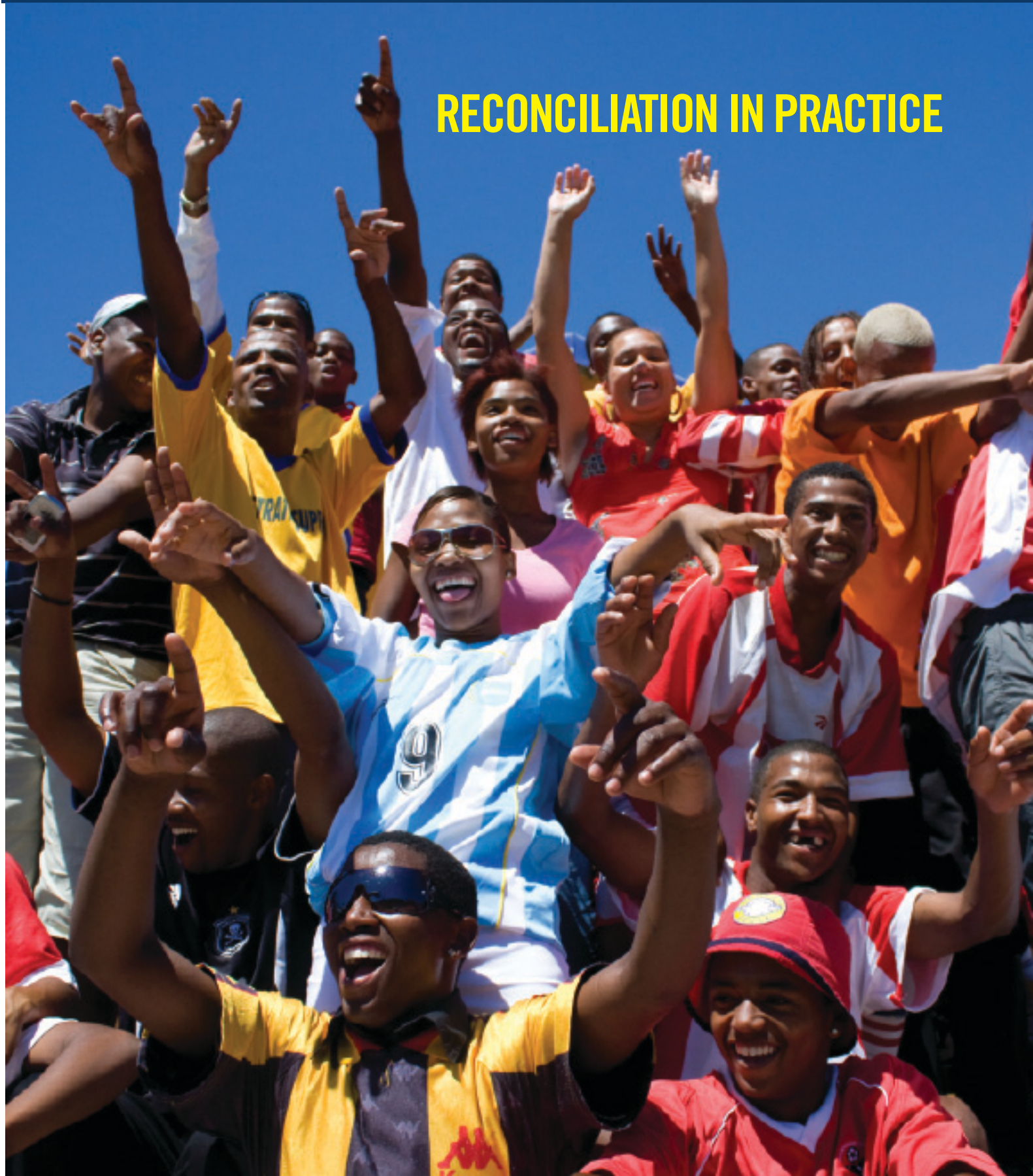


SA Reconciliation Barometer

Tracking socio-political trends
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RECONCILIATION IN PRACTICE



EDITORIAL

Earlier this month, the IJR released the results of the 2012 round of the annual SA Reconciliation Barometer survey, which has been conducted since 2003. The report, while also tracking trends and longitudinal results over time, focuses on South African youth and their attitudes towards reconciliation – a demographic that until recently has been quite difficult to capture in survey research. This year, South African ‘born frees’ turned 18, and the Reconciliation Barometer is increasingly able to test the attitudes and views of the country’s first post-apartheid generation.

The process of analysing this year’s survey data reminded me of something that those among us who are young, or at least can recall being young, should not easily forget – that young people, and even those with little else in common, are unpredictable, sometimes difficult, and just generally, surprising. This certainly came through in some of the survey results. Many young South Africans seem to feel they can make a difference in politics and government decision-making, but are dubious about political parties and elected leaders. Many are optimistic about their own economic prospects, despite the reality that many will be excluded from formal-sector participation in a constrained economy. And while there is a great deal of consensus about the oppression and apartheid crimes that fill South Africa’s past, there is far less agreement over appropriate policy responses for overcoming deep and longstanding inequities.

