

Lentšu La Sechaba

THE VOICE OF THE CE COMMUNITY

Department for Education Innovation
Unit for Community Engagement



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The Transformative Power of Theatre in Community Engagement

Prof Raita Steyn (Art Education: Department of Humanities Education)

Integrating research, teaching, and community engagement is a cornerstone of Prof Raita Steyn's work in the Department of Humanities Education. A notable aspect of her community engagement project is exploring social awareness through the arts, particularly visual arts and live theatre performances.

These performances are significant in cultural and educational discourse, providing a platform for dialogue, reflection, and social change in South Africa. Specifically, Prof Steyn's project titled *'Us and the Others'* exemplifies the power of theatre in sparking critical conversations by promoting the educational role of performing arts nationally and internationally, focusing on fostering awareness through knowledge and social consciousness through empathy, with particular emphasis on human rights advancement in South Africa.

Furthermore, in the context of the above mentioned project and collaboration with Dr Pranitha Bharath from History Education, Mr Renos Nicos Spanoudes, who is of Greek Cypriot origin and a prominent figure within the South African Greek community, has played a pivotal role.

Mr Spanoudes, the Head of Arts and Culture and Dramatic Arts at King David High School Victory Park and a contract Lecturer and Coordinator in the Department of Drama at UP, delivered two captivating segments from his solo performances, entitled *'It's All About Memories...'*, to students from the Art Education and History Education disciplines at Groenkloof Campus on 31 October 2023.



In the first segment, titled *'Odyssey'*, Spanoudes skilfully portrayed the remarkable journey of Advocate George Bizos, famously known as *'Mandela's Lawyer'*.

Through the playwright Victor Gordon's narrative, the audience was transported into the life of George Bizos and his tireless advocacy for human rights, particularly his collaboration with Nelson Mandela.

Spanoudes' performance was nothing short of inspiring, as he flawlessly embodied George Bizos' persona, capturing his mannerisms and personality traits with precision.

The second segment, *'Living in Strange Lands'*, explored the life of Dimitri Tsafendas, the infamous assassin of the South African Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd (1901-1966).

Through Anton Krueger's narrative, Spanoudes explored

the complexities surrounding Tsafendas' actions, challenging the audience to reconsider notions of madness and political activism.

The monologue prompted critical reflections on identity, history, gender, race, and social class, igniting discussions on intersectionality and fostering a deeper understanding of socio-political dynamics.

These performances serve as catalysts for dialogue and introspection, broadening perspectives and promoting socio-political consciousness within communities.

By facilitating discussions on complex historical events and contemporary issues, Spanoudes' contributions fostered interracial interaction in cooperation and mutual understanding, exemplifying the transformative power of the arts in community engagement.

Matters of interest

- The CE Forum meetings are scheduled to take place on the following dates:
 - 10 April 2024
 - 23 July 2024
 - 18 November 2024
- Refer to the links below to some of the recommended journals for submission of community engagement articles:
 - [Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement](#)
 - [Research involvement and engagement](#)
 - [International Journal of Community and Social Development](#)
 - [Journal of Community Practice](#)
 - [Journal of Community Service and Empowerment](#)
- Copies of the previous CE Newsletters are available at <https://www.up.ac.za/education-innovation/article/257709/community-engagement>.
- The Unit for Community Engagement invites you to report on community engagement activities by submitting articles for publication in the next newsletter (Winter 2024).

Contact person: Ms Kanye Rampa

Education Consultant: Curricular Community Engagement
Email: kanye.rampa@up.ac.za or Tel: 012 420 4285 (w)

Contact details for the Unit for Community Engagement

Dr Eugene Machimana

Head of Curricular Community Engagement:

eugene.machimana@up.ac.za;

Tel: +27 (0) 12 420 5199

Ms Kanye Rampa

Education Consultant: Curricular Community Engagement:

kanye.rampa@up.ac.za;

Tel: +27 (0) 12 420 4285

Mr Albert Matlhekethla

Project Coordinator: Community Engagement:

albert.matlhekethla@up.ac.za;

Tel: +27 (0) 12 420 4068

Ms Londiwe Mahlangu

Projector Coordinator: Community Engagement:

londiwe.mahlangu@up.ac.za; or
communityengagement@up.ac.za

Tel: +27 (0) 12 420 2826

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Editor: **Ms Kanye Rampa**

Graphic designer: **Mr Keith Mankgane**

Language editor: **Ms Nicole Best**

Proofreader: **Dr Eugene Machimana**

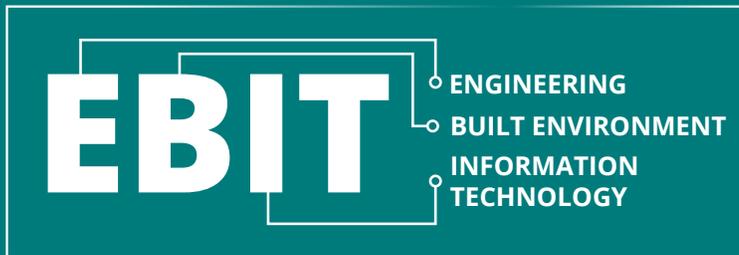


From left: Mr Albert Matlhekethla, Ms Kanye Rampa, Dr Eugene Machimana and Ms Londiwe Mahlangu

EBIT Students Lead Transformative Community Projects

Bonolo Mokoka

(Lecturer: Community-Based Projects)



Second-year Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology (EBIT) students at the University of Pretoria (UP) dedicated themselves to community engagement projects that have left a lasting impact on the provinces of Gauteng and the North West.

