

## LOCAL INNOVATION

*Many Community Work Programme (CWP) sites around the country have responded to local conditions – and the skills available in the community – to start a range of different innovative activities on their own initiative that complement the work in the CWP.*

### REJUVENATION

**Bez Valley murals:** In the area around Ellis Park in Troyeville in Johannesburg, the CWP conducted a three-month campaign in honour of the 2010 Soccer World Cup, cleaning streets, painting murals on vacant lots and community buildings, and assisted community-based organisations to transform public spaces, including making mosaics on park walls, and cleaning existing public art such as the mosaics under the Joe Slovo Bridge. The campaign encouraged community support for welcoming visitors to the area, which is close to one of the main stadiums.

**Painting the home of the elderly for Christmas:** Matatiele participants in the Eastern Cape ran a Brighter Christmas campaign in December and painted the homes of elderly people who live alone – ‘brightening’ their houses. Paint was donated by community members and the CWP participants did the work.

**Back to school campaign:** In Harrismith, the CWP launched a “Back to school” campaign in January, which involved landscaping of school grounds, brightening the premises with paint jobs, establishing school gardens and giving each school a thorough cleaning. Initially targeted at a few schools, the campaign spread to all schools in the community.

**Red carpet in a township:** Participants at Kagiso, a township in Mogale City, made good on their promise to deliver a red-carpet moment at the township entrance. This community entrance was almost reduced to a dumping site but was salvaged when CWP participants gave it a total makeover. It was turned into beautiful flower crockery, totally pleasing to the eye. The rocks were painted red to create a striking welcoming feel for both visitors and residents. Community members have expressed their happiness, saying “this has instilled a sense of pride” in them as residents of Kagiso. The flower rockery is so attractive that people from neighbouring townships have shown interest in learning how to replicate this in own areas.

### SITE ORGANISATION

**Munseville:** The community of Munseville, previously divided by political differences, found peace through the CWP. A unity of purpose created by working together on the programme saw participants reaching an agreement to contribute towards buying protective equipment. This was necessitated by a delay in the



delivery of protective clothing. In this community, CWP participants managed to turn a difficult situation into an opportunity to exercise and solidify ties, demonstrating how the CWP is becoming a catalyst for social cohesion.

**Allocating tasks in Mthwalume:** Even with 1 000 participants, Mthwalume participants in KwaZulu-Natal were not always producing the desired results. There was no clear work allocation plan and as a consequence many participants got sucked into idleness, and many loitered around during working hours. A clearly defined and comprehensible work allocation plan was designed and rolled out, with positive results. To give an example, a food garden measuring 22m by 1.5m would be allocated to 10 participants who would execute tasks as follow: four would clean and prepare garden beds, the other four would plant seedlings, and the remaining two would fetch water from a nearby river. If the eight participants allocated to prepare the garden completed their tasks before 2.00pm, they would then assist the other two with fetching water from the river. This allocation of tasks initiative has assisted in measuring the CWP activities on site.

## PARTNERSHIPS

**Randfontein:** The local CWP has formed a partnership with a dynamic pastor, who has been running the Mohau Home Based Care (HBC) initiative since 1999 to assist people living with chronic illnesses and other diseases and can therefore not take care of themselves. Most of the people who assist in the caring have HIV themselves, and are committed to their work, which they execute with enthusiasm. The Mohau HBC has been instrumental in skills development of CWP participants. Consolation Bankisi and Lucky Gibo are among 15 CWP participants who have now managed to secure permanent employment at the centre.

## COMMUNICATIONS

**Collect-a-book campaign:** Intimidated by the thought of entering a library, participants at Meriting remained determined to find a way create access to books in a desirable environment. They embarked on a collect-a-book campaign with the aim of establishing a community reading centre. A call was made to community members to donate old books and any reading material they thought valuable – and the response was positive. The reading centre, which many regard as their “mini library”, operates from a community centre and also benefits children from a neighbouring school that does not have a library. Their motto is: “Knowledge is power”.

**Bohlabelo newsletter:** A desire to promote awareness about CWP activities in Bohlabelo gave birth to a community newsletter. CWP participants have cast themselves in the role of “community journalists” responsible for story collection. These stories include general community projects and events, the work of CWP, its achievements and benefits. This exposure and experience has equipped these participants with basic writing and interviewing skills. The publication has strengthened the voice of the previously voiceless and marginalised while evoking much interest within local and national government departments. It also serves as an advocacy tool for community-based organisations that are featured on quarterly.

## REACHING OUT

**Randfontein:** CWP co-ordinators and staff have an initiative called Moneelo, loosely translated as “giving”, which aims at assisting poverty-stricken families by donating clothes and food parcels collected from community and corporate organisations. In Ward 28, families received food parcels and clothes, while the children were treated to a warm bath, home-cooked food and toys. Moneelo is also helping a family where both parents are unemployed whose house burned down leaving two children with severe injuries.

## YOUTH

**Youth seize an opportunity:** The Erasmus Youth Forum has been trying to secure funding for a youth centre for years with no luck. They then decided to include how they planned to use the CWP to establish a centre in one of the proposals. Their plan became a reality when their proposal for funding to the Ubuntu Botho Women and Youth Development was approved. CWP participants renovated an old primary school for the Erasmus Youth Development Centre. The centre is fully equipped with computers and offers services such as computer lessons, access to internet, faxing, copying and income earned is used for its sustainability.

