

## The Edmund Rice Justice Desk

Welcome to the August Newsletter of the Edmund Rice Justice Desk

### The Edmund Rice Network

The Edmund Rice Network is a global movement of people who have been inspired by Blessed Edmund Rice and wish to be part of his dream for a more just and equitable world. For us in South Central Africa, we particularly commit ourselves to Social and environmental Justice, Advocacy and Volunteerism.

We have a number of groups in South Central Africa. Some are comprised of older folk, some cater to the needs of university students while others are made up of Edmund Rice Society school-leavers.

Some of the groups have a strong spiritual growth focus while others are more committed to works of social justice.

### Edmund Rice Justice Desk

The Edmund Rice Justice Desk's purpose is to advocate, educate and equip in the area of Human Rights, Justice and Advocacy. We operate in South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe as well as offer our support, expertise and educational materials to various other groups across the globe.

We belong to a global network of human rights defenders; and form a part of the wider Edmund Rice Network, inspired by the charisma and ethos of Blessed Edmund Rice.

The Justice Desk runs four key departments: (1) Advocacy, (2) Education & Awareness, (3) Training, and (3) Bridging; under which various projects and programmes can be found which fulfill each sectors purpose.



### Anti-Domestic Violence

We have concluded our anti-domestic violence trainings within 9 vulnerable Cape Town communities alongside the Justice & Peace Commission.



### The Umoya Project

Our Umoya Project continues to thrive in the Khayelitsha Township.

# Anti-Drug Campaign - Kimberley

The Edmund Rice Justice Desk was invited to visit CBC St Patrick's at the launch of their Anti-Drug Campaign in Kimberley, South Africa. We spent time at CBC as well as St Boniface High School in the township of Galeshewe to address and raise awareness regarding the far-reaching consequences of drug abuse. Many students were unaware of the countless human rights violations that are caused by the illegal selling and buying of drugs across the globe.



We worked with 90 students from St Patrick's and 280 students from St Boniface, offering interactive anti-drug training sessions. The students were actively engaged with the various presentations, asking questions and demonstrating a keen understanding of the message we wished to portray; that drug abuse has countless negative impacts on the individual, family, community and the environment. Together, both of the schools chose to pledge to be drug-free for a better society by signing their names on a South African flag. Many went above and beyond and signed their name along with a message of hope for a drug-free South Africa. Both schools will also continue throughout the month to run various events and activities to raise awareness to harm that drugs have on their communities.

It is schools like these that make the work we do so rewarding. Many of the students came to thank us after the presentation, speaking of the impact the visit and interactive sessions had on them. As the ERJD, this is what we believe education is all about; resonating with students, as together we learn and act towards a better future.



# Together we can #LeadSA

Recently our director, Jessica Dewhurst was awarded the LEAD SA hero award for July 2016 for the work of the Edmund Rice Justice Desk. Our team was invited to attend a breakfast this month which gave us all the opportunity to meet and network with fellow awardees and organisations doing similar work across South Africa.

On the 20th of August the ERJD team was also invited to attend the LEAD SA #ChangeMakers conference with the keynote speaker being none other than the South African Public Protector, Advocate Thulisile Madonsela. With August being women’s month in South Africa, a number of speakers used the platform to encourage and advocate for the voices of women to be heard. Conversations for change were the theme underlying the Change Makers conference and it was reflected in the array of inspirational speakers that held our attention from start to finish.



Never has a conference running overtime been such a good thing! As a team we felt motivated by and in awe of the personal stories, experiences and work that was being done by ordinary individuals with extraordinary dreams and visions for the future of South Africa. Franck Leya was awarded the LEADSA 2016 youth hero award for his youth activism group called A Dollar and a Dream, and Emile Jansen, founder of the Heal the Hood project, was awarded the LEADSA 2016 hero award. Emile led an interactive presentation showcasing his amazing talent and vision for addressing community issues among the youth in the pursuit of a just and democratic society.

LEADSA aims to inspire, activate, ignite and encourage every person to make a difference. Our entire team left feeling inspired and determined knowing that there exists a mutual goal, held by many, to create a safe, fair and just world for every person. It is a big task but the Change Makers Conference reminded us that we are entering a decade of change and transformation and that no step is too small on the path towards a just and equal society!



