

ISANGQA

NEWSLETTER

Welcome to *Isangqa* – The Circle

The Eugenia Nothemba Gxowa Foundation

Dr Lindsay Kelland: Feminist philosopher, Senior Lecturer Rhodes University, Makhanda and Additional Board Member of the Eugenia Nothemba Gxowa Foundation

WELCOME TO ISANGQA - THE CIRCLE 6TH ISSUE

This 6th edition of *Isangqa* is released during Youth Month in South Africa in remembrance of the youth who took to the streets on 16th June 1976 to challenge the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. The Eugenia Nothemba Gxowa Foundation (ENGF) always observes this important month with either a webinar, for example, one webinar focused on gender-based violence against women in SA tertiary institutions, or an edition of *Isangqa*.

The South African government announced the 2024 Youth Day Theme to be 'Actively advancing the socioeconomic gains in our democracy.' The government's focus for Youth Month 2024 is the promotion of sport amongst youth, arguing that "Sport has the power to positively impact the lives of youth and help them tackle some of the challenges they face. Through sport, the youth can unlock opportunities for growth..."¹

The ENGF shares the desire to capacitate our youth to 'tackle some of the challenges they face', particularly those relating to gender-based violence, and has always promoted the importance of girls ongoing education as central to 'unlocking opportunities for growth.' In line with the theme of 'actively advancing the socioeconomic gains of our democracy', *Isangqa 6* explores work that the ENGF is spearheading in our local area that focuses on those forces that continue to impede girls' (and adolescent girls') education and growth.

Pinkie Sobahle explores the ENGF's hopes to inspire a movement among adolescent girls—the Entangeni Adolescent Girls' Movement—characterised by the intimate dialogue enabled in intanga. Sobahle explains intanga as a special room typically reserved for girls in which they can discuss their concerns with their peers. Drawing on the spirit of this practice, the ENGF has initiated dialogue amongst adolescent girls that promotes their agency and development. The goal is to empower young girls to challenge our government and their parents to ensure that they have access to education until they, at least, finish matric.

Phumelela Woshe and Natasha Ncube generously share with us their involvement and brief reflections on Phase 1 of the ENGF's HeforShe campaign in collaboration with the University of Fort Hare and, in particular, their Gender-Based Violence Prevention Unit. This phase of the campaign focused on data collection through focus groups with students across the Alice and East London campuses and aimed to get a sense from the students of the nature and prevalence of GBV at the institution as well as their perspectives of the institutions' responses to GBV.

Dr Nomakhosazana Rasana, a fellow Grahamstonian/Makhandian, and lecturer in Education at Nelson Mandela University, suddenly passed away on 19th May this year. We include a tribute to her. ♀



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1 Government Communication available at: <https://www.gov.za/YouthMonth2024>

REVISTING AFRICAN TRADITIONAL SAFE SPACES FOR GIRLS

Pinkie Sobahle

Pinkie Sobahle

Teacher, editor, former member of Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB); former Commissioner in the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE)

The Entangeni Adolescent Girls' Movement (EAGM) of the Eugenia Nothemba Gxowa Foundation (ENGF) has used the concept of *entangeni* for their programme to provide a space for adolescent girls to share their experiences and fears, specifically of their sexual and reproductive health rights. It encourages them to find solutions, with the hope that they could ultimately be used to influence the laws and policies of the country. Taking the form of a movement, the Foundation acknowledges that this scheme is already underway in some of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Member States, for example, in Zimbabwe where it has been initiated by the Rozalia Memorial Trust (RMT).

In its attempt to empower women in general and adolescent girls in particular, the Foundation has looked at one of the Conclusions of the 60th UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 60). This Conclusion encourages Member States to develop and implement holistic policies. These would enable girls to have access to education and stay at school at least until they complete matric. It also considers several practices that threaten the sexual and reproductive health rights of girls and young women, like child or early forced marriage, early life-threatening and unwanted pregnancies, rape and other incidents of gender-based violence against girls (GBVAG)¹.

Women and girls face numerous challenges. These take various forms, including (GBVAW/G) and femicide

and attempts to address these challenges are made at international and regional levels. Member States then decide whether to align themselves with these protocols; South Africa is a signatory to many of them. For instance, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol 2003) includes all categories of rights drafted from the perspective of women, including equality, non-discrimination and protection against violence. Some of the other laws that protect the rights of women and girls are the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 and the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (PEPUDA) Act 4 of 2000. Those that refer to children directly are the Children's Act 38 of 2005, especially Sections 7, 10, 12 and 150, the South African Schools' Act 84 of 1996 which promulgates compulsory education from Grade 1 to Grade 10 and now the Basic Education Laws Amendment (BELA) Bill that makes education compulsory from Grade R to Grade 10.

