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sato



WIDENING THE DISCOURSE



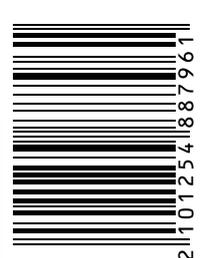
SNAT Trains a Pool of Writers

The Voice Behind Gogo Eswatini

Government stalls JNF- Delays salary Review

INSIDE

Celebrating excellence in schools- Lomahasha High & Dvumane Primary





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The SNAT Union



WIDENING THE DISCOURSE



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VISION

To become the SNAT's premium provider of quality content across all media platforms with a high level of loyalty and activism.

MISSION STATEMENT

The SNAT Editorial will lead the new media revolution by helping to build and strengthen a revitalized teacher's union and grow our presence both domestically, regionally and internationally. This we will accomplish with excellence in the way we conduct our union business, in our product offering and in our service to our diverse rank and file.

VALUES

- EXCELLENCE
- SERVITUDE
- INTEGRITY
- SOLIDARITY
- UNIONISM

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WE DESPERATELY NEED A POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AS A UNION



Mcolisi Motsa

The SNAT Editor

Michael Zweig, a leading scholar in working-class studies, defines the working class as “people who, when they go to work or when they act as citizens, have comparatively little power or authority. They are the people who do their jobs under more or less close supervision, who have little control over the pace or the content of their work, who aren't the boss of anyone.”

For a while now, I've thought long and hard about the subject of working class philosophy. Pondered over the issue of our lop-sided identity as a Union, within the context of the labour movement. Contemplated about our character, our value system, our belief system, our attitudes. The enduring questions thereupon could be: are the obtaining values/attitudes of the SNAT in tandem with those of the relative working class out there? How is our worldview as a Union? How does our slogan, 'Not By Favour But By Merit,' relate with the struggle and interests of workers?

Perhaps I should declare that I'll not mince words with this one. As I soundly reflected on our distinctiveness as a Union

[craft], it dawned on me that we still have a prolonged journey to traverse as the SNAT. Workers of the World have a unifying working class ideology which informs, not their individual; rather, their collective consciousness. Just to nip in the bud the gist of the discussion, I've asked myself as to what extent do we identify with the Marxist Theory?

True, Karl Marx rarely used the term class consciousness but he made a distinction between "class in itself", which is defined as a category of people having a common relation to the means of production; and a "class for itself", which is defined as a stratum organized in active pursuit of its own interests. Where are we as the SNAT between the two [2]? Seldom, one eavesdrops crumbs of talk that the SNAT shouldn't discuss political issues in our country. When such is uttered, I get to appreciate the inopportune level at which we embrace political theories as a Labour Formation. Truth is: politics is the lifeblood of all organisms. The SNAT is a living organism that can never be bereft of politics.

It is, however, regrettable that we've article 7.3 of the SNAT Constitution [as adopted in 2012] advancing that the SNAT shall be “self-governing and not be subjected to control by any political ideology or religious grouping.” I've mused, many a times, on the ramifications of this provision in the Constitution. I fail to persuade myself on how it found its way to the Supreme Document of a labour organisation.



How is it conceivable that we be divorced from political ideologies playing out there in the World? It is time we as an organisation align with a political ideology, not to say a political party; rather, an ideology that will form and shape our identity

as a Labour Entity. Our perspective. An ideology that will arm us with the proper tools of analysis.

I can't agree more with what Georg Lukács asserts in his book, “History and Class Consciousness (1923),” that 'each social class has a determined class consciousness which it can achieve.' As the SNAT, we need to Widen the Discourse on this ultimate question of political ideology. It is inevitable, particularly at this juncture.



ON THE LENSES





ON THE LENSES



GOVERNMENT STALLS SALARY REVIEW [SR] NEGOTIATIONS



SIKELELA DLAMINI

The SNAT Secretary General [SG]

Since the beginning of the current financial year (2021-2022), there has not been any significant progress regarding negotiations with the Government of Swaziland [the employer of choice]. This refers to both bilateral and multilateral platforms. The advent of the Covid-19 pandemic has successfully been used by the Government to run away from its responsibilities, thereby undermining the existing Recognition Agreement that the SNAT has with the Government.

Negotiations at the JNF have been deliberately frustrated by the Government. After she (Government) realized that defeat was imminent in Court regarding the Salary Review (SR) exercise, she instructed her Attorneys to withdraw the matter and revert with same to the JNF.



▶ PSAS LOGO

The reasons why as Public Sector Associations (PSAs) agreed to re-engage on the matter was that we ardently believed that the tasks at the JNF were to resume quickly for us to be able to find closure on the SR exercise. Little did we know that the Government was to find yet another divisive stunt whose objective was to further undermine the smooth operations of the JNF.

The Government challenged the legal standing [jurisdiction] of the National Public Services and Allied Workers Union (NAPSAWU) in representing some of its members who are placed in Departments within the Government which the Government wanted to abolish without consulting either the workers and/or the union that represents them. This culminated into a court battle that gave rise to an order of court that supported the Government shenanigans.



Our sister union then challenged same in court, a process that is still underway. The overall consequence of such a development is that, as things stand, the JNF will never quorate since one [1] of our own is being unfairly pushed out of the Joint Negotiations chamber. This matter remains unresolved even today.

The Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) has a hilarious way of showing its recognition for the SNAT as a bargaining force. When it suits the MoET, they hasten to call for round table discussions such as during the Covid-19 global pandemic. However, on other sectoral and professional issues, the MoET displays a lackadaisical approach and yet such issues are thorny to our members

As members of the teaching service, we are confronted by various challenges which threaten both our existence and our profession, and such issues need urgent attention. These include, but not limited to the following;

- a) Employment and Deployment of Teachers.
- b) Teachers' Housing issues.
- c) Schemes of Service for the teaching service.
- d) Archaic pieces of legislation.
- e) Casualisation of the Profession.

As the SNAT, NEC we have tried countless times to draw the MoET to the table to discuss these issues exhaustively but the MoET is failing to rise to the occasion. Be that as it may, members need to know that we have engaged the MoET for the last time, failing which we will then pursue the matter through various platforms.

As the SNAT, we are alive to the fact that the aforementioned sectoral issues cause strain of alarming proportions to our members over and above that which is caused by other cross-cutting issues such as; low salaries, low allowances and lack of Medical Aid, amongst others. The challenges that confront us are both realistic and severe and therefore in order to overcome them we need to be more consistent and harder in pushing our way through.

STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF THE SNAT TO DEFEND WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS RIGHTS IN SWAZILAND



THULIE SHONGWE

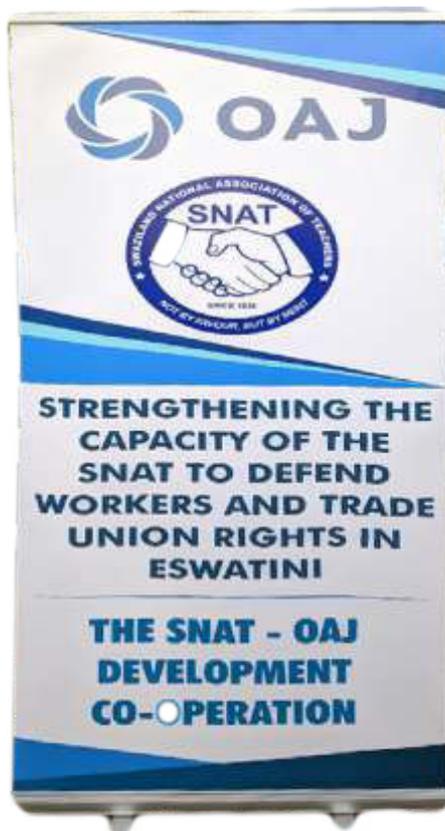
The SNAT/OAJ Project Manager

The SNAT believes that education is one of the best antidotes to build up the strength of the Union and to address the issue of apathy which is delaying the Union's advancement. The SNAT was founded to fight injustice and to ensure rights of members are respected, but today, members are doing injustice to the SNAT as they fail to participate in union activities. This makes it difficult for the SNAT to meet the changing needs and aspirations of members if they look at the Union at arm's length and not involve themselves as expected.

The partnership with SASK/OAJ therefore seeks not only to capacitate members, but also to strengthen the Union and to prepare members to play an active role for successful bargaining. The SNAT/OAJ capacitation programme is rolling out for the SNAT Representatives and Branch Executive Committees (BEC) in all 15 Branches of SNAT as well as Schools Administrators in the four [4] Regions. The SNAT Reps are capacitated on three [3] topics; Recognition and de-recognition of trade unions, types of labour disputes and rights and

responsibilities of Union officials while the main topic is grievance handling for BECs. Schools Administrators are capacitated on trade unionism and professionalism as well as grievance handling.

The workshops have proven to be very effective as they have not only given members an improved ability to cope and deal with issues in the workplace, also brought out issues and conflicts that occur in schools. The conflicts are mainly a result of the poor working relationship between teachers and administrators. Teachers are not content with the way Administrators operate and at the same time, Administrators are not happy with the level of co-operation they get from teachers.



From the workshops, it was also noted that school administrators, SNAT Representatives and teachers have low capacity to deal with conflicts and grievances in schools. This finding confronted the SNAT to make efforts to provide a safe environment for members to raise and address concerns before they get out of hand. As a result, grievance handling training has also been incorporated in the capacity building programme and is currently rolled-out for Schools Administrators and Branch Executive Committees.



The Usuthu BEC being oriented on the SNAT/OAJ Project at the Tums George Hotel [SNAT Media].

COVID-19 has not only turned the world upside down, it also had some disruptive effects on the implementation and progress of the SASK/OAJ Project. Some of the project activities had to be rescheduled and slowed down causing slow expenditure of project finances. Policies put in place to reduce the corona virus, such as restrictions on movement and gathering of people have severely disrupted the implementation of the project. This is because most of the project activities require meetings, be it capacity building workshops, debates,



SNAT Leadership at the Tums George Hotel taken through Grievance Handling by the CMAC [SNAT Media].

and technical meetings. Although some activities like project meetings can be successfully organized remotely, the fact remains that presence in the field and physical meetings are the main elements in any project implementation.

Members lack knowledge of the real mandate of the SNAT and clear understanding of the work environment. They do not understand the SNAT, how it works, its role in the staffroom and beyond. This is the reason the SNAT suffers criticism from its members. Another yawning gap that the SNAT has to bridge is the lack of understanding and application of the related labour laws. The disputes and conflicts that take place in schools indicate that the laws are not known and not put into practice. As result, it is critical for members to be capacitated on the legal documents so that they will be able to comply.

Areas of difficulty include the conflicts that mainly result from the poor working relationship between teachers and administrators. Teachers are not happy with the way administrators operate and at the same time, administrators are not happy with the level of cooperation they get from teachers.

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An area that needs urgent attention is the promotion of gender equality, especially the participation of women members in leadership positions is one area that needs to be explored in the Union. There is a gender representation gap (more male leaders than female leaders) in all structures of the organization and this need to be eliminated. Without gender balance, the Union will remain with an image that is out of touch and outdated with the membership, especially because it will not represent the specific needs of female members. On another note, Branch Leaders are unable to develop accurate, clear and concise reports.

Thus, report writing skills are a requirement for the Leaders.

The next phase is to ensure that the SNAT Representatives [Reps] and Branch Leaders will be empowered with knowledge to carry out their specific roles and responsibilities. There is a satisfactory degree of likelihood that through the empowerment, Reps will remain resilient to external factors that threaten the existence of the union. In addition, membership's participation in collective activities shall be increased through an instilled sense of loyalty and responsibility to the union. As a result, SNAT will engage in a number of well supported activities that will make her remain relevant to its members and the wider society.



SNAT/OAJ at the Manzini Branch [Courtesy Picture].

OPERATIONS OF THE SNAT IN THE MIDST OF LOUDER CALLS FOR DEMOCRATIC REFORMS IN SWAZILAND



SIKELELA DLAMINI

The SNAT Secretary General [SG]

A sizeable number of our members hold the view that the SNAT has shifted from her initial mandate of addressing only bread and butter issues affecting teachers in Swaziland.

These consistently argue that this latter development has made the Organisation to be off-tangent with the real issues affecting Educators. Members' attention may be drawn to Article 6.11 of the SNAT Constitution under the organization's aims and objectives. It states that one of SNAT's objectives is **“to advise, consult, defend and promote collective interest of members or any other issue that may be of interest to its members; including matters of public policy and public administration.”** One considers it worthwhile to attempt to define certain terms so as to contextualise the issues that are raised in this article, as follows;

- **A trade Union:** (British Eng.) or Labour Union (American Eng.) – is an organisation of workers that have

banded together to achieve common goals such as better working conditions. This may include the negotiation of wages, work rules, complaint procedures, rules governing hiring, firing and promotion of workers, benefits, workplace safety and policies, (Wikipedia 2011).

