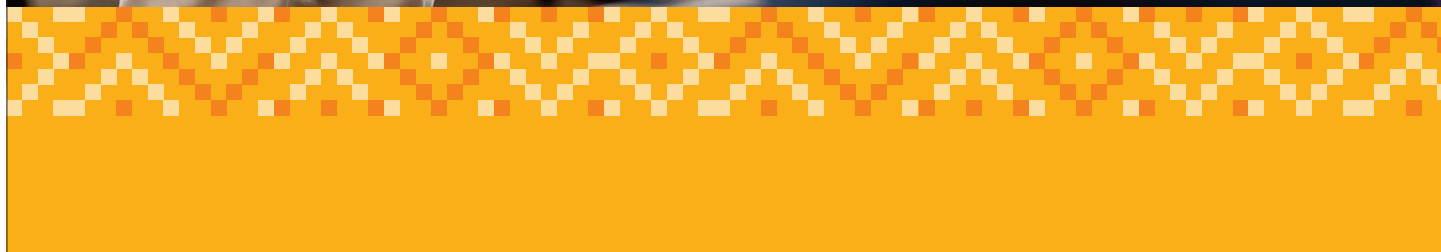


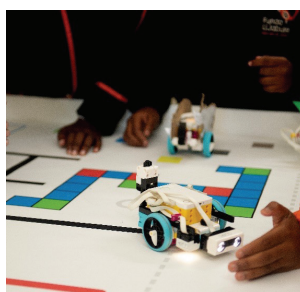
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

# Edubrief | May 2023



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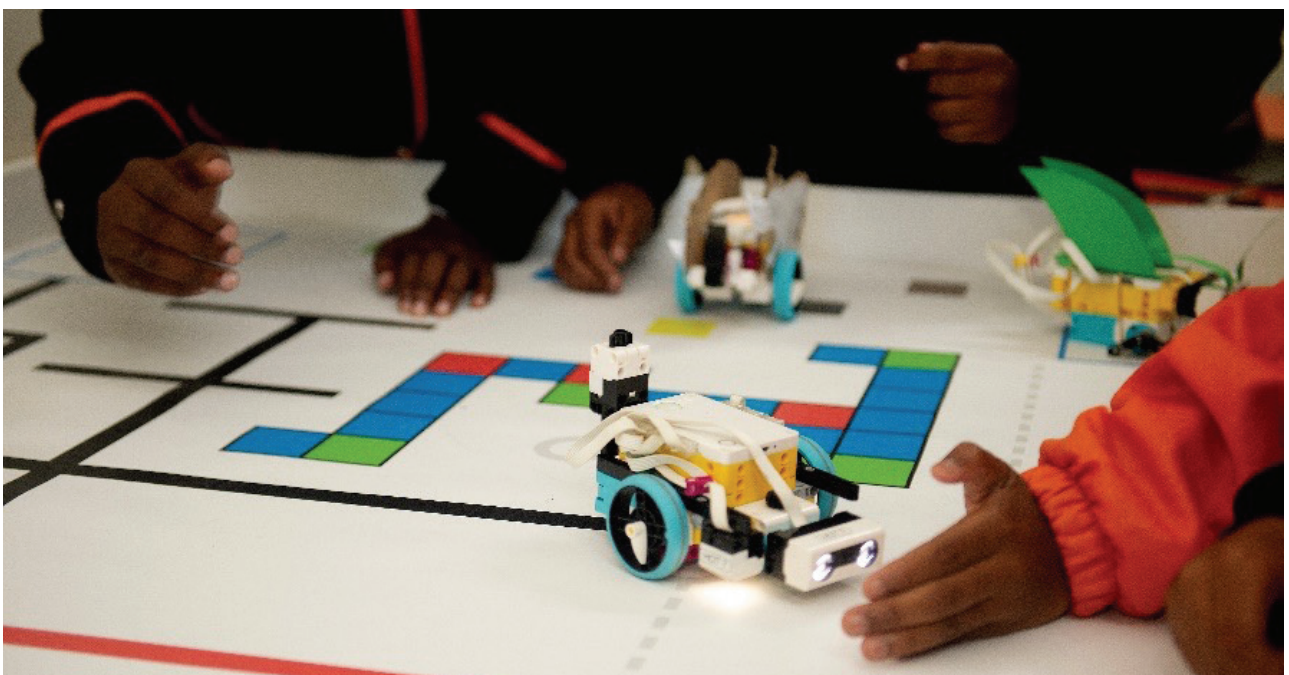




