

EAGLE



WIDENING THE DISCOURSE



Unpacking Eswatini GBV Charter



NCC- Four Year Programme, e-Learning



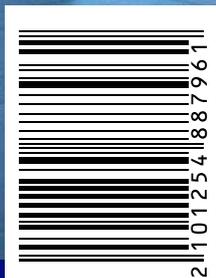
MAIN STORY

"I GAVE OUT MY BEST"

-OUTGOING SNAT SG

INSIDE

SNAT Elections: National Conference to Decide



INTRODUCING OUR NEW PSPF LOGO



Old



New

MBABANE – The Public Service Pensions Fund (PSPF) is pleased to introduce its brand-new Corporate Identity (Logo) to all its stakeholders and the public.

This logo replaces the unmistakable symbol developed and adopted in 1994 after transitioning from the Pensions Department of the Ministry of Public Service to a parastatal. The enactment of the Public Service Order of 1993 gave birth to the Fund.

The initial logo's main feature was a man and a woman counting money, symbolizing a pension benefit against a backdrop of a map of Eswatini with the national flag colours.

WHY A NEW LOGO?

Logo refreshes show that you are evolving and changing to keep up with the modern world and are in touch with where the people you serve are today.

Therefore, the Fund's new logo's design depicts the evolution of PSPF's benefits and services, which now include funeral, among others previously not there when the first one was designed. The refreshed logo reaffirms the Fund's commitment to

servicing the Fund's contributing members for their futures and the pensioners after retirement. The previous one mainly spoke about life after retirement. The new logo also speaks to the domestic and foreign investments the Fund plans to grow. Lastly, it speaks to a Fund being a source of life to its contributing members and beneficiaries.

UNPACKING THE COLOUR MEANINGS

The primary colour used in the crisp new logo is blue. According to the official visual identity and elements booklet, this blue symbolizes strength, reliability and steadfast trust. These three elements are ever-present in the Fund's current values, in particular that of Transparency and Excellence.

The logo's colour contrast is achieved with the use of the colour white in the areas of negative space. White represents cleanliness and simplicity. The simplicity tone is akin to the Fund's value of Buntfu to treat everyone equally and with respect.

DESCRIBING THE ICONOGRAPHY

One of the symbolic aspects of the logo is its main icon which is a tree. The icon is made from a stylized tree contained in a circle. This budding tree has multiple positive meanings related to pension and future savings. A tree primarily is a symbol of growth and regeneration, just as is a Pension Fund.

The tree also represents life as it is a source of oxygen. It is also a source of wood, shade, shelter, produce, fruit and building material, the same way a Fund can cater for beneficiaries' needs. A tree also symbolizes investments and growth. While also, the tree speaks to the nature of contributing to a fund for development, just as a tree grows

from a seed to a tree. Also, a tree is crucial in any environment or soil preservation, just as a pension fund supports the socio-economic development of a country.

Lastly, the logo has an interesting feature upon close observation the branches are cut off at their tips. In Agronomy, pruning stimulates continued plant growth and overall health-just as PSPF is established to support the development of its members and beneficiaries for generations.



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WIDENING THE DISCOURSE

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SUB-EDITOR

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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THE LEADERSHIP WE WANT

Come October 2022, the SNAT will parade newly elected Office Bearers of the Organisation in every stratum; duty station, Branch and National. This, in essence, means the SNAT will engage in a process of renewal of mandate from the Membership, through the ballot box. New Leaders shall be occupying respective Offices. Some will be re-elected.

My view would be: as we head to the polls this year, the electorate will have an opportunity to put into Office their preferred Leadership. The membership, through representative democracy, will cast votes for their ideal Leadership. My question would be; at this juncture, what type of Leadership does the SNAT need? What set of skills, qualifications and competencies do we need from the



Leadership we have nominated, canvassed and voted for? Lest we forget, effective leadership is about the successful application of leadership skills.

Gary Yuki [2013] defines leadership as the process of influencing others to understand and agree what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish the shared objectives.

In 1995, Robert Katz categorised these leadership skills into three [3]: technical, human and conceptual skills. Do these candidates we're electing have an understanding of industrial relations, negotiations, conflict management,

organising, trade Union practices and trade Union Laws? Will they be able to work with people and be cooperative? Do they've the ability to see the SNAT as a whole and recognise how the different components of the Organisation depend on each other? How far will they embrace strategic thinking and leadership within the SNAT?

My point is: as we elect the Leaders, let us ponder about the SNAT we want since Leadership is the Organisation. Organisation is the Leadership. With the SNAT a global player and an influencer of public discourse, we ought to take into account the quality and skills of the Leaders we shall deploy into respective Leadership Positions. The unfortunate part is the lack of the Competency Framework within the organisation as well as the absence of a Leadership Development and a clear Succession Plan.

The ball is in the Court of the electorate to decide and vote wisely. We shouldn't

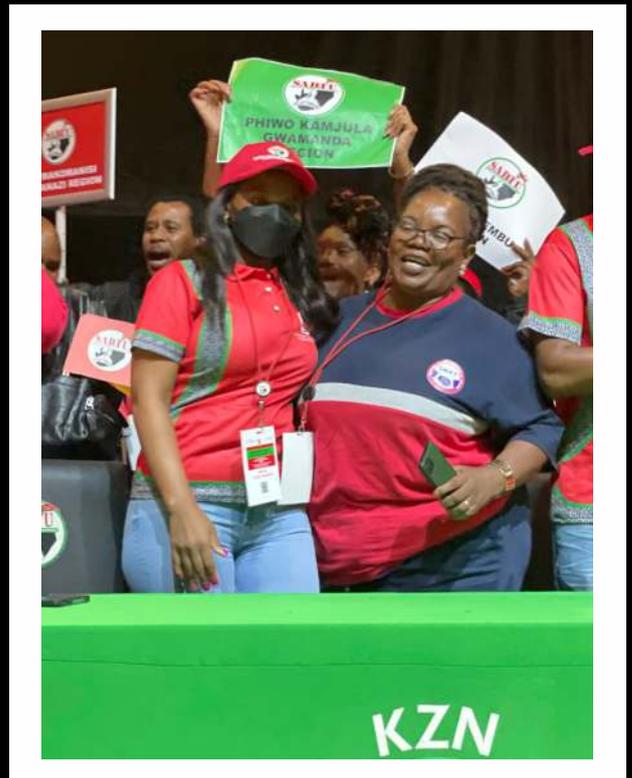


Mcolisi Motsa

The SNAT Editor



On The Lenses





On The Lenses



THE 2012 TWO-MONTHS STRIKE BY TEACHERS



SIKELELA DLAMINI

SNAT SG

The year 2012 was one of the remarkable years for the SNAT in that teachers engaged on a two (2) months long strike action known as 'Waya Waya.' The last time that teachers had a prolonged strike action was in 1997 during the leadership of Comrade Meshack Kati Masuku.

Teachers were demanding a cost of Living Adjustment (CoLA) of 18% during the 1997 strike.

In 2010, the Sibusiso Barnabas Dlamini-led Government adopted economically unfriendly policies such as the over investment in capital projects and the conversion of the then Swaziland Customs and Excise into being the Swaziland Revenue Authority (SRA). The SRA introduced new tax regimes and as a result Swazis were then being taxed to the borne. This compromised the economic status of Swazis in general and workers in particular. The economy of Swaziland took a dip during the 2010 – 2011 financial year mainly because of unprecedented levels of corruption as confirmed by the then Minister of Finance (Mr. Majozi Sithole). On another note, the failure by the Executive Arm of Government to award Cost of Living Adjustment to public servants worsened the situation in that public servants did not have adequate

cash to inject into the economy for its re-ignoration. The then Minister for Finance (Mr. Majozi Sithole) made a startling revelation when he confirmed that over E80 million was lost through corruption every month. Consequential to that during the 2011-2012 financial year, again the Government offered 0% as a salary adjustment to its workers. As if that was not enough, the Government engineered moves of effecting salary cuts, instead.

The SNAT, under the leadership of Comrade Sibongile 'Nsukuwansuku' Mazibuko, alongside other public sector unions demanded a Cost of Living Adjustment of 4.5%. Infact another section of those who drew their salaries from the public purse such as Members of Parliament agreed to take salary cuts. A meeting that was held at the SNAT Centre took a resolution to go on an indefinite strike action over the .

SWAZILAND STRIKE



Workers during a Protest March [File Pic.]



SNAT Members during a march in Mbabane [File Pic.]

4.5% cost of living adjustment.

The course of the strike was characterized by countrywide general meetings and toy toys by teachers. State security organs brutalized and injured many comrades. A group of workers had gathered at the SNAT Centre for the purposes of staging a night vigil there. When night fell, the police gate crushed into the SNAT Centre and held the few workers who were still there, hostage and some were even abducted by the police and were dumped in forests, several kilometres away from Manzini.

The Barnabas Dlamini – led administration took a drastic step to fire thousands of teachers. This caused public outcry since the general public was also in support of the strike by civil servants including teachers. The country's political leadership was therefore forced to convene the Sibaya to discuss the repercussions of the teachers' strike to the nation.

A majority of the speakers at Sibaya were in support of the teachers' strike arguing that government must give the teachers what they want so that their kids could continue with their education. Even though the government did not award civil servants, their much-deserved 4.5% but there were lessons that were learnt from that industrial action and these can be applied to contemporary times) The importance of broad base membership mobilization can never be over-emphasized and this should not be relegated to the background whenever collective interest of members are to be advanced.

c) Trade Unions in Swaziland need to have a deliberate program of massive finance mobilization to fight against the implementation of the no-work-no pay rule by the employers. The implementation of the no-work-no pay rule was the single; most caused division and fatigue amongst the workers. The only benefit that was gained through this action was that the government ended up not affecting the 10% salary cuts as she had earlier announced. The result was that upon realizing that pushing salary cuts down our throats by government had failed the members of parliament then demanded that their cut salaries be restored. This is an important historical event which can be used by leaders of today to better strategize against the employer.

b) The impactful participation of members in all unions' activities helps in fighting against victimization of union members for merely participating in industrial activities.



Sibusiso Barnabas Dlamini who made the lives of Swazis hell [File Pic.]



Sibongile Mazibuko, former SNAT President [File Pic.]

UNPACKING POSITIVE DISCIPLINE: THE POSITION OF THE SNAT



SIFISO VILAKATI

SNAT Gender and Human Rights Officer

The overarching belief as posited by scholars is that-No bad children, only good and bad behaviour.

DISCIPLINE

With positive discipline, children are not hurt physically and emotionally as a form of punishment but rather are taught skills to help them handle the difficult situations which in turn reduces the opportunities for poor behaviour.

These skills include respect for others, cooperation, communication and problem solving.

Positive discipline promotes positive decision making-communicating positive behaviour.

Positive discipline is used because children have the right to a safe school environment free from violence.

With the use of positive discipline, learners and teachers are equally protected from harm and are treated with dignity and respect.

AIMS OF POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

- To build the school environment based on positive behaviour, mutual respect and cooperation.
- To manage poor behaviour in a positive and professional manner.
- To establish well understood and logical consequences for student behaviour.

COMMON TYPES OF VIOLENCE EXPERIENCED

Within the school context;

1. Physical assault-applying physical force to a learner

2. Bullying-This can result to physical harm, emotional harassment, fear for learners' safety, creation of an environment that is counter-productive to learners.

3. Corporal punishment- (inflict pain or physical discomfort)

- Smacking, slapping, pinching, hitting with a hand or object
- Refusing a learner to go to the toilet
- Denying meals, drink, heat and shelter
- Pushing or pulling a learner into force
- Forcing a learner to do exercises
- Throwing things to a learner

4. Gender based violence directed to a person because of their gender discrimination, violence, rape and sexual harassment

5. Gangs-they intimidate and commit violent acts

6. Harassment-conduct that causes harm and it includes;

- following, watching a learner
- sending messages or letters to inflict fear
- loitering in the place where the learner lives

7. Sexual Harassment-Unwelcome sexual attention

- Intimidating a learner
- messages or remarks of a sexual nature

8. Emotional abuse

- confinement/isolation
- verbal assault, intimidation
- treating learners like servants

NATIONAL OBLIGATION BY ESWATINI GOVERNMENT

Applying Legislation

Eswatini committed through various statutory and other provisions, to ensure that corporal punishment is removed as a form of discipline in schools, and that a positive discipline approach is adopted.

The 2005 National Constitution of 2005

1. Section 29 of the constitution provides protection of children in situations where they are vulnerable.

2. The Children's Protection and Welfare Act of 2012

Section 14 (2) the act explicitly instructs the discipline of a child to be 'In accordance with age, physical, psychological, emotional' and mental conditions. Discipline is justifiable if the child is incapable of understanding the purpose of discipline.

- The illegality of corporal punishment is mentioned in the sections on diversions and prohibition of certain forms of punishment which relates to sentencing.

The Education and Training Sector Policy of 2018 is clear on these issues of corporal punishment and Positive discipline in schools [Article 1.6, page 20-21].

- a section of positive discipline is included in the policy

The policy states clearly that positive discipline must 'replace all forms of corporal punishment with non-violent discipline in all training and education establishment.'

SUMMARY

As the SNAT, we are saying zero tolerance to corporal punishment in schools. Schools must be safe places for care and support. Schools must be violence free. The union does not condone corporal punishment to learners.



THE GOVERNMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI
Ministry of Education and Training



NATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SECTOR POLICY

The Education Sector Policy [File Pic.]

THE SNAT HEADS TO THE POLLS THIS YEAR (2022)



SIKELELA DLAMINI

The SNAT Secretary General [SG]

Currently, the organization is top heavy due to the so many committees that exist in the organization. The organizational re-structuring policy could not be implemented in the current year [2022], owing to the fact that clauses 10 and 12 of the SNAT Constitution have not been deleted or replaced by new clauses which show the SNAT organogram and the names of offices and their duties, respectively.

Extra care must be taken when dealing with constitutional issues because the Constitution of the SNAT is a living document and therefore it clearly highlights how amendments on same can either be proposed and effected. Consequently, this year's (2022) elections are conducted as per the procedure that is laid out on Article 23.0 of the Constitution. Since the SNAT conferences also take policy decisions and makes resolutions, there is still a

advent of the Covid-19 pandemic which ravaged developing and developed societies alike could not spare unions such as the SNAT. The SNAT lost many comrades due to such an invisible enemy—may their Souls rest in peace. Covid-19 impeded trade union progress in that the SNAT could not hold membership based activities such as mass meetings and petition deliveries due to the World Health Organization's [WHO] Covid-19 Regulations.

This clearly means that some committees and offices which served during this time might have recorded below average success stories. Now that global citizens have reached stability regarding the pandemic, greater strides need to be taken by those in Leadership towards the attainment of organizational goals for the satisfaction of our members. Those comrades whose mandate will

be re-freshed (re-elected) or has already been refreshed by the membership, need to prove their salt during the 2022-2026 term of office.

The events that manifested themselves in June and July 2021 in the political landscape of this country dictated to us as the SNAT regarding the character of the leadership that we are to vote into office

during the 2022

elections, at all levels of the organisation. The political climate in this country is worsening by the day with trade union rights being trampled upon by the political leadership which has somehow lost legitimacy. As the SNAT, we have no doubt that the 2022-2026 te the fight towards the attainment of a constitutional multiparty democracy in our life- time. Even though indications reveal that things are going to be worse before they get any better, but as a people we have

This year (2022) the SNAT is having elective conferences from Branch to the National Level. The current leadership of the SNAT was elected in 2018 and it assumed Office October 02, the same year. According to our

Constitution, elections begin at Branch level and proceeds to Regional level and ends at the National level. The year 2022 marks the second elections Term of Office since the SNAT adopted the resolution which directs that elections at all levels should be held on the same day in all branches i.e. Branches elect a new leadership and also nominate leaders who are to serve at national level.

In 2017, during its first ever Policy Conference, the SNAT adopted a policy which sought to restructure the organization. This policy was further adopted by the 2018 conference of delegates, the supreme decision making body for the organization. This policy seeks to reduce the number of committees and the number of officers who serve in such committees.



window opened, through which this anomaly will be addressed. The 2026 SNAT elections shall be held as per the dictates of the said policy, so long as the 2022 conference of delegates shall take the necessary Resolution.

As the 2018 – 2022 term of office is nearing the end, one wishes to take this opportunity to thank all leaders who availed themselves and committed to serve the SNAT in such a time which quickly turned out to be the most difficult one during our time. The



The First Branch Conference for the SNAT began at Mhlume Branch February 7, 2022 [File Pic.]

only one option available, to forge ahead, until democracy is achieved.

The first phase of the elections and nomination process that involves branches has been successfully completed and the last Branch Conference was held on Friday (11-03-2022). The theme for this year's conferences is "TEACHERS AT THE HEART OF EDUCATION RECOVERY." Even though this was a 2021 World Teachers Day theme that was crafted by UNESCO in light of the prevailing Covid-19 challenge, it remains relevant to the SNAT since it also applies to the current political situation that has also adversely affected education in Swaziland. The

engagements were indeed so deep and informative.

The next round of Conferences were Regional Conferences and they were held during the month of June as per the schedule that was circulated to the SNAT Membership.

On a parting shot, it can be stated that although it is generally accepted that elections are contentious by their nature, it is our ardent belief that the 2022 elections will, in the main be free and fair. Those who have already won at Branch level and those who will eventually win at national level deserve our indisputable support for the rest of

the four (4) year period. As one of the critical principles of democracies, periodical elections are a moment whereby those involved, directly or indirectly, get a chance to exercise this important cornerstone of democracy. We so hope that through this process, the SNAT shall grow from strength to strength.

National Conference shall be at Esibayeni Lodge beginning 28 to 30 September 2022. National Conference shall decide on the elections of National Executive Committee [NEC], National Committees and the Board of Trustees [BoT].

TRADE UNION BASHING [BUSTING]: THE STATE PERSECUTION OF THE SNAT PRESIDENT MBONGWA DLAMINI



MCOLISI MOTSA

SNAT Editor

On Monday, 15 August 2022, members of the SNAT, the progressive camp, sister Unions and sympathisers of the SNAT President, Mbongwa Dlamini, flooded Mbabane to defend the President from the vexatious persecution he was receiving from state institutions: MoET and the Police.

