

# Faculty of Education News

We can all remember our first year at the university or college. We all know what the popular professor said to first years; “look around you, half of your classmates won’t be here next year.” We can still recall how we struggled to navigate the campus to find lecture halls or laboratories for our practicals. Sometimes we gave up and missed some lectures because the campus was an unfamiliar territory. For some, it was difficult to follow what was being said in class. Sometimes it was because of the academic jargon used, the language of learning and teaching or the speed at which the professor delivered the content. We all wished we could have an interpreter with us.

In 2021 the struggle is similar albeit on an online platform. Navigating all the platforms, material and keeping up with deadlines is part of the struggle. This challenge is exacerbated by issues of connectivity, data, device and a conducive learning environment.

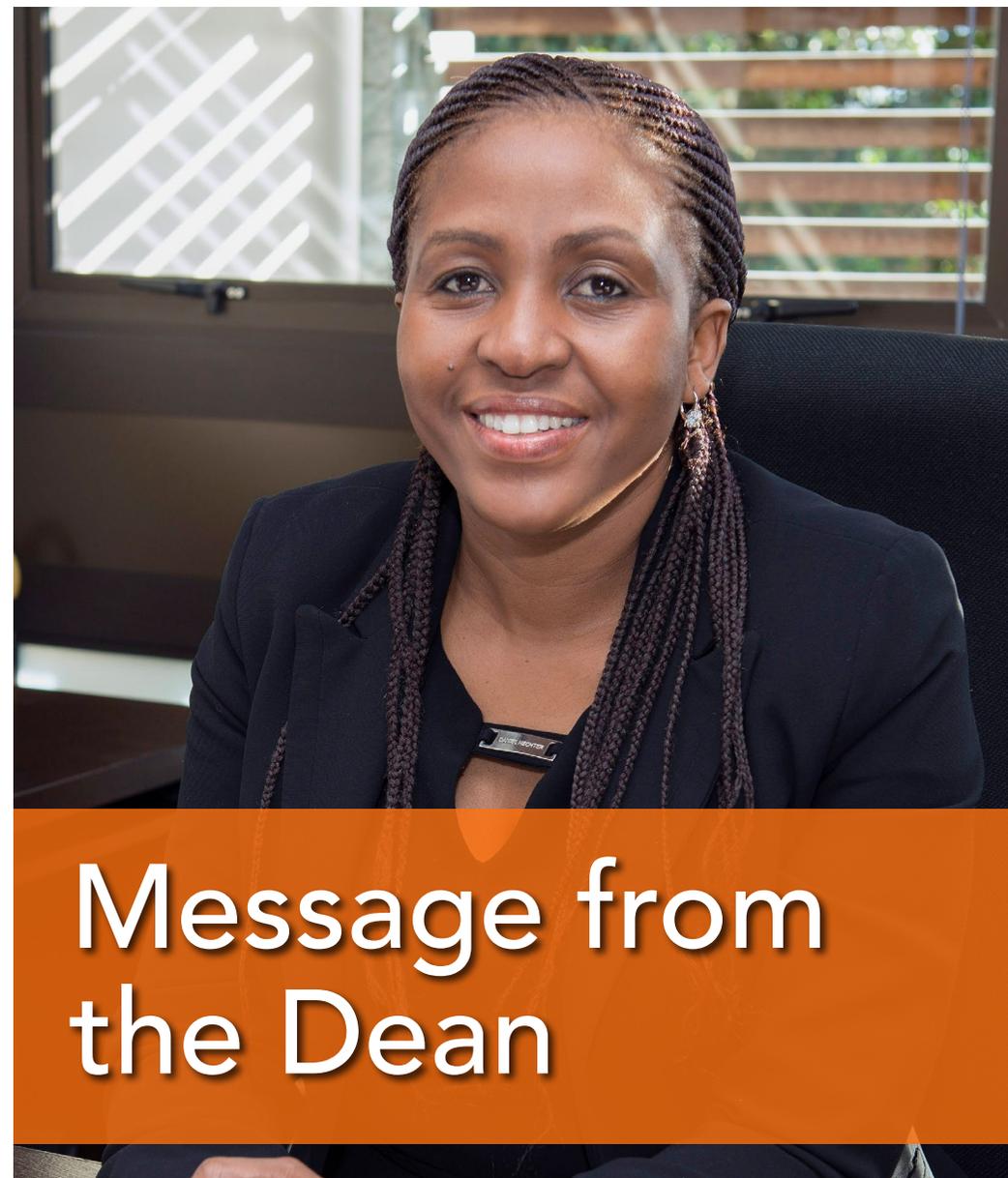
I must hasten to say that this challenge felt by all students in differing degrees, is also experienced by lecturers. So, what we are all faced with is unfamiliar and at times overwhelming. When we introduced the First Year Experience Programme in 2019, we never thought that it would be so much in need. I have always known the importance of supporting and assisting students to transition from high school to university. I understood that first generation students struggle more and need more targeted and intentional support. I however did not foresee

the demand that a pandemic would place on such a programme. A special thank you to Ms Nozuko Rhayi for co-ordinating this FYE programme with so much passion, diligence and care.

Covid-19 has made this programme so much relevant and needed. Having a dedicated person coordinating the programme puts it at the centre of our student access and success strategy. The model of having peer learning, tutoring, and mentoring provides our students with a safety net and a network of supportive senior students and peers.

As a Faculty we are very grateful to the uptake we have seen in this programme. This is indicative of the fact that the need is real and that our students take their studies seriously. We thank lecturers who identify students that might need assistance and refer them. We also thank our Administrative Forum for their continued support in making sure that Sodla Sonke reach students who are in real need of support. We are hopeful that both Sodla Sonke and the First Year Experience Programme will at least meet our students halfway and help them succeed in their studies. This newsletter is dedicated to the First Year Experience of our students, so please take time to read through their stories and what they have been up to during this challenging time.

*Dr M Moeng*



## Message from the Dean

# Faculty 1st Year Experience Programme

Nozuko Rhayi

The imposed digital times of learning and teaching continues to cause panic and a sense of indecisiveness among our first-year students. Panic of not being capable enough to handle and succeed in their studies; indecisiveness and uncertainty of their resilience about continuing with their studies. Students inadequacies in using a computer efficiently worsens the negative impact felt by these students. Due to not being technologically savvy, their chances of attending to their workload are slim, and so the failure to catch up increases.

When students fail to catch up on time with their studies this results in:

- Not attending classes
- Not participating in class discussions
- Avoiding contact with their class peers
- Not opening their emails
- Urge to deregister and start again next year
- Demotivation and development of self-destructive behaviour
- Suicidal thought and attempts

I have noticed all the above in our 1st year students across the three phases. I have constant and regular interaction with 1st years electronically and, dependant on the weight of the challenge, I have met up with some of them in person. During my interactions with our students one thing I hear mentioned by most is that they struggle to find a distraction-free space at home to keep them focused and productive, a space to do their work effectively.

We must agree that some student's transition to the institution has not been a smooth sailing journey, in fact, the journey is tough and uncertain. As challenging as it is, our students are privileged to have a platform like the FYE Programme to provide a cushion of comfort for them to voice up their challenges and experiences and to find some support and resolution.