As seen above, there are laws and policies in the country that seek to address some of the challenges that face women, girls in general, and adolescent girls in particular. However, the challenges do not seem to end. What else can be done?

The Foundation proposes that the country should consider looking at what has worked before. As a result, they have established the Entangeni Adolescent Girls' Movement. *Entangeni* is derived from the word



intanga which is a special room that is set aside for the girl or girls in the homestead. The word *intanga* has two meanings that are important for our purposes. The first one, as explained above, refers to a room and the other refers to a friend or person from the same age group. *Entangeni* is a safe space that is used as a bedroom and a meeting place for the girl and her friends, where they can discuss issues pertaining to them. Some of these may not be discussed in the presence of adults. Boys are allowed by invitation only, but adults are not allowed at all.

This concept is also found in other cultures in Africa. AmaZulu, for instance, call it *isigodlo/esigodlweni*. In Zimbabwe, among the Shonas, they refer to it as *Nhanga*. Although the words may vary, the common denominator is that they all describe safe spaces for girls.

This article therefore seeks to interrogate the concept *entangeni* in terms of social structures. It should be remembered that culture is not static but dynamic. Therefore, the

1 Concept Note

Foundation has to ensure that the concept cannot be applied as it was. Only what works in the current situation should be considered.

The EAGM is a movement. A movement is defined as a group of organised people who share similar ideas and beliefs. It aims towards a gradual development or changing of opinion or policy and lastly, to make a difference in the world². This is a proactive and forward-looking approach. One cannot help but think of the Girl Guides Movement which started in 1909 in Britain and was introduced in South Africa in 1910. The movement still exists and is still found in many countries. Its teachings, for those who were once members, are embedded in their minds and actions. There are similarities to be found here with what the ENGF on seeks to achieve. Perhaps the question that the Foundation needs to ask is, how did the Girl Guide Movement survive for such a long time?

The name itself identifies the EAGM as a girls-only space. Anyone else who attends, does so by invitation. While it is important to keep the Movement for girls only, it is also important to share the space with others. This will help the members to understand different perspectives, including those of the other sex or different age groups, including adults. The move to include adults addresses intergenerational dialogue. This mix of generations will enrich the discussions by combining the wisdom and experience of the elderly with the energy and innovation of youth, thus leading to powerful solutions for sustainable development³.

The aim of the Movement is to provide the girls with an audible, well-informed voice that will

be able to articulate the social needs of adolescent girls as a group, including those of the LGBTQI+⁴. The Movement should consider the importance of voices of individuals; these should be encouraged and not silenced.

The Movement also aims to have girls who are able to engage and lobby democratically elected leaders at national, provincial and local levels on laws pertaining to women that need to be in place and/or amended⁵. The presence of adults who are in these positions will ensure that the adolescent girls will get to hear directly about challenges that affect them. The girls will also be able to lobby those in positions of authority in person.

The country has divided adolescence from 10 to 14 years old as early adolescence, and from 15 to 17 years old as mid-adolescence. The Foundation has identified the participants from the ages of 13 to 17. They should consider dividing the age groups into two.

The activities of the Movement, as stated in the Concept Note, include leadership and mentoring; healing wounds/experiences of the past; addressing mental health issues and wellbeing; and prevention and response to gender-based violence against girls, including early/forced marriages. The Movement will be informed by the discussions that are held by adolescent girls as well as the relevant laws and policies pertaining to women in general and adolescent girls in particular.

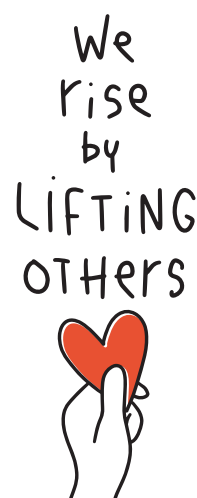
Lastly, the Movement will encourage the use of modern technology. This is one of the fastest ways of sharing information and ensuring the sustainability of the Movement. ♀

MEET NEW BOARD MEMBER: Ms Nosiseko Mditshwa



Nosie, as she is affectionately known, was recruited to replace Vumile Lwana as an additional board member. She has a Bachelor of Social Work degree from the University of Fort Hare in Alice, in the Eastern Cape, and she is currently undertaking research which will form part of her Honours degree.

Nosie has been employed as a student social worker at Fort England Hospital in Makhandla, tutored Psychology students at the University of Fort Hare and been an intern at the Department of Social Development, where she was responsible for the administration of grants for abused children. ♀



2 Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (10th edition). (1999EReference).

