UNITY COMMUNITY SOCIAL COHESION

MOVING FORWARD STRENGTH

NELSON MANDELA
FOUNDATION

Living the Legacy

CONTENTS

DEALING WITH CRITICAL ISSUES

The complexity of global challenges today and our increasing interdependence require us all to seek solutions through engaging with others. Locally, we experienced this need to build social cohesion in 2008, when xenophobic violence erupted in communities around South Africa. In response to the violence, the Nelson Mandela Foundation initiated a series of community conversations to foster inclusivity through dialogue.

The need for participation through dialogue has never been greater. The problems that the selected communities in the programme faced had been bubbling for a while, yet they had not been addressed because of a lack of opportunity for stakeholders to come together or as a result of institutions of governance in the communities involved being undermined.

The tough challenges we deal with are complex in three ways, as described by Adam Kahane – they are dynamically, generatively and socially complex. Essentially, these complexities make challenges difficult to overcome: it is difficult for those involved to draw the connection between cause and effect; the issues themselves develop in unpredictable ways; and because the actors involved have different perspectives

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and interests, problems can become intractable. Such challenges cannot successfully be addressed by applying "best practice" solutions from the past, but by growing new solutions.

The Nelson Mandela Foundation did this during the two-year community conversations pilot programme. The Foundation employed tools to assist communities reach a common understanding about the problems they faced, the tensions that resulted and, ultimately, the violence that erupted. We held a series of facilitated dialogues in 17 communities to understand community members' perspectives and help communities work out solutions for themselves.

Nelson Mandela's life is based on dialogue; it is through his work and that of others that the negotiated transition from apartheid to democracy was facilitated. South Africa's success in negotiated settlement should remain as a beacon for the world. It was driven by the need to free its citizens from the shackles of apartheid and create a just society for all to live in and to realise their true potential, bringing the vision of "unity in diversity" to life. The community conversations pilot project sought to build on this proud legacy.

**Mothomang Diaho
Head: Dialogue Programme,
Nelson Mandela Foundation**

ABOUT THE SOCIAL COHESION PROGRAMME

In September 2008 the Nelson Mandela Foundation Dialogue Programme launched a two-year pilot programme in an attempt to address the xenophobic violence that broke out in May 2008 in communities across South Africa.

The social cohesion community conversations programme, as it became known, convened a series of community conversations across the country to encourage constructive dialogue within communities. The programme aimed to unearth the root causes of the xenophobic violence and develop grassroots responses to social conflict to prevent another outbreak of this kind of violence.

Following the final community conversations in April 2010, the Foundation held a seminar, titled the Dialogue for Social Change, which was an opportunity for the Foundation, facilitators, implementing partners, community stakeholders, government and members of civil society to reflect on the lessons learnt through the pilot project, debate some of the challenges associated with addressing xenophobia and discuss the way forward.

This booklet provides an overview of the issues and challenges discussed at the seminar, offering some insight into the main causes of the violence, exploring responses to the attacks, and suggesting ways to further build social cohesion.

According to the *World Development Report* published by the World Bank in 2006, South Africa has one of the highest levels of income inequality in the world. Just under half of the country's 47-million people live in poverty and, of those, 90% are black Africans.[i]

This pervasive poverty places significant stress on society. Migration from rural to urban areas, in particular to the Western Cape and Gauteng, continues unabated. As the country's urban populations grow, so do its informal settlements, placing additional strain on services such as housing, electricity, water provision and sanitation.

The learnt behaviour of many South Africans, who see violence as a legitimate means of protest, contributes to local tensions. There is a growing tendency in poor township communities across the country to protest the lack of service delivery using violent and destructive means. According to a study by Municipal IQ, in the first quarter of 2010 there were 54 violent service delivery protests, compared with 105 protests recorded for the previous year.[ii]

In May 2008, xenophobic violence flared up in several provinces, leaving 62 people dead and an estimated 200 000 displaced. Hundreds of homes, businesses and properties were destroyed or damaged.[iii] The violence,

which took many by surprise, exposed major rifts in South African society and pointed to the instability of our young democracy and the urgent need to address issues of social justice.

The Nelson Mandela Foundation launched the social cohesion dialogues in response to this need. The programme aimed to equip communities with the skills to deal with the poverty, inequality, high unemployment and poor service delivery endemic to certain regions, and to encourage these communities to start working through the causes of the May 2008 violence.

The definition of social cohesion, employed for the purposes of the programme, was "that which galvanises a collective or a group of people around a common set of values, based on mutual respect, tolerance, freedom from fear, social solidarity and respect for human dignity". In facilitating these dialogues, the Foundation hoped to create spaces where local and migrant communities could come together and build positive relationships, based on trust and respect, at different levels of society – between individuals, communities, community-based structures, government and civil society.

The Foundation recognised social justice as central to securing democratic and human rights in post-apartheid South Africa, and as a key component of social change. As such, the Community Capacity

Enhancement (CCE) methodology, developed by the United Nations Development Programme, was adopted for the programme's implementation.[iv] This methodology was chosen because it facilitates relationship building, provides an environment in which people can share their experiences and strengthens community members' capacity to address the challenges they face.

The CCE methodology advocates a six-step process, and each step has a specific objective and set of tools or small group exercises designed to initiate and support social change.

Central to the success of the CCE methodology is building and maintaining meaningful and mutually beneficial relationships between a wide range of actors, including national and provincial government departments; local government structures, councillors and ward committees; community and faith-based organisations; informal and formal opinion leaders; community structures; non-governmental organisations; and other representative structures in identified communities.

The main goals of the community conversations programme were to promote social cohesion, and identify and address the root causes of the xenophobic violence, and contribute to the building of better relationships between South African and migrant communities.

The strategic objectives were to:

• Host 30 community conversations in selected sites;
• Train 30 community conversation facilitators to run social cohesion dialogues in their local communities and build socially cohesive communities; and
• Research and document community based initiatives aimed at building tolerance and respect for human dignity and social justice, and celebrate communities that overcame adversity.

Sites

During the pilot phase, the programme was carried out in five provinces: Gauteng, the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and the Eastern Cape. In each of the five provinces, at least three local townships were identified for implementation of the community conversations.

"The main goals of the community conversations programme were to promote social cohesion, and identify and address the root causes of the xenophobic violence."

Local implementation sites were:

• Western Cape: Khayelitsha, Nyanga and Philippi
• Gauteng: Atteridgeville, Diepsloot, Tembisa and Ramaphosa
• KwaZulu-Natal: Albert Park and Cato Manor
• Mpumalanga: Delmas, Leandra and Nkomazi
• Eastern Cape: Motherwell, Walmer, KwaNobuhle, Tokyo Sexwale and Ocean View

A baseline survey was conducted in the selected sites before the community conversations began to determine the socio-economic, political and cultural profile of these communities, and deepen understanding of how these conditions affected relationships between migrants and South African communities. To this end, the Foundation reviewed available literature and surveyed 526 participants through a mainly quantitative questionnaire.

[i]**Triegaardt J. University of Johannesburg, distributed by the South African Civil Society Information Service**
[ii]**Municipal IQ, Service Delivery Protests Quarter 1: 2010, April 2010, http://www.municipaliq.co.za/press.php**
[iii]**Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa.** *Protecting Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Immigrants in South Africa***, June 2008**
[iv]**Gueye M, Diouf D, Chaava T, Tiomkin D.** *Community Capacity Enhancement Handbook***, January 2007, http://www.undp.org/ hiv/docs/prog_guides/cce_handbook.pdf**

THE FOUNDATION HOPED TO
CREATE SPACES
WHERE COMMUNITIES COULD COME TOGETHER AND
BUILD POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

DIALOGUE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE SEMINAR

Opening remarks

Nelson Mandela Foundation CEO Achmat Dangor welcomed an audience of more than 100 to the Foundation's Dialogue for Social Change seminar, which was held at the Protea Hotel Parktonian in Braamfontein, Johannesburg, on September 13 and 14, 2010.

The two-day seminar brought together researchers, academics, members of civil society and the public, and government representatives to reflect on the community conversations pilot programme, which the Foundation's Dialogue Programme ran from 2008 to 2010. The seminar provided participants with an opportunity to discuss the outcomes of the pilot programme.

"We don't want to oversimplify the issue of the movement of human beings, but we can't take a problem and bottle it inside."

"We hope that out of these sessions we can share the lessons we have learnt," Dangor said in his opening address.

Dangor explained that the community conversations programme was established in the wake of the xenophobic violence that broke out in South Africa in 2008. The programme aimed to investigate and interrogate the reasons for the violence, and equip communities with the tools to prevent such events from recurring.

Through a consultative dialogue programme and the use of the Community Capacity Enhancement methodology developed by the United Nations Development Programme, the programme sought to empower communities to find solutions to the problems facing them and address these by developing organic and context-appropriate solutions.

"We don't want to oversimplify the issue of the movement of human beings, but we can't take a problem and bottle it inside," said Dangor. "There are underlying causes of the xenophobia attacks and we hope the panellists will help us explore these. We need to understand the complex issue of migration of people. It is not just an African problem."

The movement of people across national borders is a matter that countries around the world are grappling with. From the controversial issue of immigration into the United States via the Mexican border to the Dutch grappling with a growing number of Islamic immigrants, the issue of immigration and migration is gaining global significance.

Globalisation has accelerated the process dramatically, and South Africans and Africans alike need to assess the issue of migration and consider other countries' responses to the challenges it poses.

Within this context, the Dialogue for Social Change seminar aimed to explore the lessons learnt and consider how to address the issue in the future.

SESSION 1

HUMAN BEINGS ON THE MOVE

In today's globalised world, people are increasingly on the move, crossing national boundaries in search of better opportunities. The first session of the Nelson Mandela Foundation's Dialogue on Social Cohesion unpacked issues associated with this transnational flow of people, considering the challenges and benefits of migration.

Central to the discussion was the issue of integration, and the roles and responsibilities of government agencies, local communities and migrants themselves to ensure the

creation of cohesive communities. While it was argued that a coherent, co-ordinated national immigration policy was essential, a nation-building agenda and community level engagement should also be central to integration efforts.

Alongside the issue of integration, the session dealt with stereotyping and negative perceptions of migrants, which manifest in discriminatory practices. In particular, it considered how rethinking the notion of national identities – as well as the positive role that migrants could play in a country's economy – could foster a culture of inclusivity.

Malusi Gigaba, deputy minister of Home Affairs: Managing the movement of people

Malusi Gigaba provided a broad overview of developments in the area of migration, focusing on the underlying challenges involved in managing migration and ongoing initiatives to tackle these.

He highlighted how, because of its developing nation status, South Africa is more vulnerable to pressures associated with immigration, which can contribute to xenophobic sentiments. The country thus needs to focus on nation-building and integration, supported by a comprehensive, well-implemented immigration policy.

Quoting the United Nations World Economic and Social Survey released in 2004, Gigaba said, "International migration is one of the central dimensions of globalisation. Facilitated by improved transportation and communities stimulated by large economic and social inequalities in the world, people are increasingly moving across national borders in an effort to improve their own families' well-being."

This high volume of migration flows presents enormous challenges – especially for developing counties. In particular, Gigaba focused on the effect the "brain drain" has for Africa's development agenda.

"Developed countries have been the principal beneficiaries of the investments [made] by developing countries in educating and creating these skills – investments which can never be recovered," he said.

This is not to say that developing countries don't benefit from migration, particularly the transfer of skills and

technologies. Gigaba cited the examples of India and China, which encourage their technicians to study and work abroad. Their local information and communication technology and management industries have benefited from cross-border flows of people, and their economies have been bolstered by the injection of skills acquired abroad.

On the whole, though, Gigaba said the developmental potential of international migration has so far been skewed in favour of developed countries and upper- and middle-class migrants – those with high levels of skills and investment capital who are able to move easily between countries. The same is not true for "working-class migrants, most of whom have no security, live at risk and are often victims of xenophobia".

Millions of regular migrants already commute between South Africa and its neighbouring states, playing a big part in the country's economy, but the influx of irregular migrants has proved more problematic to manage.

PROPERLY MANAGED, IMMIGRATION WILL **POSITIVELY CONTRIBUTE** *TO SOUTH AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT*

Africa has a high rate of irregular and forced migrants, such as refugees and internally displaced people. Besides the common causes of irregular migration, such as conflict, human trafficking and international crime, Gigaba said it is largely when official channels of migration are closed to poor and working-class would-be migrants that irregular options are explored. Once in the country, such migrants apply for asylum in an attempt to regularise their stay, which congests the asylum system.

"Because they are irregular, their skills and experiences are not recognised and hence cannot be optimally recognised as contributing to the economy," said Gigaba. However, he said international migration could serve as a "launch pad for development" if the process was managed better and migrants were more successfully integrated into local communities.

Because migration changes the demography of states and cities, which become "melting pots of different cultures, languages and people of different ethnic, racial

and national origin", nation-building should be included as part of any management strategy, said Gigaba.

At present, South Africa is embarking on a migration policy shift that recognises that migration must be managed rather than combated; that migrants "must be viewed as a development potential rather than a nuisance".

"Properly managed, immigration will positively contribute to South Africa's development, reduce security challenges, including those caused by cross-border crime, and eliminate stereotypes and negative attitudes towards immigrants and immigration."

As such, immigration must find expression in the country's national development plans to ensure that the interests, needs and contributions of immigrants are recognised, alongside those of the majority of the population. A policy must also be developed that promotes the immigration of investors and skilled professionals while managing that of working-class and semi-skilled people.

The Department of Home Affairs is working to share skills, harmonise legislation and management instruments, and share data in order to facilitate the movement of people across South Africa's borders while minimising the associated security risks, said Gigaba.

Regularising irregular migrants is an important part of such a process. The authorities are currently working with the government of Zimbabwe to issue proper travel documents to Zimbabwean nationals in South Africa. Once this process has been completed, the facility will

be extended to other African nationals to document and regularise their stay.

"This will unclog the asylum system, as many economic migrants will then voluntarily leave that system and obtain proper work permits," said Gigaba.

Bernardo Mariano, International Organization for Migration: Creating good citizens

Bernard Mariano focused on the importance of integration and the proactive role local communities must play to ensure that foreign nationals are meaningfully included as "good" citizens.

The issue of immigration and the challenges facing migrants has a particular resonance with Mariano. "I'm a migrant, and I've been a migrant since I remember my existence in this world," he said, opening his presentation at the Social Cohesion Dialogue. "I was born in the northern

province of Mozambique; I grew up in the central part. And since I moved out of my province, I've been a migrant."

However, Mariano contrasted his privileged position – being able to apply for positions abroad while living in Mozambique and migrating in a regular fashion to various countries – with that of so many irregular migrants, who risk their lives in pursuit of a better future.

"Part of the problem is that foreign nationals are unaware of cultural practices and traditions and, as a result, they remain on the fringes societies."

To illustrate the lengths that such migrants go to, he related a story told to him by a deputy minister of home affairs. The deputy minister had been taken up in a helicopter to get a sense of the situation at the Zimbabwean border. At the time, a group of migrants was crossing the border illegally – unaware of crocodiles nearby. When the pilot and crew tried to warn the group from the helicopter, the migrants did not understand that they were being warned of danger ahead; they were convinced that they were about to be arrested.

