KICK STARTING 2018 IN CTS:
FACILITATOR TRAINING

Nomore Nyabote

Excitement was in the air on the 5th of February as the LKA team came together for an induction and training session at Zola 2 dining hall for the first time in 2018. In attendance was Alice campus academic coordinator for the Centre for Transdisciplinary Studies, LKA student interns, returning as well as new facilitators. The training session was mainly to orient facilitators to the LKA program, giving them a background of the program and unpacking the Umthamo (themes) sessions that they would be expected to facilitate on.

The returning facilitators took turns to facilitate the mock session and the topics on the agenda ranged from the introduction to the new and old LKA cycle, rituals, a breakdown of the roles and responsibilities of the facilitators and an overview of facilitation styles that could be used by facilitators in their sessions with students.

Benjamin Franklin once said “Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.” True to the core principles of the LKA program which involves participatory learning, the training session was meant to impart facilitation skills in an interactive and fun environment.
LKA STUDENT EXPERIENCE

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT:

LKA STUDENT EXPERIENCE

“Personally I enjoyed the socializing and networking aspect. What LKA did was to take people who under normal circumstances would not share a class and brought them together, as a direct result you ended up having friends from departments different from your own.” (S. MTANGABENDE)

“From my own experience I would say LKA helped me in gaining more self-confidence because I was grouped with students from different countries and with time I was able to stand in front of all other students and share my views on the topics that we were discussing.” (S.S. NCUMANI)

“It is of paramount importance to note that the former students report that they were able to take some of the skills that they gained in the LKA and use them to make their school work easier. These were some responses that were given by some senior students when they were asked to reflect on LKA:

“As a former student myself, I remember that I learnt how to write an assignment in LKA. I was taught all the basics of writing academically. It also helped me to gain self-confidence as most of the sessions required our participation.” (N. NODWENGU)

“This program helped me to open up and think outside the box, it helped me to engage in critical thinking - a skill which I then used in all my courses. Believe me this just made things a whole easier in my academic life.” (T. MABEMBA)

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“LKA classes helped me to be able to accept people with different cultures and belief systems from me. As a young Xhosa woman, I had been exposed to only the Xhosa culture but LKA gave me a platform to mix with other people cultures. I now truly understand that diversity should be celebrated.” (N. FAXI)

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“Do you have clan names in your culture? Uyakwazi ukuthathu? (Do you have praise names?) How were you raised? What are your values? What is taboo in your culture? How do you see me? Why do you behave the way you do? How different are we? How similar are we?

These questions we ask in LKA classes to break the stereotypes and know each other.

Bethuna, I hear that in Agriculture you learn about poverty? in economics you learn about poverty too? In Social work, you also do? Even in health sciences! Wow, then how can we collectively solve this plight as LKA students using our knowledge from our diverse disciplines?

Nomore Nyabote

LKA in a nutshell

By Nomzamo Dube

To know you better, I need to hear about you, not from television, not from radio, not from news but from your own voice.

Your ‘lived curriculum’ matters.

Questions I have, stereotypes I have, misconceptions I have, I have heard different versions of you and it scares me, do you mind sharing your version of reality?

How did you grow up? Ungumumani?

Do you grow up in a family of ten siblings? Or are you an only child? How were you raised? Do you have clan names? And do you have a title in your culture?

The newsletter team interviewed some previous students from LKA to get an insight on their experiences and thoughts on the LKA program.

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LKA FACILITATORS’ VOICES

BY SANDLA NGCULU

Mhle has enjoyed the diversity and LKA helped him move away from his comfort zone.

Glitter says she now embraces diversity and has become expressive.

Christopher loves how LKA forces people to think critically and enriches our knowledge tanks.

Facilitating LKA has improved my confidence. I am even more understanding and patient towards the students, says Emmanuel.

These LKA omakhaya settings transcend our individual disciplines. Umkhwezi wam (my facilitator) is a student too, I do not get scared to talk in class, my voice matters in class. I get assistance even after class. We have a WhatsApp group with our facilitator, we take advantage of social networks for educational purposes, we get personal attention, she knows my name. I am not scared to ask her how I should reference my assignment even outside the class.

Yshu sana, our LKA ekhaya picked litter from the Tyume river as a community outreach project. We want to save living organisms in the water from water pollution. Tadpoles for example may go extinct if we do not save them and our grandchildren will only read about them in books.

