

Faculty of Education  

# News

## Message from the Dean

We thought that the pandemic would have given us a break by now. The reality is that the virus is still with us and we are forced to find ways and means to carry on with work and studies under very strenuous circumstances. We completed our 2020 academic year in March 2021, which meant that the 2021 academic year started later than usual. 2020 was a very emotionally charged year as we had to deal with illnesses and deaths of relatives, friends and colleagues. Students and staff worked together to make sure that we conclude a very demanding year. I would like to say thank you to both staff and students for that. We are hopeful that we have developed some safety and coping mechanisms in order to deal with

Covid-19. Online learning challenges have exposed our shortcomings with regard to access to data and devices, connectivity, and a conducive learning environment. As we look forward in crafting Vision 2030, we should be mindful of the lessons we learnt in the past year. Let us work together towards creating an environment where we identify our challenges and find means to resolve them. I am looking forward to a year that will bring us solutions to our health challenges and provide us with new opportunities to build a learning environment that allows every student to prosper.

*Dr M Moeng*



# The first alumni of the Advanced Diploma in Technical and Vocational Teaching

On 03 October 2018, the Nelson Mandela University launched the Advanced Diploma in Technical and Vocational Teaching (Adv. Dip. TVT.). This event was attended by delegates from the European Union, Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), Sector Education and Training Authorities, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges (hereafter referred to as 'Colleges'), and the University community at large.

In December 2020, the first cohort of 189 students graduated with this National Qualifications Framework level five qualification.

## The beginning, the goal

In the beginning there was a policy named Policy on *Professional Qualifications for Lecturers in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges*. A policy document is all we had. At first, we were excited about the policy, but without implementation, it remained a policy. As an institution, we started developing one programme, the Adv. Dip. TVT. The policy makes provision for several qualifications, but given our resources and purpose, the Adv. Dip. TVT. was the right fit. Surely, we need to do more than the Advanced Diploma if we want to serve the TVET sector at large. Through funding from the European Union, we formed a national task team to develop a curriculum framework for the Advanced Diploma. We completed the curriculum framework in 2016 under the leadership of Ronel Blom, who at the time was representing the University of the Witwatersrand.

## The middle, the action

After spending almost two years flying in and out of crowded Johannesburg, we finally sat to finalise our internal process. We were a bit ahead. We had accreditation by early 2018. This was exciting, but scary at the same time. We decided that we were going to run the programme online, as well as in class – blended learning. This was not easy given that we don't have many local examples. Gone are those days where we had to drive to distant lands, book places to sleep, just to offer a class.

Initially, we wanted to use Skype, but we ended up with Zoom. Through Zoom, we were able to enrol students in Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, and Eastern Cape Provinces. This was not only fun, but innovative too. We are, therefore, here today, because we did not give up on the online dream. We have more Colleges that want to enrol with us in 2021 because they are interested in the online model.

## The journey, the curves, the waves, and the bumps

The journey was not easy, but worth travelling. When we started, we had problems like load shedding, internet connection, and other small problems. We also had issues of staffing each campus site. We had to ensure everyone that we appointed received training. So, 2019 was a hectic year. All the teething problems had to be sorted. We came out tired, but stronger and wiser than before. Then came 2020...

The start to year 2020 was promising. We had most of our problems sorted. We were ready for the year. January, we rolled – it was a highway. February, we rolled – it was a freeway. March, we stopped – it was a roadblock – a COVID-19 kind of obstacle. In April, we found ourselves in some deep black sea. The blended learning, kaboom! We had to move everything to the online platform. There were many uncertainties, but we slowly managed to swim out. The first semester was very long but we endured.

## The end of the beginning, and the beginning of the beginning

The beginning began in 2013, and this old beginning ended in 2019 when we started. A new beginning began. This new beginning also ended when our first cohort graduated in December 2020! Now the new end begins. We have new students in 2021. The year starts online, and we are ready and prepared. And things are going to move with speed.

We are proud to be the first university in South Africa to have TVET College lecturers graduate with us. We are proud that they will shine the Nelson Mandela University light everywhere they go. We are proud that they will contribute to the enactment of a humanising pedagogy. We are proud that we have touched several provinces. A new beginning begins...

by Lucky Maluleke

*The initial faculty TVET team.*

*A more recent image was not available due to face-to-face absence.*



# Graduation 2020

My feelings around the virtual graduation were mixed. Over the years, participating in graduation as a lecturer, I would get excited seeing final year students walk the stage and imagined what it would be like when I completed the momentous task of a doctoral study. To hear my name and a description of my study being read to the entire congregation gave me butterflies and motivation to keep working hard. I looked forward to sharing the moment with colleagues, students, family, and friends as they were all part of my journey. However, as we all know, this did happen and universities across the country worked to create a graduation event that enabled the celebration of the accomplishments of its students. While I was somewhat disappointed, the situation was out of my control. I, therefore, took a decision to take my celebration on the road over several days. Dressing up in my academic regalia and celebrating with my supervisor and friends (outside of course) turned out to be just as fun and joyous as I imagined walking the stage would be.

## Reflecting back, moving forward...

Shortly after graduation, my children and I packed up and moved to the U.S. Relocating causes one to reflect on their past in that it juxtaposes the past experiences against the experiences in their new environment. It can challenge ones thinking and their way of life. I can say that the same happened when I arrived in South Africa on September 29th, 2009. I have gained a lot during my time at Nelson Mandela University, and I am hopeful to carry on, with more focus, in making the difference that I set out to make over 25 years ago when I started my educational career.

I was not naïve to the political climate of the U.S. and very aware that the grass would not be greener on this side. Being an educator and thinking about the world I live in; I generally wonder what role education has had in social situations I observe or hear about. My move has only confirmed my conviction that education can do better to facilitate learning that is meaningful and relevant in that it enables a deeper understanding of the connection between school and society. In doing so, learning in a school environment where it is meant to be a safer and nourishing environment with expert teachers/educators has the potential to start to make a change in our society's ability to tackle social justice opportunities. Often social justice issues are side-lined within institutions such as schools and universities; policies are often in place for transformation but often implementation and practice are left wanting.<sup>1</sup>

A finding from my research would suggest that one contributing factor to poor implementation and practice is how the knowledge building occurs. The individual experience is often left out of the equation. Seeing that "teachers are both created by and create themselves within historical and cultural contexts"<sup>2</sup>, it is important to start with the self<sup>3</sup> to make learning contextually relevant and reflexive and to allow flexibility in the process, creating spaces to be critical of what is being said, heard or seen. For a variety of reasons, the work of starting with the self does not occur and often the systems of injustice are perpetuated within the very systems that are meant to be freeing.



