



when i grow up

CULTURALLY SENSITIVE GRAPHIC DESIGN EXPLORATIONS

by GRACÈ SCHUTTE

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MA Thesis, 2013, Aalto University School of Art, Design and Architecture, Department of Media, Unit of Graphic design.

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INTRODUCTION

I am the eldest daughter of a middle class Caucasian family. This in itself is by no means significant, the connotation, conversely, comes from being a middle class Caucasian family living in South Africa, irrepressibly part of a highly-strung political milieu with significant historical consequences. I was born in the mid 80s, considered the beginning of the end of the political turmoil that constituted Apartheid, still it has left a much deeper impression than I thought possible. One that I only discovered as I left the African continent.

Walking out of The University of Pretoria's graphic design department I believed the world was my oyster. And rightly so, albeit it turned out quite different from what I had envisioned. The design position I found myself in, my first job as a graphic designer, was driven by market shares, product placements and design choices that were always subjected to time restraints and what I believe to be bad taste. The most irksome, however, was that I was selling things to an audience who did not need them, nor had the means to afford them. This culminated in a feeling of guilt and discontent that set in motion, questions and theories that needed exploring.

Unfulfilled and unhappy as a designer I decided to pack my life in a single suitcase in search for a better use for my passions. Arriving in London, I set about finding a place in the sun, only to realize that it seemed to be more of the same when it came to successful graphic designers. After a number of months searching without luck, I did however find a friend. A graphic designer on exchange studies from TAIK, Helsinki. With no answers to be found in London, I set off for what is now known as Aalto University; here I found a group of like-minded designers. Not only can these designers be considered top of their respective fields, but they also had similar experiences in view of the impact they had on their world – both culturally and environmentally.

This MA thesis work is the culmination of my experiences in Finland, South Africa, the United Kingdom and New York in the past few years. Having had many discussions with fellow designers over the years, I have been sensitized to the large variety of problem

solving paths graphic designers follow to any design solution. Yet these seemed to relate to the culture and context of the locale they were taught graphic design in, not only the educated and informed opinions of the profession. Interested in this phenomenon, I set about exploring the reasoning behind it. Why would one graphic designer have a completely different set of naturally assumed references from another? Thus discussions with colleagues and explorations into the psyche of cultural bias have also found a prominent place in retrospectively analyzing my history, both personally and with regards to the cultural and political locale I am a product of.

The result of my theoretical search is the graphic design project I initiated in Mabopane, South Africa. In order to explore the accuracy and relevance of the theoretical knowledge I had acquired, I set about designing a graphic design solution that can affect social change with regards to the value perception the community has of education. Throughout the process I found some ideas that worked and others that were not relevant at all. This, however, was greatly reassuring as my premise was that all situations are distinctive and should be undertaken with a modular rather than a step-by-step approach.

I want to thank my wonderful husband for his endless patients and unflinching support all throughout. My tutors and guides, Marjatta Itkonen and Heidi Uppa, who listened to all my fears, and helped turn my concepts into tangible, executable outcomes. As well as the numerous voices, Finnish and International alike, who were willing to discuss our profession with reference to the ethical and moral implications of our design work.

On the ground, I want to thank the staff at *SA Cares for life* for their accommodation and excitement every step of the way. They welcomed me with open arms and willingly added my project into their already busy schedules, assisting and arranging meetings and other logistics. And lastly, but certainly not least I want to send a huge thank you to Rosinah, principle, teacher, and never ending motivator to the Grade R class at the Early Learning Centre in Mabopane, Tshwane. Without your enthusiasm, translations and continuous energy this project would never have left the drawing board. I believe you embody everything a teacher should be.

1

GRAPHIC

DESIGNERS

AS

SUCCESSFUL

COMMUNICATORS

Designers can succeed only when their proposals are understandable to those who matter, when the stakeholders in their design are inspired by the futures it promises.

(Krippendorff 2006, p221)

With a global village that is growing and a world that is getting proverbially smaller it becomes evermore important for graphic designers to successfully cross cultural borders, yet this is easier said than done.

This thesis aims at exploring the difficulties that could arise in the course of such a cultural border crossing as well as theories and methodologies that have been developed with these skills in mind.

My theoretical research is based on the following question: How do graphic designers adapt a global visual language to successfully communicate in a cultural context different from their own? From this question three main areas of interest can be distinguished. Firstly there is the assumption that there is indeed one global visual language that all graphic designers are taught. Secondly there is the premise that it is possible for graphic designers to successfully communicate using visuals, or what is considered a visual language. And thirdly within any graphic design work there is a cultural context that needs to be taken into account.

After careful consideration of all these theories I set out to test my premises in the field with a graphic design project that aims at exploring how graphic design and visual communication can change a community's value perception of education. This project is based on unstructured interviews and empirical research, in combination with statistical evidence and literature reviews, which brought the contextual and cultural realities of the community in Mabopane, South Africa within reach of a tangible construct. Using a combination of collaborative- and human-centered design practices a pilot graphic design solution have been created. In future I hope this solution will be implemented and iterated in locations all over the country.

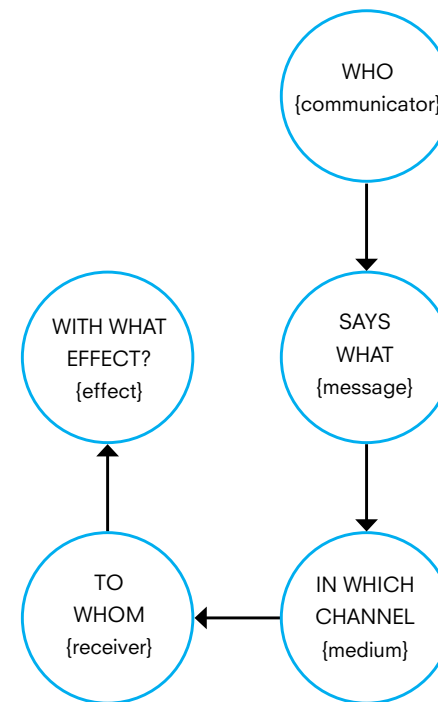
In order for a graphic designer to be a successful communicator it is imperative to understand the basics of communication theory. Add to this an understanding of visual communication and the global visual language that is the backbone of graphic design and graphic designers should be able to successfully communicate the messages they are intending.

LASSWELL'S COMMUNICATION THEORY

Concerning the successfulness of any given communication it is important to consider what the measurable elements are within the given communication that makes it successful or not. The purpose of any language is to be able to communicate effectively. *Even the most robust visual language is useless without the ability to engage it in a living context* (Phillips 2008, p10). It is fundamental that the intended message sent reaches the recipient without alteration.

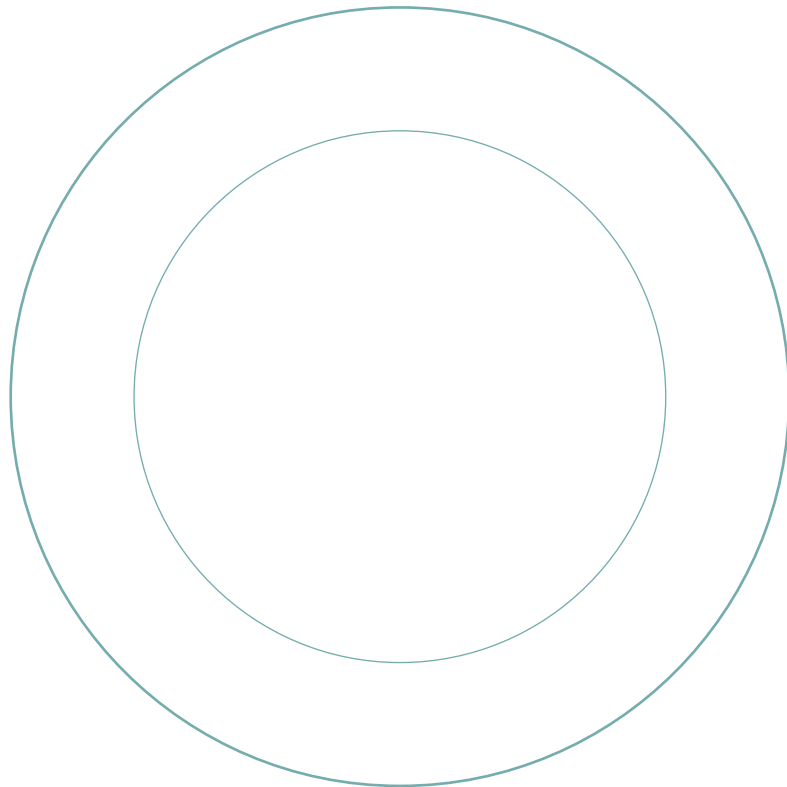
Thus once the theory of visual language was established it is fair to assume that those who can create and read the visual language, they are able to communicate visually. As long as the audience is also well versed in reading and understanding the given visual language. *As the goal of all communication is to induce in the audience some belief about the past...present...or the future audience considerations are integral components of the process of visual communication. During that process, the designer attempts to persuade the audience to adopt a belief demonstrated or suggested through the two-dimensional object. The purpose of this persuasion is to accomplish one of the following goals: to induce the audience to take some action; to educate the audience (persuade them to accept information or data); or to provide the audience with an experience of the display or exhibition of a value for approval or disapproval, with which an audience may wish to identify or reject* (Tyler 2006, p36). Though the visuals we are surrounded with everyday can hardly be classified only two-dimensional, graphic designers still tend to work mainly in a two-dimensional format, with the occasional appearance of a third-dimension.

For visual communication to be successful both the creator and the reader of the message need to have the same meanings connected to the visuals. The model most often used to simulate successful communication is that of communicator > message > receiver as explained in the work of **Harold Dwight Lasswell** (in the figure right). According to Lasswell, mass communication is all about the Who, What, Which, Whom and Why?



Lasswell Model of Communication,
Available at <<http://communicationtheory.org/>>

Thus, communication is successful when the communicator – in this instance the graphic designer – and the receiver, the user, equates the same value and meaning to the visual message between them. *According to the terrorist David Berlo's model of communication, clear transmittance of information occurs when the encoder shares the same culture as the decoder* (Bennett et al 2006, p182), or possibly when the encoder can understand and simulate the culture of the decoder.



Abstract kitchen plate. [Vector image].
Schutte,G. 2012.

Ellen Lupton (1996, p63) elaborates on the general model, creating a specific reference to graphic design. *In the practice of daily life, perception is filtered by culture. A concept of an object is both visual (spatial, sensual, pictorial), and linguistic (conventional, determined by social agreement). The concept of a thing is built up from conventional views and attributes, learned from education, art, and the mass media.* Therefore it is possible that what I perceive to be obvious might not be obvious at all within a culture different from my own. As both visual and linguistic references are learned from our surrounding – which obviously differs from one geographic location to another. Add to this that *language is a cultural artifact that enables humans to coordinate their conceptions, engage in joint action, and construct and reconstruct realities they see* (Krippendorff 2006, p20) it should leave the graphic designer – communicator – with no doubt as to the importance of the understanding the cultural context of the receiver they are trying to reach.

Traditionally graphic designers are taught extensive abstraction skills as part of their basic skills set. Within a society that has been taught how to interpret these abstractions, these skills are useful and effective tools to communicate complicated ideas in a simple and sleek manner. However within a society that is not used to reading abstraction, abstract messages can be confusing and lead to misinterpreted messages. For example, (in the left hand figure) if the graphic designer draws two consecutive rings inside each other, signifying the image of a plate and the reader interprets it as a simplified version of a plate, then the communication is deemed successful.

However if the reader interprets only two circles it is an unsuccessful way to convey the concept of a plate. Studies mention, that in some societies, mainly those not linked to the first world, citizens are not used to interpreting abstract shapes as simplifications for everyday objects. This makes the visual interpretation of complex ideas extremely difficult for graphic designers taught in an institution that references the Bauhaus principles of abstraction, especially when their receivers are part of a society who has not been educated in the reading of such abstractions. As they would need to adjust their own worldview in order to be able to reach the intended receiver.

Without language, one cannot talk to people and understand them; one cannot share their hopes and aspirations... I again realized that we were not different people with separate languages; we were one people, with different tongues.

(Nelson Mandela 2008)

ONE GLOBAL

VISUAL LANGUAGE

After having met graphic designers from all over the world, I firmly believe that we have all experienced similar beginnings in learning the skills required of a graphic designer. We have all walked in dreaming, worked like slaves to stay ahead and come out the other side to be able to tell the tale, but most importantly we have all been taught the same basic skills. These experiences and skills stem from the same father if you will. Hoffmann-Axthelm (2009, p212,219) assents this belief by saying that *in the course of a design curriculum it is impossible not to run across the Bauhaus... the Bauhaus found a home anywhere in the decades following its demise, it was in the basic curriculum for students of architecture, structural engineering, art education, visual art and product and graphic design.*

It was in my first week as a graphic design student that I encountered the **Bauhaus**, our curriculum, similar to that of the Weimar Bauhaus, started with the infamous **Vorkurs**, or at least a version assimilated from it. This was the basic course that every student at the Weimar Bauhaus had to follow in his or her first year. In turn, this basic course has made it's way into countless graphic design educational institutions, where graphic designers are expected to learn the basic building blocks that make up graphic design. In summary the course starts with the drawing and perceiving of dots, which become lines when they are connected. Lines when connected become shapes, shapes added to shapes become objects, objects manifest in a number of 2D, 3D or interactive appearances. In addition to this, graphic designers are also taught about the meaning that different colours signify.

Traditionally these building blocks form what has been theorized as **Visual Language**. *The term visual language is [a] metaphor for a vocabulary of design elements (dots, lines, shapes, textures, colors) organized by a grammar of contrasts (instability/balance, asymmetry/symmetry, soft/hard, heavy/light* (Lupton 1996, p64). In addition to the grammar of contrasts there are also other grammatical laws that govern the *ways we organize geometric and*

typographic elements in relation to such formal oppositions as orthogonal/diagonal, static/dynamic, figure/ground, linear/planar, and regular/irregular. (Lupton 1993, p32). Part of the study is also the denotations of these combinations and how audiences react to them, depending on minor adjustments and variations.

In **Language of Vision** author Gyorgy Kepes writes, *just as the letters of the alphabet can be put together in innumerable ways to form words to convey meanings, so the optical measures and qualities can be brought together...and each particular relationship generates a different sensation of space* (Lupton 1996, p64). Having established the theoretical framework for this Visual language means that surely graphic designers can use it to communicate. Thus it stands to reason that Visual communication is communicating using a visual language.

Kepes (1944, p13) exclaims that *visual communication is universal and international: it knows no limits of tongue, vocabulary, or grammar, and it can be perceived by the illiterate as well as by the literate.* Thereby making it the perfect, universal framework in which to invent and organize visual content. Bringing us to the realization of one global visual language.

Even though there is the established tradition of having one global visual language, the application and combinations of these building blocks are left up to the discretion and interpretation of the graphic designer, who brings with him not only his formal training but also his experiences and world views, creating a kaleidoscope of different solutions and interpretation for any given problem.

**It is when experiencing
that our own
understanding of
something differs
from that of others
and willing to explain
and learn from these
differences while
respecting those
involved, that questions
of interindividual
meanings arise.**

(Krippendorff 2006, p75)

SEMANTIC TURN AND ITS INFLUENCE

In his book, **The Semantic Turn**, Klaus Krippendorff (2006, p322) aims at creating a new foundation for design. He sums up the theory by stating that *the semantic turn acknowledges design as a fundamental human right, the right to construct one's own world, interact with fellow beings in theirs, and make contributions to the ecology of humanly accessible artifacts. It is a matter of ethics to acknowledge multiple stakeholders in design... while the semantic turn creates new options for design, it does not endorse arbitrariness, meaninglessness, or dishonesty either.*

Throughout the semantic turn, Krippendorff endorses a design theory that regards the meaning users attach to design above all else. He states that theories such as Aesthetics and Semiotics are not to the benefit of the design solution, as neither of these theories takes second-order understanding into account. Second-order understanding *recognizes meanings as polyphonous, enabling a range of options for human actions; it is dialogical in nature and it treats humans not as mechanisms but as knowledge agents* (Krippendorff 2006, p78). Thus if we are to attentively listen to our users, in order to understand what their references and worldviews are, we can better situate our final design solutions, and in turn be more successful communicators ensuring that the message we are communicating is equal to the message the user is receiving.

When considering Aesthetic theory in a design solution Krippendorff (2006, p166) argues that *the epistemological mistake of aesthetic theory is to (a) focus on a limited class of attributes, historically decontextualized elite terms, (b) search for universal propositions, ignoring the culture rootedness of aesthetic judgments and shifts in time, and (c) not recognizing that sense cannot be separated from someone capable of sensing and of using a vocabulary to describe that sense of aesthetic.* Krippendorff (2006, p308) also sites the work of philosopher Nikolai Chernyshevsky who *departed radically from the Universalist claims of aesthetics.* Chernyshevsky's thesis was that aesthetics was a *socially constructed phenomenon and hence a politically variable concept.*

Thus Aesthetic theory does not lend itself to multiple interpretations reliant on the context the message is found in, *as aesthetics perception is acquired in language and, hence, is social or political in nature.*

Semiotics, according to Krippendorff (2006, p273) is the *one discipline that is most frequently confused with what the semantic turn seeks to accomplish... when applied to design, semiotic theories divert attention from the meaning of artifacts to the relations between signs and their referents.* He continues to mention a number of points in which semiotics and the semantic turn differ. Firstly, *if designers were to conceptualize the meanings of artifacts in semiotic terms, they would be led to artifacts as representations of something else... by not separating artifacts from what they mean, the semantic turn pursues a nonrepresentational concept of meaning, one that encourages artifacts to be self-evident to their users* (Krippendorff 2006, p274).

Secondly Krippendorff (2006, p277, 278) says that *semioticians take their own accounts of signs as factual and construct explanations for when and why people fail to recognize signs for what they "really" are. Categories of sign result from monologue. This is anathema to the semantic turn, which is concerned with how meanings are created in dialogue (human interactions between two or more people).* Lastly, *semiotic's belief in a consensual use of signs, in sharing the understanding of signs... while the semantic turn cannot possibly deny instrumentality, artifacts may be the constituents of ritual practices, invoke emotions, be intrinsically motivated, and participate in ecologies. If rationality were universal and shared, all humans would be machines that calculate the odds of going to places.*

Though Krippendorff specifically writes about designers who work within the realms of products and technological artifacts, I believe his theories to be equally relevant to the field of graphic design, if not more so. Graphic design is continuously faced with distributing messages and information, and it is imperative for users to understand these communications, otherwise they become obsolete. Therefore, it is this shift, or turn as Krippendorff calls it, from Universalist methodologies to design solutions that are relevant and meaningful to the intended user/reader within which graphic design also needs to situate itself.

2

CULTURAL
COMPETENCE
AND
GRAPHIC
DESIGN

Culture is a system so complete and detailed that it serves as a sustaining medium for our everyday lives just as water does for fish. It is essential, ubiquitous, constant and invisible. Without hesitation we trust our cultures to fully support our gestures and expressions of individual and social identities

(Martin 2006, p259)

EXPLORATION OF CULTURE

The image of a proverbial global village is not one we find strange anymore. Many designers work across different cultures, specifically when those are found in their immediate surroundings. However, on a regular basis designers working – whether in big companies or individually – get confronted with the idea of working in a different country, sometimes with a culture completely foreign from their own. Culture is a *system of shared assumptions, beliefs and values. It is the framework from which we interpret and make sense of life and the world around us* (Van Reken & Bethel 2007, p8).

Sometimes the real differences are much more subtle and hidden. One of my favourite examples of this phenomenon's story goes as follows. Two exchange students move to Finland and become roommates, and consequently friends. The one girl comes from mid-west America the other from mid-west England. Both of them native English speakers, both of them of similar age and apart from the infamous accent and spelling disputes handed down through the ages; they expected to get along famously, especially surrounded by non-native speakers of the language.

Interestingly enough, the American girl confesses almost incredulously one day, *of all the people I have met since I have been here I have probably had the most misunderstandings and miscommunications with my roommate, and considering we are both native English speakers, who would have guessed?! On the other side of the scale we have a girl born and raised in Finland who would love to go work in Africa as a graphic designer, yet her first reaction is I wouldn't know where to start.* Alice Rawsthorn (2011, p1) alludes to this global cultural exchange stating that *design is becoming more eclectic, but surprisingly slowly in some respects.*

This leaves graphic designers with new challenges when facing a design problem dependant on communication through the use of visuals. How do we go about translating our graphic design skills into a language another culture could understand? Where do we start the translation process if we have never even considered or been confronted with the possibility of such stark differences that our intended meaning could be completely overlooked?

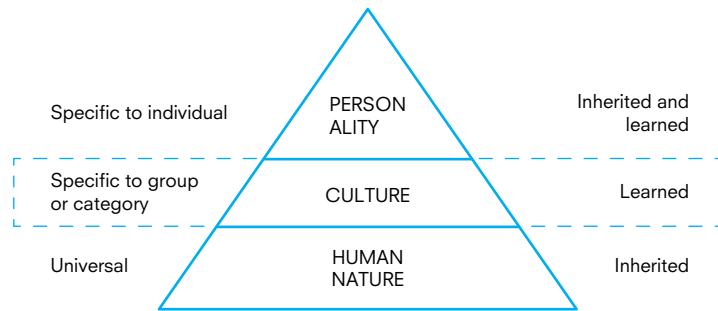
CULTURAL MODELS

According to Hofstede (THC 2013, p1) *culture is the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from others.* In addition to this he distinguishes between culture, individual personality and human nature; dividing them into three levels of uniqueness in human mental programming (see adjacent figure). Furthermore, Hofstede (Morris & Peng 2011, p1) believes that *culture is learned, not inherited. It derives from one's social environment, not from one's genes.* As such it is a *daunting challenge to convey the findings of research and field work and discuss cross-cultural issues in diverse contexts such as corporate culture, workplace culture and inter cultural competency* (Sinha 2007, p3).

There are many valid models of cross-cultural analysis, however the two most widely known are the *Iceberg* and *Onion* models. *The popular 'Iceberg model' of culture developed by Selfridge and Sokolik, 1975 and W.L. French and C.H. Bell in 1979, identifies a visible area consisting of behaviour or clothing or symbols and artifacts of some form and a level of values or an invisible level* (Sinha 2007, p3). Gary Weaver, professor of international relations, developed an expanded version of this model. In Weaver's analogy Edwards and Farghaly (2006, p2) explains that the visible part of the iceberg represents the visible diversity of culture. These are the things we can see, hear, and touch that are different from what we are used to. Visible, observable differences. However as with an iceberg this top part only constitutes 10% of what culture encompasses. The bottom 90% is invisible and need a lot more digging to be unearthed and understood. It is in this bottom 90%, the core part, that our beliefs, values, thought patterns and myths manifest. Notable is the situation of problem solving, an important component for graphic designers, being part of the unseen embodiment.

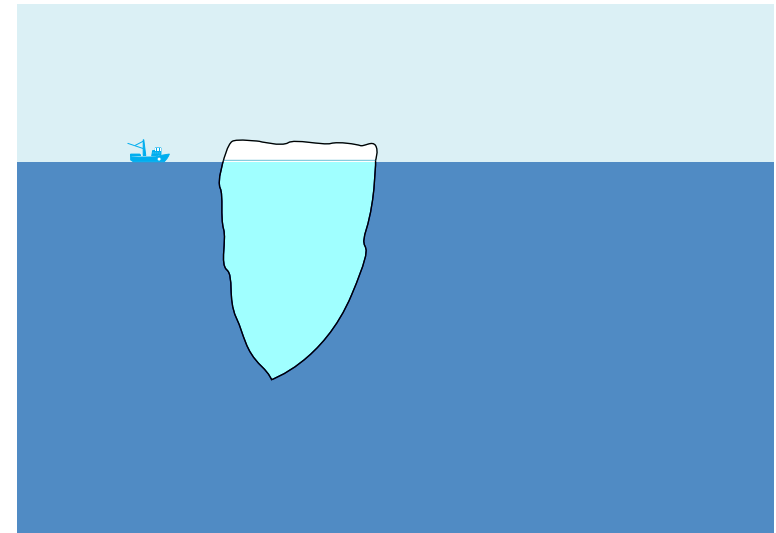
Due to the complexity of culture and the relative simplicity of the two-layer iceberg model, the onion model arose. *Geert Hofstede proposed a set of four layers, each of which includes the lower level or is a result of the lower level. According to this view, 'culture' is like an onion that can be peeled, layer-by layer to reveal the content* (Sinha 2007, p3). In this model there are four layers: Symbols, Heroes, Rituals and Values.

Uniqueness Of Human Mental Programming

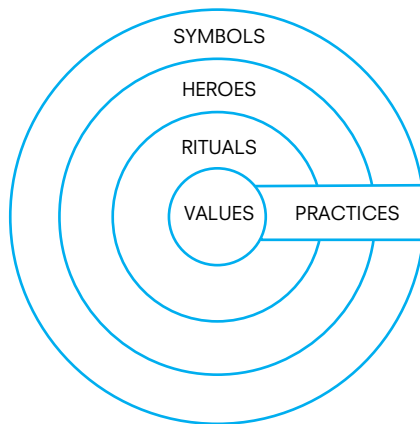


Hofstede's Levels of uniqueness in Human mental programming, Morris & Peng, 2011, p1

Iceberg Theory



Onion Theory



Hofstede's cultural onion, cited in Morris & Peng, 2011, p2

VISIBLE CULTURE

- Food
- Music
- Language
- Visual Arts
- Festivals
- Performing Arts
- Literature
- Holiday Customs
- Flags
- Games
- Dress

INVISIBLE CULTURE

- Assumptions
- Notions on modesty
- Thought processes
- Concept of fairness
- Importance of space
- Notions of cleanliness
- Importance of time
- Views on raising children
- Approaches to problem solving
- Attitudes towards social status
- Nature of friendship
- Values
- Religious beliefs
- Notions of body language
- Norms
- Etiquette
- Rules
- Expectations
- Gender roles
- Leadership styles
- Learning styles
- Notions of "self"
- Perceptions

Cultural iceberg, Schutte, G. 2012. Combination of images available at: < http://static.simpleside.com/desktops/2011/02/16/hidden_iceberg.png > and < <http://evswise.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/cultural-iceberg-opengecko.jpg> > [Accessed 4 November 2012].

Symbols are words, gestures, pictures or objects that carry a particular meaning, which is only recognized by those, who share the culture. New symbols are easily developed and old ones disappear. **Heroes** are persons, alive or dead, real or imaginary, who possess characteristics which are highly prized in a culture, and who thus serve as models for behavior. **Rituals** are collective activities, technically superfluous in reaching desired ends, but which, within a culture, are considered as socially essential: they are therefore carried out for their own sake. Symbols, heroes, rituals can be subsumed under the term practices.