Ndikuxelele our ekhaya went to the hospital, we assisted in cleaning the hospital, did hospital gardening and played with admitted children at the pediatric ward. It was awesome, we saw hope in their faces, we extended some love though our community outreach project.

Thina we did a visit to the old age home, assisted in cooking and invited a nurse to assist our elderly by educating them about how to take care of sicknesses they have. We had bonding sessions with omakhulu no tamkhulu, we felt at home. They needed us and we needed their wisdom too. They told us folk tales, I pray, I will not forget to share with my grandchildren too. We can never live without the wisdom of the elderly.

Facilitating LKA has improved my confidence. I am even more understanding and patient towards the students, says Emmanuel.
As part of a series of seminars that the Centre for Transdisciplinary Studies holds monthly, on the 27th of February 2018 it held the Robert Sobukwe Lecture in remembrance of the 40th years since the passing of Prof Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe. He is known by many as a former scholar in the University and a Pan-Africanist. He was regarded as a courageous, fearless, spiritual and visionary leader. His peculiar leadership skills saw him being imprisoned in a completely different way opposed to how other leaders were imprisoned by the apartheid government. The oppressive government saw him as a bigger threat because he advocated for Africans to lead South Africa.

Dr Dondolo presented the seminar topic “Sobukwe’s Quest for an African University: Representations and Misrepresentations of a Man of Vision in Post-apartheid South Africa.” The lecture is a series of lectures that are continuing and facilitated by the Robert Sobukwe Foundation. Dr Dondolo believed that these series of lectures were crucial for celebrating the great contribution made by Prof Sobukwe, which has gone unacknowledged. The presentation was packed with mouthfuls of Robert Sobukwe’s misrepresentation like the fact that he is placed as a shadow of Nelson Mandela. Dr Dondolo notes that instead of including Prof Sobukwe’s birthday as a relevant event on the 5th of December, the focus is more on the commemoration of the death of Nelson Mandela.

Dr Dondolo highlights that reviving the voice of the Pan Africanist Congress would shed light on how issues such as land reform and free education, decolonilisation of the Africanist Congress would shed light on how issues such as land reform and free education, decolonilisation of the education system that also encourages competition between these disciplines. According to him, the singular approach found in disciplinarity reduces the ability for any research to be holistic. He clearly describes the importance of disciplinarity but moving from disciplinarity to transdisciplinarity forms part of knowledge evolution. Dr Dondolo defines Transdisciplinarity as a holistic approach that enables us to better understand global issues.

Transdisciplinarity is a concept that has been there since the 1960s and Russian leads in the world. Like any body of knowledge, transdisciplinarity has also evolved over the years. The Centre for Transdisciplinarity is not just about the LKA module but gives support to the different departments, facilitating transdisciplinary research and community engagement in the University. The Centre aims to promote transdisciplinary research at postgraduate level since the junior degree is there to form the foundation of the graduate.

He gave an example of how poverty can be dealt with using a transdisciplinary approach. Reminding us of the former President Thabo Mbeki who understood the need to look at the social issues which affect HIV infected persons and former President Nelson Mandela who said “HIV/AIDS is no longer a health issue; it’s a human rights issue.”

In a nutshell, the seminar indeed was thought provoking as discussions the seminar was concluded with question and answer.

Summarized by Siphamandla Ngesi

**Breaking the Walls of Disciplinarity: The Meaning of Transdisciplinary Discourse in a Changing University Context**

Dr Dondolo presented the paper were he said he sought to provoke thought and conversation around Transdisciplinarity in the University. He initiated his talk by giving an understanding of disciplinarity. The different disciplines where formed by the colonial education system that also encourages competition between these disciplines. According to him, the singular approach found in disciplinarity reduces the ability for any research to be holistic. He clearly describes the importance of disciplinarity but moving from disciplinarity to transdisciplinarity forms part of knowledge evolution. Dr Dondolo defines Transdisciplinarity as a holistic approach that enables us to better understand global issues.

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**Research Engagement**

Research forms part of the three legs of the Centre for Transdisciplinary Studies. As part of the Centre’s development path, an active research agenda has been developed. The research agenda is founded on the principles of transdisciplinarity, human rights, active citizenry, African philosophic thought, freedom, justice, non-racial discrimination and diversity. The research agenda also aims at promoting the culture of transdisciplinarity amongst the academics. The Centre also provides a platform for intellectual engagement and exchange of ideas.

