In 2006 a community activist came to Thembi Sefatia’s (Thembi’s) gate in Evaton North, Gauteng and told her that he was working with numeracy and literacy groups in the community. He was working as a researcher with the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD) at the time and was busy mapping the Evaton North area to determine how and where to work towards establishing a community literacy and numeracy group (CLING) in the area. He had been directed to Thembi’s crèche and she helped by taking him to the two other crèches in the area at that time.

Discussion with the community activist on what CLING was all about followed this first contact. This made Thembi realise that, as teachers working in the foundation phase of learning, that they were in a crucial stage of children’s literacy and numeracy learning. She recognised the importance of herself and other crèche teachers/owners getting involved in this project. When the mapping was complete there were further meetings with two other CEPD researchers and other stakeholders (that included at least one member from every civil society group) in the area.

CLING is about storytelling, the building of shared reading skills and the training in different library skills necessary to ensure the smooth running of the group. Unfortunately, because there was no money involved in committing to and working with the CLINGs many people back out, until then only 15 when the first CLING started in Evaton North. Also, there were those who tried to use the launch of the CLINGs as a political tool to further their organisation/portfolio. One of the CEPD workers was asked to come and address this issue and it was made clear that CLING was a community project and that there was to be no politics involved in the running of the group.

At a meeting with an Education Policy Consortium (EPC) researcher, the idea was presented to the community and it was explained that CLING was about storytelling, the building of shared reading skills and the training in different library skills necessary to ensure the smooth running of the group. He explained that initial work to establish a CLING group requires the understanding of the communities’ educational needs. This entails a lot of activities, including community mapping, as this will enable community researchers and EPC researchers to better understand who is in the community, what structures are available and where the gaps in community education are.

Through this groundwork, the Evaton CLING group discovered that the community is struggling with a public library and started campaigning for a library to be established in the area. They then established a shack library in Evaton North that also offered programmes that encourages and enhances the love and culture of reading. It was also a space such as storytelling.

The Shack served as the base from which the Mandela Day project was hosted that year. With the help of all the stakeholders, including the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) at the time Nelsiswa Mbabha, and the different local government departments in Sedibeng, all the people who attended the event were hosted. Eventually the CLING group then had to move to another shack that became available at the time.

Then, in 2010 a woman who came to one of the CLING training workshops was a teacher at the Lakeside Estate Primary School. Her enthusiasm for the project resulted in CLING being set-up at the school library on Mandela Day.

Despite the challenges the CLING groups went ahead and its activities grew into the following:

- The Homework Club, which is offered after school - This Club addresses the gaps left by overcrowded schools.
- The Reading Club – This Club addresses the need for reading out loud (to practise and grow their reading skills) in Sotho and even in English.
- The Adult Education classes – These classes ran during 10 am and 12 noon.
- ECD outreach – Here CLING has partnered with Naliba, a group that emphasises the importance of storytelling for children, to supplement the reading readiness that takes place at the crèches, as well as the training of pregnant women.

There is no syllabus that CLING follows. Its facilitators’ works on creating an informal, friendly, open and caring environment that is different from what the schools offer at present.

The impact of CLING on children in the area (as noted by facilitators and parents who use the service):

- Many social problems that children face in these areas are detected by the CLING facilitators and they do their best to help these children.
- For ECD, CLINGs have been found to impact on the following areas:
  - Children’s abilities to dramatize stories
  - Children develop their own imagination to tell their own localised stories and localise them
  - The children become creative and are able to ‘think out of the box’, as well as develop inquiring minds from the CLING activities.
  - It builds the self-esteem and confidence of the children
  - They are able to draw pictures to tell their stories as well
  - Children develop the reading habit, which enhances their social skills. Reading is seen as fun activity where books come alive for them and they are able to portray characterisation and become role models for those around them. The structured activities of the maths and science classes have helped children to improve and develop a liking for these subjects. Thembi notes that a CLING facilitator, Zakariya Maphosa (Shorty), has had the most impact in this area and his students have shown an improved pass rate in their schooling.

Challenges identified by CLING facilitators in Evaton North:

- People do not want to volunteer for the long-term without some form of remuneration. As a result there is a high turnover of facilitators.
- The CLING group is under-resourced and experiences difficulties with paying for the basics, such as rent.
- Faced with these challenges it is difficult to recruit more adult learners into the program.
- Operational space is a challenge.
- Help is required with getting the essential paperwork required for proposals, as well as a good strategy to raise funds for the group.

The facilitators’ ideas on how government can aid CLING groups:

- To support local municipalities who are looking for ways to help with stipends for the CLING facilitators
- To provide a space for the CLING group to operate from that has a kitchen and toilet with it
- To assist with a feeding scheme for the children coming straight from school
- To help establish the basic facilities and structures for CLING groups so that their project proposals can be considered

What role should tertiary institutions in the locality play in CLING groups?

