

NEWSLETTER

CENTRE FOR EDUCATION RIGHTS AND TRANSFORMATION (CERT)



Welcome to the CERT newsletter for the second semester 2024. This edition provides a snapshot of recent and upcoming events organized by the Centre, and shares exciting updates for our community of scholars, students, educators, activists, artists, and beyond. We hope you enjoy this edition.



End-of Year Message from the CERT Director

We have had a very productive year in growing our research capacity in new areas, building on the existing programmes and expanding into new ones. In 2024, CERT hosted and participated in a total of 35 conferences, seminars and engaged research events, of which 20 were with international partners and scholars / activists / civil society, involving over 30 networks. Our respective interdisciplinary research focus areas for 2025 are: Labour Organisation, Decolonising Community Education and Worker Education (supervised by Prof Mondli Hlatshwayo with Prof Salim Vally / CAWE); Decolonisation in African Education; Indigenous Knowledge Systems, and the problematization of indigenous Identity Politics in Africa (supervised by Prof Morgan Ndlovu with Professor June Bam) and Feminist and Indigenous Historiographies, Public Epistemologies, Archival Studies, Heritage, Museum Curation, Teaching as Reflective Practice and Digital Architectures (supervised by Professor June Bam with Prof Salim Vally / CAWE). If you are interested in pursuing a research degree at Masters' degree or PhD levels in any of the these respective research areas, please contact our administrator: Busisiwe Nkomo: 011 559 192 busisiwen@uj.ac.za

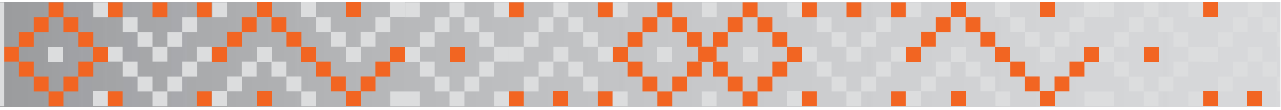
We thank you for your wonderful support in 2024, and wish you a well-deserved rest, and a peaceful and safe holiday season.

Hats off to Professor Linda Chisholm

An internationally esteemed and highly cited and accomplished scholar in the field of history of education and curriculum development in South Africa and in Africa, CERT's Professor Linda Chisholm has been recently ranked in the **top 10 of Education researchers on the African continent**. This new rating index was developed in 2021. See: <https://www.adscientificindex.com/top-100-scientist/?tit=Education&con=Africa>.

An NRF: B1 Rated Researcher, 2020 - 2025, she was appointed ASSAf (Academy of Science of South Africa): Elected Fellow in 2020, and as Elected Corresponding Fellow of the internationally prestigious British Academy in 2022. These Fellowships are bestowed on those scholars of outstanding distinction in their fields, amongst their global peers. Professor Chisholm has been Professor at CERT for the past 10 years, since 2014. Prof Chisholm holds a highly respected place in education transformation research in the world (both

in the global south and global north). Her original and pioneering scholarship in the field veritably spans decades, and has earned her the various appointed positions nationally for the Republic of South Africa. These included as Special Advisor to the Minister of Basic Education, Chair (2009 - 2014); as Ministerial Review Committee on the National Curriculum 2000-2002 and as Ministerial Committee Project Leader for Review and Revision of Curriculum 2005, Ministry of Education, Pretoria. In these national strategic leadership positions, Professor Chisholm had to oversee complex and politically challenging processes involving national stakeholders in the absence of an ongoing Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Despite these incredible politically volatile challenges, Professor Chisholm successfully led South Africa's first curriculum transformation process to align with the values embedded in the South African Constitution and Bill of



Rights. This was no insignificant feat and illustrated her depth of scholarship and praxis honed over decades, applied in a new and unknown transformation minefield in education. Her impactful research leadership position in the field goes back almost 25 years, when she started out as Director, Education Policy Unit (EPU), University of the Witwatersrand. It is much recognized today that the EPU played an instrumental role in influencing and forming post-Apartheid education policy for South Africa. Professor Chisholm has a tremendous wealth of knowledge, experience and archive to offer – still widely recognised unfinished work in the archiving of South Africa’s annales of education history.

Given her incredible contributions that also impacted significantly on the founding of CERT, it was therefore with great sadness that we held a small celebration ‘cheerio’ for Professor Chisholm in November, on the occasion of her retirement.

