



Lentsu La Sechaba

THE VOICE OF THE CE COMMUNITY

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Editorial letter: Community engagement partnerships' dynamics during COVID-19



In South Africa, community engagement (CE) represents the concepts of knowledge and power influenced by higher education (HE) at three levels, namely management, academic staff and the community partners. At all three these levels it is

acknowledged in CE partnerships that power and knowledge are interrelated. In this specific power-relation dynamic, the community may feel powerless when interacting with HE given that they have no or limited theoretical background of CE.



Shared voices and views of marginalised communities contribute significantly to the development of pathways. Shared values engender trust and connect community partners, especially during COVID-19, when social support is greatly needed. Edwardh, Burke and Lau (2011) state that engagement with marginalised communities is effective when it develops leadership among citizens and local organisations, provides training, develops relationships, and fosters collaboration. In this context, it is important to understand the present world, together with the community partners who are negatively affected by inequalities and power imbalances. As we know, COVID-19 did not necessarily bring inequalities, but it highlighted the gap between the rich and the poor in society to an even greater degree.



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Insufficient attention to the voices of marginalised communities creates barriers in CE, thus hindering the promotion of social and cognitive justice. Pitso (2014) writes that in HE there is a limited understanding of the third-sector organisations (NPOs – Non-profit organisations), their functions and the kinds of capacity they require. Kaars and Kaars (2014) argue that knowledge limitation applies to both partners (HE and community) in the CE partnership. Such limitations restrict NPOs' contributions to social and economic development of the communities they serve.

Although shared voices and views are crucial, HE can try to create an atmosphere of mutual conversation, but the community feels inadequate due to emotional, mental and verbal restrictions. "A coin has two sides" and "it takes two to tango" are two well-known sayings that illustrate the value of partners in a relationship. It takes both partners to make the relationship work in the interest of developing a just society. Both partners are equally important, as with the two sides of same coin.



As we approach the end of 2020, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to social and cognitive justice as it relates to HE-CE partnership. Students, staff members and community partners contributed in many ways to building mutually beneficial partnerships in the midst of COVID-19. The articles that



were submitted to the newsletter have shown how the University of Pretoria (UP) promoted the distribution of wealth and equitable provision for the marginalised, including the distribution of power. This broadly relates to the benefits of CE-partnership as envisaged by the UP. CE partnerships were furthermore conducted in a way that assisted and also recognised community partners as experts in their own right, in line with the principles of cognitive justice.



Thanks once more to all of you for your invaluable contribution to HE-CE partnership. May you have a wonderful festive season with your family and friends. Remember to adhere to the COVID-19 regulations and guidelines as you enjoy your holiday safely.

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Matters of interest

- Visit the University of Pretoria's online Community Engagement Management System (CEMS) for updates on community project opportunities.
- The Unit for Community Engagement invites you to report on community engagement activities by submitting articles for publication in the next newsletter (Autumn 2021).

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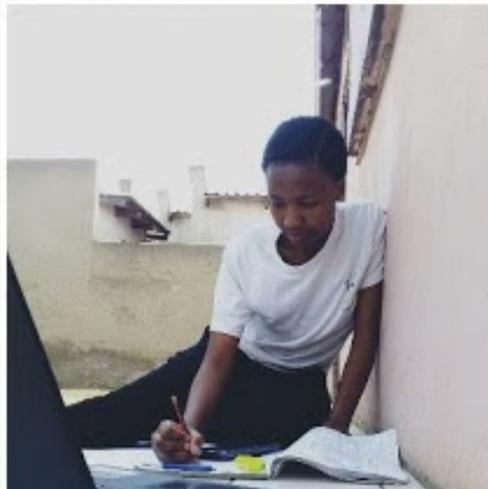
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Keep that Gold Shining (MAP Competition)

Ngwenya Thabang (CEO and Co-Founder of Keep That Gold Shining)

Keep That Gold Shining (KTG), in collaboration with the community-based project module (JCP) of the University of Pretoria tutored Mathematics in the annual KTG Mathematics Accounting and Physical Sciences (MAP) competition project. Grade 10, 11, and 12 learners were tutored by 43 JCP students and the majority of learners came from Soshanguve (eMakhosini Combined Secondary School), Winterveldt (Tswaing Secondary School), and Hammanskraal (Makgetsi Secondary School). At most 100 learners were involved in this year's program. The primary objective of this program was not for the learners to compete with each other but to get motivation from the concept of competition.

Due to the pandemic, the MAP competition was held online. As a result, the program was not only limited to tutoring mathematics. The JCP tutors went the extra mile to assist the learners with other subjects and also help Grade 12 learners with university applications. The JCP tutors conducted virtual sessions using Google Meet and Zoom; however, WhatsApp was used as the primary form of communication between learners and their tutors. The scope that was covered for mathematics was algebra, functions, analytical geometry, trigonometry, and number patterns.



Faheem Ghafoor and Sumaiya Ismail (BCom Informatics), Masilo Mashela, Victor Motau and Dasrey Mothibi (BEng - Mechanical Engineering ENGAGE)

The project was split into three phases (July, August and September); Phase A, Phase B and Phase C. During the initial and second phases (Phase A and B), tutors spend enormous time presenting the sessions and giving assessments to evaluate learners' progress. One of exciting the assignments that Tutors facilitated was BOATS (a programming game), and learners were exposed to some programming skills through this assignment.

Throughout the programme, one of the challenges that tutors had to deal with was the participation of learners which was poor in the last phase. This was mainly because the learners had to cope with both schoolwork and the programme's work. Despite all that, the tutors managed to grasp the problems that learners faced and helped them cope.



Christmas Market and COVID-19

Elmien Claassens (Social Work Lecturer [Practice])

What is the link between a Christmas market and the COVID-19 pandemic?



Two fourth-year social work students made that link after returning to their placements after the extended lockdown this year. The fourth-year social work students only returned to their placements in October 2020, to work a full four-day week in the communities for six weeks. Pumelela Dano and Chandre Burger, placed at Lynnwoodrif Church in Lynnwood Ridge Pretoria, returned to their placement and were immediately faced with the economic impact of the pandemic on the local congregation as well as the direct community around the church. Some community members were unable to sell their hand-made products at local markets, due to the closing of these markets during the lockdown. In most instances, this was the only income for a household. The church also has a labour centre, reaching out to unemployed community members, and these members were also directly impacted by the pandemic. Many of them also have hand-made items they made during the pandemic.

As part of the fourth-year social work programme, students are required to host a community work project in their different communities. The two students, together with their placement supervisor, had this solution as a response to the economic impact of COVID-19 and the idea of a Christmas Market was born. The market was an opportunity to create a platform where the

community members were able to sell their hand-made items to the public.

