

# GR@ILVINE

## GRAIL PROGRAMMES NEWSLETTER

Kleinmond, South Africa, May 2017



'Each one teach one' at Mthimkhulu Community Development Centre skills training programs.

### Each one teach one

By Lindia Trout

Mthimkhulu Community Development Centre has offered skills training programs since its inception. This year Mthimkhulu is looking to expand its course offerings. This is in line with the organisation's shift towards running courses and skills training aimed at equipping participants for the job market as well as for enterprise development. We are currently testing to incorporate new areas of training. It is envisaged that this will widen participants' options to make a living.

One of our new courses, Website Development using Wordpress, is offered through a partnership Mthimkhulu has struck up with local business Wowmedia – where the basic courses are offered free – participants leave with practical skills to build a website and they have the option to further their training with the service provider for more advanced courses. Our next Wordpress webdevelopment course will take place in June. Please follow us on facebook for details of upcoming courses - [www.facebook.com/Mthimkhulu-Community-Development-Program](http://www.facebook.com/Mthimkhulu-Community-Development-Program).



**"Think Green – Please do not print this newsletter unless you really need to"**

### IN THIS ISSUE

#### MTHIMKHULU COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Each one teach one.

By Lindia Trout – p. 1

#### TRAINING FOR TRANSFORMATION

Working not for but 'with the poor'.

By Marykutty Palaparambil – p. 1-2

#### THE GRAIL CENTRE

An ideal place for holiday accommodation, conferences and retreats. – p. 3

### Working not for but 'with the poor'

By Marykutty Palaparambil

*"Knowledge is produced in response to questions. Once you have learned how to ask questions that are relevant, appropriate and substantial, you have learned how to learn and no one can keep you from learning whatever you want or need to know" Wren (1977, p.12).*

There is no system of education which leaves the learners in a neutral position, "sitting on the fence". In this article, I would like to explore certain aspects of an educational system which was introduced by the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire. I write from my understanding of the principles and methodology of Freire and my experience in TFT of facilitating and participating in Learning Teaching Teams, where we practiced as animators and facilitators. I also write from my desire to bring changes in my work and in the attitude of the work in my organization. And as such, I have tried to share my personal reflections.

### Key principles of Freire

Hope and Timmel (1996) describe the six principles of Freire as follows: (1) The aim of education is radical transformation (2) Relevant generative theme (3) Dialogue (4) Problem posing and the search for solutions (5) Reflection and action (6) No education is neutral.



*“Critical understanding leads to critical action”, states Freire.*

Marykutty Palaparambil (TfT 2016-17)

Freire has brought together the process of developing critical awareness and literacy teaching—a process that links the reflection and action. I see that his principles and methodology are useful not only for adult education, but also for learners, teachers of any age, anywhere. To use his principles not even a school building is a prerequisite, but the attitude of the teacher and the learner is central.

### **The teacher and the learner**

It is important to change the name from “teacher” to “facilitator” or “animator” and from “learner” to “participant”, to assign a different meaning to the terms. The word “teacher” has connotations of an authority and a controller of knowledge, and “learner” as one who knows nothing and needs to be taught. This attitude devalues the person. What I experienced in my TfT practice session was the existence of ‘teacher–learner’ and ‘learner–teacher’, which I plan to emulate in my future work.

### **Passive recipient**

Within the formal or dominant systems of education, the teacher (an expert) with the knowledge “pours” information into the head of the student who passively receives this transfer of knowledge. I have received such a formal education and did not develop a critical consciousness in me, was not trained to think critically and to ask critical questions. My work and mission is to train, uplift and empower poor and illiterate tribal women (Indigenous Adivasi Indian women). Now I realise that I have to first change my attitude as a facilitator. I should not present information, but should help people organize concepts, drawing on people’s every day experience or understanding of life as linked to the concepts. This is how they gain the information. I need to show empathy in the situation and learn the art of facilitating dialogue. An important opinion was expressed by Freire (2005, p. 40) that “Critical understanding leads to critical action”.

It is important for me to learn critical understanding, not just the meaning of the words. I also need to grow in my ability to question, reason and think critically then my actions will become critical. I admire the power of team work and the problem-posing code in the TfT workshops.

### **Active Participant**

Freire aimed to shift his learners from passivity to a critical and active awareness and he used the term ‘conscientization’ to describe this type of transformation. To begin with, the facilitator should understand that the participants already have knowledge from their real life experiences and they are born in a culture. What I learnt is that I should be an animator in the community, meaning to say, part of the whole process, ready to take any risk, connected to the group. This challenges me to sit with the participants and analyze on the ground with people. At TfT people respect each other and question each other. I am challenged by a quote I heard in TfT class from an indigenous people’s activists group, which says, “If you have come to help me you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.” Reflecting over this quote I realized that my goal to work for poor and indigenous people should not be ‘for the poor’ but ‘with the poor’. After reading and reflecting on the different ways of responding to poverty, I realized that I was located for some time in a charity approach - caring for the welfare of the people. I then moved to a development approach, giving skills to the people. It never occurred to me even to ask myself or to them why are they poor. In my future work with the people, I will animate the participants to ask the socio-cultural, economic and political causes of poverty.