Her farewell speech at CERT’s gathering in November was both poignant and illuminating:

I woke up this morning with a roof over my head. I washed my face – there was water. I boiled water for coffee. There was electricity. I had breakfast with my husband and sister. I can afford breakfast. I have family members. I came to work. I have work. The university is still standing. This weekend I will visit a sick friend in the hospital. Our hospitals and educational institutions, for all their inequalities, have not been flattened to the ground. I have been doing this, getting up, writing, seeing family and visiting friends, uninterruptedly for most of my life. Others have been and are not so lucky. In Gaza, Sudan, Ethiopia, Yemen, DRC, Myanmar and many many other places, there are others whose access to these basic things have been destroyed. They have no home, no access to basic running water, electricity, food, family members, friends, colleagues or work. Institutions like



Professor Chisholm with longtime close colleagues Professor Shireen Motala and Professor Leila Kajee who both joined CERT in the warm farewell to Prof Chisholm in November.

Prof Chisholm and Prof Mondli Hlatshwayo bid ‘farewell’ after many years of a close comradeship at CERT.

Left: Intern Amanda Ntaka, among the young female scholars at CERT, who are inspired by Professor Chisholm’s stellar scholarship amongst peers in the field.



With CERT visiting doctoral scholar of, Tokyo University of Foreign Affairs, Shunki Oketani



A poignant farewell with longtime colleague Professor June Bam-Hutchison, who also worked closely with Professor Chisholm 20 years and more ago during the Ministerial Committee Curriculum 2005 days in Pretoria with the late Minister Kader Asmal.

hospitals and schools are rubble. There are too many people who have no place they can call home, or real education, including in South Africa. It weighs heavily on the present. Little would I have thought as I set out on my intellectual and personal journey almost half a century ago that things would not improve. I had a fundamental belief in progress, for South Africa and the world. I believed that if I struggled and worked hard enough alongside others to change the world, it would change. But today we see not only seemingly endless wars engulfing large parts of the world, a growing number of countries whose people do not believe in democracy, but also a world of struggles between empires in which oligarchs are allied to corrupt rulers, who dismiss the realities of climate change, contributing to it through their race and competition for the space around us and the space above us. Our streets and rivers are polluted, our children not learning, and the economy not working for them. Inequalities have widened. The dimensions of the challenges were different when I started out. They seem to have multiplied. But a message of doom and despair is also not one with which anyone can live. There has to be a way out, a way forward, a way of hope and love, a way of binding people in common projects for a life to be lived in peace, where everyone has a roof over their heads, food, clothing, education, and health provision. There always has been, and there always will be hope. Although universities have been sites for building such projects in the past, the space for it has narrowed considerably. Nonetheless, one has to start where one is. And one has to push back, challenge, and build institutions where people

can grow and learn. Universities remain important spaces. So as one generation leaves, the new, such as I see here, will take things forward: it is a space to build. And that is the message that I would like to leave: I hope you both cherish and challenge the institution as you chart your own path forward. We have all come through educational institutions and processes that have brought us to where we are today: build and cherish them.

She thanked those administrators she worked closely with, without whom she could not have done her work – ‘as they are at the centre of everything’, and welcomed Busi, as the new administrator as CERT goes forward. She also paid tribute to Mudney, ‘no longer with us’, and Fatima, ‘whose presence remains strong’, – observing that June is taking Mudney’s work on food sustainability and education forward. Prof Chisholm emphasised the crucial rôle of post-docs, who have been a vital and stimulating part of CERT, building cohesion amongst a very disparate group of people. She paused to pay particular gratitude to Mondli, who has been to her ‘a comrade throughout, a person who will always have her respect and admiration - an inclusive leader with leadership skills of great value to the university’. A special thanks was mentioned to Salim, for inviting and sustaining her in the intellectual home of CERT. ‘Your commitment and activist scholarship has been an inspiration – hard to emulate, but a lighthouse nonetheless. Again, I want to say how thankful and grateful I have been to have been part of this team for ten years. May CERT go from strength to strength!’

Of course, it goes without saying, that it is not ‘farewell’ from us all as Professor Chisholm will always remain a treasured member of the CERT family.