# Funda UJabule School Makerspace/ Tinkering studio Launch

**By Kenneth Baloyi – Department of Childhood Education**

On April 14, 2023, the Department of Childhood Education launched its FUJS Makerspace/Tinkering Studio at Funda UJabule Primary School (FUJS) in Soweto. The makerspace is available for use by learners and teachers at the school. It will also serve as an environment for pre-service teachers to learn to incorporate making as a pedagogy in their teaching practices by creating engaging and meaningful learning experiences for their learners.



Distinguished guests, including Dr. Phumzile Mlambo Ncuka, the Chancellor of UJ, Prof. Letlhokwa Mpedi, the Vice-Chancellor, and Deputy Vice-Chancellors Prof. Surab Sinha and Prof. Sehaam Khan, attended the launch. The event included an opening address by Prof Mpedi, comments from Mrs. Antoinette Nicolaai of the Gauteng Department of Education, and remarks from Mr. Tsekiso Maneli, the Funda UJabule SGB Chairperson. Executive Dean of the Faculty of Education, Prof Nadine Petersen, welcomed the attendees, while Professor of Education, Prof Sarah Gravett, gave the vote of thanks.



*From left to right: Mr. Tsekiso Maneli, the Funda UJabule SGB Chairperson; Mrs. Antoinette Nicolaai of the Gauteng Department of Education; Deputy Vice-Chancellor Prof. Surab Sinha; the Chancellor of UJ Dr. Phumzile Mlambo Ncuka; Funda UJabule Principal Mrs S Lukhuleni; the Vice-Chancellor of UJ, Prof. Letlhokwa Mpedi; Deputy Vice-Chancellor Prof. Sehaam Khan; Professor of Education, Prof Sarah Gravett; Executive Dean of the Faculty of Education Prof Nadine Petersen; Mr Kenneth Baloyi.*



*From left to right: Mr Baloyi; Prof Sarah Gravett; and the Vice-Chancellor of UJ, Prof. Letlhokwa Mpedi.*

**PROGRAMME**

**Welcome**  
Executive Dean, Faculty of Education,  
Prof Nadine Petersen

**Opening address from the University  
of Johannesburg**  
Vice Chancellor, Prof Letlhokwa Mpedi

**Comments from the Gauteng  
Department of Education**  
Advocate Aliston Bengtson

**Remarks from the Funda UJabule SGB  
Chairperson, Mr Tsekiso Maneli**

**Vote of Thanks**  
Professor of Education, Prof Sarah Gravett

**Guided Tours:**  
Funda UJabule Makerspace/  
Tinkering Studio







**The Future  
Reimagined**

During the Makerspace guided tours/walkabout led by the faculty of education's foundation and intermediate phase 4th year students, guests were impressed by the Grade 3, 5, 6, and 7 learners who demonstrated their ability to utilize the Makerspace tools creatively. The learners showcased their resourcefulness and ingenuity by combining everyday objects such as paper, glue, string, and paper clips with robotics kits, Lego bricks, and exploring gears on the tinkering easels.

The launch of the FUJS Makerspaces marked a significant milestone for Funda UJabule Primary School and the Department of Childhood Education, demonstrating their commitment to promoting quality education and preparing the next generation of learners and teachers for the challenges of the 21st century. Moreover, the Makerspace will facilitate research contributing to the current understanding of makerspaces in teacher education programs. Supervised by Prof Sarah Gravett, M.Ed and PhD studies are underway to explore how to equip pre-service teachers with the skills to promote significant learning through making and tinkering in a rapidly changing world and best practices for integrating Makerspaces into initial teacher education programs.