WHILE A COHERENT, CO-ORDINATED NATIONAL IMMIGRATION POLICY IS ESSENTIAL, A **NATION-BUILDING** AGENDA AND

COMMUNITY LEVEL

ENGAGEMENT SHOULD ALSO BE CENTRAL TO INTEGRATION EFFORTS

"When we are not privileged, we take risks," said Mariano. "Fences do not stop anybody; rivers with crocodiles will not stop somebody who has no other option where they're living ... If I live in a village and I have no options in my village, I might – I will – migrate."

South Africa is a promising destination for those seeking to improve their prospects. The economic powerhouse of the region, it has become a haven for those escaping political unrest, conflict, persecution and poverty. But the influx of foreign nationals has brought with it negative stereotyping of – and increased discrimination against – foreign nationals.

Part of the problem, said Mariano, is that foreign nationals are unaware of cultural practices and

traditions specific to the communities in which they choose to live. As a result, they remain on the fringes of these societies, largely excluded from the community. Overcoming this isolation involves the community taking a proactive approach to integration.

To illustrate his point, Mariano recounted his own experience of living as an immigrant in a small village in France. After filling out the necessary paperwork for his stay, he had been introduced to the local culture and given strict instructions detailing what people did and did not do in that particular village, down to the time of day when he should mow his lawn.

"I think that migrants in South Africa should also be taught how to behave so that they integrate well in the

communities they stay in," he said. "There is a common responsibility to migrants – local communities and the government at the level of municipality [have to work] to integrate migrants, to create good citizens."

Hosting communities and local municipalities are crucial to helping migrants adjust to their new environments and teaching them local practices, he explained. "Otherwise I'll behave as I behave in Mozambique and maybe that will conflict with some of the habits and cultures of the local community."

Successful management of the migration issue requires integration on a regional level too, said Mariano. He suggested that a policy framework be created to facilitate the movement of labour migrants, allowing people like farm workers entry into Southern African Development Community countries to work for a few months and then go home. If migrants have the chance to migrate to countries legally, he said, they wouldn't place their lives at risk to do so.

Sandi Kibimbi, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: Making integration a success

Sandi Kibimbi focused on attitudes towards migrants and the importance of inclusion. Echoing Mariano's sentiments, he emphasised the need to promote tolerance and integrate migrants into South African communities.

According to Kibimbi, there is nothing essentially new about migration – human beings have always been on the move, travelling within and outside of the borders of countries. While many move to improve their living conditions, seek better work or better medical care, some are forced to move as a result of persecution or violence.

"Irrespective of the reasons why people have moved, irrespective of the reasons, of the places where they have gone to and all sorts of consideration, when people

move from one place to the other, they hope or expect to be better off," said Kibimbi. "They hope and expect to be well received. And, at the end of the day, in very many situations, they hope for solidarity with the people who are receiving them."

"There is a common responsibility to migrants – local communities and the government at the level of municipality [have to work] to integrate migrants, to create good citizens."

This is not always the case. Instead of being accepted, migrants are often treated with distrust and hostility; they are forced to contend with negative stereotypes, and sometimes even with outright violence, as was demonstrated by the 2008 xenophobic attacks.

Kibimbi said that what he had found interesting – and heartening – about South Africa's situation was that, despite the scale of violence around the country, no-one wanted to be labelled a xenophobe. "We have to really work on that," he said.

Kibimbi urged delegates to work on the issue of xenophobia and promote the values espoused by Nelson Mandela – the values of solidarity, tolerance and dialogue. "It is through these that people can know who they are and why they moved from their countries of origins."

He also focused on co-operation as a means of combating xenophobia in South Africa, speaking of the need for international organisations, non-governmental organisations and faith-based organisations to join forces.

Importantly, Kibimbi encouraged South African nationals to be more tolerant of migrants, working towards inclusion and overcoming the fear of the "other".

"The fear of others is, I think, really found not in any one country in particular – it's a general phenomenon and it has been there for a very long time," he said. "And that takes us, of course, to the issue of seeing others, of fearing others – is it xenophobia or not?

"I think that irrespective of the way you describe the phenomenon, what is important is that it has got to be a call for action."

SESSION 2

DIALOGUES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

The Nelson Mandela Foundation's community conversations pilot project aimed to identify and address the root causes of xenophobic violence in particular communities and to contribute to building better relations between host and migrant communities.

As part of the process, implementing partners and facilitators spent time in the selected communities, building relationships, enquiring about the causes of

violence and listening to the voices of the community. The process also required community members to proactively work towards solving problems in their communities, thus uncovering the root causes of xenophobic violence themselves, through a process of dialogue.

The second session of the Dialogue for Social Change focused specifically on the importance of dialogue and the role it plays in overcoming social conflict and building positive relationships within communities.

Bea Abrahams, community conversations implementing partner: Dialogue as a participatory process

Bea Abrahams provided feedback on the community conversations initiative. In her presentation, she assessed the efficacy of dialogue as a tool for healing communities and establishing community based solutions to the problem of entrenched xenophobic perceptions.

While Abrahams acknowledged that the programme had not been without difficulties, she said the community conversations had provided communities with the tools necessary to take ownership of their problems and work at creating their own solutions.

Abrahams began by looking at the broader discipline of dialogue before focusing more narrowly on the Community Capacity Enhancement (CCE) methodology in the context of dialogue.

"Dialogue is a participatory process that deals with complex social problems," said Abrahams. "It is a process and an approach. It is a process in the sense that it facilitates enquiry and discussion; it is also a process of listening and looking at underlying issues. The central part of dialogue is building relationships."

There are many different levels at which dialogue can take place, said Abrahams, including the community based dialogue approach that the community conversations project had adopted.

Regardless of the level at which dialogue is exercised or the level of the participants, the participatory nature of the process is central to the method's success.

Dialogue allows for the exploration of issues that involve numerous players, dimensions and dynamics; it allows for a thorough interrogation of the root causes of the issue at hand. This is what made it a comfortable fit for the community conversations project, which set out to uncover the root causes of xenophobia in South Africa, said Abrahams.

Dialogue does more than encourage conversation; it encourages a particular quality of conversation – one that facilitates enquiry. "It is that process of enquiry – that process of opening up the mind and wanting to know more – that is really what encourages discussion and I think what sets [dialogue] apart from many other tools," said Abrahams.

Abrahams told delegates how the community conversations enabled migrant communities in South Africa to help create a culture of tolerance, respect for human dignity and social justice. Through the CCE methodology, communities were able to revisit memories, speak the truth and create a space for more positive interactions.

She also recounted stories of reconciliation, where migrant and South African communities came together of their own accord and engaged in serious dialogue after attending the community conversations. She referred to a particular community in KwaZulu-Natal, where migrants had previously been isolated and excluded through language. As a result of the community conversations process, community members had created new memories and found ways to communicate with one another more effectively.

"We created some unique spaces for communities to be heard," Abrahams said. "For the South Africans, it was particularly poignant. The presence of local councillors, for instance, was particularly profound for some South African participants, because so many of them came back and said, 'You know what? It's the first time that we have a local councillor in a meeting and that local councillor is actually listening to us.'

"For the migrants it was also absolutely important because once again it was, in many instances, the first time where migrants could speak their truth and could speak their experiences. It had not happened before.

"So we feel that we have created that space. We have created awareness that there are alternatives to violence and, in some instances, we have started communities on that journey of collective action."

Vincent Williams, South African Migration Programme project manager: Using dialogue to change minds and behaviour

In his presentation, South African Migration Programme Project Manager Vincent Williams focused on how South Africans and migrant communities go about achieving consensus for dialogue, as well as on the factors that underpin successful dialogue.

Community dialogues are complex processes that require carefully considered engagement. In particular, Williams noted the importance of highlighting the shared interests of stakeholders, and emphasising the need for firm outcomes at the beginning of the project.

"Dialogue doesn't begin of its own accord; to reach the point of dialogue, it is necessary for a community to reach some form of consensus on the need for dialogue."

According to Williams, dialogue doesn't begin of its own accord; to reach the point of dialogue, it is necessary for a community to reach some form of consensus on the need for dialogue. "We need to get people to agree that there is a need to talk," he said. "We need to find common ground around issues of actual or potential conflict and, equally, we need to find common ground around opportunity."

In managing any dialogue process, it is important to keep 10 points in mind, said Williams:

• Be aware of and address power imbalances. Because all dialogues involve some form of power balance, it is important to ensure that those with more power understand the value and importance of dialogue and engaging equally with

others. Engaging powerful stakeholders is essential, as without their support and buy-in the entire dialogue process can be undermined.

• Dialogue is a constructive process that sets out to achieve particular outcomes. As such, it is important that facilitators "demonstrate the concrete, tangible outcomes of the dialogue" as these emerge.

• Build a knowledge base. Knowing what information and knowledge is required for a particular dialogue is central to the process of constructing a dialogue.

• Encourage accountable leadership to ensure that discussions and conversations are not dominated by one particular group or concern, and that the needs of the community are presented well by community leaders.

"Knowing what information and knowledge is required for a particular dialogue is central to the process of constructing a dialogue."

"There is no point in bringing people to a dialogue if, in fact, they themselves are powerless and they're not able to engage with others in a way that is constructive or in a way that will persuade others they need to behave differently," Williams explained.

• Set standards that apply to all equally. In setting behavioural benchmarks, power relations can be equalised, thus creating the space for dialogue.

• Remain focused on the outcomes. Lobby groups can distort the dialogue process by pushing a particular agenda, constructing the dialogue in such a way that, "right from the beginning, it is to the disadvantage of the other group", said Williams.

• Situate the dialogue within a particular context. Dialogues are not isolated and need to be understood within a broader socio-economic and political framework.

• Establish firm outcomes at the beginning of the dialogue process in order to guide the dialogues in the appropriate direction.

• Dialogue is a process of action and reflection by and between all stakeholders.

• Dialogue is about sharing. Because dialogue is about meaningful engagement, it has the potential to be an extremely positive process and contribute to social cohesion. It provides participants with an opportunity to share information, learn about each other and develop solutions that are acceptable to all parties.
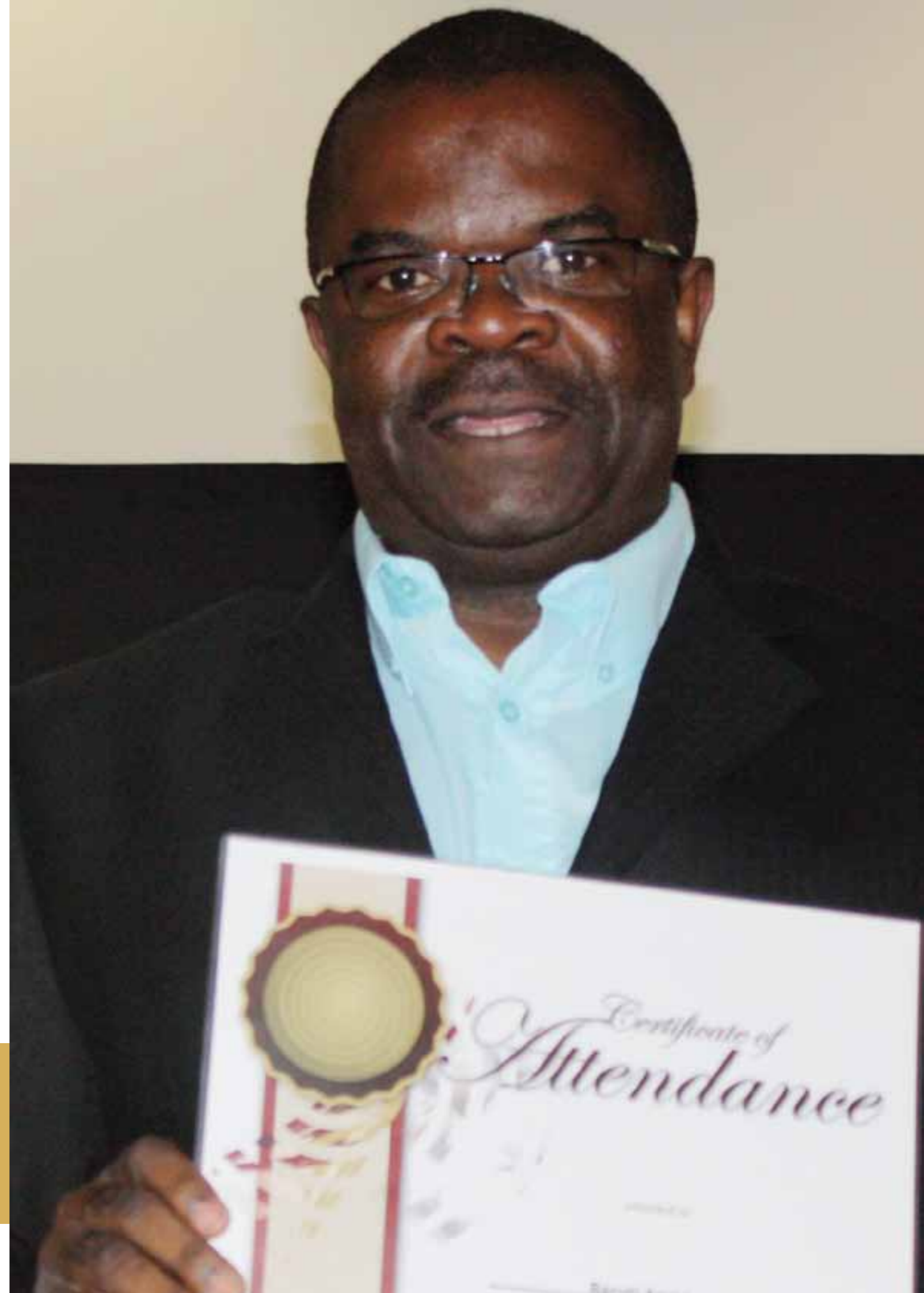
"It promotes co-operation and it promotes cohesion in identifying in the first place what the issues are, but also in addressing the issues," said Williams. "Then the outcome of all that is not prescribed by one particular person or group, but leads to a conclusion that everyone is happy with."

However, Williams cautioned, the success of the process depends on continued engagement and dialogue to bring about social change.

"The end result of the dialogue must be fairness," said Williams. "It must bring about change that betters the lives – that improves the quality of life – of all the people who might have been involved."

*THE END RESULT OF THE DIALOGUE MUST BE **FAIRNESS**, IT MUST BRING ABOUT*
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"We were working with some of the most disadvantaged communities in South Africa," said Mutuma. "We were dealing with very high levels of poverty [and] income inequalities and, constantly during the dialogues, we had a sense of marginalisation."

This sense of marginalisation was evident in the sentiments of foreign nationals, who felt excluded in local communities. This, together with the fracturing of communities along socio-economic lines, led to divergent views within communities and varied perceptions of migrants by locals.

By way of explanation, Mutuma referred to the Western Cape community of Khayelitsha, where two distinct perceptions about migrant shopkeepers coexisted. Some community members felt these shopkeepers traded unfairly and should be regulated, while others felt they provided a valuable service and convenience that enhanced their lives.

Through the dialogue process, the shopkeepers were able to engage with the local community and share their knowledge and expertise. This, said Mutuma, was an example of how community conversations helped build better relationships between people and create new, shared meanings.