The report also finds that in the past year, it has too often been the case that youth are reduced to little more than a potential destabilising threat or an economic boon for the future, and these issues are explored further in this final issue of the *SA Reconciliation Barometer* newsletter for 2012.

First, IJR senior researcher and professor of rhetoric Erik Doxtader writes on the power of discourse and its importance to the South African reconciliation project, in a tribute to the late Neville Alexander.

Also focusing on reconciliation in practice, Carolin Gomulia and Zyaan Davids of the IJR’s strategy and communications programme profile Olga Macingwane, the recent winner of the Institute’s Reconciliation Award and leader of the Worcester Hope and Reconciliation Process in the wake of the 1996 Christmas Eve bombings.

Young voices also fill the pages of this issue. Kudakwashe Matongo, who recently completed his masters thesis in development studies at the University of the Western Cape and is an intern in the IJR policy and analysis programme, suggests that South Africa needs to adopt a new policy approach that emphasises education and job creation for a more secure and stable economic future.

Eleanor Swartz of the IJR’s Ashley Kriel Youth Leadership Development project explores the new social and economic challenges faced by South Africa’s post-apartheid, ‘born free’ generation. Mabine Seabe, columnist, student and founder of Youth Lab, writes on the importance of commemorating the National Day of Reconciliation. Finally, Stellenbosch graduate Malan Jacobs considers the contributions that individuals, and not just groups or communities, can make to reconciliation.

As always, we would like to hear your comments and feedback, and encourage you to visit the Reconciliation Barometer blog (reconciliationbarometer.org) or follow us on Twitter (@SABarometer).

From all of us at the IJR, we would like to thank you for your support in 2012 and wish you a happy and safe festive season. All of the best for the New Year!

Kate Lefko-Everett
Editor/senior project leader
SA Reconciliation Barometer

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YOUTH DIALOGUE

On 28–29 November, the Building an Inclusive Society programme hosted a workshop with 27 young people, between the ages of 15 and 25. Youth participants came from the communities of Hanover Park and Elsies River in the Western Cape, and from as far away as Potchefstroom. Together, participants explored the importance of history, memory and dialogue, and were challenged to think together on how these can become avenues for a better understanding of the often difficult concept of reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa.

IJR RECONCILIATION AWARDS

In November, the IJR granted a series of reconciliation awards to South Africans who made extraordinary contributions to progress in this critical social process during 2011. The main award was given to Olga Macingwane, a victim of the 1996 Christmas Eve bombings in Worcester, who now leads a Hope and Reconciliation Process that aims to bring together divided communities in the small Western Cape town. Awards were also given to 18-year-old 'born free' South Africans in a competition to capture experiences of reconciliation in photography, canvas art and creative writing. The winners of this 'Coming of Age with South Africa: (Y)our Story of Reconciliation' competition were Andiswa Tsoho (creative writing), Linda Velapi (photography) and Bertus van Schoor (canvas art).



SA BAROMETER SURVEY

The results of the 2012 round of the SA Reconciliation Barometer survey were released in Cape Town on 6 December. With a focus on youth opinion on reconciliation, the report – entitled *Ticking Time Bomb or Demographic Dividend?* – received widespread coverage on radio, television, online and in the print media. The survey found that while young South Africans appear to be interested in participating in politics, they are sceptical about political parties, mistrust leadership and are concerned about the extent of corruption in the country. Many are optimistic about their future economic prospects, but in the current economic climate will likely face challenges in accessing education and training and entering the labour market. The full report can be downloaded at www.reconciliationbarometer.org.

THE QUESTION OF AN UNSPOKEN POVERTY

In memory of Neville Alexander, by ERIK DOXTADER

Language does not appear to lack for employment. If this seems a curious thing to say, it is worth remembering the myriad ways in which we are surrounded, inspired, stymied and provoked by words. It is also worth remembering that political, social, and cultural life depends heavily on our individual and collective capacity for expression, a power that begins to wither the moment it is taken for granted.

While words are in ample supply, the actual wealth of language feels increasingly unsatisfying. Quantity holds no assurance of quality. Opportunities to speak are not distributed equitably. More and more, it seems that our words are not getting the job done. The effort needed to make them work seems less and less worth the dividend.

Do we have enough of the ‘right’ words? Are the important things being said? Are we saying them well? Who has the power to speak in ways that matter? Who does not? What does the constitution’s promise of free expression mean if no one is listening? Why do so many arguments and so many debates strike us as violent?

At the risk of saying something that very few want to hear, these questions are rhetorical questions. This does not mean that they are unimportant or that they arrive without an expectation of reply. A rhetorical question asks us to reflect on our individual and collective experience of language. Its answer emerges through imaginative, critical and practical reflection on the condition of language, the terms of its power and its role in human life.

