

ENGAGEMENT

in the EC community



EC nursing college transformed through partnerships, governance, restructured courses Lilitha now SA's 'benchmark'

LILITHA College of Nursing, which produces the majority of the Eastern Cape's nurses, has become the country's benchmark nursing college.

Today, all nursing colleges countrywide are required to become Higher Education Institutes (HEIs), with all nursing programmes re-curriculated to ensure that nursing qualifications are pegged at Higher Education levels – and Lilitha is well on its way to attaining this.

Over the past five years, just about all of its academic staff have completed nursing education diplomas – and many of them are now pursuing honours, master's and doctoral qualifications. New clinical simulation labs have been set up at each of the five main Lilitha campuses, enabling student nurses to be trained in labs that simulate real hospital situations. The college's courses have been restructured, its examination procedure has become world class and its structures have improved.



Prof Dalena van Rooyen



Prof Esmeralda Ricks

Lilitha principal Nomvuyiseko Links attributes all of these triumphs to a highly-successful collaborative project – called *Sokhula Sonke* (a Xhosa phrase meaning “we will grow and build together”) – which is managed by Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), in partnership with Lilitha and the Department of Health. It was started with the aim of improving Lilitha's training and research capacity.

“The main impact of this project has been capacity building, and specifically the academic develop-

ment of our academic staff across all academic programmes,” said Links.

“Prior to this project, a shortage of [fully-trained] academic staff had been one of the main challenges Lilitha faced ... Another part of the project which has been very effective has been the focus on governance and leadership, which has helped put the mechanisms in place, in terms of the documents and policies required, for a Higher Education academic nursing programme.

“We are participating in the national programme [to become an HEI] ... Lilitha is the country's benchmark college because of *Sokhula Sonke*.”

Prof Esmeralda Ricks, NMMU's Head of Department of Nursing Sciences, and project manager of *Sokhula Sonke*'s first phase, said one accomplishment of the project that can't be measured, but is indeed tangible, is the sense of pride emanating from staff and students in the rejuvenated college,

which spreads across five campuses situated in Lusikisiki, Mthatha, Queenstown, East London and Port Elizabeth, each with their own satellite campuses, totaling 13. “Apart from the whole change in the environment, you can see there's a whole different culture at Lilitha. Staff and students feel proud.”

NMMU's involvement in this project began in 2008, when Lilitha was



HERO FOREVER ... A young girl hugs a statue of Nelson Mandela, which forms part of a collection crafted by Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University art students, as part of a public art project to help change the face of Port Elizabeth's inner city. The Mandela sculpture, along with those of other struggle stalwarts, forms part of an installation called “Conversations with the Queen”, which will be installed outside Port Elizabeth's Main Library in Vuyisile Mini Square (formerly Market Square), alongside the Queen Victoria statue. (See page 5.)

awarded R13,8 million from Atlantic Philanthropies in the United States. NMMU had assisted the nursing college with its proposal for funding – and was then asked by Atlantic to manage the project. Though the first

phase ended in 2011, such was its success that in 2013, Atlantic asked NMMU to manage a second phase of the project, which is being headed up by Prof Dalena van Rooyen, NMMU's former Nursing

Sciences' Department Head. “We are confident that by the time the project ends [in 2016], Lilitha will be an example to other institutions, and produce high-calibre nurses for our province and country,” said Van Rooyen.

TECHNOLOGY:
VISIONARY CHIEF
CONNECTING LIVES
P3



LAND:
NEW GRASS
OFFERS RURAL
SOLUTIONS
P4



HEALTH:
ALL ABOARD FOR
WELLNESS
P5



GROWING LEADERS ... Akhona Gcasamba (left) and Leizel Jagers (middle), first- and third-year Psychology students, respectively, are participants in this year's Beyond the Classroom (BtC) leadership programme, coordinated by NMMU's Kim-Marie Elliott.

Voluntary work programme transforms lives

“THE students who volunteer at our centre are good role models for the children – and also give our children a sense of possibility.”

So says Travis Marshall, programme manager of the Eastern Province Child and Youth Care Centre, which each year welcomes about 15 student volunteers from Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU).

The students help the children with their homework, coach sport and run stimulating educational programmes for them. “They are not being selfish – they are giving back. This is the type of attitude we want our children to have.”

The students are members of an innovative student leadership programme, which requires participants to give 20 hours of voluntary community work, and is creating a new generation of responsible citizens. “We've had students who continue volunteering

long after their 20 hours are complete,” said Marshall.

Since 2009, students across all disciplines and walks of life have been signing up for the eight-month NMMU-run programme – called Beyond the Classroom (BtC). Participation has grown to around 280 students a year. The BtC programme is also developing students for their future careers, by equipping them with skills that are likely to enhance their future employability.

The learning achieved through BtC reflects on their co-curricular record, an initiative pioneered by NMMU, in which students not only receive their academic record from the university, but also a formalised record of the learning achieved through out-of-the-classroom involvements. “It's about becoming responsible citizens.” says BtC coordinator Kim-Marie Elliot.

Meeting maths, science tuition needs with technology-based solutions

Nurturing talent in poorer schools

IN his final exams last year, Cradock matriculant Mava Qolo achieved 96% for maths and 92% for science – a remarkable result for a learner in a historically-disadvantaged school in rural Eastern Cape, where the country’s ongoing education crisis continues to affect many schools.

Qolo, 18, was the top-achieving learner in previously disadvantaged schools in the Cradock district – and the district itself was recognised as the third best nationally, out of 81 districts, in terms of improvement in mathematics over the past four years, and the second best, in terms of improvement in physical science, over the same period.

It is no coincidence that, also four years ago, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University’s innovative technology-linked but offline teaching and learning model for maths and science – developed by the university’s Govan Mbeki Mathematics Development Unit (GMMDU) – was first introduced in this district.

Edgar Klaasen, Cradock’s Acting District Director, said GMMDU’s programmes “contributed significantly to our Mathematics and Physical Science Grade 12 results over the past four years ... These accolades would most definitely not have come our way without [GMMDU’s] intervention.”

Many learners in rural districts of the Eastern Cape are trying to pass matric maths or science in classrooms that have no teachers. Or with teachers that are under-qualified, and do not properly understand the content they are teach-

ing. The result is that many promising learners fail to reach their full potential, limiting their career possibilities.

To try and prevent this from happening, GMMDU has developed a unique teaching and learning model that empowers teachers as professional 21st century practitioners and gives learners in the majority of neglected Eastern Cape secondary schools a chance at boosting their marks and qualifying for tertiary education.