The FYE Programme aims to provide advice and support to our students to enable them to be settled, resilient and happy in their studies. But, at the same time, we can never provide all the necessities that our students require, like financial stability. We have students who opted to quit or deregister due to matters of funding and we wish them well because we understand their challenge is bigger than us.

We must agree that times now require students to make working adjustments for themselves, yet, in the same breath, this should equally apply to all of us in the Faculty of Education. The fair balance of preparedness from our fellow lectures to understand the plight of the students who register late or who were advised to amend their modules, with a positiveness from the student will do much to ensure stability and benefit in conquering this year.

Some initiatives that are being managed withing the FYE Programme include are FYE student assistants/liaisons, catch-up plans, extra tutorial sessions and food parcels.

## Tutors and Student assistants

| FP                    | IP                     | SP/FET         |
|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| Siphosethu Poti – s/a | Samkelisiwe Bebe – s/a | Zizo Jikijela  |
| Caroline Boschoff     | Chuma Mdladlamba       | Ezile Mngqenge |
| Bonginkosi Boma       | Amahle Wayise          |                |
|                       | Emma Hempel            |                |

These students provide support and tutoring sessions to 1st years who need such, mainly in PCTL, Maths and Languages modules. They are also liaisons between me as the FYE coordinator and the wider 1st year community of students.

## Extra Tutorial Classes

- Students are eager to learn and be in the know of their 'not so easy' modules (Maths & Computer)
- Their interest in interacting with their class peers is increasing as they discuss academic related matters
- They have tutors that show understanding and support, coaching them well through their academic challenges
- Student assistants form part of the extra tutorial classes, sometimes as observers
- Students are eager for class quizzes and tasks due to the extra tutorial classes
- Other modules are also discussed, and participation comes from the students
- Attendance continues to be on point, classes are late in the day most times, for about 2hr to 3hrs

## The number of students who are currently attending tutorial classes

| FP  | IP | SP/FET |
|-----|----|--------|
| 128 | 82 | 21     |

There is one student assistant I am still scouting for in the SP/FET class of 2021, as soon as I know where the need is.

I also do monitor the student tutors / assistants, to ensure that they do not prioritise tutoring over their own studies. We can only hope that our collective faculty efforts for our students produce great results.

I would like to encourage lecturers to refer students who are experiencing any kind of challenge to the FYE programme, so we can assess where they can be assisted in order for them to perform as required.

## Catch up plans for students from the Lecturers

- I am aware that there are Lecturers who have made provisions for our students who joined late, in the form of recordings, voice notes and videos, that summarize the subject content of their modules
- There are lecturers who take calls from our students at any time of the day and week to assist in their quest to catch up as quick as they can
- Lecturers who check and respond to our student's emails on time
- Lecturers who take time in their contact sessions to ensure that new students follow what is taught
- Lecturers who make time to chat with students who are struggling in class and refer them to the FYE Programme if there is a need to. Sometimes personal interaction leads to better and quick effective desired results.

## The Sodla Sonke Initiative

Whilst we have mentioned academic challenges thus far, we cannot close without mentioning that our students are starving due to various reasons and circumstances. I am happy that the number of these students has decreased from the list that I was given due to receipt of NSFAS or Funza Lushaka funding.

For students who still do not have any kind of funding, provision has been made by our Executive Dean through the faculty Sodla Sonke Initiative. These funds have been utilised to order groceries to make nice food parcels for our needy students, who have been derived from both my FYE and bursary office lists. Mrs Daniels-Smith (Chair of the Admin Forum) will call the students to come to campus collect.

The Faculty of Education cares and it continues to do what is within its control.

Thank you.

## FYE programme Student Tutor Reflection



Chuma  
Mdladlamba

I am currently doing my final year as an IP student majoring in languages. I am one of the Student Assistants on the new program for first years. I am currently helping with computer literacy. The reason I chose computer literacy over other modules is simply because everything is done online now because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of our students come from rural to deep rural areas with very little to no knowledge and understanding of computer and how it functions.

I am one of the students who came from deep rural areas of the Eastern Cape and I only had my hands on a laptop when I arrived at Nelson Mandela University in 2018. I really struggled. But, I managed to pass and I want to assist the first years of 2021 so that they can have a better experience of this than I myself had.

## First Year Experience Programme



My name is Sipho-Sethu Poti, I currently hold a National Diploma in Marketing which I obtained here at NMU back in 2013. Coming back to University to pursue another qualification, I found the circumstances to be completely different than what I knew them to be. The infusion of online learning and studying from home was a big adjustment for me personally, so I could only imagine what it was like for a first time, first year student. Personally, I am not one who is shy to raise my hand when I need help and that is how I got to meet Mamzo quite early on in the year when I was extremely anxious about a few matters that she so willingly helped me with. Little did I know that it was the beginning of a beautiful relationship which would help me help my classmates who were not as open and vocal about their challenges as I was.

Mamzo and I have been working together to ensure that whatever gap we can bridge within the BEd FP we do so be it in big or small strides. It started off with picking up that many of us had challenges with certain modules and Mamzo helped us get amazing tutors like Bongzi and Chuma. Then whenever I picked up on our generic WhatsApp group that there are slight disgruntlement, confusion or concern with regards to certain modules and assignments or anything Mamzo could either help with or point me to the right direction with, I would quietly approach Mamzo or sometimes the lecture pleading for in depth explanations and they would be more than keen to help.

One of the biggest challenges we picked up was that most IsiXhosa speaking students struggled articulating themselves even when they had burning issues or questions, so wherever I could I would help and be their medium in order for them to know that it is okay to speak in a language they were comfortable with. I generally work closely with my classmates and if I pick up at any point that one is down or not understanding any concept, I would approach them privately and wherever I cannot help, I try to get Mamzo, a tutor, a lecturer or anyone that can assist to do so because as I always remind my classmates we all started this journey together and I have no intention of leaving anyone behind.

When I look at the positive change made so far, for me personally it is heart warming and to know I am part of a University that cares and is willing to go an extra mile for us in order for us to succeed, I could not have asked for better.

As an aspiring educator, I am practicing the vision that our Faculty has by being an active agent of hope in every small way that I can and I sincerely hope that this programme lives on to change the lives of many other students.

Warm Regards

*Sethu Poti*

# First Year Experience Student Assistant Reflection

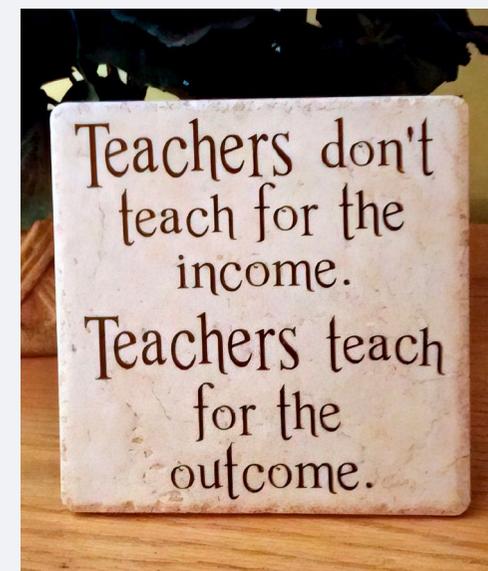
**M**y Name is Bonginkosi Boma. I am a fourth-year student in Foundation Phase. I am from Grahamstown, born and raised. This is my second attempt at a qualification. I did Public Management before but, unfortunately, I did not finish due to financial and personal issues. I started this degree in 2018 and, luckily for me, I had previous experience at tertiary level. I also had experience as an educator because I was involved in a literature campaign called "Khari Gude Literature campaign" as a Voluntary Educator and moved on to become Voluntary supervisor. I loved being part of that program so I decided to make teaching a profession because I believe it is my true calling.

