



eNewsletter No. 9

July 2013

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1. From the Director's Desk

Dear Readers

Greetings from PACSA.

In this edition we present a snap shot of some of the events and actions that PACSA and our community partners were part of in July 2013.

Our feature article raises an issue, much debated in PACSA, on why we do not see more solidarity, communication and activism across the class divide in our country. South Africa has one of the highest inequalities in wealth and inequity in access to basic services and we have seen more localized popular protests than anywhere in world. Yet, we have not reached the stage, as in Turkey, Brazil, and parts of southern Europe, where a social justice movement stretches across the class divide. Glen Ashton argues in 'Unity in Diversity? Time to Revitalize Inclusionary Activism', we require greater solidarity across the class divide, but led by those who suffer, if we are to shift the social justice discourse in South Africa.

We hope you find this edition informative and interesting.

MERVYN ABRAHAMS

2. News

· HOPE IN THE PIPELINE: SIZONQOBA GETS ACCESS TO WATER FOR IRRIGATION

The area in which Sizonqoba, one the livelihoods partner projects of PACSA, operates in has for the last few months been experiencing an extremely dry winter season. This situation has had detrimental effects on their crops.

[Read the full article \(with gallery of photographs\) here](#)



· TOGETHER WE CAN: DOOR TO DOOR CAMPAIGN IN MATHANDUBISI

The Hilton Valley Health and Development organization conducted a door-to-door campaign at Mathandubisi, an informal settlement, in Howick in the KwaZulu-Natal Natal Midlands. The objective of the campaign was to connect with the inhabitants and do a baseline analysis of the health needs in the community.

[Read the full article \(with gallery of photographs\) here](#)



· COMMUNITY PARTNERS NETWORK FORUM DISCUSS THE AFFORDABILITY CRISIS FACING POOR HOUSEHOLDS

PACSA met with its community partners groups on Friday 19 July 2013. The discussions were facilitated by the Electricity Action Group and Sakikusasa Youth Development, and focused on the socio-economic challenges the communities face and popular struggles that the groups are involved in.



[Read the full article \(with photo gallery\) here](#)

#### · PACSA PROGRAMME TEAM AT STAFF DEVELOPMENT

As part of consolidating and deepening our common professional practice of process facilitation the PACSA Programme team engage in regular reflection and learning as well as staff development sessions. We spent two days last week with Sue Davidoff from Proteus Initiative deepening our process facilitation skills and reflecting on our practice.



[View the photo gallery here](#)

#### · COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS LEARNING TOGETHER

The three PACSA Community partner groups working on livelihoods had a two-day joint learning session with dietetics and community nutrition students from the local campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Together they explored the nutritional value of indigenous vegetables, nutrition for good infant and childhood development, nutrition for HIV, hypertension, and diabetes - all within the context of affordability challenges that households face.



[View the photo gallery here](#)

### 3. Upcoming events

This is early notification of three events in September and October of this year. We will give further information (dates, venues, speakers, etc) in the next eNewsletter.

- PACSA Film Festival in September
- Week of Activism for food justice in October
- Round-table discussion on political leadership in South Africa in October 2013

### 4. PACSA in Media

· PACSA's research and work on food justice featured prominently in the following news article published by the Witness during the past month. Read the article, *The Big squeeze: High food prices are forcing even middle class consumers to make less health choices* at:

[Read full article here](#)

· PACSA and the uMphithi Mens Network on a TV programme: Thulani Mthlane (PACSA) and Sphamandla Makhathini (uMphithi) took part in a television discussion on the role of men in advancing gender justice screened on 1KZNTV Lifestyle Show on the 11th July 2013.

· **PACSA on Facebook:** PACSA now has a very active face book page. To get additional information on our work go to <http://www.facebook.com/PACSAPMB> and like the PACSA page.

### 5. Feature / Debate

The following article, *Unity in Diversity? Time to Revitalize Inclusionary Activism*, by Glenn Ashton, was published by the South African Civil Society Information Service and explores why the middle-class in South Africa is not identifying with the struggles of the poor.

[Read this interesting article here...](#)

### 6. Meet the Electricity Action Group (EAG), a PACSA Community partner group

The Electricity Action Group is a network of mostly women community activists, started in 2010, campaigning for access to affordable and sufficient electricity, including free basic electricity for poor households using the prepaid meter system in the Msunduzi Municipality. The EAG has more than 200 members across 10 communities in Msunduzi Municipality.

Households in Pietermaritzburg with prepaid meters are discriminated against. Currently only households on credit meters receive free basic electricity and per kilowatt hour charges are at least 47 cents cheaper



per kilowatt hour. The past year saw the EAG employing a number of strategies consistent with its vision to compel the local state to extend free basic electricity to households on the prepaid meter system and to rationalise the tariffs. The struggle has been relentless: the EAG occupied municipal offices, it picketed, it marched, it attracted broad solidarity from civil society, unions and citizens; it approached the Public Protector for intervention and the case is now being taken forward by the Legal Resources Centre.

Despite the frustrations and the bureaucratic attempts to exhaust; the groups ability to reflect and learn and adapt to the changing terrain has seen it emerge confident and united. The group was invited by the National Energy Regulator to make an oral presentation on ESKOMs (the electricity utility) submission for a 16% increase in the cost of electricity. At that hearing they made a strong case that electricity has become unaffordable for poor households and that NERSA should reject ESKOMs application. Their presentation was broadcast on prime time national television and contributed to NERSA only allowing an 8% increase in electricity costs in South Africa.

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### 7. Support PACSA financially through MySchool MyVillage MyPlanet card

PACSA is now registered as a beneficiary of My School/My Village/My Planet 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 participating outlets. If you are a card user and would like to list PACSA as a beneficiary then please follow the steps below: small contribution each time you swipe your card at participating outlets. If you are a card user and would like to list PACSA as a beneficiary then please follow the steps below:

1. 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!
2. If you don't have a MySchool card yet, simply apply for your card online or fill out an application in store at any participating Woolworths Store.



Online:

Go to <http://www.myschool.co.za/>

o Get your free card today.

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### 8. Please write to us!

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

*We look forward to hearing from you!*

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