These initiatives, totalling around 350, were the perfect intersection of academic theory and real-world application, showcasing the potential of applied knowledge to bring about positive change. The collaboration between the students and their community partners revealed their dedication and skill, as affirmed by the feedback from these partners.

In a sea of remarkable efforts, three projects stood out for their innovation, impact, and teamwork, showcasing the exceptional work of the students.

Among the multitude of commendable efforts by the students, three projects stood out for their innovation, impact, and collaborative spirit. These are the top three projects that exemplify the outstanding work of our exceptional students:

First Place: Group 22

Community Partner: Tshwane Haven Children's Home

Group Members: Adam Boyens, Jonathan Clark, Cam James, Riaan Schoeman and Vayur Bhana

Project Summary: Tshwane Haven Children's Home provides refuge and care for underprivileged children. Recognising the importance of a safe and engaging environment for the children, Group 22 embarked on the restoration of the home's trampoline, an essential recreational asset.

Their comprehensive plan included excavating the trampoline pit, reinforcing its structure, replacing worn-out components, and enhancing safety features. Through their efforts, Group 22 aimed to ensure a secure and enjoyable space for all children at Tshwane Haven Children's Home.

Second Place: Group 26

Project: Sensory Pathway at UNICA School

Group Members: Hannah Essa, Charlize Nel, Patterson Rainbird-Webb and Adrian Swanepoel

Project Summary: UNICA School caters to children with autism,

offering a nurturing environment tailored to their unique needs. Group 26 identified the need for a sensory pathway, a therapeutic tool designed to stimulate sensory experiences by enhancing the learning environment for the learners. Their proposal aimed to create a safe and enriching space conducive to the development and well-being of the learners, particularly those within the 14-21 age group.

Third Place: Group 232

Project: Mamelodi Campus Sensory Garden

Group Members: Disego Maile, Charity Moloto, Lungile Ngomezulu, Queen Timane and Zanke Vosloo

Project Summary: Led by Dr Martina Jordaan, Head of Community Engagement Research and Postgraduate Studies at Mamelodi Campus, Group 232 embarked on the creation of a sensory garden at local preschools. Recognising the therapeutic benefits of sensory experiences, their project aimed to design and implement a recreational tool that would support early childhood development (ECD) practitioners in fostering sensory exploration and learning among young children.

These projects not only demonstrate innovation, impact, and teamwork but also reflect the students' commitment to and skill in making a meaningful difference in their communities. Well done to all students who completed their Joint Community Project (JCP)!

Phyllis Robertson Home

Jady Hewitt (General Manager)

Phyllis Robertson Home is primarily a residential care facility for adults with disabilities. Our mission is to allow the families of the persons entrusted to our care to have peace of mind, knowing that their family members living with disability are well cared for and enjoy living life in full colour according to each one's individual capabilities.

The organisation has been operating in the community for 62 years. We have 53 staff members and volunteers who are involved in running the organisation. Currently, 70 beneficiary organisations, such as schools and early childhood centres, receive help from us.

We provide single room accommodation and, where necessary, assistance with tasks of daily living; three balanced, wholesome meals and three snacks per day; cleaning service; laundry service; and medication management, from collecting and packing to dispensing the right prescribed dose to the correct recipient at the specified time.

We also create awareness around disabilities and act as advocates for the rights of people living with disabilities. Success is very difficult to show in an industry where people cannot be 'fixed' or 'cured'. However, when you have people who have been residents here for more than 50 years and their families are still satisfied that this is the best place for their loved ones, it illustrates that we are living our values, and it works.

However, the omnipresent challenge of a lack of funding from any state department prevents us from serving the majority of the population who cannot afford to pay our fees, although they are modest by comparison to other private facilities.

In terms of partnership with the University of Pretoria, several departments send their senior students to us for familiarisation with persons with disabilities and for practical experience. Currently, students from the medical school and students of physiotherapy and occupational therapy pay regular visits to us. Working with students

offers the opportunity to 'provide' services which we could not afford otherwise. It also offers new perspectives on old challenges and provides fresh thinking. We have opportunities where students can get actively engaged and support the work of our organisation. For instance, our residents run a project to create eco-friendly firefighters from waste material and wax.

A marketing strategy for this product would be helpful. The purpose of this project is to provide a sense of accomplishment to our residents who cannot otherwise be economically active. It should also provide a sustainable (if low) income to grow the project and provide a small stipend for the participants.

We also collaborate with Helplift South Africa, who provide us with services from volunteers and occasionally provide items on our wish list. We host regular social events at our premises to entertain the residents, their families, and interested members of the community.

