BUILDING COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAMMES:

A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

With financial support from

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Building adult and community education (ACE) programmes is currently receiving more attention in South Africa as well as on the African continent. The development of ACE programmes is integral to a focus on the establishment of adult learning centres where youth and adults could build knowledge towards the socio-economic development of communities and society. Countries on the African continent are increasingly focusing on policy and programmes of which community learning centres feature as key sites of formal and non-formal education.

Several global and local determinants such as the ecological crisis, COVID-19 and the growing debates related to a just transition provide the contexts for re-engagement with the purposes, focus and approaches to community education programmes. More recently, the Marrakech Framework for Action (MFA) drew attention to the importance of advancing human rights-oriented and social justice adult education systems as imperative in a time of great transition. This focus of the MFA, noting the exacerbation of the socio-economic conditions of millions of Africans, directs adult educators across the transdisciplinary fields of practice to reflect on a broad set of themes that require educational responses, including building praxes of hope and possibility. Today, there is broad consensus that adult education on the continent should engage, among others, the thematic areas of climate change, community food systems, conflict, gender-based violence, migration, learning and work in the informal economy, community health systems, the water crisis, community energy systems and community economic systems. It is therefore critical to build and share a variety of resources that could support the educational and practical work of adult educators working in and across these thematic areas.

In October 2022, a group of government officials from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), university-based scholars in the National Research Foundation Chair for Community, Adult and Workers Education (CAWE), and principals from the nine Community Education and Training Colleges (CETCs) met to discuss a strategic plan and communication strategy for non-formal adult education (NFE) in South Africa. The event was co-hosted by DVV International, DHET and the Centre for Education Rights and Transformation, University of Johannesburg. Based on several years of research, there is an acknowledgement of the significance of NFE as complementary to the formal adult education programmes that have been established over the last 20 years. Important in this acknowledgement is the urgency to conceptualise and reinforce NFE programmes that are informed by community-based socio-economic and political analyses. Such analyses should result in community education that encourages and engages people in learning and actions based on community interests, needs, issues and problems. Community education curricula should, therefore, support local people in their efforts to play constructive and positive roles in addressing issues that affect their daily lives. This could be made possible through locally sited, integrated, issues-based programmes rather than the compartmentalised, subject-based provision prevalent in community learning centres in South Africa. Curricula that use development study models and that reflect the development of critical citizenship, substantive democracy, community development and social justice are encouraged.

A key question that arises from these discussions is how we build capacity amongst adult and community educators to bring educational programmes into existence. This publication, which is based on research that spans more than a decade, is a resource to support adult educators in their role in building NFE programmes that are responsive to the needs and interests of communities in which they work.

This resource encourages adult educators and community activists to embrace a pedagogy towards the progressive transformation of communities. In developing this resource, we recognise the importance of building capacity with adult educators and community and cultural workers in the conceptualisation, design and facilitation of curricula that are more directly linked to socio-economic locations in which learning takes place.

There are several methodological approaches to building community education programmes. This resource promotes participatory approaches, especially the use of community participatory action research (CPAR). There are many important reasons for this. We would like to highlight a few and encourage adult educators to engage with this methodology. First, community learning centres are sites of learning located within communities and should by their very location be the most socially engaged spaces of, and for, learning. The vision, mission and resources of a CLC should be oriented towards the needs and interests of communities. Second, CPAR views participation and community action as vital to building critical citizenship, substantive democracy and social justice. Third, CPAR offers adult educators an opportunity to recognise the kinds of knowledge that best serve human emancipation (knowledge tied conceptually, politically and ethically to a larger pedagogy of liberation), and to recognise that knowledge is socially constructed. An important characteristic of CPAR is that communities are holders and constructors of knowledge that emerges from their histories and experiences in society. Fourth, CPAR is not simply a method, but rather a theory in practice and in support of the struggles of poor, marginalised and oppressed groups. CPAR is therefore explicitly political in orientation and in terms of whose interest it serves. Fifth, CPAR recognises the prominent roles of communities as the architects of critical enquiry including their role as originators of knowledge for social change and collective praxis. Sixth, CPAR is a basic human right in the sense that all citizens have the right to the systematic increase in knowledge most vital to their survival as human beings. Full citizens should have the right to make ongoing and strategic inquiry on a range of issues. Seventh, CPAR is also an educational process and commonly associated with popular education. As popular education, CPAR constructs curricula from the concrete experiences and material interests of people in communities. It involves collective learning and development and forges direct links between education and social action. Finally, CPAR is based on building and sustaining mutual beneficial and truly collaborative partnerships within communities and uses several methods that encourage collective participation and action.

This resource, *Building community education programmes: A participatory approach*, is based on the knowledge constructed with communities and shares with adult and community educators an approach from which we hope they could learn. The resource is not a textbook or blueprint for building community education programmes. It has been prepared to challenge and encourage adult educators in their vocation and as intellectuals interested in enhancing transformative pedagogical practices toward a transformed and just society.

I am inspired by the profound statement of a community educator from Freedom Park, Johannesburg. He said: *"Community education is central to our community life. It is part of the cultural production of our community – something that should live within our community like fresh air, like water – a natural part of our existence. Without it, community life is damaged and open to all forms of oppression."*

Ivor Baatjes
Director: Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training (CIPSET), Nelson Mandela University

WE DEDICATE THIS PUBLICATION TO ALL THE ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATORS AND THE COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS WHO SHARED WITH US THEIR CO-CONSTRUCTED KNOWLEDGE, IDEAS AND ACTIONS. WE SHARE THIS PUBLICATION WITH ALL THE ADULT EDUCATORS AS A CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THEIR MISSION IN USING ADULT EDUCATION AS A VEHICLE TO BUILD THE KIND OF SOCIETY WE WANT.

INTRODUCTION

This Learning Guide is a resource for community educators, community workers and activists. Community educators, community workers and activists work in a variety of areas, such as food and hunger, energy, healthcare, alternative economic systems, etc. - this guide should be used to support their learning & teaching and doing.

The guide is made up of three parts:

- WHAT IS COMMUNITY EDUCATION?

- COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AS CRITICAL PEDAGOGY.

- COMMUNITY EDUCATION FROM THE GROUND-UP.

The guide is a combination of theory and practice. The 'theory' draws from scholars' work and on-the-ground examples, specifically the work of the Community Education Programme (CEP) (Centre for Integrated Post-school Education and Training (CIPSET), Nelson Mandela University) and the Community Literacy and Numeracy Group (CLING). The 'practice' includes a number of activities which users of the guide are encouraged to engage with. There are many resources within this resource which can be accessed online (some hard copies are available), such as popular booklets developed by CIPSET and the Centre for Education Rights and Transformation (CERT), University of Johannesburg.

PART ONE:
WHAT IS COMMUNITY EDUCATION?

Write down a few words/ideas that come to mind when you hear the term *Community Education*.

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*Community Education emerges out of people's experiences and social interests generated within communities. Community Education enables democratic agendas to emerge at local levels to challenge and **eradicate** oppression linked to exploitation, marginalisation, cultural dominance, powerlessness and violence. Community Education exists neither to help people enter into the workplace, nor to place profit as the main objective. Instead it focuses on education that benefits the whole of society, bringing about transformation.*

Community Education Manifesto. Community Education Programme, Centre for Integrated Post-school Education and Training (CIPSET), Nelson Mandela University, 2017

**eradicate** - get rid of/end

Let's begin by looking at various terms:

✓ Community

✓ Community Work

✓ Community Education:

- Its Purpose
- Community Workers/Educators
- Community Education Programmes.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY?

Write down a few words/ideas that come to mind when you hear the word *Community*.

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The term *community* has different meanings. It remains a complex concept but is an idea that is important because it describes something essential and **irreducible** about the everyday reality of peoples' lives and the spaces where those lives are lived (Tett, 2010). For those who engage in community work, giving careful consideration to the *meaning* of community is important - how *community* is defined and the relationships within communities - because these definitions have significant implications for action.

irreducible - complex/not simple
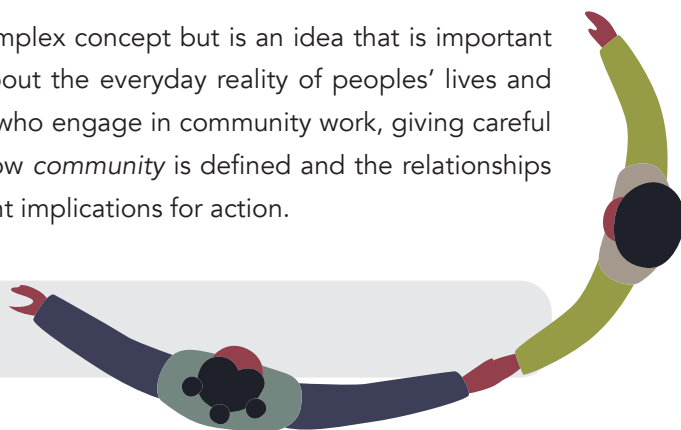
In this Learning Guide, we divide the meaning of community into three main areas as set out by Tett (2010): Firstly, as place of locality - a social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality, share [local] government, and often have a common cultural and historical heritage. This is the most frequently used meaning and refers to people who have in common that they live in a particular geographical community, such as a neighbourhood or village.

COMMUNITY MAPPING
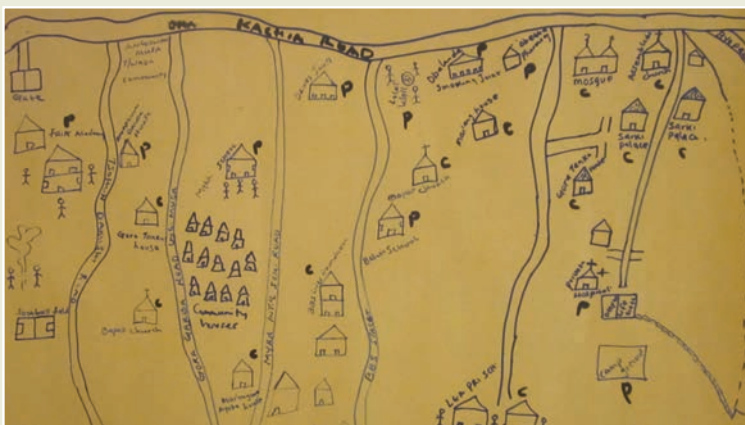
Secondly, community as interest - a social, religious, occupational, or other group sharing common characteristics or interests and **perceived** or perceiving itself as distinct in some respect from the larger society within which it exists (usually preceded by 'the'): the business community; the community of scholars. This refers to people who are linked together by common factors or characteristics, such as religious belief, sexual orientation or ethnic origin.

perceived - seen as

Thirdly, community as function - this refers to groups with the same profession, such as teachers, or the same role such as community representatives, or those who have common interests, which leads them to acquire a common sense of identity through the actions that they engage in together.

For the purposes of this Learning Guide, we use the first definition as described above. Having said that, it is important to note that - as Baatjes & Chaka (2012) argue - while members of a 'community' are located within a particular physical space, a 'social group' is not **homogeneous**. Communities are usually **heterogeneous** and **multifaceted** and do not easily fit **pre-determined** descriptions, **attributes** and/or values often assumed by others to be in place. Obviously there will be certain things shared by the group specifically with regard to where they live, but the group will be comprised of men, women and others who may not identify as either, young and old, of differing values and/or beliefs (political, religious, other), different languages, who may or may not know each other, etc. Therefore, a community group should not be viewed as the same, even though community members will, in all likelihood, share certain commonalities.

homogeneous - all the same
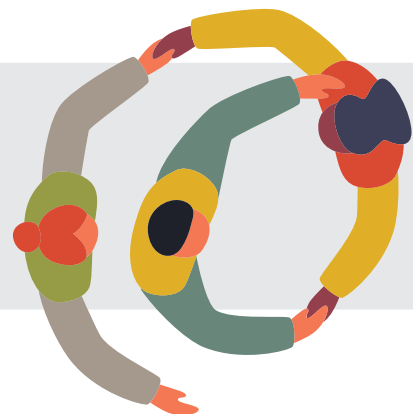**heterogeneous** - opposite of homogeneous/different
multifaceted - similar to 'heterogeneous'/people have differences
pre-determined - decided upon beforehand usually by someone else
attributes - qualities/characteristics/what you are like

WHAT IS COMMUNITY WORK?

Write down a few words/ideas that come to mind when you hear the term *Community Work*.

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Many people work in the community doing a **multitude** of things. Many people who live in a particular community work in their community, for example growing vegetables, recycling waste, repairing houses, washing cars, etc.

ABALIMI BEZEKHAYA

ITSOSENG WOMEN'S PROJECT

People also come from outside/other areas into a particular community and work there. This kind of work could be charity work (like establishing a soup kitchen or handing out blankets and clothes) - this usually happens from a **deficit** way of looking at a community (often based on a social **pathology** model) - something is 'wrong' and one is helping to make it 'right' (albeit temporarily). People also work in a community within a social justice framework which is to do with addressing and challenging the deeper contextual issues in communities in the hope that action will lead to change for the better.

If you have come here 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.

Lilla Watson

While *there is nothing wrong* with 'dignified charity' and helping others in need (as witnessed during the Covid-19 pandemic), it will never change the world. The oppressive structures and systems that created and maintain the **status quo** remain intact. This Learning Guide focuses on community work and education that is 'progressive, **emancipatory** and dynamic' (Tett, 2010).

The difference between charity work and social justice work is highlighted in the following quotes and images:

*When I give food to the poor, they call me a **saint**. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist.*

Dom Helder Camara

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multitude - many
deficit - insufficient/something is wrong
social pathology model - this is particular to specific times in our history and reflects the dominant moral concerns of the era. Some things are considered 'out of order', wrong or even dangerous
status quo - the 'usual' way/how things 'are'
emancipatory - to truly be free from power, oppression and injustice
saint - a good person associated with being holy

*A People's Organization is not a philanthropic plaything or a social service's **ameliorative** gesture. It is a deep, hard-driving force, striking and cutting at the very roots of all evils which beset the people. It recognizes the existence of the vicious circle in which most human beings are caught, and strives **viciously** to break this circle. It thinks in terms of social surgery and not **cosmetic** cover-ups. This is one of the reasons why a People's Organization will find that it has to fight its way along every foot of the road toward its destination - a peoples' world.*

Saul Alinsky

Charity work deals with symptoms (or 'cosmetic cover-ups' as described above) and social justice work deals with cause ('social surgery'). The former is about assisting and **soothing** the situation temporarily; the latter attempts to radically change or transform it.

ameliorative - to make something better so it is more bearable

viciously - fiercely/with all the power it has

cosmetic - surface/not deep

soothing - calming

MAKE NOTES HERE

Write down any thoughts, comments or questions you may have here:

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WHY DO WE NEED COMMUNITY WORK?

If we believe that a better world is possible, we need to understand more fully the principles of social justice and ecological sustainability that will guide the process of change. These are important times for community development: the world is facing crises of social injustice and ecological unsustainability. Divisions between poverty and privilege are growing both within and between countries, putting excessive wealth in the pockets of the privileged at the same time as poverty is damaging an increasing number of lives, putting children in particular at greatest risk.