## Visit to National University of Lesotho

**By Umesh Ramnarain- HOD Department of Science and Technology**

Prof Umesh Ramnarain accompanied by Distinguished Visiting Professor, Professor Joe Krajcik visited the National University of Lesotho (NUL), where they presented a seminar on "How can Artificial Intelligence Support STEM Teaching and Learning?" and a public lecture titled "Supporting Students' Development of Disciplinary Ideas and Scientific Practices". Both events were well received by students and staff at NUL, and also attended by participants from South Africa who joined online.



*From left to right: Prof Makomosela Qhobela; UJ SciTechEd DVP Prof Krajcik; NUL Dean: Faculty of Education, Prof Paseka Mosia; UJ HOD: Faculty of Education, Prof Ramnarain; NUL Lecturers Mr Lereko Mohafa, and Mr Sechaba Koma.*

Prof Ramnarain facilitated discussions on research collaboration between NUL and UJ. Both institutions are now exploring the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding to formalize the collaboration. Prof Ramnarain and Prof Krajcik also visited high schools in Lesotho.

## What a fruitful great 2023 Mathematical Modelling week we had

**By Erica Spangenberg – Deputy HOD of the Department of Science and Technology Mathematics Education Unit**

The Mathematics Education Unit at APK held another successful Mathematics Modelling (MM) Week from 27 – 31 March 2023, as part of the Global Minds collaborative project between the University of Johannesburg and Hasselt University in Belgium. Following the success of the first MM week in 2022, which was held virtually, this year's sessions were held on campus. The 4th-year BEd students worked in groups.



*Some of the 4th-year students working in groups*

All the sessions were facilitated by trainers Dr Sfiso Mahlaba, Ms Janine Boucher and Mr Thapelo Mqwathi. Prof Erica Spangenberg coordinated the MM week in collaboration with Dr Viren Ramdhany and Mr Bongani Mashego who were available for further assistance and support during the week.

Mathematical Modelling is a pedagogical approach to mathematics teaching through models. "Traditional" pedagogical modes are those where mathematics teachers "show and tell" about the usefulness of mathematics while maintaining a focus on pure mathematics with few applications. However, in recent times, many curriculum documents recommend that students experience the usefulness of mathematics through mathematical modelling activities, in which students use mathematics for solving real-life problems. This perspective emphasises that mathematics is a tool to solve non-mathematical, real-life problems.



*Colleagues involved in the Mathematical Modelling week*



*Some confusion expressed by students*



Modelling weeks are an approach to modelling based on a simple but effective formula: On the first day, Monday, a real-life problem was presented to the participants, who worked intensively on this problem for three days. On the last day, Friday, the students presented their results on Friday. The modelling week was a holistic modelling approach, where the pre-service teachers were immersed in mathematical modelling for one week, and they were required to work through all steps of the modelling cycle.

At this year's MM week, the student engagement was fantastic, with each group member playing their part. It was an intensive and exhausting week, and the students went through a range of emotions, with negative emotions dominating early in the week (frustration, confusion, and fatigue) but transforming into mostly positive by the end of the week (confidence, motivation).



*A student presenting a mathematical modelling case study*



*The students and trainers of the 2023 Mathematics Modelling Week*

The students' presentations on Friday were held in hybrid mode, with guests from Belgium and Germany attending, asking questions, and providing feedback and comments after each group presented their models.

The success of this MM week has prompted the Mathematics Education Unit to include MM in the 4th year curriculum, and there are plans to hold similar MM workshops for the 1st and 2nd year BEd students soon.

