“For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them”

(Aristotle, 349 BC)

An**[other]** look at vocational and community education

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NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY

Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training (CIPSET)

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Contents

Part One

*As teachers who teach **critical pedagogy,** we often get students returning to our offices after their first job, telling us that "all that social justice and **empowerment** stuff was great, but we don't have that option. We have to test and measure, there is no time for Freire."*

(Dale & Hyslop-Margison, 2010)

This booklet is about the relationship between vocational and community education. Part Two of the booklet deals specifically with *education* - it looks at how vocational and community education are generally understood and then offers some alternative ideas, understandings and examples of what we think they are and could be. But we cannot discuss education *until* we discuss the *context* in which education is located. Therefore Part One of this booklet 'sets the scene' and is about the current context - it looks at the current global economic system and also at 'work' under capitalism. It questions many commonly held beliefs and ideas and contrasts these with other ideas and concepts (including some from the past).

In this booklet:

Poor means those who are lacking in their material conditions; lack access to basic needs and services; and who are **marginalised** from the mainstream. We do not mean 'poor' in any other way such as of spirit or mind. Although many people are uncomfortable with the term, movements of the poor in South Africa deliberately use the term to describe themselves.

Workplace means any space or place of 'work' or 'doing' and does *not* only refer to workplaces in the formal 'labour market.'

'Work' nowadays refers almost **exclusively** to activities carried out for a wage. The terms 'work' and 'job' have become **interchangeable**: work is no longer something that one *does* but something that one has. (Gorz, 1997)

In this booklet, we do not write as if 'work' and a 'job' are the same. Work in this booklet is not necessarily waged labour. We explain what we mean by 'work' throughout Part One and show examples in Part Two.

We cannot discuss education (and training) if we do not first look carefully at and understand the society in which we live, as the two cannot be separated. Our world is **dysfunctional** for the majority of its people, and we need to understand why it is so (if we don't already), and continue our struggles, or join with those in struggles, to make our world a fair and just place for all.

So, let us begin with our broken world in order to understand why we, like many activists and scholars, make the argument that there is and must be 'time for Freire*' in education.

* Paulo Freire taught literacy to poor people in Brazil - he believed that literacy was much more than just reading and writing. He believed in 'reading the word and the world' - he wanted people to ask why they were living in poor conditions while others were rich. He believed in always asking WHY…

You can read more about Freire here: **http://www.freire.org/paulo-freire/**

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critical pedagogy - is about teaching that is not a neutral act but rather inherently (deeply) *political* ('political' as defined as *relations of power*). It must 'take a side.' Issues of social justice and **substantive democracy*** underpin the teaching and learning process. Critical pedagogy is about thinking deeply about and questioning the way things are and achieving *emancipation* (freedom) from all forms of *oppression* (when one group is dominant over / has power over another group - and this dominance / power is unjust and unfair to those who are being dominated over)

empowerment - the process of becoming stronger and gaining more control in one's life and claiming one's rights. Some activists and scholars do not use the word 'empowerment' because they argue it is *not* about breaking free from the *oppressive system*. They prefer the word 'emancipation'

marginalised - pushed to the sides / not included in the 'mainstream' / not considered at all important by those in positions of political and economic power

exclusively - only

interchangeable - as if they are the same

dysfunctional - not working properly

* In a substantive democracy, the general population plays a real role in carrying out its political affairs, i.e. the state is not merely set up as a democracy but it functions as one as well (democracy is not just about the right to vote every few years). Substantive democracy is a form of democracy that functions in the interests of the governed / the people. This type of democracy can also be referred to as a functional democracy

There are many who have said and continue to say 'enough is enough' and who fight back against the oppressive global economic system. But, for many others, including some who consider themselves 'educated,' they continue, like a hamster spinning round and round on its wheel, on the same path that caused this crisis (we discuss this 'crisis' further below), doing the same ol' same ol.'

Yeka!

Ema!

Pare!

Arrêtez!

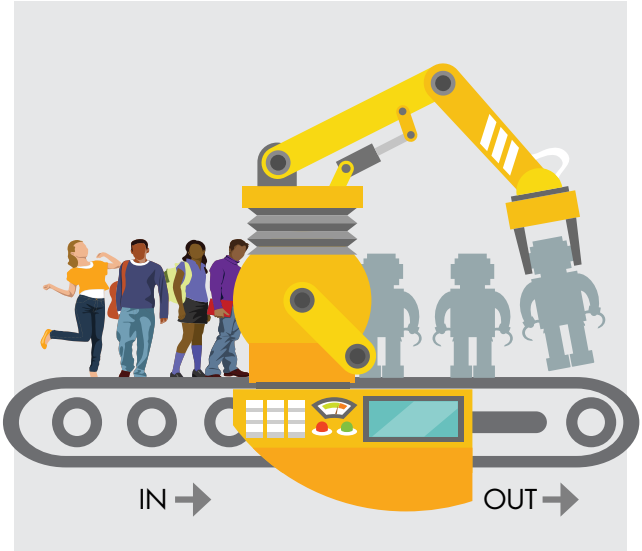
Stop!

We need urgently to take a pause, to listen, to think critically, to unlearn, to **deconstruct**, to **re-examine**, to **debate**, to discuss, to **dialogue**, to learn from possibilities and demonstrations of change, and to contribute towards creating something new from the crisis and **devastation** that presently exists.

A story heard by many American schoolchildren is that of Ragged Dick, Horatio Alger's 19th century book about a poor, 14 year old 'bootblack' (shoe shiner / boot polisher) who smoked, drank and slept on the streets of New York City. This ambitious boy, **anxious** to 'turn over a new leaf' worked hard and eventually secured himself a **'respectable,'** middle-class life. This 'rags to riches and respectability' story is about one of America's most **sacred narratives** - the American Dream: that no matter who you are, where you come from, what your socio-economic conditions are like - that with enough education and hard work, you too can 'rise up the ladder' and realise your **aspirations**.

This story or narrative, like so many other American stories which echo around the world (as part of the colonisation* project), is also told in South Africa. And many believe it. The reality is that the **realisation** of the American Dream (or the South African one) is true for a very small number of people. For the vast majority, the 'realisation' is more like a nightmare (think of the many people who move to eGoli who have been told there is 'milk and honey' there, but instead get a shared room of 20 people in a **condemned** building, a life on the streets, begging at robots). There's another narrative or **myth** (told to us daily by politicians, business people, and others) about people pulling themselves up by their bootstraps, as if that is all a person needs to do to 'fix' yourself and 'escape' your problems. But if you have NO boots nor bootstraps, how do you do that? And should we not be questioning this 'respectable' life that Ragged Dick **'elevated'** himself into? Is this 'respectable' life actually *respectable*? Who decided what is 'respectable'? Should we not be questioning much more **vigilantly** this blaming of victims, particularly the blaming of our youth (who supposedly do not have the right or enough

knowledge and skills; who supposedly have bad attitudes; who supposedly are lazy, **entitled**, etc?). And the blame is also directed at our educational institutions for not 'producing' the right kinds of students (as if these institutions are factories).



The blame-game is used in other areas of life and has become so **ingrained** in our **dominant discourse** that most 'ordinary' people believe it. It is often used by those in political and economic power to **divert** attention away from the real source…the crisis that is our global economic, political and social system. It is **imperative** to deconstruct and unlearn (for those who have not) the dominant ways of knowing and understanding how the world works, i.e. the 'common sense' view of the world.

* Colonisation is the action or process of taking power away from the indigenous people/s of an area/s. This 'taking away from' includes their land, voting rights, language, cultural practices, among others. Today many activists and scholars argue that colonisation still exists, although it has another name - neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is about increased privatisation (the transfer of something like a service (e.g. electricity or water supply) from public to private ownership and control), deregulation (removing or reducing state regulations (laws)), free trade, austerity measures (such as cutting down of government spending on things like education and healthcare). The role of the private sector ('big business') is increased in the economy and society under neoliberalism

See Page 3

deconstruct - look at closely / 'take apart' (in your head / thinking) whatever it is you are looking at or studying

re-examine - look at again

debate - discussion with different viewpoints and each puts theirs forward

dialogue – conversation / exchange of ideas

devastation - very bad damage / destruction

anxious - nervous / worried

respectable - upright / decent / good

sacred narratives - stories that people generally believe and 'hold dear' or value greatly

aspirations - hopes / what you would like to achieve in the future

realisation - actualisation (happening) / bringing into being

condemned - in very, very bad condition / not fit for use

myth - not true, but believed by some to be true. Usually passed down from generation to generation (older to younger)

elevated - lifted up / raised / given higher status

vigilantly - watchfully / strongly

entitled - if one thinks they should have something even without working for it

ingrained - deep-rooted / very much part of / in-built

dominant discourse - particular ways of thinking and talking about issues and subjects by those who hold positions of political and economic power. These 'particular ways' are repeated and passed on and become 'normalised.' Many believe them to be true. Often they are false

divert - distract / turn away from

imperative – very, very important

The crisis

Below we look at four things that constitute (make up) the crisis in which we find ourselves:

1) Mother Earth and all people, animals and plants are in **grave** danger.

Stephen Hawking: Humanity only has 100 years left on earth before doomsday
https://futurism.com/stephen-hawking-humanity-only-has-100-years-left-on-earth-before-doomsday/

If we continue 'as is,' by 2100, climate models predict global temperatures will be on average

4°C warmer and sea levels will be 0.7m higher. Our natural resources (forests, water, air, plants, animals, etc) are either **depleted**, getting depleted and / or contaminated. Our oceans have become large rubbish bins.
The oceans are drowning in plastic - And no one's paying attention
http://www.huffingtonpost.co.za/entry/plastic-waste-oceans_us_58fed37be4b0c46f0781d426

Our fish are eating the plastic (and also getting over-fished - some are almost extinct, like eels). Industrial farming gets all the attention (and most of the land). It accounts for more than 80% of the fossil fuel **emissions** and uses over 70% of the water supply used in agriculture, but it actually produces only about 30% of the world's food.
http://www.etcgroup.org/whowillfeedus

There is a growing number of climate refugees as people get displaced by so-called 'natural disasters,' or more accurately - climate disasters.
Two billion people may become refugees from climate change by the end of the century
http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/billion-people-refugees-climate-change-article-1.3282594

2) 'Growth' and 'development' benefits a small number of people, and comes at a great cost to most, threatening or destroying land and livelihoods.

*Op-Ed: 'Resistance is fertile' – Amadiba agriculture challenges **elite** mining agenda*
https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2017-07-20-op-ed-resistance-is-0fertile-amadiba-agriculture-challenges-elite-mining-agenda/#.WgjCBSb8JLM

Mining industry in South America threatens indigenous communities
http://indianlaw.org/content/mining-industry-south-america-threatens-indigenous-communities

India's farmer suicides soar as expectations for better life grow
https://www.thenational.ae/world/india-s-farmer-suicides-soar-as-expectations-for-better-life-grow-1.611104

Radical ecological economics
http://www.radicalecologicaldemocracy.org/radical-ecological-economics/

(See Two villages, four researchers, one inspiring experience by Baatjes, Leurquain-Steyn, Mnqwazi & Ngalo - an article about happiness / well-being and 'development' in the Readings section at the back of this booklet).

3) Globally many people, including those with qualifications, cannot find jobs in the formal labour market.

Young UK graduates struggle to find skilled work
https://www.ft.com/content/480d0ad6-0ba9-11e6-b0f1-61f222853ff3

Those who are in the labour market face **precarity** daily because the system of capitalism simply does not need or want them: *Here come the robots - And they're going to take our jobs* *https://www.ecologise.in/2017/04/28/here-come-the-robots-and-theyre-going-to-take-our-jobs/*

*(See Short of skills or of jobs? by Sibiya - an article on education / training and employment which **debunks** the myth about a **linear relationship** between them - in the Readings section at the back of this booklet).*

4) There are more people in **vulnerable** forms of employment or who are unemployed than those in the formal labour market (who have permanence, security, benefits etc). Despite those 'outside the formal' demonstrating resilience and agency, most face enormous hardship and struggle (See more on this under 'Making a life' further below).

…vulnerable forms of employment are expected to remain above 42 per cent of total employment in 2017, accounting for 1.4 billion people worldwide. In fact, almost one in two workers in emerging countries are in vulnerable forms of employment, rising to almost four in five workers in developing countries. As a result, the number of workers in vulnerable forms of employment is projected to grow globally by 11 million per year. The two regions most affected by vulnerable employment are Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

(World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2017. ILO *http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_541211.pdf*)

While there *is* enough for everyone, billions go to bed hungry, without shelter, without adequate healthcare and other life-sustaining necessities. In this so-called civilised, modern and advanced world - with more 'educated' people than ever before, *grave inequality persists.*

See Pages 4 & 5

grave – very, very bad / serious

depleted - finished / come to an end

emissions - releases / gives off

elite - a small group of powerful people that control a very, very large amount of wealth, privilege (special rights / treated much better than others) or political power in a society

precarity - from the word precarious which means the opposite of secure and stable. It is usually associated with jobs which are temporary, contract or casual and may have no benefits. Workers who are precarious usually have few or no rights

debunks - disproves / shows not to be true

linear relationship - two things are connected by a straight line / one 'thing' will definitely lead to another 'thing'

vulnerable - at risk / could end at any time power is unjust and unfair to those who are being dominated over)

Our current global economic system produces deep social **consequences**, such as increasing poverty. Capitalists '**pursue** the **expansion** of value through **exploitation** without regard to the social consequences' (Harvey, 2006). Barnes argues that there 'are **fundamental systemic flaws**. Fiddling with the system (i.e. 'fix[ing] it by patches here and there, by stopping this or saving that, by spending more on education or adding a few government regulations') does not bring about real change; it just postpones the chances of bringing about change. 'Such **reforms** may make us feel better and may even be beneficial, but they do not fundamentally change a system that **disregards permanence** and increases inequality by its very nature' (Barnes, 2003).

We need an entirely new and different economic system based on the principles of social justice, equality and substantive democracy.

Beyond **consumerism** *lies the society of enough.* (Jackson, 2017)

consequences - results /effects

pursue - go after / chase after

expansion - to make bigger / more

exploitation - a similar word to oppressive / one takes advantage of another by exercising control over that person or group

fundamental - something that is of central importance or necessary to the 'thing'

systemic - relating to a system or whole, rather than to a particular part

flaws - faults / mistakes / things that are wrong

reforms - changes

disregards permanence - does not consider and is not concerned about the future / something that is short-sighted

consumerism - from the word consumer. Someone who buys things. Consumerism is about encouraging people to buy goods and services in ever-increasing amounts

Was it always this way?

It is important to remember that life was not always about having to work so hard as if that is what our **sole** purpose on this Earth is. Many activists and scholars question this, such as Kothari in his article: *Why do we wait so restlessly for the workday to end and for the weekend to come? Could work be redefined to include enjoyment and pleasure?* (Scroll.in, 2016). Let us briefly look at the concept of leisure which was, if one looks back in history, a **vital** part of life.

Leisure

Today, leisure is often misunderstood as watching TV or collapsing on one's bed after a hard day's work. That is not the true meaning of the word 'leisure.' In one famous study (Stone age economics, 1974), Sahlins pointed out that Aboriginal people in Northern Australia and the !Kung people of Botswana typically worked only three to five hours a day. Besides looking for food and doing other 'work' activities, they filled their days with leisure activities and sleep. According to Skidelsky & Skidelsky (2013), leisure is 'not just time off work but a special form of activity in its own right.' They also explain that it is: 'All recreations involving active, skilled participation - playing football in the park, making and decorating one's own furniture, strumming the guitar with friends.' This definition 'comes close to what Karl Marx called non-alienated labour, which he defined as "a free **manifestation** of life, hence an enjoyment of life."'

We look at this 'free manifestation of life / enjoyment of life' and its opposite under numerous headings below ('making a life' ('doing'); alienation (and more alienation); vocation; socially useful work; and refusal of work / antiwork.

