



eNewsletter No. 5

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1. From the Director's Desk

Dear Readers

This eNewsletter will reach you as Christians begin their celebration of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. This period, the most significant in the Christian calendar, commemorates a story of the triumph of life over death, hope over suffering and despair. This story of life over death and hope over suffering continues to play itself out in the struggles for dignity of the poor and the marginalised. Wherever people struggle for life and hope, even in the midst of suffering and despair, resurrection is happening and the God who triumphs over death is present.

May this Easter time be an experience of new life for you and your loved ones.

FROM MERVYN ABRAHAMS, DIRECTOR

2. News

PRE-PAID ELECTRICITY METERS IN MSUNDUZI MUNICIPALITY

The Msunduzi municipality is planning to convert all households to pre-paid electricity meters from the current credit meter system. PACSA is arguing strongly against this conversion because it is not in the interest of poor households who struggle to pay for electricity. For PACSA's position see the Witness article, '15 things you need to know about pre-paid meters'.

[Read the full article here](#)

3. Events

PASTORS BREAKFAST WITH THE MIDLANDS COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

PACSA in partnership with the Midlands Council of Churches (MCC) held a Pastors Breakfast at the City Royal Hotel in Pietermaritzburg on the 15th March 2013. The purpose of the breakfast was to introduce MCC to the broader space of churches as lack of participation by mainline churches had been identified as one of their weaknesses. Over seventy pastors and church leaders representing ministers fraternal working in all 7 local municipalities within Umgungundlovu districts. [Read more...](#)



Paddy Kearney, a well-known ecumenist, was the main speaker at the breakfast and he spoke about the need for a strong ecumenical movement in the midlands area. He shared the findings of the study that he had conducted a few months ago highlighting the need for a unified effort to mentor MCC into a fully-fledged Council of Churches with a membership that is inclusive of all Christian traditions.

4. Features/ Debate

Many South Africans have decried the recent, terrible cases of rape. South Africa's pervasive culture of hyper-masculinity has been blamed for the problem, as has the patriarchal nature of its society, where men remain the central figures around which society is organised in spite of the country's constitutionally enshrined commitment to gender equality.

See 'Towards a Political Economy of Rape' by Jane Duncan on the SACSIS website on the 7 March 2013.

[Read the full article here](#)

5. Meet a PACSA Community Partner Group

PLANTING THE SEEDS OF HOPE

The Story of change : Hlakaniphani Women's Group, Trustfeed

Hlakaniphani Women's Group was formed voluntarily by widows living in the Trustfeed area, Umshwathi municipality. They started a food security project consisting of three homestead gardens where the members jointly worked. Upon harvesting the produce, some was divided amongst members for their households' food security and some of the surplus was donated to needy households in the area. The bulk of it was sold to neighbours.

The group realised the potential of increasing their households' income through selling more produce to the neighbours as it was becoming clear that most households in the area could not afford to go to town to buy their vegetables. After an intense accompaniment process of thinking through how best they could reach their goals i.e. food security for their household and increasing income through providing fresh vegetables for sale, the group identified land within their area that lay idle and could be used for agricultural production. They approached the owners of the land, the Shembe Church, and were granted a ten year lease to cultivate the 1 ha land.

The changes that the group has undertaken in the process include the fact that the group initially looked at the needs of their own households but now they are concerned with the needs of the whole community. While they were farming on a homestead garden level they hardly had to think about marketing strategies, which have become crucial as they are beginning to farm for selling purposes. The group's entrepreneurial acumen has been enhanced as they have to think, plan and work at the level that ensures sustainability of their project.

The members of the group now have some control on how much additional income they make through their hard work and dedication. The growth of the project has contributed to the deepening of relationships both within the group and the community.

6. Meet a PACSA Staff Member!

The Witness Newspaper recently profiled Mervyn Abrahams in his position as Director. To read the article, 'Being good neighbours' see [the full story here](#)

Meet Thulani Mthlale

Mr Thulani Mthlale is currently working as a Process Facilitator, specialising in masculinity issues. He is also responsible for events management at PACSA. He has been a PACSA staff member for the past three years. He has experience in working with community based organisations, in the area of Human Rights, Gender and HIV and Aids as well as specific interests in gender issues, working especially with men. His work includes facilitating processes of organisational development amongst community based organisations and other partners. Thulani is also involved with many national and provincial networks working in the field of masculinity. He is a secretary of the Provincial Men's Forum, responsible for coordination and support of men's programme within the province.



Meet Thulas Ndlovu



Thulas is a Process Facilitator and the OD Coordinator. He has been with PACSA since March 1991. He worked in the Finance Section until 2006 when he became the Project Officer of the Community Capacity Enhancement Unit (CCEU).

Thulas holds a Master's degree in Public Administration from Ohio University (USA) and has worked in the banking and public sectors. He is passionate about organisational growth, especially the journey of community based organizations towards effectiveness and sustainability. He is a member of the Board of Zakhe Agricultural College based in Baynesfield Estate in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands.

7. Please write to us!

Tell us your story to inspire or challenge us to action!

We look forward to hearing from you!