Ledwith, 2016

WRITE NOTES HERE

Write down what you understand by *social injustice*.

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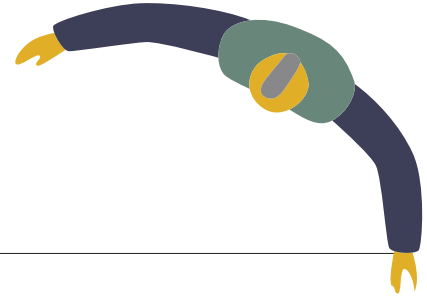
The world's 2,153 billionaires have more wealth than the 4.6 billion people who make up 60 percent of the planet's population.

World's billionaires have more wealth than 4.6 billion people, Oxfam, 20/1/2020

https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/worlds-billionaires-have-more-wealth-46-billion-people
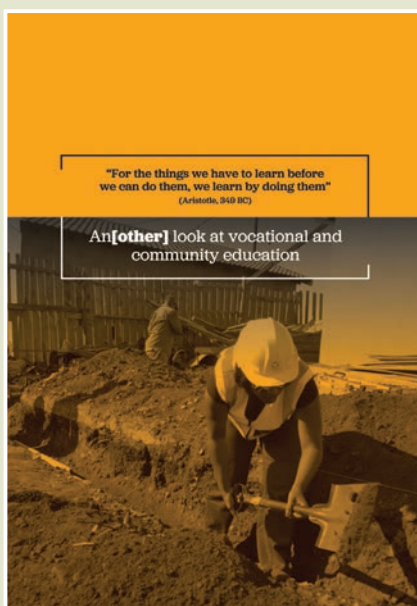
"For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them"
(Aristotle, 340 BC)

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

https://www.mojaafrica.net/en/resource/another-look-at-vocational-and community-education

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

An[other] look at vocational and community education, CIPSET, 2018

See pages 4-6: *An[other] look at vocational and community education*

Write down what what you understand by *ecological unsustainability*.

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We are in the midst of an ecological crisis - a sixth mass extinction - caused by humans. People's inability, particularly the rich, to live as part of nature extracting from and destroying it, thinking they own it, has caused, and will continue to cause, ecological devastation.

https://www.mojaafrica.net/en/resource/what-has-a-polar-bear-got-to-do-with-me-why-respecting-and-saving-the-environment-is-justice-issue-which-affects-us-all
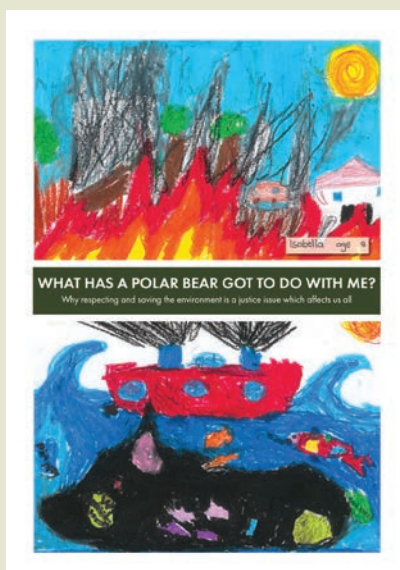
Those who suffer it the most (and who will continue to suffer it the most) - poor people of colour, particularly women and children - did not cause it.

See *What has a polar bear got to do with me? Why respecting and saving the environment is a justice issue which affects us all*, CIPSET, 2019

Write down what you understand by *divisions between poverty and privilege are growing both within and between countries.*

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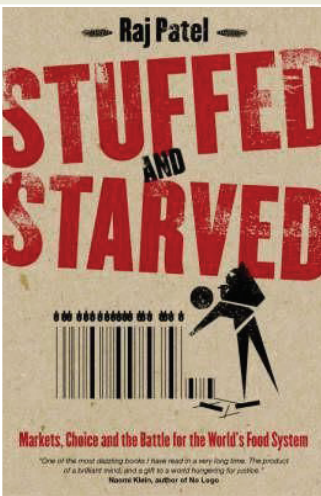

What else do you think is wrong with the world?

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In this unequal, unjust world, there are many people who are

> *'making a life'* [see page 15] or 'doing' outside of the formal labour market and (il)logic of capitalism. The many productive activities people do (despite often having inadequate or no resources) are not simply about the meeting of basic needs, although unquestioningly, meeting basic needs is vital. People demonstrate love and connection to others, including to nature; people find meaning (oftentimes spiritually); and show the importance of having value, worth and dignity in their lives. John Holloway describes this as "another form of doing [which] pushes against the creation of capital and towards thecreation of a different society" (2010).*

See *Re-making the world,* Centre for Education Rights and Transformation (CERT), University of Johannesburg & CIPSET, 2017

*_Making a life_ is a term coined by the authors of a book titled _Learning for living: Towards a new vision for post-school learning in South Africa_ (HSRC, 2018). It is used to describe what it is '_ordinary_' people do - their daily activities which include a **myriad** of things, be they physical, emotional or spiritual (often these are inter-linked). People participate in care and housework for family members, neighbours, community members who are sick, elderly, orphaned or simply in need. People grow vegetables and look after animals, and much (if not all) of this work is unpaid, underpaid, unrecognised and undervalued.

Yet these are the very things (love, care, concern, solidarity) we need for healthy, functioning communities. This kind of 'work' may have nothing to do with money, let alone profits. We learned from the **feminist movement** many decades ago that **GDP** (Gross Domestic Product) measures only those things _within_ 'the market' (regardless of whether they are good and bad), and all 'work' outside of 'the market' does not count in the eyes of capitalists (yet this economic system needs and relies on people, particularly women, to do this _invisible_ work, such as described above (cleaning, caring, etc.)).

An[other] look at vocational and community education, CIPSET, 2018

> **myriad** - many
>
> **feminist movement** - a movement (made up of many smaller movements) fighting for the liberation or freedom of women. It includes many issues, such as gender-based violence, maternity leave, equal pay for women and men, women's rights, etc.
>
> **GDP** - a monetary (money) measure of the market value of all goods and services produced in a particular period of time (e.g. yearly). GDP is used to measure the economic performance of a whole country or region, and to make international comparisons. There are many people who say that GDP is not a fair measure of how a country or region is doing in terms of their well-being because it includes such things as money spent on medicine for sick people (of course sick people do need medicine, but the question to ask is: why are they getting sick in the first place? With urbanisation and modernisation, there is an increase in illnesses)

'Making a life' is very similar to what Tithi Bhattacharya refers to as "life-making" activities that "are required for making life, maintaining life, and generationally replacing life."

Most of these activities and most of the jobs in the social reproduction sector (nursing, teaching, caring, cleaning) are dominated by women workers. Because capitalism is a "thing-making" system, the exact opposite of a life-making system, these activities and these workers are severely undervalued.

Capitalism asks, "How many more things can we produce?" because things make profit. The consideration is not about the impact of those things on people, but to create an empire of things in which capitalism is the **necromancer** reigning supreme.

Social reproduction and the pandemic, with Tithi Bhattacharya, Sarah Jaffe, 2 April 2020

https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/social-reproduction-and-the-pandemic-with-tithi-bhattacharya

See more on this in *Beware of the bot: A critical perspective on the 4IR*, CIPSET, 2020

https://www.mojaafrica.net/en/resource/beware-of-the-bot-a-critical-perspective-on-the-4ir
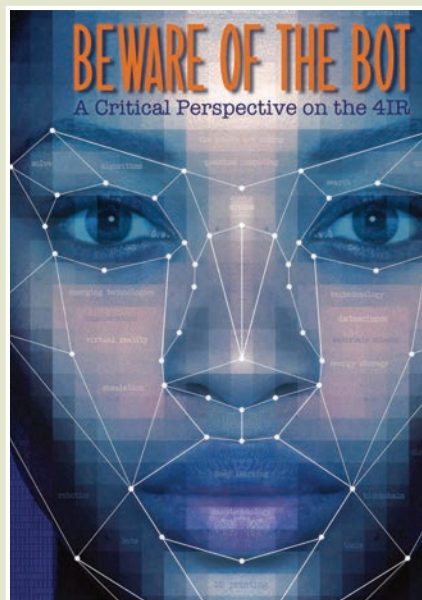
necromancer - someone who practises magic like a witch or wizard

16

WHAT IS COMMUNITY EDUCATION?

WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE?

Write a few lines about what you think the purpose of education is.

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Write a few lines about what you think the purpose of education *should and could be*.
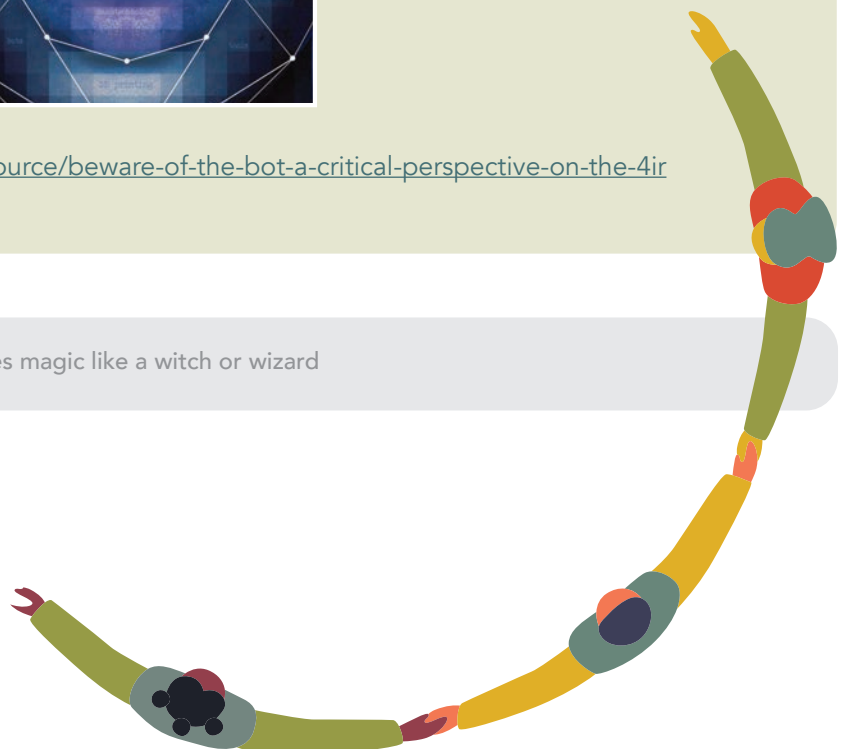
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Marxist sociologists Bowles and Gintis (1976) argued that the main purpose or function of education in capitalist societies is to reproduce a workforce that is hardworking, listens to authority, and even accepts a certain amount of exploitation. They developed the *correspondence theory* that contends that the norms and values taught at schools* (mainly through the hidden curriculum) prepare children for their future role as compliant, docile workers. In most cases, learners have no control over what it is they learn or how they learn it. They are schooled in order to pass a test or exam (to get a mark) and they see very little value in the learning, such as experienced by this learner:

Interviewer: Someone told me they distinguish between 'learning to pass' and 'learning to understand.' What do you think about that?

High school student: Yes, they do, because as I have just said right now it's because you learn to pass and the teachers say you should go and study for you to pass, not to understand. And to pass is so easy because you can pass without understanding something…there is this method, we call it the CPF (Cram, Pass, Forget). That is what we mostly do, so we say tomorrow morning I'll be writing such test so I just have to cram and then I pass and I forget, without understanding.

High school learner, Vaal, Gauteng

From: *Learning for living: Towards a new vision for post-school learning in South Africa* (HSRC, 2018)

Similarly, workers do not have control over the product they make (or service the organisation provides), or how, when or why they make it. They are alienated from the product/service and from the process. Work is, oftentimes, simply about getting through the day/week and earning a wage or salary.

*This kind of education is also present in many adult education programmes.
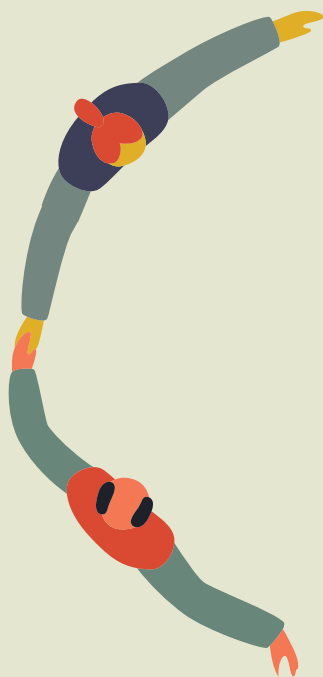
Even though there has been much critique of this type of education - education for domestication (See Shaull further below and his critique) and even though education policy documents may include language to do with problem-solving and critical thinking, the kind of education described above (instrumentalist/framed by human capital theory*) still remains the dominant form of education. We hear over and over that in order for the economy to work, education and training needs to be more responsive to the needs of employers/business/industry. *Instrumentalism focuses on teaching and learning so-called useful knowledge and skills in order to better meet the needs of business and industry and, in this way, serve society. (See the opposite of this - 'really useful knowledge' further below). Human capital is about what a worker knows and can do in order to perform labour so as to produce economic value to the company/ organisation they work for.

Economic failure, and indeed poverty and inequality, are often blamed on ordinary people and their so-called inadequate skills levels. Instrumentalist education, including skills development, is presented as the 'solution.' However, the relationship between education/training and economic development is complex and there is little evidence that participating in skills development, education and training will necessarily translate into greater prosperity for all (Marsh, 2010; Tett, 2010; Brown, Lauder & Ashton, 2010).

People's so-called deficiencies or inadequacies are often the focus of an education programme, particularly an adult education one. The 'thing that is wrong' should be corrected or fixed. However the person's situation, circumstances or context are very rarely looked at, let alone analysed.

Dominant discourse

Education and training lead to skills

Skills lead to jobs

Jobs lead to economic growth

Economic growth creates more jobs and is the way out of poverty and inequality

= FALSE

An[other] look at vocational and community education,
CIPSET, 2018

Lovett et al (1983) describe various community education models, including the *community organisation/ education model* which "usually implies appointing out-reach workers - community education tutors - to work outside institutions in local communities where there is little or no take up of adult education provision, thus linking the community to the latter." While this type of education can and does have some benefits, it is mainly to do with an individual's self-improvement, possibly even "providing a ladder out of 'deprived' communities." The main critique of this model is that "it leaves the position of the general community unresolved. It does nothing for problems of poverty and inequality which community development strategies seek to eliminate."

The second model which Lovett et al describe is called the *community development/education model* and it attempts to meet the above criticism by concentrating on a mixture of community work and community development. In this model, "an effort is made to educate the institutions and organisations concerned with the provision of services and resources for the local community. They are provided with a 'community' dimension in their training and education i.e. how 'they' see 'us'. Thus courses are provided for local councillors, clergy, police, planners, social workers, etc., as well as professional community workers and local working class leaders." While this model attempts to "improve local community problems," it "distracts attention form the root causes of the problem by focusing attention upon personal deficiencies." *People* rather than root causes of problems, issues and, indeed, crises are blamed.

