



Lentšú La Sechaba

THE VOICE OF THE CE COMMUNITY

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Editorial letter:

Social connectedness versus social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic



washing of hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. How do we stay socially connected when we are expected to distance ourselves from others? Anecdotal evidence shows that social distancing does not equate to social disconnection. Paradoxically, COVID-19 has highlighted the need to stay socially connected for support, encouragement, and the prevention of stress and depression.

Social connectedness between higher education (HE) and community partners is created through community engagement (CE) partnerships. Participants in CE often give feedback that value is attached to connectedness between and support of student peers and their community partners. Comments by participants further revealed that the relationships experienced in CE were great platforms for establishing bonds, while learning from peers also occurred. Community partners used the metaphor of feet 'walking together' to emphasise that the partners 'can go far', given the

support and connectedness that prevails in the partnership. xx

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented society with many challenges, including in the dynamics of CE partnerships. The good news is that there are ways of protecting yourself and others against contracting COVID-19.

As we all know, it is crucial to wear a mask, maintain social distance (about two arms' lengths) from others who do not live with you and avoid crowds. COVID-19 preventative measures also include regular

As alluded to above, participants in CE report that experiences of connectedness and support are not limited to the University partners; positive expressions of connectedness and support are also extended between civic organisations, the private and public sectors, learners and students. You will find in this newsletter that overall feelings of connectedness are expressed by various partners

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as they engage in what Boyer (1990) describes as scholarship of application. In scholarship of application, community partners use knowledge to solve consequential social problems. In further support of this argument, Boyer (1990) notes that scholarship of integration establishes connections across disciplines.

Furthermore, Webber and Jones (2011) noted in a study conducted among 233 university staff members that participation in CE provides networks and research opportunities. Research in the HE-CE context could have some theoretically discernible and eventually pragmatically applicable connections with the social well-being of a community. Moreover, CE could be good for the contextual enhancement of a community's lived realities and expectations for the future.

HE should support the deep sense of calling by academia that is embedded in CE. In the context of CE in the working environment, there should be openness among community partners to discuss issues that affect the local community in the interest of collaborative interventions. Collaboration builds the capacity of community partners as they solve problems together ('walking together'; 'can go far'). It is important for community partners to be engaged in CE partnership in

a meaningful way. In addition, this moves global citizens to develop critical skills, and students and staff connect as they engage in democratic processes with the community.

In line with the experiences of community partners, Weiner (2003) found that transformative CE links school, home, work and family. In addition, dialogue between parents and teachers leads to authentic collaboration and partnership. Teachers, who are among the key community partners, should develop their schools by establishing relationships among all the community partners. As seen in previous newsletters, teachers who participated in CE reported experiencing feelings of connectedness and support, which they in turn used to support learners and their parents.

In conclusion, the positive perceptions of participants about connectedness and support that strengthen ties correlate with the findings reported in existing literature, which indicate that all partners are critical in strengthening CE partnerships, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Citizens who feel connected to the community often want to engage with and be involved in socio-political activities. CE partnerships therefore create connectedness among like-minded partners.

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Matters of interest

- The next Community Engagement Forum will be held on Tuesday, 13 April 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, 3 September 2021.
- The Unit for Community Engagement invites you to report on community engagement activities by submitting articles for publication in the next newsletter (Winter 2021).

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Combating loneliness with telehealth

Marike Smit & Helga Lister (Occupational Therapy)



The first-year occupational therapy students used to visit older persons' residential facilities as their first practical fieldwork experience. There, they presented therapeutic group activities to the residents. The standard practice was to have one clinical supervisor to guide and give feedback to a group of students. COVID-19 required that this approach to practical learning and therapy change.

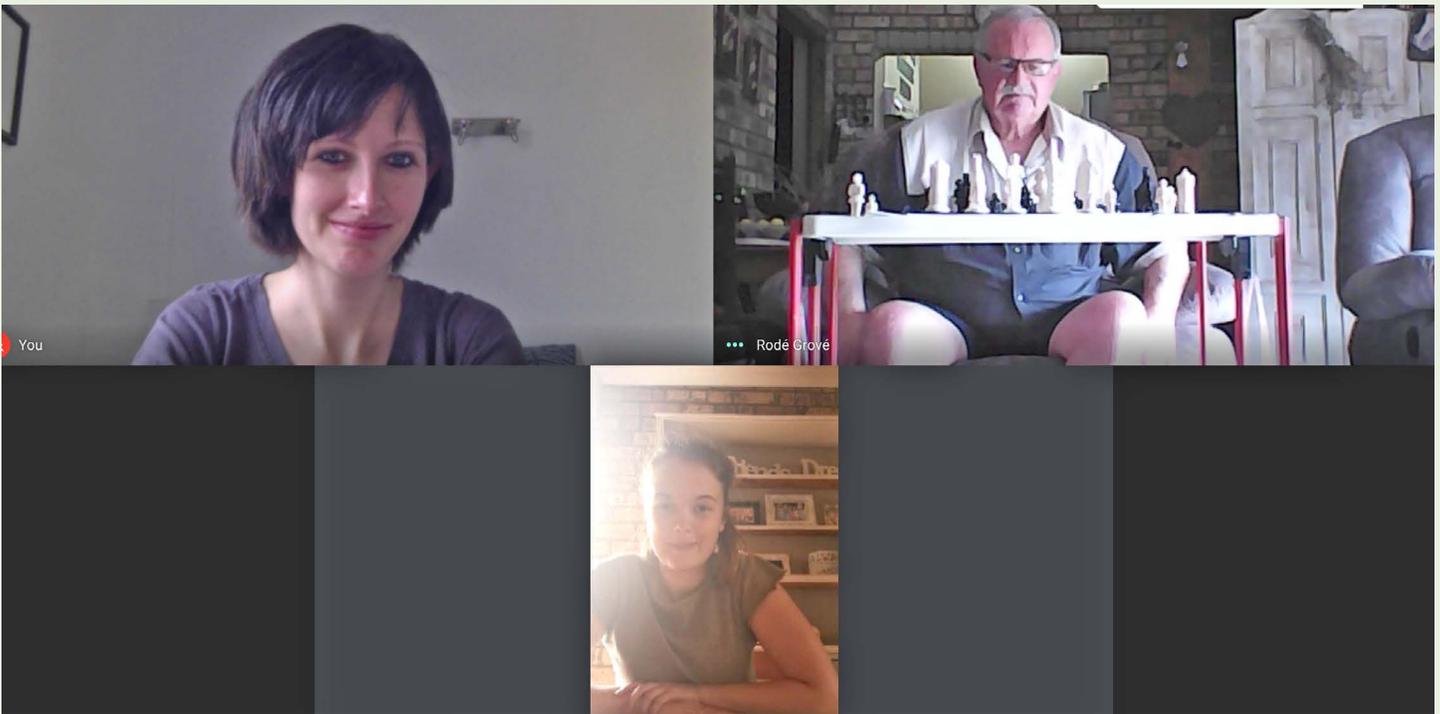
For the students to still gain service-learning experience while complying with the COVID-19 regulations, the Department of Occupational Therapy decided to move the fieldwork online. The students had to present telehealth sessions. One of our students put into words what many of us thought at the onset: 'Telehealth! Using technology for therapy with the elderly? I have never heard a worse idea in my life'. How on earth could this work? The fieldwork coordinator had to find enough qualified occupational therapists (OTs) to volunteer to be mentors