It is an open secret that on the 10th August 2022, the President received a Letter from the MoET Under Secretary, Lungelo Nhlengetfwa, calling him to show cause why he should not be charged for putting the sector into disrepute and contempt and hatred to the Swaziland government. The two-page Letter was dated 09 August 2022 and signed by the US Schools himself. The Schools Manager requested the SNAT President to respond by August 15, 2022. It is on that premise that members of the SNAT and other progressive-minded individuals, resolved to accompany the SNAT President when submitting his response to the US Schools. As if that was not enough, the National Commissioner for the Royal Eswatini Police Service [REPS] Tsintsibala Dlamini, summoned the President to the Headquarters to respond to certain questions from him, same day. The Police NatComm. had called the SNAT President earlier that week, informing him that he needed him to come to the Headquarters to respond

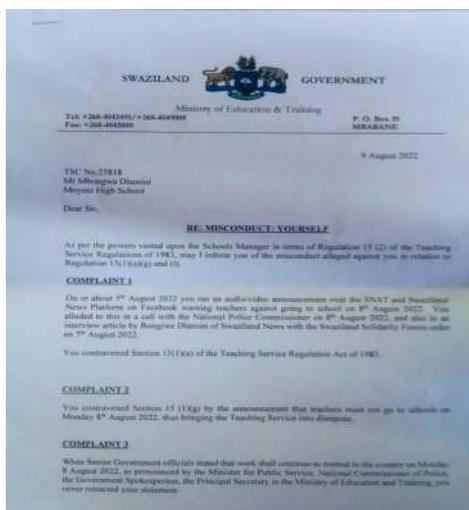
“All appropriate measures should be taken to guarantee that, irrespective of trade union affiliation, trade union rights can be exercised in normal conditions with respect for basic human rights and in a climate free of violence, pressure, fear and threats of any kind.”- ILO on Trade Union Rights and Civil Liberties

to some questions he had for the President on his remarks to one of the online Platforms regarding a certain 'Commander.'

Such a summon did not sit well with a number of stakeholders who offered solidarity to the SNAT President-viewing the conduct of the Police and MoET as persecution of the President. It must be stated that the SNAT President was being victimised for pronouncing a SNAT National Executive Committee [NEC] Resolution regarding the safety of teachers in schools on the 7th August 2022. Worth noting is that there was a sound clip threatening Teachers and Learners not to dare attend school on these particular days.

The threat was taken seriously by the SNAT NEC thus warning teachers to stay at home, citing the Occupational Health and Safety Act of 2002, Section 18 (2). The Act provides that an employee shall have the Right to remove himself or herself when such an employee has reasonable justification to believe that there is imminent and serious risk to the safety and health of that employee. On the 8th August 2022, teachers were advised by the SNAT NEC to invoke this Section in lieu of the Order from the 'Commander.'

Hell broke loose in Mbabane when Officers from the Operation Support Service Unit [OSSU] fired rubber bullets and tear gas to our un-armed members and sympathisers of the SNAT President. Such ferocious behaviour continues to be exhibited by the Royal Eswatini Police with no penitence. Many would recall how the OSSU terrorised our members at Nkoyoyo, October 20, 2021; throwing tear gas inside a bus and firing live rounds of ammunition at those who were running helter-skelter for their dear lives. The same played out on Monday [15-08-2022] with one Commander of the OSSU, Delisa Mavuso, baying for the blood of the comrades who were approaching the Police Headquarters. Such was heinous conduct from the Royal Cops with no provocation from the peaceful protesters. It is no hush-hush that the SNAT President has been a victim of trade union busting by



Part of the Misconduct Letter written to the SNAT President by US Schools, Lungelo Nhlengetfwa [File Pic.]



The Commanding Officer from the OSSU, Delisa Mavuso in a heated argument with the SNAT SG, Sikelela Dlamini on Monday [15-08-2022].

the Government of Swaziland. In 2019, he was charged by the Teaching Service Commission [TSC], with trumped-up charges laid on him. He was alleged to have failed to do Official Books, including conducting formative assessments on Learners. All the insane charges subsequently led to him being forced to transfer from Mhubhe High to Moyeni High School. The point of reference when charged was him discharging union activities on numerous occasions. The 2019 torment of the President proved to all and sundry that the SNAT was under massive attack from the Central Government.

The Commissioner of Labour, Mthunzi Shabangu, was mute on the issue even though steps to Report it and request his intervention were followed to the latter. The fact that Shabangu's hands were tied on the matter speak volumes of the

gravity of the onslaught on the SNAT President. Those in the echelons of power have again assembled their ammunition, directed at the SNAT President for executing his union duties by advising members to prioritize safety. It is trite for the SNAT to defend and protect her membership from any threat to their lives. That's a basic fact. Any member who joins a Union does so with the understanding that the Union will speak on his behalf and protect him from harm.

Perhaps it is fundamental that we disclose that the SNAT SG, Sikelela Dlamini, wrote to the Ministry of Education and Training [MoET] on the 3rd August 2022 on threats making rounds in social media, directed to teachers notwithstanding the lacklustre response from the MoET, on same. It must be put on record that there was no way the SNAT would have taken those threats for granted. The 'Commander' was not pooling wool in the eyes of our members. Nyakatfo High School

Principal, Mlungisi Kunene, has a tale to tell regards the gravity of the Command from the 'Commander.'

Those online would share identical sentiments with me that it is normal for the SNAT President to be interviewed by the online Platforms. For the President to respond to complaints on pronouncements he made in these Platforms, leave a lot to be desired. What drives most of analysts up the wall is the summon by the Commissioner of the Police Tsintsibala Dlamini.

Analysts hold the view that the Commissioner was led astray in summoning the President of the SNAT. The act undermines freedom of association. The summon is a direct attack to the International Labour Organisation [ILO] Convention 87. It is on that premise that the SNAT President was accompanied by his Lawyer, Lucky Howe, in that Tsintsibala circus of a meeting.

What happened in that meeting is history as there was no way the President could have seen the National Commissioner of the Police without his Executive or the Lawyer mainly because the National Commissioner had his entire Executive in the Meeting. The Rules of Natural Justice do not allow a tilted approach in resolving conflicts/disputes.

The ILO Technical Committee will be here on the 23rd August 2022 to discuss the same issue of the SNAT President, as reported by the TUCOSWA-a clear case of union busting by the central government. This anti-SNAT posture by the Government dates way back in 1977 when the SNAT was banned with some clowns asserting that the SNAT is now a political party instead of being a Union. We can only warn the Government on this posture.



The SNAT President Mbongwa Dlamini speaking to his Lawyer, Lucky Howe at the Police Headquarters on Monday [15-08-2022].



The SNAT President Mbongwa Dlamini doing the trademark 'Amandla' as he enters the MoET Offices on Monday (15-08-2022) with the TUCOSWA SG Mduduzi Gina [SNAT Media]

Sponsoring the formation of the Eswatini Principals Association [EPA] and demanding that other Members of Parliament resign from the organisation will not compromise the progressive colour and posture of the SNAT on issues of public policy and administration. The Union is yet to be stronger than it was before. The 1992 entity is a formidable force that has stood the test of time.

My memory is fresh that around June this year, the ITUC released a 2022 Global Rights Index where Eswatini was added as a New Member in the list of ten [10] Worst Countries for Working People in the World. The Kingdom was listed amongst the likes of Egypt, Belarus, Brazil, Bangladesh etc with freedom of

speech and assembly heavily curtailed. The country continues to have an increased attack on workers, violating ILO Convention 87 on freedom on freedom of association and assembly and recently, Convention 98 on Collective Bargaining. This long tradition of trade union repression will surely lead to the placement of the country in the Special Paragraph at the ILO as it happened in the early 2000s. I recall that the persecution of trade unions ultimately led to the abrogation of trade rights with the US under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) in January 2015, forcing a number of workers to be retrenched in the textile industry. With the ILO Team expected August 23, 2022, the chickens will surely come home to roost.

The best advice to give to the Powers-that-be is to allow Union Activity to thrive in the country with the defined freedoms and safeguard industrial harmony in accordance with the enabling legislations. Tsintsibala should leave the SNAT President alone and focus on National Security. He may need to also focus on intervention strategies on the thorny issue of police brutality meted out to workers in the country instead of straying to uncharted territories.

The 10 worst countries for working people

- | | |
|------------|-----------------|
| Bangladesh | NEW – Eswatini |
| Belarus | NEW – Guatemala |
| Brazil | Myanmar |
| Colombia | The Philippines |
| Egypt | Turkey |

“I DISCHARGED MY DUTIES TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITIES”- OUT-GOING SNAT SG

When the SNAT Media requested him, the outgoing SNAT SG, Sikelela Dlamini, availed himself without a blink. He shares with us deep issues in line with his tenure as the SNAT SG [2018-2022]. This is his last interview with the SNAT Media as the SNAT SG.

S *SNAT Media [SM]: Good day SNAT SG.*

SNAT SG [SSG]: A very good day indeed my leader.

SM: Thank you for taking your time to be with us. Kindly remind us: where does Sikelela Dlamini come from, your place of birth?

SSG: I come from Mashobeni South, a rural area in the outskirts (North Westwards) of the fast growing Nhlanguano Town when I grew up with my four [4] sisters.

SM: Oh yeah! Now, tell us about the work of being a SG. How did you feel on being elected to this Office?

SSG: Being elected into this Office was indeed humbling to me. It was, in my view, a huge task whose overarching responsibility was to selflessly serve not only the SNAT Members but also the rest of the trade union movement both inside and outside Swaziland. It was an opportunity that shouldered upon me to serve humanity in my life time.

SM: Hmm...now, we would like to get inside that Office of the SG. What does the SNAT SG do on a daily basis? What does being the SNAT SG entail?

SSG: The SNAT SG is responsible for Administration work since the Office manages operations of our Union. The Officer also links up all the intricate parts of the organisation to ensure that they work as a unit and also functions as a link between the organisation and its publics (national and international). This then directly connects to the furtherance of interests of the members at their personal and work-related levels. Being a SNAT SG is indeed a challenging task.

It is a responsibility one cannot just take up when he or she is ill-prepared. It requires unmatched agility and open mindedness. By its very nature, the duties Hoover between being political and technical and therefore the occupant of such an Office must exemplify versatility at all times. Unless that operational strategy is embraced, the organisation's operational systems can cease to operate thereby rendering the whole organisation dysfunctional. The SG is one who needs to know that the organisation is one that is walking on two [2] legs (collective interests of workers in their various forms and the professional aspect).

SM: Well, we've seen you around on many occasions. Looking back since 2018 when you were elected, what challenges can you identify from the angle of the SNAT SG? How did you override those challenges?

SSG: The main challenge is lack of capacity to carry out all the tasks concurrently as expected, either due to shortage of fulltime elected officers or due to lack of adequate training in dealing with specific issues. Our members are not clear on the role of Unions such that at times they end up demanding things that are outside the operational domain of unions. Unions are generally progressive organisations in both approach and outlook and this has made it increasingly difficult to perfectly deliver on my mandate because of the hostile socio-economic and political environment in which the organisation and its Officers work. I have been

sharpening my academic and interpersonal skills so as to improve on my work but to achieve this, is normally a mammoth task because it demands a lot of sacrifice. I have also spearheaded the creation of new linkages with other organisations both inside and outside Swaziland to build both national and international solidarity which went a long way in mitigating those challenges which were posed by the autocratic governance system. This has helped in overriding some of these challenges and to mitigate others.

SM : Looking into the



SIKELELA DLAMINI

SNAT SG



The out-going SNAT SG Sikelela Dlamini in his office at the SNAT Centre (SNAT Media.)

SNAT as a whole, what can you say needs to be strengthened in the organisation for it to be more effective?

SSG: We need to invest immensely in leadership development in the form of training. The development of a leadership development and retention policy is fundamental. We must engage in deliberate efforts to build institutional memory in our ranks. We need to also create specialised cadres to carry out certain tasks such as Researchers and Think Tanks. The formation of the SNAT paralegal cadre was a step in the right direction. Such initiatives must be strengthened.

SM: Wow! During your term of Office as the SNAT SG, we saw the organisation establishing a number of International Partnerships such as OAJ/SADTU/OSISA/EI. What ignited this idea of international partnerships? How do you feel about the role played by these partnerships to the SNAT as a whole?

SSG: The money that we collect from members in the form of subscriptions is inadequate in carrying out all the core roles of the union such as the education or capacity building of members. The only available option was to then approach these partners for possible funding and they did come through [OAJ/EI/OSISA] and we were able to deliver to the membership.

SM: We saw the SNAT having a Strategic Plan. In your view as the SG, how far did the organisation achieve the set objectives there [SP]? If there were issues, what were the challenges in implementing the strategies therein?

SSG: The SNAT NEC has been able to adequately deliver on six (6) out of the 11 objectives that are highlighted in the strategic plan. This moderate success rate was due to the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic that locked down the whole world by more than two (2) years, since March 2020 to May 2022. A majority of the other objectives are based on campaigns. The six [6]

objectives; however, adequately cover two [2] of the three (3) programme areas that are laid down in the strategic plan and these are, Capacity Building and strengthening Financial Governance.

SM: Hmm... as the main engine of the organisation, we know that you can pinpoint specific achievements that you have ensured gets through in the organisation. What would be those achievements you can say the 2018-2022 collective was able to achieve and why?

SSG: The SNAT NEC Collective, delivered on establishing development co-operations with other organisations from outside Swaziland, paved the SNAT Headquarters, Erected car ports, Built a security wall to protect our multimillion property in the face of the political instability, upgraded the Ngwane Park Residential houses, Drastically reduced SNAT debts from above 7 million to slightly above a million, conducted countrywide and across sectors capacity building workshops for members, amongst others.

SM: We once saw a SNAT Foundation with the objective of helping the needy in the country. What happened to that Foundation? Where is it now?

SSG: That entity was discontinued after there were complaints from our membership to the effect that the NEC had not been mandated to establish such. Consequently, our social responsibility pillar has never functioned during the period under review. Once members are convinced that the SNAT, as a human rights organisation, is duty bound to lend a helping hand to struggling members of society, they will re-open this entity.

SM: Organisational Diagnostic Report. If a member would come to you and request for the SNAT Diagnostic Report, would you avail it?

SSG: The office of the SG works for the members and on behalf of the members. As such a diagnostic report can be availed to members at any time if they need to see such.

SM: The SNAT, we understand, has numerous Resolutions that have not been implemented, since. What could be your opinion with regard issue of Resolutions Implementation within the SNAT and the overall process of Resolutions within the organisation?

SSG: Many of our Resolutions passed by the SNAT are un-implementable and they date back from 2006. The period under review (2018 – 2022) was marred by the Covid-19 pandemic which militated against delivery of many programmes such as Resolutions implementation. Those Resolutions that are directed to the Government could not be implemented because of the attitude that our government has against the trade union movement and the SNAT in particular. There is total lack of co-operation from the country's political leadership on trade union issues. However, as the SNAT, we have a duty to rethink our strategy and intention of Resolutions formation. Some of our Resolutions are made through emotions and therefore become counter progressive at times and in the process set our organisation out of step with the rest of the progressive movement.

SM: *Well, we have noted that you are now out of the secondment process. We would like to know about what you think about the entire secondment process. Do you think the period provided in the General Orders is reasonable or needs to be done according to the needs of that particular organisation?*

SSG: The current three (3) year duration of the secondment is inconsistent with the SNAT Constitution which has a four (4) year term of office. Therefore, this period is unreasonable in that it makes the SG to pull hard in trying to strike a dynamic balance between his professional and trade union responsibilities. This period must be negotiated according to the needs of that particular organisation. This is very possible since General Orders are not an Act of Parliament but a kind of establishment circular that regulates employer-employee relations within the civil service.

SM: *I'll ask this one for convenience sake. You are now at TUCOSWA and back to the classroom, teaching. How do you juggle around being at work, SNAT and TUCOSWA?*

SSG: Whilst doing my Advanced Diploma in Project Management, I was trained to chart every organisation I am involved with to be able to generate schedules for each tasks. This is the only way of monitoring workflow to attain the expected deliverables. Those skills have been embraced in this

case but truth be told, it is not an easy thing to accomplish.

SM: *As you are leaving this October 2022, how do you feel about that? Do you leave the organisation in a better or worse position than it was 2018?*

SSG: One feels greatly honoured and exceedingly humbled to have been given a chance to make a small contribution to the Trade Union movement in the manner that I have done. When I leave office, will do so with my head high, knowing that I have done everything I could to discharge my duties and responsibilities to the SNAT collective to the best of my ability. I will, for the first time in eight (8) years, experience being led by other equally capable leaders as I re-join the rank and file of our glorious organisation. The question with regards to whether I leave this organisation in a better or worse position than in 2018, is a difficult one and therefore cannot be answered by myself. The right people to make an appropriate analysis are my principals, the members of the SNAT who were the ones who gave me a mandate to lead them in this position, four [4] years ago. But I do believe that I have done my job to the SNAT and to the broader Trade Union Movement and I have no doubt that the experiences I got as I was leading are indeed invaluable.

SM: *Hmmm...yes National Conference begins September 28, and delegates will elect your successor. What advice (s) would you give to the one you will hand over the baton?*

SSG: For him to succeed in such a challenging position, he has to make humility and respect to be his guiding principles throughout his term in Office. Those two [2] attributes coupled with versatility, agility and the desire to learn will make him conquer. Many more pieces of advice shall be given to him in details during our handover sessions.

SM: I am sorry that I have to ask you this one my leader. Yes, you are leaving the organisation; where to from here? We know you are at TUCOSWA but what else will the SG be doing post SNAT?

SSG: I shall be refocussing on furthering my academic and professional interests. When I became the SNAT DSG in 2014, I had to leave academia since I was violently snatched from same by Trade Unionism. I still remember those comrades who

strongly advised me to join the race at that time, completely swaying my focus into top trade union leadership. As a disciplined member of the SNAT, I shall, however, continue to make a significant contribution to teachers lives using my experience in these issues. The SNAT has invested immensely in me and therefore I have to give back to this organisation and its members. I shall never disappear from the picket lines and will never disconnect myself from the day-to-day struggles of our people. I therefore pledge my availability to the upcoming leadership in case of need.

SM: *Well, we take this time to wish you well SG in other future engagements. We thank you for working well with us as the SNAT Media; your availability, your work ethic, your commitment etc. We thank you so much Leadership.*

SSG: Thank you so much for this opportunity. Special thanks goes to the SNAT Media for contributing in building my capacity and experience in myriad ways.



The SNAT SG Sikelela Dlamini offering fraternal greetings at the SADTU Conference earlier this year (SNAT Media).

'Leadership is not about a title or a designation. It's about impact, influence and inspiration. Impact involves getting results, influence is about spreading the passion you have for your work, and you have to inspire team-mates.'
Robin S. Sharma

THE BRAINS BEHIND THE 'HELP THE GIRL CHILD' CAMPAIGN: 'DR. SHAKES'

The SNAT Editor took his time to engage with Bonginkosi Dlamini aka Dr. Shakes. Dr. Shakes is a comedian, entrepreneur, philanthropist etc who has entered the Arts Industry with a storm. The SNAT Media engaged him on his career and a plethora of initiatives he has done in the country.

SNAT Media [SM]: Good day Dr. Shakes. We take this time to welcome you to our platform: the SNAT Media.

Bonginkosi Dlamini [BD]: Thank you so much for the opportunity and also the work done by SNAT and SNAT media does not go unseen.

SM: We are excited to have you here my Leader. Tell us: who is Bonginkosi Dlamini and where do you come from?

BD: This is a tricky question. One moment you'd think you know yourself then boom such a question and you go blank but Bonginkosi is a young vibrant Swazi young man even though some may have mistaken me for a South African. Most people don't know this and they'll be hearing it first here. I come from the Shiselweni Region the dusty village of Mhlosheni Emabhudlweni but in search of greener pastures, I am based at the capital city.