The core of culture is formed by values. **Values** are broad tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over others. Values deal with: evil vs. good; dirty vs. clean; ugly vs. beautiful; unnatural vs. natural; abnormal vs. normal; paradoxical vs. logical; irrational vs. rational. Values are among the first things children learn - not consciously, but implicitly (Morris & Peng 2011, p2).

Because cultures embody such variety in patterns of perception and behaviour, approaches to communication in cross-cultural situations guard against inappropriate assumptions of similarity and encourage the consideration of difference (Bennett 1998, p2) this makes it hard as our initial response to difference is usually to completely avoid it. A stereotype would be a type of inappropriate assumption to be made as a response to such a communication approach. Stereotyping involves a reduction of images and ideas to a simple and manageable form: rather than simple ignorance or lack of "real" knowledge, it is a method of processing information. *Stereotypes arise when we act as if all members of a culture or group share the same characteristics* (Bennett 1998, p4).

In this Krippendorff (2006, p103) promotes using ideal types as identifiers of the users we design for, rather than the traditional stereotypes. Citing the work of psychologist Carl G. Jung, he explains that the term "archetype" corresponds closely to the ideal type. *It describes individuals' guiding concepts, cultural in origin and of deep psychological significance. A "stereotype," by contrast, is an oversimplified characterization of the members of classes, ethnic or religious groups being prominent examples. They are likely sources of misidentifications.* Thus the ideal type embodies the essence of a category or user group, and provides the graphic designer with an accurate simplification that can aid in the siting of the design solution.

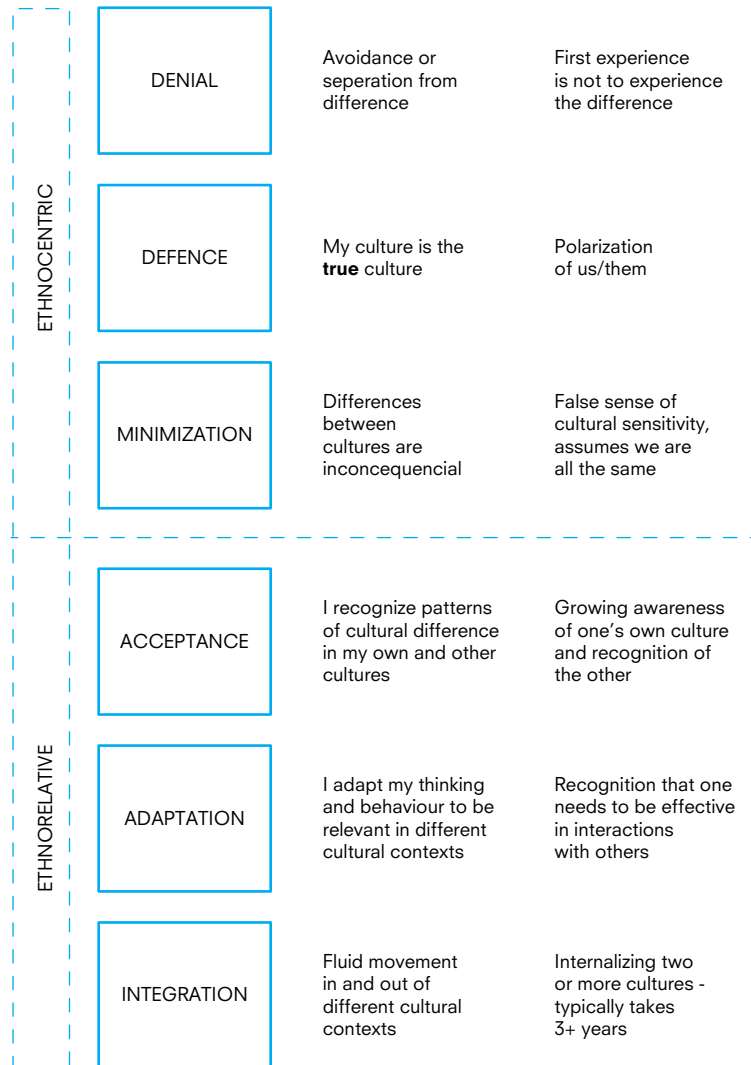
CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Design is one of culture's most powerful (Martin 2006, p262) tools making the graphic designer a perfect candidate for explaining and visualizing communication in a way that can bridge the gap – often referred to as the cultural divide. However in order to communicate across cultures graphic designers need to become adept in intercultural communication and master the art of cultural competence. Intercultural communication has tried to answer the question, "How do people understand one another when they do not share a common cultural experience?"... [interculturalists] study how language is modified or supplanted by culturally defined nonverbal behaviour, how cultural patterns of thinking are expressed in particular communication styles, and how reality is defined and judged through cultural assumptions and values (Bennett 1998, p1,2).

Both professor Darla Deardorff and Milton Bennett agree that cultural knowledge by itself is not sufficient for cultural competency even though knowledge is a very important aspect. Cultural knowledge combined with communication skills and the ability to apply the knowledge is the gist of cultural competence. According to professor Deardorff (2006) we accumulate knowledge by understanding other's worldviews; understanding the role and impact of culture on behaviour and communication; by studying the historical and religious contexts; and by sociolinguistic awareness of the relation between language and meaning in societal contexts. In order to accumulate this knowledge we need to listen, observe and interpret in addition to analyzing, evaluating and relating to the elements we have collected.

Bennett (1998), Hanley (1999) and Deardorff (2006) all conclude that first and foremost we need a positive attitude if we are going to apply ourselves in interculturality. Secondly we need to be open to other worldviews and appreciate them without prejudice. For example *South Africans don't drive on the wrong side of the road, they drive on the left side of the road... [but] because it is not my side I call it wrong* (Weaver 2007, p4). In this way we are able to change our perspectives in order to develop empathy. Furthermore it is important to have a willingness to experience new things, we

Development of Intercultural Sensitivity



need a well-formed self-knowledge and we need to be able to deal with ongoing processes and tolerate ambiguity. Last but not least we need to be able to tell, and experience, the difference between adaptation and assimilation. In an advanced form of intercultural competence we need to be able to adapt, which relies on adding culture and worldviews to our existing framework. We need never assimilate ourselves, giving up our own culture and substituting our own culture for another.

However even if we are not able to adapt to the new cultural worldviews we have experienced, we should at least be able to accept the culture as being different from our own. *People at the acceptance stage enjoy recognizing and exploring cultural differences. They are aware that they themselves are cultural being. They are fairly tolerant of ambiguity and are comfortable knowing there is no right answer (although there are better answers for particular contexts)* (Bennett 1998, p17). Subsequently it is my belief that graphic designers cannot visually communicate effectively from an ethnocentric worldview. *Ethnocentric is defined as using one's own set of standards and customs to judge all people, often unconsciously* (Bennett 1998, p15).

As a professional, you have been trained to know it all, to have the answers. But the journey toward cultural competence begins with the courage to realize that you do not know it all. On this journey, you will learn about yourself in a thoughtful, honest, and intense way. You will also learn about other cultures through books, movies, workshops, and, most important, through firsthand contact (Hanley 1999, p4).

Stages of intercultural sensitivity.

Schutte, G. 2012. Combination of images available at: <<http://sanctuaryseating.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/09-12-11-Blog-Image.jpg>> and <<http://amle.aom.org/content/7/3/356/F2.large.jpg>> [Accessed 3 January 2013].

3

METHODOLOGIES

FOR CONTEXT

SENSITIVE

GRAPHIC

DESIGN

Design searches for present openings to change something so it is better, to find what can be moved and consider moving it...design is a way to understand things, to make them meaningful, to feel at home with them, and to make them part of one's life.

(Krippendorff 2006, p81)

Graphic design has often times been defined as a problem solving activity. According to the website of the Australian Graphic Design Association (AGDA 2012, p1) *graphic design is an interdisciplinary, problem-solving activity, which combines visual sensitivity with skill and knowledge in areas of communication, technology and business.* It continues to explain that the *graphic design process is a problem solving process, one that requires substantial creativity, innovation and technical expertise.* Wired magazine quotes Sir James Dyson as saying that design is just problem-solving (Carter 2012, p1) while Jurgen Wolff (2011, p1) published a blog article and video that is introduced with the following sentiment: *Graphic design star Michael Beirut claims he's not creative, he just likes to solve other people's problems.*

Professor of Art and Design, Jeffrey Morin, from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point explains that in graphic design the pertinent methodology is that of the problem-solving process. This process can be defined with a chain of events as follows: *(1) defining the problem, (2) gathering information or research, (3) developing ideas, (4) finding solutions and (5) implementing one or more solutions* (Morin n.d., p1). Graphic designers in their day-to-day professional dealings talk about design problems, defining those problems and finding appropriate solutions. Professor Ravikumar' (2008) definitions of this terminology hit the nail on the head: *any message that needs to be communicated visually to a specific audience has been defined as a design problem; a problem refers to a task or assigned objective and the design process will refer to all that occurs between the definition of a problem and it's end solution.* Krippendorff (2006, p26) suggests that *the fundamental problem that designers are to solve, is how to change an existing situation into a preferred one?* This is an ideal and typically traditional situation where we, as graphic designers, are designing for a client/company or situation. Our client comes to us with a brief that defines the design problem, we investigate and research this problem *selecting particular things and relations for attention, and impose on the situation a coherence that guides subsequent moves* (Cross 2004, p432).

DESIGNING FOR

This traditional problem-solving theory in graphic design *have [been] tested and retested to the point where it makes sense to refer to these theories as laws or principles* (Bennett 2006, p14). These laws and principles specifically refer to the basic building blocks and their possible arrangements and combinations that we have been exposed to, through graphic design pedagogy. When defining a design problem, graphic designers take into account a number of elements (usually supplied by either the client or the marketing department), which traditionally makes the graphic designer, relate to the consumer of their final product in an observational manner only. In a simplified explanation of this work method the graphic designer is given a report on the attributes of their reader (the person they are designing for), the designer translates these attributes into a visual representation, using their own experiences and training as a frame of reference, then the visuals are delivered to the reader in the format the graphic designer deemed fit, and hopefully the reader can interpret and relate to the culmination of design experience, market research and visual choices in the intended way.

This method delivers varied results, due to assorted contributing factors. Thus graphic designers have been reviewing these data collection methods, especially in recent years, in a bid to become evermore successful in determining what their audiences will respond to. This exploration leads to a more integrative nature for graphic design and at that one that is increasingly difficult to define. *Buchanan has suggested rhetoric as the closest available model for explaining the integrative nature of design. Rhetoric, as a field of study, is both the practice of verbal persuasion and the formal study of persuasive verbal communication. Design may be seen as the visual counterpart to rhetoric* (Swanson 1998, p19).

Within a theory of rhetoric, the audience is not characterized as a reader but as a dynamic participant in argument (Tyler 2006, p38). This change in the status of the reader leads to the aforementioned move away from designing for the users and into the realm of designing with the users.

Krippendorff (2006, p7) explains this move away from the traditional methodology as a possible ambiguity in the idea that *design is making sense of things... It can be read as "design is a sense making creativity", which claims perception, experience, and perhaps appearance as its fundamental concern, and this interpretation is quite intentional. Or it could mean that "the products of design are to be understandable to their users"*.

In a radio broadcast, as explanation of what graphic design is in layman's terms, graphic designer Adrian Shaughnessy (2008, p4) makes mention of two categories of graphic designers: *the structured and the emotional*. He then goes on to define each of these groups. The structured graphic designer, is the designer for whom *problem solving is what they do... This notion of being a problem solver suits the mentality of many designers who are naturally analytical and objective: to be a graphic designer, you have to be able to see things from the viewpoint of the intended user*. On the other hand the emotional graphic designer *while they may function like traditional problem solving graphic designers, they rely far more on intuition and on an inner aesthetic lexicon... What others see as problems crying out for solutions, these designers see as opportunities crying out for graphic expression*.

This implies that not all designers are equal, and neither are the design problems/tasks they address. This is noteworthy as it signifies a multi-faceted graphic design discipline that cannot be embodied by a **one-theory** approach nor can the design problems graphic designers are faced with, be solved with only one methodology. Thus graphic designers should be able as well as comfortable to use a combination of design skills and methodologies that complement each other in the resulting of a solution.

DESIGNING WITH

No matter how you approach your design problem, it is the re-thinking of engaging with the audience and the methods used to collect valuable information and insight into the world and perceived reality of the audience that is the main differentiation between the traditional **designing for** methodology and that of **designing with**. **Designing with** calls for a collaborative approach to the design problem, rather than the traditional top-down approach usually associated with the graphic design process.

Tirza Ben-Porat (2012, p65) writes that *there is a great difference between working for and working with. In the former, someone in charge tightly controls the project, drawing in others as consultants and workers as needed. In the latter, a group of people share knowledge, work together, form a dialogue, and make critical decisions together*. However this does not just include shared choices with our professional partners, design or other, but it also involves new ways of interacting with the audiences that the visual communication is meant for. In the last decade there have been a number of theories and discourses that have tried to establish a practical working method to deal with the inclusion of the end user. These include, but are by no means limited to: Collaborative design, Design thinking, Design participation, Human-centered design and Transformative design.

The common thread that runs through all of these design disciplines is that they try to effectively link the designer and the audience in non-traditional ways. Not only does alternative exposure give the graphic designer a clearer understanding of the design problem and the audience, but it also adds legitimacy to the graphic designer's proposal. It solidifies the claim that the graphic designer's ideas are not simply pulled out of thin air, but have a solid and rational grounding that both the graphic designer and the client can fall back on.

An important factor to consider is that even though the designer is the experienced professional, the audience also might have something to teach you, as designer, and that you are not the only one with knowledge to share. Case in point, *rather than assume that*

we had the knowledge and technology that they [should] adopt, our design process began with the assumption that both sides have valuable knowledge and technology to contribute. For example, indigenous forms of communication such as oral tradition, dance, folk theatre and sculpture can be combined with technology and western communication strategies and techniques in ways that produce hybrids utilizing the best characteristics of both (Bennett et al 2006, p181). This by no means indicates that the designer has to give in to all thoughts and suggestions, but rather that they add to their list of considerations or suggestions of the end solution.

Different levels of participation and control can be given to all involved parties and even changed and reviewed intermittently depending on the nature and scope of the project. *Projects are socially viable organizations, constituted in what people do, and last long enough to leave something behind: a particular design, a new technology, a self-sustaining institution* (Krippendorff 2006, p11). Different projects require different outcomes as well as different skills to resolve the problem effectively. However as participatory projects require a perspective change from the traditional methodologies, it seems that theoretical acceptance of these methodologies far outweighs implementation of them in practical capacities. In this regards Bruce Archer mentions that *significant ideas and interventions have their gestation periods. To take root, paradigm shifts require a new generation of proponents, a fertile cultural climate, but also significant technological advances* (Krippendorff 2006, p5). Krippendorff (2006, p8) explains that the significant shift we have seen in this regard has to do with the fact that *functional, aesthetic, and market considerations that justified the products of design in the past have been replaced or overshadowed by other more social, political, and cultural concerns, such as ecological sustainability and cultural identity*.

Design thinking – first propagated by the book titled **Change by Design**, written and published by Tim Brown in 2009 – have had a significant influence on the graphic design process and the way graphic designers interact with their users. Designers actively subscribing to this theory tend to examine how much they really know about their users and how this knowledge should be applied. Design thinking has a strong link to design research in the way that user research get collected for the purpose of furthering proposed design solutions. IDEO, branded as a design innovation firm, have

been actively involved in developing this and other modern design and business methodologies. *IDEO evaluates potential solutions for innovation through design thinking: observing, experimenting, collaborating, rapid prototyping, and creating connections through storytelling* (Givenchy et al 2006, p306) According to IDEO's CEO, Tim Brown (2012, p1), *design thinking is a human-centered approach to innovation that draws from the designer's toolkit to integrate the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for business success*.

Richard Buchanan (2001, p304) advocates this method of design thinking saying, we believe *that general access to the ways of design thinking can provide people with new tools for engaging their cultural and natural environments*. Design thinking, it seems, developed as both leader and parallel methodology to co-design and human-centered design, where the audience becomes an integral part of the process, specifically regarding information integral to the success of the final outcome. All of these methods advocate that the graphic designer interact with the audience in non-traditional ways.

Thakara (2011, p2) has valuable, cautious words regarding the subscription to any of these methodologies; *the most destructive misperception about design for impact is the notion of "design thinking" as a magic elixir that can be sprinkled on anything. While design tools and methods can be a great way to kick-start new thinking, most of the value is in the follow-through. This work constantly reminds us of the commonalities and differences in human needs and behavior, particularly in how people use technology around the world. It is not an easy process*.

For the purpose of this MA thesis my main focus is on only a couple of the phenomena and trends in graphic design, in an effort to understand what brought us to the shift of designing for to designing with, this includes an exploration of the subsequent capabilities graphic designers need to develop to be effective in their design communication. Firstly there is the move towards sustainability or Sustainism in design and secondly there is the phenomenon of designing for social change.

**Give a man a fish, and
you feed him for a day.
Teach a man to fish,
and you feed him for a
lifetime.**

(African proverb)

SUSTAINABILITY

VS SUSTAINISM

Currently we find ourselves post-postmodernism, lacking a name and possibly a description for the artistic and philosophical era we find ourselves in. *Postmodernism announces what it isn't, but it doesn't tell you what it is, and what the word appears to say isn't the whole story anyway because, elements of Modernism continue within the Postmodern* (Poynor 2011, p5), making it even harder to pin-point exactly what we find ourselves immersed in.

Yet significantly where Modernism denoted generic qualities. Post-modernism *brought about an acknowledgment of individual choice influenced by cultural preference* (Bennett 2006, p16). Poynor (2011, p5) explains the reasons for these significant changes, after industrialization, we *had lost our illusions, our faith in scientific progress and our belief in the shaping power of grand narratives*.

Having *moved past Modernist and Postmodernist ideas of organizing the world* Schwarz and Elffers (2011, p1) attempted to coin a term for the present era, they call it **Sustainism**. Admirable as it is that they have stepped forward with a suggestion, I believe they are partly mistaken in their theoretical premise.

Not because of their premise itself but because they qualify their theory by stating that it is their intention to *replace Modernism*. I believe that while Modernism and Postmodernism has and still carries significant influence on current design pedagogy, what we are looking for in this new decade is a terminology with which we can signal in the newest era, including it's philosophies and work ethics. In this I believe Schwarz and Elffers (2011, p2) hypothesis to be a valid description for the Design community I find myself immersed in. **Sustainism** *is bringing its distinctive style and perspective: diverse rather than uniform; effective instead of efficient; networked instead of hierarchical. It stands for the perspective of long-term investment and appropriate speed, rather than quick return and faster is better. From functionality to meaning; from space to place*. Bennett (2006, p16) adds to this notion by explaining that *in recent years, many graphic designers have begun to evaluate*

more rigorously the issues surrounding what they create and the impact of graphic design artifacts on society at large there is a new wave of introspective examination.

I agree with Schwarz and Elffers (2011) that a new era or movement signifies a need for new design criteria. *We mark the shift from design [for] to design with – Co-Design, design with nature, participatory design thinking, user- and human-centered design and a number of current design methods. [It] involves a shift in how we frame problems and look for solutions. A new wave of innovation... inclusive, socially available, ecologically responsible and locally oriented (but not provincial)*. This deals not only with the outcome of projects but also with the methods of problem solving used to get to these particular solutions. For example: the institution Trade Partners UK (BDI 2003, p7) released a publication in 2003 wherein they stated that *in all instances knowledge of the local market is imperative and a local partnership approach is vital*.

John Thakara (2011) reviewed Schwarz and Elffers' publication sustainism and concluded that *many a familiar word flutter across the folios: connected, local, digital, ecology, community, interface, collaboration, crossover, social and so on*. Thakara renders the audience with no doubt as to his doubtful position regarding the terminology and classification of the philosophical stance of Schwarz and Elffers.

In addition to the very verbal disregard Thakara (2011, p1) have for the word *Sustainism* he also feel that *the word Sustain speaks, to much, of bailing out a leaking boat as it drifts towards a waterfall. It's got to be done, but it is not a joyful prospect*. An elegant and descriptive metaphor that can easily be hooked on to a number of current global issues, most of them considered quite controversial, yet I side on Schwarz and Elffers (2011, p1) side in this matter. *The idea of Sustainism deserves more than a discussion about what we (dis)like about nomenclature*.

When I hear fellow designers, mention the notion of Sustainability, I often find myself frowning and wondering at the description or context they use it in. Understandably not everyone has the same understanding or definition of the term, yet we use it in conversations, without explanation or philosophical description, both private and professionally all the time.

Surely we have to start establishing some kind of definition connected to it at some point. While my intent is in no way to take away from exploring and expanding new theories and terminology, and I appreciate that it doesn't have to start of being intelligible to all, it can be something that we as a design community evaluate and reevaluate constantly until we are satisfied that we are all on the same page.

One definition of Sustainability is linked to *the environmental sciences. The quality of not being harmful to the environment or depleting natural resources, and thereby supporting long-term ecological balance* (dictionary.com). However when we look at the origin of sustainability, the word **Sustain** is defined as *supporting something from below – to keep something in position* (Microsoft word dictionary); grounding something, building a foundation that keeps steady and does not collapse; *to make something continue to exist*. Not only does this relate back to the previously mentioned notion for preserving the environment where our actions can attribute to the earth continuing to exist, I believe it should be extended to include the application of the value of longevity in order to ensure that whomever we come in contact with during our projects – their lifestyles, culture, values and morals – should continue to exist.

I would prefer to see graphic design function within a realm of Sustainability, not simply by bailing out the boat heading towards the waterfall, but by displaying a type of designed and thought through longevity that could outlive the project outcome itself. *Designers create messages and experiences that leave indelible impressions as they flow through people's hearts and hands* (Hamlett et al 2011, p2), and it is designing these impressions that I feel graphic designers can invest more thought as to the sustainability thereof.

There is a deep and meaningful truth regarding sustainability relayed in the African proverb **Give a man a fish, and he eats for a day. Teach a man to fish, and he eats for a lifetime**. Andrew Shea (2012, p125) pulls this concept back to a more practical application for designers who are working in a specific community. *The communities you work with will benefit from being part of the design process, and your engagement with them should include finding ways to give them ownership of tools that can continually empower them*.

This denotes a major psychological shift from bailing out the boat to a place where we can make a significant and proactive difference in the way we design. Whatever we call this new philosophy: Green design, social design or Sustainism, they all come down to the expressed desire to change the way we solve problems within the design briefs we are given.

In this I am not reducing the need for injecting design discourse with ecologically sustainable practices, but rather advocating for a larger, more encompassing definition of Sustainability specifically within the graphic design discourse, as well as an overarching, established terminology designers can align themselves with. It is in this that I find Schwarz and Elffers's submission of the term Sustainism valuable. Within Sustainism there is space for ecological sustainable practices as well as considering the impact of other cultural and local factors on designer, design and the end-user.

Lastly, it is evermore important that graphic designers, who consider designing solutions with Sustainism in mind, should also consider the financial viability of their solutions. If a project is good for the culture as well as the environment and proved unsustainable financially, the solution will not be adopted nor will it have a credible lifetime. This seems to be an obstacle that still needs more thought and planning, *even companies with an enlightened attitude to design and sustainability struggle to convince that their overall business model is one that meets long-term sustainability objectives* (Faud-Luke 2007, p22).

Designing meaningful
and innovative
solutions that serve
your constituents begin
with understanding
their needs, hopes and
aspirations for the
future.

(IDEO 2008, p18)

DESIGN FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Social design is a problematic term that leaves graphic designers with an incoherent uncertainty as to the specific situations and outcome specializations referred to within the field of graphic design. With social media in many a graphic designer's arsenal of tools, to be used in communicating messages to the masses, there have been two distinct types of graphic design that gets named/regarded as social design. The first one regards the use of social media like Facebook and Twitter in visual communication as an expansion of the traditional channels these messages are distributed through. The second, which aligns with my notions and theoretical research, deals with a new found sensitivity to communities as a social entity and the impact graphic designers' work have on them.

Shaughnessy (2008, p2) exclaims that *it's undoubtedly true that most graphic design is about selling things in a consumer society. Yet not all graphic design serves purely commercial purposes. There are clients – and designers – who use graphic design in a constructive and socially useful way.* Sarah Grigsby (2003, p7,5) uses the term socially responsible design and defines it as a term to *identify graphic design not solely concerned with the economy, but rather graphic design that is primarily concerned with the ecology of society,* Sarah also mentions the *interest in the potential of graphic design as a communication tool for social change within society.*

Thus, social design, speaks to the intentions of the graphic designer, as well as the care given to understand a community and it's social or cultural structures. Social design as a discourse reveals a number of design methodologies that deal with the way graphic designers are connecting to their audience and providing guidelines in creating a positive social impact. *The emerging design practices, on the right, centre around people's needs or societal needs, and require a different approach in that they need to take longer views and address larger scopes of inquiry* (Sanders et al 2008, p7). Buchanan (2001, p303) describes this view of design as being grounded in human dignity and human rights. It is also within

the dominant trend of shifting towards human rights that the graphic designer is increasingly aware of the social impact of their work. Social impact considers the aspects of Sustainability, Social responsibility and Ethics. *As designers, we have the power to help those around us find better ways to do things. We are, by nature, creative problem-solvers. We must apply our brainpower to finding ways to change perceptions* (Scott 2009, p1). This attention to pro bono work and environmentally conscious work, *started in the late eighties and early nineties, as a way to balance the dominance and potential damage of commercial work* (Grigsby 2003, p7).

Shaughnessy's (2008, p4) layman explanation suggests that *questions of morality and ethics often manifest themselves in an urge amongst graphic designers to use their skills to do good – raising awareness of charitable, social and green causes, for example. There is a long tradition of graphic design being used to aid protest movements. Think of the role of the Peace symbol in various antiwar and peace movements that have existed since the 1960s.* However in recent years, these methodologies have moved away from the peripheries into mainstream design education as well as professional practice.

IDEO, a US based design agency are one of these agencies known for their propagation regarding the incorporation of sustainability, social responsibility and designer ethics into everyday design practice. They have been expanding their own theory and practices as well as being involved in discussions regarding how we can go about being more responsible designers, thereby strategically situating themselves as a role model for graphic designers aiming for and desiring positive social impact. *Simply put, intuition, coupled with insight, gets designers appropriately further in the design process, and gets them there faster* (2011). According to IDEO this type of insight is acquired by awareness, research or observation, while intuition is a skill graphic designers develop within the realm of experience in graphic design. Additionally in an effort to *transcend the narrow focus on sales, designers have assumed an advocacy role for the culture that their designs affect or for the individual users of their designs* (Krippendorff 2006, p19).

In his book titled, **Designing for social change**, Andrew Shea explores what it is that graphic designers needed to focus on in order to be more socially aware, be better cultural advocates, in their de-

sign work. Robin Mooty and Amanda Buck explains to Shea (2012, p129,131) that for them *it all came down to people: knowing people, investing in relationships, putting people first, not design... we learned to design with, not for, the students, and a lot of the times this meant letting go of our personal aesthetics to make something that served their purpose*". Bernard Canniffe said that *designers are only effective when we listen to the needs of everyone and humble ourselves to realize we are a small and important cog in a large matrix that is full of many important and vital constituents* (Shea 2012, p145).