I am a person who loves and wants to help other students. When I started in 2018 I had my fellow students coming to me for help because they took note of me in our introductions in class during orientation week and, being the person that I am, I was more than willing to help. I

believe that helping other students also helps me to grow as a teacher. The fact that I have previous tertiary experience is an advantage too because I realise what it takes to succeed at university level and I am willing to share that knowledge with other students.

When Mrs Rhayi first approached with this initiative of helping first years I did not even think about it, I was immediately in. I believe it is our responsibility as seniors to help our fellow teachers at any level below us. I am very honoured to be part of this program and the feedback I am getting from my PFMM100 first year student group is satisfying to me. I always want to make a difference in people's lives for the better.

*Bonginkosi Boma s20234569*



## From being mentored, to being a mentor.

I remember last year my roommate from 1st year sending me the How2Buddy poster and all I said was that I won't be in PE due to Covid and will probably be busy with my practicals, but she still encouraged me to apply for it. I took her advice before you know it I was shortlisted and prior to that, I remember how nervous I was during the interview and I thought to myself that I won't even make it, but to my surprised I was one of the chosen ones.

Taking the opportunity of being a First Year Success (FYS) Buddy makes me feel proud, because 3 years ago (during my 1st year), I was being mentored and now here I am being a mentor to the Foundation Phase's 1st year students. I am assisting them with all the questions they may have about varsity experiences, online learning and questions regarding the Foundation Phase course.

It is beautiful to watch the students sending me messages of appreciation and feedbacks on how

they are navigating the online platform as this gives me a reassurance of progress amongst them.

It is not a walk in the park, but I can see that they are slowly but surely adapting to online learning and trying their best to cope and it is also great that NMU is meeting them halfway through the Student Success Coaching for those that are not sure of how to go on about their studies.

I am grateful that I took this opportunity to help our first year students and I am happy that some of them not only see me as a learning development assistant, but as their sister/friend who is here to guide them.

This goes to show that, *Motho ke motho ka batho – Umntu ngumuntu ngabantu – I AM, because YOU ARE.*

*Kamogelo Thalitha Phasha, 217175139*

# Caroline Boshoff reflection

I choose teaching as a career because it has been my dream to become a teacher and to assist children to learn to read and write. My motivation is my own disability and the struggles I endured. Being diagnosed with severe dyslexia (combined motoric, auditory and visual dyslexia), reading and writing has always been a challenge to me. Being different from other people is not easy to live with, being bullied at school because you are different is terrifying. But that was the changing point in my life. I decided to accept my disability and, furthermore, I was such a devoted hard worker at school, and with the help of my computer assistive devices, I overcame my challenges and became an independent learner.

I was so shocked, yet also excited, when I was chosen to be a 1st Year Experience Programme, student assistant. It is such a privilege and honour to be selected to assist students that struggle with certain aspects of their studies. There are so many people sitting in our Microsoft Teams lectures struggling to get through the day. I know how they feel when struggling... Once upon a time, I was one of them. I don't want anyone to experience challenges with their lectures. I want to make a difference, seeing people's abilities and not their challenges. A teacher believed in me, he gave me a chance, and therefore, I am what I am today. Now, I want to be the person that makes a difference in somebody's life.

I am always willing to help others and am very patient to explain something again. Despite the fact that I am assisting other students with their work, I am excited about the friendships we form and will nurture these new friendships like a precious pearl.

*Caroline Boshoff*

# SUPPORT FOR NEEDY STUDENTS

As the pandemic continues to impact life, this year teaching and learning follows an online and hybrid teaching model for all programmes. Students who are not easily able to follow this model from their homes (for a variety of reasons) have been encouraged to return to campus and residences so they are able to access devices, materials, stable wifi and infrastructure to support their educational aims. However, national funding crises has meant that many are not able to secure bursaries or NSFAS as planned. Thus, we find a number of students who are needy and desperate for support. As in previous years, the Dean's Office made funds available to provide food parcels to the most vulnerable and hungry. These students are derived from the list that the bursary office has, in liaison with the FYE programme coordinator.

The Admin Forum of the faculty worked together to ensure these were purchased, packed and disseminated. Our thanks to Muki, Gishma, Nozuko, Pam, Nonkululeko and Jackie.

We aim to regularly distribute these parcels through the year, but costs do add up and the budget allocated will only cover 2 more purchases. Should you wish to provide any items or support for the initiative, please contact either Gishma or Jackie Smith.



**REMINDER**  
"If you cannot feed 100 people, feed just one."  
Mother Theresa





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HELM

# USAF HELM WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP INAUGURAL PROGRAMME

September 2020 – March 2021

There is an increase in the focus on the role of women in leadership in Higher Education on both a national and international level. Higher Education and Leadership Management (HELM) under the auspices of Universities South Africa (USAf), also has a special focus on women leadership and committed to champion and support women in higher education to address not just global equity and access challenges, but local leadership and management needs as well. HELM conceptualised a Women in Leadership (WiL) programme to focus on creating a community of leaders and to expand the leadership pool, by advancing and supporting women to lead change in a complex higher education context. The programme prepares women leaders and managers for a world, where balancing paradoxical demands, engaging with pressing student and public voices and synthesising global and local imperatives in sustainable ways, are viewed as opportunities to shape this context into an environment, in which they succeed and ultimately thrive. To formalise the offering of this programme it was registered as a non-credit bearing Short Learning Programme in the Faculty of Education at Nelson Mandela University (NMU).

The inaugural WiL programme was offered from September 2020 to March 2021 and built on HELM's foundations of leadership/management programme which dealt with the fundamentals of the Higher Education context, regulatory drivers, planning, financing,

operations and resource management. Prof Denise Zinn was appointed as project leader and was assisted by Dr Birgit Schreiber in presenting the seven-month long programme. Applications to participate in the WiL programme were invited nationally and Dr Heloise Sathorar was selected as the only participant from NMU to participate in the programme. She was later joined by Prof Cina Mosito who was initially a participant from CPUT but transferred to NMU when she took up a post at this institution. 26 Women from 17 Higher Education Institutions across the country were selected to participate as pioneers of the programme.