Setting up a new service at Blymoedig Psycho-Geriatric clinic

Sune Kritzinger (Fourth-year Occupational Therapy student) and Helga Lister (Occupational Therapy Lecturer)



As part of the Department of Occupational Therapy's collaboration with the Tshwane District mental health services, students had the opportunity of working at NGOs that have not previously been a part of the sites serviced by the department.

In their second work integrated learning block of 2023, the students were placed at a newly identified site called Blymoedig Clinic. Blymoedig Clinic is a non-profit, psycho-geriatric clinic located in Roodeplaas, Pretoria.

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The clinic currently has between 76-80 residents that are staying at the facility. The clinic specialises in long-term psychiatric care.

The residents have various illnesses and conditions, including Alzheimers, Schizophrenia, Down Syndrome, Bipolar disorder, Major Depression, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Parkinson's disease, Huntington's Chorea as well as people who have had various traumatic brain injuries and strokes.

During the first visit, the students met the various stakeholders within the facility, and were oriented to the facility including the services being provided. It was evident that the existing structure of the site and its processes had been designed to ensure that residents felt comfortable and at home.

The facility has a valuable structured daily and weekly routine that they follow to ensure that all the residents are optimally engaged and orientated throughout their day. At Blymoedig nursing care is prioritised. There are various healthcare workers at the facility who ensure that all the residents are bathed, fed and dressed.

Blymoedig aims to ensure that all residents maintain their dignity, irrespective of their mental or physical condition. The residents are seen as individuals and the facility strives for patient-centred care.

Furthermore, the clinic endeavours to ensure that all residents have meaning or purpose in their daily lives, which includes sharing small responsibilities such as keeping a log book of visitors; helping to set the table; and helping to clean up after meals. The clinic allows the residents to engage in activities that they enjoy doing or that keep them stimulated such as doing needlework, knitting, and reading books. Opportunities

and/or resources that are required for these, are supplied by the clinic. Blymoedig Clinic appointed a new activity coordinator/manager in 2023, who is responsible for providing daily activities and group sessions with the residents.

The role of Occupational Therapy at Blymoedig

After the students conducted their analysis (looking at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the facility), they determined that the existing structure and routine within the facility is of a huge advantage, as it enabled them to start with the activity programme for the residents in the clinic.

They followed the occupational therapy process to determine which additional therapeutic activities would be appropriate for the residents. The occupational therapy students were able to group the residents according to their level of functioning, which allowed for the activities chosen to be more meaningful and purposeful to the residents.

Additionally, the students provided skills training and education by including the facility's activity coordinator during their sessions to ensure the necessary transfer of knowledge and skills and thereby create continuity after the students' work integrated learning period had finished. They also shared with her an activity booklet of various activities that had been designed by them for the different functional levels of residents.

During their six weeks in the community, of which two days a week were spent at Blymoedig, the students also focussed on adapting basic caregiving activities to be more therapeutic for the lower functioning clients who were unable to attend group activities. They also identified the need



to provide skills training for the healthcare workers within the clinic. Institutionalisation is a significant barrier for healthcare workers.

The students' goal was to educate these healthcare workers about the importance of patient-centred care and seeing the residents as people, thereby improving the workers' ability to communicate and interact with the residents more therapeutically.

When this is implemented successfully, it will ultimately improve the residents' quality of life. A skills training booklet was also made to ensure that the clinic is able to keep track of the skills training or education sessions which were done and maintain a register of who attended these sessions. This is to ensure the sustainability of the skills training.

Blymoedig clinic is a wonderful environment with friendly staff and people that are willing to learn. It truly feels like a home, and all the residents agree that they feel safe and loved. The student Occupational Therapy intervention has been a valuable addition to the clinic, as it will further facilitate a holistic treatment approach to ensure the optimal functioning of everyone there.

Let's Dog Event

Nokuzola Faith Nkosi (Lecturer-DVTD [OP-PGSA Community Engagement Officer])



In support of Rabies Awareness Month and rabies prevention, the Onderstepoort Postgraduate Student Association (OP-PGSA) of the Faculty of Veterinary Science embarked on a journey to make a difference in the lives of our tail-wagging friends and their owners. This event took place at Wollies Animal Shelter, Pretoria North.

Rabies is one of the most fatal communicable diseases, and 28 September each year serves as World Rabies Day, which aims to raise awareness about this deadly disease and help the world unite to fight the disease.

Individuals typically get infected with rabies from the bite of a rabid animal. Other possible but

rare transmission routes include scratches, abrasions, or open wounds that are exposed to saliva or other infectious material. The goal of the OP-PGSA for this fulfilling event was to raise funds for the association while promoting a great cause.

The Let's Dog event involved a variety of activities such as a fun walk, a dog appearance show, and a live raffle. To cater to the medical needs of furry attendees, staff from the Onderstepoort Veterinary Hospital were there for free vaccination, microchipping, and deworming.