Paulo Freire understood work (or as we say in this booklet a job) in terms of capitalist production as: "Work that is not free **ceases** to be a **fulfilling pursuit** and becomes an effective means of **dehumanization**." Work should not be **coercive**, but an act of creative expression that brings happiness to humans. Each person should also share in the rewards of human **accomplishments**. (Dale & Hyslop-Margison (2010)

sole – only

vital – very, very important

manifestation – sign / demonstration

ceases - stops

fulfilling pursuit - something that one does and really loves / a pleasing and satisfying activity

dehumanization (dehumanisation) - the process of depriving (taking away from) a person or group things which she or he should have (like food, shelter, dignity, respect, etc)

coercive - forced / something one has to do

accomplishments - positive things one has achieved

'Making a life'

The term 'making a life' was coined by the authors of a book titled *Learning for living: Towards a new vision for post-school learning in South Africa* (In press). We will now take a closer look at this term in order to better understand the arguments made in this booklet. Life, since the start of capitalism, has been about **accumulation** (for some), exploitation (for most) and **commodification** (of much). The impact of this system has been devastating for most of the world's population and for our Earth (as described above). There are billions of people the world over - those who have been shoved or pushed to the margins (if we take the centre as that which holds economic and political power). The people who have been shoved out do not simply 'fall over and die' but, in numerous ways, push back against this oppressive and exploitative system. 'Making a life' is used to describe what it is *'ordinary' people do* - their daily activities which include a **myriad** of things, be they physical, emotional or spiritual (often, these are inter-linked). People participate in care and housework for family members, neighbours, community members who are sick, elderly, orphaned or simply in need. People grow vegetables and look after animals, and much (if not all) of this *work* is unpaid, underpaid, unrecognised and undervalued.

Yet these are the very things (love, care, concern, solidarity) we need for healthy, functioning communities. This kind of 'work' may have nothing

to do with money, let alone profits. We learned from the **feminist movement** many decades ago that **GDP** (Gross Domestic Product) measures only those things *within* 'the market' (regardless of whether they are good or bad), and all 'work' outside of 'the market' does not count in the eyes of capitalists (yet this economic system needs and relies on people, particularly women, to do this *invisible* work, such as described above (cleaning, caring, etc)).

'...places of work [should be] places of life' (Bennholdt-Thomsen & Mies, 1999) and this is what 'making a life' is.

The term *economics* comes from the Greek word 'oikonomia' which means 'household management.' Oikos means all the members of the family, which included slaves, and all property. Nomos means management, law or principle. An oikonomos was a steward or manager of a household in its broad sense.

'Making a life' makes us reflect on life as it used to be (and especially life before capitalism), but not in some **romanticised** way. It urges us to look at what was good within our communities (and still is within many indigenous and poor ones as seen in numerous examples of people 'making lives') and what enabled a real sense of well-being, **flourishing** and happiness. Life was filled with examples of **mutualism**, **conviviality**, respectfulness, love and care. These qualities framed relationships between human beings, such as between the elderly and young, women and men, for example the Mbendjele Yaka Pygmies (Congo) who lived in an **egalitarian** system of social relationships - they had a '**pendulum** of power' system of women ruling and then men ruling. The qualities also framed relationships between humans and non-human things that exist on Mother Earth. The notion of 'communing' was commonplace - things that belonged to 'the commons' were shared by all - water, land, seeds, forests, knowledge, etc.

See Page 7

accumulation - increase / getting more and more of something

commodification - from the word commodify which means to turn something that everyone has a right to (like water) into a product that can be bought and sold

myriad - many

feminist movement - a movement (made up of many smaller movements) fighting for the liberation or freedom of women. It includes many issues, such as gender-based violence, maternity leave, equal pay for women and men, women's rights, etc

'Simply put, feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression. (...). Practically, it is a definition which implies that all sexist thinking and action is the problem, whether those who perpetuate it are female or male, child or adult. It is also broad enough to include an understanding of systemic institutionalized sexism. As a definition it is open-ended. To understand feminism it implies one has to necessarily understand sexism.' (bell hooks, 2000)

GDP - a monetary (money) measure of the market value of all goods and services produced in a particular period of time (e.g. yearly). GDP is used to measure the economic performance of a whole country or region, and to make international comparisons. There are many people who say that GDP is not a fair measure of how a country or region is doing in terms of their well-being because it includes such things as money spent on medicine for sick people (of course sick people do need medicine, but the question to ask is: why are they getting sick in the first place? With urbanisation and modernisation, there is an increase in illnesses)

romanticised - idealised / put on a pedestal (put 'high up') / made to be more important / better than it actually was

flourishing - thriving / something that grows or develops successfully

mutualism - joint / shared / common

conviviality - friendliness / cordiality / being nice to one another

egalitarian - equal

pendulum - swing / one then the other

Alienation

This notion of sharing was stopped by **enclosures** which started in the 16th century in England. Once enclosed, use of the land became restricted to the owner, and it stopped being common land for communal use. Labourers now worked on the land for the owner - they became wage labourers. This enclosing of land and commodifying of other 'common' resources has continued throughout history in many places - things that once belonged to many, now belong to a few. Some describe privatisation (part of neoliberal capitalism) as 'enclosure' with a different name. Schumacher (1973) describes the 'market' (which is very much part of neoliberal capitalism's make-up and made to seem (by capitalists) as if it is some sort of neutral **entity**) as something that: '…utterly disregards things which cannot be, or have not been, privately **appropriated**, but are nonetheless an essential precondition of all human activity, such as air, water, the soil, and in fact the whole framework of living nature.'

'The land question' - South Africa

The history of 'white' colonial land **dispossession** did not begin with the passing of the Native Land Act in 1913; rather it goes back to the expansion of Dutch colonial settlements in the Cape in the 1600s. Settlers occupied the land of indigenous peoples and also took their cattle. Over time **proclamations** were made and laws were passed by both the Afrikaners and the British to remove African people from their land while increasing and **entrenching** areas of 'white' settlement. Thus, by the time the Land Act of 1913 was passed, South Africa had already moved in the direction of **spatial segregation** through land dispossession.

Prior to the coming of the colonialists, African people lived in a communal way. Land was considered to belong to everyone and no special permission had to be given if one wanted cattle to graze in a space they did not normally graze on. If one wanted to build a hut, one could, and materials would be provided by the village. The colonialists came from a system where ownership was a major part of their society. They claimed ownership of indigenous people's land by force and protected it with force. That is how land was stolen from African people.

Land grabbing continues today...

When people leave their rural land or are forced off their land and migrate to cities and towns, their own land may lie **fallow** and / or may be transformed into large-scale industrial farm land, a game reserve or such like. Land grabbing by multinationals is a global reality. As Paraguayan **ecologist**, Miguel Lovera, puts it: 'These new "**conquistadors**" are racing to seize all available **arable** land and, in the process, are destroying peoples' cultures and the country's **biodiversity** - just as they are in many other parts of the planet, even in those areas that fall within the jurisdiction of "democratic" and "developed" countries. Every single foot of land is in their **crosshairs**. Powerful elites do not recognize rural populations as having any right to land at all.'
(http://photolangelle.org/2014/12/18/the-pillaging-of-paraguay-photo-essay-with-analysis/)

enclosures - closing of land from public to private / an area that is surrounded by a barrier

entity - thing

appropriated - seized / something (like land) is taken for one's own use, often without the original owner's permission

dispossession - removing from / depriving someone of land; things they own

proclamations - public or official announcements

entrenching - establishing (an attitude, habit or belief) so firmly that change is very difficult or unlikely

spatial segregation - the action or state of setting people apart from others using space (land)

fallow - bare / unused

ecologist - from ecology. To do with the environment

conquistadors - conquerors / those who capture or take land, etc (especially one of the Spanish conquerors of Mexico and Peru in the 16th century)

arable - suitable for growing crops

More alienation

Labour leader Terrence V. Powderly reflects on the human effects of industrialisation in his memoirs written in 1889:

With the introduction of machinery, large manufacturing establishments were erected in the cities and towns. Articles that were formerly made by hand, were turned out in large quantities by machinery; prices were lowered, and those who worked by hand found themselves competing with something that could withstand hunger and cold and not suffer in the least. The village blacksmith shop was abandoned, the road-side shoe shop was deserted, the tailor left his bench, and all together these mechanics turned away from their country homes and wended their way to the cities wherein the large factories had been erected. The gates were unlocked in the morning to allow them to enter, and after their daily task was done the gates were closed after them in the evening.

Silently and thoughtfully, these men went to their homes. They no longer carried the keys of the workshop, for workshop, tools and keys belonged not to them, but to their master. Thrown together in this way, in these large hives of industry, men became acquainted with each other, and frequently discussed the question of labor's rights and wrongs. (Powderly, 1889, in Kincheloe, 1999)

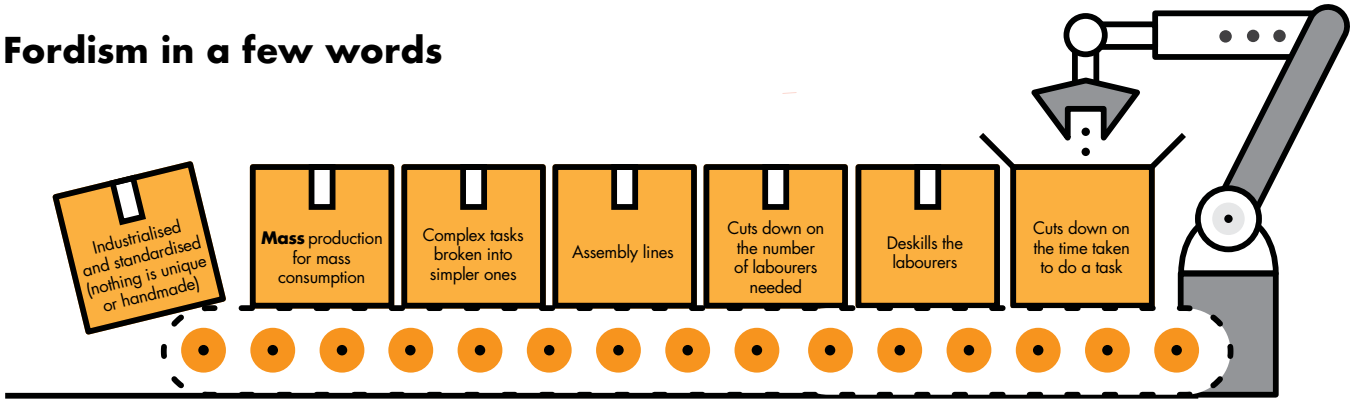
And more... Marx on alienation

Marx believed that work has always been essential to us as human beings - it is part of who we are. Work under capitalism leads to what he defined as 'alienation.' Marx believed that alienation is the systemic result of the process of removing the worker from her or his work. As things get commodified and lose their real meaning and value to workers (Marx's 'use-value'), the worker no longer has a connection to the product. Holloway explains it as such:

> I bake a cake. I enjoy baking it, I enjoy eating it, I enjoy sharing it with my friends and am proud of the cake I have made. Then I decide that I will try to make a living by baking cakes. I bake cakes and sell them on the market. Gradually the cake becomes a means to gaining an income sufficient to allow me to live. I have to produce the cake at a certain speed and in a certain way so that I can keep the price low enough to sell it. Enjoyment is no longer part of the process. After a while I realise that I am not earning enough money and think that, since the cake-making is in any case merely a means to an end, a way of earning money, I might as well make something else that will sell better. My doing has become completely indifferent to its content; there has been a complete **abstraction from** its **concrete** characteristics. The object I produce is now so completely alienated from me that I do not care whether it is a cake or a rat poison, as long as it sells.

Most workers do **discrete**, **repetitive** motions (almost robot-like) as they make products (or parts of products (see Fordism below)). For many (if not most) workers, a job is simply a way to make a living as opposed to being connected to 'making a life.' And they are not the ones making any profits; sometimes they barely make enough to survive. Gorz (1997) explains it as such: 'Work has not always existed in the way in which it is currently understood. It came into being at the same time as capitalists and proletarians. It means an activity carried out: for someone; in return for a wage; according to forms and time schedules laid down by the person paying the wage; and for a purpose not chosen by the worker.'

Fordism in a few words



Work as defined in this booklet and by many should be: 'Free, **conscious** [and] creative….an inherent part of our humanity.' Magdoff & Williams (2017)

See Page 9

biodiversity - many different kinds of plants and animals in the world or in a particular habitat or area

crosshairs - used to describe someone or something being targeted (pointed at) as if through an aiming device having crosshairs (used in positioning or aiming, for example with a gun)

See Page 10

abstraction from - removal from / taking away from

concrete - real / existing / actual

discrete - separate / distinct / disconnected

repetitive - something done over and over again usually without having to think about what it is one is doing

mass - bulk / many

conscious - mindful / aware / something one thinks deeply about

Vocation – its true meaning

If we return to the original meaning of the word 'vocation,' it becomes clear that it means a calling - one's life's work and *purpose*. It refers to the many meaningful, productive, satisfying and creative activities that human beings carry out with a great sense of **dedication** and **commitment**. The idea of vocation is also found in religion and is central to the belief that God created each person with gifts and talents oriented toward specific purposes and a way of life (Baatjes, 2015). The idea of having a vocation can be seen in craftspeople during the Middle Ages, a time when products were made by hand individually or in a group. Craftspeople got together in various craft guilds which existed for every trade or craft. These included: carpentry, painting, cloth making, baking, shoemaking, candle making, amongst other. The guilds organised the production and distribution of goods through a market system (not a so-called 'free market'). Prices were 'fixed' and high standards of quality were kept. Members could be asked to leave the guild if they did something like **stockpile** goods to get a higher price for themselves ('entrepreneurial' activities were not liked). Guilds also supported members in difficult times (such as if someone got sick) and they also cared for members' widows and children if a member died. They ran the apprenticeship systems, providing mentoring for young men and women (see more on this in Part Two).

Today, many are calling for a return to the idea of a vocation, such as in India with the handloom (dating back to ancient times) which is an important craft product. The modern economic **paradigm** which was forced on many countries including South Africa, got rid of handicrafts (such as the Indian handloom), and replaced them with cheaper, lower quality factory-made products, and in the process, destroyed the livelihoods of billions. Globally people have become further and further **distanced** from the products they made or make. There are, however, still some examples of people who produce handicrafts, such as Mozambican (and other African) tailors, as described in the following example:

> To be a tailor in Africa means to preserve a traditional know-how where experience and creativity meet together to create a unique garment, **amplifying** an **intimate** connection with oral tradition. "Speaking," "seeing" and "listening" are essential elements of the chain of knowledge transmission. From the master to the disciple, knowledge is transferred together with the details that the stitches bring together. Usually there is no formal education, but rather knowledge that is transferred based on "lived" experiences. Facing apprenticeship, African tailors start training at the age of boyhood and "apprenticeship happens as a way of, and in the course of, daily life" (Lave, 1991). From master to disciple, the traditional knowledge is the hinge to preserve cultural knowledge on tailoring.
>
> http://www.buala.org/en/city/african-tailors-empowerment-an-approach-on-co-learning

Socially useful work

An alternative way of thinking about skills, livelihoods and work is through the concept of 'socially useful work.' This way of thinking about the issues makes us consider the fact that there are many ways of making a contribution to society, and that we should not assume that contributing toward the profitability of a business is the only way, or the best way, or even necessarily a good way.

> Many people have skills that are very useful and that can add value to the lives of the people around them: skills in childcare, in building or repairing things, in cooking or cleaning, in making music or telling stories, and countless other things besides. Many people already provide these services to each other on the basis of neighbourly exchange - in other words, they help each other when something is needed, and simply maintain an 'informal' sense about who has done what for whom, and who owes someone else a return favour. These are not necessarily skills that businesses can easily profit from, so these skills are not normally recognised or taken seriously within discussions of skills, employment and livelihood (CERT, 2013). See Vally & Motala (2014): *Education, economy & society* for additional discussion on this.

Abalimi farmers we met spoke about learning about new vegetables, like rhubarb, and learning to cook these new and different vegetables. They also spoke about the nutritional value of the food they grow and that working in a garden is good exercise. For these farmers, growing vegetables is so much more than just a technical exercise. It is not 'just a job' to feed families.

I still love the garden, still now, I'm so passionate about it. I love it. (Abalimi Bezekhaya farmer / trainer (Cape Flats) who started farming in 2000)
(EPC EV2 Profiles of Possibility Report, 2015, p.24).

In the late 18th century, people, including children, worked 10-16 hours a day in factories. Robert Owen started a campaign to have workers work no more than eight hours per day. His slogan was:

Since then the idea of an eight hour working day became the norm.

Refusal of work / antiwork

Dean (2015) in his article: *Work is bullshit: The argument for "antiwork." Be honest: Do you actually need to do your job?* argues that we need to think about the idea of work (that is, jobs / alienated labour) - and consider replacing it with 'antiwork' (note: he writes from a Western, so-called 'developed' country). He explains:

> Antiwork is a moral alternative to the **obsession** with "jobs" that has **plagued** our society for too long. It's a project to radically reframe work and leisure. It's also a **cognitive antidote** to the **pernicious** culture of "hard work," which has taken over our minds as well as our precious time.