## New Book: The Selected Writings of Neville Alexander

**By Salim Vally- CERT APB SARCHI Community & Worker Education**

Despite his passing in 2012, former Robben Island political prisoner and educationist, Neville Alexander, remains one of South Africa's foremost public intellectuals and scholars, and a reference point for understanding some of the most important education debates in our country over the past half-century. Neville Alexander launched CERT and a new book includes his views on education in South Africa.

Alexander's specific contribution to the field of education requires serious study, particularly since many suggestions were not taken up or fully developed during his lifetime despite their importance for 'fixing the system'. Some of these interventions included promoting early childhood development, literacy, reading clubs, and multilingualism; bridging programmes between school and university; the importance of teaching African history; undermining racial thinking and ethnic consciousness

in education; the redefinition of community and participation in order to promote public education; teacher support and development; and undoing spatial apartheid by 'clustering' education institutions.

His contributions to the field began in 1957 when he wrote an article entitled 'The Universities', essentially a trenchant critique of the infamous apartheid Extension of University Education Act of 1959 which brought apartheid ideology directly into Higher Education. A year later this was followed by an expansive analysis entitled 'Education in the Modern World' which called for a 'democratic system of education in a democratic South Africa'. Many of the themes in these early essays resurfaced in his later work. Incarceration on Robben Island did not curtail his interest and involvement in education.

Notwithstanding the privations and physical hardships documented in *Robben Island Dossier: 1964–1974* (1994),

**'Amidst all this talk of racial capitalism and abolition, there is one thinker we should all be reading: Neville Alexander. He is a revolutionary intellectual for our times and for our planet.**

**For anyone committed to abolishing, not just studying, racial capitalism, this is the book to read'**

Robin D. G. Kelley, author of *Freedom Dreams*

**'Profound and provocative. Grounded in history, engaged with revolutionary theory, and informed by a lifetime of practice, Neville's intellectual acuity and passion for freedom shine through in every page. Read, learn, and join the growing global struggle Against Racial Capitalism'**

Barbara Ransby, historian, activist, author of *Making All Black Lives Matter*

**'Alexander's beautiful writing patiently connects theory and method with purpose. *Against Racial Capitalism* is absolutely necessary for all who struggle to understand and change 21st century conditions'**

Ruth Wilson Gilmore, author *Abolition Geography*

Neville Alexander is not a household name, but he should be. As a revolutionary public intellectual, activist and former political prisoner, he is among the most important theorists of racial capitalism to emerge during the struggle against Apartheid. Alexander's writings engage with some of the important debates in South Africa from the last 50 years, many of which have international resonance today. An opponent of the neoliberal trajectory embarked upon by the post-apartheid establishment in the 1990s, Alexander was always reflective and humble but never wavered from his own self-description: a non-dogmatic Marxist, pan-Africanist and internationalist.

This carefully curated collection brings his incredible body of work to an international audience for the first time. It features a comprehensive introduction, a timeline of key events in the life of Alexander, selected articles, speeches, op-eds, book chapters and a bibliography of his writings.

**Neville Alexander** was a revolutionary scholar, educator and activist in the struggles against Apartheid and in post-Apartheid South Africa. He spent ten years (1964-74) as a political prisoner on Robben Island alongside Nelson Mandela and others before emerging as one of South Africa's foremost public intellectuals.



BLACK STUDIES  
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Design: Melanie Patrick

**PLUTO PRESS**

AGAINST RACIAL CAPITALISM ALEXANDER



*"For anyone committed to abolishing racial capitalism, this is the book to read"*

ROBIN D. G. KELLEY



# AGAINST RACIAL CAPITALISM SELECTED WRITINGS NEVILLE ALEXANDER

EDITED BY  
*Salim Vally  
& Enver Motala*

Alexander describes how inmates transformed their prison into the 'University of Robben Island' in which he played a key co-ordinating role. As he later wrote,

"We taught one another what we knew, discovering each other's resourcefulness. We also learned how people with little or no formal education could not only themselves participate in education programmes but actually teach others a range of different insights and skills.