The WiL programme was framed within the theory of change and focused on complexity management. The programme was conceptualised to consist of 3 face-to-face block sessions and would also include a 5-day international visit to Bath University in the UK. Unfortunately, with COVID-19 restrictions this had to be changed to 7 online sessions and 2 hybrid (some participants attending mask-to-mask and others joining virtually) retreats. The online sessions focused on a range of different topics including: How to lead from your strengths, Horizon scanning, Complexity, Theories of change and strategic management, Successful institutions, Understanding people – Strategies and management as well as Academic planning. At the December retreat we focused on developing an institutional culture, self-care and self-leadership. The March retreat was about consolidating what we had learnt over the past

seven months and we had sessions presented to us by international and national guest speakers on internationalisation and networking, the impact of COVID-19 on women in higher education and specifically those in leadership. We also had a session that focused on student experiences of learning and teaching during COVID-19 and reference was made to the SAULM survey. The March retreat was concluded by tasking participants to consolidate and summarize their learning from the programme in a Portfolio of Evidence that would be graded for certification purposes.

Participants were also placed in Peer-Learning groups during the programme to allow them to discuss their learning with fellow participants. Friendships and networks were strengthened in these smaller groups and we will continue to draw on these connections in the future. We were also introduced to the value of coaching by engaging in 4 coaching sessions that helped us focus on creating a balanced lifestyle and on goal setting.

The programme was inspirational and empowering and will serve as a guide that we will refer back to as we navigate our way through the complexity of the Higher Education environment. We now look forward to our certification ceremony and to serve as alumni of the programme and mentors to the new cohort of participants.

# USAF HELM WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP INAUGURAL PROGRAMME

September 2020 – March 2021



**Above:** Our Peer-Learning Group

Back: Dr Heloise Sathorar (NMU), Prof Nalini Moodley-Diar (TUT), Dr Angela James (UKZN)  
Front: Prof Cina Mosito (NMU)

**Top Left:** Participants during the December retreat

**Left:** A group photo of those who attended in person as well as those who attended the March retreat virtually

# Gay Pride in South Africa

In a country that is rich in history for the LGBT+ community, from the Xhokhoi people in the 18th Century, it's disheartening there is no positive film adaptation of our history. Much like unicorns, Pride in South Africa exists and does not exist at the same time. As a queer person living in South Africa, I am yet to discover what is it that I should be proud of. According to society, I have been supposedly 'free' since 1996, – I can legally marry.

I have 'rights' also supposedly, as a Queer Person: rights that have been constituted and documented to protect me. That my brothers and sisters in the LGBTQIA+ community, and I, ought to be grateful for. But is it really enough to be grateful for – and proud of?

As a gay person living a democratic country that has the potential to demonstrate eloquently, the gender equalities that it preaches about – I struggle to find what we should be proud of. Is it the basic human decency bequeathed to me of no longer being stoned?

## South African Public Facilities and Public Institutions

The issue of gender-neutral facilities is something that seems not to be taking a priority in our country. There are a handful of institutions of higher learning that have managed to prioritise the LGBT+ community, allowing our lives to be less strenuous by building or modifying their facilities so that they can cater to all genders. A segregated bathroom to a trans person is a constant torture. Not only do they have to be reminded that they are not biologically aligned with their sexual identities but are also bombarded with silly questions whenever they need to use these facilities.

The healthcare workers are still homophobic. It is still very difficult for LGBT+ community to open up about our sexual health needs, which is one of our basic human rights that gets overstepped. An article I read about regarding the first queer wellness centre that was opened earlier this year in Johannesburg, speaks vividly about this and the notion behind opening a wellness centre that will focus on issues of queer personhood.

It is difficult to bring the topic of preferred pronouns to healthcare workers who still impose their personal or religious beliefs on us when we are simply seeking medical assistance. Which begs the questions: during the meetings and trainings they attend and conduct, are we even discussed or considered?

The Batho Pele Principles: do they apply to us? Are we not worthy of receiving service that is 'Courteous' and 'Value for money?' If we are, then should we not form part of the training sessions and workshops that will focus on how to properly address health issues of the LGBTQIA+ community.

And then there is an issue about application forms that still insists on limiting our hard earned freedom by forcing us to choose between Mr., Ms., Mrs. When will Mx be recognised?

The other application form that I came across asked if I am a man, a woman, or LGBT.

Left me perplexed with questions such cannot I be gay and still identify as a man? What does that imply? That as gay men we are not in fact men? These are still used even by some South African institutions and organisations that claim to understand the importance of gender transformation, aiming to fight against the injustices and exclusions of marginalized groups.

## Conclusion

While I commend some brave South African film writers that seek to bring issues of South African minorities, I still believe that they can do better on these characteristics that they bring to life for millions to see. The message must be concisely about bringing awareness while leaving viewers educated about our struggles as a community.

Lastly, we deserve to receive the same treatment from public servants regardless of where we are because we are all over South Africa, and not just in the cities.



by Thabiso Praisegod Zulu

# Autumn Graduation

The morning of 22 April 2021 was our Autumn graduation! Although the occasion took place virtually, one could still experience some level of excitement for our students and our colleagues. Our students worked very hard under very difficult and challenging circumstances. Indeed, they could not have done so without the guidance, assistance and hard work of our academic and administrative staff. Thank you all for your commitment and dedication to the academic agenda!

A special word of congratulations to all the lecturers who taught Undergraduate and Postgraduate modules under very difficult conditions.

Congratulations to Prof Geldenhuys; Dr Du Plooy and Dr Scheckle; Dr Khoboli and Dr Powell on the graduation of your Masters students.

Congratulatory wishes also go to Prof Athiemoolam (2 students) and Prof Pillay (1 student) on the respective conferring of doctoral degrees on their students.

The Faculty is proud of you!

Dr Muki Moeng (DEd)

# Deputy Dean Appointment



**D**r Tulsi Morar has been appointed as Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Education from 01 June 2021 – 31 May 2024.

Dr Morar was first appointed at the institution on contract at the then SMATE Unit on the Bird Street Campus in 1994, and was consequently permanently employed in 2001. He has held different leadership and management positions in the Faculty, for

example, Off-campus Manager, B Ed Hons HoP, Acting Director of SITE, Operations Manager, Acting Dean and recently as Acting Deputy Dean. He thus brings along with him a wealth of experience with regard to Faculty management.

We congratulate him, and wish him well for this challenging and yet exciting responsibility!

## Welcome Ms Helen Septoo

**P**lease join me in welcoming Ms Helen Septoo to the Faculty and the FP Department. Ms Septoo joined the Faculty on 1 April as an Associate Lecturer for Language and Literacy Afrikaans. Ms H is in the teaching profession for over 36 years, where she first joined Helenvale Primary School in 1987 until she was seconded to Triomf Primary school where she took up the position as Head of Department. A position she held until August 2010 when she decided to move overseas. She obtained her Diploma in Education at Dower College, a Diploma in Special Education Needs (Remedial Education) as well as complete her Honours degree at NMMU.

She took up a position as teacher in Abu Dhabi and was seconded to Head of Faculty. Where also served on the UAE Assessment committee from the Ministry of Education. At the end of April, she will relocate to Port Elizabeth where her precious son awaits her return.

Welcome to the Faculty Ms Septoo! We wish you a fulfilling career while you enjoy academic, personal and professional growth in the Faculty and the FP Department.