The following two models (also Lovett et al) both focus on the *collective*, as opposed to education for personal development, and on linking local issues to 'bigger picture' ones. They differ slightly in various aspects, as described below:

A community action/education model

"The third model places greater stress on combining community education and *community action*, on the role of conflict in resolving local problems and the importance of creating alternative institutions and organisations. It emphasises the need for adult educators to identify with, and commit themselves to, local working class communities and the groups and organisations found in such communities. There is a strong belief that community action is in itself an educational process, one which, in line with Freire's pedagogy, offers opportunities for consciousness raising about those wider arrangements in society which cause local problems."

A social action/education model

The fourth model "places greater stress on motivation and content; on hard educational effort; on social, rather than community, action; on 'working class' rather than 'community' education. It is suspicious of the view that community action is, in itself, a learning process, or that just because an educator is involved in providing support and assistance for a particular local initiative it is an educational process. Education must be more structured and systematic. Educators must however act in solidarity with local people, aligning themselves with local community action, seeking to provide specific forms of educational support which illuminate the problems which local people seek to resolve."

Both of the above have critiques - the former "for its stress on local alternatives rather than broad social movements as solutions to the problems of inequality; its tendency to regard everything in which an adult educator is involved as 'educational'; its lack of intellectual content, offering people instead a second class 'informal' education which underestimates their ability to undertake more sustained study; its emphasis on 'process' rather than content and motivation." The latter "for its narrow interpretation of education and the possible dangers of creating an educational elite."
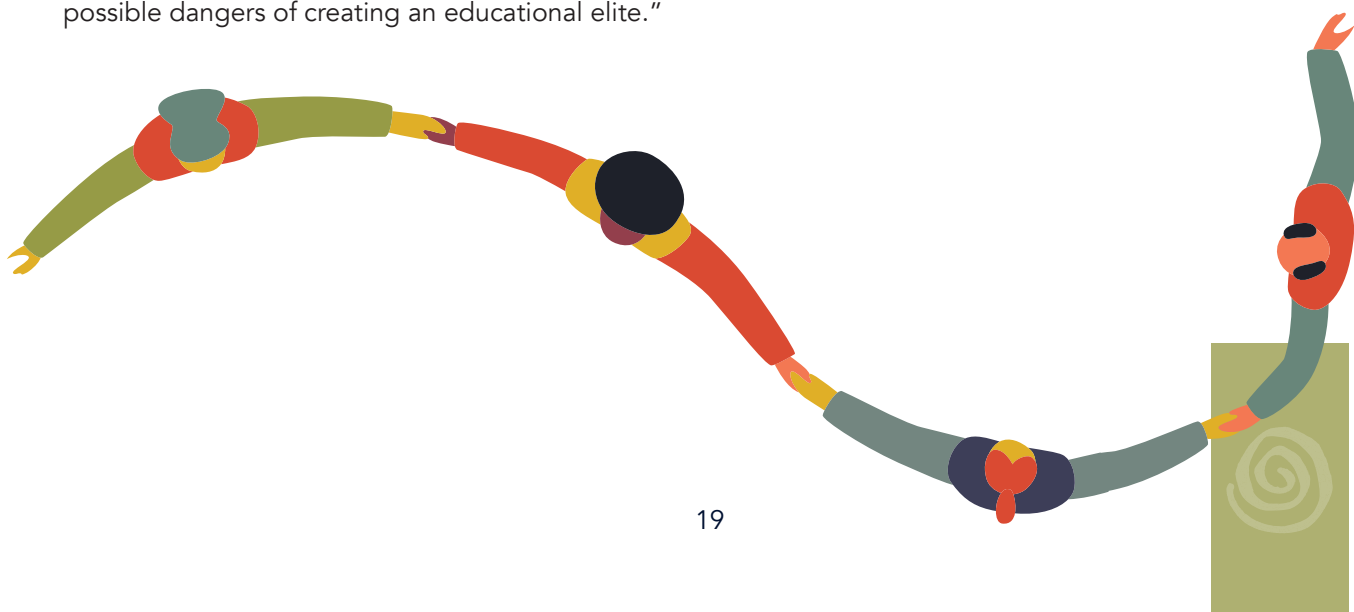
While the above models are described as discrete and separate, many examples of community education programmes draw from, and could have aspects from, more than one model in their programme/s. In addition to this, there may be other ways groupings form and develop, such as a group who, as they explore, learn and reflect, *become a group* sharing certain values and working towards a shared vision. And more participants may join the group in the process. The group *develops in action* (see more on organising and action below and examples of this in Part Three - CEP and CLING).

The kind of community education this Learning Guide encourages and supports embraces the emancipatory tradition - it is about asking WHY (problem-posing); about developing a *critical consciousness*. In this Learning Guide, community education is about naming, analysing, critiquing, challenging, reflecting on, and *collectively addressing through action* the real and urgent issues, concerns and problems of people living in difficult circumstances, not of their making (we will look at the teachings of the famous Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire throughout this Learning Guide).

This kind of education is *not* about enabling people to cope or to adapt or to fit in, but rather, as described in *Community mapping in public spaces* and in *Environmental health and waste in the community*, it is about:

✔ …education that benefits the whole of society and nature. It is education which works to bring about social transformation.

✔ …the values and beliefs which underpin the curriculum must be made clear and must be for the benefit of people and nature.

See *Community mapping in public spaces: Tools and information for developing an environmental justice curriculum*, CIPSET, 2017

https://www.mojaafrica.net/en/resource/community-mapping-in-public-spaces-tools-and-information-for-developing-an-environmental-justice-curriculum
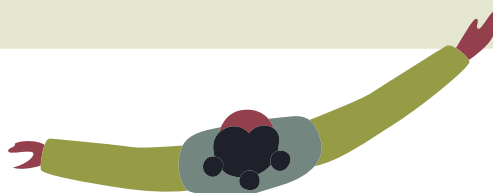
And *Environmental health and waste in the community: Developing an environmental justice curriculum*, CIPSET, 2017

*There is no such thing as a neutral educational process. Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the **integration** of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about **conformity** to it, or it becomes "the practice of freedom," the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.*
Shaull (introduction to Freire's ***Pedagogy*** of the oppressed), 1970

*Community education's primary purpose is education within and for communities. This involves a **blurring** of traditional boundaries and an emphasis on education that grows out of people's experiences and the social interests that are generated within communities. Education is developed that is relevant to the participating learners and is responsive to community priorities identified <u>with</u> people rather than <u>for</u> them.*
Tett, 2010

Community education emphasises education that grows out of people's experiences and the social interests that are generated within communities. It has a different focus from mainstream education both in its curriculum and in its methods. Community education is about encouraging and engaging people throughout life into learning that is based on what they are interested in. Education is developed that is relevant to the participating learners and is responsive to community priorities identified with people rather than for them. The motivation and purpose for learning by the participants will change over time, but if education is rooted in communities 'it will allow genuinely alternative and democratic agendas to emerge at the local level' (Martin cited in Tett, 2010).

integration - fitting in
conformity - obeying/doing as those in power say you must
**pedagogy** - an approach to teaching/the theory and practice of learning
blurring - one mixes/combines with the other so they are not necessarily separate

It is very important that adult and community education be 'organic' and that ideas, needs and wants come from community members, rather than being imposed by outside people (even if they are so-called 'experts'). There are many examples globally of failed top-down approaches in which 'experts' imposed their ideas on communities. These largely fail because the experts ignore what community members already know and can do, and what they need, want and/or dream of.

The right to adult and community education, Education Rights Project, 2013

https://www.uj.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/the-right-to-adult-and-community-education.pdf
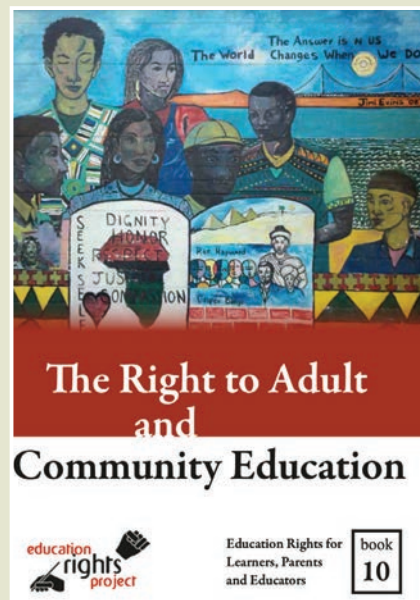
Really useful knowledge is knowledge calculated to make you free.
Johnson, 1988

There is a difference between 'useful knowledge' and 'really useful knowledge.' 'Useful knowledge' is knowledge which does not 'rock the boat' or make one think deeply about issues. It is part of 'banking education.' It is about compliance. 'Really useful knowledge' is created by individuals and groups (rather than so-called 'experts') and it is to do with their experience/s of things. Context is very important. It is about a deeper understanding of why things happen. Irna Senekal (Community Education Programme) explains 'really useful knowledge' in *Some conceptual tools for imagining non-formal community education* (Post-school Education Review, Volume 1, Issue 4, December 2015).

Here is an extract:

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

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

Also see *Creating knowledge through community education* by Thalia Eccles, Post-school Education Review, Volume 1, Issue 3, July 2015.

Above taken from: An[other] look at vocational and community education, CIPSET, 2018

Page 22 **established** - set/fixed/already made up

associated - connected to

generation - creating/making

autonomy - independent/self-regulating/they can decide

Page 23 **rote** - repeating/saying it over and over, sometimes with no understanding

To briefly sum up:

Community Education is about:
- supporting transformative learning processes
- acknowledging learners and educators as agents for social change
- a focus on people who are excluded from the mainstream - those who are marginalised and oppressed
- issues, concerns and problems that are considered important by the people living them
- connecting these issues, etc. to a wider critique of our society (i.e. local to global)
- understanding our everyday experiences in a more critical way (Freire, Gramsci, & Lefebvre)
- understanding power relations that shape the world
- working from a political position (as in to do with issues of power, not party politics)

- striving for a more equal, just and sustainable society
- learning that is geared towards transforming our ways of living while protecting the Earth (ecopedagogy)
- learning from the ground up (Choudry & Kapoor)
- collective learning and action
- experiencing continuous spirals of naming, exploring, investigating, organising, critically reflecting, challenging, learning and acting together
- acting in support of emerging alternatives
- new knowledge construction and no **hierarchy** of knowledge.

Participatory action research (or community participatory action research) is an approach which encompasses all of the above and it informs the kind of community education this Learning Guide is about.

See IMFUNDO YABADALA EKUHLALENI: Imfundo yantoni?
ADULT EDUCATION IN THE COMMUNITY: Education for what?
In *Community education in a community school: Tools and information for exploring the possibilities for community education*, CIPSET, 2017
And pages 16-19: Why do we need adult and community education?
What are its purposes? *In The right to adult and community education*, ERP, 2013

https://www.mojaafrica.net/en/resource/community-education-in-a-community-school

https://www.uj.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/the-right-to-adult-and-community-education.pdf
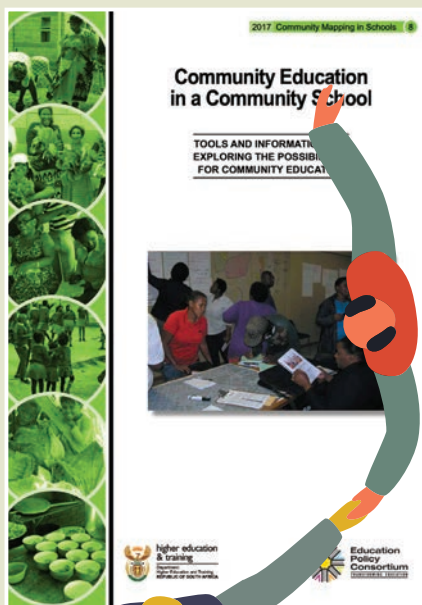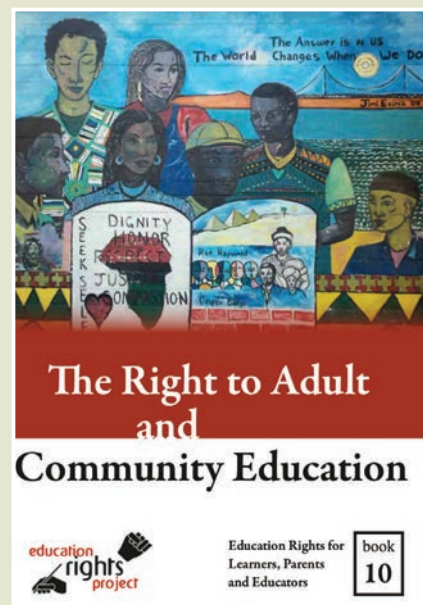
hierarchy - when something or someone is 'above' the other in terms of power or control or importance

Mobilise, organise, educate

Look at the image and the quote below.

Do you think mobilising and organising are important parts of education/learning? State why you say so.
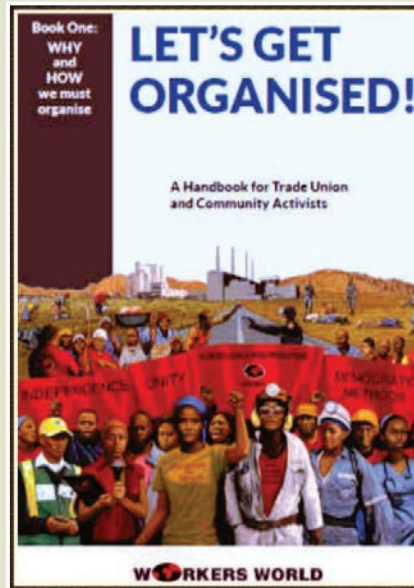
March 2014

If you give me a fish, you have fed me for a day. If you teach me to fish, then you have fed me until the river is contaminated or the shoreline seized for development. But if you teach me to organise then, whatever the challenge, I can join together with my peers and we will fashion our own solution.

Levins Morales

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Read the following extract from *The right to adult and community education*, Education Rights Project, 2013:

Community organising and mobilisation

Community mobilisation and organising are about rallying and uniting community members in order to work together as a group with a view to bring about change. Solving of issues and problems and improving lives requires the active participation of those most affected by the issues and problems. This idea was theorised by Kurt Lewin (the first theoretician of group dynamics) in the 1930s! Lewin discovered that those closest to any change must be involved in the change in order for the change to be effective. If we did not need the active involvement of those closest to the problem, then good policies or the dissemination of good ideas alone would achieve the improvements we seek. They do not. The right information alone is not sufficient when it comes to making social improvements or changes in people's behaviour.

There is more power and more 'voice' in a group, than individually - organising is about getting together to work for the common good - it is anti-individual.

What does the above say about action and its relationship to unity in organisation?

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COMMUNITY WORKERS/EDUCATORS

Describe what you understand by *Community Workers/Educators* in a few lines.

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According to Beck and Purcell (2010) the role of a community worker is:
- Firstly, to have a thorough understanding of the issues which are important to the local community.
- Secondly, to understand the wider social and political context that gives rise to those local conditions.
- Thirdly, to develop processes whereby local people can critically reflect on their experiences in the context of the wider world.
- And finally, to support a process of collective action that aims to achieve personal and social transformation.

