

memories rewired



Restoring Humanity Project

The Institute for Healing of Memories, in an attempt to creatively respond to the challenges faced by young people today has revisited its youth project. The “Restoring Humanity” project is an outcome of this process. It sets out to give life to the vision of the IHOM by contributing to the healing journey of young people so that they can impact and influence the healing journeys of their peers and community.

In a report on the state of youth released early this year by SAIRR it states: *‘The data points to a generation in crisis. If a third of young people have nothing to occupy them all day, it is not surprising that sexual activity, drug and alcohol use, and crime rates are high among young people. Our research suggests that the lack of a stable family life contributes too many of the social problems besetting young people, the country’s future workers, entrepreneurs, and leaders.’* Working with young people over the last couple of years it has become apparent that the social conditions within communities has made it important for young people to engage in the process of healing that will enable them to reach their full potential.

This learning journey aims to:

Assist young people to deal with the social problems they are living through by exposing them to the healing of memories workshops- giving them a space to tell their story and their voices to be heard. Contribute to preventing future actions and decisions which might destroy and take away their human dignity and that of their community – so doing building a human rights culture in their communities. Empower them with the skills and knowledge to engage other young people and members in their community to work towards positive social change, social cohesion and healing of their communities.

Activities include:

1. Experiential workshops focusing on issues of Healing (personal and community), Human Rights, democracy, governance, identity, diversity and ethnicity.
2. Participants share in interactive platforms and story telling circles, addressing social political and economic issues with the aim of better understanding the world they live in and how they can contribute to change.
3. Visiting historical and present day- sites of dehumanization that provide participants with knowledge of the ancient, past and present wounds of our country.
4. Enskill youth trainers to offer the Youth Healing workshops in their communities
5. Develop communication skills and tools to – celebrate that which is life giving and laying to rest that which is destructive.

Youth bring the promise of “newness”

To build healthy, dignified communities, we need youth who are healthy and motivated. And the best way of ensuring this is by nurturing those with the potential to be inspiring leaders.

Each of them, if reaching their potential, will affect the lives of countless other youth around them and become powerful agents for building a more dignified, humane society.

This is the vision that led the Institute for Healing of Memories to revamp its youth project, focusing on developing the knowledge and skills of a core group of 30 young people in three Cape Town communities.

In partnership with local community organisations, the Institute identified ten young people from each of the communities of Atlantis, Athlone and Masiphumelele. The year-long programme started in March this year and the 30 young people have already attended 6 workshops. Established “Restoring Humanity” youth groups in their areas and expanded to the small town Mamre.

shape the present; discussed the many factors that shape how they and others perceive the world; and talked about how they developed their own sense of identity and attended a Healing of Memories workshop.

“You need this knowledge about what shapes the present, before we can gain a vision for alternatives for the future,” says Fatima.



The youth also planned, organised and held three mini street festivals, of the kind Fusion (refer pg 3) helps young people to organise, in each of the three communities. Walking on stilts, making balloon sculptures and painting faces, they turned their own turf into a carnival. It was all about celebrating life, releasing their own creativity – and having a blast.

“Youth are a reflection of what society is, but they want to change the world. We need them.”

The participants are developing their own solutions for building a more humane and non-violent society, and at the end of the year, they will have produced a case study of their own observations, analyses and interventions for each area.

They have also visited District Six Museum and the Gugulethu Seven Memorial as part of their investigation of how past wounds

IHOM partners

Beacon Hill Church and the Khoisan Coloured Reformation: Atlantis and Mamre

The mission of The Khoisan Coloured Reformation organisation is to encourage and protect of human rights and fundamental freedom for all indigenous people and called on governments and civil society to ensure that the Declaration's vision becomes a reality by working to integrate indigenous rights into their policies and programmes.

The Beacon Hill Independent Church was establish more than 10 years ago by Pastor Michael Adams. The Church plays an active role in addressing the socio economic challenges faced by the Atlantis and Mamre community.