The event embodied the spirit of care and compassion for all our four-legged friends. Various stalls were also there for all the foodies and shopaholics. Lots of donations

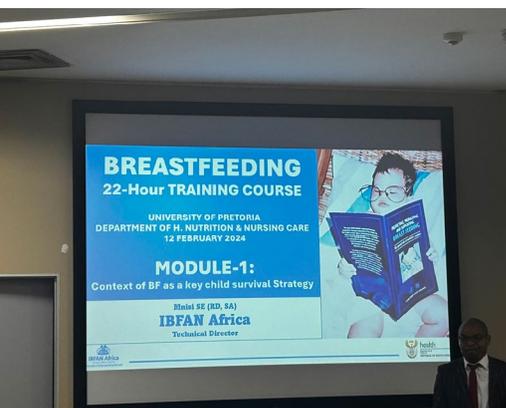
in the form of food, toys, and many other materials were also contributed to the hosting venue, Wollies. Everyone present had an awesome time, won incredible prizes, and made lifelong memories.

The event was sponsored by Wollies Animal Project, Inqaba Biotec, ZooOmics, Tuks FM 107.2, Nutribyte Premium Pet Food, MSD Animal Health, Ultra Pet, and the University of Pretoria Onderstepoort Veterinary Academic Hospital.

OP-PGSA truly appreciates how they were enabled to spread the love for their furry friends by these entities and are also grateful to all the volunteers of the day.

Breastfeeding matters: Engage, Empower and Educate

Heather Legodi, Natascha Olivier, Betty Mohlala, Marion Beeforth, Eugene Machimana, Londiwe Mahlangu, Mmamakanye Rampa, Albert Matlheketha, Maurine Musie, Molatelo Kgodane, Sithembiso Mnisi, Malebina Botsane, Gontse Dikgole, Tshgefotso Matlhane and Phumudzo Tshiambara



The University of Pretoria (UP) Department of Human Nutrition and Department of Nursing, the Unit for Community Engagement, and the International Baby Food Action Network Africa (IBFAN), have for the first time collaborated in offering the 20 hours three-day Breastfeeding Training Course from 19 to 26 February 2024.

The main aim of this movement is to address breastfeeding matters/issues and promote the importance of breastfeeding.

We do this by engaging with relevant stakeholders within communities, empowering healthcare students and community members with relevant information and tools in order for them to be confident in educating communities in the effort to promote, protect and support breastfeeding.

The technical approach of the students' knowledge empowerment began with advocating and collaborating with different stakeholders, and they are now at the stage of knowledge and skills building (formal training) with

practical experiences. This will be followed by mentoring and coaching during the students' community block (with quality improvement projects - from identified practical problems related to breastfeeding); and finally, the monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning.

Dr Heather Legodi, Head of the Department of Human Nutrition, offered a welcome and introduction to the course; she was followed by the Viva Foundation choir, who sang two beautiful songs. Students started with an introspection to determine their own attitudes toward breastfeeding.

This was followed by Mr Sithembiso Mnisi, from the International Baby Food Action Network, setting the scene of breastfeeding in South Africa and globally. He went on to talk about policies and how these tie into child survival.

The Viva Foundation choir closed the first session; they set the room alight, toes tapping and hips swaying with their music, and the whole hall was up dancing.

The second session, by Natascha Olivier from the Department of Human Nutrition, covered the miracle of breastmilk, and the various components and bioactive factors that make it different and unique from artificial milk and animal milk.

The session continued with an overview of breast anatomy using broccoli as a hands-on teaching tool, and dove deeper into the physiology of lactation and the importance of the concept of supply and demand.

Megan Wrigglesworth, from the Department of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, gave insight into the importance of infant oral and facial anatomy in relation to breastfeeding, with videos to illustrate how everything works together.

After the lunch break, Dr Maurine Musie and Mrs Molatelo Kgodane from the Department of Nursing Sciences shared more on the topic of early initiation of breastfeeding, including antenatal support, supporting the first breastfeeding, and key principles for breastfeeding support.

Mrs Marion Beeforth from the UP Department of Human Nutrition spoke on expected feeding behaviour and the assessment of breastfeeding.

Mrs Tobie Muller from La Leche League and Dr Debby Kupolati from Wellbeing Africa introduced the students to various community support organisations, and how these can be accessed.

Hong Kong Polytechnic University Students Conduct A.I. Pose Recognition Workshop for University of Pretoria Pre-University Academy and Mamelodi Learners

Dr Martina Jordaan (Head: Community Engagement Research and Postgraduate Studies, Mamelodi Campus)

This past recess, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HKPU) hosted an A.I. Pose Recognition Programme workshop for 99 learners from the University of Pretoria Pre-University Academy and learners from Mamelodi.

The initiative was aimed at promoting Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) literacy among youth and was a joint project of the Department of Computing and the Service-Learning and Leadership Office of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

This was the fifth project that the Hong Kong Polytechnic University presented with the UP-PUA and learners from Mamelodi, but the first in-person project, as the previous four were virtual.

During the six-day programme, 30 Hong Kong Polytechnic University students presented an A.I. Pose Recognition Programme workshop, while UP alumni volunteered to assist with the programme.

Dr Martina Jordaan, Head of Community Engagement Research and Postgraduate Studies at UP's Mamelodi Campus, said that the project was initiated by HKPU but is part of an ongoing collaboration between the institution and UP.