## Welcome Ms Serah Malinga

**P**lease join me in welcoming Ms Serah Ntombikayise Malinga to the Faculty and the SSE Department. Ms Malinga joined the Faculty on 1 April as an Associate Lecturer for Economic Management Sciences. She holds BComp, BEd Hons and MEd (Educational Leadership) degrees. She is currently enrolled for a Phd in Educational Leadership with WITS. Ms Malinga joins the Faculty after spending 20 years in the Department of Basic Education, teaching Economics, Business Studies, EMS and Accounting at 4 different schools. She will be responsible for the PIEM100 module as well as team teach on the PMSC400 and PSAC200 modules. She is also the mother of a daughter who is currently studying law.

Welcome to the Faculty Ms Malinga! We wish you a fulfilling career while you enjoy academic, personal and professional growth in the Faculty and the SSE Department.



# DAAD Project: Dimensions of Diversity in Teacher Education

## Alternative engagements to serve as a substitute for student exchange programme

In 2020 the Faculty of Education at Nelson Mandela University (NMU) entered into a partnership with Carl von Ossietzky University in Oldenburg (UOL), Germany and the University of Groningen (RUG) in the Netherlands. The focus of the partnership is Teacher Education and the partners identified three themes for engagement: Language in Education/Multilingualism, Inclusive Education and Teaching Practice (Practicum). A steering committee consisting of members from each of the institutions was established to facilitate the engagement. (Members of the steering committee: NMU - Dr Muki Moeng, Prof Nokhanyo Mdzanga and Dr Heloise Sathorar; RUG – Prof Dik Maandag, Dr Marije Michel; UOL – Prof Karsten Speck, Prof Martin Butler and Ms Tina Grummel.) Sub-committees were established for each of the themes and the first objective was to plan an activity programme for the three years of the project and also to identify staff from each institution that would be interested in participating in the project.

The teaching practice theme would focus on student exchanges between the three countries. The primary objective would be to expose students to the education system in each of the countries as well as to the teacher education programmes offered by the

participating universities. With the COVID-19 pandemic restricting all international travel, the teaching practice sub-committee had to find alternative ways to engage students in the exchange programme. The sub-committee members (NMU – Dr Heloise Sathorar, UOL – Prof Till-Sebastian Idel, Dr Katharina Kaschel, Ms Tina Grummel; RUG – Dr Alex Van den Berg – See phone below) met regularly and planned a virtual Lesson Studies programme that would run from May to September 2021 that would serve as a substitute for physical exchanges between the three institutions.

Final-year students from all three institutions were invited to participate in the programme. The following students from NMU accepted the offer to participate in the programme: Sinovuyo Matiwana (PGCE), Leyla Ogretmen (PGCE), Nishkah Swart (PGCE), Lesiba Kekana (PGCE), Thato Moshesh (FET), Sinazo Fanie (FET), Rae Eyman (IP), Sheryn Legg (IP), Clarisha Maarman (FP) and Francisca Maarman (FP).

The programme was initiated on 12 May 2021 with a one-day online workshop. Dr Moeng was part of a party of senior management from the three institutions who participated in the opening address during the workshop.

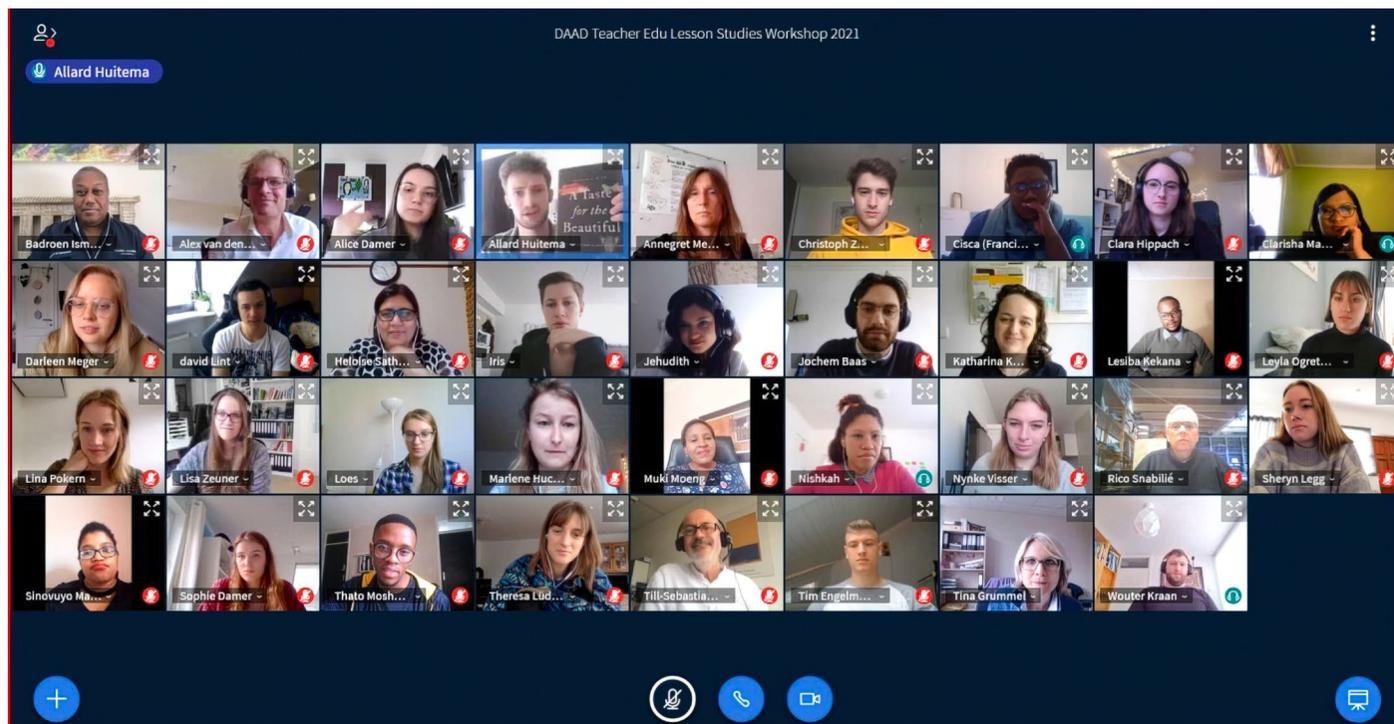
There were presentation sessions on the structure and composition of the education system in each of the countries, as well as what teacher education programmes entailed in these countries. This was to introduce students to the different learning cultures that prevail in these countries so that they could identify similarities and differences. This was followed by practising teachers sharing their experience of being a teacher in the respective countries. Mr Lukhanyo Boligello a B Ed FET and B Ed Hons alumnus, currently teaching at Marymount High

School in Kariega, represented NMU during this session. The final session of the workshop involved students watching short videos of typical lessons presented in each of the countries and then responding to a set of discussion questions regarding learner engagement, classroom climate (management) and teacher relations (teachers as transformative intellectuals). The day was concluded with a plenary discussion on the feedback from the video analysis.