# The Umoya Project

The Umoya project was co-founded by The Edmund Rice Justice Desk and St Michaels Catholic Church in 2013. It takes numerous volunteers to a Missionaries of Charity home in the township of Khayelitsha on weekends in order to interact with the many residents in the home.

The 65+ residents have various mental and physical disabilities and have little or no contact with their families. The project plans fun activities in order to provide a space for 'our family' to have fun and form positive relationships with volunteers.

This month we celebrated spring by running an arts and craft day. Residents had the opportunity to design their own flip-file covers to store private documents, as well as paint posters for above their beds. To celebrate Saint Teresa's canonisation the group also created flower icons of Saint Teresa, which were used to decorate the home. We also assisted the sisters this month in feeding 500 children to celebrate Saint Teresa's feast day. Check out our website for more details on the next session. Why don't you join us?

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you would like to volunteer, and live in the Cape Town area, register via our website: [www.theumoyaproject.com](http://www.theumoyaproject.com)



# Anti-Domestic Violence Training

In collaboration with the Justice and Peace Commission and The City of Cape Town, the Desk ran anti-domestic violence trainings throughout July and August 2016. The trainings took place over two days and were carried out in nine vulnerable communities. 30 – 50 women attended the two-day trainings in each community, with over 400 women being trained in total.

The aim of this training was to educate women on the issue of domestic violence so that they may protect themselves as well as other women in their communities. The scope of the training included defining what domestic violence is; understanding the Domestic Violence Act No. 116 of 2007; how to obtain a protection order; and the duties of the police. Additionally, the training aimed to equip women with practical skills in dealing with conflict and healthy communication.

Within each training, we created a space for shared learning among the participants where they were able to speak openly about the challenges facing their community and the reality of domestic violence. Through the process, the participants came together in unity to support one another and discuss how they could be agents of change in their community.

Our team was encouraged and inspired by the bravery of the participants. At one of our trainings, a participant came up to us and informed us that she had woken up that morning with a 'bleeding heart' as she was filled with pain for the suffering of 'her sisters' in the community. However, after our training her 'heart was blossoming' because our training had given her information on domestic violence. She now felt that she could teach other women about domestic violence and how to protect themselves.

We would like to extend a big thank you to Bernie Daries from the Justice and Peace Commission for co-facilitating these trainings with enthusiasm, commitment and passion.



## CSO Training – Youth Taking Action!

On the 29th of August 2016, the ERJD along with St. Michael’s Life Teen, facilitated a full day workshop with 58 learners from various schools, for the Catholic Schools Office of the Western Cape. The training was titled “Human Rights and Youth Taking Action” and aimed to educate learners on the Catholic Social Teachings, the importance of human rights, justice, advocacy, and how youth can be agents of change in their schools.

The morning was interactive and full of opportunities for learner participation. Each teaching session included small group break out time where the learners could discuss what they had just learnt. Each school was then given the chance to come up with a social justice campaign that they could run in their school in 2016/2017.

It was exciting to see the interaction and shared learning between the schools. Our team left the workshop feeling refreshed by the enthusiasm and optimism of the students. We look forward to seeing the impact of these agents of change.

Thank you to the Catholic Schools Office for inviting us to facilitate this workshop.



## Intern Update: Gesa Bork

Hi! I am Gesa, 23, from Germany. I am interning at the ERJD during my semester break. I am studying “International and Development Economics” in Berlin and am very excited to get first-hand experience in this, while working in the field during my internship. I enjoyed a very warm welcome here and felt part of the team from my very first day. I got the chance to participate and support the ERJD at different trainings reaching from Human Rights Education for school children to Anti-Domestic Violence training for adult women. Furthermore, I got valuable insights in the organization structure and its linkages with the international network. Long story short: I am very happy to be here and I’d like to thank the ERJD for the amazing experience. I am very excited for the upcoming weeks.



