

## **Khanya College's 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Winter School a success**

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From 18 July 2022 to 22 July 2022, Khanya College held its 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Winter School themed 'Organise to Remake the World'. The school had about 70 participants from different organisations including cultural groups, women's, community and worker organisations; reclaimers namely the African Reclaimers Organisation, Page to Stage, The Blah Blah Brothers, Habitat61 Creative Hub, Simunye Workers Forum, Casual Workers Advice Office, Sisonke Revolutionary Movement, Women on Farms, New Bronville and Witzenburg Justice Coalition; Orphans and Vulnerable Child organisations such as PUSH, Rena le Lona, Ikageng and Dirang ka Kagiso.

The annual winter school is meant to help activists and organisations understand organising and how to organise. It is also a platform for them to think about their conditions and plan to organise around these conditions and how they can implement decided strategies in, as well as organise, their communities.

The reading and study materials used at the school were readings from Paul Hawken, Alan Jay Levinowitz and Comrade Oupa Lehulere – the former Director of Khanya College, as well as from Khanya College's strategy paper such as the extract in the "3 moments of social change", taken from the *Khanya Perspectives, Positioning and Strategy: Before and After Marikana (2014)*. There were also some visuals on the *Paris Commune* and the Cuban Literacy campaign of 1961.

The school also had simulation exercises such as plays and statues to portray issues; the "3 moments of social change" and indigenous games which the participants enjoyed as part of the week-long program. The participants were also asked to build a wall that represented the social issues that they identified. The aim was to strategically break down and destroy the wall and issues represented such as gender-based violence, capitalism, substance abuse etc., all in an organised manner.

Edgar Mokgola (33), a Campaign Coordinator from CWAO (Casual Workers Advice Office) and a participant in the Winter School, said that he joined the school as he was intrigued by the theme and to see what the discussion on the resolution of current issues would be.

"My goal was, through the theme, to try and take on the issues faced by other community organisations and compare their struggles with ours and found that we are all faced with the same issues", said Mokgola, adding that he wanted to see which organisations would be tackling those issues.

"I liked the fact that, [they are thinking about] the challenges they are faced with, even the youth has begun to understand and debate on the issues politically".

Mokgola said that other than previous times when the youth did not understand the system that is oppressing them, this was his first time experiencing the youth participating.

Kamohelo Mailula (21), a participant from the school, who is a screen actor, community theatre practitioner, and audience developer from Page to Stage said, “I joined the Winter school because as an artist I believe it is important to invest more in learning, receiving more knowledge about what’s happening around the world.”

Mailula continued, “As a writer, my goal was to be in a space where I can learn more about the social issues we are facing as a nation and how we can bring about change or remake and redefine our country.”

Both participants set out goals for themselves which they achieved goals, and now carry the experience into their work and struggles.

“I joined the winter school because I wanted to know more about strategies to solve issues of the working class as the theme was Organise to Remake the World and what the theme meant for social movements,” said Lerato Tala, a 21-year-old junior ICT staff at Khanya College.

Tala further said the goal she set herself for the school was to learn more about the struggles of other organisations and working-class communities and found a lot of information from the organisations than she expected. What stood out for her the most was the high level of participation from the participants throughout the school.

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