Three student groups consisting of members from each institution were formed during the workshop. These groups would subsequently become working groups that would meet to discuss the Teaching Practice assignment that students must engage with before the next workshop. Students were tasked to plan a lesson together, taking the following into account: What are the forms, modes and templates used for lesson planning in the three countries; Which didactic theories and principles must be taken into account as you plan the lesson; What theoretical and conceptual knowledge concerning “Lesson Planning” needs to be taken into account and; How do we relate the content of teaching to the learning processes of the students? Students will present their lessons at a workshop scheduled to take place on 17 September, during which a panel of teachers from the different countries will give them feedback.

Our students enjoyed the first workshop and connected well with their counterparts from UOL and RUG. They are currently, eagerly working in their groups on co-constructing a lesson and we look forward to them presenting it at the September workshop. Even though we have not been able to engage in physical exchanges, these alternative activities have given our students the opportunity to experience the German and Dutch schooling systems.

# DAAD Project: Dimensions of Diversity in Teacher Education



Above: A group photo of participants of the Lesson Studies workshop held on 12 May 2021.



# LECTURER EXCHANGE INITIATIVE AS PART OF DAAD SPONSORED PROJECT

The DAAD sponsored project involving the faculties of education from the Nelson Mandela University in Gqeberha, Carl von Ossietsky University in Oldenburg and the University of Groningen in the Netherlands focuses on the creation of various opportunities for cross university initiatives in novel ways during a Covid-19 pandemic era. In 2020 the universities hosted a series of virtual workshops focusing on the theme of diversity involving both students and staff from all three universities. The initiatives for 2021 involved further promoting open discussions among education students across the institutions and lecturer exchanges.

Two of the lecturers involved in the project namely Dr Sylke Bakker and Professor Logamurthie Athiemoolam participated in the lecturer exchange initiative in June this year. Dr Bakker presented a very inspiring lecture to the PGCE Method of English HL class in which she informed students about the European framework for English second language teaching and the requirements for teaching English in Europe. The students found the lecture entitled Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in German EFL Teaching Contexts very stimulating, and participated actively in the question and answer session after the presentation.

In June Professor Athiemoolam visited Dr Bakker's Masters class in the Didactics of English and presented a lecture entitled Using Tableau and Creative Arts for Literacy Development. The presentation was extremely well attended, and the students also found the presentation very useful as part of their own skills development.

The students from both institutions found the lecturer exchange initiative extremely engaging as their insights on the requirements and expectations of teaching English in both Europe and South Africa were enhanced. Such partnerships during an era of virtual teaching and learning create opportunities for international engagement to continue when face-to-face international exchanges are not possible.



## \*ARRESTED WITH A PEN\*

I thought I had nothing to do with poetry,  
I thought I would survive without an ode.  
Thinking my life is complete,  
Didn't know I'm arrested with a pen.

Standing behind the bars,  
Finding myself in this situation.  
When I look in the bend,  
There's a pen with a depraved expression.

Trying to sleep in the midst of these grey walls,  
Need to have a reverie about my future.  
Just had a sarcastic dream of myself  
Holding a pen trying to write.

What must do to get rid of this?  
There can't be anything else I can do except this?  
Unfortunately, pen found my soul.

After bail granted and went back home.  
I saw the caged bird,  
Singing for its freedom.  
I was lucky because I got my liberty.

But there's this one thing, a pen.

Sitting in a couch watching my favorite movie,  
Because It's been a while without it.  
I saw my Mom writing something,  
Guess what! She was using a Pen.

I ran back to my room, resting in my bed.  
Trying to reason about this.  
But there were these two things now near my bed,  
My Diary and My Pen.

~ Ncise Philasande

# HoPES TEAM VISIT SCHOOLS IN GQEBERHA

The HoPES project, which is an NRF sponsored project under the leadership of Dr Bruce Damons, focuses on how schools can be transformed into community schools so that communities can be better served. The project comprises members of staff, masters and doctoral students who are specifically involved in conducting research in schools as beacons of hope for the upliftment of the community. The acronym HoPES stands for Hope Pedagogy, Education and Schools.

In consideration of how important it is to acquire an understanding of the characteristics of community schools, the team comprising students and staff visited two schools namely Sapphire Primary in Booyens Park (Mrs Alicia Baatjes) and Charles Duna Primary (Ms Nombulelo Sume) in New Brighton. The aim of the visit was to gain deeper insights into the principles and practices adopted by these schools that place them at the centre of community development in partnership with communities.

During the visits to the schools the members of the HoPES team were taken on tours of the schools and apprised of the various projects undertaken by both schools in various areas of community development. After the tours, the team met principals in the staffroom to understand why principals consider their schools to be community schools. A common theme that emerged across both schools is the focus on a values driven approach in collaboration with the community, the involvement of the community in the schools' activities and an open door policy that motivates members of the community to feel a sense of belonging to the school. A significant feature of their approach to community development is their willingness to embrace change through increasing openness and to familiarise themselves with community challenges and constraints. The creation of enhanced collaborative partnerships through democratisation involves valuing the talents and skills of community members so that their roles in the schools' activities could be enhanced.

Both principals emphasised the need for schools to be catalysts for social change if they hope to engage the community optimally and to effect change in society at large. A key feature of their success as community schools inspiring hope is their focus on volunteerism by inviting parents to support teachers in various ways for the effective



Members of the Hopes team with the Principal of Sapphire Primary School, Mrs Alicia Baatjes

**From left to right:** Silindile Malangeni (Phd), Noluvo Rangana (Phd), Dr Tobeka Mapasa, Dr Bruce Damons (co-ordinator of HoPES), Mrs Alicia Baatjes (Principal of Sapphire Primary School), Prof Logamurthie Athiemoolam, Xola Quvile (Masters), Prof Veonna Goliath, Nkosinathi Mzuzu, Reinhold Gallant  
**At the Back:** Dr Deidre Geduld, Dr Heloise Sathorar **Absent:** Dr Avivit Cherrington , Suthu Sonti (Masters), & Molekwa Mmaphuti (Masters)

operation of the school and by apprising parents of new ventures proposed by NGO's, the Department of Education and national and international partners.

A guiding dictum that appears to guide these schools was encapsulated by a quotation in the staffroom at Sapphire Primary which states: *If you are feeling hopeless, help someone.*

The HoPES Team were inspired by the insights gained during their visits to the two schools and their understanding of the principles synonymous with community schools was enhanced. The visit to the two schools enabled the team to reflect on some of the missing pieces in their research agenda and how the masters and doctoral students could enhance their research by including the missing pieces of the puzzle.

# Centre for the Community School CCS

## SAKHINGOMSO PROGRAMME - CALA



**Left :**  
*The first photograph shows the toilets in 2017. The other photographs show the vastly improved new toilets built by the Seed Funding in 2021.*

**Below Left :**  
*CAPACITY BUILDING- SGB WORKSHOP  
Parents engaging during the SGB workshop*

**Below Right :**  
*THE BOOKERY AND  
SAKHINGOMSO ENGAGEMENT  
Planning the establishment of the Literacy Hub*



CCS is partnering with the iKamvelihle Development Trust (IKD) in the Sakhingomso programme. Sakhingomso, which means building the future in isiXhosa, is a multi-stakeholder engagement in which, together with the communities, CCS envisage what the ideal school could look like in the rural context.