The 'University of Robben Island' was one of the best universities in the country..." (Villa-Vicencio 1996: 13).

After state restrictions against him were lifted in 1979, Alexander was the moving spirit behind the clandestine 'Committee of 81' which consisted of student and youth representatives involved in student, worker, and community struggles. He joined the alternative, activist, and anti-apartheid Sached Trust (South African Council for Higher Education), becoming, in 1981, its Cape Town director. Later, he helped to establish Khanya College, a bridging institution aimed at helping student activists to prepare for and enter universities in the mid-to late 1980s.

In 1992, completing the academic circle, Alexander established Praesa (the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa) at the University of Cape Town which, as professor, he directed for many years. Its purpose was to focus on language and literacy, and the fundamental need for mother tongue education and structures for a proper multilingual society. He played a leading role in organising the first national conference

on primary school curriculum initiatives, which generated a series of proposals for reforming the education system. Outside the university, he occupied high offices in various organisations (at home and on the continent) concerned with his primary interest, the language issue.

Alexander's output includes twelve books and numerous scholarly articles and monographs, published in refereed journals as well as by political and educational organisations with which he was associated.

*Education and the National Liberation Struggle in South Africa* is largely a collection of speeches given by Alexander in the latter half of the 1980s. An introductory chapter outlines the political, economic and educational crisis of the apartheid ruling class, the strategic weaknesses of the liberation movement, and concrete perspectives around an alternative education programme. The second chapter, 'Ten years of educational crisis: the resonance of 1976', is the text of a seminal speech given by Alexander at the Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre in Johannesburg which began with the words: 'In the seamless web of South African history, the 16th of June 1976 represents both an end and a beginning' (Alexander 1992: 25). Written in lyrical style, Alexander argued that '... the rifles and ammunition that laid low Hector Peterson and his comrades and that sent the Tsietsi Mashininis into exile and the Dan Motsisis into prison' put an end to illusions that the struggle for educational equality could be separated from the struggle for democracy.



And 'eventually from class emancipation' (Ibid: 26). However, under the subheading 'AK 47s, petrol bombs, driver's licences and matric certificates', he strongly cautioned that the dominant slogan of the times, 'Liberation before education' (*inkululeko ngoku, idegree ngomsa*) or 'Liberation first, education later' was dangerously misguided, arguing instead that education institutions should be sites of struggle and contestation for developing a future democratic education encapsulated in the counter slogan 'Education for Liberation'.

Toward the end of 2008, Alexander and other key educationists launched the Public Participation in Education Network (PPEN). In its 'Call to Action', PPEN declared that the failures evident in the education system had induced cynicism among various communities and even among educators, school managers and other public officials. It warned that these sentiments would further entrench the sense of powerlessness and a loss of hope about the possibility of meaningful outcomes for society as a whole. While a minority of schools situated in middle-class and rich communities excelled, South Africa essentially had a two-tier education system. PPEN asserted that schools were not failing individually; rather, the nation was failing them collectively. PPEN's declaration read in part:

*'South Africans face an important moment in our history. Almost seventeen years after our first democratic elections, our education system is in crisis. It is not a technical problem to be solved by experts but a national disaster requiring our collective efforts. The majority of children in South Africa are not learning to read and write with any confidence. Too many schools are bleak and uninspiring places for our children and teachers. If we do not act decisively now, we run the risk as a nation of 'getting used to this' (Vally 2009).*

Alexander's article about the education crisis reprinted in this book expands on the nature of the crisis identified by PPEN, but also discusses ways of reversing this trend. In an article originally entitled 'The Truth about Education in the New South Africa', published as 'Schooling In and For the New South Africa' two years before his passing Alexander argued that:

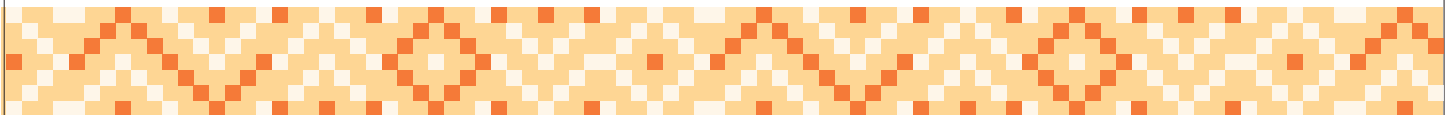
*'... fundamental mistakes of a conceptual, strategic and political-pedagogical character [policies such as Outcomes Based Education, teacher redeployment and others critiqued by Alexander at the time] were made in the process of transition from apartheid to post-apartheid education during the period 1993-1998*

*approximately. Not everything was wrong, of course, but many of the beacons that should have facilitated a soft landing for the new system were placed wrongly.'*

He continues this metaphor by explaining how subsequent attempts to correct the deficiencies 'were doomed to fail, precisely because they did not replace these beacons and, instead, themselves became no more than decoy beacons that had to end up in numerous but related crash landings' (Ibid: 7). Alexander identifies and discusses a few key omissions and mistakes, including the failure to move away from the spatial apartheid location of schools which perpetuates racial and class divisions and the unequal allocation of resources, the inadequate professional development of teachers, and the blind spot of language policy in schools.

He also expressed concern about the role of universities, their accountability to communities, and the dangers of managerialism and the corporatisation of the academy (Alexander 2006 and 2014). At a commemorative for Alexander at the University of the Free State, Melanie Walker (2012) made the following salient points about Alexander's praxis relevant to all of us in the academy today:

*"Firstly, conceptual clarity and careful reasoning were tremendously important to Neville politically and educationally. So, a university education ought to enable and demand this clarity and reasoning in all its students. Secondly, for Neville practical action to bring about social change is as important as thinking well about the problems we face. It follows, I think, that universities have a moral obligation to foster in all students the knowledge, skills and values to turn the privilege of a university education to the benefit of those who are undeservedly disadvantaged. Thirdly, Neville advocated a genuine regard for the diversity of human life; a university education ought to enable this diversity to flourish in ideas and action which take us beyond 'race' to a new imaginary... If we truly achieved these three challenges for every student on our campus, and in our own educational practices – critical reasoning; commitments by our graduates to act for justice; and a regard for human diversity – we will have gone some significant way to bringing an equal South Africa into being."*



# Global Leadership Training Programme on Sustainable Development in Africa

By Salim Vally – CERT APB SARCHI Community & Worker Education

Straddling January and February this year, forty postgraduate students from countries in Africa, Asia and South America took part in a four-week programme on sustainable development for the United Nations University. The course instructors were the Faculty's Chair of Community, Adult and Workers' Education (CAWE) Salim Vally and Carol Anne Spreen, CERT's Visiting Professor based at New York University. Spreen and Vally developed the curriculum for the programme titled 'Global Leadership Training Programme (GLTP)' on sustainable development in Africa with Prof Yamaguchi

from Tokyo University's Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability.

The programme focuses on key concepts related to sustainability, development, leadership, and global inequality in relation to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs, also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.



UN 2015 – 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's)

The online programme, initiated three years ago, encourages participants to learn about innovative leadership and development, participatory democracy, civic engagement, and public policy. The programme includes keynote lectures, workshops, resource sharing, and participatory activities prepared by African scholars and practitioners in the interdisciplinary fields of health, education, environmental studies, human rights, law and technology. The programme highlights areas which include gender equity, women and youth, peace and security, environmental justice, poverty alleviation, economic and social development and sustainable livelihoods.

The introductory sessions familiarise participants with the SDGs and centers on the conceptualisation of development in Africa. While the programme examines the practical questions of leadership and sustainable development, it also engages with the experiences and observations of development practitioners from diverse disciplines and fields and broader ideas about what it means to work on sustainable development. This programme critically examines and builds on the SDGs.