- **Politics:** process by which groups of people make collective decisions. It consists of social relations involving authority or power and refers to the regulation of public affairs within a political unit and to the methods and tactics used to formulate and apply policy, (Wikipedia 2011).
- **Public Policy:** a Government action which is the principled guide to action taken by the administrative or executive branches of the state



SNAT Members during a protest action. Protesting is part of the character of Labour Unions [SNAT Media].

with regards a class of issues in a manner consistent with law and institutional customs, (Wikipedia 2011).

As workers, we are interested, first and last, with the advancement and protection of worker rights and interests which can be loosely referred to politics of the stomach. But the attainment of satisfaction on the material conditions that affect us as workers is dependent

on the effectiveness of the political system or lack thereof which is in place at that particular point in time. Over the last three hundred years, many Trade Unions have developed into a number of forms, influenced by differing political objectives. Activities of Trade Unions vary, but may include the following:

- **Provision of Benefits to Members:** Early Trade Unions like Friendly Societies often provided a range of benefits to insure members against unemployment, ill health, old age and funeral expenses. In many developed countries, these functions have been assumed by the State; however, the provision of professional training, legal advice and representation for members is still an important benefit of Trade Union membership even today.
- **Collective Bargaining:** where Trade Unions are able to operate openly and are recognized by employers, they may negotiate with employers over wages and working conditions.
- **Industrial action:** Trade Unions may enforce strikes or resistance to lockouts in furtherance of particular goals.
- **Political Activity:** Trade Unions may promote legislation that is favorable to the interests of their members or workers as a whole. To this end, they may pursue campaigns, undertake lobbying or advocacy, or financially support individual candidates or parties (such as the labour Party in Britain) for public office, (Wikipedia 2011).



The SNAT SG, Sikelela Dlamini, addressing workers during a protest (SNAT Media)

Unions may also engage in broader political debates and processes or social struggle more especially in countries where political parties are banned, such as Swaziland. Social Unionism encompasses many Unions that use their organizational strength to advocate for social policies and legislation favorable to their members or to workers in general.

As well, Unions in some countries are closely aligned with political parties. In many countries, unions are tightly bonded, or even share leadership, with a political party intended to represent the interests of working people. That their struggle takes on a defensive form at one stage and a revolutionary form at another, is entirely due to the relations existing between the class forces at a particular time. This relationship depends basically upon the economic maturity and stability of that country's political system, both in part and as a whole.

One does not need to be a Harvard University Graduate to comprehend the fact that socio-economic issues and those that are political are indeed inextricably bound and trying to debate this assertion could be a mistake of kindergarten proportions. Since teachers are Public Servants, the Government is their employer yet she also doubles as a juristic person in charge of the country politically. The Unfair Labour Practices witnessed in this country are as a result of a fast-decaying political system that is responsible for the crafting of policies and promulgation of laws that weaken rather than strengthen the employer-worker relationship in this country. The

Tinkhundla system of Government has dismally failed on the whole in meeting the simple objective of decent service delivery. The lack of meaningful consultation of this system is responsible for the ushering in of a system of Education which can never be compared to any in the SADC Region and beyond because of its poor quality. That is why the country is quickly producing unemployed and unemployable graduates at unprecedented rates.

One of our duties as a Trade Union is to



Corruption versus Reforms (Sourced from google.com).

interrogate Public Policy as espoused in the Supreme Law of the organisation, but when we do that, our critics are quick to say we are now talking politics. As the SNAT, we cannot contest for State Power but we are right in order when we apply pressure to any Government that fails to deliver to vacate office and or if we advocate for a total political system overhaul, as in the present times. As a Trade Union, we need to be militant because we are not a religious group but a pressure group. The afore-discussed modus operandi has brought forth good fruits in other countries such as the Republic of South Africa [RSA]. The former Secretary General [SG] for the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), Comrade Zwelinzima Vavi remarked, **'In South Africa, surveys show that Union members particularly those in well organized, democratically controlled and militant Unions are better off in terms of wages, overtime, retirement fund and medical benefits, health and safety than those in weak unions.'** This power is asserted both at the work place and at national bargaining forums. As workers, we should always be cognizant of the fact that Trade Unions and Government never go to bed together but trade unions and political parties do. As workers, we can only make calls on regime change and actively participate in all processes and

campaigns that are pushing for total democratic reforms in the country as members of political parties, which in our case can be rightly referred as Liberation Movements [for now], and that is how far we can go.

As the SNAT, we organize all educators as workers on the basis of our common interest, irrespective of political allegiance, race, creed, religion or gender. That is what Trade Unions do, the world over. That is how we build the unity and strength of our organisation. The interest of our members as workers, teachers and citizens can only be fully advanced if we participate in wider political processes and debates. Through trade unionism, we will arrest all the evils of the capitalist system such as institutionalized corruption through the ideals of democracy. As Swazis, we are inexorably moving towards multiparty democracy. However, the transition from one system to another is by no means a mechanical process. However, 'inevitable' the change may be, the time necessary to effect that change can never be measured. Nor can the amount of human suffering and conflict involved before the change is carried through, be estimated. Any worker who says he or she has nothing to do with politics is like a person drowning in the deepest part of the sea and still maintains that he or she is not in contact with the water.



The SNAT has therefore engaged in a deliberate programme with the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), Kwazulu Natal and Mpumalanga Provinces, to build capacity and to strengthen cooperation between the two [2] organisations. The formation of alliances both inside and outside Swaziland shall be scaled up so as to adequately capacitate our membership on myriad issues. Teachers remain a critical link in the transformation of any society and therefore it is our moral obligation as the SNAT to push for Democratic reforms. Amandla.

SNAT BURIAL SCHEME MEMBERSHIP EXPLAINED



BONGINKHOSI DLAMINI

SNAT Burial Secretary

We again wish to greet our honourable members of the Burial Scheme, as well as teachers who are not yet members of the most reputable Burial Scheme in Swaziland. It must be said that the SNAT Burial Scheme is one of the largest Burial Schemes in the country and it is owned by teachers. Membership of the scheme is obtained voluntarily by joining, and registering your dependents as your beneficiaries at E10.00 per person with a cover of E6,000.00, and E23.00 for a spouse with a cover of E15, 000.00. It is very important for our members to maintain their membership through their monthly subscriptions. It is the prime responsibility of each and every member to make sure that his or her subscriptions are paid every month. The waiting period for every beneficiary is twelve (12) months.

The SNAT Burial Scheme subscriptions are normally taken through a stop order arrangement with the Treasury Department. This arrangement does not work for pensioners and teachers who have run out of contract. For pensioners, we encourage them to make arrangements with their banks so that the subscriptions are taken through a bank stop order. It is sad to see our legends who have worked very hard for the SNAT and also committed themselves to remain loyal to the scheme throughout their working life losing their

membership as a result of not maintaining their membership through subscribing. We have also seen a number of contract teachers who after the government has not renewed their contracts losing their membership. It is for that reason that we again remind our members to make sure that each month end, subscriptions to the SNAT Burial Scheme are paid. There are times whereby new members who have just joined the Scheme find that the stop order is not effected by the treasury department at the end of the month. Such cases require that the concerned member informs our accounts department so that it can be corrected, otherwise you become and remain a member of the SNAT Burial Scheme only if you pay your monthly subscriptions. Even though we are in the process of doing away with carrying passbooks for monthly updating, we must say that we have not yet covered every corner of this exercise. It is for this reason that we implore our members to be understanding and cooperate with our staff when they request certain documents from them. Such requests are procedural and meant to cover for any mistakes that may occur as well as protecting the finances of the Scheme. Teachers should also make it a point that they know the information that is contained in their files, making sure that you registered all your beneficiaries correctly. It becomes a problem when a client has come to claim only to find that he or she registered a wrong name not appearing in the beneficiaries' official documents. To counter this challenge faced by our clients during the sad times, members are encouraged to make sure they submit copies of the National Identity cards for all their beneficiaries so that they are kept in the files.

For any other urgent issues, members may use these contact details: +268 7990 6809 or +268 7690 6809 info@snatburial.com or bongimcolisi84@gmail.com The SNAT Burial Scheme pays claims to members when they lose one of their registered beneficiaries. When making a claim, the

clients are expected to produce, a certified copy of the National ID for the deceased, death certificate, current pay slip, and passbook. We wish to remind our members that it is only a maximum of two (2) members who can claim for the same beneficiary, that information must be known by all members and related members of the scheme should try and share information about their registered beneficiaries. A claim can only be made within two (2) months after death has occurred. It is a fact that we sometimes face challenges in assembling the required documents to make a claim, and for such cases the concerned client should inform the SNAT Burial Scheme Executive Committee, through the Secretary in writing. When the Principal members passes on, it becomes the responsibility of the nominated candidate to make that claim.

This is a fully-fledged funeral home owned by the SNAT Burial Scheme which was established in 2019. It has now started operating and we will be visiting Branches for more information and we will cover more details in the next edition of The Eagle. Thank you!

For any other urgent issues, members may use these contact details: +268 7990 6809 or +268 7690 6809 info@snatburial.com or bongimcolisi84@gmail.com



The SNAT Burial Offices in Manzini [SNAT Media].

VENTURING INTO OUTRIGHT JOURNALISM: SNAT TRAINS A POOL OF WRITERS



MCOLISI MOTSA

The SNAT Editor

In her 17 February 2020 commentary entitled, “The Power of Media,” US Political Communication and International Affairs, Counter-Terrorism Research Fellow and Intelligence Analyst, Antoine Andary, asserts that “Today, our life will remain incomplete without media.”

Such an assertion dawned on the SNAT on Friday, the 17th of September 2021, marking a novel dispensation for the Labour Formation. On this captivating day, the SNAT veered onto a protracted journey of venturing into the uncharted territory of training a Pool of Writers within the organisation. It marked the journey of the SNAT establishing what the contemporary world sees as independent media. Media that will operate with the absence of external control and influence.

Often times, the Union has had to deal with jaundiced reporting on episodes that boarder around its industrial activities. Such bias reporting from the State Controlled Media has dented the reputation and identity of the Organisation as a bargaining unit. There is no denying that the SNAT is a force to reckon with. At some point, the organisation had to ban one of the State Propaganda Machinery that kept on putting the name of the organisation into

disrepute. One of the country's Weekend publication which featured the SNAT Column came out guns blazing, firing a salvo, suspending the Column following an article that was weirdly seen as defaming the ill-reputed TSC Chairperson, one Simanga Mamba. These are but a few of the history the SNAT had with the Fourth Estate, culminating to the decision to establish a fully-fledged SNAT Media Department.

“We need a robust media that will project the solid voice of the SNAT within the constrained media space in the country where newsroom and self-censorship for so-called journalists is a conspicuous reality. There is no other opportune time than now for the SNAT to inaugurate its own Media Practitioners,” advanced the SNAT President, Mbongwa Dlamini in his opening remarks.

The training of a Pool of Writers, as a Constitutional Requirement, Article 12.8.3 of the SNAT Constitution, initiated what has been envisioned for decades; establishing the SNAT Media Department so as to make decisions and

act according to our own logic, as a Union without expecting other parties to tell the story of the SNAT. The organisation will now be able to report news the way it deems fit, adhering to the Laws and Ethics of the Field as per the SNAT Media Policy which is in South Africa for content review and validation.

“We have always desired to have our own capacitated Journalists, Communication Experts, Analysts and Feature Writers as the SNAT. The vision is to establish our own autonomous studio: Newspaper, Radio and Television. We want SNAT FM, SNAT News and SNAT TV. This is the future we aspire to see within the SNAT. It is feasible!” revealed the SNAT Editor, Mcolisi Motsa in his preliminary remarks during the Writers Workshop at the SNAT Library Hall.

During this Workshop, the SNAT Editorial had lined up cutting-edge experts from the University of Eswatini [UNESWA] Journalism Department. These connoisseurs were all out to leave an indelible mark, imparting their wealth of knowledge on the field of Journalism to the thirty-five [35] participants from all SNAT Structures: Branches, National Committees and the National Executive Committee [NEC].

Led by their Head of Department [HoD], the robust and ever vibrant Ms. Siphwe Mohammed, she left participants in the Hall yearning for more after presenting on Feature Writing. She expressively introduced her colleagues from the UNESWA Journalism Department in Dr. M.V. Mthembu who presented on the Basics of Journalism, Dr. E.H. Evans who facilitated on News Reporting/Story Writing, Ms. Nqobile Ndzinisa who facilitated on the Role of the Editor, Ms. R. Musvipwa who led the House on Writing Letters to the Editor, to the delight of the audience.

The fundamental objective of the Writing Clinic was, in essence, to capacitate the attendants on the World of Journalism. The focus was on the writer as a person who informs, entertains, persuades,



The SNAT President, Comrade Mbongwa Dlamini, making his opening remarks during the Writers Workshop at the SNAT Centre [Courtesy of SNAT Media].



UNESWA JMC Head of Department, Ms. Sipiwe Mohammed articulating on Feature Writing during the Workshop [SNAT Media].

remembers, reminds and expresses using a combination of words. Participants were introduced to what journalism is about, types of journalism, elements of a good story, basic tenets of journalism etc.