In less than five weeks, this team comprising church staff, the two University of Pretoria (UP) students and some volunteers, organised a Christmas Market. Tasks including marketing to the local communities, screening the different stall owners, networking with other local markets and every administrative detail rested on the shoulders of the two UP students. Weeks and days were filled with meetings, phone calls, hundreds of emails. Finally, 20 November arrived.

The afternoon and evening market was planned as an outdoor event, but the afternoon was met with the usual Pretoria November afternoon thundershowers. Last-minute changes were made, and the market was moved inside the church premises, and like the rain outside, people supporting the market just came flooding in.

All in all, the market was a great success, and people were able to sell their hand-made items to the public. Not even the rain was stopping people from coming to the market. The 'Oppi Rif Family Christmas Evening Market' will probably become an annual event in the organisation. Hopefully, our UP students can annually play their part in this fantastic opportunity to serve the community of Lynnwood ridge. Who would have thought that social work students can utilise a Christmas market as an economic empowerment tool as part of a post-COVID-19 response during the pandemic?



School Health Services go online during level 3 lockdown

Khensane Mengwai (Second-year clinical lecturer) and Melitah Rasweswe (Clinical coordinator)

The curriculum of the Department of Nursing Science requires second years to offer community health services at schools. The plan for this year was to visit five different schools in the first semester. Students were divided into five groups, and each group was assigned to a school to offer the services. The first visit for all the groups took place in March before national lockdown. During the first visit, the students assessed the health status of the Grade R's to identify health needs and referred them to the relevant health care providers. The most prevalent health need identified during this visit was tooth decay.

The second visit was planned for April and a third visit for May. The second visit was to follow up on the referrals and to conduct a school situational analysis, interviewing Grade 6s and Grade 7s to identify challenges that learners were experiencing at schools. From the difficulties identified, our students learn to prioritise and compile solutions that were communicated to the learners in the third visit.

However, with a sudden closure of schools to curb the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), all plans were cancelled during levels 5 and 4 of national lockdown. The nationwide lockdown was downgraded to level 3 in July, when Grade 7s resumed their studies at school. Due to lockdown restrictions such as social distancing, our students were not able to physically conduct situational analyses at schools.

The lockdown situation made the second-year clinical lecturer and clinical coordinator think about school health services in fresh ways. In consultation with our students, the support of the Unit for Community Engagement and a lesson learned from Community-Based Project Module (Code: JCP) students, a situational analysis was conducted online. The students became innovative and creative, videos, posters, pamphlets and flyers were created and presented to schools. The group is planning to physically present their work to Grade 7's when lockdown is completely lifted. Students from the Nursing Department are also planning to collaborate with JCP students in future.

Health education and safety precautions for the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Social distancing:** when communicating with your friend keep your distance of 1.5m and both of you need to wear masks to limit your exposure to Covid-19 incase one of you might have it.
- Wash your hands often, washing your hands is more effective than using a hand sanitizer.
- Isolate yourself if you suspect you have contracted Covid-19.
- If you feel sick, inform your teacher.
- Lie down on your desk to rest.
- Stay at home if you feel sick.
- Stay away from anyone who is coughing.





Psychological services in a Global South context during the COVID-19 pandemic

Donné Barnard (Educational Psychologist: Pretoria Boys High School [PBHS] and Centre for the Study of Resilience [CSR])

In modern times globalisation has had a noticeable impact on the provision of healthcare and related services, including various psychological services. With this in mind, and given the current Covid-19 pandemic, one cannot disregard the effect it has had within a vulnerable healthcare system, specifically the availability of appropriate postmodern psychological and other health support services in South Africa.

During times of crisis, access to, and the sharing of strategic psychological knowledge and resources within a globalised environment should undoubtedly be emphasised. Although globalisation might be a well-known concept in developed nations, it has been slow to reach specific rural communities around the world due to the excessive influence and power the West holds over developing countries. This being one of the main concerns related to post-colonial theory. During my research, I found that global trends have thus far had an undeniable and definite effect on the general development of individuals who reside in underdeveloped contexts across the globe. The prolonged consumption of resources in developing nations, without providing adequate infrastructure and sustainable long-term education and growth plans, has undeniably harmed these underdeveloped communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also made it clear that there exists an unequal distribution of specialist services around the world to counter its effects. Unfortunately, individuals who reside in high-risk contexts seemed isolated in terms of access to healthcare support, basic psychological support

and other essential resources. Despite these inequalities, the pandemic has seemingly increased awareness of the gaping structural discrepancies, which has expedited and motivated change in several sectors.

Considerable criticism of globalisation alludes to the fact that colonialism and the effects thereof have not yet come to an end. Many countries around the world are still experiencing the severe effects of colonialism. The accepted approach amongst former colonialist countries has traditionally been to merely to denounce the concept, its effects, the architects thereof and to offer monetary compensation as restitution for their nations' failures. One of the resultant outcomes is that Western interpretations and perceptions of colonialism are reinforced instead of challenged, which has and could further lead to a gross misrepresentation of the realities of non-Western groups.

The regrettable aftermath in a post-colonialist, pandemic-stricken context is that the gap between developing and developed countries has increased significantly. This is mainly attributable to globalisation, which has placed a focus on inequality and revealed the existing structural disparity. A global re-evaluation of health and psychological practices in the African context is therefore long overdue.

The rate of globalisation encourages psychology and related health systems to keep up with the pace of development, although psychology is still seen as decontextualised. One would consequently hope to facilitate a more relevant and solution-focused discussion on available psychological support services, seeing as the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to an even greater need for relevant, equal and accessible support services in the Global South.

HCSSE Career Reach Report: Tembisa West Secondary School

Mr Leepile Mothloalwa (HCSSE Coordinator), LJ van Zyl (Sports Practical Coordinator) and Zama Buthelezi (Teaching Assistant)

approach—to not give up at any point in their journey towards their future and to wish them the best of luck. As many matrics often worry that their

were several speakers—our very own students among them—emphasising the large variety of career options available to matrics and the courses that could be taken.



The incorporation of sport into an event such as this is very affirming of the pivotal role sport plays in the development of communities through our youth. Sport brings people together, and we can attest to this because our involvement in the Department of Sports Science brought us together for the first time since the national lockdown started. Sport also allows for everyone to participate, whether as a team member or a spectator because it is both fun and challenging while being extremely educational, teaching learners how to work together and support one another. Skills learned in a sport overlap with the skills needed in life, and this is why it is so important. Young people are important across the

On Tuesday, 3 November 2020, a couple of University of Pretoria lecturers and students from the Higher Certificate in Sports Science Education Programme accepted the invitation to attend a career expo and sports day at the Tembisa West Secondary School. As we all know, 2020 has challenged us to be very adaptive in getting our work done. Hence, a few of the Higher Certificate in Sports Science Education (HCSSE) students organised their roles in this event to make up for the practical hours missed during the national lockdown.