He believes that a job can leave a person stressed, exhausted, **demoralised**, and often still financially poor (globally many middle class people live in debt). 'Society has become wealthier and wealthier', he says. 'Even by traditional measures of total wealth (e.g. GDP) one can see this. But the wealth has become more and more concentrated in the hands of a few. So, the question is primarily not about work, it's about how you share the wealth more fairly and humanely.'

This idea is shared by many others who argue that instead of fighting for the 'right to work' or for 'better' work, we should adopt the 'Refusal of Work' position (*that is the refusal of capitalist jobs / alienated labour*) that was **articulated** by the Autonomist movement in Italy in the 1970s, amongst others. Paul Lafargue, the French revolutionary Marxist socialist journalist, literary critic, political writer and activist wrote The right to be lazy (1883), and in it he argued against a particular definition of 'work.' He stated that laziness combined with human creativity are important components of human progress (his father-in-law, Marx, did not agree with his arguments).

> As unemployment rises, the struggle is not for the "Right to Work" but for an income regardless of work, for the sharing of the reduced amount of necessary social labour, above all for the primacy of **autonomous**, self-determined activity. And it is a struggle that is already taking place.
> (Gorz in New Statesman, 1988)

See Page 11

dedication - devotion / loyalty / keenness / really wanting to do something

commitment - a promise or guarantee to do something

stockpile - keep a lot of the product in storage

paradigm - model / way it is / way it works

distanced - removed / alienated

amplifying - increasing / make bigger

intimate - cherished / something one 'keeps dear' or holds close

obsession - fascination / something that is always in (most) people's minds

plagued - weighed down on people / something that worries one all the time

cognitive - to do with thinking, understanding and acquiring (gaining / getting) knowledge

antidote - cure / solution

pernicious - harmful / some even say 'evil'

demoralised - downhearted / dejected / depressed

articulated - expressed by / said by

autonomous - independent / not dependent on others

Part Two

Now that we have looked at our world and all that is wrong with it (in Part One), we can move to the 'education' part of this booklet, and the role education plays and should play in our society.

Why do I study?

Students usually say:

"To get a good job."

"To make money."

"To live a better life for my family and I." Sometimes this comes with conflict as below:

High School demanded time, focus and serious thinking. This was where you assessed your career choice, subject choice and your own strength and weaknesses. It presented options and assistance in terms of guiding you toward a career path of your choosing. This is where pressure starts for most of us. We are often confused, not sure which career to choose. ***Haunting*** *us … our parents' expectations of what we ought to become. Most parents and family members put strain on teenagers to be accountants, doctors and scientists, not taking into account how these kids feel about it. I had become that teenager in high school too. I had the* ***mentality*** *that I should study commerce and become an economist because these jobs pay well.*
(TVET college student, Eastern Cape) (EPC EV2 Finding the Cross-over: NMI YRLA Report, 2015, pp.9-10).

In college, I didn't enjoy it at all because the course that I was doing was not what I wanted to do. I went there to please my mom and I, myself, hate office work especially being someone else's personal assistant.
(Young woman, Eastern Cape) (EPC EV2 Finding the Cross-over: NMI YRLA Report, 2015, p.11).

What some scholars say:

Rothstein (quoted in *Education isn't the key to a good income*, 2017), writing about America, states that there is no reason to assume that improving schools will be necessary or sufficient for improving someone's economic prospects. 'We can't educate people out of this problem' [the problem of poverty], he says.

Deborah Menkart, the Executive Director of Teaching for Change, agrees that Rothstein's research supports what teachers have long known from their own experience on the 'front lines.' 'I think it also **affirms** the focus,' she said, on having 'children not just see schools as a ticket out of poverty, as a way to "rise above" your community, but as a way to [be] agents for change within their communities.' 'Part of the problem,' she adds, 'is that the whole conversation around education has become so focused on helping individuals "escape" their bad circumstances [see Ragged Dick example in Part One], rather than helping them become part of the solution.'

These arguments are questioning the notion of education as a 'solution' to poverty, *even if* the education is of a good quality (of course this does not mean they are anti-education arguments, but they do raise important and difficult questions).

TVET – what it means and what it could mean

Let us start by looking at the definition of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), the term used in South Africa and globally. The South African *White paper for post-school education and training* (2013) defines the *main purpose* of TVET colleges as sites for providing youth with the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for employment in the labour market. Baatjes, Baduza & Sibiya (2014) state that the purpose of TVET, as thus **conceptualised** (i.e. its main purpose), is linked to increasing the supply of human capital, particularly the youth, necessary for the labour market. This conceptualisation seems to imply that the 'necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes' will somehow mean that people will find employment (or create their own jobs). See Allais & Nathan (2014): *Skills? What skills? Jobs? What jobs? An overview of research into education / labour market relationships.*

The harsh reality of a labour market with ever-increasing *unemployment* which many young people now face as their reality, whether they are certificated or not, is only acknowledged fairly briefly in the White Paper (2013) and, according to the White Paper, will be dealt with in the Community Colleges:

> This situation means that we are providing training for individuals who will not, in the foreseeable future, be able to find formal employment in existing enterprises. To make a living, they will have to create employment opportunities in other ways - by starting small businesses in the informal or formal sector, or by establishing cooperatives, community organisations or non-profit initiatives of various types. The education and training system must cater for people in such circumstances by providing suitable skills. Education must also cater for the needs of communities by assisting them to develop skills and knowledge which are not necessarily aimed at **income generation** - for example: community organisation; knowledge of how to deal with government departments or commercial enterprises such as banks; citizenship education; community health education; literacy. The proposed community colleges are expected to play a particularly important role in this regard, and must therefore be designed to be flexible in meeting the needs of their own particular communities. The colleges must build on the experiences and traditions of community and people's education developed by non-formal, community-based and non-governmental organisations over many decades.

It is our argument that the 'main purpose' of TVET and the TVET colleges - participating in the formal labour market - should, in fact, be re-conceptualised given that the vast majority of people in South Africa do not participate in it, and may *never* - even if they have all the 'right' skills, knowledge and attitudes - *because unemployment is a structural feature of capitalism* and not an individual's problem.

Even if one is able to get a job in the formal labour market - which usually means waged labour (and increasing precarity), the question must be asked: whose interests are being served? (As shown under Alienation in Part One.). And, given the ecological damage and **degradation** caused by capitalists in the name of **progress**, how **sustainable** is this anyway? And, are people really being 'properly' skilled or are they actually being dumbed down as technology **infiltrates** workplaces? (See Part One, *The crisis (point 3)*). Increasingly students learn discrete 'bits' of knowledge and skills and get further and further distanced from their 'work.'

A narrow definition of TVET and its programmes - about meeting the interests and needs of business which functions as a kind of HR supply system - firstly, fails to include millions of youth and adults; and secondly, fails to consider the broader social purpose that *vocational education* (the term we prefer) could and should serve.
(*See Broaden vocational training by Leurquain-Steyn & Baatjes - an article about expanding understandings of vocational education beyond skills for the formal labour market in the Readings section at the back of this booklet).*

See Page 14

haunting - worrying one all the time / not quickly forgotten

mentality - way of thinking

affirms - confirms / supports

conceptualised - thought about / put together

income generation - making money

degradation - destruction / ruin

progress - advancement / going forward / growth / development

sustainable - viable / able to keep going

infiltrates - penetrates / gets into

A few points about *'skills'*

The 'common sense' view of 'skill' is that it is 'something' we possess (have) or do not possess; something an educational institution should 'give' us to make us work-ready (for the labour market) (see the 'blame-game' referred to at the beginning of Part One). 'We hear daily the mantras of "upskill," "reskill," "retrain," "refocus"' (Baatjes, 2015). This notion is questioned by many activists and scholars. *(See The language of 'skills shortage' and the insufficiency of 'skills shortage' language by Ngcwangu & Balwanz - an article digging a little deeper into 'scarce skills,' and Adapt and die by Baatjes - about the so-called 'skills crisis' versus the jobs crisis - in the Readings section at the back of this booklet).* Also see more on the concept of 'skill' further below under *Head, heart and hands.*

Of course one can learn a skill, formally, non-formally or informally (further below we explain these in more detail). An educational institution is not a necessary part of learning a skill and the skill is usually best practised and improved upon when one is 'working' (i.e. on-the-job) or 'doing' / applying the skill in a 'real' context (as opposed to in an education institution). There is an ongoing debate about whether 'skills' are general and applicable to all workplaces or whether they are specific to the particular workplace one finds oneself in.

We also argue that the acknowledgement in the White Paper of this so-called 'other' ('cooperatives, community organisations [and] non-profit initiatives of various types' and the education to support them) should be **expanded upon**, *centred* and *central*. If the focus remains on getting into the labour market (often by 'escaping' from their communities), then we are preparing our youth for a world that (almost) no longer exists (See *Part One, The crisis (point 3)*). Globally millions of people are actively involved in vocations which they find valuable, particularly because these *vocations* or 'work' are meaningful and are to do with their daily needs, concerns, issues and struggles (for example, planting vegetables, building shelters, caring for others, etc). This is in direct contrast to alienated forms of labour. Our argument is that vocation *is* ever-present in communities.

Further below we look at vocational education which should support these 'vocations.' Surely the purpose of education should not be to better yourself as an individual (and climb the corporate ladder at **whoever else's expense**). Rather you should be part of changing your community for the better; of changing the world to be a fair and just place for all. Students should go through an educational process and exit that process as concerned citizens - concerned citizens as in those who have a greater understanding of socio-economic and political (as in power) issues and who act for change.

Sustainable livelihoods is not the same as 'making a life.' Sustainable livelihoods is about increasing resilience and surviving *within* the status quo - the very framework which exploits and oppresses. It does not question or challenge 'big picture' issues, but rather it is an example of one way of working and surviving *within* the capitalist system. 'Making a life' requires of us to shift our way of understanding the world and to re-imagine and make a different one.

expanded upon - made bigger

whoever else's expense - not being concerned about what happens to others

What do we have? What do we want? What should we want?

Compliant and docile OR critical and engaged?

During the 19th Century, Horace Mann, known as the Father of the Common School, argued for common schools to be open to all children:

> When Mann talked of schools producing a "common core of values," he insinuated to the industrialists that such values would support and promote industrial development. The common schools, he said, would turn out factory workers who were docile, easily administered, and not **prone** to participate in strikes and working-class violence. Schooling would reduce poor

people's **hostility** toward the wealthy, Mann promised. Such words were music to the ears of industrial leaders, who were far more concerned with orderly and docile workers than with well-educated and **inventive** workers.
(Kincheloe, 1999)

This instrumental view, which still **persists** today, is about making students 'fit in,' conform and 'be ready' for the labour market. A curriculum or *what* is taught is instrumental when it provides (or attempts to provide) students with 'specific job skills, behaviors, values, and attitudes to create a "properly" skilled and socialized work force' (Simon, Dippo, & Schenke, 1991). It allows very little, if any, opportunity to **critique** it. On the other hand, emancipatory or democratic (in its true sense) education is about encouraging students to be thoughtful, questioning, creative, 'critical citizens' (of which being a worker is one part). Educators (or lecturers) who consider themselves to be **progressive** do not believe that education (or training) is purely a technical exercise. Rather they believe that education must be about a different way of seeing and understanding the world. Hinchey (1993) in Kincheloe (1999) states that, '… democratic vocational educators begin to think in terms of "why do we" rather than "what do we"'.

And further below we look at some examples of '*how* we do.'

There is no such thing as a neutral educational process. Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes "the practice of freedom," the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.
(Foreword by Shaull in Freire, 1996)

….the development of such intelligence, **initiative**, **ingenuity**, capacity as shall make workers as far as possible, masters of their own industrial fate… the kind of vocational education in which I am interested is not one which will "adapt" workers to the existing industrial regime…but one which will **alter** the existing industrial system and ultimately transform it.
(Dewey in Simon, Dippo & Schenke, 1991)

Education is about more than churning out worker bees.
(Fesmire, 2017, *http://theconversation.com/education-isnt-a-commodity-for-labor-79606*

See Page 16

compliant - obedient / will do as one is told and not question

docile - submissive / ready to accept control or instruction

prone - likely

hostility - anger / aggression

inventive – creative / innovative (for example being able to make things)

persists - carries on / is present

critique - deeply analyse

progressive - in education it is someone who is broad-minded and concerned about issues of social justice

initiative - someone who takes charge before others do / an example could be someone who does something rather than waiting to be told to do it

ingenuity - someone who is clever, original and inventive

alter - change / transform

Going beyond...
What we learn and *how*

The Joe Slovo West Community Project

Amongst RDP houses and shacks in Joe Slovo Township in Port Elizabeth, stands a building made of recycled materials - it is a youth centre and is part of the Joe Slovo West Community Project. This project looks at the use of **green design** using **alternative** materials and technology and is an example of alternative sustainable human settlement design in an informal settlement. The project is made up of five phases: a youth centre (a **multi-purpose** hall once used as a crèche for about 80 children). The centre is also used for community events and functions (it can seat over 100 adults); a special needs school and a **frail care** facility; a community-education centre; a 'science shelter' **showcasing** the various green technologies used in the project; and 'green business development.'

The youth centre is built out of about 500 **pallets** and a bottle wall made up of about 2 500 wine bottles. Through **passive design**, it is able to **thermal regulate** itself while it recycles water used for flushing toilets. It was built for less than the cost of an RDP house. The 'green business development' is currently underway - at the moment there are five local 'green' small **enterprises** and co-operatives. A bottle recycling workshop and a pallet and scrap metal workshop are already built.

The buildings of the Joe Slovo West Community Project were built with the help of local community members, students from a PE-TVET college, and local and international university students - all supported by professional building **consultants** and project stakeholders. The project is driven and guided by 'community architect' Kevin Kimwelle (and part of his **action research** and **multidisciplinary** PhD).

See Page 18

green design - an approach to building that minimises (makes less) harmful effects on the environment and human health. The green architect does this by using eco-friendly (not harmful to the environment) building materials and construction practices

alternative - different / not the usual or mainstream

multi-purpose - something that can be used for many purposes or things, e.g. a space which can be used for meetings, teaching, etc

frail care - elderly / old people in need of care

showcasing - showing / displaying

pallets - planks of wood which make up a flat structure that supports goods

passive design - ambient (to do with one's immediate surroundings) energy sources like daylight, natural ventilation (to do with air circulating or moving), and solar energy are used within a structure or building. These are used instead of things like electricity or gas

thermal regulate - the ability for a structure or building to control its temperature so that it is warm when cold outside and cool when it is hot outside

enterprises - initiatives / similar to a business

consultants - someone/s who knows about a particular area of work and is brought into a project (for example) for her or his expertise about it

action research - research that involves actively participating in a situation which is about bringing about change. It is 'about action' and it is 'for action.' Participants (those who are 'researched') play a much more active role than in traditional research

multidisciplinary - combining or involving many academic disciplines (areas)

Below TVET college students share their experiences about working on this project:

My name is *Sibusiso Dyantyi*. I am doing Electrical Infrastructure and Construction with Renewable Energy and Technologies on the IQhayiya College campus. I enjoy what I am studying - it focuses more on our environment and its challenges, and is about using what we have around us in facing these challenges. I got involved in the Joe Slovo Project through my lecturer, Mr Ganess - he encouraged me to volunteer - it's great for me, I would get experience. What I learned on the project is team work - I learned a lot about working together as a team to achieve a common goal - it's also much better and faster to complete a task. I met a lot of people. What I really liked about the project is putting smiles on people's faces and knowing that I contributed to that - it leaves you with a nice feeling. I would do it over and over again. I told others that this project is great - you learn a lot from this project and it helps see things differently. I think this project should be included in the TVET curriculum because what we learned is a lot and you get work exposure. It was different, for example - tools that we learn about in a textbook, we had to use them and get a feel of how they are used. We got a lot of experience.