With the realization that graphic designer's are evermore concerned about the impact and outcomes of their work, methodologies on how to add these elements to the current discourse abound. As do numerous iterations on the same basic theories in order to establish an effective, and stable methodology to be used across a large and diverse spectrum. Melissa Tioleco-Cheng, a graphic designer in San Francisco, specifies one of these tools, *today, we consider design to heavily include the art of listening* (Shea 2012, p149). There seem to be consensus that the art of listening should be one of the top principles in socially responsible graphic design, specifically when gathering information and research about the users. Other, often overlapping, principles are explained further in the methodologies of human-centered design and collaborative design.

It's human-centeredness is assured by consulting stakeholders; potential users, including linguists, experts, critics; and other interested parties, finally assuring that the designer's character is identifiable.

(Krippendorff 2006, p234)

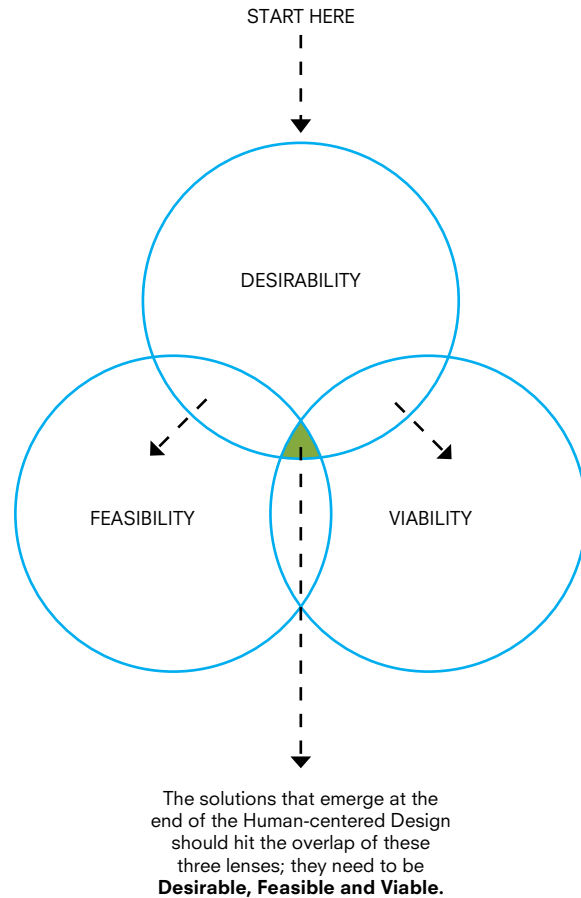
HUMAN- CENTERED DESIGN

Richard Buchanan says that human-centered design is a *reminder of the central place of human beings in our work. Human-centered design is fundamentally an affirmation of human dignity. It is an ongoing search for what can be done to support and strengthen the dignity of human beings as they act out their lives in varied social, economic, political and cultural circumstances* (Buchanan 2001, p303). IDEO (2011, p5) says that *the reason this process is called "human centered" is because it starts with the people we are designing for. The HCD process begins by examining the needs, dreams, and behaviours of the people we want to affect with our solutions. We seek to listen and understand what they want.*

IDEO has developed an open source toolkit that explains the thinking behind HCD and ways for NGOs and other interested parties to explore the methodology in a series of practical tips and hints in the form of concise examples. According to Andy Chen (2009) the difference is also very simple. *Most design caters to the "average Joe", he who is averagely tall, with average tastes, and no real handicaps. The truth, however, is that none of us are really average. People-centered design methodology focuses, instead, on socially-excluded populations. By creating ethnographically-informed design solutions that include those on the margins of society, the needs of the general population are also better met.*

In addition to the broader population and the more specifically defined users, *the human-centered graphic designer can envision the entire context around a given project, linking together all areas that become expressions of a brand* (Givenchy et al 2006, p309). IDEO has defined three main questions that can guide the designer, toward finding the best human-centered solution. Desirability: what do people desire? Feasibility: what is technically and organizationally feasible? and Viability: what can be financially viable? The area where these three overlap are considered a successful and HCD solution.

The three lenses of Human Centered Design



The three lenses of Human Centered Design, IDEO 2011, p6

Givenchy et al (2006, p306) further explains how this human dignity can be translated into the practical business elements expected of graphic designers. *Human-centered research methods, aimed at deriving insight for design from people and their needs, mindsets, and experiences, are useful to graphic designers, enabling them to gain understanding from end users and stakeholders firsthand and to build on a client's perspective.* In this IDEO (2011, p7) explains that HCD starts with a specific Design Challenge and goes through three main phases: **Hear, Create and Deliver.** Each of these phases has a number of steps that can be chosen from by the graphic designer, as the situation demands. Metaphorically the methodology is that of a buffet where the responsible party can choose the items needed in order to complete the specific task, without having to follow an exact routine, or including unnecessary or irrelevant items.

In this way the design solution caters for the users and their specific needs without excluding the expertise and relevant experience that the graphic designer brings to the table. Additionally it gives the graphic designer a ballpark within which the graphic designer can use his personal creativity and produce a solution that is aesthetically pleasing, without compromising the intended communication. After studying the HCD Toolkit, I found that the structural outline enforced advice given by my tutors and interviewees regarding the balance between functional communication and good graphic design, without compromising on either.

COLLABORATIVE

DESIGN

Collaborative Design, co-design for short, *argues that the best and most sustainable design solution will come from a participatory model that includes and values the people affected by the outcome of the project* (Benson 2011, p1). Faud-Luke (2007, p19) describes designers that adhere to these philosophies as the design-enablers, *catalysts in designing the future with, for and by society. Co-design creates new outcomes...encourages behavioral change and generates new societal values and enterprise.*

Co-design, as methodology, aims at including the audience in every step of the design process. Making design decisions collectively. The most voiced opposition for co-design is that designers are professionally trained for years to make the best design choices, specifically aesthetically, on any given project, and in the co-design process designers tend to feel undermined in these decisions and often feel the visual outcome are not on par with competing designs or other similar projects where the executive decision had been left to the designer, arguably a professional with experience in the matter at hand. This can lead to disillusionment and despondency both for the graphic designer and the client/user. However this need not be the situation. Every project requires different input and different outcomes, depending on the users involved. Thus it stands to reason that graphic designers should be able to use co-design as a pendulum or slide scale tool. On one end of the pendulum is the graphic designer having the final say and making all design choices independently; on the opposite end the graphic designer is in a supervisory or facilitation position where the end result is left up to the choices of the users. Depending on the amount of input needed the graphic designer should be able to employ the methodology co-design to a lesser or more extent in order to arrive at the best solution.

Monica Pericleous, a fellow design student as well as experienced design strategist and project manager, brought the four methods of decision making to my attention: command, consult, vote and consensus. While command serves as a top-down indication and

therefore would not be effective in a co-design process; consulting, voting and consensus leaves the graphic designer with usable terminology where the swinging pendulum of co-design decision making is concerned.

Halloran et al (2009, p27) believes that *effective co-design results in a re-aligning of values... This suggests that co-design around values is not simply a question of identifying values and then designing for them, but a process that reformulates values.* Value is the importance or preciousness of something, to a person/community/culture or company. This signifies that graphic designers who are told, what users believe, their values, explores the situation further and tries to understand whether there are underlying discrepancies or additional hidden values that need to be considered as well. Though this process have been proven to give the user enhanced decision making capabilities and a shared experience they can be proud off, graphic designers can continually evaluate and re-evaluate the solution and the extent to which users decisions are to be incorporated.

It is important to note that *participation [from users] is not important for its own sake. Rather, it is important because it has the potential of adding value to a design project and its outcome through empowerment* (Hussain 2010, p8). An empowerment that is not limited to the user, client or reader, but includes empowering the graphic designer to be better equipped to create a design solution that considers all interpretation possibilities. *It is useful to distinguish between empowering processes and empowered outcomes. The first refers to how people, organizations or communities get empowered, whereas the second refers to the consequences of those processes* (Hussain 2010, p8,9). Both of these forms of empowerment are important and should be incorporated in the final design solution.

4

DESIGN
PROJECTS
THAT
ADVOCATE
SOCIAL
CHANGE



Currently examples of design projects that aim at social change can be found around every corner, however they are not all equal. These three examples have been chosen as representations of very diverse design examples that span a range of media – dependant on the users they are aimed at. In addition to the diversity of media, I also chose to highlight these three projects due to the possible similarity in context and situations that I would be exploring in my own project.

The Dutore posters, designed for the Rwandan elections, expresses the difficulties of working within an unknown context, as well as the risks of not having adequate information to ground design decisions. It utilizes a low-cost traditional medium for conveying its message and has a simplicity that is admirable. Additionally the author's retrospective analysis contains valuable insight and lessons to be taken to heart by any designer attempting this kind of design solution.

The Hiding Hyena, deals with real life taboo issues that needed extreme sensitivity from the design team. The media used creates a mix of traditional and modern options and complements one another effectively. Here the design team has also included a much more comprehensive dialogical aspect in addition to the drawing and characterization created by the stakeholders, in order to understand and communicate the intangibility of the situation in a physical way.

Project M, is by far the biggest and most modern adaptation of the three examples. For reasons of anonymity and larger community infiltration cell phones provide an inexpensive and accessible tool for message distribution. Coupled with the more traditional route of packaging, the project might prove to have an extensive response, and subsequent social change.

RWANDA – DUTORE

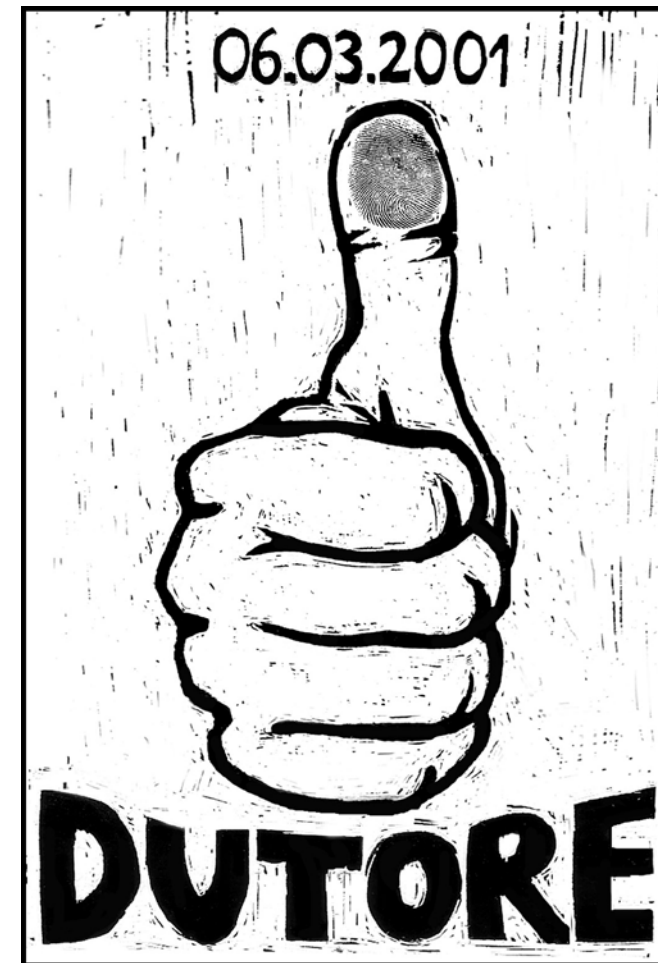
In 2000 Wendy MacNaughton was commissioned by US-AID to design the national civic sensitization campaign for the first democratic local elections to be held in Rwanda in the beginning of 2001.

The purpose of the campaign was to educate citizens (est. 8 million) about the purpose and importance of voting, teach people to use a secret ballot, and motivate everyone to participate. The campaign had to communicate equally to literate and non-literate voters, and be extremely sensitive to ethnicity and ethnic, political and economic division (MacNaughton 2006).

Rwanda is infamous for the atrocities that occurred in the one hundred days, between April and July 1994. During this time an estimated million people were killed by their fellow countrymen, eradicating approximately one eighth of the entire population. Most of the killers were members of the majority Hutu community; their victims were principally, though not exclusively, members of the minority Tutsi community (AI 2002). In the aftermath of the genocide a multitude of the remaining population fled to neighboring countries as well as seeking asylum abroad, leaving the country devastated and trembling in fear.

Still under dictatorship rule, six years after this terrible tragedy Rwanda stood at the eve of their first Democratic elections, and people needed to be informed regarding the process and the need for all citizens to vote in order to have a unbiased outcome.

MacNaughton set about the enormous task by aligning herself with a number of local cultural consultants and businesses as well as the National Electoral Commission of Rwanda and United States Agency for International Development in an attempt to create a campaign that was *culturally relevant, ethnically sensitive and easily understood, regardless of the viewer's level of literacy* (MacNaughton 2006). The campaign were to consist of three different mediums: posters, flyers and spray painted street graphics, aptly chosen for their relevance in relaying information practically and cost effectively.



Dutore poster,
MacNaughton, W. 2006.

Moreover, the unintended relevance of these formats cannot be better described than by the words of Bishop Desmond Tutu. He proclaims that [graffiti, posters and other visuals proclaiming positive slogans] *all say there is something in human beings which refuses to be manipulated, which proclaims... [Human beings] are made for something better than that which they are experiencing. They can dream dreams, they can work like anything to realize the apparently unrealizable - to try to bring utopia to earth* (Williamson 2004, p7).

Donnelly (2005) adds to this by mentioning that since independence, elections have become integral to the functioning of African democracies and the qualities of the poster make it ideal for election campaigns: it should have a strong visual presence, the message must be brief, and *it should be mass produced and distributed to reach the greatest number of people.*

This been said, MacNaughton describes the concept of the campaign as being simple. In Rwanda, most people sign official documents by stamping their thumbprint. With the introduction of the secret ballot, people would be using their thumbprints to cast their votes. So with this knowledge she combined the image of an inked thumb with a thumbs up sign (which means the same thing in Rwanda as it does in the U.S.) and *produced a graphic that read: voting is good. The NEC and MacNaughton selected the word Dutore to complement the image. Translated to English, Dutore means We Vote.* (MacNaughton 2006).

The comic book illustrations used reminds of a familiar African illustration style, and in this instance added to the ethnic neutrality of people depicted, adhering to MacNaughton's goal with regards to being ethnically sensitive in the context she found herself in. The mass production was locally done with techniques known to the Rwandans, again informing the familiar and specific cultural traditions of the voters. The graffiti stenciling was done by MacNaughton, who then sent out a group of local orphans with the stencils and spray paint to literally spread the word. Again this added to the local ownership of the project, and in turn the promise of a democratic government where ordinary citizens could participate to the process to a certain extent.



Vote poster, MacNaughton, W. 2006.

With careful planning and a collaborative effort, specifically sensitive to her lack of local knowledge as well as the volatile political situation within the country, I believe she circumvented all manner of offensive meanings but for one. In one of the instructional posters there was an image of a person displaying their voter registration card next to the inked thumb, illustrating a positively finished voting process. However, unfortunately, this image of a person holding up their voter card recalled memories of the ethnic identity cards used to divide Hutus and Tutsis, the same identity cards that were used to target people during the genocide. Voters feared that the military police stationed at the voting booths might check their voter card for a stamp and look for ink on their thumb and if they were found to be without either, there could be grave consequences.

Unintentionally the reported ninety percent voter turn out was possibly due to the politics of fear rather than the community coming together in order to dream about a better future as the Bishop described. I am quite certain that this was not the reaction she was looking to create, especially after having gone through so much effort in order to circumvent such a situation.

One comment on the posted article's web page hinted that another possible unintended meaning could be spreading US ideals such as neo-liberalism and friendliness with the US government. Though I am sure if this was a result the US government would not mind being treated as a friendly.

I doubt, though, whether a majority of the voters who saw the campaign, would ever have realized that a US citizen designed the electoral campaign, or that it was done in conjunction with US-AID, and therefore these unintended messages in all probability never reached the voters the campaign was aimed at.

Ultimately though, I share in MacNaughton's apparent distress and disappointment at the unintended meaning connected to the perfectly positive intentions that this project was created with. Moreover when looking at the political circumstances almost a decade later, I am astounded that there are still reports of continuing violations against the human rights of Rwandan citizens. This leads me to believe that one graphic campaign cannot be blamed for these prolonged circumstances.



Top: **Guys with poster**, MacNaughton, W. 2006.

Bottom: **Boys**, MacNaughton, W. 2006.

As the author of a recent book about the resistance art in South Africa, *Red on Black*, continuously reiterates, though art has become a tool for liberation and indeed played a part in the political change that occurred within South Africa, it can not be substituted for actively partaking in politics (Seidman 2007).

Therefore, though the end result of this project is highly upsetting, it cannot be blamed for the continuing lack of politics practiced within Rwanda, neither can it of itself be attacked for not being sensitive to the political and ethnical climate within the country at the time. As MacNaughton went to the utmost care in order to circumvent her own unfamiliarity. Having worked with a number of local insights, sure the blame should be laid at all the doors collectively.

Though I believe that there are lessons to be learnt in order to ensure that tragic meanings are not connected to visual works because of our ignorance with regards to cultural contexts and historic prejudices. I also trust that once you have realized your own shortcomings, collective decision-making is probably your best option. One suggestion is to be better versed in the history of the culture within which you are designing, and try collect as many images, stories and situations as possible in order to not be caught with the proverbial pants down.

Another suggestion, most definitely, should include personal experiences, even the unfortunate ones. I believe if MacNaughton tried to bury her project because of the unintended mistake there are a number of designer's who would have to make the same mistake. Hopefully now, however, with her having shared her misfortune there would be new lessons to be learnt rather than rehashing the old ones.

Once upon a time there
was a lonely Hyena
who hid deep in the
heart of the forest.
Unfortunately, he was
unaware of being
infected by the deadly
HI-Virus... But one
evening, he heard music
and decided to follow
the sounds...

(The Hiding Hyena, 2006)

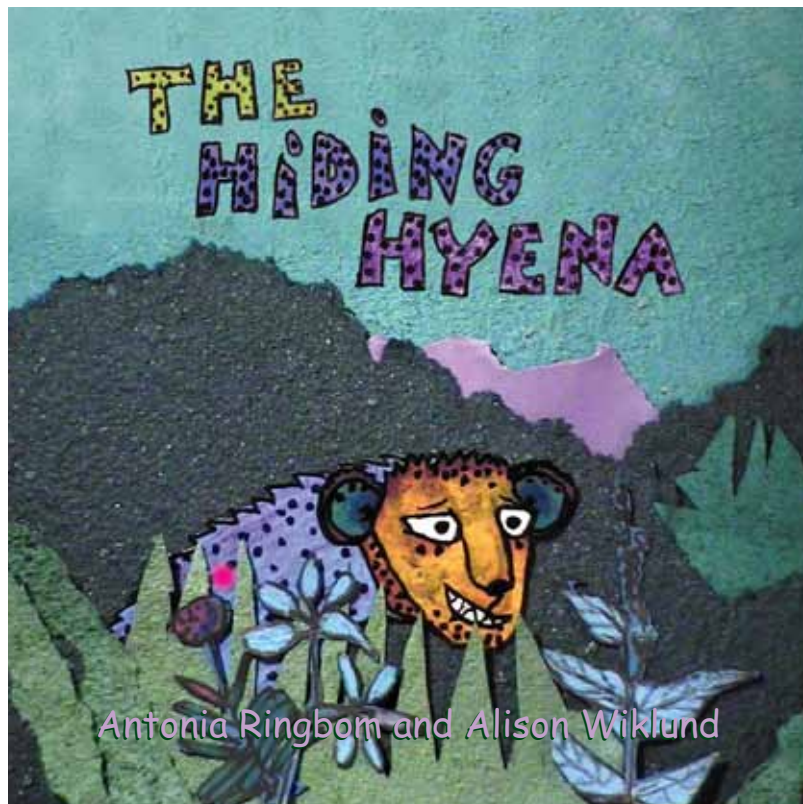
MALAWI – THE HIDING HYENA

It was on a crisp, winter afternoon that I was running across the tram tracks on my way to meet Alison Wiklund in a coffee shop in Helsinki's esplanade. As she was sipping her green tea we started our conversation on why exactly it was that I wanted to speak to her.

Alison Wiklund is a Finnish artist who has been working in Malawi for the last decade, and it was in her experiences of working in a cross cultural context that I was most interested. Although Alison is very accomplished, she very modestly insisted that she could try and help me with the research I was conducting. As an answer to my question, regarding the project she was conducting in Malawi, Alison started walking me through the process as well as the outcome and difficulties they have experienced.

The Hiding Hyena is the brainchild of Alison Wiklund and Antonia Ringbom, partnered by the Office of the President and Cabinet, Malawi. In searching for an method to help educate the children in the Malawian primary schools on the realities of the HIV/Aids virus, as well as dispelling a number of very troubling myths and superstitions, the team set up a workshop within the Namazizi primary school, in Malawi. In Malawi the community lives in close proximity to the bush and therefore has firsthand experience of wild animals and their temperaments, thus animals became the perfect vehicle for explaining the hypothetical social realities of the HIV/Aids virus and it's consequences.

Using the workshops at school as their entry point, Alison and Antonia facilitated an association process where the children connected certain human characteristics to specific and familiar animals. The elephant became a dirty old uncle, slippery and always busy with underhanded dealings. The antelope and zebra became young, innocently naïve girls, in their prime, ready for experimentation yet unable to fathom the potential consequences of their choices and actions. The hyena, the shyest and most shameful of them all, becomes a creature with tendencies towards hiding, spying, fantasizing of beautiful young women and completely isolating himself from the daily existence in his community.



Front cover, Wiklund, A & Ringbom, A. 2006.

So these characters needed illustrated embodiments, which the children happily supplied through numerous drawings and crayon characterizations. Ultimately these drawings were edited and combined in a storybook format, which illustrated the contraction of HIV/Aids, addressing the common misconceptions and superstitions of the community in an understandable and culturally relevant manner. The story explains how HIV/Aids is a disease that is treatable when diagnosed early and does not have to result in the carrier being exiled, but rather that the support network of family and friends are one of the key elements to keeping the infected person healthier for longer.

Once the booklets were printed they were handed out in the school and Alison reminisces that the most astounding reaction to the new property was that the children said they had never owned a book before. *When you give a child a book you bring the influence back home, creating a much more dynamic school environment.* This was an unexpected, yet very welcome, realization. With one book you have not only influenced the life and future of the child you gave it too, but you have also influenced and bettered the life of the rest of that child's family. In due course it is quite possible to reach an entire community through one primary school class. *The challenge lies in changing peoples' behaviour and such initiatives are necessarily slow in taking root. This requires a long-term vision if we are to truly affect the lives of children – the future stewards of their environment* (Appendix B). Moreover, there is also an animated version of the story that was distributed by Alison, Antonia and their partners in the schools.

On lessons to be remembered and advise to anyone who might be considering working in a different cultural context, Alison made the following points. *Everyone wants attention. Therefore it is extremely important that you as a designer is able to listen, and let them express themselves.* Thus it is imperative for a graphic designer to learn the art of listening, asking questions about what do they want? Besides it should always be about them, and what you can do for them, rather than about yourself and your partners/backers. Secondly Alison recommends *showing them that they have*



Once upon a time there was a lonely Hyena who hid deep in the heart of the forest. Unfortunately, he was unaware of being infected by the deadly HI-Virus...But one evening, he heard music and decided to follow the sounds...



Nobody noticed when Hyena joined in the dancing. During that long night of celebration, the animals drank too much and behaved foolishly...



Irritated, he demanded a bath! The girls did their best to please Uncle Elephant but Zebra was suspicious.



Zebra was VERY upset by Uncle Elephant's behaviour. How could he do such a thing to her friend?!



Nurse Goat spoke kindly to them and all the animals listened to her. They now understood that they *could* all live and work together...



With a long face, Hyena gave his paw to Nurse Goat and had his HIV test. It was positive (+), which meant he was infected...

Top left to Bottom right:
Pages 5, 6, 29, 31, 41, 43,
 Wiklund, A & Ringbom, A. 2006.

a worth and a skill. She explains that she likes doing viewfinder exercises where the participants can experience new perceptions of themselves and their self-worth. *Increase the self esteem of the participants and give them ownership, and then they will buy into the idea and concept really quickly.* Getting them excited about the basic ideas or the basic outcome, rather than focusing on the details too early.

Another good incentive is making them realize how they can make money out of this? Because everyone needs to make a living. Tongue in cheek she also suggests that *food is always a good motivator*, as it always attracts people. For that matter, so is anything you give away for free. Lastly she suggests that you have to build on the existing foundations. Teaching the participants that if they are good, if they get it right, then they can teach others and the message spreads much quicker.

Alison's advice and methods rings parallel with the suggestions found in theories of collaborative and human-centered design practices as well as cultural competence methodology. She continually spoke of the realities and the way the situations can often feel very stretching and outside the comfort zone of the designer. However it is always worth it in the end. Preliminary reports suggest that the booklet they created is also applicable to other countries in Africa, and at the time of the interview Alison was discussing the expansion of the project to South Africa and other African primary schools. In this way they might have to consider cultural tailoring, which entails taking created designs or art material and changing or adapting them slightly in order to ensure the material also aligns very specifically with the new user.

Though Alison and her colleagues do not classify this project as a graphic design project, I believe the lines to be slightly blurred as what started off as a primary school art project, in the classroom where children drew pictures; with the subsequent publication of the book it also resides very much in the realm of the graphic designer. Cultural visual choices resounded with the local population due to the reports of excitement and appreciation that Alison and Antonia experienced from the locals. However it remains to be seen whether there is a lasting impact with regards to behavioural changes.

South Africa has more HIV positive citizens than any country in the world. In some provinces, more than 40% of the population is infected. Yet only 2% of South Africans have ever been tested for HIV. Of those who are HIV positive, a mere 10% are receiving anti-retroviral therapy – leaving 90% untreated, infectious and likely to die.

(PopTech 2010, p1)

SOUTH AFRICA – PROJECT M

In October 2006 Zinhle Thabethe travelled from Johannesburg, South Africa to Camden, Maine to explain the HIV/Aids phenomena and experience to the attendees at the PopTech conference. *HIV positive herself, Zinnye came to share how the disease is affecting her, her family and her country. She also detailed her fight to reverse the course of HIV/Aids in South Africa – and invited others to join her crusade* (Grau 2010, p1). Frog design, based in the US, stepped up to the challenge, as did a number of other high profile partners. Together with the Arient group, PopTech, iTeach¹, the Praekelt foundation², Nokia Siemens Networks, National Geographic and MTN (one of South Africa's mobile network providers), Frog design launched Project Masiluleke.