The day started with a prayer for the upcoming exams, which was then followed by the career expo, and ended off with soccer and netball matches between the learners, teachers, and some of the HCSSE students. The Mtanmo Organisation hosted this event to motivate and encourage Matric students—as their final exams

future is over when their results are not quite what they expect, this event was committed to pushing students to give their best while embracing the fact that a destiny delayed is not a destiny denied. In alignment with this, there

globe, and they must stay enlightened and empowered. Events such as the Career Reach serve to keep the youth aware of the infinite potential that only they can unlock.

Location, Location, Location —Lory Park Zoo is for You!

A Community Engagement Venue

Faces, places and things to do

Robynn Moller (Lory Park Zoo, Midrand, South Africa)

Need a location to do your community engagement project or activity?



Lory Park Zoo is for you. Central and accessible and year-round, Lory Park Zoo in Midrand has it all.

Lory Park Zoo has for many years strived to offer opportunities for students to gain first-hand experience: Vet, vet nurse, engineer, horticulture, landscape, art, drama, theatre, education students and more. Lory Park Zoo can offer a custom experience or offer projects based on our and your needs.

Community engagement is a great way to be exposed and to test your theoretical knowledge in a practical way, such as creating and implementing environmental enrichment to exhibit upgrading and daily husbandry, to veterinary care (preventative medicine, hands-on vet experiences etc). Education a must can through visitor experience to generated via theatrical experiences and stage/plays. Artwork through murals and posters to much more can be achieved. We invite you to practise your skills here at Lory Park Zoo.

Engage with our animals (lions, tigers, puma, cockatoos, snakes, serval, caracal, monitors, lemurs, gibbons, meerkats, owls, vultures, ground hornbills, ibis, flamingos and more) for real hands-on experience.

There are loads to do at Lory Park Zoo. If you are interested, contact Robynn Moller through info@lorypark.co.za for more information and guidance, or visit us directly at 181 Kruger Rd, President Park, Midrand.

The Community Park—Phase 2: Serving the Hatfield District

Paul Ssali (Joint Community-Based Project [JCP] Project Manager)

Community-based learning is a form of experiential learning, which aims to accomplish tasks that meet genuine human needs as well as executing tasks that serve as an educational and learning tool to help students acquire essential life skills. Since 2005, the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology (EBIT) at the University of Pretoria has implemented a new compulsory module, the Joint Community-Based Project (JCP), for all undergraduates. Since its inception, the numbers of students taking the module has grown dramatically, and the impact the module has on communities is immeasurable. This year was no different.

In 2019, JCP students led by Altus Bischoff began work on the neglected park located opposite the entrance to the Sport, Exercise Medicine and Lifestyle Institute (SEMLI) at the Hillcrest Campus. A total of nine groups, a total of 45 students, signed up for The Community Park—Phase 1, and completed various projects that included constructing and paving the entire walkway of the park with sensory walkway elements, repainting the perimeter fence, building and installing additional play equipment and renovating the existing play equipment.



In 2020, Phase Two of the project led by UP Alumni Paul Ssali began. A total of 14 groups signed up for the project. Despite the hurdles that COVID-19 placed in the way of the successful completion of the projects, twelve of the groups managed to complete their projects. The projects included the construction of an outdoor gym, installation of play equipment for the kids, refurbishment of the sensory walkway and a sandbox under the steel dome constructed in the previous round.

The project ran from February 2020 till early November 2020, with groups working throughout the lockdown on planning and designs, and the bulk of the construction work happening when the lockdown was downgraded to level 1. Not long after the gym equipment was erected, several locals expressed deep gratitude for the new gym equipment. They were delighted with the quality of work delivered by the students.

The project will continue in the future, and new features will be added to upgrade the park even further. The JCP students are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to have a lasting impact on the Hatfield district.

LinkedIn profile considerations for graduates

Marile Roos (Senior Employability Consultant: Career Services Office)

LinkedIn is a social networking platform for business professionals, with over 600 million users. It is, therefore, advisable that students register and make use of LinkedIn to find jobs. Here are some LinkedIn profile considerations for students and graduates:

Photo

Providing a photo, head and shoulders up, with a clean background, will increase your chances of being searched by prospective recruiters.

LinkedIn headline

The best formula to write a graduate headline is what you are currently doing, followed by what you aspire to do. For example 'Marketing graduate seeking position in marketing'.



Marile Roos (Senior Employability Consultant: Career Services Office)

LinkedIn URL

Personalise your URL to your name and surname. To follow the steps to personalise your URL in LinkedIn, Google 'How to personalise your LinkedIn URL'.

LinkedIn summary

This section can be regarded as the old cover letter. Some tips for writing a summary are:

- Describe what you are currently doing.
- Describe what you are passionate about. For example: - Completed my degree in marketing, passionate about thinking out of the box and coming up with creative ideas'.
- Add information on any work experiences you might have and mention accomplishments.
- Also add a call for action, for example: 'Currently seeking employment in the Information Technology field'.
- Do not write more than three paragraphs with three to four sentences per paragraph
- Use keywords from industry to allow recruiters to find you more easily

Work experience

Add work experience, regardless if it was part-time, voluntary or vacation jobs

Skills

It is recommended that you add at least five skills. Make sure they are skills that you actually possess and that they are relevant to your education and past work experiences.

Endorsements

Do not be shy to ask for endorsements from former lecturers or employers.

Networking

LinkedIn provides a unique opportunity to network. Request to network with your former classmates, friends and family

Alumni network

The Alumni network provides you with an opportunity to engage with former Alumni from your education institution. Former Alumni can be an excellent resource to connect you with potential future employers. For example, you could request an informational interview and not just directly ask for a job.

A teacher training opportunity exposed during the lockdown period: Community of practice

Dr Nkhensani Susan Thuketana (Lecturer: Department of Early Childhood Education)

The lockdown period in South Africa exposed many challenges and opportunities, particularly for community engagement initiatives. The subsequent closing of schools and higher education institutions by President Cyril Ramaphosa and the COVID-19 command council affected the planned community activities for the 2020 academic year. Social distancing, the wearing of masks, and the ban on interprovincial travel, were included in the protocols to combat the coronavirus's spread. The resultant effect was that most activities in the country and teaching in schools came to a standstill.



Although the lockdown initiative exposed many teaching and learning challenges, it also created introspection opportunities, particularly in the rural special needs area. All the schools sent children home, including Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) users, to comply with the coronavirus protocols. AAC is an educational

approach used to augment speech and provide alternative communication strategies for children with little or no functional speech. The method aims, among other things, to enhance curriculum access and promote children's social integration. However, the social, strategic, and operational competencies are inherent attributes expected for the children to learn, develop, and progress with other children without disabilities.