The programme introduced learners to various aspects of artificial intelligence, and on the last day, they had to show that they could



apply their machine learning and block programming knowledge in a competition that included moves of the Baduanjin qigong.

Dr Jordaan expressed pride in being part of this collaborative effort to educate youth and promote STEM literacy. She hopes that the initiative will inspire and encourage more students to pursue careers in STEM-related fields.

The learners shared positive feedback about the project, indicating how impactful it was for

them. They said that the programme helped them believe they could pursue a career in IT, and that they enjoyed interacting with the students. The project created a space of cultural exchange and technological advancement for both PolyU students and the learners of Mamelodi community.

Dr Jordaan said these projects had created additional opportunities for growth and development of relationships between the University of Pretoria Pre-University Academy, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and the Mamelodi campus.

Plant Science Honours students develop educational trials

Prof Nigel Barker (Department of Plant and Soil Sciences)



The Department of Plant and Soil Sciences offers an Honours elective module called “Plant, People and Planet” (BOT 789). Prof. Nigel Barker leads this module, and its aim is to involve students in projects that increase awareness about plants and the environment. In 2023, these students were split into two groups, with two separate projects.

One project was based on campus, and required the students to create a botanical trail that provides information about some of the amazing and unusual plants that grow on our Hatfield Campus (which is a formal Botanical Garden in its own right – the Manie van der Schijff Botanical Garden – see <https://www.up.ac.za/botanical-garden>).

Building on submissions prepared by some of these students and their peers when they took the third-year BOT 366 Plant Diversity course the previous year, the #LoveYourCampus project was developed. Working hand in hand with the Tourism Honours students, led by Prof. Karen Harris, as well as the horticulturist responsible for the gardens, Mr Jason Sampson, the plant science students trialed out the concept by developing the

content for a website, and designing small plaques bearing the name of the plant and a QR code that takes the visitor to a web page with information on the species and in some cases its interesting history as relating to UP.

Initially an A4 page was developed with the QR code and a link to a Google form for a survey. These were mounted on trees around campus, and the results from the survey collated.

Thereafter, having had feedback from the survey, the design of the plaques was finalized, and Prof. Barker liaised with Facilities Management to ensure these met with official approval and could be installed. Unfortunately, the official plaques arrived too late in the year for an official “launch” of #LoveYourCampus botanical tour, but this will be done in 2024.

The second group of students worked with the renowned traditional healer Dr Ephraim Mabena in Mamelodi. Dr Mabena is passionate about environmental education, and wanted to have an educational trail developed on the mountain ridge above Mamelodi, where he has his medicinal plants gardens. These students worked on developing the content

for large signboards (again with QR codes linking to additional content on the web) that were then mounted on poles and put in the ground on the mountain in Dr Mabena’s Mothong African Heritage site.

The challenge faced here was trying to get the scientific content explained in a way that Grade 8-12 learners could understand. These large signs were installed at the end of the semester last year and have yet to be formally tested with a group of school learners – a process that future BOT 789 students can continue with so that this project can be further developed and expanded.

In reality, although divided into two groups, all the BOT 789 students participated in both projects and helped each other out; they also interacted with various communities beyond their immediate scientific context, including Dr Mabena, his horticultural interns, tourism students and staff, as well as other members of the public. Most importantly, their legacy from these two projects is there for all to see and experience, and can also be further built on in the future.

Circle of Life: 25 Years of service in Eersterust Community

Sarah Shkaidy (CoL Manager)

Circle of Life (CoL) started operating in Eersterust in 1999. Our mission and purpose are to support those infected with and affected by Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and other related diseases.

We promote awareness and prevention of HIV in our communities. Our services include screening for Tuberculosis (TB), Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), COVID-19, and other life-threatening conditions to ensure those infected take proper actions to seek medical help and adhere to treatment.

We offer services that benefit the community. Primarily, we support People Living with HIV by giving health talks, Bible studies and food parcels.

Some of the patients who need our assistance are bedridden. We also look after stay-home children who are not in school.

Our work involves home visits during which we capture household needs of families as well as provide HIV Testing and Counselling, and screening for TB, STIs and COVID-19. The organisation is run by a team

that consists of a Project Manager and two Coordinators. They are responsible for the HIV Testing Services (HTS) and Social Mobilisation. Community members acknowledge the work Circle of Life is doing in the community.

The home visits brought our attention to the number of children eligible for pre-school, primary and high school that are not attending school. Parents who struggle to get grants for their children are referred to social workers.

As far as challenges in the community are concerned, the biggest in our community are unemployment, substance abuse, and other social issues such as children not attending school and victimisation of elderly grandparents by their grandchildren.

Our partnership with the University of Pretoria involves working with Dr Eugene Machimana, Unit for Community Engagement, and

different faculties at the University of Pretoria. Third year students in Radiology, Psychology, and Physiology come to our community to undertake practical studies.

Students can further assist the community by offering career guidance to the Matriculants and by visiting schools and community organisations to encourage education interventions and self-development. Besides UP, we also engage non-profit organisations (NPOs), churches and schools in the work we do.