The model’s high-tech nature appeals to the demands of today’s teenagers – the so-called “digital generation”. Qolo, who is now studying mechatronics at NMMU, has called the model “the greatest resource”.

To date, it has been rolled out in a number of the Eastern Cape’s 23 districts – making a difference in the lives of more than 2,000 learners (who received tablets and special digital resources; many of these learners are now busy completing degree courses at university) and 700 teachers (who have received laptops and digital support packages) and there are plans to roll out the programme in more provinces.

“We have always focused on urgent short-term solutions to help



STAR PUPIL ... Cradock’s Mava Qolo, 18, was Matthew Goniwe Comprehensive School’s most outstanding matriculant last year – and the top pupil from previously-disadvantaged schools in the Cradock district.

learners with potential – those school qualification,” said GMMDU head Prof Werner Olivier, who also holds a FirstRand Foundation (FRF)

Chair in Mathematics Education.

The teaching and learning model – which saw GMMDU winning the university’s Engagement Excellence Award last year, as well as a national Impumelelo Social Innovations Gold Award in 2013 – has evolved to the point where the entire curricula for Grade 10, 11 and 12 maths and science are available on a tablet, for learners to work through after school hours as a type of “personal tutor”.

The model takes the form of video-based lessons, animated Power Point presentations, calculator and exam revision videos, experiments, simulations and the other visual high-tech digital resources, put together in a user-friendly offline package.

In parallel, and through each stage of its development, the FRF Chair has tested the model in 10 Port Elizabeth schools. The central digital support package for the techno-blended model, called TouchTutor, also has interactive self-assessment and feedback, along with a Mxit-based maths and science curriculum-support system. The support package is constantly being upgraded, based on research into the experiences of those who use it, through the projects implemented by the GMMDU and FRF Chair.

An integrated digital look-up (where learners can look up meanings of words) and translation functionality (into six different African languages) is currently being embedded as part of the TouchTutor™ package.

Learners with potential are introduced to the Android tablets through an Incubator School Programme (ISP) run over a two-year period, or an after-school Tablet Assisted Peer Support (TAPS) programme, run after school hours.

“In general, learners who attend the ISP or TAPS and who receive the tablets on a 24/7 basis, improve their marks by at least 10%,” said Olivier.

Qolo attended an ISP, one of the main problems he had experienced throughout his school career was that his teachers lacked sufficient content knowledge of the subjects they were teaching. Already a self-motivated learner who used to memorise his textbooks and use Google for extra information, the addition of the ISP and tablet saw his marks going from 5s (60% to 69%) in Grade 10 to 7s (80% to 100%) in Grade 12.

GMMDU has also developed a university-accredited professional skills development programme for in-service teachers, which utilizes the offline teaching and learning model and which has become a second central focus of the unit. TouchTutor™ is available on laptops for teachers as a professional teaching resource. There is also a desktop TouchTutor™ model for after school learner support.

Trust gives students a ‘second chance’



FUNDING DREAMS ... A number of students at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University are benefitting from bursaries funded by the Milde McWilliams Charitable Trust. These include “second chance” bursaries for selected Accounting Honours students having to repeat their Honours year.

ALBERT Milde, although a private individual, was an astute businessman who, together with his life partner of more than 50 years, renowned architect, yachtsman and artist Herbert McWilliams, poured their respective talents into the city of Port Elizabeth.

McWilliams, who drew up the plans for many well-known Port Elizabeth landmarks, including the Zwartkops Yacht Club and the St Dominic’s Priory Chapel, died in 1995 and Milde seven years later, but they continue to contribute to the city through the Milde McWilliams Charitable Trust. One of its main thrusts is supporting students at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in three scarce-skills areas: nursing, architecture and commerce.

In the area of commerce, this is achieved in a unique way: The trust provides “second chance” bursaries to selected Accounting students who narrowly fail their challenging BCom Honours exams on their first attempt and cannot afford to repeat the programme.

Such students, who were on a path to qualifying as Chartered Accountants, effectively end their professional careers before they even begin them, because without the Honours degree, they cannot write the qualifying exams required by the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) to enter the industry.

“This is a crucial year,” said NMMU Trust director Renita Affat. “Seventy to 85% of candidates who fail, pass if they are given a

chance to repeat. The Milde McWilliams Trust is giving people a second chance because nobody else does.”

School of Accounting director Prof Frans Prinsloo approached the Milde McWilliams Charitable Trust, through the NMMU Trust, to consider the repeat bursaries – and the initiative has been running since 2009.

Thus far, 40 students have been given a second chance through the trust, with repeat bursaries making up about a tenth of the R14-million that has, to date, been donated to NMMU by the trust.

“This is a very special bursary,” said Prinsloo. “Not only is it making a significant difference in the lives of these students, but it is making a difference within the accountancy industry in this province, nationally and even internationally – as many of the ‘second chance’ bursary holders go on to be employed by top firms and, as qualified Chartered Accountants, are able to add significant value to their employers or to the economy, as entrepreneurs themselves.”

Milde McWilliams trustee David Robertson said the repeat bursaries had “no strings attached. We hope those who are given a second chance to succeed, one day do the same for someone else.” The Milde McWilliams Trust’s other main beneficiary is the Echo Foundation.



WIRED TO WORK ... It is in such a setting that the visionary chief, a leader within the Xhosa Royal Kingdom and of the Amajingqi Traditional Council, has a visionary plan to ensure that his community is constantly connected despite physical distances.

22 Transkei communities 'connected' to boost education, tourism

Rural village goes global



Chief Ngwenyathi Dimalisile of Shixini Great Place, in the Willowvale area

AMONG the deep rural villages in the Willowvale area of the former Transkei – 90 minutes away from the nearest bank, and accessible only by off-road vehicles – there is an ICT resources centre, supported by a solar charging station for laptops, tablet PCs and mobile phones.

This high-tech hub is almost anachronistic in this setting, where thatched huts dot green fields overlooking the sea. But, although proudly traditional, community members are well and truly part of the global village, thanks largely to its thoroughly modern leader.

Chief Ngwenyathi Dimalisile of Shixini Great Place, a leader within the Xhosa Royal Kingdom and of the Amajingqi Traditional Council, has a visionary plan for "rural-based industrialisation".

It is not industrialisation in the urban sense (there won't be any factories going up) – but rather getting the 22 villages under the jurisdiction of the Amajingqi Traditional Council wired up to the latest technology, boosting education in the one high school and

seven primary schools and harnessing the area's potential for tourism – and he is partnering with a number of stakeholders to do so, including government, parastatals and NGOs, along with Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), which is playing a critical role as a strategic partner.