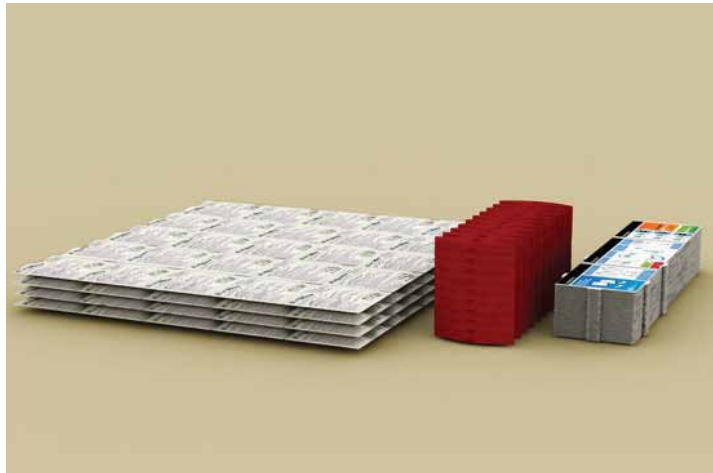
Masiluleke is a Zulu word that means lend a helping hand (De la Mare 2009, p1) or to give wise counsel (Butcher 2008, p2) in a hopeful way (PopTech 2010, p1). Project M, as it is fondly known, is *using mobile technology to tackle the worst HIV epidemic in the world in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, where infection rates are more than 40 percent. Broadly speaking, Project M consists of two parts. The first component, a mobile phone-based platform, is being used to get the word out about testing, and also to provide information and counseling when needed. The second component consists of an HIV testing kit (above) designed for use in the highest risk communities with minimal oversight or instruction from HIV educators* (De la Mare 2009, p1).

In the early part of this decade Vodacom [Vodafone's South African operation] introduced Please Call Me (or PCM) into their pre-paid mobile subscriber plans in South Africa. In places where only the caller is charged for the mobile call, PCMs are used to provide pre-paid users who are out of time a way to send a "please

1. iTeach is a leading HIV/TB education, outreach and service organization, headquartered at Edendale Hospital in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa (Butcher 2008:4)
2. The Praekelt Foundation is a South African-based non-profit committed to building innovative mobile technology solutions that improve the health and well-being of people living in poverty. The Foundation is an incubator for new mobile-based solutions and developed the technology to insert the healthcare messages into existing PCMs, as well as the TxtAlert concept, two critical components of Project M (Butcher 2008:4)



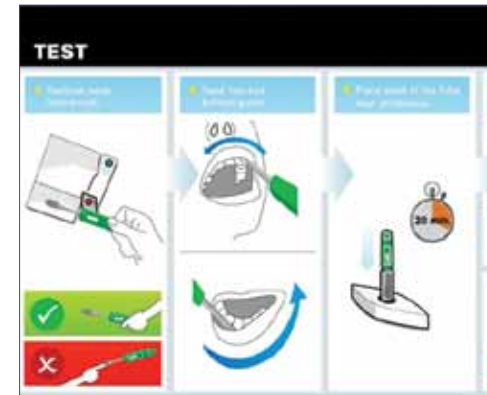
Top: Test kit using low-cost, easily assembled materials; Bottom: Open package includes simple instructions for minimal literacy. All available at < <http://www.frogdesign.com/work/project-m.html> >



Separate components ready for distribution. Available at <http://www.frogdesign.com/work/project-m.html> [Accessed 25 January 2011]

call me” message with their number to anyone, telling the receiver to call them back. Originally designed because callers with no minutes left were calling and ringing a recipient number once and hanging up as if to say, ‘please call me”. This “beeping” was clogging the mobile networks. So Please Call Me via USSD was introduced (Grau 2010, p1) and with nearly 100% of South African’s with access to mobile phones it was the perfect distribution channel for the message. In addition to readily available access Vodaphone now claims to process 10- 20 million PCM’s per day, that’s a lot considering there are 45 Million prepaid subscribers in the country (Grau 2010, p1) which makes it a service users understand and make use of on an daily basis.

HIV/Aids is a contagious, terminal and preventable disease when it gets detected early enough. However within the South African context there is a huge social stigma connected to the disease, coupled with the poverty, unemployment and the high cost of medical care it is a death sentence to many South Africans. The stigma connected to HIV/Aids preventing many from getting tested or pursuing treatment, and there is wide-spread misinformation about how the disease is contracted. Further complicating matters, the



Top to Bottom: **Instructions designed for low literacy, with direct links to mobile support and counseling.** All Available at <http://www.frogdesign.com/work/project-m.html> [Accessed 25 January 2011]

nation's overburdened healthcare system is incapable of providing care to the millions in need – many of whom enter the system with end-stage HIV or full blown AIDS (PopTech 2010, p2). One of the goals of Project M was to destigmatize HIV and make knowing one's status an acceptable part of every day life (Yale 2011, p1). Yet because HIV is such an emotional subject matter, and for South Africans in many cases literally a life and death experience (with 50 percent HIV-positive populations in some areas), sensitivity and empathy have to be highest on the list of prerequisites for any product in this category (De la Mare 2009, p1).

The first stage of the project is built around the use of specialized text messages, delivering approximately 1 million HIV/AIDS and TB messages each day for one year to the general public (Butcher 2008, p2). This was done with the network capacity donated by MTN. By using the characters at the end of every PCM that is sent, designers could create a specific message that urged users to get tested and know their HIV status. Project M was able to utilize the PCM mobile technology in three crucial ways: to encourage use of low-cost diagnostic test kits (which frog created), to walk patients through the at-home testing process; and to guide people into care should they need it and encourage healthy preventative behaviors if they don't (Loring 2011, p1).

The text components in the PCM messages connect *mobile users to existing HIV and TB call centers. Trained operators provide callers with accurate healthcare information, counseling and referrals to local testing clinics (Butcher 2008, p2). The user could then call the call centers or send a PCM that would be directed to an operator that could help. The second part of the project required the self-testing of users' HIV status, the test would be sent back to the clinic and test results sent back to the user's cell phone keeping the process discreet and completely anonymous.*

In addition to the preliminary contact with the user through PCM and the hot line assistance by professional healthcare workers, the mobile phone component also added a follow-up contact in which the design team utilized the *Praekelt Foundation's TxtAlert technology, which uses text messaging to remind patients of scheduled clinic visits, helping to ensure they adhere to ARV regimens (Butcher 2008, p2).*

The second part of the project consisted of the distribution of self-testing HIV kits. *Analogous to a pregnancy test, these distributed diagnostics would provide a free, private and reliable way for anyone to take the critical first step of knowing his or her status, with high-quality information provided via mobile device. Stigma is widely considered the number one impediment to increased HIV/AIDS and TB testing. Many in South Africa are unwilling to take the risk of being seen standing in line at a clinic, waiting to be tested (Butcher 2008, p3).*

Synthesizing the results of on-site research and insight gathering in Kwazulu Natal, leveraging the cultural knowledge of our local advisers and stakeholders, and later concept testing revealed to us that the context in which the kit would be used provided both limitations and opportunities for the carton design and OOB. Research told us that for this effort to become successful, the test kit would have to be mostly homegrown with local and respected advocates, be very cheap to produce, designed in a sustainable fashion and walk a fine line between being a utilitarian medical and desirable consumer product (De la Mare 2009, p1).

The first consideration for the self-testing kits' packaging was that *the team could not assume [that] any changes would be made by the pharmaceutical companies that supplied the test in its original packaging (Yale 2011, p1) and therefore they had to design the packaging and information around the products that already existed. The brainstorming was organized into testing stages: Awareness, Setup, Test, Results. Ideas were generated under each of these categories (Yale 2011, p2). Subsequently, the brainstorming resulted in the following prerequisites for the packaging they were to design. The packaging had to be consumer-friendly and in order to accomplish this the team leaned toward making the packaging warm and inviting add to this that the target population had limited literacy skills. Therefore, the package had to somehow communicate the test directions graphically. The packaging required the ability to be adaptable to tests from more than one supplier.*

The *exterior packaging should help hold the tubes upright* as they had to assume that the user might not own a table or flat surface. Or would not have one in the area where they were conducting their test, as their living situation probably leaned itself to very few

opportunities of privacy. The *packaging materials needed to be inexpensive and it had to be discrete packaging that could be hidden in a pocket or a drawer* (Yale 2011, p1,2). Grau (2010, p2) mentions that they discovered the *project should be about men, as they are largely absent from the system. It was determined that men are especially private when it comes to testing.*

After three weeks of beta testing, Project M has already helped triple average daily call volume to the National AIDS Helpline in Johannesburg (Butcher 2008, p2) however the packaging prototype was not as big a hit as the project participants had hoped. *We didn't want to either confuse or alarm testers unnecessarily during what is already an extremely stressful event. South Africa has extremely high cell-phone adoption rates, and so we were able to create clear linkages between the carton itself, which provides high-level steps to take a successful test, and the phone, which can be used to call for deeper understanding about testing, or to speak to another human about the results. A pocket-sized brochure containing helpful phone numbers and next steps gives testers a sense that the schedule is theirs to decide and not dictated by others* (De la Mare 2009, p1). Yet the initial packaging solution proved to be too big to be carried discreetly in one's pocket, neither did the sharp corners help.

Subsequently the team set out to re-design the package to fit into the top pocket of a man's shirt, without any sharp corners that can feel uncomfortable or hurtful. According to Loring (2011, p1) this initial failure in itself was not a de-motivator. *Although the initial designs were not the right solution, it was an opportunity to build a platform of engagement with those on the ground in South Africa to understand what their needs were.*

In a reflection on the project's results Loring (2011, p1) writes with elation that *The Economist called it "the world's largest field trial in mobile health technology." Today, we are proud to report that Project M has achieved over one billion "call me back" messages, proving the success of the project's large-scale capabilities in reaching every South African with life-saving information.* Grau (2010, p2) quotes Fabricant in saying that it *"engages, inspires and allows for health education to happen in a thought positive, privacy respecting way"*. While De la Mare specifically reflects of the packaging when he describes that *it's been well received in*

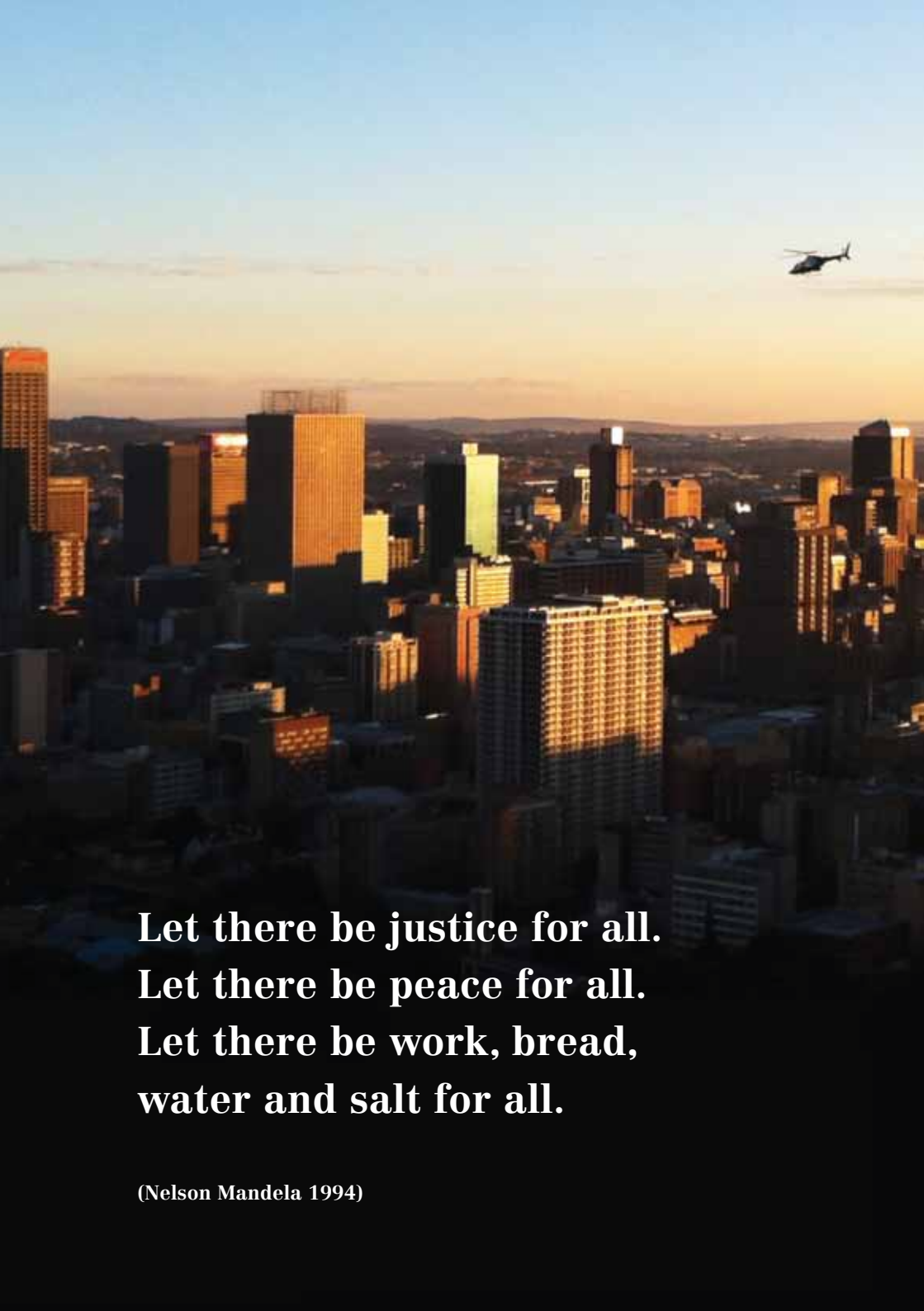
the communities for which it's designed. It's a great case study for culturally diverse and geographically disparate people working together (De la Mare 2009, p2).

Two years down the line PopTech (2010, p4) reports that *since the project's launch, over 685 million PCM messages have been sent throughout South Africa, driving over 1.5 million calls to the National AIDS Helpline.* While their curator and executive director, Andrew Zolli, praises the design choices and decisions that the team made on a grander scale. *In a country where the healthcare system is overburdened, mobile devices can be a profound tool for healthcare information, and that's what this is all about. Using mobile devices, we can get people tested earlier and keep them in care longer as part of country-wide mobile initiative* (Butcher 2008, p1). With Butcher (2008, p3) adding his own reflections, *early response from South African government and healthcare officials, as well as likely users in both urban and rural communities, has been overwhelmingly enthusiastic.*

In a century where medical help is possible and testing for a deadly disease is available it seems like an evermore-viable solution to use mobile technology that already exists and is highly popular. It is also heartening to see a design team listen to their users and gladly adapt packaging and processes that seem ineffective, even when extensive brainstorming and planning have gone into the process. I believe it is imperative to employ HCD methodologies in projects like these where there are so many unknown societal aspects to consider.

5

WHEN I
GROW UP —
GRAPHIC DESIGN
PROJECT IN
MABOPANE,
SOUTH AFRICA



Let there be justice for all.
Let there be peace for all.
Let there be work, bread,
water and salt for all.

(Nelson Mandela 1994)

SOUTH AFRICA = POLES APART

Quantitative measures and stereotypes are used universally to create a context that makes it possible for us to grasp the immensity of the realities and nature of a certain location, when we have not been able to experience it for ourselves. However I believe it imperative that I first describe the political miracle that is the country I have grown up in. In 1984, I was born into a South Africa on the verge of civil war, yet today it is a thriving, developing, emerging market by global standards.

After WWII, the elected **South African National Party** legalized racial segregation, or Apartheid, as it was locally known. While the rest of the world was abolishing slavery and giving women equal rights, the majority of South Africans had to fight for their basic human rights. The list of atrocities committed by the governing minority, at the time, is endless, yet the gist of the situation was this: Non-white (of non-European/African dissent) South Africans were considered second-class citizens. They were not allowed to choose where they lived, where they worked, or even where they used ablution facilities. All of these things were chosen for them by the system they found themselves in. Consequently they rebelled, and with just cause.

Through years of underground struggles and fierce, bloody protests, this oppressed majority emerged the victors and in 1994 South Africa's first democratically elected, and consequently its first African president was announced: Nelson Mandela, also known by his tribal name **Madiba**. Madiba's inauguration heralded a new era for all South Africans. *On 27 April 1994, long queues of voters waited patiently to shape South Africa's future through its first democratic election. They provided a powerful sign of the intention of ordinary people to participate in the transformation of their country* (Perold 2002, p10). Understandably the white minority feared retribution for a history riddled in oppressing the new ruling majority, yet most significantly Nelson Mandela continued his legacy of peaceful protest and forgiveness, by proclaiming his dream of South Africa being one nation in unity in his inaugural speech on 10 May 1994:

We enter into a covenant that we shall build the society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall, without any fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity - a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world.

For the extraordinary peaceful transition between the regimes and the astonishing negotiations between Mr. Mandela and his predecessor, Mr. FW de Klerk they were awarded the Nobel Peace prize in 1993. Nelson Mandela *became the compass for all, pointing in the direction of the freedom, prosperity, dignity, honour and happiness that everybody desired* (Ubuntu 2011, p16). Accordingly what could have been the start of an extremely violent civil war, even genocide, ended in numerous apologies and heartfelt confessions in front of the Truth and Reconciliation committee, headed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Thus was born: South Africa the Rainbow Nation³. *A bewildering complex society... [that] could then be from one perspective an illustration, like Africa, of considerable fragmentation, or from another perspective, an example of unique diversity* (Ubuntu 2011, p17). Today this apt metaphor of the rainbow nation, is true on more than one front. Ethnically, Geographically, Culturally and Traditionally South African's have managed to forgive and reconcile into One Nation, extremely proud of their achievements as well as their collective and individual heritage. Regrettably the scars of past misconduct cannot be erased overnight, and thus the South African government and its' people are still striving towards the lofty goals of every South African being on equal footing in all basic human rights.

Consider with me now, if you will, the diversity found within the borders of South Africa. South Africa is divided into nine geographical areas or provinces. Each provinces has it's own *distinctive landscape, vegetation and climate as well as its own legislature, premier and executive councils* (Yearbook 11/12, p5). I will use these already established boundaries to try and illustrate the different cultural and physiological experiences one would have on a tour of the country. South Africa has ~50 million people with 11

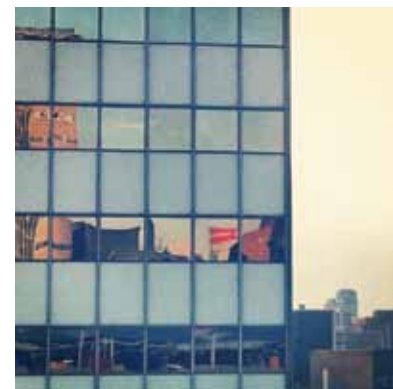
3. Rainbow Nation is a term coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu to describe post-apartheid South Africa, after South Africa's first fully democratic election in 1994.



Map of South Africa, Schutte, G. 2012.

official languages, and as many different cultures. *Although English is the mother tongue of only 8,2% of the population, it is the language most widely understood, and the second language of the majority of South Africans* (Yearbook 11/12, p4).

The heart of the country, both geographically and economically is the **Gauteng** province. Gauteng is *responsible for over 34,8% of the country's and 10% of the entire continent's GDP, making it densely populated* (11 million). Gauteng has two large, modern, cosmopolitan cities: *Johannesburg and Pretoria. Johannesburg, nicknamed "Egoli" (Place of Gold), is the capital of the province, was built up around the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886. Thus*



Left: **Inner City Beauty**, Dowse, C. 2012. [private collection] Right Top left to Bottom right: **Scenes from Johannesburg**, Roets, J. 2012. [private collection]

the nickname, due to the rich mineral output and the booming mining industry that is still functioning today. *There are 159 mines – 44 of them gold mines – in Gauteng, that together account for a quarter of South Africa's total mineral production* (Yearbook 11/12, p8). Nelson Mandela fondly writes about Johannesburg and his relocation from the countryside to the city of Gold when he was a young man. *Johannesburg had always been depicted as a city of dreams, a place where one could transform oneself from a poor pheasant to a wealthy sophisticate, a city of danger and opportunity* (Mandela 2008). Pretoria is the administrative capital of South Africa, fondly known as the Jakaranda city due to the purple-flowered tree that was imported and blooms every spring creating a city covered in purple buds. Plus Pretoria is where parliament and the infamous Union buildings are situated.

Both the cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria are surrounded by what used to be called **informal settlements** or **townships**. These are areas the **Apartheid** government set aside for occupation by all non-white South Africans. Rather than displace these families again, after the 1994 elections, the government have worked extremely hard to introduce basic amenities and improve living conditions in these areas. The largest of these, south of Johannesburg is Soweto. Soshanguve and GaRankuwa are situated north of Pretoria. Mamelodi lie to Pretoria's east and Atteridgeville to its' west. In general these areas do not have all the modern conveniences the cities' suburbs have yet, and can culturally feel like a world apart.

Moving to the rest of the country. The tropical eastern coast is named the **KwaZulu-Natal** province. This area is known for its warm subtropical climate with extensive beaches and lush tropical vegetation. The province includes large areas that have seen little to no modern development. These unspoilt areas are veined with singular dirt roads that lead to small rural villages, abounding in bare-foot children playing in the streets. Children play with toys they collect from their natural surroundings or they invent imaginative games that carried over from generation to generation. Here televised sports are watched with a seeming ignorance concerning the droning of the petrol run generator behind the hut that keeps it alive, and a family's wealth is measured in heads of cattle and other animals. In juxtaposition with these rural villages we find the city of Durban, the busiest port in South Africa. Durban is the third largest city in South Africa, with amply luxurious and modern

high-rise buildings that provide every modern convenience one could hope for. Moving inland from KwaZulu-Natal we cross the Drakensburg mountain range into the Karoo, at the heart of the Free State province.

The Free State is *a province of wide horizons and blue skies, farmland, mountains, goldfields and widely dispersed towns*. While the majority of South Africa's field crop and other primary food production can be found here *with, 90% of the province is under cultivation for crop production*. The Free State's *major employer is Mining*, as it is the fifth largest producer of gold in the world. Moreover some of the most valued examples of the ancient rock art, created by the hunter-gatherer San people can be found in the Free State (Yearbook 11/12, p7).

The area on the west coast of South Africa is called the **Northern Cape** province. *The largest part of the province lies in the Nama-Karoo Biome. [This] area is known worldwide for its spectacular annual explosion of spring flowers, which attract thousands of tourists* (Yearbook 11/12, p12). The northern part of the province consists largely of arid to semi-arid desert area, including a number of preserved national parks, while the colder Atlantic ocean is known for its rich fishing grounds. Going down the coast to the southern point where the Atlantic and Indian oceans meet; we find the capital of the **Western Cape** province, Cape Town (the Mother city).

Cape Town houses Parliament and is the country's legislative capital. Cape Town and its' surrounding area with its natural beauty and boundless hospitality is possibly one of South Africa's largest tourist attractions. With beaches rivaling the best in the world and kilometers of Wine farms to visit it is no wonder that tourism is the largest growing industry in the area. *The Western Cape is known as one of the world's finest grape-growing regions. Many of its wines have received the highest accolades at international shows* (Yearbook 11/12, p14). Add to the beautiful natural surroundings, the mild Mediterranean climate and the modern, high-end conveniences of the city and you have the perfect summer holiday destination.

Travelling back north, past the populous Gauteng region, tucked away into the northeastern corner of the country, we find the

province of **Mpumalanga**. *Mpumalanga* means “Place Where the Sun Rises”. The province’s spectacular scenic beauty and abundance of wildlife make it one of South Africa’s [other] major tourist destinations. Situated mainly on the high plateau grasslands of the Middleveld, which roll eastwards for hundreds of kilometers towards the immense escarpment which plunges into the grassy Lowveld (Yearbook 11/12, p11). The most popular destination is surely the Kruger National Park, where tourists and locals alike dream of sighting the Big 5. The Big 5 is the group name for the largest animals found within South Africa: the Lion, African Elephant, Rhinoceros, Cape buffalo and the Leopard.

Though such a short overview can hardly do justice to the variety and rich cultural heritage that is South Africa, it aims at being helpful in letting the imagination run untamed, conjuring up potential treasures and experiences, found within.

Here I gladly return to the theme of the **rainbow**, specifically when describing the people of South Africa. The rainbow symbolizes not only the diversity found within the different cultures but it also emphasizes the parallel movement of the different colours towards a unanimous goal. This unanimous goal, symbolizes the remarkable move towards tolerance and erasing inequality that have already taken place. South Africans refer to their own country as a land of possibilities. The population of South Africa has fought many a battle; first in taming the land followed by cultivating an understanding off and integrating cultures that might seem foreign. Staggeringly, however, considering the historical hardships and previous disadvantages, South Africans are generally positive, innovative, friendly people who are eager to make plans for a better future.

Unfortunately, even with all these possibilities change is slow to visit the large part of the population who still live in low-income or extreme poverty conditions, according to Statistics South Africa, *extreme poverty being less than a \$1 a day while low-income is defined as under \$2.5 a day* (MDGR 2010).



Drakensburg, Dowse, C. 2012.
[private collection]

Education is the great engine of personal development. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another.

(Mandela 2008)

PROJECT CONTEXT

The focus of this theoretical exploration is the formal education system in South Africa and the way that students engage with the process put forth rather than pedagogy, which is the art or science of teaching and includes education as one of numerous methods of instruction that influence the development of children. Pedagogy goes beyond the formal education structure to include how other parts of society or culture contribute to the education of children for example parents, clubs, coaches or role models. The scope, does however, investigate the perceptions and values that the community and society places on the formal education system as a vehicle to educate and enrich the lives of their children.

At the United Nations Millenium Summit in 2000, the international community reached consensus on working to achieve eight critical economic and social development priorities by 2015 (MDGR 2010, p12) these are often referred to as the Millenium Development Goals or MDGs. In order of priority, goal number one is to eradicate extreme poverty while goal number two is universal primary education.

The South African education system moves scholars through Grades 1 to 12, with age seven as the proposed year to start Grade 1. Up to Grade 7 is considered Primary or Basic education. *School enrollment is compulsory for children between the ages of seven and fifteen years, or between Grade 1- 9, whichever is reached first (StatsSA 2011, p4).* In this the government has made remarkable strides, with 99% of children between seven and thirteen participating in an education institution and 93.2% of children fourteen and seventeen participating. However, of these 19.9% of children aged 15 has not completed primary school, indicating a large problem, as there is a significant number of children dropping out of school (StatsSA 2011, p23). *The reasons for dropouts vary... however, the overriding reason seems to be a lack of value placed on education (Unbuntu1/09, p24).* This large drop rate is alarming when compared to Finland for example. *[The] Finns have recently emerged as the rock stars of global education (Levine 2011, p1) and*



Shoshanguwe, Kellermann, M. 2012.
[private collection]

according to the Business Insider *93% of Finns graduate from high school, while 66% of students go to college* (Taylor 2011, p4,6).