My name is *Siyabulela Lama*. I am doing Electrical Infrastructure and Construction on the IQhayiya TVET College campus. I like what I'm studying - green energy is for the future. The **mission** is to save the world from emissions produced by human activities resulting from the **combustion** of carbon-based fuels such as wood, coal, oil and natural gas - it also has an impact on climate change. I overheard my lecturer and one of his students talking about the Joe Slovo Project - because of **curiosity**, I approached him and asked for more details - the rest is history. I've done a lot of building with a team - such as a work space and storeroom for empty bottles for two residents of Joe Slovo. Now there are a few power tools that I can use and I can cut wood. Working as a team improves communication and thinking skills. I like helping people and to put a smile on their faces - it makes me feel good too. Yes, I would do it again.

My name is *Xola Myoyo*. I am doing Renewable Energy Technologies at PE College. I enjoy the course as it is about a new way of **generating** electricity and **reducing carbon footprint** - as we all know we are facing the crisis of global warming. After graduating I am planning to study further and be a **specialist** in the field. I got to know about the Joe Slovo West Project through Mr Chase. On the project I did whatever tasks needed to be done on any specific day. What I enjoyed about the project was that I could share my ideas and be corrected if I was wrong - basically I got to learn some new skills as I worked. I have learned a lot from the project and I am still learning from it - hopefully more people will join us in helping to develop other communities. I didn't only learn skills but got inspired to study more because we got to know professors and doctors in their fields, and they emphasised the importance of education…I am looking forward to more new skills.

My name is *Luvuyo Nqakula*. I am a student at PE College in Nelson Mandela Bay, studying Civil Engineering and Carpentry as my main course. Carpentry was the main reason for me to learn about civil engineering. I fell in love with wood before I went to college. After failing my matric in 2007, I worked with a man who lives close to my home, building shelves and counters for shop-owners. At first I was doing it to support myself and help out at home, but later I developed a passion for it. Years later I started to search for places that offer skills for those who want to work with wood. I got lucky - I joined a centre where I spent a year learning and doing practical work with timber. In 2016 I went to PE College hoping to learn about furniture-making but unfortunately they were doing Roof Work which goes as Civil Engineering as a whole. At first I was not sure about Civil Engineering until I learned more - that I will be more skillful and knowledgeable about the Joe Slovo Project.

I first heard about the project when Kevin Kimwelle and German students visited our college. A friend, who is also a student who was already involved in the project, told me that they were short of students who were willing to volunteer. I was more willing since I aim to learn more about my field - starting from designing to construction.

I helped in building a storeroom for a mother who has a recycling bottles business. When I joined the others, the storeroom was already built but not finished. I built timber windows, a wall with pallets that extended the storeroom closer to the house and I also built pallet boxes to pack lose **empties**.

The Joe Slovo Project felt, for me, like a family with the 'father,' Kevin, giving his children a future. Sharing knowledge and wisdom is a great weapon to have if you want to be successful in life and in your trade.

I learned that to volunteer means that you are human, that you have a heart for other people. I learned that to grow your skill, you must volunteer; and by doing more practicals, you gain experience. It has grown me and I want to focus on my company which I am trying to grow. I would love to do again. Doing good for others is to **pave the way** for a bright future. I also liked building new and different things every day. I would tell others that we are lucky to work with Kevin Kimwelle. Not many educated and skilled people are willing to give back what they have. We are lucky to have Kevin as our **mentor** when it comes to getting practical experience.

This kind of work should be included in our colleges. We are not getting enough practicals. **Theory** is important but practicals are more important - you have to **prove** theory with practical. The practical experience is similar to what I am learning - Civil Engineering Design and Building Construction.

South Africa is a country that faces many challenges. So in order for it to grow, people need to become one, and people need to be taught how to create jobs for themselves. We can develop our educational institutions by bringing more machinery in order for the youth

to learn how to work with their hands. I also believe those who write books, etc have the power to change this country in a good way or in a bad way.

My name is *Hlwati Sigqibo*. I am doing Electrical Infrastructure and Construction with Renewable Energy and Technologies. I enjoy what I am studying because it deals with lots of challenges that the world is currently facing. I got involved with the Joe Slovo Project through the College - we were asked to volunteer if we were interested and I was one of the interested students. What I liked about the project is the moment of connecting through work with people we are able to bring a smile to, and working with the team. I would definitely do it over and over again because the project brings a feeling that money can't buy. I think these kinds of projects should be included in the TVET curriculum because we get work **exposure** as we work in the field. The experience was totally different from the classroom because in class we work in a **controlled** environment. I hope projects like this one expand and bring solutions to more South Africans and reduce unemployment.

This project is an example of the broader social purpose of vocational education that we discussed above. It is also an example of the combination of head, heart and hands: students *thought* (head) as they designed and built together; and they *did* (hands) as in practising their hard skills (carpentry, welding, etc), and learned as they did - *'basically I got to learn some new skills as I worked'* (Xola Myoyo). As seen above, students used the word 'love' to describe how they felt about the work - they enjoyed working with others in teams and they liked assisting those who are materially poor - they experienced / felt the harsh socio-economic conditions **emotively** (heart). *'I learned that to volunteer means that you are human, that you have a heart for other people'* (Luvuyo Nqakula).

What to learn (content that is relevant and meaningful to life) and how to learn it (experiential, situated) (discussed further below) can be seen in the Joe Slovo West example. This powerful example goes against the idea of the 'modern workplace' which has 'no space for craft work, no place for a worker to exercise subjective understanding and interpretation' (Kincheloe, 1999).

See Page 19

mission - a strongly felt aim or ambition / something one wants to work towards achieving

combustion - burning

curiosity - inquisitive / wanting to know more

generating - producing / making

reducing - making less

carbon footprint - all the emissions of CO_2 (carbon dioxide), which are made by one's activities (such as heating our homes, cooking, using transport, etc). Too much CO_2 in the atmosphere (air) is bad for the Earth

specialist - expert / someone who knows a lot about something

See Page 20

empties - empty bottles

pave the way - to create a situation that makes it possible or easier for something to happen

mentor - advisor / guide / someone who helps you with something

theory - the opposite of practical. To do with what people have researched, studied and written about

prove - show that something is correct

exposure - experience

controlled - very ordered / certain things are to be expected

emotively - to do with feelings

Following are two *tourism* activities (based on the TVET curriculum) which go beyond just asking students technical questions (identify, explain, describe), but rather ask of them to think critically:

Task A

Find someone (e.g. a parent, older sibling or relative) to interview about the World Cup 2010 which was held in South Africa. Ask the person to read the following extract or read it to them (translate it if need be). The extract taken from *Let them eat cake! The ugly backdrop to the beautiful game* by Sheri Hamilton, Weizman Hamilton and Liv Shange (Izwi La Basebenzi), was written before the World Cup 2010.

Nothing **symbolises** more **graphically** the ugliness that forms the backdrop to the beautiful game than all the **scandals**, corruption and greed surrounding the **mega** event on which the entire world's media is focused on the 2010 World Cup. The first to be held on the African continent, it is being presented as an opportunity to contribute to the development of sport and the economy. Through amongst others, "football Fridays" (when the national anthem should be sung by all and the national football jersey worn), and the special "diski" World Cup dance, it will brighten up the fading colours of the "Rainbow Nation," **boost** "nation building," provide **redress** for historical injustices, create jobs and help SA escape the effects of the global **recession** and kickstart economic recovery – a **panacea** for all social and economic **ills**.

Ask the interviewee if they thought - *before* 2010 - if the World Cup would:

- contribute to the development of sport and the economy;
- brighten up the fading colours of the 'Rainbow Nation' and boost nation building;
- provide redress for historical injustices;
- create jobs and help South Africa escape the effects of the global recession and kickstart economic recovery;
- fix all social and economic ills?

Then ask the person if all or some of the things (listed above) happened *after* the World Cup. Ask them why they say so. If any of their answers are 'no,' ask them *how* they understand this. What do they think happened?

symbolises - represents / means /stands for something else

graphically - very clearly

scandals - an accusation/s (claim / something negative) that get/s wide exposure or attention. Generally there is a negative effect on the credibility (trustworthiness) of the person or organisation involved

mega - extra large / extremely big

boost - improve

redress - restore / set right / fix something that is not fair

recession - slowdown in the economy / decline (gets worse)

panacea - solution or remedy / something that will fix everything

ills - problems / things that are wrong

Task B

Read the passages below and answer the questions that follow:

I am still at my home, looking after my parents, and working when there is work. Everything is done by the man from Johannesburg, Mr Botha. He tells us when we need to take tourists on the horse trails, then we do that. Otherwise we look after the horses and the trails, and we wait for the next tourists. Mr Botha tells us when they will be coming. We hope one day to own the business…now we are just employed by Mr Botha.

Dumisani Zwane, tour guide (Ubuntu Horse Trails)

The Ubuntu Horse Trails (a small tourism business) was started a year ago in a rural part of KwaZulu-Natal, by Johan Botha, a businessman from Johannesburg. He spoke with the local community (who live on the land where he wanted to start the trails) and also with local government. Six members of the local community are employed as 'guides on horseback.' All guides received two days of 'tour guide' training. As they know the area well, they did not need any training about the history, **fauna** and **flora**, etc.

The guides take tourists on the trails; keep the trails in order; and look after the horses. Mr Botha advertises and markets the horse trails (for example, he manages the website and Facebook page); controls the finances; and does the bookings.

The local community members hope that more local people will become tour guides in 2018 and that one day the business will be owned by them. Mr Botha does not think that any of the guides have enough business experience yet. None of the guides have received any 'business' training.

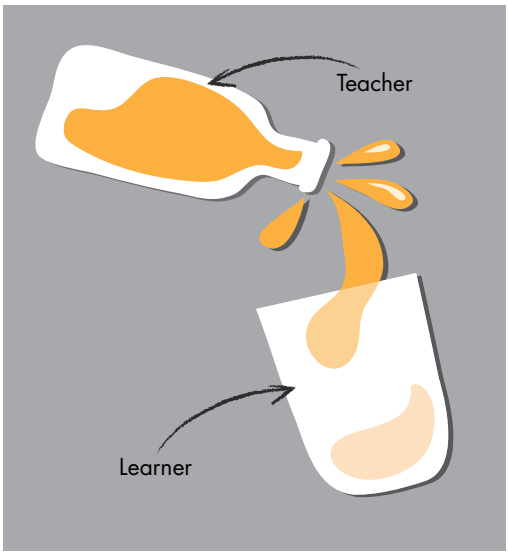
(NOTE: 'Ubuntu Horse Trails' is not a real organisation – it is made up for the purpose of this activity).

1. Can we call the Ubuntu Horse Trails a community-based tourism business? Why do you say so?
2. What benefits (positive things) are there for:
    - the six tour guides;
    - the local community;
    - Mr Botha?
3. What risks or disadvantages (negative things) are there for:
    - the six tour guides;
    - the local community;
    - Mr Botha?
4. Who do you think should 'own' this tourism business and why do you say so?

fauna - animals
flora - plants

Some useful terms, concepts and examples:

Problem-posing education (Freire) is about asking WHY? WHY? and WHY? again. It is about critical thinking in order to deeply understand your context and things that influence your life for the purpose of 'liberation,' as opposed to 'banking education' or 'education for domestication' (also Freire's terms), which is about 'fitting in' and not questioning.



Really useful knowledge / community wisdom

Really useful knowledge is knowledge calculated to make you free. (Johnson, 1988, in Kilminster, 1997).

There is a difference between 'useful knowledge' and 'really useful knowledge.' 'Useful knowledge' is knowledge which does not 'rock the boat' or make one think deeply about issues. It is part of 'banking education.' It is about compliance.

'Really useful knowledge' is created by individuals and groups (rather than so-called 'experts') and it is to do with their experience/s of things. Context is very important. It is about a deeper understanding of *why* things happen. Irna Senekal is part of the Community Education Programme (CEP) based at the Centre for Post-school Education and Training (CIPSET) - a **collective** of university staff and community educators who work in communities around the Missionvale campus of the Nelson Mandela University (NMU). Below she explains 'really useful knowledge' in *Some conceptual tools for imagining non-formal community education* (Post-school Education Review, December 2015):

…we have thought about curricula as 'living' - as fluid and 'emerging,' rather than as a fixed set of **established** content and **associated** educational practice. For us developing curricula brings pedagogy and different knowledge systems into a whole, enables questioning, and the **generation** of 'really useful' knowledge. We have used community-based participatory research as a theory and practice to bring to life participatory, flexible curricula. In this space educators and learners have autonomy to explore and define what is useful knowledge and learning. Creating the possibility for learning is shared - educators can learn from learners and learners from educators and learners from learners, we've argued.

…everyone thinks and has knowledge and can build new knowledge; [that] everyone is a researcher, [this] is central to our work. These issues are important in understanding our work because key to an active democracy is having access to education, and a truly emancipatory education cannot mirror the dominant forms of schooling or develop by **rote** learning but must cultivate and share the tools used to create knowledge as well as explore more deeply what we consider useful knowledge to be.

(See Creating knowledge through community education by Eccles - on knowledge and community education - in the Readings section at the back of this booklet).

Other examples of community wisdom:

Maclean Chambwe left his teaching job to work full-time on his gardening project. For three years he has been using a half acre of land at the back of Sizwesethu Pre-school in Motherwell, Port Elizabeth.

*"There is a lot of poverty in urban areas that can be **combatted** by simply turning the backyards of houses into **viable** vegetable gardens,"* he says.

https://www.groundup.org.za/article/backyard-veggie-gardens-put-food-table/

Using **drip irrigation**, Robert Matsabisa sustains about 16 kinds of fruit and vegetables - from cauliflower and cabbage to strawberries and garlic. While many Nelson Mandela Bay gardens are dead or dying because of drought and the water crisis, Matsabisa, from Wells Estate, who developed a simple and cost-effective drip irrigation system using bottles and crates, has a flourishing crop and only waters it once in two months.
http://www.heraldlive.co.za/news/2017/07/18/inventive-gardener-makes-little-water-go-long-way/

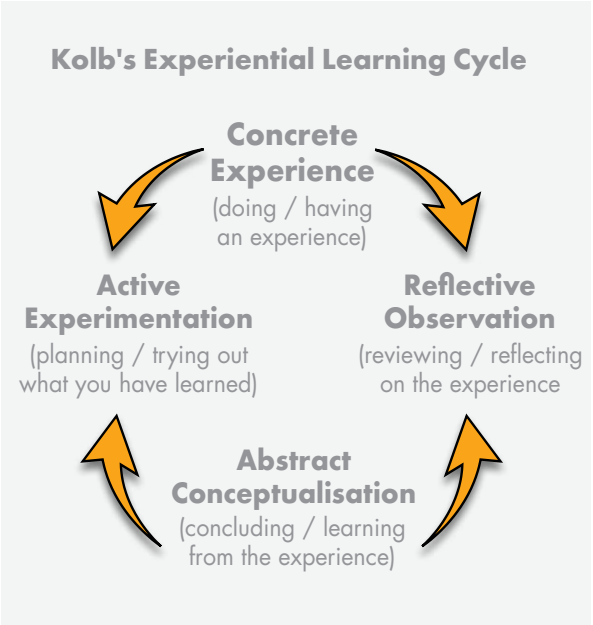
Nkosinathi Nkomo, a third-year civil engineering student at the University of Cape Town, started a company that reduces the amount of water people use at home and work.

Nkomo was unable to register at UCT in 2017 due to a lack of funds, so he decided to *apply some of his practical knowledge* in order to find a solution to the Cape water crisis.

He developed a greywater system which could be used in South African homes and places of businesses. His company was formed with three friends who assisted him.
https://www.thesouthafrican.com/brilliant-uct-student-develops-greywater-system-to-solve-cape-water-crisis/

Experiential learning is the process of reflecting on and learning from experience/s.

Here is a diagram of the 'experiential learning cycle.' This cycle is about thinking deeply and in detail about your experiences. By reflecting on your experiences, you learn.



Situated learning is about the connection between learning and a particular space, time and people (the social situation). The learning cannot be separated from the situation / context in which it happens. This is why many people say that the best learning experience they ever had was not within a formal classroom but outside of it. People usually learn best when they are 'doing' something / learning it 'on the job.'