Above: At home during graduation Below: Prof N DeLange and I



Currently, there are certain issues that occupy my mind. I am saddened to hear that university students across South Africa have had to take to the streets, yet again. Here in the United States the George Floyd case has begun and the increase of attacks on the Asian community amongst other social issues are prominent in the news. These events coupled with moving back in with my very conservative parents have caused much time to wonder about education and its role in social issues that are not unique to the U.S. or South Africa but are a global phenomenon, perhaps at varying levels or with local nuances, but nonetheless prevalent. In reflecting I am reminded of a Paulo Freire<sup>v</sup> quote:

**There's no such thing as neutral education. Education either functions as an instrument to bring about conformity or freedom.**

This quote is a reminder that our education cannot be without an understanding of the connection between school and society and to go further, for me, it is a reminder that this learning can and should be part and parcel to the youngest of learners'. Our youngest learners are making meaning of their lived experiences starting as young as 2 years old. As teachers and educators, we have a responsibility to understand such complexities and to do something. Thinking about my time in the faculty, my time with students is what stands out the most. Watching students grow in knowledge and gaining a broader understanding of the connection between who they are, school and society made me hopeful. Many students demanded a different kind of education that would create a "vibrant, socially just and democratic society"<sup>w</sup> which pushed me to make sure my courses were meaningful and relevant. For that I am grateful. I was pushed to be critical of myself in relation to my students and my course content. Student voice was important, and the Faculty of Education's Mission and Vision statement served as an overall guide in supporting my thinking with all the work that I did within the faculty. I am thankful for the time that I spent at Nelson Mandela University and with the Faculty of Education. I plan to continue living out the mission and vision in my new home as a Director of Kiddie Academy to create a space that shapes and inspires children for a socially just future.



**Above:** With Kiddies **Below:** With friends Dr Phumelele Gama and Dr Denise Schael  
**Below Left:** With friend and colleague Nadeema Musthan



<sup>v</sup> Council on Higher Education. (2016). South African higher education reviewed: Two decades of democracy. Pretoria, South Africa: CHE.  
<sup>w</sup> Rarieya, J., Sanger, N., & Moolman, B. (2014). Policy brief: Gender inequalities in education in South Africa. Pretoria: Human Science Research Council (HSRC).  
<sup>x</sup> Smulyan, L. (2006). Constructing teaching identities. In C. Skelton, B. Francis, & L. Smulyan (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of gender and education* (pp. 469-482). London: Sage.  
<sup>y</sup> Kirk, J. (2009). Starting with the self: Reflexivity in studying women teachers' lives in development. In C. Mitchell, S. Weber, & K. O'Reilly-Scanlon (Eds.), *Just who do we think we are? Methodologies for autobiography and self study in teaching* (pp. 231-241). New York: Routledge.  
<sup>z</sup> Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. (Myra Bergman Ramos, Trans). New York: Herder and Herder. (Original work published 1968).  
<sup>aa</sup> Faculty of Education. (2019). Vision and Mission. In 2019 Nelson Mandela University Faculty of Education Prospectus.



## Maxhalanga ndidleni!

I am Yongama Mjiwu, a twenty-seven years old BEd: Senior Phase and FET student at Nelson Mandela University. I will be doing my second year in 2021, specialising in commercial subjects. I was born and bred in a dusty rural town called Dutywa in the former Transkei, Eastern Cape. I am a former student of Walter Sisulu University and a former employee of Nedbank Ltd.

I am a storyteller and a very passionate soul concerning literature. I recently self-published my first book, written in my mother tongue, isiXhosa. It is titled "Maxhalanga ndidleni!", which can be translated to "Vultures devour me", and is a Xhosa figure of speech which expresses the willingness of a person to deny himself to fight for what he believes in, up to the point of death.

This is a story about a girl who is faced with unspeakable obstacles as she begins her journey as a student at the fictional "University of Eastern Cape". She battles with challenges of peer-pressure and campus life, lust from senior students and a friend who introduces her to the life of prostitution. This story also divulges further social issues including corruption, human- trafficking, impact of unemployment and drug abuse.

This book is intended to educate prospective students, especially those who are still at high school, of the highs and lows of tertiary life. It is not intended to scare anyone, but rather to warn them that they should be vigilant and stay focused as these issues truly exist at tertiary institutions.

Yongama Mjiwu

## Homophobia & How to Combat It for Future Generations

We are a modernised generation, and a lot has been done to create safe spaces for the LGBTQ+ community. However, there is still remnants of homophobia lingering around the corners of our educational system. The effects of homophobia can lead to great adversities including severe mental health issues and poor educational background.

What can be done to save the future generation from the horrid experiences of homophobia? The teachers produced on yearly basis should be assessed before given the rights to teach young generation of students; students of diverse cultures and diverse genders. This would hopefully hinder the instillation of personal beliefs on fragile souls. If we are being completely honest – being queer is a tough personal journey.

There is a vast amount of knowledge available on the internet and/or media but none of this seems to be enough to combat the spread of homophobia in our classrooms. Being a teacher-leader in a society requires having an extensive level of growth mindset as an imperative skill. This arguably applies to any profession but more especially to teachers as they are the ones that we depend on to receive knowledge. If they impose their personal beliefs, we get confused – especially if their beliefs are not aligned with our beliefs or personal goals.

- Thousands of kids still face bullying in schools because of their gender identities.
- The number of LGBTQ+ dropouts in schools can be traced back to homophobia.
- Some teachers are perpetrators of this vile and inhumane experience.
- Children who suffer from homophobia tend to not excel in their grades.

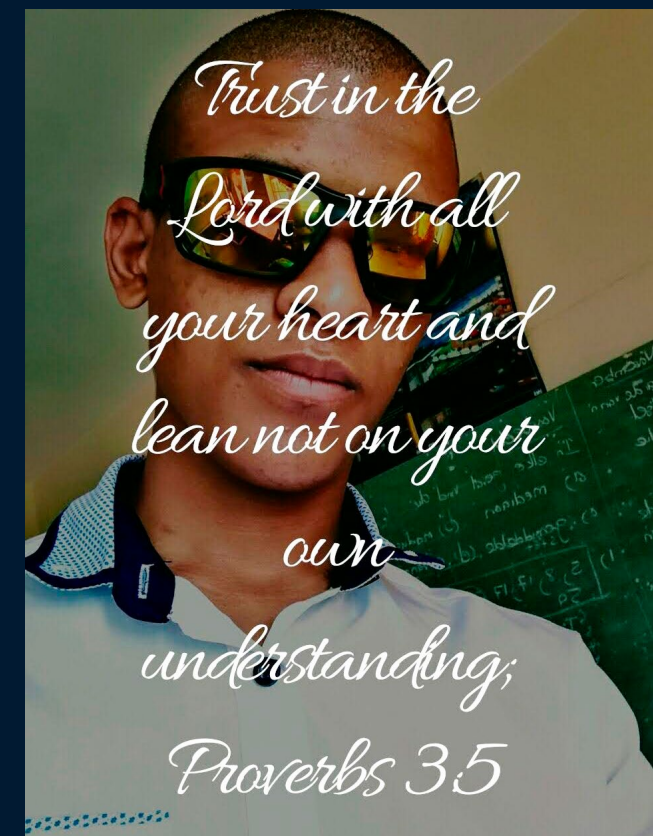
This might seem like an insignificant issue that requires less attention, but we ought not be selective when it comes to handling issues affecting minorities. If we comprehend the results of racism and bigotry, then we ought to understand the long-term effects of homophobia – as these issues are not that unique from one another and often yield the same results.