During the lockdown, teachers used technology to support children accessing the general curriculum from home. However, most teachers did not have the skills to use AAC devices to teach the learners in need, despite all schools closing. Additionally, the poor infrastructure, poverty, and varied parents' literacy levels contributed to the loss of learning for these children.

Following the easing of lockdown regulations in the country, Dr Nkhensani Susan Thuketana, a learning support lecturer with research interests in inclusive education, child development, and learning disabilities, collaborated and seized professional development skills transfer opportunity with sixty multi professionals in rural Limpopo province. She taught the professionals comprising teachers, coordinators of the District Based Support Teams (DBST), nurses, and occupational therapists, a coordinated approach for providing children with AAC devices and the skill required to support their teaching and learning. At the end of the training that Dr Nkhensani Susan Thuketana conducted, the professionals formed communities of practice to support the continuous outsourcing of AAC tools and provide care for the children.



The 'seen' and 'unseen' from the Lemba Arts and Culture Heritage Foundation

Dr Raita Steyn (Art Education Lecturer)

In collaboration with the School of the Arts (Prof Lize Kriel), the Department of Humanities Education (Dr Raita Steyn and Ms Deléne Human), presented an international, inter-departmental online virtual colloquium from 29 to 31 October 2020. The colloquium focused on cultural visual representations of the 'seen' and 'unseen' from Africa, related to 'Angels, Ancestors, Alchemy and the Arts of Africa'.



Amongst the presenters, was Prof Magdel le Roux from the University of South Africa (UNISA), who introduced to the online participants, the Lemba of Limpopo (Venda) and Zimbabwe. She started by analysing the angel-stars and the Venda-Lemba epic tradition, *Ngoma Lungundu*. According to Prof le Roux, the Lemba maintain some beliefs and practices similar to those of the Jewish community: 'the Lemba have a rite of sacrifice called the *Pesah* which is similar to the Jewish *Pesach*. These religious beliefs and practices are believed to be transmitted by oral tradition'. Afterwards, Ms Tanya Mungulwa from the Lemba Arts and Culture Heritage Foundation, spoke briefly about her father, Mr Ishe Musandiwa Johannes Mungulwa Hadji (1928–2018) who was, for a long time, the president of the Lemba Cultural Association of South Africa. Subsequently, Ms Mungulwa guided the viewers through a virtual mini-exhibition, showcasing some most fascinating hand-made art objects created by economically disadvantaged women from the Lemba Arts and Culture Heritage Foundation. These artworks included Venda and Lemba pottery, dolls, pillows and assorted linen, standards by high levels of technical and visual artistry.



Some of the participants in the Angels, Ancestors, Alchemy and the Arts of Africa Colloquium



Lemba doll (left) and Venda/Lemba pots (right) created by ladies of the Lemba Arts and Culture Heritage Foundation

Eersterust moving forward: Love circle senior citizens club

Josina Tellie (Love Circle Senior Citizens Club)

The last few months have been getting better for the community of Eersterust. Most of the community members are back at work, although some work from home. Many people do not fully enjoy working from home because they feel uncertain if their jobs are safe for 2021. The community realises the seriousness of COVID-19, but they still throw caution to the wind by hardly wearing masks.

Our Love Circle Group is in a recess due to deaths in a family and one of the families who have all tested positive for COVID-19. They will only return to the club in 2021 but will attend the club's closing lunch on 27 November 2020. Life at the Mokukus (Shacks) is still the same with a difference that the Social workers, Victim Empowerment Centre (VEC), Social Crime prevention and gender-based violence (GBV) awareness campaigns have been relatively busy in the area which is of great help and everything seems quiet for now.



The station commander is trying his utmost to curb crime, and crime statistics are low. While GBV has been growing, victims are starting to speak up. The first Gender-Based Violence organisation, Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against All People (EFVAP), has been registered. EFVAP is doing well, still operating from my home. The organisation has partnered with the Victim Empowerment Centre, the South African Police Service (SAPS) Crime Prevention Unit and a private nursing sister, who volunteers her service. They started a GBV Support group for victims and survivors. We have clients that we refer to SAPS and the VEC to get them to a home of safety, and this will be launched on the 22 November 2020. Our challenge is that we still need an office to work from.



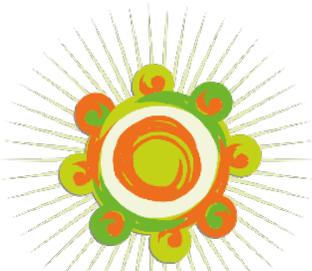
The community destroyed the post office because they did not get their R350 from the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) and the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF). Now everyone has to suffer because of the damage done. The community youth formed a party called the Patriotic Alliance, and they are recruiting members. The GOOD party is also very active, as are the ANC and DA.

The Eersterust Community Police Forum partnered with the Voice in Action and EFVAP to introduce programmes at the schools, by engaging 50 learners per school to assist with challenges for 2021. The programme is aimed at creating jobs and opportunities. A ray of light is that I received the Tshwane Woman in Sports award on Friday, 13 November 2020 in recognition of being a winner in the Sports Confederation President's Award. Five ladies in total received the award. What a way to end the year!

Light for the people in dark times

Mary Lant (Lesedi la Batho: Marketing & International Fundraising Manager)

Lesedi la Batho community centre, meaning 'light for the people', continues to make a difference to our community during this time of dire need, with the help of proactive partnerships.



Lesedi la Batho

LIGHT FOR THE PEOPLE

Saving water, saving lives!

Along with some exceptional partners, we got to be a part of the exciting Annual Water Stewardship Event this year, distributing 200 packs promoting good water stewardship for primary school learners on Friday, 13 November 2020. Each learner was screened for COVID-19 and given information on how to stay safe, as well as a school bag containing a face mask, 2 litre of hand sanitiser, snacks, a water-saving dispenser, soap and a beautiful, just-released children's book. *Gogo Makes Every Drop Count* by Mmaphefo Thwala is a culturally relevant book in local languages, teaching children about sustainable living, water and environmental conservation. Each bag and face mask were hand-made by the lovely ladies of our fair-trade project, Kago-Entle who specialise in locally made corporate gifting.

By educating the youth on today's issues, we can change the way our community perceives the precious resource of water and live in a way that is healthy for both them and their environment. A HUGE thanks to the donors and sponsors who made this special event possible for our community: Strategic Water Partners Network (SWPN), Department of Water and Sanitation South Africa (DWS), Embassy of Denmark in South Africa/The Royal Danish Embassy, National Business Initiative (NBI), German International Cooperation (GIZ) through the Natural Resources Stewardship Programme (NatuReS), and Nestlé. Watch the video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXPFUWQZcpY&feature=youtu.be>



16 Days of ACTIVE-ism

Our new women empowerment program, IKEMELE (meaning 'to rise up') uplifts and supports women who have survived abuse to become economically empowered through counselling, skills training and practical help. We invite individuals and companies to sponsor women through this life-changing three-month program or to contribute towards one woman's sponsorship with smaller amounts.