In a 2011 report by Statistics South Africa (2011, p26) there are a number of reasons listed for not attending school. These include but are not limited to physical circumstances such as the distance that children have to travel to attend school, lack of funds and disabilities.

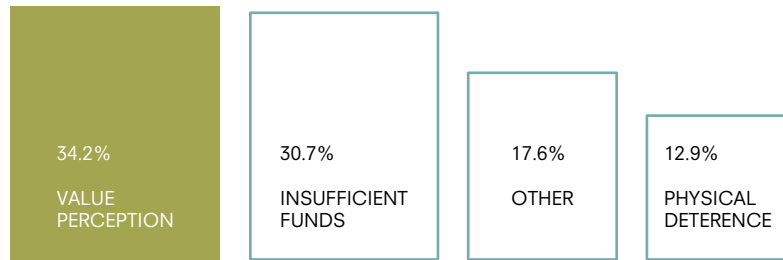
Another heart-breaking statistic that is firmly rooted in the past, is that *black African children continue to be indirectly affected by the poverty and unequal education opportunities their parents have suffered, but they currently also have the biggest opportunity to eradicate many of these problems* (StatsSA 2011, p1). In rectifying these previous disadvantages the government have come a far way, and have been continually improving on all fronts:

Among the many steps taken by the Department of Education to redress imbalances caused by apartheid were the building of schools, adding classrooms to existing schools, providing water, sanitation and electricity to schools, changing school curriculum, developing new learning resources, and training teachers. But along with the efforts to redress these material inequalities, the transformation of the education system also depends centrally on the achievement of a number of less tangible goals: developing management skills, changing mindsets of white and black South Africans, and putting in place a new work ethic (Perold 2002, p12)

Accordingly, the South African Government has prioritized the tireless job of raising the quality and standards of Basic Education throughout the country, *with education spending remaining] government's largest expenditure item* (Yearbook 11/12, p150). According to the Minister of Basic Education it is the department's mission to ensure that *by 2025 we must see the following in every South African school:*

Learners who attend school every day and are on time because they want to come to school...they will have a good meal...minimum quantity and quality of materials that every learner must have access to. Thereby using the school as a location to promote...poverty reduction interventions (Motshekga 2010).

Reasons children of school-going age give for not attending school in South Africa

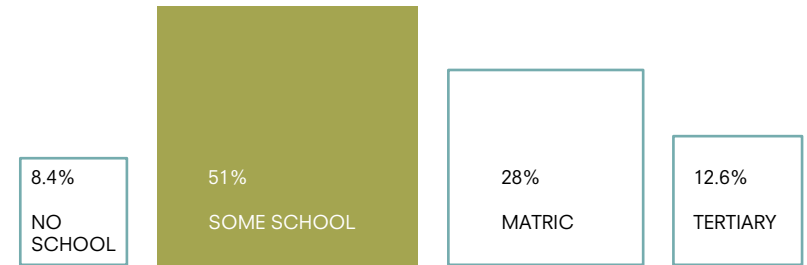


It should be noted that the South African Government have not been fighting alone, private institutions have increasingly been investing in programs that would grant students the opportunities they cannot fit in their means (MDGR 2010, p47).

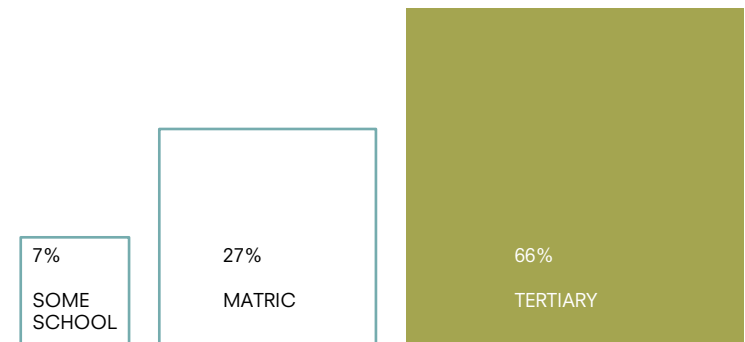
It is my belief that education, as well as many other social concepts, finds itself ingrained in a country's value perceptions. As a collective a culture/community believes education to be inherently valuable or not. While I understand that there are still numerous circumstantial difficulties South Africa's children experience in the effort of being educated, I believe it is imperative to continue stressing the extreme value of having an education. *A university degree, I believed, was a passport not only to community leadership but to financial success* (Mandela 2008). The Thembalitsha foundation works in the Western Cape township **the Cape flats**, situated on the outskirts of the city of Cape Town. They brings perspective to the children living and growing up in the Cape Flats.

This is a group of vulnerable youth, in danger of turning to a life of crime, abuse and poverty. Their only hope is to complete their education and become employed. Without an education, they loose hope of ever making it in the real world and the downward spiral of socially unacceptable, negative coping mechanisms begins to take place (Ubuntu 1/09, p24).

Percentage of people aged 20 years or older in Gauteng's highest educational qualifications



Percentage of people aged 15 years or older in Finland's highest educational qualifications

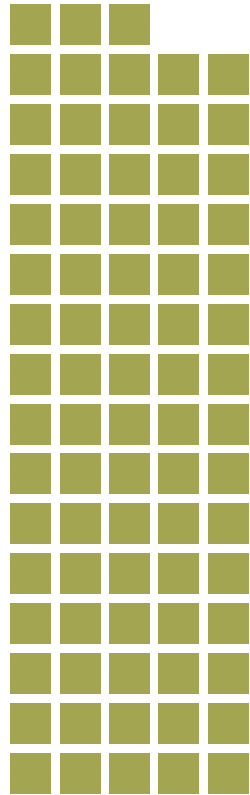


Top left: **Reasons children of school going age are not attending school**, MGDR 2010. Top right: **Percentage of people aged 20 or older in Gauteng's highest qualifications**, MDGR 2010. Bottom right: **Percentage of people aged 15 years or older in Finland's highest educational qualifications**, Taylor 2011.

Median disposable income in South Africa and Finland

75% of Finnish population

LIVE ON LESS THAN 78€/DAY




75% of SA population

LIVE ON LESS THAN 2€/DAY



Median disposable income in South Africa and Finland per day, in 2010. South African numbers cited in MDGR 2010, Finnish numbers released by Finnish Statistics on Income and Living Conditions via email on 21 November 2012.

 = 1 euro/day

Nelson Mandela (2008, Loc 1410-12) writes in chapter 9 of his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, of a colleague Gaur Radebe who used to be *preaching the value and importance of education – for me individually and for Africans in general. Only mass education, he used to say, would free my people, arguing that an educated man could not be oppressed because he could think for himself. Education, Gaur argued, was essential to our advancement, but he pointed out that no people or nation had ever freed itself through education alone* (Mandela 2008, Loc 1672-74). Though the fight has changed, aiming for political freedom through the means of the anti-apartheid struggle, to a struggle against poverty aiming for monetary freedom. Many South Africans are still fighting. Education proving to be a weapon with extraordinary consequences. This does not make education the only means to the end, Nelson Mandela (2008, Loc 1670-71) retrospectively acknowledging that he *knew that the [BA] degree itself was neither a talisman nor a passport to easy success.*

In [the] South African context, poverty and unemployment remains structurally inter-linked (MDGR 2010, p30) with the employment population ratio being 42.5% in 2009. *Out of nearly 50 million people, only about 13.1 million are employed, with only 40% of people working age in a job* (Reuters 2012). In this, education qualifications are one of the key differentiators between workers, subsequently leading us to a conclusion that higher educational qualifications or skills development leads to a higher employment ratio all round. Significantly there is a direct correlation between the 70% of South Africans that have not finished high school and the 70% of South Africans that live under \$2.5/day. The New York Times published a story on the remarkable outcome of Costa Rica's decision to dissolve its armed forces and instead invest in education. *Increased schooling created a more stable society, less prone to the conflicts that have raged elsewhere in Central America. Education also boosted the economy* (Thriving too 2010, p1).

An educated population remains the fundamental platform for meeting most of the other MDGs. Literate and educated people are in a better position to obtain meaningful and decent formal employment, [or] to create work opportunities for themselves and others (MDGR 2010, p41). Therefore it is imperative that education initiatives be coupled with value creation in the perceptions of the communities. *When a tool is valuable enough, people will find a way to use it* (Lee 2012, p3).

SA CARES FOR LIFE; AND EDUCATION

SA Cares for Life is a pioneering organization and the NGO that I partnered with in order to explore and realize my project. Since its establishment in 1993 they have been working tirelessly to establish models of care in South Africa that make a difference in the lives of women and children. *SA Cares* loves to pioneer new things and build partnerships to duplicate their models all over South Africa.

The vision of SA Cares is to change the destiny of children through family-focused projects. SA Cares for Life is a Christian, faith based, national NGO that is passionate about creating opportunities for change and giving hope to orphans, other vulnerable small children, women in pregnancy related crises and families in need. They provide places of care, practical support, counseling and continuous replication of their models of care (SA Cares 2012, p1)

SA Cares for Life's mission is: to offer holistic services with unconditional love and compassion, empowering their clients to have a better future and ultimately to be independent. This is how they explain the development of the work they are currently involved with in Mabopane, South Africa.

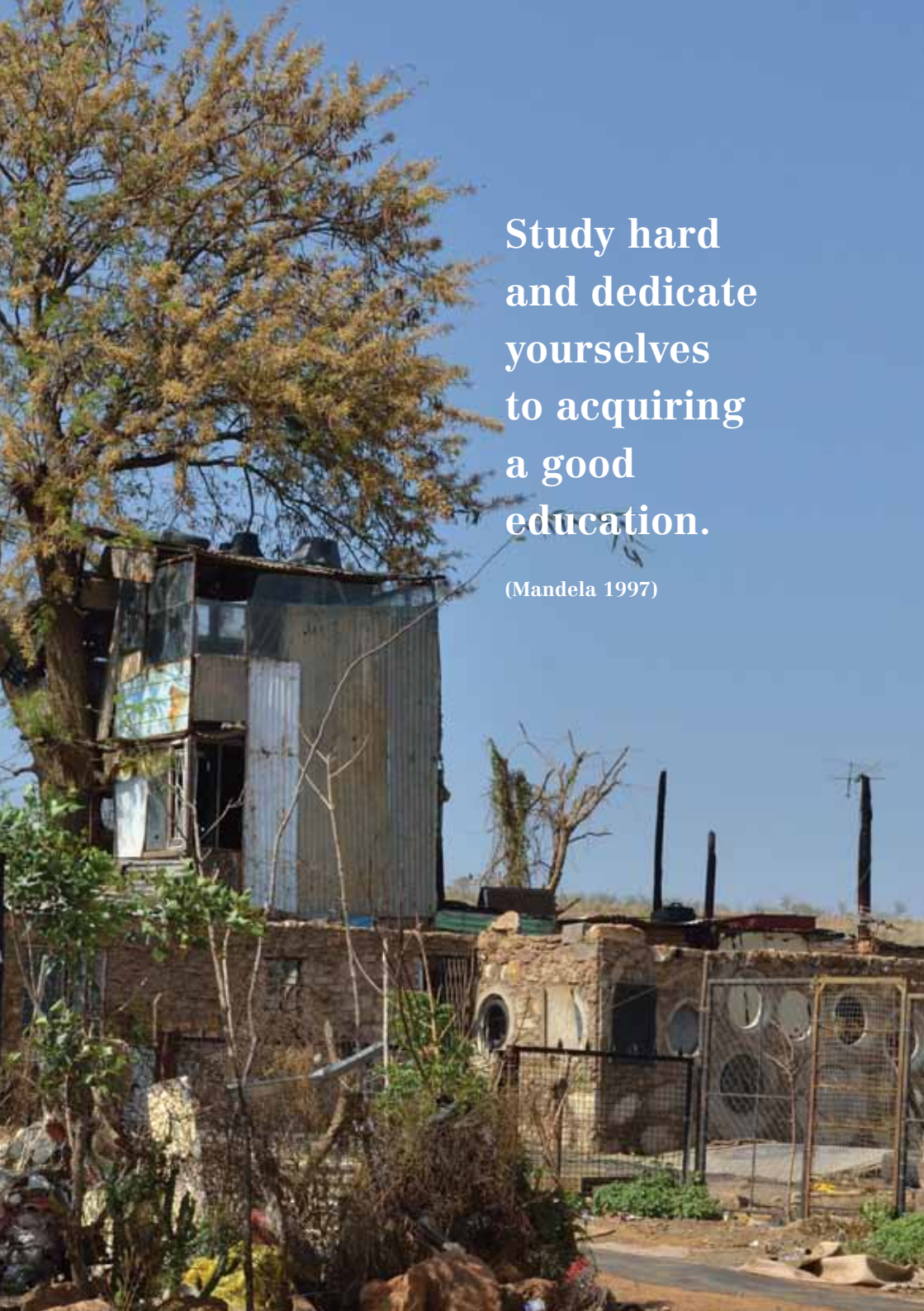
During 2004, one of the mothers at Neo Birth, who was HIV positive, asked us to help her to do something in her own community. We started a satellite office in Mabopane and assisted her to help other woman facing crises pregnancies. We soon realized that the needs of this community was quite different. We started what became known as the Cluster Care Model of SA Cares for Life. This sponsorship programme focuses on identifying individual children in need of care living in poverty stricken circumstances and AIDS affected families in the community. Our entrance in the rural areas is to recruit Child Care Workers from the community to reach out to the families in need where they live. These workers visit needy families and are our hands, feet, eyes and ears

in the community to identify children in crisis. A cluster is a group of up to 30 families who live within walking distance from each other. Two Child Care Workers are designated to these families and each Child Care Worker takes responsibility for 15 families at a time, by offering emotional and practical support. Our goal is to empower families to be able to function independently and care for their children in a loving manner. The cluster eliminates discrimination and serves to bring hope to families as it creates awareness on ground level to care for each other and to protect vulnerable children in their area.

Through cluster care 195 families, representing over 1,000 children, are receiving services of support and care in Mabopane, Garankuwa, Winterveldt and Mmakuananyane. The Lesedi La Batho Community Care Centre was officially opened in 2005 and we also established a HIV/AIDS support and training facility. AdoptionCentrum, Sweden, took our hands and supported us to develop & establish this model of care.

Lesedi la Batho is the name of the centre where the Early Learning Centre is situated. This is where the group of children that I based my premise and pilot design project on, attend school. In Tswana, Lesedi la Batho, means **Light to the people**. The community centre opened in the town of Mabopane, South Africa in 2005. Currently the centre has two classes of pre-school children, the first class has children between 4-6 years old, while the second class starts at age 3-6. The 6 year old children graduate at the end of November every year, in order to start their formal Primary schooling in January which is the beginning of the school year in South Africa.

According to U-SA Cares for Life's (2012, p1), *many children in the community are at a disadvantage because they receive no educational stimulation before they start formal schooling. The ELC provides education and stimulation for children aged 2 to 6 years. Qualified teachers from the community have been appointed to care for and educate these youngsters. Lesedi Centre has a formal learning environment but there is also time to play and [to] enjoy two nutritious meals every day.* Here I met with Rosinah, the class teacher and principle, who translated my thoughts and instructions to the children with enthusiasm and never-ending energy.



Study hard
and dedicate
yourselves
to acquiring
a good
education.

(Mandela 1997)

WELCOME IN MABOPANE

Armed with a camera, a notebook full of questions and a bunch of chocolates – in case I needed to incite some cooperation – I arrived at the SA Cares for Life head office in Pretoria. Today was the day I was going to get my premises validated, at least so I hoped. Though Mabopane is only 50km outside of Pretoria, I have never ventured to that part of Tswane, the municipality Pretoria belongs to. *Township is a historical term, which was an area of more advancement than villages or rural areas. In South Africa, the term township (as well as location) usually refers to the (often underdeveloped) urban living areas that were reserved for non-whites (principally black Africans and Coloureds, but also working-class Indians). Townships were usually built on the periphery of towns and cities (Seeletse & Ladzani 2012, p3288).*

According to South Africa's Online History *Mabopane was to be the largest of the Black townships within the Pretoria area. The township, which is 22km north-west of the city centre, formed part of the Tswana homeland, named Bophuthatswana (SAHO 2012).* A homeland was the area designated by the **Apartheid** government where a specific African tribe where to live, under their own governance. These homelands were located within the borders of South Africa. The South African government mandated these homelands as countries within the country, even though they were never recognized as such by any other government.

In the early 70s hundreds of families who were classified as Tswana had been removed to two towns in BophuthaTswana, GaRankuwa and Mabopane. The removal of the Tswana families was supposed to relieve pressure on housing, separate out "ethnic" groups, and also provide a work force for industries on the borders of the Reserves – the so-called border industries (SAHO 2012, p9). Though these geographical borders have not been enforced since the newly elected democratic government took over in 1994, many families have not left the townships due to their societal roots. This is where their friends and families live and continue to live. According to the Tshwane Municipality, the local government of Northern Gauteng, Mabopane has an estimated population of 210 500 of whom most are still of the Tswana tribe. Thus the main language in this area is SeTswana.

Malishia Swarts is the Cluster Care Co-Ordinator for Mabopane, as well as my guide and help for the day. She has a weekly meeting with the twelve Child Care Workers in charge of the families in Mabopane, where the wellbeing of both the Families and the Care Workers themselves are discussed. Leaving the tree-lined streets of Pretoria, we head east, and follow the highways out of the city. Arriving in Mabopane, I feel like I have left my world behind, even though I grew up in Pretoria. Yet Mabopane does not resemble the preconceived ideas I had of what a township looks like either. Though there are few trees and lush gardens, everywhere I look the houses are neat and well looked after. The houses around the community centre are mostly square brick houses, with yards on the roadside, and a small fence or low wall running along the property edge.

The Care Workers starts emerging from the inside of the far-end of the building and systematically off-load the supplies that Malishia brought, piled to the roof inside her vehicle. After everything has been off-loaded and everyone has caught up on the week's news, each Care Worker assembles behind a classic flip school desk and unpacks their files and stationary, ready to take care of the business of the day.

The reason for my visit is to conduct an informal group interview with the SA Cares for Life Care Workers. I believe that these ladies understand the community and their situation best. They are well versed in conducting conversations in English and have a wealth of experience in working with the community within the context of upliftment. Another important factor is that SA Cares for Life already has a network and trust relationship on the ground in Mabopane. This is an important factor. In my association with SA Cares for Life, I can enjoy the benefits of this trust relationship, even though I only have a short period within which my research should be done. This existing relationship affords me the luxury of better information and trust by association that gives me more credence that I would have enjoyed were I to venture into the community unaccompanied.



Top left to Bottom right: **Scenes from Mabopane's daily life**, Schutte, G. 2012.

Group interviews can be a valuable way to learn about a community quickly. Group interviews can be good for learning about community life and dynamics, understanding general community issues, and giving everyone in a community the chance to voice their views (IDEO 2001, p30). As a start to our chat I ask all twelve care workers to join me around a table so that we are not hierarchically spaced – me in front and each Care Worker behind a school table creating the perception that I am there to teach them something. My intention is to have a group chat in which I can learn what their specific traditions and cultural mindsets are. Secondly I ask everyone to write herself a name badge in order for me to know whom I'm talking to, but also to create the feeling of a professional panel of speakers adding insight and value to the discussion at hand.

Earlier in the week when I was discussing the interview and meeting's strategy with the members of the *SA Cares for Life* staff, there were concerns that the Care Workers might not tell me anything of worth. To the extent where I was informed that they probably will not join my discussions spontaneously. For this purpose I packed the chocolates as a conversation starter devised a strategy of informing the Care Workers that I was here to learn from them and that I hoped they would help me understand their lives and community better.

To this end I started of our discussion with the following sentiments: I came to visit them because I was told about the remarkable work they were doing within their communities, and I needed their help and expertise. Would they be willing to brainstorm with me, and answer some questions I have? Tentative at first, it wasn't long before these ladies were loudly and excitedly sharing in the discussion that lasted the next three hours. The discussion was documented, partly in video format and partly in audio format, the transcriptions are attached in Appendix A.

MEET THE CARE WORKERS



Meeting over lunch the Care Workers and I spent time discussing their value perception of education. Unfortunately not all of the Care Workers were available for all the workshop sessions, however I felt that the time they were giving up to talk to me was valuable and I was truly honoured that they were willing to explain themselves and their community in such intimate details.



MALISHIA

Malishia is the Cluster Care Coordinator employed by *SA Cares for life* to look after these wonderful ladies and the work they do in their communities.

Aged 50
Born in Johannesburg
Married
2 step daughters,
3 daughters



NELLY

Aged 29
Single
1 son

I am full of life and I'm happy

Is an orphan – both parents passed away when she was 13.
I cried every time, I hated school.

I failed standard 9, and I start again, peer pressure again. I fell pregnant in my first Matric. My grandmother says: my child, you are going back to school.

Primary school was horrible. High school, it was the best.



WILHELMINA

Aged 52
Born in Ledisabona
Divorced
2 boys and a girl

So in the morning, the day I had to go to school, while I was washing my mother told me to go underneath the bed and took my shoes there. And I find Brooklax. That time I thought it was chocolate, so I took that Brooklax (giggling). On the road, my brother didn't see anything, but I finished the whole slab. So when we were in the queue, my stomach started to work...I was running the whole time, running to the toilet up and down, up and down.



ANNATJIE

Aged 48
Born in Nylstroom, Vaalwaterberg rivier
Married
1 son, 1 granddaughter

“The comedian”

I hated schooling because I had to wake up early in the morning.

[School] was not fun for me, but I did enjoy my sub-B.



PINKY

Aged 50
Born in Balfore, Siatemba location
Divorced
1 daughter, 2 grandsons

*I liked school.
I didn't reach my Matric because I fell pregnant.*

My mum said: because you are pregnant, you've got a child, you must go and get married.

The father of her child said: I am going to marry you. You are not going back to school, if you are going back to school you are going to have another boyfriend.



ELLEN

Aged 38
Born in Mabopane
Single
5 children, 1 grandson

Born in the clinic next door. Proud of being single.

Schooling for me was perfect. From Grade 1 until I finish. I finish my Matric. I did a course at Bosman in town.

(everyone commenting on ellen being spoilt)



IDA

Aged 48
Born in Johannesburg
Widow
4 children

Today I am proud of it [finishing highschool] because I have some knowledge.

I dissappoint my parents when I got pregnant, about 21 years, I was pregnated by a teacher (laughing). That was the worst time of my life! My parents took care of my daughter, Pauline, and then I go back to school.



JULIET

Aged 52 on ID
Born in Botswana
Engaged
2 boys, one adopted 7 years old

Grew up in South Africa; Twin sister who lives in Botswana;

I do like school.

You would wake up very early, around 3 'o clock. We must sweep the whole yard. We must clean the floor, we must make tea for [Mother] there in the bed. And when you come back from school you must cook, you must wash the dishes.



DORIS

Aged 49
Born in Potchefstroom
Married
2 boys and a girl, 2 grandchildren

I don't want school.



HERMINA

Aged 33
Born in Mabopane
Single
2 boys and girl

Standard nine was when I started to cook. So it was so hard for me.

The best thing I remember for after Matrics, going for doing the course.



HELEN

Aged 62
Born in Pretoria
Divorced
2 sons

Was married to the Zwan family

I enjoyed my schooling, it was fine. I was doing well in school.



DIANA

Aged 46 on ID
Mabopane
Single
1 son, adopted 2 girls and 1 boy

Family was originally moved from Sofia town to Mabopane by the Apartheid government. Block A was the first section of Mabopane.

Then when I'm still at school, I dissappoint my family and I got a baby.

I go back to Sebili to finish my studies, because I said: no! I want my Matric. And then I make it!



SARA

Aged 28
Born in Pretoria, Kalafong hospital
Married
3 daughters

I been to the class and I know how it is..

After the introductory pleasantries I attempted to find out whether the Care Workers, their children, the families they work with or the community they live and work in place a high value on education and being educated. What their obstacles are on the way, as well as whether they believe it's possible for every child to finish high school.

Though we, as humans, are often incapable of being objective and usually bring our own prejudice to any discussion we get involved with, my aim was to find out what their perspectives and experiences are regarding these matters without pushing them into answers that validated my premise and subjective opinion.

The first point of business was what these mothers told their children regarding going to school. What do you tell your children when they ask why they should attend school, especially those days when they do not feel like attending?

Diana explained that she tells her children that they must go to school because *they prepare their future. So that tomorrow they can be a doctor, a lawyer, another person, not like myself working at SA Cares... it is not a professional job... so I groom them, I prepare them* (Appendix A, p5). Pinky reiterates this idea explaining that she tells her grandson that he needs to go to school so that he can become a doctor. So now her grandson *wake up early [every] morning [saying] I'm going to school because granny told me that I'm going to be a doctor when I grow up* (Appendix A, p6). Helen has a more encompassing explanation, *I always tell them that you won't reach where you want to be unless you go to school*, while Annetjie elucidate that the opportunities available now are very different from the opportunities afforded her when she had to choose, with lots of agreement resounding around the circle.

Next we arrive at the purpose of school, according to the Care Workers. In a general consensus they state that you need to be educated in order to be wise. *To have knowledge. And power.* Nelly adds that it is all about money, *to get educated is that we want a better life, and to get a better life you have to earn money*, in addition to this she adds that her son *needs to be educated to be the best.* Every mother around the table wants to give her children and grand children, what she was never granted. Everyone around the table agrees that it is important for children to go to school.

After lots of discussion and debate, however, we arrive at the revelation that it is not every mother in Mabopane who thinks about education in this way. Annetjie states that *there are mothers who don't see the purpose of education.* While Juliet points out that when children are older it is their own choice whether they want to attend school, there is agreement around the table stating that it is the children's right to choose. Ida explains that children should go to school to keep them away from trouble: *for the children to have a education is better because they won't go for crimes... it is the better future you can give to the child.* Ellen asks *what do you do?* When you want to give your children all these opportunities and they do not want it? She exclaims that *you can't force him?!* (Appendix A, p7). Wilhelmina points to Hermina's little girl sitting on her lap when she says: *[It's] making a child grow in the right way, as a child, as little as she is you are able to control [her choices/actions] but after the certain age you don't have any time, you can't* (Appendix A, p8).

My next question is whether they think that school is too hard, and therefore not everyone will be able to finish Matric (which is the last year in high school, also known as the National Senior Certificate)?

At first there is a consensus that school is definitely too hard. Then Nelly pipes up saying: *Gracé, you know what, we are not the same.* She then explains that there are children who have an intellectual disadvantage and no matter how hard they work, they are not able to finish school. *School is difficult sometimes.* Hermina disagrees with Nelly, stating that there is more than one way to skin a cat. She mentions that there are programs for children who struggle academically, where they can learn skills where books are not so important. Therefore she concludes that she *thinks it is not too hard, it is just that we are lazy.* This sparks lots of debate, especially from Nelly's side. Juliet comes in saying that *now a days there is a other opportunity*, continuing to explain that there is a lot of information in the community, however she also concludes that people don't want these opportunities. *Laziness!* Which sparks another few minutes of arguments both for and against the notion of laziness (Appendix A, p10).