A second issue to come out of the dialogues related to trust. Migrant and local communities felt alienated in their relationships with their leaders, and this leadership gap resulted in informal structures being developed to satisfy communities' needs. Where the legitimacy of official institutions was eroded, powerful, informal structures were created to fill the void.

"Migrant and local communities felt alienated in their relationships with their leaders, and this leadership gap resulted in informal structures being developed to satisfy communities' needs."

KEY FINDINGS
OF THE COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Ken Mutuma, implementing partner of the Nelson Mandela Foundation's community conversations programme, was among those who engaged with communities around the country to explore the root causes of the outbreaks of xenophobic violence in South Africa. Together with a team of facilitators, Mutuma spent a considerable amount of time over the past two years promoting dialogue in communities and encouraging community members to speak up and embrace the healing process.

At the Dialogue for Social Cohesion, he highlighted some of the issues to come out of the community conversations, including the effect of socio-economic inequality on feelings of marginalisation, and a lack of trust in local leadership structures.

The most significant observation to come out of the community conversations was that there were very high socio-economic stress levels in all of the communities in which the conversations took place.

The power of these organisations and unofficial structures put them in a position to undermine the success of the dialogues, said Mutuma. As such, they had to be incorporated into the dialogue process without being given the power to divert attention from the real issues.

The issue of trust extended to communities' confidence in the rule of law. South Africans have a history of resorting to violence to express dissatisfaction and voice grievance, said Mutuma. The conversations process showed how distrust of the rule of law in these communities had reinforced this sense of lawlessness as the only means to resolve conflict.

Mutuma explained how the community conversations had uncovered "a chasm between what we have on paper and what people have internalised and accepted as a society". Communities did not feel any ownership over the Constitution and the laws of the country, and this disjuncture undermined the rule of law and the efficacy of the justice system.

A major socio-cultural issue that the team encountered was the concept of "othering". Mutuma explained that insider/outsider sentiments were pervasive in the communities, and that language often determined who was accepted and who was ostracised. Furthermore, because people could not communicate and did not understand each other, myths and fears of the "other" had developed.

Interestingly, this was not just a phenomenon that foreign nationals encountered. South Africans from other provinces also experienced a sense of exclusion because of their lack of proficiency in the dominant language.

> *"The conversations process showed how distrust of the rule of law in these communities had reinforced this sense of lawlessness as the only means to resolve conflict."*

Mutuma also drew attention to the psycho-social legacy of apartheid, explaining that the system had a significant and lasting effect on the country, affecting South Africans' relations with others.

"My [a South African's] anger is not necessarily anger with you [the migrant], but it is anger at my lost opportunity," he explained. "I think it's important in the course of dialogue to be able to enter the hearts of the community and experience that sense of frustration."

Mutuma concluded by highlighting the importance of facilitators engaging with local communities in the dialogue process – "to walk hand-in-hand with the community, feel their pain, inculcate that pain, change as they change, and leave a better promise".

COMMUNITIES DID NOT FEEL ANY OWNERSHIP OVER THE CONSTITUTION AND THE LAWS OF THE COUNTRY, AND THIS DISJUNCTURE

UNDERMINED

*THE RULE OF LAW AND THE **EFFICACY** OF THE JUSTICE SYSTEM*

MYTH, MEMORY, MIGRATION

The fourth session of the Dialogue for Social Cohesion focused on strategies that can be employed to combat xenophobia and xenophobic violence.

Speakers approached the subject of Myth, Memory, Migration from relatively varied positions, considering language as a tool of fragmentation, the socio-economic and cultural causes of xenophobia and the challenges of managing migration, and government and civil society's capacity to respond to social violence. Yet all recognised the importance of constructive community engagement through initiatives such as the Nelson Mandela Foundation's community conversations as a means to combat misinformation and build cohesive communities.

Lucas Ngoetshana, head of advocacy for the KwaZulu-Natal Council of Churches: Speaking the language of inclusion

Lucas Ngoetshana opened the Myth, Memory, Migration session of the Dialogue for Social Cohesion with a presentation on language as a vehicle to promote inclusivity.

Ngoetshana's central focus was on the duality of language – how it can be inclusive and exclusive, unifying and divisive. Because communities use language to reproduce culture and identity, it can be a powerful tool for either social cohesion or fragmentation.

"When people want to exclude you from a conversation they simply switch to a language you do not understand," Ngoetshana explained. "The same is done when they want you to be part of a conversation – they speak in a language you can hear and understand."

In the 2008 xenophobic attacks in South Africa, language was used to exclude and divide, to separate out locals and foreign nationals.

"People were shown the elbow and asked what it was in isiZulu," Ngoetshana explained. "If they didn't know, they were in trouble. Now, if all of us were to ask each other, 'What is this in your language?' how much mayhem and chaos [would there] be in this room?"

Language, Ngoetshana argued, holds a particularly powerful position because it informs how we order and understand reality; it creates meaning and fashions perception. It is also the tool we use to make sense of contradictions in the world around us.

Life is dialectical; it requires us to reason and balance competing ideas in order to fashion our perception of the truth. Language is the means by which we do this. As such, it is "an instrument of disintegration or of integration; of order or disorder".

Central to the issue is the role language plays in making – and understanding – meaning. It plays a significant role in the creation of exclusionary national and ethnic identities because, in defining and reproducing the culture, tradition, symbols, norms, mores and idioms of one group of people, it automatically excludes others.

"Language holds a particularly powerful position because it informs how we order and understand reality; it creates meaning and fashions perception."

"As long as I ... define myself as South African residing in KwaZulu-Natal, being an African of Sotho-Sepedi origin, you don't belong," said Ngoetshana.

However, just as language can be used to define difference and create – and amplify – negative perceptions of the other, it can also be used as a tool for inclusion. To this end, Ngoetshana suggested that communities should establish multilingual schools, community newspapers, community radio stations and billboard advertisements.

"Involve women in your conversations, involve the police, and involve your community leaders. Let us get talking to build capacity in our communities," he said. "And let us dance, man, let's dance together – the Congolese dance,

the Zulu dance, the French dance, the Canadian dance, the Zambian dance, the Kenyan dance ... let's dance. Let's dance a little bit, and let us make others jealous that we are dancing together, and we are no longer holding machetes and pangas and chasing one another ... Let us make music and exchange cultures. Let the world see us eat together, because that could be a language that unifies us."

Amisi Baruti, chairperson of the KwaZulu-Natal Refugee Council: Creating spaces for cohesion

Amisi Baruti focused on the root causes of xenophobic violence in South Africa and responses to the 2008 attacks, as well as on the importance of working towards a culture of dialogue. He considered how misinformation fuelled negative perceptions in 2008, and how the organisations working to build cohesion today are challenged by fragmented migrant communities, a scarcity of resources and lack of political support.

Baruti began by delving into some of the causes of the 2008 xenophobic violence, considering how the socio-economic environment and dynamics within and outside South Africa had fuelled the violent sentiments that took hold in the country.

Unemployment, a shortage of housing, crime, corruption and regional geo-political stress, particularly instability in Zimbabwe, contributed to the xenophobia underlying the 2008 violence, he said. Cultural differences were another contributing factor. In particular, Baruti noted how patriarchy fostered tensions between migrant and local men, with migrants being accused of "stealing" South African women.

Importantly, he highlighted how xenophobia in 2008 was driven by misinformation. Not only was there a lack of information available on migrants' rights and responsibility in South Africa, but the media did little to dispel misinformation about and stereotypes of migrants. Furthermore, media coverage of the increasing numbers of migrants in the country actually encouraged xenophobic feelings by giving the impression that foreigners were flooding into the country.

With few anti-xenophobia programmes and educational initiatives in place, little information was available to counter misinformation and the xenophobic attitudes it generated.

On a positive note, Baruti noted that a number of organisations encouraging social cohesion and integration had been established in the wake of the violence. Today, organisations such as the Union for Refugee Women, KwaZulu-Natal Refugee Council, Somali Association of South Africa and the Co-ordination Body of Refugee Communities are all committed to assisting with migrants with self-integration.

"Where we [migrant communities] can't directly work towards self-integration and where we don't have the political power to influence politicians, we use third parties," Baruti explained. "We go to institutions like the Nelson Mandela Foundation, we speak to universities and we speak to Lawyers for Human Rights."

However, the diversity of migrant groups poses a challenge for organisations championing their collective rights. Migrants are a fragmented group, Baruti explained, comprising highly skilled and unskilled workers; legal and illegal migrants; those who have successful businesses and business networks, and who engage in local politics, and those who are economically and politically marginalised.

Organisations and projects that bring South Africans and migrants together are also constrained by a scarcity of resources, leading to a lack of influence in social structures, said Baruti. While a lack of support and funding has weakened the institutions and organisations that can counter xenophobia, Baruti said engagement between migrants and South African nationals at community level could foster cohesion.

"We have skills in both migrant communities and the South African communities, so joint projects will create space where we will develop skills and transfer these

skills to those who need them," he explained. "Of course, when we work together we will be forced to talk to one another – we will be forced to know one another – and that subsequently will build trust among us."

However, addressing the issue requires political will and the support of all stakeholders, including government, the private sector and civil society. Baruti said that initiatives by, for example, the Nelson Mandela Foundation and other civil society organisations already go some way towards overcoming xenophobia, but a holistic approach with clear leadership from government is key to creating a sustainable solution.

Jean-Pierre Misago, researcher in Forced Migration Studies, University of the Witwatersrand: Any lessons learnt?

In his presentation on Myth, Memory and Migration, Jean-Pierre Misago focused on government and civil society's capacity to respond to xenophobic violence. Misago outlined some of the strides that have been made in developing early warning systems, emergency response mechanisms and consultation forums to address xenophobia, but cautioned that the successful management of xenophobia requires increased engagement by government and civil society.

There have been positive developments in response mechanisms since 2008, said Misago, particularly a shift in perception in key institutions, such as the police. This has led to specialised structures being established to deal with xenophobic violence, including the appointment of a national director for xenophobia in the directorate of the police. Official communication structures have also been improved in an effort to manage future violent outbreaks.

"We now have a specialised team to collect intelligence on xenophobic violence and threats and everything so that there can be some kind of early warning mechanisms and these bodies can respond in time," Misago explained.

Sustained engagement and consultation between government and national and international organisations is also a positive sign. Co-operation between the police

*THE **DIVERSITY OF MIGRANT GROUPS** POSES A CHALLENGE FOR ORGANISATIONS CHAMPIONING THEIR*
COLLECTIVE RIGHTS

and communities has improved – as was evident in the quick response by the police and army when there was a threat of violence breaking out in Mamelodi, Pretoria – and there is increased co-ordination and collaboration among different organisations.

In contrast to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) competing for "access to misery", as they had in May 2008, Misago said people and organisations have come together to monitor xenophobia and put initiatives in place to promote social cohesion and prevent future violence. The Nelson Mandela Foundation community conversations programme is one such initiative.

"If we don't have the government's political will, our efforts will not succeed. We need to find ways of getting in their decision-making meetings if we can't press them in courts."

But the success of response mechanisms may be undermined by the perception that violence involves only the physical act of "burning, or shooting, or killing", said Misago.
Although there's a perception that no attacks took place during the 2010 World Cup, Misago said violence had broken out.

"Threats that feel so real that people displace themselves – those threats by themselves are violence and they were all over," he said. "But nothing happened to make sure those threats didn't turn into action. So violence happened."

Also problematic is misinformation surrounding the causes of xenophobic attacks – particularly the suggestion that they are motivated by crime, rather than xenophobia. Such a discourse has serious implications for how institutions and the public respond to violence.

"If we call this thing just crime, what response are we going to look for?" Misago asked. "The police and the army react and arrest the criminals – case solved, problem solved – which is not always the case ... If we call it just crime we are not going to look for motivations or the factors that enable that particular crime to happen."

Misago said research has shown that a main trigger of the 2008 violence was competition for leadership and business. Worryingly, he said this kind of competition is still evident.

"It shows that we have a narrow understanding of rights and the meaning of belonging," he explained. "I belong here so I have rights to what is here; anybody who doesn't belong has no right to what is in my space. That is a very dangerous perception."

Misago said combating such perceptions and building sustainable, cohesive communities requires a holistic approach that takes account of the reasons for xenophobia and builds respect for human rights and the rule of law. Particularly, it involves civil society engaging with government more effectively to ensure an adequate official response.

"If pressing the government doesn't work, you have to find other ways. If we don't have the government's political will, our efforts will not succeed. We need to find ways of getting in their decision-making meetings if we can't press them in courts ... We need to be able to influence Cosatu [the Congress of South African Trade Unions] or [ANC Youth League leader Julius] Malema – whoever is calling the shots in this country – on whatever platforms."

ALSO PROBLEMATIC IS MISINFORMATION SURROUNDING THE
CAUSES OF XENOPHOBIC ATTACKS
– PARTICULARLY THE SUGGESTION THAT THEY ARE MOTIVATED BY CRIME, RATHER THAN XENOPHOBIA
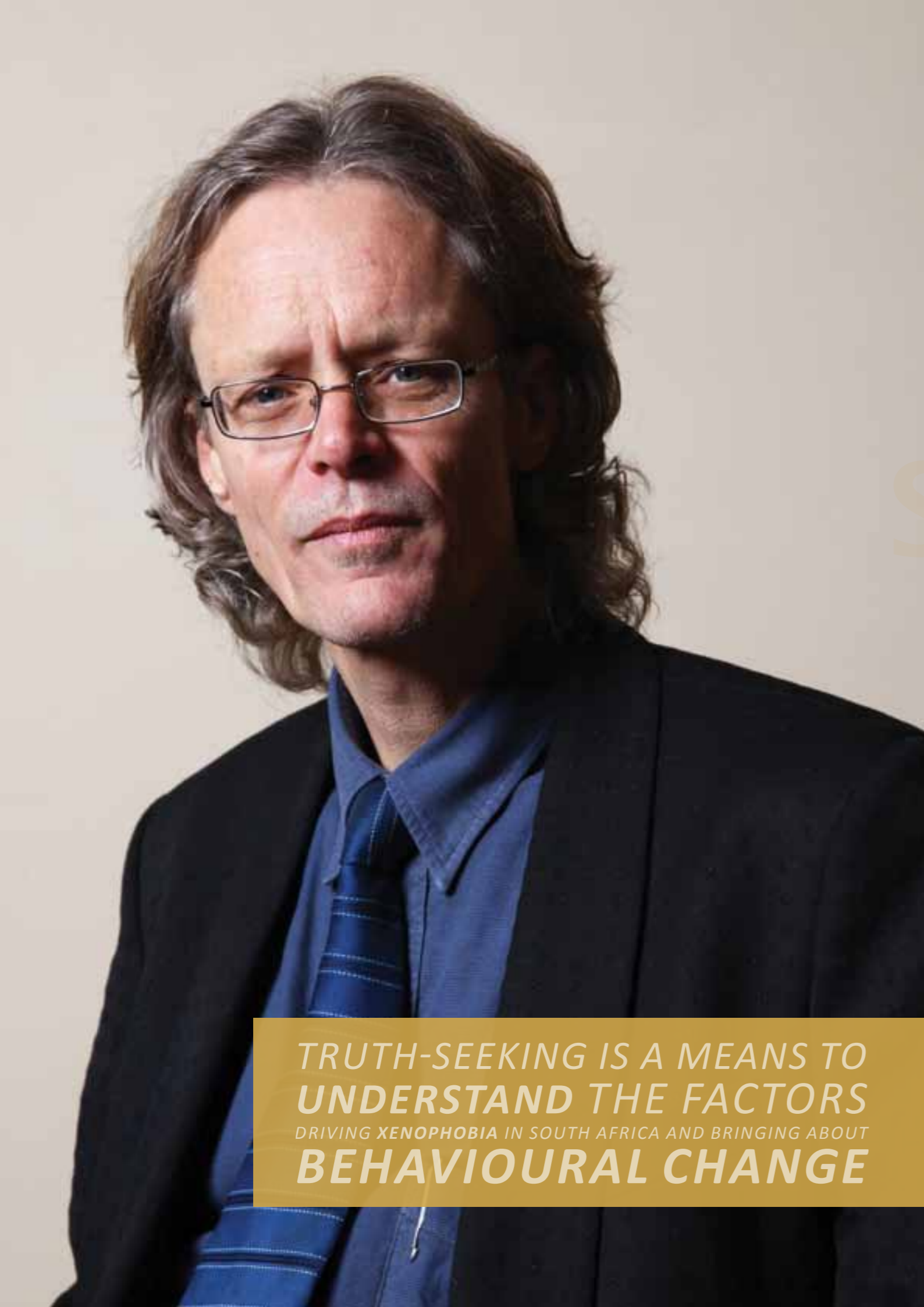
TRUTH–SEEKING, MIGRATION AND
SOCIAL JUSTICE

This session of the seminar explored the relationship between truth-seeking, migration and social justice as a means to assess South Africa's response to the 2008 xenophobic violence.