To raise awareness and support for this work, we are hosting a FREE, LIVE online fitness event series during 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Inspiring female fitness instructors from around the world are hosting a variety of fitness classes through MS Teams. All classes are free to join with the option to make a donation to the Ikemele program.

We hope to end this long, challenging year on a high note, getting different people from around the globe together for one common cause—to save our women from the hands of violence and see them rise up. Please help us spread the word and join us!

See the full schedule and sign up here (we will email you a link to the MS Teams meet): <http://www.lesedilabatho.co.za/16daysofactivism.html>

Find out more about the Ikemele program here: <http://www.lesedilabatho.co.za/womenempowerment.html>



Staying in touch

Dr Carin Combrinck (Senior Lecturer: Coordinator Honours and Urban Citizenship, Department of Architecture)

We were in the middle of the final crits of quarter one when we were instructed to vacate the building. In the Department of Architecture at the University of Pretoria, and at the honours level, this constitutes a fairly severe crisis. Our students prepare for an oral presentation and critical evaluation of their creative work, an age-old and global tradition of the pedagogical model in our profession. We all scrambled to find ways for them to present their work digitally, unsure of how to use the digital platforms that had been around for the last decade or so, but which were intermittently and haphazardly used by the more adventurous among us.



The staff teaching in the honours programme made a solemn promise to the students that they would not let the ball drop, that we would make a plan to get them through the year. We had all managed to pull through the academic programmes in 2016, we had survived two significant moves during our building's renovation, and we would overcome this little obstacle too. The tight knot at the pit of my stomach was not to be shared just yet... I knew that my studio was fully committed to community engagement, in urban areas that even under normal circumstances, prove challenging in terms of communication, accessibility and relationship-building. I had absolutely no idea how we were going to manage this one.

Then the little obstacle became a full-blown global pandemic with lockdown restrictions leading to post-apocalyptic scenes that had us all aghast and enthralled at the same time. Where were the people? How were we going to stay in touch? What did this all mean to a spatial discipline that is all about public life?

Perhaps because my students and I have been engaging with a variety of communities over the last ten years, the reality of crisis management has always been part of our vocabulary. Having to adjust to the circumstances in the blink of an eye, whether it is because no-one shows up at a meeting, or because too many people are there, or there is no water, or no electricity for the



political rally interrupting a workshop halfway through... any one or several of these factors at once contribute to the conditions that underpin community engagement work. So it was eventually no surprise when, after chatting to several of our community partners using WhatsApp, phone calls, 'please-call-me' messages and so on, that it dawned on us that we simply needed to shift gear in the way that our resourceful and creative students and partners would be able to find ways to stay in touch.

When the university started again in quarter two, our students set about investigating, exploring and analysing all the digital platforms that people were using, were comfortable with, could afford and would be able to commit to for the next seven weeks. From these findings, they were then able to successfully communicate with an even wider range of stakeholders related to two different geographic areas (Mamelodi East and Plastic View informal settlement in Moreleta Park) to undertake an intensive and highly sophisticated co-design process. In architectural terms, this is a complex and immensely challenging process, even under favourable conditions. Our students were able to engage with the discourse at a globally relevant level, while simultaneously communicating, almost daily, with a stakeholder spectrum ranging from people living in the informal settlements to high-level institutional decision-makers, all participating with real commitment, interest and enthusiasm. The results of these processes were professionally documented and shared with the partnering stakeholders, where key ideas were assimilated into strategic planning and further research. Assessment of the studio outcomes could be undertaken by an international panel, who were now all available as a result of the digital interface. At the height of the pandemic, valuable information gathered by our students could be used in support of food drives undertaken by local non-profit organisations (NPOs) in support of Plastic View residents.

I stand back in humble appreciation and admiration for the creative energy and commitment that was evident not only in our student body but also all our community partners. There have been such important lessons to take away from this extraordinary year, the greatest of which has been to value the importance of continuing our commitment to a scholarship of engagement, no matter the obstacles we face. Staying in touch with our society, with the communities we serve, therefore continues to anchor our academic and moral purpose.

The Empty Space: Performance in/and the Pandemic



Prof Mariè-Helene Coetzee (School of the Arts: Drama Department)

The performing arts, entertainment and live events sectors have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. The nature of the industry requires shared spaces, close contact, and gatherings of groups of people. With lockdown regulations across the globe, theatres and entertainment venues were closed. UNESCO called the situation a 'cultural emergency' on a global scale.

In South Africa, theatres were closed under levels 5 and 4 of the lockdown. Theatres, quite literally, were empty spaces. The lockdown regulations meant that the jobs many producers, directors, choreographers, musicians, performing artists, stage crew and technicians had lined up into the second half of 2020, in effect disappeared. Arts and music festivals were cancelled, postponed or moved to limited online content presentation. The audio-visual and interactive media domain (including TV, film and radio), due

Image: *Little Red Riding Hood and the Big Bad Metaphors*—set Photographer, set designer and lighting designer: Wilhelm Disbergen

to a combination of pre-and postproduction processes that do not require contact, the possibilities of technology and essential service recognition, stumbled on. Amendments followed as lockdown regulations eased. Modifications to allow theatres to operate as studios for recording or live-streaming productions with small casts were gazetted in May. The audiovisual and interactive media domain could resume more or less normal operations within specified parameters. It is here that the Government-subsidised South African State Theatre made a local impact in setting up content suitable for online consumption and continuing to employ artists. Recordings of past theatre shows were made available with financial benefit to artists, and new recordings of solo artists and discussions with artists were made. Some of the content was ticketed, and some not.

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During level 3 of the lockdown, theatres could partially operate again, but with limited capacity and with COVID-19 protocols for operations in place. Several non-subsidised theatres remain closed under level 1 as the financial costs of complying with these regulations are not attainable. Some closed their doors for good. All of this comes with retrenchments and job reductions. The problem not only affects people directly involved in the operations of the theatre and productions, but it also affects those working in areas that provide services to the theatres, such as food and beverage, specialised equipment, and cleaning and printing, to name but a few.

A preliminary study conducted by the South African Cultural Observatory (SACO) for the period of 30 March to 4 May, demonstrates the severe impact of Lockdown level 5 on the creative industries in South Africa and illustrates how it affected our economy. The long and short of the report is that creative industries impact on our economy in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), more significantly than what Government's seemingly lack-lustre engagement with relief for the creative industries would imply. This, of course, excludes the significant socio-cultural benefits of the creative industries.