When asked if it would be possible for all children to believe in a better future through education, Diana is the first to air her views.

Even those smoking Dagga they do believe it... they know that education conquers everything. Education is the key to success. Pinky agrees adding that there's this thing that put them aside... they want faster money not the slow money, where you work for a monthly salary.

Next I ask whether, in their opinion, a child who does not have Matric will still be able to find proper employment? The unanimous answer from all around says NO! You need both a Matric and a driver's license in order to find proper employment. A few minutes later, however Sara says that *Matric is not important*. By a show of hands, ten out of twelve Care Workers believes Matric is important, while the others state that they believe skills are more important than having a certificate (Appendix A, p12). After some discussion they all agree that the school curriculum have changed in recent years and therefore to have a current Matric certificate is good. Sara, however, sticks to her beliefs and adds that she knows some people who *have a Matric but they don't know nothing!* Hermina reiterates that *now Matric is important... they [the proverbial employers] want the Matric. I can go and pass the Matric with a distinction, but know nothing, [and] because of that distinction I will get a job*. Here Malishia speaks up from the back of the room where she has been listening to all that was being discussed. Malishia agrees with Sara that it is possible to get employment *if you don't have a Matric but then you need to know someone or something. It is not easy to get employed without a Matric*. Wilhelmina says *at the end of the day, yes you can find the job because of your skill, but at the end of the day Matric is important... [it] is the door*.

Doris has an example of two guys she knows who have Master's degrees and no employment. *I ask myself how? You are so well educated, why are you not working?* While this is being discussed someone suggests that if you are that well educated it might be that you are too expensive to be hired in the current economy.

As a summary I conclude that we all feel that Matric is important, even though it is not the only thing that is important. We all think that children should work hard at school, but not all children want to. To each of these statements the Care Workers added an affirmative confirmation.

Coming back to the community, I ask whether they think it possible for all children to believe that school is important. They stand on their previous answer that some think so. In order to change this they confirm that the belief has to be instilled in the children while they are still young. *From the start, as they grow*. Additionally we need to *encourage them to go to school so that they can be what they wanted to be*. The discussion continues to the financial trouble that the Care Worker's current charges have regarding school uniforms, shoes and other necessary items. They also explain that all the schools in their area do not have the same working structures, some of them are state sponsored while others are built on a more traditional structure where parents have to pay school fees.

After considerable reflection on the day's discussion I had to admit that all my premises where not on target considering the information the Care Workers provided me. Originally I worked from the premise that there is a lack of value placed on education in this community, yet from the discussion it becomes apparent that though there is considerable value placed on education, it seems that the mothers feel like there is no way for them to enforce this notion of value in the lives of their children. Though the focus of my project – the value of education – has not changed I believe it imperative that there should be a shift in how and whom we approach in instilling this value.

In addition to the ladies stating imperatively that an education is important, I find it note worthy that they seems confused at times as to the hierarchical place education should be placed in. If we say education is extremely important it could certainly trump other priorities/values. Thus some of the answers the Care Workers gave leans towards a skewed value ladder where they continue to emphatically proclaim education's value, while at the same time relegating it to the backburner.

Thus, with all of these reflections added to the initial research and brainstorming, the solution we are pursuing starts with a visit to the primary school children under the care of *SA Cares for Life*. On a visit to school we will join the art class, where we will initiate a drawing session themed "When I grow up, I want to be.."



DRAWING AND DREAMING IN PRE-SCHOOL

Having arrived at the Early Learning Centre at the Lesedi la Batho Community Centre, I tip toe into class as I am not sure that I am expected. I am early for our appointment and I do not want to disturb them if they are in the process of doing something else. However the moment I poke my head around the door frame there are 42 pairs of eye who connect with me, their hands start waving and out if their little mouths come a very long, stretched out greeting of hi. It does not reach any conclusion either. The teacher, and headmistress of the school, Rosinah turns around and greets me like an old friend. She then turns back to her charges and shoe them into the corner where they are expected to sit on the carpet and keep quiet.

Rosinah has 42 pre-school children in her class between the ages of 4 and 6, she tells me. Their main language of instruction in Tswana, although not all of these children grew up in Tswana houses, they are in the minority however. The 6-year olds have also mastered Basic English and are able to communicate with me, albeit in a rudimentary fashion. Our first question to the children, me asking with Rosinah trailing with the Tswana translation, is what they want to be when they grow up. 40 odd hands shoot up excitedly as the pushing ensues to be able to reveal to their teacher what the answer to this question might be. So many future policemen that it might start becoming slightly monotonous, but we did ask, and everyone should get a turn to be able to share their dreams and ambitions.

Judith Burns, an Education reporter with BBC News, reports that *big career plans in young children may hint at greater emotional strength and resilience*, this is according to a study done at London University's Institute of Education (2012, p1). They asked 11 000 7 year olds what their dreams and *ambitions are and found that ambitious children from poor homes had fewer behavioural problems than those with lesser dreams* (2012, p1), these are children who have been followed from birth. The aim of the study is to continue following the children through to their adult lives, however already it seems that children from poor home, with great ambitions, could be better or similarly of than their richer counterparts. Thus it



golekane



amogelang



dorah



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keabetswa



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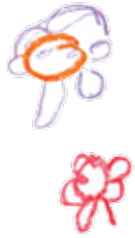
letlhogonolo



boitshepo



golekane
wants to be a
doctor



amogelang
wants to be a
teacher



dorah
wants to be a
doctor



letlhogonolo
wants to be a
nurse



batsile
wants to be a
teacher



omphile
wants to be a
teacher



keabetswa
wants to be a
police officer



regoemetse
wants to be a
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wants to be a
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rebatswe
wants to be a
doctor



ipeleng
wants to be a
doctor



oratile
wants to be a
paramedic



amutelani
wants to be a
police officer



rorpis
wants to be a
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nkosinathi
wants to be a
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pmogeiang
wants to be a
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latheo
wants to be a
soldier



phenyo
wants to be a
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tebogo
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tiisetso
wants to be a
police officer



omphemetse
wants to be a
veterinarian



letlhogonolo
wants to be a
police officer



boitshepo
wants to be a
nurse



seems imperative for children to have dreams that can carry them through their situations, into better futures.

After having gotten answers from our little collaborators, we asked them to draw us a picture that symbolized these ambitions. The number one choice of profession was a policeman, followed by a doctor, a nurse, a teacher, a paramedic, a pilot, soldier and veterinarian. One of the aims was to find out exactly what their ambitions were; second to this were the visual embodiment of their dream and the extent of their visual language capabilities, revealed in the sketches they produced.

Armed with these sketches by our determined little children, I set off home, to be back tomorrow for the hosting of a co-design workshop where the twelve Care Workers will aid us in writing a song with accompanying movements.



Top and Bottom: **Scenes from drawing project in the Mabopane ELC, Rosinah's class**, Schutte, G. 2012.

SONG WRITING WORKSHOP WITH A SMALL COMMUNITY

Walking into the room where the Care workers are having their weekly meeting gives me a chance to collect my thoughts as well as gauge the emotional atmosphere. It seems like they have gotten some bad news and it dawns on me that they might not be interested in what I have to say or ask at all.

Their first question to me is *what do you have for us today?* This is going to be a long day. Living in an area that is marked by hardship and daily struggles, songs might seem superficial and illogical however traditionally these African tribes are known for their ingenuity and seemingly bottomless well of songs, one for every occasion. *These traditional songs, accompanied by the thunderous stamping of feet... each song had a special meaning and was rendered when the occasion demanded. The original versions are pure poetry, and lose much in translation* plus they are almost childlike in their simplicity (Nortje 2010). Knowing this is one of the reasons why I had chosen a song as the medium for my message. Other reasons for this choice includes the sustainability of a song in pre-school as it doesn't need to change, it requires no funding to keep it alive, it is an activity that the children are accustomed to and use to entertain themselves and their elders. In addition to this it is an interactive and fun peer-to-peer approach that does not enforce a top-down hierarchy. It is also a vehicle that can travel outside of the classroom and influence parents, siblings and other members of the community, and as such the message carries further than just one class. Furthermore, pre-school songs are rarely outdated and next year there is a new class that can participate and be informed and given hope using the same method.

The song's words and theme will be derived from the sketches the children drew us, adding to it the idea that was reiterated by the Care Workers numerous times: that education is the way to achieve these dreams and ambitions. The first reaction from the Care Workers are that the task at hand is much too difficult, with some nudging, however they agree to try and help out. Success.



Meeting room for the song writing workshop, Schutte, G. 2012.

We start out with a look back at all the songs we know that have movements attached to them, and that we were probably taught when we were little girls. It is astounding how easy it is to remember the lyrics of these songs, even though it seems like school was a lifetime ago. We take turns, them as well as me, to entertain each other with new and old demonstrations of songs we remember that could be relevant.

The melody chosen for the new song we are writing is not new. We will use **This little light of mine's** melody, a song that is very familiar to everyone present. Next we sit down and start writing down sentences that has to do with each professional ambition the children have mentioned. Some of these sentences seem like they might have potential for poetry yet it remains imperative to have the means to the ambition as a main part of the message. If you want to be a doctor, you will have to keep attending school. The same is true for Nurses, Teachers, Pilots, Vets and the other dreams children were explaining the previous day.

I want to be a
policeman; I have to
go to school.

I want to be a doctor;
I have to go to school.

I want to be a nurse;
I have to go to school.

I have to go to school,
go to school, 'cause it's
cool.

(Song lyrics written by Annetjie)

In an inspired moment Annetjie wrote the lyrics and it seemed we had reached a unanimous conclusion. The message is simple, to the point and easy enough for a 6 year old to understand. The question then begs, should this song be translated into Tswana, as this is the language children are taught in. *No*, says Helen, *Tswana is boring; it should just be in English*. Also says Nelly, *Tswana does not lean itself to this type of song. The words are too long to fit in*. It is tempting to start from scratch and come up with something that can be sung in Tswana, but the thinking they are explaining quickly persuades me. All those children can, or will, be speaking English and according to these ladies it does not matter which language it is in. The next order of business, then, is to create matching movements that are age-appropriate. After much discussion it became quite clear that some of these professions do not have any outstanding characteristics. However, after wrestling with the concept we manage to have at least one movement for each profession. Lunch is served.

On reflection the day and it's produce turned out perfect. Even though it took some convincing, a part of me want to believe that we, as South Africans, are becoming evermore integrated in such a way that we still treasure our individual heritage and traditions, but we are not hung up on the ideas of keeping those unchanged and uninfluenced. I found it heartening that these ladies were willing to share with me their feelings and values in addition to their dreams. Before leaving Wilhelmina corners me to ask that I pray for them and their situations. To keep remembering them and maybe they will see me again. I truly hope so.

LEARNING AND PERFORMING

SONGS BACK AT PRE-SCHOOL

The purpose of this visit is to teach these children the song we wrote, while filming them. The final envisioned outcome is a **sing-along song** type animation juxtaposing the sketches with the filmed children. This will be sent back to the school to be used by the teachers to continually remind the children of the importance of education, before they are deemed to old to be influenced by their community.

Arriving at school we find the children in deep concentration trying to remember the steps to a cha-cha. Their teacher for the day, a friend from the community, is showing them what to, expecting them to follow until they are able to do it by themselves. Nelson Mandela (2008), even though not born a Tswana but a Xhosa, recalls that *like all Xhosa children, I acquired knowledge mainly through observation. We were meant to learn through imitation and emulation, not through questions... When I first visited the homes of whites, I was often dumbfounded by the number of questions that children asked of their parents – and their parents' unfailing willingness to answer them.* This shows, a clear differentiation between the way that African children and Western children assimilate knowledge.

Another important aspect of the community's tradition is the *ancient and time-honoured anthropocentric philosophy of ubuntu*. Mfuniselwa Bhengu describes ubuntu as a *way of life that contributes positively towards the well being of a people, community or society. The strength of ubuntu is in its pervasiveness and inclusiveness. In sub-Saharan Africa, it is the relational bond that holds entire communities together through an expanded view of kinship. It is a vital force in a continent that has such a diverse range of cultures, colonial histories, and geo-political realities* (M'Rithaa 2008, p2).

Finally it is our turn and Rosinah gathers all the children, including the other class' 40 children into our sing a long session in the foyer of the school. Rosinah makes a big speech explaining what we are going to do and get the children excited and screaming

YES! to a number of questions asked. It takes us about an hour of repeating the 3min song relentlessly before they start remembering the words and movement combinations. Yet their concentration spans are not that long, and they become restless as well as listless. In the back of my mind I keep on wondering if this is due to the song's language choice. Completely worn out I watch the mid-morning feeding process, everyone sits in a circle where a number of rhymes are chanted in both Tswana and English. Then the eldest start distributing the chocolate porridge, and as the spaces in front of the children becomes less, so too does the chatting as everyone is properly fed.

After conferring with Rosinah we decide to try one last time, in the hope of a more enthusiastic result and we are not disappointed. Having been fed, and given a rest from concentrating on the words, this time around the children are excitedly filled with attitude as they become braver in front of the cameras. It was well worth the wait, even if I am not sure that they will remember any part of this experience.

One week later I arrive back at the ELC, to be greeted by jumping, touchy children who take pleasure in a never-ending stream of high-fives. Rosinah is absent, but the other class's teacher has gathered all of the children in the foyer and they are eager to comply with the sing-along situation. Astoundingly they seem to equate me with the song and sporadically and completely unprompted start singing the song, movements and all. This is heartening as it means they have actually remembered, not only me but also the song and appropriate movements. After a half hour rehearsing and rehashing the song, I depart with a smiling heart and a light disposition. I have achieved what I have come here for, not only the collecting and processing of valuable data that underline the premise of my thesis and design solution. Also because I have learnt surprisingly valuable lessons from these users without them having any professional design know-how. Without their insight and thoughts the final result would have been completely different, and possibly ineffective.



Gestures from song, Top left to Bottom right:
School is cool; Pilot; Police officer; Teacher.
Kellermann, M. 2012.

6

CONCLUSIONS

**Emphatic listening and
continuous adaption is
your most valuable skill.**

(Grace Schutte 2013)

Graphic design is often equated with beautiful aesthetics, which in itself is not a problem. Though aesthetically pleasing design solutions remains a continual prerogative of graphic designers, it is evermore critical to be able to add meaning to the final design solution, by being able to listen to the people you are designing for, and applying the new information in a suitable and effective way. In this I whole heartedly agree with Krippendorff's (2006, p73) estimation that *respect is granted by attentive listening and acknowledging what people say — not necessarily complying with what they want, but giving fair considerations to their views and interests*. This does not mean that the graphic designer should do without adding his/her own opinion. Yet it infers that the graphic designer needs to be interested in attentively listening, without prejudice, and then acting upon the information and insights given. We need to look at the world and the people around us with a different perspective. Different from the perceptions and methodologies of the Universalist and Modernist, that has been upheld as the standard of all that is expected of the graphic designer.

Human centered graphic design practices gives us a series of practical guidelines that we can use to collect more relevant information from our users, in addition to the empathy it evokes within us that should then be translated into more effective visual communication solutions. Following the IDEO HCD model the outputs for each phase is clearly stated, with numerous optional combinations that can be employed in order to suit the specificities of any situation. **Hear, Create and Deliver** is the three main points. When listening to what our users have to say we **hear**, and collect people's stories, observations of constituents' reality as well as a deeper understanding of needs, barriers and constraints. This does not make the research process more complicated or more extensive, but clarifies where we should be looking for the answers that can lead us to a successful design solution. When we **create**, when we purposefully choose and as such design, we are focusing on creating opportunities, solutions and prototypes in-line with our expertise and experience to the best of our graphic design abilities. When we **deliver**, we make sure the solutions we are proposing are feasible, viable, innovative and can be properly implemented. As an additional ethical consideration it is also imperative that we *ensure*

that a design does not aid one community of eager users at the expense of the well-being of others, or that it satisfies an immediate desire while constraining future developments (Krippendorff 2006, p267).

Whether this investigation of human-centered design is done in a social design capacity or a more traditional or corporate environment it stands to reason that we should delve into the cultural values of the users, rather than trusting our presuppositions and stereotypical worldviews. I believe this type of focused research emboldens, rather than restrains the graphic designer when it comes to the design choices they deliver or substantiate.

In order to successfully communicate in a cultural context different from our own we need to increase our personal intercultural competence. Greater intercultural competence comes with listening to our users, to what they want, as well as being flexible and understanding enough to know that there can be more than one right answer for every problem. We start realizing that users who react to the world in a way that is different from ours, is just different and not necessarily wrong. When we enter into dialogue with our potential users it means a *suspension of judgment and of claims to be right or superior to other participants... acknowledging each other's contributions, and building on them* (Krippendorff 2006, p259).

Most importantly we learn to be flexible and adaptable and more creative in our final solution, as we become progressively aware that these difference exist under the surface of all things observable. Using the outlines given in methodologies such as Human centered design, as a guide not a straightjacket, *provides for a systematic expansion of designer's imagination, creativity, and sensitivity, and then reduced the possibilities it creates to a realizable proposal* (Krippendorff 2006, p234).

Lastly we should become critically involved in the assessment of projects done and amendments that could prove substantial results. When we take all of our stakeholder's opinions into account, even though the playing field or constraints to the project seem to become more complex, the resulting solution becomes all the more profound and applicable to the specific context.

Throughout the Mabopane project I had to continually remind myself of the validity of the process, as described above. I found it extremely easy to start running away with ideas without having consulted my stakeholders, and falling back into old habits where I design my solution and then just present it to the stakeholders, awaiting critique, rather than including them in decisions made along the way. Hence I believe the balance between what you leave to the user's discretion and which decisions you make in a professional capacity, as well as the integration of the two worlds, to be the fundamental essence, and proverbial tightrope to be mastered when using human-centered design methodology, especially the first time.

The sing-along animation produced, is the culmination of the investigatory research done in Mabopane, and promises to be a first pilot in a larger project. The animation was shot on a Nikon digital single reflex camera, using only the natural light in the school building, and tried to capture the children in as spontaneous manner as is possible. In hindsight this could have been done with professional lighting and a monochromatic background without much disturbance to the children who were part of the process, in order to ease the post-production process. Throughout the filming process the children were very much aware of being filmed, yet when they saw snippets of the images we were capturing, they became much more enthusiastic and if this was foreseen and a big feedback screen was provided we might possibly have gotten even more smiles and energy from them. This, however, begs the question of intention. The project intention was to create an environment that they were completely familiar and comfortable with, therefore it could be argued that the addition of professional photographic equipment and other props might possibly have had a reverse effect, making the familiar class room, evermore unfamiliar and artificial.

After the initial testing of the user's reactions to the recordings and other elements, I believe it a safe conjecture that the preliminary format already successfully communicates the intended message. After the first day at the ELC Rosinah said that *she was so glad I taught her this song because now she has something that she can use*. My intention was to create something that would assist the

teacher in communicating and instilling the value of education in her charges; I deem this remark by Rosinah, to portray the success of realizing the stated intention.

Furthermore, when showing the children the filmed elements of themselves performing the song, they started mimicking themselves, this I believe to be another indication of the intended reaction to have manifested. Though these preliminary tests are not conclusive in themselves and by no means provides an unquestionable indication that the final design has met all of its proposed undertakings, it does provide proof that the design choices made are aligned with the meaning the users attached to them, and accordingly they have survived the first testing stage with flying colours.

In order for the larger project to be delivered the pilot would first need to be sent and used in the classrooms at the ELC at Lesedi la Batho. While I thoroughly enjoyed the process and the project that I have created, I feel it could possibly become much larger than I am able to produce or underwrite. Supplementary to design adjustments and additional project requirements, if the project is to be extended past this pilot phase, it would be necessary to find partners with appropriate contacts as well as authoritarian stakeholders who would be interested in buying into the distribution process. One such a partner might be the Department of Basic Education in South Africa.

Once the children's continued reaction to the added visual and philosophical stimulation has been measured and assessed, and possible amendments made to the initial work, it would be possible to extend this product to all pre-school classes, situated in the South African townships, who have access to a TV and a DVD player.

As a graphic design outcome, the animation presents the audience with a high-quality visual message that is sensitive to the culture in which it will be distributed, even though the research paths and theoretical methodologies used are not considered traditional. As such I estimate the visual outcome, as well as the process followed, a successful visual communication prototype in a culture different from my own.

7

REFERENCES

APPENDIX A

Round table interview, 12 September 2012, Community Centre Mabopane, Mabopane, South Africa.

SA Cares for Life Care workers. 2012. Discussions on value of education. Interviewed by Grace Schutte. [video/audio tape] Mabopane, 10 September 2012 .

Please close your eyes. Think back to when you were a little girl, when you had to go to school, what do you remember, your memories from when you were a little girl who had to go to school.

GRACÈ

Lets say, I remember when I was a little girl, my father had to wake me up every ten minutes because I didn't want to get out of bed and go to school. Okay, so can you tell me what do you remember from going to school, when you were a little girl? Anyone?

Hermina

DORIS

I hate school.

GRACÈ

You hate school?

DORIS

I wake up and I cry and cry. I don't want to go to school. I don't want school. I had other plans.

GRACÈ

How about you? (directed at Hermina)

HERMINA [00:45]

In the morning it was early. I am the last-born at home. There was a lot of strike, you know, I was carrying a brown suitcase. A lunch box. When they say the comrades are coming we have to run and the lunch box has to make a noise (making a up-and-down motion with the hands holding the handle) on the case. You know, it was so fun. I enjoyed the most at the middle school,

GRACÈ

At the middle school?

HERMINA

JA, yo I was excellent at Home economics and Tswana. I was very, so it was so nice, even when I was naughty at the class the teachers know that this girl, she will do my work. It was with the friends, unfortunately two of them passed away. So it was so fun, I enjoyed being a teenager. I was playing netball at school. Going trips,

I played I didn't jump a stage. I grown with the stage, I must play, I must what what... it was so nice. And I was ... when my mum came the sweeties was for me, my brother give me the zimbas, what what, so it was nice, but when I get to highschool doing grade... standard nine it was when I started to cook. So it was so hard for me. When I get from school I have to cook I have to clean, so I missed this last time. But it was nice. I did enjoy it.

GRACÈ

You did enjoy it?

HERMINA

Ja I did enjoy it. The best thing I remember for after matrics, going for doing the course, I am using a train, but I didn't like the train it was so tough.

Saartjie

SARA [03:02]

Ja don't laugh né.

GRACÈ

I won't.

SARA

(laughing) I was going to school, I went to school and I want to have a husband when I was nine years. Because I love me a husband. Not having children is like there and there. (hand gestures – reprimands Annetjie with a friendly backhanded gesture)... Now I have 3 daughters so it is not vegetables anymore just

one potato. But one thing I get from my grandmother (comments from everyone) she was abusing me, she would take me to, to the witch doctors (everyone confers whether they are to be called witch doctors or traditional healers) O I went to the traditional healers. (more comments around the table) but I been to the class and I know how is it.

GRACÈ

That's good

SARA

Ja

GRACÈ

How about Annetjie?

ANNETJIE [05:03]

Uhhh when I started school, I hated schooling because I had to wake up early in the morning. My mother used to wake me up then I went to the toilet for..

piepie

ANNETJIE

Ee for one hour. Then she would come and beat me. And grab me to the bath. And when I got to school I want my sister to put me on, on her back. So she was tired. She telled my mother that she is not going to school with me and my mother had to grab my hand and take me to school. When she arrive at the gate then she had to return. So it was not so fun for me. But I did enjoy my sub-B. it was called sub-B at my time. It was fun because

I had to have the new friends the new class teacher. My sub-A class teacher was (conferring with the ladies around her – looking for the English word) aggressive; she was used to beat us. You had to put your finger on your mouth the whole day. So the sub-B teacher she was lovely, we were playing, she gave us almost thirty minutes just to play. So I enjoyed sub-B not sub-A. Sub B = Grade 2

GRACÈ

How about Helen?

Yeah what do you remember from school when you were a little girl?

HELEN [07:20]

It was near school, school was not so far. I grew up at home, my brothers were older so I was the only child my mother had to take care of. And all the attention was on me. so I was primary in mamogadi, same in mameledi. I go to mameledi high school. And I enjoyed my schooling it was fine. I was doing well in school.

GRACÈ

Ellen?

ELLEN [08:15]

Schooling for me was perfect. From grade 1 until I finish. I finish my matric. I did a course at Bosman in town. But I didn't need to complete my grade 12. At my primary school it was perfect, because in the morning when I wake up my mother gave me the bread. I think she was putting the bread on top of the eggs (hand gestures suggesting something like French toast). Then put it in the oil.

And then make a tea with milk. I was busy washing myself in the toilet (hands rubbing face). I would get that smell and I would make, bath myself faster, so that I could get that lunch. After that she would then take me to school and after that she would come back and collect me at school. It was perfect at school. And then they would give me ten cent and then we eat the lunch box too. When I come back my father, the ice cream would, when the ice cream pass by my father would buy me an ice cream. When it go that side I would say papa the ice cream is finished buy me another one. We will cross, at the back of my neighbour, and buy another one for me. And when I was given ten cent I would buy all my friends a ice...a sweets and I would tell my father, I don't have one and she would pick another money from his pocket and give it to me. It wasn't... (everyone commenting on ellen being spoiled)

GRACÈ

Whose next? Nelly?

NELLY [10:07]

You know my school was (shaking her head). When I started school it was not perfect I didn't like school at all. I cried every time, I hated school. I hated the teachers at the primary school, you know I was crying, (holding her hand over her heart) I would stand next to my classroom and I would see all the kids that were happy, but you know something was not right there. Middle school, now I am a young teenager looking good with the mini

dungaree, you know. And my mother there, that's when I started having a relationship. You know, the problem is that my mother was wake upping early in the morning. Every time I wake up my mother was not there. And other kids their mother would accompany them to the school, and it made me not loving the school so much, because in the afternoon some of the mothers would come to school, you know, and see how the kids are doing and my mother was at work all the time. And will knock-off at night, you know I didn't enjoy it. So I had to make myself comfortable at high sch/ at middle school. Then I went to Sito mokiwa middle school (pointing straight out the door) standard 6. And standard 5. When I started standard 6 January the 13th of January 1997 my mother passed away. And... you know, it was horrible, I started hating school again. Then my uncle took me to the Rustenburg. I finished standard 6 and then standard 7 I went to Rustenburg, you know that's when I started meeting boys, they make you feel like... you know... my uncle will give me, you know, money and everything. Then I came back to Mabopane, I went to Mabopane high school that was the best years of my life. Standard 8. Then peer pressure came, I failed standard 9, and I start again, peer pressure again, I fell pregnant. In my first Matric. And I failed unfortunately. Then I bounced back, I went back to school. My son was little, then my grandmother says my child you are going back to school. You know my grandmother, she was, you

know, the best. When I was pregnant, né I was... I gave birth on the 18th of October 2002, 18, 19, 20, 21 I went back to school with all of the stitches. The high school you have to climb, there was the stairs to go, yo! But it was fine, having my son was the most amazing thing! High school was perfect. That's why now, when a teacher, a primary teacher say my son is naughty and everything I jump (snapping her fingers). Because I know the primary school are stressing, it was so stressful. They don't like the kids so much. They complaining too much. That's why I, you know, primary school is not good. But not all. But for me and my son is naughty, and he enjoys, ja but he enjoys saying that he is not going to school tomorrow. But for me, yo! Primary school was horrible. High school, it was the best.