They were further capacitated on characteristics of Feature Writing, types of features, feature planning process, tips on article writing, basic news story, what makes news, gathering news, interview tips, dealing with data, writing the lead, attributes etc. The Role of an Editor was unpacked: types of Editors, traits of an Editor and the job description of an Editor. "We appreciate the glorious opportunity to do community service, add value to the SNAT through this overwhelming initiative," commented Mohammed in her presentation's overture.

For all intents and purposes, the attendants in this workshop were openly selected by Structures, having received an invitation and notification from the SNAT Editorial on the proposed Writers Workshop. All fifteen [15] Branches were provided an opportunity to select two [2] interested writers to part take in the exercise. National Committees were requested to deploy one Member of their own volition to the Assignment. A number of Branches heeded the clarion call, sending the Representatives who were requested to come from the floor instead of those in respective committees in the Branches.

Comrade Palesa Dlamini, a deployee from Siteki Top Branch posited that, "The Workshop was an eye-opener and exhilarating. What made it more fascinating was the long term goal of having a SNAT Media and it made me yearn to be part of this glorious dream that will entrench the SNAT both locally and internationally in the minds of different people."

Worth noting is that the Friday Workshop participants shall be Trainer of Trainees [ToTs] for the SNAT. The Programme shall be two-fold with the second instalment set for November 2021. These trained writers shall further train others in Branches so as to allow the organisation to have Communication Activists and Correspondents throughout the fifteen [15] Branches in the country.

As the SNAT Media, we intend to give immense knowledge and transmit information about the SNAT, raise consciousness amongst members on our issues, raise our voice on societal issues, provide a true picture of the SNAT, educate the society about the SNAT, 'Widen the Discourse' on a plethora of issues.



Participants taking notes during the Workshop [SNAT Media].



Dr. H. Evans presenting on Story Writing during the Workshop [SNAT Media].

I recall one incident on the 27th September 2018 at the US Embassy where the SNAT had gone to deliver a petition. The next day, teachers were called names by one of the Royal Propaganda machinery following an incident that involved a cameraman of that newspaper. The reporter used unpalatable words such as 'hooligans', 'ruffians', 'criminals', 'gangsters', 'rascals.' The time for that biased reporting will soon be over.

Giving a comment few days after the workshop, Zanele Sukati from Mhlosheni Branch revealed that, "The workshop provoked the inner me which wanted to be in the industry, years back. The facilitators were awesome. They were well prepared and I was greatly motivated."

In our next instalment [November], we will have Online Communication, Code of Ethics for Journalism and Design and Layout as Workshop Content. Our writers shall be awarded with Certificates of Attendance with the UNESWA inscription and signatures of Authorised Persons. We intend to network with other credible organisations such as UNESCO to provide more capacity building for our writers as the SNAT.

Author of the Book, 'Media and Journalism [2015],' Jason Bainbridge, posits that the relationship between media and their audiences is dialogic. Media forms encourage their audiences to enter into dialogic relationships with them: to contribute, to question, to solve the mystery, to follow the narrative and to seek resolution." This is what we aspire to do as the SNAT Media. In the words of the First President of Ghana, Kwame Nkhumah, "We Face neither East nor West; We Face Forward."



Programme Director of the Day, the SNAT DSG, Comrade Simanga Khumalo [SNAT Media].



THE SNAT EAGLE

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

P.O. BOX 1575, Manzini | Phone: 2505 2603/2505 6267 | Email: motsamcolisi@gmail.com

Location: Manzini, opposite William Pitcher | Website: www.snat.org.sz

FINED FOR CAPTURING RITUAL COWS ON A PUBLIC ROAD

DEAR EDITOR

Please allow me some space in your edition to thank the SNAT family and the entire democratic Swazi populace.

On Monday, the 26th of July 2021, while I was driving to the High Court in support of our incarcerated MPs, Honourable Bacede Mabuza and Honourable Mthandeni Dube, my attention was caught by a rare beast transported in a truck without registration, escorted by two [2] bakkies also without registration. I tried to take pics of the rare breed not knowing that I was inviting trouble. I was stopped in the middle of the road by six [6] Police Officers who were armed to the teeth and all pointed guns at me, upon alighting from the unregistered cars. I quickly locked the car doors and said a little prayer. They viciously shouted at me, asking me to tell them who sent me to take the pictures. One of them demanded my blue cell phone (they were specific about the colour of the phone), my driver's license and the national ID. They demanded that I follow them to the Malkerns Police Station, which I did. Immediately they left, I called the SNAT SG with my other phone, reported to him my plight. I also called the Swaziland News. The SNAT SG promptly actioned and the legal adviser swiftly went to the said Police Station. Upon arrival, the police were now in their navy blue uniform instead of the OSSU camouflage they were wearing when they pulled guns at me. They changed the story and said I was at the police station because I used my mobile gadget while driving and

charged me E60 for that. They gave me my cell phone and documents after they demanded that I delete the pictures.

The support I got from the SNAT and the General Public is overwhelming and gives one courage to fight on even when I'm alone wherever I can be.

We owe our kids a better future without being oppressed in their own land. Let's fight on comrades; giving up is not an option now.

Lindz Nhlango



COVID-19 CHRONICLES: TEACHERS BATTLING TO SURVIVE IN THE FRONTLINE

DEAR EDITOR

A single tick on paper can change your life and get you walking off at a tangent. I experienced that first hand when my Covid-19 test results came back positive on the 30th of August 2021 at Bhudla Clinic.

It was around 9am when this paper came into my possession, confirming my fears of the previous week.

The previous Thursday and Friday I hadn't really felt myself.

A bit under the weather, and very short tempered. I was just on the edge. I knew something wasn't okay. My daughter had a heavy headache, and I kind of brushed it off and assumed maybe I was just being soft and caring as a parent.

Then things got suspicious when the weekend nights had me feeling extreme fever: sweaty and cold. All within the few hours of bedtime. I had to change tops on two [2] occasions, Saturday night. By Sunday, I was convinced that something was really off. And it needed attention.

We had a short family meeting and I expressed my fears and concerns, So I avoided church on the 29th of August 2021, had the bedroom to myself. It was a long Sunday night. Lots of sweating and cold shivers. I had a hair dryer for the cold bouts. It did a good job on my ice cold back.



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Monday the 30th of August, I knew I had to be first at testing centre. When they opened, I had already arrived. Surprisingly, I was the seventh. We exchanged formalities with the nursing staff and got my sample taken for testing. The nurse seemed more shocked than me, I had done the pep talk to myself over and over. I had tried to steel my nerves over and over. What I hadn't got myself ready for was to be told there's no medication for Covid-19 at the centre.

That right there was the low point. My World seemed to crash. Questions rushed through my mind as I stumbled to the compound gate with my multivitamins, cold and flu tablets and paracetamol.

The kind nurse had advised me to go to Zakhele Covid-19 Centre. A chat and five [5] calls later I was at Emafini. The drive to eMafini has never been this short! After diagnostics using blood pressure monitor and the Oxygen Meter, Doctor Muyalo prescribed medication and that included 3 days of intravenous injection. My oxygen reading was 95, at 94 and lower I would need oxygen. I had a fighting chance. I was determined to use it.

As I sat with my hand connected to pipes, nourishing my body with fluids necessary for my survival, I remembered that I had forgot to fuel the car in my rush to get to emafini. It all seemed to be happening too sudden and too fast. I had started the battle against Covid-19, and it was inside my body. Fighting my vitals. Life, as I knew it, was gone. No more!

My mind began a journey, analysing how could I have averted such a situation. The blame began. I had done

my best but I had contracted the virus. I most probably took off the mask with the virus already in my hands. I had to accept I had done my best in observing the WHO Covid-19 Prevention Guidelines.

Being a Member of the schools Covid-19 Team, I had seen my colleagues put in a lot of effort to ensure our school had a safe Covid-19 free environment. Screening, monitoring and advising learners and teachers to observe the Ministry of Education and Training's Covid-19 Standard Operating Procedures [SOPs].

My mind wandered into thinking of government interventions to assist educators and learners keep safe. The education and development of SOPs is a good start. The masks received from the MoET were a very noble gesture. It is my responsibility to keep myself safe. Still the question came. Has the government done enough? I mused. Has the Ministry of Education and Training [MoET] been practical in ensuring protection of my learners and me?

Why had schools opened when they did? In the face of such a deadly third wave, with around a thousand new infections daily. The positive cases were roughly 50% of all daily tested when we opened. Maybe the decision was bigger than me, I thought. Maybe the decision was bigger than my life. What could be worth more than the life of a teacher and a student? The very people who create the future.

The risk to contract the virus is one we educators and learners face, daily. And it is one we have to face with bold calmness in the pursuit of a better Swaziland. It is a sacrifice worth making when we look at the end result. The

To touch the life of a child with education is every teacher's dream. Even those teachers languishing at home despite the complaints that some learners are idle due to un-renewed contracts. Our dream is to teach. And it is a dream we have continued to pursue over the years.

Despite so many discouraging conditions, State created conditions like low pay, inadequate teaching resources, casualisation, hard working conditions, harsh daily commuting problems, poor housing, little to no bonus and material appreciations, years without Cost of Living Adjustment [COLA. It is a sacrifice we have been able to make. And it is a sacrifice we are making and it is a sacrifice we shall keep making. Despite being unappreciated and being underpaid, we the teachers of Swaziland, are inadequately remunerated essential frontline workers. The World is changing and teachers are the turbines driving that engine of change. The teachers' role in national development will always be that of the pillar ensuring that the economy is made and kept intact. C.S. Lewis put it rightly when he said, "The task of the modern educator is not to cut down forests but to irrigate deserts."

The teacher is a very important figure in our society.

Zweli Maxwell Masina
Moyeni high school -Mafutseni



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TEACHING REMAINS THE NOBLEST PROFESSION!

DEAR EDITOR

With the entire world watching, even the wind seems as though stopped blowing, she took the podium and belted one of her heart-exonerating limerick denominated, "The hill we climb." The opening line touches the cockles of the heart in the thick of the pangs endured by teachers in the country. "When days come, we ask ourselves, where can we find light in this never-ending shade?" At the heart of the rampaging Covid-19 pandemic, that is escalating dramatically each passing day and continuously sweeping away throngs of people from the face of the Earth; allow me to reverberate to the world that teaching still remains the noblest profession. This is in spite of the "never-ending" shade engulfing teachers in the country.

Investigating intensively what stands around the teaching profession; low wages, the stance of teachers employed in contracts and the heaps of teachers roaming around the streets with their certificates buried right under their sleeping mattresses, I almost unenthusiastically forced myself to believe that it is over with the teaching profession in the country. Believe me you, teaching still out stands the rest of other professions in the entire universe. It has contributed vastly to the sustainability, development, high-tech and ultra-modern world. Not only did it discard atrocity but it has enacted professionalism to almost everyone who went under the wondrous hands of a teacher. Additionally, teachers contribute unprecedentedly in improving the country's economy. People with good academic and educational qualifications tend to get well-paid jobs. The higher their education accomplishments, the better employment options they get. People who come from poverty-stricken backgrounds but get educated, have high chances to transform their lives, thus contributing to a decrease in

society's poverty rates. Without the hard-work of teacher, the glamorous aforementioned goodies and achievements would be of non-existence. It is unbelievable although that some people in their disposal have the chutzpah to drag this noble profession in the mud.

What has been done effectively, I mean by our government to curb the atrocious welfare of teachers in the country? We have always heard naysayers bellyaching about both the passing and failing rate of students every year, some would go to an extent of pointing fingers on some teachers or schools and brassily say they do not do their work. What capacitates positive results and competitive teaching? Isn't it the love, deep passion, and the undying fire that keeps on burning inside to see academic excellence? However, this is practically far-fetched since the welfare for teachers are laborious and a rough go even to the least understanding toddler in the country. That, of course, is a worst button-pusher for every teacher in Eswatini!

On another note, we are flooded with pessimists whose work is to momentarily derail both aspiring teachers and already-in-the-field teachers' emotions. People leaving in glass doors should not throw stones. So many times, we have read on newspapers, told by our beloved relatives and friends about this bickering, rumor-mongering and unholy issue at hand; the saturation of the teaching profession. Does that mean the Universities and Colleges training teachers in the country should be closed? Does that mean professors and Lectures should stop working? Such back-fence talks should come into a juddering halt! We really cannot afford to deal with such individuals who, instead of providing answers, they mask over the truth with a bunch of problems. Such a destructive way of talking is unacceptable! In order for the government to curb the challenges faced by

teachers, it needs to go back to the drawing board, strategize, look intensively the loop holes and loose ends within the teaching sector. That's where exactly answers for this noble profession are wrapped in. If, by any chance, you have been successful in catching a fish in the river and unfortunately it escapes, are you going to look for it in the mountains or on trees? Absolutely no! Instead, in the nearest pond. In the same way, answers for this profession lies only upon teachers and the government not other stake holders. If these challenges are not resolved, for the better part of the profession, it is still going to be difficult to be a teacher in Eswatini. That is so painful!