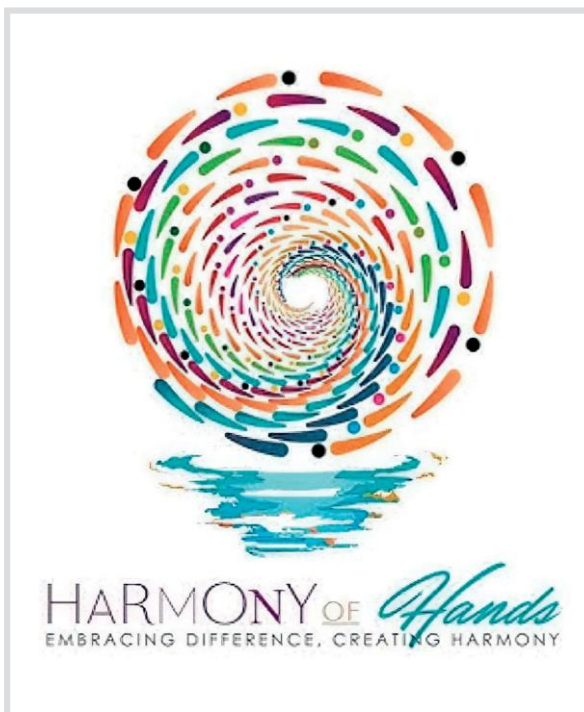


Interns: Post-graduates Amanda Ntaka and Nokwanda Mngometulu setting up the newly established CERT library in 2024.

CERT Interns Set Up Historic Library

At the onset of 2024, the department welcomed two postgraduate interns: one specializing in the Education Foundation Phase and the other in Public Relations. Both interns were recruited and appointed by Professor M. Hlatshwayo via the South Africa Youth Commission program. These interns take on the role of Research Assistants, contributing not only to the work of professors but also supporting postgraduate students in their research projects, organization of seminars, and various administrative tasks. Their experience has been both

enlightening and educational, as they dedicated considerable time and effort to creating and compiling a catalogue and annotated bibliography of the department's extensive library of 1200 books. The year has been marked for them by significant professional development and a steep learning curve in scholarship, research and organizational development. In their own words, 'Amidst the rigorous work, we participated in academic seminars and cultural events. One such highlight was the dialogue on the legacies of African educational philosopher Es'Kia Mphahlele and Brazilian education philosopher Paulo Freire, held at the Funda Community College in Soweto.' Our interns also engaged in seminars where colleagues presented diverse interdisciplinary research methodologies, theoretical frameworks and contemporary debates. 'These various events have exposed us to a range of new ways of thinking,



Harmony of Hands Indaba & Festival 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

As part of its diverse engaged work with communities who are marginalized and who continue to suffer gross intersectional inequalities and structural oppression, CERT hosted a successful international *Harmony of Hands Indaba & Festival* in Heritage Month on 17 September 2024, in the Chinua Achebe Library Auditorium. The Dean, Professor Nadine Petersen, delivered the opening address online. Find the link here : <https://youtu.be/3gJyLJdYv5M> Vice Dean Professor Jacqueline Batchelor warmly welcomed the close to 200 participants who were in attendance, including from India, Australia, France, and the UK. The event was opened with a symbolic ritual of hand washing in herbal-infused waters. A highlight of the event was the keynote address delivered by the Public Protector of the Republic of South Africa, Advocate Kholeka Gcaleka, in which she passionately committed to ensuring that South Africa's left-handed children are not left behind. Presenters and speakers included Dr Julie Reddy, Unesco South Africa Deputy Chair, who is also Professor

of Practice at CERT, and Left-handers networks and organisations represented by Steve McGuirk (Australia), Bipin Chagule (India), and Mark Stewart (UK). Dr Sigamoney Naicker, who published his latest book *Education and the Working Class: Is there Hope for an Inclusive Approach?* (SunMedia, 2024), served as discussant to the international panel presentations.



The exhilarating music festival was directed and curated by internationally renowned Eugene Skeef FRSA, Professor of Practice at CERT. See his rendition and tribute to his left-handed late mother here :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHp2kPydKK0>

The festival included breath-taking African storytelling by the legendary African storyteller Gcina Mhlope.