Thank you mam. Thank you.

GRACÈ

Pinky?

PINKY [13:58]

When I was young, when I grew up I liked school but I had to wake up in the morning, it was very very cold there where I was staying in Balfour. When it's winter it would snow it is full of snow down there and then we had to go with our feet and go and fetch the bus to go to school. Because we are staying at the village, the school were very far. I had to wake up early in the morning, my father, because my mother passed away when I was two years old, so we were

staying with my father and my aunt. So they would wake up early in the morning and do the fire so that when I wake up we must get the house warm. Get the hot water to bath and go to school. Sometimes, because I was the last born, sometimes when I wake up I would cry. I said I'm not going to school. My father said no no leave her she is not going to school today the older I was I must go to school. And my two brothers and my sister when they come after her. So when they go to school, and I would stay at home, my father used to cook and make the dumpling and make the soup. We will stay in the house, sometimes my father is not going to work he is off, maybe he is on the leave. We stay in the house and we eat, we eat. And the bus pass away and then I saw the bus and then I would take all the soup and hide it, because I didn't want them to come and take the soup. I take a dish and I put the soup and I hide it inside under the table, because when they come back at school, they are hungry, they want food. They will eat only the dumpling no soup. I had soup and I hide the soup. And my father would take the soup and put the bowls inside the soup. I remember it very very much. And my father would say hide the soup and the meat is for you. They mustn't eat the soup, they must eat only the dumpling. They make the tea, boil the water and then they drink the tea with the dumpling. Ok it was fun, my father was staying with us and then we grow up and then we move from Balfour to Pretoria, when I coming to Pretoria,

and then I was doing standard 3 or 4, ja, I was going to school in Mabopane at Esibotie. Then I was going to school at Esibotie at standard 5 and 6. I went to Mamelodi to make my standard 7 and 8 and 9. But I didn't reach my matric because I fall pregnant. EH! (hitting her hand with her fist, everyone laughing). I had to leave the school and then I stayed at home and my mother, my mum said because you are pregnant, you've got a child and you must go and get married. You know, the older people they are like that, and then the father of my child said I am going to marry you. You are not going back to school, if you are going back to school you are going to have another boyfriend... and so I leave the school and I didn't finish my Matric.

GRACÈ

Who wants to go next?

Wilhelmina

GRACÈ

Wilhelmina?

WILHELMINA [17:10]

Me on my first day to the school, my mother was very strict. He used to wake us up and then with my, with my big brother, my other sibling was staying at my mother's place very far at the rural area from us, so I was the youngest. So in the morning the day I had to go to school, while I was washing my mother told me to go underneath the bed and took my shoes there. And I find Brooklax. That time

I thought it was chocolate, so I took that Brooklax (Pinky giggling) I put it in my shoes, so I wash, after cleaning up and eating for the morning, my mother told me to go and... Always my mother wanted my shoes to shine, so I wear the shoes the last time so I must not spoil them. So I took the chocolate, I took a very big slab and I put in in my mouth and took the other one and put it in my suitcase. (laughing). Then my brother goes to me near the school. At the school I was in the queue to be registered and on the road, my brother didn't see anything but I finished the whole slab (gasps all round). So when we were in that queue my stomach started to work (laughter) and my brother he said what's your problem? I just say I want to go. I was running the whole time, running to the toilet up and down, up and down. Unfortunately those time there was no cell phone because they could have phoned my mother and said this kid is sick. So my brother thought I was afraid of going to register but I was big enough because I was about 8 years, I was already bigger, I didn't I was not afraid of going to school, but the whole day I was running to and fro to to the toilet.

But my young days as a kid in primary well it was not so fun. Ahh my mother was so strict I was the cleanest kid in the whole school, only time they wanted to pick somebody who is the cleanest they would pick me. My mother used to clean my shirt she used the blue seal, so I was always the brightest. So I was the brightest

girl in the primary school. Going to the high school that was the time of '76, that time when we were running, we were everything was there, '76 yo yo! It was some sort of fun, I remember when the strike broke people drew there... (some comments from the other side of the table) okay, okay ricky... I need to stop cause she is so tired, let me cut short... so at high school I love, I loved Softball, so I didn't like this basket thing the ladies did, I didn't like so much. Debate and softball, I was the always the best in debate and softball. My body was very small so they use to look down on us, so all the time we were making the innings. Because we were so small so when we came with the bat everybody think we are just going to make a short put here. We were, I was the best! We were for the whole school we were only three girls in softball.

Well I was the father's favourite girl, maybe a like Helen. He would always give me whatever I want. Ice cream, chocolate, anything and he was working at the dairy and I was afraid of food. So when everybody, my mother was a family woman because we were about 16, my aunty, my... so when he feed us we would take the deep dish with about 5 liters of milk with pap there. And we put it there in the middle of us, if you don't eat it's your own business né everybody had to wash their hands there and you make sure there that they wash their hands. So if you don't eat it is your business. So we attended. So I take just one scoop and put it there in the

other hand, and that, I didn't like food so my father would come and take a dish and spoon out from the big dish and say this is my house and this is my child... so all the time my mother would drive you insane, she going to be always like this, not eating not all these thing, so it's fine. (everyone laughing).

GRACÈ

How hasn't had a turn?

Doris... Juliet

JULIET [22:59]

I do like school.

GRACÈ

You didn't?

JULIET

I do like school. But my problem was I won't go to school if my sister didn't put me on her back. And I can't go to school before they can make tea and bread for me. And I was very slow to eat, even now I am slow. And my sister could be late at school I don't mind. And when we walk, around the corner I need to sit down, and I cry. She must put me on her back, I don't mind if she is getting dirty or what. And there was a centre, a big one, when we go to that centre, I just go onto the bus (showing hand motions turning like a wheel) then she put me on her back every time. I was just loving it was nice. She didn't want to put me on her back, she just leave me behind that centre. Then she'll go. That last time then I just go to sit at those shops there (pointing right in

front of her). I was sitting there the whole day. I miss school. After school I just go home. And then at home I was naughty. And my aunt was a dress maker, then she was working somewhere at the other shop. Then when I was home she left the meat all ready cooked. So when she come home she would just make pap. And myself, I will just be naughty. That time they were drinking tea with condensed milk, I like condensed milk so much. So I will take the condensed milk (licking her hand) even now. And I won't wash my mouth, you know and my aunt will catch me when she comes back with the tea there is no condensed milk. (laughing) then she will ask where is the milk, I don't know, but then she said come here then she would let me stand in front of the mirror, then she will say what is this (demonstrating, pointing to ellen's mouth) then she would beat me. but during the day I would go and eat all the meat in the pot, I just left the soup. And the pot I would put it nicely there. When she comes back she would just make pap, that time she's supposed to dish up, yoyoyo! (signing fingers that clap together, up and down). (everyone commenting) ja and I was like to climb the trees. Climbing trees, every now and then my aunty was buying me new panties because I was busy with climbing trees. And when I grow up, start going to the high school, she was (confer in mother tongue) very strict. It was that time now where I was suppose to do every thing now, by that time. Then I decided I will run away to my granny

in Rustenburg. If school holidays I got money I go to Rustenburg, she doesn't know where. Then she would phone and they say that I am at Rustenburg. When I know tomorrow I'm going to school, then I go straight to school because I have the uniform already. Then I will be back at home I know she is going to beat me. It was very tough. And if you would go to school you would wake up very early. Around 3'o clock half past three. (others sympathetic of the early hour). We must sweep there the whole yard. We must clean the floor, we must make tea for her there in the bed. Before you go to school. It was very hard you know. And when you come back to school you must cook you must wash the dishes and when you are finish you must make your own work. And she will make a point that you are busy with your work, she can't, and if you can't sleep without washing the dishes she will wake you up. There in bed, putting the blankets away, come out go and wash the dishes. She don't mind what time is it. But I'm fine and I'm bigger, and it was not a abusing. (lots of discussion)

GRACÈ

One more, who still needs to go.

Two more

GRACÈ

Okay who still needs to go?

M4H08498.MP4

IDA [00:00]

My been to the school, I finished in the North West. We, my father worked Joburg in beans and my mother stayed North west at Bedford. So I attended primary school there with my brother oupa, I was called ouma, and we go together to school, he would take me by the hands, he loved me a lot. My big brother make us the lunch boxes. He would give us some cold drink or juice. So what I enjoy most is my primary school, I had a nice teacher, he teaches us such thing as we have to know. But to school, 6'o clock we have to be there. But today I am proud of it because I have some knowledge. And then I like music at school, I was a good singer. I sing at middle school and I sing again at manpower at my teacher. So I enjoyed. I disappointed my parents when I got pregnant, about 21 years I was pregnanted by a teacher (laughing) that was the worst time of my life! My parents took care of my daughter, Pauline. Now, and then I go back to school. I attended, I was at Mabopane High school. I move to Moroso, because I had that feeling, that now you see I'm a mother, you know I have that feeling that, that (laughter) but at Morosene I have some friends. Mmmm. I met this guy, who then consoled me and he loved me. very much in love! It was, he used to come and bring me luch at school. perhaps he would come with the truck and take me. (big laughter) it was fun, and then he built a house now. But me was still at home, in block x né. Now we are still staying there, block x. and

then he proposed me to marry. I told my parents and said he's introduced to my parents and then I was married to this man, and then I was blessed with three children. One girl and two lovely boys. Mr Sedi he look after me because after he married me he took me to Man Power, because I have to do my course in child care, so I'm proud of him working his, I'm working here. Because of him. My first child, that one of the teacher, Paulina she is an engineer. She's working at Witbank mine. She's in the management, she is part of the managers there. And my one son is Papi, he is working at BMW he is a mechanic (exclamations of wow! From the other ladies) and my third son, Kgoketso, he is doing BSC in agriculture (WOW!! From the crowd). And my last born, she is doing teaching at Tukkies.

Proud mother!!!

And I'd like to thank God. For the children that they listen to me, because other children they blame their parents, so I want to thank God very much! I am not proud but I am thankful

JULIET

Very clever educated, and Ida she love people she doesn't (comments all round) she's not proud... I like her style!

MALISHIA

Leave them, let Diana finish!

GRACÈ

Yes then we'll do lunch.

M4H08500.MP4

DIANA [00:32]

Myself I'm Diana. I was born here in Mabopane. Then I go to Limpopo, at sub-B. then I continue with my studies. Then when I'm still at school, then I disappointed my family and I got a baby. Then I come back at Pretoria. Then they said no, you are going to spend the whole year with the child, but the child. I was bottle feeding him because he refused to breastfeeding. Then the father of the child communicate, that time there were no cell phones, by landline. Then he brought me a letter, then I go back to Sebili (YO! From the crowd) to finish up my studies. Because I said No I want my Matric and then I make it. I got my matric, then after I matriculated I come back here to Pretoria to live. Ja the father high! (hands making a shooping motion) (everyone laughing, giving high fives). What can I say (lauging). In our culture I can't go and fight for him (agreement) then I enjoy staying as a single mum, because I can afford. I got wisdom, and I was blessed! I was blessed with a son, a brilliant one. (WOW!). Then I'm proud of him! Because he Matriculated, then he go to tertiary, but now there is some other, what can I say, problems. When she didn't/ HE didn't get her/he the results. But

God will make it

God will make it

Ja God will make it don't worry. He will, he will come to your place!

So I'm proud to be a single mother, because I make it!

Up to where he is now!

With the little money you get from SA Cares.

But you are here!!! Jaaa!
(clapping all round)

M4H08501.MP4

GRACÈ

Do you want to tell us how do you get your children to go to school?

DIANA

First of all in the morning when I wake up, I wash my hands first, and I bathe the kids also. I wake up, say waky wakies wake up time but then after them I take the Vaseline, cause me and the whole group né, they brush their own teeth. I taught them to brush their own teeth. Then after brushing their teeth they get dressed. Another ones go to school, but the little one she's in crèche. Then after that I prepare the lunchbox for that one of attending school. I make breakfast. But sometimes they don't want breakfast. They say they are going green, then they don't eat breakfast sometimes. They go to school. their older brother is accompanying them, because the other one is attending

school when they pass by another one's crèche. So this one can accompany them.

GRACÈ

Okay. So what do you do if they don't feel like going?

DIANA

Well sometimes the little one is supposed to go there, I say you must go to school. YOU MUST. It's a matter of must. Everyone at home is going to work, at school you must go to school the same as myself they must go to work. The little one say I must go to work we must walk fast.

ELLEN

I slap them.

GRACÈ

You slap them.

So if they ask why? Why should I go to school I don't feel like going to school?

If its not. Why?

Why should I go to school? I don't wanna go to school.

DIANA

No I tell them they must go to school they prepare their future. So that tomorrow they can be a doctor, a lawyer, another person, not like myself working at SA Cares. (lauging and comments) ei it is not a professional job what I'm doing here at SA. It's an NGO! I don't have any benefits here, so they must get better job. So

I groom them, I prepare them. They must go to school, like my son and my elder sister's children. They got to tertiary and then now they working, better than me.

GRACÈ
Sara?

SARA [03:38]
Mine I tell them, early in the morning, when she wake up, she must pray 'cause if she doesn't pray something will happen. (comments of disapproval all round) Yo! Eish! It's not a trauma, its not a trauma. Because if I'm teaching her the bible she knows (laughing and more comments). I'm telling her if you are not going to school God will punish you.

For what? For not going to school?
(lots of comments all round.)

She must follow the... so I'm just telling her about God. God will punish you... because maybe you are going to be selling you body...

Sho Sara!

No I am not supposed to tell her about those things. I am not wrong!

How old is she?

Nine years. The reason why I'm teaching her, she already knows. Where the baby comes from and man and woman, what they do. So that is why I'm teaching her. (more comments) Annetjie man! So I'm telling

her that, you know, to go to school, Annetjie! (slapping her on the arm) You have to go to school so that you can teach your younger sister and other children about serving. But she must know that God is watching her and she is the seed of God. (more comments).

GRACÈ
What about you Annetjie?

ANNETJIE [06:31]
You know I wanted to say that, I wanted to say to Sara that she mustn't tell her child about, she mustn't tell her child that God is going to punish her, whenever she is not going to school. it's wrong because at the end of the day the child is going to hate God. She mustn't say that. The child doesn't like God is because of the Mother who is pushing her to go to school.

GRACÈ
Okay, so

ANNETJIE
She mustn't give the child a lot of information, she's too young.

GRACÈ
So, annetjie what do you say when your children want to know why they should go to school?

ANNETJIE
Just to tell her about the importancy of education. (agreeing sounds all round)

GRACÈ
Okay.

PINKY
Let me come in here. Like my grandson, sometimes when he's supposed to go to school, when he comes and visits with me he tells me, you know granny, mum will used to hit me when in the morning she said you must go to school. Why must I go to school? and I when I answer him I say, you know what Thabiso, you supposed to go to school and have education so that you can be a doctor. Because that time I was sick, I was, 4 years or 5 months ago, 5 months ago and then he was so worried he was saying granny why are you sick, why didn't they take you to the doctor. I said they take me to the doctor and then he said to me they didn't help you. I said I no I'm still drinking the medicine, I becoming alright so when I talk to him I told him that you must go to the school so you can be educated so that you can be a doctor so that when I'm sick I can come to you. So that you can heal me. (agreeing comments) you can be a doctor, heal your granny because you are worried and then you always come and said granny's going to die. So now if you are a doctor you are educated, you are a doctor, they going to have medicine and those got the steals and you can hear that granny's heart is pumping or maybe my eyes they are not seeing so I said okay, like that, I said yes. If you can be educated, you can be a doctor and when you are a doctor you are going to heal granny. Granny

is not going to get sick anymore. And then that's why she is now every, they wake up early in the morning she said I'm going to school because granny told me that I'm going to be a doctor when I grow up. And I've finish my education. (agreement)

GRACÈ
Helen? Nothing to say?

HELEN [09:11]
Yeah, I think myself I have been working in the community for quite a long time, what I tell my grand children is that they should become social workers so that also get involved in the community. There are so many problems we are facing in the community, but especially now a days there is this pandemic, in our community. That's my advice, and I always tell them that you won't reach where you want to be unless you go to school. JA Because it doesn't take anybody to have the knowledge of helping the community you must have a knowledge to be able to do your work. In a proper way. And be professional.

ANNETJIE
And this now a days is simple for us parents, because our children when they start doing grade A, the teachers are teaching them and they help them to know what really they want in life. This now a days if you ask a child what do you want to be after finishing school, she will tell you I want to be a doctor, a lawyer it is not the same as when we grew up. (lots of agreement)

around the table) I want them to be a teacher... its simple for us.

GRACÈ

So that's the purpose of school right? What is the purpose of school?

To be educated

To be educated? But why do we need to be educated?

To be wise. To have the knowledge.

And power.

NELLY [11:17]

And money. But money makes the world go round. (Agreements) I think if you can't get educated for nothing, for sitting, like, at home doing nothing. For us to get educated is that we want a better life, and to get a better life you have to earn money. And to earn money you have to work for it. And working for it comes from education I think. So money for is, is

Everything

Ja if you tell a child to go to school, he wants... my son carries R5 everyday. And on Friday I give him ten rands, they pay R3 for wearing

Sivvies

Yes, but also sometimes when I don't have money I tell him that you are not supposed to say that I am not going to school because I don't have money. I'm giving you this because I have that I don't have money now, that you should appreciate it for now. You must

understand that mommy doesn't have money. And when he has it he will give it to me. But I make sure that, you know, my responsibility's to raise my son as best as possible. And if I don't have money how will I do that? If I'm not educated if I don't learn each and every day, learning here I am learning and I want to learn more so that maybe I, I'm not saying this is not a better job, but for me the salary and everything is a bit of a challenge because I'm young I still want to go far I still need to buy a car I still need to buy a house, something like that.

So you it's not like I don't appreciate it, but I don't want to see myself in five years' time, earning the salary that I'm earning right now. Because it is only for my son, the salary that I earn I use it only for my son. And for me it is like I'm stealing this money from my son to buy something for me to, you know you have to, your hair must look good, your have to wear makeup you have to buy shoes and to your son also. You have a son, you have a family, not automatically I son also, you have a grandmother, you have a brother, you have your siblings, you have everybody in the house that is looking up on you. So if I'm not educated, how? My son needs to be educated to be the best, to not be like somebody like me now. I didn't wish to be in this situation now, in this earning the same salary that I'm earning right now, but for him, he knows that he must work for me. I told him that, you are going to work for me because (comments from the other side of the room) No! No! you

are going to work for me because I work so hard for you. You are going to work! He knows that he's going to work. (Comments) He's going to have work, you know even if he's not going to support me. (More comments) Yes! Yes it is my responsibility but it is also his responsibility sometimes too! To look after me when I'm broke, must he leave me (comments) to starve to death? (more comments and debate all around the table) must I starve to death? He won't do that Wena. (more comments) Ok maybe I put it in a wrong way. Ja I put it in a wrong way né. Not like he must work for me, he must give me his pay, but he must know that this is my mother.

You can't force him.

No! then I put it in a wrong way I'm not going to force him, I'm not going to force him. But I must, you know sometimes it is very hard. I'm talking about it like it is so very hard to see my grandmother starve. My grandmother doesn't have, it's like she doesn't have kids. You see, and he has two big boys. My uncles are working like, the one of them

Boys are not like girls.

But they should be. (comments and debates) yes but how can you raise a child and the child not look after you (more discussions). He/she feels like you know...

GRACÈ

Okay, okay...

PINKY [15:43]

Can I say something, can I say something? Children are not the same. (agreement all round). Sometimes boys, other boys, they can take care of you. But other boys when they've got the other, they got their wives, their wives is going to tell them that don't give your mum the money. But sometimes others they can think about when they are staying, maybe they are staying at Rustenburg, I'm staying at Pretoria. When they come said home they can bring the food or maybe give me money. But the one thing I wanted to say is about girls. Girls are, they are not like boys. Girls they think about their mothers. I've got a girl, I've got my daughter, my lovely daughter and she thinks about me everyday! Everyday! When she get paid she knows that this amount, this is for my mum. She's got a house.

M4H08502.MP4

ANNETJIE

Take care of their mother-in-laws. Not their mothers. So the mother (laughter all around, and added comments).

GRACÈ

Okay. So everyone says it is important for children to go to school?

YES!

So is it all mothers that think that way, in Mabopane? Are there some mothers who don't think that way?

All mothers! Not all! (lots of debate and discussion)

ANNETJIE

There are mothers who don't see the purpose of education. Because some parents, they do nothing when their children doesn't go to school (agreement). They just sit there and look at them, they don't care whether they do drug or... they don't care.

GRACÈ

Juliet?

JULIET [01:08]

As a parent, as a parent, you should give to high like a children, everybody. Then you can tell the children about the education, how important is the education. And the child is coming back, he's still growing up, then he's becoming bigger and then he's still at school, is the choice of the child. I can push the child to go to school, but he can make his own choices. The problem to us parent, some of the parent they never go to school at all. And then they don't have any courage from anyone else. How important is the school. That's why he can't encourage the kids also. What to do. Because where she come from, she didn't have education. And then some of the parents they don't have money, to take the child to the school, but they child refuse to go to school. That's why some of them they go to drugs, they do funny things, but when you go to their homes you can see that this child is not suffering. It is just she/he is taking his own decisions.

They have the rights.

But you the mother you want you child to do something. But when he's grown up, you see it's difficult, very difficult. Because we are facing many challenges in life. And according to the one who already finish the school who is working, also is from the child's choice. Is a boy or is a girl, it doesn't matter. There are some boys who are taking care of the parent. There are some girls who taking care of parent but some of them, girls or boys they doesn't take care. She only cares about where she is living, is looking for his, that type of a family is paying he's forgetting about you parent at home. But its, 50/50 you know. It just depends from a child.

How the child is raised ja.

GRACÈ

How the child is raised?

ELLEN [03:40]

You can raise your child perfectly, as a parent, but if your child doesn't want to be (comments from the right side) NO! it's how you raise your child. Like a good child, when he grows up he will just decide, he will go and take dop and he will be a tsotsi whatever he likes. And I don't think there is a parent who wants to see his child go and take nope or whatever. All parents want their children to be perfect. So it is just that we people, we are putting pressure on other parents.

GRACÈ

Ida?

IDA [04:19]

So for the children to have a education is better because they won't go for crimes. They can afford to buy a own house, a own car, have children support the children. They won't go around and do house breaking, theft, go to prison you see. So is no one will take, if the child is educated, and no one will take the education. He will die with his or her own education. It is the better future that you can give to the child.

ELLEN

But if you want to give her and they don't want it, what do you do? (discussions around the table) You can't force him?!

PINKY

Can't just let your child...

ELLEN

Not all of them, some of them are being forced they did the best but some of them, there is a lot of money at home but they don't go to school. They don't do anything. (discussion) JA!

PINKY

What I am trying to say is: Helen, you can't throw a towel! (point with a index finger) if your child is taking nope, you can't say: what can I do because he's taking nope? You must try and try and try and try.

ELLEN

All parents are trying! No parent want his child to go. No! they don't

give up, even if they've seen that their children are not, are not listening to them, they are trying. They will ask people, how can I help him, they will go there, there (hands demonstrating) all the ways to get this child back to him.

PINKY

That is why I'm saying you must try you mustn't just throw a towel.

ELLEN

All of them are trying, all the parents are trying.

HERMINA [06:05]

The nope boys, (giggle) sorry... the nope boys if they didn't tell themselves that they are (ja! They won't) they can take him to rehab, they can take him wherever they won't. But if he tells himself that I am not going to use it anymore, it's the time!

GRACÈ

It's the time?! What did you want to say?

WILHELMINA [06:27]

Ja, I'm, I'm talking about these two things. Like, yes you must not give up, you try and try and try, and sometimes they, it's a different case. I have experienced this thing where the mother he push and push and push, and then where the mother he did try, then the kid just want to be a stray. So, and this mother who pushes and pushes, the other one. Last year some time in October we find her in the mountain there where he want

to kill himself because the parent want him to do what he don't want to do. He doesn't want to go to school! He doesn't want any, both parent have been, they combining this thing where they must try to shape up his future and he doesn't want he just think of something else, so for this child to change he would rather kill himself. Sometimes you try you push, and then you put so much pressure, unaware that he want to kills himself. So yes you don't have to throw out the towel, you don't have to throw out the towel, at the same time you don't have push overload. (agreement). But the reality is that every mum want his kid to be... (ja) every, you cannot go for nine months (for nothing) for nothing. No it's impossible. But at the same time, just like the bible says: (quoting of passage in mother tongue) so that when he grow up, (laughing looking around to Malishia) when he grow up he must not go astray. Or he must remember the way you make him grow. So making a child to grow in the right way, as a child, as little as she is (pointing to Hermina's daughter sitting on her lap) you are able to control but after the certain age you don't have anytime, you can't. But if he knows the truth, after, even those they join the club he will remember the truth and go back. (ja, ja) So but...

JULIET [08:39]

The parent also, he can listen to you at home, but outside he's got friends. (agreement) they chat outside he is listening to someone else.

ELLEN

And at home he is a good child.

GRACÈ

So do you think it is possible to change the peer pressure to finish Matric rather than the peer pressure to run around doing something else?

WILHELMINA [09:13]

It is possible sometimes. Sometimes it goes with the kid. Some kids change and some they don't want!

GRACÈ

They don't want?

WILHELMINA

Yeah, they don't want. Unfortunately.

NELLY [09:25]

There's something like to fit in, it's something, it's something very bad. For us, like we have been teenagers in our teens, so I know how it is. You know you can start smoking like your playing, like it's like, you know when they give you a cigarette, because you want to fit in. you will do it. No matter how, how, you know my grandmother raised me to be the person I am today but I remember the day I got a cigarette from my hand, and started smoking, it was like I was playing. It was like, you know, and sometimes people they do it for fun, and you, you will get stuck in that thing. Some people get into nope for fun but now they are stuck and some of them they, they got out of there. Peer pressure is something very bad (pointing to her heart) because need to have, need to

look, more specially even for boys, for all of them. For boys and girls it is so bad. And it start there at school. You know, it always start at school. you wouldn't know what to do with your, you know you just pray! And you will see what happens in the future. What the future holds for your son or for your daughter. Because these days, ah ah, peer pressure (shaking her head).

HERMINA [10:47]

Peer pressure is very difficult to take your child out. While is time, it's time you can even leave the pots on the stove, (comments) YO! You can even close the doors.

JULIET

Nope, they can go to rehab. But they run away at the end of the day.