Teachers have gone on strikes, so many times. They have poured out their heartfelt sorrows, grievances and their challenges. As a Buddhist in an abattoir, I get confused because the only response they get is the firing of rubber bullets and spraying of tear gases! Are we really perpetuating responsible citizens and of great integrity? Seemingly, it is not so! Rather, like whiners do, we heightening young people and old adults that will dike their responsibility and resort into violence. Violence has never been a polite way of solving challenges as it has created even worse predicaments. Albeit, we cannot say that teachers should always engage in violence but they should not stop fighting for what belongs to them. If people are entitled into something, so willy-nilly, they must get it!

We might not always get our facts correctly but that does not mean we should give up on fighting. Teaching will forever be the noblest profession. Being the noblest profession, it deserves better hospitality, better services to upper its standard. The high-tech era has finally arrived! Is it necessary that it finds us battling on about primitive obstacles? We are uprightly going to have problems in surviving in such an expeditious era. As there is transformation, teachers too will be implicated in the process. This profession should not be taken to the cleaners and shoved in broad day-light into the lion's den. Teaching is still the noblest profession!

Wakhe Simelane



The SNAT Media took time to engage one of the outstandingly incredible characters in the virgin field of comedy in the country, Mduduzi Nkambule, popularly known as 'Gogo Eswatini.' He shares with us his history, career path, experiences and future plans.

S **SNAT Media [SM]** :
Good day Gogo Eswatini. Hope you're doing well!

Gogo Eswatini [GE]: Greetings everyone, thank you for having me on SNAT Media.

SM: First and foremost, I would like to reveal that we are more than humbled as the SNAT Media to finally have you here Gogo in our publication. We appreciate your time and craft as the SNAT. Now, tell us more: who is Gogo Eswatini?

GE: My name is Mduduzi Nkambule. I do not have a good background, but I'm working on shaping my destiny. I stay at Sitjeni around Lobamba. Before people could know me, I was working at Lugogo Sun. Through the love of art and culture, I was also attached with the Mantenga cultural village where I was working with the culture team. We have been to local and international competitions. Through God's grace in 2019, I joined the Merchants of Bottomless

Laughter, which has put me to where I am today.

SM: Wow! This is sweet to hear! Inspiring! Give us a picture, how did you realise that you are talented in comedy? How would you categorise your craft?

GE: I started doing comedy skits at a very young age. I would even do it at school with friends and grew up with it, until the time I joined the Merchants of Bottomless Laughter.

SM: Hmm...Your journey before you met Smallz and S'Iwane. You had your videos before and content you were developing. How were you expressing your craft before you met the Merchants of Bottomless Laughter and Classical Indulgence?

GE: As an artist and comedian, I was already doing comedy in my circles until that time, with the help of friends whom I was working with, we did videos, which attracted the Merchants of Bottomless Laughter who recruited me after identifying the talent.

SM: Now, the most significant day: 5

November 2019. This is the day Lungelo Gina and Classical Indulgence Management met you at your workplace. Just a mental rewind. How did you feel about their visit and can you surely say it was the turning point for your profession as a Comedian?

GE: It as one of the greatest experiences not only to meet them but to finally join one of the greatest comedy movements in the country. I was so happy and I knew that it was the beginning of my professional comedy journey at a national stage.

SM: On the 6th of November 2019, your first video with Smallz was posted and it attracted 2000 reactions, 344 shares and 413 comments. How did you feel about this reaction?

GE: I was overwhelmed; given that it was my first video with the Merchants of Bottomless Laughter. Also, looking at the comments, it showed that people admired my craft and the character I was playing.



SM: You've worked with so many fascinating stage characters. For yourself, how did you choose the character of Gogo and why in particular that character?

GE: It's a long story but to cut it short, I am a Swazi, and I love culture. I grew up in the same environment, working closely with the Mantenga Cultural Village. One day I was given the role, and it was so fitting, as like to give guidance and mentor young people. Also my voice makes it fit.

SM: Your collaboration with Smallz, Slwane, Gedlembane, Bongiswa and others has produced the best of your craft. How does it feel working with these multi-talented guys?

GE: I love comedy, and I love the craft, it's a perfect combination. I have learned a lot from the guys and I enjoy blending with them. They make me grow and we grow together.

SM: Hmm...beautiful! Kindly tell us about the Programme siSwati Sami: Bungimi Bami, Broadcasted, as well, by Evolve Studios. What was the idea behind that programme?

GE: As mentioned earlier, I love culture and I am a Swazi, I felt the need to educate emaSwati on some aspects of the culture and to enlighten them on the things people do not understand about siSwati. In the programme, I was focusing

on culture-centred topics and others where I would teach on accepted practices on how people ought to conduct themselves in a Swazi society.

SM: Hmm...You were also a Brand Ambassador for Standard Bank [ItCanBe]. Take us through that. How did it feel associating with such a reputable Bank?

GE: Working with Standard Bank has been a great journey. We went through a tough selection process where we came on top and we were selected as Influencers of the Bank. Working with the corporate has been a very fascinating journey, and we learned a lot of things as we engage and promote their campaigns.

SM: 18 July 2020, your Partners pampered you with a surprise [new wheels]. How did you react when Slwane and Smallz said 'surprise, handing over to you your new wheels?' You were teary too, understandably.

GE: Nobody wouldn't have had tears of joy to get new wheels as a surprise, especially from your teammates. It was such a great honour and we give thanks to God for everything.

SM: Wow! Relevantly so, you went on to remark that: 'God's timing is always the best.' What did you mean by that in particular?

GE: I believe in God and I am a child of

God; therefore, I believe everything that happens it is in God's plan, we may not know the time table, but it is all in God's plan.

SM: Well, from there, you were hooked-up with many other talented artists in the industry, such as Gedlembane, travelling to South Africa. How was the experience, rubbing shoulders with other incredibly talented artists?

GE: I respect the talent we have locally and working closely with them has made me to rub shoulders with great people and it has now made Mpumalanga our second home as most of our shows were conducted there.

SM: I recall seeing your own Page uploading your video [24 February 2021] where you were talking about polygamy. What was the reason to choose to go for your own autonomous page instead of the one you were using prior as a collective?

GE: Gogo Eswatini is a brand, eventually there was a need to grow the brand, and the decision was endorsed by the Management. Also, we cannot ignore the fact of the unfortunate incident that implicated one of our key team members, whom we used his page as our content distribution channel. During the time off air sorting the issues, Gogo Eswatini became the immediate option.

SM: Of late, you have been visiting schools as a crew, motivating high school learners. We have seen you at Timphisini High, Mhlatane High, Mpaka High, Lubombo Centraal High etc. Take us through: what prompted such a decision by your Team? Are you still going to visit more schools around the country?

GE: This is our way of giving back and to encourage learners to take education seriously. We do it to motivate and to inspire the young generation, out of love and passion for our craft. COVID-19 happened and we stopped. As soon as schools open, and regulations relaxed, we are looking forward to go back and continue with the schools' tours. We want to say to the headteachers who see value in us, and allow us to come and bring Laughter to the schools before daily lessons begin.

SM: Recently, you have been displaying philanthropic traits, visiting elderly, giving them food handouts and building houses for the destitute. Tell us more about your time their content receives airplay.



humanitarian side and if there are companies or individuals sponsoring your outstanding random acts of kindness?

GE: Well, this is part of giving back as an artist. I have also opted to give food parcels especially to the needy. We have visited a number of old people, where even today we still take care of them on a monthly basis, giving food parcels and anything that they need. Special thanks to our fans and supporters who always after seeing us post about a situation, they quickly jump to make contributions towards the good cause.

SM: The latest content of your videos with Themba and Slwane reflects the obtaining stories in our society, as a country. What has inspired such progressive content which is assuredly enjoyed by your audience?

GE: As artists, we cannot ignore the situation on the ground. We believe we have a voice, which we can use to send a message audible enough to reach a wider spectrum of society.

SM: Well, before the last question Gogo. What would you say regarding Government's support or lack thereof of the Arts Industry in the country? What do you think should be done to develop the Arts Industry in general?

GE: Government has programmes and structures in place to assist artist in the country, and we commend efforts they have made to that effect, especially Art and Culture and other partner organisations that assist in the arts sector. However, the lack of budget from government for artists is discouraging. It washes down the efforts to rebuild the arts and entertainment sector. Worth noting is that ever since lockdown started, the entertainment sector was hit and has never been operating. This is to say, artists lost their income and haven't got anything as income since then. We have all been affected, and at the same time we are learning. We hope government will improve in its programmes. We have also seen the efforts to operationalize the copyright act, though it is long overdue, but we hope soon it will be operational to enable artist to get paid each airplay.

SM: Hmm...mouthful! In terms of personal development and career growth, how do you see yourself in five [5] years as an Artist?

GE: With the grace of God, we hope to continue with the craft and be counted amongst the best comedians in the country. Well, we cannot grow alone. We also look forward into nurturing and

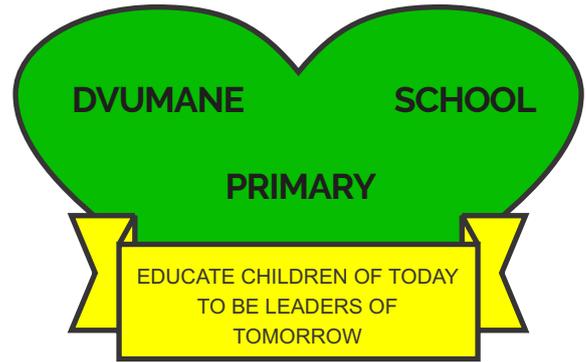
mentoring the next generation of comedians, in terms of Acting, drama, content creation: building a character and professionalising the sector. This, we hope, will be realised soon.

SM: Gogo, thank you so much for your time to be with us today: highly appreciated and humbled. We wish you all the best in your future endeavours as a Professional Artist. Hoping to feature you in our events as the SNAT in the not so distant future.

GE: Thank you so much for giving me this platform and allowing me to share a bit of my journey. All in God's time, it shall be realised, thank you.

SM: Thank you our exquisite Gogo Eswatini!!!





YVONNE THULILE MAZIBUKO

Dvumane Primary School
Headteacher

- 1. NAME OF SCHOOL:** Dvumane Primary
- 2. SCHOOL'S STAGENAME:** Dvumane
- 3. REGION:** Lubombo
- 4. DISTRICT/SUB-DISTRICT:** Lubombo
- 5. VISION STATEMENT:** Our vision is to create a school that is regarded for its academic excellence and contribute in serving, improving and developing the community in which it operates through education.
- 6. MISSION STATEMENT:** To develop young learners with active and creative minds, a sense of understanding and compassion for others and the courage to act on their beliefs. Our emphasis is on total development of each child, morally, spiritually, intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically.
- 7. SCHOOL'S VALUES:** We pride ourselves in teaching learners' life time values in order to face life's challenges in future. We instill love for one another, tolerance, respect, keeping peace always, be responsible beings, stay motivated, reliable, co-operate, have freedom and humility. We instill values that can improve their self-discipline, self-esteem and behaviour that is acceptable in the society.
- 8. SCHOOL'S MOTTO:** Do Well in Whatever You Do
- 9. PHYSICAL ADDRESS:** Tikhuba
- 10. POSTAL ADDRESS:** P.O. Box 1188, Siteki.
- 11. E-MAIL ADDRESS:**
- 12. SCHOOL'S CATEGORY [PUBLIC/MISSION/NATIONAL/PRIVATE]:** Public
- 13. FOUNDED WHEN:** 1984
- 14. TOTAL AREA COVERAGE [SQUARE METRES]:**
- 15. UNIFORM COLOURS:**
Girls: green tunics with gold collars, jersey green with 2 stripes of gold on V neck and wrists and white socks.
Boys: khakhi trousers/shorts with grey/ khakhi shirts and black socks

- 16. STAFF QUOTA:** 7 teachers and 1 headteacher
- 17. CURRICULUM DEPTH/SUBJECTS OFFERED:**
7 subjects: English, mathematics, Siswati, religious education, social studies, science, practical arts in higher grades.
Lower grades: English, Mathematics, Siswati, Religious education, Expressive Arts, General Studies and Health and Physical Education
- 18. SCHOOL'S ENROLLMENT:** 167 learners
- 19. STREAMS AVAILABLE:** 1
- 20. EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES IN THE SCHOOL:** Sports and Culture
- 21. PASS RATE IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR [2020]**
A. EPC- 57%
B. JC-
C. EGCSE-
- 22. ONE OUTSTANDING MOMENT FOR THE SCHOOL:** Two of our learners winning in the regional athletics competition and even won to represent the country in South Africa. We pride ourselves, having a product of the school learner (Linda Mazibuko) attaining a master's degree in mechanical engineering in the University of Capetown. Who would have thought? Unfortunately he is still unemployed.
- 23. SUCCESSES OF THE SCHOOL:** Being able to secure a donation of a borehole from Samaritan Pairs. And having water tanks to harvest water
- 24. CHALLENGES IN THE SCHOOL:**
1. Lack of Teaching resources and teachers. Having less enrollment is a challenge as we get little funds from government hence we can't afford some resources. Most learners don't have birth certificates which makes it difficult for government to pay for.
Introduction of CBE also is a challenge as the subjects like HPE, Expressive Arts need a lot of materials to implement effectively but due to lacking we mostly do the theoretical part.
Lack of practical skills subjects such as agriculture, home economics etc due to lack of ground.
2. Poverty stricken community, learners are in dire need of basic needs eg first and last meal is received at school.