## Human Rights Training – Edmund Rice Camps

This month our team trained Edmund Rice Camps WC volunteers in our Human Rights Stage 2 programme. The training consisted of equipping leaders to be advocates of change in their communities, through working with the various legal structures of South Africa. These included international human rights mechanisms, local constitutional instruments, as well as municipal duties. How to hold others accountable was a major element in the training, which focused on the role of the police, ward counsellors and the criminal justice system.



## Meet some of our Youth Ambassadors!

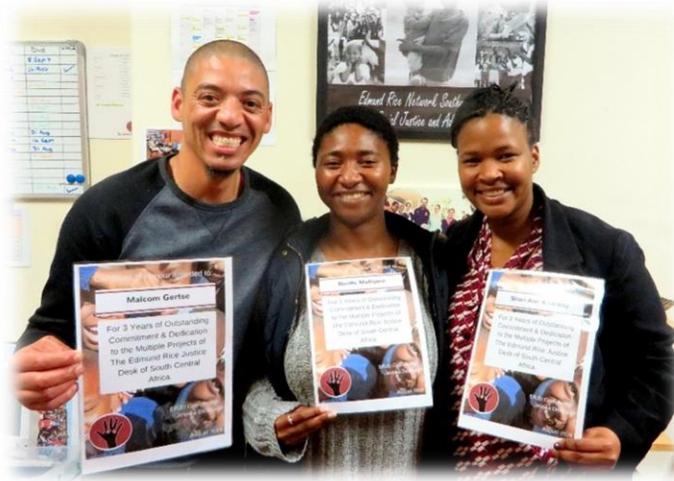
Hi! My name is Goitumetswe Pula and I am in Grade 11 at Mariasdal High School. My favourite subject is Life Sciences because I want to be a doctor. I am motivated to be a Youth Ambassador by the life of Edmund Rice who taught me to work towards being the change, as well as helping to improve the lives of others. I would say that my biggest role model is Edmund Rice as he inspires me daily. We have already done and continue to do many justice campaigns at our school. Coming up is our children's rights themed fun day which we will be hosting for the children of the Bloemfontein orphanage.

My name is Grace Makhanya and I am a Grade 11 student at Mariasdal High School. My favourite subject at school is Life Sciences, because I want to be a Forensic Scientist one day. I have the enthusiasm to make a difference in my school and community, as well as a passion for working towards equality in our country. Through our work as ERI Youth Ambassadors, I hope to reach as many people as possible. I believe that if we work hard, our country can be one. My favourite quote is, "Don't just wish for it, work for it!"



# Congratulations!

A huge congratulations to Malcom Gertse, Bontle Mafojane and Shari-Ann Kennedy for receiving Certificates of Honour this month, for 3 years of outstanding commitment and dedication to all the projects of The Edmund Rice Justice Desk!



## Youth Ambassadors Update

Our Youth Ambassadors continue to do amazing work across our District! St Dominic’s College in Welkom ran two campaigns to raise awareness to the rights of women, as well as to stand up to gender based violence. Students wore bow-ties as part of the Stella Fellas campaign to highlight the importance of protecting women from all forms of violence. They also began a sanitary campaign, aimed at raising awareness to the rights that women have to have access to sanitary items. Students also led a sanitary drive and donated them to vulnerable women.

St Boniface High School in Kimberley ran a children’s rights campaign that introduced their fellow pupils to the rights of all children. To facilitate this understanding, they coordinated for their local Edmund Rice Society to visit and care for children at the Helen Bishop Orthopaedic Aftercare Home; cleaning, feeding and spending time with children of various needs.



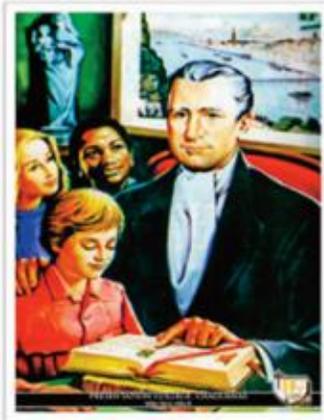


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**WHO WE ARE – an international family of brothers, celibate and living as communities.**

**OUR VISION – to be brothers to all, modeling our dream for a world of justice and love.**

**OUR MISSION – to be and bring Jesus' good news on the margins, especially through education and care of youth.**



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**& Misan Cara**

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