Returning to Cala after a long time for stakeholder engagements focusing on capacity building was extremely uplifting. Distance and Covid 19 didn't stop the CCS from continuing the work started in Cala, a visit in April this year to follow-up on last year's outstanding activities was a success. It began by a joint reflection session held with the School Governing Bodies and School Management Teams from Batandwa High and Mnxe Primary School. Guata Junior Secondary School. The main project for the last year was to ensure that the school improvement plans were implemented. Seed funding was made available to all three schools to commence with one project of their choice from their school improvement plan. All schools focused on utilising the money to build and renovate toilets since it is a major need for rural schools. With the seed funding allocated to each school to support implementation of school improvement plans, schools managed to retain the human dignity by fixing toilets and building new ones.

The Bookery an organization based in Cape Town, one of our partners joined the engagements in Cala to understand and explore the rural context. The Bookery formed a partnership with schools to establish Literacy Hubs. The collaboration between the Bookery and the CCS started in 2017. A decision was made to explore a Literacy Hub in a rural context. A committee was elected, and the pilot schools agreed to house the Literacy Hub at Batandwa Ndongdo Senior Secondary School.

As part of our visit to Cala, the Centre for the Community School visited schools to monitor and evaluate their school improvement plans. At both Mnxe Primary School and Guata Junior School, two new toilets were installed for boys and girls

# Centre for the Community School CCS

## Co-construction of a sustainable Physical Science, Life Sciences, English and Mathematics (PLEM) support programme for High Schools



### Interpersonal Relations Project

A very interesting workshop was conducted by AVP (Alternatives to Violence Project). After the school committed to a full two-day workshop. A group of 15 educators from Ithembelihle Comprehensive School volunteered to be part of the AVP workshop. Coordination was properly executed between CCS, Thabang Queench (Lead Facilitator) and Shena Lamb-du Plessis (AVP Coordinator).

The main activities of the workshop included the following:

- Affirmation and listening
- Communication
- Cooperation and trust building
- transforming conflicts and creating conflict management

Participants and co-facilitators showed keen interest to coconstruct the process and collectively create an enabling space for all to learn and grow. This was motivated by the deepening of discussions; the collegiality and the bonds created among participants as a result of the exercises. Each participant received a certificate of participation after attending both days.

### Reflections from the participants after the workshop

"I'm glad to part of the workshop as I see things different now and able to resolve and communicate in a better man"

"Team work, cooperation, respect and value each other"

"Sharing, caring, team work"

"I learned to separate feelings from emotions"

"Resolving conflict non-violently"

"Respect and the importance of listening to others"

*By: Jabu Bam,  
Programmes Coordinator, Centre for the Community School*

# A special boy named LONWABO

Nokhanyo Mdzanga  
Illustrated by Sphatho Mzantsi



There was once a boy named Lonwabo. He stayed with his grandmother, Gogo Mantle, because his parents worked out of town. They often visited him at the end of each month. Lonwabo's grandmother always tells his neighbours about the day his grandson was born. She was so excited, as a result, she named him Lonwabo-which means 'the one who brings happiness'.

However, Lonwabo was different to other children. His granny couldn't put her finger on it, but little things about his development bothered her. Everytime Lonwabo's parents came home, she would tell them about her concerns. Gogo Mantle had raised other grandchildren before including children from her neighbourhood. She knew about the stages of child development, but Lonwabo was different. Gogo noticed that Lonwabo was not crawling well, babbling, climbing stairs, jumping, kicking or throwing things. But she kept on telling herself that he was just delayed.

When Lonwabo was a year old, he still could not walk. One day, Gogo Mantle took him to see a paediatrician who later referred her to a

clinical psychologist. The problem was that the hospital was far away, therefore Gogo had to wait for Lonwabo's parents to return home so that they could take him to a psychologist. Gogo was hopeful that his grandson was just delayed.

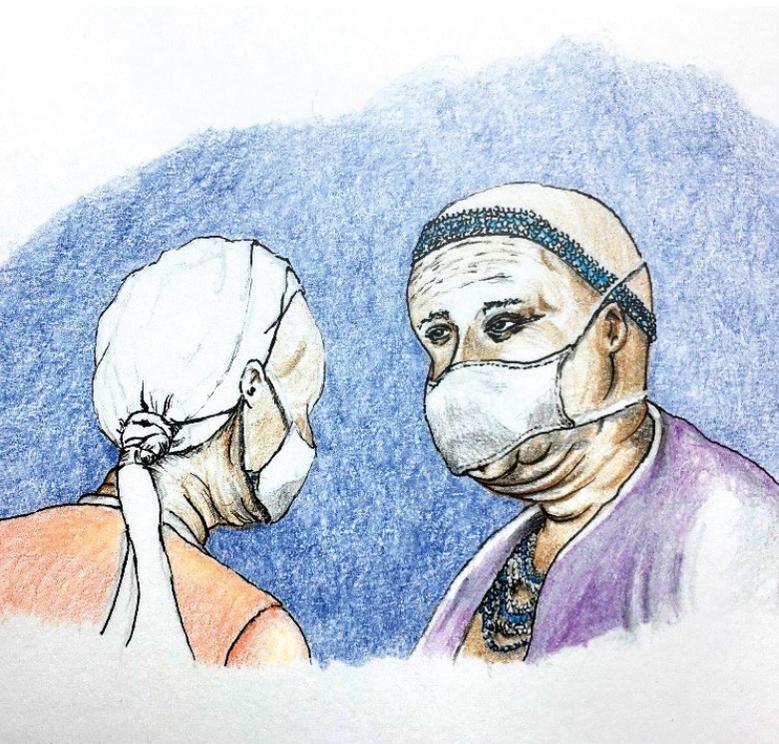
When Lonwabo's parents returned from the doctor, Gogo noticed that they were sad. Upon enquiry, they eventually told Gogo that Lonwabo was born with a condition called Autism. Gogo did not know what the condition was in her home language. As they were explaining based on Gogo's observations of Lonwabo's behaviour and milestones, she could understand.

Many people in the neighbourhood always wanted to know what Lonwabo was suffering from. Gogo decided to approach the chief in the village to ask him to call Imbizo so that she could educate the villagers about signs of Autism.

At this stage she had observed Lonwabo's behaviour and has also been educated about Autism by a social worker who consistently



visited Gogo and Lonwabo. She was so thrilled to learn that the chief has agreed to her request. On a particular Saturday, Gogo left to the chief's homestead. Many people, young and old came. Most of them were women who stayed with children.