They walk long distances to school always exhausted.
 3. Dagga growing community, learners lack motivation on education so as a result mostly drop out before grade 7 to pursue their dagga business.
 4. In-conducive teachers' quarters
 5. Lack of sports ground for extra curricular activities
 6. Lack of staff room, library, career guidance and counseling room.

25. CORPORATE PARTNERS OF THE SCHOOL: Cospe- donated water tanks and gardening materials
 Samaritan Pairs- donated and installed a borehole
 ADRA- Food
 Micro project- built Toilets
 European Union – built a house and a class
26. NAME OF SCHOOL'S SNAT REP: Sindie Khetsiwe Dube
27. NAME OF THE HEADTEACHER: Yvonne Thulile Mazibuko
28. NAME [S] OF THE DEPUTY: Senior Teacher (Bonsile Mngometulu)





MUZI TSABEDZE

Lomahasha Central High School
Headteacher

- 1. NAME OF SCHOOL:** Lomahasha High School
- 2. SCHOOL'S STAGE NAME:** Locentra High School
- 3. REGION:** Lubombo
- 4. DISTRICT/SUB-DISTRICT:** Mhlume
- 5. VISION STATEMENT:** To be child-centred, quality driven institution that shall spare no effort towards achieving the best results in all spheres.
- 6. MISSION STATEMENT:** Working with the parents, Ministry of Education & Training and other stakeholders, guided by our constitution in providing quality and relevant education to all pupils enrolled with us.
- 7. SCHOOL'S VALUES:** Learning, Cooperation, Achievement, Respect and Empathy.
- 8. SCHOOL'S MOTTO:** Educate the whole person
- 9. PHYSICAL ADDRESS:** Lomahasha, Madzalane next to Lomahasha Primary School
- 10. POSTAL ADDRESS:** P.O. Box 3 Lomahasha
- 11. E-MAIL ADDRESS:** Lomahashahigh01@gmail.com
- 12. SCHOOL'S CATEGORY**
[PUBLIC/MISSION/NATIONAL/PRIVATE]: Public Institution
- 13. TOTAL AREA COVERAGE [SQUARE METRES]:** 15000 sqm
- 14. UNIFORM COLOURS:** Maroon, Grey, White and Khaki
- 15. STAFF QUOTA:** 40
- 16 CURRICULUM DEPTH/SUBJECTS OFFERED:** JC (15), EGCSE (20)
- 17. SCHOOL'S ENROLLMENT:** 525
- 18. STREAMS AVAILABLE:** JC (3) and EGCSE (3)



19. EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES IN THE SCHOOL:

Netball, Soccer, Volleyball, Athletics, Darts, Drama and Theatre, Drummies, Sibhaca, Ummiso, Kwaito, Show Novelty.

20. PASS RATE IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR [2020]

- A. EPC-** 94.20%
- B. JC-** 60.81%
- C. EGCSE-** 60.81%

21. ONE OUTSTANDING MOMENT FOR THE SCHOOL: One of our students, got position 1 on The Brains on The Go TV show on academics.

22. SUCCESSES OF THE SCHOOL: Having students in the top 10 for both JC and EGCSE in the last five academic years.

23. CHALLENGES IN THE SCHOOL

- Water shortage
- Teacher shortage
- Financial challenges
- Security challenges

24. CORPORATE PARTNERS OF THE SCHOOL: None

25. NAME OF SCHOOL'S SNAT REP: PHINDILE DLAMINI

26. NAME OF THE HEADTEACHER: MUZI TSABEDZE

27. NAME(S) OF THE DEPUTY: BOY LUKHELE





NEW NORMAL [COVID-19] AT THE BIG BEND BRANCH OF THE SNAT



MANZOMLILO MAMBA

Big Bend Branch Secretary

When government announced that all pupils would progress to the next grade at the beginning of the year, we all flagged a number of concerns. It was out of concern and the government dismissed our concerns as fear of the unknown. Like true soldiers, we took to class, noting and ready for the challenges.

Schools were closed again, just when the Covid-19 third wave started. Completing classes were called back to school. Again, as the SNAT, we raised concerns. The government, as usual, ignored us. We went back to work, ready to play our part.

As a Branch, we have gone on with our obligations; to members, pupils and the entire populace. We have managed to hold our OAJ workshop, intervened in disputes in schools and tried our level best to steady the ship under this new normal.

It is saddening to note that our superiors continue to ignore critical issues by playing them down. Amidst the volatile political situation, we were forced to return to school, government claiming the third wave was at a controllable level. In the first week alone, more than twenty schools reported cases of positive pupils and teachers. Trouble started when the Sub-Regional education Office at Siphofaneni failed to take bold decisions and always consulted regional office;

which in turn would consult the principal secretary in the ministry of education and training. It became clear as glass that those we look up to make decisions are, in fact, sewer pipes-transporting whatever waste product from the politicians directly to us as teachers. As a result, most schools could not close for fumigation after the discovery of positive cases in schools. A sober minded discussion with the REO helped us reach an agreement that schools would close for fumigation after positive cases were discovered.



End of year party at the Big Bend Branch
[Courtesy Pic.]

The agreement with the REO was watered down by stubborn headteachers who would hide the cases and make teachers continue with their work, further exposing more citizens to the deadly virus. The ministry of health didn't help matters with their refusal to test those who had not started exhibiting Covid-19 symptoms. As a Branch, we recorded no fewer than thirty-three teachers and over fifty pupils.

Another thorn in our flesh has been the political unrest and its effect on the education system. For our government, it was business as usual. Three [3] schools were torched (Mhlabeni, Mahlabaeni and Mpompotha). Whilst at Mhlabeni there was no significant damage, Mahlabaeni and Mpompotha recorded serious damages amounting to thousands of Rands. The whole staffroom and Secretary's office was destroyed at Mahlabaeni, resulting in the loss of

crucial working implements like computers and photocopiers. Compounding the problem was that the OVC information was lost when the Secretary's Office was burnt. It won't be anytime soon that things will get back to normal. Same situation with Mpompotha which lost its Library. The headteacher and Deputy had both been transferred, leaving no one to sign cheques to purchase simple utilities like electricity. Support staff has not been receiving salaries. All is normal with our superiors and we are expected to work diligently. A real circus.

In our routine school visits, we did discover a few issues that need serious attention. Most headteachers do not teach, citing arduous Administrative tasks, even though their favourite guide to school rules and procedure booklet clearly spells that they should. We cannot allow them to choose what must be followed and that which must be ignored. What is good for the goose must also be good for the gander. We encourage our members to stand up for their rights during Staff Meetings. Moreover, we have a number of contract teachers yet there are vacancies (left by permanent and pensionable teachers) which have not been filled, some since 2018. We currently have twelve [12] vacant posts for deputies (both primary and high



End of year party at the Big Bend Branch
[Courtesy Pic.]

schools) which have been vacant for over a year. We also have eight [8] un-replaced teachers who either died, transferred or retired since January 2021.



The Branch Structure that requires roofing [Courtesy Pic.]

Another anomaly realised is that of four [4] teachers who still get their payslips from schools in the Branch yet they are now in other regions (some of these are Degreed primary schools posts). We shudder to think what will happen next year during the external examinations for the classes which are taught by contracted teachers whose contracts end in December. Not only the external ones but also internal classes taught by these comrades. The permanent and pensionable teachers will find themselves having to carry the burden left by these teachers. It is quite evident that the think-kudla system of governance is not prepared to hire teachers; not because there are no vacancies, but because it never prioritised education. We shall never cease to make a clarion call to all educators not to allow themselves to be abused. Just ask yourself; when I take more periods than I should, how do I think the government will hire more teachers? The period of oppression is determined by the oppressed: the more you tolerate abuse, the longer it will go on.

It is worth mentioning that the BEC has seen it fit that each of its members be responsible for fifteen [15] schools for close monitoring and early detection of problems in schools. It will also ensure much visibility of the Union in all schools in the Branch.

It is not all doom and gloom since we have a host of inspiring activities to look forward to from now till the end of the year. We shall continue to host our usual Annual events as expected. Our BRASOWECO is still working on the logistics of our end of year get together, in full compliance with Covid-19 regulations; even if it means holding this zonally. They are also working on the pensioners' Annual Party. Our BRASOWCO will continue with the presentation of Christmas hampers to two [2] needy families as usual. Our Business Wing, working in collaboration with BRASOWECO shall go ahead with the BIG BEND HOT EXPERIENCE. This is a social function, Covid-19 permitting, where we shall get together and celebrate teacher entrepreneurs in the Branch, in the presence of various financial institutions, with the aim of inspiring more entrepreneurs and serve as a network for funding of business

projects. We are hoping this will culminate in a dinner and we are confident it shall become another Annual event of this trendsetting Branch. We are also trying by all possible means to roof our structure now that the brickwork is finished.

In December 2017, we hosted a GBV campaign; outside the air-conditioned rooms of hotels-to where GBV victims live. It is unfortunate that it was stopped at the 59th second of the 59th minute of the 11th hour by local authorities. We wouldn't be doing a good service to the memory of our fallen comrade Khulile if we were to shun that event this year. It is very ironic that her memorial service was at the same place where she had organised that campaign, at the Church of her Pastor who is currently out on bail, allegedly for a gender based violence crime. We feel compelled, more than before, to host this event again this year, at a date to be announced soonest.

On a parting shot, may you stay blessed and we wish to share with you, from the Bible, in the Book of Esther Chapter 4 verses 13 and 14.

AMANDLA

NEWS FROM THE MANKAYANE BRANCH OF THE SNAT



PHINDA MATSEBULA

Mankayane Branch Secretary

Several activities have been conducted in this Branch. For instance, there has been numerous leadership capacitation workshops hosted by the BEC and the SNAT NEC, in some cases. These were solely conducted in order to improve the knowledge base of its Stewardship, from SNAT Reps up to BEC. In addition to the leadership workshops, BEC visited most of its retired comrades, to check on their health and also implore them to avail themselves in SNAT activities especially those commissioned by the SNAT. Furthermore, the Branch also conducted Branch meetings where the Branch membership meets and is updated on SNAT issues such as

changeably with the likes of the Health department, Police and Public Works department, to keep our members healthy and fit.

On another note, the Branch has crafted an Action Plan for year 2021-2022, which includes visiting all the schools in the Branch who have been noted to miss meetings and Branch activities. Further on, the BEC has resolved to also visit the 52 schools to verify membership strength and also recruit new teachers in the field into being SNAT members. In conclusion, Mankayane Branch of the SNAT challenges include, Geographic location of the schools in the Branch. Some are inaccessible, especially during the wet seasons, resulting in some members not

Mankayane is the largest district in the Manzini Region, located along the Splash Echelons of the beautiful Highveld scenery. Mankayane is popularly known as "Anka" among its residences.

Mankayane Branch of the SNAT, is entailed

of 52 schools, where 12 comprise of high schools and the rest being primary schools. It has a membership of about 582 SNAT Members, dispersed amongst three [3] main zones, namely being Mankayane, Musi and Mahlangatja.



Mankayane Branch meeting [Courtesy Pic.]

updates on the JNF, SNAT businesses, including operations of the Coops, Burial Services etc, and any other issue [s] that are critical to the wellbeing of teachers in the Branch. On a social note, BEC in conjunction with BRASOWECO, formed social teams of soccer and netball, who normally on Wednesdays compete inter-

attending some of the Branch activities. There are also areas that are remote and without communication signals, which makes communication between BEC and the schools poor, in some cases. Another worrying challenge includes, the dwindling interest of SNAT members in attending SNAT Union activities over Coops activities in the Branch. The matter needs urgent attention, as we move to the elective year of 2022.

MBABANE BRANCH ACTIVITIES DURING COVID-19



NICHOLAS DLAMINI

Mbabane BEC Secretary

The Mbabane Branch, situated in the Capital City, could not be spared from the cruel grip of COVID-19 as it has been a global pandemic sending us from pillar to post. Our Wellness Team has fought tooth and nail though to ensure that our over a thousand members are well attended to, from all angles: education, visitation, guidance and counselling and any other possible interventions were strictly monitored by the office of the Secretary. The immediate grip on COVID-19 does not mean that we have allowed it to hold us hostage as a Branch, but it simply articulates the numerous effects it has had on our operations to a larger extent. However, one must hasten to declare that it has taken its toll on us as a Branch. We therefore have an ardent wish to have these negative repercussions dissuaded by concerted efforts to focus our energies on striving for what makes grow and realise what we seek to attain as a directed union guided by strategic goals at both Branch and National level. This shall be a dream come true for every member as time will tell when we hold hands in creating a well reinforced wall against apathy to survive any storms that could cause irreparable damage.