- Links between the tertiary institutions and the CLING groups should be established so that CLING participants can be made aware of what is offered, as well as career guidance from these institutions in their area.
- These institutions should offer computer skills classes to local school-going learners
- They should come to motivate learners in CLING to encourage further study.
Emerging Voices 2 in the Vaal, Gauteng – Findings Presentation Workshop

The findings from the Emerging Voices 2 (EV2) research project for the Sebokeng area will be presented to all stakeholders and participants at a two-day workshop at the Vaal University of Technology (VUT) Science and Technology Park in Sebokeng, Vanderbijlpark on the 14th and 15th of May.

Over the past two years EV2 research has been conducted in four sites around the country, in particular through PSET institutions, to reimagine PSET. In the Vaal, researchers from CERT/ UJ have worked with VUT, Sedibeng FETC (Sedibeng Campus), Several ABET centres, and with Youth from several different community organisations. In this workshop, conducted jointly by VUT and UJ, we seek to share and critically interrogate EV2 research findings. We see this dialogue as a preliminary yet important step in a long and necessary journey to ensure PSET better responds to the needs of all people. We are sincerely grateful to our partners and to all who participated in this research. We look forward to a rich and thoughtful dialogue … and to continuing this journey together.

The goal of EV2 is to reimagine post-school education and training (PSET) so that it better meets the needs of poor and working class communities. We believe that too often PSET focuses on individual success and supporting the privileged and not enough on building communal values, listening to historically marginalized populations, and working with and in communities to create a better life for all. Given the monumental social and economic challenges facing South Africa, we believe that a PSET which focuses only on narrow technocratic skills relevant to limited formal sector jobs suffers from severely diminished vision of the role of PSET in building a new South Africa. PSET can and should contribute to community and national development in many and different ways. At the same time PSET had a lot to learn from community struggles if PSET institutions are to serve as credible partners in local development.

None of the youth, the researchers and other delegates had an opportunity to say anything to our Minister. Indeed the Minister arrived, he was well received and given an opportunity to address us all. Before concluding his talk he highlighted that he has another meeting elsewhere so he will not stay long for questions, and answers but mostly that he was not going to be around for our presentations. This was a huge ‘aw’ moment for all of us because we had been looking forward to this day since the inception of the research project.

The only EPC participants who had an opportunity to say something to the Minister, or in the Minister’s presence, were two research house Directors by gentle fibering that the at least get two minutes to say something. That two minutes was very limited; it was nothing considering the amount of work and time everyone had put into the research. None of the youth, the researchers and other delegates had an opportunity to say anything to our Minister. The Minister explained that he was in a hurry, but that we could continue the discussion with his advisor. The advisor did not stick around for much longer, as well. We are grateful that he came in on one of the days of the conference, the first and only, but unhappy that he did not listen to the presentations we had prepared.

In closing, we thank the Minister for coming and we hope that in the upcoming EPC conference we will have a conversation with him. We look forward to hearing about his ideas on ways to improve the future of our young people.

Thank you to all the Education Policy Consortium (EPC) team members who have contributed and helped put this newsletter together including Britt Baatjes, Violet Chisulo, Thami Hukwe, Nonipumelo Celebahlulu, Ithumeleng Moabi, Sandile Zwane, Dlawn Nkgwed, Mudney Halim (Layout), Yoemna Saint (Proofreading), Hibist Kassa (Editing) and Fatima Gabru (Managing Editor).

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To find out more about the EV2 project, visit the EV2 blog: http://ev2.jwws.wordpress.com/ the EV2 Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/emergingvoices2 and http://www.uj.ac.za/EN/ Faculties/edu/CentresandInstitutes/CERT/Pages/The-Centre.aspx

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EDITORIAL
As the second chapter of the Emerging Voices research project is coming to a close the EV2 NEWS newsletter will also be saying goodbye in the not too distant future. The future for the newsletter will be a change into a community education development (CED) focused newsletter with a different name and look. The same commitment to discussing community challenges, and ways in which communities are working to improve their environment, will be the focus of the new newsletter.
For this rounding up issue we have started off with a crossover story (from EV2 to CED) from one of the Education Policy Consortium’s (through CERT) exciting projects, the Community Literacy and Numeracy Group (CLING) in Evaton North. CED projects such as these are providing an essential intervention in assisting learners and communities improve their educational and social capital. It is also interesting to note that it is the women who are more often the backbone and energy behind such community building projects.

The focus on ‘The Lion of Kwa-Masiza’ (in isiXhosa and English, p3) highlights the importance of acknowledging past struggles and community commitment. Our Special Feature (p6-7) showcases the hope, innovativeness and strength of communities to make life more liveable/bearable even under the most trying circumstances.