If our capacity for speaking and writing distinguishes us from the animals, it is more than a bit ironic (and dangerous) that rhetoric is neither widely understood nor trusted. By and large, we are taught to ignore this ancient art. We are taught to discount its call to grapple with our fragile capacity for expression and the ways in which it defines the human condition. Seduced by schools of philosophy that reduce language to a possession and a tool whose ‘proper’ purpose is to insert my idea into your head, we are taught to be deeply suspicious of rhetoric, along with the empty, fine-sounding words and obfuscating jargon that it is thought to sponsor. Many of the media’s opinion-makers encourage and deepen this presumption. Almost daily, we hear and read that someone somewhere is being rhetorical. The claim is a code, a signal that we should take a particular pronouncement for what it ‘really’ is – irrelevant, duplicitous, or embellished at the cost of substance.

It is worth pondering whether this code needs to be broken. As a quick and dirty way to ignore what we don’t want to hear, our deeply rooted aversion to rhetoric impoverishes language. It condones a world bereft of poetry, conflates impassioned advocacy and propaganda, and naively reduces the articulation of opinion to ideology. More troubling still, our dismissal of rhetoric betrays a kind of self-loathing. As Theodor Adorno put it, a disavowal of rhetoric sets society in league with barbarism – it literally renders us mute and strips us of the capacity to embrace the creative possibilities of expression.

There is nothing glib about Adorno’s thesis – he wrote the argument in the wake of the Holocaust, an event that is frequently held up as definitive proof of rhetoric’s capacity to engender evil. The risk that our words will perform and legitimise violence is not overcome by standardising and enforcing rules of ‘proper expression’. It is not overcome with the fantasy that language is simply ours to master. It is not overcome with a refusal to recognise that language remains an open question, a mysterious power into which we are thrown and that works in better and worse ways.

Neville Alexander recognised all of this – and quite a bit more. In his trenchant book, *An Ordinary Country*, Alexander maintains that South Africa’s future rests heavily on the ability of citizens to foster new forms of expression, talk about their common and divergent experience of language, and cultivate a national discourse that weaves together their many mother tongues. As he put it, the pervasive temptation to ignore the question of language risks forgetting the essential ‘relationship between the formative aspects of language and social transformation’. In the wake of Marikana, this warning is altogether relevant, not least as the terrible events at the mine overwhelmed discussion of the National Planning Commission’s report and its call for citizens to define and debate the terms of a ‘formal social compact’.

Rhetoric is another name for thinking, gathering and expressing the formative power of language. Both theoretical and prac-

IN HIS TRENCHANT BOOK, *AN ORDINARY COUNTRY*, ALEXANDER MAINTAINS THAT SOUTH AFRICA’S FUTURE RESTS HEAVILY ON THE ABILITY OF CITIZENS TO FOSTER NEW FORMS OF EXPRESSION



the ways in which the meaning of citizenship and public life are shaped by vocabularies and forms of expression that develop over time and which exceed our control.

All in all, it is an extremely delicate and uncomfortable balance: we assert ourselves with words whose power is not our own. Accordingly, our responsibility for language can feel like a heavy burden. In the call to trouble stable meaning and move without the banister of certain truth, we are presented with a double 'response-ability', an advocacy (advocacy: to give voice) that discloses our debt to language at the same time that it invites response from those with whom we might enter into relation. In this way, rhetoric's hope lies not in the definition and enforcement of a 'unifying' consensus. It is more concerned with the much more difficult question of how to create the potential for productive disagreement, an interaction whose meaning is held in a play of expressions.

To this question, there are no easy or singular answers. But, there will be no answer at all so long as calls to attend to language are condemned as mere 'talk shops'. Indeed, as it is used to sling accusations of idealism and idle contemplation, the charge that individuals or groups have convened a 'talk shop' is a backhanded way of foreclosing rhetoric's question. It is a charge that encourages us to dismiss the question of how language works and what it does – to us and for us; it is a charge that deters us from taking an interest in language or advocating for its development; it is a charge that invites us to overlook how both Adam Smith and Karl Marx maintained that the distribution and redistribution of finite material resources rests on exchanging words in ways that allow us to define the conditions of exchange under which we

are willing and able to live.

tical, as Aristotle observed in his often overlooked treatise on the matter, rhetoric is an art of beginning. It is a kind of action, an invention and discovery of words that address (and redress) those elements of human life that are 'in the main contingent'. Put differently, rhetoric begins as we struggle to find our voice and engage issues that have more than one side and which provoke deep disagreement about what is true and what is good. Or, put differently still, rhetoric may be most important in those moments when it is difficult if not impossible to know what to say and in those moments when what is said enforces silence or devolves to chatter.

As Alexander understood, political controversy, economic inequality and cultural alienation demand a 'discourse of process', a way of speaking that affords opportunities to question and remake the grounds of individual and collective choices about what is good, just and productive. They also demand that we pay close attention to the process of discourse formation –

Human beings spend far too much time waffling, stuck between the belief that no one has the authority to tell us that our words are falling short and a deep worry that social, political and cultural discourse has become counterproductive. If life in such a bind is a form of poverty, which it is, the way out may require that we strive to address what remains unspeakable – the rhetorical questions and the questions of rhetoric that shed light on the work of words. Today, such an effort would amount to nothing less than regathering the potential for reconciliation.