NMMU's Centre for Community Technologies (CCT) helped to establish the ICT Resources Centre, which consists of 14 tablet PCs connected to the internet, and exposes learners to technology. In fact, computer literacy studies have been formally introduced at all the schools. But it is not just the youth who are learning: The Chief's father, for instance, is learning how to do his banking online and

the Chief himself conducts meetings on Skype, using a tablet. The Chief's wife runs the computer lab facility.

Instrumental in helping to set up the ICT centre was NMMU's Prof Darelle van Greunen, who heads up NMMU's Centre for Community Technologies. She is also the Chief's main contact at the university, having taken over this role from former Deputy Vice-Chancellor Prof Thoko Mayekiso, who is now Vice-Chancellor at the University of Mpumalanga.

"The first 16 members of the community recently graduated with their Computer Literacy Certificates," said Van Greunen. They received their certificates during a ceremony last month.

But the ICT project is not the only one. Thirty maths and science teachers in the area have received

a skills boost through NMMU's Govan Mbeki Mathematics Development Unit, which has developed a high-tech teaching and learning model, available on laptops for teachers and tablets for learners.

And NMMU's Earth Stewardship Science Institute, led by Prof Maarten de Wit, is investigating natural resources in the area and the potential for tourism development.

To spark interest in tertiary education, NMMU has run careers exhibitions in the area – and there are already a few matriculants studying at NMMU, including the Chief's son, Nkosendalo.

New projects underway through the partnership with NMMU include a mobile tourism app to market the area and its economic activities, the establishment of a website

"We are creating a world where we can learn from one another"

to highlight the history of the area, and the development of a beading project to be marketed online.

NMMU is even engaging with the Chief and provincial government departments on the celebration and awareness creation of National Marine Week – with the celebrations planned for October.

Van Greunen says: "One of our core values at NMMU is *Ubuntu*."

"Desmond Tutu states that in the spirit of Ubuntu 'being together is the ultimate goal of our existence'."

"I believe that by joining hands with Chief Dimalisile, we are creating a world where we can learn from one another and allow information to flow freely through the use of technology."

The school nurse receives a high-tech makeover



CONNECTED ... Nurses interact with a new health app that helps them to be more effective in assessing learners' health.

A PIONEERING mobile app has enabled school nurses in rural areas of the Eastern Cape to use tablets and cell phones to more effectively assess the health of learners.

Developed by Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's Centre for Community Technologies (CCT), and originally funded by the Department of Science and Technology as the mobile health sector of their Technology for Rural Education Development (Tech4RED) initiative, the app has been so successful in its two-year Eastern Cape pilot phase that there are plans to roll it out nationally.

"We have been so privileged to be part of this [pilot] initiative," said Xoliswa Williams, who was interviewed just prior to her retirement as a district manager of the Nsikayethu District, a position she held for 13 years. "This technology has improved [our] way of working, in terms of saving time and [the] accuracy of the information that has to be collected ... The exposure we have had [to the technology] is inspiring and makes you want to work more in primary health care, especially with children."

Previously, the paper-based screening of learners was lengthy and time-consuming. "Nurses used to only screen 20 learners per day. They can now screen up to 90," said CCT director Prof Darelle van Greunen.

"What has also happened is that there now appears to be more faith in the ability of the nurses because they are using technology. They are perceived as being more professional and teachers are doing more referrals – the status of the school nurse has been elevated." Children's fear of the school nurse has also disappeared.

"Where children used to be scared,

they're now intrigued by the technology."

Through the app, everything the traditional school nurse has had to test for has been linked to mobile devices – from measuring blood pressure and pulse rate, to conducting a blood test for diabetes. Also connected to mobile devices are stethoscopes, designed to measure heart murmurs in children, and bluetooth scales that automatically calculate body mass index. The data is then filed away in cyber space, effectively creating a health profile for patients that is non-reliant on old-fashioned clinic cards.

Through Tech4RED, the mobile app was successfully piloted in the rural Cofimvaba area from July 2013 until last month (July). Based on this, the National Department of Health has requested that

the CCT join a national task team, which will essentially draw together into one solution the country's best initiatives in mobile school health technology, that can then be rolled out to schools throughout the rest of the country.

Van Greunen said: "What it will involve is that every school health team will receive tablet PCs and related tools to equip them to assess according to the integrated school health policy (2012) of South Africa." This will include vaccinations, including the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccination for girls to reduce cervical cancer, making referrals for vision and hearing, deworming, and so on.

"The project will be rolled out to 52 districts, equating to 2000 school health teams, with the first phase commencing in 2016."

Van Greunen said the CCT-developed mobile app had proven to have a number of benefits, among them allowing all the data collected to be written to a central database.

"This technology has improved our way of working"

PE College: 'second chance' matric and other options

EACH year, thousands of Grade 12s fail their matric exams – and most of them join the estimated 20 million people of working age who are unemployed or not economically active in this country.

To tackle this problem – and the spiral of poverty attached to it – the Port Elizabeth College runs a unique “second chance” matric programme – and almost 1,000 young people, are working their way towards passing Grade 12 at the end of this year.

On passing, the college is determined to assist them further by encouraging them to pursue a tertiary education, either at college or university level. “We want to help them finish matric, and then make it easier for them to go to university,

or study at the college [by providing information on courses and bursaries]. We want to show them: “You’ve got options,” said PE College acting principal Khaya Matiso.

“We want young people to be introduced to new technologies”

“Some of these students are brilliant. Failing matric, for many, was a lesson – and now they are working hard.”

Through this programme, Matiso is also planning to utilise maths and science education initiatives that have been developed at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Uni-

versity (NMMU) to boost the students’ chances of passing these critical subjects. “South Africa is facing huge challenges in the teaching of maths and science ... We want to produce Grade 12 graduates with good pass marks in these two subjects, to give them more opportunities in life.”

A year ago, while working as Dean of Students at NMMU, Matiso was seconded to PE College by the Department of Higher Education and Training.



CHANGE AGENT ... Khaya Matiso, acting principal of the Port Elizabeth College, has introduced a number of new programmes at the college.

His appointment as acting principal came amidst months of conflict, strikes and boycotts at the college, which he has since helped stabilise.

Throughout the past year, Matiso has been determined to improve the college in many spheres, including enhancing the reputation of college qualifications, and establishing strong links between colleges and universities.

Working with NMMU academics Matiso has also been instru-

mental in developing a five-year plan that aims to produce ICT entrepreneurs. His vision is to pilot ICT incubator projects in colleges in all nine provinces. “We want young people to be introduced to new technologies. We have studied similar models in Asia and other countries – young people are excited about ICT.”