The last page of this edition captures the summary of the preliminary findings of the EV2 research project. It provides a very brief summary of the preliminary findings of the EV2 research project, to reimagine PSE. In the Vaal, researchers from CERT/UA have worked with VUT, Sedibeng ETFC (Sekobeng Campus), Several ABET centres, and with Youth from different community organisations. In this workshop, conducted jointly by VUT and UJ, we seek to share and critically interrogate EV2 research findings. We see this dialogue as a preliminary yet important step in a long and necessary journey to ensure PSE better responds to the needs of all people. We are sincerely grateful to our partners and to all who participated in this research. We look forward to a rich and thoughtful dialogue … and to continuing this journey together.

The goal of EV2 is to reimagine post-school education and training (PSET) so that it better meets the needs of poor and working class communities in South Africa. We believe that too often PSET focuses on individual success and supporting the privileged and not enough on building communal values, listening to historically marginalized populations, and working with and in communities to create a better life for all. Given the monumental social and economic challenges facing South Africa, we believe that a PSET which focuses only on narrow technocratic skills relevant to limited formal sector jobs suffers from severely diminished vision of the role of PSET in building a new South Africa. PSET can and should contribute to community and national development in many and different ways. At the same time PSET had a lot to learn from community struggles if PSET institutions are to serve as credible partners in local development.

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The only EPC participants who had an opportunity to say something to the Minister, or in the Minister’s presence, were two research house Directors by gently forcing that at least get two minutes to say something. That two minutes was very limited; it was nothing considering the amount of work and time everyone had put into the research. None of the youth, the researchers and other delegates had an opportunity to say anything to our Minister. The Minister explained that he was in a hurry, but that we not stay long for questions, and answers but mostly that he was not going to be around for much longer, as well. We are grateful that he came in on one of the days of the conference, the first day, but unhappy that he did not listen to the presentations.

In closing, we thank the Minister for coming and we hope that in the upcoming EPC conference we will have a conversation with him. We look forward to a rich and thoughtful dialogue … and to continuing this journey together.

‘Thank you for coming sir, but next time we would really appreciate a two-way conversation with you’

Sandile Zwane, CERT - EV2 Researcher

We were all excited that we were going to meet the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande on the first day of the conference, at the Education Policy Consortium (EPC) Annual Researchers Conference at Wits University Education campus, December 2014.

Attending the conference were youth groups from three provinces and four research sites engaged in the Emerging Voices 2 research project. The conference was held over a period of 3 days, from the 09 to the 11 December, 2014 There were youth representatives from the deep rural parts of Limpopo, Sekhukhune village; Evaton North, Sekobeng and Steeldeale in the Vaal, in Gauteng; Zwelve, Newbrighton and Missionvale in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape and lastly there were youth from Mdansane and neighbouring informal settlements in East London, Eastern Cape. Other delegates included researchers from different research houses forming the EPC. All of us had been working hard throughout the year conducting research that will assist in informing aspects of the education policy. We all wanted the Minister to hear what came out of the research.

We prepared presentations of findings, frustrations and recommendations.

Today is the day; the Minister is coming - that was a little happy voice whispering into my ear and I later learnt that I wasn’t the only one receiving the melodious voice in my ear. We were all excited and anticipating a fruitful discussion with our Minister. Indeed the Minister arrived, he was well received and given an opportunity to say something to all. Before concluding his talk he highlighted that he has another meeting elsewhere so he will not stay long for questions, and answers but mostly that he was not going to be around for our presentations. This was a huge ‘aw’ moment for all of us because we had been looking forward to this day since the inception of the research project.

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POPULAR BOOKS AVAILABLE FROM CERT

1. HIV/AIDS: The Rights of Learners and Educators
2. Sexual Violence: The Rights of Learners and Educators
3. The Education Rights of Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants
4. Language Rights and Schools
5. Religion and Schools
6. Disability: The Rights of Learners
7. School Governing Bodies: Rights and Responsibilities
8. The Cost of Schooling: Your Rights
9. Admission Policy: Your Rights
10. The Right to Education in Community Education
11. Corporal Punishment and Bullying: The Rights of Learners
12. Early Childhood Development and Education Rights
13. Racism and Schools
14. School Nutrition and the Rights of Learners
15. Facilitating Literacy: A Handbook for Community-Based Literacy Workers
16. Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity rights in Education
17. Environment and Education: Rights and Responsibilities
18. Children’s Rights to Education in Hospital
19. Reading Clubs and Community Literacy
20. Privatisation of Schools: Selling out the right to quality public education for all
21. Work: Hope and Possibilities
In the mines we were herded like animals back then. Let me say, we were beaten, driven like animals while loading up goods.
ESSENCE OF EDUCATION
Akhona Mavuso

Education is the most powerful weapon that lightens up our lives. It is also used by enabling us to know and understand our world through interpretation.

Education is a weapon that can be used to fight against poverty and secure our economy. Our knowledge of society and understanding of how it is organised can enable us as communities to identify opportunities to improve our immediate circumstances of poverty and joblessness. As such, the education system should empower people to tackle life's challenges critically and creatively.