Community workers/educators do not see themselves as merely performing a technical exercise. Education/learning is more than simply teaching a set of 'facts.' Community educators are facilitators of learning as opposed to 'experts' who know it all and who control and direct the process.

Answer the following questions about this image:

Describe what you see.

_____

_____

_____

What does it make you think of?

_____

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_____

Do you know anyone who has experienced something like this? (You do not need to provide their name/s). Why do you think they have experienced this?

_____

_____

_____

Is this a problem in your community? If so, why do you think this is so?

_____

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_____

Do you think it is a problem anywhere else (in South Africa/globally)? Why do you say so?

_____

_____

Choose two of the four images and make up a few questions about them (see the questions above as examples of the types of questions you can ask).

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Community educators need to ask many questions. Freire's problem-posing method allows for reflection, analysis and critical thinking. Community educators also need to _listen_. And, while a community educator needs to be prepared, they also need to be **wholly** 'unprepared' in order to embrace the organic nature of the learning process.

wholly – completely
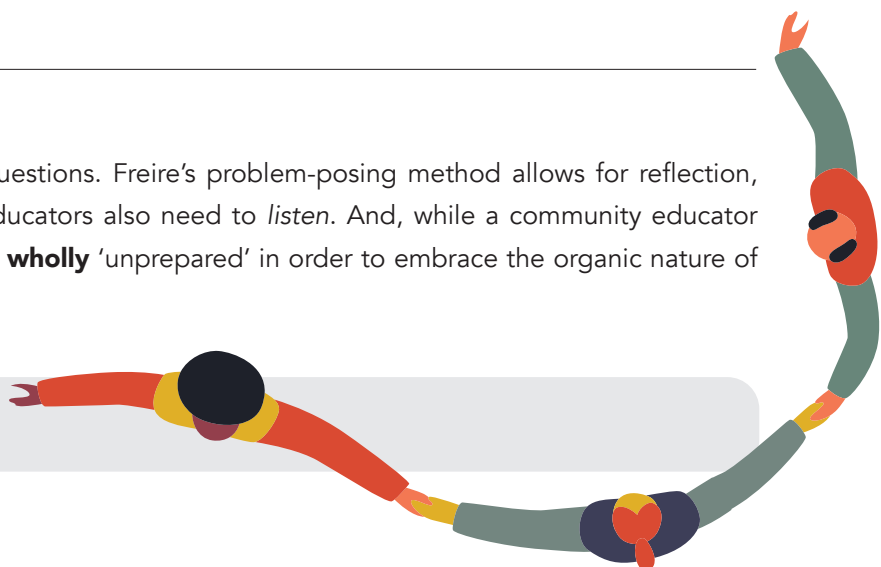
Below Stephen Brookfield and Donald Schön describe critically responsive teaching and being a *reflective educator*:

Critically responsive teaching (Brookfield)

Having a clear idea of what you wish to do, but being willing to adjust the means by which you think it best to do it, is a form of teaching that I describe as critically responsive teaching. Critically responsive teaching is teaching which is guided by a strongly felt rationale but which in its methods and forms responds creatively to the needs and concerns expressed by students. Guided as they are by deeply held convictions, critically responsive teachers nonetheless pay close attention to the ways in which students experience learning and to the myriad of contextual factors that no teacher can possibly anticipate.

The *critical* component of critically responsive teaching can be found in its concern to develop critical thinking. Critically responsive teachers help students to realize that dominant values, 'commonsense' wisdoms, generally accepted standards, and prevailing social or political arrangements are cultural constructs. Because these are cultural creations, teachers point out that they can be dismantled and reframed by human agency.

The *responsive* component of critically responsive teaching is seen in the willingness of teachers to adapt their methods, content, and approaches to the contexts in which they are working and to the ways in which students are experiencing learning.

Brookfield, 1990

Reflect-in-action/reflect-on-action (Schön)

A reflective educator thinks carefully about their work while they do it (reflect-in-action) and afterwards (reflect-on-action). Schön's theory (reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action) (1991) is that there are two types of reflection - one during and one after an activity or event.

Reflection-in-action

- Experiencing
- Thinking on your feet
- Thinking about what to do next
- Acting straight away
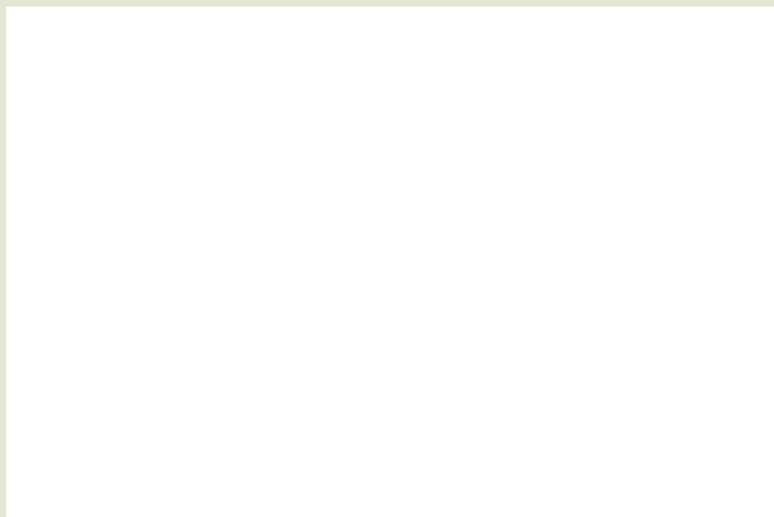
Reflection-on-action

- Thinking about something that has happened
- Thinking what you would do differently next time
- Taking your time before acting.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Write down a few lines about your understanding of *Community Education Programmes*.

_____

_____

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This blank diagram represents a community education programme. It is a blank canvas because the programme should be what the people 'on the ground' want and need. It is, therefore, not a blueprint, nor a 'best practice' example, nor is it conceived of by so-called outside 'experts,' nor neatly packaged as a set of pre-determined outcomes. It is, as Tett (2010) describes, "dynamic."

No intervention that is said to be for us should be without us. Talk with and not for us. Think with and not for us. Plan with us and not for us.

Zikode, Abahlali baseMjondolo

Ordinary people need the opportunity to have their say, to be listened to and to talk back to the state. This is essentially a democratic process. It cannot simply be managed and measured; it has to be nurtured and cultivated in communities. It requires faith and trust in the people, and a valuing of genuinely democratic dialogue and debate.

Crowther, Martin & Shaw, 2009

Para dialogar escuchar primero. Despues escuchar.
(For a dialogue let's listen first. And then, listen).

Machado in Prakash & Esteva, 1998

We wanted to understand from the perspective of people who are marginalised and excluded, what knowledge and skills they consider worthwhile learning in building a more equal, just and sustainable society. Then we wanted to act in support of emerging alternatives and increase the space for these alternatives to take hold and become self-sustainable.
The above is from the Community Education Programme's *Challenging hunger: A workbook for bulk-buying groups*, CIPSET, 2018.

https://www.mojaafrica.net/en/resource/challenging-hunger-a-workbook-for-bulk-buying-groups
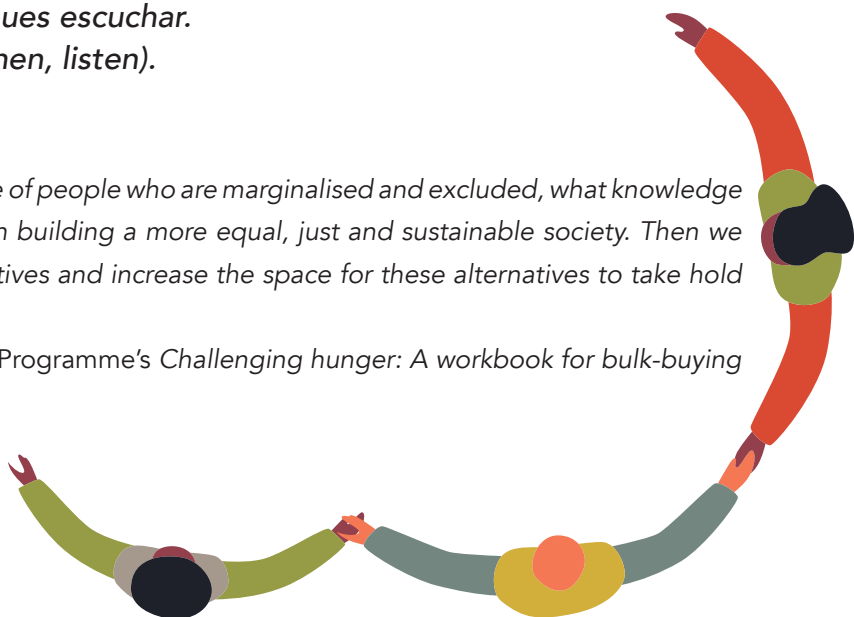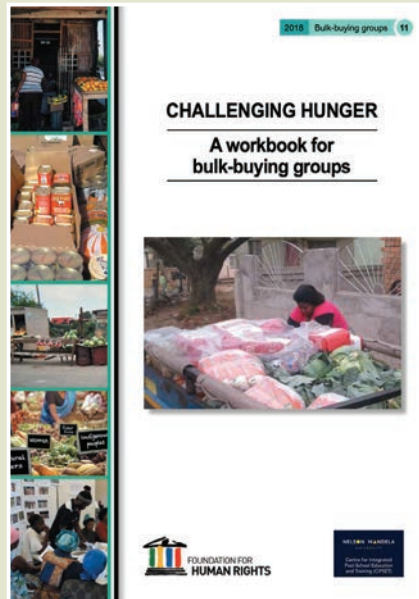
The work of CEP is described more fully in Part Three.

Beck and Purcell suggest useful principals about education, knowledge production and learning. They highlight 'traditional non-western forms of knowledge' which include:

- Learning is communal. One's identity is not as an individual as in the west, but is based on the notion of collective identity. In this context the purpose of learning is not for personal but for improving the well-being of the community through the sharing of knowledge and collective and **reciprocal** activity.
- Lifelong learning is understood as an informal process that is embedded in everyday experience and necessary to enable the individual learner to improve their contribution to society. Much important informal learning is created through problem-solving activities based around daily life.
- Learning is holistic. It is not fragmented as in the west, but an integrated process that takes place through the mind, the body, emotions and the spirit. Learning is rooted in the experience of daily life and through participating in rituals and collective experiences.

reciprocal - mutual exchange/give and take

Write down anything new you learnt from this first part of the Learning Guide:

_____

_____

_____

In the next part of the Learning Guide, Part Two, we look at *community development as critical pedagogy.*

PART TWO:
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AS CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

What do you think of the following quote? What would you say to the educators (students) who say they "don't have that option"?

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

Dale & Hyslop-Margison, 2010

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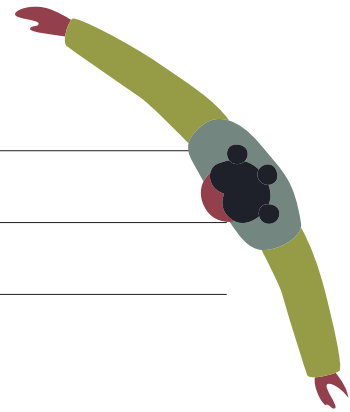
Using Beck & Purcell's explanation of *critical pedagogy* (2010), we will explain what it is:

• All education is **inherently** political and all pedagogy must be aware of this condition.

The word *political* is used not to describe party politics but *power relations* - it is used to describe the unjust systemic balance of power in society - such as who has power and who does not/who is included and who is not/who counts as important and who does not/etc. Education that acknowledges and challenges this is one that strives to liberate and transform, rather than maintain the status quo.

In Part One, there is the famous quote from the introduction to Freire's *Pedagogy of the oppressed*:

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

Freire also said:

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

And:

Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.

> **empowerment** - the process of becoming stronger and gaining more control in one's life and claiming one's rights. Some activists and scholars do not use the word 'empowerment' because they argue it is not about breaking free from the oppressive system. They prefer the word 'emancipation'
>
> **inherently** - by its very nature/it is
>
> **decontextualized/decontextualised** - removed from a context/not seeing the bigger picture

If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality.
Bishop Desmond Tutu

In Part One, we also included the following from *Community mapping in public spaces: Tools and information for developing an environmental justice curriculum* (CIPSET, 2017):

✓ …the values and beliefs which underpin the curriculum must be made clear and must be for the benefit of people and nature.

There should be no hidden curriculum in the kind of community education this Learning Guide encourages. The purpose is clear: education is about striving for a just and fair world and is in support of those who are marginalised and excluded from the mainstream. This leads us to Beck & Purcell's next point:

• **A social and educational vision of justice and equality should ground all education.**

If we return to the quote which opened this part of the Learning Guide, the educators (students) are saying that, in their experience, teaching is about 'testing and measuring' and that it (the institution/the curriculum) does not allow them time for anything beyond that, including "all that social justice and empowerment stuff." They say it is a technical exercise in the so-called 'real' world. A technical exercise can (and often is) **devoid of** anything political. It attempts to be 'neutral.'

Community education, as described in this Learning Guide, is *not* a technical exercise. Community education "encourages the development of civic agency and solidaristic forms of organisation and work that lie outside of the domination of people and nature" (Senekal, 2015). Community education is grounded in "socially and ecologically useful community knowledge" (ibid.).

We return to the Ledwith (2016) quote from the beginning of Part One:
If we believe that a better world is possible, we need to understand more fully the principles of social justice and ecological sustainability that will guide the process of change. These are important times for community development: the world is facing crises of social injustice and ecological unsustainability. Divisions between poverty and privilege are growing both within and between countries, putting excessive wealth in the pockets of the privileged at the same time as poverty is damaging an increasing number of lives, putting children in particular at greatest risk.

• Issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, and physical ability are all important **domains** of oppression and critical anti-hegemonic action.

A set of social relations exists in society between people with political and socio-economic power and privilege and other social groups without, upheld by deeply entrenched structures. In this Learning Guide, community education is about supporting and standing in solidarity with people who are marginalised and oppressed by the mainstream.

devoid of - without/lacking in
domains - areas/parts

Look at the following image and the quote extracts below. Write a few lines about what it means to be 'unfree.'

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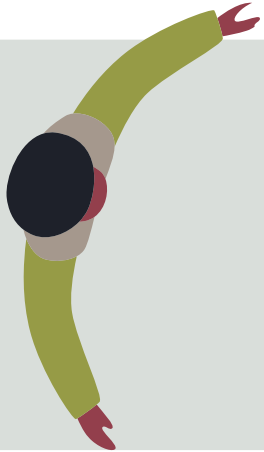
Every year on the 27th April, Abahlali baseMjondolo hosts UnFreedom Day, a day which demonstrates that the poor are still not free in South Africa.

Below are two extracts from the Per Anger Prize Speech by S'bu Zikode, 21 April 2021:

The price for land, for decent housing and the right to the city is paid in blood. Brutal and unlawful evictions continue to terrorize our communities.

No human being should live in substandard housing conditions, without access to basic services such as water and sanitation, where there is no road access, where there is no electricity and where there is no refuse collection.