Eugene 'Jahman' Khumalo, a motorcycle mechanic based in Orange Farm Township in the south of Johannesburg, says, *'I learnt my skills as a mechanic through volunteering at Tiger Wheel [previously Tiger Yamaha] during weekends and school holidays. I was volunteering every Saturday and Sunday.'* This, he emphasises, was how he learned his basic motor mechanic skills as an apprentice at the tyre fitment specialists and dealers as a young man. He feels that learning skills from the bottom up provides essential practical experience that

many tertiary institutions fall short of giving to young students. He says that *'whether or not one comes from university, it is about working with someone with practical experience'* that counts. He feels that more use must be made of such elder community members, like those in his community who have been *'doing skill intensive work as mechanics and welders.'* He says that such experienced elders are ***'neglected** … but we are working in our backyards because we don't have industrial sites to operate from, while malls are being erected everywhere in the community.'* He adds that excluding such ***'pillars in the community'*** leads them to being *'marginalised'* and asks '*Bazosithola kanjani i-skill without abo-Baba?*' [How are they going to learn skills if they exclude the experienced elders?].
(Motorbike philosopher of Orange Farm, EV2 News, No. 2. September 2014, p.1)

A progressive democratic vocational education attempts to understand work in the context that gives it meaning, even though it would be less **complex** and **ambiguous** to remove it from the reality in which it is found in everyday life. A student studying electrical wiring, as taught from a textbook, would not encounter the "bugs" that confound a professional electrician. Real-life electricians encounter real-life problems that must be solved before a wiring system runs smoothly. The factors that separate a good electrician from a bad one involve the technician's ability to deal with these unexpected, unique wiring problems. **Standardized** in-school vocational education removes the very complexity that a professional must successfully confront. (Kincheloe, 1999)

Communities of practice

When you become part of something, such as a group or a team, you learn how things 'work' within that group or team. As you participate, so you learn how things are done in that particular context.

'Communities of practice are self-organized and selected groups of people who share a common sense of purpose and a desire to learn and know what each other knows' (Lave and Wenger 1991; Brown and Gray 1995; Brown and Duguid 1996; Wenger 1998 in Hansman, 2001).

According to Sloman & Fernbach, who wrote *The knowledge **illusion**. Why we never think alone*, our 'intelligence depends on the people and things that surround us and to a degree we rarely recognize. Knowledge, they say, is a community effort.' (Cook, 2017)

The following is an extract from a piece titled *Learning from Bertrams Street* (Post-school Education Review, August 2016) by Neil Murtough (also from the Community Education Programme):

Andiswa's story: When we started (working as community educators), I was scared because I didn't know how to hold a drill and was worried that I won't be able to make furniture. The only thing I know is how to draw. But seeing Sindi that she could make things, I talked to her about my problem. She said "no you can do it, just do it!" Then I made a small chair for a child then the shelf. Sindi was my motivation.

Now as I think about it, we make a good combination, I had to draw and come up with ideas and she can make furniture. That's how we work together. And our aim is to see other youth make something for themselves. And there's no right and wrong, it's only that you need confidence, unity, learn from each other, bring new ideas and love what you do.

The only thing I know is how to draw and I never learned that from school, it comes from my family background. Everyone at home can draw e.g. my mother can weave but before she does anything she draws on paper without seeing them in a magazine.

Sindiswa's story: Why wasn't I singing about making my bench? I was bothered by not being able to make a bench and disappointing the person teaching me how to make it. This meant that I am wasting the pallets.

What motivated me was working with Andiswa when she was fixing her own cupboard. I never did drawing at school. I learnt it from Andiswa and also Mzimkhulu, the one who usually draws in class at CIPSET. I would sit next to him.

I learnt woodwork from my father and grandfather because there were no boys at home, we were all girls. Because my dad was very strict we mostly did boys work at home, such as my dad's mechanics work. He would make us work his car engine.

Non-formal education/learning

- is *open* as opposed to formal education which is selective and allows some people in but not others (usually judged by their academic 'success');
- is organised, but less so than formal education (i.e. non-formal education could be loosely organised);
- may or may not be guided by a formal curriculum; the curriculum is often developed from the 'ground-up;'
- may be 'led' or facilitated by a qualified educator or someone else who has experience in a particular area;
- does not result in a formal degree or diploma; 'success' can be measured by the students themselves rather than by **external** standards;
- is usually a continuing process;
- can happen in any space or place and does not have to be within a 'recognised' educational institution.

Non-formal education/learning is often considered more engaging than formal education as the *learners' interests* are a very important part of their desire to participate and the issues dealt with are concrete and life-related. Knowledge and skills learned are usually used by the learners immediately.

See Page 24

collective - group

established - set / fixed / already made up

associated - connected to

generation - creating / making

rote - repeating / saying it over and over, sometimes with no understanding

See Page 25

combatted - fought against / overcome / stopped

viable - sustainable / something that can survive or live successfully

drip irrigation - a type of micro (very small) irrigation that can save water by allowing it to drip slowly to the roots of plants

See Page 26

neglected - abandoned / not asked for their knowledge, etc or included anymore

pillars in the community - people who play an important part / role in a community

complex - difficult

ambiguous - unclear if something is one thing or another thing

standardized (standardised) - all the same

illusion - something that appears to be true or real but is not

external - outside

Informal learning

Interview with a fishing-net maker (Ngobozana, Eastern Cape):

Researcher: Se mi swi dyondza kwihi leswi swa ku endla ti-nete? *(So, where did you learn the skill of making fishing nets?)*

Fishing-net maker: Leswiwa ni swi endlaka leswiwani, ko va ku loko se ku nghene ku hlupheka u fane u ze u dyonza swilo swo tala. Swilo leswiwa a ni lo fundhisa hi munhu. Ni yo fika ni langutisa wun'wana a ri ku endleni na yena. Ene i swa khale swilo leswi loko ni swi langutisile vo ma (19)82. Marha mina ni te ni ta sungula ku swi endla hi 2008. *(Suffering makes one learn a lot of things. No one taught me how to do this. Instead, I observed someone doing it - and this was back in 1982, but I only started making nets in 2008.)*

Researcher: A swi endla hi mani? *(Who was this person?)*

Fishing-net maker: I nkulukumbha wun'wana, no lova se u lovile – a va ku i Mbeva – wa Mnyasa. Hi yena a nga endla ku ni vona ntirho lowuwa. Marha mina ni te ni ta wu fundha ni ri nexe hi 2008. Swilo tshika swi ni tela ku kambe ni vone nkulukumbha wun'wana a karhi a endla swin'wani, a kota ku sapota munti wa yena se na mhe (mina) loko no zama ke, ni nga (va) ni nga swi koti na? Se ni kuma ku loko ni ringeta hi mpela na swi kota. Nkarhi wun'wana lok ni ri kaya a ni tirha mina, vana va mina va zamanyana. Sweswi lexi endlaku ni lava ku tlhela, ku na n'wana wa 1996, u tshike na xikolo sweswi hi mhaka a ni le ku tirheni, a ku na sapoto. Wa swi vona ku bava a kuna leswi a ni pfunaka hi swona. Hi swona swi endlaku ku ni lava ku ya ekaya, hiku(va) loko no ya ni ya nghena-nghena emadan'wini, kumbe ni ta kum 'one cent' ku vana va mina va kota ku ya exikolweni. *(A man by the name of Mbeva, but I only learnt on my own in 2008. It just occurred to me that I once saw this man making nets and was able to support his family, can't I do it if I tried? When I tried, I discovered that I could. Sometime in the past back home, I used to work and was able to support my children. One of my children, born in 1996, dropped out of school because I am not working; there is no support. He can see that my father cannot support me. Perhaps if I went back home and get back to fishing I can earn some money so that my children can go to school.)* (EPC EV2 Community Snapshots Report, 2015, p.34)

Informal learning refers to **spontaneous**, **unstructured** learning that goes on daily in the home, neighbourhood, workplace, community, etc. It is never **intentional** on the part of the learner, for example, a baby learns to speak and understand a language informally; a parent 'teaches' her / his child to catch a ball; children learn about their religion or culture through rituals and practices done in the home or in a place of worship.

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 work out ways of doing something about it. (Foley, 1999)

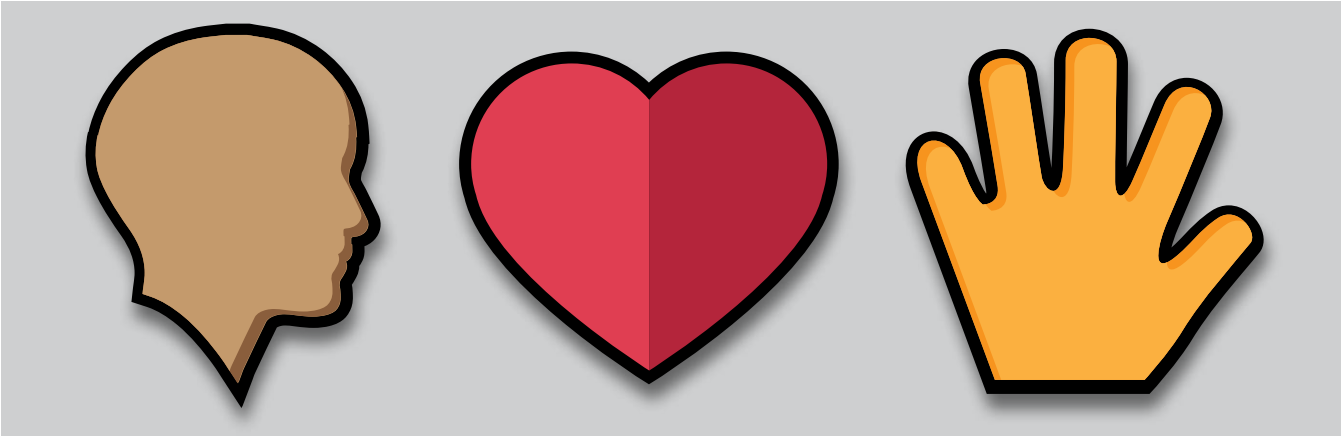
spontaneous - unplanned / it just happens

unstructured - the opposite of structured. Without formal organisation or structure

intentional - on purpose / planned

incidentally - not planned / by chance

Head, heart and hands



We have been taught to believe that one learns either with one's head (theory) OR with one's hands (practical) and we never really hear about learning with one's heart. We have also been taught to believe that learning with one's head is somehow 'better' than learning with one's hands; that it requires more thinking and more intelligence. This is simply not true.
Learning with one's heart can be connected to the idea of learning something like a craft that is *not* alienating (as described in Alienation in Part One). Several activists and scholars have written about this; following is what some of them argue:

Kothari (2016):

For these **counter-trends** to gain ground, **fundamental** change is needed in education. In school and college, we are **inculcated** with the attitude that intellectual work is superior to physical labour. Our minds are trained, to the exclusion of building the capacity of hands, feet, and hearts. We are given role models of people whose success is based on **conquest** of nature and climbing ladders while kicking other people down.

And so we grow up undervaluing producers. The **horrendously** low prices that farmers get for their produce is a **symptom** of a society with **warped priorities**; we do not want to pay adequately to someone who keeps us alive, but we are willing to pay through our noses for branded shoes and gadgets. And in relation to the latter, we don't even care what the actual factory worker gets.

Noddings (2011):

John Dewey made it clear repeatedly that no subject is inherently more intellectual than another (1916), and I have also made that argument in several places (Noddings, 1992, 2003, 2007). If we identify the intellectual with thinking, the algebra taught in schools is not inherently more intellectual than cooking or motorcycle repair. Calvin Woodward made the argument even before Dewey, referring to young workers in a forging-shop as "young **Vulcans**, bare-armed, leather-aproned with many a drop of an honest sweat . . . They are using their brains and hands" (Kliebard, 1999).

Today, Mike Rose has reminded us that thinking and doing are mutually supportive, tightly connected activities. No useful activity or preparation for an occupation involving hands-on work need be simply manual labor; such work can be taught and learned intelligently, and classroom discussion can move beyond specific doings to matters of citizenship, mutual respect, and prospects for a satisfying personal life (Rose, 1995, 2005). Rose connected his discussion to the meaning of democracy and the centrality of respect in a growing, evolving democracy. In such a democracy - we might call it ***Whitmanesque*** - honest workers are worthy of respect. One should not need a college degree to earn respect (Dewey, 1927).

Hyslop-Margison (2005):

A craftsperson is unlikely to transform raw materials into useful products without some creative vision and on-going reflection of how that transformation will unfold. Productive wisdom includes a problem-solving response that considers solutions outside **predetermined** possibilities.

Wink (2005) describing a mariachi guitar player:

He carried the entire history of the Mexican revolution in his head, and he could sing and play it. After taking lessons from him, I learned the difference between **orate** and literate communities.

Suissa (2004):

The chief theoretical **exponent** of this idea [education that combined intellectual and manual training or integral education - a central feature (part) of anarchist educational thought] was Kropotkin, who developed the ideal of a society in which, instead of the current 'pernicious **distinction**' between 'brain work' and 'manual work,' reflecting divisions between a 'labouring' and an 'educated' class, all girls and boys, 'without distinction of birth,' should receive a 'complete education' (Kropotkin, 1974). Kropotkin's views were guided by the belief in social equality as a valuable and attainable goal, and the ideal of a society based on mutual cooperation and **fraternity**.

Business and industry try to claim and 'enclose' *skills* and say they belong to them, but actually those very skills exist within *communities* and are very much part of *life*. What we argue for in this booklet is for a *framework for vocational and community education* that captures 'making a life' (as described above), rather than for what presently exists which is unrealistic, dysfunctional and **exclusionary**.

After failing my matric in 2007, I worked with a man who lives close to my home, building shelves and counters for shop-owners. At first I was doing it to support myself and help out at home, but later I developed a passion for it. (Luvuyo Nqakula, TVET college student, Port Elizabeth)

See Page 29

counter-trends - something (like an idea) which goes against what is most popular at the time

fundamental - central / essential / necessary

inculcated - something like an idea or attitude that is taught over and over so that it is not questioned and is believed

conquest - used in war meaning defeat / conquer / overpower

horrendously - extremely unpleasant, horrifying or terrible

symptom - indication / sign

warped - twisted / confused

priorities - what is very important or of main concern

Vulcans - in Ancient Roman religion and myth, Vulcan is the god of fire including the fire of volcanoes, metalworking, and the forge (used for heating metals). Vulcan is often shown with a blacksmith's hammer

Whitmanesque - like the author Walt Whitman's broad and optimistic (positive, hopeful) outlook on life (as shown in his writing)

predetermined - already decided beforehand

mariachi - to do with music that dates back to at least the 18th century in Western Mexico

orate - speaking

exponent - advocate / supporter

distinction - division / difference

fraternity - togetherness / unity

exclusionary - does not include / leaves people out

Useful Resources

Following is a list of resources you may find useful. There are many others too - some are freely available online.

Allais, S. & Nathan, O. (2014). Skills? What skills? Jobs? What jobs? An overview of research into education/labour market relationships. In S. Vally, & E. Motala (Eds.), *Education, economy & society* (pp. 103-124). Pretoria: Unisa Press.

Allen, M. & Ainley, P. (2012). *Why young people can't get the jobs they want and the education they need*. Retrieved from www.radicaled.wordpress.com

Baatjes, I., Baduza, U., & Sibiya, A.T. (2014). Building a transformative pedagogy in vocational education. In S. Vally, & E. Motala (Eds.), *Education, economy & society* (pp. 81-102). Pretoria: Unisa Press.

Brown, P., Lauder, H., & Ashton, D. (2011). *The global auction: The broken promises of education, jobs and incomes*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.

Dale, J., & Hyslop-Margison, E.J. (2010). *Paulo Freire: Teaching for freedom and transformation. The philosophical influences on the work of Paulo Freire.* Dordrecht: Springer.

Fleming, P. (2015). *The mythology of work: How capitalism persists despite itself*. London: Pluto Press.

Gorz, A. (1997). *Farewell to the working class: An essay on post-industrial socialism*.London: Pluto Press.

Gorz, A. (2005). *Reclaiming work: Beyond the wage-based society.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Haworth, R.H. (Ed.). (2012). *Anarchist pedagogies: Collective actions, theories, and critical reflections on education*. Oakland, CA: PM Press.

Hyslop-Margison, E.J. (2005). *Liberalizing vocational study: Democratic approaches to career education.* Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America.

Hyslop-Margison, E.J., & Thayer, J. (2009). *Teaching democracy: Citizenship education as critical pedagogy*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Kilminster, S. (1997). *Vocational education and really useful knowledge*. 27th Annual SCUTREA conference proceedings. Crossing borders, breaking boundaries: Research in the education of adults. http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/000000252.htm [2013/10/04]

Kincheloe, J.L. (1999). *How do we tell the workers? The socioeconomic foundations of work and vocational education.* Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Kothari, A. (2016, June). Why do we wait so restlessly for the workday to end and for the weekend to come? Could work be redefined to include enjoyment and pleasure? *Scroll.in*. Retrieved from https://scroll.in/article/809940/why-do-we-wait-so-restlessly-for-the-workday-to-end-or-for-the-weekend-to-come

Marsh, J. (2011). *Class dismissed: Why we cannot teach or learn our way out of inequality.* New York: Monthly Review Press.