to these students. Following extensive marketing and the use of social media, 24 OTs volunteered. They were matched with the students and 51 older persons who were willing to participate in individual sessions.

Telehealth is a recent development in the South African context, and no one in the coordinating team nor the group of volunteering mentors has had any previous experience in conducting telehealth sessions. Of the online resources, policies and webinars that were constantly being developed and offered, most focused on children. But having witnessed, read and heard about the significant toll that the lockdown was taking on older persons, we had to press on and succeed.

An online orientation was held for the mentors, and an occupational therapist from Germany shared her personal experiences,

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activity ideas and lessons that she learnt while doing telehealth with her clients in Germany. Some plans and preparations for presenting telehealth in the unpredictable South African context included backup plans in case of load shedding and recording sessions where the internet connections failed.

Very soon, the first session began, in which each student conducted an interview, made observations and asked the clients to complete an inventory list of what materials were available in their home to use during sessions. After this, there were four intervention sessions in which therapeutic activities were conducted.

The mentor would observe the sessions and only intervene if required. After each telehealth session, the student and mentor would have a feedback session. The students then had to write evaluations on the sessions and reflections about their learning experience and growth process.

After the service learning was completed, the coordinating team facilitated online focus group discussions with the students and mentors, who shared anecdotal information on some of the elderly participants' experiences.

Benefits

For the elderly participants, telehealth services proved to be an effective form of service delivery. Some elderly participants who had mobility problems and found normal avenues of healthcare inaccessible could be assisted. Many participants were encouraged to spend more

time taking care of their own health, where previously they would only take care of others. The telehealth services decreased their social isolation and occupational deprivation. Some of the participants did not want the telehealth sessions to end because they quickly became a significant part of their much-needed connection with the outside world.

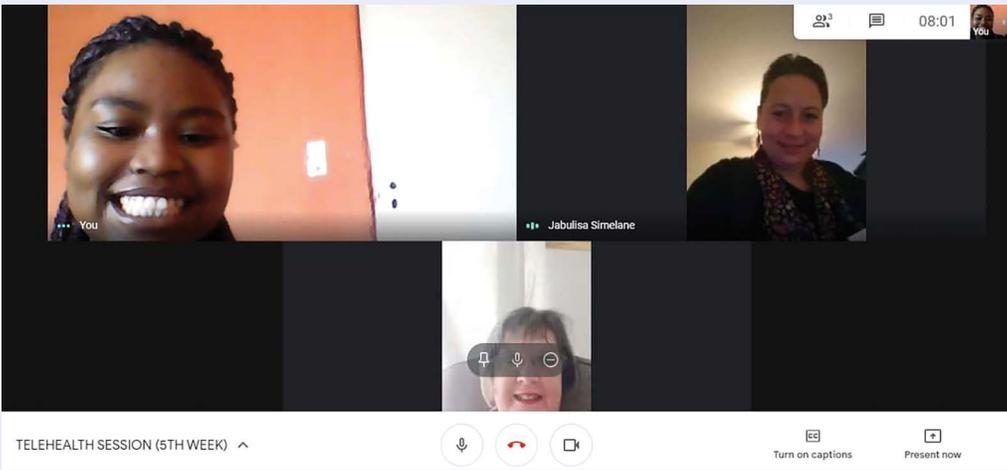
For some elderly participants, the telehealth services were empowering because they had a younger person teaching them how to use their smart devices and connect on social media. This enabled them to connect with other family members and friends, further decreasing their social isolation. Telehealth combatted feelings of depression and the monotony that came with occupational deprivation during the lockdown period.

There were more mentors involved in the fieldwork than in previous years, and from the feedback we can expect to still see a ripple effect in the wider occupational therapy community and an improved standard of service in times to come. Having one-on-one mentoring for the students throughout their fieldwork ensured improved service delivery and student education.

Challenges

It was a challenge to find participants in rural areas or of lower socioeconomic status. The barriers were inadequate internet connection, lack of access to smart devices, reduced knowledge of older persons on how to access emails and data in-affordability.

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Some participants initially had resources to take part in telehealth sessions, but later were unable to access these or did not have data. Some students and mentors bought those participants data to allow sessions to continue.

It was also more challenging to reach the individuals who live on their own or with family who worked during the day. Sessions seemed to have fewer challenges in cases where elderly participants were in care facilities with additional staff for support. When the telehealth sessions went smoothly, the service seemed very accessible and the participants felt relaxed receiving therapy in the own environment. Unfortunately, it was observed that when technology failed, or even lagged, the participants initially became anxious. Additionally, many participants needed family members to assist them with the technology.

Since the students could only see their participants within the boundaries of a screen, and since this was their first time interacting with clients, they sometimes missed important non-verbal behaviour. Body language is important during therapy. It took longer to form a therapeutic relationship between student and participant. Just as the students could not see beyond the boundaries of the screen, the participants themselves needed to see both the students and the demonstrations of some therapeutic activities. It was more challenging to present activities via telehealth than to conduct in-person therapy, but the students came up with astounding solutions and innovations.

The students were encouraged to adapt their environments so that their background created a relaxing and therapeutic atmosphere. For an enjoyable exercise session, one student had set up two cameras so the client could see the student's face and the movements required simultaneously. Some telehealth sessions focused on restoring and maintaining

previously enjoyed leisure participation. Others explored new ways to use time in lockdown constructively. Examples of activities include:

- making a memory box which included the elderly participant's favourite pictures, hobbies, and photos of family and friends;
- playing chess (using algebraic notation to describe the moves on the chessboard); and
- cooking an Italian meal as a reminder of the client's time spent travelling, which she is now unable to do.