SM: Hmm...that's refreshing. Now, we'd like to know where you got the nickname 'Dr. Shakes.'

BD: Good question. There's really no Rocket scientist behind the name. First, when I came to the comedy industry in 2013, I had no stage name and I read a quote saying laughter is the best medicine. Then that's how I came with the Dr. It's not something I worked hard for like other real Dr's. The Shakes I don't really remember but I can make something up. Laughter is the best medicine and before you take your medication you shake it right.... Eyiii...I really can't remember where I got the Shakes from in all interviews I give different versions. [laughs]

SM: Wow! That's beautiful to hear Nkhosi. We've seen you around as an established comedian. When did you realise that you've comedic talent?

BD: I'd say I never discovered it myself but it was discovered by my fellow class mates back in high school. I used to be joker in class and well this is where that got me today. It was discovered in 2013 that comedy in Swaziland wasn't a big thing. Back then there were only a few comedians. I performed in Churches and night clubs; also took wedding bookings. Then in 2015 there was a comedy talent search themed "LOL" that was a stepping stone for me. In that search, I made it to the top 5 and I never looked back.

SM: Dr. Shakes, we understand that you use a number of platforms to market your productions: Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Tik Tok etc. Which platform works best for you and why?

BD: All the platforms are working best for me since I've understood how social media works. There's content that can go on Facebook but not on Twitter vies versa. I'd say Twitter has really helped my brand to grow not only in the country but also internationally. People in SA, Botswana, Lesotho and Mozambique book me based on what they see on my Twitter account. Then with Facebook, I still feel like it's a local thing but I'm trying to work on it too.

SM: Tell us about your first performance as a professional comedian and how did you feel about yourself thereafter?

BD: My first performance as a professional comedian was at Happy Valley and I remember very well the organizers called to book me. That was a first step. I didn't go out to look for the gig. I had no transport and they sent a car to fetch me before the show and drop me after show. I felt like a super star because before that, I'd hike to shows and hike from shows. They even paid me E500 which I used to buy a white shirt and a formal trouser that's how I used to wear back then. After that performance and I felt like a professional. I felt like I can do living.



BONGINKOSI DLAMINI

Comedian & 'Help the Girl Child' Campaign Founder

DR. SHAKES

SM: *Hmm...What have been your achievements thus far since you started in this field and what can you say regarding the support you get from emaSwati?*

BD: The biggest achievement for me is hearing some say I've made their day. I don't want to lie, it makes me look like nothing but to me it means a lot and also being able to purchase a few assets and also winning awards. I'd really like to appreciate emaswati for their support not only towards me but also towards the industry. As the years go the support from our people is increasing. They no longer want complimentary tickets for shows they now understand that this is how we make a living.

SM: *Hmm...we understand that you can't work alone in this arts industry. May you list for us people [artists] you have worked with in the field and why them in particular?*

BD: I've worked with a lot. When I started in 2013, I worked with Dj. Cash and Dj. Sparks to help me grow and also help me with night gigs. Then I worked with Larry Mhlanga an Artist Manager who has played a huge role in the shaping of the brand 'Dr. Shakes.' I also worked with the hardest working Dj. Karly B who believed in me when I wanted to do my first one-man comedy show themed 'Shots Fired.' I can name a lot and forget some hey.

SM: *Wow! I know that even internationally there are achieved*

individuals in this field that you look up to. Who inspires you Nkhosi in this field?

BD: Internationally, I look up to Dave Chapel. That's one of the smartest comedians I'd like to believe and he always delivers nothing but the best sets.

SM: *Now tell us more about your 'Help the Girl Child' Campaign on the Sanitary Towels. Where did this campaign come from and where do you want to see it sustained as the brains behind? Whom are you working with too?*

BD: This is a campaign that is close to my heart at the moment. It started 12 January 2022 on my birthday. I went on social media and asked my friends to send me money for my birthday not only birthday wishes. Some of my friends sent not knowing what I wanted to use that money for but I decided to go and buy sanitary towels as a gesture to share my birthday with the less privileged. The main aim is to see a girl child NOT missing out at school because of the lack of sanitary towels as this is not a choice. I'd like to see this campaign going big to an extent that we get to have free sanitary towels at school offices or school toilets. I'm working with all the companies and individuals that have contributed towards this initiative also with the help of Times of Eswatini, to do deliveries nationwide.

SM: *What can you say about the support the campaign has received and who are the key sponsors that have supported the initiative?*

BD: I'm really happy with the support and it is overwhelming to see so many sponsors and companies coming on board every day. We are still open for more donations as we know that even now there's a girl child who is bleeding and has no sanitary towels to keep herself clean. I wouldn't say they are key sponsors for the project but we are truly appreciative to all Companies and individuals that have contributed towards the project.

SM: *We've also seen you around Nkhosi engaged in other business ventures. Kindly narrate to us who you keep things going and how do you sustain your talent as a comedian?*

BD: On the side also when COVID-19 started and we went to lock down and there were no gigs, I started a tree felling and grass cutting business. That has kept me going thus far. Balancing the two [2] is not easy but having a team to work with makes everything simple. I now have my business "grass-cutting" days and comedy days but it works well because most comedy bookings are on weekends and also in the evenings.

SM: *We can't thank you enough Nkhosi for your role in the society. We wish you all the best in other initiatives you think of as well as growing your talent as a comedian.*

BD: Thank you so much once again for the opportunity.



Dr. Shakes taking a photo with one of the Schools where he donated the sanitary towels (Courtesy Pic.)



Bundle of Jokes Poster with Dr shakes(Courtesy Pic.)

TAKING THE GOSPEL MUSIC INDUSTRY BY STORM: SPHIWO NDONI

This edition, the SNAT Media took time to engage one of the crowd pullers in the gospel industry, the one and only, Sphiwo Ndoni. As an established and global artist, the SNAT Editor, Mcolisi Motsa, wanted to know more about him as a musician and globetrotter.



SNAT MEDIA [SM] :
Good day Mr. Ndlangamandla. Thank you for being with us as the SNAT Media.

SPHIWO NDONI [SN] :
 Thank you Sir for inviting me here, I really appreciate you. Greetings.

SM: Now, Mr. Ndoni, as you are affectionately known, tell us a bit: who is Sphiwo Ndlangamandla?

SN : Sphiwo Ndlangamandla is a born again Christian, born and raised at my grandma's place in the Lubombo region, Mamisa area under Sthobela inkhundla but my home is in Hluthi in the Shiselweni Region. A Public Relations Practitioner by profession and a Gospel Artist by Talent, and a husband.

SM: Hmm...that's great! Give us a hint: when did you realise you have a talent for singing?

SN : I was a teenager when I realised that.

SM :
Wow! We've seen you around Mr. Ndoni: take us through the journey of yourself being an established artist? What was your

debut performance and how did you feel about yourself on the day?

SN: My debut performance was in 2004 at a wedding in Mbabane and yoh I was so afraid before I was called to the stage to sing, but when the time finally came, I was so shocked. The people loved my singing such that they all got on their feet and started dancing, making a joyful noise and some were dropping money on me. After that, I actually felt good and gained some confidence.

SM: Hmm...give us a lowdown on people you've worked with and tell us how much value they added to your career?

SN: I have worked with Israel Mosehla, Andile KaMajola, Nduduzo Matse just to name a few. Working with them helped me to get to know more about music industry. They gave me confidence in this and grew in understanding the importance of a song and stage presence.

SM: We understand that you do have a spiritual father. Give us a glimpse on who is your Spiritual Father and the role he plays in your life and career? Where do you drink, spiritually?

SN: My father in Christ is Apostle Mholi Shlongonyane at Kingdom Ambassadors Worship Tabernacle. He's helped me a lot in my relationship with God and the Church at large. He taught me how prayer is important as a child of God and as a minister. Found myself growing in knowing Christ and I became a better person than I was before; my life had a paradigm shift.

SM: Now, the most popular song "Tive Temhlaba." What a rendition! We congratulate you on this! What was in your mind when you

SPHIWO 'NDONI' NDLANGAMANDLA

The Psalmist

SPHIWO NDONI



Sphiwo Ndoni with his wife Temvuselelo Matsebula (File Pic.)

composed this song and what do you think about its popularity?

SN: This song came when I was at a very lowest point of my life, nothing seemed to be working for me. At that time, I had no job: nothing. The Spirit of God spoke to me and told me to stop getting frustrated about how down I feel or how messy my life is. I started seeing how we get consumed by the things of these world and lose the real purpose of our living. He said to me the only way for men to get up from situations they have put themselves in is by lifting Him (God) and I was reminded of the verse that says If I be lifted up, I will draw all men near me. Immediately after that, I found myself sing the 'Phakama Nkhosi Tive Temhlaba Tikubone.' There was this trending statement back then that used to say (Sukuma Mkami Bakubone). In my heart, it was inspired that We shall lift



Mr. Ndoni flanked by reputable artists including Nduduzo Matse [Courtesy Pic.]

Him up so that the Nations of the world may see Him. The way the song has gone viral is really humbling and I really am convinced that there is God in this song. I really thank God for it.

SM: We also saw you beginning a Tive Temhlaba Challenge. What inspired this noble idea? And how do you feel about the response from your followers [me too]?

SN: Tive Temhlaba Challenge... he he he...this has been really amazing. Actually, a former Lecturer of mine by the name 'Thandwayinkhosi Dlamini' called me in January and suggested that we do a challenge of this song since it's a great song... my wife started the challenge and many people joined in and did it on Tiktok and the response amazed us. We really thank our wonderful supporters for all the love they have for us we pray that God may continue blessing them all.

SM: Tell us too about the people who have assisted you thus far in your career as a Musician, particularly Nduduzo Matse. Your wife too...

SN: People Like Nduduzo have helped me so much in my musical journey. He

would call sometimes just to tell me that he loves the heart I have for God and for that I will go far. That alone gave me so much faith and confidence in my Work. I really appreciate Nduduzo for the love. My wife Temvuselelo has been wind beneath my wings. I mean she's beengiving me all the support I need on this journey and I appreciate her so very much.

SM: What can you say about the support you're getting from the people out there: locally and internationally?

SN: I would love thank them all for the humbling support they are giving me. I'm really grateful and praying that God may bless all of them. It is through their support that we find ourselves growing in this work. So I can promise them more goodies in the near future. More beautiful music is yet to come.

SM: What are your future plans in terms of new music/album and other ventures you might wish to engage on? Any collaboration or featuring in other Artists Albums?

SN: Oh yes! There's a lot to come by the enabling grace of God. New songs are coming in the next few months and a new album will be recorded this year. And yes more features are coming, people like Takie Ndou, Scelo Moya and many more I will definitely feature in my music in the near future.

SM: As the SNAT Media, we wish you all the best in your music career and hoping to see you in Europe, the US, Canada, Brazil etc. We wish you grace in your path as a musician. God bless you!!!

SN: Thank you so much Sir. I really appreciate SNAT Media for having me here. Blessings.



Mr. Ndoni with his friend from South Africa, Takie Ndou, during Ndoni's Zion Experience Concert at the Lobamba Christian Revival Centre. Ndou is a gospel powerhouse in SA. [Courtesy Picture]



Tive Temhlaba available at Soundcloud [Courtesy Pic.]

THOBILE SIMELANE-LEAVING AN INDELIBLE MARK TO THE YOUTH AT NKWENE

The SNAT Media took time to engage a gem, a philanthropist, educator and humanitarian at Nkwene Area, Thobile Simelane. Thobile is a young person with a massive vision to take the country by a storm, focusing on young people. The SNAT Media Reports...

SNAT Media [SM]: Good day Thobile. How are you doing?

Thobile Simelane [TS]: Good day. I'm doing good, thank you.

SM: We're good too as the SNAT Media. Well, we're excited to have you here Mnguni. Kindly tell us: who is Thobile Simelane?

TS: I'm humbled to be here. Thank you very much for having me. Thobile Simelane, is just a young woman from Nkwene, a final year student at the IDM, the founder and chairperson of Nkwene Youth Charity Organization, and Mbabane Crime Prevention Club, a Youth Leader in my community, a peer educator trained by Eswatini National Youth Council and Khulisa Umntfwana, but most people know me as a farmer.

SM: We've heard a number of great news, even saw your Twitter post on the 20th of July 2022, on the magnificent work you're doing at Nkwene Area. Tell us more about your community activities at Nkwene and why Nkwene.

TS: Firstly, I successfully initiated a charity organization (Nkwene Youth Charity Organization) which has a great reputation at the Nkwene Community and surrounding areas. I also lead Nkwene Wings of Change, a Youth farmer's cooperative that got a huge sponsorship from AFAO, then the great philanthropy, my favourite, which aims to curb the rate of teenage pregnancy in the community by resuscitating the essence of a girl who contribute economically, intellectually, and emotionally in our communities through developing, mentoring and educating the girls, especially on the issues of Sexual Reproductive Health, Gender Based Violence, HIV, Teenage

Pregnancy, Career guidance and Entrepreneurship. I took the initiative of gathering and educating the girls between the ages of 10-19, of the Nkwene Community, and keep the sessions interesting by having activities which include Ingandla, dance and choral, at the end. It started as a gender-specific programme but then the boys approached me and complained about being left out. I had to add a boys' session. Their parents' cooperation (giving sweets and snacks to be shared amongst children during sessions) motivated me to do more, which got me the idea of having Miss/Mr Teen Nkwene. That innovation inspired the young people because everyone wanted to take the crown home and knowing that they will showcase their skills from the activities in front of their parents. Miss/Mr Teen Nkwene is not a beauty pageant but a brains battle. It's about sharing what one has achieved throughout our sessions and what they think should be done moving forward. As to why Nkwene, it's because Nkwene is home and learned friends normally say "charity begins at home." I think it's my duty to build the community I want to live in.

SM: Wow!! That's awesome and some humane of you. How did all this start? Who inspired you? What prompted you to step in the way you did with the girls?

TS: Thank you very much. I was infuriated by an article in the Eswatini Times dated September 2020 which said "30 Teens Fall Pregnant at Nkwene." I'm very passionate about the girl child and my Community. The article really got to

me. I realized that something needs to be done, because transforming the lives of poor and marginalized girls doesn't happen by chance but requires thoughtful investment in a holistic programme of support. As someone who truly believes in girls and believe they have fierce, unlimited potential, power and valuable place in the world, I decided to be the change I want to see. I was honestly inspired by my passion for the girl child.

SM: We saw you having Miss Teen at Nkwene and Ingadla for the Girls.



THOBILE SIMELANE

Founder of Nkwene Youth
Charity Organisation

THOBILE SIMELANE



The Newspaper carrying the story of Nkwene Teenage Girls falling pregnant in 2021 (Courtesy Pic.)

Who supports you in all this? What was the reception like to the girls at first?

TS: I'm honestly supported by the whole Nkwene community, from the parents to the community leaders and former Mp Skhumbuzo Dlamini. I appreciate them very much. The girls grabbed the opportunity with both hands, heart-warming, positive attitude and vibes only. The numbers easily jumped from 15 to over 40.

SM: That's sweet of you! Do you consider taking this initiative to other schools or perhaps nationwide?

TS: Thank you. Yes, I'm considering taking it nationwide through a Foundation that will work with both schools and communities. I would like to help create a generation of girls with positive skill sets that will influence healthy choice making, create strong self-esteem and build bright futures.

SM: What, in your view, are the key drivers of teenage pregnancy and what do you think should be done to curb this scourge?

TS: I think the key drivers are poverty, peer pressure, lack of knowledge about contraceptives, and unwelcoming and judgemental health centres to young



Community Talk and Engagement at Nkwene (Courtesy Pic.)

people coming for contraceptives. Strengthening the self-esteem, character, integrity and capacity of young girls can curb the unacceptably high rate of teenage pregnancy.

SM: What, in your view, should the government do to address issues of teenage pregnancy in schools?

TS: The government should make sure parents and law enforcers take on everyone who impregnates a teenager, invest on economically empowering the girl child, make sure health centres are conducive for young people to freely go for contraceptives, and prioritize poverty eradication.

SM: Looking into the future, what programmes and innovations do you consider to put in place to address the challenges faced by the girl child? How do you plan to ensure there is sustainability in whatever programmes and strategies you've in your mind?

TS: I'm actually thinking of starting a gender-specific foundation (Eswatini Girls Empowerment Foundation) that

will work nationwide, where about ten (10) out of school youth will be recruited in each Region as trainers in the programme. Their raining will be orchestrated for them to be skilled mentors and coaches, who will design and lead educational programmes, work with the girls in person-through stages, electronically-through newsletter, social media, t-shirts and community outreach, where at least two (2) constituencies in each Region will be visited in a month. The ground-breaking fellowship will also donate sanitary towels, have summer camps for girls around the country, and scholarship for girls. The philanthropy will host a data or feedback collection day which can be inform of a Girls Empowerment Day annually, where schools and communities will be involved through debates, essay writing, poetry, public speeches, and other activities. The foundation will have a supportive organizational culture, a driving mission, and clearly defined needs and demands to ensure sustainability.

SM: Wow! I'm speechless! This is beautiful! We take this moment to thank you Mnguni for the sterling job you do at Nkwene. We're proud of your work and wish you well.

TS: My pleasure, and thank you very much.



Young Girls Dancing during a cultural event at Nkwene (Courtesy Pic.)