A university is an institution that cannot operate in solitude, as the saying goes, Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu (we are because of others), the university exists through the support of the surrounding communities. It is therefore, the responsibility of the university to support the communities surrounding it. The Centre for Transdisciplinary Studies (CTS) has established an ongoing relationship with the Mzikazhe Children’s Home in Mdantsane, where LKA students and the CTS staff collectively visit the home and occasionally donate toiletries and clothing. Other community outreach programs done annually include soup kitchens, hospital visits, cleaning and providing career guidance to high school students and visits to vulnerable communities who need different kinds of support.
The idea of decolonising education has become the subject of recent discussions by academics, as well as students on several occasions. In fact, South African universities have become an intellectual melting pot. We have seen reports on television, newspapers, magazines, or internet showing an ocean of protesting university students, hitting on the street, for better or worse. Besides being a poignant spectator, it is noteworthy to understand that underlying these protests, is a clear call for a free decolonized, Afrocentric education. Briefly put, this call is being projected as premised on the liberation of black people and the complete dismantling of the so-called colonial vestiges or legacies which perpetuates black subjugation and relegation from the epicentre of knowledge production, packaging and dissemination.

When the agitation for decolonising education began, many lecturers asked their students what this demand meant for them and used student ignorance to dismiss it. It was crudely expressed that students themselves do not know what decolonising of education means therefore, they do not know what they want. It seemed for the majority of the student’s, as reported in the press, and lecture halls decoloniality was a euphemism veiled in obscurity. Further, some lecturers exhibited lack of elementary knowledge on decoloniality by mocking it as an impossibility. They argued, how can one “decolonise” the laws of gravity and Newton’s law? In responding to angry student comment, one of the lecturers was reported verbatim saying “We cannot throw out the laws of gravity and Newton’s law? In responding to lecture halls decoloniality was a euphemism veiled in the fact that we cannot decolonise the curriculum while the university as institution remains untouched. As Grange maintains that first generation colonialism was the conquering of the physical spaces and bodies of the colonised, and that second generation colonialism was the colonisation of the mind through disciplines such as education, science, economics and law. This means wholesome decolonisation covers both first and second-generation colonialism.

Constitutionally speaking, everyone has the right to education in South Africa. This means that the right to education is regarded as a fundamental human right which is crucial to the transformation project as a whole. However, the right to education is not without limitations. It is subjected to progressive realisation based on the availability of resources. It is the constitution provides for the right to education, it is mute on the content of the right itself. Although many scholars have speculated on the content of the right to education, it can be argued that such an endeavour should not result in adopting a determinacy which does not exist. In the context of decolonisation, one can submit that the right to education should be understood as containing liberalised knowledge which reflects more the living experience of its people and society in general. However, this does not mean the existing knowledge economy must be overthrown and replaced by another version in an anti-thesis manner.

In order for one to understand the meaning of decolonisation, it is necessary to engage with the semantic meaning of the two words, ‘decolonisation’ and ‘education’. According to Cambridge dictionary decolonisation is the process in which a country that was previously a colony controlled by another becomes politically independent. The preceding Cambridge dictionary definition of decolonisation is not without shortcomings. It does not clearly embrace the concept of decolonisation beyond political independence. Aside of its shortcomings, the Cambridge dictionary further defines education as the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction, especially at school or university. Read together, decolonisation of education can be interpreted as meaning that a nation becomes independent with regards to the acquisition of knowledge, values, benefits, beliefs and habits.

Decolonisation education can be either be understood in a broad or narrow sense. Broadly speaking, decolonisation of education refers to decolonising the university or decolonising the higher education landscape. Narrowly, it means decolonisation of the curriculum itself. In the latter format, that we cannot decolonise the curriculum while the university as institution remains untouched. As Grange maintains that first generation colonialism was the conquering of the physical spaces and bodies of the colonised, and that second generation colonialism was the colonisation of the mind through disciplines such as education, science, economics and law. This means wholesome decolonisation covers both first and second-generation colonialism.