Erik Doxtader is a senior research fellow at the IJR in Cape Town and a professor of rhetoric at the University of South Carolina. He is the author and editor of numerous books on the South African transition, including With Faith in the Works of Words: The Beginnings of Reconciliation in South Africa.



ANC YOUTH LEAGUE 16 JUNE 1976



IN MEMORY OF
HECTOR
PETERSON
AND ALL OTHER
YOUNG HEROES
AND HEROINES
OF OUR STRUGGLE
WHO LAID DOWN
THEIR LIVES FOR
FREEDOM, PEACE
AND DEMOCRACY



UNVEILED BY DR. NELSON ROLIHLAHLA MANDELA ON 16 JUNE
PRESIDENT OF THE ANC

ERECTED BY ANC YOUTH LEAGUE

YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS FACE NEW STRUGGLES

ELEANOR SWARTZ finds that while the politically charged young activists of the anti-apartheid movement have taken their places in history texts, young South Africans face critical new battles – and have the energy to succeed.

As a young South African I sometimes find myself wondering what it would have been like growing up during the 70s and 80s in this country. In a time characterised by simmering unrest and escalating protest against the oppressive systems of the apartheid government. Would I have stood, fist raised in solidarity, with the hundreds of young people who refused to continue to be subjected to the inhumane policies of the state, which perpetuated unequal treatment and the exclusion of the majority in the interest of a few? This is something I suspect many young people have reflected on. I have even been in conversation with some young people who go as far as to say they feel they were born at the wrong time – they feel they should have been born earlier, so as to be actively involved in the anti-apartheid struggle.

South Africa is not unfamiliar with expressions of youth power. The 1976 protests that shook the country effectively set into motion the struggle that would successfully bring an end to the apartheid regime. The role that young activists have played in our country's transition speaks to the transformative power of youth, and youth leadership.

Considering this history, it is alarming how current conversations about young South Africans have relied on a rhetoric of unruliness and destruction. Images of crowds of young people demonstrating in support of former African National Congress (ANC) Youth League president Julius Malema, regularly bombard South Africans in the media. Youth are often portrayed as a 'lost generation', and while these representations remain, they delegitimise the power and impetus of young people for social transformation and change.

It might not be that our generation is lost unto ourselves – degenerate, unfocused and a cause of fear. It may actually be that our country risks losing us, somewhere along the way.

The young South Africans at the forefront of the anti-apartheid struggle have been immortalised in museums and text books for their roles in the legitimate and just fight for democracy. In stark contrast, the young people of today are often seen as lacking in a cause or bigger political purpose – rather than being regarded for our critical and profound experiences and struggles, many are regarded as a potential threat that needs to be managed.

Yet ours is a different, but equally important struggle. We no longer have to physically fight against oppressive government powers with bullets and bombs in covert operations. But we face the legacies of poverty, crime and socio-economic inequalities.

One of our biggest battles is that for equality in education – an absolute imperative if we are to ensure that we can enjoy economic freedom, alongside hard-won political freedoms.

Young South Africans are caught in a space between a violent history, defined by extreme exclusion and gross infringements of human rights – and a post-apartheid, 'rainbow nation' that is buckling under an ever-growing weight of crime, poverty and deep inequality. This paradoxical crisis – the promise of a bright future through a new dispensation, and the frustrations of our lived realities – has pushed young people into new struggles and pro-democracy demonstrations the world over.

We all need to shift our perceptions beyond the current singular narrative of South African youth as violent, uneducated, unemployable and unemployed. Young people need, and deserve, to be recognised as the powerful agents of social transformation and change that many will become.

Inter-generational dialogue is critical if we are to achieve this shift. Some argue that the central fault line in South African society today is that between generations. Increasingly, we see youth potential extracted and manipulated to further the political agendas of many in power. At the same time, young people have yet to see the benefits of promised changes in the economy. The impact of globalisation, and the tension it brings between continuity and change, is particularly felt in Africa. Despite promises of modernity and all that it has to offer, most South African youth remain on the periphery of these possibilities, watching with discontent from the sidelines. New spaces for political assertion and identity formation arise in the midst of disenchanting sites and decayed or novel institutions. Youth, often in a state of disillusionment with government and the promises of democracy, face the challenge of forging their own futures and security.

There is, however, much to be learned through encouraging conversations between generations that promote deeper insight into behaviours and actions, and in which knowledge and experiences are shared. Examining and recognising connections and inter-dependencies between generations is important for both the activists of yesterday and those of today and tomorrow.

It is only through deep meaningful engagements with youth that concerted efforts can be made to move away from a homogenous narrative based on threat, to igniting and harnessing the transformative power that South African youth hold.