"Do work that matters. Choose to participate in initiatives that will positively impact the world and help make a difference in your community." — Germany Kent

2022 SNAT ELECTIONS: KNOW YOUR NEC CANDIDATES

PRESIDENT

NAME: MBONGWA ERNEST DLAMINI
POB: NGCULWINI
BRANCH: MANZINI
SCHOOL: MOYENI HIGH SCHOOL
YEARS IN SNAT: 23



DEPUTY PRESIDENT

NAME: MSIBI BONGINKHOSI M.
POB: MAHAMBA
BRANCH: NHLANGANO
SCHOOL: MAKHOSINI HIGH
YEARS IN THE SNAT: 22



DEPUTY PRESIDENT

NAME: MTHUPHA LUNGILE F.
POB: EDLOZINI
BRANCH: PIGG'S PEAK
SCHOOL: ROSENBERG PRIMARY
YEARS IN THE SNAT: 31



SECRETARY GENERAL ISGI

NAME: VILAKATI LOT M.
POB: NGCOSENI, MANKAYANE
BRANCH: SITEKI TOP
SCHOOL: LASI MEMORIAL HIGH
YEARS IN SNAT: 12



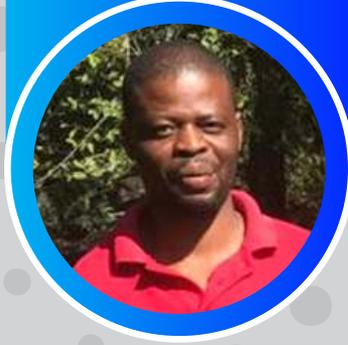
DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL IDSGI

NAME: NDLOVUKAZI MFANKHONA A.
POB: PIGG'S PEAK [EBULANDZENI]
BRANCH: USUTHU
SCHOOL: NTONDOZI PRIMARY
YEARS IN SNAT: 22



DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL IDSGI

NAME: NGCAMPHALALA MXOLISI
POB: MAHLABATSINI, MATSAPHA
BRANCH: BIG BEND
SCHOOL: DUZE PRIMARY
YEARS IN SNAT: 12



NATIONAL TREASURER INTI

NAME: HLATSHWAYO BUSALIVE M.
POB: NEW HAVEN, HLATHIKHULU
BRANCH: BIG BEND
SCHOOL: NDZEVANE HIGH
YEARS IN SNAT: 14



NATIONAL TREASURER INTI

NAME: SITHEBE KHUMBUZILE
POB: MANZINI
BRANCH: USUTHU
SCHOOL: ST JOHN BOSCO HIGH
YEARS IN SNAT: 20



ORGANISING SECRETARY IOSI

NAME: DLAMINI MLONDI
POB: ENGUDZENI
BRANCH: MBABANE
SCHOOL: ST. MARKS PRIMARY
YEARS IN SNAT: 29



ORGANISING SECRETARY IOSI

NAME: DLAMINI VICTOR
POB: HLATHIKHULU
BRANCH: MBABANE
SCHOOL: EJUBUKWENI HIGH
YEARS IN SNAT: 25



2022 SNAT ELECTIONS: KNOW YOUR NEC CANDIDATES

RECORDING SECRETARY (RS)

NAME: DLAMINI EMMANUEL P.
POB: MANZINI
BRANCH: NHLANGANO
SCHOOL: NHLANGANO CENTRAL HIGH
YEARS IN SNAT: 33



RECORDING SECRETARY (RS)

NAME: MAMBA WELCOME C.
POB: MPOMPOTHA
BRANCH: BIG BEND
SCHOOL: NKANINI HIGH
YEARS IN SNAT: 24



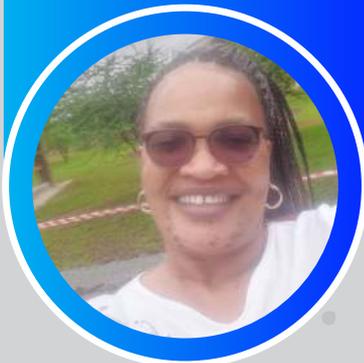
EDITOR

NAME: MOTSA MCOLISI Z.
POB: MKHULAMINI, MANZINI
BRANCH: NHLANGANO
SCHOOL: EDWALENI HIGH
YEARS IN SNAT: 12



SUB-EDITOR

NAME: DLAMINI FUTHILE
POB: MANZINI
BRANCH: MANZINI
SCHOOL: THULWANE PRIMARY
YEARS IN SNAT: 28



SUB-EDITOR

NAME: DLAMINI LINDIWE H.
POB: MANKAYANE
BRANCH: NHLANGANO
SCHOOL: EQINISWENI PRIMARY
YEARS IN SNAT: 16



GENDER AND HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER

NAME: VILAKATI SIFISO
POB: MBABANE
BRANCH: PIGG'S PEAK
SCHOOL: MGULULU PRIMARY
YEARS IN SNAT: 15



SNAT Elections (2022-2026)

TUCOSWA STUDY CIRCLE CONVENERS



JABULANI DLAMINI

Pigg's Peak Branch (Hhohho)

I am Jabulani Simanga Dlamini from Pigg's Peak Branch of the SNAT. Currently, I am the Vice Secretary in the Branch.

In TUCOSWA, I am a trainer. Before TUCOSWA, I am a member of SNAT-the head of the education committee in my Branch: Pigg's Peak. To join the TUCOSWA ToT, I was invited by the National Deputy Secretary to be part of TUCOSWA/ LO-Norway Training of Trainers Workshop in August 2020. During the training, I was equipped with the history of unions in Swaziland, the role of a Trade Union, grievance handling, effective communication in Trade Union, handling of Trade Union finances, and many more. After the training, we are supposed to go out and train other leaders. It is essential, thus as leaders in Unions to receive training to become effective and make the best use of limited resources. Leaders learn techniques for helping each other succeed and respond appropriately to common issues, while honouring the value of labour movement.

My name is Happy Delsile Mazibuko AKA Delzozibs. I am currently the Deputy Secretary of Mbulungwane Branch of the SNAT.

SNAT being the affiliate of TUCOSWA, I am one of the comrades who were chosen for trainings by the federation. I attended a training where we were trained as Trainers of Trainers (ToTs) and recently we were trained as conveners of Study Circles for the Federation.

From these workshops, we came out very informed leaders, equipped with knowledge for the betterment of our federation and unions respectively.



HAPPY MAZIBUKO

Mbulungwane Branch (Shiselweni)



SIBHAKELA DLAMINI

Mhlume Branch (Lubombo)

I am Lusekwane Alpheus Dlamini, from Mhlume Branch. I am an educator/trainer at TUCOSWA. I've been a SNAT Marshall from 1999 to 2010. I received a call from the then SNAT SG, Muzi Mhlanga, to go for training, where I received a warm welcome from TUCOSWA leadership. I'm now training new trainers for the Federation. Areas of capacity include HIV and AIDS counselling, gender equality training, male gender champion, gender auditor, then trade Unionism.

I am a member of SNAT currently serving as the Usuthu Branch Executive Committee Secretary. Actually, I've served as an Elections Committee Member and Secretary between the period of 2010 and 2016. I was then nominated and subsequently elected into the position of Branch Secretary in the 2016 – 2018 transitional term of office and was again elected as Branch Secretary for this term 2018 – 2022. I come from the Usuthu Branch of the SNAT where I've been taught trade unionism and organisational discipline. I am an Educator and a Study Circle Convener in TUCOSWA.

I got the opportunity to attend a Training of Trainers workshop just after we had resumed office following our (Usuthu-BEC) suspension in 2021.

I train trainers and also convene study circles. There is a Training of Trainers programme being run by the federation, TUCOSWA, with her partners on a yearly basis whereby affiliates send representatives to be trained as trainers. I have had the privilege of training these trainers as well.



SICELO ZONDO

Usuthu Branch (Manzini)

LIDWALA INSURANCE LAUNCHES NEW MEDICAL AID



SIKHUMBUZO NKAMBULE

Business Development Manager

needs has led us to broaden our product offering within Short-Term Insurance by looking into health. The decision to introduce health in our product offering is largely driven by continued focus of creating value for our customers.

In the local market, Medical Insurance popularly known as Medical Aid, has had very low penetration levels compared to our neighbouring countries. We have seen these low penetration numbers as an opportunity to provide a suite of products that will meet the needs of the uncovered lives.

Latest developments indicate that Lidwala Insurance Company will be offering a locally owned Medical Aid product to the local market. Their medical aid product will be called "Lidwala Health." Lidwala health is already accessible in the market and is supported by all local service providers as well as over 12,000 service providers in the South African Market. Lidwala Health offers five [5] products that are split into two [2] major categories which offer solutions targeting both low, medium and high-income earners. Further, our product is open to both corporates and individuals. With

Established in 2009, Lidwala positioned itself as an innovative, alternative risk solution provider by introducing revolutionary products and services.

As an established service provider in the Short-Term Insurance industry, Lidwala was the first insurer to insure homes built on Swazi Nation Land (SNL) and introduced the innovative Alternative Risk Transfer Solutions (ART) to the people of Eswatini.

Our longevity, drive for innovation and excellence in delivering products that respond to clients'



Lidwala Insurance MD Dr. Thokozani Nkambule (Courtesy Pic.)

One of the key factors that has resulted in low penetration of medical aid is the cost of Medical Aid. Our market is in need of affordable medical aid that can provide access to private health facility.

these products, we aim to change the behaviour of our people to adopt a more proactive approach to managing health, hence we focus highly on Wellness.

Lidwala Health has been fully licensed locally and has already been tested with a number of service providers both locally and in South Africa, where such tests have brought about positive results. This gives us confidence that the experience in accessing and consuming Lidwala Health will continue to give value to

our clients as we take them onboard. Our processes have been tested to ensure seamless access to all service providers through our Medical Aid.

STRUCTURE OF LIDWALA HEALTH

TRADITIONAL MEDICAL AID PRODUCTS; Premium, Flex & Base Option

- By simple definition these products that are open to a wide variety of Service Providers, whether contracted or not, based on the Rules of that particular scheme. Lidwala Health has three products in this category: Our Primum Option, Flex Option & Base Option.
- As mentioned earlier, we are pleased to announce that we have contracted all major service providers in the country, in both the Private and Public Sectors Further, we have a network of over 12,000 Service

Providers in the Republic of South Africa. These providers are throughout all disciplines.

CAPITATION PRODUCTS;

Essential and Comprehensive.

- By simple definition, Capitation products can only be utilized within a very limited number of service providers for a defined scope of services/products. The upside to this is that the consumer gets to access private health cover for at a very affordable monthly premium. We therefore offer two options that start from as little as E200 per month under the Capitation Category: Essential Option and Comprehensive Option.

"THE FUTURE OF MEDICAL AID IS HERE"



Lidwala Team During a Breakfast Meeting (Courtesy Pic.)



Lidwala Insurance MD Introducing GM Health Ntokozi Ndzabukelwako (Courtesy Pic.)





THE SNAT MERCHANDISE ON STOCK

Available at SNAT Centre,
Opposite William Pitcher
(Manzini)



Tracksuit	E700
Jacket short	E480
Jacket long	E550
Bodywarmer	E350
T-shirt	E130

Jacket
(Red, Black, Khakhi,
army green)

Long E550
Normal E480

©SNAT Merchandise, 2022



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

Conscientizing the Masses

Dear Editor

Lenin says in one of his many quotes, “organization is the best weapon the proletariat has against the oppressor; capitalism.” With regards to the Swaziland revolution, that cannot have hit home any better. The recent events that have engulfed the country and shrouded it in a blanket of, for the lack of a better word, confusion and division amongst the oppressed majority of our people who form a part of the working class is a cause for concern, to say the least.

At this moment, it is important to define some of the key terms mentioned in this text. By “proletariat”, is meant, as defined by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in 1848, the class of modern wage labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour power in order to live, and by “bourgeoisies,” the class of modern capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage labour.

These definitions are still valid today as they were in 1848.

Drawing reference from Karl Marx's teachings that there are only two [2] major classes in existence in the world: A. The ruling, exploiting and oppressing minority, and B. The oppressed, exploited and working-class majority. It is imperative that in Swaziland, we [the people], that is the oppressed people, put our differences aside and fight against our common enemy, the oppressor. It is also quite important that we are cognisant of the fact that we all belong to one class! To put it bluntly, we are all in the same hell! Teacher, nurse, banker, office worker, miner, farmer, student, peasant, unemployed youth at home, elderly and the entire lot. For some of us to see ourselves better than the next is totally wrong! Ours is to organise, unite and overthrow the dictator.

Let every site where one finds themselves at be an organisational, educational, unification and democracy preaching site! The recently seen attempt by some members of the country's police service at an en masse resignation is worrisome. Though many admire their courage and decisiveness in leaving such a vile and evil service, I am though concerned. Firstly, how are they going to sustain their livelihoods? Secondly, I feel they should have remained in the belly of the

beast and could have been useful as the Swazi revolution is being wagged. They could have passed on relevant information on missions and operations against the revolution, given us names and addresses of those bootlicking top brass who give orders which aim to please none other than their so called 'employer.' I feel as politically aware and 'politics adolescents' they could have played a role from the force itself to open the eyes of their politically unaware and 'politics toddlers' colleagues who still believe the nonsensical narrative that they are employed because someone willed it so. They could have conscientised them that theirs is a service like the rest of us and that, come this sadistic regime or a socialist democratic one, their service will always be needed. No blind loyalty warrants the killing, beating, torture, maiming and kidnap of our people in defence of the current regime. Remind them of loyalists who have since fallen from favour and make them see that Swaziland has but one problem: a loinskin wearing, bald, purple crested lourie bird feather donning chap who is masquerading as a thug, gangster, businessman, head of state and some sort of demigod.

As educators organised under the Swaziland National Association of Teachers [SNAT], though prohibited by certain clauses in the so-called code of conduct and ethics booklet, we cannot be overtaken by our prime clients, the students, in the call for a democratic Swaziland. We have since time immemorial been at the forefront calling for better conditions for ourselves and the entire nation. One would be tempted to say we have been preaching the socialist gospel in Swaziland since forever. It, therefore, according to my opinion falls upon us to educate, organise, unite and join students in the fight for democracy in Swaziland. We cannot sit idle by and watch the youth and students in our various workstations and home areas boycotting, protesting and organising themselves against this useless regime. For us to say we are protecting our salaries and are afraid of the no-work no-pay strategy of the Tinkhundla government and are protecting our children's future is a spit on the struggle for a democratic Swaziland. There cannot be better pay for us, better conditions nor better future if the current regime is in and remains in power!

Let me reiterate, ours is a service regardless of regime in power! Let us not be scared off by bootlickers and scrappers who go on spewing bile to please their master. Others even go to the extent of saying dull statements like that we are receiving tokens of appreciation as salaries from their masters and that we must leave the service if not satisfied with the current regime. The least said on those utterances the better, they do not deserve to be given the slightest of attention and response! Those making them are plainly clinging and milking for the last time a regime which itself is on the brink of collapse.

The Church and the private sector must all play their roles in the emancipation of our people from the tyrant! The Church must stop their glorification and narration that the regime was ordained by “God” to rule over the Swazi Nation and that any opposition to it is evil and a direct attack to God. The narration of us walking on gold paved streets, wearing crowns and dressing in fine robes in Heaven must change to us having all that here on earth and in Swaziland under a democratic system and not the one we have now! The Church should reject the divide-and-conquer method of the regime to appoint some members of the clergy to powerful and lucrative positions and have them preach and spin the gospel according to Tinkhundla. They must preach the gospel of democracy, equality, freedom and fairness – total freedom from bondage!

The private sector should stop this nonsense of elevating an individual to a god-like status! Swazis are overcharged on services, underpaid, overlooked and exploited at the private sectors watch. This is all because the private sector values an individual over the masses. An individual whom they must give hefty birthday presents and handsome dividends and profit at the expense of the majority who are oppressed, exploited and ill-governed Swazis which all you, kneeling and praise-singing executives are a part of.

In conclusion, as the oppressed and exploited majority of Swaziland, it is our responsibility to liberate ourselves. No messiah will come for us and deliver us to the promise land of democracy! Let us all conscientise one another and march towards freedom. It is my firm belief that SNAT, as one of the most radical workers' union in the country, is capable of rallying the entire trade union movement in this fight for justice for all. Adios muchachos!

Ser Villah



EDUCATION OF THE SWAZI CHILD: GOVERNMENT TRYING TO BE SMART

Dear Editor

Greetings to all teachers and best wishes in the year 2022. As schools opened in January 11, 2022 to complete the 2021 School's calendar, teachers, learners and parents had many questions and concerns on when the 2021 would end. For instance, whether the syllabus will be complete by then and of course will the learners be ready to sit for their exams?

The Minister of Education and Training [MoET] announced the opening of schools at a time when we as educators had many questions than answers on how the syllabus could be completed to cover the two [2] years: 2021-2022. The government of the land, as usual, did no consultation with the relevant stakeholders but continued with its dictatorial tendencies of always imposing decisions on us with disregard on the consequences such would have on us as teachers, learners and parents. It is an honest fact that in the year 2021 less time was spent in class due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the political unrest in the country (which is the making of the regime). If education was a priority in Eswatini, more time could have been allocated to complete the 2021 school calendar in order to allow educators to effectively complete the syllabus and have adequate time to prepare learners for exams both externally and internally.

One wonders why the rush by the government to complete the school calendar when we all know that the syllabus isn't fully completed and pupils aren't ready to sit for exams. Is the government trying to save money

(paying FPE and OVCs grants) by rushing to end the school calendar? This is because she still owes payments for the year 2021 in some schools and knowing the kind of government we have, she won't pay the owed fees yet, on the other hand, parents were forced to pay full amounts or their children would be sent home for owing school fees.

Another (one other) reason for the government to finish the 2021 school calendar in haste/ without proper teaching and learning having taken place, would be to produce an illiterate and or half learned citizenry, which will be loyal to the Tinkhundla system by paying allegiance to the King (tibutseki). Again, the government may or is doing this so that the Form 5s do not qualify for tertiary as most of them will not meet the entry requirements of these institutions of higher learning.

If most learners do not qualify, (meet entry requirements) the government will save millions of Emalangeni in terms of scholarships as few learners will have to be awarded same. The question then is, who benefits from the saved monies that should have been used to pay FPE and OVCs grants and scholarships? Where does that money go to as it was already budgeted for? Your answer is as good as good as mine. It is diverted to the Royal family to fund their extravagant lifestyle when over 70% of the population live below the poverty line.

Concerned Educator

Dlamini Lihle

WHAT GENERATION ARE WE RAISING?

Dear Editor

Education is the seed from which everything grows,' once said Trevor Noah. This proves not to be the ideal eSwatini since the society we live in is soon changing into illiterate ones. Not long ago, we have been worried that the education system is simply dysfunctional considering the fact that graduates from eSwatini universities and colleges are unemployed, loitering in the streets like uneducated citizens.

Personally, I am currently bothered by the school going children we have; is the system of pushing them to the next Grade and forcing the Academic calendar to adjust and suit our standards ever going to help us? What are we doing as stakeholders of the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET). Are we even aware of what shape the system is taking or we are just bystanders waiting for catastrophe to happen? We are just quiet when live liya eweni especially in the education sector. In 2020, schools were closed untimely due to the COVID-19 pandemic causing the academic year to come to a halt and thus 'nullified', or was it really, since learners were smoothly pushed to the next class with the exception of those who were 'externally examined' of course. Okay fine! We grudgingly accepted that as parents and teachers when in 2021 the Academic Year was cut short by the civil unrest.



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

To everyone's surprise, most of the assumed grievances of the people in question were not attended to, rather; our shameless and selfish government imposed a school calendar suiting her and her 'beloved' Examinations Council of eSwatini (ECESWA). What about the people and the students' needs? This is practically letting Form 3s sit for a Form 5 Examination, which is ironic on its own. Where is the education system headed?

Having noted all that, the useless Competency Based Education (CBE), majestically landed for Grade 1s in 2019, compelling teachers to shove learners to the next class every Academic Year. Currently in Grade 3, I personally do not understand what CBE entails really, but after studying closely the material used to teach, I grumpily question the capabilities of the panels involved in curriculum changing; drafting and implementation in the country.

When you question some of the teachers on the ground, you get shocked to learn that they are not well informed of what exactly is expected of them. Some of them even struggle to remember what CBE is. Then what are they doing with the poor innocent souls? They are now victims themselves of this government. Not only them but the Inspectorate themselves, display shallow knowledge on the preached CBE.