BRANCH SUCCESSES

1. Attending OAJ workshops as the Branch Leadership and conducting one [1] at Branch level with the COVID-19 Regulations restricting us due to numerous lockdowns we have been exposed to in the country. The primary

objective of this exercise is to re-ignite the knowledge and appreciation of why teachers as workers need to be organised. The belief is that with such revivals, the members will be as determined in standing for their cause and cannot be swayed at will.



Mbabane Branch Vehicle [Courtesy Pic.]

2. This unprecedented period since March 2020 has ushered our lives to extremely challenging episodes. As the saying goes, 'every dark cloud has a silver lining,' we have prevailed and conquered a number of these eventualities; something which has taught us significant lessons for a lifetime. In as much, health education has always been alive to the washing of hands, keeping safe social distance and safe covering of our coughs, with the advent of COVID-19, it has proven to have been the greatest weapon. Experience has demonstrated that catching a cold has been reduced so drastically as long as these habits are fully adhered to. Our National Executive has played a pivotal role in ensuring that all teachers are well cushioned by having countless interventions through the Ministry of Education and Training [MoET], regardless of all opposition faced-to which we can proudly say BRAVO leadership!

The OSISA project on COVID-19 compliance was an icing on top as it has kept school leaders on toes where learners and teachers' health are concerned. Patience and diligence have really paid-off, amidst the adversities

ushered-in by this cruel head of the corona virus. It would be gross errata to claim that this has and still is smooth sailing, however, appreciating the little attainments can never be overlooked.

A milestone has been envisioned in the listed areas:

- School visits done to assess COVID-19 compliance as spelt out by the SOPs set at Union level have enhanced the necessary monitoring of how teachers are either protected or at stake at the various workstations.

- Government has also learnt to appreciate and be tolerant of the inevitable union involvement as a key stakeholder in our education system.

3. The purchasing of the Branch vehicle-a seven seater Elgrand- which comes in very handy when the wellness team visits our indisposed members, funeral attendance and whenever there are grievances to address as we have seen an escalation on these pertinent issues, lately. Another imperative objective of buying the vehicle was for effective visitations of schools in fighting apathy. Attending the General Council [GC] meetings has been made even more cost effective on fuel as all members use one vehicle as opposed to each one using their own.

4. Amidst all strict prohibitions, the Branch has at least been able to organise a workshop for the management and representatives on the key tenets of OAJ in a bid to escalate the fight for the lack of enthusiasm amongst our cadres. Obviously, this could not exhaust all the necessary topics of prime concern, hence the need to keep organising more sessions of similar nature. Technology too has been very useful as we had a very fruitful virtual session under the auspices of our Resolutions Secretary [RS] who addressed the management on how to craft effective resolutions as pro-active preparations for our conferences.

5. The office of the Gender and Human Rights attended a number of workshops on various topics with the likes of COVID-19 issues looking at life beyond this era, gender based violence as well as



Mbabane Branch Meeting [Courtesy Pic.]

'Marriage Rights' together with 'Will Recording' for the proper distribution of assets amongst the owners and beneficiaries.

6. Teachers' vaccination with the involvement of the Ministries of Health and Education, through the National Executive initiative, to which we are so grateful, was a resounding success.

7. Grievance handling workshop attended recently has fully equipped leaders on how to be prosperous where grievances arise to ensure a conducive working environment at all times for productivity and industrial harmony.

BRANCH'S CHALLENGES

Wherever there is progress, derailleurs too prevail as a norm and we too have not been spared from same:

- a. Inability to meet the quota for annual meetings due to COVID-19 eventualities
- b. Some bereaved members could not be visited as there were curfews especially with the rise of cases and deaths.
- c. High infection rates in schools each time the waves hit have been a perpetual concern.



The Branch Chair handing over gift to a retiring teacher at her home! [Courtesy Pic.]

- d. Poor attendance during workshops and Branch meetings due to superiors' refusal to grant permission much against the dictates of our 1992 Recognition Agreement is still a pain in the neck.
- e. Inadequacy of platforms to share acquired knowledge from workshops under COVID-19 restrictions and threats posed by the high mortality rates recorded lately.

- f. Lack of resources for data as well network inefficiencies which affects the virtual participation of members.
- g. Vaccine after effects have been really disturbing among some comrades where we even lost others, whilst others are still complaining of abnormal body aches, a month after getting inoculated.

Summarily, the Branch is undeterred in standing for the unions' vision and mission statement of highly committing to serving the membership without any fear or favour with the unabated principles of transparency and accountability at all times.



New Furniture for the Branch Office [Courtesy Pic.]

THE SNAT BUSINESS AT MHLOSHENI BRANCH



WONDER MOTSA

Mhlosheni BEC Secretary

It is my pleasure to write to this Column as the Secretary of Mhlosheni Branch of the SNAT. Mhlosheni Branch is located on the Southern part of the country. It is landlocked by Big Bend Branch and Mbulungwane in the East, Nhlanguano Branch in the North and the boundaries separating Swaziland and Kwazulu Natal on the South and Western part of the Branch. The Branch has 63 schools (inclusive primary and secondary schools). It has a membership of about +-1000 teachers. We have a Branch management made up of Branch Executive Committee and other known sub-committees as well as Swaziland National Association of Retired Teachers (SNART) and Swaziland Association of Schools Administrators [SASA].

At the beginning of the 2018-2022 leadership era, the Branch Leadership declared the period as an **ERA OF CAPACITY BUILDING**. So the Branch resolved to visit schools for capacity building purposes and membership recruitment to increase the strength of the Branch. The schools were grouped according to their activeness in participating in local and national Union activities. For efficiency, the Branch is divided into four [4] zones and each zone was allocated a team of leaders (BEC and Branch sub-committee leader) to ensure that they get the necessary service. The programme was named **Capacity Building and Recruitment** was Deputy Secretary, Sabelo Khumalo as the Co-ordinator. The Branch Representatives were invited to a Branch

workshop where the programme of action was unpacked and adopted.

The Branch, through the Branch Social and Welfare Committee, also planned some activity for the Branch. This included a Branch Day where teachers will come together once a year to socialize. The day will begin with a Branch sensitisation march before the Main Activity, in a chosen site. The Branch Day will be for teachers to socialize and distress by braai, music and physical exercise. The Committee also planned outings (local and external). The local tours will be from the Branch to another to learn how a Branch like Big Bend has evolved to be a social hub for its teachers. The external trip/tours were meant to visit the teachers' union (SADTU) in South Africa so to socialize with our counterparts in Ophongolo Branch.

The Office of the Gender and Human Rights Officer successfully presented a



Branch leadership led by Secretary by a "Slogan" on the right

gender sensitisation campaign. The campaign was to revolve around widowed woman who are abused by their families upon the demise of their husbands. Teachers and ordinary community members were then going to be taught to write a Will. The Branch holds the notion that we are members of the communities before we are teachers. The campaign was to begin with capacity building around the rights of a woman. The initiative is open even to other sister unions like nurses (SWADNU Matsajeni hospital) and NAPSAWU (Hluthi immigration officers). The main challenge to the planned activities or Branch

programme was the state of disaster brought by the Corona-virus disease (Covid-19). There was lockdown for months where schools were closed, sickly teachers' numbers increased and there were casualties as we lost some teachers and their relatives alike. The Branch had to invest a lot in the Wellness Programme as coordinated by the Deputy Chairperson, Matsebula Victor. The Branch was hit the hardest when it's Chairperson, Ndwandwe Michael, had a cerebrovascular accident (CVA) and the local health centres had a policy that a patient cannot be admitted for over 14 days. He had to be transferred to South Africa where he is still recuperating. We were able to call some workshops. The problem of lack of attendance was also observed. The Branch then resolved that to ensure maximum participation on Branch activity, each school Rep and Headteacher should be called by the Branch Executive Committee [BEC] members on top of the invitation letters. This will ensure that the school confirms its presence and an alternative teacher comes to the activity if the school's SNAT Representative is held up.

One thorny issue from the Branch was the housing issue from our Lady of Sorrows Primary and High Schools. The teachers were charged at commercial rates yet their counterparts from neighbouring schools were charged at the government gazetted fees. To make matters worse, some staff members from the schools were overcharged just because they were not members of the Catholic Mission for the same service given to their counterparts who were Church members. The matter ended up in Court, where the case was initially withdrawn, however, the mission has since filed new papers.

Special thanks to Finland OAJ-Swaziland SNAT Partnership for the capacity workshop which blended well with the Branch capacity programme. The September, 16, 2021 Branch workshop is a continuation of capacity building to empower school representatives who will in turn empower the ordinary teachers in their schools.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE PEN OF A TRAINER



DAVID BIRD

Director and Owner of Nilsbird Training

Who am I? This is the question you might be asking, as you read the title of this new column for the Magazine. Well, my name is David Bird, and I am a teacher/trainer resident in the country of Shropshire, United Kingdom.

Your next question may well be: Why is a teacher/trainer from the United Kingdom writing for a Magazine for teachers in Eswatini? Well, this second question does need a longer explanation, so here goes!

In August of this year my business, nilsbird training, ran a successful three-day online teacher training conference in partnership with Chingola Private Schools Association: Educating the 21st Century Student. One of the participants at the conference was a man you will all know, Mcolisi Motsa, Editor of this Magazine. (Mcolisi and I had first connected through Twitter, and then WhatsApp. As a result of this, Mcolisi decided to attend the conference.) After the conference had finished, I started chatting to Mcolisi about how nilsbird training could support teachers in Eswatini and this column, so to speak, was born!

So, I have been involved in education since 1987. Over the years, I have taught many different subjects, and students between the ages of 5 and 17. In 2001, I started working as an examiner and in 2009 I became an international teacher trainer. Much of this time as a trainer involved working for others, providing

face-to-face and online training. (Visiting countries around the world, including Nigeria, Ghana, Lesotho and Zimbabwe). Nilsbird training was begun in 2018, with both a UK and international focus, but has since moved to having a predominately international one. (A more detailed profile for nilsbird training can be found at my website. The main focus of nilsbird training is to provide good quality training, at a very reasonable cost (or, maybe, even no cost) for teachers who couldn't



necessarily access such training because of the cost! (Educating the 21st Century Student was an example of how partnering with another organisation, and receiving company sponsorship, could provide teachers with fee-free attendance at a conference.) Website: nilsbirdtraining.com) Another focus for the business is to provide training for those teachers who have the daily experience of a low resource environment. (In the last couple of years, I have witnessed, first hand, what it is like for teachers to have very few resources in the classroom).

Now, with the introductions out of the way, let me share where, I think, this column could go, as I move forward writing about how we can develop as professionals. Well, first of all, this column needs to be useful! (This might be stating the obvious, but the last thing I would want is for me to write articles for you, the reader, and they not actually be beneficial for you!) Secondly, the column needs to be interesting, and written in such a way that you don't want to give up after just the

first ten words! Thirdly, and the most challenging for me, the column needs to be inspiring, with great support for all of you as always need to be on best practice!

With such high expectations, as I have shared in the previous paragraph, I have certainly set myself a challenge. Over time, the column could broaden into, for example, providing specific subject support, as well as answering people's questions. Also, I might call upon others to provide some input into the column, thus broadening the knowledge and expertise that will be found within it.

So, as I begin to draw this first article to a close, let's look forward to the next one.

To do this, let's consider the following unfinished statement: I ask questions in the classroom because ... How would you finish this statement? Would you find it hard, or easy, to do so? Would you have many different ways to complete it? I might finish the statement with ... I want to challenge my students. It is important, I would argue, that we do know how to finish this statement which I will return to in my next article. (You might have guessed that it will focus on questioning in the classroom, and you'd be right. Actually, it will show how questioning is an effective teaching technique that requires no resources whatsoever!)

Thanks for reading this first article. I hope it provided enough information to tempt you to come back for more in the next article; made you inquisitive as to what I might write each time! Until next time.



First Nilsbird Teacher Training in Sierra Leone in 2019 [Courtesy Pic. Twitter]

COULD 'GIVING THE OTHER CHEEK' BE SEEN AS PLAUSIBLE?



CEBSILE MHLANGA

Mbabane Branch Gender

Philosophy is one exciting area of study which enables anyone to follow that school of thought which fully satisfies their convictions, right? However, it is quite interesting that whichever angle is never without controversies as everyone is entitled to their own perceptions and postulations. Then the most exciting discourse bothers on how the two [2] parties enjoy these liberties independent of the other and, without trespassing or infringement on the other's freedoms?

Imagine someone relating their plight and you are found with no choice but to laugh your lungs out as the plot presents itself as an 'irresistible' one. Everyone has the liberty to exercise their freedom (s). The challenge here is the limited privacy which compels the narration of confidential issues in public which then exposes secrets and allows potential listeners to follow inevitably and react as the 'spirit' leads them. What happens to the one being laughed at? It goes without saying that they would be hurt: one man's food is another man's poison. Then how does someone whose rights have been violated in the process get to offer the other cheek? Interesting philosophy! The Old Testament advocates for such, yet it leaves more questions than answers to the whole rigmarole. Recently, as reflex action though, I met some Lady who was awfully stressed by inhibitions to be the first to take care of her nursing daughter as her marital family was equally excited over their debut grandchild, and I had this uncontrollable laughter, as I empathised with the poor woman. When we finally discussed this, the Lady was grateful for the insight which healed her from her lethal anxiety. The laughter could have been rude, but she appreciated how it prepared her psychologically for the inevitable.