Circle of Life and the community at large gain so much knowledge through working with students from different faculties. Our beneficiaries are also empowered by the understanding of different treatments and how to use them. We also collaborate with the District AIDS Council on developing Multisector plans on HIV, TB and STIs responses.



Transforming the youth of Malusi informal settlement through education support

Hlakudi Malatji (Founder and Executive Director)

Malusi Youth Development Organisation (MYDO) was established on 20 February 2015 and registered on 25/05/2015 with registration number 152-983 NPO by a visionary team of youths in Malusi informal settlement, Booyens Pretoria.

The idea was born out of a realisation that most youth living in impoverished communities, especially informal settlements, are struggling to continue or complete their education and to have a positive sense of self and place in the world.

Since youth in informal settlements are most vulnerable, MYDO have been working towards changing the environment in which young people live to facilitate their emotional, intellectual, physical, mental, and social development growth. To accomplish this goal, young people must be in a caring, inclusive learning environment that promotes their best effort and reinforces personal respect.

MYDO provides a variety of programmes for youth in Malusi 1, 2 and 3 in Booyens informal settlement and surrounding areas. The organisation has formed partnerships with local schools, clinics, the South African Police Service (SAPS), the University of Pretoria (UP) and other community-based formations to unite for the youth's goal and to foster a commitment

to young people that will promote pro-social friendships, strong interpersonal skills, and reassert a sense of hope in the future. Only through personal relationships can a sense of individual responsibility be re-established that will give youth the commitment to follow through on the path to adulthood with a sense of pride and accomplishment.

A team of nine full-time staff members and twelve volunteers is involved in running the organisation. MYDO runs four programmes, namely after-school care, feeding scheme, Sport and Art Programme, and Youth Empowerment and Entrepreneurship. Specific services offered to the youth include skills development, training, life skills, job placements, tertiary applications, and bursary applications.

The organisation also serves as a linkage between various institutions, including non-profit organisations (NPOs), UP, City of Tshwane, and government departments, which enables them to engage with the community on several projects and services. The after-school care has got 361 beneficiaries and a skills programme with over 500 beneficiaries, bringing the total number of beneficiaries in 2023 to 861.

Some of the challenges experienced in the community are poverty and food insecurity, youth unemployment,

lack of skills, and a shortage of basic services. Students' support in these areas is a constant need.

The organisation collaborates with UP students from various departments, including Architecture, Occupational Therapy (OT), Dentistry, and Engineering on projects such as vegetable gardens, the building of shade structures by architecture students, workshops by dieticians, and OT workshops.

Other partners include Rata Social Services, Doctors Without Borders, Well Being Africa, Beth Shan, Future Families, Community Media Trust, and the Entrust Foundation.

MYDO has grown since its inception in 2015. The organisation has moved from a one-room structure to a functional youth centre facility through partnerships and collaborations. It has become a one-stop shop for community engagements.

The school results of the youth are reported to have improved, and youth are assisted with bursary opportunities. The local unemployment rate is said to be at a minimum through the job opportunities made available to young people. Some of them have even established Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) through the help of MYDO.

Empowering Communities: A Synergistic Journey in Employment Solutions with Industrial Psychology honours students

André Rust, Kailey Erasmus, Caitlyn Sherman and Tishca de Coning (Industrial Psychology honours students)
Edited by Dr Martha Harunavamwe (Senior Lecturer of Industrial Psychology)



In a recent collaboration between Industrial Psychology honours students from the University of Pretoria (Department of Human Resource Management) and Express Employment Professionals (EEP), a comprehensive community project was initiated to address the pressing issue of unemployment in specific South African communities. The purpose of this project was, firstly, to provide tangible employment opportunities for individuals in areas like Olievenhoutbosch, Laudium, and Tembisa. Secondly, to equip the individuals with valuable skills and contribute to the long-term economic development of these communities.

Objectives of the Project

The objectives of the project included addressing the overload of clients from EEP seeking employment

services, preventing EEP employee burnout due to increased workload, establishing a sufficient pool of pre-screened candidates for urgent job openings at EEP, minimising missed placement opportunities, and alleviating unemployment among low-skilled rural individuals. EEP, as the community partner, brought its expertise in industrial relations support, recruitment, and temporary staffing to the table. EEP played a crucial role in preparing the team of honours students for the community project.

Through a Training Day, facilitated by an EEP Supervisor, the university student team gained knowledge and skills in recruitment administration, effective candidate interviewing, and post-recruitment drive protocols. This engagement not only enhanced

the team's individual and collective capabilities but also contributed to the overall success of the recruitment drive and its positive impact on the targeted rural communities.

Benefits

Both the university and EEP benefited significantly from this collaboration. The university gained practical insights into the real-world application of Industrial and Organisational Psychology (IOP) principles, particularly in recruitment, selection, and training.

The academic institution also provided an opportunity for its students to gain hands-on experience in the field, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical implementation. On the other hand, EEP benefited from the enthusiastic and well-prepared university team, streamlining their recruitment drive process and expanding their impact on local communities.