So, why implement something you are not sure of? Looks like it's now our government's tendency to do such; consider the Free Primary Education [FPE] she struggles to fund, the implementation of positive discipline minus corporal punishment she fails to enforce, allowing pregnant girls to 'give birth in classrooms', to cite just a few. What are we doing to the kids? Which tertiary institutions are they going to?

And the biggest of all questions is; are we raising and empowering an illiterate generation to face the literate world? It is time we stand up and challenge this government for the choices she makes for our kids without involving us.

Irate, Melody 'Melz' Vilakati

OFFENDERS IN OUR SOCIETY: WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

Dear Editor

I hope my letter will find you in good health. I am a teacher by profession and my work involves producing human resource for businesses and diverse institutions. Having said that, I am not blind to the terrible fact that no matter how much we try to instil good morals to the children, they may still find themselves on the wrong side of the law. When someone is growing up, breaking the law is similar to stumbling upon a stone. It is not deliberate. Peer pressure and other struggles can easily turn one into an offender. I can bet my life that a majority of people with no criminal records cannot vow and say that they have never done anything that is against the law. But somehow they managed to cheat the law.

Alright, back to the gist of the matter, may I ask this question: how many businesses and institutions in our lovely country have room for people who have broken the law at some point and served time or paid fines? Prisons have been renamed correctional institutions. This means that they spend precious resources on offenders to rehabilitate them. If the draconian laws of hiring employees, the requirement of fingerprints records are still in place, what is the use of the correctional facilities then? Why does the government spend resources on offenders, resources which would otherwise have been used on scholarships for instance? Is the government not throwing precious resources down the economic drain?

I have also thought deeply about the issue of repeat offenders. There could be various reasons why people revert back to crime after they have served time. But one of the reasons could be the brutal fact that employers tend to discriminate against ex-offenders. I will hold government responsible on this one. She should be working in collaboration with businesses and institutions to give ex-offenders a second chance. Government is trying to do a good thing by paying for the education and nourishment of orphaned and vulnerable children. She also needs to spread her wings and look after ex-offenders too, see to it that they contribute immensely to the economy of the country.

To close this small chapter, may I share with you dear readers the word of God in Ephesians 4:28 (KJV) which says, 'Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.' Therefore, God being the Father, a loving one, always wants to give all of us second chances. His word uses a thief as an example of an offender, but in actual fact the scripture accommodates all offenders who still have a chance to do something positive. God has trust that an ex-offender can still contribute meaningfully to the good of a country from family to national level. Our government should consider adopting the same perspective and hope for the best. Putting certain controls would not be a bad idea either.

Sibusiso Mamba

[Concerned Teacher]

MHLUME BRANCH OF THE SNAT STRATEGIC DIRECTION



MANDLA NKOMONYE

Mhlume Branch of the SNAT Secretary

Welcome to the Mhlume Branch of the SNAT, a sister Branch to Siteki Top and Big Bend Branch of the SNAT, respectively. The Branch prides itself of having produced two [2] Presidents of the union and a handful of National Office Bearers [NOBs] who have served at the SNAT with dignity. The Branch has been in existence ever since.

Geographical Location

Mhlume Branch is located in the eastern part of the country in. The Branch runs along the Lubombo region, Mozambican and South African borders with Eswatini (sisemkatsini wemhlane nembeleko), so much that we have some schools (Lomahasha Central and primary high and Emafusini Nazarene primary school) just a stone's throw away from the border line. It is for that reason that these schools sometimes receive learners from the neighboring countries, mostly from Mozambique. As much the schools receive learners from the two [2] neighboring countries, most often times their learners migrate to the Republic of South Africa schools.

The Branch is divided into Four [4] zones namely: namely

1.Lomahasha Zone= mostly situated along the border lines.

2.Shewula Zone = located up in the Lubombo mountains

3.Mhlume Zone = located along the sugar belt.

4.Hlane Zone = found next to the Hlane royal residence and the KM111 international airport.

The zoning of the schools allows for effective service delivery to the membership. There is a total of thirty-two [32] schools in the Branch consisting of both primary and high schools

There are twenty-three [23] primary schools and nine [9] high schools distributed across the four [4] zones; unfortunately, there are no colleges or institutions of higher learning in the Branch. The Branch is also home to a couple of tourist attraction sites namely: Hlane Game Reserve, Mlawula, Mbuluzi and the Shewula mountain camp.

COVID-19 Pandemic

Like in all other Branches, the COVID-19 pandemic wreaked havoc in the Branch. The pandemic caught us off guard, we were ill prepared and as such we experienced many challenges. The geographical location of the Branch (Lubombo Region) was a huge obstacle as we have no water and receive very little rainfall, yet we all know that water is very key component in fighting the spread of the virus as it plays a major role in the washing of hands and cleaning of classrooms. Most schools had no adequate means to fight the virus and the insufficient funds and the delay by the government to release FPE and OVCS grants was another challenge faced by schools. Schools had to make do with whatever resources they had to salvage the situation. We applaud and appreciate the efforts made by schools to ensure the safety of both teachers, learners and support staff from the deadly virus. Another challenge was the lack of teaching personnel (teachers) and classrooms to accommodate the twenty [20] learners per classroom. This therefore, left the available teachers overburdened and learners having very few face to face/ class time. The Branch experienced a lot of COVID-19 positive cases both from teachers, learner and the support staff.

The Branch also lost some members to the pandemic (may their souls rest in peace).

Branch activities were stalled by the COVID-19 pandemic due to the Regulations imposed by the government together with the Ministry of Health on the movement and gatherings of people. Branch activities such as Branch meetings, annual conferences, Teachers Day were all affected and that had a negative impact in the progress and planned programmes of the Branch. The Branch is yet to host a Branch social day owing to that in 2021 the Branch Teachers' Day was cancelled on the 11th hour due to the COVID-19 4th wave outbreak, when all preparations had been made. The Branch is faced with many challenges, two [2] of most being:

1. Union empathy (members lack the zeal to fully partake in union activities, this is evident in the vacant posts of the Branch Management Committees.
2. Low/little subventions, these hinders the Branch's planned projects and programmes such as the completion of the reconstruction of the Branch Offices and many others.

Strategic Plan

The Branch is looking forward to having more Branch workshops to capacitate shop stewards and BMCs on labor relations issues, so they may in turn capacitate the membership at the shop floor level. The Branch is also planning to host constant Branch meetings to engage with the membership and recharge mandate and social gatherings such as Branch days for teachers to come together, socialize and exchange ideas.



Mhlume BEC with BOT checking Branch Assets [File Pic.]

NHLANGANO BRANCH OF THE SNAT DURING COVID-19



ZANELE HLOPHE

Nhlango Branch Secretary

Geographical location

Nhlango, after which the Branch is named, is located in the southern part of Swaziland under Shiselweni Region.

The town is the third largest in the country. The Branch is the largest in the Shiselweni Region amongst the five [5] Branches of the Region with a total of forty [40] primaries, twenty [21] high Schools, two [2] colleges and a Regional Education Office. Nhlango is a town situated about 30 km from Mahamba border and about 13 kms away from the borderline that separates Swaziland and South Africa. This makes it one of the towns that are located at the SAs periphery. Such has a great impact on the Branch, with lots of influence from the South African side.

The town functions as the Administrative town in the Shiselweni Region and as a Branch, we have in our jurisdiction, the Regional Education Offices [REOs] which is the administrative education Office in the region. Having the Regional Education Offices [REO] in our radius has an added advantage in the sense that we could easily get access even without appointments. The Branch has a leadership that is eager to learn and most attend meetings, this has to some extent been enhanced by the COVID-19 pandemic in the sense that the restrictions caused members to be eager to meet by the time restrictions were uplifted. The vibrancy within members is further evident in their attendance to national union events.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit Swaziland, there was a lot of panic including in the Branch. Most were afraid and tried by all means to adhere to the Regulations and there was a great fear of death amongst teachers. This pandemic terrorized the Branch so much such that some succumbed to it.

In August 2021 alone, about 37 cases were reported to the executive committee but we were made aware that some cases were hidden. Some SNAT Reps took it upon

themselves to inform the Branch of irregularities in schools, others still hid the information fearing victimization by the Administration of that school.

At the beginning of the pandemic, most schools disclosed when a positive case was identified and the necessary precautions were taken by schools. As the impact intensified, some schools hid this from teachers and so many teachers vanished unaccounted for. The Branch Executive went to the REO to enquire on how it was expected to minimize transmission under the prevailing conditions to which he said schools were expected to ensure safety by fumigating and at the time. The REO further admitted that there were schools he wasn't aware of that had been affected. This caused strain amongst members.

The abrupt closer/opening of schools greatly led to a lot of uncertainty in the Branch. Pupils were traumatized and became uncertain about their future. Some teachers became uncertain about their jobs especially since there were threats from the Ministry of Education and Training [MoET].



SNAT Reps after a Workshop (Courtesy Pic.)

So many teachers on contract in the Branch were dealt a hard blow by the TSC by not renewing their contracts of employment. This led to decline in membership and job insecurity.

It should be traumatizing to wake up one morning without a job and no hope that you would be hired soon.

The Branch Executive, through the wellness committee, contributed to members who were infected especially at the beginning and furthermore, there were collections that were made by members which were of great help to the affected. This though became difficult as the numbers escalated.

During the beginning of the pandemic, all activities were put on hold. Everything just stopped. As there was ease on the Regulations, we began with meetings of leaders, then there were activities under strict guidelines as expected. We were able, at the end of 2021, to hold a Branch day and it was a success.

As a Branch, there were Areas of Focus we had thought would be of importance during the period 2021-2022; however, the pandemic restricted us from achieving most.

We then focused on the development of the Branch plot. As much as the work that is required, is still intense, there has been some development on the plot. The vaccination programme rolled-out by government evoked mixed feelings. There were those that thought it to be an intervention in the right direction. Some felt it was a means by government targeting teachers and up to this day, they have not been vaccinated. This fear intensified when some that were vaccinated got sick and one member was feared to have died as a result of vaccination. Some felt it was not necessary to vaccinate since pupils were not vaccinated.

We are currently seeing a state of adaptation to the pandemic but there is an outcry on how



Branch Plot at Nhlango [Courtesy Pic.]

the pandemic has negatively impacted on our students. The Region dropped rank in the last exam. Members have seen it as one of the diseases we could conquer in terms of following all necessary precautions as stated by the World Health Organization [WHO]; question is, will our education system ever recover?

CHALLENGES FACED BY THE BRANCH

1. Decrease in membership number due to the loss of life as a result of the pandemic and other causes, and the un-renewed contracts of teachers.
2. The inability to fully finance all activities the Branch wants to engage in, restricting development

Branch Plan of Action [POA]

We had a plan of action for the Branch for the 2018-2022 period but most of the things were stalled by the uncertainty brought about by the global pandemic. One of the things we had set to do was resource mobilization where at the beginning of our term, we did purchase some T-shirts and sold them to the membership.

We also had planned to focus on the development of the Branch plot and were able to channel resources towards that. We are hoping those who will be elected into office for the coming period will continue from where we ended and take the Branch to greater heights.

PIGGS PEAK BRANCH OF THE SNAT IN THE MIDST OF COVID-19



MUZI DLAMINI

Piggs Peak Branch Secretary

INTRODUCTION

The Piggs Peak Branch of the SNAT is one of the biggest Branches of the SNAT. It is positioned in the Northern part of the Hhohho region. Due to its geographical location, the Branch is divided into three [3] sub-Branches namely:

1. Piggs Peak Sub-Branch: most schools are located in town, out sketch of the town as well as along the Nkomanzi River Belt

2. Mayiwane Sub-Branch: schools around Mayiwane area and surrounding areas

3. Ntfontjeni Sub-branch: Schools around Ntfontjeni area and its surrounding areas.

The Piggs Peak Sub-Branch has about 94 schools. The primary section has about 82 and the rest are high schools. The Branch membership is 1,902 and counting. The Sub-Branches were formed so that our members are serviced effective and timely on union activities.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Like in all the other Branches, COVID-19 has wreaked havoc and we even had some casualties that occurred. Our comrades were caught off guard like the rest of the world. We lost some of our comrades and we are happy that a high number of recovering cases were recorded. Government, through Micro Projects, our schools had washing stations built, limited number of sanitizers and a few liquid soaps for our pupils. The pandemic gave our Branch a great challenge as few teachers were employed compared to the large number of pupils as government flatly refused to hire teachers. The rotational teaching demanded our members to be overworked as they were to teach one

and the same thing to different groups. Doing SNAT work was limited as COVID-19 had strict Regulations on gatherings so we were grounded.

CHALLENGES

1. Union Empathy: Members lacking the will or zeal to participate in Union activities. This is evident in Branch meetings. Our numbers show a great decline

2. Some headteachers have little or no concern in SNAT activities. Some of our members tell us that their school heads don't cooperate when it comes to SNAT issues.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The Branch is planning to have more activities for our membership.

1. Branch Workshop: We plan to fully capacitate our members on labour related issues both new and old members.

2. Do more workshops on SNAT Reps: We plan to intensify all labour laws both on SNAT policy and work related laws that govern our members at the place of work.

3. Branch plot: We intend to develop our plot into a money making investment to meet day to day Branch needs.

The Piggs Peak Branch of SNAT purchased a plot at Msahweni next to Ekhaya Funeral Service. All the relevant personnel were involved and it was handed to the Branch. The Plot was bought and will be developed soon. We

also bought Branch vehicle (7-seater sedan) black in colour: Toyota Alphard.

The vehicle plays a major role in reducing our transport costs. The vehicle is already in use when doing our Branch activities. We had Branch Day which was well attended by the membership. We had a Retired Teachers farewell function and about 30 pensioners were presented with gifts by the Branch. The Branch also moved its Office from Piggs Peak town to Tingadzeni to cut rentals costs for the Branch.

Our membership strength has declined due to casualisation by government. The SNAT is working on the above issues of our teachers. Our membership now stands at 1,352 and are expecting it to grow.



The vehicle the Branch procured for Branch Business [Courtesy Pic.]



The Piggs Peak Branch of the SNAT [Courtesy Pic.]

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE



SAKHILE DLAMINI

SWAGAA Communications Officer

What is child sexual abuse?

Child sexual abuse includes any act (s) which results in exploitation of a child, with consent or not, for purposes of sexual or erotic gratification.

**A child is anyone below the age of 18 years.*

Child sexual abuse is unique in its definition as a traumatic experience in that there is often a subtle process involved that does not necessarily involve violent coercion. The abuser uses tricks or bribes to lure child into a sexual experience and child is developmentally unsophisticated to recognise this.

NOTE: Both boys and girls can be victims of sexual abuse, but girls are more likely to be abused.

Sexual Violence:

- Can be perpetrated by adults or other children
- Includes some form of exploitation of the child
- Makes use of coercion in some form, however gentle
- Is much wider than penetration of vagina or anus by penis
- Also include acts that do not involve physical contact
- Often involves a grooming process

How does Sexual Violence affect a child through life?

Child Sexual Violence has at least four major effects: Trauma, Betrayal, Powerlessness and Stigmatization.

1.Trauma: Victims lose their sense of safety and security. Trauma depends on individual coping skills; children with poor coping skills and unsupportive family will have greater impact and longer-term trauma.

Traumatic sexualisation

This is a process in which child's sexuality is shaped in a developmentally inappropriate and interpersonally dysfunctional way.

Effects of traumatic sexualisation

- Sexual preoccupation and repetitive sexual behaviour: Masturbation, Compulsive sex play, Promiscuity, Sexually aggressive behaviour
- Adult sexual dysfunction: Victimisation of own children, Confusion of sexual identity, Impairment of sexual desirability, Confusion about sexual norms and standards, Negative connotations associated with sex
- Factors affecting trauma
- Type of act: The act will have effect on trauma e.g. violent rape may be more traumatic than brief fondling over clothes
- Frequency of abuse: the more frequent the abuse, the more severe the trauma
- Duration: the longer the abuse, the greater the impact
- Age of onset: Age at which abuse occurs has impact, adolescence time of crisis in



Stop child abuse [File Pic.]

sexual development -abuse then will have a huge impact on normal sexual development

- Use of force: If force is used, impact is greater. Force does not just include violence; it can be psychological and include manipulation
- Relationship to perpetrator: Impact is greater where there is a relationship between the child and perpetrator, over 80% of children know their abusers
- Number of perpetrators: more perpetrators mean more severe trauma, child tends to be victimised continuously, even in adulthood

2.BETRAYAL: Process where child victim discovers that someone on whom they may have been dependant has caused them harm

3.POWERLESSNESS: Refers to process in which the child's will, desires, and sense of efficacy are continually controlled by someone else

4.STIGMATISATION: Refers to negative connotation associated with sexual abuse

SHORT TERM & LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

1.PRESCHOOL: Nightmares, Anxiety, Inappropriate sexual behaviour, Regressive behaviour

2.SCHOOL-AGED: Nightmares, Fear, Mental illness, Hyperactivity, Regressive behaviour, School problems, Aggression

3.ADOLESCENTS: Depression, Withdrawal, Physical complaints, Running away, Suicidal thoughts, Self-harming, Illegal acts, Substance abuse

NOTE: Victims use coping mechanisms to manage trauma, Coping mechanisms often make child appear unaffected by abuse.

Coping skills include:

- minimizing impact and/or severity of abuse
- ationalizing offender's behaviour
- denying abuse occurred
- dissociating from abuse
- forgetting that abuse happened
- hiding by means of creating a persona that appears perfectly functional so that no one knows that the victim was abused

How can teachers identify an abused child?

Types of abuse to look out for in children include; physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. The following are some ways to identify if abuse is going on:

- Physical signs of abuse or neglect: these could include bruises, burns, fractures (broken bones), frequent hunger, awkward walk due to pain, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or poor hygiene
- Behavioural signs of abuse or neglect: these could include showing little or no emotion when hurt, wariness, fear of being touched, alcohol or drug misuse, age-inappropriate sexual behaviour, stealing food, excessive friendliness or wearing long sleeves and trousers in hot weather (to hide bruises), serious rebellion, social withdrawal

Disclosure: if the child tells they have been abused [Article to be continued in the next Edition]



"In Pursuit of Peace & Harmony"

NCC: HIGH SCHOOLS FOUR (4) YEARS PROGRAMME, E-LEARNING



BONGANI MASUKU

Curriculum Evaluator

The principal function of the National Curriculum Centre (NCC) is to interpret the Ministry of Education and Training's [MoET] educational policies as contained in the country's policy documents, including the National Development Plan, reports by National Review Commissions and other Government policies, to formulate objectives and to produce educational programmes for use in the education system. The formulated objectives help to guide the designers in the process of developing syllabi and Instructional materials for schools.

Among the several educational programmes that the NCC develops, the three [3] below are currently being implemented in our schools.