In an effort to gain a full understanding of the situation in the country following the violence, the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) conducted research into the relationship between the rule of law, justice and impunity. The study examined how perceptions of the integrity of the justice system affect efforts to resolve xenophobic issues. Joyce Tlou, the national co-ordinator for non-nationals at the SAHRC, provided an overview of this study.

Verne Harris, head of the Nelson Mandela Foundation's Memory Programme, also focused on scepticism surrounding the justice system, considering it in the context of truth-seeking. According to Harris, negative perceptions of the judicial system have led communities to rely on memory as a means of establishing the truth. However, he argued that while memory is a useful tool in transitional democracies, it is also a flawed tool that can subvert the truth and reconciliation process.

Memory is particularly pertinent to discussions around migration in South Africa, as it can help South Africans and foreign nationals process the xenophobic violence of 2008, come to a shared understanding of the events and look for solutions in the future.

This was the theoretical departure point for Paul Graham, from the Institute for Democracy in South Africa. He focused on knowledge and knowledge creation, showing how, through engagement, communities create shared knowledge systems.

Graham discussed knowledge as a framework for interpreting shared experiences; and how this shared knowledge could empower communities to begin working through the complex issues associated with the presence of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers.

The session examined the various tools used to document and understand migration and the stories associated with it. It focused on truth-seeking as a means of understanding the complex factors driving xenophobia in South Africa and bringing about positive behavioural change.

TRUTH-SEEKING IS A MEANS TO UNDERSTAND THE FACTORS DRIVING XENOPHOBIA IN SOUTH AFRICA AND BRINGING ABOUT BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE

Joyce Tlou, national co-ordinator for non-nationals, SAHRC: Reconstituting the rule of law

Joyce Tlou delivered a presentation on the government's response to xenophobia and the effect of impunity on justice and the rule of law.

Following the outbreak of xenophobic violence in 2008, the SAHRC conducted extensive research into government's response to the attacks. The study sought to establish what progress has been made in securing the rights of non-nationals and ensuring the judicial system functions effectively. In its assessment, the report focused specifically on the interplay between the rule of law, justice and impunity, and the effect of this relationship on the realisation of human rights.

In her presentation, Tlou discussed the report findings, focusing on issues such as capacity building, as well as the factors underlying the attacks, including socio-economic and political factors, and negative perceptions of the justice system.

While government institutions have little institutional memory of the 2008 violence, Tlou said some measures have been put in place – largely in the state security apparatus – to prevent similar crises in future. Various early warning mechanisms have been established to alert authorities when xenophobic violence is on the increase and the security of non-nationals and local communities needs to be safeguarded.
The South African Police Force (SAPF) has been particularly active in this area, establishing a desk to

monitor the situation and alert authorities to instability; creating a network of provincial co-ordinators to track crimes against non-nationals; instituting regular national security assessments; and setting up dedicated phone lines in Gauteng and the Western Cape.

However, government's capacity to respond to xenophobia is heavily dependent on security forces. This needs to be reassessed in order to take adequate account of the social, economic and political factors underlying the problem, said Tlou.

For example, the study found that a combination of indifferent or corrupt leaders and a lack of trust between residents, the police and key officials undermined respect for democratic structures. In such situations, communities felt they needed to develop their own structures to satisfy their needs and protect themselves.

"Limited administrative justice outcomes limited the attainment of justice for victims and might have resulted in a high degree of impunity."

While community governance structures have shown improved co-operation and leadership subsequent to the 2008 attacks, Tlou warned that communities need to take the lead in ensuring responsible leadership. This is particularly important in the run up to the 2011 local government elections; communities need to hold their leaders accountable in order to minimise populist, anti-immigrant rhetoric.

The SAHRC study also found that living conditions on the periphery of urban areas had left the poor and marginalised more vulnerable to the 2008 xenophobic violence. A lack of infrastructure, such as roads, street signs, street lights and shack numbers hindered police responses and reinforced the need for satellite police stations familiar with particular communities.

Communities' understanding of justice and the rule of law was also a focal point of the study, which found that there was generally a poor relationship between the communities surveyed, the police and the judicial system. Police were seen as unresponsive and corrupt; communities were reluctant to participate in the legal process and report crimes for fear of retaliation; and communities complained that the justice system failed to remove criminals from society, which led to further withdrawal from the judicial process. In addition, so-called community representatives did not necessarily represent communities' specific needs or opinions.

Administrative issues undermined the course of justice after the attacks and eroded communities' respect for the judicial system. This was the result of poor case-flow management, a shortage of investigators and a lack of forensic and court capacity.

"Limited administrative justice outcomes limited the attainment of justice for victims and might have resulted in a high degree of impunity," said Tlou.

Tlou suggested that these issues could be addressed through "closer co-operation within the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security cluster, which is already working on an overall joint monitoring progress report".

While an effective response has thus far been undermined by a lack of capacity, she said the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development is monitoring all xenophobic cases and has drafted hate crimes legislation, which will be tabled in Parliament in 2010/2011. There is also a move to create courts similar to the World Cup courts to respond quickly to xenophobic incidents.

Although significant progress has been made in establishing response mechanisms, Tlou said the focus should now fall on systematic monitoring and assessment of the implementation of the SAHRC's recommendations. This involves submissions on progress from state departments, and active engagement with the SAPF and the departments of Home Affairs and Justice and Constitutional Development on policy and practical issues.

Verne Harris, head of the Nelson Mandela Foundation Memory Programme: Exploring memory as a tool for truth-seeking

Verne Harris has written several papers on heritage, power and social cohesion. Using this research as a starting point, he led a discussion about truth, memory and justice, showing how dialogue bridges the gap between evidence-based thinking and the ways in which communities remember.

According to Harris, the outbreak of xenophobic violence in 2008 was indicative of a massive failure of South African memory; of how the baggage of the past continues to impact negatively on South Africans. To overcome this, and to promote social cohesion, Harris said it is essential to establish the truth of what happened – and why.

He argued that recovering truth assumes a particular relationship between evidence and proof: truth is substantiated through demonstration or rational argument. The disciplines of history and law situate truth in this evidentiary paradigm.

In South Africa, significant scepticism surrounds the justice system and rule of law – scepticism that has its

IN SOUTH AFRICA, SIGNIFICANT **SCEPTICISM** SURROUNDS THE JUSTICE SYSTEM AND **RULE OF LAW**

roots in distrust of apartheid-era justice and legal systems. Because communities distrust the truth originating from the judicial system, they have come to rely on memory to establish the truth rather than an evidentiary paradigm.

Harris argued that memory is a powerful tool for seeking out truth and working through national and personal histories in transitional democracies, where truth is often contested and "costly to pursue". Through processes like those of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the history of the previously oppressed is brought into the popularly accepted narrative of the past.

However, memory is also inherently flawed and fluid; it can subvert truth-seeking and reconciliation-building exercises. As such, Harris suggested "authenticity" as an alternative guiding principle in the truth-seeking process. Authenticity is positioned within an evidentiary paradigm

"Memory is a powerful tool for seeking out truth and working through national and personal histories in transitional democracies."

and suggests a trustworthy statement of fact that is also "original". Harris argued that the concept of the authentic as "being true to itself" opens another possible compass for truth-seeking: dialogue.

Harris discussed philosopher Charles Taylor's theory that authenticity can only be secured through dialogue. According to Taylor, humans are fundamentally "dialogical creatures" – we can only understand ourselves and define our identity through interaction with others.

"Through dialogue, we are able to exchange ideas with others and construct our values and beliefs from bits and pieces emerging from the process," said Harris. "This is how we become what [Taylor] terms 'authentic humans'."

But Harris admitted "authenticity", as a concept, is slippery. In academic terms, it is highly dependent on context and circumstance, which constantly change; in popular usage, it implies continuity with the past. The concept thus raises questions about who is authentic and who is not. On the one hand, this can undermine rational analysis and determination of the truth in relation to the past; on the other, it accommodates multiplicity and the fluidity of memory.

Harris suggested that a tool that combines evidence and memory to create a "new authenticity" is perhaps the best solution. "A deployment of [authenticity] which harnesses the concept of 'evidence' and which embraces the necessary limits imposed by rational analysis offers a hybrid compass, drawing on the strengths of both memory and evidence."

Harris noted that the TRC process had highlighted the limitations of authenticity – apologists of the apartheid regime asserted that truth was relative and dismissed the systemic nature of "rogue" behavior. Through rigorous interrogation, though, the TRC process had countered this.

Another issue that affects notions of truth in post-apartheid South Africa has to do with the role that experts such as

lawyers, journalists, historians, political scientists and professional researchers play in interpreting the past. Through their truth-seeking work, they decide on memories on behalf of communities.

"Their knowledge is a source of immense power, and they exert an almost unavoidably paternalist influence over when and how memory is archived," said Harris. But this may be contested – non-experts may challenge it, insisting on memories being archived in the forms they desire.

Harris noted that the issues experts encounter in their respective fields are complex and require investment of time, energy and experience to deal with them in their full complexity, and this process requires access to resources.

"Memory, we see, challenges these truth-seeking experts to reassess where the investments have got them, as well as presenting opportunities for critical review," he said.

Harris concluded by bringing the discussion back to the Foundation's community conversations programme. He explained that the community conversations were held to contribute to truth-recovery around the xenophobic violence of 2008 and to prevent similar events from happening again.

He posited that such dialogue can bridge the gap between evidence-based thinking, on which justice systems are based, and the ways in which communities remember.

"In the past two years, the community conversations run by the Foundation sought to contribute to truth-recovery and sought to bring experts into dialogue with non-experts and embrace the notion of humans as dialogical."

By bringing together experts and community members through dialogue, said Harris, a new, authentic kind of truth can emerge: memory informed by evidence.

Paul Graham, Institute for Democracy in South Africa: Creating shared meaning in fractured communities

Paul Graham spoke about how knowledge informs our understanding of the world, and how sharing knowledge mediates our experience and informs future action.

Graham began by considering the tension between knowledge and truth, explaining how the complex relationship between the two mediates our interpretation of our experiences. According to him, knowledge is contingent – it works with what we believe and accept as true. This means that "we need to be open to the possibility that we don't know; that we only know partially," he explained.

South Africans thus need to be critical about what they think they know and understand about ideas such as xenophobia, non-nationals and refugees. They need to critically assess their beliefs in order to unearth what they "know" about these issues and how they understand and process their experiences thereof, because this determines their future actions.

"Knowledge helps us act in the world," he explained. "Knowledge is about power and the choices we make."

According to Graham, we make knowledge through disciplined reflection on our experiences. By reflecting honestly and thoroughly, by taking into account available evidence and data and analysing this, we are able to negotiate different interpretations of our experiences.

As humans, we naturally reflect on our experiences. When it comes to shared experiences, our reflection involves a process of engagement – our interpretation and understanding of events is mediated by the interpretations of those we shared the experience with.

Graham related this process of knowledge creation to research, showing how research helps to document a

shared experience and to create knowledge. He touched on how, when research is conducted into some of the complex issues with which South Africa grapples, there is little feedback given to the affected community. Because feedback mediates knowledge, which informs action, a lack of feedback means communities develop little sense of what they can do to change.

"In truly democratic communities we learn that when we share knowledge and individuals prosper, our experience as a society expands for the better," said Graham.

"In truly democratic communities we learn that when we share knowledge and individuals prosper, our experience as a society expands for the better."

Graham's presentation provided an interesting theoretical backdrop to the Nelson Mandela Foundation's community conversation programme. He focused on the creation of shared meaning through engagement; of how this shared knowledge provides a basis for future action. Similarly, the Foundation's community conversations utilise various tools to empower community members to give voice to their experiences and to build knowledge based on a shared interpretation of events such as the 2008 xenophobic attacks.

The Community Capacity Enhancement methodology that the Foundation uses provides a framework for interpretation and a platform for dialogue between estranged groups. In creating shared knowledge structures, the programme aims to positively influence behavioural change and create positive channels for future engagement and knowledge sharing.

SESSION 6

MEDIA AND REPORTING: FACT OR FICTION?

This media session of the Dialogue on Social Cohesion examined the role of the media and media reporting in relation to xenophobia. It sought to critically assess both how the media reflects public perceptions of certain issues and how it establishes particular discourses, thus influencing public perception.

The session aimed to engage representatives of government, the media and civil society on the delicate balance of honest, truthful reporting and the need to promote social cohesion through the sensitive portrayal of migrants.

In opening the discussion, Nelson Mandela Foundation CEO Achmat Dangor said, "When dealing with the media, it is a contentious issue and necessarily so. If it wasn't, there would be something wrong. How the media helps or hinders is what we will explore in this session."

The speakers provided a broad overview of the current media landscape in South Africa and insight into the challenges that the media faces. In particular, they examined how the media affects perceptions of migrants and how its representation of migrants and xenophobia needs to be carefully considered to avoid perpetuating stereotypes.

William Bird, Media Monitoring Africa director: The challenge of portraying xenophobia in the media

William Bird, director of non-governmental organisation Media Monitoring Africa (MMA), focused on the challenges that the media faces in portraying xenophobia, and how the South African media has both succeeded and failed in its depiction of migrants and xenophobic violence.

Bird focused on the role of the media in democracy, highlighting the tension between notions of the media as objective observer and creator of news. In unpacking the media's role in covering xenophobia, he considered how images projected by the media can encourage either understanding and cohesion or division. On the whole, though, he said South Africa's media tends towards responsible reporting, sensitising its publics to issues surrounding migration.

