

A Quarter Century of Progress: Showcasing 25 Years of Work in an Online Exhibition

By Yonela Gebengu

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On the last day of the 25th annual Khanya Winter School, the Khanya team launched an online exhibition covering the various Winter Schools that have taken place since it began in 1999. The launch took place at the Workers Museum in Newtown, as part of a celebration event that was organised together with the 2024 Winter School participants. Also, in attendance were some of Khanya's board members, partners, and fraternal organisations and activists.

At the exhibition launch, Cde Maria Van Driel, director of Khanya College, explained that Khanya's work over the past 38 years must be accessible to the public and that this is the purpose of the exhibition and the broader Khanya archive website. Discussing Khanya's archival work historically, Cde Maria also spoke about Khanya's important role in keeping the Workers Museum alive in the 2000s, when the Johannesburg Development Agency wanted to demolish the Museum and build a shopping complex in its place.

While looking at projections of the online exhibition website, Cde Maria took the audience through the exhibition on 25 years of the Winter School. Each year, the viewer is able to see the various educational packs given to participants, the programme, the Imbila Yesu daily newsletter editions and the Khanya Journal which documented the Winter School discussions and debates.

Cde Maria also shared that the Khanya archive is currently a work in progress and is part of the work the late Cde Oupa Lehulere began when he worked as a director at Khanya. Cde Maria also spoke about Cde Oupa's role within the new social movements of the early 2000s in South Africa.

Comrades in the audience were invited to share their thoughts about the website and reflect on all their experiences of the Winter Schools over years up to now.

Cde Viwe Mzwana, who attended her first Winter School in 2022, said that as young people today, we face many challenges. "To navigate these issues, we must unite and understand where we're headed. We need to learn from the past, study how our comrades from [the past] addressed similar problems and use those lessons to find solutions to the challenges we face now. By working together and drawing on historical experiences, we can create a better future."

Cde Mzwakhe from Page to Stage, a youth theatre organisation, shared that "coming to Khanya College has been an eye opener for me. I learned a lot and I also realised that as a collective we can achieve a lot of things. Where I'm from we don't have such conversations... [or]... learn about mutual aid and solidarity, that means there is a lot that needs to be done and I have to be amongst one of those people who brings change."

Cde Zamuxolo Matha from Graaff Reinet in the Eastern Cape said, "I'm very happy that I was part of this journey... It has personally grown myself and opened my eyes

in terms [of] being united as we share the same problems... two heads are better than one.”

The older members of the audience shared their experiences and reflected on how times have changed. They encouraged the youth to unite and organise movements to read, discuss, and find solutions to the struggles they face in their communities.

In closing, Cde Maria thanked everyone who helped organise the online exhibition, including Arnold Pieterse, Yonela Gebengu, Masai Dabula, Bervely Mutshipay, and the many others who were involved. She also thanked the Winter School participants Class of 2024 for participating and for treating the Khanya space with respect.

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