1. Competency-Based Education – This approach was adopted in order to reflect the aspirations, developmental priorities and needs of society as well as the development goals of Eswatini in the curriculum. It is essential that EmaSwati develop the capacity to diversify the economy and create jobs. Therefore, much value must be placed on

competence and high standards in the work place. Thus, the aim of this programme is to equip learners with critical core skills which everybody needs in a knowledge-based society of the 21st century. Competencies that learners acquire in this programme put more emphasis on skills, knowledge and attitudes that must be demonstrated in order to achieve success. This will eventually prepare learners to be both competent at work and be able to think critically and innovative. Its rollout started with Grade 1 learners in 2019 following a phased approach, and it is currently implemented up to Grade 4. This current year. The CBE Model [Courtesy Pic.]

2. Piloting the four-year Secondary Programme: The Ministry of Education and Training is currently piloting a Four-Year Secondary Education Programme in 32 selected high schools around the Kingdom of Eswatini. This is a step

(2018) stated that EGCSE is not sufficient for entry into some international tertiary education institutions, hence there is need for a post EGCSE qualification for learners. The SADC Protocol on Education and Training (1997) advocated for equivalence, harmonization and standardization of education systems in the region. According to the Ministry of Education and Training in (2012), the Junior Certificate will be phased out, to allow learners to write internal examinations which will be school-based assessment. The Four-Year programme will create space for post SGCSE certificates such as Advance Subsidiary (AS) and Advanced Level (A-Level). This pilot started in April 2022 in 32 schools across the country. The cohort that started the pilot in 2022 will write their SGCSE examination in 2025. **3. E-Learning Programme** – The NCC together with Macmillan Education

is currently engaged in a project of piloting technology enabled learning/e-learning to two primary schools of the country for a period of twelve weeks beginning in October 2022. The purpose of this pilot is to ascertain the extent to which e-Learning can be effectively rolled out in Eswatini, in light of the desegregated learning terrain in the country. The pilot is conducted with the Grade 4 learners of the selected schools. This will ensure that these learners are already familiar with the software when



e-learning model [Courtesy Pic.]

towards the abolishment of the current Five-Year Secondary Education Programme. The Four-Year programme was informed by a number of policies, including the National Education Reform Commission of 1985 which pronounced that the duration of the Eswatini Secondary Education should be four years instead of five years. The Eswatini National Curriculum Framework for General Education

they progress to Grade 7.

For secondary schools, the department is also engaged in facilitating the process of digitising content to align with the current trends of embracing ICTs in teaching and learning. This is an ongoing project that will promote blended approaches to teaching and learning as articulated in the Education Sector Policy (2018).

YIBUTSE GREEN-SCHOOLS ESWATINI UNVEILED



MUSA NDLANGAMANDLA

Founder of Yibutse Green !ction
Reputable Journalist and Activist

Yibutse Green !ction, the community-based non-profit environmental organisation, continues to be the standard bearer in national efforts to deal with the endemic littering and wastes, and innovative solutions for environmental protection.

In the latest move, the NPO has started a programme to empower and motivate children and teenagers to protect and preserve the environment.

The project is named Yibutse Green-Schools Eswatini, and the pillar objective is to engage schools and young people in environmental education and action.

The project will be youth-led and driven. "Working with corporate sponsors and partners, schools and key stakeholders in the environmental eco-system, the Yibutse Green-Schools Eswatini initiatives empowers and motivates pupils to drive change and improve environmental awareness in the schools, communities and nationwide," says Musa Ndlangamandla, the Founder and Executive Director of Yibutse Green !ction.

"Working with pupils, teachers, parents and communities Yibutse is encouraging young people and schools to lead the charge in reducing the litter and waste footprint of communities through changes in the student's behaviour."

Ndlangamandla says Yibutse Green !ction strongly believes that education is the best way to effectively deal with the crisis of littering, plastic pollution and waste management challenges the country is faced with.

He says there is no place more ideal to start a project like Yibutse Green-Schools Eswatini than in schools where young people can be taught good habits, and hopefully influence positive changes and correct behaviours at home and in their communities. "As Yibutse Green !ction, we are excited to partner with schools and young people across the country to implement the Yibutse Green-Schools Eswatini initiative.

The Green-Schools and Eco-Schools, initiatives are having a huge impact across the world, and we felt Eswatini should not be left out." Meanwhile, Mavela Mdluli, a teacher, said his school is keen to join the movement, and that collaboration with Yibutse Green !ction in the Yibutse Green-Schools Eswatini initiative is important for pupils.

Mdluli says this is one of the ways in which the schools can give back to nature and make a positive contribution to the wider community.

"We all have an obligation to protect and preserve our only planet and leave it safe for the next generations. Through this initiative, schools are given the opportunity to educate children and youth across the country, and

"The clean-up campaign that our school is partnering with Yibutse to conduct is an effective and useful response to the litter crisis. As young people we are happy to join our communities in tackling litter and cleaning up our public spaces," she said. "I am excited to be part of this great initiative, which is not a once-off activity, but one that will be replicated in schools and communities across the country. This initiative gives us, young people, the opportunity to improve and enhance the places we live in, learn in, and play in by taking positive action to stop litter."

Lusanda Motsa, a university student said: "Tackling litter and waste is imperative if the country is to reverse declining standards of cleanliness, health and safety across the country caused by indiscriminate dumping of waste and errant consumption habits."

The Yibutse Green-Schools Eswatini programme helps not only the pupils, but the teachers, parents and communities address the challenges of waste and litter. This equips us as pupils with the skills and knowledge regarding litter and waste, thus empowering us to become leaders in our own right, and contribute to effective solutions for sustainable development and positive behavioural change in our country and communities."

About Yibutse Green !ction

Yibutse is the siSwati language word for 'pick it up'. It was formed on May 11, 2021, as a green movement for community involvement in reclaiming public spaces through the proper disposal of waste, particularly single-use facemasks, gloves and other COVID-19 related waste that negatively impacts the environment. The founders are Ms Zodwa Madolo and her husband Mr Musa Ndlangamandla. The latter is a veteran journalist and doubles as the Executive Director of Yibutse Green !ction.



Yibutse Green !ction, a grassroots environmental care non-profit organisation has launched the Yibutse Green-Schools Eswatini to empower pupils across the country. In this file picture pupils of Woodlands High School are seen during a presentation on Environmental Care by the Municipal Council of Mbabane.

elsewhere on the issues of litter and waste. This is also a golden opportunity for them to engage their local communities in awareness-raising activities," he said.

"Working with Yibutse and key stakeholders in the environmental protection and preservation value chain, we are confident of success in implementing programmes that increase pupils' knowledge and practical skills in preventing and managing litter and waste."

Through the Yibutse Green-Schools initiative pupils get to appreciate the devastating impact of litter and waste, particularly discarded single-use plastics, on human beings, animals and plants. Sethu Mkhonta, a prefect in one of the schools in Mbabane says the country faces a litter crisis as single-use plastic and trash is discarded all over the place and illegal dumping is on the up and up.



Yibutse Green !ction Founder and Director holding an award after winning the Climate Change Champion Award on the 27th July 2022 [Courtesy Pic].

THERE IS AN URGENT NEED FOR FINANCIAL EDUCATION FOR SNAT MEMBERS



TERENCE 'MTERA' THWALA

Established Financial Advisor

It is an undisputable fact that there is no financial education in our curriculum and that is not by mistake but deliberately done to breed an ignorant citizen who will spend recklessly and the elite capitalist making tons of money out of that ignorance. Having a lot of money is not good enough when you cannot put that money into good use to grow yourself. It is the duty of the leadership of Companies, Associations and Unions to educate their membership on how to handle their finances.

The topic of financial education must always be on the annual programme because an Association with financially stable members is a healthy Association with aspects of growth. We are, therefore, going to be talking about the need of introducing financial education programmes because we believe that no matter how your financial situation is, once you are financially enlightened, you are better placed to change it for the better. One would ask as to what is financial literacy and why one needs to bother about being capacitated on such a weird topic. Financial literacy is the ability to comprehend and apply different financial skills effectively, which may include paying off debt, creating a budget, and understanding the difference between different financial instruments. Acquiring this skill is very key because it enables the society to have financially sound and developing families who are able to reach their personal set goals.

Across the globe, Financial Literacy, the ability to understand and effectively apply financial skills including personal budgeting, investments, managing finances, is relatively low, especially among communities of the African race. In America, financial literacy is at 66% among black

households which is lower than the 78% recorded among white households. According to the Standard and Poor Global Financial Literacy Survey, the situation is even worse in Africa with South Africa and Botswana being the only countries with a score above 50%. Although there is no available data about financial literacy in Eswatini, one may not expect the situation to differ from those of other lower-middle-class status countries. It is worth noting that over 50% of Emaswati live below poverty line and unemployment is extremely high particularly among the youth which constitute a large chunk of the country's total population.

The numbers are then showing that we must start from the roots to educate, mainly because there is a glaring need as number of our membership is evidently debt trapped. The benefits developing an educational program from the zones will benefit our membership through the following.

1. Learning how to budget: Having worked with hundreds of the members in debt, we got to understand that there is need to budget for their income. Budgeting being the act of being able to allocate each E1 a task to do, and be able to track your spending thereafter. It is always appalling to learn that a member cannot account for how much from their salary they spend on petrol or food. Teaching them how to budget, will not only help them know how or where to spend money, but will also help them identify where they are not supposed to be spending.

2. Paying off debt: We have referred a number of members for debt counselling simply because they are not in any position to meet their obligations with the credit providers. The worse part here being that the members are literally waking up to go and work for a zero net on a daily basis, so educating them about debt, and debt management will help them manage their finances, and know not only how to pay off debt, but also when and how to take debt.

3. Understanding Credit: There is a cost of credit (interest), whenever one takes a loan, but it is always disturbing to see the trend on how the membership are borrowing from one or the similar cluster of credit providers with the highest interest in the industry. Education on credit will make membership understand that just like any other product, one has to do quotations before committing. The member must seek for terms and conditions of the loan also, and trust me there are credit providers with horrible clauses in their contracts which tend to haunt membership later

4. Protecting their income: It will take the leadership of this precious Association to place their members' needs first and educate them on issues that affects them, because such issues affect the Association by extension. Now and again, you meet a member that is in serious debts because they failed or they did not know that they were supposed to take house content insurance to protect their properties in their houses. When robbers come during school holidays and steal every content of the house, unfortunately the member has to start afresh. Most of the time you find that the member is still servicing a loan they took to buy the furniture. It is therefore very important to educate members about how they can protect their income through taking such insurance covers.

5. Investing: For anyone to grow, they must invest part of their income so that their future is secured, but due to lack of information you find members investing their funds with institutions that would give them interest rates that are below the inflation rate. Members must be educated on investment indicators, terms and conditions of the investments so that should they decide to invest, they are clear what they want. We have membership with such investments, and upon realizing that the investment was a raw deal from the onset, they try to terminate it and move it elsewhere, only to find that the contract signed does not allow that, and worse they do not have a clue as to where to go trying to resolve that.

We are hoping that the need for financial education will make sense, and be attended to urgently because what is happening out there is shocking and sad. While waiting for such welfare programmes from the leadership, members must continue seeking for financial literacy programmes, attend such seminars as well as buy and read books that cover such topics. We are also available on Facebook as 'Financial Literacy with Mtera Thwala,' or WhatsApp on (268) 7957 6065.



The Logo for Financial Literacy with Mtera Thwala [Pic.]

DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING



DAVID BIRD

Director and Owner of Nilsbird Training

It is February 2022 [NB: article written in February 2022], the day after a big storm hit the United Kingdom. Lots of weather warnings were issued, including threats to life. The maximum gust of wind that was recorded was 122 mph. There was disruption to transport, trees came down, homes lost power and, sadly, three people died. (I have just looked up the kind of weather you can have in Eswatini. It seems, you too, can have some bad weather, including your own thunderstorms.)

When we think about what we read about climate and weather, do we just take it on face value, or do we critically evaluate it? The consensus, worldwide, is that the extremes we see in our weather is all down to climate change/global warming. Have you ever considered whether this is true? Have you critically evaluated the evidence they provide? (If you wish to consider a different opinion, you might like to watch Land of Fire and Ice.)

Now, in this article, I am not going to debate the pros and cons about what I have just highlighted in the previous paragraph. What I am going to do, however, is to consider the role of critical thinking; for ourselves, and in the classroom.

To begin with, let's ask ourselves a question: what does critical thinking/to think critically actually mean? For me, one idea about critical thinking is standing back, and taking stock of what you are thinking about. Not just accepting, let's say, what you are

reading, but asking yourself questions about it. Is it true, or false? Does it make sense? Why is the writer arguing this way? Can I think of some counter arguments? (And we could ask a number of other questions.). In a recent podcast I listened to about critical thinking, produced by the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD), ideas about critical thinking for workers in the people profession (human resources) were discussed. I think they are very helpful ideas for us, as well, and they expand upon how I was defining critical thinking. Thoughts around critical thinking included being able to critique other people's ideas and opinions; being able to construct sound, logical arguments ourselves; listening really carefully; having the ability to watch out for other people's errors. This last thought is an interesting one! Apparently, there are

disservice if I didn't try to support their development of critical thinking. Do you agree?)

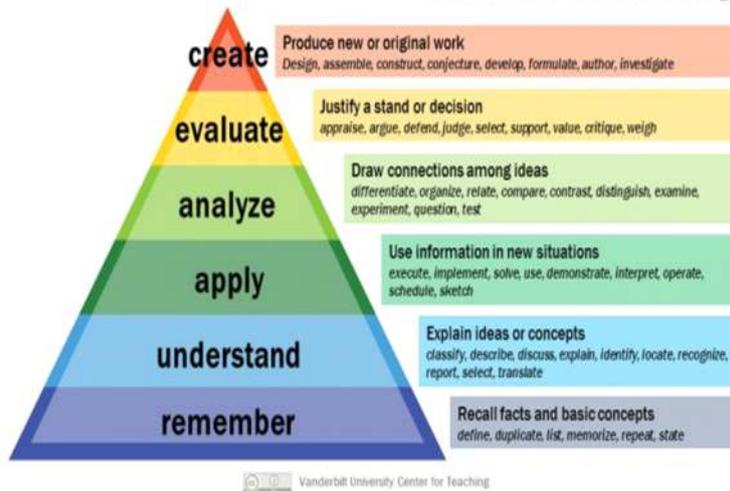
In the classroom, I would argue, we can provide opportunities for critical thinking in many lessons. For instance, every time you ask a student to give you a reason why they have answered a question in a particular way, they are thinking critically; evaluating what they have said and reasoning through their argument.

What I have just said relates back to bloom's taxonomy; mentioned in the last article:

Next to the word evaluate, for example, there are a number of ideas that relate to critical thinking.

What about classroom activities to promote critical thinking? Here are some subject/non-subject specific suggestions:

Bloom's Taxonomy



Think-pair-share, or any similar opportunity for
·Students to discuss ideas in pairs/larger groups.

·A debate on a topic, such as climate change. Encourage all the students to argue their case and to try to find solutions.

·Put a driving question on the board, asking the students to debate it in silence on a big piece of paper.

·Being stranded on a desert island with a minimal amount of equipment; how are you going to escape?

·Having to build a tower, out of newspaper and Sellotape, that must be able to hold the weight of a chocolate bar.

I am sure you can all come up with many more. (I suggest you write to the editor and, maybe, they can be published in a future magazine!)

As I finish this article, I would like to suggest that you listen to the CIPD podcast I mentioned above (the link is in the footnotes) and spend some time thinking about how you will develop your own students' critical thinking skills.

Thanks for reading. Until next time.



many errors that people will use in arguments; things that we should look out for. Examples include appealing to history and appealing to popularity. Now, as a good critical thinker, you can bring these errors to light and lead the argument in the correct direction. (I found an interesting list of errors, or fallacies, online. I can't vouch for its validity, but you might find it interesting.)

So, having considered critical thinking for ourselves, what about the students in the classroom? How can we support their development of critical thinking? Do we actually want them to develop the skill? (I think I would be doing a student a

DOES AN APPLE FALL AWAY FROM THE TREE?



CEBISILE MHLANGA

Hhohho Regional Secretary

In a space of a week, these are generalisations formed out of the attachment to gender issues as amongst those championing that field. Have you ever stopped to reminisce on why crowds resemble some homogeneity regarding their response to presenters? Such deliberations could be highly subjective, nevertheless, they still need some close scrutiny and interrogations.

Here is what caught one's attention to the extent of triggering the question if an apple falls away from its tree. The judgements are based on four presenters who had two different topics to address. They were working in pairs all with almost the same audience but in various venues. The first pair had a balance of sexes; male and female whereas the second one had both males addressing some financials and audit findings. And the former had been requested to speak on the working class consciousness. These two topics and their presenters came from two [2] different worlds; social sciences as well as commercials. Oh, maybe even that had an impact, who knows?

Now diverting focus to the entrants; educators of course who are leaders from various structures of our SNAT. The initial impression from any observer would be an assumption that they have endured so many dynamics as the classroom exposes them to such on a daily basis. Remember teachers are the only people who go to school from childhood until their last day at work. Then, should we assert that they tend to develop some immunity where participation is concerned? Or, could some safely argue that definitely, no apple falls away from its tree? The way they respond when a presenter is on the floor conversely depicts their clients. In a majority of cases when there is

trouble shooting, all hell breaks loose. Interestingly, an identical scene can be emulated by the 'tree'. In direct focus to the first pair and the female addresser, and her being the first to ascend the stage. For some reason, the audience just had their tongues wagging from the moment she opened her mouth and it could have triggered the contentious attitude from this figure behind the mic.

Mark my words, these are leaders and there is this adage of 'leading by example' insinuated where it matters. You will all agree that sometimes standing before a crowd can be intimidating and the responses would vary from one's personality to a plethora of other factors. Then, the expectations from our members of the esteemed general council could have been nothing but tolerance, especially because they too are constantly victims to a similar scenario as prescribed by their job descriptions. However, the whole room was abuzz with laughter and all sorts of informal counter discussions instead of being sensitive and alive to reality. And the most touching part was noting how a woman could be exposed to an environment that causes loss of assertiveness when gender championing advances teachings on advocating for opportunities for the disadvantaged minorities in leadership. A majority of attendees who displayed lack of interest were the same group aimed at being gradually initiated. These actions were utterly nothing to write home about.

On the contrary, when the male presenter got his fair share of an opportunity, everyone was all ears and appeared really taken. Honestly, he could have been eloquent and also advantaged by following his predecessor where he could

have noted all the strengths of the audience, and obviously capitalised on them. It could be beside the point that he brought in a different, articulate approach in addition to his advanced understanding of technological tools. The mic, power point and its other related devices like controlling the cursor are highly likely to affect ones eloquence. Women are prone to multi-tasking, but tables turn around once there are too many of these technicalities. All those could have created the unsavoury attitude from the former, but the expectation was for women leaders who are teachers to be more empathetic. Interestingly from the second event on financials and auditing, as much as one of the two males too could have resembled some homogeneity with the initial presenter in the former, he was not subjected to much scrutiny. The same audience was attentive throughout. Maybe, it had been a learning curve on how uncouth it had been to respond from the previous session. Even that would be an excellent gesture to be applauded.