At this point, this level of quality education is not free, nor is it cheap. In our communities, government is providing us with free education by instituting a ‘no-fee’ policy in some schools to exempt some parents or guardians from paying school fees because of their family socio-economic status. With this action, our government partly admits and acknowledges that they recognize education as an human right.

However, 'no fee' status should not mean compromised quality. In order for us to realise the essence of education in our communities and our livelihoods, we need to get all involved in shaping the teaching and learning experiences. It starts from accepting that education is not a passive process. The same active presence that is present between the preacher and the congregation is needed between the community and schools.

This understanding informed my decision to volunteer with the Kwa-Masiza Community Literacy and Numeracy Group (CLING). CLING assists children with improving their studies through homework support and literacy experiences. It starts from accepting that education is not a passive process. The same active presence that is present between the preacher and the congregation is needed between the community and schools.

Let us put our hands together to help our communities by caring together. It’s mine, yours and our responsibility to play a part in our country’s development.

Our lives in the Kasi
Thandi Mabona

On the 23rd of January 2015 I was attending an ACTIVATE! Imbawa leadership programme. Young people were showcasing their projects and doing activities.

What stood out for me at the programme is the Eco gardening and the theatre performances.

I’ve realized that in our community we were already growing plants, veggies and fruits from a long time ago. We do Eco gardening to produce healthy plants and foods, and to support our families by selling those plants. Eco gardening is clean for our environment and it minimises land pollution, as well as help the earth to produce good soil for our benefit.

Other young people were performing at theatres to tell stories that are taking place in our kasi. Stories about domestic violence, alcoholism, and abuse by their wives or boyfriends abusing their girlfriends; children lacking stress management at school, of which it somehow leads to school drop outs or being drug addicts; and how some young people decides to adopt kasi thug life and others see prostitution as a ticket to live a better life until they end up sick with HIV/AIDS.

Our kasi lives have been taken for granted for years and yet now we are using those old methods for employment. The Imbawa event reminded me of these good values and skills in my kasi life.

Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing
Arundhati Roy

Our youth are currently facing the growing challenge of joblessness. Joblessness is a very disturbing situation in any young person’s life who has undergone many years of school, whether it is after matriculation or after a tertiary education. It causes these young people to lose hope that leads some of them to abuse substance like alcohol and drugs.

There are efforts from government and the private sector in terms of learnerships and internships. However, perceptions on the ground are that the private sector needs to increase their efforts to fight youth joblessness because many perceive the sector as possessing greater opportunity to create more jobs for young people than government.

There are claims that big companies are using learnerships and apprenticeship programs to claim from the skills development levy fund from the Department of Labour. The main issue here is that there are many youths who are still unemployed after taking part in these programmes.

Of concern is that government also does not seem to have permanent plans for those youths coming out of learnership and internship programmes. Both government and private sector are struggling to absorb young people into the system or even opening opportunities with prospective employers for permanent employment. Instead, we see young people in my community jumping from one internship programme to the next for as long as they are able to get these internships. Our youth is using internships and learnership programmes as unemployment stipends and an opportunity to collect different certificates while waiting for real employment.

This shows the weak monitoring strategies employed for these internship and learnership programmes that allows young people to abuse these platforms. In addition, political interference at community level impacts the monitoring of such initiatives. There are also some community-based political leaders and affiliated members who use learnerships and internships as opportunities to score points with the community and this influences some members of the community from benefiting from these programmes.

Learnership and internship programs are temporary solutions for a growing problem such as unemployment. The frustration of unemployment expressed by youth is displayed in much of the protests seen in townships today. Xenophobia is also an added problem of these frustrations. Youth are increasingly on the streets burning tyres, blocking roads, and looting foreigners’ shops due to poor service delivery from government.

My conclusion is if everyone can have a decent job as stipulated in our constitution as a basic human right and our youth in particular, and then we will see a society where we will live in peace and harmony.

A vegetable garden in the Vaal

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead
MANKGERETLA
Written by the Site Based Research Learning and Advocacy Team in Sekhukhune, Limpopo

Mankgeretla
Ke mankeretla ke malalobula
Dijo ke pantane le mohlwa wa matuba ka baka la pelo go rotha madi
Meloko le metswalela ge ba mpona ba ntšhikuloga
Ke mankeretla ke malabulabu

alternative perspectives to be realised?

3. 1.

following questions framed the research:

interested in sharing their ideas on post schooling. The
Written by the Site Based Research Learning and
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SOME ARE ROAMING THE STREETS ... BUT THERE
ARE POCKETS OF HOPE

Reflection by CEPD researcher Violet Chisulo

You have all heard this saying, “that the mistakes of the
educators are roaming the streets and the mistakes of
the nurses and doctors are filling the graves.”

I was intrigued to understand the context of post
schooling issues better to enable an appropriate
response to the so called popular saying above. I had
the privilege of working on the Emerging Voices 2
research project in a few villages in the Sekhukhune
District; where I engaged with ABET learners and
educators, TVET learners and lecturers, community
leaders, community project participants amongst others
interested in sharing their ideas on post schooling. The
following questions framed the research:

1. What is the current reality of PSETD sector?
2. Is post schooling education meeting the needs of the
rural communities?
3. What alternative visions for post schooling education
will serve the rural communities?
4. What needs to be done and by whom to bring these
alternative perspectives to be realised?