Impact to the Community

Regarding the outcome of this project, a total of 224 CVs were scanned, leading to meaningful contact with 176 suitable candidates. During the recruitment drive, 153 interviews were conducted, ensuring a thorough evaluation of potential candidates. Furthermore, 145 unemployed individuals from the target communities were successfully

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uploaded to the system, creating a pool of qualified candidates for future opportunities. The engagement resulted in the immediate placement of two candidates on the day of the interview, emphasising the project's efficacy in speedily connecting job seekers with employment.

Beyond the numerical achievements, the project offered a comprehensive training experience for team members, empowering them with hands-on skills in interviewing, recruitment, and candidate selection.

Challenges

Despite the project's success, challenges were encountered, including a potential overload of clients at the recruitment drive and overworked employees at EEP. However, proactive measures such as strategic location selection, multilingual assistance, and a well-structured testing process successfully mitigated these challenges. The transparent and ethical approach, coupled with a focus on member safety, contributed to the overall success of the project.

In conclusion, the recent community project between the University of Pretoria and Express Employment Professionals (EEP) not only addressed the unemployment challenges in South African communities but also provided valuable benefits to both partners. This engagement revealed the positive impact of collaboration between academic institutions and businesses, demonstrating the potential for meaningful change in local communities while providing practical learning experiences for university students.

CV and Cover Letter Writing Training

Selena A. Da Corte; Luca W. Collett; Joane Opperman and Mariete Strauss (Industrial Psychology honours students) Edited by Dr Martha Harunavamwe (Senior Lecturer: Industrial Psychology)

Our community service project aimed to enhance the employability of University of Pretoria students by conducting CV and cover letter sessions. The project was executed in collaboration with Career Services and targeted students of various academic levels to provide them with guidance regarding the structuring of effective CVs and cover letters.

Our project also included participation in career activations and fairs, informing students about the additional programmes of Career Services, career development opportunities and connecting students with potential employers.

Our project successfully assisted over 100 students in creating their tailored CVs and cover letters. Furthermore, we were able to provide networking opportunities for over 1000 students through career fairs, and connected with over 600 students in career activations.

Our team, in collaboration with Career Services, emphasized the importance of ethical practices in job applications and provided valuable skills to improve the confidence of students during their professional journeys. We received positive feedback from Career Services which highlighted our commitment to make a real impact in the community, to provide invaluable advice, and to improve the professional documents and confidence levels of all the students we interacted with.



Career information workshops for Grade 9 learners

Mmaphuthi Maditse, Bridgette Makgareetsa and Obakeng Mosisidi (Industrial Psychology honours students) Edited by Dr Martha Harunavamwe (Senior Lecturer: Industrial Psychology)



The project aimed at conducting a series of workshops to inform Grade 9 pupils of the available career opportunities in different areas of study. The target was learners from poor communities who do not have access to information regarding career opportunities before they make decisions on which subjects to focus on.

Unlike in other schools, where pupils receive career assessments and career guidance, some schools do not have such facilities, and thus the project played a vital role by providing necessary career information and resources to learners at Chipa-Tabane Comprehensive High School in Refilwe, Pretoria. The project focused on providing learners with comprehensive information, including generic admission

requirements, APS scores, and details about different courses offered in colleges and universities in South Africa (handout prospectus from different colleges and universities). This information empowered learners to make well-informed decisions regarding their subject choices.

Outcome of project

Overall, the Grade 9 Subject Choice project stands as a successful initiative that not only filled a critical gap in the community but also laid the foundation for future projects aimed at providing guidance and support to young individuals regarding their possible careers. The Grade 9 Subject Choice project at Chipa-Tabane Comprehensive High School yielded positive outcomes, significantly impacting the learners' ability to make informed career decisions.

The project successfully addressed the absence of career centres and limited career information in the community by providing valuable insights into various career paths related to specific subject choices. The project empowered Grade 9 learners to make decisions aligned with their long-term career goals. The outcomes include enhanced motivation, improved decision-making abilities, and a positive influence on academic performance among the students.

Challenges

Despite facing challenges such as power outages and printing limitations, the project team persevered, demonstrating resilience and adaptability. This highlights the commitment and dedication of the team to the success of the project.

Love Circle Senior Club

Josina Tellie (Manager: Love Circle Senior Club)

Love Circle Senior Club is a community centre based in Eersterust, with a main objective of bringing the Elderly together to socialise, discuss burning issues pertaining to their lives, and do handwork; all while learning new skills. The purpose is to ensure that the Elderly gather and participate in activities that help improve their mental and physical fitness.

Love Circle has been operating in the community for ten years, offering services to benefit the community of Eersterust. Among these services are Mother's Day and Women's Day events, where motivational speakers are invited and refreshments served. In addition, 3-day a week fitness training and football training sessions form part of the club's regular get-together routine. A team of five volunteers from the community helps in the running the club. To date, a total of 15 local beneficiaries are supported, including a crèche, a school, and learners.

The organisation's success over its ten years of existence has led to resounding popularity in the area. Notably, training sessions are very popular and have gained lots of praise for the football programme and with fundraisers.

However, success did not come without its share of challenges. "Our own meeting place is still a challenge, lots of kids in the informal settlement not attending school poverty, drug abuse, load-shedding," said Tellie, the club manager.