Fusion: Athlone

Fusion South Africa, is a youth and community organisation and registered NPO, and has been involved with community projects in the greater Athlone area for the past year. We have been running programmes like Kids' Clubs, Youth Daytrips, Chat 'n Chow (reflection for youth and sharing of food) in Silvertown and also Open Crowd Festivals with the purpose of allowing the "people" of the community to engage and co-operate with one another.

"we're finding a new wisdom"

PORTIA MTHONISWA

"As youth in Masi, we do things very spontaneously. We think of going drinking, then next thing we're drinking. We think it's all about sex, alcohol, having fun. There is a bar and we just go there and drink alcohol.

And we are sleeping around. If you come home on Friday, you go out and don't come back until Sunday. Then you go to school on Monday. You don't care who says what. We say we are living a sweet life, maybe because

we don't have the challenges of the youth of before, who sacrificed their lives for us to live better today.

Liso, who is a facilitator for the Institute of Healing of Memories, told me all about the programme. She chose me because I was one of the most interested students. I had a feeling maybe this could help me start a new life.

continued on >>>04



“we're finding a new wisdom” ... from page 3

I used to think I was better than people of other races. In this programme, we meet get to know other people and see that they face the same challenges as me. So we are all the same, as humans.

On the first night of the workshop in Schoenstatt, we blacks all went to sleep in our own room. The second day we shared a lot, so that night I slept where my new friends were. I learnt something new – to share with other people. There is no need for barriers between us.

This programme is teaching us to think about consequences. As youth, we sat in a group, each one saying what they think. So we are teaching each other even without knowing it, because each one is saying she thinks is right.

Now I am talking to people about consequences a lot. At school, when we are talking about things, my friends say, ‘You like lecturing.’ I say, ‘I’m not lecturing you, just telling you what will happen.’

In the programme, I learnt that today’s youth are spoilt. We say to our mothers, ‘You brought me into this world, so you must give me all the things I want.’

In the programme we also learnt that life was hard in the past. Then we watched a film about Kenya. Young people were being killed, and some of them were sleeping in the forest or on the streets. I can say, ‘I am living a better life than that. I must not underestimate my life.’

When I got to Masi I stayed with my aunt. I felt alone. We didn’t talk. But when I went out she would call after 30 minutes to ask where I was. I thought maybe she didn’t like me or my style.

I talked about this in the workshop. They told me, ‘Maybe your aunt cares about you and doesn’t want you to get into drugs, sex and alcohol, the daily bread of Masi.’ Then we started talking and I saw she was a nice person. And I didn’t ask her but she told me, ‘I thought that maybe you didn’t want to talk.’

I like debating and making a speech in class, but I was never sure if I was right. But in the workshop we were talking, talking, talking. Guess what? On the Monday I was going to present a speech, and I decided my topic was ‘Today’s Youth’. And my teacher liked my speech.



As we were all telling our stories, I learnt there are children who have no one to provide for them. I realised that my father and mother are not educated but my father is trying to work underground in the mines, and my mother has done a lot for us seven children. I have food and clothes. It gave me a new perspective. Now I think, ‘I want to make my mother proud of me one day.’



As a result of this programme I have now joined the Ikamva Youth tutoring project at the library, and the netball group at school. I learnt that I like being part of something.

I want to be a young, successful citizen of my country. I want to be a scientist, but I am also interested in acting, singing and talking. I believe that if I carry on like this, then one day I will be who I want to be.

So this programme has given me a big boost.”

“building people up, not breaking them down”

CHARLTON

“This programme has been awesome. You meet a lot of new people and the stuff we’re doing links up with what I want to do in future, which is tourism.

I see things in a different perspective because of taking part in this programme. I’m aware of how we can help one another instead of break each other down. I didn’t really know these things before – it was the programme that developed these skills.

And I’ve found myself through telling my story. I know that I’m a people’s person, and now I care about other people too, not just myself all the time.

I live in Silvertown, in Athlone. Normally I go to one of the church functions after school, like a Bible study. In my free times I make music, or do rap, or I sing or even do sports. I’m in the rap group Blessed by Christ, a gospel rap group.