The poor are not poor by choice. It is the history of colonialism, apartheid and land dispossession that keep us in deep poverty. The commodification of land and state corruption keep us poor. This is why the social value of land must come before its commercial value. This is why it is important to organise, to build democratic power from below. This requires building solidarity between and within struggling communities. This is what has kept us strong.

Emancipatory community education demands of us to stand on the side of the oppressed - t*o be political*. It asks us to critically question and challenge the things we take as 'common-sense'/the way things are. We look briefly at what Antonio Gramsci said about hegemony further below.

By critical pedagogy, Freire means empowering education, education that questions everyday life, identifies **contradictions***, makes critical connections with the structures of society that discriminate and acts to change things for the better.*

Ledwith, 2016

contradictions - things that do not make sense (e.g. there is enough food to feed the whole world but there is hunger; there is enough land for all but there is landlessness and homelessness; etc.)

Gramsci and Hegemony

Gramsci was an Italian Marxist philosopher, journalist, linguist, writer and politician and well-known for the concept of *hegemony*. This concept is to do with the ways in which a dominant group asserts control over other social groups (for example, males over females; owning class over the poor). This is done through state control (such as through the police or the army) and also through i*deological persuasion*. People, including children, are socialised and taught to agree with and fit into the dominant social order - this is done through such things as schools, mass and social media, religious and cultural organisations, the family, etc. This is a more **subtle** form of power that goes into our *minds*, convincing us to agree that things are the way they are - they are simply 'common-sense.' And even if they do not act in our interests, there is little or nothing we can do. Hegemony "asserts control over knowledge and culture, affirming the ideas of the dominant culture and marginalising and silencing others" (Ledwith, 2016).

Gramsci's greatest legacy is his analysis of hegemony as the interplay between **coercion** *and* **consent**. *Hegemony is always struggling to maintain its power, and to do that it relies on the collective support of the people. This is why the dominant narrative is so crucial in convincing the public in general that 'more of the same' is called for, that 'there is no alternative', by instilling fear of uncertainty, instability or* **insurrection***.*
Ledwith, 2016

The development of a counter-hegemonic process that interrupts the moral leadership of the powerful is central to Gramsci's thinking. A different way of making sense of the world plays an essential part in the process of change by creating hope that change is possible. Gramsci saw the importance of critical education in opening people's minds to the possibility of change, releasing the intellectual potential inside each of us to question, think and act in alliances for change between diverse social groups.
Ledwith, 2016

If you were about to meet *Dr Williams*, describe in a few words/lines who you think you will meet.

_____

_____

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Later on we will 'meet' Dr Williams.

subtle - not direct
coercion - pressure or force to do something
consent - agreement
insurrection - uprising/revolt/revolution
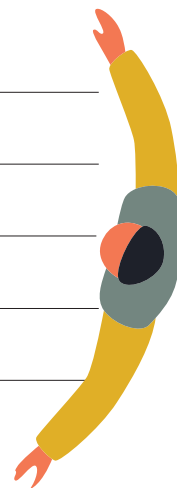
Here are some so-called 'common-sense' examples. Write a few thoughts next to each stating what is wrong with the image/statement.

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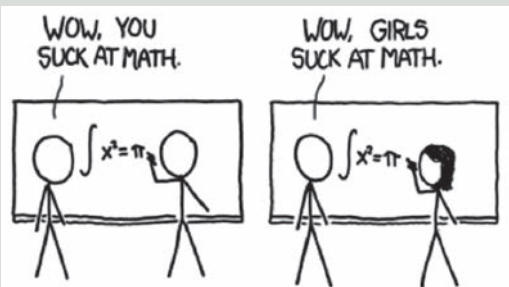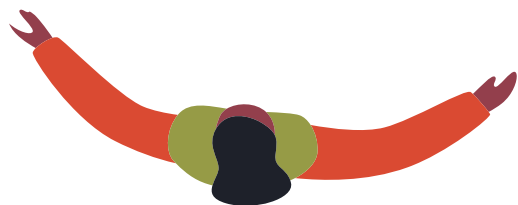
LOOK: eThekwini council workers 'sleeping on the job'

This is Dr Williams. Did you describe her correctly? Explain what you thought and why.

Understanding and challenging hegemony allows us to imagine a new and better world, such as described by Grace Lee Boggs below (with reference to Arundhati Roy):

• The **alleviation** of oppression and human suffering is a key **dimension** of educational purpose.
The philosophy and thinking framing and shaping community education should be that the world has *got to be* a better place for the majority of people who live in it (*not* just a select few). In this *better* world, there is no oppression nor human suffering.

*Freire used the term dehumanisation to emphasise the ways in which oppression robs people of their right to be fully human in the world. For individuals to be healthy and for society to function well, we have to create a system that offers people the chance to develop their potential as a contribution to the whole. Self-determination and personal autonomy lead to a collective autonomy, a more fully functioning and engaged society. In this way, difference/diversity replaces domination/subordination as a way of life that **dismantles** excess privilege for the few with a common good for all.*

Ledwith, 2016

While education alone cannot make the world a better place for all, *it plays a very important supporting role in bringing about change.*

The "alleviation of oppression and human suffering" should be extended to include the alleviation of oppression and suffering of nature (See Part One: Ledwith's "social justice *and* ecological sustainability"). The **degradation**, **pillaging** and **extraction** done by humans to plants, trees, mountains, rivers, forests, animals, insects, birds, **micro-organisms**, etc., also causes untold harm. Life is an **intricate** ecosystem made up of living and non-living components and all need to be in balance and harmony. There is increasing concern about the rights of nature, including ecofeminism (which is about the connections between women and nature).

alleviation - easing/making less

dimension - part/measurement

dismantles - takes apart/breaks up

degradation - the ruining/breaking down/destruction of something

pillaging - stealing

extraction - taking out of (e.g. mining)

micro-organisms - things like bacteria and viruses that are so small people cannot see them with the naked eye

intricate - detailed/involved

In order to struggle and strive for this better world for all, we need to have *hope*. Read the following two quotes about *hope* and write down a few thoughts about each.

…my main point is that we must tap the well of our own collective imaginations, that we do what earlier generations have done: dream. Trying to envision "somewhere in advance of nowhere," as poet Jayne Cortez puts it, is an extremely difficult task, yet it is a matter of great urgency. Without new visions we don't know what to build, only what to knock down. We not only end up confused, **rudderless***, and* **cynical***, but we forget that making a revolution is not a series of clever maneuvers and tactics but a process that can and must transform us.*

Kelley, Freedom dreams: The Black radical imagination

To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places - and there are so many - where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction. And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand **utopian** *future. The future is an* **infinite succession** *of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in* **defiance** *of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.*

Zinn, You can't be neutral on a moving train

Comment specifically on the following:
- *Without new visions we don't know what to build, only what to knock down.*
- *…we forget that making a revolution is not a series of clever maneuvers and tactics but a process that can and must transform us.*
- *To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic.*
- *And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.*

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rudderless - the part of a ship or boat that is used for steering it - without it one loses control

cynical - suspicious/pessimistic/looking at things only negatively

utopian - ideal/perfect

infinite succession - endless sequence/one thing after another

defiance - disobedience

Choose one of the following images/quotes and write down a few lines about what it means to you.

However long the night, the dawn will break.

To be truly radical is to make hope possible rather than despair convincing.
Raymond Williams

THE WORLD MAY BE BROKEN BUT HOPE IS NOT CRAZY
-JOHN GREEN-
RISARODIL.

You may SAY I'M a DREAMER But I'm not the only ONE... I HOPE some day you'll join us And the world will live as one...

WITHOUT A MINIMUM OF HOPE, WE CANNOT SO MUCH AS START THE STRUGGLE.
- PAULO FREIRE -

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Education is emancipatory or liberatory when people/learners:
- Think deeply and critically about their lived experiences/what is happening around them and why things are the way they are - Freire's notion of *conscientizacao* (conscientisation).
- Apply theory in action, and out of that action, deepen their theory - they engage in a spiral of action and reflection, action and reflection, action and reflection - this is Freire's *critical praxis*.
- Act together to change things for the better.

Ledwith (2016), drawing from Freire, states:

This new way of seeing the world leads to action for change, opening up possibilities for a world built on social justice values. It is a pedagogy of hope that carves its way through hopelessness and restores human dignity; it is a pedagogy of love inspired by compassion for people and the planet.

One of the most important dimensions of Freirean pedagogy is that it can only be transformative if it is situated in its social, political and economic context, and when it becomes a collective approach to social change.

Ledwith, 2016

- **All positions including critical pedagogy itself must be problematized and questioned.**

As discussed above, there are many things we accept as 'common-sense' (see Gramsci/hegemony). One of these - to do with education - is illustrated in a diagram in Part One of this Learning Guide (taken from *An[other] look at vocational and community education*).

Have another look at the diagram (page 18) and then write down what you think about what is stated in it. Do you agree that this 'common-sense' view is false? Say why.

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The dominant or common-sense view of education is that there is a linear or direct relationship between it and getting a job or 'becoming employable' and that education, therefore, impacts on whether or not a country's economy survives, thrives or not.

In the *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* (2013), it is stated that:

One of the main purposes of the post-school system is to prepare workers for the labour market, or to enable individuals to earn sustainable livelihoods through self-employment or establishing a company or cooperative. Everyone should be able to make a living for themselves and contribute skills to a developing economy.

This (above) is an *instrumental* view of education - it is about making students 'fit in,' conform and 'be ready' for the labour market. A curriculum or *what* is taught is instrumental when it provides (or attempts to provide) students with "specific job skills, behaviors, values, and attitudes to create a 'properly' skilled and socialized work force" (Simon, Dippo, & Schenke, 1991). It allows very little, if any, opportunity to critique it.

On the other hand, emancipatory or democratic education is about encouraging students to be thoughtful, questioning, creative, 'critical citizens' (of which being a worker is *one* part). This kind of education has a *social purpose* rather than a narrow economistic one. This is the kind of education this Learning Guide supports.

See An[other] look at vocational and community education, CIPSET, 2018
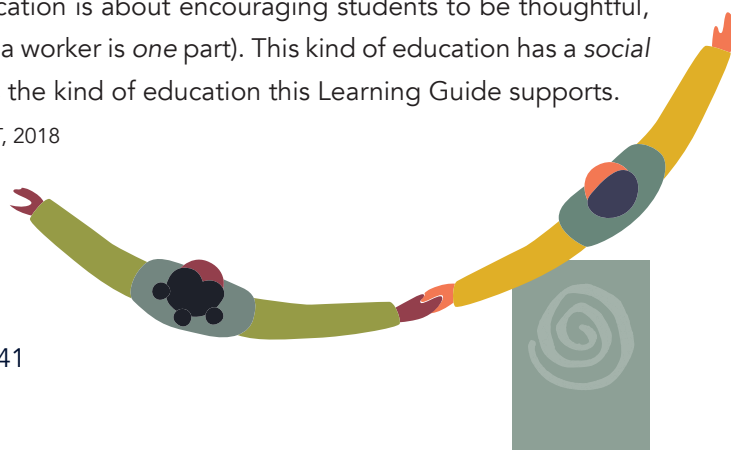
Critical pedagogy asks of us to reflect on and question everything (as Beck & Purcell state above - "including critical pedagogy itself"). Freire believed in asking WHY, WHY, WHY - this notion of problem-posing should frame and guide what we think about and how we practise education.

- **Education must both promote emancipatory change and the cultivation of the intellect.**
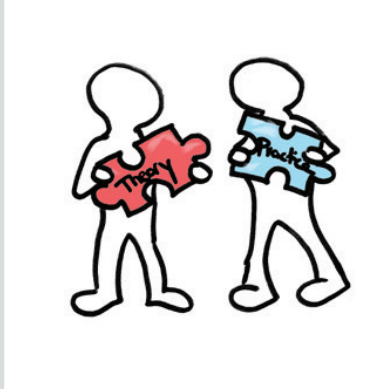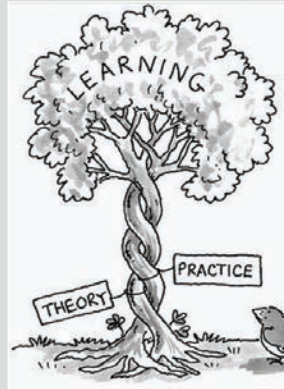
What do the above images of theory and practice mean to you?

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Freire and Praxis

*Freire places great emphasis on praxis, a unity of action and reflection, so that practice (or doing) and our thinking about what we do (theory) are bound together in one process, applying theory in action, and developing theory from that action. This becomes transformative praxis when it situates people in their political context, identifying and questioning the unjust contradictions of everyday life. Freire's critical pedagogy is a process of critical consciousness leading to action for change, in which personal problems are questioned in relation to political times that **embed** structural injustices within the very fabric of society. The process is one of empowerment combined with the knowledge to analyse and collectively act together for change. The overall aim is to deepen democracy by transforming unjust power relations by understanding the historical conditions that have created the present injustices in order to change the future.*

Ledwith, 2016

cultivation - development of
intellect - mind (thoughts, etc.)
embed - insert/put in

Some important points from the above:
- Unity of action and reflection - bound together in *one* process
- People are situated in their political context (to do with unequal power relations)
- Critical consciousness leads to *action for change*
- Personal problems are questioned *in relation to* political times (the problem/issue is much bigger than just you/your so-called 'inadequacy')
- It is far more than personal learning, development and growth - it's about learning *from* and *with* others and acting collectively for change.

Freire helps us to theorise oppression *and also to* develop liberating practice that brings about change. This is informed action or liberating/transformative/critical praxis.

Praxis is the unity of theory and practice that comes together in action and reflection. In other words, it is a form of education that is rooted in everyday life, involving, as Freire said, reading the word and reading the world. In this way, instead of theory becoming **detached** *from action, it is woven together and deepened in action as we work together to co-create knowledge that comes from experience, rather than unquestioningly accepting knowledge that is detached from life. In a process of action and reflection, theory in action and action as theory, a unity of praxis is built.*

Ledwith, 2016

- Education often reflects the interests and needs of new modes of colonialism and empire. Such dynamics must be exposed, understood, and acted upon as part of critical transformative praxis.

We return again to Freire's quote:

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

Freire asked of people to not only "read the word, but the world." People are thinking and conscious beings - able to ask questions, challenge, resist and fight back against the many unjust and oppressive systemic 'common-sense'/'way things are' structures, etc. People are co-operative and therefore capable of acting together to change their lives, and to struggle for change for a better and just world.

We cannot and will not simply accept that the way things are is, in any way, the way, shape or form things should be. It cannot be that a global small minority benefit, while the vast majority of the world, including all of nature, suffer immeasurable harm, loss and pain.

