mission and plan of the University for 2025*. Retrieved from http://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/Legacy/sitefiles/file/publications/2012/eng/strategic_plan_v11_13feb.pdf

Literacy enhancement project in collaboration with the World Literacy Foundation and Sun Books

Dr Mia le Roux and Dr Salomé Geertsema (Department of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology)



Dr Mia le Roux and Dr Salomé Geertsema, from the Department of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, launched a literacy enhancement project in a primary school in Hammanskraal. This project was facilitated by the technological input of Sun Books, an affiliate of the World Literacy Foundation, both non-profit organisations.

The Gauteng Department of Education is also actively involved in a supportive role. Sun Books seek to merge literacy with technology. Hence, this exciting collaborative endeavor aims to enhance literacy by providing educational resources and recognising that successful literacy skills are essential to the social, economic, and environmental development of global communities.

Many children worldwide are taught in classrooms with no internet and limited access to educational resources. The Sun Books App is preloaded on a solar-powered tablet with an e-library of content available offline and/or through other devices. This innovative technological tool includes literacy enhancement activities based on localised educational resources for children in remote locations.

Sun Books believe that the incorporation of local cultural content, stories, sounds, images, and the active participation of the community they are working in, is the key to educational success. The materials include e-books with age-appropriate stories, phonological awareness skills, phonics, and spelling activities, inter alia. Dr Le Roux and Dr Geertsema undertook this opportunity of community engagement and literacy enhancement as a research project. The project aims to determine if the implementation of the electronic materials and tools will enhance the literacy skills of Grade 4 Setswana first language speakers learning in English. The current project is a pilot study, which suits the difficult circumstances during the lockdown as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Literacy Foundation and Sun Books see the engagement with the school, the Gauteng Department of Education, and the local community as an ongoing project. As such, when schools revert to the normal timetable, the main research study will be conducted.

In May 2021, the two researchers and a team of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology students from the Department of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology visited the school to do hearing screening and assessment of literacy skills - including early literacy skills. The group of students assessed 120 participants as a pre-test procedure. Teachers were trained by Sun Books to use the electronic materials.

The materials will be used with an experimental group of participants to determine whether these materials increase the literacy skills of this group. Post-test assessment is planned for the end of the year. The participating students of the Department of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology benefited from their involvement by gaining practical experience in a resource-limited community.