Besides UP, Circle of Love collaborates with Tshwane Elderly Golden Football League, Eersterust Community Policing Forum (CPF), Poort FM, and the Eersterust Football Association.

Recently, the club was invited to play in the annual Elderly league in Athlone, Cape Town. They organised a fundraising event to be able to cater for the trip, and to buy tracksuits and t-shirts branded with a logo.

The second event was the Women's Day Elderly football celebration, which featured 11 teams from all over Tshwane and where up to 200 players gathered at the Eersterust stadium.

The third event was a Women's Day treat for women who work selflessly in the community. About 60 women were treated to a lunch, followed by a massage, pedicure, manicure, hair care, and make-up by a group of service providers.

Community engagement opportunities are made available to UP students where they can utilise their skills in areas where the club may be lacking resources (e.g. bookkeeping, fundraising).

Another important need that students could help address is blankets for the Elderly. Last but not least, students could share ideas on how to deal with challenges pertaining to troublesome kids in the community.



Happy and healthy

Ms Leya Abba, Ms Ina Kotze and Mr Andrew Nashed (Fourth-year Dietetics students: Community nutrition internship)
Ms Phumudzo Tshiambara, Ms Shaszia Alli and Ms Marion Beeforth (Supervisors: Faculty of Health Sciences)



The fourth-year dietetics students have been placed at the Daspoort Poli Clinic for seven weeks for their community nutrition internship. During this time a non-communicable disease (NCD) health and awareness day was conducted, regarding obesity and healthy eating.

The following disciplines integrated with the dietetics students' programme to make it a success: medical students, community health workers, and oral hygiene students, who all covered aspects regarding obesity/diabetes.

Savemore and Print copy sign kindly donated all the ingredients and posters that were used for the intervention day. An intervention was held which consisted of three dietitian students covering various

aspects of nutrition and how a balanced meal should look. A healthy eating placemat was given out to all participants. A pre- and post-test was conducted to monitor if the education was beneficial, and tastings of the dietetics students' newly developed recipes, with a take-home recipe, were distributed. The recipes that were made consisted of overnight oats, a chickpea salad, and an egg, potato and pea curry.

We had local non-profit organisations (NPOs) involved, which included Johan Cloete, Hercules community policing forum, and his secretary, Tilla van Deventer. Tilla also works at the Hercules community policing forum and is a training coordinator. She is also part of the Victim Empowerment Unit at the Hercules South African Police Department (SAPD).

Petro Slater, who is the owner of Eljada Huis, sponsored diabetic-friendly rusks on the day. Jan Kontreikos sponsored four meals to our lucky draw prize winners. The dietetics students would like to kindly thank all the people that were involved during the intervention day and made the day a complete success.

Chris Batts from Hi 5 Stereo was also present at the intervention day and broadcasted the programme on live air where 57 000 people were listening and reached. The Community Orientated Substance Abuse Programme (COSUP) volunteers and workers were also present on the day and brought awareness to their programme and how drugs can lead to obesity and NCD as well.

Community Engagement Forum Members 2024

Representative/Secundus	Faculty/Department
Prof Gerrit Stols	Director Department for Education Innovation
Dr Eugene Machimana	Head of Curricular Community Engagement Department for Education: Innovation Unit for Community Engagement

Faculty support: Department for Education Innovation - Unit for Community Engagement	
Ms Kanye Rampa	Engineering, Built Environment, and Information Technology (EBIT)
	Humanities
	Veterinary Science
Mr Albert Matheketha	Health Sciences
	Law
	Theology and Religion
Ms Londiwe Mahlangu	Economic Management Sciences (EMS)
	Education
	Natural & Agricultural Sciences (NAS)
Community Engagement Faculty Representatives	
Prof Natasja Holtzhausen	Economic Management Sciences (EMS)
Dr Susan Thuketana	Education
Prof Lelanie Smith	Engineering, Built Environment, and Information Technology (EBIT)
Ms Bonolo Mokoka	
Dr Mable Kekana	School of Health Care Sciences (SOHCS)
Prof Ahmed Bhayat	Dentistry
Mr Mahlatse Moropeng	School of Health Systems and Public Health (SHSPH)
Mrs Felistus Ndamba	Humanities
Mr Eddie Hanekom	
Ms Karabo Ozah	
Prof Nerhene Davis	Natural and Agricultural Sciences (NAS)
Dr Hanri Taljaard-Swart	
Mr Lance Thomas	Theology and Religion
Ms Irene Thomas	
Dr Alfred Kgasi	Veterinary Science
Support departments	
Dr Martina Jordaan	Mamelodi Campus
Mr Edwin Smith	
Mr Rowan Watson	Security Services
Mr Rikus Delpont	Institutional Advancement
Ms Isabel de Necker	
Mr Juan-Pierre van der Walt	Student Affairs (DSA)
Ms Veronica Israel	
Ms Khanyi Mahlangu	Student Representative Council (SRC)
Mr Kamva Diko	
Mr Abe Mathopa	Department of Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Education
Ms Christine Nel	Library Services
Ms Pfano Makhera	