We are the most educated generation – there is information everywhere we turn. We can do better; we can end homophobia and create a better liberated society for our future generation.

Thabiso Zulu

## William Stroebel narrative

That is me in the background. I am doing FET but I helped out at a school that goes until intermediate phase although I'm studying for high school. At the school 3 or 4 tested positive for corona, but I held on to this verse to not trust on my own insight, but rather let God guide me. I tutored Maths and some LO at the school and almost everyone passed. It was a very difficult time for me in my home circumstances because I lost 6 family members. I had to be positive and resilient, and to keep on persevering. In the background, you see I don't smile. That emphasizes my mood to the pressure around; I kept the word of the Lord before me and not behind me.



# Staff Picnic @ the Beach, 30 March 2021



Executive Dean, Dr Muki Moeng, is engaging in one on one meetings with all faculty staff, and has noticed a trend amongst colleagues on how they feel isolated and are missing social interactions that occur in a 'normal' working day. Remote working and meetings are just not the same! She decided to host an informal, socially distanced gathering at one of our beautiful local beaches. Those who were able to join us shared an hour of sunshine, sand and laughter. "It was such a great time to spend together and to actually see and talk to each other. It certainly got us energised!" remarked Dr Moeng.

# Staff Picnic @ the Beach, 30 March 2021



# Welcome!

## CINA PATRICIA MOSITO

I am the newly appointed Associate Professor of Inclusive Education in the Faculty of Education. Before joining NMU, I was working at Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) where in the past five years I was a Head of Department: Intermediate Phase studies and caretaker HoD for Foundation Phase studies for three years. My research, teaching and engagement revolve around Inclusive Education and Educational Psychology. While at CPUT the Faculty of Education lead in a national project funded by the European Union titled Teaching for All (T4A) in 2017 - 2020 as a researcher, writer and materials developer. The project was premised on the belief that all children have the ability to learn, have the right to quality education and that they matter, and matter equally.

Driven by the principles of Ubuntu and social justice: participation, access, equity, equality and respect for human rights, my scholarship engages with how best teacher education can prepare teachers to support cognitive development of learners from diverse realities. I believe that when it comes to good quality education, no compromises and apologies should be made. In initial teacher education this starts with programmes that graduate teachers with a strong sense of self and belief in their capabilities to be leaders in their chosen careers. At times society has a low opinion of the teaching profession. Teachers should challenge these negative stereotypes by wearing their 'teacherliness' badge with honour and pride based on an inward realisation that they are change drivers who are able and capable. I believe this realisation is in a large part influenced by the messages we share I teacher education programmes about teacher identity and teachers' roles in education. I am excited to be associated with Mandela University where the philosophy of Humanising Pedagogy has been adopted to drive all teaching and research. This provides me with a lens through which to interrogate if my research, engagement, and teaching-learning interactions enable "*agency, a sense of coming not only to know, but to own the knowledge and be empowered by it*".

I strongly believe in partnerships and collaboration as important drivers of education. This manifests in the research I do with colleagues and that of postgraduate students I supervise teases on issues of engagement among learners experiencing barriers to learning. My six most recent publications, all on collaborative research, in national and international journals examine inclusive education in teacher education and classroom intervention studies. On 27 February I was a panellist in a webinar organised by the Division of International Special Education Services (DISES) titled "*Global Educators Supporting ALL Learners Through Crisis: Innovations, Challenges, & Changes in Schools*". The discussions highlighted the fact the world is facing similar challenges during the COVID-19 crisis. The best we can do is collaborate, share ideas on how to support learners/families and identify opportunities for



change and success in what is understandably difficult situation. My participation and contribution in Teaching for All (T4A) project, a multi-partnered and key stakeholder national project also emphasised the value of partnerships and collaboration. A team consisting of various stakeholders was involved in research and development of teacher training modules and materials (Units 1 – 4) for Bachelor of Education and Postgraduate Certificate in Education programmes. These materials are an open source available on the British Council and fundaoer.org websites. The key aim of T4A is to mainstream inclusive education in South African teacher education. The T4A curriculum and material are built into study guides for modules that deal with Inclusive Education in the Faculty of Education. I look forward to learning more ideas on inclusive communities of practice at NMU that promote the university's mandate of research, teaching and engagement as promised by various webinars I have attended since I joined the institution in January. The demands in education are enduring, it is my goal to engage in research that is relevant to these challenges.

I am one of the participants in the current cohort of Higher Education Leadership and Management programme called Women in Leadership (WiL). The programme aims to create and sustain a pipeline and pool of women leaders and managers for South African higher education and promote their advancement in this regard.

On the home front, I am proud mother of two adult daughters that continue to make me proud in their chosen careers.

On behalf of our Dean, Dr Moeng, it gives me great pleasure to welcome Associate Professor Cina Mosito to the Faculty.

Associate Professor Mosito previously worked at Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) where she was the Head of Department of Foundation and Intermediate Phase studies. At CPUT she was the lead researcher, writer and materials developer in a national project funded by the European Union titled Teaching for All (T4A). T4A is a project that premises the belief that all children can learn, have the right to quality education and that every child matters and matters equally.

Ass Prof Mosito's research, teaching and engagement revolve around Inclusive Education and Educational Psychology. The principles of quality education and social justice drive her research. She has written several research articles on how best Teacher Education prepares teachers to support the cognitive development of learners from diverse realities.

Ass Prof Mosito has supervised and graduated postgraduate students whose research teases out engagement issues among learners experiencing barriers to learning. Her six most recent article publications in national and international journals examine inclusive education in teacher education and classroom intervention studies.

We welcome Associate Prof Mosito to the FP Department in the Faculty and look forward to joining and sharing ideas on inclusive communities of practice that will promote the university's mandate of research, teaching and engagement with her.



## Dissemination of stories

### #covid19storytellingproject

On Monday 29th March, Prof Nokhanyo Mdzanga visited Kanyisa School for the Visually Impaired in KwaDwesi to donate braille stories to their school library as well as newspaper format stories to teachers and parents of children at the school. This forms part of the COVID19 Story Telling project with dissemination of materials around the province.