"Almost all media that we've monitored over the last 15 years clearly and overtly and abundantly challenge racism and xenophobia."

According to research conducted by MMA, the mass media in South Africa – including print, radio and television – has taken a clear position, condemning racism and xenophobia.

"Almost all media that we've monitored over the last 15 years clearly and overtly and abundantly challenge racism and xenophobia," Bird said. "This is completely in keeping with our society and we believe that even though it is an overtly biased position, it is one that is in line with our Constitution and the values of human rights, so it's one that we actually support."

Furthermore, Bird argued that the South African media has shown itself to be a "caring industry". He explained how journalists and media houses around the country assisted the victims of the 2008 violence, raising money, making donations and volunteering in emergency camps.

In contrast to this, he touched on the perception that the media actually feeds xenophobic sentiments. In the wake of the 2010 World Cup, for example, the media drew fire for supposedly fuelling violence against foreign nationals. At issue, said Bird, is whether the media was objectively presenting facts and thus highlighting the need for preventive action or whether its reportage bred insecurity and violence.

For the most part, he believed the issue had been reported in such a way as to minimise further violence. The issue, however, goes to the heart of the debate on the media's responsibility in discharging its duties – to what extent should the media be an uninvolved, objective observer?

I THINK THAT THE MEDIA ARE
GENERALLY ETHICAL
IN THE WAY THAT THEY REPORT ON MIGRANTS

"Traditionally they [the media] should be dispassionate observers, reporting accurately and fairly," Bird said. "In MMA's view, they need to be ethical ... in our view that is understood in line with the concept of *ubuntu* ['caring for one another'] and human rights. I think by and large the media does this. In other words, I think that the media are generally ethical in the way that they report on migrants."

In the period since South Africa's democratic transition, there have been positive changes in the way that migrants, race and racism are covered, said Bird. Particularly noticeable is that racial identifiers are no longer used in stories.

The media has also worked to incorporate non-nationals into the mainstream media and cater to their needs. The Independent Group's *The Migrant* publication aims to promote a diversity of voices and social cohesion; and Avusa recently ran a supplement targeting children that aimed to address issues around xenophobia.

These weren't requirements that the media needed to fulfil, but measures that it initiated of its own accord to combat xenophobia, said Bird.

However, this does not mean that all is well in the local media. Coverage of Africa often reinforces stereotypes, said Bird, pointing to coverage of a boat sinking in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in which 200 people died, compared with that of the recent earthquake in New Zealand, in which nobody died. He explained that the disproportionate coverage given to the New Zealand story would subtly perpetuate stereotypes of Africa and Africans.

Furthermore, some publications are guilty of publishing stories that are factually incorrect and undermine social cohesion, contributing to existing xenophobic perceptions. While Bird acknowledged that the inherent flaws in the media industry are no different to the flaws that other institutions, organisations and industries struggle with, he said more could be done to encourage inclusivity.

"We need to build on a positive energy that is there. I think we can help encourage the media to build on social cohesion dialogues; they should be a partner – key partners – of these things. And then, critically, I think we need civil society to engage with the media on these issues."

Fikile Mbalula, deputy minister of Police: Responsible reporting is key to democracy

In his presentation, Deputy Minister of Police Fikile Mbalula emphasised the significant role the media plays in supporting democracy. He argued that diversity within the media promotes, deepens and consolidates democracy, nation-building, social cohesion and good governance. However, the media's power to shape the public discourse brings, with it, great responsibility. As such, he said, robust regulation is required to ensure accountability.

As an institution that disseminates information, the media plays a critical role in society – it is in a position not just to inform the public, but also to shape public opinion. It thus has a responsibility to recount current events accurately and uphold the public interest.

Mbalula illustrated his point with an anecdote about a television interview with a former Bafana Bafana coach. The coach was quoted as saying that he was prepared to resign – a statement that shocked South Africans, as he had only just been appointed. When the incident was investigated, it was clear that the sound bite had been edited and, in fact, the coach had said he was willing to resign if there was continued interference in his team line-up.

This anecdote, said Mbalula, illustrates how journalists, reporters and editors need to consciously assess their editing decisions when matters of public interest are at stake. In addition to this, he said the media has a responsibility to ensure that the information it disseminates has a broad reach and is understood by all.

"The media plays a critical watchdog role in the defence of the constitutional rights of the rich or poor masses who might be under threat from their own leaders," said Mbalula.

The issue is one of regulation – of how to ensure the media discharges its duties responsibly, and how to hold the industry to account. In considering this, Mbalula focused on how other societies have dealt

"The envisaged [media tribunal] must strengthen, support and complement the existing self-regulatory systems. There is no desire to diminish their existence."

with media regulation. In the UK, for example, an Executive Select Committee on Culture and Media was tasked with assessing the integrity of media reports and the prominence of corrections and apologies. The committee's report concluded that media regulation would best be achieved by a regulatory body entirely independent of serving editors and able to take disciplinary action and impose financial penalties.

Such self-regulation is necessary to prevent the media from being manipulated to serve particular agendas in "total disregard for the laws, security of the country and dignity of individuals".

Mbalula was critical of the success of existing regulatory structures in South Africa in ensuring accurate and fair reporting. For example, he noted that the ability of the press ombudsman to act on all matters arising is checked by funding constraints and structural and institutional limitations. Furthermore, individuals laying complaints with the ombudsman are required to waive their rights to further legal action – a waiver that complainants sign "in desperation", because the alternative is to pursue a lengthy and costly court battle.

While South Africa's commitment to the principles of independence and accountability is evident in the

Electronic Communications Act of 2005, which provides for the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa, the press does not have a similar regulatory body, said Mbalula.

He went on to outline how the media appeals tribunal that has been proposed by the African National Congress will work to ensure media accountability. He noted that it would follow due process, working through Parliament and adhering to the principles of public participation and transparency.

"The envisaged [tribunal] must strengthen, support and complement the existing self-regulatory systems," he said. "There is no desire to diminish their existence."

Mbalula emphasised that the tribunal would be a part of a home-grown approach to regulation, tailored to meet the specific needs of South Africa. "The transformation of the self-regulatory mechanism should ... constitute a cornerstone of the current national discourse. Any other initiative, such as the proposed media appeals tribunal, should be construed as a measure to assist and strengthen this transformation effort."

Mondli Makhanya, chairperson of the South African National Editors' Forum: Does the media contribute to xenophobia?

Mondli Makhanya, editor-in-chief of Avusa Media, discussed the media's successes and failures in

covering xenophobia, migrants and the xenophobic violence that broke out in 2008. He spoke about the media's commitment to fair and accurate reporting that strengthens democracy, but acknowledged that there are challenges inherent to the industry.

Makhanya began by clarifying the role of the media, which is to hold power accountable, reflect society and facilitate dialogue. It was from this standpoint, he said, that he would critique the media and whether its portrayal of migrants and non-nationals contributed to violence and xenophobic perceptions in South African society.

"We're supposed to tell the truth, supposed to hold power to account, reflect society with warts and all, and also enable society to have a conversation with itself," said Makhanya. "That is what a media, a good media, in any country should do and I think in this country we do endeavour to do so."

As a starting point for discussion, Makhanya assessed how the media depicted migrants immediately after South Africa's transition to democracy. He noted that in the early 1990s, migration was relatively new and, as such, the media did not understand the effects of its coverage on public perception.

In 1994, when the country's borders opened and South Africa began to accept people from all over the continent and, indeed, the world, little attention was paid to how migrants were portrayed and how their portrayal

influenced public perception and xenophobic feelings among South Africans.

"It was not a surprise that these newcomers were treated with suspicion. There has always been suspicion of the other, even if it is internal," said Makhanya. "I think that if there's any failing, I think we in the media did not fully reflect the trend that was happening at the time and sensitise South Africans to the fact that, you know what, this is what happens in the world."

Makhanya also conceded that in the early 1990s crime reports in the media generally included a mention of the nationality of those involved. As a result, perceptions changed and stereotypes developed. Since then, through serious introspection, the media has changed the way it reports; today, an individual's nationality is generally only mentioned if it is pertinent to the story.

Because outbreaks of xenophobic violence in South Africa were relatively isolated prior to 2007, the 2008 xenophobic attacks were unanticipated. In the period that followed, there was a lot of finger pointing, with the public questioning why the intelligence agencies, police, civil society and ANC branches on the ground hadn't foreseen the violence. The media asked itself the same questions.

"We are guilty as charged," said Makhanya. "We didn't see it coming and we shouldn't point fingers. I think at that particular point we were all very much focused on the political goings-on: it was post-Polokwane, and a certain man was about to lose his office, and so all our focus was on the big political story.

"Were the accusations about our contributory role accurate or not? Obviously there were yes and no answers, mostly no."

The media is put in a difficult position when rumours circulate about potential outbreaks of violence, such as those that did the rounds after the World Cup, said Makhanya. On the one hand, repeating rumours can fuel negative perceptions and increase the potential for violence; on the other, ignoring the rumours undermines the media's reporting role.

However, he said lessons could be learnt from the 2008 attacks and the media could play a more prominent role in addressing the issue of xenophobia in future.

"I think we need to start helping South African society recognise that we are not what we once were," Makhanya explained. "There are millions of people in this country who do not come from here originally; who'll not be perceived as South Africans in the classical sense. But they have been here for years and they have no intention of going anywhere."

Importantly, he said, the media has a responsibility to inform the public about migrants; sensitising the public is essential to avoid a repeat of the events of 2008.

THE MEDIA PLAYS A CRITICAL WATCHDOG ROLE IN THE DEFENCE OF
THE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS
OF THE RICH OR POOR MASSES WHO MIGHT BE UNDER THREAT FROM THEIR OWN LEADERS

REFLECTIONS
FROM THE AUDIENCE

"The Nelson Mandela Foundation has played an important role. Initiating this dialogue has brought people to say what is in their heart. The coverage [of the seminar] has been good, as it hasn't just focused on one issue. Dialogue is key and only when people talk can you find solutions. I hope that this will continue and be replicated beyond the programme." **— Sandi Kibimbi, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**

"The need for dialogue at all levels is important. The Nelson Mandela Foundation dialogues' main role is to enhance and take this dialogue to a local community level. The main value is to work at a macro-level and transpose [this] at a community level. Dialogue can address some of the issues and establish what the rules of the game are. The experience of the national policy has a great impact at the local level." **— Bernado Mariano, International Organization for Migration**

"It certainly made me think of issues in a more macro way. All countries are made up of migrants and the social barrier that unskilled people experience, being seen as a nuisance, is something we need to talk about. Why are we not going to the core and talking about the human rights movement? It has been very interesting stuff and made me think differently. At the core, we are all human beings." **— Glenda Parker, audience member**

"Listening to [Deputy Minister of Home Affairs Malusi Gigaba's] presentation, I saw it as an update. It was informative and gave us the status of what is happening and this is information that should be given to everyone. I feel that the Department of Home Affairs is not coming and disseminating information. Their way of sharing information is not adequate. It compounds the problems around immigration and refugees. If the man on the street doesn't understand how government is engaging, it can cause tension." **— Dolly Mphuthi, Community Capacity Enhancement master trainer**

"I hope that policy-makers will be able to implement some of the things discussed. These issues affect the ordinary man and there is a lot we can do in order to help." **— Rethabile Mohlala, freelance reporter**

"I think that most of the issues were relevant and responded to the current challenges in the country. It is up to civil society to find the truth and use the process of truth-finding for the healing process. Another issue is that the media should play a positive role in sending out messages to the community, messages that encourage unity and healing in our communities, instead of propagating hatred. I would like to commend community radio stations for being proactive in forging a spirit of *ubuntu* ['caring for one another'] and healing the nation." **— Lucas Dlamini, South African Council of Churches, Mpumalanga**

"The seminar was really interesting. I hope to learn more about dialogues and the media session really piqued people's interest. I hope it inspires people to integrate dialogue into their own work." **— Jessica Anderson, Forced Migration Studies, University of the Witwatersrand**

DIALOGUE IS KEY
AND ONLY WHEN PEOPLE TALK CAN YOU FIND SOLUTIONS

"The media and police and the questions that people raised show that it is practical to look to the future."
– Gozachew Kebede Awou, Ethiopian businessman

"This was very helpful. We ... learnt how things work, how justice works and, in the future, if we want help we know where we can go." **– Elizabeth Mokoena, Khulumani Support Group**

"I suppose one of my responses would be that we heard a lot about the philosophy and theories behind the community conversations, but I would be interested in what they found and the trends to get some overall impressions from the facilitators and what they learnt." **– Pamela Whitman, Khulumani Support Group**

"I think it was an eye-opener. [It covered] issues pertinent to xenophobia, since the 2008 attacks and today. We were given an analysis [of] where we are, the challenges that we face and possible solutions of use to us." **– Ezra Moyo, Southern African Institute for Migrant Affairs**

"Everyone who lives in South Africa must accept the fact that we are a different and more diverse country today than we were 20 years ago."

"I think the Nelson Mandela Foundation is doing significant work and the work needs to grow. The whole notion of dialogue for social cohesion is critical. The recurring theme is how we move away from the other and living out the patterns of the past to living securely in diversity. How can art contribute to social cohesion? How can we infuse art into education? Drama creates narratives and brings people together." **– Warren Nebe, Wits School of the Arts, University of the Witwatersrand**

"The conference was interesting in that the presenters themselves are migrants. That distinction reminded us that it is not always the poor and unskilled worker that immigrates to other counties and that brings the issue home for us." **– Danny Glenwright, Gender Links**

"The session was informative and interesting; I am looking forward to learning more." **– Putco Shabalala, Khulumani Support Group**

"This was a fantastic and incisive topic; it touched on the human aspect of problems faced by migrants. All the

speakers were very down to earth, they spoke well. It helps to put a human face to the term migration. I hope this conference will educate the ordinary South African to not give excuses about his/her shortcomings." **– OC Cocodia, Nigerian High Commission**

"This session was very informative. The speakers are experienced people; it has really opened my eyes to a lot of things." **– Sonto Tshisonga, Migrant Help Desk, City of Johannesburg**

"This session made me realise that there is good work being done out there. I am happy that community conversations are making a difference in communities and I feel that they should be publicised so that more people can know about the work." **– Sibongiseni Mkhize, Market Theatre**

"This session has opened my eyes to a lot of things and I will follow in the facilitators' footsteps and help people in my community. We need to remember that we are all Africans – one blood, one nation – and not discriminate against our brothers and sisters from other parts of Africa." **– Elizabeth Moleko, Khulumani Support Group**

"This was a very good session and one of the most difficult to tackle. The panellists were straightforward and I believe that this conference will help shape my future." **– Abdul Hassan, Somali Association of South Africa**

"This session was very good – it gave us a platform to address challenges faced by migrant workers. The diversity of the panellists was also an added bonus because they each brought a different thing to the table and made us free to ask them anything." **– Givenmore Gifi Nhidza, Zimbabwe Youth Housing Organisation**

"I think that the conference was absolutely successful. It was great to see people share ideas with us. It was a great and fruitful session." **– Abdirahman Jilley, Somali Association of South Africa**

"Everyone who lives in South Africa must accept the fact that we are a different and more diverse country today than we were 20 years ago. We need to adopt a new vocabulary in our means of mass communication and policing, including a new paradigm shift." **– Mothobi Mutloatse, author**

"This morning's session was really interesting. The Deputy Minster [of Home Affairs, Malusi Gigaba] spoke well, he analysed issues of xenophobia." **– Vuyo Mpushe, Pedi Development**

"Today's presentation was interesting, especially the [Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Malusi Gigaba's] speech, because it is about moving forward and it recognises the problems of the past and talks about the steps we can take in moving forward," **– Gugu Shabalala, Western Cape Trauma Centre**

REFLECTIONS
FROM THE FACILITATORS

IT'S BEEN A GREAT JOURNEY, SEEING PEOPLE
GETTING INVOLVED
IN THIS WORK WITH THEIR HEARTS

As the social cohesion community conversation pilot programme drew to a close, the Nelson Mandela Foundation spoke to regional facilitators to find out what they had experienced in communities around South Africa. They provided feedback on the programme, the ups and downs and rewarding moments from their work with their local communities.

