The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation contributes to the building of fair, democratic and inclusive societies in Africa before, during and after political transition.

It seeks to advance dialogue and social transformation. Through research, analysis, community intervention, spirited public debate and grassroots encounters, the Institute’s work aims to create a climate in which people in divided societies are willing to build a common, integrated vision.

The Institute is committed to peacemaking at every level of society, by breaking down old boundaries and reshaping social paradigms.


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Design & Layout by:
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OVERVIEW - RATIONALE, PROCESS & PARTICIPANTS

If we accept that the historical record of places, spaces, cities, towns and valleys will always be incomplete, how can that understanding be used to stimulate budding historians at school to explore the following questions:

- What is the history of De Doorns?
- How people’s lives have changed in De Doorns in the past 50 years?
- How can young people learn the tools in the production of new historical knowledge?

These were some of the questions that informed this oral history project initiated by Institute for Justice and Reconciliation’s (IJR) Schools’ Oral History Project (SOHP) in partnership with Van Cutsem Secondary School and the Cape Winelands Education District, Worcester.

Published local histories of small towns in South Africa, in general, reflect the development of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) and focus virtually exclusively on the life and times of white communities in those towns. Other communities are marginalized and are often only mentioned as recipients of benevolent actions from the white community.

This project is based on the understanding that colonialism and apartheid dehumanized the colonized and oppressed and instilled a sense of inferiority in them. Therefore, there is a need for processes that could contribute to acknowledge, validate and affirm their lives and experiences. Furthermore, the project allowed project participants to explore their own narratives and how those connect and intersect with those across the conventional South African divides of language, race, colour, class and creed. In this way, new narratives may be developed that will contribute to a greater sense of social cohesion and understanding in local towns.

Getting learners interested

Most people, especially teenagers, are curious about understanding how the world works and how they can make a contribution to better communities, towns and societies. Moreover, if learning is presented as fun and stimulating, but at the same time, as a challenging activity, one will be amazed at how young people want to learn.

Learners were actively engaged throughout the training process by exploring the following issues:

- What is their understanding of history and oral history?
- How can one know what happened in the past?
- What informs the writing of history?
- How can one use photographs to tell history?
- How to formulate and implement a research plan?
The use of technology, for example, voice recorders and cameras contributed to sustain the interest of the learners.

At the first practice session with the voice recorders, they laughed at their strange voices emerging from the recorders; then there was intense listening to people they once would have passed on the street without acknowledging them, slowly making sense of all the sharing of stories, perspectives and recollections from the past; the closely relatedness of the past, present and future and how to use these understandings to inform their lives.

Incorporating different types of learning formats, big group discussions; small working groups to task teams to undertake specific duties; as well as application of acquired knowledge were used to ensure optimal learning as well as maintain enthusiasm. In the end, however, a core group of learners spearheaded by Tshepo, Luleka, Mabhuti, Abongile and Siyavuya did most of the work for this project.

The sustained interest and attendance of the Van Cutsem history educators, Ms Toni and Mr L. Gagu, also contributed to the success of this project.

PARTICIPANTS:

EDUCATORS: Ms N. Toni and Mr. L. Gagu
PROJECT COORDINATOR: Cecyl Esau, Schools’ Oral History at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR)
FLIPCHART NOTES FROM THE VARIOUS WORKSHOP SESSIONS WITH PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

1. Check in:
   - Research Theme
   - Research Question

2. How does one use OHC as a tool for research?

3. What is H?
   - H = based on significant events that happened in the past written from the perspective of the historian/narrator based on selected sources.
   - What you see is what you look at, but what you look through.

4. 0 Biographical Questions

5. How did De Doorns was when they were young?

6. Work life
   - iCawe
   - iMidelal
   - Entertainment
   - Usapho

7. Cultural life
   - What were the
From L to R: Nikita, Luleka, Tshepo and Siyovuya during a break whilst on a fields trip in the Hex River Valley.