She was accompanied by Ms Nosiphiwo Delubom, Director of UADS at NMU, who translated our stories into Braille, and had expressed an interest in becoming part of the dissemination of materials to both Efata (Mthatha) and Kanyisa schools for the blind. Prof Tumi Diale (UJ), is currently in PE visiting the Faculty of Education, and also joined the visit to Kanyisa. Her area of specialisation is Inclusive Education and Educational Psychology and she is working with Prof Mdzanga in advancing Autism research and scholarship.

The team also stopped in at Quest School for learners with Autism. In addition to handing over the stories from the story telling project, they had a productive meeting with the principal on possible collaboration initiatives going forward.

The dissemination of these stories from the story telling project takes the form of digital copy, hard copy newspapers and braille. Recipients identified to receive materials include schools, orphanages, reading clubs and newspapers in the greater Nelson Mandela Metro. Colleagues will also share these resources in Cala and Umtata.



**Top Row (left and right):** Prof N Mdzanga with the Principal of Quest School in Gqeberha and Prof T Diale

**Far left:** Ms N Delubom, Khanyisa Principal Ms Daniels, Prof N Mdzanga and Prof T Diale

**Left:** Presenting braille and print stories to the Principal of Khanyisa School for the Visually Impaired in Gqeberha

# FOE-Reflection

Hey there, I thought of reflecting about the past year on how I navigated from face-to-face learning to online learning, specifically on assessments. Like any other student I was anxious I did not know how we were going to be assessed as we were still doing SBL. Lockdown happened and that meant that no SBL, so the assessment had to be online. Although we communicated almost everyday on WhatsApp groups for each module, I honestly missed my classmates physical presence. I missed the classroom arguments that we used to have but now I only felt their presence through typed messages, and I would sometimes laugh and think that if were in class physically the argument would have taken longer. Online learning made me realize that maybe I was not appreciative enough of my classmates as I found myself missing everything especially the classroom presentation as it was where we interacted most. The lesson I learnt from this is to be appreciative and embrace every moment because it is guaranteed on how long it will last.

I was curious on assessments particularly of service faculty modules because there was an option of going to campus or being invigilated on zoom. All I knew was the 'cold' Sport Centre so writing with camera turned on in zoom was new to me. I was concerned whether I would be able to finish the tests on zoom without network or internet problem or not. I found myself worrying more about possible technical issues than the actual assessment. At first, I was happy that I will be in my warm room to write my tests. But it was very unusual. I somehow felt lonely and missed my peer's company at the Sport Centre when we write Accounting. It was just not the same - no invigilators, no lecturers or whosoever to always remind me of the remaining time. I had to set the timer on my cellphone to avoid missing the submission deadline because although it was online the duration of the assessment was the same with few extra minutes to scan and submit. After writing there is no one who is physically next to you that will discuss the few questions with and maybe offer some sense of comfort. I was all alone in my room, overthinking and looking at the cars passing outside just to distract my mind.

I thought I was the only one who felt this way, but I was not alone. My friends also felt this way and acknowledged that we were not appreciative enough of what we have. When things changed, coming



back to residences and to campus felt like a luxury and that is when I realized that we saw value of what we have when it was no longer easily accessible. To everyone, I want to say let us learn to appreciate and embrace everything we have even if it seems little.

*Neo Sepuhle*

## Ongemerck Poem

Kyk hoe praat ons vandag

Ironies.

Dit lyk ons is van twee verskillende dimensies

Twee verskillende leeftye

Wie sou kon sweer ons was op n tyd soos peanut en jam

Wie sou kon dink ons het nagte omgesit

Ai maar so waai die wind die liefde deurmekaar

So laat dit die sterkste verhoudings vergaan

Om te dink jy was op n tyd my beste vriend

Om te dink jy was op n tyd my sterkste rots

Maar die water het die mooi kom wegwas,  
en die vreemde maar egte jy agtergelaat

Tot my verbasing voel ek egter geen seer.

Ek sou raai dat my hart sou treur.

— Maar nee,

Ek is gelukkig en gesond

Liefde in my hart en uit my mond

'n Glimlag van oor tot oor

Woede is diep uit my hart geboor

Jyt absoluut geen meer mag

Ek het gevat wat aan my behoort, my krag

Ons tyd saam is nou klaar,

Dis tyd vir 'n nuwe blaar

Nie 'n oomblik sal ek berou

Dit het help vorm wat jy nou aanskou:

'n Pragtige jongvrou

Maar totsiens vir nou.

*RNVP*

# A Short Story

by Freeman Black, 23 January 2021

I remember Thubza, growing-up he thought every good in the world, all the nice things, were meant for other people. But there he was, on the verge of receiving all of his heart's desires – it was this final step that would "Set me up for life"; as he used to chant to us like a mantra at every corner-convention.

Unlike him, we all knew not to dare dream, I mean, every realistic aspect of our surrounding constantly battered us to see that this little box at the back of Maritjie's farm was our heaven. Thubza knew this too, to an extent; but it never derailed him from seizing all and every opportunity (if you could call them that). But all of his 'Kasi' advances were unlike ours, every move Thubza made, in the end served his agenda – contrasting to ours which were only confined to our pockets – Thubza's agenda was to get out of the box and again, be "Set for life"

I hadn't seen him for almost fifteen years, and there he was, in the best suit my meagre eyes have ever seen. I was making my way to the station where they keep the four-legged animals that drive us home, packing us to the brim. He was on the phone with his mother, that was obvious to everyone around him as he was very excited and it sounded like he had won a night's game of dice, well at least to me, to you it could be the lottery, but be that as it may, he was surely the happiest man in town!

And so I walked on over to greet the brother, we had, by far the most hopeful conversation in my life, Thubza told me that he eventually found a way to go study Engineering in Japan, I didn't even know what that was until he explained it to me. I was happy for him, I asked "why would he return to our box, why not make a living in Japan?"

"The Japs have enough hard-working and dedicated smart people creating a better future for their next generation. On the other hand, Equal Town has been mothered by the West since the days of our forefathers, we also need EqualTownians thinking about our future don't we? Which is why you see me so thrilled today" Thubza continued to tell me that today he had been granted funding to break-ground on his new company – which he described as "Equal Town's Black diamond" to him, it was the start of ensuring that we all eat!

We exchanged numbers and he promised to come say hi to my gran and I went for the taxi rank. Five steps on my way, then "BANG" a gunshot? But we can't afford those here, I looked back and Thubza was bleeding out in the pavement and two faceless hoodies were running swiftly between the crowds.

I took him to the hospital, while there, I got his phone and called his mother who I can imagine flew to the taxis as she was there within the hour – broken! With defeat in her eyes "They knew he was too good for us – They knew he was too good for us" she went on and on as she was pacing in the emergency waiting room.