Eleanor Swartz is project leader of the Ashley Kriel Youth Leadership Development Project at the IJR.

RECONCILIATION NOT JUST THE TASK OF GOVERNMENT

Let's take the opportunity to meaningfully commemorate the Day of Reconciliation this year, writes MABINE SEABE.



South Africans love public holidays, and a notable number have been added to the national calendar. Many have both significant historic and present-day meaning. On these occasions, government generally organises rallies and events across the country, often featuring a string of speeches by the same politicians, who repeat a predictable rhetoric in the hope of scoring political points. Commemoration of our public holidays is often devoid of the meaning that it should have for citizens.

One of the country's most important public holidays occurs on 16 December. The Day of Reconciliation was first celebrated in 1995, and in marking its significance president Nelson Mandela observed that there are 'few countries which dedicate a national

public holiday to reconciliation'. An entire national holiday dedicated to reconciliation may seem unwarranted to many outside of South Africa, but the country's history is unique, and 16 December should be a day for citizens to reflect on how far we have come, as well as on the journey that still lies ahead.

The democratic government that was elected in 1994 was mandated with the mammoth task of charting a vision for the country and building national unity. Archbishop Desmond Tutu coined the popular characterisation of South Africa in this process as a 'Rainbow Nation', where unique colours come together to produce a wonderful collective phenomenon. In reconciling our differences, we are not asked to discard our unique qualities, but to bring them together to create something beautiful and new.



Given this country's dark history, the Day of Reconciliation should be one of our most celebrated national holidays. A day for South Africans to recognise our differences, yet find ways to transcend these, for the sake of becoming a better and more unified country.

Some, though, may argue that in 2012 we are further away from reconciliation than we were in 1995, on the first celebration of the holiday. Back then, the fight was to bring South Africans of different races and cultures together. Today, these issues are compounded by matters related to socio-economic class, and the difference between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. Will we ever find a way to address issues of class when our work on race remains unfinished?

South Africans have a tendency to expect government to always take the first steps towards building a better country. It's a case of, 'I work hard and pay my taxes and therefore government should take the lead' type of thinking. If we continue to expect government to unilaterally determine our collective future as South Africans, then we cannot be surprised when we are led on a path that does not always take us in the right direction.

President Thabo Mbeki spoke eloquently about the importance of individual responsibility in this project: 'real reconciliation and nation building can only happen when the South African people, black and white, through their own initiative, without any prompting from government, take visible and decisive steps to break down the racial walls that still define us'. It is the people, without government, who must take the first steps towards reconciliation.

Come 16 December 2012, many South Africans will gather around a braai stand, lamenting the state of the country. Others will be rotting away on their couches, recovering from a night of recklessly consuming copious amounts of alcohol, unaware even of why there is a public holiday. This is the reality of many people who need to reconcile, yet cannot even appreciate the importance of the day.

If we are to commemorate the Day of Reconciliation, and use it as a marker, as individuals and as a nation we need to work towards being further along on the road to reconciliation than we were the year before. If we are not, we should be able to say why, and how we intend to make more progress in the year ahead.

We should also not overlook, or fail to recall, the historical importance of this date in particular, which marks other past events in the country. On 16 December 1838, the Battle of Blood River between the Voortrekkers and the Zulus took place. On the same date in 1961, the African National Congress established its armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK). Our commemoration and celebrations should also take note of our different histories, and despite these, the importance of working together to forge a collective future.

The Day of Reconciliation is also not about forgetting the painful history that preceded 1994, but reminds us what has to be done so that we never return to a society defined by deep inequality and injustice.

Our battles – material, ideological or otherwise – may remain different, but we can all agree that working for a better South Africa is a common goal we should share. Our paths to reconciliation may also differ, but for all of us, the destination is the same. As individuals, we may not see that day ourselves, but we need to work together so that future generations can leave behind the baggage of our history.

Reconciliation, like all good fights, is not easy.

Mabine Seabe is a politics junkie, a student, a columnist and the founder of Youth Lab. You can follow him on Twitter on @Mabine_Seabe.

RECONCILIATION IN PRACTICE

This year's recipients of the IJR Reconciliation Awards demonstrate how ordinary individuals can initiate opportunities and create spaces for mutual understanding, tolerance and healing, write CAROLIN GOMULIA and ZYAAN DAVIDS.

South Africa has made significant strides in socio-economic development since 1994, but nonetheless remains a country that faces huge challenges and deep divisions. Incidents of extreme violence over the past year, such as the 'necklacings' that occurred in Khayelitsha and the tragic killing of striking workers at the Lonmin mine in Marikana, remind us of the profound woundedness and social fractures that still exist in South Africa.

During this year's annual Desmond Tutu lecture, Graça Machel – wife of former president Nelson Mandela – called for a clear vision of how to heal South Africa and build a more healthy society.

Yet the big question remains – how do we go about healing the country and ensuring that we are not paralysed by this woundedness? What tangible measures can a society take to effectively deal with its past?