Wanting to improve the quality of student results, Matiso has also adopted the university’s model of rewarding academic excellence through merit awards.

“Last year, I introduced a policy of academic awards and have been given R1-million to implement it.”

Those who achieve first class prizes will be recognized and rewarded.



GREEN SOLUTION ... Production of a new type of grass provides both employment and a solution to soil erosion in Keiskammahoek.

Ploughing back into the community

THE Eastern Cape’s Keiskammahoek area boasts a unique nursery: It grows a hardy type of grass which is ideal for preventing soil erosion.

“Erosion is a massive problem in this area,” said Greg Eland, of Siyakholwa Development Foundation, an organisation that aims to alleviate poverty through sustainable projects that facilitate job creation and develop communities.

The vetiver grass nursery – the first of its kind in that area – was set up at Siyakholwa with the assistance of staff and students from Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University’s agriculture department, which also provided training to those employed to manage the nursery.

“We now have about 10,000 plants,” said Eland. “We will soon be planting it out in the community as a model.”

Elsewhere, in towns, cities and villages stretching all the way from Port Elizabeth to the most remote corners of the former Transkei, agriculture students are ploughing back into communities susceptible to food shortages, by helping to set up sustainable vegetable gardens at clinics, NGOs and churches.

In the past two years, over 50 working vegetable gardens have been established. Second-year agriculture students complete the community vegetable garden project in their June/July holidays, as part of their “plant production” syllabus.

Through this project, student Phateka Gibeni has taken on a more consultative role within her hometown, having been asked by community members to provide agricultural training. She has helped them grow vegetables and has taught the rural farmers about how to vaccinate their animals and deal with diseases.

“Farming and gardening [are] a big deal at home,” said Gibeni. “Our people have been doing it for ages without the proper knowledge and skills. The agricultural college in the area has been closed for years [so] most of them have [no] formal training... Their fruits, vegetables and animals are healthier now. If they don’t put them on the table, they sell them ... Either way, it helps to alleviate poverty.”

“This project was started to facilitate a connection between academic learning and complex agrarian [cultivation] issues – and also to give students the opportunity to give back to their own communities,” said Agriculture lecturer Dr Tim Pittaway.

Staff and students are also helping emerging farmers to set up poultry farms in the Tsitsikamma area, on land from which they were forcibly removed during apartheid.

Efforts to meet needs of unemployed masses

Building communities via non-formal education

A TEAM of 20 “community investigators” walk along a carefully-planned route through a township in Port Elizabeth’s Missionvale area.

On the way, they take photographs of what they see – children playing in the streets, rubbish scattered in a drain, unauthorised electricity connections, thriving vegetable gardens and more – and they speak to residents, specifically the unemployed, about day-to-day life and some of the challenges they face.

This information gathering exercise forms part of a process whereby the investigators – who are in training to become “community educators” – find out what issues affect and interest community members, and then critically analyse these to get to the heart of the issues, by asking questions like: How and why did it happen? What are the effects of the situation?

The “transect walks” – and the “themes” that are identified out of them – are the first few steps in a journey that ultimately aims to help community members tackle the real issues they face via non-formal community education workshops.

“We wanted to create a learning space that will not marginalise people based on qualifications, that will welcome everyone to co-create knowledge,” said project researcher Anele Dlot.

The initiative fits into a much bigger picture – the Community Education Programme

(CEP), which is situated within Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University’s Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training (CIPSET), based at the Missionvale Campus.

The work forms part of the research conducted on post-school education through the Education Policy Consortium, which brings together CIPSET, the Centre for Education Rights and Transformation (CERT) at the University of Johannesburg, the Centre for Researching Education and Labour (REAL) at Wits University and the Nelson Mandela Institute at the University of Fort Hare.



INFORMATION GATHERERS ... Community investigators/educators from NMMU’s Community Education Programme prepare to walk through Rolihlahla township to take photographs and interview community members about the issues they face.

CEP’s conception was sparked by the White Paper for Post-school Education and Training, which states that: “The education and training system must find ways to cater for the needs of the millions of adults and youth who are unemployed, poorly educated and not studying.”

The emphasis is not on formal education, the likes of which is offered at university and college level, but rather on non-formal education, described by the Department of Higher Education and Training as

“Community education focuses on education that benefits the whole of society”

“learning that is planned and structured, but not designed to lead to formal qualifications, and has an important role to play in increasing access to lifelong learning.”

“Community education exists neither to help people enter into the workplace, nor to place profit as the main object. Instead it focuses on education that benefits the whole of society, bringing about social transformation,” said CEP senior researcher Irna Senekal.

CEP’s community investigators/educators come from public adult learning centres and existing community-based organisations.

Their next step, after the “transect walks” is to develop a

shared understanding of the main issues faced by the community, and then facilitate workshops that are meaningful to the community.

“We go back to the communities and show them what we saw and heard and invite them into discussion,” said Senekal. “Our work is about a collaboration, working with communities – as opposed to working in communities or for communities.”

Among the interlinked themes that have to date been identified through CEP’s exploration of communities around Missionvale Campus, are environmental justice, food and hunger, children and families, and critical citizenship.

Out of the environmental justice theme, emerged a focus on energy resources in the community, exploring strategies that poor communities use to access energy and the issues that arise, such as safety and access to energy as a basic human right. This led to a central focus – unauthorised electricity connections – which was then developed into an open education event. On the day, community educators helped participants understand key concepts about how electricity works, by allowing them to set up small electrical circuits.

Public artworks change the face of PE's 'inner city'



A NEW LOOK ... Huge murals – depicting the many different identities in South Africa – have given Strand Street a facelift. Picture: Fritz Schultz

LONG before the recent controversy over sculptures celebrating colonial achievements, Port Elizabeth's inner city – Central and the old CBD – was already experiencing a change of face with public artworks intended to challenge the status quo.

The innovative Route 67 celebrates the years of service given to South Africa by the Bay's famous namesake, and takes visitors on an art, culture and heritage journey from the Campanile, via the Donkin Reserve, with its exquisitely-patterned mosaic road, to the Athenaeum in Central, with links to South End.

At the Campanile, as a conceptual counter-balance and challenge to the prominent brick tower erected to commemorate the 1820 settlers, there is a low-relief frieze on a specially constructed curved berm (wall), which celebrates the contribution of home-born artists to the cultural richness of the metro. At the repurposed Athenaeum Building, these are urban art/graffiti murals celebrating "the power of play", "the power of memory" and "the power of knowledge", the latter including representations of Nelson Mandela, Steve Biko, John Lennon, Albert Einstein and the Dalai Lama.