### **No education is neutral**

Freire explained that we all are conditioned by our life experiences. Therefore it is important that we look critically at how our judgments and values are affected and affect others. He asks us to constantly watch ourselves so that we do not try to shape others in our image. We are asked to encourage others to develop their own paths. We are also asked to check that education does not subjugate people but liberate them – to be critical, creative, free, active and responsible members of society. An interesting view was expressed by Freire (1993, p.69) that “Human existence cannot be silent, nor can it be nourished by false words, but only by true words, with which men and women transform the world.”

Saying the word is not the privilege of some few persons but the right of every one. No one can say a true word alone; nor can she say it for another. It is important to have Dialogue between whose right to words is denied and those who deny. The fundamental right to speak must be reclaimed to prevent the continuation of dehumanizing aggression.

### **Problem posing education**

I learnt in LTT the art of asking questions. The gradual process of asking: What? How? Why? enables participants to dig deeper down to the root causes and find out the consequences. The strong emotion generated through questioning and naming the problem can also help communities to make action plans that can overcome short-term consequences of the problem as well as a long-term strategy to remove the root causes. When the community makes an action plan collectively, it will be effective; unlike the action plan made by a facilitator. This is another important insight which I will use in my work. Still, I need to learn more about the art of framing questions that will enable the participants to unfold their knowledge, experience and to develop critical consciousness.

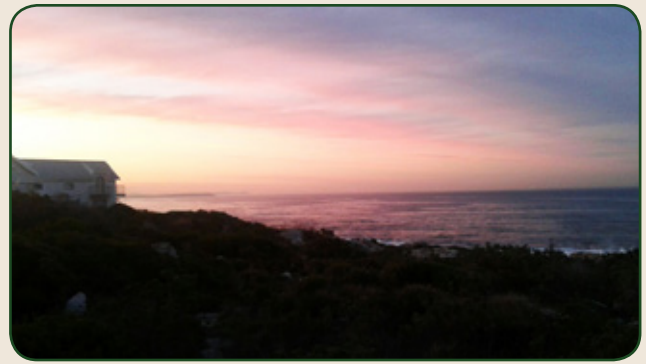
In glancing critically at my life and work, curiously I discovered that in my 20s I was a Charity worker trying to give food to the hungry, in my 40s I taught the poor to gain some skills to find their food and in my 60s I will animate people to break the culture of silence and focus to gain self-confidence to ask why some people are poor. My learning journey continues...

### **The Grail Centre**

The Grail Centre is an ideal place for holiday accommodation, conferences and retreats. It is located in Kleinmond, at about 100 km from Cape Town and 40 km from Hermanus. Surrounded by trees and mountains, it has thirteen self-contained Cape cottages, a swimming-pool, two meeting rooms and a dining room in a quiet atmosphere for work and relaxation. It is a perfect place to come for a holiday with your family. For bookings contact Leverne on 028 271 3410 or [grailadm@mweb.co.za](mailto:grailadm@mweb.co.za).

### **Area Attractions**

- Blue Flag beach (10 min walk)
- Pristine Fynbos Reserve
- Mountain hiking trails
- Betty's Bay African Penguin Colony
- Wild horses
- Birding at Rooisand Nature Reserve



Enjoy early walks on the Palmiet path, in Kleinmond.

## **ABOUT US**

### **THE GRAIL CENTRE TRUST**

The Grail Centre Trust is based in Kleinmond, Western Cape. This Not-for-Profit Organisation delivers two programmes, namely Training for Transformation and Mthimkhulu Community Development Programme. In addition, the Grail Centre Conference and Retreat Centre can accommodate groups of up to 50 people.

### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

#### **Mthimkhulu Community Development Programme**

Tel. +27 (0)28 271 5213  
Fax. +27 (0)28 271 5639  
Email: [admin@grailprogrammes.org.za](mailto:admin@grailprogrammes.org.za)  
Website: [www.grailprogrammes.org.za](http://www.grailprogrammes.org.za)  
Facebook: Mthimkhulu-Community-Development

#### **Training for Transformation**

Tel. +27 (0)28 271 4887  
Fax. +27 (0)86 576 88 65  
Email: [tft@grailprogrammes.org.za](mailto:tft@grailprogrammes.org.za)  
Website: [www.trainingfortransformation.co.za](http://www.trainingfortransformation.co.za)  
Facebook: TrainingforTransformation

#### **The Grail Centre**

Tel. +27 (0)28 271 3410  
Fax. +27 (0)28 271 4704  
Email: [grailadm@mweb.co.za](mailto:grailadm@mweb.co.za)  
Website: [www.thegrailcentre.org.za](http://www.thegrailcentre.org.za)  
Facebook: [grailcentre.kleinmond](https://www.facebook.com/grailcentre.kleinmond)

Our work is not possible without your support.  
Please contribute and contact Eunice at  
[eunice@grailprogrammes.org.za](mailto:eunice@grailprogrammes.org.za).