Relief for those working in the arts sector in South Africa is problematic, due to the nature of employment in the industry, qualifiers for UIF and relief funding, and how Government's artist relief fund is deployed. Due to the seemingly haphazard and ineffective distribution of artist relief funding, non-profit organisations (NPOs) and volunteers stepped in to assist artists in varied ways, from offering help with completing applications for relief funding to establishing lobbying and fund-raising platforms. The longstanding Theatre Benevolent Fund, set up primarily to assist artists and their families post-retirement or in times of financial distress, created a new arm with its own COVID-19 relief funds. But one organisation can only do so much at once for the whole sector.

In an attempt to draw the Government's attention to the plight of the sector, several campaigns and foundations were launched. Amongst them are the #LighSARed campaign, and the STAND Foundation. The #LighSARed campaign (following in the footsteps of the international campaigns) launched on 5 August. The South African campaign focuses on mobilising Government and financial institutions to extend financial relief to the sector until the sector is allowed to be fully operational again. Further, that Government recognises and support the NPOs that give financial assistance to the industry. This is also a fund-raising platform. #LighSARed also sent out an online survey to establish the impact of lockdown on the sector from March to August 2020. At the time of writing, the data from the survey was being processed.

The Sustaining Theatre and Dance Foundation (STAND), steered by heavy-weights in the arts, launched in September 2020 and aims at providing support to South Africa's dance and theatre 'ecosystems'. At the time of writing, the foundation was preparing for its own survey of the sector, including engagement with the artist relief fund.

Significant investment in the arts from the private sector is laudable, as is the ability of artists to work across industries and innovate in the face of online expansion. However, a long-term national strategy and the political will to secure livelihoods and the health of the performing arts, entertainment and live events sectors are necessary for visioning the future post-COVID-19. Were it not artists and entertainers who lit up our TV and computer screens through the seemingly unending days and nights of level 5 of the lockdown? Were it not artists who transformed the empty space of a TV screen, a computer screen—or a theatre—to a space filled with possibility?

Notes:

1. Different iterations of this article were published in the *Daily Maverick* (7 August 2020) and *The Theatre Times Magazine* (16 August 2020).
2. *The empty space* (1968). The opening of the book states: 'I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged.'

Reliable house is a brand on its own

Emanuel Maringa (Manager: Reliable House)

Reliable House was established upon the realisation that society continues to ignore the fact that men need help. If men keep on becoming a social problem and threat to humanity, then the focus should be on them. Reliable House started by focusing on reducing the harm that is caused by drugs, alcohol and homelessness with the aim of moral regeneration. Our mindset at Reliable House is that change starts within by building self-esteem and giving hope without paying a cent. We offer transitional housing ranging from a period of three to six months before a person can be integrated back into his family. Since Reliable House was established in 2016, more than 200 men integrated back to society through the help of social therapy, health care, psychological therapy and occupational therapy.



On the 29 September 2020 Reliable House hosted the Gauteng province roadshow for social development of homeless people, drug addicts and alcoholics that are affected by COVID-19 in the Tshwane region. The *Member of the Executive Council (MEC)* for social development was impressed with the work that was done in the Tshwane region, and she liked the housing layout structure of Reliable House. She confirmed that she was going to duplicate our layout through other regions in Gauteng. As we speak, she has mandated the Department of Social Development to offer training as part of a change-makers exit plan. The Tshwane social development has already introduced a hair and beauty course for ten weeks to twenty Reliable House residents. During the roadshow at Reliable House for drug addicts, alcoholics and homeless people, many organisations like the South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA), *Community Oriented Substance Use Program (COSUP)*, Thandanani Drop Inn Centre, Alcoholics Anonymous, Nicotine Anonymous, the Tshwane Leadership Foundation and PEN found time to engage regarding their services.



Reliable House managed to take two of their change-makers to SANCA Pretoria for rehabilitation. The two gentlemen, Mr Mthobisi Sibisi and Mr William Seloane, graduated from SANCA free from drugs after 30 days. Reliable House has a partnership with nine different faculties at the University of Pretoria, and many students do their community engagement module as required as per their curriculum at the house, which is within walking distance from the Hatfield campus. Students apply their knowledge and skills for free and make a considerable difference to minimise the cost to our centre.

We are delighted at Reliable House for receiving agricultural science (gardening) training so that we can plant to eat in our centre. Thanks to Prof Michael van der Laan and his team for providing such knowledge and skills for the planting process, irrigation system, compost and soil with dos and don'ts in planting so that change-makers can take the skill home once graduated to society. Next year we plan to ensure that Moja-Gabedi and Reliable House become a brand of recognition and brand awareness organisations.



Visual art education students are making history: First online visual art education art exhibition in the faculty of education

Deléne Human (History of Art, Art Practical and Art Methodologies Lecturer)

On 10 November 2020 the Visual Art Education Department of Humanities Education launched the first online art exhibition in its history. The opening attracted around three times the number of people attending this event in the past. After only one week, the online exhibition has reached close to 5000 engagements. Opening speeches by the Dean, Prof Chika Sehoole, the Head of Department, Prof Johan Wassermann, the lecturer, Ms Deléne Human, and the class representative, Ms Amoré Naudé, were presented. The third-year art education students, whose works were on display, hosted two days of live panel discussions, during which time the viewers and community were able to engage with the artists directly.



The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our lives and consequently, how we do things. New ways of teaching and learning had to be considered, and online learning became the norm. In the Visual Art Education Practical Module (JKU 301) this challenge was embraced by integrating online platforms, not only into how art was created but also how it was displayed and used to reach large audiences. The pandemic allowed our students to engage with the community in ways they were not able to before. The community was eager to embrace this opportunity and with hundreds of comments, likes and shares the Humanities Education Art Education students were able to share their messages and concerns.

In addition to many personal challenges, students faced a year of uncertainty. However, many new skills and attributes were gained, and students took on the task to present viewers with current

socio-cultural, political and religious challenges. As these Education students embark on a journey of Teaching Practicals next year, these skills and attributes are reinvested in the community.

Students were asked to keep a lockdown diary, which was the point of departure for their year project. They had to create a body of work in which they critically and creatively identified a challenge or issue present in their real-life context. Through introspective discovery, students grounded their work in a contemporary South African (and in many cases global) situation and developed their own artistic voices.

The themes selected ranged from situations surrounding their identities, such as body image or shame, mental health-related challenges such as anxiety and depression, challenges faced during the lockdown, such as access to hygiene or smuggling of commodities, such as cigarettes or alcohol, often resulting in corruption, religious debates, socio-cultural politics, targeted sexual and gender-based violence and abuse, to parking and safety challenges experienced by students. However, all works created also carried messages of hope and encouragement.

In the past few months, the world has experienced something like never before. To some extent, the world pandemic seems incomprehensible or indescribable. We are still coming to terms with what is actually going on and what the actual effect of this might be on teachers, learners and our society. These uncertainties have stirred many emotions within not only the art community but all of us. Through it all, however, we see how Art, the visual, is used as a way of communication to educate and unite the public. In an attempt to deal with many of the socio-cultural realities, our students have created works that are a response to their understanding of their surroundings.