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Readings

Reading One

Two villages, four researchers, one inspiring experience

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Four of us who work on a research project - Emerging Voices II (part of 'Building a progressive network of critical research and public engagement: Towards a democratic post schooling sector' (Education Policy Consortium)) set off on a Sunday on a nine hour drive from Port Elizabeth to Port St Johns. Our task: to visit the first of 10 South African 'Profiles of Possibility' - groups/organisations/communities doing something that can be defined as a 'transition', a 'prefigurative expression', an 'intermediary', 'pocket of hope' in an increasingly hostile world in which millions struggle to survive largely because traditional forms of employment are becoming a thing of the past. Zizek (2011: 211) extends Vilfredo Pareto's 80/20 rule when he states:

The global economy is tending towards a state in which only 20 percent of the workforce will do all the necessary work, so that 80 percent of the population will become basically irrelevant and of no use, potentially unemployed.

More on 'Profiles of Possibility'

Throughout the world there are numerous movements, spaces, groupings, organisations, ideas, learnings, 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 majority. These 'possibilities' 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 domination. And yet, against all of this, they are there - they exist, even if they are marginalised and invisible to many or even to most. Our research explores these 'profiles of possibility', with a specific focus on the *learning* that happens there - learning which may not be confined to a classroom; or to a day, week or month; or may not happen in a traditional way of 'teacher-expert' and 'student-empty vessel'; or may not be prescribed; or may not have formal assessment. 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' schooling). Learning that is of interest to us is aptly captured in the following words:

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 work out ways of doing something about it (Foley, 1999: 1-2).

Our first 'profile', Is'baya, together with the ARC-Institute for Tropical and Subtropical Crops, has worked in the Port St Johns area of the Eastern Cape for 15 years. They currently work on the Uvuselelo (Integrated Village Renewal Programme) with 55 villages. Uvuselelo is a long-term (5 to 7 years) holistic model that has to do with self-reliance and is being implemented interactively with organised village communities.

Noqhekwana, the first of two villages we visited, is 10km away from town. This is a misleading measure if gauged by the urban experience. The village is roughly 40 minutes from town (on a non-rainy day) owing to

the gravel road, pot holes and the mountainous landscape - the latter being a feature telling of the spatial (and other) divide between the rural and its town counterpart. The guesthouse owner (where we stayed) knew very little about the villages or what is being farmed there. She told us that there is "cattle farming, but the youngsters are not interested and are more interested in having cellphones, etc". We experienced something quite different to her description.

Grappling with the concepts of 'poverty' and 'poor'

We are aware of numerous studies showing that as people's income and consumption rises, their levels of *happiness* don't necessarily rise too (see, among others, Schumacher's Small is beautiful, 1973), and we acknowledge that assets within a livelihoods framework focus on what people have (their strengths) - and build on that *capita*l - rather than seeing people as passive victims - and concerns about the inadequacies of traditional measurements of poverty based on income or consumption (see reference to the work of Chambers, 1989; Carney, 1998; Rakodi, 2002 and others in Staples, 2007). Despite knowing this, we were all still struck by the 'wealth and richness' of the farmers - a pride and dignity within themselves, a collegial and cooperative relationship with their neighbours and, indeed, a stunning richness in the blossoming of their trees and plants. None of us felt that we were in the presence of 'poverty' - except for the fact that the farmers are lacking in certain basic rights and necessities, like not having easy access to water and not having enough farming utensils. Besides these vital missing components (and we do not wish to minimise their importance at all) - there was no sense of starvation or desperation or helplessness or hopelessness - none of the middle class assumptions or labels of what 'poverty' is. The four of us (all middle class) experienced a tremendous sense of peacefulness, serenity and calmness over the two days. Perhaps for the two researchers who grew up in a similar environment, it felt a bit like home, or for the two of us who did not, it felt a bit like we wished it was. How could we feel envy for people who seemingly have so little when we have so much (or perhaps that is the problem - it is how we define 'much')?

There is no alienation of work here as many urbanised workers feel being part of a factory line. Instead there is a deep connection to the land and a sense of harmony and balance within and among it. The children, chickens, chicks and dogs sitting and playing side-by-side are testament to this. We visited the villages at the same time as seasonal farmworkers got retrenched in De Doorns, Western Cape. Lumka Oliphant (Social Development) said:

"There's a problem with seasonal workers, where they only get money for a certain period and where they only get food for a certain period. And then they go back to poverty".

The farmers in Noqhekwana and Qhaka and the other villages grow fruit and vegetables the whole year round and they are working their own land. In this way, they are not part of a capitalist system that can hire and fire at a whim, leaving you 'working and eating seasonally'.

Agency rooted in struggle

We were momentarily carried away to some romantic place for two days, and then rudely re-awakened as we drove away from the villages through towns and cities - re-awakened by the pollution, hooting of cars, people scurrying, and litter lining the streets. This jolt back to reality was a good thing as it reminded us to always be very aware that "airbrushing the countryside serves us badly" (Patel 2007:21).

"To become and remain an idyll, the rural is forgotten, sanitized and shorn of meaning to fit the view from the city" (ibid.).

This 'little piece of heaven' in the rural Eastern Cape is a site of struggle and hardship for those who live in it - carrying water up and down a mountain is no easy task and we witnessed a few people doing this, including a child of about 9 or 10 with her head wrapped to cushion it from the heavy bucket. While the villages, farmers and the work being done there shows us that something else is indeed possible, we should not romanticise

it - a few examples of hope will not change this world but they do show us that another world is possible - it is already emerging. This is an example of agency within struggle.

This example and others like it need to be amplified in order to bring a new world order into being. This requires new thinking, heightened conscientisation, mobilisation, resistance to co-option, and embracing the ethic of social justice. It will be a hard, long struggle against those who care very little (if at all) for real justice, peace and dignity for all.

What is our role in this?

What is our role in this struggle? What can we do, as middle class researchers, who research the so-called 'poor'? Some of the farmers asked us if we can assist with water or with utensils. We said that we cannot, even though we wished we could. We did promise to get 'word out there' - to try to do something with the little power we have - our ability to write - to write on behalf of others. We do this remembering the words of Freire (1998: 73):

"No one can be in the world, with the world, and with others and maintain a posture of neutrality. I cannot be in the world decontextualized, simply observing life".

We can listen and we can learn, we can be angry and we can stand in solidarity.

One of the farmers gently scolded us (the 'University') for forgetting about rural communities like his - as he said to us: "ukuba nithi niyiyunivesithi nyayabuya niza ezilalini, icacile ukuba iyunivesithi isilibele singabantu basezilalini" ("the University is coming back to the rural communities").

We end with a reflection and poem. The reflection is written by Sonya and the poem by Olwam – both pieces looking at 'poverty':

Having Enough
(Sonya Leurquain-Steyn)

A culture of avarice deepens this widening gap between those who have, and those who don't; it desensitises our recognition of gross inequality and is irrevocably destroying our planet - and yet this insatiable appetite for more grows, seemingly apathetic to the destruction it causes. I sit back and wonder what world we could have if everyone was happy with enough - because there most definitely is enough for everyone: enough food for everyone to be fed, enough land for everyone to have homes. I think of this capitalist system which subliminally feeds our wanton desire for more; a system which thrives on this need for excess and can only ever reproduce this growing gap of inequality; a system which is so engrained within the fabric of our society that we barely notice its effects on our everyday choices until we're forced to step back and assess the disastrous state of our world. I imagine a world untainted by the greed of capitalism where people are seen as human beings and not as human capital. A world where enough truly is as good as a feast (Mary Poppins' words oft quoted by Neville Alexander) - a feast that everyone can enjoy.

Five Days of Hunger
(Olwam Mnqwazi)

You know it's bad when there are no hunger-pains anymore.
Your mouth taste like something between metallic and alkali – one is too hungry to tell.
Your face, belly and thighs start to lose fat from the past few days of no food.
Your arms feel sore just where your skin meets the bones.
Your voice grows faint and it becomes harder to shout as energy is depleting.

Today you learn new lessons that help you to last longer in tomorrow's battle:
Lie flat on your bed and move slowly to preserve the little energy left in your blood;
Be careful not to jump too quickly off the bed because dizziness and weakness will send you to the floor;
The stomach growls digesting the saliva that's been collecting in your month;
You drink water to stay alive and it will also make your skin look fresh and hydrated.
The human body can take much more beating than three days of starvation.

With two more days to go before any sign of a good meal,
My hope is stirred up knowing I have endured this long.
I realize it's not hunger but poverty that is my enemy.
Two more days of hunger that I need to withstand.

At this moment I put my pen down to save the little energy left in me.
I lie prostrate, drained on my bed dreaming of a better day.
Thinking of all the good things in my life, I am comforted.
Seeing my future screening on my shut eyes, I am consoled.
Hunger is but for a while then harvest comes.

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Reading Two

Short of skills or of jobs?

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The public discourse on skills and the economy in South Africa and beyond is so eloquent about the crisis in education, the shortage of skills, the problem of unemployment and the high cost of labour (that supposedly prevents business from employing people). This discourse is repeated so much that one could easily be convinced that this is widely agreed upon. My colleagues point out that we are told we need to urgently create jobs but, at the same time, we are told that it would be difficult, if not impossible to do, because of a desperate shortage of skills that supposedly exists among South African workers. I agree with them that this could not be further from the truth.

This notion that South Africans, including graduates, are without skills or the 'right' skills, is simply not true. If we do indeed have a problem with the so-called scarce skills, then how does one understand the many unemployed or "employed-in-another-field" graduates, like friends of mine who hold so-called scarce skills qualifications in areas such as IT, tourism, human resource development, business and engineering? My IT friend is now a receptionist; my friend with a BCom is working as a petrol attendant. Both are honest jobs but how does one understand why they were unable to find employment in IT or business? Graduates and others who are less qualified are victims of circumstance. They are victims of a system that values cheap labour, outsourced labour, machines as labour and a certain amount of unemployment in order to maintain it. Unemployment is a structural feature of capitalism - under capitalism, unemployment is guaranteed. This is especially true under the form of capitalism dominant in the world today - neo-liberalism. The crisis in South Africa and globally is not a skills crisis, but a jobs crisis. Just look at the number of graduates with PhDs in "developed" countries with no jobs. The high unemployment rate among young people is not unique to South Africa - countries throughout the "developed" and "developing" world are confronted with increasing rates of unemployment particularly among the youth. Young people are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults. According to the International Labour Organisation, in a global labour force of 3.3 billion, some 200 million people are unemployed, 75 million of which are between the ages of 15 and 24.

How do we understand the relationship between education and employment? We have been told that education leads to employment, that there is a linear relationship between the two, but we know this to be incorrect, particularly in a context of increasing joblessness. Is it the role of education to simply churn out compliant robotic workers? Surely education's role is so much more than this - we are much more than just workers in an economy.

We often hear that besides for the lack of skills or the "incorrect" skills, young people cannot easily access the job market because they lack experience. Internships, learnerships and work experience placements and programmes attempt to address this by giving students or potential job seekers some experience in a real-life work situation, but there is no guarantee of employment once the internship or learnership has ended. Many trainees are made to make tea, do photocopying or buy lunch for others and do not get a chance to practise what it is they are meant to be learning and experiencing.

The European Alternatives (a civil society organisation) supports the Quality Charter on Internships, which includes the following important points (among others):

- Well-organised internships/apprenticeships help young people acquire practical experience, and add practical skills to the knowledge and qualifications that have been previously acquired through either formal or non-formal education;
- Internships/apprenticeships help to orientate interns/apprentices professionally and also widen their perspectives of different sectors;

- Internships/apprenticeships provide recognised working experience that develops the skills of young people and elevates their professional capacity;
- Internships/apprenticeships should be carried out under the guidance of a competent supervisor and have access to robust evaluative and complaints channels to monitor progress and quality of the internship/ apprenticeship experience.

Some writers have used the term "warehousing" to indicate the keeping of young people in some kind of institution or programme merely as a way of prolonging the person's stay in the system without any guarantee of work. We see this with the increasing push for students to go to FET Colleges - many with little prospect for employment thereafter. Surely we cannot continue to train people for unemployment.

The labour market is shrinking - we have to acknowledge this and stop blaming the unemployed for being unemployed. We have to do something - whether it is to embark on a massive public service employment programme and/or to find, create and value alternative spaces where work happens or could happen, even if that "work" appears in a different form to what we know. For instance, we need to urgently consider such things as student and community-controlled co-operatives, especially given that more young people will be joining the ranks of the unemployed next year. What we cannot do is continue lying to people, particularly to our future, the youth. We have a jobs crisis, not a skills one.

Reading Three

Broaden vocational training

Sonya Leurquain-Steyn & Ivor Baatjes (both Centre for Integrated Post-school Education and Training (CIPSET), Nelson Mandela University and the Education Policy Consortium).

This article was first published in The Herald, 28 April 2017.

The technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sector has seen a rapid expansion since Higher Education and Training Minister Blade Nzimande took office in 2009. Student enrolments in the TVET sector doubled from 310 000 in 2010 to more than 725 000 in 2015. The growth in enrolments follows the minister's commitment to reconfigure the post-school education and training (PSET) system, of which making TVET programmes more attractive to the youth is a key strategy. Parallel to this growth, however, are many systemic issues – some of which have spurred the South African Further Education and Training Student Association (Safetsa) to call for a national shutdown of TVET colleges as a way to draw attention to legitimate problems which the Department of Higher Education and Training should address. These include (but are not limited to) the question of unqualified lecturers, inadequate National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) support and delays in the certification of student results. While it is necessary to engage with the systemic problems of the colleges (including community colleges), we would like to point to the limitations of the functionalist approach to TVET in South Africa.

Internationally, TVET is understood as the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various areas of economic life. In South African policy, TVET colleges are defined as sites for providing youth with the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for employment in the labour market. Vocational education emphasises the occupation or job-specific skills that students acquire to meet the needs of business and industry. Functionalist vocational education is thus oriented to the production and supply of qualified human capital necessary for the economic system – a process which would presumably also begin to address the crisis of growing unemployment, particularly among the youth. The expansion of the TVET sector takes place in the context of chronically high unemployment of 26.6% (official rate), youth unemployment of 54.5%, unemployment among TVET college graduates of 33% and an increase in precarious work. These statistics clearly show that the formal labour market is unable to absorb graduates at the rate at which they exit the education system. The emphasis on expanding access and increasing enrolment in TVET speaks directly to the commonly held misconception that skills development is directly linked to employment in the formal labour market.

The growing unemployment rate, particularly among the youth (and more so for TVET students) lends further credence to arguments which foreground how institutions of learning are "preparing" students for jobs which just do not exist. Research has further highlighted that while some students may find employment (although often not in their fields of study), the vast majority are faced with unemployment despite achieving qualifications in areas of so-called "scarce skills". South Africans therefore need to engage more deeply with the purpose of vocational education beyond it being the alleged panacea for youth unemployment or preparing them narrowly for an unstable and limited formal labour market. The current social efficiency model of vocational education is not only democratically problematic, but it also directs students from poor and working class backgrounds into lower level jobs. An educational programme that encourages uncritical acceptance of prevailing economic and labour market conditions constitutes inadequate preparation for participatory democratic citizenship because it fails to entertain alternative visions of society. It is not our belief that education geared towards formal labour market jobs is inherently wrong. Rather we argue that its limitations be acknowledged and that it is incumbent upon us to consider the broader social purpose that vocational education should serve.

Unemployment is a structural feature of capitalism and as such vocational education (education generally) can never be the solution to the contradictions that capitalism represents. Addressing unemployment, inequality

and poverty will require a fundamental reorganisation of our social and economic systems. We argue that the social efficiency model of vocational education is limiting and needs to be replaced by vocational education that serves a broader social purpose, including the needs of communities, by building on the vast array of capabilities that exist within communities. The argument for social purpose vocational education is informed in part by a two-year research project mandated by Nzimande. The research project examined the experiences of people living in rural and peri-urban parts and in particular their experiences of the PSET sector. This research further shows that, contrary to popular belief, people are not just sitting at home doing nothing or waiting for hand-outs. Many are actively involved in forms of learning and work that are meaningful and valuable to their lives. The research found many examples of people using their "hands, heads and hearts" in their work as opposed to formal labour market jobs which not only encourage the separation of these "parts" but also favour one over the other ("head" being the most important).