Some organisations and individuals have pioneered practical approaches to dealing with the past and building bridges that span South Africa's huge divides. Olga Macingwane is one such individual, and her continued commitment to community reconciliation was recognised when she was named the recipient of the IJR's annual Reconciliation Award and honoured at a ceremony on 21 November.

On Christmas Eve in 1996, Olga Macingwane was an ordinary resident of the small Western Cape town of Worcester, going about her last-minute holiday shopping. On that day, she became one of 67 victims of a racially motivated bomb attack on a local shopping centre that exposed the community's deep historic schisms. Unable to stand for long periods of time, Olga's injuries as a result of the Worcester bombing have prevented her from ever resuming regular employment again.

Four Afrikaans men were convicted of the Worcester bombings, among them 18-year-old Daniel Stephanus Coetzee – or Stefaans. Some 13 years into his prison term, Stefaans contacted the Khulumani Support Group with a request: he wanted to meet with the victims of his attack. In 2011, Olga and three others from Worcester made the long journey by car to the Pretoria Central Correctional Facility.

Dr Marjorie Jobson, director of the Khulumani Support Group, shared her recollection of the meeting:

Stefaans explained to the small group that he had come to feel

deep regret that many women and children had been victims of his bomb. He said he wanted to take responsibility for causing so much harm and that he wanted to make himself available to his victims to answer any questions they might have.

In the room provided for the encounter at the Pretoria Central Correctional Facility, Ms Macingwane listened intently throughout the interaction with Stefaans. She had told him simply at the start of the visit that it was not in her power to grant him forgiveness and that she only wanted to hear his story. As the visit drew to a close, Ms Macingwane asked Stefaans to stand up in front of her. She told him that she had listened to him and that she had understood everything he had said. She put her arms around Stefaans and told him simply, "When I see you, I see my sister's son. That is how I will take you from now on.

This moment catalysed a movement for reconciliation in Worcester, based on processes of listening and hearing, and making restitutions for harms done to one another. Olga is a figurehead, and also actively steers the Worcester Hope and Reconciliation Process. Her steadfast commitment to bring together area residents has meant growing numbers of local participants. Members of the Process have explored new approaches to bring the geographically, historically, socially and psychologically separate communities within Worcester closer together.



WHAT TANGIBLE MEASURES CAN A SOCIETY TAKE TO EFFECTIVELY DEAL WITH ITS PAST?



Olga's act of meeting with Stefaans, the opportunity it presented for regaining humanity, and the subsequent initiation of a healing process, has been widely recognised and commended. Professor Jonathan Jansen, Rector and Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Free State, wrote in an endorsement of Olga's nomination for the IJR Reconciliation Award: 'Macingwane looks past the epidermis and all it represents in this broken country to see a relation, a son'. Despite her own woundedness, she engaged with 'the other' and listened, and took a step towards healing – for herself and the perpetrator of a crime against her and others in her community.

Olga's work is a profound illustration of how reconciliation may start with mutual acceptance. In practical terms, this work requires that platforms are created for listening and talking in respectful and safe spaces.

Yet achieving the vision of a healthier and more cohesive society also, and critically, must involve young South Africans as well. Understanding the legacy of the past, and recognising and addressing the woundedness that some have inherited, will enable them to participate in creating a better future.

This year the IJR also set out to engage and interact with 18-year-olds – the first of the 'born free' generation – on the concept of reconciliation and celebrate a rite of passage into adulthood. Alongside the main Reconciliation Award, an arts competition was held, in which 18-year-olds from around the country were invited to submit creative writing, photography and canvas art symbolising and depicting their understandings and stories of reconciliation. The entries received were a reflection of both how far South Africa has come since 1994 and how much work is still left to do – and these tasks will have to be taken up by young people.

If we are to take one thing away from this year's reconciliation awards, it is the call to all of us to become more involved in our shared project of 'nation building', but moves to take this forward need to be preceded by efforts to listen to and understand one another. As citizens, we need to take every opportunity available to us to do so.

Carolyn Gomulia is head of Strategy and Communications, and Zyaan Davids is communications officer at the IJR.

DEVELOP THE PEOPLE,



A sustainable future for South Africa requires a new development approach, writes KUDAKWASHE MATONGO.

NOT JUST THE ECONOMY

Global uncertainty has eclipsed the world economy, and with no respite on the near horizon, many countries are grappling to find new strategies that promote resilience, sustainability and prosperity. More than ever before, governments need to take up developmental approaches that build human capacity and empower citizens to achieve prosperity, while also reducing future dependency on the fiscus.

Unfortunately, South Africa has many deep and structural economic challenges to overcome. Certainly, there have been significant and impressive strides in growth since the transition to democracy, and particularly before the global recession of 2009. However, in a volatile international climate, the country cannot bank on seeing a return to these high growth rates in the near future. Projected GDP growth for 2012 is at only 2.5%, down from 3.1% in 2011. In this economic environment, there is little certainty ahead.