The students share their experiences and messages as follows: As a third-year art student, one is expected to deliver a body of work at a gallery as an end of year exhibition. As this one-of-a-kind year progressed, it became clear to the class that a physical gallery exhibition would not be in the best interest of those attending during this pandemic, which forced us to come up with alternative forms of hosting an exhibition. After testing various platforms, we decided to use Facebook, as the internet is used to shorten the distance between people. The page *Art Education UP* was used as a stage to engage with the community, aiming to get everyone excited to attend the online exhibition and hopefully share it amongst

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their friends and family. We made use of many engaging visuals on the page including the flyers for all three days of the exhibition, countdown days that dedicated a day to each artist through the use of movie pictures and videos, as well as uploading all the works of each artist under their designated file. These visuals all consisted of the exhibition in which the audience could participate with, comment on or 'like'. This interaction was monitored by the artists who would reply and engage with the comments left on the works. Lastly, the two final days of the exhibition were allocated for interactive sessions with the artists, where fellow Facebook users could attend the event and ask the various artists questions in real-time, which personally made this exhibition feel real to me as one of the artists answering the questions. Not only did the online gallery encourage community engagement, but the works of the artists also comment on the community from the view of that artist (Danelle van Wyk).

This year, I decided that I would centre my art-making process around the concepts of body image and fatphobia/ skinnyphobia. Body image is an issue that plagues all of society, no matter where you are on the body spectrum, so thus community engagement was an integral part of my collection.

I first began my collection by asking my community to anonymously share their thoughts and experiences around their body image with me to see what the real situation is in South Africa. I then took these anonymous experiences and incorporated them into my collection, thus giving the anonymous a voice and using them to bring awareness about the impact of people's words on an emotional and even physical level.

I then got into contact with different individuals and asked if I could paint their bodies, and I wanted to include real bodies and show that all bodies are worthy enough to be artworks in their own right. I didn't edit or enhance their features (besides colouring them to look like thermals) as I wanted people to be able to identify with these figures and think, 'Wow, my body looks exactly like that! So if that body looks so beautiful and my body looks like that, then my body must be beautiful too'.

Lastly, I created a mini-movement on social media where I encouraged people to emphasise and fully embrace their imperfections to take a stand against how over-edited social media is and to show that their flaws are beautiful and are what give them more worth in comparison to the carbon copy perfect human. If it were not for the community's engagement, I would not have been able to create a movement, so therefore this final art piece was not my own, but instead was created by the community for the community. I was just the nudge that got the ball rolling (Kimberly Oosthuizen).



My work is all about coexistence within our country, communicating the need to coexist and accepting all those who are out of our comfort zone. I created this artwork intending to spread awareness of the many struggles people in our country face, due to being outcasts or excluded from society. My artwork is about different peoples from different walks of life, and they each communicate the need these people feel to be accepted in society (Emma Jackaman).



Please visit the Facebook page: Art Education UP to view the online exhibition.
<https://www.facebook.com/Art-Education-UP-124126559434205/>

Community engagement activities of the School of Healthcare Sciences, University of Pretoria

Mr J. Thambura, Prof M. D. Peu, Prof M. Mulaudzi, Prof K. Mostert, Dr N. Mshuqane, Ms H. Lister, Dr H. Legodi, Dr P. Jiyane, Mrs M. Rasweswe & Ms K. M. Sethole

The School of Healthcare Sciences (SoHCS) entails the Departments of Radiography, Nursing Sciences, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Human Nutrition. These departments came together for common goal of community engagement around city of Tshwane. The focus of their activities is for now at Refaphogile High School in Mamelodi township where both staff and students are involved.



The aim of the community engagement group is:

- to promote the health of surrounding communities;
- to prevent and reduce health related problems including sexually transmitted diseases, teenage pregnancies, bullying, violence and substance use; and
- to promote social responsibility by aligning these activities with relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Background and focus

The highest rates of pregnancies worldwide are in low to middle-income countries, including South Africa (World Health Organisation, 2007). The Statistics South Africa General Household Survey Report, which focused on schools, revealed that 99 000 teenagers fell pregnant in 2013 (Masondo, 2015). Among the 99 000, the highest teenage pregnancy rate is in the provinces of KwaZulu Natal (26 468), the Eastern Cape (20 698), and Limpopo (13 941) (Department of Health, 2007). In 2018 Statistics South Africa reported that 97 143 teenagers gave birth (Mlambo, 2018). In the selected high school in Gauteng, 18 learners were pregnant during the time of problem identification in 2018. Teenage pregnancy has also been associated with substance use (Department of Health, 2008).

Additionally, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) has also been identified as the aftermath of substance use and teenage pregnancies. Substance use has been known to increase chances of pregnancy. This statistic made the community engagement committee at the school of healthcare sciences to identify a school which they could transform.

The method of transformation used a steppingstone approach. Steppingstone is an educative approach that was designed to address ways that gender norms and restrictive views about sex was putting vulnerable people at increased risk of negative health outcomes. This approach aims to improve outcomes by building stronger, more equitable relations using a participatory learning approach and a modular curriculum with small peer-group sessions. The School of Healthcare Sciences visited this school on 9 October 2019. The visitation created a collaboration and agreement to use data obtained from this school for publication purposes. Various reflections were conducted with teachers and students. Students identified bullying, teenage pregnancy, drug use and violence as problems experienced at school. Based on these health problems, the members of community engagement decided to adapt the research proposal that was used at Makapanstad, North West province as a model to guide in addressing these existing problems (Ngunyulu, Mulaudzi, Peu, Khumisi, & Sethole, 2016) Therefore, a research proposal for the community engagement has been redeveloped by the SoHCS committee and it is awaiting ethics clearance and funding. This research will focus on teenage pregnancy, GBV, and substance use among teenagers at a high school. The high school pupils were given a talk on these areas of focus where

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students at the University of Pretoria performed a role-play focusing on these themes. In the process of interaction with these teenagers, the following lessons were learnt:

Illiteracy

Teenage mothers are faced with:

- an inability to pursue higher education due to extra responsibilities;
- an increased rate of illiteracy in the society;
- being unable to find a job to support themselves financially;
- the fear of embarrassment, humiliation and harassment by friends; and
- The fact that only one-third of teen mothers acquire a high school certificate and few a university degree.

Social obligation

Teenage mothers are faced with:

- slim chances of getting a good job;
- lack of respect from friends and family members;
- having their social lives ruined due to early and unexpected pregnancy;
- emotional trauma; and
- living in poverty

Medical complications

Lack of proper antenatal care induces complications such as:

- high blood pressure
- anaemia
- HIV and AIDS
- premature birth of the baby—low birth weight and respiratory problems.