While vocational education in the main is interpreted to mean what happens in TVET colleges or the training required for specific trades such as plumbing or bricklaying, revisiting the original meaning of the word "vocation" refers to one's life's work and purpose. It refers to the many meaningful and productive activities that human beings carry out with a great sense of dedication and commitment. During the course of the research, we found many such examples of people who are challenging the commonsensical or naturalised view of vocational education. We met farmers in the Port St Johns area working alongside the Is'baya Development Trust in an integrated village renewal programme. Farmers said their learning happened in the process of doing, "theory and practice", and the "head, hand and heart" were fundamentally bound. In a village along the Xhora River mouth on the Wild Coast, part of the Bulungula Incubator, early childhood development combines with vocational education related to agricultural and hospitality practices that provide children with nutritious meals, using vegetables grown at the school. Furthermore, Bulungula is a site where healthcare, sustainable community-based tourism, pottery, dressmaking, water and honey harvesting, and alternative energy use are combined as part of holistic community development. We are by no means romanticising what it is that people are doing. In fact much of this takes place amid great hardship and struggle, mostly due to a lack of support in terms of basic resources such as water. It is also important to note that these examples are not merely of people building livelihoods. Rather, they are prefigurative of a different kind of society. These case studies show how people are liberating themselves from a monolithic vision of the possible. They are examples of people doing, being and "making a life" - working in, against and beyond.

It is clear that the current role of vocational education is too narrowly understood and is therefore constrained in its applicability to a broader social purpose that vocational education could serve, particularly in relation to community development. We therefore argue for a more expanded role for vocational education in the South African context - a role that includes the significance of vocational education in community development and community work, and one that draws TVET colleges much closer to the role that vocational education should play in communities. It is incumbent upon us to consider the broader social purpose that vocational education should serve.

Reading Four

The language of 'skills shortage' and the insufficiency of 'skills shortage' language: DHET and scarce skills

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In April of 2014 the Department of Higher Education and Training released for public comment a Government Gazette titled the 'National Scarce Skills List: top 100 occupations in demand '. This document emerged out of the call in the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training to have a more centralized system for the identification of skills needs in the economy and society. The document argues, "identifying current and future skills demand as accurately as possible is extremely important if the goals of the National Development Plan, the New Growth Path and the Industrial Policy Action Plan are to be achieved," (DHET, 2014: 4). After identifying this purpose, the document defines some key concepts, outlines its method for determining scarce occupations and then provides a list of the top 100 occupations in demand.

Few would disagree with the statement, "South Africa needs skills." The authors agree that skills can play a vital role in human and community development in South Africa and that DHET can play a vanguard role in supporting skills development. However, after carefully reviewing the National Scarce Skills list we are compelled to offer this critique: The National Scarce Skills list's conceptualisation of 'skills' is too narrow, insufficiently inclusive and based on problematic theoretical assumptions; its methods are biased; and its analysis offers a selective, and in some cases, factually untrue presentation of data. To support this critique we compare the DHET Scarce Skills publication with a recent analysis published by the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services SETA (MERSETA). We chose to review the merSETA report since more than half of the top twenty occupations 'in demand' included in the Scarce Skills publication are also included in the merSETA list.

A misleading and narrow conceptualisation of skills

The Scarce Skills publication begins with a bait and switch: skill, a general concept, is defined in terms of the requirements of formal occupations. A simple definition of 'skill' is 'the ability to do something well; expertise.' A skill can be any ability: fixing a broken leg, thinking conceptually, singing, writing a paragraph, childcare. This broad definition of 'skill' is jettisoned in the Scarce Skills publication. Instead the DHET publication considers 'skill' only in terms of 'skill levels' and 'skill specialisations' required for formal occupations identified in South Africa's Organising Framework of Occupations (OFO). This is our first critique: we argue that 'skill', a broad and important concept in education, should not be constrained to the consideration of formal occupations only. The DHET publication's conceptualisation of skills is further narrowed by paring it with two other terms: 'scarcity' and 'demand'. The publication's title makes clear the understanding of DHET: a skill is scarce when an occupation is in demand. According to the publication, scarce skills "refer to those occupations, in which there is a scarcity of qualified and experienced people," (DHET, 2014: 5). We emphasise these two points because such distinctions are important: the implications of compiling a 'scarce skills' list suggests not only that we can predict occupational demand, but also that higher education 'skills development' should respond to occupational demand and that 'skills' not included in the OFO are unimportant.

If the intention of DHET is to 'project skills demand' in a dynamic labor market, then by equating 'skills' with 'formal occupations,' DHET, in this publication, unfortunately does students and aspirant workers a great disservice. Carnevale et al. (2009: 27) draws on United States labour market data to demonstrate the folly of equating skills with occupations.

1. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has released an updated version of this Gazette titled "List of Occupations in High Demand: 2014" on 4 November 2014, Vol 593, No. 38174 pp1-34. At the time of publication of this article we had not had sufficient time to comment on the updated version. In the next edition the authors will analyse the updated version based on permission from the editors.

The United States creates and destroys jobs faster than any other economy in the world. …every three months, nearly 14 million workers will be hired and 13.6 million will leave their current jobs. More than half of those actions will happen because a new job was created or a job disappeared. …Every year, more than 30 million Americans are working in jobs that did not exist in the previous quarter …Many of the occupations workers have today did not exist five years ago.

In the modern economy, occupations (and skills required for occupational competency) evolve, become extinct and emerge sui generis. Yesterday, South Africa needed textile skills (then China came); today 'soft skills' are in demand (because of a growing service sector); and tomorrow, "if all government's planned Special infrastructure Projects materialise", there may be a 'scarcity' of merSETA-related skills (MERSETA, 2013: 129).

Many institutions of higher education will find DHET's equating of skills with occupations troubling. Several university initiatives (for example the Grounding Programme at the University of Fort Hare and the trans-disciplinarity research led out of the Mapungubwe Institute) offer counter-examples to DHET's discourse. Both of these initiatives privilege the values of humanistic and liberal arts education: broad exposure to varied sources of knowledge across academic and practical fields. The tone of the Scarce Skills rhetoric and other DHET initiatives, such as the "decade of the artisan" indicate that South Africa is in dire need of semi-skilled workers and artisanal labour. Labour market analysis completed through Labour Market Intelligence Partnership points to a different story. Of changes in the labour markets from 2001 - 2012, Bhorat et al. (2013: 30) note,

High- and medium-skilled occupations such as managers, professionals and service and sales workers have seen significant employment gains. In turn, craft and trade workers, and operators and assemblers experienced no significant employment growth, and the economy experienced a declining proportion of medium-skilled workers in the primary and secondary sectors. The analysis from Bhorat et al. (2013), pointing to growth and wage growth in the tertiary sector economic activities, suggests that liberal arts and pre-professional degrees may be valuable after all.

The Scarce Skills list acknowledges that many skills are transferable: The publication notes that Chartered Accountants (see p. 19) may work in other fields or occupy other general jobs. The list considers this phenomenon to be an aberration. We argue differently. Not only do individuals often have skills in many fields, but many skills are transferrable across occupations and fields. In the modern economy, it is possible for an individual to have multiple careers: an engineer may attain a post graduate qualification and then transition to a job in corporate management, academic research or a government regulatory body. Equating 'skills' with 'formal occupations' offers many drawbacks. DHET could conceptualise skills differently: in ways related to knowledge and cognitive processes (e.g. Bloom's Revised taxonomy) rather than markets and occupations, and preferably in smaller quanta. A simple, well-written, job description could offer an example.

In a democratic society, it is also important to ask, "Who is not included when we are defining skill and scarcity?:" The interests of several groups do not appear to be represented in the Scarce Skills publication, including workers in the informal sector, unemployed, underemployed and casually employed workers, households in poor and marginalised communities, volunteers, and, we argue, women and individuals working in religious, spiritual health, cultural, culinary, arts and community development professions. In the dominant discourse, skill shortages (to the extent they actually exist) are defined by the market. A more inclusive approach to determining skills shortages would be to democratically identify social development priorities and educational interests as well as citizens' 'non-marketable' activities and priorities. Such an activity could result in a different list of scarce skills. DHET's narrow and non-inclusive conceptualisation of skills, outlined in this section, is intimately related to the problematic theoretical foundations on which the skills discourse rests.

Problematic theory: Is unemployment the fault of education?

Since the early 1960s the dominance of liberal economic approaches to studying the relationship between education and the economy have coalesced around a philosophy of human capital theory which privileges the productive aspects of education and those aspects which advance 'employability'. The New Growth Path,

the New Development Programme and the DHET White Paper are grounded in the rhetoric of human capital theory. Vally and Motala (2014) contend that human capital theory argues in favour of empirically unsound assumptions about the relationship between education, skills and the economy. Simply put, supply-side skills development has not been shown to create new jobs and grow economies. According to Wedekind, this critique has been ignored by post-apartheid education policymakers.

Vocational education and the lead institution, colleges, are seen as fundamental to solving a problem [unemployment] that is not primarily an educational problem. There is a continual anxious hand wringing at the failures of the colleges and the VET system generally, followed by a new set of reforms that repeatedly aim at the same thing: making the colleges more responsive through curriculum reforms, capital investment and training. The latest proposals are not significantly different to previous reforms and it is likely that they will fail again because they do not and cannot address the underlying problems [of society] (Wedekind, 2014: 76).

Wedekind indicates that the disciples of human capital theory can only understand unemployment as a failure of education: a scarcity of skill, a mismatch, a gap. That the existence of a 'skills gap' is the main cause for unemployment or at least a main contributory factor to joblessness is now accepted by many as the 'gospel' explanation of South Africa's employment challenges. All other factors, particularly exogenous economic factors, have tended to be treated as secondary to this fundamental problem. The Scarce Skills fits neatly into the 'skills gaps' discourse and places the problems of society on the doorstep of education. But does the discourse reflect the reality?

Biased methodology

The methods, consultations and literature review sources used to create the scarce skills publication privilege government articulated priorities, the priorities of industry and capital and the use of data privileging professional occupations. A ranking scorecard is used to determine demand for a particular occupation based on an analysts' review of these particular sources. Some source documents appear to identify 'priority' skills by simple exhortation (i.e. the NDP and the HDRC report). Other reports draw on labour market data or stakeholder consultations. Let us accept, for the moment, the bias and methodological issues used to determine the Scarce Skills list. Let us also ignore, for the time being our analysis which points to the structured nature of high unemployment in South Africa. Accepting these limitations, let us simply consider the DHET publication to be an exercise in identifying 'scarce occupations' using existing education and employment data.

We can start with a broader picture of the labour market. Unemployment data in South Africa are well known: In a labour force of twenty million people, eleven million workers are employed in the formal sector, five million workers are unemployed and over four million individuals are employed in the informal, agricultural or households sector. Unemployment, narrowly-defined stands at around 25%, while the measure of unemployment which includes discouraged job seekers is above 33% (Stats SA QLFS Q1, 2014). One source referred to by the Scarce Skills publication is 'Job opportunities and unemployment in the South African labour market' which was produced by the South Africa Department of Labour. This publication states the number of job vacancies identified by the department (60,433 in the 2011/12 fiscal year) as well as the number of terminations (over 500,000) between Apr.-Dec. 2011. When we compare unemployment data with vacancy data - we see issues of mismatch and scarcity in a different light. Identified job vacancies are equal to about one percent of the number of unemployed workers and number of terminations is an order of magnitude greater than the number of vacancies.

A close review of the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services SETA (merSETA) Sector Skills Plan Update (MERSETA, 2013) identifies similar issues:

In the face of very limited recovery from the economic recession, and the increasing challenges facing companies competing against rising levels of imports, the demand for new skills is dropping. For 2012…slight employment losses were the reality that emerged. (MERSETA, 2013: 127-128)

2. Reports drawn on to create the scarce skills list include the NDP, the NGP, SETA skills reports, Department of Labour data, and a HRDC report on the Production of Professionals.

An earlier report indicates that because of employment losses "people are hanging onto their jobs and labour turnover rates are relatively low" (MERSETA, 2012: 112). In 2012, the merSETA sector employed 653,800 workers. In 2013 a projection model used by merSETA indicates that the sector "will require a total of 4 170 people to fill new positions created in the sector and 14 540 people to meet replacement-demand needs" (2013: 77).

Notably, while mandated to create a 'scarce skills' list, merSETA prefers to use the term 'priority skills', stating,

Since 2012 industry has no longer unanimously supported the concept of 'scarce skills': Because of the very limited recovery from the economic recession, and the increasing challenges facing companies competing against imports, the demand for new skills has dropped to levels only slightly higher than those required to cover replacement demand. (2013: 129-130)

Reflecting on its methodology the merSETA report notes, "the development of [former] 'scarce skills' lists...did not in fact reflect genuinely 'scarce occupations' with any level of accuracy" (2013: 129). It goes on, stating, "the priority skills list presented in the SSP 2012/13 was not scientifically confirmed or quantified." Instead the list was based on industry stakeholders "intimate knowledge of working in the various sectors" and that added to the list were "skills that their companies were struggling to find, which are difficult to train for and which are very important for the growth of the sector" (MERSETA, 2013: 130). Several passages in the merSETA document appear to contradict the Scarce Skills list: 'scarce' is changed to 'priority'; 'priority' is determined using qualitative methods; and merSETA speaks to job loss and slow job creation which appears unrelated to 'skill'. MERSETA does, however, comment on the "perceived poor and variable quality of newly qualified technicians and artisans" (MERSETA, 2014: 85).

What is happening in post-school education? In 2011, public universities enrolled over 250,000 students, and graduated over 46,000 students, in Science, Engineering and Technology courses. In the same year, public FET Colleges enrolled 27,000 students in Report 191 Engineering Studies and nearly 7,000 students in Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology occupational programmes. Not to be left behind, merSETA enrolled over 6,000 individuals, and produced over 4,000 graduates in its Learnership and Skills Programmes. In the same year, over 100,000 NCV learners were enrolled, many of them in engineering studies courses, in public FET Colleges (DHET, 2013).

The dissonance between the DHET Scarce Skills publication, the merSETA analysis and post-school education data is disconcerting. The Scarce Skills publication claims that 'electrical engineer' is the number one scarce skill/occupation, but we don't know if this is because we have a severe shortage in the number of electrical engineers; because merSETA stakeholders identify 'electrical engineer' as a priority skill (i.e. the demand may be for a small number of high-skill workers); or because electrical engineering has been identified as a "high salary and wage growth" profession (DHET, 2014). DHET data show that the education and skills 'pipeline' is producing a lot of engineers. Does this mean that next year our shortage of 'qualified' electrical engineers may turn into a surplus? What is certainly clear is that filling the 60,000 vacancies (determined by DoL) or the 19,000 projected vacancies projected by merSETA, in short responding to market identified vacancies, is a totally inadequate policy response, if in fact government policy seeks to respond to the needs of the over seven million unemployed and discouraged workers in South Africa.

Post-schooling institutions and DHET leadership can and should play a leading role in human development, community development and skills development in South Africa. We hope this critique identifies the severe problems with DHET's current policy trajectory and creates space for a broader and more democratic discussion of skills and skills development.

SIPs stands for Special Infrastructure Projects

3. This dissonance is seen in DHET "year of the artisan" events, which lament the shortage of 40,000 artisans in South Africa.
4. Labour projection models are often poor predictors of future employment. Notably, the 2012 merSETA publication had previously offered a baseline projection of requiring 27,000 new workers – 10,000 higher than the number identified in the "update" publication.

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Reading Five

Adapt and die
Alternative views to skills and employment

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There's a crisis in South Africa and globally. While not everyone may agree on the cause of the crisis or indeed that there is one, this article is about the crisis and its often devastating impact on the youth.

The crisis is one of increasing wealth for a few and poverty for most and is characterised by increasing joblessness in a shrinking formal labour market and its resultant insecurities. These include lack of food, shelter, health care, and increasing destruction of interlocking ecosystems - all because of the structures, systems and frameworks within which the world operates. A handful of people (1%) live in a kind of 'Elysium' (the luxurious space habitat depicted in the 2013 film of the same name, suspended in the air far away from the ravaged Earth on which the majority of people live - poor and desperate). We have these same 'Elysium' dwellers in gated communities living in splendid isolation behind their high walls, with boomed off streets, security guards and cameras where they live, eat, shop and work - they never really have to leave. At the same time, the majority of people live in poverty - workers increasingly have no jobs and ecosystems are being destroyed in the name of 'development' - state-of-the-art office building after office building is erected in Sandton - many of which stand empty, while millions live in shacks or on the streets. This is a stark symbol of the crisis - a colossal gulf dividing the haves from the have-nots.