CERT Director presents 2024 TEDx Talk On Interconnectedness



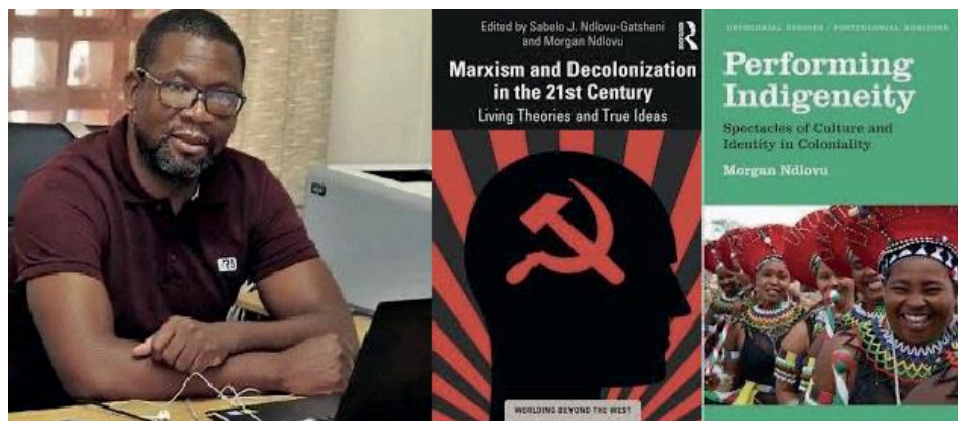
Prof June Bam-Hutchison, Director of CERT, was nominated to present a TEDx talk on 10 October 2024, on the theme INTERCONNECTEDNESS. She spoke about why reclaiming forgotten spiritual ancient knowledge of women in Africa matters in the world right now, and how such feminist indigenous knowledges on protecting and sustaining ecologies are passed on from generation to generation over thousands of years, and travel with other cultures and knowledges in the world (often through women). These knowledges form the foundation for understanding our interconnected ecologies within our deeply connected landscapes and this ancient knowledge sharing by humans has always been one of the sacred understandings of collective human survival worldwide, against colonisation, militarisation and displacement and serve as an important reminder of our profound equality. Click the link here to watch the short talk, spread the news for the idea to count, and please give a 'like':

https://youtu.be/w_msId120EY?si=xbhKEM5ODH1ZGUvF

CERT members from the continent support the TEDx talk L-R: Interns Nokwanda & Amanda, PhD scholar Maryam Adewunmi, and Post-doc Dr Titilope Opesemowo.

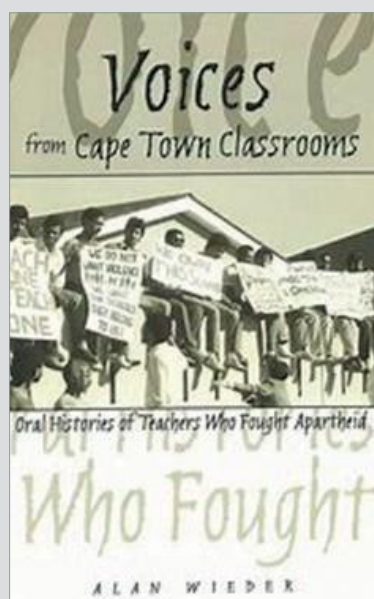
PUBLIC LECTURE BY PROFESSOR MORGAN NDLOVU:

'Indigeneity in Colonial and Decolonial Horizons: Spectacles of Culture and Identity in South Africa.'



In this public lecture, delivered on the 20th August, Prof. Morgan Ndlovu delved into the complex and layered discourse surrounding indigeneity within colonial and decolonial frameworks. The central theme addresses how indigeneity, as an identity and cultural concept, has been interpreted both as a tool of colonial oppression and as a powerful foundation for liberation and decoloniality. Key points and questions raised in the talk included Indigeneity as an Identity Debate: On one side, some regard it as a crucial means of resisting colonial power and reclaiming identity. Others argue that it is a construct born from coloniality, serving to maintain colonial structures rather than dismantle them. He places indigeneity within the history of colonial entanglement, suggesting that it was initially entangled in the colonial project that sought to establish a “second

nomos of the earth”—a phase marked by domination and the notion of an “end of history.” By situating indigeneity in a historical continuum that acknowledges both colonial roots and decolonial potential, Prof. Ndlovu’s talk encourages a nuanced understanding of Indigenous identity as both a legacy of colonial imposition and a liberatory force challenging colonial power structures in South Africa and beyond. Core questions addressed during the talk include: How indigeneity can be understood beyond mere affirmation or rejection in the context of coloniality, ways in which indigeneity functions both as a colonial mechanism and as a path to liberation, and the implications that this dual perspective has for current and future decolonial movements.



Teachers and School-Based struggles against Apartheid: Education for Social Justice – Panel Discussion

CERT / CAWE Post doc Dr Jeanne Bouyart organised and chaired this ‘Thirty Years of Freedom’ panel discussion on the 13th of August with discussants Prof. June Bam-Hutchison, Prof. Linda Chisholm, and Prof. Salim Vally. The panelists (all former anti-Apartheid activists in the 1970s and 1980s) reflected on how apartheid-era challenges shaped their schooling experiences, where resistance often coexisted with education, fostering resilience and critical awareness. They explored

how these early experiences of activism shaped their research and academic contributions, often aiming to document, analyze, and keep alive the struggles and stories of this period in education. The discussion addressed how historical struggles in education remain relevant today. The panelists questioned how lessons from the anti-Apartheid movement could inform ongoing efforts to achieve educational and social justice, including equity and fairness in the school system.