3 UN Today – Alejandro Bonilla Garcia, June 2023

4 Concept Note

5 Concept Note

HeforShe Campaign at Fort Hare University

Phumelela Woshe and Natasha Ncube

Left, Phumelela Woshe and right, Natasha Ncube, data collectors from the University of Fort Hare



The campaign continues. You can read the details of the initiation of this campaign in our previous edition (*December 2023, 5th Edition*). In brief, the Eugenia Nothemba Gxowa Foundation (ENGf) in partnership with the National Lotteries Commission, is piloting the UN Women's HeforShe Global Solidarity Campaign at the University of Fort Hare (UFH). Men holding leadership positions in society are challenged to be at the forefront of fighting gender inequalities, and more specifically, senior male leaders at Fort Hare will focus on gender-based violence against women (GBVAW) at the university. Working with the university's GBV Prevention Unit, the ENGf recruited ten postgraduate students from the social sciences, psychology and law faculties to collect data on the nature, prevalence and response to GBV at the university.

Natasha Ncube and Phumelela Woshe are two of the data collectors contracted by the ENGf to carry out this work. Ncube is a Development Studies Honours graduate doing an internship at the Fort Hare GBV Prevention Unit, and Woshe is a University of Pretoria Development Studies Honours graduate, who is currently unemployed.

The researchers were trained by Celeste Fortuin, an independent feminist researcher. Fortuin took them through the background of the project, which puts men, as the beneficiaries of gender inequality, at the forefront of fighting gender inequality. From her own research, Fortuin shared her findings on GBVAW in South African tertiary institutions. Among other things, her research highlighted the absence of reliable, dependable data on the topic. Fortuin has

discovered that while there appears to be little to no available research around this topical issue, and with seemingly very few cases having been reported to law enforcement agencies, it is quite possible that due to the sensitivity of this issue, the confidentiality of the victims is being maintained and consequently the information is not publicly available.

The data collectors were trained in qualitative research methods, with an emphasis on focus group discussion, taught how to use the data collection tools and the

participants' consent forms, and most importantly, shown how to provide secure environments and keep the respondents safe.

Fortuin explained that since the student body is understood to be on the receiving end of GBVAW and therefore has valid first-hand experience of the issues being investigated, it made sense to mobilise graduates and use them to reach out to the greater student community. Fortuin suggested that every data collector hold two focus groups with 15 participants in each. The study also gave a platform to



University of Fort Hare

Together in Excellence



students to talk openly and increase their awareness of GBVAW trends at the two Fort Hare campuses.

Whilst Woshe gathered data exclusively at the Alice campus, Ncube conducted student focus groups at both the East London and Alice campuses. From their discussions, they ascertained that additional definitions of GBVAW had emerged. For example:

- The issue of violence against women by other women was raised, where one woman exercises coercive control over another in a partnership, or where a partner in a lesbian (homosexual) relationship behaves violently.
- The relationship between lecturers and students, where a female student rejecting a lecturer's advances can easily receive in low grades or even be failed. It was claimed that reporting this type of abuse by a lecturer to the Dean or Head of Department did not guarantee a solution to the girl's ongoing safety or an end to the lecturer's unwelcome behaviour. In the focus groups, respondents



The Data Collectors, above front row: Lihlumile Nomavayi; Natasha Ncube; Achumile Nombungu; Nosiseko Mditshwa. Back row: Amahle Mvambi; Aphelele Maliwa; Phumelela Woshe; Dr Bellita Banda Chitsamatanga (Ms B); Kibadasi Chego; Anda Mcaleni. Below, seated in front with the Data Collectors, Nomkhitha Gysman, Anita Kube and Celeste Fortuin.



attested that such incidents are not uncommon at UFH.

- Another form of GBVAW that was highlighted in the focus groups related to queer phobia, which they claimed is rarely addressed. It is not unusual to find a so-called 'straight' person taunting a queer person, and people in management, including campus control officials, appear unable to address or put a stop to this kind of abuse.

"As data collectors, we created safe spaces to hear all views and voices," said the two researchers. "But we ensured that we didn't deviate from what was on the table."

Ncube and Woshe reported that the data also exposed internalised dominance and sexism by male students. When talking about the dress code for women, it became apparent that girls who wore shorts could be verbally insulted. According to the researchers, the university management does not have the capacity to handle the GBVAW cases brought to their attention and the campus control officers were the least able to handle situations, whether they were

reported immediately or several hours later.