In my engagements I found that the current realities in
the villages were that the educators were not happy with
their role in educating the youth. The educators were
under very trying conditions; such as no resources, no
governmental support and a lack of in-service training.
The teaching curriculum that they used was outdated
and in some cases they did not have the equipment for
practical demonstrations, as such they were aware of the
limitations of the learners graduating from their
institutions.

For most youth completing higher education, they found
themselves trapped, with no job opportunities. Some
indicated that they were chasing qualifications and
accumulating a number of certificates that were in
various fields. Those that were despondent turned to
using drugs and alcohol which affected the communities
at large.

Looking at the education systems as a whole, the
communities noted that there are limitations in terms of
portability and transferability of qualifications. For many,
the current post schooling education system, not just the
educators, is not meeting the needs of these rural
communities.

Despite all this, there are pockets of hope. Communities
have realised they need to take charge of their
communities and their lives and not just wait for the
system to change. The villagers are engaging youth in
various projects to provide services to their communities.

All the villages visited had home-based care
services and agricultural projects. In one village,
there existed a youth group helping to find work
placement for graduates, and at the same time,
looking at alternative ways of exposing the youth
to practical work experience.

More importantly, the youth have become
politically aware and teach each other ways in
which they can bring about changes in their
communities. For some, this has meant organising
protests on service delivery, whilst for others it has
meant trying every possible way to make various
government departments and agencies aware of
their plight and engage with possible solutions.

Yes, some of the youth are roaming the streets but
not all is lost, and the youth have the power to
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there existed a youth group helping to find work
placement for graduates, and at the same time,
looking at alternative ways of exposing the youth
to practical work experience.

More importantly, the youth have become
politically aware and teach each other ways in
which they can bring about changes in their
communities. For some, this has meant organising
protests on service delivery, whilst for others it has
meant trying every possible way to make various
government departments and agencies aware of
their plight and engage with possible solutions.

Yes, some of the youth are roaming the streets but
not all is lost, and the youth have the power to
affection positive change.

Reflection by Violet Chisulo

You have all heard this saying, “that the mistakes of the
educators are roaming the streets and the mistakes of
the nurses and doctors are filling the graves.”

I was intrigued to understand the context of post
schooling issues better to enable an appropriate
response to the so called popular saying above. I had
the privilege of working on the Emerging Voices 2
research project in a few villages in the Sekhukhune
District; where I engaged with ABET learners and
educators, TVET learners and lecturers, community
leaders, community project participants amongst others
interested in sharing their ideas on post schooling. The
following questions framed the research:

1. What is the current reality of PSETD sector?
2. Is post schooling education meeting the needs of the
rural communities?
3. What alternative visions for post schooling education
will serve the rural communities?
4. What needs to be done and by whom to bring these
alternative perspectives to be realised?

In my engagements I found that the current realities in
the villages were that the educators were not happy with
their role in educating the youth. The educators were
under very trying conditions; such as no resources, no
governmental support and a lack of in-service training.
The teaching curriculum that they used was outdated
and in some cases they did not have the equipment for
practical demonstrations, as such they were aware of the
limitations of the learners graduating from their
institutions.

For most youth completing higher education, they found
themselves trapped, with no job opportunities. Some
indicated that they were chasing qualifications and
accumulating a number of certificates that were in
various fields. Those that were despondent turned to
using drugs and alcohol which affected the communities
at large.

Looking at the education systems as a whole, the
communities noted that there are limitations in terms of
portability and transferability of qualifications. For many,
the current post schooling education system, not just the
educators, is not meeting the needs of these rural
communities.

Despite all this, there are pockets of hope. Communities
have realised they need to take charge of their
communities and their lives and not just wait for the
system to change. The villagers are engaging youth in
various projects to provide services to their communities.

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What is a Profile of Possibility – We are often confronted with the question, “What is the alternative”?

Throughout the world there are numerous movements, spaces, groups, organisations, ideas, learning activities, and ways of doing things differently – against the dominant, oppressive system of global corporate capitalism which favours a few at the expense of the many. We argue for something new, better, equitable and just. They often do this against all odds – they struggle to survive and constantly bump up against power and dominance. And yet, against all this, they are there – they exist, if they are marginalised and invisible to many or even to most.

Part of the EV2 research, ‘Profiles of Possibility’, explores these with a specific focus on the learning that happens. Learning which may not be confined to a classroom; or to a day, week or month; or to a school or college. Learning which may not be learned formally in conventional ways. Our search is for learning within a group/organisation/community that is connected to the everyday struggles of people within that group. This kind of learning can hopefully point to something new, better and more meaningful in what has come to be termed the ‘post-schooling’ sector (the education/training/development that happens ‘around’ school)

“For me the most interesting and significant learning occurs informally and incidentally, in people's everyday lives. And some of the most powerful learning occurs as people struggle against oppression, as they struggle to make sense of what is happening to them and to figure out ways of doing something about it” (Foley, 1999: 1-2).