One participant was in the process of moving to an old age home during the fieldwork. She still had goals for her life. Thus, they made a vision board, to illustrate these goals and ideas.

Recommendations

It was recommended to provide more educational sessions for elderly clients before commencing treatment so that they can learn how to access and use the technology, thus reducing anxiety.

Telehealth services proved to be an effective educational modality as well as a beneficial form of service delivery to the elderly community. When queried about whether this should become a permanent feature in the occupational therapy curriculum, all students and mentors responded positively. Therefore, the telehealth coordinating team of 2020 can recommend that the university continue offering telehealth training and service learning in the future. Telehealth services can be provided not only by occupational therapy students, but also within the interprofessional sphere, thereby reaching a wider community.

Additionally, the continuation of a more hands-on, individual approach to mentorship from qualified professionals is strongly recommended. The potential scope and opportunities in this rapidly developing field is very exciting, and the coordinating team is grateful to everyone who contributed towards making this service-learning experience a success.

A dream come true

Nhlalala Hlongwane (First year - Civil Engineering)



High school was a very eventful period in my life. In normal cases, high school is a period when a learner should make friends, learn and just enjoy those last days of childhood. I had the advantage of attending the Pretoria Central High School, where my father happened to be the principal. Most people saw this as a disadvantage because it limited my behaviour.

In all honesty, there were disadvantages. Every learner was looking at my actions as they wanted to see if I was acting the way my father (their principal) advised them to act. I feel I definitely nailed that assignment. It taught me discipline and respect and also inspired the willingness to help people.

Growing up, I wanted to become an architect and my cousins, who happened to be studying at

the University of Pretoria (UP), definitely sold the university to me. I was dying to study there. When I got to Grade 10, I chose to do Physical science, Mathematics, Accounting and Life science.

Those were truthfully the most challenging subjects, which required commitment and hard work. At the time, I was, to be honest, not really sure of the career path I wanted to take. All I knew was that I wanted to go to the UP.

During my Grade 11 year, when it was time for applications, I applied for Civil Engineering at the UP and it was a dream come true when I learned on 23 February 2021 that I have been accepted. I was ecstatic about this heart-warming news. I look forward to completing my studies at the UP, my dream university.

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 in case 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.



Oasis community engagement programmes

Sabeth Bapela (Manager: Oasis)



Oasis is a soup kitchen that provides care to over 500 people per week. Besides serving meals to patients, we offer skills-training courses and spiritual counselling. Thanks for the support from Dr Martin Bac and Mrs Mies Bac.

Plan for 2021

We have been planning to add more courses to accommodate even those who are less literate and all age groups. Presently, we offer computer literacy, baking, sewing, cooking and gardening. We used to offer knitting and crocheting courses but could not continue as we did not have teachers for those skills.

After a few discussions last year, the Oasis management team decided to resuscitate the courses, with Mya Kampman and Bea van den Bosch to oversee them.

Our strategy for 2021 is to try to help more people, while making sure that all programmes offered are sustainable. Oasis depends on donations for its funding. Previously, we were able to feed and teach our clients free of charge, but that is no longer possible.

We have decided to offer our services for a small contribution of R5 per meal. Clothes that are still in good condition are going to be sold at an affordable price. We are going to sell vegetables and flowers that grow in our garden to hospital staff and patients. Products from baking and cooking classes will also be sold and

the proceeds used to purchase ingredients.

The plan is to calculate the costs and set a registration fee for each course (usually of three months' duration), then issue certificates of completion. We appreciate the proposal from the University of Pretoria to partner with us in the journey of empowering community members.

Dr Eugene Machimana and some students will be joining us for community projects in 2021. It is an honour for us as an organisation to have people of high expertise to share their time and wisdom with us.

The impact of COVID-19

Like everyone else, we have been badly affected by COVID-19. As a result of Tshwane District Hospital being transformed into a COVID-19 treatment centre, we could no longer serve our clients from within the hospital. Sadly, some of our staff members had to be retrenched owing to a shortage of funds.

All our courses had to stop, and facilitators could not get their stipend. Oasis was not operational between April and July 2020. We were allowed to serve soup to three clinics at Tshwane Rehab Centre in August 2020. It was challenging to prepare the hot soup and bread at Oasis, then take it to the rehab centre on a trolley.

We are looking forward to working with different community partners for the empowerment of the people. We anticipate good things to come.



Keep that Gold Shining

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

Keept That Gold Shining (KTG) is currently collecting data to make informed decisions in forming the strategic plan for the period 2021 to 2025. It has been seven years since the founding of this organisation, and we are at the stage where we must reflect on our successes and drawbacks. Additionally, we want to adjust KTG's objectives to fill in the educational gaps that have been highlighted by COVID-19 disruptions.

We believe that information and communications technology (ICT) literacy should be prioritised in township schools and communities. Therefore, one of KTG's big projects between now and 2025 is to build community centres that will primarily address ICT literacy in communities.

In 2021, the following projects will be implemented:

- KTG annual Mathematics Accounting and Physical Sciences (MAP) competition, in collaboration with the community-based project (JCP) modules and the Metallurgical Engineering sub-house committee of the University of Pretoria
- Virtual Career Fair, in collaboration with Kairo Archives NPO, recently founded by Ofentse Mathibela (MSc candidate and CEO), Mmamoloro Malefo (PhD candidate and COO) and Adelaide Simelane (MSc

candidate and CFO) from the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences at the University of Pretoria.

The main goal of Kairo Archives is to bridge the gap between academics and industry. The goal will be achieved by forging partnerships with various institutions to offer our chosen students (Grade 10 to 12) an opportunity to experience their dream career before making the decision to embark on that career.

We not only groom our students for their prospective career paths, but we offer mentorship to build self-confidence and harness passion within the students to ensure success in any field they choose. We believe that everyone has potential, and we aim to give them a glimpse of that potential to motivate them to be the best.

Due to the pandemic, we had to rethink our strategy, since it involved mostly human contact. We have moved to conducting interviews online and hosting webinars with various professionals to ensure appropriate matches for shadowing opportunities. Our selection criteria involve direct association with schools and working with organisations such as Keep that Gold Shining, to choose students who are not only excelling academically but are also passionate and hard working.