HIP HOP culture as a global form of indigenous knowledge and healing

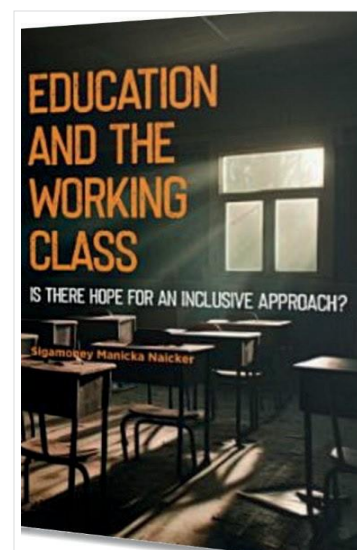
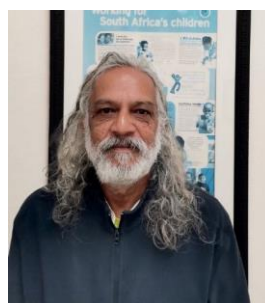


CERT hosted an exciting panel discussion on the 11th of October with a special focus on the overlap between First Nation expressions such as the San, Khoi, & Aborigines globally, & their expansion across Africa. The panellists were legendary Cape Flats former school teacher and Anti-Apartheid Hip Hop 'Black Noise' founder and activist Emile YX? who initiated and organised the event with CERT ; Drmgnow (well known Aboriginal Australian Hip Hop artist Yorta Yorta / Kaieltheban man, Neil Morris, whose stage name means 'The Dreaming') and Dr Msia Kibona Clarke (a professor in African Cultural and Feminist Studies, Howard University and member of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa - CODESRIA). The panel discussion, which attracted keen interest from local youth, examined Hip Hop's role as a powerful medium for healing, and emphasized the cultural resonance between Hip Hop and the decolonial

'First Nation' expressions. Both Hip Hop and these indigenous cultural practices emphasize oral tradition, rhythmic storytelling, and community-centered creativity-making. Hip Hop serves as a natural conduit for indigenous stories and struggles. Panelists explored how Hip Hop helps preserve indigenous languages, customs, and narratives, to resist the erasure caused by colonial forces, thus reinforcing cultural pride and continuity. Panelists also discussed how African youth, particularly those facing socio-economic challenges against raging global capitalism, have embraced Hip Hop as a voice for change, empowerment, and global working class solidarity. Hip Hop has become an educational form through the arts and culture to spotlight issues such as inequality, political corruption, and economic and social injustices, resonating deeply with those seeking social and economic transformation.

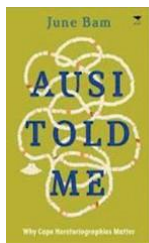
Book launch on Education and the Working Class: Is there hope for an inclusive approach?

This book launch was hosted by CERT on 15th October. The author, Prof Naicker, presented a critical analysis of the South African education system, highlighting the reading crisis among children and the neglect of working-class students' struggles. He shared personal experiences and sociological studies to advocate for a shift in educational policies that promote inclusivity. Prof Naicker illustrated the disparities in educational performance between affluent and impoverished areas, using statistics from the Western Cape to underscore the impact of socio-economic factors on educational outcomes. He emphasized the need for a new pedagogical approach that supports marginalized communities. Prof. Mondli Hlatshwayo (a thought leader on community and workers' education) served as discussant, critically illuminating on the systemic issues rooted in colonization and capitalism that affect working-class communities, and called for a re-evaluation of educational purposes. In his response to this important book, he advocated for initiatives that align with the needs of working class children, emphasizing the crucial ongoing role of grassroots organizations in fostering community resilience to ongoing and deepening structural inequalities in South Africa.