The instrumental view of education (briefly discussed above) is about maintaining the status quo (the way things are) and serving the interests of those who hold political and economic power. If we simply accept that this is how things should be then we are **complicit** in maintaining the unjust status quo and the balance of power as it is.

detached - removed from
complicit - to be part of something that is wrong
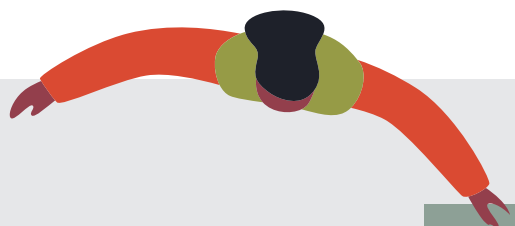
For example there is currently much talk about the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and how it will 'solve' all our problems. We should not simply accept this as some sort of truth, but instead we need to ask many questions as stated below:

If one looks at the fourth industrial revolution as something that will 'fix' all problems and issues with technical 'solutions' without taking into consideration the broader context and how those technologies work in it, we will maintain and/or worsen the existing economic and social structures. We cannot implement the so-called 4IR without addressing existing inequalities and without critically examining the purposes of the technology - for who, how and why?

See more on this in Beware of the bot: A critical perspective on the 4IR, CIPSET, 2020

*At the heart of Freire's critical pedagogy is the development of critical consciousness, conscientisation, a way of seeing the world with all its contradictions, a process that starts by simply creating the context for people to question their everyday experience. The purpose of this is to look beyond what we unquestioningly accept and take for granted in everyday life. Seeing situations with fresh eyes lifts the **blinkers**: we see the contradictions of life that are unjust and that lead to social inequalities. This locates the community worker as an educator in a process of education for liberation.*

Of course, this in itself is not enough to be transformative without collective action for change. This is precisely why the concept of empowerment is always a collective and not an individual process: personal empowerment is only truly empowering when it leads to collective action for transformative change.

Ledwith, 2016

We end this part of the Learning Guide with the following taken from CIPSETs *Curriculum from below: Bringing community education into existence* (2018):

Harley (2015), referring to South Africa, argues that:

People's Education was consciously about more than confronting the state's race-based policies; it was about envisaging an alternative economic society as well, a society rooted in Marxist humanism.

Working from this tradition, a number of principles can be elaborated to inform community education. Community education:

- Is a political process that critiques and makes visible the existing arrangements of power in society, including that of capitalism
- Is based on the assumption that all people are equal, because they share a common humanity (Harley, 2015)
- Enables the interest of the 'mass of the people' to surface through wide participation in "community based and community devised alternatives" (Hawarden 1986, in Kruss, 1988, p. 9)
- Enables new positions and alternatives to emerge that address the social allocation of power
- Makes possible the development of critical consciousness.

We now return to the quote that started this part of the Learning Guide:

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

Dale & Hyslop-Margison, 2010

blinkers - used for horses to cover their eyes. Here it means 'lifting the blinkers' helps us see things from a different perspective

Would you now say anything different to the educators (students)? If so, what and why?

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Write down anything new you learnt from this second part of the Learning Guide.

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In the next part of the Learning Guide, Part Three, we look at *community education from the ground-up.*

PART THREE:
COMMUNITY EDUCATION FROM THE GROUND-UP

Write a few lines stating what you think of the following and why.
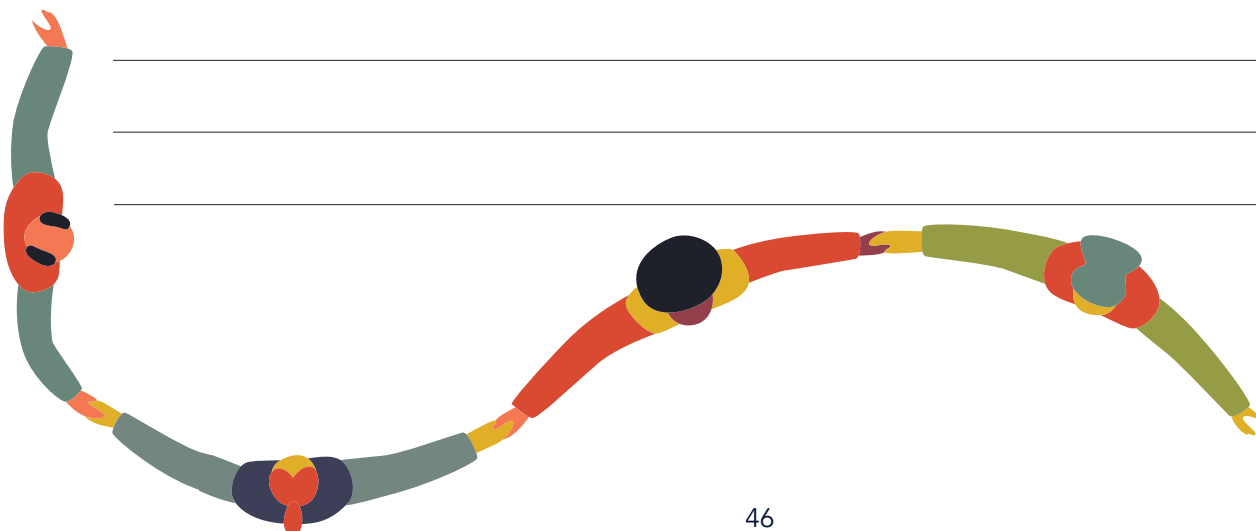

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This part of the Learning Guide deals with *community-based participatory action research (CPAR)*.

Write a few lines describing traditional or conventional research (you can use the following questions as a guide):

Who does the research? Who participates? What is its purpose? Who benefits?

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Write a few lines describing CPAR (you can use the above questions as a guide too).

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UNDERSTANDING CPAR

Let's look at the different words in order to understand the term better:

Community: Part One of the Learning Guide deals with this in some detail.

Participatory is the way the research is done - it is a collective undertaking, as opposed to an individual one. People come together with shared values and a common vision - learning and action are for the good of the community or the whole (refer to Part One: Beck and Purcell: *Learning is communal*).

Research is done *with* people, not *on* people (See Ledwith (2016) below). CPAR challenges and changes who researches and who are 'the researched;' who holds the knowledge and power; who constructs the research questions; who designs the methods; who interprets and analyses.

PAR challenges traditional approaches to research in relation to top-down power and knowledge that reinforce a single truth that favours privilege.

Ledwith, 2016

If you want to go fast go alone.
If you want to go far go together.
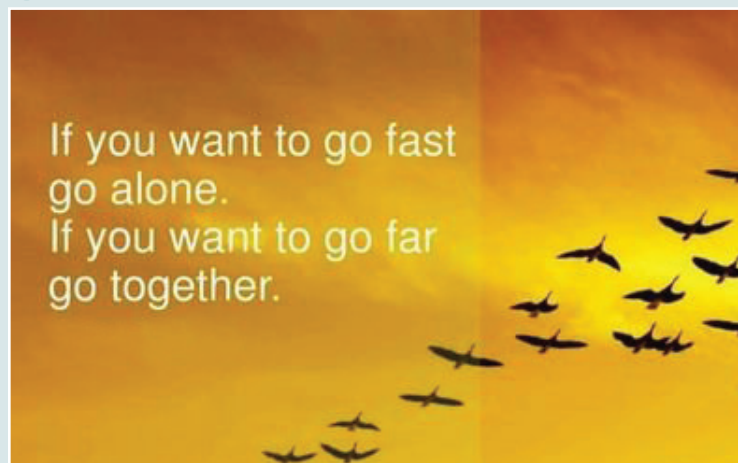
Freire's emphasis on *praxis* (see Part Two) is central to community-based participatory action research. The knowledge collectively generated through research is used to support and enable the action. Knowledge is necessary *in order to act* (Freire's notion of informed action) and knowledge also gets acquired *while one acts*. *Action* is about community members mobilising and organising themselves and others to work together to make changes for the better, sometimes with support from outsiders.

Research is not simply a technical process to do with trying to understand a certain situation or problem, but rather it is about surfacing and understanding the issues and attempting to *change* the situation and power relations in order to bring about social justice. Freire's emphasis on *critical consciousness* through dialogue is key to exposing dominant thinking or the collective lie. Ignacio Martín-Baró (a Jesuit priest and activist-scholar) made up the term *collective lie* - things that persuade us to go along with life based on the interests of those who want to maintain their power and privilege. This is similar to Gramsci's concept of *hegemony* discussed in Part Two.

The idea of who holds knowledge - who 'knows' and who does not - is challenged in CPAR. And the *kind of knowledge* that is valuable and needed is not simply knowledge or useful knowledge, but *really useful knowledge* - knowledge that is socially and ecologically useful *to and for* the community (See more on *really useful knowledge* in Part One).

In this kind of an approach to research, there is ongoing collective *planning, acting, observing*, and *reflecting* in order to learn about ourselves, our contexts and the world and to transform (or try to transform) unjust situations.

Ledwith (2016) explains that participatory action research is an approach to research that shares the same value base as community development. She identifies this *value base* as such:
Community development is committed to:
- principles of social justice and environmental justice;
- a vision of a just and sustainable world;
- values of equality, respect, dignity, trust, mutuality and reciprocity;
- a process of critical consciousness through popular education* (critical pedagogy), practical projects and collective action for change;
- a theory base that helps to analyse power and discrimination;
- contextualising practice in its political context.

Participatory action research is committed to:
- social justice and environmental justice;
- values of equality, respect, dignity, trust, mutuality and reciprocity;
- working *with* and not *on* people;
- using non-controlling methods;
- working mutually as co-researchers and not controlling researchers;
- different ways of knowing the world.

*Popular Education is a concept grounded in notions of class, political struggle, and social transformation. The term comes from the Spanish and Portuguese words where 'popular' means of the people i.e. the 'popular classes' - the poor, unemployed and working class. It embodies Freire's notion that education can never be neutral - it must side with the poor, oppressed and excluded. It is political in nature.
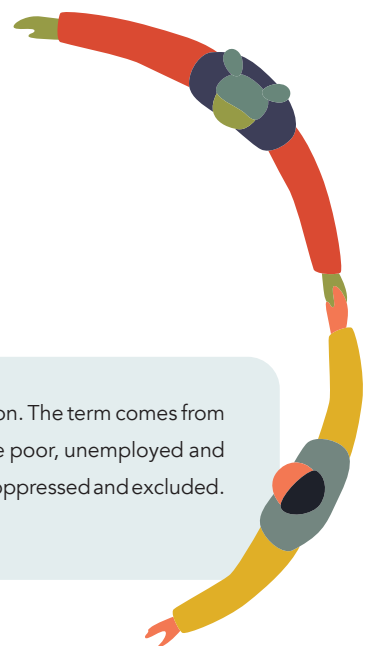
It we fail to come up with counternarratives of possibility, alternatives that challenge and change the injustices of life as it is, there is no means of keeping power in check. The theory/practice divide is symptomatic of Foucault's* warning: if we fail to question, then we are in danger of becoming complicit with the power we condemn. This sets the scene for exploring a critical living praxis for community development to take its stand as a practice for social justice into a simple practical process.

Ledwith, 2016

*Paul-Michel Doria Foucault was a French philosopher, historian of ideas, writer, political activist, and literary critic. His theories primarily address the relationship between power and knowledge, and how they are used as a form of social control through societal institutions.

Stephen Kemmis is associated with the term *emancipatory action research*.

Ledwith (2016) describes it as such:

Emancipatory action research is an approach to research committed to change for social and environmental justice by:

- equalising power in its process by working *with* and not *on* people;
- using methods that liberate, not control, so the traditional 'Objects' of research become 'Subjects' co-creating new knowledge from lived experience as a valuable truth;
- co-creating new knowledge that is beyond the written word through story, dialogue, photographs, music, poetry, drama and drawings;
- contextualising personal lives within the political, social and economic structures that discriminate;
- demonstrating an ideology of equality in action using demonstrable skills of mutual respect, dignity, trust and reciprocity;
- **dislocating** the researcher as external expert to become a co-participant;
- supporting co-participants to become co-researchers in mutual **inquiry**;
- creating the research process as a participatory experience for all involved so that the research process becomes empowering in its own right, as well as achieving a social/environmental justice outcome through collective action for change based on new understandings of the world.

dislocating - taking away/removing
inquiry - research/questioning

DOING CPAR

The following are three questions, borrowed from the work of Anne Hope and Sally Timmel, which essentially frame CPAR:

- o What is the world like?
- o Why is the world as it is?
- o What could be done about it?

What is the world like?

In Part One, we looked at the following images and wrote a few lines about them.
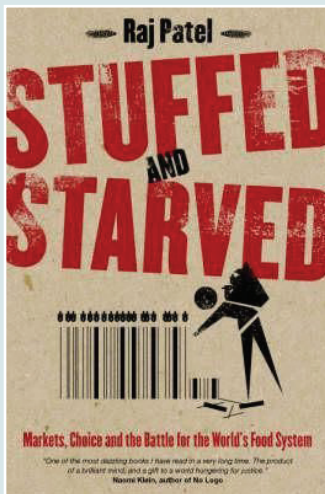
Now write a few more lines about the above images - this time thinking about and discussing the *common lie* (mentioned above) and how it is depicted in each of the images.

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It is critical pedagogy that gives community development the potential to bring about change for social justice. The process begins by simply questioning everyday life's taken-for-grantedness to see the contradictions we live by more starkly. This leads us to seeing the world through a new lens - seeing power in action and co-creating new knowledge, a new story of the world that forms the basis of action for change.
Ledwith, 2016

Why is the world as it is?

…questioning everyday life's taken-for-grantedness to see the contradictions we live by more starkly.
What are the *contradictions* in the images above?
Who holds the power and who does not and why?

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What could be done about it?

This leads us to seeing the world though a new lens - seeing power in action and co-creating new knowledge, a new story of the world that forms the basis of action for change.

Either re-draw the three images (on page 50) to depict "a new story of the world" or describe in a few words how you would re-draw the images.

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There is not one way to do CPAR. Following are examples of two groupings who have been involved in a CPAR process. The two groupings have not experienced CPAR in the same way - they have differed in what they have done. There is no step-by step guide because CPAR is organic - it comes *from* and is for the people 'on the ground.' A CPAR process adapts to what the particular group seeks to understand or want to change. It will be different in different contexts.

First meet the Community Education Programme (CEP) group. Based at the Centre for Integrated Post-school Education and Training (CIPSET) at the Nelson Mandela University, the CEP was made up of a small group of university-based researchers and community participants who lived near the Missionvale Campus (made up mostly of learners at Public Adult Learning Centres - including some **seasoned** political and community activists - and a group of volunteers from a local environmental justice organisation).

CEP sees the purpose of community education as supporting youth and adults to organise themselves to work and learn collectively, to provide mutual support and build unity, to claim their rights, and to develop their community and transform society.
CEP, 2017

Community participants came from two informal settlements, Ramaphosa (which used to be an old waste dumping site) and Rolihlahla (which was initially owned by the university and then sold to the municipality). Others came from Veeplaas and Soweto-on-Sea (which were both informal settlements, but upgraded to formal housing). All sites included households that are amongst the poorest in the Nelson Mandela Metro and in all the areas unemployment is high.