**Youth against crime:** A high number of bank accounts opened during the inception of CWP in Merafong showed that many participants had not operated an ATM before. Most of them had accounts at the Post Office, which they used mainly to draw pension and social grants. They voiced their anxiety about using ATMs, made worse by the fear of being mugged. Younger participants decided to step in and accompany the elderly to the ATM. This initiative is done in collaboration with the FNB in Merafong and has afforded elders some form of security. They take pride in the younger generation for doing what many youth shy away from, that is caring for “parents”.

## USING DRAMA

**Dukuduku:** The idea of the CWP social group staging plays with relevant themes was first proposed at a community meeting. It was embraced fully by the community and a series of successful plays have been staged. One of these was presented ahead of a forecasted influx of foreign tourists into Zwelisha and looked at the value of tourists, how tourists should be treated, and the negative effect that crime directed at tourists would have on the local economy. Another play presented prior to the local government elections tackled political tolerance.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Beekeeping in Bohlabela:** Five hundred potential beekeepers from the CWP in Bohlabela tasted the sweetness of honey when they were offered an opportunity to train as beekeepers by African Honey Bee, a social entrepreneurial business with expertise in organic beekeeping, in partnership with Skills Africa. These potential beekeepers were trained in harvesting honey, assembling and repairing hives, frames, and other equipment. This programme is supported by the Mpumalanga Provincial Government, and could be used as an empowerment tool in the poverty-stricken community of Bohlabela. With practice the CWP participants could move on and invest in income-generating projects that eventually leave them in charge.

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT

**Dukuduku, Mbazwane and Dlangubo:** The construction of jungle gyms in schools and crèches forms part of the CWP early child development support activities in the sites in Zululand. This initiative supports the notion of ‘a child who doesn’t play doesn’t learn’. The objective is to have early childhood development (ECD) centres with playing facilities that provide learning appropriate for children. A jungle gym is a tool that stimulates a child’s motor skill, such as hand co-ordination. Each part is therefore constructed in such a way that will assist the child to better develop specific aspects. A group of participants has now identified a niche in the local manufacturing sector and started with training on how to design these types of jungle gyms. The plan is to form a co-operative that will supply jungle gyms to crèche’s and schools in other areas.

**Wooden cut-offs for educational toys:** The high cost of educational toys made it difficult for ECD centres in Dlangubo in KwaZulu-Natal to acquire the correct teaching aids for child development. Disabled CWP participants embarked on a do-it-yourself initiative and have since transformed wooden cut-offs into various educational toys. Wooden cut-offs are shaped into different blocks (square, circle, triangle) which are then painted in various colours using natural, non-toxic dyes. These are then donated to local ECD centres and make great educational toys.

## HELPING THE ELDERLY

**Mokgalwana:** People would be forgiven for throwing away the piles of chair frames that were stored at a community hall in Mokgalwana in North West Province. These iron frames were what was left of chairs once used during community gatherings at the hall. As a result, Mokgalwana residents, particularly elderly people would miss out on important community gatherings as they would have to stand or sit on the floor because there were no chairs. CWP stepped in and restored these broken chairs. They collected the plastic strips used by brick manufacturers to keep bricks together during transportation and used these to revive the chairs. This initiative has resulted in much improved attendance at meetings.

## AGRICULTURE

**Green Impis:** This is the name given to CWP homestead and community gardeners in Zululand. Equipped with a Green Impi Tool-pack, a pack consisting of all garden utensils, the Green Impis



receive training in permaculture and thereafter look at resources available in the area to make as many gardens as possible. Part of the training focuses on organic farming and includes mulching and garden design. These participants then return to their own communities and share their agricultural knowledge to ensure sustainable homestead and communal gardens.

## REFUGEE DAY

**Meriting:** Rising ethnic tensions in Meriting in Rustenberg laid fertile ground for xenophobic attacks and became the focus of International Refugee day, a day aimed at promoting awareness around the rights of refugees and harmonising relations among people from diverse cultural and racial backgrounds. Mkululi Maboza, a CWP co-ordinator, highlighted an increase in squabbles among members in his community. Maboza feared that if the squabbles are not contained and managed they could result in xenophobic violence as witnessed in 2008.

In Meriting non-citizens from Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Somalia and Malawi make up a large number of the community. This is also the case in Bokfontein, but Bokfontein residents were able to avoid xenophobic attacks by maintaining harmony. A platform was created where community members from Bokfontein could have a conversation with tension-ridden Meriting on how they have achieved community integration. Phaphama Institute facilitated a dialogue on conflict management principles.

Those who attended signed a banner, which was put up as a reminder of a pledge to unify communities. They also shared the rights of non-citizens through talks and pamphlets. Participants performed poems and songs condemning xenophobic actions and words. Diverse cultural group also gave performances.

This profile is part of a series that looks at local innovation in the South African government’s Community Work Programme (CWP). It was produced by Trade & Industrial Policy Strategies (TIPS) for the Department of Cooperative Governance (DCoG). For more information about the CWP go to [www.cogta.gov.za/cwp](http://www.cogta.gov.za/cwp).