Without beating about the bush, such needs to be ameliorated if the global trend is to get as many leaders groomed from the female pool. It is these elements of discrimination, gossip, backbiting which we must fight tooth and nail to allow the girls to rule the world. It is also the same girls who must hold the bull by its horns as they climb the ladder. Then the key models cannot be allowed to compromise the standards by causing a stare from those weaknesses. To craft iron ladies, let us see them fall and rise towards their destiny. It is after numerous falls that it shall dawn to them on how much hard work could pay. Our narratives must focus on motivating women to keep their heads high as they dash towards their goals. It cannot be women pulling down other women, the gospel has been loud enough. What strategies are necessary to make it visible?

As the whole scene unfolded, one ran short of some energy to get to the podium, pat this lady whispering into her ear how much she had to have a grip and how all the uncanny experience was ephemeral. This is the same passion to be advanced as the young lionesses are groomed; to confront, they must defy all odds; visible or invisible as everyone plays their part to eliminate the hurdles arrogantly posed. Introverts have their unique strengths and deserve an ear as much as our extroverts are accorded. Appreciating the various building blocks in our make-up could be another process to acknowledge how 'we' are because 'you' are.



An illustration of an apple falling from a tree [Courtesy Pic.]

INSTITUTIONS SIGN AND EMBRACE GBV CHARTER



BANDILE LUKHELE

Kwakha Indvodza Communications Assistant

Eswatini has a fairly robust policy and legal framework for dealing with gender-based violence, particularly following the enactment of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act in 2018.

The country is also party to several Regional and International human rights instruments that oblige government to take measures to protect all citizens, especially the vulnerable from violence and abuse.

Additionally, over the years, many interventions

have sought to contribute to the reduction of GBV. These include research to understand the drivers of and contributing factors to violence; awareness-raising and community education campaigns on GBV; training of members of the criminal justice system and service

providers; providing support to victims/ survivors of GBV to access medical, legal and counselling support as well as advocating for changes in law and policies that impact on GBV and establishing the relevant facilities to protect those experiencing GBV, such as safe houses. However, the rates of GBV continue to be high, and have been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Eswatini GBV Charter therefore, seeks to contribute to the work in this area by encouraging individual and institutional commitment to fight against gender-based violence in Eswatini. It

concerned about GBV, often do not know how they can contribute as; they are not part of or involved in any of the institutions or organizations that work on GBV. The Charter provides an opportunity for people who want to play a part to move from concern to action by displaying behaviour that does not condone any form of GBV and actively act against it wherever it occurs.

Where individuals are leaders in their sectors, the Charter encourages them to ensure that their institutions do their part by ensuring a culture of zero tolerance for GBV. This includes ensuring that institutional policies that address this issue, are adopted and implemented, such as putting in

place mechanisms for appropriate support to those reporting experiencing GBV in the institution and ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable. The Charter is an opportunity for all emaSwati, institutions, those in positions of influence, duty-

bearers and other decision-makers to join the nation in making a deep and profound commitment to ending violence in all sectors of our society. On the 5th of May 2022, Kwakha Indvodza and partners successfully hosted a high-level key signing event for



British High Commission Simon Boyden signing the GBV Charter (Courtesy Pic.)

acknowledges that everyone has a role to play, and that this individual commitment to play one's part at family, community and institutional levels can serve as a good example to others.

The Charter also seeks to fill the gap where many people, while

UNPACKING ESWATINI GBV CHARTER



SNAT President holding the signed GBV Charter at the SNAT Centre [Pic.SNAT Media].

In order to reach an online audience, Kwakha Indvodza and Partners also established an online pledging platform found on this link: <https://www.change.org/eswatinigbvcharter>. Through this platform, approximately 2 000 online signatures have been collected and more Swazis are still encouraged to make their pledges to end gender based violence in Eswatini.

Appreciation goes to the following institutions for taking a stand against gender-based violence.

the Eswatini Gender Based Violence Charter. This half day event was hosted at the Hilton Garden Inn in the country's capital city, Mbabane. The main objective of this key signing event was to establish buy-in from people of influence in the Kingdom of Eswatini to set in motion a domino effect that would result in more emaSwati taking a stand against gender-based violence in Eswatini. Experts on gender and violence from civil society organizations and government were invited to share best practices in developing effective strategies to actively prevent gender-based violence. This session allowed for participants to gain understanding on the state of Eswatini when it comes to issues of violence. Upon being sensitized, participants were then encouraged to sign the Eswatini Gender Based Violence Charter. Over 80 additional signatures from some of the country's most influential decision-makers were added to previously collected pledges.

This event attracted a total of seventy-one [71] participants who consisted of leaders of different sectors; civil society sector, private sector and government.

These specifically included;

- A.** The Honourable Minister of Sports, culture and Youth Affairs
- B.** The Deputy Prime Minister's Office
- C.** The Ezulwini and Mbabane Mayors in Council
- D.** Development partners (including United Nations Agencies, British High Commission, European Union Delegation to Eswatini and the United States Embassy)
- E.** Civil society organizations and partners
- F.** National Church Leaders
- G.** Financial Institutions

- SEDCO
- British High Commission
- Eswatini Breweries
- Status Capital Building Society
- Eswatini Electricity Company (EEC)
- Ezulwini Municipality
- Eswatini Observer
- Standard Bank Eswatini
- United States Embassy
- MTN Eswatini
- Swaziland National Teachers Association (SNAT)
- Rugby Union
- Construction Industry Council (CIC)



SWAGAA Director Ms. Nonhlanhla Dlamini holding the Eswatini GBV Photo Booth upon signing the Charter [Courtesy Pic].

IT'S ABOUT TIME FREE SECONDARY EDUCATION (FSE) IS INTRODUCED IN SWAZI SCHOOLS



WANDILE NGEMA

SNAT Media Writer

Without access to learning opportunities, our children face a lifetime of disadvantage. Seeing your hard work go to waste as a teacher is so disheartening. Coming across my former students who should be at secondary school, going around seeking piece jobs with all hope lost truly hurts. Seldom, these are learners with great potential. When Free Primary Education (FPE) was introduced in 2010, we heaved a sigh of relief. Though it remains fraught with challenges such as limited infrastructure and late payments, among many others, it was, nonetheless, a good project by the government.

A UNICEF Report on our school children in Swaziland shows a high number of dropouts in Form 2 and 4 citing financial problems as one of the major causes of the high number of school dropouts. The enrolment rate has consistently been above 90% in primary schools in 2015 but insanely 27.7% in junior secondary, falling further to below 15% in senior secondary in the same year.

While primary education is free, the cost of secondary education is a major barrier to many Swazis. This means that the FPE may not achieve its full

objective if a high number of children from primary fail to enroll for their secondary education. One cannot overlook the main cause of dropouts in teenage pregnancy but I feel that the issue of the cost of Secondary education needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. It is unfortunate that the government has not at least regulated fees in secondary schools as per the outcry of some parents in recent years.

The struggle to pay the exorbitant fees in Swazi schools is real with some schools charging around E9 000 per child a year (this is exclusive of transport fees). Perhaps we should mention that 58.9% of the rural population live below the national

I needs to be done. The introduction of FPE without making provisions for access to secondary or even higher education was a flawed strategy.

There were no arrangements made for what would happen further down the line. This has somehow jeopardized the good initiative of the FPE project. Not only did the high number of dropouts created uncertainty in the future of the Swazi child but it has led to an increase in the number of teenage pregnancy and cases of drug abuse, worsening the already fragile situation.

The government should adopt a policy backed by enough funding to support



poverty line (live on less than US\$1.90 a day) and the unemployment rate stands at 41% (with those employed earning merge salaries) according to the 2017 survey by the World Food Programme [WFP]. These households are expected to pay average E6 000 for their children's education or their children should stay home if they don't have bursaries. Isn't education a right according to the Sustainable Development Goals [SDG]? There is quite a lot that stil

all children through their secondary education. The two systems, Primary and Secondary education should be supportive. Free Secondary Education [FPE] should be phased in much the same way as FPE to realize the Education For All [FPE] initiative. Otherwise, the investment made in FPE will not yield any significant outcome going forward. A wise Chinese proverb says, "If you are planning for the future, educate people."

SNAT EAGLE, WHAT DO YOU SEE? CONTRACT TEACHERS



SIBUSISO MAMBA

SNAT Media Writer

Long live, SNAT, long live! It is certainly clear to all and sundry that teachers in Swaziland are going through their worst period in history. It is, however, also an uncontested fact that teachers are the engine of the education train. I am fully aware that government plays an oversight role in education by using experts in the field to advise the central government. It is expected that those experts should be in constant consultation with the Teachers' Union, the Swaziland National Association of Teachers [SNAT]. The Union is better placed to know what is going on the ground. The Union has agents such as shopstewards and structures such as Branch Executive Committees [BECs].

As far as I am concerned, constant consultation by government is an obligation, not a choice. However, if government becomes a god to the teachers and their Union, it spells doom for the entire education process. A god does not normally consult or even suggest, instead; it dictates to its subordinates and a concern by those below is misinterpreted as disobedience and rebellion. That could be a logical explanation why the SNAT is misconceived as a political party by some.

As a teacher myself, I know that we have genuine concerns about matters bothering our welfare. The welfare and wellbeing of teachers is priceless and has a direct impact on the quality of education. A compromised standard of education is a sabotage to the economy of any country, way more serious than arson attacks. There are words of wisdom from the Holy Book, the Bible in Proverbs 4:7 (NIV) which say, 'The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.' Nelson Mandela also once observed same when he said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." It is quality education that will sustain a nation,



Learners in a classroom during a lesson [File Pic.]

and quality education depends on well trained and motivated educators.

It is very unfortunate, I should say, that the current government, just like the previous one, is failing dismally in this regard. An interview conducted in one school in the country tells the true story of the state teachers are in. First in the interview was a comrade I will nickname 'Miss Old-horse', who has been in the profession since 1995. When asked about her feeling at the present moment concerning her long time profession, she answered, "I am not happy. Things are expensive in

shops, I can't survive." A further question was for her to suggest a solution to the demoralising feeling and she bluntly remarked, "A salary increment can reignite my passion." Since she has been in the profession for quite some time, I wanted to know if she had experienced what we are currently going through as civil servants in the years past? Her response was: "This is quite a new experience for me." Then there is another teacher I will christen 'Mrs Struggler', who is an ICT teacher and is employed by the school. She has been working in this school from 2016. Her school is in the countryside and it has a huge number of orphaned and vulnerable children. This means that the school relies more on government funding to pay her and the entire support staff.

These people play an equally important role in the smooth operation of the school. So we can all imagine how demotivated they get when they often skip months without receiving a pay cheque. Interviewed about how she was doing, she depressingly replied, "I am happy about my work. I am fond of ICT as a subject. But the work load is weighing heavily on me. I have too many classes with a lot of students. Don't be fooled by the number of periods. Planning is a challenge when you have so many classes. We are underpaid, judging by the amount of work I have to endure. There are skipped payment dates and at times it can be dry for months. Listening to her sad song, I asked her what she thought could be a way out of this misery and she replied: "I wish government could hire me."

Next in line was "Mrs Hardworker," a teacher who has been working

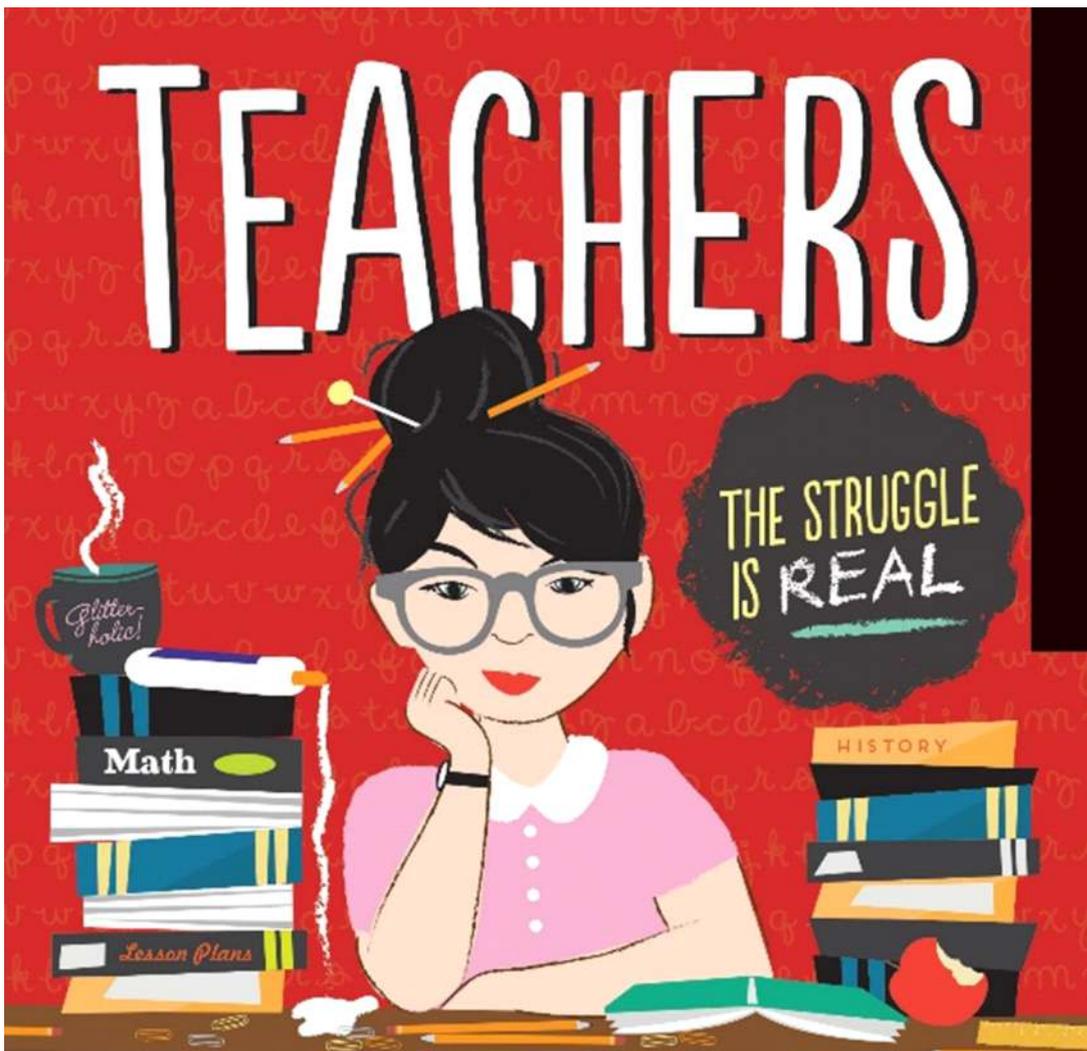
diligently on contracts since 2013. She is a Science teacher mind you. Science, just like ICT should be a priority to government. Countries with thriving economies invest a lot in these kinds of subjects. The United Kingdom is one good example. Back to my interview with Mrs Hardworker, here is what she had to say, "I am happy to be a teacher, I have since made peace with it though I considered my options at first. But there is lack of motivation, which hinders productivity. A salary increment can lift my spirit again."

Pressed further to comment on how working on contract affects her as an educator and a parent. This is what she said to me, "It has a lot of inconveniences. When my contract has come to an end and it is the beginning of an academic year, I often ask myself if I should resume teaching as a volunteer or I should stay at home? But there is an urge to start teaching the children of Emaswati and to also reduce the amount of work I would have to do by the time my contract gets renewed. Still I am always scared that a replacement might be on the way with a posting letter."

Mrs Hardworker shared her worries every year. She is often not sure if her children will continue in the nearest primary school in the following year. Also, she said that her pay often comes in late yet she still has to pay bills, look presentable as a teacher and be well nourished. Quizzed about possible solutions to her challenges

And after the contract has been renewed, it wouldn't be a bad idea to start receiving our salaries with immediate effect. I guess that is not too hard for a competent and performance driven government." May we all take a moment and imagine all these challenges that the teachers are going through almost on

a yearly basis. Pay days that used to lift their spirits have turned to be a depressing formality. Teachers carry with them emotional burdens, yet effective teaching demands a relaxed and focused mind. Government has to play her part to eliminate the destructive worries that teachers have to contend with these days. These are souls. Let them be compensated accordingly for their service. They must also



as a teacher working on contract, this is what she had to say: "I would suggest that our contracts be longer than two years, at least five years. I also want to have long term goals. If I happen to get a loan, it is usually small since my repayment period is short. I also wish that government would be swift in renewing our contracts, say as of December processing should have been resumed. That would enable me to commence my work on time.

space for them to teach and nurture children well. This also translates to family bonds. If our government has an iota of love for this nation, she would wake up to the plight of the teachers. Teachers are the potters and children are the clay. Keep the potter motivated and inspired, then expect magic on the clay. Government will never regret this, ever.

Salute, my leaders! SNAT is here to stay. Peace be with your hearts.

REFLECTING ON THE DEPLORABLE SITUATION OF THE WORKING CLASS IN THE COUNTRY



DOCTOR MANDLA KUNENE

Mliba Branch Columnist

The interview of the President Mbongwa Dlamini with the Swaziland Democratic News early this month, nearly tried to dissect the overall reflection of the socio-economic dynamics of the working class in the Kingdom, in the not so distant future. Citing the key elements, a retrogressive economy, a looming hyperinflation as a result of the Ukraine-Russia conflict, endemic unemployment of parents who pay school fees. Wage and salary freezes since the credit crunch of 2008 are a clear indication of a collapsing economy and the inability of the Tinkhundla government to govern which shall in turn compromise social development and mobility through

The interview of the President Mbongwa Dlamini with the Swaziland Democratic News early this month, nearly tried to dissect the overall reflection of the socio-economic dynamics of the working class in the Kingdom, in the not so distant future. Citing the key elements, a retrogressive economy, a looming hyperinflation as a result of the Ukraine-Russia conflict, endemic unemployment of parents who pay school fees. Wage and salary freezes since the credit crunch of 2008 are a clear indication of a collapsing economy and the inability of the Tinkhundla government to govern which shall in turn compromise social development and mobility through

Systems reviews, validating and updating programmes is one thing the Tinkhundla government is known to have dearth of skill or no urge to commit. This might be due to a number of reasons which might include: unqualified civil servants who have gained employment through corrupt practices, favoritism, nepotism, sexually transmitted employment, to mention a few.

Such negligence of an important sector in the economy can be appreciated in terms of poor service delivery, product quality, low wages and salaries, deregulation of the employment sector equity, like the two-year probation instead of three [3]



Public Sector Workers in a Protest in 2019
[SNAT Media]

months as enshrined in the Employment Act 1980, as amended. These are symptoms of a bigger problem which its explosion will ripple the effect to a majority of the population.

The President further alluded to the fact that teachers were not getting in writing their pay slips or salary advices on time. He mentioned that it would sometimes take a fortnight, yet such was needed in many institutions which dealt issues of money like banks and even in our cooperative to update, secure loans to supplement the meagre salaries and other needs.