## Learning outcomes

The learning outcomes of the programme are aimed at developing skills and strategies needed to strengthen the capacity and resilience of community and civil society, building and enhancing human rights, and contributing to environmentally sustainable development across Africa toward achieving the 17 United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. Participants in the programme:

- Engage with African leaders across fields and disciplines (health, education, environment, governance, history and human rights) to learn about leadership skills and understand the strategies they are using to promote sustainable development initiatives
- Form new agenda-setting, strategic-planning, and community-engagement skills in order to become ethical, relevant, and context-specific.
- Recognise and engage in learning opportunities and networks to discuss some of the best practices in governance, community mobilisation, public management, and social innovation.
- Design a research proposal on a critical sustainability issue.



### Keynote Speakers

Over the past three years keynote speakers included:

- Nana Anyidoho, Associate Professor, Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, Ghana.
- Professor Tshilidzi Marwala, former Vice Chancellor, University of Johannesburg and rector designate of the United Nations University.
- Professor Yao Graham, former University of Ghana Law School, Founder, Third World Network- Africa, Ghana.
- David van Wyk, Principal researcher, Bench Marks Foundation, South Africa.
- Rosemary Osi Dufleosi, Programmes Officer, Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre, Ghana.
- Enver Motala, Adjunct Professor, Nelson Mandela University and research associate of CAWE and CERT.
- Tim Kakuru, Director of Programs, and Impact at BarefootLaw, co-founder SEMA, Uganda.
- Saleem Badat, Former Vice-Chancellor of Rhodes University and Director of Higher Education and Institutional programs, Mellon Foundation.
- Robert Swap, Division Director of Mission Planning, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, USA.
- Hanif Vally, former Director, Foundation for Human Rights, South Africa.
- Sibongile Mkhabela, former Chief Executive Officer, Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital Trust, South Africa.
- Philip Osano, Centre Director, Stockholm Environment Institute- Africa, Kenya.
- Leon Tikly, Professor School of Education, University of Bristol, UNESCO Chair on Inclusive and Quality Education for All.

## Distinguished Visiting Professor Kerry Kennedy visits the Faculty

By David Robinson

In the month of March 2023 Distinguished Visiting Professor Kerry Kennedy visited the Faculty for the first time since the Covid pandemic.

A highlight of DVP Kennedy's visit was his public lecture, delivered in the Ubuntu Chambers on 9 March. The title of the lecture was *The 'narrative of failure' in local school reform: How important is democracy for South African education?* The lecture addressed fundamental concepts in the development of the various incarnations of the school curriculum, from 1994 onwards. The lecture explored and affirmed the value of democracy in South African society, and questioned whether the implementation of the curriculum was achieving the intended goals of a socially just democratic society. The lecture drew attention to the value of the intended goals of the curriculum, but also explored the failure to realise all the goals.



Another element of DVP Kennedy's visit to UJ was the establishment and initial development of a research project. The research project is located in the Department of Education and Curriculum Studies – the department which hosts DVP Kennedy. The research team includes established researchers as well as younger members of staff. The research project has the following title: *Human Rights and Social Justice Education in South Africa: How Far Have We Come?* The project includes research which addresses social justice and human rights as concepts, but also includes classroom-based practices relating to the topic. The project draws on the wide range of interests and skills in the department.

DVP Kerry Kennedy's visit to the Faculty in 2023 was highly successful. We look forward to his next visit in 2024. It is fulfilling to have a scholar of his stature providing insights and commentary to academic staff in the Department of Education and Curriculum Studies.

## Staff Achievements

The following staff members have been promoted to Senior lecturer level



**Dr Jean Fourie**  
Department of Educational  
Psychology



**Dr Daphne Mawila**  
Department of Educational  
Psychology



**Dr Lucia Munongi**  
Department of Educational  
Psychology

Prof Sefotho and Prof Diale have received NRF Rating (Department of Educational Psychology)



**Prof Sefotho C2 rating**



**Prof Tumi Diale C2 rating**