The existing Queen Victoria statue outside Port Elizabeth's Main Library will soon be joined by a group of life-sized sculptures, as part of an installation entitled "Conversations with the Queen".

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's (NMMU) school of Music,

Art and Design's (SoMAD's) involvement in this ongoing art project arose out of a Memorandum of Understanding between NMMU and the Mandela Bay Development Agency (MBDA), which has been tasked with rejuvenating and regenerating the inner city.

The first set of public artworks commissioned by the MBDA formed part of Route 67.

"The MBDA is trying to improve the quality of the lived experience in the inner city, and has embraced

the internationally-accepted and highly theorised notion that an infusion of public art can assist in transforming the expectations of the citizenry about a place," said SoMAD director Mary Duker.

"The multi-million rand project has led to significant visual change in the city centre."

It has turned places that people had long stopped visiting into tourist attractions and, more importantly, it has helped to make the public spaces more accessible, safer and more attractive. As part of the Route 67 project, a wide range of works were created, many under the guidance of David Jones, head of NMMU's Department of Studio Arts.

As the larger project continues to grow, Jones has met with the MBDA to look at the feasibility of expanding to create a working collective of students and alumni to drive an ongoing maintenance project for the city's public art works.

SoMAD's commitment to the inner city revival was a catalyst for its expansion onto NMMU's Bird Street Campus, to where its pre-tertiary music training and post-graduate visual

arts programmes are relocating, and where the NMMU Institutional Art Gallery (IAG) will soon be launched. In addition to the public art initiative, NMMU is instilling a love for music among Bay communities. Besides the pre-tertiary training (for school-going learners), NMMU's music department works with the Eastern Cape Philharmonic Orchestra (ECPO) on the latter's "Music Investment Project" to teach music to children in townships and Northern Areas Schools. The department also provides regular public musical entertainment, including a recent concert in Central's Trinder Square, run through NMMU's collaboration with MBDA.

"Public art can assist in transforming the expectations of the citizenry"



WALL ART ... A king-sized mural injects a fun element into Port Elizabeth's Athenaeum.



RAINBOW ROAD ... A colourful mosaic pathway – the work of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University staff and students together with artists from the community – leads tourists and locals alike through the Donkin Reserve.

Mobile health train reaches deep rural areas

EVERY year, thousands of poor people in some of South Africa's most remote areas have access to quality, affordable primary health care, thanks to the Transnet Foundation's Phelophepa health train.

Months before the train starts the 10-week Eastern Cape leg of its annual medical trek, communities in each area need to be visited and local organising committees mobilised to ensure it reaches as many people as possible.

In the Eastern Cape, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's Community Development Unit (CDU) has been tasked with this role.

"In terms of community mobilisation, the role NMMU has to play before the train gets into the province is critical ... We would not be able to visit the Eastern Cape if [the] so-

cial mobilisation [aspect] was not done," said Transnet Foundation's Shamona Kandia.

Last year, the Phelophepa train reached 20,000 people in the province.

"NMMU has also played a leadership role in training some of the other provinces on the role of community mobilisation," said Kandia.

NMMU also provides student volunteers from the departments of nursing, psychology, pharmacy and social work.

NMMU's involvement in the project began in 2008, when Kandia's predecessor Dr Lynette Coetzee approached NMMU to be their Eastern Cape implementation partner.

"The students realise, being on the train, how big the need is. My hope is that this maybe convinces them to go to the rural



areas once they are qualified," said Coetzee. The train's visit to the province has also led to a spin-off programme (the Teenage Health Programme), where toiletries and sanitary products, are distributed to school-age girls along the train's route.

PLANNING FOR SUCCESS ... Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University mobilised local organising committees, such as this one at Dimbaza, to assist with the logistics and planning of health care visits from the Phelophepa train.



LEARN TO KNIT ... Learners from Vusumzi Primary School in Addo are taught to knit by women participating in the Nedbank Eyethu Community Trust Visual Arts, Crafts and Entrepreneurship Project.



FABRIC BEADS ... These unique necklaces were made by participants in the Nedbank Project, which is run by Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's Centre for the Community School.



ORGANIC LOOK ... A growing number of community members in the Sundays River Valley learn how to make leaf-inspired ceramic plates.

A GROUP of Grade 11 learners at Hillside High in Port Elizabeth's Northern Areas has started a successful mobile hair-cutting business, while others are making and selling muffins – and growing a healthy profit.

Their entrepreneurial initiatives arose out of the Absa Employability Skills Development Programme, which was introduced at the school last year. "The learners at our school are disadvantaged. They are not [usually] exposed to projects like this. It has opened their minds: they can go into the informal sector [after matriculating] and get going in life ... They have more of a future when they leave school," said Hill-

Support for impoverished schools

side High's Brenda Paulsen, the school's coordinator for the project, which is run by Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's Centre for the Community School (CCS).

In parallel to helping learners develop entrepreneurial skills, the Absa project also prepares them for the formal job market by teaching them how to apply for jobs, write CVs and conduct themselves in interviews.

This project, which kicked off last year, is being run at 11 Port Elizabeth and Uitenage schools. It is one of four core programmes run by the CCS, which provides training, mentoring and support for schools in Nelson Mandela Bay, the Sun-

days River Valley, Graaff-Reinet as well as schools in the area spanning from Humansdorp to Tsitsikamma.

Through the various programmes, these schools are encouraged to come up with strategies to help themselves – with the help of their communities – in a bid to improve their functionality, and give their learners a quality education that will equip them for post-school success.

A second core project run by the CCS is the Rupert Foundation School Development Project, which is targeting 13 schools in the Graaff-Reinet area – many of which have problems with drugs and vandalism – in a bid to help them build

action plans to kick-start the process of developing their schools themselves. "Through this, the schools are establishing strategies to involve the broader community – from the police to the municipality to individuals – to assist them in areas where they are having difficulties," said Viv England, an associate of NMMU's School of Educational Research and Engagement (SERE), who manages the CCS together with Anathi Jindela, Jabu Bam and Ntomboxolo Yamile.

A third project – funded by the Claude Leon Foundation – is focusing on the training of School Governing Bodies and School Manage-

ment Teams at selected schools in Uitenage, Addo and Port Elizabeth.

"We want to create model schools that are run efficiently and effectively, so that schools around them can see and learn from them."

The final project is the Nedbank Eyethu Community Trust Visual Arts, Crafts and Entrepreneurship Project, which is linked to schools in the Sundays River Valley area, and is teaching arts and crafts skills to the parents of learners, along with other community members.