We are focusing on healing ourselves through this Healing of Memories, so that we can reach out to others. We’ve talked a lot, and became really close friends with people from the other areas. It really develops us as people.

In the workshops we went into detail about our stories and it laid off our burdens – really private things that you can’t easily talk about. We were taught not to tell other people outside the group about what was said, because it was very personal. And we were taught how to respect other people who were



telling their stories and not to do anything that would offend them. We had to put ourselves in their predicaments to make it easier, and that helped a lot.

And we learnt the reason war happens, which is because people don’t listen to each other. If people didn’t misunderstand when other people were talking, there wouldn’t be a war in the first place. Often, at school, people don’t listen and they fight over misunderstandings.

I also learnt about the history of the Gugulethu Seven and District Six. A man who lived in District Six told us his story at the District Six Museum. People got killed for our freedom. It made me feel agitated. I’m grateful that I’m living now, not then.

Before, I only knew the history I got taught at school, but in the Healing of Memories we learnt how apartheid really affected real people. It became personal. Afterwards, at one of the workshops, we talked about what we felt about it all. Talking about our feelings really helped us to deal with them.

The street festivals were great. It’s very nice to engage with young and old people, and bring the community together. There was so much going on. I was mostly focussing on the balloon sculpting and I was the field reporter, asking people their experiences of the festival, with a mike for everyone to hear right then.



continued on >>> 07



NAZEEMA SAUER

“hungry for knowledge”

“I’m staying with my aunt and uncle. My aunt is an entrepreneur and my uncle a panel beater and they are making something of their lives. But many people here in Atlantis aren’t like that. They don’t set high goals for themselves. I think that’s very sad because they could dream so much bigger.

“I’m at Saxonseas Secondary School and I love it. I get up every morning at six and I can’t wait to go to school. My friends say I’m abnormal but it’s because I’m so hungry for knowledge. It’s my passion. I’m also a very outgoing person and I love challenges, so when the teacher suggested I join this programme I said yes.

“I’m really honoured to be part of this Institute, which is helping people to grow, and showing us all that people matter. If all youth were exposed to the things I’ve been exposed to, they would see the world with a totally different perspective – that there’s more to life than meets the eye, and that reality can always surprise you.



“One day, in a workshop, Fatima gave us a challenge. She said we had to sit still and not interrupt while someone told us their life story. I found that very hard, the discipline of it, and I didn’t think I could do it. But I did, and I surprised myself. It taught me to be patient with other people – very, very patient. I learnt that you can learn a lot from other people, listening seriously and talking less, and that making eye contact with people makes them realise you’re listening to them.

“I also learnt not to judge people – which young people tend to do. In the programme there was one very dominant person, and my initial reaction was that I didn’t like that at all. But getting to know him, I discovered how gentle he really was. Now I know that if you take the trouble to get to know people, they will surprise you.

“My friends sometimes ask me, ‘Nazeema, why are you so quiet?’ I say, ‘You don’t have to speak. You can be quiet, and listening, and still be seen and heard.’ When we look at a person, we should realise that there is something about that person that makes them unique. Everyone has certain special qualities, and the rest of us can learn from them.

“I’m from Knysna but I got tangled up there with friends I shouldn’t have, and became quite naughty. When I came on holiday here to Atlantis I was exposed to all the right things, and told myself I didn’t want that old life anymore, so I came to live here.

continued on >>>07



“hungry for knowledge” ... from page 6

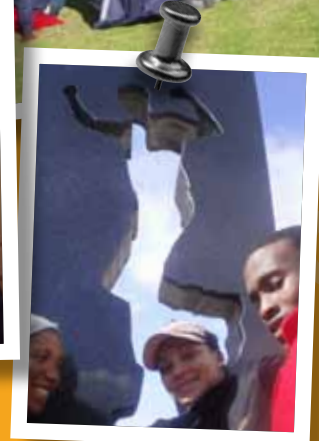
“During the workshops we talked about our wounds, sharing our own stories and keeping it confidential. People cried and laughed. We all got closer. I made peace with my past, and I could see what a difference it made to others – how they had so much more confidence afterwards.