Effectively, the violated privacy had been meant to assist her learn something, as the saying that 'we learn the hard way'. Then, would giving the other cheek be necessary here?

The complexity of life is forever puzzling. Come to think of the victims of 'divine retribution' as articulated within religious spheres- as the punishment befalling those who commit certain crimes or sins. Closely following their assertions, it would appear as if those who have 'huge' sins might bear the worst of God's wrath. And it complicates when a man of the cloth and their families suffer calamities as the presumption would be such individuals and their families are frequently in consultation with their deity; fasting, purifying and praying earnestly. The prejudice emanates from another sin unfortunately as God is wary of individuals with the 'holier than thou' attitude. We are all sinners in God's eyes and are expected to assume that approach when in his presence for Him to graciously offer His love. A very complicated phenomenon it is because of the various hermeneutical approaches adopted after diverse and intense studies. Some of these interpretations would seem like they hold no water to the victims. Imagine one who loses their loved one yet they see themselves as having done 'the most' for their Creator. They would bring countless memories of their acts of piety and feel like they deserve better as some heavenly reward, only to find that by that mere thought or feeling, they would be blaspheming. Their pride of assuming that Gods' favour is definitely unto them as they would be judging their worth from what they see; is said to be the last straw. Then what can provide individuals with assurance that they will forever be covered? Are such individuals likely to propose for 'offering the other cheek' under any given condition?

Who is worthy of Gods' love? Is it the ones devoted to serve Him strictly following some schedule or those living their lives to the fullest but simply admitting their frailties? What should be taught to the juvenile about how they must approach some Biblical teachings? How does one justify their claim of following the Law on offering the other cheek in the face of divine retribution? Or should there be freedom to live one's life like

there is no tomorrow? What if those actions culminate to offending others? Assuming that when people throw a party, they get over excited, make so much noise for the neighbours; does that still qualify only as a celebration or an infringement on the others' splendid isolation? Yes, the offended neighbours will have to find a way to make it in the midst of the disturbances, while those at the party are on cloud nine because, coming out as furious could be interpreted as jealousy, another vile in society, right?

Then what is freedom if all these scenarios alluded to will prove inefficient in painting a perfect image of being free and enjoying one's life without impediment on the next person? Does it mean individuals will now be stuck with the prevailing contradictions? However, all these frameworks present life as an incredible journey that we must endure as we enjoy. Assertiveness needs to be invoked for living beings to forge their future without intimidation. It is when one's critical thinking skills are teased. Quality problem solving approaches are a must. Perfection is some utopian concept that should not be confused with authentic living. Issues can never be treated unilaterally. A generous approach would be accepting the diversity whilst still striving for peaceful co-existence. Absolutism is also not a key. Nothing would be achieved if we were to address issues in a linear pattern. For instance, the issue of 'agency shop' amongst those refusing to be organised. Joe Bidden spoke so articulately on the worker's rights to be organised in one of his Presidential Addresses. But that does not mean that there will be coercion for all workers to be organised. Whilst at the same it would be imbecilic for the organised to keep fighting those who are still adamant about being organised. Rather those organised apply other means of ensuring that those outside pay for the services they are legally provided to benefit from.

As hard as it seems for my union, SNAT to win the agency shop battle, we still have to push a little harder as this sabotage was intentionally designed to frustrate us and further aggravate the 'divide and rule' principle upon which all capitalists thrive. So, giving the other cheek is sometimes not a choice as it becomes inexorable.

FIGHTING DOUBLE BATTLES: COVID-19 AND POLITICAL FREEDOM



MANDLA 'COW1' NKOMONYE

Mhlume Branch Secretary

The Coronavirus pandemic is wrecking-havoc in the country. Many a Swazi, are testing positive and dying, including our members and learners. As we are battling this deadly and faceless enemy, we are also battling and fighting for the freedom and liberation of Emaswati from the current cruel and corrupt regime.

The recent political unrest in the country where the Swazi populace delivered petitions in their various Tinkhundla centers is a sign that we (as Emaswati) are fed up with the current government which is controlled by one person (not even a family by Swazi standards). We have lost a lot of our brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, children and grandparents in the hands of the



Former Army Commander, Jeffrey Shabalala, who resigned after an embarrassing sex scandal. He is the one who commanded soldiers to shoot to kill emaswati late June this year.

country's armed forces through orders to shoot and kill from their Commander-in-Chief.

Taking a look into the statistics of the innocent Emaswati killed by the police

and army, it pains me to see the number of children (learners) injured and paralyzed. The question is why were these young and innocent souls shot? What wrong had they done? We cannot deny that these children were just innocent bystanders during the protests



Nkosephayo, a 9-year-old was shot at eSkom [Nhlngano] by the Police [Photo Courtesy of eSwatini Solidarity]

but the armed forces shot at them. One case in point is that of 17-year-old Machawe Lukhuleni from Lomahasha, who was shot and crippled by the armed forces (police and the army) whilst innocently watching the protest action.

The armed forces are running rampage killing and assaulting people willy-nilly and unfortunately the government of the land is harboring these killers. A policer officer shot and killed two [2] people,



The two [2] gentlemen killed by the Police Officer at Lomahasha [Courtesy of Swaziland News].

Sifiso 'Mpostoli' Masilela and Mxolisi 'Sigubhu' Nyoni, in cold blood, just for speaking the truth against the Tinkhundla system. We all know that even though he was allegedly suspended by the NATCOM, that was a public stunt. The education sector is in shambles. Learners have been away from the classroom for quite some time and that has a huge and negative impact on them.

The government and the MoET seem to have no clear guidelines/plans on how



The DPM, Acting Prime Minister, Themba Nhlanganiso Masuku, the man at the helm of Government before the unceremonious appointment of Cleopas Siphso Dlamini [File Pic.]

schools should operate during the pandemic. Schools are closed and reopened without proper consultation with all stakeholders. Schools were closed on the 29th June 2021 with the then Acting Prime Minister, Themba Nhlanganiso Masuku, citing an increase in the COVID-19 positive cases and later reopened when the numbers had drastically increased, a clear indication of a confused government.

The opening of schools in the peak of the 3rd wave of COVID-19 and with schools not complying with the COVID-19 Regulations, is a suicide mission. The government is gambling with the lives of Emaswati (teachers and learners). Schools lack the necessary equipment to allow learners back to class. There is also a shortage of teachers in schools and that is a cause of serious concern which cannot be ignored.

COVID-19: DYING WITH OUR BOOTS ON



LOT 'GADAFFI' VILAKATI

Siteki Top Secretary

The announcement of the recently donated vaccine to Swaziland was a relief to many. The mere fact that now it is Johnson and Johnson [JnJ], coming with a single dose was warmly welcomed by many of us. Even though the Russian Sputnik V was our priority, what more can we receive as a donation? In jubilation, we were eager to go and have our jabs as the citizens of the country.

As teachers of Swaziland, more especially under the SNAT, our jubilation was short lived when we were told that the vaccine is given first preference to teachers because they are supposed to go and open schools as we were termed as 'social loafers' as if it was us who said schools must close at the lower stage of the pandemic. At that point in time, the pandemic was not vicious as it was when we were told to go back to class.



Covid-19 [google.com]

The right call by the SNAT of opening schools by government in full compliance of WHO standards when it comes to Covid-19 Regulations, not grandstanding with the compliance in the process,

causing some casualties. Our lives are in danger as workers and we are gambling with it. We cannot make the ends meet due to strategic system of salary cut and we are expected to wear the happy face. Not again. We are being robbed our rights as workers. It is unfortunate that we are begging salary review which is our right as workers. We need to go up and down begging what belongs to us. Prices are hiking up and again but our salaries are standstill.

Let me get back to my take. Dying with our boots on is the story of our time as Swaziland teachers, more especially under the banner of SNAT. One thorny issue is the one that I have raised above:



The SNAT SG getting his Johnson and Johnson jab 30 July 2021 in Mbabane [Courtesy SNAT Media].

the issue of day armed robbery of not given what is due to us in terms of salary increment. The other issue is the vaccination which I hinted above also. In the hype of the pandemic, we were forced to open up.

As if that was not enough, comrades were told, in a week's time, to go and vaccinate, schools set to re-open in the subsequent week. Teachers were supposed to go to school and teach. After vaccination, depending on one's immune system,

there are side effects of the vaccine. Depending on the individual, they happen after vaccination, sometimes days after vaccination. Against all this, we are supposed to vaccinate and go to class. How can you go to school when you are sick from the side effects of the vaccine itself? It took me five [5] heavy days for the side effects to clear and it was tough. We are supposed to be given at least a month after vaccination to clear all the sicknesses caused by the vaccine.

Another factor was that there was no counselling given before one took the jab and also testing for Covid-19 before taking the jab. We have suffered as a Union on that negligence. We are hoping that this time around teachers will be given day offs after taking the jab as the side effects varies from person to person. Teachers are having these comorbidities that are specifically caused by the lack of



Masses in a protest [Courtesy SNAT Media].

proper pay. Using the SADC scale to be precise, we as Swazi teachers, just like our brothers in the armed forces who were promised SADC salary scales, we are also demanding same from the government of choice.

On the issue of salary review, comrades, my take is clear. Last time we had a review, we had to take it to the streets to have such. Even now, we are patiently waiting for our leaders to give us the day: we go to Mbabane and demand what is due to us and it is long overdue. We want our money and we want it this year [2021] as per the 2016 Collective Agreement.

MEET THE SNAT LEGAL OFFICER

After a winding recruitment exercise, the SNAT finally engaged a Legal Officer to be fully in charge of the Legal Department of the Union. The SNAT Media interviewed the new asset in the Organisation.

SNAT Media [SM]: Good day Legal.

SNAT Legal Officer [SLO]: Thank you for having me, good day to you too and to the SNAT family in its entirety.

SM: Tell us about Sikelela Zwane.

SLO: In 2001, Sikelela Zwane cut his teeth by being a Legal Officer to one of the reputable unions (SMAWU) in the manufacturing industry. Since then, his work has been centred on industrial relations matters. He did his articles of clerkship with Vilakazi & Co. Attorneys from 2003 and got admitted as an Attorney of the High Court of Swaziland in

legal experience in the union industry to the enjoyment of the SNAT.

SM: The SNAT has numerous Legal Cases before the Court. How do you look forward to enhancing the Organisation cross this hurdle?

SLO: Several active and none active court cases have already been retrieved from Attorneys and/or labour consultants to be handled internally by the SNAT Legal Department, with the exception of those which are at critical stages. Also, with the advent of the paralegals training which aims to equip paralegals with the relevant skills on effective and holistic resolution of disputes, it is envisaged the organization will minimize cases which end up being dealt with before external fori (courts) as thus cut down legal costs.

SM: You have been at the forefront of a solemn exercise of Paralegals. From your own analysis, how fundamental is the programme for the SNAT?

SLO: The Programme of the training of paralegals falls right at the core of the Legal Department of the SNAT's mission. The paralegals will aid conscientize SNAT members about their rights and welfare within the context of the education sector as well as make legal services more affordable and accessible to membership. Also, the training of paralegals is that not only will it ease the stress of a heavy caseload but also help cases to proceed towards resolution more quickly and efficiently, creating

a win-win situation for all parties concerned.

SM: We are pleased to have you at the SNAT. We wish you all the best.

SLO: Thank you so much, I am also looking forward to sharing my experience and to add value to the organization and making it a formidable one within the SADAC region.