"On behalf of the facilitators from Gauteng: the road has not been easy. It has had its ups and downs, and the dialogue and conversation has been very interesting. I learnt a lot from the communities, and we still have a lot to learn. We have learnt the dynamics of different communities. You might think the community is one, but I tell you there are a lot of different, divergent versions within the community [that] you will only know if you go down to the grassroots.

"The facilitators have taken a step further. A journey of a thousand miles starts somewhere. The Nelson Mandela Foundation started it for us and it is up to communities to take it forward.

"I don't think this is the end; it is just a starting point for us and the operating partners within the community. I am humbled by the communities and it is up to us to take [the dialogue] forward, to solve the ills within our own communities – not only xenophobia, but other issues. I wish you the best and let's continue with the hard work."
– Abdul Hassan, Gauteng regional facilitator

"It has been a journey filled with experience and emotions, where you find your heart yearning because of [those] experiences ... I cannot single out one area, but those seven community conversations that we did have, we experienced so many challenges within the community.

"[The dialogue process] opened up the platform where communities could express themselves and tackle challenges. In areas like Jeffrey's Bay, soon after engagement, the migrant community decided to be more involved in the experience to bring the community together. Through our experience we have encountered a gap between government and people which erupts in violence.

"As a migrant I have realised that we were pointing fingers at the communities but these communities have an apartheid history that has impacted on them." **– Roderick Chimombe, Eastern Cape regional facilitator**

"The experience has been a wonderful journey that has seen us grow and develop. It has been emotional at the same time and has enabled us to create a space for the community. As Nelson Mandela said, dialogue is the ability to listen and speak after you have listened, and this programme has granted us that opportunity.

"People had so much hope and I [have] the feeling that we have left them at a vulnerable stage; at a time when there is a real need for healing and development to take place. It is our dream that we would not like to part today but, instead, unite and form pools or networks and draw support. The challenge is continuity and that is an element we hope for.

"I would like to thank the Nelson Mandela Foundation for the opportunity to be part of this great name and for the skills we have acquired. Thank you for accompanying and supporting us through the process." **– Gugu Shelembe, KwaZulu-Natal regional facilitator**

"The thing I will miss most is the fun that I had in this space. This space created an opportunity for me to feel young again, to play and be human again.

"When we went into communities, the most emotional experiences were the deep divisions that still exist in these communities. There was lots of pain and hurt, and we dealt with people who had not even begun to approach healing themselves. We came into contact with people who battle poverty, racism, unemployment and sexism. We encountered people who need basic services. What this resulted in was a deep hatred of the other. We found that the community needs to heal and it is an important journey for the community to take as we need to redefine trust and self-dignity.

"We may not continue the journey with them to the end, but we definitely think that there is a need for these communities to journey to the end of this healing process. With or without us, [it is] only when these

communities have undertaken these journeys that we will have a change.

"We identified that there is a need for a moral regeneration; there is a great need for rebuilding family relationships and family values. We also acknowledge that it's only when these things have been achieved that we will develop a relationship with community members and community members with each other." **– Mary Tal, Western Cape regional facilitator**

"Much has been said today, but I would like to reflect on the team. This has been a unique training and it has been so special in terms of growth. We didn't have to go far to learn about different communities. We are here learning about different communities within the group and I think that has equipped us to go out and learn from the different communities.

"If we are able to come together and be united as different people, different genders, different cultures and different ethnic groups, we are able to then achieve that somehow in the communities."

"This process has given us space to learn about ourselves and be self-aware about our work and those around us and the goal we are working towards. If we are able to come together and be united as different people, different genders, different cultures and different ethnic groups, we are able to then achieve that somehow in the communities.

"Thanks to Bea [Abrahams] and Ken [Mutuma, implementing partners of the community conversations project]." **– Ntombi Mcoyi, Western Cape regional facilitator**

"Mpumalanga is a little bit different to the rest of the country as you'll find the province is bordered by three major countries where it is the easiest and quickest way to cross into South Africa. We found that through the facilitation we opened our minds. For me it was a turning point and we learnt a lot from our experiences and integrated with people and discovered what is hidden in their hearts that they can't talk openly about.

"We also discovered that Community Capacity Enhancement [CCE] was so swift and quick to get people talking. The CCE is the most extraordinary tool that can heal Africa and the world.

"I ask you to develop the ability to absorb – you have to have the ability to get everything into the mind – and then develop the ability to respond. Finally, is the ability to reflect – how do you interact with people and how do you handle people?

"To sum up, I will say thanks to Ken and Bea and especially the facilitators." **– Magan Dahir, Mpumalanga regional facilitator**

"The CCE offered fabulous and amazing training. I did not work on the programme but I would like to acknowledge that it has been a life-long desire to make a difference. I have been involved in my community and community activities and I have managed ... even if there were some challenges, to get the system of the CCE running with the knowledge I got from the Nelson Mandela Foundation.

"The personal development I acquired was the maximum ... the skill of thinking differently and now I have the potential to approach matters in response to a community's needs. I now also have the skills go into dialogues and ask for constant follow ups.

"Bea Abrahams, Ken Mutuma and the Nelson Mandela Foundation show commitment to making a difference in people's lives." **– Tewodros Kethama Areda, Community Capacity Enhancement trainer**

"I would like to say how pleased I am to be part of this process. Growth has been real in the past two years. We have grown in many ways but, most importantly, we have grown internally. We've grown in our evaluations, in our perspectives and the way we look at things. We've grown out of our biases, not just us but the communities that we are part of.

"I'd like to thank the Nelson Mandela Foundation for allowing us to be part of process that can leave meaning in the hearts of people that matter.

"It has been very special to be able to invest our lives in that process, to go through those challenges. Friends are made through struggle and success. I remember Mpumalanga, Western Cape, and Atteridgeville. We share a bond [that is] beyond professional and develop relationships that are deeper than [those between] colleagues.

"I would also like to thank Bea. The process has had so many challenges, you struggle to stay sane, and I am blessed to be proximate to a psychiatrist [Bea Abrahams]. Thank you for your companionship and presence. When I think of you, the words integrity and honesty come to mind. I would also like to say thanks to the [Foundation] staff and Mothomang [Diaho, head of the Dialogue Programme] – we talked so often and you presented us with good leadership.

"I will leave you with an expression of hope. I think hope feeds us and creates a sense that what we started won't end." **– Ken Mutuma, implementing partner**

"I would like to thank all of you. When you walk through life you encounter people. There are times when I know, no matter what happens, I will leave a part of my heart behind. I have lived so much of my life as a migrant in South Africa and in different countries trying to negotiate the psychological space. I made a commitment to never leave this road.

"Though I came back to South Africa, I'm not sure I understand it; in the past two years I have tried to understand it and I am beginning to feel that a part of me belongs in South Africa.

"The community conversation experience and your stories helped to integrate different parts and now they fit in me. Thank you, because each one of you makes up so much of who I am.

"Thank you to Ken [Mutuma]. Though it's been two and a half years, our friendship feels ancient. Ken has brought a sense of humour and intellect and both of those are so appealing to me. Working with you has been so meaningful and I could not have done all this without you.

"I would like to thank the Nelson Mandela Foundation – it was an opportunity to work within an institution with such significance and the integrity that it stands for. Thank you to the Foundation staff, Yase Godlo, Molly Loate and Lee Davies.

"Motho [Mothomang Diaho] provided leadership – what she enabled us to do is be creative, she trusted us and gave us the space to explore our own understanding of things and push the boundaries." **– Bea Abrahams, implementing partner**

FOUNDATION THANKS
FACILITATORS
FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTION

The Seminar on Dialogue for Social Change was an opportunity for the Nelson Mandela Foundation to recognise the significant contribution of the regional facilitators to the success of the two-year pilot programme. As a small measure of its appreciation, the Foundation arranged for a special awards ceremony for the facilitators involved in the programme.

At the ceremony, Foundation Information and Communication Manager Sello Hatang said, "I'm so honoured to have the opportunity to thank you here today. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed in the office, in the country and, I think, the continent. We all appreciate your efforts."

Hatang encouraged the facilitators to return to their communities and continue the good work that they had started with the help of the Foundation. He then acknowledged the work that the facilitators and implementing partners had completed through the programme, saying that this was featured in the Foundation's 2010 annual report.

"Hopefully [the annual report] will be teaching a lot of people about the kind of work that you had to do," he said.

Hatang encouraged the facilitators and implementing partners to continue their work and build on the strong base that the Foundation has assisted in creating. He called on the participants to continue the work in the spirit of the Mandela Day initiative, a call to action for individuals to work to make the world around them a better place.

Hatang acknowledged the hard work of the project's implementing partners, Bea Abrahams and Ken Mutuma: "The two people that we want to single out, Bea and Ken, your hard work will be rewarded – maybe not now, but way into the future when there is no more prejudice in the country and the continent."

He also thanked the various partners who had worked with the Foundation to make the community conversation programme possible, encouraging them to continue their good work.

All the community conversations facilitators were recognised for completing the Community Capacity Enhancement training and the two-year programme, receiving certificates of acknowledgment.

"We'd like to thank you all for the hard work that you've put in to this," Hatang said in closing. "Thank you."

LOOKING BACK
ON THE SOCIAL COHESION DIALOGUES

In May 2008, xenophobic violence erupted in communities around South Africa, killing 62 and displacing as many as 50 000 people within the country. Local and international media carried images of burning shacks, armed mobs and overcrowded refugee centres.

At the time, feelings of uneasiness, hatred, anger, loss and uncertainty about the future were pervasive. Relations between migrants and locals reflected these emotions – communication was difficult, and neighbours often did not know whether to embrace one another or join the fighting.

In an effort to come to terms with the violence – and to ensure it did not recur – the Nelson Mandela Foundation's Dialogue Programme launched the social cohesion dialogues, a pilot project that aimed to inculcate a culture of dialogue in communities around the country. For the past two years, the Dialogue Programme has engaged with communities to promote peaceful co-existence.

"Because the communities are marginalised, they know they have rights but can't access those rights."

The project's implementing team of Bea Abrahams and Ken Mutuma – both experienced in the area of forced migration and human rights – was central to the success of the dialogue process. Abrahams and Mutuma recently reflected on the community conversations programme, considering the project's successes and challenges.

Mutuma and Abrahams said one of the main challenges to the project's success was the disjuncture between government structures and communities, with communities lacking faith in government's capacity to fulfil their social and security needs.

"Because they [the communities] are marginalised, they know they have rights but can't access those rights," said Abrahams. "They don't trust their government and the structures in place to protect them."

As a result, communities often developed informal structures, which acted as powerful gatekeepers. These structures sometimes hindered engagement, obstructing the path to social cohesion.

The poverty and inequality that is prevalent in so many of South Africa's communities also proved a challenge for social cohesion. According to Abrahams, the project opened her eyes to the growing gap between the "haves" and "have-nots", and the effect of this on social cohesion. Because the poor felt marginalised and excluded, she said, they did not tap into their full potential. She also noted the moral degradation that seemed to accompany poverty – the increase in substance abuse and the extent to which people felt they had no rights.

It was through the community conversations process that communities could debate such issues and develop the capacity to manage them. According to Mutuma, this provided the basis for one of the most successful aspects of the dialogue process: communities taking

the initiative to build partnerships and put their own structures in place to manage tensions.

In particular, he referred to a community in KwaZulu-Natal, where migrants and South African nationals had been at loggerheads. "In that community we created a space where people could dialogue," he said. "We were able to put together community based committees and those have started to do lots of great things, including organising cultural programmes without our facilitation."

These local forums have become central to ameliorating tensions in communities, as they provide a platform for locals and migrants to explore and resolve common issues.

The KwaZulu-Natal community has also embarked on a journey to open a multicultural centre, where migrants and locals can come together and learn about each other's cultures and traditions. Such actions encouraged migrants and locals to be open-minded and embrace each other's cultures so they can co-exist peacefully, said Mutuma.

"When you share languages and cultures you increase awareness of the other. It is the same as greeting people in their own dialect; even if they don't want to smile, they will because it's a form of goodwill."

The social cohesion dialogue process was rewarding on a personal level too, said Mutuma. It challenged his preconceived ideas about life in South Africa's communities, giving him a deeper understanding of "what people go through each day". It also motivated him to continue working to close the gap between neighbours and encourage people to practise *ubuntu*.

"It was a privilege for me because not many people get the opportunity of seeing transformation and being part of that transformation. The conversations have infused in me a long-term ambition to want to see that element of social cohesion in communities. I am grateful to have been a change agent and it's been great walking the journey with people in the communities."

A central lesson that Mutuma has drawn from the project is that transformation does not happen overnight. The process of empowerment requires long-term thinking – "an attitude for a marathon".

"As implementing partners we need to emphasise the shift from negative to positive thinking among people," he said. "People need to stop complaining and open their eyes to see the strength they carry within them. As soon as that happens, tremendous things will happen in their lives."

WHEN YOU SHARE LANGUAGES AND CULTURES YOU
INCREASE AWARENESS
OF THE OTHER. IT IS THE SAME AS GREETING PEOPLE IN THEIR OWN DIALECT; EVEN IF THEY DON'T WANT TO SMILE, THEY WILL BECAUSE IT'S A FORM OF GOODWILL

FEEDBACK
FROM THE IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

With the social cohesion community conversations completed, the project's implementing partners, Bea Abrahams and Ken Mutuma, had a chance to reflect on the pilot project and report on their key findings.

When the project was conceptualised in 2008, the Nelson Mandela Foundation decided that the community conversations model was ideal for the South African context. South Africans have traditionally used dialogue and public engagement to resolve a range of community issues, and processes such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission proved the suitability of the public participation model.

The Community Capacity Enhancement methodology, which the Foundation adopted from the United Nations Development Programme, recognises – and taps into – the inherent knowledge, expertise and capacity of communities. The model uses a cyclical format and variety of tools to bring about transformative change within communities.

The dialogue process itself is premised on co-operation, with key stakeholders in a community engaging in dialogue in a safe space, allowing participants to candidly address issues causing tension within the community.