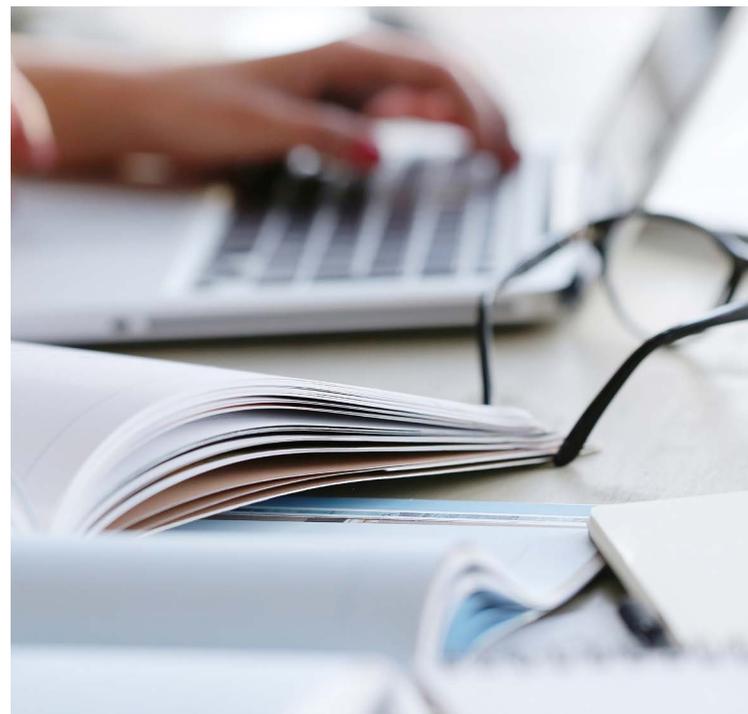


Outstanding matric results despite COVID-19

Tim Hlongwane (Principal: Pretoria Central High School)

The year 2020 was challenging for all of us but more so for thousands of Grade 12 learners whose future depended on their matric results. Our school, Pretoria Central High School, was no exception. We worked very hard facilitating online learning during lockdown. Parents were also very helpful in assisting with data for their children. When the results were released, we were overjoyed with the 90.57% pass rate achieved by 139 candidates.

This achievement was made possible because of years of successful partnership with the University of Pretoria (UP). This partnership involves the Faculty of Education sending some of the student teachers to do their teaching practice at our school. The majority of our young teachers are also proudly UP graduates. We are looking forward to even greater achievements in 2021.



There is light at the end of the tunnel: My story how I overcame the difficulties of 2020

Ivainashe Earnest Nyamutsamba
(Third-year Law student)

2020 was a year that brought me to my lowest and most vulnerable state, a time when I was brought down to the severest level of anxiety and depression. Despite all that, I managed to pick myself up out of the muck, take responsibility for my destiny and give honour and praise to my creator through the works of my hands. Hello, and welcome to my story.

Before, I dive into the core of this narration, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the University of Pretoria (UP) community: the security staff, the cleaners, the groundsmen, my lecturers from both the faculties of Law and Humanities, the student body, the UP Library family, my colleagues at TuksFM and PDBY, the faculty houses and student residences, the international student community, and the societies, as well as my best friend Khanyisa Masinge and my family.

We have made history and I am proud of us. We have written a new chapter of UP history and we are not stopping here. Our target is the world stage. Congratulations, UP community, we have done it. Our very own self-published literary work has gone against the grain and rewritten the codes of what it means to be a UP student.

My name is Ivainashe Earnest Nyamutsamba and I am a UP BA (Law) student, newsreader for TuksFM, blogger, poet, bookstore owner, writivist, and a self-published author. My debut literary work, soon to drop, is titled I was never ready and many other stories.



The idea of I was never ready and many other stories was birthed in the second semester of 2018. My best friends Khanyisa Masinge and Xihlamariso Mgiba and I were on our way to the Groenkloof Campus to attend an English lecture. It was a late afternoon lecture, and upon boarding the bus Khanyisa exclaimed, 'I was never ready!'. In that moment, I had a eureka moment; I asked if I could use the phrase.

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The Centre for Human Rights was having an essay competition on the importance of human rights. Entrants were tasked to explore the importance of human rights through creative works.

In that moment, I challenged myself to explore the psychology, emotions, and pain of an African woman, borrowing what I have seen first-hand around me and my mother's journey. The story did not make it to the podium, and in that moment I was whisked away by inspiration to come up with an anthology that explicitly explores the contemporary crisis that has affected our community.

I observed that the UP community is a microcosm of our communities. This is how I came upon the idea for the literary work. I am a firm believer in the notion that it takes a community to sit down and solve its own problems. In my submission, I note that she is helping the UP community in two ways, amplifying (1) the rights of women and children and (2) African literature, ie, improving the literacy of my community through home-grown, relatable stories.

When COVID-19 first waved its ugly head of uncertainty in my face, it startled me I did not know what to do. I am from Zimbabwe, and it is no secret that Zimbabwe is going through a tumultuous episode in her history. The economic upheaval took a turn for the worse in 2020 when the economy shrunk, which meant that money from Zimbabwe to South Africa would not arrive in time for registration.

Upon realising that, the stark truth struck me that I would have to sit out the 2020 academic year. It was difficult for me to come to terms with the reality; I was sucked into a depressive state where I interrogated myself. At times, I would hurt myself so I might feel something. The lockdown took the best of me. I blamed myself for the pain of my mother, who was stressed that I was not at school. One day I was with my best friend she exclaimed, 'Earn, you need a job to meet your daily expenses!'

At my place, alone, it dawned on me that I am a writer; I have a literary work on my hard drive that is done (at

that time I thought it was done). A few years back, my brother, Blessing Zana, offered to help me with financing the printing of the book. I reached out to him and asked him if he would loan me some money so I might kickstart this project, and maybe, if I sold 300 units, I might clear my debt with UP and resume my studies in 2021. Unfortunately, within the arts industry, jealousy is rife. A fellow author led me astray to work with a fraudster who unfortunately ran away with my money.

I had to dig deep again, infuse myself with self-belief and the understanding that it is now up to me to save myself and my family. I knew that the story of my life would not only inspire my community, but South Africa and the rest of Africa. It would inspire my fellow countrymen that, although we might be going through a series of unfortunate events for now, if we sit down and understand what we want, we shall get it as a united nation.

The challenges were daunting and frustrating; there were a lot of psychological questions, such as 'Who do you think you are, you are black and a Zimbabwean; who will listen to what you are saying?' 'You are a black man writing about women's issues, what do you know about women's issues?', 'You are a black independent writer, and you think people will listen to you?' Such questions stormed through my mind. I had to take that leap of faith, harnessing that self-belief. Prayer helped me to conquer my doubts, as did the history of my people, Zimbabwe is a nation, blessed with an array of historical landmarks. I channelled that energy of intimately knowing that I too can achieve great feats like my ancestors.