They are four living in the house. No one is working and they have to walk about 30 minutes to the bus stops and taxi rank. To survive they depend on the R310 per month from the social grant for her granddaughter; nothing else brings in income.
(Veeplaas: family lives in one room)
CIPSET, 2018

seasoned - experienced

The following describes the process undertaken by the CEP (adapted from *Curriculum from below: Bringing community education into existence,* CIPSET, 2018):

We were interested to understand what issues and problems members of local communities deemed important, what situations or circumstances they would like to change, and how one could develop a non-formal community education programme from the experience and lives of community members:

We aimed to work with people who are excluded from the labour market and wanted our work to talk to their lived experience. We wanted to understand from the perspective of people who are marginalised and excluded, what knowledge and skills they consider worthwhile learning in building a more equal, just and sustainable society. (Senekal, 2015)

The CPAR process incorporated a number of activities that loosely mirrored the Freirean process of co-investigation, coding and decoding in the development of a learning programme, and its accompanying reflection-dialogue-action cycle as described by Kirkwood and Kirkwood (2011) and by Freire (2000; 1985). Our investigative approach **hinged** around three linked questions through which our activities cycled:

- What is the world like?
- Why is the world as it is?
- What could be done about it?

(See above - Doing CPAR).

During the preparatory phase, the CEP group taught themselves how to 'do' participatory action research. From the first CPAR process, four broad **generative themes** emerged:

- Environmental justice
- Food & hunger
- Children & families
- Critical citizenship.

Two broad thematic areas were then chosen: environmental justice and food & hunger. More CPAR processes and actions then took place.

BRAINSTORMING ISSUES

hinged - based/established

generative theme/s - an issue about which people feel strongly and are willing to take some action

The CPAR process unfolded as follows:

It started with *community mobilisation* - meetings were held with local political and community-based organisations and researchers spoke on community radio stations in order to get the word out.

Transect walks were conducted along pre-planned routes through local communities. During these walks, photographs were taken, community members were interviewed - this involved building trust with people and, therefore, required explaining to potential participants who they (the researchers) were and what the purpose of the research was. The researchers used their **senses** to observe what was going on around them.

Below is an example of that. As you read it, think about what senses are being used and how they assist to 'set the scene'/get a feel of the area. Write what you think below.

On the 18th November 2014, we were doing Community Mapping*, walking in the Veeplaas Area. The route of the transect walk started at the bridge of the Chatty River. The sun was very hot about 30˚C. The flies were all over the place especially on our route because it was near the dirty, smelling river.

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*Community mapping is about identifying what is in one's neighbourhood and where the things are, such as a river or school or clinic, and how near or far things are from each other, etc. A community map creates a visual or picture of what it is like to live in a particular area, as things are drawn or photographed or filmed. (See the Community Mapping images in Part One).

senses - smell, sight, hearing, touch and taste
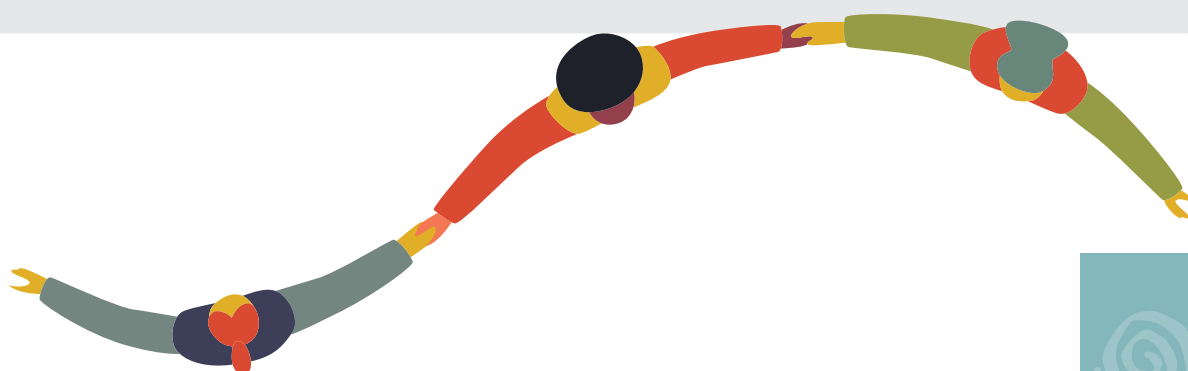
Fieldnotes were then written by researchers immediately after completing the walks. Once this was done, and after photographs were printed, the group of researchers would meet to do a more detailed data analysis - this was done in small groups. Each group looked at photographs and attached relevant labels to them. This was the coding part of the process (which took place over a few days) - sorting the data thematically - either by neighbourhood or by issue. The small groups then discussed and debated with other small groups what they had done and why. Photographs and labels would change as more researchers looked and commented on what each other had done. Then the groups met in plenary - this enabled everyone to see similarities and differences across the data sets. The sorting of the data continued to shift as the group discussed and debated further.

The field narratives were then connected to a photograph or group of photographs. This also involved a process of sharing, offering feedback and revision. Then the group looked at all the narratives and photographs and asked: What are the 'stories' and ideas that lie behind the groupings of photographs and photo stories?

The sorting or coding started the process of *naming the world* by describing what the world is like. The decoding started when the group began to look at how their descriptive analysis might help them develop an understanding of why the world is the way it is.

By comparing and contrasting individual stories and perspectives, the researchers moved from individual experience and knowledge to a collective community experience and understanding of the world. They extended this understanding again by adding perspectives from critical theory*.

*Critical theory is a social theory which focuses on a critique of society in order to reveal and challenge power structures. It differs from traditional theory which focuses only on understanding or explaining society.

Coding surfaces community experiences and knowledge. Decoding enables the development of stories that disrupt the emerging picture even further. By juxtaposing these stories with other dominant narratives, further new stories can be told which "reveal existing fault lines" and point to "where mobilization can begin and radical change is possible."
Weis & Fine, 2004

DECODING

COMMUNITY MEMBERS DISCUSS PICTURE CODES

Findings were recorded using a range of methods, including poems, photo stories, reports, popular booklets* and plays. The group wanted the findings to be shared with community members and groups who were not part of the core team in ways that encouraged a critical understanding of the world and, once again, allowed the group to interrogate their research findings. The community education events were open to any interested community member to attend and were held at a community hall in those communities where the research was conducted.

*The booklets are referred to throughout this Learning Guide and can all be accessed online. There are some hard copies available too.

The following extract comes from the work of the CEP - *Challenging hunger: A workbook for bulk-buying groups*, CIPSET, 2018:

https://www.mojaafrica.net/en/resource/challenging-hunger-a-workbook-for-bulk-buying-groups
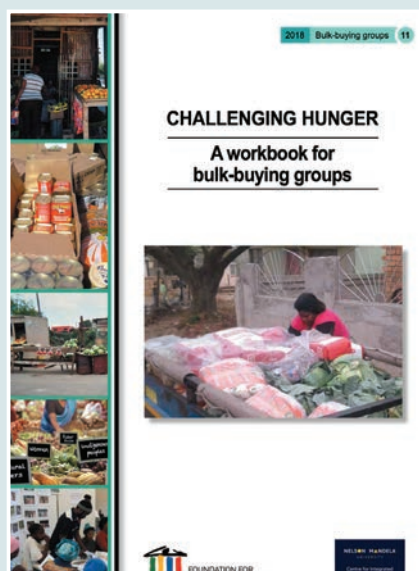
It explains CEPs participatory approach for shaping a *learning programme*:

We use three sets of linked questions (also see above) as a way to spark dialogue and structure the learning process:
    o What is the world like?
    o Why is the world as it is?
    o What could be done about it?

Answering the first question requires descriptions of our shared experiences and brings out our shared understanding, so that we are naming our world. This 'naming' can come from the group's own research, but also through the use of photos, stories, short video clips, cartoons and pictures to open up discussion and reflection. Depending on the energy and interest of the group, a single activity or a set of activities that surface the participants' lived experience can launch an investigation into ways of making sense of the world from different standpoints - ways of 'reading' the world.

At this point, new information could be added that also relates to the experience of the participants. Such information is explored not only as new content. Through this question, "Why is the world as it is?", we develop our understanding of different explanations of the world as it is and we compare these explanations or theories to our experience and to ideas of what the world could be. In this way, we deepen our understanding and add to our knowledge from other perspectives.

A further aspect of making meaning is to examine how knowing is valued in society and the ways in which knowledge is used to strengthen social, political and economic power. What do we learn from the different positions people hold about the interests these positions represent? Sometimes this process includes challenging our own ideas and beliefs, or exploring ways to claim and reinforce the validity of marginalised forms of knowing. The process of making sense - **upending** thinking, rethinking, restating and reclaiming - leads us to thinking about what knowledge is useful and helpful in opening up spaces for transformative learning. This connects us with the third question: What is to be done?
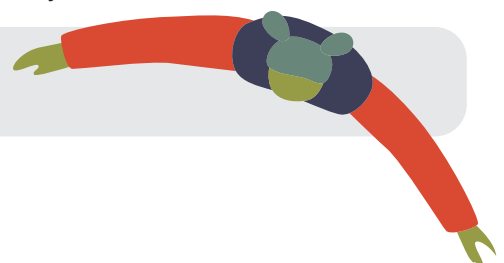
Thinking about 'action' suggests a participatory investigation to identify and evaluate alternatives that might exist within a geographical or cultural community, but could also exist elsewhere. From our new understanding, we assess what the possibilities for change are. We ask ourselves, what power we have in our own hands? We look at what resources and strengths, abilities and qualities we have as a community or group. We look at the possible risks and difficulties our initiative might face. We organise ourselves and identify roles and responsibilities. We allocate tasks and say by when these tasks should be completed. We follow up to see what has been done and hold each other responsible. We reflect on our progress and consider what activities we need to adapt or change or stop all together.

Exploring possibilities and spaces for action can shift the focus from local issues to finding global connections and examples of resistance. However, 'action' does not necessarily mean only activities that connect back into the community through mobilising, organising and collective work and the learning this can bring. It can also be thought of as the shared processes of designing and implementing new learning activities that deepen our understanding or our capacity for action. These interlinked questions spark learning that is both focused within the learning group and embedded in broader transformative processes with others in a community.

The questions give momentum to a spiral of repeated activities that drive us to ever deeper understanding and transformation of ourselves and our world. They are not **prescriptive**, sequential steps that are each completed before moving on to the next element, in the way of a conventional content-based curriculum. A starting point and further connecting activities come from educators and learners co-designing the learning programme through these problem-posing questions. How activities are selected and sequenced, with what learning objective in mind, should emerge from ongoing thoughtful dialogue between learners and educators. They are offered as possibilities for shared learning and activity.

upending - turn upside down
prescriptive - fixed/established - made by someone else

The diagram below sets out the process we follow in our work:

STRUCTURING A LEARNING PROGRAMME

concrete experience

identify issue

test & act

move into collective action

observation & reflection

imagine alternatives

describe situation

exploring contradictions

ask critical questions

formulate own concepts theories

add technical input

explore concepts & theories
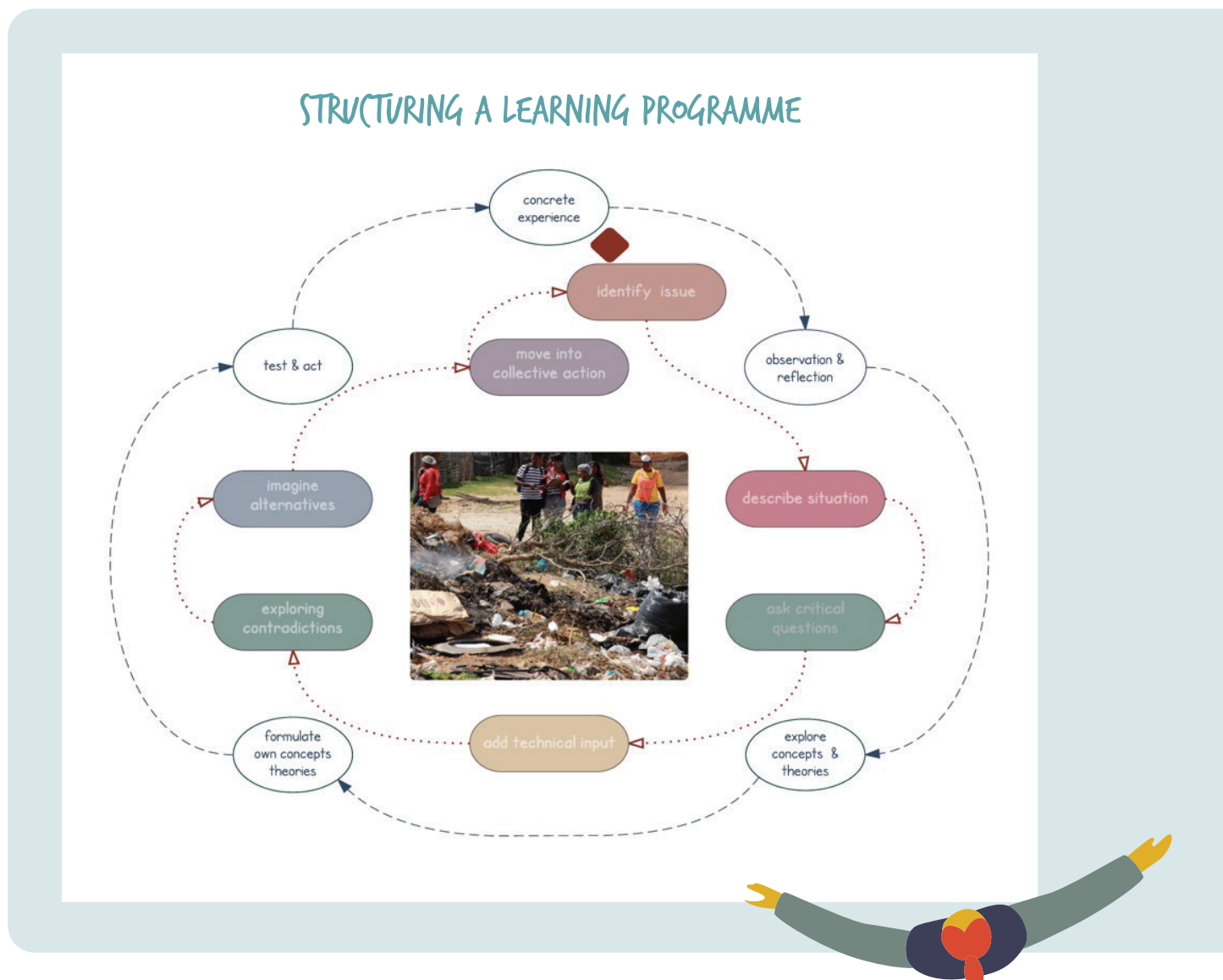
A note about language

Our learning circles bring together people with different home languages and schooling, and experiences of how language was used in education. Opening up dialogue amongst learners and between learners and educators in a way that encourages participation requires that we recognise that language is not a neutral issue and that language preference, and the dominance of English in our society, reflect its power relations. In our groups, we talk and write across the languages that we share. For example, we start with a discussion that surfaces lived experience in isiXhosa (sometimes based on instructions for the activity in English).
We write down our discussion in a mixture of isiXhosa and English. We put up a newsprint sheet where any participant (learner or educator) can write down key ideas from a discussion that is in isiXhosa or in English. At the end of a session, we review this list and translate these terms. Or we start a discussion with a word code from the popular language of a community and unpack the deep knowledge and understanding that is crowded into this concept.