[Photo taken by Mabuthi Tata]
The Hex-river Valley is world renowned for the export of table grapes. The cultivation of this high valued crop requires high levels of labour power which could not be met locally and this resulted in increased demand for seasonal labour over the years. With the ending of apartheid and the pass laws system, freedom of movement was guaranteed in the South African Constitution. Moreover, the ending of apartheid gave the table grape producers increased access to the international markets with the simultaneous increased demand for workers in this labour intensive industry. Formerly, housing for workers was provided on-farm. However, the demand for housing soon outstripped supply and the government had to step in.
The Hex River Valley in recent years has also been the site of intense workers’ action for improved working and living conditions.

Agricultural enterprise production in the Hex River Valley

All except one, Siyazama Klipland, have white owners. Siyazama Klipland is a beneficiary of the government’s land reform process. However, there are also a number of empowerment schemes in the Hex River Valley like De Hoop Vineyards, Uitkoms Farms, Olykloof, Osplaas and Hoogland which aim to promote farm worker shareholding in the agricultural enterprise.

[Photo's taken by Luleka Duma]

Cooling facilities for table grape exports in Orchard

[Photo taken by Mabhuti Tata]
De Doorns Wine Cellars
Three views of the table grape producing Hex River Valley

[Photo taken by Tshepo Letolo]
The railway line through the Hex River Valley has declined in importance as a mode of transport and people rely primarily on minibus taxi's.

During the Apartheid Era, this building was used as a clothing shop with separate entrances for black and white people.
Meeting The Demand For Housing in the Hex River Valley

The houses at the bottom of the photograph are part of the first off-farm dwellings. This is also referred to as the Klipdal street area.

An example of on-farm housing for farm workers, below, known as 'Ruben se bulu' (Ruben's Hill) and also as Arbeid Adelt.

Below, entrance to Hasie Square, a residential area developed in response to the increased demand for housing for farm workers and consisted initially of wood and iron structures.
A view of new housing development, Lubisi, at the top of the photo, on entering the Hex river Valley on the N 1 from Pretoria on the way to Cape Town. The informal housing in the foreground underlines the escalating need for housing.

[Photo taken by Abongile Madlolo]

Place called ‘Hoender’ or ‘Chicken’ where migrant / seasonal workers from Lesotho settled during the apartheid era. However, they were removed from there because they did not have the proper documentation. They were resettled in an area called ‘izinyoka’ close to the Catholic Church.

[Photo taken by Tshepo Letolo]
Primary Health Care Provision

Then - Previously this building, which is situated next to Spar, was used as the healthcare clinic. Today it houses the Breede Valley East Traffic Centre.

The new De Doorns Clinic opened in 2001
New and Old Community Meeting Spaces

The old hall which was used for community events

[Photo taken by Tshepo Letolo]

Hex Valley People’s Centre (2003) which is located next to the new De Doorns Clinic

[Photo taken by Siyavuya Sibulwana]
Some Educational Institutions in De Doors

Orchard Primary School established in 1918

[Photo taken by Mabuthi Tata]

F.J. Conradie Primary School established in the 1950's

[Photo taken by Tshepo Letolo]
The Hex Valley High School obtained its high school status in 1950 and is situated in the main road in De Doorns.

[Photo taken by Tshepo Letola]

Hex Valley Secondary School

[Photo taken by Tshepo Letola]
Van Cutsem Combined School

[Photo taken by Tshepo Letolo]
Some of the faith based institutions

This building belonged to the Uniting Reform Church (formerly known as the Dutch Reformed Mission Church) before it was removed from the main street because of the Group Areas Act during apartheid.

[Photo taken by Luleka Duma]

The new location of Uniting Reform Church (formerly known as the Dutch Reformed Mission Church) after its removal from the main street in De Doorns

[Photo taken by Luleka Duma]
The Catholic Church in De Doorns

[Photo taken by Tshepo Leolo]

Construction of Soccer Field

[Photo taken by Tshepo Leolo]
Entrance to the Hex River Valley on the N 1 en route from Pretoria to Cape Town
Educators and project participants at the first oral history training session

[Photo taken by Cecyl Esau]
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