I was drenched in Thubza's blood, my presence could only torture his mom at this point. So after hearing that Thubza was now in a medically induced coma to have the surgery to contain the damage caused by the bullet that went for his head; I asked his mom to be excused to go change and come back to wait with her, I was afraid to leave her alone in such a state, but half of her son's blood was on my clothes.

"It is well mntanam, I have called his siblings and our close family, and they will be here soon. Thank you so much for saving my son's life. You do not have to come back, well not until he wakes up, you have done so much already. Go home and rest, thank your grandmother for raising my superhero"

It was six months later when I got the call. Thubza was alive and well, he was inviting me to come over and see him, he told me "I understand the world now" and dropped the phone.

Understand the world? What's there to understand? Monsters kill women and children, he just got shot in the head and he wouldn't even harm a fly. Or maybe it was the bullet to the head that clarified it? Well, Fort England Mental hospital is a drive from here should I need to visit, but now let's see how he really is.

"My friend and saviour, thank you for rushing me to the hospital and saving my life. There aren't words yet in the universe clear enough to express my gratitude, brother, Enkosi" he said as he gave me a truthful embrace.

"It was the will of the ancestors that I be there at that precise moment, and I did what every rational human being would do and I would do it again, but don't make me, hey?" Thubza blasted out laughing as he promised not to. "So did you find the two scums that did this? Where are they and how many of us do you need?"

"No, they did not find them, but there's no need, they were the hand, I know who the brains behind it were"

"Even better, who is he, where does he live and again, how many of us do you need?"

"No need for more violence and anger, we should be dedicating every ounce of our strength for the elevation of our people, a revenge attack could only harm us, mentally if not physically." It was this that made me intrigued that maybe he really comprehends the world, and not from the nuthouse perspective. We talked even more about how he was feeling, and what was he going to do with his 'second life' as he puts it.

After the surgery, Thubza was in a coma for five months, showing absolutely no progress besides his beard; when out of nowhere he woke up in the middle of the night and before the night nurse could call the doctor, Thubza called her by her first and last name, sat her down and thanked her for thoroughly doing her job, revealed details about her life that she wanted to forget and now, miraculously forgave herself for them all.

Before coming to the hospital, Thubza didn't know this lady, but he was able to solve her life problems in one sitting. "Come on Thubza, this is all surreal, how could you know all that?"

"I think it is because of where I went when I was in a coma. I was everywhere at once, I could see you, could see my family, other families I don't know at once. It is like I visited you all at the same time unbound by the limits of the flesh. And the animals, oh my God, the animals, they know it all, and when I was there, I also knew what they knew, saw and walked as they did, which is why it has been decided for me, that I don't start my Engineering company"

# A Short Story

continued

"Thubza, what are you saying? Did you lose the funding? I mean didn't you say you were gonna make sure we all eat?"

"And eat we will. Just off a different dish, decent as the one for the elders in the kraal when there is a ceremony. Which is the actual reason I called you here today, I want you to come help me create a new company this world has yet to see."

There was something very scary in how calm and certain he was, for a man who was just on his death bed six months ago, he surely is optimistic. So, Thubza's company was the first of its kind for a peculiar reason, Thubza was convinced that he could understand the world too much that he even understood the animals. And this is how we were all going to eat. His company would be for people to get clarity for where they need to be in life, I admit, I was a bit sceptical about the whole "speaking to animals" thing until he showed me.

"It makes perfect sense if you think about it"; Thubza went on, "think about all the clans in Equal Town, each clan has one animal that they recite in their clan names, all the ancestors of that clan use that specific animal to stay 'in touch' with the physical world. By this, they get to still be alive and live through the animals. See, your clan's animal is an eagle. I know this because there's been an eagle on my window ever since we were having this conversation, it is here to bear witness to your rational rebirth in hopes that it and your other ancestors will receive their long awaited praises and offerings."

"Woah, Thubza this is unbelievable, I haven't seen an eagle in Equal Town before, and I didn't even notice it until you mentioned it."

"Do you want to speak to it? Could be someone you knew"

"What!? I can? Yes, please brother Thubza"

And I saw my first miracle, Thubza opened his window, the bird didn't even flinch, "Greetings kind stranger, would you like to come in?"

The eagle sprung in the room and went for the unoccupied seat. Thubza sat across it and their eyes were locked for ten minutes straight until Thubza dropped on the floor like a sack of potatoes, the eagle flew to him and started flying in circles over his head and went straight out of the window. Thubza rose immediately after it went off.

"That was your grandfather, your dad's father. He told me that you do not have to be like your father in order for you to be a good man, he

said he wished he could have told this to your father too as he would have stopped wanting to become him and actually live his life the way it was meant to be lived. He also says he is happy that you are on the path you are on, and in time, you will become the great man you were destined to be, not one moulded by the limitations of your father, he says, with you, that traitorous cycle ends. He said he doesn't know what will finally become of you, but what he knows, is it would be the manifestation of your fullest potential and in that the advancement of your family, for his future descendants to continue roaming the earth until Qamatha decides it is done. ."

Thubza fainted again. When he came to, he couldn't remember what he had just said, but I was furious, I wanted him to explain what it meant, what I had to do to become that man. He calmly replied.

"There's also a simple explanation to this too brother, whatever that I said was a message from the eagle, a message from your ancestors through me to you and as such not for me. The vessel does not quarrel why you pour milk in it, it cannot complain because it doesn't know that it is usually used for syrup. It doesn't know the difference, all it knows is that it is being used for its intended purpose, to pour. I am that vessel brother, and as such I just pour."

That was it. I knew I would follow Thubza till the rest of my days. Not just for eating now, but for spiritual nutrition too. Being his right hand as he ventures for his healing company.

As we speak, I help Thubza run his multi-billion company that magically turns its customers to share-holders, really, the first this world has seen. The box at the back of Maritjie's farm we used to take pride in calling our haven, has exploded, too small to confine us now, as we have transcended Equal Town to be fully compatible to the global market. Where we used to have our meaningless corner-conventions as boys, today, young men are hosting seminars of "How to Get Better at Being You" as one of the billboards on the corner read, this one time. We all eat in Equal Town, no pauper in sight, and it is all because of Thubza and his company –IZILOZEKHAYA, Google it.

Dedicated to my first best friend. Thubza Z. Claimed too soon at age 17.