The Profiles of Possibility research took us around South Africa (and globally via the internet and books) between the months April to November, 2014. We visited nine organisations/groups (see below) and conducted five additional interviews with the following groups: Biowatch organisations/groups (see below) and conducted five additional interviews with the following groups: Biowatch

Not simply about fruit and vegetable

Is'baya Development Trust

Is'baya Development Trust was founded in 1998 and was registered as a public benefit trust in 2001. Is'baya believes that in seeking rural development solutions, people should be at the centre of their own development. Is'baya identifies partners and resources, and co-ordinates all activities including assisting with building capacity in communities for the attainment of greater self-reliance. Is'baya has an office in Somerset West, Western Cape, and a field office in Port St Johns, Eastern Cape. Is'baya has worked in the Port St Johns area for 15 years. The initial Is'baya work in the area - with the support of the Agri-people, Agriculture Research Council, and the Agricultural Research Council for Tropical and Subtropical Crops - was a feasibility study to test, amongst other, soil and water quality, but very soon (according to Is'baya) these possibilities argue for something new, better and more meaningful in what has come to be termed the ‘post-schooling’ sector (the education/training/development that happens ‘around’ school). We are not farmers because we have no farms. We live with our cattle. Farmer Hankey

The various programme elements, not all of which are yet in operation - mainly due to financial constraints - are:
- agriculture production - integrated farming based on conservation agriculture (small-scale);
- technical support and training; trade and business development strategy;
- heritage study;
- community health management strategy;
- appropriate ICT resources;
- economic impact; agriculture infrastructure - including access to water, roads, communications, schools, etc.

Researcher Reflection: Nqoghewana Village is 10 km away from town, a misleading measure if gauged by the urban experience. The group was roughly a 40 minute drive from town owing to the gravel road, pot holes and the mountainous landscape, telling of the spatial inequality between rural and urban areas. On the way to Nqoghewana we passed children playing in a lake on the side of the road trying to keep them busy, while parents washed their clothes.

Further along we saw a young girl - head wrapped to cushion it from the heavy bucket of water on her head - walking up the hill to her home. We passed by small, scattered clusters of huts and counted one school and one clinic.

Sites and scenes perhaps telling of the challenges we were to be acquainted with in the village we were about to visit.

Khanyisile Ngalo (NMI)

Khanlya Education and Development Trust

Khanlya Education and Development Trust's office is located in Central, Port Elizabeth and it operates in the localities of the Sarah Baartman District Municipality, Sodwana River Valley and Kouga Municipalities and in KwaNobuhle, a township in Uitenhage.

Khanlya was started in 1990 in response to the crisis in ‘black’ education in South Africa. With the advent of democracy in South Africa, the new government was tasked with dealing with education and, thus, Khanlya shifted its focus. Its new focus became poverty and land, specifically access to and use of land. Khanlya’s bias is to the rural poor and those living in peri-urban settlements. Key to Khanlya's work is to assist in the building of organisations. Khanlya uses an approach called People’s Participatory Planning and Action which involves organising and mobilising in order for people to effect change. Khanlya’s role in this is to support organising and mobilising. Khanlya works with poor small-scale farmers (livestock, crop, small gardens (for example at schools)); with those who have got land or who are trying to get land through the land reform programme or through the municipal commonage programme (in which land is used by particular households in the very under-represented and politically discriminated against); and with those who have no land and have claims.

Khanlya is affiliated to the Trust for Community Outreach and Education (TCOE). In May 2010 the Makana People’s Development was launched (it is supported by Khanlya). One of its successes has been its support for the work of rural women.

“One is nie boere nie want ons het nie hooi nie. Oos bly met ons beebe.

Amid the shacks of Khayelitsha, Nyanga and the surrounding areas of the Cape Flats, there lies a kind of an oasis - gardens filled with a variety of organic vegetables. This is the result of hard work of the Abalimi Bezekhaya farmers (Farmers of Home/the planters). Abalimi Bezekhaya was started in 1982 and today consists of 4700 farmers (mainly women from the Eastern Cape, who have left their province in search of work). Abalimi Bezekhaya is a non-profit urban eco-farming association which assists individuals, groups and community-based organisations to initiate and maintain sustainable organic food growing projects at home and in community gardens. Abalimi reduces poverty by creating community-initiated, organic, grassroots, bottom-up groups have faced and still faces many hardships and hurdles. Today it has 15 women who work in the recycling section (and earn a salary) and six who work in the crèche (who each receive a stipend).