"We hope as time goes by, there will be a transfer of skills from parents to their children. So many learners in this area drop out of school with no skills or achieve Grade 12, but are unable to obtain gainful employment," said England.

ICT lab, Skype science lessons 'put Paterson school on map'

LAST year, Sandisulwazi High School in Paterson celebrated an 84,6% pass rate – its highest in 20 years. The school was placed second among the historically disadvantaged schools in the Uitenage district. And from a zero per cent pass rate in science the previous year, the school notched up a 75% pass rate.

The school's former principal, Sedrick Gouza (who left in June to take up an appointment in Kirkwood), has attributed Sandisulwazi's impressive turn-around to interventions made possible by the introduction of technology – including science lessons via Skype for Grade 11 and 12 learners – which have supplemented the efforts by the school's one and only maths and science teacher, who had been single-handedly teaching these two critical subjects to

all classes from Grades 10 to 12.

The initiative – driven by Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in partnership with the Hermann Ohlthaver Trust – saw the introduction of a brand new fully-equipped computer lab, linked to the Internet, which made the Skype lessons possible and also enabled all learners to access high-quality, curriculum-linked "virtual lessons" after school hours. This year, the learners are benefitting even further, thanks to the placement of four NMMU Post-graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) student teachers, who are teaching maths and science for three days a week, using an ICT-linked teaching and learning model.

"There has been such a tremendous effort by everyone involved," said Gouza, who is now deputy-principal at St Colmcille Senior Secondary School in Kirkwood. "NMMU



HIGH-TECH APPROACH ... Utilising technology to grow maths and science education at Paterson's Sandisulwazi High School are Prof Paul Webb (left), director of NMMU's School of Educational Research and Engagement (SERE) and Prof Andre du Plessis, head of NMMU's Science, Mathematics and Technology Education (SMATE) unit.

has placed Paterson on the map."

Sandisulwazi has to date received 16 computers, which were funded by a grant from South African Breweries (SAB). The computers are connected to the Internet via NMMU's system, and are used for both teaching and learning. "We've never had student teachers in the rural areas before," said Prof Andre du Plessis, head of NMMU's Science, Mathematics and Technology Education (SMATE) unit, who together with Prof Paul Webb, director of NMMU's School of Education Research and Engagement (SERE), has been involved with Sandisulwazi since 2011, when the DG Murray Integrated School Development and Improvement Project was launched by SERE associate, Viv England.

It is one of three schools in the Sundays River Valley benefiting from the "ICT in schools" partnership between NMMU and the Hermann Ohlthaver Trust. The other two, both primary schools, are Rietberg in Kirkwood, and La Trobe in Enon township.

The four PGCE student teachers

are accompanied by SMATE associates Preston Geswint and Dr Ron Beyers, who assist them with learner evaluation and assessment. During school hours, the student teachers teach Grades 10 to 12 maths and science, using Computer Aided Maths Instruction (Cami Maths) and other software. After school hours, they teach Grades 8 to 10, using the same software.

In the science classroom, a computer has been set up along with a data projector and camera. This has enabled retired NMMU lecturer Dr Jeff Ilsley to provide interactive Skype science lessons to Grade 11 and 12 learners, to help them prepare for their exams. "He consults with the teacher in the classroom before covering key topics," said Du Plessis. The classroom video link also allows the four student teachers to be mentored and assessed remotely by their NMMU lecturers.

In the two primary schools, the learners' understanding and enjoyment of science has been enhanced by a "science literacy" teaching strategy, which was developed by Webb,

in a bid to transform pupils' negative attitudes towards learning science.

Webb's strategy essentially promotes reading, writing and discussion among learners while "doing science", and it has been found to boost pupils' understanding of science as well their general literacy skills. Involving a mix of classroom language and mother-tongue (e.g. English used for writing reports, and isiXhosa used for discussions with peers), and the pupils themselves working their way through science experiments, it is the antithesis of teacher-dependent rote learning, which still takes place in many second-language science classrooms.

Du Plessis has expanded this strategy by using digital technology as an add-on to Webb's original pen-and-paper scientific literacy model. "Now, the learners must find information online, and also discuss what they find, online. They then make Power Point presentations of their findings ... We want to see if this alternative model leads to further improvement in the learners' cognitive thinking and reasoning skills."



WIRED UP ... Learners at Paterson's Sandisulwazi High use the computers in the school's online lab.

EC centre a beacon of light for refugees

LEGAL EAGLE ... Prof Hennie van As, director of NMMU's Centre for Law in Action has helped draft new by-laws for more than 60 municipalities in South Africa.



Free legal help for PE's poorest

SO far this year, about 1,500 of Nelson Mandela Bay's poorest members have received free civil legal aid from a fully-fledged law clinic that Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University runs from its Missionvale Campus.

"Our biggest impact is the amount of people we are able to help," said Marc Welgemoed, one of two senior attorneys at the clinic, whose role is to supervise and train final-year law students who, through the clinic, are given an opportunity to put what they have learned into real-life practice.

Last year, the clinic handled 2,900 cases and made 440 court appearances.

"The students see real people with real problems – and they render such a lot of good. We wouldn't be able to help this amount of people, if it were not for the students ... The clinic is ideally situated in Missionvale but people come from far and wide. We have had clients from the Langkloof [near Joubertina]," said Welgemoed, who also lectures in the university's Department of Criminal and Procedural Law.

An additional six candidate attorneys are also employed at the clinic.

The civil cases it handles deal mostly with debt, divorce, child-related matters (e.g. non-payment of child support), evictions, estates, wills, pension-related problems, and so on.

"...people come from far and wide"

"The clinic operates like a law firm," said Prof Hennie van As, director of NMMU's Centre for Law in Action and acting head of the university's Department of Criminal and Procedural Law. "It was started in the late 1970s to give students practical exposure to live clients, and it grew over time. We have an agreement with Legal Aid South Africa, which stipulates that the law clinic acts as an agent for them in civil matters."

The clinic also acts as a *pro bono* [free] referral centre. "If we have too many cases, we refer them to attorneys to do *pro bono* work. All practising attorneys are expected to provide 20 *pro bono* hours a year."

Due to the high demand for legal services in the townships, Van As said it was likely that, in addition to the office at Missionvale Campus, a satellite office would be set up in Motherwell.

SEVENTY per cent of the refugees in Port Elizabeth are from Somalia and Ethiopia. Most didn't choose to leave: they fled from war and persecution, risking torture, kidnap and rape.