I appreciate my community, the UP community, knowing that we are tight-knit, we are trailblazers and we never tire in rewriting the chapters of history. That is how I overcame these moments of doubt, fear, and inadequacy. In the first three months (1 October to 3 December 2020), I sold 72 copies. However, I noted that the book needed some tinkering and improvements, thus I am re-issuing her on 9 August 2021. Once the logistics have been finalised and the key areas have been put in place, the date will be made known to the public.

As I conclude my story, I would like to thank the editors and publication team: Thank you so much for the opportunity and platform to share my story with the UP community. To the UP community, once again, congratulations! We have done it. Finally, life is a process, give yourself space to grow and learn from your mistakes and understand your purpose.



Participants identify future training courses for Inclusive Education success

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

In November 2020, Dr Nkhensani Susan Thuketana finalised a professional development-training project with 60 participants in the Limpopo inclusive education directorate. She conducted the week-long training three times between October and December. Enterprises University of Pretoria (Enterprises UP) funded the project. Enterprises UP engages in continuous education and training activities, marketable research, and consulting services on behalf of the University.

The different projects collaborate with the government and private sector nationally and internationally to generate a third income stream.

The project aimed to equip teachers with strategies for identifying communication barriers among learners, refer and outsource professional support and choose appropriate assistive devices to provide the learners with grade-appropriate language to access the prescribed curriculum.

The project participants included assistant teachers, teachers from mainstream and special schools, and school-based support team (SBST) coordinators.

Professionals from different districts made up the district-based support team (DBST) coordinators, namely, nurses, psychologists, and occupational therapists. The composition of participants supports the collaboration-inclusive principle to enhance success in implementing the augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) strategy.

Participants actively contributed to the training process. They developed and presented resources for perceptual grading and learned how to upload the board maker program on their computers and make resources to enhance learner participation in inclusive classes. Additionally, some participants had resources in their schools but did not have the skill to use them. I asked the teachers to bring the resources to the venue for hands-on training.

The final project reviews revealed satisfaction and that the project aims were reached. Follow-up training needs were identified to address professional gaps in the inclusive working context. The above indicates the importance of consultation regarding schools' training needs rather than using a top-down approach to training.

Commencing of skills training and other centre activities in the new year at Lesedi la Batho

Jenet Ncube (Centre Administrator) and Thapelo Mokwena (Project Coordinator)



We re-opened on 11 January 2021. Mabopane community had been identified as a COVID-19 hotspot, but the management team and staff members decided that we would not allow the COVID-19 pandemic to instil fear in us and the members of the community. We dedicated our time and centre equipment to educating, screening, and referring people who had COVID-19 symptoms to local clinics in order to prevent the spread of the disease in our community.

Fortunately, along our journey, we partnered with an organisation called One Young World that shared the same mission and vision as us of creating COVID-19 awareness, educating people in the community and all our centre beneficiaries who came for skills training about COVID-19. We have established a strong outreach team who dedicate their time as frontline workers and make a point of fighting COVID-19 head-on by going into the community, doing screening, sharing COVID-19 information and educating as many people as possible in and around Mabopane.

As we started our COVID-19 awareness and education project, we were happy with the positive impact it had on the community as we had noticed that most people had



very little or no knowledge about safety measures. The outreach team noted that many community members and learners do not adhere to the COVID-19 regulations.

Most of the community members now know the symptoms they have to pay attention to that might mean they have contracted COVID-19, as well as the importance of following the 1,5-to-2-meter social distancing rule, wearing a face mask at all times in public spaces, and washing or sanitising ones hands regularly.

We have also hosted COVID-19 drives, visiting vulnerable families and women, giving COVID-19 education, doing screening, referring people with COVID-19 symptoms to the clinic, and giving them dignity packs containing the following items: 1 litre of sanitizer, toothpaste, facecloths, toothbrushes, anti-bacterial soap bars, Rise Against Hunger (RAH) nutritional rice packs and Nutri-Go meal packs.



Students from The Hong Kong Polytechnic University teach a learner to build a cardboard 360-degree video viewer

Learners from Mamelodi Campus's Pre-University Academy become tech-savvy thanks to The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Dr Martina Jordaan (Head: Community engagement research and postgraduate studies, Mamelodi campus)

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University's Department of Service-learning requested a possible project with secondary school learners in South Africa. It was proposed the project involve ten learners from the University of Pretoria's (UP) Pre-University Academy (PUA) at its Mamelodi Campus. Three engineering students from the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology were asked to assist with the technical aspects of the project.

The project

The project entailed students from The Hong Kong Polytechnic University teaching ten learners of the PUA and ten learners of the Caritas Ma On Shan Secondary School in Hong Kong to use a 360-degree camera and to create a 360-degree video with the footage.

For the first project, Mamelodi Campus bought a 360-degree camera. The Hong Kong Polytechnic University sponsored and posted three cameras to the value of nearly R35 000, as well as twenty 360-degree cardboard viewers, to be used for the project. The three cameras will be utilised for another project in September 2021 before they are returned to Hong Kong. Additional web cameras and headsets were acquired for the project. The web cameras and headsets will be used for other projects as well.

Dr Martina Jordaan, Head: Community Engagement Research and Postgraduate Studies at the Mamelodi Campus, presented a background session on South Africa, the University of Pretoria, the Mamelodi Campus and the Pre-University Academy to the Hong Kong students on 28 December 2020. The learners were identified by the PUA coordinator, Mrs Mekidela Belay, and represented six different schools in Mamelodi.

They came to Mamelodi Campus on 7 January 2021 and were orientated about the project. They also received training in using the Zoom platform. On 8 January 2021, the Hong Kong students and learners and the PUA learners met virtually and did various team-building exercises. The group was divided into four teams. Three engineering students, Bryce van der Kraats, Rohan van Zyl and Janco Venter, assisted the teams and helped with all the technical issues.

The programme started on Monday, 11 January 2021. The ten PUA learners learnt to build and use a 360-degree cardboard viewer. They were taught to edit a video on YouTube and to use a 360-degree camera. On the same day, we were informed that the computer assistant, Sam Tshele, had tested positive for COVID-19. The learners, lecturer and students were requested to go into quarantine for ten days, which altered the course of the project.