Community members who bring waste to the site benefit financially and have a cleaner environment in which to live.}

Researcher Reflection: Women use their ‘informally-learnt’ skills to cultivate land and plough vegetables. They received no formal training to operate the machinery they use for their recycling project and with these ‘informal’ skills they are able to feed their families. They received donations and funds from different organisations. The Abalimi Bezekhaya Project is proof that there are skills in the community and there are means of survival even in these difficult times of high unemployment.

Sandle Zwanze (CERT)

Abalimi Bezekhaya

Abalimi reduces poverty by creating self-employment and improves the health and nutrition of people.
Workers' World Media Productions

Workers' World Media Productions (WWMP) is located in Community House (Salt River, Cape Town) and also has an office in Johannesburg. WWMPs work includes:

- providing an alternative quality, relevant and informative media source for working class people;
- training and support in media production so that trade unionsists and working-class organisations can make their own media; and
- education (in the form of their Mass Education Campaign amongst other) so that people can question the dominant discourse prevalent in all forms of mainstream media.

WWMPs more recent work is in the form of ‘building and strengthening much needed grassroots organisation and leadership - at workplaces and within local communities and to build political and organisational bridges between these two terrains of working class life and struggles’ (P4, WWMP, 15 year report). WWMP does this through, amongst other, their Labour Community Media Forums and Labour Advice Media and Education Centres (which operate like social centres).

Workers’ College

Workers’ College is located in the James Bolton Hall in Magwaza Maphalala Street in Durban - a bustling street of unions and bargaining councils. It was founded in 1991 in order to serve the labour movement and its culture is drawn from the values embodied in community and trade union activism: selflessness, collectivism, egalitarianism and a commitment to working class struggles.

Transformative education which in a workplace context deals with the lived experiences and struggles of workers and is, most importantly, about change is embraced by Workers’ College.

Trade union rights education is about empowering trade unionists to be able to effectively represent and defend workers, and to advance the working class agenda.

The theoretical and ideological education of workers is about equipping workers with analytical tools that will help them interpret the world (understanding the material basis of their class position in society and linking that with their everyday struggles as workers), and act upon it (Freire’s ‘Reading the World’).

Since 2000, Workers’ College has focused on linking trade unions with community organisations and has been committed to the development of both trade union and community activists. Workers’ College combines Popular Education with formal education.

Pietermaritzburg Agency for Community Social Action (PACSA)

PACSA is a faith-based social justice and development NGO that was founded in 1979. PACSA operates in the Umngeni valley region of KwaZulu-Natal, and focuses on socio-economic rights, gender justice, youth development, livelihoods and HIV/AIDS.

PACSA’s work and its practice seeks to enhance human dignity and it is convinced that those who carry the brunt of the problem must be a part of the solution - at the heart of PACSA’s core strategy is the notion ‘nothing about us without us’. PACSA’s vision and mission continue to be grounded in ‘working with people rather than for people’ and being in critical solidarity with the poor as they lead the struggle against neo-coloniality.

Unemployed People’s Movement (UPM)

The Unemployed People’s Movement (UPM) is a social movement which operates from an extremely modest ‘office’ in Grahamstown. It has not been around for long, nor does it have many resources, yet it is a powerful force. It has challenged unemployment, poor-quality housing, lack of housing, lack of water and sanitation, lack of electricity and street lighting, violence against women and problems with the social security system. In 2011 it staged an ‘Occupy Grahamstown’ in solidarity with poor and marginalised people from around the world. During this protest, members dumped bucket loads of human faeces in the foyer of the Grahamstown City Hall.

Some of us are reading and discussing Frantz Fanon in the squatter camps and broken RDP houses. But it is clear that a new politics is required. We are inspired by movements and communities in struggle around the country and around the world. We need what has been called a living politics, a politics that is rooted in the everyday lives of the people, a democratic politics, a politics of the people, for the people and by the people’.

Press Statement by the Unemployed People’s Movement

The UPM has challenged unemployment, poor-quality housing, lack of housing, lack of water and sanitation, lack of electricity and street lighting, violence against women and problems with the social security system

Bulungula Incubator

The Bulungula Incubator programmes include education health and nutrition, sustainable livelihoods and basic services.

In 2004, in Ngqileni Village, Xhosa Mouth Administrative Area (Wild Coast, Eastern Cape) an eco-friendly backpackers’ lodge was opened. The lodge was partly community-owned and is now 100% community-owned. It is Fair Trade accredited, uses renewable energy, composting toilets and harvests sustainable rain and ground water sources.

In 2007 the Bulungula Incubator (BI) was established in order to address the many challenges of rural poverty in the community, while promoting and preserving traditional African lifestyle and culture. The rehabilitation of the Noofisi Primary School in Ngqileni Village was the project that prompted the launch of the BI. Even though education has always been a central focus of the work, BI realised very early that it needed a holistic approach to its rural development strategies. Therefore, it chose to have a broad range of programmes in an area in order to have ‘depth instead of breadth’. The programmes include education (we visited the Jujurha Preschool - which won the ABSA/Department of Social Development Best Early Childhood Development Centre Award in the Eastern Cape in 2013), health and nutrition, sustainable livelihoods and basic services.