"Grassroots communities are demanding spaces in which they can talk about their issues, ranging from sexual and gender-based violence to creating more inclusive, participative processes for deepening

democracy," said Abrahams. "In their quest for overall well-being, equality and social justice, communities on the margins of decision-making want the opportunities to speak their truths; to feel that they are plotting the changes they want to see; to craft and chisel their own narrative and to be the custodians of their vision."

The community conversations process in each of the 17 communities involved three stages: establishing connections with stakeholders and community members in preparation for each event; hosting the community conversations; and addressing issues that came out of the dialogues.

Said Abrahams: "The main objectives of the dialogues [were] to foster and facilitate discussions within communities around the critical issues they faced, and so bring to the surface often latent or unarticulated tensions that classically are barriers to seeking common solutions; to create linkages between various community stakeholders, and between communities and the relevant policy makers; and to help build the capacity that enables communities to take ownership of the dialogue process."

The five main findings from the community conversations are explored in more detail below.

Cohesive communities require a supportive socio-economic environment

During the community conversations it became clear that socio-economic inequalities were a major hurdle

to building cohesive communities, leaving many feeling marginalised and excluded from social, economic and political processes and decision-making. The experience was common to migrant as well as impoverished South African communities.

The dialogue process in Albert Park, KwaZulu-Natal, highlighted how poverty and income inequality eroded cultural values and traditional ways of life, leading to the breakdown of the family unit and mushrooming drug and alcohol abuse and teenage pregnancy. An action committee was formed to assist the community in conveying their concerns regarding liquor permits to the authorities and to integrate migrants into the community policing forum.

Political and institutional frameworks are weak

The community conversations found that political and institutional frameworks were ill-equipped to build long-term sustainability, and that their effectiveness was undermined by high levels of mistrust and a perceived lack of leadership.

There was also a general lack of awareness within government institutions about migrants' rights and the range of protection that the Constitution offers. Furthermore, it was felt that individuals within these institutions tended to display deep-seated xenophobic attitudes.

In Atteridgeville, Gauteng, community members felt that government and civil society structures needed to reassess how they communicated with local and migrant communities. The community hoped that local institutions would, through a consultation process, provide community members with a more realistic understanding of what they could expect from government in terms of housing and service delivery.

"There was a general lack of awareness within government institutions about migrants' rights and the range of protection that the Constitution offers."

Security, justice, accountability and the rule of law

The community conversations documented significant challenges regarding the provision of security and justice, and the rule of law. The most significant of these was the informal structures that emerged to combat crime and violence. These structures were often motivated by personal interest and economic gain, and they undermined the ability of existing structures to function effectively.

The conversations revealed a widespread perception that violence against migrants was motivated by crime and poverty, rather than xenophobic sentiments. Migrants, on the other hand, expressed their reluctance to participate in community affairs due to their keen sense of being "othered".

The conversations highlighted the lack of local community structures to resolve these issues. In Diepsloot, Gauteng, the community drew attention to the need for competent, responsive and accountable leaders. The community felt its leadership should

decentralise control of resources to stimulate economic activity, encourage skills-sharing and promote community driven activities that would lead to self-sufficiency.

Promoting psycho-social healing

One of the key findings of the pilot programme was that South African and migrant communities were at loggerheads due to a confluence of psychological issues. Interactions between migrants and South Africans were coloured by the psychological "baggage" migrants carried with them from their homelands and that South Africans carried as a result of apartheid. To work through these issues, it was felt that community forums should be established to promote healing for local and migrant communities.

The community of Cato Manor, KwaZulu-Natal, prioritised dealing with the historic causes of xenophobia, recognising the need to inculcate tolerance and respect for the rights of all, including the right of migrants in South Africa.

Promoting language as a unifying factor

The pilot programme found that language was a major factor standing in the way of social cohesion and encouraging division between local and migrant communities. It was felt that language, as used colloquially and in the media, contributed to "othering" and encouraged exclusion. However, using language in a positive manner could encourage dialogue and acceptance of diversity and difference.

Both Abrahams and Mutuma agreed that the community conversations process had affirmed the transformative effects of dialogue and successfully created a space for people to engage with one another.

One of the key lessons to come out of the conversations was that the structural violence wrought by the apartheid state had created a climate in which all areas of social existence – including housing, education, jobs, wages and service delivery – had become politicised. Abrahams and Mutuma noted that the community

conversations approach could be a powerful tool in contexts where a historical pattern of exclusion underlies societal problems, as it gives a voice to those who would otherwise have no say in decision-making processes. The interactive, inclusive approach encourages confidence in participants' knowledge and provides a safe space in which community members can express their frustrations and hopes; where they can define new relationships unfettered by prejudice.

Despite the safe space that the community conversations offered, undercurrents of fear pervaded all of the conversations, indicating that local and migrant communities came from positions of unequal strength. The implementing partners thus advocated a series of interventions – of which community conversations form one part – to address the underlying causes of violence, such as poverty, inequality and patterns of social exclusion.

Looking forward, Abrahams and Mutuma suggested that, in the run-up to the local government elections in 2011, the programme needs to explore strategies and tools that facilitate a deeper understanding of conflict dynamics, mediation, negotiation and conflict resolution. There is also an urgent need to build communities' capacity to embrace constructive alternatives and to support strategies for early detection and the prevention of violence.

THE PILOT PROGRAMME FOUND THAT SOUTH AFRICAN AND **MIGRANT COMMUNITIES** *WERE AT LOGGERHEADS DUE TO A CONFLUENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES*

SUSTAINING DIALOGUE ON
SOCIAL COHESION INTO THE FUTURE

Nelson Mandela Foundation CEO Achmat Dangor closed the seminar on Dialogue for Social Change by looking at what the future holds for those working in the field of social cohesion.

Dangor identified sustainability as the most important issue to be addressed as the social cohesion community conversation programme winds down. While debates on sustainability tend to focus on resources, Dangor said he would look, instead, at the philosophy driving the Foundation's approach to dialogue within the context of sustainability.

Borrowing from what Nelson Mandela has said about dialogue in the past, Dangor said, "Dialogue is the ability to listen and to speak to others; you can't speak to others without listening. It is also the ability to get others to listen and speak to each other, because that is how you begin to generate a genuine dialogue that takes place around the country."

Though a perception exists that dialogue is the prerogative of political organisations, the media and intellectuals, Dangor said this is a misnomer. South Africa has a rich tradition of people speaking among themselves. During apartheid, the United Democratic Front arranged dialogues to get communities talking and engaging on issues that affected them. These dialogues, which were often held illegally, were an opportunity for people to debate the challenges they faced.

"Dialogue is the ability to listen and to speak to others; you can't speak to others without listening. It is also the ability to get others to listen and speak to each other."

The power of this cumulative voice is central to sustainability, said Dangor. For the Foundation, sustainability means local communities, villages and towns asserting their right to enter into the discourse on what affects their lives and, in particular, entering the dialogue on social cohesion.

"Our hope, through forums like these, is to stimulate that process and to promote partnerships between government, media and civil society," he explained.

Dangor went on to say that community involvement is central to sustainability: "What I hope will emerge from this [community conversations] process is once more to stimulate that movement of people who are willing to change the world around them, one step at a time."

He implored leaders – at all levels – to take responsibility for driving these processes and programmes in the future, explaining that International Nelson Mandela Day is the perfect platform from which to continue these initiatives.

International Nelson Mandela Day is an international call to action for people everywhere to make the world a better place, one small step at a time. People are asked to devote just 67 minutes of their time to change the world for the better as a small step towards a continuous, global movement for good.

"Allow people and empower them to take back the right to speak about themselves and for themselves," said Dangor.

ALLOW PEOPLE AND EMPOWER THEM TO TAKE BACK THE
RIGHT TO SPEAK
ABOUT THEMSELVES AND FOR THEMSELVES

FOUNDER'S LEGACY

The Nelson Mandela Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation established in 1999 to support its Founder's ongoing engagement in worthy causes on his retirement as president of South Africa.

The Foundation is registered as a trust, with its board of trustees comprising prominent South Africans selected by the Founder, Nelson Mandela.

The Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory and Dialogue was inaugurated by Nelson Mandela on September 21, 2004, and endorsed as the core work of the Foundation in 2006. The Foundation, through the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory and Dialogue, contributes to the making of a just society by promoting the vision and work of its Founder and convening dialogue around critical social issues.

Dialogue for Justice

The Dialogue Programme of the Centre of Memory and Dialogue aims to develop and sustain dialogue around Mr Mandela's legacy. It is committed to building on the history, experience, values, vision and leadership of its Founder to provide a non-partisan platform for public discourse on critical social issues.

Achieving community participation in decision-making, even at policy levels, is prioritised.

The Dialogue Programme aims to perpetuate and re-invigorate the culture of engagement, using the example of inclusive and open dialogue set by Mr Mandela.

Drawing on the rich traditions of transformative dialogue, problem-solving and social renewal that made possible South Africa's remarkable transition, the Dialogue Programme:

• Aims to facilitate greater understanding and awareness about the problems faced by people, particularly in South Africa and Africa, and the possible solutions available to them;
• Utilises comprehensive methodologies to promote dialogue between stakeholders; and
• Convenes result-oriented stakeholder dialogue on key social issues identified through continuous engagement with partners.

Memory for Justice

Memory resources documenting the life and times of Nelson Mandela are to be found in an extraordinary range of locations, within South Africa and internationally.

The Foundation's Memory Programme provides a unique facility which:

• Locates, documents and ensures the preservation of these scattered resources;
• Collects and curates Mr Mandela's personal archive;
• Promotes public access to these resources and fosters dialogue around them; and
• Ensures that all initiatives in the name of Mr Mandela are true to his legacy.
Memory is not an end in itself. Its significance lies in its use. The Memory Programme seeks to reach both global

audiences and those systemically disadvantaged within South Africa by:

• Undertaking outreach programmes, including travelling exhibitions, books, a comic series and internships;
• Ensuring web-based access to information through its web portal;
• Supporting digitisation initiatives designed to broaden access to resources; and
• Facilitating research by individuals and institutions.

We believe that the vehicle for sharing memory effectively, for growing it and for engaging it in the promotion of justice, is dialogue.

We actively open our memory work – on the life and times of Mr Mandela, the events and the people he influenced or was influenced by – to debate and discussion, and we draw on this memory work in convening dialogue on critical social issues that present a threat to justice in society.

THE FOUNDATION CONTRIBUTES TO THE MAKING OF
A JUST SOCIETY
BY CONVENING DIALOGUE AROUND CRITICAL SOCIAL ISSUES

OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

September 2008 to April 2010

The Nelson Mandela Foundation programme was implemented against a backdrop of violent community protests around South Africa that were unparalleled in recent history. The violence, which occurred in several townships, was linked to public protests over corruption and the failure of local government to deliver basic services, such as housing, electricity, sanitation and other essential services. Entrenched xenophobic attitudes saw refugees and migrants become easy targets for communities' frustration and anger – not unlike the events of 2008.

In the first five months of 2010 at least 11 incidents were recorded in five provinces, including violent attacks and the looting of shops, particularly those owned by Somali and Ethiopian nationals. Within this general atmosphere of anger on the one hand, and profound fear on the other, the community conversations proceeded with minimal disruption.

Between September 2008 and April 2010, 21 community conversations were successfully completed, bringing the total number of conversations conducted during the programme to 30.

The objective, in each of the 17 sites where the conversations were held, was to identify and develop relationships with key stakeholders and, through the process of dialogue, empower communities to take responsibility for continuing the dialogues.

The overall approach in all conversations, taking due account of the specific dynamics and unique set of challenges in each respective site, was to work with communities, through a set of exercises, to identify the most immediate issues; to enable them to explore the root causes of their challenges; and to facilitate a process of action planning with a view to identifying the stakeholders that would continue the dialogue process beyond the Foundation-supported programme. Some of the tools used included the Historical Timeline, Tree Analysis, Five Friends of Planning and Envisioning the Future.

Community members' frustration about living in poor conditions, a perceived state of lawlessness where criminal and rogue elements continued to operate with impunity, and the apparent lack of accountability from key local and provincial government departments featured prominently throughout the conversations.

The section below details specific issues identified by some of the communities, as well as the structures the communities put in place to continue the dialogue process.

Atteridgeville, Gauteng

Issues identified by the community:

• The need to put in place truly participatory and representative processes to promote community based conflict resolution and reconciliation.
• The under-representation of youth in community forums and development initiatives. The community recommended that projects be set up aimed at youth empowerment, particularly aimed at skills development and rights awareness.
• A lack of understanding of structures and mechanisms aimed at strengthening democracy. Community members felt government and civil society organisations should demystify the concept of democracy, consult with the community to understand its expectations of democracy and, where needed, realign community expectations with what could be realistically achieved, such as housing, basic service delivery etc.
• The apparent lack of participation of migrants and migrant organisations in community initiatives. The community felt some of the misperceptions of migrants could be addressed if migrants were encouraged to play a more active role in the social and economic development of the community.

Following lengthy and often tense discussions, the Atteridgeville community decided to set up an ad hoc committee, including civic associations, community structures and migrant formations, to be co-ordinated by the Speaker's Office.

Albert Park, KwaZulu-Natal

Issues identified by the community:

• Degeneration of values – the breakdown of the family unit and dearth of role models, drug and alcohol abuse, materialism and the influence of the media.
• Crime – unemployment and poverty, destruction of cultural values, drug and alcohol abuse.
• Rights and cultural awareness – historical legacy of apartheid and colonialism, leaders motivated by self-interest, lack of transparency and accountability, illiteracy, apathy and despondency.
• Access to resources – language barrier, lack of

THE COMMUNITY FELT SOME OF THE **MISPERCEPTIONS** *OF MIGRANTS* COULD BE ADDRESSED IF MIGRANTS WERE ENCOURAGED TO *PLAY A MORE* **ACTIVE ROLE** IN THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITY

accountability, lack of documentation, financial and administrative barriers, and lack of trust.
• Leadership and participation – poor communication, selfishness, dictatorship, competition at the expense of co-operation and a failure to recognise gender equality.

A committee was put in place to follow through on the community's action plans. The community was briefed on positive developments in relation to these issues, such as the presentation of a petition calling for the reduction in the number of liquor outlets in the area; ongoing discussions to integrate migrants into the local community policing forum structure; and an audit of the skills possessed by foreign nationals which could form the basis of skills sharing programmes.

Nkomazi, Mpumalanga

Issues identified by the community:

• Exploitative labour practices fuelled by high numbers of migrants from Southern African Development Community countries, especially Swaziland and Mozambique, and the tendency among employers to exploit their vulnerability.

• Perceptions of high levels of corruption, especially with regard to the issuance of refugee permits or permits for economic migrants, resulting in many migrants operating without legal documentation.
• Low levels of education, coupled with high levels of unemployment.

The community formed a working committee with representatives from Mozambique, Somalia, Pakistan and Swaziland, as well as local community structures.

Leandra, Mpumalanga

Issues identified by the community:

• Fear among migrants because of the widespread rumour that xenophobic attacks would take place after the 2010 World Cup.
• High levels of poverty and unemployment were seen as the underlying reasons for alcohol and substance abuse and the high crime rate.

Follow up activities could not be planned due to violent protests and the subsequent cancellation of a community conversation.