When they first started flocking to South Africa some years ago, desperate for a better life, many were made to feel unwelcome by the very authorities supposed to help them – immigration officers, Home Affairs, the courts and even the police – largely because there was a widespread lack of understanding about refugee law.

Five years ago this month, Port Elizabeth's Refugee Rights Centre was established by Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's Department of Law in response to the dire need for legal assistance for refugees and asylum seekers – and as a means to educate public officials about the laws pertaining to refugees.

"No one chooses to become a refugee. They are in need of help, protection, support and empathy," said Linton Harmse, who heads up the Refugee Rights Centre, which runs entirely on donor funding.

"Due to our interventions, we have seen a positive change over the past two years or so in the way public officials handle refugees and asylum seekers. They used to be 'anti-refugee', mainly because they did not understand the law."

Each day, refugees come flocking to the Refugee Rights Centre in Cuyler Street, Central, where Harmse and his small team of dedicated attorneys provide free legal services to refugees and asylum seekers across the entire Eastern Cape. On average, they get about 100 new clients each month and, since they first opened their doors in 2010, have directly assisted more than 6,500 people – and indirectly countless others (for instance, the wife and children of those who successfully obtain refugees permits, can work, study and apply for social service grants). "The need is grave."

Fifty per cent of the centre's clients are from Somalia, 20% from Ethiopia and the rest from Zimbabwe, Uganda, Angola, Eritrea, Malawi, Congo DRC and Congo Brazzaville, Rwanda, Nigeria, Burundi and Bangladesh. There are even



FREE LEGAL AID ... Refugee Rights Centre attorneys Gwendoline Wolela (far left) and Linton Harmse (right), who is also the head of the centre, provide legal assistance to refugees and asylum seekers (from left) Congolese Gildas Bassidi and Ethiopian married couple Tafsse Abute Lenje, Fikirta Tazassa Osama and their son, Ezra.

a handful from Iran and Jordan.

Their cases vary widely – some have no documents or are having difficulty getting their documents renewed at Home Affairs. Others want to appeal a rejected claim for asylum. Some have been unlawfully detained, some are facing deportation and some have to be "reset-tled" in other countries to escape life-threatening situations in South Africa. Some just need assistance to

get adequate medical treatment at the city's public hospitals. "We go where we are needed. We want to be at the coal-face, where the need is."

The centre has been determined to educate Eastern Cape authorities by providing training on both the Refugees Act and the Immigration Act – an offer that has been taken up by magistrates, police and various government officials in cities across the province. "We have trained close to 1,800 public officials at our stakeholder forums on refugee law." Over the past five years, the centre has regularly offered paid-for training to Home Affairs, but they have never taken up the offer.

Since the Refugee Rights Centre was established, Harmse has seen a significant drop in the number of

refugees and asylum seekers who are detained unlawfully. "In the few instances where people are still detained unlawfully, we are usually approached by a family member, and we can get the person released swiftly."

What used to happen in the past was that, when a refugee or asylum seeker's permit had expired, the authorities would sometimes put them in prison with the intention of deporting them – however this was not following procedure.

According to the law, they should be issued a fine, which they have to pay within 14 days. Upon payment of the fine, they should be reissued with a permit.

The centre also provides training to refugees, educating them about their rights and responsibilities in this country. They teach those who run spaza shops what to do when they are robbed – and how they are obliged to testify in court for the matter to proceed. "They become less vulnerable because they are empowered with knowledge."

Harmse said many of the problems still experienced by refugees and asylum seekers came down to poor service and a lack of capacity from Home Affairs. For instance, an application for asylum should take six

months to finalise, however it is currently not uncommon for a person to be on an asylum permit for between five and 15 years. "The asylum application of one refugee who arrived here in 1999 was rejected and he had his appeal hearing in 2001. In 2013, he was still awaiting the outcome of his appeal hearing. When we followed up with the refugee appeal board, they had no record that such a hearing was ever conducted. Today, his asylum application is being extended every six months."

Those who apply for asylum are issued with temporary permits, which must be frequently renewed. However, if their claim is finally rejected, they often find themselves facing immediate arrest and detention. "Meanwhile, these people have established a life here. It would just be humane to afford them a reasonable period of time to wind up their lives and leave. The law has made provision for that."

For many years, there were long delays in the issuing of refugee identity documents, which those with refugee status require to open bank accounts and access social services. However, Harmse said this backlog has improved over the past year, but there remains a major backlog in the issuing of refugee passports. Home Affairs has also tried to close Port Elizabeth's Refugee Reception Office several times, but each time, the courts have declared the decision to close unlawful. Home Affairs' appeal against the court's decision has led to three running court battles, which moved from the Port Elizabeth High Court to the Supreme Court and finally the Constitutional Court, which earlier this month dismissed their appeal. "Home Affairs must now ensure that there is a fully-functioning Refugee Reception Office in Port Elizabeth. This office is the only office serving thousands in the Eastern Cape. At their 2013 file audit, there were in excess of 73,000 pending asylum applications. They have to receive new applications and process them."

Harmse said the centre pursued resettlement as an option for those refugees who, despite their best efforts, were unable to integrate and settle in South Africa, "very often due to suffering multiple incidents of crime".

"No one chooses to become a refugee. They are in need of help"

Did you know?

- **An individual whose application for asylum is still pending is referred to as an asylum seeker. Once the asylum application has been approved, that person is classified as a recognised refugee.**
- **Many refugees enter the country illegally and are arrested by police or immigration officers. However, if they indicate that they want to apply for asylum, they have a 14 day grace period in which to do so. The authorities are obliged to take them to a Refugee Reception Office.**
- **Refugees and asylum seekers have the same rights as South Africans, the only exceptions being they cannot vote or hold public office.**
- **An asylum seeker permit as well as a refugee status permit entitles the holder to work and/or study in South Africa. They do not need a work or study permit to do so. Employers need not ask for a work permit as the other two permits are valid.**
- **Recognised refugees (Section 24 permit holders) can also apply for the different social grants.**
- **Asylum seekers and refugees are entitled to access health care, education services etc. on the same basis as South Africans.**
- **When a permit has expired, the law states that the permit holder be issued with a fine (at the discretion of the official giving the fine), which they have to pay within 14 days. Upon payment of the fine, their permit is re-issued. If they cannot pay the fine, the matter must go to court.**
- **After five years of being a recognised refugee (Section 24 permit holder) in South Africa, a refugee can apply for permanent residence if he/she is certified as an indefinite refugee by the Standing Committee for Refugee Affairs (SCRA).**

Business of making people uncomfortable necessary to kick-start change

Dissecting complexities of post-democratic South Africa

FROM the country's education crisis to the "Rhodes must fall" colonial statue debacle to the "moral decline of the ANC": Everyone in South Africa has an opinion on such issues – but not everyone has a safe space in which to raise them, or indeed unpack and question them.