## Technology-based Teaching and Learning in Higher Education during the Time of COVID-19

Editors:

Nobuhle Ndimande-Hlongwa, Labby Ramathan,  
Nhlanhla Mkhize, Johannes A. Smit



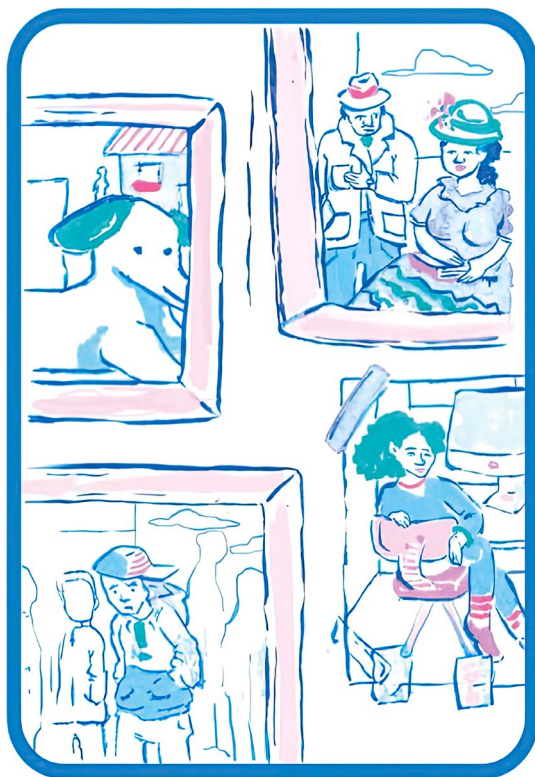
Alternation African Scholarship Book Series, Volume #02

## Halala! Profs' Du Plessis & Blignaut

Congratulations to Profs' Du Plessis and Blignaut on their chapter titled *Technology-based Teaching and Learning in Higher Education during the Time of COVID-19* (pp. 92-119) in Ndimande-Hlongwa, N., Ramathan, L., Mkhize, N. and Smit, J.A. (2020). *Technology-based Teaching and Learning in Higher Education during the Time of COVID-19*. Alternation African Scholarship Book Series, Volume #02. Durban: CSSALL Publishers (Pty) Ltd. DOI number: <https://doi.org/10.29086/978-0-9869936-1-9/2020/AASB502>

# SURVIVAL OF COMMUNITIES DURING THE PANDEMIC

N. Gedze, N. Mntwini, T. Chizu  
Illustrated by Sanelisiwe Singaphi



## 1st Learner

I am Onako, a girl living in 5 Ways Port Elizabeth with my big sister and her 1-year-old baby. My big sister is an Intern at a Bookkeeping company that is BBEE owned. Our parents are both in a small rural village in Sterkspruit. My big sister is the breadwinner, she fends for us in Port Elizabeth, our parents in Sterkspruit, as well as our drug addict brother who is currently living with our parents.

Towards the end of February, I was on a platform just browsing and having a good laugh at the memes and people were posting, until a video popped up on my timeline on how people overseas were dying of a Respiratory illness. I then watched it and in panic mode I showed my big sister, who just laughed and joked about how it would not reach South Africa.

As days turned into weeks, more and more information popped up about the illness, and I picked up two words 'COVID-19' and 'Coronavirus' these seemed to have been the names of the illness – I do not know. I did try looking it up and GOSH! It was just too much for me to understand.

As if that was not enough, a cloud of panic was hovering around social media, "wear gloves and masks, use hand sanitisers that are alcohol based" my word!? What does that even mean? Who should wear the masks and gloves? Why should they wear them and for how long? How often should one sanitise their hands? What about those who cannot afford the sanitisers? Oh, wait a minute where does one even buy the proper hand sanitisers? Do babies also have to wear masks and gloves? Do they also have to have their tiny hands sanitised? Confused was my middle name.





////// DATA LOADING ////



////// VIDEO BUFFERING ////



35 min.later...

YOUR 1 DAY DATA HAS RUN OUT .

Rumours about the illness landing on South African ground started making rounds, and it was confirmed - it had officially admitted itself admission into South Africa silently. Are we all going to die? What is this COVID-19? Is it the same as Coronavirus? Does it have a cure? How will I know if I have contracted the virus? Questions were flying around! We did not know what we were up against. Then the President announced the official 21 Day Lock-down, and the country stood still for a minute. What is a lockdown? What does it mean for us school children? What about the working class? The informal traders, vendors? What are we going to eat? What are we going to do with all this time on our hands? These are some of the Million and One question people were asking each other.

The lockdown started on the 26th of March 2020, what about grocery shopping for us households whose breadwinners get paid on the last day of the month, which in this case was the 31st of March. I don't know. However, grocery stores were exempted from closing during the lockdown, as they sell essential goods. that was a relief! Regardless of the exclusion people went on a panic shopping spree, clearing shelves, taking more than they needed.

Working for a BBEE – my sister has a horrible day when payday comes. “You get paid on the last day of the month! That means between 00:00 of the 31st of March till 23:59! So, you will be paid anytime on that day.” Is the answer she gets from her employer when she asks about

the delay on her salary – of which on this particular day she asked about it at 14:37. The frustration, anger and stress was written all over her face – being the breadwinner she has to pay rent for the flat we are living in, she has to buy us food, pay our parents’ helper, send our parents money to get groceries, buy her daughter’s monthly needs. Buy electricity, pay my school fees, pay her debts and pay her monthly policy payments – the list goes on. All this was held up because she had not yet received her March salary.

When it finally came through it was too late to get anything done - 20:19. When morning came, she left very early in the morning to get things done. With no taxis or buses on the road, she had to walk to town. Along the way she was confronted by ‘amaphara’ – homeless drug addicts, who searched her and took a R50 note she had and insulted her for walking around with nothing but a “stupid R50”. That incident on its own made me ask questions like: Are we safe during this lockdown? What happens to ‘amaphara’ during this lockdown?

As if that was not enough, my school sent an email telling her as my guardian to create a ‘Zoom’ account for my tuition. That meant we had to have a laptop with a proper webcam, enough data for the online class – that on a good day, with a good internet connection and speed would chow 1G per Hour. 1G costs R125 on the cell phone networks we both use. STRESS! Food in stores is now ridiculously expensive; R20 for a head of cabbage, R35 for a 2.5kg bag of Maize Meal. A

pack of nappies costs R229, a tin of Formula costs R175 – cheapest, and now we must have data for my Zoom lessons. I do 7 subjects at school each teacher wants +60minutes for a lesson. All this and yet the government said, “We are ready and prepared for this Pandemic”. Again, a new word: PANDEMIC!

Relief funds for some and not for everyone. Yesterday morning as we were packing my stuff for camp, my big sister received an email from her employer who was telling her that the company will not be able to pay all its employees a 100% of their salaries but 50% of it on the 15th of every month till July 2020. What does that mean for us? What will we eat? We live on hand to mouth. Where will we stay? We won’t be able to pay rent! What about our parents? Their grant money barely is enough for each of them. My school is requesting that my school fees be paid in full, with what? I will not be able to attend any Zoom lessons; my sister’s daughter won’t have nappies or formula.

Even coming to this camp – she had to go lend money from a loan shark, just so that I can come here and study. I read somewhere on a social media platform: “Discipline saved China, Ill-discipline drowned Europe, Ignorance will kill Africa” – are we really ignorant or we were never taught about this ‘thing’ properly?!