All of these Profiles of Possibilities are examples of groups and people who are doing excellent work despite hardships and struggle. They are all learning organisations/groups and, although most of the learning happens outside of formal institutions and occurs non-formally and informally, it is meaningful, valuable and powerful and is directly linked to people’s lives and in some examples, to their livelihoods. It is not well-supported by the mainstream and remains almost completely hidden in the margins. Yet we know that the margins can be very powerful spaces.

We don’t have to engage in grand, heroic actions to participate in the process of change. Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world.

Howard Zinn

Researcher Reflection:

What stood out for me, amongst other things, was the interview we had with a preschool committee member who never went to school. She provided an oversight of the activities that take place at the Early Childhood Centre. She explained her role as that of a person who comes and checks if the educators, the support staff and the management of the school really do what they are supposed to do. She comes in and checks to see if the gardens are in order, if the educators are busy with the children or if there are any challenges within the school. She told us that she even asks the children to sing to see if they are taught anything new at school. She told us that when she first came to the school as a committee member, she saw the learners coming in to sit in a circle. She realised that they were coming and sitting in front of a piece of paper which, as someone who can’t read or write, she could not understand what was written on the papers. As she enquired, she was told that each piece of paper had the names of the learners who were supposed to sit in front of them. That made her think how there are many learners who are not being taught in their own life. She described herself as one who is ‘blind and deaf’ since she is not able to read or understand English. She also expressed her wishes that the younger BI staff members study further to take the work that has been initiated further. She said she does not think it is an insult when others call people like her ‘illiterate’ because they really are: “Abasithuki abantu xa besibiza amaqaba ngoba sangwwe”.

She said she feels that she cannot see or hear many things that happen around her when she is around English speakers or looking at a text because of her being ‘illiterate’. Two of my colleagues, who are English-speakers, told her that they are also ‘illiterate’ when they listen to her speak in isiXhosa and they cannot read things written in isiXhosa. This is why we believe that ‘illiteracy’ should be used as a relative term that doesn’t discriminate against forms of knowledge, wisdom and understanding that might come from different people. Maybe the most important thing she said was that she was not about to consult a book/policy to help her make decisions but that she relies on her own thinking which tells her that this is not how things should be, and that this is how they are supposed to be. She said she would not know what might be the solution per se and that the ones who can read should then consult their books to determine the way forward.

Olwam Mnqwazi (CIPSET)
The “Food on the Table” series

Fatima Gabru, CERT researcher

Children’s drawings frequently reveal that their dreams are based on creating better living conditions for themselves and their families. Often when asked what children want to be when they grow up (notwithstanding the hegemony that underpins this question) they aspire to emulate the careers and professions that have the most commercial and money-making value. Apologists for the capitalist economy hide the fact that these jobs/skills/professions are limited to those who have access to the structural advantages that pave the way to them. Moreover, they also fail to inform us that it only has a space for a few and that in the pursuit for greater profits even these opportunities are decreasing.

Yet, when pressed for a more in-depth answer these same children reveal that their dreams are based on the need to create better living conditions for their families and themselves. But children themselves have a more real and humanising vision that adds to the dignities of lives and one that provides hope for a better life. Young people would love to have the opportunities to provide for a better life for their families.

The ‘Food on the Table’ series of drawings highlight people like the ‘Recyclers’ who are viewed by most motorists as an annoyance on urban roads. But these workers are crucial to keeping our environments much cleaner, ensuring that recyclable material are indeed taken for recycling, as well as helping reduce our landfills. The ‘Walkie-Talkies’ sellers and ‘Mielies-Sellers’ provide an essential, economical and highly accessible meal or snack for many. The ‘Traffic Light Vendors’ spend long hours in the sun peddling anything from ‘cool-time’ ice lollies to kites to cell-phone chargers for the convenience of motorists. Often, the community landscape reveals a person carting around second-hand material that becomes a part of someone’s home. The ‘Building Material’ drawing pays due to these scavengers who are innovative and hard working under harsh conditions. Then, the ‘Motorbike Mechanic’ displays innovation and tenacity of a person to do such work in an environment that has yet to grasp the versatility of these machines. The sketches that highlight the easy to set-up businesses such as ‘The Barber,’ the ‘Veggie Seller on Cart’ and the ‘Shoe Repair Services’ illuminate the dedication and skill to make these services work. Finally, the art of sewing is an essential skill that many within the community are reclaiming for self-sustainability and the ‘Sewing Project’ drawing spotlights this essential skill.

The drawings ask us to take a moment, or more, and look into the hard work, perseverance, innovation and dedication many put into ensuring that families have food on the table, or that water or heat finds a way into homes. These pictures are dedicated to the majority in our country whom innovation and dedication many put into ensuring that families have food on the table, or that water or heat finds a way into homes. These pictures are dedicated to the majority in our country whom