Luketj posi that colonisation was premised on violence, economic exploitation, disfigurement of African communities and cultures, disguised as development and modernisation. This view is elucidated by Hoppers who maintains that colonialism deprived Africa of its sovereignty, self-respect, its freedom, power thereby obliterating Africa from the annals of history. Happens conceptualisation of colonialism as caricature through which everything African and indigenous was given a negative ontological and cognitive status. In Ngugi wa Thiong’s argument the pinnacle of colonialism was the systematic disassociation of the language of conceptualisation, thinking, formal education and mental development, from the language of daily interaction in the home and in the community. On the other hand, Mbembe argues that decolonisation must be perceived as referring to demystifying whiteness. According to him, the pulling down of Rhodes statue from the University of Cape Town is an example of how we can decolonise universities. He argues for expelling whiteness; decolonising buildings and public spaces; decolonising the classroom or curriculum and decolonising systems of management.

It is noteworthy that underlying the idea of decolonisation is the need to interrogate the status quo of knowledge production within the university space. In other words, one must understand the link between the curriculum and power, simply put, who decides whose knowledge is valid. Such an enquiry is necessary for people to comprehend the historical development of disciplines as we know them today. One of the gravest blunders made by African scholars in general was the view that the absence of a colonial administration and government automatically translates into decoloniality. Far from it, the global colonial system of hegemony erected over a period of 450 years continue to subsist. As Ndlovu-Gatheni puts it, colonialism refers to a global infrastructure which continues to reproduce Eurocentrism in society and academy long after the fall of the physical empires.

In sum, the above discussion demonstrate that the debate on decolonisation of education in South Africa is rooted in attempts to achieve curriculum transformation and liberalisation of the knowledge economy. It is this quest that students refer to when they demand decolonisation of education. Although this debate on decolonisation of education may have more merits than demerits, lamentably, it has not yet received much attention beyond informal conversations raising here and there. Indeed, robust round tables and academic conversation must be encouraged to gain a full insight into the subject. Such efforts may culminate in the birth of a new epistemological discourse, which is Afrocentric, transformative and liberating.

by Shelton Motamakore
Graduation makes me feel ecstatic and very proud of myself, also the fact that I am the only graduate of my family makes it more special. I thank the Lord for how far I have come.

**Bathsile Gijana**

Graduating to me means achieving one of my many goals, and it feels so special because my family is celebrating with me on this achievement.

**Akhona Pato**

I am proud of myself that I have achieved something that may change my life and at home I am the first graduate, so that makes it extra special.

**Babalwa Fumba**

Graduating was a huge accomplishment to me. Walking down that stage and seeing my family ululating was amazing, it proved to me that hard work pays.

**Azola Mmangaliso**

My best experience about graduation is when your name is called and you walk across the podium while people are applauding you. In that moment you realize that you don’t owe yourself success but many more that look up to you as their role model.

**Busisiwe Nyeke**

Graduation is a reflection of hard work, a journey characterised by determination and endurance. The 11th of May was a dream come true as I was the first graduate in my family and my village. Such proud moments will forever be cherished.

**Glitter Ndlovu**

My family is always supportive of my academic progress. It’s also comforting to graduate considering we come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

**Hards work is necessary to rid all**

Worked hard and tough to rid it all. All remedies experienced in all forms, But in the end you are never have want sleepless nights it takes. **HOLD ON OR DIE OUT!**

**Earth**

by Mihle Maciko

Our greedy nature has turned you grey
And what we see will soon decay
There will be no horn on the Rhinos face.
With your extinction to come from the human race
Your blue waters spilled with viscous liquid
From the countless testing of nuclear missiles
Mother Nature, what have we done?
Dear Earth, can this be undone?

**THIS MAN LIVES**

By Wayne Muchengeti

I have had it! aloud he said
This burden that clings to weary soul
Heavily laden, upon unwilling chest.
It burns, then cools.
Once cool burns again and not die out

"This being has tried all for all
Worked hard and tough to rid it all
All remedies experienced in all forms
All meditations, supplications and hopes"

All that is heavenly
All that is worthy
All that is earthly but
All failing

The toil vividly remaining
Undisturbed within travelling soul
Fears and hope at once striking the soul
Despair! Calling her by name
She lodges with doubt
Only a little whisper for comfort
"Hold on will you not?"

"Hold on"

"Hold on will you not?"

"Hold on will you not?"

"I am done and no more"

"Then you may search the reason for all"

FOR now though, you will know to endure

"Hold on will I not?"

"I will hold on"

"Hold on will you not?"

Our greedy nature has turned you grey
And what we see will soon decay
There will be no horn on the Rhinos face.
With your extinction to come from the human race
Your blue waters spilled with viscous liquid
From the countless testing of nuclear missiles
Mother Nature, what have we done?
Dear Earth, can this be undone?

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