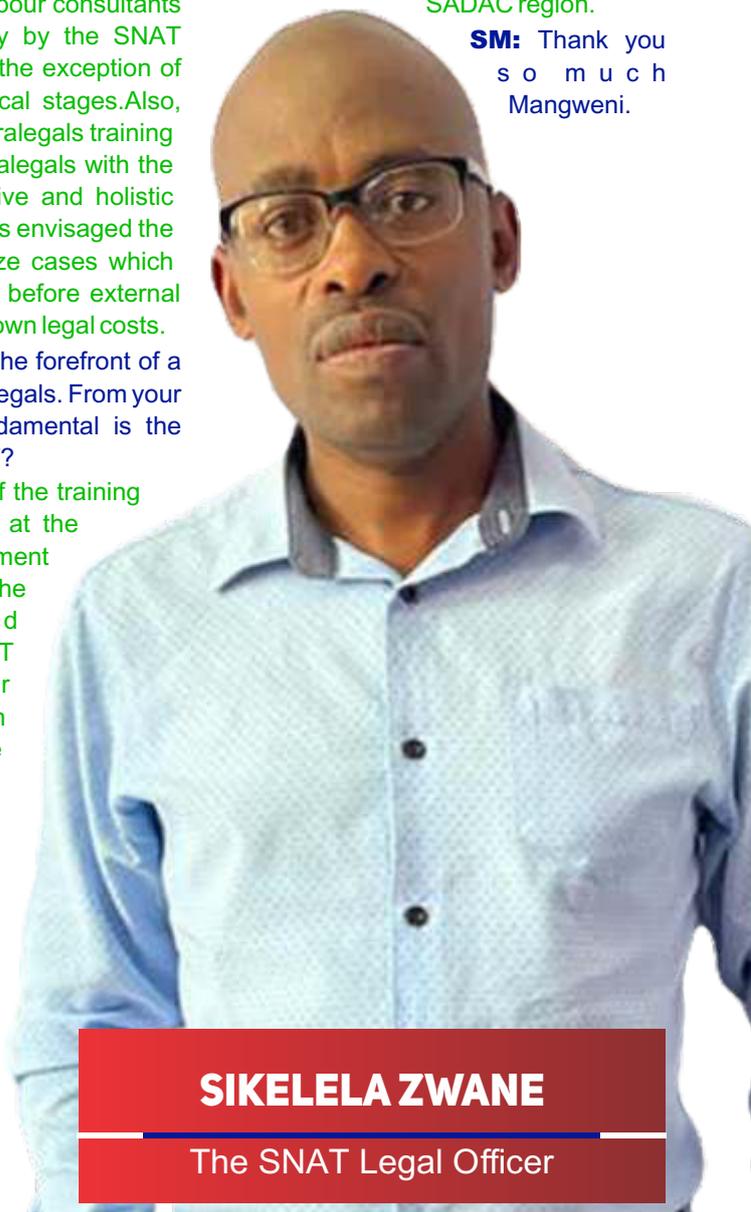
SM: Thank you so much Mangweni.



2006. In 2015-2017, he worked as a Human Resources Officer at The George Hotel (TGH). He is a Part-Time Commissioner with the Commission for Mediation and Arbitration Commission (CMAC) since 2016. Sikelela feels very privileged to be working with the SNAT as a Legal Officer and looks forward to sharing his skills to help turn the organization into a formidable entity within SADAC.

SM: Wow! We have seen you around the SNAT for a while now. How does it feel being part of the SNAT?

SLO: I feel welcome and being part of the collective of other similarly situated workers who are working in concert for mutual aid and protection the rights of the organization's members. It also gives me the opportunity to put into practice my



SIKELELA ZWANE

The SNAT Legal Officer

SWIMMING AGAINST THE TIDE



Look!
Keep looking
Keep Looking for the light
I'm used being an outcast
I'm used being the freak
Things you may feel are helpful
May be hurtful
Hurtful rules you've created
Ringleader of the feebleminded
Those are your rules
Rules for keeping the chaos at bay
A conniving mouth
The hatred you have over me
And I am the sick one?
I'm terribly conflicted
Here comes the crocodile tears
Your desire to be cruel to your fellow
man
A man such as myself
Me and the others
In my soul I've known them always
Their names give me firmness
Look!
Don't ponder
Just do it
Keep looking for the light
It's an opportunity
An opportunity for all of us to grow
If you hedge I will know
If you trick me I will know
It's my duty to stay vital
It's your duty to look for the light
The people looking for the light will
survive
With the light, humanity will survive
There is humanity in you
I see it
Humanity to let me be
Be who I really want to be
~ Thami

ASISIBO BANTFU KULABO BANTFU

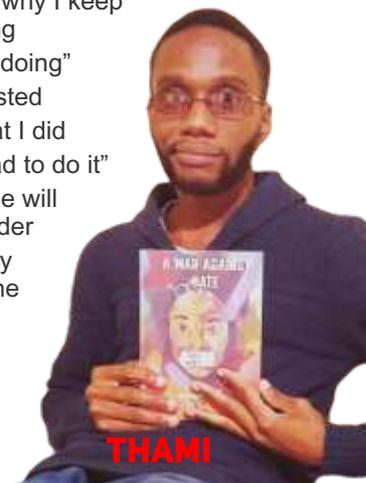


Who am I now
The whispers in my head don't lie
The things I saw
Knowing what I know
Drowning in mud wanting to move but
unable to
The unhappiest man is one trapped
Trapped in past memory or future hope
Asisibo bantfu kulabo bantfu
A room without a door
A hostage in my own body
Abasibo bantfu labo bantfu
All that hate
Always trotting around looking for a
target
Lese majesty and prejudice
No appreciation of what love, and life
means
Ignorance or evilness
Abasibo bantfu labo bantfu
Ancient and armed with spears
Nothing could escape their grip
Everything they say is seasoned with a
grain of salt
Asisibo bantfu kulabo bantfu
My children have been haunted
My children have been tortured
Robbed of something
A moment that was ours
The door won't hold
I want to speak to my children
I want to speak to my children alone
About a concept you cannot understand
About how we get through it to the other
side
Together
A fresh shade for a fresh start
The whispers in my head don't lie
Didn't want to know until I had to
Asisibo bantfu balabo bantfu
~Thami
#KungahlwaKwenile
#HonestArtworks

ALL MONSTERS ARE HUMAN



He said
"Why are you crying
Nobody cares about you"
Everything isn't as it should be
He said
"Even the law knows better than to
bother me"
I haven't felt human
Everything isn't as it should be
I haven't felt human for years
Panting and gasping
Grunting and Crying
Fear and exhaustion
Breathing heavily
I am running out of daylight
Can't vanquish the fear in my heart
Only ashes will remain at the end of this
night
There's no after after this
If by chance you see this
The first thing you have to know
I am mess
He mangled my face
He insisted
No one would believe my story
Proclaiming his innocence
He insisted
"I don't know why I keep
doing
What I'm doing"
He insisted
"I did what I did
because I had to do it"
A part of me will
always wonder
What it truly
means for the
future
~Thami



THAMI

MY SOURCE OF COMFORT: PSALMS 119 VS 50



WELCOME NGWENYA

Anointed Man of God

This is my comfort and consolation in my affliction: that your word has revived me and given me life.

Indvudvuto yami ekuhluphekeni kwami kutsi setsembiso sakho singinika kuphila. Tihlabelelo 119:50

We all go through a rough page in life. Psalm 34:19

■ sometimes, no matter how strong we are, we need encouragement. Jesus once had a discouraging, painful moment. An Angel from the Lord had to come down to encourage/uplift him. (Luke 22:43, an Angel from Heaven appeared to him and strengthened him). If God, with all powers, needed encouragement, how much more a person like me and you?

■ sometimes we get tired hopeless, useless. (1 Kings 19 vs 4).

■ sometimes we fill defeated, abandoned, used, neglected

■ sometimes we feel lonely

■ sometimes we feel like we failed. We blundered, so we deserve punishment. (1 Kings 19 vs 4)

Truth is: we all go through such.

But the Author says (This is my comfort and consolation in my affliction: that your Word has revived me and given me life).

Wow, not material things but his statutes, his word.

Why His word?

David once said: "your Word is a Lamp for my feet, a light on my path. Psalm 119 vs 105.

Meaning, on His word we have lamp for our feet and light on our path meaning, without His word we walk in darkness and we are in danger. It is only through His word, where we get our life's divine, direction.

Hebrew 4:12 for the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword. It penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints

While some get happy with revenge, Mark 6 and 19.

But author, David Psalms 119 vs 50 says, "this is my comfort and consolation in my affliction: that your word has revived me and given me life."

May I challenge you to also find comfort and consolation during your affliction to His word only, nowhere else nor sorcerers,



and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. (this is the power of the word of God). It penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. This is because of its sharpness.

The promises of God that gives David comfort and consolation in his affliction (Psalms 119 vs 50).

God reminds us daily, that:

- I am your strength
- I will never leave you
- I have plans for you to prosper
- I hear your prayers
- I will fight for you
- I will give you peace
- I always love you

Many things make people to be jubilant, jovious, happy.

- Business world is money profit
- Fun lovers its clubbing
- Some get happy through alcohol
- Some get happy through many wives, girl friends
- Some get happy with positions
- Some get happy with vacations



Pleasures of the World [Sourced from the Internet]

But author, David Psalms 119 vs 50 says, "this is my comfort and consolation in my affliction: that your word has revived me and given me life." May I challenge you to also find comfort and consolation during your affliction to His word only, nowhere else nor sorcerers, nor false prophets, nor diviners, nor magicians, nor witches and witchcraft practices. God alone is enough to console and comfort you during your afflictions.

May the Word of God revive you and guard your life during your persecution: betrayal, lied on, disappointment, embarrassment, let down, mourning, amongst others.

May the good Lord bless you, enlarge your territory, prevent you from danger and pain. Amen!

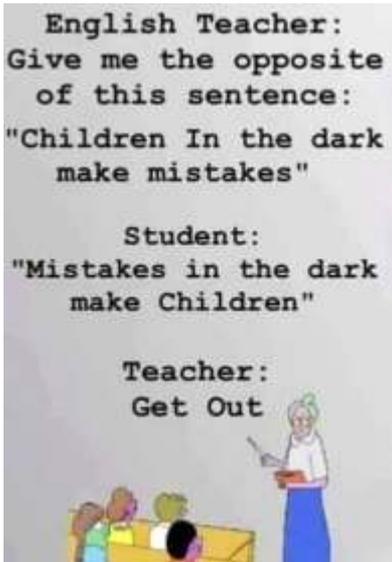


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An uneducated father with his educated son went on a camping trip. They set-up their tent and fell asleep. Some hours later, the father woke up his son. Father- 'Look up to the sky and tell me what you see.' Son- 'I see millions of stars.' Father- 'And what does that tell you?' Son- 'Astronomically, it tells that there are millions of galaxies and planets.' Father slaps the son hard and says- "Idiot, someone has stolen our tent"

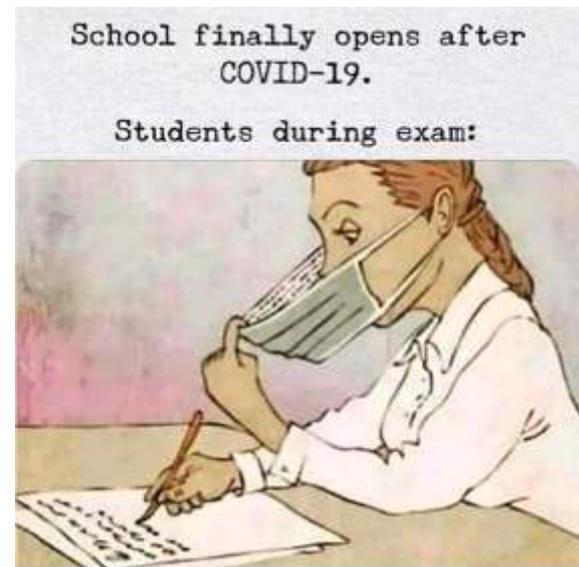
MORAL:
Too much education can spoil our common sense.

A man was fresh out of accounting school and went to an interview for a good paying job. The company boss asked various questions about him and his education, but then asked him: "What is three times seven?" "Twenty-two," the man replied.

After he left, he double-checked it on his calculator and realised he wouldn't get the job.

About two weeks later, he got a letter that said he was hired for the job! He was not one to look a gift horse in the mouth, but was still very curious. The next day, the man went in and asked why he got the job, even though he got such a simple question wrong.

The boss shrugged and said: "Well, you were the closest."



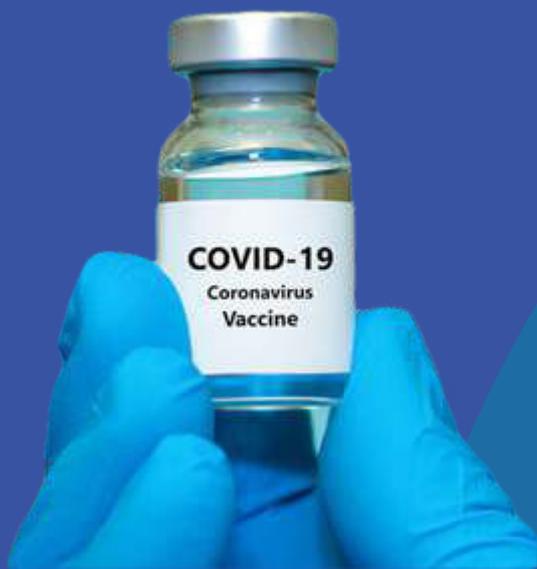
A joke I've picked up from working in Higher Education.

At a small university there is the director of the Sociology program, the director of the Religious Studies program, the director of the Anthropology program and the university president. All four of them are heading to a conference in the next town over. The directors all decide to carpool, and the president is driving his Porsche behind them. On the way to the conference the directors lose control of their vehicle and crash into oncoming traffic. It's a horrific accident. The university president manages to stop his car, gets out, witnesses the accident and exclaims...

"Oh the Humanities!"



The SNAT
Supports
the **vaccination**
exercise for
learners
and teachers.
We must
achieve
herd immunity.



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