## 2nd Learner

**M**y name is Xolisa, I'm a 16-year-old living in KwaZakhele – eSeyisi. Currently I am on holiday at my grandmother's house, this means that I am staying with my 2 aunts, my cousin, my brother both 15-year olds, and my 10-year-old sister. Both my aunts are not permanently employed, one is an Intern and the other recently lost her job. My grandparents are both late, this then means that my aunts are responsible for everything in and around the home. My parents live in New Brighton, and they do help my aunts wherever they can.

This year (2020), I am doing Grade 11 and I was really looking forward to my year as a Pre-Matriculant. My first term results were quite good, and I was really looking forward to doing even better in the 2nd term. That goal became unattainable when we were told at school that schools were closing earlier than expected and our much anticipated 'Annual Stay Awake' was cancelled. What a bummer! Luckily this announcement was made after we had finished writing our March Exams and we received our end of term reports. I must admit, I never pay attention to the news, and because I was busy studying for the exams – I did not even log on to any of my social networks. It was only when schools closed that I realised that people were panicking about a 'Coronavirus' that had taken over China and killed thousands of people. This Virus then quickly moved to other countries such as Italy and Spain, by then it was all over the news and social media, and in all honesty, I was not even worried about it, I did not even think that it would reach South Africa.

Of course, we made jokes about the virus, whenever someone coughed or sneezed, but we did not think to protect ourselves. A couple of days after schools had officially closed, I am not really sure of when exactly, the President announced a National Lockdown, together with the announcement that a couple of people had contracted the virus, mainly a couple residing in KwaZulu Natal.

The Lockdown did not really affect me negatively, I still got to see my friends, go to the park, play with my friends, go to the spaza shops. Besides schools closing, shops at the mall being closed, and my favourite food outlets closed; I really did not feel the pinch of being locked down or the negative impact the Coronavirus has. Reality struck when my aunt insisted that we stay indoors and a friend of ours had to move in with us because at his home the term 'NO WORK, NO PAY', is a harsh reality. There was no food at his home so he would spend so much of his time at our home. Until my aunts decided that for our safety and that of himself, he should rather move in and stay with us.

The fact that my friend had no food at home, because his uncle is a self-employed Plumber, Builder and Mechanic, the lockdown meant that he could not find work. This raised so many questions in my head;





What is this Coronavirus and what is COVID-19? - because all that my friends and I know about it is that it is a virus that can be transmitted when an infected person coughs or sneezes. We have no idea what this COVID-19 is. Also, is there a treatment or a cure for this Virus? I really don't know. Why are people that are unable to work not being given food? - As in the case of my friend, whose family is suffering. We were told that our families must register for Food Parcels by the Councillor's office, but I know of no-one that has received those parcels in our community - none of our neighbours got them.

With these and many more questions running through my head, I came to this realisation, much more interventions need to be made



by the government about the Coronavirus - people need to be taught about the virus and the testing systems, as many of my neighbours have stated that they would not willingly test for the virus because of how they think it is tested. People in my community are roaming around the streets not because they are not fearful of the virus but because they cannot just stay at home while they have no food to eat.

With the many break-ins at major liquor stores in and around KwaZakhele, I realised that some people are willing to risk their lives and those of their families just to be able to drink alcohol. Could this be because drinking alcohol is their coping mechanism? What does this mean for my Academic year? I mean so much uncertainty over when we will beat the Coronavirus, there is no clear indication of when schools will reopen. My fear is repeating Grade 11 again next year, but at the very same time I do not want to proceed to Grade 12 unprepared.

People in my community share so much misinformation about the Coronavirus, that we have now stigmatised people affected and infected by the virus. It is a constant battle to get the people of KwaZakhele to adhere to the new Lockdown Funeral Regulated number of attendance and the cancellation of traditional ceremonies. Social distancing doesn't exist in my community especially at our shopping centres, it is only when people see police vans then they run to their homes, otherwise they roam in the streets freely more especially the children. I became so jealous when I look through my window only to find other kids playing outside whilst I am being told to stay at home.

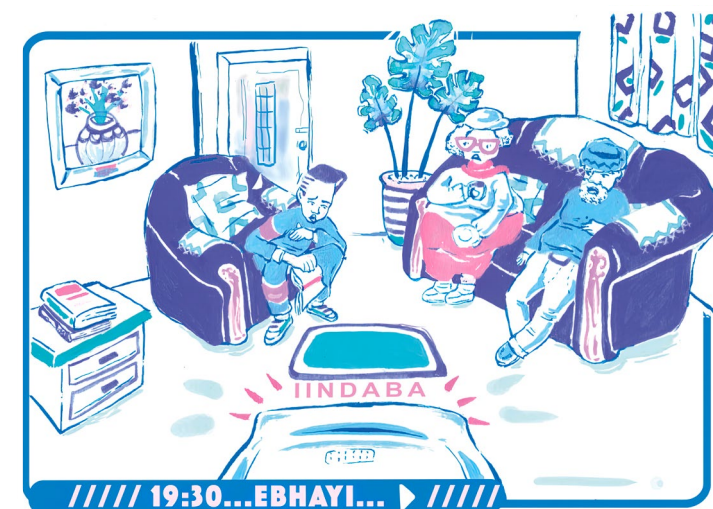
The People of KwaZakhele have lost faith in our government because of the corruption, even with the recent announcements by the president, people still do not believe that they will benefit from the relief funds offered. There is so much uncertainty as to what the future holds and more and more people are getting infected.