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The learners identify a theme and create a storyline



A virtual tour of Hong Kong by the students of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University adapted the programme to continue with the project using the learners' cellphones. Dr Jordaan transferred data to each learner in the evening so that they could join the Zoom sessions the following morning. On Wednesday, 13 January 2021, the PUA learners and learners from Caritas Ma On Shan Secondary School visited Hong Kong virtually with a live-stream session via Zoom, YouTube or WhatsApp.

between the different countries and their current contexts. When comparing the differences, they noted that there are unique differences between the two cultures. However, at the fundamental level, they all encounter the same basic problems with which they live daily. It was an exciting experience for the learners, as well as for the three engineering students. Similar collaborative projects between the two institutions are in the pipeline for the 2021 academic year.

Four different teams compiled all the video footage into short videos. Each team chose a topic. The topics varied from cultural differences to environmental issues. For example, Group B addressed the different cultural perspectives and discussed similarities and differences

After the quarantine period was over, the learners visited Lory Park Zoo and took 360-degree video footage for the Hong Kong learners and students. This footage was included in the final presentation of the videos.



The PUA learners visiting Lory Park Zoo



The final presentation session

The final videos

The final videos may be viewed at the following links:

Team A:

Viewing with a 360-degree cardboard headset is highly recommended:

Team B:

Viewing with a 360-degree cardboard headset is highly recommended:

Team C:

Viewing with a 360-degree cardboard headset is highly recommended for the second section:

First section:

Second section:

Team D:

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Reflections of the students and learners

The value of the project was apparent in the second phase of its implementation. The ten PUA students were initially shy, but soon formed close relationships with their peers, the UP students and the international students.

This aligns with familiar student success theories as identified in George Kuh's research on high-impact student success practices, as well as Vincent Tinto's focus on integration and intentionality. However, the project also highlighted the importance of involvement related to Astin's involvement theory. The students' engagement with each other and the University, as well as other international universities, contributed to laying a foundation for the learners to stay involved with the PUA.

The UP students and PUA learners' feedback highlights the value of the energy devoted to participating in the project. It will contribute to the PUA learners' commitment to the quality and quantity of their involvement in the PUA academic project. In conclusion, the project highlights the undeniable importance of a holistic approach, which was required from the PUA project to get the learners involved, and of not only focusing on academic preparedness. It is anticipated that these ten learners will commit their time and resources to being successful in their participation in the PUA project.

Rohan van Zyl (student):

When the project started, I was kind of in doubt as to what we would be able to do with a 360 camera that we could not do with a normal camera, which would be able to let us experience something different, and how this would give us another view of service-learning, but as we took a tour through the Kowloon walled city, we were able to see some of the histories of Hong Kong and how these had an effect on the culture that developed.

A learner indicated:

It was fun meeting new people from another country. It was very cool learning how to use the 360 cameras. It was amazing creating a video with my friends and showing Hong Kong a bit of South Africa, as well as being able to learn about Hong Kong. I would have loved to learn their language and to learn a bit of kung-fu.

Janco Venter (student):

One can easily forget about other people who have their very own challenges. One tends to think the world revolves around oneself, but this project reminded me that I am not the only one with challenges. There are other people worldwide with their own challenges, some easier and some more difficult than others. It was an enriching experience connecting with Hong Kong. It is amazing to see other places without going there, and all of this within the lockdown period in South Africa. It also helped me to realise what technology and virtual reality can bring to this world; how you can make another world your own. This is exactly what happened in this case. We had the chance to see Hong Kong and show the South African students what is outside South Africa. It also allowed learning: to learn how they operate, and commute and live in Hong Kong; to learn what animals they have and which animals thrive in their conditions; to learn about their cultures and traditions; to learn their history and what their circumstances are because of their history. This was truly an enriching eye-opener.

Another reflected:

I have learnt a lot from the project: from communicating with different nationalities to teamwork. I learnt to be patient with other people and some communicating skills and techniques. I learnt not to judge people by race and gender. It has also unleashed the adventurous part of me. Since I enrolled in this project, I have seen growth in myself.

Learner feedback:

People from Hong Kong speak Cantonese. Their city is well known for its skyscrapers. I learnt how to use a 360° camera for the first time. I gained a lot of information about animals, their habitats and their lifespan on our trip to Lory Park. Most of us went out of our comfort zones. I also learnt that, despite all our differences, we are all human beings and can learn from one another, even if we live on the other side of the world, thanks to technology.

COPC Research Unit's engagement with its practice communities

Dr Edith Madela-Mntla (Department of Family Medicine)

The Community Oriented Primary Care (COPC) Research Unit has provided services in the Pretoria West communities of Melusi and Zamazama since its inception in 2016. The Zamazama site was started in 2012, before the unit was formally established. Beginning in 2017, the unit expanded its footprint to include two communities in the East of Pretoria, that is, Woodlane Village and Cemetery View, which share Woodlane Clinic. These are all informal settlements that were not in existence during the national census in 2011 and therefore were underdeveloped in many ways when the unit started work there. The unit's engagement with these communities includes developing relationships with other structures in each area, including community leadership structures, non-profit organisations (NPOs), churches, volunteers, funders and civic organisations.

Community engagement activities by the unit include the following four core areas at all four sites: health care, research, nutrition, and education. All these sites are in various stages of development.

Health care: The COPC Research Unit provides the multidisciplinary health team and medical supplies in collaboration with the Gauteng Department of Health and Tshwane District Health Services. Health teams are comprised of a medical doctor/project coordinator, dietician, environmental health officer, and COPC team leader and registered nurse. Community health workers (CHWs) from the area are appointed for each site, and the numbers vary according to the size of the local population. Health services provided are within a comprehensive primary care strategy (COPC), which starts a health service at home, with CHWs identifying health problems and linking household members to appropriate care for early treatment of health and social problems. All data are captured on the AITA™ health app, developed by the unit to support delivery of care. Community engagement activities in this regard have included assistance with formalisation of community leadership structures and meetings, as well as campaigns and health education in a

range of areas to relevant sectors of these communities, for example, child health days and nutrition education. All patients seen are screened per COVID-19 protocol for symptoms, and either home isolation or referral for swabbing is advised accordingly. Some of these activities were negatively impacted by the lockdown in that some of the regular meetings and collaborative activities that the unit normally implements were interrupted. There were also high defaulter levels for chronic treatment, such that health teams started rounds for delivery of chronic medication picked up from local clinics.

Research: The unit conducts various research projects in these communities. There are currently three research studies at various stages in Melusi, namely a diabetes study, a health and demographic surveillance systems (longitudinal) study (with a second site in Atteridgeville) with a COVID-19 sub-study, as well as the Mayku mask study. There is a tuberculosis (TB) swabbing study at the Woodlane and Cemetery View sites. All these studies have received ethics approval from the University.