The youth - born into this crisis - now bear the brunt of it, mostly when it comes to being unable to find employment or to create their own jobs. Globally the formal economy's ability to absorb labour is fast slipping away while students are still being prepared to enter into the labour market. The youth are told they are lazy, uneducated, under-educated, inexperienced, disinterested, and incompetent and so on. They are told that the reason for their unemployment is a result of their own deficiencies and inadequacies. If they can't get a job, they need to acquire more education or ignite their entrepreneurial spirits and start their own businesses. As if it is as easy as that - as easy as the technical steps of putting a business plan together. Alas, this is not a technical exercise and keeping on doing 'business-as-usual' will not get us anywhere, except maybe enrich a few consultants and authors of 'how to' books. There's even an application which was launched on Youth Day "to develop youth entrepreneurship" - yet another so-called 'solution' to yet another so-called 'challenge'! Pointing the finger of blame has become an art form in the last couple of decades. This blame game extends beyond blaming people (particularly poor, working class without jobs) to the educational institutions that prepare them for citizenship. In South Africa, our Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges are targeted and championed as the places where all will be fixed. It's simple - pour money into them and do some 'fit for purpose' training and all will be resolved.

A lot of fiddling and tinkering has already been done and has got us nowhere. Remember outcomes-based education which was meant 'to level the playing fields'? We have more hills and valleys in our schools now than ever before. We hear daily the mantras of 'upskill', 'reskill', 'retrain', 'refocus'. Most of us, like the good compliant robots we have become, get ourselves upskilled, reskilled, retrained and, indeed, refocused - a la get a qualification in one thing and because there are no jobs in that area, do something else (and remember it's your fault for choosing the 'wrong' field of study). Does all this 'up-ing' and 're-ing' really help the people it is meant to? Ask the millions who have been retrenched the world over. Ask the increasing number of unemployed graduates who sit with certificates and not much else. The other mantra - the 'shortage of skills/mismatched skills/scarce and critical skills' mantra is now bankrupt and boring. The people who sit on the sides of the streets with paint brushes and spirit levels in hand have skills, as do millions of others the world over, like the farmers forced off their land in India. These are examples of skilled people with no jobs. So, wherein lies the problem? No, not in the people themselves nor in the choice of study options, and not because the youth are disinterested and 'untrainable'. The problem lies in the crisis of global corporate capitalism and its formal labour markets that cannot absorb the workers.

Surely, a narrow, technicist focus on education and skills for business and industry only is past its sell-by-date. 'Doing work' as useful to oneself, one's community and society in general should be part of one's life - life is about so much more than simply being a cog in business and industry's wheel. We need to revisit the true meaning of the word 'vocation' and this needs to permeate our Vocational Education colleges. 'Vocation' means a calling - one's life's work and purpose. It refers to the many meaningful and productive activities that human beings carry out with a great sense of dedication and commitment. The idea of vocation is also found in religion and is central to the belief that God created each person with gifts and talents oriented toward specific purposes and a way of life.

Even though one could argue that UNESCOs definition of TVET is broad(er) in that it includes "employment, decent work and lifelong learning", the White Paper for Post-school Education and Training defines the main purpose of TVET colleges as sites for providing youth with the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for employment in the labour market. This narrow definition, repeatedly and routinely used in South Africa, is about preparing students to become workers for business and industry (compliant and adaptable) and if that fails then to be 'employable' or get a 'job opportunity' (what is that?) or miraculously become an entrepreneur (never mind the realities of banks not providing finance and all other hardships and barriers that budding entrepreneurs face, including a dwindling customer base as more and more people have less disposable income and simply cease to be customers).

The global economic system continues to exclude and marginalise millions of people. However, the world over, numerous movements, spaces, groupings, organisations, ideas, learnings, activities, and ways of doing things differently are emerging - against the dominant, oppressive system of global corporate capitalism. These examples are meaningful and valuable demonstrations of hope and possibility outside of formal spaces. These spaces or 'cracks', have been created by ordinary people who show resilience and agency and refuse to give up despite hardship and struggle. These examples may be invisible to many but they exist. Abalimi Bezekhaya For instance, amid the shacks of Khayelitsha, Nyanga and the surrounding areas of the Cape Flats one finds the Abalimi Bezekhaya farmers' ('the planters'/Farmers of Home) many gardens filled with a variety of ecologically grown vegetables. Abalimi Bezekhaya was started in 1982 and today the Abalimi movement consists of over 5,500 registered micro-farmers (led by women who hail from the Eastern Cape, many who left their homes in search of work). Abalimi Bezekhaya is a voluntary urban eco-farming association which assists individuals, groups and community-based organisations to initiate and maintain sustainable ecological food growing projects at home and in community gardens, and to thereby help reduce poverty by creating self-employment and to improve the health and nutrition of people. Freshly harvested vegetables are sold on a weekly basis through Harvest of Hope - a provider of "freshly packed, organically grown vegetables ... grown in gardens of Cape Town's townships". As part of a research project, a team and I interviewed farmers who all spoke passionately about what it is they do. This sentiment is captured in these words said by a farmer who started farming with Abalimi in 2000: "I still love the garden, still now, I'm so passionate about it. I love it." Farmers we spoke with mentioned learning about 'new' types of vegetables, like rhubarb, and learning to cook new and different vegetables. They also spoke about the nutritional value of the food they grow and that working in a garden is good exercise.

For them, growing vegetables is so much more than just a technical exercise. These, and others like them, are examples of meaningful and socially useful work involving the value of authentic vocational education. People are participating in a variety of activities meaningful to their families and communities - and they learn (usually non-formally and informally) as they do. These examples are not simply about people 'adapting' and trying to 'fit in'. They are about ordinary people taking control of their own lives and contexts - working, learning and demonstrating that another world (as Arundhati Roy and others have pointed out) is, indeed, possible! Our world today is in crisis because of huge structural inequalities and the systems and ideologies that support these, not because of individuals who are supposedly inadequate and cannot adapt fast enough. So let's stop upskilling, reskilling and adapting to try to 'fit in'. You may just 'die' anyway while you join the millions of job seekers in search of fewer jobs in a dwindling formal labour market the world over. "Enough is Enough! Ya Basta!"

Reading Six

Creating knowledge through community education

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Introduction

This article will explore one of the intricate issues that we consider and deal with in our work: the issue of knowledge. Our work in the Community Education Programme (CEP) is part of a broader research and development programme into post-school education and training at the Centre for Integrated Post School Education and Training. It looks to create the practice and theory necessary within a participatory curriculum for community adult non-formal education. I will begin by laying out some of the ideas I have about "how we know what we know", and how this effects how we teach, learn and create new knowledge. It will also look at how our knowledge is interlaced with our beliefs about the world - for this stems from what we understand about power and agency and its relationship to the ways knowledge is created and can be used to recreate social inequality.

The work of the CEP is based upon a radical critical eco-pedagogy which draws on Freire's praxis of emancipatory adult education, as well as work done by other educationalists, some of whom are also strongly influenced by his theory, like the Adult Learning Project in Scotland. Our approach is radical because we consider the nature of society to be characterized by unequal power relations that create inequality which must be radically changed if we want a just society. We have a critical stance on education because we consider our position as non-neutral and resist the notion that education can be value free. We have an ecological orientation because we recognize the role education and our systems of knowledge have played in separating us from our nature and the natural world we inhabit. We see that this is connected to our role in climate change and habitat destruction that not only disproportionally affects the marginalized in society but is leading us toward a mass extinction which is likely to include our own species.

It should be noted that whilst this work is informed by strong concepts about the nature of human beings as creators of society and knowledge we consider the theory of education and adult learning to be a process rather than a product. As such the philosophical basis and pedagogy that informs our work is continually being made and remade by those participating in it. It, like all of us, is in a state of becoming.

A philosophical basis for the Community Education Programme:

It might seem odd for an education programme to be thinking about its beliefs about the world or about the nature and extent of knowledge rather than educational methods or teaching and learning principles. But all human actions come from an underlying belief system; one which provides a foundation for their other smaller ideas and actions. Sometimes our actions don't match our beliefs and sometimes they can conflict but we all have a layered way of understanding and making sense of the world around us.

The creation of knowledge about the world around us is part of our human capacity and society. However the racialised and gendered division of labour has meant that the creation of knowledge is placed in the hands of certain privileged people and the knowledge created elsewhere is not considered relevant – though it certainly is to those who use it. We are creating knowledge about the things around us and the ways in which the world works on a daily basis. Not all of this knowledge is critical, just as not all knowledge created in the academy recognizes its positionality. As such our work begins but does not end with the knowledge participants bring to a learning circle.

Part of the way we consider knowledge is in a particular context. Knowledge is dependent on where it is because we understand that human beings are subjects in the world (not objects) and as such have the ability to have a subjective relationship to others and objects. In this way knowledge is particular - it is bound by the fact that it is related to that specific person in that specific moment and is subject to change. We seek new knowledge through a process of participatory research - but this too must have as its foundation a radical critical orientation. Research seeks the evidence or knowledge which is most convincing, in order to enable us to act in the world. Often numbers and quantifiable data are seen as more convincing tools and evidence for interrogating the world - however this forgets that both the tools and the knowledge they create do not float above the world. The methodology of research cannot be 'objective' as is often assumed, because it is embedded in a social world.

So our critical understanding of knowledge - and how we know what we know - tries to find a balance between a phenomenological approach which gives importance to direct observations of the world and a critical interpretivist approach which seeks to go beyond both the descriptive and the quantitative (stressed by empiricism). We end up with a way of approaching teaching and learning which recognizes that it is "important to look beyond the commonsense knowledge of people to uncover the structures of oppression which lie behind everyday life." (Haralambos, Holborn & Heald). As such it takes as its basis a qualitative approach which relies on detailed interpretation of the lived and subjective aspects of people's lives. Through the research and education process community education emphasizes that: adults hold key information about their lives and context; that learning is contextual and relational; that if learning is contextual then it is also subjective - the learner as subject rather than object is primary in the creation of agency. If it is relational then it should deal with class issues - knowledge and education cannot be neutral. We can all create knowledge and collective learning in non-hierarchical ways. It is necessary to prevent hegemony of thought and cognitive imperialism (Community Education Programme).

These perspectives are drawn and adapted from previous educational research and our own learning/teaching experiences; where we have confirmed that people are able to, and do, create useful and complex knowledge about phenomena in their lives. As such the research/learning process which we begin through Community Participatory Action Research (CPAR) makes clear that 'in this process, the old, paternalistic teacher-student relationship is overcome. A peasant can facilitate this process for a neighbor more effectively than a 'teacher' brought in from outside. 'People educate each other through the mediation of the world.' As this happens, the word takes on new power. It is no longer an abstraction or magic but a means by which people discover themselves and their potential as they give names to things around them…each individual wins back the right to say his or her own word, to name the world'. (Shaull, foreword in Freire, 2005, p.32-33)

By considering all knowledge creation as a socially embedded practice we can begin with an exploration of the context of our lives and through that identify areas of knowledge which need a critical response, things we might wish to unlearn, and questions we might want answered, whether through investigation or action.

Our beliefs about the nature of reality are also underpinned by the idea that everything is in a constant state of becoming; that no knowledge, person or action is complete, and therefore in our search for understanding or change, there can be no failures - only attempts. This has an effect on the ways in which learning is evaluated, and knowledge is pursued. It also alters the way individuals relate to one another and gives us the Freirian concept that learners can be teachers. If knowledge is embodied and we can all create it then the continuation of a "jug and mug" model of learning becomes nonsensical. Instead we work to create a learning environment in which subjects interact with and examine their own circumstances. From there developing their literacies, becoming able to read the word and the world, the text and the context that shapes the injustices of their lives (Freire, 2005).

Our approach would agree with Gouldner who proposes that since we necessarily must have values/ perspectives we should be open and clear about them. This entails a good degree of introspection and critical self-analysis and to the problem of limited perspective. In trying to overcome this limitation of perspective we

find that collaborative, supportive and critical spaces for a dialogical practice as espoused by Freire (1979) are helpful in shedding light on biases. This gives the group a broader and deeper overall perspective not only on the topics we are studying but on ourselves as a community of learners.

In our work we choose to uphold the idea that "educators" and "learners" as well as "experts" are capable of creating knowledge about a relevant curriculum structure. We believe that the oppressed are not objects within a world that can be understood objectively but are "subjects who can know and act on the world, whose task is to emerge from their conditions of submergence, and intervene in reality" (Kirkwood & Kirkwood, 2011, p.35). We see that a just and humanizing society requires that we are all given access to this opportunity to "name" and change our world.

One way in which we extend Freire's thinking about the subjectivity of people is in the relationship between nature and culture. If we are subjects rather than objects then we are distinct from nature which is "everything that would be there without people: birds, fish, animals, rivers…". Whilst we would partly agree with Kirkwoods' summary of Freire that "Culture (and history) is nature transformed by people, through their work" (Kirkwood & Kirkwood, 2011, p.37), this concept also ignores the ways in which we continue to be shaped by our natural environment (or lack of it) and our evolution by the landscape and other inhabitants of our shared home. The distinction between humans and nature is in conflict with more recent theoretical developments from within a critical eco-pedagogical perspective which "establishes a dialogue between social and eco-justice 'wherein the destruction of the environment is taken up and fought alongside the battle to end the terrorizing of the poor and powerless.' This perspective provides the two main lenses, critical social and ecological justice, through which the data generated during the [CEP] participatory research process is interrogated." (Kahn, 2010 in Community Education Programme). This has become an important part of our research process as findings have emerged from initial investigations which highlighted the central issue of Environmental Injustice which is faced disproportionately by marginalised communities. When we talk about environmental injustice we refer not only to the destruction of 'natural' spaces - like the Chatty River - but also the whole experience of the spaces in which people find themselves living, the quality of their housing, and their access to water, their physical safety in the streets and their relationship to natural spaces.

By working to alter our perspective on the relationship to and the nature of the spaces around us it becomes possible, in the words of David Abram, to "practice a curious kind of thought, a way of careful reflection that no longer tears us out of the world of direct experience in order to represent it, but that binds us ever more deeply into the thick of that world." Abram (2011) In the same way that a humanising pedagogy seeks to reconnect us to our humanity, and Freirian pedagogy seeks to reconnect us with the ways love intersects with knowledge and justice, eco-pedagogy seeks to reintegrate humans and the "nature" which language and modernisation has isolated them from. This is partly due to an epistemology that leans towards an integrated and interpretivist perspective – where we make meaning within a context – but also due to the increasing practical pressures that are being placed on communities to understand and act against climate change and environmental destruction. We agree that "Educators are complicit in the massive ecological crisis which encompasses all forms of life on earth. Kahn (2010) argues that progressive educators and concerned citizens should re-imagine the role of education; actively working to enable a critical eco-pedagogy to emerge." (Community Education Programme)

What is the purpose of an educational philosophy?

If we agree with Carspecken that the purpose of knowledge and education is to change the world and with Freire that the oppressed can create the conditions for their own emancipation, then this puts us in a position where the purpose of emancipatory education is in contradiction to the purpose of conventional education (which is the reproduction of existing forms of labour and living). This requires a new praxis for learning and research and prompted us to use a participatory approach to research (CPAR). Fundamentally it is about access and justice - who gets to participate and create knowledge? By creating a process which share the tools of knowledge creation whilst respecting the embedded knowledge in communities we are challenging who gets to do research - who can be involved and who can use the tools of research to create knowledge that is relevant.

We are putting into practice the idea of Marx and Engels in which they remind us that the possibility for change always exists in every environment and is not only the preserve of those in power.

"The material doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men that change circumstances and that the educator himself needs educating." (Marx and Engels in Freire, 2005, p.53)

This reversal of roles in society about who holds knowledge and drives change has the potential to redefine what socially useful knowledge is and how our educational and developmental organisations are structured. Part of our understanding of knowledge is based around the idea that the active creation of understanding is not only emancipatory for the individuals involved but provides the agency for action. In exploring the underlying philosophy behind the Community Education Programme and the value of such an approach to the ways in which it manifests in praxis we hope that we can continue to develop and apply it in ways that can influence community education policy.

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Notes

Notes

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