The data collectors expressed the hope that the HeforShe campaign will empower leaders to handle GBVAW at the campus more effectively than is currently the case. As a priority, they suggested Phase 2 of the campaign should build the capacity of university officials, including campus security officers, deepening their understanding of GBVAW and enhancing their skills when handling conflict, so they do not impose their personal biases on the matter in question. The researchers recommended that there should be a further effort to help male students unlearn hetero-patriarchal beliefs, norms and values, including preconceived stereotypes about women. They also advised that ENGF help to establish a young women's forum to be the eyes and ears of the campaign. Finally, the researchers proposed that the university consider recruiting influential people, such as sporting personalities, at the GBVPU, to encourage students to make maximum use of the facility. ♀



News from UN Women



UN Women is the UN organization delivering programmes, policies and standards that uphold women's human rights and ensure that every woman and girl lives up to her full potential.

Any individual, non-governmental organization, group or network may submit communications (complaints/appeals/petitions) to the Commission on the Status of Women containing information relating to alleged violations of human rights that affect the status of women in any country in the world. The Commission on the Status of Women considers such communications as part of its annual programme of work in order to identify emerging trends and patterns of injustice and discriminatory practices against women for purposes of policy formulation and development of strategies for the promotion of gender equality.

What types of communications are sought?

Accurate and detailed information relating to the promotion of women's rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields in any country anywhere in the world.

For more information on the Communication Procedure, deadline for submissions and examples of the categories of communication, [click here](#).

The ENG Foundation is part of the Civil Society Advisory Group For The UN Women Regional Office For East And Southern Africa (R-CSAG). [Click here for more information](#).



A Tribute to Dr Nomakhosazana Hazel Rasana

by the RASANA AND NDYOLASHE FAMILIES

Khosi's untimely death has left the whole family absolutely devastated. However, the tributes, prayers and messages of condolence received from various communities have been a great comfort to us, as we realise how much we are loved.

Dr Nomakhosazana Hazel Rasana was born to Nobhini and Groove, an influential couple residing in Grahamstown, now Makhanda. Raised in Fingo Village, Khosi, as she was affectionately known, initially attended one of the Fingo Village Primary Schools, then proceeded to Nyaluza High School, before completing her matric at Loyiso High School in Gqeberha.

After obtaining a Diploma in Primary Education from the Cape College of Education and whilst working as a teacher, Khosi received a Bachelor of Arts from the University of South Africa, followed by an Honours Degree in Applied Linguistics. Still thirsting for knowledge, she registered herself at Rhodes University and was successfully awarded an Enterprise Management Postgraduate Diploma. With a Diploma in Language Instruction from Ohio University and a Masters Degree in Education from Rhodes University, Khosi travelled to Bangor University in the United Kingdom to read for a PhD in Applied Linguistics. Then, just to keep herself busy while looking for a suitable employment opportunity, she signed up for a postgraduate diploma in Political and International Studies at Rhodes University and followed that up with a course in Effective Leadership from the Nelson Mandela Business School.

As a teacher, Khosi taught at Nathaniel Nyaluza and Mahlesela high schools in Makhanda and Nomzamo High School in Port Alfred. She then went on to work at Rhodes University and the University of the Western Cape, before spending the last eleven years employed by the Nelson Mandela University where, amongst many roles, she supervised masters and PhD students.

An avid supporter of the community, Khosi was Chair of the Old Nyaluzans Association. She also served as a member of the Council for Higher Education as a curriculum evaluator from 2018-



2022. In 2019, she was appointed by the South African parliament to be a member of the Pan South African Languages Board (PanSALB) and was serving her second term on the South African government's Arts and Culture portfolio as a board member of the Amazwi Literature Museum at the time of her death. She was also a member of the African Languages Association of Southern Africa from 2021-2023, an executive member of the Cape College Union and a former member of the Reading Association of South Africa.

"'Miss Gucci', was what I used to call her because of her sense of style", said Mr Lance Schultz, CEO of PanSALB, as he paid an emotional

tribute to Khosi. As a way of acknowledging her contribution to languages transformation, PanSALB gave her family a certificate of contribution. In celebrating its century of existence, the Ethiopian Episcopal Church Mothers' Union (Umanyano Lwentandazo Yamanina,) produced a book, which Khosi edited as her contribution to this milestone.

"Khosi was a respected and dedicated staff member of the Faculty of Education at the Nelson Mandela University for more than ten years. She left an indelible mark on all her faculty colleagues and all the students who attended her classes. We salute her for her passion for teaching language

and for being a torchbearer for indigenous languages. Her kind spirit, warm smile and love for good things will be missed in the faculty. Hamba Kahle, Sis Khosi. Rest well, Dr Rasana. Until we meet again, dear star-mate." - Prof Heloise Sathorar, Acting Executive Dean of the Faculty of Education at Nelson Mandela University.

As a qualified traditional healer herself, traditional healers performed their rituals to honour and acknowledge Khosi's passing. Dr Nomakhosazana Hazel Rasana leaves behind her mother, her son and daughter, grandchildren, siblings and paternal and maternal aunts. ♀