CERT Appoints Short-Term 'Ausi Told Me Collective' Community Researcher Resident In Heritage Month

Shihaam Domingo is CERT's first 'Ausi Told Me Collective' community researcher resident, based on her work in the Cape Flats communities of particularly marginalised working-class women. Her food security work, supported by the Netherlands Embassy, focuses on co-creating platforms and opportunities for invisibilised people and histories to be honoured, re-connecting with the land (from which they were brutally displaced) as custodians of ecosystems and food security. By exploring indigenous food and medicine through African storytelling and cultural feminist ritual, her community education programmes in the veld and along the coast produce multi-sensory cultural experiences which are centred around decolonial re-imagining of a sustainable present and future. The residency is informed by June Bam's award-winning non-fiction monograph, *Ausi Told Me: why Cape Herstorioographies Matter* (Jacana, 2021).



Kingdom of the Netherlands



Shihaam Domingo



Zoe Fortuin, a researcher on the 'Ausi Told Me' research project.



Dr David Kerr

EXCITING NEW RESEARCH APPOINTMENTS AfOx Programme Director joins CERT as Senior Research Associate

Dr David Kerr from African Studies at Oxford University will be joining CERT as Senior Research Associate for 3 years. Dr Kerr's research aligns with CERT's focus area in arts and culture as form of popular culture and decolonial public pedagogy in Africa. Dr Kerr is head of programmes of AfOx (Africa Oxford Initiative). His PhD thesis completed in 2014 at the University of Birmingham was titled *Performing the self: rappers, urban space and identity in Dar es Salaam*, and his post doc research was on street performances in Tanzania. His publications include: Kerr, D., 2021. Rapping, Imagination, and Urban Space in Dar es Salaam. *Youth and Popular Culture in Africa: Media, Music, and Politics*, pp.63-87 ; . Kerr, D., 2018. From the margins to the mainstream: making and remaking an alternative music economy in Dar es Salaam. *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 30(1), pp.65-80. Welcome to CERT, Dr Kerr !



Drusila Gomes

CERT welcomes AfOx indigenous feminist heritage scholar from ANGOLA

Drusila Gomes, from Angola, who is currently based as an AfOx scholar at Oxford University, has chosen to develop her scholarship at CERT under the research mentorship of Professor June Bam-Hutchison. Drusila has previously also studied at the University of Japan. Her research at CERT will be over 6 months from 2024 to 2025 and will entail working on indigenous representations and cultural narratives, and major exhibition and museum projects in practice. Her placement is funded by AfOx, to research visual arts and heritage representations in indigenous feminist exhibitions and to establish a conceptual foundation, exploring indigenous imagery, historical texts, and curatorial frameworks in decolonial indigenous heritage practice in Africa, integrated with modern storytelling elements. We warmly welcome Drusila!

Genocide and Richtersveld Land Restitution Community Research Project

Before colonial rule, the Khoi and San people lived in the Richtersveld under their indigenous authorities and practiced customary land laws for centuries. When the British annexed the Richtersveld in 1847, amidst ongoing genocide and relentless land dispossession of the indigenous people, the Nama communities managed to retain control over their land until 1925 when diamond discoveries led the South African state to seize the area as 'Crown Land'. The state awarded mining rights to Alexkor Ltd., a state-owned diamond-mining company, displacing the Nama people and barring them from their land and resources. Over time, government actions such as fencing, the creation of buffer farms, and the establishment of a 'reserve' for the Nama people further marginalized them. After many years of struggles for their rights to customary lands and access to mineral resources, as well as lengthy negotiations with the South African government and Alexkor, the !Ama peoples of the Richtersveld on the West Coast in the Northern Cape won their land claim in 2007. However, notwithstanding the return of the land to the Richtersveld community, the community continues to face many significant challenges. Analysing these challenges is the focus of a community-engaged research project facilitated by CERT in partnership with Goab Martinus Fredericks as elected representative of the !Ama Traditional Authority (of all !Ama people in South Africa) with CERT Research Associate Dr Simphiwe Tsawu. The project is made possible by the generous contribution of Dr Chris Spring (former curator of the Africa Gallery, British Museum).



Goab Martinus Fredericks explains the history of the Richtersveld and the creation of the reserve system after genocide, land dispossession and the discovery of diamonds.



CERT 2025 AFRICAN JAZZ & EDUCATION PODCAST SERIES

We are excited to announce that legendary radio presenter on jazz (Khaya FM) will be launching and presenting the CERT 2025 African Jazz & Education Podcast series. The podcasts series will include conversations about the history of jazz in Africa, and the exciting possibilities for education on the continent. Targeted audiences will be the youth on the continent and the African Diaspora. Watch this exciting space!

CERT

<https://www.uj.ac.za/faculties/education/centres/centre-for-education-rights-and-transformation/>

We thank CERT post-doc Dr Titilope Opesemowo for compiling this edition of our newsletter.