South Africa's high growth rates in previous years have also not been accompanied by comparable progress in human development, or sustained increases in labour market participation.

Important inroads have been made to reducing income poverty over the past 18 years. Data from the 2009 All Media Products (AMPS) survey placed just over a third (34.5%) of all South Africans below the unofficial poverty datum line (at R422 per month, in 2009 constant rands) – an improvement from 50.4% in 1994.

Arguably, much less progress has been made in the area of reducing income inequality. The recently released results of the 2011 Census also reveal that the income disparity between households across race lines remains high – the average annual income for households headed by white South Africans is R365 134, compared with only R60 613 among black households. The Gini coefficient, a standard international measure of income inequality, remains high – it was recorded at 0.70 for income in 2008, and 0.63 for consumption in 2009.

These poverty levels, together with high unemployment, are a strong case for government-funded social assistance to the most vulnerable South Africans. Numbers of recipients have increased exponentially, from 2.4 million in 1996/1997 to 14.9 million in 2010/2011.

Together with other publicly subsidised goods and services – like healthcare, housing and education – levels of dependency as illustrated through this uptake in grants, are very high. Certainly, social grants do provide relief to the most vulnerable

South Africans – including children, the elderly and those with disabilities. However, this level of government dependency does have potentially detrimental effects on growth prospects, and at the heart of the issue is a failure to fundamentally address the root causes of current levels of poverty and inequality.

Questions of the sustainability of social assistance are not coming from government and economists alone. This year's round of the SA Reconciliation Barometer survey, conducted annually by the IJR, found that 57.6% of South Africans feel citizens depend too much on government to change their lives. A participant in a focus group conducted by the IJR in the Free State during 2011 commented, 'what genuinely worries me is for how long can the government support all the people that it currently does ... For how long will it have enough money to do what it needs to do for everybody?' Another added, 'it's a completely unviable situation and I can't think how it can be sustained'.

It's clear that the time has come for a shift in South Africa's developmental trajectory, towards a path that will more effectively guide the country through uncertain economic times, increase competitiveness and bring about greater prosperity. In these times, approaches based on self-reliance and empowerment are the most likely to bring about a more sustainable future. South Africans can and must become more self-reliant and innovative.

However, in order for this shift to occur, far more strategic emphasis is required – together with budgetary allocations – on job creation and education. This may also ultimately require gradually diminishing the share allocated to social grants.

Reducing inequality also must become a foremost policy priority for the future economic stability of the country, and without substantial progress in all of these areas – poverty reduction, job creation and improvements in education – South Africans may continue to experience prolonged frustration with the pace of socio-economic change, coupled with diminishing trust in an over-extended government unable to deliver the goods and services currently required by citizens. Neither economic prosperity nor social stability can be achieved without a more equitable distribution of resources and wealth.

Kudakwashe Matongo is concluding a masters degree in development studies from the Institute for Social Development at the University of the Western Cape, and is an intern in the IJR Policy and Analysis programme.

RECONCILIATION SHARED EXPERIENCE, INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

MALAN JACOBS finds that in the collective and shared processes of reconciliation and nation building, each individual South African has an important role to play.

As South Africans, we often make the mistake of seeing our reconciliation process as something that needs to happen primarily between people of different race groups. Although many still fundamentally define themselves in race terms, the reconciliation process is in fact a far greater one.

An important starting point is addressing the persistent stereotypes that exist in South Africa – not just about race and ethnicity, but also about gender and other individual characteristics and features we perceive to be different from our own. It is important for us to realise and be conscious of the generalisations that we make. This needs to be an ongoing process of self-interrogation and reflection, and we cannot just accept what is presented to us in general public discourse or the media. While stereotypes may never be completely eradicated, each one of us can make a concerted effort to take on this challenge, although it can become a daily individual battle.

Reconciliation also needs to be anchored in a deep-seated belief and commitment to the ideal that every person has the right to be respected, regardless of his or her race, social class, political affiliation, or any one of a wide range of chosen and inherited characteristics. Respect, in its truest sense, means seeing others for who they really are – people like you and me, each with their own fears and dreams for the future. This quality of being able to respect others universally is one of the highest we can aspire to – it allows an individual to discount misperceptions and come closer to appreciating our common humanity.

Our individual struggles to overcome stereotypes and misconceptions, however, will be fundamentally challenged by a growing change over 18 years of democracy – our widening economic divide. More than ever before, we are not judged on race alone, but also on the basis of economic class. The reality is that our increasingly Western values – the extent that these are for the better or worse is a debate for elsewhere – seem to be pushing us away from *ubuntu* and towards a more individualistic society. The group values that we may have embraced before, which emphasise the potential of togetherness and its possibilities for a stable and prosperous society, seem to be eroding. It may take a more conscious and concerted effort – an act of will – for us to reinvigorate our genuine, shared commitment to reconciliation.