Gogo explained the signs of Autism in children as follows:

- Ukungayiqapheli ingozi (unaware of danger)
- Ukubuya kakhulu/kancinci ubuhlungu (over/under sensitive to pain)
- Usenokungafuni ukujongana ngqo emehlweni nabanye (avoid eye contact)
- Usenokukhetha ukuba yedwa (prefer to be alone)
- Ukungafuni ukwahlukana nezinto (attachment to objects)
- Iintshukumo eziphindaphindwayo (repetitive movements)
- Usenokunyanzelisa inkqubo yesiqhelo (insists on routines)
- UkuPhazamiseka kweNkqubo yemizwa (sensory processing disorder)
- Usenokuphelelwa ngamandla engqondo ngenxa yokuxinana kokufundwe ngaxeshanye (meltdowns due to sensory overload)
- Ubunzima ukuqonda izikhokelo ezisetyenziswayo ngabanye (sometimes, doesn't follow instructions)
- Usenokungathandi ukuphathwa okanye ukwangiwa (doesn't like to be touched or hugged)
- Usenokuba nomdla kwizinto ezikhethekileyo. (has certain preferences or interests)

Some of the people who attended Imbizo heard about Autism for the first time but could identify with the signs that Gogo was referring to. She advised them to see a paediatrician. From that day onwards, Gogo learnt more about Lonwabo's strengths and the social worker also provided her with more information. Gogo also noticed that Lonwabo was non-verbal but soon they developed their own language. Lonwabo's parents were jealous because they could not communicate with their son.

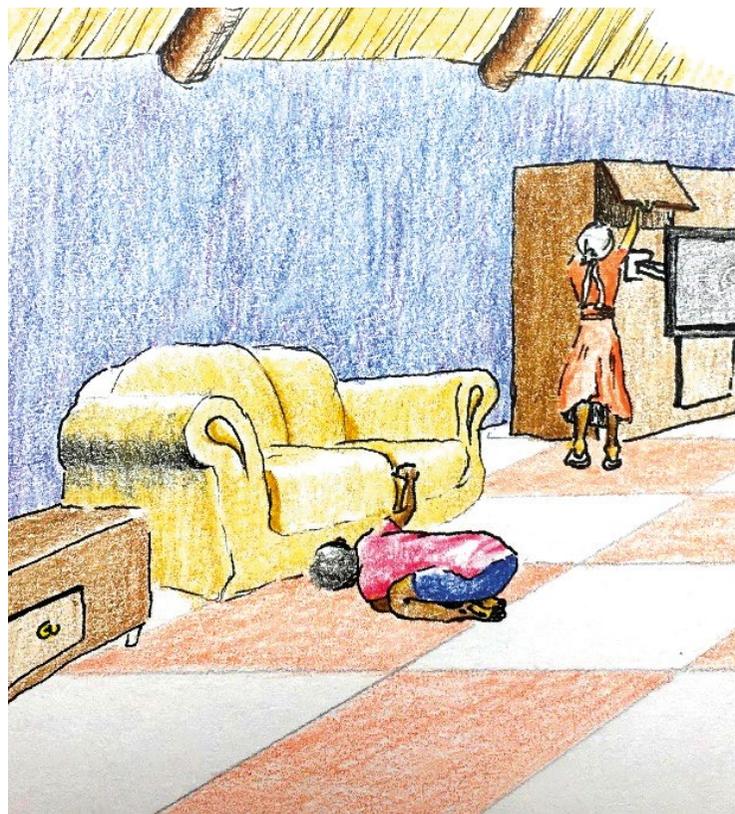
Whilst Gogo was still at home, she learnt that there is a virus that makes people sick. As a result, schools, businesses, in fact the whole country was not operating. She found solace in the fact that radio and TV were operational. Gogo was made aware that staying at home, keeping a distance between people, washing hands with soap and water would keep every safe and healthy against the virus. Lonwabo's parents could not travel to their home as transport was not operating, so Gogo stayed alone with Lonwabo. Since Lonwabo was non-verbal, Gogo used pictures and other visuals to communicate with him. She knew that she would have to be creative in order to inform his grandson about the virus and also adhering to precautionary measures.

Lonwabo did not like confined spaces. He enjoyed walking with his granny to the shop. Gogo was worried that because of the lockdown,



they would not be able to walk to their favourite shop. Gogo decided to teach Lonwabo a game that will force him to walk around the house. Gogo would hide Lonwabo's favourite toy somewhere in the house, sometimes, behind the house. Together, they would look for this toy. In that way, Lonwabo was not stifled in one place. He enjoyed the moments when they looked for the toy outside the house because that gave him opportunity to smell the air and walk around outside of the house.

Lonwabo enjoyed washing hands even before the Corona virus. Gogo had taught him to scoop water from the bucket using his favourite mug, get a soap from the cupboard and pouring water in a washing basin. He enjoyed making bubbles so it was not difficult to continue



with washing hands. Everytime they washed hands Gogo would be singing to him. He always giggled at Gogo's songs. Gogo was sad that she did not have pictures of children washing hands because Lonwabo's parents would have brought such pictures.

Gogo was not worried about social distancing because Lonwabo preferred to stay alone in any case. He did not like to be touched or hugged. He preferred to play alone and was not good with games that required joint attention. Lonwabo's mother had tried to play 'touch' game with him. Lonwabo wanted her mom to run after him and not the other way round.

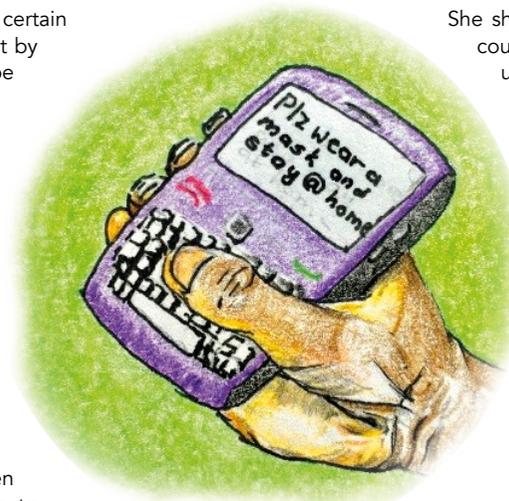
Gogo really struggled with teaching Lonwabo how to put on a mask. After 21 days the social worker came to visit Gogo and Lonwabo. His parents also could come home as there was a window period for them to travel. They brought along some masks for Gogo and Lonwabo. They also brought along some newspapers showing people wearing masks. Lonwabo did not like wearing shoes or tight fitting pants, so Gogo was wondering how he would get him to wear a face mask.

Lonwabo's mum suggested to Gogo that they should create a game

where all adults would be wearing masks for a certain period during the day. His mom thought that by becoming familiar with the habit, he might be curious to do the same. Gogo also thought that when walking to the shop with him, she must insist on wearing the mask.

This has been difficult for Lonwabo to do. Gogo is now putting the mask over Lonwabo's favourite teddy bear's mouth so that Lonwabo could realise that he is the only one in the house who is not wearing a mask. Gogo has now decided that he will not walk to the shop with Lonwabo until he is familiar with wearing the mask.

When Gogo is alone, she is thinking of the other parents who are raising children like Lonwabo. She then asks her daughter to communicate via WhatsApp or sms to other parents.



She shares instructions about games that parents could play with their children, advise them to use pictures or visuals and clear language to communicate about COVID 19 and what needs to be done; and follow the child's lead with regard to their routines and speak to other parents who are raising children with Autism. Right now, Lonwabo is happy to see his parents, but Gogo feels that he might be wondering why everybody is at home and that he cannot walk with Gogo to his favourite shop. Gogo encourages all parents with children with Autism to make visuals that will communicate information about COVID19.

*Design pictures/visuals that can help a child like Lonwabo to learn about COVID-19.*



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