Community engagement activities in this regard have included briefing community leaders on each research study and highlighting benefits and procedures that will be involved. Representative community advisory boards (CABs) have been formed to liaise with researchers and act on behalf of the respective communities. Consultations on the boundaries and timelines have been held with community leaders, and signed letters of support have been obtained both from community and civic leaderships. These leaders have also been engaged to make inputs into the flyers to be used to inform the communities of the respective research projects. The plan is to keep the CABs updated regularly on progress and results. Lockdown has affected starting times and progress of the different studies.

Nutrition: The COPC team has been doing training at the Zamazama informal settlement kitchen for a number of years and has developed a nutritional training manual. Children under five years are treated with vitamin A and deworming and receive a micro-nutrient supplement. This is linked to nutrition training and the establishment of a vegetable garden, which will also be implemented in both Melusi and Woodlane clinic grounds.

Education: The unit works with churches and NPO partners to establish sentinel learning nodes to strengthen early learning and school readiness. The unit's role in these is to do health assessments and treatment for the children, including supplementation and deworming, as well as training Early childhood development educators on childhood conditions and early detection and referral of problems.

Higher Certificate in Sport Science Career Reach

LJ van Zyl (Higher Certificate in Sports Science: Lecturer and Sports Practical Coordinator, BEd (Exercise Science): Lecturer) & Mr Leepile Mothloalwa (HCSSE Coordinator)



In 2021 the Higher Certificate in Sports Science programme will join the Career Expo and Sports Day at Tembisa West Secondary School, as we did in 2020 despite all the challenges we faced. We will be very adaptive in getting our students' sports practical work done. The Higher Certificate in Sports Science Education (HCSSE) students will organise their roles in this event to do their sports practical hours.

The day will begin with motivational talks by the lecturers regarding the upcoming exams, followed by the Career Expo, and will end with soccer and netball matches between the learners, teachers, and some of the HCSSE students. This event will be hosted by the Mtanmo Organisation to motivate and encourage matric learners not to give up at any point in their journey towards their future and to wish them the best of luck.

As many matric learners often worry that their future is over when their results are not quite what they expect, this event will be committed to pushing learners to give their best while embracing the fact that a destiny delayed is not a destiny denied. In alignment with this, there were

several speakers—our very own students among them—emphasising the wide variety of career options available to matric learners and the possible courses that can be taken.

The incorporation of sport in 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 began. Sport also allows 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 sport most certainly overlap with skills needed in life, and this is why it is so important.

Young people are important across the 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.

CAUTION



X - RAY RADIATION

Experience of Radiography students at Daspoort Poli Clinic

Keiara Bisnath, Carla Engelbrecht, Antoinette Louise Fouché, Isabella Elizabeth Joubert, Nisrock Hlawuleka Lebese, Kamogelo Mabotja, Mabitjie Mmetla Makeke, Maria Gezena Christina Scholtz & Jana van Heerden

As part of Breastfeeding Week, which was from the first week of August, radiography students were tasked with a community engagement project. This project was for the students to educate the public, preferably pregnant or breastfeeding women, on radiation and procedures when one is pregnant. The Daspoort Poli Clinic caters for both genders and treated minor illnesses.

The clinic is a training facility for the University of Pretoria. Every week, students from different academic disciplines practise there. The clinic mostly hosts physiotherapy, dietetics, occupational therapy and sometimes nursing students. Students in these disciplines are able to engage in practical activities with the patients. Because radiography involves the use of radiation to produce images, radiography students had to prepare PowerPoint presentations to educate the community about radiation and its associated risks. Most of the patients who were present on the day were pregnant women who came for

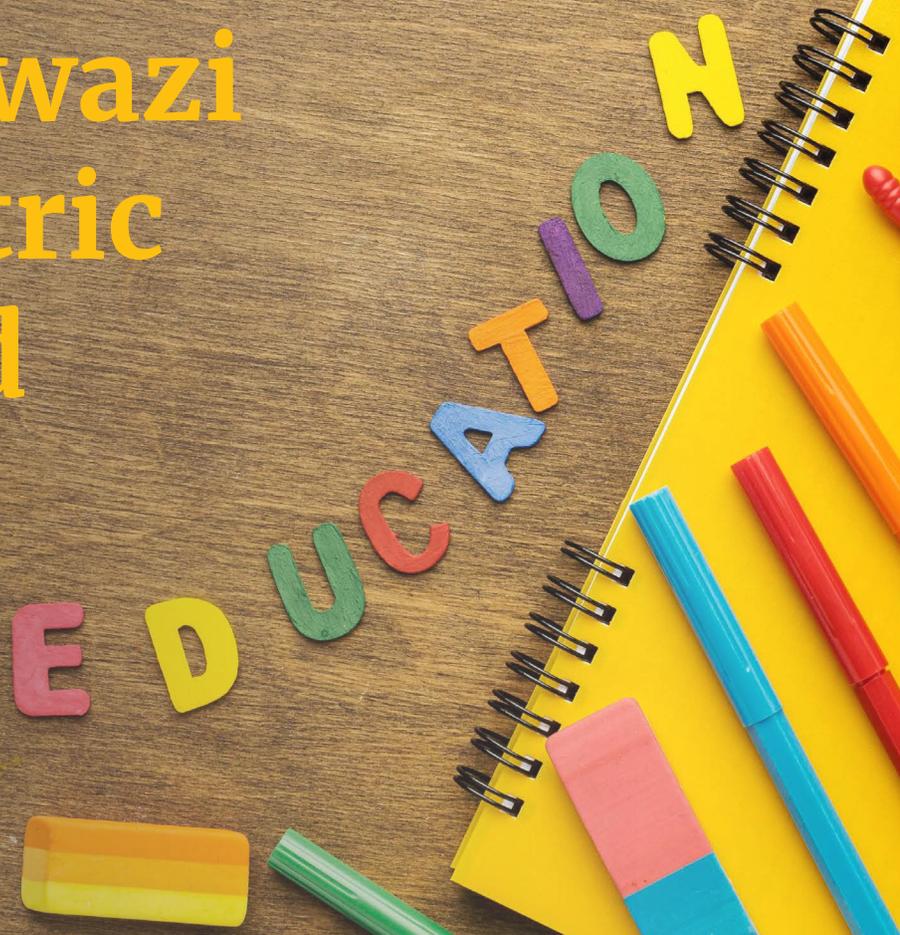
their weekly check-ups. Also present were mothers who had recently given birth and brought their children to the clinic for registration and testing. The men that we spoke to were either there to accompany and support their wives or came to get medication.