“For one activity, we were put in groups and had to form a community and give it a name. We called our community ‘divernity’ – a combination of ‘diversity’ and ‘unity’. Our values are being gentle with one another, respect, discipline and trust, because love is built on trust. For our symbol, we chose two hands with the palms together.

“In Islam, my religion, it says, ‘What is the use of having knowledge but not sharing it with the world?’ Now I’m thinking of giving back to the community, and implementing some of the things I’ve learnt at the Institute. Others should also be exposed to the things I’ve been exposed to.

“I love writing so one of the things I want to start is a school newspaper, publishing the things that are on youth’s minds, to help them feel more worthy and appreciated. I’m on the Representative Council of Learners and we’ve already been discussing our newspaper at meetings, planning it.

“I know it’s going to happen.”



“building people up, not breaking them down” ... from page 5

There a horse-shoe layout with an opportunity for everyone to come in and there were games in the centre, where everyone can come and play. There was also stilt walking, facepainting, line dancing, diabolo – spinning this hour-glass shaped thing with two sticks on a string – and spinning plates. Our street festival was during the holidays and more than one hundred people came, children, parents, everyone.

I’ve decided now that I want to start a hip-hop lounge at my school, a place where people can listen to music. Normally people bring

their phones to school, so they can listen to music on them. They’re not supposed to have phones to school so they do it under cover and then they start smoking and stuff.

Kids are catching a nonsense all the time because they’re bored and they don’t know what to do with themselves. I want to bring music to them, so they can chill in a classroom, maybe have people rapping and stuff.

I’m trying to draw up a plan, to show to the principal.”

First Annual Healing of Memories Lecture

Restoring Humanity



Institute for Healing of Memories in partnership with the University of the Western Cape invites you to share this historic moment with us

Speaker: Ela Gandhi

Date: 18th August 2011

Time: 5.00pm - Reception - Refreshments will be served

5.30pm - Lecture

Venue: Library Auditorium - University of the Western Cape

RSVP: Institute for Healing of Memories

Eleanor Kuhn - info@healingofmemories.co.za or 021 683 6231

University of the Western Cape

Anita Fredericks - arfedericks@uwc.ac.za or 021 959 3859

by 12 August 2011



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A Brief Biography of

Ela Gandhi in her own words:

I was born at Phoenix Settlement on the 1 July 1940. It was the first day of school holidays and right in the middle of the war years. My sister and brother were aged 12 and 6 years respectively at the time.

I was fortunate to have not only doting parents but two siblings who also loved and doted over me. My parents used to publish a weekly newspaper and so from an early age I learnt all about printing and publishing.

I learnt about Mahatma Gandhi (my father, Manilal Gandhi was his son) from my mother. Our bed time stories were often about him, and about other heroes and heroines of the liberation movements of South Africa and India. I also accompanied my father to the political rallies held during the 50's and became involved in political work myself.

I have a BA social science honours degree. I am a social worker by profession. My passion for gender equality, for changing the lives of the poorest of the poor and doing something about the injustices in the country based on race saw me become a founder member of the Natal Organisation of Women, which joined the ANC Women's League, joined the ANC and the SACP in which I was chosen as a central committee member. In 1993 I was chosen as a delegate representing the Natal Indian Congress on the negotiations forum and later elected on to the Transitional Executive Council (TEC) and then in parliament as a member of the National Assembly. I resigned from parliament in 2003 and chose to retire and engage in voluntary work. Today I run a newspaper, research and collect information on Mahatma Gandhi and other heroes of the liberation struggle and compile them into documentaries and exhibitions. I do this as a volunteer and not a paid staff. I was nominated and accepted the position of Chancellor of the Durban University of Technology in 2008. I was nominated and accepted to serve on the Legal Aid Board of South Africa in the same year. I am Trustee of the Gandhi Development Trust and Chairperson and Hon. Editor of Satyagraha. I am Honorary International President of the World Conference on Religions for Peace, and a member of many other local and international organizations working for peace and building a culture of nonviolence."