HERMINA

And she even steal for you, she even, the pots and the clothes and sell them to get money. But, eh, is the child you have nothing to do, you can't go and take him to jail, I don't think. Even your own child, to take your own child to jail, you won't, even she steals for you. You can't do that.

Sometimes you would. But sometimes, if she tried to steal it.

PINKY

I still remember another woman who was telling us at the church that her child was stealing and he had to supposed to work with the police. And told the police: come at night when he's asleep, come and fetch

him and then I'll open the door when you come there, you just (snapping fingers) break in the door, and you comes in and you took him. Because you want your child to be straight (agreement around). You are not doing that thing, you must take your child to jail! The child must know that you don't want this thing. If maybe you stand with you child say: ok it is steal, and then you put him under the table he's going to steal everything. And once you know that you didn't buy a tv for your child, you come inside the bedroom, you find the tv playing in there. You didn't give him the money to buy the tv, where did he get that tv? Why don't you ask him: where did you get this tv?

HERMINA

No! I don't say it is ok for other to, I don't say that she steal my clothes and sell them to get nope. So I want to help my child and she will steal the pots at home, my pots and selling them. Not for others and bring them at home.

NELLY

And you know what Hermina, I think it's best if you start with you.

In house.

If you are the one who start to take, to discipline your child, say: I'm going to call the police for you because you are stealing from me. (ja, ja) I think that way maybe he will have a direction somehow, because (agreement) ja he will know that if I, if a next door

neighbour comes you will know that he must be disciplined.

HERMINA

Maybe if they come, but not to spend the night in jail. (How!! Disagreement from everyone, lots of heated discussion all around the table)

I pray that God will give me the strength!

GRACÈ

Sara?

HERMINA [13:20]

I want to take him there to show him how the person there, the person that steal there, and show him show him, but not to going to take my child to sleep there.

PINKY

Hermina can I ask you something, if your child comes to my house and steal my tv or my clothes and then I come to you and tell you: Hermina, your boy has token my things. What are you going to do?

HERMINA

No! That is the other part.

PINKY

I'm asking about that, can you answer me that?

HERMINA

I'll call him.

ELLEN

He will refuse!

SARA

...And to watch him come back and saw others. They make him worse! (comments and discussion all round)

WILHELMINA [13:58]

What if now, because he take the, you didn't allow the police to take over and go to the jail. He came to my house and I shoot her? What about that? I kill him.

HERMINA

I don't have a problem if my child steal from me, I don't have a problem, you take him to jail. But me, I won't! Me, I won't.

GRACÈ

Okay.

PINKY

I am asking you a question, your child is still stealing from me, in my house, what are you going to do? I come to you and face you straight: Hermina, your child has taken my thing. What are you going to do?

HERMINA

You've got the proof?

PINKY

Yes I've got the proof.

HERMINA

Yes you can take him to jail.

PINKY

And you, are you going to agree with me?

HERMINA

Yes.

PINKY

Okay.

GRACÈ

Okay. (lots of discussions)

HERMINA

Rather than kill him.

PINKY

I'm not going to kill him.

HERMINA

I'm saying if, if my child is still maybe around the neighbourhood or wherever, they can send him to jail. But me I won't go straight and open the gate for my...

PINKY

It's the same.

HERMINA

It's not the same.

PINKY

It's the same... o she can steal from you it's fine.

HERMINA

Ja, it's fine. (more discussions)

GRACÈ

Okay.

ELLEN

And when yours are finish what is he going to do? He's going to steal our stuff.

HERMINA

Me I'm not going to take him to jail but you, you can. Because he steals from you.

ELLEN

You have to discipline at first, at first! (more discussions)

GRACÈ [15:37]

Okay. Okay. (giggle)

NELLY

Nah I don't like, it's not like it's the right thing, but I want God to give me the guts to do it one day if my son get out of control. I want it to be (discussion) ja I want it to be me. I want to lie in bed and knowing that I am the one who ended, I know that even if he does it next time I won't get worried, because if he doesn't want to hear it from me, then... (finished sentence in mother tongue) (more discussion)

GRACÈ [16:09]

Okay. So let's go back to school. (everyone laughs) so can you tell me: do you think school is too hard? Or is it possible for anyone to finish Matric?

Yeah, school is too hard. It's too hard.

Is it really to hard or do you have to work hard?

NELLY

Gracè you know what, we are not the same. (that is true) And we have slow learner kids, we have clever kids. Some slow learner kids they drop out of school, because of they don't

fit in. Whatever they, they will read, they will do their job to fit in in their peers, maybe the clever ones. Maybe I'm a slow learner and I go out with clever ones, I will do my best but it's impossible my mind it doesn't work. I read I do but I fail. So what do you do? You get anger, you get that anger that you know I, no matter what I do, maybe book is not my thing, maybe I can be rich somehow, but school you drop out. How can you, can you go to school failing five times? And knowing that you are trying? Five times, one class, five times? Reading everyday, you don't go to sleep, you know yo ah, school is difficult sometimes.

HERMINA [17:32]

From my side it is not difficult this now a days. Because (comment) ja this now a days, because if you know that I can not go for books. You can go for hand. So even at hand there is a level 1, 2, 3, 4 which is will add you to be the one like, the one we have Matriculating, the Matric certificate, in the levels is also there. Matric certificate, and now the hands are much rich, than the books. So I think it is not to hard, is just that we are lazy.

NELLY

It's not about the laziness it's about the,

HERMINA

Sometimes it's about the laziness.

NELLY

If I don't have that information that you are having.

HERMINA

It's the lazy, the information, you must go and look for the information. If you want to go to school, you must go and look for the informations. They are lazy, saying that I can't read. I can't write but even they have the hands.

PINKY

Hermina, if I can't matriculate and I go the levels there, (Kabatho!) No! listen to me, if I the level 1, 2, 3 and you write, and I can't, you know anger, you know something about anger. It something that, you, you it grows in you. And you start not to believing in yourself, not necessarily saying that you are lazy, because of that anger that you have, you think that, you think that you can't do anything! It's not that, like... like Kagaboga... not knowing, ja, you give up not knowing there is a option. Other option, not knowing that hands are richer than books, some people they give up not because of they lazy, they don't have, the information haven't reached them.

GRACÈ

Okay. Juliet?

JULIET

I'm just saying this now a days there is a other opportunity.

HERMINA [19:20]

I used to go to the school to check their school, to check their other kids how they are doing. Especially my brother's kids, so at school my brother's kids is so naughty, and he can't

even. Sometimes he doesn't do the homework, maybe the test the marks are not too good. So you must have the time to study that child. At school they did explain to me that they have the projects. The hand projects that will boost the marks, of the child's. if you cannot do better on the books, at least she will do better on the project. They said that he can make the house and they take the marks. Maybe the house they get 98% on the test she get 2%, so they take that marks of making the house on that one and she can pass. So I just know things are very much easy.

GRACÈ

Juliet?

JULIET [20:14]

I think outside there in the community, the information is plenty for now because there are some pictures, and there are people still going outside to give information. And there are some skills. You know, and I've got one of my clients they are too old to test. They been out from school, for nothing. And I did told them about the skill. She, they were supposed to go do sewing or computer or something, people they do get information. But they don't want!

Lazyness!

GRACÈ

They don't want?

JULIET

They don't want! Even they don't

want, Hermina is talking the truth, that they are lazy. You can even, some of the, some of the, I can say to someone, to my peers they need some volunteers, you know. The person can tell you I can't work for nothing. But then where can you go and just go just work now and get nothing, you see. For now everything is volunteer. Because they know that people can't work, but most of the people where looking for money. They are not working for the passion of what they are doing. So information is so plenty outside to the community, but people they don't want to go vote and this confident. That's all.

GRACÈ

Do you think that children believe that going to school is a better future?

Some! (Unanimous)

GRACÈ

Only some? Can we change that? Is it possible that everyone can believe it will bet better?

JULIET

I think to go to the other one those that can change. There are some who want to go to school, they drop out, because lack of the money. To those ones, yes they can be a change, because those they need to be changed you see. They want to be educated, but at home they don't have money.

IDA [22:21]

But now there are some bursaries, the NPSAS and the grants to go to

school. And then they will repay for them (discussions).

NELLY

It is the marks, but they will not, it is not everyone who is getting it. (more discussions)

Sometimes they apply and they failed.

Unfortunately that is not the way it works.

DIANA

They want the results. If your results is poor you are not permitted, you are not qualifying.

GRACÈ [22:58]

So my question is, is it possible for everyone to believe education is a better future? Do you think so?

DIANA

Even those who are smoking dagga they do believe it. To go to school, but they know education conquers everything. Education is the key to success.

PINKY

Ja. Everyone wants education but there's this thing that put them aside. They don't want to go to school, because they are naughty, others they want to steal cars. They call them Zamfiors, they steal cars. They make quick money. Others they are there, they stole, they break the houses. When someone is not there, they go there and they broke in and they steal the tv's. they want mts they what what... they sell it they

get faster money! They want faster money. Not the slow money, you are working January, until January until to December they going to earn 5000 or 3000 but when you've got the car now, you're going to sell the car now, you give 10 000 now, cash. And you've got the money, you're going to have fun. And children now a days they like to drink...

Voice memo: 9/12/12

WILHELMINA

To reach the information, not all are able to have this. To some people it is a luxury to have a say. So there are other children, those who want to, and their parent want to but financially they just can't.

[00:24]

maybe if we

DIANA

sometimes we as Africans, especially we blacks, that is why most of the time we don't qualify. Because other cultures are putting to their culture. If when they, even the same as this one. when the child is born, already she brought the money, the investments for this child, then when the time comes the child wants to go to tertiary, already the child qualify because he has the money, so we as blacks, because we are earning peanuts (agreement) we can't save. We can't afford it. If you have myself, I was working from January and now it is October, I have saved maybe 50cents. (Laughter all around).

PINKY [01:24]

Now early in the morning I was at Mabopane I drew up the last R100. I've got only R100 left, and now it is the 12th. (lots of discussions in the mother tongue).

And what about our children now? We ourselves, we can't afford ourselves. So what about our children? It is not about investment.

WILHELMINA [01:54]

Because the community see you going round (discussion about social worker) Yes I don't. I disagree with volunteering myself. The work is too much. Most I disagree with volunteering. With all of my heart, because the work is so much and people who, those people who we most volunteer, yes we can volunteer marginally, but volunteering is not a good thing because if the people who are working now a days in the offices, in the hospitals, in the people who are earning, are drawing back and the volunteers are doing the job. (agreement, ja! Ja!) and maybe the volunteers are wrong now, because they don't earn, they just wish, immediately when they start to earn, they themselves the volunteer, they draw back, the other volunteer do the job. Meaning volunteering is wrong. You, don't have to agree to volunteering in any way. Because volunteering, you need a soap to wash, you need the yo! It so it's so..

The money for the transport.

As care workers we are thankful for, for the little bit SA Care give us, really because we are able to wash, at least we are able to. She's talking about now she doesn't have, she did have something month end where she all she was able to tell to have a transport up and down, but some other Care workers is just volunteering for offices. It's wrong, it's very wrong! Because of the, the owners of the NGOs, we cannot say they don't get paid, they get money in bulk. Only they had to be taught to budget. In order for the care workers to be able to have any soap to wash or something. So because the owner of the NGO they get this money in bulk and they do paid for themselves in a bulk way, forgetting the workers there. So I won't go for volunteering. I don't like it.

GRACÈ [04:05]

Juliet?

JULIET

For education also, there is no chance, even for us, you know you were willing to do some things, and you are here. And then here there is a lot of experience here, and you are only to, to learn something. But because of lack of money, you can't do that thing any, you are wishing that maybe the company should supposed to think about us and think that maybe something. You wanted to go and learn about nothing, and they get certificate and they get promotions and they, next time is the other. We are not the same, everyone got his own goal you see, so even to us, that's

why there are some other school. But you, you can't afford to go.

GRACÈ

You need money?

JULIET

Ja. To go, because education, even you are, it doesn't mean you are big, Aowa! Even at the parliament, you see people are still educating they are still graduating. So even us, you just stuck in the moment.

We need more. (discussions)

GRACÈ [05:39]

Okay. So if a child does not have Matric now, do you think they can still get a good job?

NO!! No! (unanimous)
Matric and license.

GRACÈ [05:49]

So they need to have at least Matric, right?

SARA

Even they don't have, quiet (discussion). Beside Matric I have a uncle he doesn't have a Matric, and he's working at the government. He's working there at the prison. (discussions) and my cousin is working at the government and they are taking her to school. He's at Matric, they just meet someone (more discussions)

GRACÈ

Extra?

SARA

Ja. Extra. (lots of discussions all around)

ELLEN

Sometimes the experience that you have in the company, that job that you are required to do. Sometimes you with a Matric, because you don't have experience... they take you. It's not all about... Ja. It's not all about it. Some people are doing good.

[07:10]

To be a domestic worker you have to have Matric (agreement). Because the boss is going to leave and tell you that they are going to phone and bring blah blah blah, if you don't answer the phone and you don't write what are you going to do? (discussion)

If you don't know how to answer the phone. And other's they do have Matric and they don't know how to speak... what about that! (lots of discussions in).

PINKY

Can I say something. If you are looking for a job they don't want a cv. They want it. They want a cv. they want to know about the skill. Yes, what do you know. Your skills. Experience.

NELLY [08:16]

Most of the companies now they want a, they don't want to teach you anything about, they want you to have an experience. You and your big certificate, that is not experience that is like, that's why I don't agree with

Wilhelmina saying that you won't volunteer, volunteering sometimes helps. (discussion)

WILHELMINA

Nelly, you are now talking about yourself.

NELLY

I am not talking about myself.

DIANA

You know the way they explain it, Matric and everything, I am working at SA Cares I don't have Matric. And I started cleaning no one teach me how to answer the phone, I didn't know how to speak English, but I told myself I will go there with other people.

NELLY

It's all about you.

DIANA

No it is not about me. it's example. (discussion)

NELLY

I say it is all about you to know to answer the phone! (discussions in mother tongue)

SARA

Matric is not important. (discussions!)

GRACÈ [09:47]

So can I just, can you just show me: who thinks Matric is the most important?

Education! Education.

1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10. Okay. So the other ladies who say skills are more important than having a certificate, is that correct? (nodding) okay. Do you think that school teaches you anything useful? So I have heard a lot of people say for example that it doesn't help to go to school because they don't teach you anything about the real life. Is that true?

Sometimes. Sometimes. Pardon? The real life how? [10:39] The teach you biology... how about Life orientation? (discussions)

GRACÈ

So they've changed it?

Ja!

Okay. So children who go through school now learn all the skills? (unanimous) Yes!
And they learn all the books? (unanimous) Yes!

So to have a Matric now is good? (unanimous) Yes!

SARA

Others, No! many people, those I know. They have Matric but they don't know nothing. (discussions)

Shhhhhhh! Give her a chance, let her explain something! One at a time... yes, yes!

HERMINA

And now Matric is important. If they advertise a posting they want a Mat-

ric and maybe 3 year experience. I can have 5 year experience, but without the Matric they won't take me. They want the Matric! They didn't, I can go and pass the Matric with a distinction, but know nothing, maybe my English isn't perfect, but because of that distinction I will get that job. (comments)

GRACÈ
Malishia?

MALISHIA [11:54]
Can I just add to what Sara said: before I started here I work on some research in department education in UNICEF, and we did the research on HIV/Aids. But 99.9% of those Matriculates cannot read and write. And I ask myself how do they get there? Teachers don't worry, (agreement) it's a general thing. It's what's happening in schools. One, they don't worry. Two, they themselves, because of the new syllabus, and the new curriculum that we have, they, they were not teach how to do it, so they themselves don't know maths, they don't know science. The other thing is our children don't have books. So when I addressed one of the doctors there, it say but how can you work from this because what does it give you. She says: don't worry we know. What happen is that, whatever there are teachers that really help them, there are teachers that go out of their way still, and later helping, helping, but there's other teachers that wants sexual, what is is favours, sexual favours. There's other teachers that just don't care

they are going on all the courses, and everything, the children sit and end of the year they fail. So it's difficult and personally my two eldest daughters where in private schools, I couldn't afford to put the younger in a private school, the two eldest did very well and everything. The younger one she's struggling, not because she is not interested but because the teachers (the teachers) they are not interested and they still don't have books. So it's the, what she, what Sara says it is possible to get a employment if you don't have a Matric but then you need to someone or something. (Ja! Ja!) It's not easy to get it!

DIANA [14:34]
But even if the child of the girl is, the boys not even, get Matric, but the important thing is when you have the skill of that certain workplace. Maybe you the BMW hired you. Then naturally you got that skill, of Mechanic, then you qualify there. But if I'm Diana, I'm black, I don't know anything. (Ja! You don't qualify) [15:10]
Because now people here in South Africa, all provinces, people is on the tv or watching the tv, people are toing for service delivery, because of what? Because those who occupy those seat. They got no skill, they are they just put that person there because in the struggle you were active. They don't know..

PINKY
You are the right person for the position?

Ja!

DIANA
But with my struggle... what can I say? Maybe the ANC or I'm a member of the ANC and then here, that particular party. And then they just put me there. You see, myself I'm going to enjoy the pay, the salary, What about, I'm not doing my job? Knowing nothing! And you don't know nothing.

And then the people are suffering because of me. You see. (Ja!)

PINKY [16:10]
Housing! I don't know nothing about housing. I just see people building the house and then I give my family the house, my friends, all those things.

Corruption! Yes.

WILHELMINA
At the end of the day because of, yes you can find the job because of your skill, at the end of the day Matric is important. To do the rightful way. The rightful journey. (yes!) so if you want to go the right way Matric is the door.

Ja! It's the key!

So you can get a job you can have whatever. Whatever because of your friend, because of the struggle because of, you know, know people or whatever. But that's not the rightful way. The right way, the only way which is right, to get the job is Matric (agreement all round).

GRACÈ
Yes Doris?

DORIS [17:06]
There was this two guys they got a Master's degrees, they are not working. They struggle for ten years to get a job. They've got Master's. I ask myself how? You are so well educated, why are you not working (too much expensive!) when I go for interviews they said you've got one missing experiences you don't have it. See he even went for Management, for six months, then he got a promise, he's working right now. You see. Got his master's but it didn't help.

HERMINA
Sometimes they don't want to pay, master's is so much expensive. They will take me with the diploma they don't want, they're not going to pay much.

DORIS
They even going to Department of Education. And then they are well educated and then they don't. they said no, why we are coming back to you.

GRACÈ
So it's not a guarantee?

DORIS [18:01]
For me, I guess, maybe they want more money (too much money! Ja!) (lots of discussion in mother tongue about Master's)

GRACÈ [18:43]

Okay.
So, if I recap, for a summary then.

[19:04]

We all feel Matric is important (yes!)

It's not the only thing that's important (ja)

Okay, we all think children should work hard at school (mmmm)

But all children don't want to (mmm)

Is there, we are not certain, but is there a way we can get all children to believe that it is important?

[19:29]

Do you think it is possible? That all children believe that school is important?

Some. Some. We said some.

Yes but do you think it is possible that everyone can believe that it is important?

Ja. From the start as they grow. When they still young.

When they're still young?

Ja. Because all of them they want to be a policemen, I want to be... so we encourage them to go to school so that they can be what they wanted to be.

Okay. So the most important thing is to encourage small children that school is important. (yes) and then we pray and believe that they will remember that when they are older? Ja. Grow with the thought! Ja!

GRACÈ [20:18]

So my last question/go think about it is: how do we encourage the children? What do we do that makes it easier for young children to believe that school is important? From what I hear all of you have encouraged your own children, but what I'm asking is, how do we go past our own children and we go to those children whose parents are not encouraging them. How do we get those children to also believe?

Yes, Wilhelmina?

WILHELMINA [20:59]

Sometimes for an outsider like ourselves to encourage or to reach in the community to encourage children, it means we should have the support. Because some of this children are discouraged from going to school. Cause of lack. In the morning they don't have anything to eat. They don't have uniform, they became discouraged. It doesn't have school books. He doesn't have this he doesn't have, he is discouraged to go to school. So I as a care worker, when I go to there I have to have somebody behind me, who when I ask, could you give me to be able to help that family, like SA Care is trying to do. So we can encourage, but you should have a support.

GRACÈ

So I'm asking you the kind of support you need?

WILHELMINA [21:54]

Obviously it's financial. Yes because, it need, why I say financially because it's books that is needed, it's clothing that is needed, it's, I had to get the transport to and from to those people. That's why rapubly I say financial. (yes!)

PINKY [22:20]

Because even me, my clients got a very simple life, like Wilhelmina is talking. Other's don't have uniform, even now, others is to complain about uniform. Because at school they change uniform, they can't, they tell them last year they are going to change the uniform. They still have their last year uniform, they don't have the uniform. Others they don't have books. Others they don't have school bags they kept in plastics. Others they don't they don't have shoes. Sometimes we make it to have the letters to inform you to write the request. Maybe you write the request you want shoes, then you don't get those shoes. They want that shoes, or they want informal white shirt, or orange shirt or other one jacket. We still have that problem and even books again. You see there's the problem, there's a problem this.

ELLEN [23:10]

I think now a days it's much easier. Because the children are getting uniforms from the school. they're (SOME!

Not all) getting uniforms from schools, eh, books, they get school bags, I've seen. So it will develop on times. And they're not paying school fees.

GRACÈ

Okay. Juliet?

JULIET [23:42]

Schools are not the same (yes!) and even the teachers. Uniform and all those things can be at schools, but they don't give it to the children.

NELLY

Some they don't get to the schools at all. The uniforms (discussion continued in mother tongue)

HERMINA [23:58]

Sometimes, eish I don't know how to put it, sometimes it's because we have a pride. (yes!) And schools they did write a letter or maybe they called a meeting and I don't attend the meeting, the parents meeting. Saying if you have a problem of paying your school fund for your kids, if you kids doesn't have school uniform, if your kids doesn't have other thing, come and see me (agreement). So that they can help. Sometimes they do raise the fund, you do explain your situation to the teacher and they can raise the fund. Maybe some can buy the examinations for your kids, some can buy the t-shirts some can buy the trousers. But because we have a empty pride which is going to take us nowhere, I can't go to school and know that my child have the clothes that they donated from the school.

Maybe Ellen bought a trousers for my child, Juliet bought a shirt. So I feel so ashamed like maybe some kids they will tease him, or what, or what. So nowadays may not be they are given the uniform, the kids they didn't pay the school fund. But if you know that I can't afford to pay this school fund, you can go to school. But because, I don't know, maybe some other people is others to choose for themselves.

NELLY [25:19]

Maybe it's because of the school. If the school doesn't give you the forms to fill for uniform, if the school doesn't give you this kind of things what, and if the school doesn't, it's not all of the schools that, you guys, it's not all of the school that, it's not all. Even if they matriculate and they don't receive the school uniform this year. And it's not their fault. It's not their fault that..

HERMINA [25:40]

They did ask the parents come and explain your problem.

NELLY

(continueing the discussion in her mother tongue, Tswana)

GRACÈ

Diana?

DIANA [25:55]

My sister is a teacher, at Winterveld, so some, if your child, they see your child is not well, they will combine their moneys and buy shoes for you, and not all of them, all of their school

are doing that. And then not all of the children are, are not having uniform.

ELLEN

They see the child who is not having the shoes and coming to school without shoes. They'll they will donated, eh, money, and buy shoes and buy something, tunic, and whatever so that he would fit in the other children. The teachers are not that bad!

But not all of them!

NELLY [26:48]

If something is happening in one school it doesn't mean it will happen to another school.

ELLEN

That's what I'm saying.

NELLY

O okay. Ja ja.

(some discussions)

how are you going to, are you going to

say (discussions)

what are you going to do?

HERMINA

I will go to the parents meeting.

NELLY

You are doing all of that, Hermina, you are doing all of that. (discussion) it's not because you are lazy. Let's not put the word lazyness and then everything outside. (discussion)

MALISHIA

Let's give everyone a chance, we need to finish please.

GRACÈ

Diana?

DIANA [27:30]

O in our area, there is the different schools. They differ. They don't operate with the same, what can I say, the same methods. Here we got no school fees, schools. And then others who pay. Whether you are working or not. (ja!) you are going to pay. Whether you receive the, the children's grant, and then sometimes you see that grant, there is no one at home which is working. Everyone is in without money. No income but you're out to pay the school fees. And then, then there are some of the schools that the government adopted the school. that this one is a no school fees. And then they got mean. But our children, sometimes at the High School, primary they don't have any problem the kids, then at High School, because Ida give her son or her daughter R100 then my own children I cant afford to give them R100. Then they suppose to eat that school meal. So because they are teenagers they want pie, they won't go there. They will stay hunger. Because they say yo!

And it's natural.

ELLEN

You see, it is called peer pressure.

Eh!

It is natural it is not wrong.

Eh!

PINKY [29:14]

I was trying to say about at other schools. Even now they didn't have the test books. I'm talking about my clients when I go to them to visit them. Other's children they don't have tests books. They can't, they don't have books, they borrow to other childrens' books, even now. And then others they don't have uniform. Because at their schools they don't give them uniform. I'm talking because I know, they tell me. At Winterveld there is no uniform. They are not giving uniform, to other children. Other children they got uniform, others they don't have.

Even in Garankuwa.

I was trying to say only that, because I work with those children and they told me. Their mothers, even when I come, I visit them, they come to school I saw them with my eyes. They don't have uniform (agreement) they don't have school bags they carry plastic.

They don't have shoes. They don't have.

I sometimes request, I say I want shoes but I don't get the sizes.

GRACÈ [30:13]

Anyone else wanted to say something?

(Nobody volunteering)

Okay, so we are going to meet again in October, they (pointing at Malishia representing the SA Cares for Life staff) are working on a plan. But what I want you to think about, while I'm not here, is. I understand that resources are an extremely important part of getting children to go to school. But if we cannot give them resources. What else can we give them to encourage them? Is there something? I just want you to go think about that.

If I don't have money but I can give you something else to make it easier, what would that something else be?

Ah no homework. (laughter)

APPENDIX B

Notes from chat over coffee with Alison Wiklund - author of the hyding hyena

You need incentives although they might not be the first/real reason you want.

When you give a child a book you bring the influence back home creating a much more dynamic school environment.

It is important to appeal to both the teachers and the head master when you are working with school children.

It works really well to video tape the children and play it back to them. Food is always a good motivator as it always attracts people.

The bottom line:

1. Everyone wants attention. Therefore it is extremely important that you as a designer is able to listen, and let them express themselves.

Talk about them. What is it that they want?

Make sure you show genuine interest, as faking will only harm the process further.

2. I like to do a viewfinder exercise where the participants are given a new perception of themselves.

Show them that they have a worth and a skill.

3. Increase the self esteem of participants and give them ownership, then they will buy into the idea and concept really quickly.

4. Get them excited about the basic things.

5. Another good incentive is making them realize how they can make money out of this? Because everyone needs to make a living.

6. You have to build on the foundations they already have in place. This creates the realization that I can also be this!

If you are good, if you get it right, then you can teach others and the message spreads much quicker.

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