The majority of our audience had undergone x-ray procedures previously but had no knowledge of the benefits and risks of radiation. They did not know the importance of wearing a lead apron when escorting a patient into the x-ray room. This presentation was an eye-opener for them. We also learned the importance of having an interpreter when doing community work, as not all the audience members understood English.

The overall experience was incredible because we got to teach people about the different imaging modalities suitable for pregnant and lactating women. We also acquired knowledge on breastfeeding from the other students.

George Mswazi High's matric turnaround strategy in 2020

Gaza Mahundla (Principal:
George Mswazi High School)



George Mswazi High School is located in Wayeni village, under the Makhado Local Municipality in Limpopo province. This is an isolated village surrounded by rivers, which makes it very difficult to access during the rainy season.

George Mswazi High is a school with a learner enrolment of 169 learners, of whom our 2021 matric class accounts for 32. This is one of the smallest schools in the province, with a teacher provisioning of five educators, including the principal. An additional three educators are employed by the School Governing Body to bring the total teaching staff to eight.

In 2019 our school achieved an average pass rate of 56,7%, which made the department categorise our school as a chronically underperforming school because we had obtained an average matric pass rate of less than 65% for three consecutive years.

However, in 2020, with the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and all the unfavourable circumstances relating to the pandemic, there was an improvement in the matric pass rate.

The class of 2020 had achieved a 70% pass rate. The reason for this improvement was that the School Management Team engaged on different ways of doing

business and implemented the following:

- Close monitoring of the curriculum delivery and assessment gave every teacher an opportunity to administer quality tasks on time.
- Partnership with teachers from neighbouring schools who have had excellent results in the past were outsourced to teach targeted topics on certain subjects. A day would, for example, be declared Life Sciences day, when that subject would be taught.
- In certain subjects such as Mathematics and Physical Sciences, learners were allowed to attend what we call peer-tutoring sessions. The tutor would run additional tests and submit feedback to the Office of the principal. The level of engagement amongst the learners who received peer tutoring was very high as they found it easy to ask questions and have a debate on any misunderstandings.
- Learners were also invited to attend a four-hour study session every Saturday, during which tutoring regularly and writing of tests occasionally took place.

The George Mswazi High School may be a small rural school, but it takes its job of teaching seriously and has shown that it is possible to improve, even in difficult times, when all the stakeholders come together.

Occupational therapy intervention as part of the homelessness response during the COVID-19 lockdown

Sarah Dixon, Helga Lister and Michelle Janse van Rensburg (Occupational Therapy Department – University of Pretoria)



COVID-19 and lockdown were seen as both an opportunity and a challenge to confront homelessness and curb the spread of the virus among South Africa's most vulnerable¹. The initial emergency response sought to meet basic needs (food, shelter, sanitation and hygiene as well as medical services including screening for COVID-19 and Tuberculosis and managing chronic conditions).

Various services were initiated in order to assist the homeless across the shelters in the City of Tshwane. It very soon became clear that routine and participation in meaningful activities would be required to prevent the negative effects of boredom. This was also seen in other cities and highlighted by Prof Monique Franks from the Urban Futures Centre in Durban in the early days of lockdown².

The Occupational Therapy Department at the University of Pretoria saw this as a need which our professional skillset could fulfil. And so began a series of meetings with various stakeholders to see what could be done, a particular challenge since we had to remain in our homes because of lockdown measures. The initial occupational therapy services provided included sharing 'Doodles' created by occupational therapists at U-turn Ministries in Cape Town; compiling and dropping off individual activity

packs and shelter activity boxes at St Wilfrid's Church and Elim Full Gospel Church Shelter; collecting activity ideas that had been put together by a practicing occupational therapist; providing online webinar training to various staff members at the shelters in order to implement these toolkits; and creating advocacy through connecting the shelters to Jedidjah Rotter from *I have a name*, who shared personal stories on her social media pages. Furthermore, community service occupational therapists who had, during their fourth year of study, gained experience in running groups with clients attending Community Oriented Substance Use Programme (COSUP) sites in Mamelodi, compiled toolkits. These services provided the stepping stones for the implementation of occupational therapy group sessions by the students from the University of Pretoria.

We know that participation for the homeless in meaningful occupations is restricted by their socio-economic opportunities, social issues and stigmatisation as well as having to meet their immediate physiological needs, according to Maslow's hierarchy³. This results in diminished health outcomes, social interaction and well-being⁴, which in turn contributes to decreased satisfaction of one's purpose or meaning in life⁵.

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Activity packs

Furthermore, research indicates four areas of occupational needs of homeless persons including financial management/budgeting, coping skills (anger management, stress management, safety and assertiveness⁷), work and leisure skills^{6,7}. Meeting these occupational needs can be addressed through various types of intervention, including group therapy. Group intervention is considered a significant treatment method used by occupational therapists since it fosters productive occupations as well as allowing homeless persons to view themselves from a different perspective⁸. Group therapy is time effective for the therapist in order to target and address the needs of large numbers of homeless persons at any one time⁹.

The value of group intervention lies in the participation in the group, as well as the activity¹⁰. Additionally, Yalom's curative factors developed within a group through the group process are perceived as beneficial to its members¹⁰. When the fourth-year occupational therapy students were finally allowed to return to campus for their service-learning fieldwork, they started running group therapy and training sessions at various shelters including Bethesda, Capital Park, Centurion Haven of Hope, Gilead, Tau Village and Moja Gabedi (with participants from Reliable House and the St Wilfrid's shelter). Their group therapy sessions focused on skills development, socio-emotional growth, and vocational training, amongst others. Additionally, when one of the shelters closed down, they were instrumental in rehoming 17 of the 20 homeless persons, by being able to assess and determine person-specific alternative accommodation.

The pathway out of homelessness is not considered to be linear and thus requires outside assistance and intervention¹¹. Based on the above mentioned information, the barriers preventing participation in meaningful activities are evident, thus requiring intervention. Occupational therapy services through group intervention can thereby be seen as a significant tool for homeless persons and their reintegration into the community.

The experience highlighted, however, that intervention into the lives of homeless persons must be holistic. Services including these mentioned, which were initially

considered non-essential, are in fact essential. The occupational therapy response forms part of the bigger interprofessional team. Consistent, continued and sustainable intervention is required to ensure continuity and success for the homeless.

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