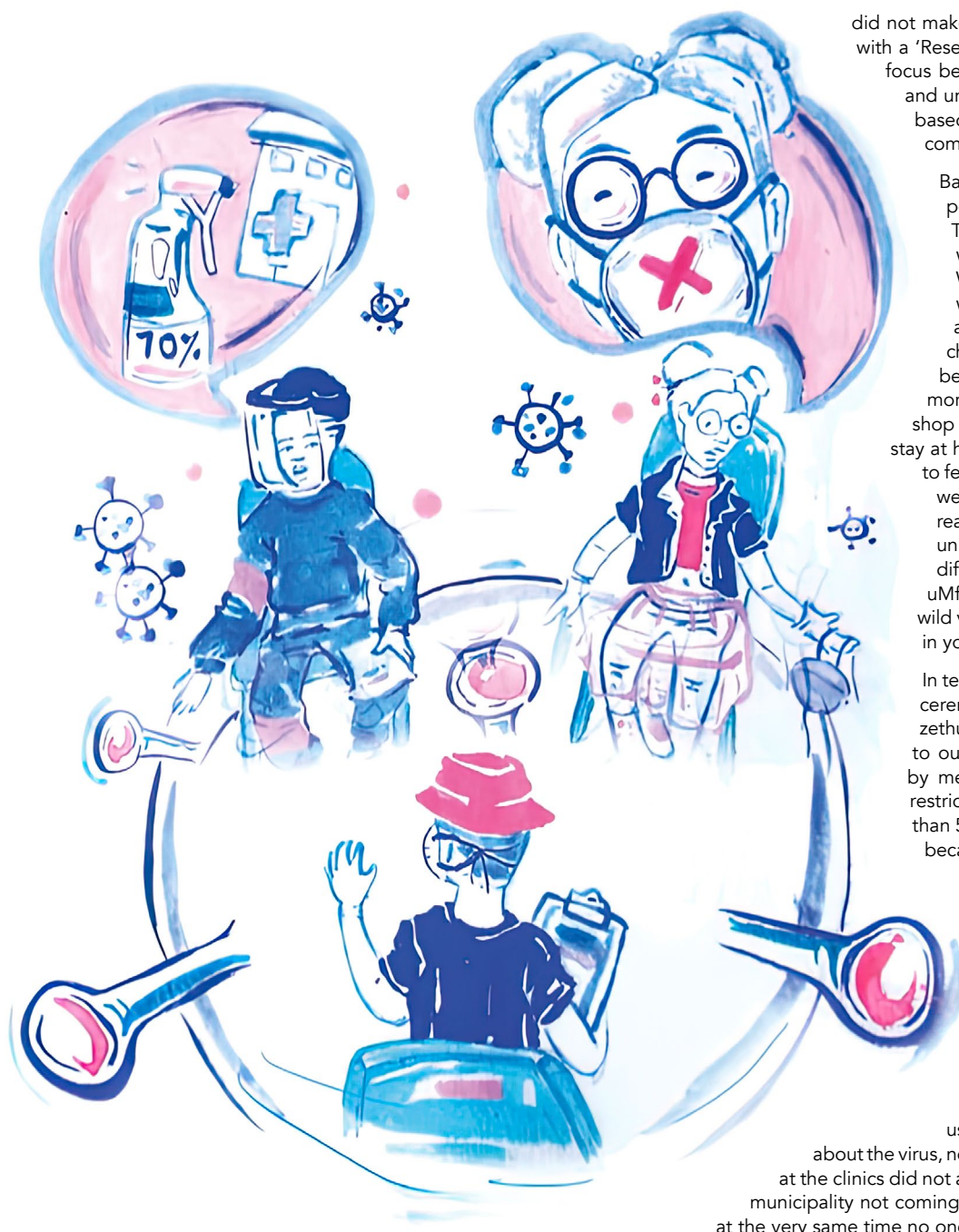
### 3rd Learner

My name is Lingomso, a 16-year-old who lives in a small village in Ngqushwa or as some people know it - Peddie. I live with my grandmother and my 10-year-old nephew. I am currently doing my Grade 11, and I always try to do my utmost best at school. In March, while we were at school our teacher told us about a Virus that had apparently been going around called Coronavirus. She did not explain much about it, so we made sure to watch the news daily just so that we could absorb as much information as we could about this Coronavirus. My grandmother would sometimes ask me about the virus, and I would explain from my own understanding - because in all honesty the news would just confuse us when they start mentioning COVID-19 while talking about this Coronavirus.

I entered a competition at school to attend a Camp, the competition was for those who really needed to go but could not afford the Camp fees and everything else in between. Lucky enough I made it! I was so excited because never have I in my life travelled to the big cities. My mother left Ngqushwa many years ago, on a quest to get a job - and she never returned. We don't know what happened to her, this instilled some fear of the unknown on me, because I always thought something bad happened to her, now with me leaving for the City, what if I don't come back? What if that bad thing that could have taken my mother away from us, takes me? Nevertheless, my grandmother kept on reassuring me that everything was going to be ok.

Camp Day came! I was so excited. We left Ngqushwa and arrived at our campsite safely, we were introduced to each other and grouped in 3s. I was grouped with Onako from 5ways, Port Elizabeth and Xolisa from KwaZakhele, Port Elizabeth. I must say it was kind of a culture shock for me to be grouped by people who live in the city, but they





did not make me feel like a misfit! We were tasked with a 'Research on the Coronavirus' with the main focus being to speak out about what we knew and understood about it, as well as our views based on the communities that we were coming from.

Back in Ngqushwa, we have lots of Old people who do not understand this virus. They only understand that they must wash their hands with soap and water. We do not stay indoors or stay at home, we visit and socialise with other people, also the shops are very far we have no choice but to go out to the shops – also because of one's safety we go in pairs, the more people who accompany me to the shop - the safer. We cannot be indoors or stay at home because we must go to the forest to fetch firewood, we do have electricity, but we eat food that takes a long time to get ready and it ends up wasting the electricity units. Things like Soup, that has lots of different types of Legumes and Mealies, uMfino – Pap with different edible healthy wild veggies or just regular green vegetables in your garden.

In terms of the cancellations of all Traditional ceremonies – sinamatyala kwizinyanya zethu ekufuneka sizisilele (We have 'debts' to our ancestors that need to be honoured by means of Traditional Beer) and Funerals restricted to only family members not more than 50 – people in the village are struggling, because in the spirit of UBUNTU and in the spirit of Empathising, people would gather up at the home of the deceased for a night vigil. We also see Soldiers who are said to be patrolling on the news, but we have never seen them in our village and that is why people do not take the lockdown seriously.

As a young person from Ngqushwa, I feel that the government has failed us in so many ways, we are not educated about the virus, no testing is done in the village, the nurses at the clinics did not attend any trainings about the virus. The municipality not coming to check if we still have enough water, at the very same time no one has received food parcels.

Despite Traditional Ceremonies being cancelled, schools being closed, and Funerals now restricted to only the family members not exceeding a total of 50 persons, life in Ngqushwa is close to normal. We are still facing our very same daily challenges, oh except the fear of the unknown Coronavirus to the people of Ngqushwa.

- Ask your Elders to teach you life skills; Indigenous education has been side-lined somewhat by technology, you could use this time to learn how to sew, knit, cook, make fire or even cook on a fire.
- Carve out family time – play games as a family, have debate sessions on the current situation that we find ourselves in. create customised 30 Seconds or Charades and play it together this helps with getting to know each other as well as general knowledge.
- Chat to friends, if you have internet access chat with your friends, just a break from the reality helps.
- Watch good movies as a family, a good laugh helps.
- Share responsibilities chores, this helps lift the strain on each one of you.
- Story telling – lintsoni.
- Artwork, this can be tons of fun, you could decide on a theme maybe 'Art using Recyclable materials', old clothes, leaves.
- Studying or revising the work you did at school.
- You could also create a Game where you talk everything 'Coronavirus', myths, statistics, challenges, etc.





Newsletter of the Faculty of Education

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