Individual experiences of reconciliation should also include attempts at forgiveness, whether directed at specific people or groups of people for their wrongdoings. Olga Macingwane, recent winner of the IJR Reconciliation Award and featured elsewhere in this issue, brought about significant social change in the small community of Worcester when – after suffering a permanent injury as a result of the 1996 Christmas Eve bombings – she forgave convicted perpetrator Stefaans Coetzee and was instrumental in initiating a local Hope and Reconciliation Process. Forgiveness does not mean that we have to endorse the past, but it does require a definite choice to let it go – even when this feels impossible. Ultimately, this can also bring about emotional freedom for both victims and perpetrators, and spark energy, motivation and inspiration for further reconciliation.

This cannot take place, however, without a balanced understanding of South African history. It's important that we listen to each other's stories so that each of us has a well-founded and accurate view of those we see as 'the other'. It is often easy to be judgemental about the past, but a more difficult task is that of trying to understand why people acted in a certain way and the motives and reasons behind their actions – whether or not we agree or approve. This isn't a justification for damaging or destructive acts, just a plea that these are viewed in the broader context of South African history.

We often hear and use language like 'whites need to reconcile with blacks' or 'blacks need to get along with coloureds', but who are these groups in fact? Only the individual can decide to move outside of his or her traditional identity group and comfort zone, and embrace someone previously viewed as 'the other'.

As we celebrate the Day of Reconciliation on 16 December, let each of us be introspective and reflect on our individual roles in furthering reconciliation and deconstructing stereotypes. If we are as ordinary South Africans are able to do this, we may begin to move beyond the dividing lines of our past and towards a more cohesive and unified country, in which we genuinely appreciate and respect one another.

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SA RECONCILIATION BARMETER SURVEY: 2012 REPORT



Since 2003, the IJR's Political Analysis programme has conducted the South African Reconciliation Barometer survey: an annual national public opinion poll that measures citizen attitudes towards reconciliation, transformation and national unity in post-apartheid South Africa. Change in these complex social trends is measured through six key indicators: human security, political culture, cross-cutting political relations, race relations, historical confrontation and dialogue. As one of the few dedicated social surveys on reconciliation in Africa and worldwide, the Barometer has become an important resource for encouraging national debate, informing decision-makers, developing policy and provoking new analysis and theory on reconciliation in post-conflict societies. This year's survey report, entitled *Ticking Time Bomb or Demographic Dividend? Youth and Reconciliation in South Africa*, focused on the opinion and attitudes of the 'born free' post-apartheid generation. The survey found that while young South Africans appear to be interested in participating in politics, they are sceptical about political parties and distrustful of leadership, and many believe corruption to be widespread. While many agree that there has been progress in reconciliation and that a unified country is a desirable goal, opinion is divided over how best to address apartheid's economic legacy. The full report can be accessed online at www.reconciliationbarometer.org.

2011 TRANSFORMATION AUDIT: FROM INEQUALITY TO INCLUSIVE GROWTH



The 2011 Transformation Audit presents a collection of articles by South African thought leaders, which asks how the country can set goals and achieve them in a hostile global climate that threatens developmental gains that have been painstakingly achieved. For nearly two decades, South Africans have conducted exhaustive analyses of the country's challenges, embarked on bold scenario exercises and, more recently, produced forward-looking strategies aimed at addressing these challenges. The most eminent of these in recent years were the Department of Economic Development's New Growth Path, and the National Planning Commission's Draft National Development Plan. We know now what the problems are and, by and large, what needs to change to address them. Courage is required now to forge consensus, to take decisions on strategies, and to start implementing them. As in previous years, this publication, with its slightly different format and appearance, seeks to provide analysis and provoke debate on how this might be achieved.

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POTCHEFSTROOM: CHANGING OF STREET AND PLACE NAMES



The Schools' Oral History Project (SOHP), initiated in 2004, uses oral history not only as a community-based research method for collecting stories about people's memories and experiences but also as a tool for reconciliation through the promotion of intergenerational and multicultural dialogue. The first volume, *Making Apartheid History: My Contribution*, provided communities in the Western and Northern Cape with a platform for sharing personal memories about important events in South Africa's past such as the Pass Laws and Forced Removals in terms of the Group Areas Act. The Potchefstroom Oral History Resource Guide – *Potchefstroom: Changing of Street and Place Names* – is based on the workshop activities that were conducted during 2011 with history educators from Potchefstroom and Ventersdorp, North West Province. The project explored the changing of place and street names in Potchefstroom where this issue was highly contested, as an example of cultural/historical redress. This is the final book of our second volume, *Building Blocks for Democracy*. In 2009 Democratic Participation in Cradock was explored and in 2010 the theme was Non-racialism in Welkom's Schools.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE RECONCILIATION BARMETER NEWSLETTER

Established authors interested in contributing to forthcoming editions of the *SA Reconciliation Barometer* newsletter should contact Kate Lefko-Everett, editor, on (021) 763 7128 or kate@ijr.org.za.

For project updates, analysis and commentary, visit the
SA Reconciliation Barometer blog at
www.reconciliationbarometer.org

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