



PIETERMARITZBURG AGENCY FOR COMMUNITY SOCIAL ACTION

eNewsletter No. 6

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1. From the Director's Desk

Dear Readers

Greetings from PACSA.

Last week our country celebrated Freedom Day. While there is much to celebrate in our democracy, we are also conscious of processes that seek to limit the victories won through struggle. One of these is the passing of the Protection of State Information Bill, also known as the Secrecy Bill, by Parliament last week. PACSA joined a number of organisations, last year, in making submissions to Parliament calling for a bill that has a public interest defence clause and one that cannot be used to undermine the right to information and a free press. The bill passed last week does not have a full public interest defence clause and questions around its constitutionality remain. Another issue that threatens the freedom we have won is the spate of gender based violence cases, especially rape. In one of the articles below we focus on the disturbing trend of the rape of older women.

It is clear to us in PACSA that freedom is a value we should remain vigilant about and we must continue to work so that every person experiences a sense of freedom that recognizes their dignity as human persons.

FROM MERVYN ABRAHAM, DIRECTOR

2. News

· Visitors to PACSA

Rev. Sonia Barron and Dr. Burkhard Bläsi (right), from Germany from the United Kingdom visited PACSA during the past month.

Dr. Burkhard Bläsi is from the Führungsakademie in Baden-Württemberg, Germany, visited KwaZulu-Natal to assess various projects supported by the Baden-Württemberg state government and to gain some understanding of the local context. His visit to PACSA was to gain understanding of our work and hear our assessment of the development context in KwaZulu-Natal. Dr. Burkhard Bläsi is a trained psychologist and we had a very interesting discussion on the work PACSA is doing around masculine identities and how awareness-raising on gender power relations could lead to behaviour change.



The Rev Sonia Barron visited PACSA and led our staff devotions on Monday, 22nd April and spent half a day with us. Rev Sonia is a priest from the Anglican Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham in the United Kingdom and is on a visit to the Cathedral of the Holy Nativity in Pietermaritzburg. She is passionate about faith and social justice and had worked for a number of years in Uganda where she developed an interest in community development. In her reflection with PACSA staff she focused on the Christian imperative of love and that love seeks that which recognizes the dignity of each person. Her reflection led to lively discussion amongst PACSA staff on how our approach of walking in alongside in solidarity with people in struggle is a form of loving.



· People taking control of their livelihoods

Three PACSA community partner groups working on livelihoods (Gezubuso, Trust Feed and Richmond) hosted two women emerging farmers, Ms. Ndwandwe and Mrs Mfekayi, from the Zimele project in Mtubatuba, northern KwaZulu-Natal, for four days of sharing experiences, expertise and peer mentorship. The invitation to the Zimele project to send two of their members to come and share their knowledge on seed banks resulted from a visit that Hlakaniphani (Trustfeed), Sizonqoba (Gezubuso) and Usizo Groups had undertaken to Mtubatuba last year. The aim of the exchange was for the Mtubatuba women to demonstrate agro ecological methods of farming and provide advice and training on how to preserve seeds for the next planting season.

[Read the full article here](#)



· **Community support of rape victims**

In February a granny aged 91 was raped by a 23 year old. KwaDindi Youth Development reached out to the victim. In a joint meeting of PACSA community partners this case was discussed and the general impression was that the justice system has failed this victim. It was also revealed at the meeting that in early March there had been a case of another granny aged 64 that had been raped by a 26 year old. PACSA Community Partner groups decided that they would engage in joint action against rape. On the 24th April about 52 community activists, all dressed in black, came together at PACSA offices and marched to the court in solidarity with victims of rape and to support the 64 year old women whose case was being heard that day.

[Read the full article here](#)



· **PACSA in Learn with Echo**

In order to increase our media influence at community level we now collaborate with 'Learn with Echo' a weekly supplement published in the Echo community newspaper. The Learn with Echo is coordinated by the University of KwaZulu-Natal's School of Education and Development and is designed for used by individuals, families, adult literacy centres, and schools.