There are new technological systems which such database can be made available online to any facility that needs it, but this manipulative government is not willing to erect such and do away with the archaic systems. A whole government can lack ink and paper to print out such it's an insult to efficient service delivery.

Social Security

The ripple effect created by this archaic standards managing labor and labor standards has serious negative consequences as the President stated with regards the collapse of the Public Service Pension Fund [PSPF]. Such systems are created upon strategic contingencies meant to sustain the fund based on increasing membership, which the fixed term contract mechanism adopted by this government has elements of collapsing the fund. This is despite the fact that we are cognizant of the fact that the ruling elite in an unholy alliance with the current Minister of Finance has helped themselves with the funds' monetary resources.

The collapse of such funds has negative connotations for posterity, which our children are supposed to benefit should we die, or incur a life a condition such that you can't sell your labor in the labor market. It goes without saying that such irresponsible leaders are a threat to many Swazis as it is stark clear that they don't understand the dynamics of establishing such facilities in a country.

Free Universal Education

Another critical area the President made mention of is the issue of school fees. The state of unconsciousness of parents with regards educational rights of their children or sometimes apathy with

regards the payment of school fees has militated what I may call "A still to be witnessed, unprecedented mass scale picketing of Parents." I am saying this because in principle, there is no regulatory mechanism the government has placed since COVID-19. Payment of school fees has been at the discretion of school administration which in many circumstances the determinant is felt pressure of paying non-academic staff. The formula for executing such vary and is never standard which is fertile ground to spike a volatile situation. Parents should know that the education of their children is a constitutional right: a United Nations Declaration enshrined in its Conventions. Education should be free from primary to tertiary. Some of the discrepancies of paying school fees come with the issue of Form 3 OVCs paying SZL 1,950.00 and Form 5s paying SZL 2,500.00 yet an ordinary child of a Swazi will be made to fork SZL 10 000, subsidizing the other student on behalf of the government. Where is equality in opportunity when it comes to such systemic fraudulent state activities executed in broad day light.

Dear parent, I think it's time you stand up, assertively position yourself to counter the criminal activities of the government. It started with citizens refueling graders to mend the road, a prescription for medical services in a public health unit and now a subsidy by the working class to OVCs on behalf of the government. If it can't regulate with efficiency, it cannot equitably redistribute wealth: it therefore, does not have a right to be called a government.

School Year Calendar

As gazette by the state, last years' school calendar ends in March. The failure by this government to instate a sound shift system during COVID has borne an educational down syndrome which it shall take years to recover. In actual fact the amount of time the children were at home is equivalent to two calendar years for a portion of learning made for three years. They have been promoted without being educated. This problem will have a ripple effect even to the employment sector with regards their effectiveness. This will slump production and product quality. While other countries instated efficient systems this government let it to be at the discretion of each school which will cause disparities in quality of the product they will produce. Trying to split yet this year to be a year and a half is another blunder meant to instill unnecessary pressure on the pupils which will also result in uneducated pupils. You ask yourself then, on what really is the objective? Passing

pupils to the next grade or quality. That's why it's not easy for Swazi pupils to learn at national school and enroll at a university of their choice across the world.

It is said by the government external examinations are going well in school yet the President alluded to the fact that some pupils have dropped out because they have lost faith in the system of government which has repeatedly failed to restore order in the volatile situations around schools and in other sectors of the economy.

Salary Reviews

It goes without saying that the issue of salary reviews is a real thorn for the government and ponders a threat of industrial action in not so distant future. Since the salary freezes of the credit crunch there has been no health negotiation between the government and its work force. This is a clear indication of a government which embezzles public funds for self-interest and give nothing to their labor



force which is the engine of the economy. The mathematics is clear. The GDP of the is Kingdom draws between SZL 24Billion to SZL 35Billion annually. Compare that with the +/-1,2 Million population. With equitable redistribution of wealth Swazis should be a well off nation. It is clear then that someone is emptying the public coffer as he or she pleases and that big rat should be caught, chained to work for the money embezzled. It is very clear there can be no salary reviews if the self-confessed owner of everything in Swaziland has started venturing in the Airbus business, where his acquisitions are financed through the public purse, and a permanent solution to such must be sought quickly.

Role of the SNAT in the liberation movement Let's by way of summary, entangle ourselves with the most inefficiently responded question by the President, and I don't know why, I should think he has his reservations though for a noble reason. I always set down by myself, try to analyze the role players in the struggle. My analysis always showed about three [3] main categories which are, political parties, civic sector organizations

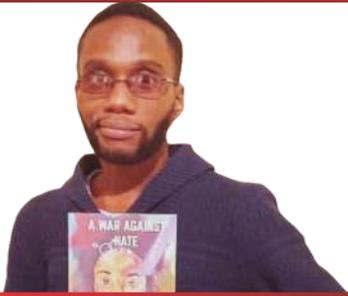
and labor unions. Their roles in a nutshell, political parties want to replace government, civic sector organs are just pressure and interest groups and labor unions are the fuel and engine of the struggle. I shall not analyze the rest but labor unions. Labor unions create wealth, to topple the regime anywhere across the world yet they do not contest political power directly but they finance the struggle as they are the working class. Let me just make an example of financing, if all civil servants today including our members today can set up a "Swaziland Unrest Crisis Fund" and collect SZL 5 from each we can be able to finance the activities of the struggle, train defense units in shooting, intelligence and many other needs for the struggle which I might not hint here. It might be easy because the units of employees are organized and could collectively bargain easily. Many of the answers of the triumph of the struggle in Swaziland lies with labor unions.

They join hands with the poorest of the poorest commissions to execute such a mandate. Here they use their created wealth. Secondly note, they are the fourth arm of the state apparatus and they are the engine out of which government functions. They form the unions because they are employees of the state are bureaucrats, which means it's the Executive, Judiciary, Legislature, Bureaucracy and the Media. If labor union stop selling their labor to government en masse that government is collapsed and they take over the

means of production to usher in a new dispensation which either might be socialist or communist. The methodology for doing such include, mass stay aways, en masse resignations, stay ins, industrial actions, internet activism to mention but a few.

I cross my fingers if the liberation movement has to succeed the only people who share a bigger portion of the power to make it happen are labor unions including our SNAT. We can't be sustaining the businesses of an oppressive regime and at the same time expect we are winning the struggle. It's not going to happen up until, civil servants down tools that there be no service at all. No passport, travel document, certificate, health services, water electricity, retail services, no schooling, university etc. We shove the fragile and faint hearted to asylum either in Mozambique or South Africa. We as the working class are working and sustaining the government yet others are picketing calling for liberation. It's called "A contradiction of the liberating Forces."

I still really think my leaders we are supporting the struggle but we are not committing to it.

**THAMI MAGONGO**

Author and Poet

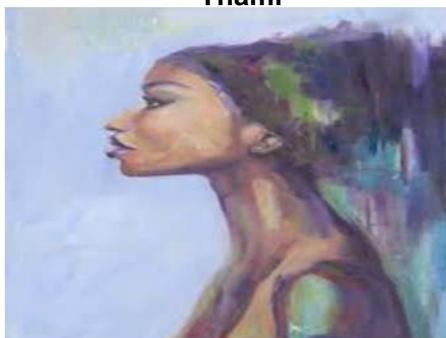
I HAVE SEEN THE WORLD

I have seen the world
It is not looking good
Today
A man raped a baby
Yesterday
The same man told me
"have you seen how women dress
lately"
I have seen the world
It makes me sick to my stomach
A man killed and burnt a woman's
body
Said she didn't want him back
Said if he cannot have her
Nobody can
She was gloriously beautiful
Her eyes were glowing with kindness
Her smile was beaming with light and
joy
Her beauty was out of this world
And I have seen this world
I made eye contact with this world
Ashamed and angry
I asked the world
"What else don't I know about you?
Can you care about humanity for a
change?"
~Thami



WOMAN OF THE WORLD

This is real
I want to tell you how I feel
Woman of the world
Who embodies her feminine might
Who embodies countless gifts
Some say all of them
I say one among us who was born
destined to lead
You are the most fearsome thing that
ever lived
Woman of the world
I must confess
I could sit here and boo-hoo my
choices
I know when a lie is being told
And I protect the truth
Woman of the world
I must confess
Something potentially far more grave
has come to my attention
You taught me everything I know
You know how I lauded you?
Waloped the door on you
Queried your competence
Cracked your head open on the
pavement
Cracked it open like an egg
I was the last one to see you alive
Buried you deep
Watched you decay
Woman of the world
Who embodies intelligence with
grace
Roses pull in love and romance
That's not what you're looking for
right now
Now, last night
As you were coming into your own
As you were flexing your muscles
I wanted to tell you the truth
The only thing I cannot refuse you
Woman of the world
~Thami



THE LITTLE TURN TO THE DARK SIDE

Hoodwink?
An illusion?
I came home
I was still lost
A terrible thirst
Where is my happy ending?
We started with so much hope
My future pink
Wrapped in silk
A real destination
An illusion?
I came home
Back to this side
Back to life
Shed my pain
Carried my pain
Like a man with a sack full of rocks
crossing a river
One foul step
I go under
An illusion?
An illusion of control
I came home
My little kingdom a mess
A mess like nothing was ever there
Challenging me to be very
understanding
It's quite a cold sweat indeed
My song was different this time
Rustling and whispering
Whispering a secret aloud
Secrets of the other side
What is your secret?
I want what you have
I have tasted humility
Humility out there in the streets I
have tasted
Munched everything they put in front
of me
Plenty of the hard stuff to numb
myself
Responding to the inevitability of it all
Exquisitely damaged
I came home
~Thami



IT WILL WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD FOR YOU



WELCOME NGWENYA

Anointed Man of God

The Word of God that says God works for our good "in all things" is reassuring. It means that no matter the circumstance, something will do.

Romans 8:28: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose," (Romans 8:28; NIV).

How can things like death and disease work together for our good?

How can God permit a global pandemic and work that for our good?

How can God bring chronic anxiety, or depression, and work that for our good? What about divorce, miscarriage, war, earthquakes, tsunamis...the list is seemingly endless.

No matter how optimistic you are, some things just suck. Things like war, death, human trafficking, and the like are awful.

But our God is more powerful than all the forces of evil and all the rotten things that happen in our lives. God took death itself and used it to redeem all of humanity. He reached down into the depths of our brokenness and began the restoration process.

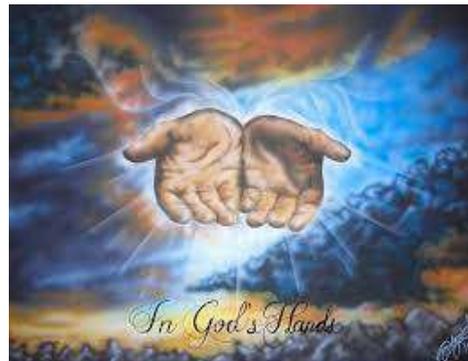
And so, Romans 8:28 does not mean that all things are good, but rather that God is redeeming all things. He is "making all things new." (Isaiah 43:19; Revelation 21:5).

God is taking all of creation, even the broken stuff, and renewing and redeeming it. We should focus on the more important truth that God is bigger than all our tragedies, all our losses and our failures.

Evil doesn't win. In fact, in Christ's death and resurrection, God entered into our brokenness and He redeemed the whole of it.

In every situation you see, you face, you hear, you are in, it will work together for good for you. God can use a broken pencil to draw a straight line. Faith and believing God is necessity for a believer. Heb. 11: 1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Substance means the real physical matter of which a person or thing consists and which has a tangible,



We are all in the hands of God [Courtesy Pic.]

solid presence. While evidence is anything that you see, experience, read, or are told that causes you to believe that something is true or has really happened.

Through Faith we see physical things. Through Faith we see, experience, believe in things. So believe that your pain, frustration, disappointment, shame, ridicule, setbacks, continuous failure, continuous mistakes, continuous broken hearted, your disease, your losses will work together for good for you through Faith.

2nd Corinth 5: 7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.

Even when you are an orphan and vulnerable, it will work for good. It worked for Esther from orphanage to Queenship. Even if you hated by your family

members, it will work for good, it worked for David from shepherd boy to Kingship.

Even if they want to kill you without any purpose, it will work for good for you. It worked for David when King Saul wanted to kill him. He failed because God never allowed it.

Even if they kill you without purpose, it will work for good for you. It worked for Jesus. They thought by killing Him, they have finished the Church yet that was the beginning of the Church.

Even if you are hated by your family members, it will work for good. It worked for Joseph in the foreign land. He became Prime Minister, yet his brothers sold him thinking they are destroying his dreams.

No one can destroy what God has put in you unless God has allowed.

Joseph, they thought it was over yet the beginning of his dream.

Who sold you?
Who hates you?
Who betrayed you?
Who let you down?
Who killed your child, friend, spouse, relatives?
Who is following you for evil?
Who pained you, lied upon you, bad mouthed you?

Cry no more! Fear not! Begin to celebrate! Begin to thank God, because God is saying, all this that has befallen you.

IT WILL WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD FOR YOU FROM NOW ON! BELIEVE GOD! TRUST GOD! EXPECT GOD! NEVER LOSE HOPE IN GOD.

The glory of God that killed the Egyptians is the same glory that saved the Israelites.

The water that destroyed the wicked world is the same water that saved Noah! The same river that drowned Hebrews boys' children is the same river where MOSES was pulled out from.

IT WILL WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD FOR YOU!!!

AMEN

RELEVANT LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHERS

- ☞ The Constitution of Swaziland Act No.001/2005
- ☞ The Industrial Relations Act No.001/2001 [as amended]
- ☞ The Employment Act No.05/2005 [as amended]
- ☞ The Code of Good Practice, Section 109
- ☞ The Occupational Safety and Health Act No.009/2001
- ☞ The Workmen's Compensation Act No.0007/1983
- ☞ The Environmental Management Act No.005/2005
- ☞ The Retirement Funds Act No.005/2005
- ☞ Pensions Order, 1993
- ☞ Children's Protection and Welfare Act No.006/2012
- ☞ Public Finance Management Act No.10/2010
- ☞ Children's Policy, 2009
- ☞ Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act No.15/2018
- ☞ Public Order Act No.12/2017
- ☞ Public Service Act (undergoing amendment, Bill of 2014)
- ☞ Prevention of Corruption Act No.003/2006
- ☞ Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act, No.67/1938
- ☞ People Trafficking and People Smuggling (prohibition) Act, 2009
- ☞ Suppression of Terrorism Act No.11/2017
- ☞ Cooperatives Societies Act No.005/2003
- ☞ Financial Services Regulatory Authority Act No.002/2010
- ☞ Gender Policy, 2010
- ☞ Consumer Credit Act No.007/2016
- ☞ General Orders Governing the Conditions of Service of Public Officers, 1964

MOET LAWS

- ☞ Education and Training Sector Policy, 2018
- ☞ Education Act No.009/1981
- ☞ Teaching Service Act No.001/1982
- ☞ Teaching Service Regulations, 1983
- ☞ Council of Educators Act
- ☞ Free Primary Education Act No.001/2010
- ☞ Council of Higher Education Act
- ☞ Examinations Order

In Denver, the members of a Sunday-school class were asked to set down their favorite biblical truths. One youngster laboriously printed: *"Do one to others as others do one to you."*

Manners

A Christian farmer spent the day in the city. In a restaurant for his noon meal, he sat near a group of young men.

After he bowed his head to give thanks for his food, one of the young men thought he would embarrass the old gentleman. "Hey, farmer, does everyone do that out where you live?"

The old man calmly replied, "No, son, the pigs don't!

VACUUM CLEANER SALESMAN

A LITTLE OLD LADY ANSWERED A KNOCK ON THE DOOR ONE DAY, ONLY TO BE CONFRONTED BY A WELL-DRESSED YOUNG MAN CARRYING A VACUUM CLEANER. "GOOD MORNING," SAID THE YOUNG MAN. "IF I COULD TAKE A COUPLE OF MINUTES OF YOUR TIME, I WOULD LIKE TO DEMONSTRATE THE VERY LATEST IN HIGH-POWERED VACUUM CLEANERS.

"GO AWAY!" SAID THE OLD LADY. "I HAVEN'T GOT ANY MONEY!" AND SHE PROCEEDED TO CLOSE THE DOOR..

QUICK AS A FLASH, THE YOUNG MAN WEDGED HIS FOOT IN THE DOOR AND PUSHED IT WIDE OPEN. "DON'T BE TOO HASTY!" HE SAID. "NOT UNTIL YOU HAVE AT LEAST SEEN MY DEMONSTRATION." AND WITH THAT, HE EMPTIED A BUCKET OF HORSE MANURE ONTO HER HALLWAY CARPET. "IF THIS VACUUM CLEANER DOES NOT REMOVE ALL TRACES OF THIS HORSE MANURE FROM YOUR CARPET, MADAM, I WILL PERSONALLY EAT THE REMAINDER."

THE OLD LADY STEPPED BACK AND SAID, "WELL I HOPE YOU'VE GOT A DAMNED GOOD APPETITE, BECAUSE THEY CUT OFF MY ELECTRICITY THIS MORNING."

Two eggs, a bagel, and a sausage walk into a bar. *"Bartender, my friends and I would like a cold one,"* says one of the eggs.

"Sorry," the barman replies. *"We don't serve breakfast."*

The Devil

George Bush, Queen Elizabeth, and Vladimir Putin all die and go to hell.

While there, they spy a red phone and ask what the phone is for. The devil tells them it is for calling back to Earth.

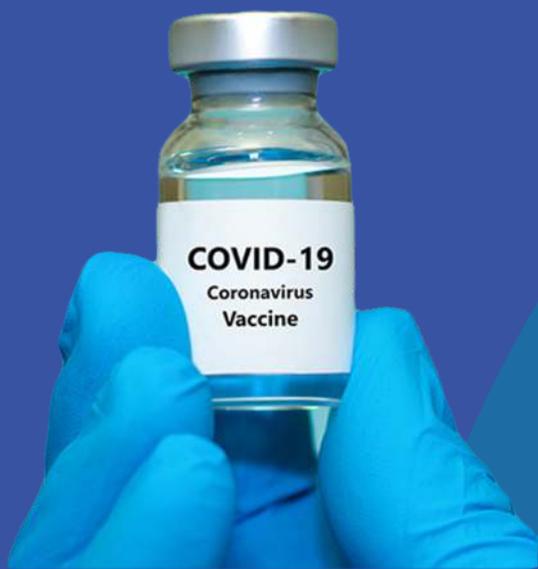
Putin asks to call Russia and talks for 5 minutes. When he is finished, the devil informs him that the cost is a million dollars, so Putin writes him a cheque. Next Queen Elizabeth calls England and talks for 30 minutes. When she is finished, the devil informs her that the cost is 6 million dollars, so she writes him a cheque.

Finally George Bush gets his turn and talks for 4 hours. When he is finished the devil informs him that the cost is \$5.00.

When Putin hears this he goes ballistic and asks the devil why Bush got to call the USA so cheaply. The devil smiles and replies: "Since Obama took over, the country has gone to hell, so it's a local call."



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