Emotional crisis

- Suffer substantial emotional breakdown emotional crisis due to lack of social support from family members, which
- triggers the onset of unhealthy behaviour like suicide attempts and/or self-aborting the baby.

Substance use

- Used as a coping mechanism when faced with a crisis

Bad reputation

- They face severe humiliation
- Receive negative remarks from people
- Treated as strangers and outcasts

Domestic violence

- Teenage mothers are faced with gender-based violence

Higher suicide rates

Teenage mothers are prone to commit suicide due to:

- Humiliation
- Lack of social support, which
- triggers depression
- resulting from an emotional and financial crisis.

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Community engagement through art: Is hygiene a right or a privilege?

Kelly Loring (Third-year Visual Art Education student)

Community engagement is essentially a collaborative approach to combine course material and the community's needs. Typically, community engagement is incorporated into a course or series of courses by way of a project that has both learning and community action goals' (Community, n.d.).

In my body of work 'Is hygiene a right or a privilege?' I have tried to create awareness surrounding community hygiene problems. The global pandemic has exposed various inequalities in our community. Therefore, by observing my community's problems, I have tried to create awareness about the problem.



What is essential. 2020. Oil on canvas and waste products

My first artwork is titled 'What is essential?' (oil paint and waste products). This artwork attempts to ask the viewer to check their privilege. When viewing this artwork, you can ask yourself:

Can I afford health care?

Do I have running water?

Can I get sick from my living environment?

This led me to my next artwork called 'Innocence'. I used the metaphor 'hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil'. In this artwork, the viewer sees three self-portraits in warm colours.

I wanted to create a communal conversation about corruption in our Government. The Government is crippling the vulnerable. I use a plastic bag, to try and 'protect' myself. The portraits are again commenting on mass-produced items like masks. During the lockdown, big corporations induced price hikes crippling the vulnerable.



2020. Innocence. Colour pencil

In addition to this, I created a photographic series. I wanted citizens to reflect on corruption and what they can do to create a better future for all. The use of the white colour symbolizing purity reinforces this.



Artwork commentates on South African

My next artwork is called 'Waiting'. This artwork comments on South African citizens as a whole. We, as South Africans, are constantly waiting, waiting for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) material. This is conveyed through the use of medical masks. We are waiting for better health facilities, conveyed by the use of concrete. We are waiting for change.



Waiting. 2020. Medical Mask dipped in concrete

My last artwork is called 'Suffocation'. I used cling wrap and Sellotape to cover my face. This created a live cast. The artwork is a performance art piece. I wanted to evoke a negative response. This includes being uncomfortable, uneasy and anxious. I felt the above emotions wearing a mask, but more so how people must feel when they do not have access to a fundamental right: hygiene. Hence the title 'Suffocation'.



Suffocation. 2020. Performance art

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Find out more on my website:
Link to Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Art-Education-UP-12412655943420>

The COVID-19 lockdown and parents' partnership as auxiliary teachers

Martin Chukwudi Ekeh (Department of Early Childhood Education, University of Pretoria)

Researchers in the field of childhood education view parents as an integral part of the childhood education process, hence they refer to parents as the child's first and best teacher. On the other hand, most Nigerian parents are heavily dependent on teachers and conventional schools for the educational progress of their children. This is occasioned by their struggle to meet the harsh economic demands of the family and society.

Children are dropped off at school very early in the morning and then picked by their parents after 16h00, however, the sudden realities of the coronavirus pandemic broke the religious routine for children's learning and parents' work schedules. Schools, workplaces and churches among many others were shut down; movement was restricted and this took a toll on parents as they came to realise the enormous work done by teachers whom society had always treated with some level of contempt.

Parents are generally concerned about the well-being of their children. They are



central to their children's development and they play a critical role in their children's success. Their partnership in their children's education cannot be debated. More so, parents' roles and responsibilities are extremely important for the development of a child. In fact, a child benefits more when parents show great involvement in his or her education and when parents have every confidence in helping their child to be successful in school (Eliason & Jenkins, 2008).

Community engagement with parents was done via conference phone calls and WhatsApp voice note messages due to social distancing protocols at the time. Parents who did not know how to engage with their children were taught to assume the responsibility of the teacher while considering their family as an imaginary school environment. They were taught to provide an outline of planned activities for their children just as it was done at their school. The outline of activities included time slots for curricular and non-curricular activities.

Parents were able to engage with their children personally and the outcome was amazing. Parents became more involved in helping their children improve their schoolwork by providing encouragement, arranging for appropriate study time and space, modeling desired behavior (such

as reading for pleasure), monitoring homework and actively tutoring their children at home. Now that children are back at school, parents can serve as advocates for the school, volunteer to help out with school activities or work in the classroom. They can take an active role in the governance and decision making that is necessary for planning, developing and providing an education for the children in the community.

Armstrong (2020) and Vellymalay (2013) mention that parents' level of education has a great influence on the partnership in their children's schooling. They have more contact, communicate with the school, become more aware of their children's achievement, monitor their children's progress and lead them to pursue higher education. Such was the case the author discovered during the community engagement with parents on homeschooling their children during the coronavirus pandemic lockdown. Research overwhelmingly demonstrates that parents' partnership in children's learning is positively related to children's academic achievement. The author, therefore, recommends that parents need a positive change in attitude towards the education of their children.

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Our community projects are 'inreaches' as much as outreaches

Gerdus van der Laarse (Engineers Without Borders UP Project Manager)

Throughout 2020 we were all faced with challenges. At Engineers Without Borders (EWB), most of our plans for projects and events had to be adapted. We decided to participate in the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology (EBIT) JCP community-based project module to give engineering and other EBIT students opportunities to improve their skills. At EWB we strive to enable engineers to empower people so they can have a larger impact on their communities. Combining this goal with our partnership with JCP, 11 groups under the guidance of EWB project manager, Gerdus van der Laarse (a final-year electronic engineering student), worked on different projects at the University of Pretoria's Moja-Gabedi and Reliable House sites.

These sites are unique in that those doing projects there are given a large degree of freedom, which nurtures innovation and allows students to see the results of their contributions and experience a sense of accomplishment and ownership. This was confirmed by our groups working there. Although somewhat driven by a desire to escape from their homes after the lockdown, the students were changed in a unique way by their participation in the projects and they wanted to continue.

The projects, which included the installation of rain-water collection systems and the handcrafting of furniture for coffee and vegetable shops, contributed significantly to the quality of life of the Moja-Gabedi and Reliable House site communities.



The students themselves were not left untouched as they could witness the effect they could have in communities, which inspired them to pursue similar projects in the future.



We normally think of University Social Responsibility (USR) as a one-way street: the University helps the community. However, what the University and its students gain from their community outreach programmes is no less valuable. The University not only awards successful students with a degree but teaches them to help and make a difference wherever they can.