Over the past four years in Nelson Mandela Bay, in an attempt to open up public dialogue and debate, community activists, trade unionists, political parties, authors, various other high profile figures and the general public have been given the platform to voice their opinions on controversial issues that tend to divide South Africans and, in the process, grapple with alternative points of view.

These open public debates are made possible through a unique partnership between Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's Centre for the Advancement of Non-

Racialism and Democracy (Canrad) and the Herald newspaper, which since 2011, have jointly run the Herald/NMMU Community Dialogue series, held monthly, and attended by people from all walks of life.

"The community dialogues are a rich contribution to deepening participatory democracy - the voices of ordinary people are aired, solutions to common problems are proposed, and hitherto arch enemies are forced to listen to each other and value each other's contributions despite their differences," said Heather Robert-

son, editor-in-chief at the Herald.

"Politicians, business leaders, intellectuals, academics [and] government officials are taken off their pedestals and brought to engage face-to-face with the people they are meant to serve and reach,"

Whatever is most topical at the time influences the topic of debate. "These events help to break down the physical barriers [that exist] between communities," says Canrad director Allan Zinn, who is also an executive committee member of the Anti-Racism Network in Higher Education (ARNHE).

For Robertson, a particularly memorable community dialogue was "the debate on race in the Northern Areas, where the myth of us being divided into different races was stripped bare by speakers Neville



OPENING DEBATE ... Former anti-apartheid activist Allan Zinn heads up NMMU's Centre for the Advancement of Non-Racialism and Democracy (Canrad).

Alexander and Christy van der Westhuizen. Even though they showed that there is only one race - the human race - people [had] difficulty grappling with identity politics, and how the way one looks and the language one speaks is still a discrimi-

natory factor in South African life."

The dialogue series is one of many safe spaces provided by Canrad to enable society to discuss long-held, but possibly skewed, views which shape how they see the world and those in it.

Canrad pays close attention to all issues that hinge on unfair discrimination, including racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia and more. And its purpose is not to sugar-coat issues but rather to make people uncomfortable, in order to kick-start the process of critical analysis and change. "If you feel comfortable, what does it help?" said Zinn.

"Transformation remains a challenge. South Africa is a young democracy. It is still in the making. We still have to understand who we are as a nation."

In another Bay initiative, Canrad is working with the Northern Areas History and Heritage Project (NAHHP), helping people who were marginalised during apartheid to have a voice about their past, which has led to the publication and launch of several books.

It was an act of racial discrimination in 2008 - where students from the University of the Free State (UFS) forced university cleaners to eat urine-laced food - that was the catalyst for the formation of Canrad in 2010. In response to the UFS incident, NMMU Vice-Chancellor Prof Derrick Swartz led an on-campus march against racism - which set the ball rolling for a university entity that could provide an intellectual and social space for debate on the complexities of post-apartheid South Africa.

Canrad works both within the university structures, addressing internal transformation struggles, and well beyond it, to city-wide, provincial, national and international levels, where it links with other like-minded centres and institutions.

Robertson said: "There is a greater need now for organisations like Canrad because democratic and non-racial values are currently under attack by some of the very people who fought for these values to be enshrined in our constitution."

Each year, Canrad holds "the human race", a fun walk/race to bring people of the city together. This year's race takes place on 10 October.

'Active aging' for Bay sports day participants

FOR the past 37 years, a "sports day for older persons" has been run in Port Elizabeth – an event so successful it was the catalyst for the government-driven national over 60 sports event, the Golden Games, which since 2008 has become an annual fixture on the country's sporting calendar.

"It's like the Olympics for older people," said 70-year-old Retha van der Merwe, manager of the Afrikaans Christelike Vroue Vereeniging (ACVV) Algoa Park/Govan Mbeki branch. She started the "sports day for older persons" 37 years ago, in partnership with the then University of Port Elizabeth (now Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University), a relationship that continues today.

Each track and field event at the "sports day for older persons", held at NMMU, is managed and officiated by NMMU Biokinetics and Sport Science Unit (BSSU) students. A netball tournament is run in parallel, with teams from the Eastern Cape competing against one another.

"The purpose of the sports day is to promote active aging among older people.

"Without the university, and in particular the Department of Human Movement Science and its Biokinetics and Sport Science Unit (BSSU), we would not be able to run this event so successfully," said Van der Merwe.

The provincial gold medalists in the track and field events qualify to participate in the Golden Games – which the Eastern Cape has won for the past two years.

This is not the only initiative in which the BSSU is making a difference within the community.

The students also provide assistance to the hydro-therapy unit



GRITTY DETERMINATION ... There is plenty of nail-biting action in the netball tournament, which runs in parallel with an annual over-60s sports day, which has been held in Port Elizabeth for the past 37 years.

at Aurora Hospital, along with daily rehabilitation sessions for residents of Cheshire Homes.

"The department also facilitates a physical education programme for schools accommodating children from lower socio-economic communities," said Prof Rosa du Randt, director of NMMU's School of Lifestyle Sciences.

BSSU is also involved with providing sport science services to the Eastern Cape Academy of Sport (ECAS). This project helps to nurture and develop the province's aspiring athletes across all sporting codes.

NMMU's top sports teams (grouped under Madibaz Sport) are also playing a role in devel-

oping sporting talent in the city.

For instance, Madibaz football is helping disadvantaged players to participate in the Bay's formal football league structures.

"Playing in junior tournaments has enhanced the skills of the players," said Dumisa Thys, who coordinates the Phakamisa/Zondelelo (both township high schools) football project, which has seen an under-15 and under-17 school football team "adopted" and sponsored by NMMU to participate in league football.

One of the players is now playing in the under-17 Eastern Province squad.

Madibaz cricket has been involved in coaching initiatives at

Northville Cricket Club in the Northern Areas since 2010, where a number of youngsters have also been selected for Eastern Province.

"During the cricket season, we send one of our coaches to assist Northville's head coach," said NMMU's deputy director of sport Riaan Osman. "The idea is not to take over, but for their coach to shadow the NMMU coach." NMMU annually sponsors the costs for selected Northville coaches to attend the accredited Cricket South Africa level one coaching course to ensure the club continues to have qualified coaches.

EDITOR:
Debbie Derry
Debbie.Derry@nmmu.ac.za

WRITER:
Nicky Willemse