[Read the most recent articles here](#)

· **PACSA on Face book**

PACSA now has a face book page that we update on a weekly basis. To get additional information on our work please "**Like**" the PACSA face book page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/PACSAPMB>



3. Events

· **Gender and HIV training with young people**

We conducted a gender and HIV/AIDS training week-end for 46 young people who are part of the peer educators' network. The workshop provided foundation level knowledge on HIV and gender information and the space for these youth to explore these issues. The Peer Educators work with other young people in 5 schools and communities around Pietermaritzburg to enhance their knowledge of gender and HIV and to inculcate a life-style that advances gender-justice and avoids the spread of HIV.

[Click on the gallery of the photographs here](#)



· **PACSA Spirituality group discussion with Professor Gerald West**

Over the past 20 years a small group of PACSA members and friends have been meeting as the PACSA Spirituality group to explore questions emerging from faith in action. Twelve PACSA staff and members took part in a discussion with Prof Gerald West on the topic of 'State construction of the role of religion in the public sphere and the return of people's theology' on the 16th April.

To access Prof West's paper go to <http://ujamaa.ukzn.ac.za>



4. Features/ Debate

Since 2006 PACSA has been tracking increases in **food prices** around Pietermaritzburg and each year producing a report that details affordability of food and its impact on poor households. See 2012 report on www.pacsa.org.za. As part of our work on the impact on households of un-affordability of essential food products, Julie Smith, PACSA Research and Advocacy Coordinator, in collaboration with the University of KwaZulu-Natal, conducted a series of community discussions on this matter. The following reflection provides insight into food affordability at household level in poor communities around Pietermaritzburg.

[Read the full story here](#)

5. Meet a PACSA Community Partner Group

Meet Springs of Hope HIV Support Network, a PACSA Community partner group

Springs of Hope HIV Support Network was established in 2003 and has been in an accompaniment relationship with PACSA since 2009. The Network consists of 230 members and works to break stigma around HIV and AIDS and supports people living with HIV to mobilize and advocate for improved health care and HIV related services. The photographs below provide snapshots of their work in 2012.

[Read more...](#)



6. Meet PACSA Staff Members!

Madalitso Mtine

I am a Process Facilitator and Training Co-ordinator. I have been with PACSA since June 2008.

I hold a Bachelor of Social Science in Political Science and Industrial Sociology which I obtained at the University of Swaziland. I have worked in the NGO scene for 8 years. I previously worked for a regional organisation EJM of FOCISSA on trade justice and food security issues. I serve on the board of Church Land Programme. My focus within PACSA is economic justice, gender, youth development and HIV & AIDS.



Bernd Schultheiss

My name is Bernd Schultheiss. In 2006 PACSA asked Misereor, one of their overseas funders, for staff support in their youth work. In 2007 AGEH sent me as a 'youth and small business development consultant' to PACSA.

My job is to consult the PACSA youth wrt their after-school-careers. I am working as a consultant for dioceses youth-work as well as a networker on a national level. Some of my work is also Misereor related. From time to time they need a 'fieldworker' and organizer for their work in RSA.

I did a vocational training in mechanic engineering and worked for AEG. I went back to school and did Matric. After the military service - compulsory for Germans during this time - I went to university and studied social work and left as a Dipl Sozial. Paed (FH). - and now I am in the beautiful city of choice PMB... :-)



7. Support PACSA financially through the Woolworths My School Card

PACSA is now registered as a beneficiary of the Woolworths My School card programme. This means that the My School card users can list PACSA as a beneficiary and we will receive a small contribution each time you swipe your card at Woolworths. If you are a card user and would like to list PACSA as a beneficiary then please follow the steps below:



1. Link your current Woolworths Card to MySchool MyVillage MyPlanet by calling 0860 100 445 and make PACSA one of your charities.
2. If you already have a MySchool card, but would like to change your beneficiary, simply call our Client Service Centre (0860 100 445) - there is no need to get a new card!
3. If you don't have a MySchool card yet, simply apply for your card online or fill out an application in store.

If online:

Go to the Woolies website: www.woolworths.co.za;

o Click on Reward Yourself - it's on the top button bar

o Go to the box titled: Reward a School of Charity and click on click there for more information.

o Then follow the steps outlined

NOTE: The list of possible charities is right at the TOP of the form - go down the list and choose PACSA (My Village). Visit www.myvillagemyplanet.co.za for a comprehensive list of Villages and Planets or to read more.

8. Please write to us!

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

We look forward to hearing from you!

Mervyn Abrahams

The Director

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