Walmer, Eastern Cape

Issues identified by the community:

• General lawlessness, lack of trust in the police and the tendency of the community to "take law into [its] own hands".
• The high level of unemployment, especially among the youth, was seen as the major driver of alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy and the breakdown of the family unit.
• The struggle to secure legal documents such as birth certificates and social grants. Many households were supported by grandmothers, who had the added burden of caring for their children's children.

The Red Cross Society, loveLife and the Department of Social Development made a commitment to continue with the community dialogues.

Jeffrey's Bay, Eastern Cape

Issues identified by the community:

• Crimes such as housebreaking, human trafficking and domestic violence were rife, fuelled by the mushrooming of shebeens, and high levels of alcohol and substance abuse.
• Perceptions that violence against migrants was instigated by criminal elements and was not the result of xenophobia. It was thought that criminals targeted migrants because they were interested in their goods and money.
• The absence of a high school contributed to the high rate of school drop-outs.
• It was felt that the general community did not take

ownership of Jeffrey's Bay and therefore did not feel it had a stake in the development of the community.

Follow up activities could not be planned due to violent protests and the subsequent cancellation of a community conversation.

Nyanga, Western Cape

Issues identified by the community:

• It was felt that the community of Nyanga had to exercise its right to determine who really belonged there based on their contributions to the community.
• Migrant shop owners did not always take account of relevant business regulations, resulting in conflicts with local spaza shop owners.
• The lack of capacity of local leaders to provide direction to the community and address its economic challenges.

Despite drawing up action plans, the community was reluctant to take responsibility for the implementation of these plans. It was agreed that the Institute for Healing of Memories, supported by other operational partners, would continue the Western Cape dialogues.

Diepsloot, Gauteng

Issues identified by the community:

• Complicity of community members in corruption. It was felt that in remaining silent when crimes were committed, receiving stolen goods or enabling violence against migrants, the community contributed to the culture of silence around criminality and violence.

PERCEPTIONS EXISTED THAT VIOLENCE AGAINST MIGRANTS WAS INSTIGATED BY
CRIMINAL ELEMENTS
AND WAS NOT THE RESULT OF XENOPHOBIA.
IT WAS THOUGHT THAT CRIMINALS **TARGETED MIGRANTS**
BECAUSE THEY WERE INTERESTED IN THEIR GOODS

• The need to involve youth in community activities and ensure youth representation in community structures. The community undertook to launch a public campaign in June and use community activities planned for "Youth Month" to break the silence around corruption and crime.

• The need to elect competent, responsive and accountable leaders and for the community to communicate clear criteria, values and the competencies it would expect of its leadership to enable greater decentralisation of resources and stimulate economic activity at community level.

• The need to identify and develop co-operatives to initiate joint projects and greater skills-sharing, especially between host and migrant communities, and to promote sustainable community driven activities that would lead to self-sufficiency.

• A general lack of awareness about policies and laws relating to refugees, asylum seekers and other categories of migrants. It was felt that the City of Johannesburg's Migrant Help Desk should embark on programmes to raise awareness about the rights and responsibilities of migrants, including their right to participate in economic development activities in Diepsloot.

A nine-person committee was formed to promote the implementation of the action plan developed in the community conversations. The City of Johannesburg's Migrant Help Desk committed to assist the committee, especially in terms of promoting awareness about refugee and migrant rights.

Cato Manor, KwaZulu-Natal

Issues identified by the community:

• The need to inculcate tolerance and respect for the rights of all, including the rights of migrants in South Africa.

• The need to build open communication and consultation between leadership structures such as churches, community leaders and local government to ensure the root causes of conflict could be addressed.

• The need to put strategies in place to encourage the transfer of skills to promote self-reliance and overcome barriers to cohesion between South African and migrant communities.

The community set up a committee, housed by local government, to follow up on the recommendations and outcomes adopted.

REFLECTING ON THE COMMUNITY
CONVERSATIONS

The fragility of a South Africa built around the dream of a rainbow nation came under scrutiny in May 2008 following the dramatic wave of violence perpetrated against African nationals in informal settlements and townships across the country. This unprecedented violence exposed the chasm between the ideals enshrined in the Constitution – of a country underscored by tolerance and respect for human rights – and the realities of life in South Africa.

The May 2008 violence echoed the division and racial conflict that characterised South African society prior to the 1994 transition to democracy and stood in stark contrast to the vision of a "South Africa that belongs to all who live in it". It was a disturbing parallel of the past –

a society infatuated with difference and ingrained with a culture of violence against the embodiment of such difference.

More recent violence has been linked to public protests over corruption and the failure of local government to deliver services such as housing, electricity, sanitation and other essential services – but in these instances, as in 2008, refugees and migrants proved easy targets for communities' frustration and anger.

The programme

Against this background, and in line the philosophy of its Founder towards encouraging dialogue, the Nelson Mandela Foundation launched a pilot programme to promote social cohesion in 2008. As part of this programme, the Foundation initiated a series of community conversations in sites in five provinces that had experienced xenophobic violence in 2008. The conversations aimed to promote cohesion between migrants and locals through dialogue.

The Foundation's focus on dialogue was premised on a wide range of experiences, including in South Africa, where dialogue proved to be a powerful tool for building co-operation and resolving conflict.

While a range of tools and methodologies can be used in the dialogue process, the Foundation adopted the Community Capacity Enhancement (CCE) methodology, a framework used by the United Nations Development Programme. The methodology recognises the capacity
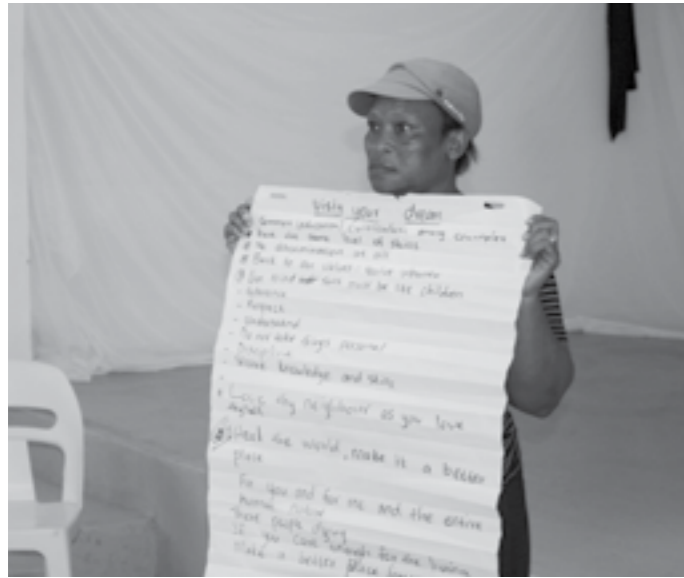
inherent in communities and taps into this to bring about transformative change at community and institutional levels.

The dialogue process

The primary goal of the community conversations process was to create the conditions for social transformation by engaging stakeholders in a safe environment that facilitated a deeper understanding of the challenges facing each community.

The Foundation convened the conversations in partnership with civil society organisations working with local communities and migrants, including faith-based organisations, organisations working with refugees and migrants, and those working to improve the conditions of the poorest of the poor. These operational partnerships assisted in securing support for dialogues at local level, where the efforts of these organisations were concentrated.

The CCE process envisages transformation through a cycle of six steps – relationship building, identification of concerns, exploration of concerns, decision prioritisation, implementation and constant reflection during each phase of this cycle. Underpinning this is a set of governing principles that includes inclusiveness (everyone who is part of the problem is involved), joint ownership (everyone is involved and engaged), learning (maintaining openness in conversation), humanity (the quality of empathy) and long-term perspective (understanding there are no quick fixes).

Three vital and interrelated ingredients are critical for the success of dialogues – psychological, substantive and procedural components. The psychological component requires that the appropriate people are involved in the dialogue and that their need to be respected and heard is addressed. The substantive component is primarily concerned with maintaining the key purpose of the dialogue – in this case, the need to grow social cohesion among migrants and locals. Procedurally, it is necessary to safeguard the dialogue process and ensure that participants perceive it as fair and worthwhile.

An overview of the community conversations process should not be confined to the dialogue event, but equally contemplate the numerous engagements that take place outside the conversations, including bilateral meetings with stakeholders, capacity development workshops, follow ups in relation to outcomes and agreements emerging from the dialogues and so forth. The journey around each site thus unfolded in three sets of activities: a first stage, consisting of a range of preparatory activities aimed at the dialogue event; the dialogue itself; and a final stage involving the range of activities that arose

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as a consequence of the dialogues. As the dialogues were held as a series, the first and third stages were connected in a cycle, with follow up activities feeding into preparation for the next dialogue event.

Comprehensive electronic publications around dialogue and the CCE methodology in particular are available on the Nelson Mandela Foundation website (www. nelsonmandela.org).

Findings

As the participants were motivated by different concerns and interests, a range of perspectives emerged from the dialogues. Some views were superficial – based on social determinants such as social standing, origin, class, age, religion etc – while others focused on the underlying factors affecting relations. General findings from the dialogue process are laid out under five broad headings below.

Socio-economic environment

• The socio-economic environment acts as a major stressor in building cohesive communities.
• Growing social and economic inequalities intersect with communities' lived experiences of exclusion and marginalisation from social, economic and political processes and decision-making.
• While institutional and other forms of exclusion take on a peculiar trajectory with respect to migrants, impoverished South African communities' experiences of exclusion and marginalisation are not significantly different.
• Within a contested social and political space, "ownership" is seen as the route to political and economic power.
• Social and development agendas are increasingly being merged with the political agenda.
• There is tension and mistrust within South African communities based on historic ethnic, cultural, language and social class divisions.
• South Africa lacks strategies to deal with the effects of massive internal migration, which is conflated with international or cross-border migration.

Political and institutional frameworks

• The political and institutional frameworks necessary for building long-term social stability are weak.
• Entrenched institutional attitudes and practices exclude migrants from accessing the full range of social protection and rights envisaged by the Constitution.
• There is a general lack of awareness of South Africa's national and international obligations regarding the protection of refugees and migrants, entrenched attitudes and a willingness to act on xenophobic perceptions.
• Mistrust of organs of government, coupled with strong perceptions of lack of leadership, is pervasive.

Security, justice, accountability and rule of law

• There are significant challenges to the promotion of security, justice, accountability and the rule of law.
• The emergence of formal and informal leadership structures, often motivated by economic gain and self-interest, appears to be filling a perceived vacuum in terms of addressing violence and crime, providing "safety and protection" and ridding communities of "undesirable elements".
• In addition to extraordinarily high levels of crime, the perception that government is unable to stem the tide of crime is common.
• Widespread perceptions exist that attacks on migrants were motivated by crime and poverty and were, therefore, not a manifestation of xenophobia.
• Migrants' lack of participation in community affairs is

driven by high levels of fear and experiences of being seen as "outsiders".
• There is a lack of strategies and mechanisms to resolve conflicts at the local community level.

Psycho-social recovery

• There is recognition of the profound and enduring effects of apartheid and its current manifestations.
• Within South Africa, there is a confluence of "hurting communities" – of migrant and host communities' historical pain – and a lack of mechanisms to promote psycho-social recovery and healing.
• Community structures should be strengthened and opinion leaders should inspire others to look beyond their challenges and embrace more inclusive actions.
• Community-based forums and mechanisms to promote healing should be established.

Language as a unifying or dividing force

• Language can be a barrier to cohesion and a medium of exclusion.
• The way in which language is used in the media and common parlance emphasises difference and separateness.
• Language can be manipulated to exclude the "other".
• The "insider-outsider" phenomenon is pervasive.
• Language has the power to promote the wealth of culture and diversity.

Case studies

The Nelson Mandela Foundation has published case studies based on the unique learning and specific outcomes that emerged from particular dialogue sites.

In some instances these explore aspects of the findings; in others, they describe the changes flowing out of the action adopted by communities.

One case study discusses efforts currently under way in KwaZulu-Natal to explore the role of language as a bridge towards accessing other cultures and promoting mutual understanding. Language reflects values and concepts that are deemed to be culturally important. As such, the sharing of language can be pivotal in building intercultural dialogue.

Members of the Albert Park community in KwaZulu-Natal felt that learning languages could create familiarity among cultures and, ultimately, further peace-building and social cohesion. The leadership of the local ward, inspired by these discussions, initiated three projects to respond to the challenges facing the community, introducing a radio station to "tell their stories", a multilingual community newspaper and a multilingual inner-city school.

The importance of language and culture for a community's psychological well-being is well established and historical accounts, including from South Africa's past, show how dispossession in this regard can annihilate people's belief in their heritage and identity. In contrast, the promotion of linguistic diversity, particularly in public spaces, renders power and acceptance to people, and affirms their identities.

The community conversations highlighted how dominant linguistic groups within specific geographical spaces often fail to see language diversity as a social resource, choosing instead to view it as a problem and barrier to integration. This is particularly evident as societies struggle to respond to the challenges of globalisation and

linguistic diversity arising from international migration. In a bid to forge national cohesion, such societies attempt, expressly or implicitly, to foster artificial homogeneity around the culture of dominant groups, indirectly undermining national unity by promoting attitudes opposed to cultural and linguistic pluralism.

In contrast, the linguistic pluralism evident in our Constitution and its approach to 11 official languages has potential to be developed further, to permeate all spheres of public life (including interactions with migrants).

When people talk about inclusion of migrants in their societies, the idea often mooted is of their assimilation into society through adoption of the dominant language and culture. This thinking has been criticised as a "strip-tease" approach to integration, suggesting migrants enter "naked" without any cultural, religious or even ethnic specificity or identity before they can be accepted. Instead, what is increasingly advocated – in line with human rights law – is an approach of promoting integration of the basis of accepting cultural and ethnic diversity as a natural condition in our societies as a result of globalisation.

In the context of the Albert Park community conversations, participants believed that language possessed the power to open the community to the wealth of a different culture. They thus sought to grow a shared understanding through language, with migrants and locals being encouraged to learn local languages such as isiZulu, as well as regional languages, such as Kiswahili, and thereby grow their awareness of other cultures.

In addition to this study of language and belonging, the

Nelson Mandela Foundation will publish case studies on its website in November 2010 exploring:

• The notion of belonging and nation-building as it emerged from community conversations held in Khayelitsha and Nyanga;
• The factors inhibiting migrant participation in community life and the opportunities for strengthening migrants' capacities to promote integration in host communities; and
• The historical migration flows from Mozambique and Swaziland into Mpumalanga.

These case studies, which mark the culmination of the pilot phase of the programme, will be available for download on www. nelsonmandela.org.

Conclusion

In many respects, the community conversations pilot programme affirmed the power of dialogue and its transformative effect on relationships. The process allowed participants who previously had no forum to engage with their counterparts a platform to articulate their views.

Community dialogues may present forums for developing the capacity to resolve conflicts peacefully. In this sense dialogue should not be viewed in isolation, but rather as one tool in a series of integrated interventions, including mediation and conflict resolution, through which communities can address the underlying conditions that generate conflict, such as poverty, inequity and patterns of social exclusion.

Most importantly, any organisation or institution wishing to utilise dialogue must bear in mind that sustainable results depend on a willingness to invest in a long-term intervention focusing on specific social concerns.

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Living the Legacy

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