We try to use language as a resource for defending, privileging and extending all the knowledge that is stored in the languages of participants, rather than only what is written in English. This means that we must problematise our own language use and preferences, and that educators must become co-learners rather than expert-knowers.

Challenging hunger: A workbook for bulk-buying groups, CIPSET, 2018

From the above, it is evident that the CEP group embraced the principles of *knowledge democracy*, as described below:

(1) recognition of a **multiplicity** of **epistemologies** and ways of knowing;

(2) an openness to assembling, representing and sharing knowledge in multiple forms, including traditional academic formats but also a range of social and arts- based approaches;

(3) recognition that knowledge emerging from the daily lives of excluded persons is an essential tool for social movements and other transformational strategies; and

(4) sharing research findings in a free and open manner, while protecting the ownership of knowledge held by communities.

Hall & Tandon, 2020 https://doi.org/10.5130/ijcre.v13i1.7225

> **multiplicity** - many
>
> **epistemologies** - knowledges. Epistemology is the study of human knowledge and is sometimes referred to as the theory of knowledge

Now we look at the Community Literacy and Numeracy Group (CLING). The following is taken from *Umhlaba omutsha uyafufusa. Reflections on community participation in education: The Community Literacy and Numeracy Group* (CERT, 2016).

https://www.mojaafrica.net/en/resource/reflection-on-community-participation-in-education-the-cling
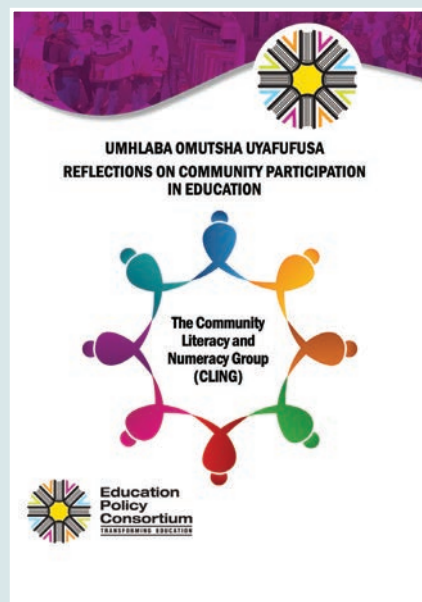
The CLING Project was conceptualised in 2006 and started in 2007 (as part of the 3Rs Project - an Education Policy Consortium (EPC) literacy and numeracy research project) in order to try to understand better and answer the question of *why*, despite moving state resource allocations (such as money) to schools catering for predominantly poor Black children, there had not been a significant improvement in the quality of education in these communities.

The CLING Project was located in five sites in the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and Gauteng, and in both urban and rural communities. It was a multiple case study aimed at understanding whether increased *community involvement* in schools could contribute to improved *literacy and numeracy* levels amongst children in primary schools. The research teams consisted of local community activists and EPC researchers. Community Literacy and Numeracy Groups (CLINGs) were started in each of the sites by researchers - these groups were responsible for enhancing and supporting community mobilisation and participation in schooling and education through a focus on literacy and numeracy. While the research project ended in 2011, the CLINGs continued for many years and the work expanded over the years (see further below). The groups that continued and/or started after the research project ended were all Gauteng-based - Evaton North and West, Freedom Park and Sebokeng (Kwa-Masiza Hostel).

CLING was supported by parents, teachers, some civil society organisations like non-governmental organisations, some government and business people, other interested community members and the Centre for Education Rights and Transformation (University of Johannesburg). Some funding was available for the project, however it mostly existed with volunteers - a number of whom worked/volunteered for many years.

The CLING Project was based on an understanding that literacy is not just the process of learning the skills of reading and writing, and maths but a 'contribution to the liberation of man and his full development' (The Declaration of Persepolis, from the International Symposium for Literacy, held in Iran in 1975. NOTE: 'man' should read 'people'). This broader definition of literacy is about critical consciousness - about participation in activities that lead to action and change for the better - it is about emancipation.
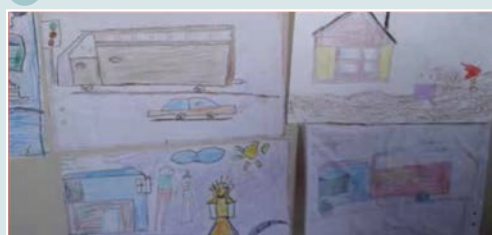

FREEDOM PARK LIBRARY AND EDUCATIONAL GAMES

EVATON WEST LIBRARY

EVATON NORTH READING CLUB – DRAWINGS

CLING is an example of a community group - made up of researchers and facilitators working in the various sites - involved in attempting to deal with and change a crisis in schooling and related issues. CLING is an example of a *community participatory* action research project because:

- It is more than a method or way of doing something - it is a theory in practice in favour of the struggles of oppressed and marginalised groups (that is, it *sides* with the oppressed and marginalised). CPAR is openly and clearly political in its position and in terms of whose interests it serves.
- It believes that those who have been oppressed and marginalised hold important *knowledge*. 'Outside' people (who may have degrees and may hold important positions) might actually know less than the people whose lives are affected by the issues - issues such as bad schooling, etc. CPAR recognises that the people who are affected by the issues are the 'experts' in their knowledge of these issues, whether or not they have degrees, etc.
- It enables the people who are 'being researched' to participate as co-researchers. They *participate* in the entire process of the research from the construction of questions to the analysis of findings, etc.
- Besides emphasising participation, CPAR also focuses on action. It tries to understand the world by attempting to *change* it, and it does this by working together (i.e., researchers and those affected by the issues who are co-researchers) and reflecting on what has happened.

This is how CPAR worked in CLING:

Project activities were grounded in an understanding of literacy and numeracy as **integral** to participatory citizenship and the development of democracy, and a recognition that the struggle for literacy and numeracy requires agency and active participation. In each location, community activists and EPC researchers did community mapping and drew on local knowledge in order to raise awareness of the importance of literacy, and to mobilise community participation. As stated, initially the project focused on literacy and numeracy in schools, but this focus eventually shifted toward community spaces, leading to the establishment of shack libraries, afterschool classes, reading clubs, adult basic education and early childhood development*.

Community members gained experience as producers of valuable knowledge, and an understanding of key structures and processes that determine quality of life. The project thus provided additional reason to insist that people in poor communities are capable of finding solutions to their problems, and that public policy should support them in using their knowledge, talents and skills to improve their lives.

Adapted from *Youth unemployment: Understanding causes and finding solutions. Reflections on education, skills and livelihoods*, CERT, 2013

*There was also, amongst other, crocheting, knitting, food gardening, physical exercise and arts & culture.

integral - very important

Youth Unemployment

Understanding Causes and Finding Solutions

Reflections on Education, Skills and Livelihoods
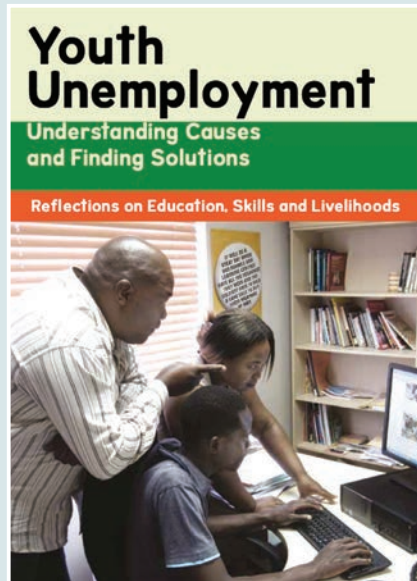
Learning that happened in a CLING space was non-formal and informal. There was no syllabus to follow and no outcomes to meet and be assessed. The learning was responsive to what community members (adults and children) needed. Learning within the CLING space happened as a result of direct participation in the events of life. It is learning related to struggle and it involves action - *action* is an integral part of the process of learning. This action can sometimes result in **victory** and sometimes in pain, suffering and loss. In February 2015 CLING held a protest in front of the gates of Freedom Park High School to demand sufficient and adequate education facilities and enough teachers for the newly-opened school. Learners were being squeezed into small classrooms with 90 learners to one educator! There was a shortage of textbooks, desks, chairs, and teachers. The Gauteng Department of Education responded to the protest and community demands - it hired 12 teachers and brought in eight mobile classrooms. This was a victory.
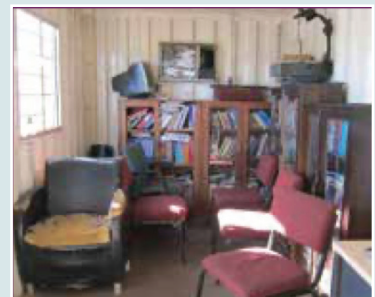
44

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FREEDOM PARK WORKSHOP   KWA-MASIZA HOSTEL   FREEDOM PARK

victory - success

CLING members met regularly to discuss issues, reflect, and plan. In Freedom Park, the Abahlali group met to discuss issues such as housing and land. In Sebokeng, the Working Class Coordinating Committee (Kwa-Masiza Hostel) met to discuss issues affecting their community, particularly to do with poor service delivery. In these examples, learning is about the sharing of something (such as an issue or problem) that concerns self-organised members who are part of a specific *context* (for example a shared space/where people live). The members participate on an ongoing basis in order to deepen their knowledge about the issue or problem.

Urhulumente makawuthathele ingqalelo umsebenzi esiwenzayo negalelo lwethu ekuphuhliseni intlalo- ntle yoluntu. Akunamfuneko yokumbongoza kulento, kufuneka abaze amehlo azibonele ngokwakhe lendima enyusa umgangatho wempilo. Uyakuthi akubaza amehlo abone intlungu yokungabinakutya, yokuxinana kumagumbi amancinci, nemfuneko yezakhiwo eziphangaleleyo. Akukho sempilweni ukubona ingxinano yabantwana kumagumbi amancinci. Amagosa ka Rhulumente kufuneka aqonde ubunzima bomntana ophuma endlini ekuseni, abesesikolweni imini yonke, emva koko aye nqo kwi CLING angakhange wabe kanti uyatya. Kufuneka sibaxelele ngezinzima, mhlazane bandwendwela imisebenzi yethu.

The government must recognise the work that we do and the role we play in improving lives. We do not need to approach them for this, they need to come out and see for themselves. They will obviously see that we are short of food, that we need bigger space. It is not healthy to keep children crammed up like this. Government officials will see for themselves that no child can be expected to leave home at 8am to go to school and spend the whole day at school, then after school come straight to the centre and knock off at 4pm still without any food. If government officials visited us, we need not tell them of these challenges, they will see for themselves.

Parents, teachers, CLING facilitators and community leaders, Freedom Park, Gauteng, 2014

Write down anything new you learnt from this third part of the Learning Guide.

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We briefly looked at *hope* in Part Two and we end with it…

Imagination should be used, not to escape reality but to create it.

Colin Wilson

Hope has never trickled down. It has always sprung up.

Studs Terkel

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

Hope, in this deep and powerful sense, is not the same as joy that things are going well, or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously headed for early success, but rather an ability to work for something because it is good, not just because it stands a chance to succeed. The more unpromising the situation in which we demonstrate hope, the deeper that hope is. Hope is not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out. In short, I think that the deepest and most important form of hope, the only one that can keep us above water and urge us to good works, and the only true source of the breathtaking dimension of the human spirit and its efforts, is something we get, as it were, from 'elsewhere.' It is also this hope, above all, that gives us the strength to live and continually to try new things, even in conditions that seem as hopeless as ours do, here and now.

Disturbing the Peace

Write your own message of hope here:

_____

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USEFUL RESOURCES

BOOKLETS

Many of the booklets listed below (developed by CIPSET; CERT and/or the Education Rights Project) are referred to in this Learning Guide. All are freely available online. Some hard copies are also freely available.

o   (An)other look at vocational and community education

o   Beware of the bot: A critical perspective on the 4IR

o   Challenging hunger: A workbook for bulk-buying groups

o   Children in the community

o   Community education in a community school: Tools and information for exploring the possibilities for community education

o   Community Education Manifesto

o   Community mapping in public spaces: Tools and information for developing an environmental justice curriculum

o   Energy workbook: Activities and information for community learning and investigating circles

o   Environment and education: Rights and responsibilities

o   Environmental health and waste in community: Developing an environmental justice curriculum

o   Let us not be slaves until we die: The lives of chokka fishers

o   Privatisation of schools: Selling out the right to quality public education for all

o   Racism and education

o   Reading clubs and community literacy

o   Re-making the world

o   Resource book for savings groups: Mobilising solidarity through savings groups

o   Sexual orientation and gender identity rights in education

o   The right to adult and community education

o   Umhlaba omutsha uyafufusa: Reflections on community participation in education: The Community Literacy and Numeracy Group (CLING)

o   Waste in the community

o   What has a polar got to do with me? Why respecting and saving the environment is a justice issue which affects us all

o   Work: Hope and possibilities

o   Workbook for community gardening groups

o   Workbook for community investigators: Activities and information for community learning and investigating circles.

o   Youth unemployment: Understanding causes and finding solutions: Reflections on education, skills and livelihoods.

The Education Policy Consortium's Post-school Education Review

The reviews are also freely available online.

•   Volume 1 Issue 1. July 2014

•   Volume 1 Issue 2. Dec 2014

•   Volume 1 Issue 3. July 2015

•   Volume 1 Issue 4. Dec 2015

•   Volume 2 Issue 2. Oct 2016.

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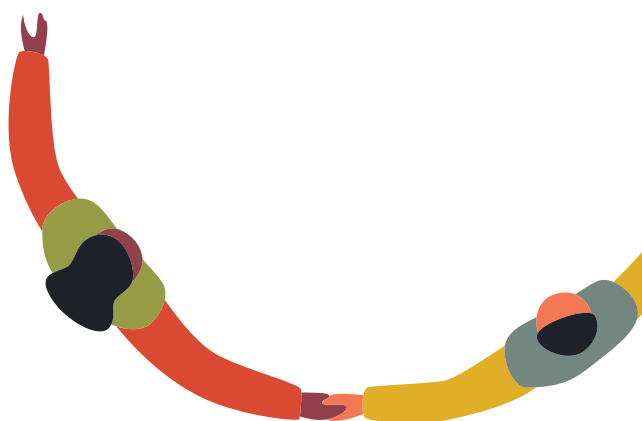Weis, L. & Fine, M. (2004). *Working method: Research and social justice*. London & New York: Routledge.

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12 This stencil was found in Melbourne, Australia. The street art is said to be Banksy's, but it is not confirmed.
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37 Said to be an "African proverb," however the source is unknown.

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38 Curriculum from below: Bringing community education into existence. A report to the Programme for Support to Pro-Poor Policy Development (CIPSET, May 2018).

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39 & **40** Curriculum from below: Bringing community education into existence. A report to the Programme for Support to Pro-Poor Policy Development (CIPSET, May 2018).

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41, 42 & **43** Umhlaba omutsha uyafufusa. Reflections on community participation in education: The Community Literacy and Numeracy Group (CERT, 2016).

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44, 45 & **46** Umhlaba omutsha uyafufusa. Reflections on community participation in education: The Community Literacy and Numeracy Group (CERT, 2016).

NOTES

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