

eNewsletter No. 03

March 2014

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1. From the Director's Desk

Dear Reader

Greetings from PACSA

Over the past month PACSA has been engaged in a number of events ranging from dialogues on youth unemployment, masculine identities, recovering a history of struggle, reflecting and learning from our practice of accompanying grass roots formations in their struggles, etc.

In this E-Newsletter we present a snapshot of these engagements and what emerged from it. South Africa is celebrating 20 years of democracy and in the midst of an election campaign leading up to the May 7th 2014 national election. We share an article by Prof Steven Friedman on whether this election offers South Africans the possibility of making real choices? We hope you will find these short articles interesting and useful for your own work and reflections.

Over the past few months we have worked on creating a more user-friendly website and integrating new features such as a photo-gallery, video clips and podcasts. The new website was launched after the PACSA Council meeting on the 17th March 2014. We invite all our readers to visit the site and give us feedback if you have any. Please visit us at www.pacsa.org.za

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.

Kind regards.

MERVYN ABRAHAMS
 PACSA Director

2. PACSA News

· Changing Male Identity In SA: Learning From Positive Masculinities

PACSA, the Goedgedacht Forum for Social Reflection and OXFAM Australia jointly hosted a round table on 'Changing Male Identity In SA: Learning from Positive Masculinities' in Pietermaritzburg on the 20th March 2014. The round table, attended by sixty-one people, focused on emerging alternative masculine identities informed by the lived experience of men who have made an intentional shift in understanding and practice.

[Read the full article here](#)



· PACSA partners participating in a Dialogue on the Right to Food

Representatives of two of PACSA's community partners, Ntombifuthi Nyoka from the Hlakaniphani Women's group and Ntombifikile Khanyile of the Sizonqoba Group, attended a 3 day "Right to Food" Dialogue in Grahamstown hosted by the Eastern Cape Agricultural Research Project. The Dialogue seeks to discuss how the right to food can move beyond passive consumption and the concentration of food markets in the hands of a few to transforming the system of food production and distribution to ensure that high quality, nutritious food is available to all citizens.

[Read the full article here](#)



· Young people reflecting on their experiences of unemployment

On the 13th and 14th March 2014, PACSA, with the support of the Foundation for Human Rights, hosted a 2-day forum where young people engaged with their experiences of being an unemployed youth in South Africa today and what South Africa would look like in 20 years' time if the challenges they faced were not addressed. Much of the discussions centered around frustrations to access tertiary education and jobs and what this meant for them.

[Read the full article here](#)



· Educators visiting an apartheid museum

As part of our Human Rights Day celebration PACSA supported a group of 15 educators from 4 Pietermaritzburg schools to visit the Monty Naicker Exhibition on the struggle against apartheid in Durban. The visit took place on the 14th March 2014. The exhibition celebrates the struggle against apartheid and for the recognition of human rights by Durban-based activists. The educators came from Siyahlomula High School, Phayiphini High School, Insika High School and Ashdown Combined Primary School.

[Read the full article here](#)



· PACSA Reflecting and Learning on its Practice

PACSA staff met from 24th-28th March 2014 for its first quarterly organisational week in 2014. The new format of bringing many typically separate reflection spaces into one week is useful to provide distance from the office to better reflect on the work as well as to provide improved focus for much richer learnings. It is a check-in and invigorator of sorts to reflect on our practice (where am I in our joint construction of practice), consolidate and reinforce our organisational learnings, whilst further deepening our theoretical understandings through readings and discussions.

[Read the full article here](#)

· Thulas Ndlovu: 23 Years of Service to PACSA

Thulas Ndlovu celebrated 23 years of service in PACSA this month. Thulas joined PACSA when it was a young organisation founded 9 years previously. He is the one who holds our thread with PACSA as it evolved over the years. Thanks for your commitment to social justice over the years Thulas.



· PACSA receives a Human Rights Award

Mervyn Abrahams, on behalf of PACSA, received an award for its contribution to human rights from 'Love to Live', a Pietermaritzburg based organisation. The award is given "in recognition of selfless commitment and sacrifice to Human Rights in South Africa and abroad."



3. Visitors at PACSA

· On the 31st March 2014 we bade farewell to Mirjam Knecht who had been an intern at PACSA for 6 months. Mirjam returned to Germany to complete her studies at the University of Heidelberg. While with PACSA Mirjam oversaw the archiving of our documents and publications dating from 2000 to 2010 and refurbishing the old EJPD wing which we will now use as an additional meeting and training room. Thanks for your time with us Mirjam. We will miss her.



· Angela and Wolfgang Mai visited PACSA in March 2014. Angela and Wolfgang are longstanding friends of PACSA and have made generous contributions to our work over the years. On their visit they spent some time with two livelihoods community groups, Hlakaniphani and Bambanani, and got to see first-hand the bead work that the groups are making.



4. Upcoming events

Good Friday Service

Inkonzo yephasika

Greed - Corruption - Inequality

DATE: Friday 18 April 2014 from 6.15 am

VENUE: From St Mary's Catholic Church to The Cathedral of the Holy Nativity

PREACHER: Bishop Rubin Phillip, Anglican Bishop of Natal

Things must change/izinto kumele zishintshe

We will be reflecting on and reminding ourselves and the nation that 20 years into democracy, although some gains have been made, there is a desperate need for societal transformation.

All are welcome to attend

A collection will be taken to help cover the costs of the service

5. Feature Article

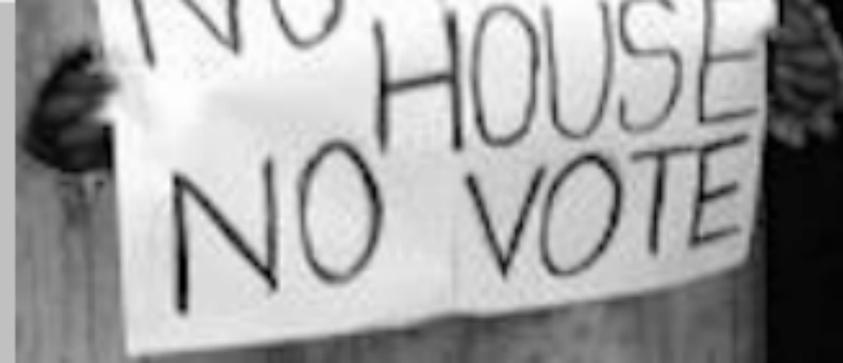
· **Will This Election Offer Real Choices to Most South Africans?**

Steven Friedman - On one level, the question seems ridiculous. All elections offer choices and all of us are allowed to vote. So



many parties are likely to appear on this year's ballot paper that the Independent Electoral Commission might face a serious printing challenge. Isn't the fact that we can all choose who will govern us from a wide array of parties one of the great achievements of the fight against apartheid? Yes and No. The vote is an essential tool for citizens who want a share in the...

[Read the full article here](#)



6. Write to us!

Here we encourage readers to write to us. . .