



## UJAMAA CENTRE

# UJAMAA NEWS

## How realistic is the ‘new dawn’ in South Africa?

The Bread Theology programme is apprehensive about chronic unemployment that persists unabated in the post-apartheid South Africa. Statistics South Africa recorded unemployment rates at 26.7% in the fourth quarter of 2017 and first quarter of 2018 respectively. The National Development Plan (NDP) projected a decline in the unemployment rate of 14% by 2030. The current situation is 12.7% short of the projected target by the NDP.

Unemployment has subjected millions of unemployed youth to extreme poverty especially in rural areas where job opportunities are minimal. Statistics South Africa estimate those unemployed at six million with 249 000 people recently added to this alarming number of the unemployed in the country. The unemployment rate among the youth is repugnant and is a course for concern. The majority of the unemployed youth in the Vulindlela area especially in Kwa Nxamalala, Pietermaritzburg depend mostly on social grants as a means of income. Most of the unemployed young mothers are the beneficiaries of the Child Support Grant (CSG) as single parents.

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The feminization of poverty is evident in rural areas where patriarchy remains entrenched, subjecting the majority of women and children to hunger and malnutrition. When the CSG was introduced in 1998 after the State Maintenance Grant (SMG), it was designed to deal with high levels of poverty and malnutrition among women and

children. The SMG had benefited minority groups, excluding African communities in the process.

The Ujamaa Centre recently conducted a survey among 25 unemployed young mothers in the area of KwaNxamalala in Vulindlela, Pietermaritzburg. The survey indicated that 68% of the respondents were receiving a household income below R2000 a month from the CSG while 32% received an income above R 2000 from social grants.

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***“The feminization of poverty is evident in rural areas where patriarchy remains entrenched, subjecting the majority of women and children to hunger and malnutrition”***

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The survey indicated that 100% of the respondents argued that the CSG was making a significant socio-economic contribution to the lives of the unemployed young mothers in the area. The survey indicated that most beneficiaries of the CSG use it to generate additional revenue through informal small business operating in schools. The beneficiaries use part of the CSG as the capital to purchase products such as chips, sweets, peanuts and food to sell to the

children in schools. Some stated that they use the CSG to make stokvel (local investment/savings) contributions that generate revenue to pay for school fees, uniforms, transport and education for their children.

Contrary to the dominant narrative in the public realm that the beneficiaries misuse the grant, the survey in KwaNxamalala indicated that the beneficiaries used it to address chronic unemployment and to alleviate poverty within the households in the area.



*President Cyril Ramaphosa*

An income of below R2000 a month per household means that most of these families live below the poverty line. The Lund Commission investigated the eligibility criteria of the CSG and took a decision that an income below R2500 a month per household meant that the state had to provide social security for those families.

The rationale for this was to begin a process of obliterating absolute poverty within the households. It is unequivocally evident that the CSG is not only addressing hunger and malnutrition facing children, but challenges chronic unemployment, extreme poverty and huge income inequalities in the community. Unemployment remains the fundamental socio-economic challenge confronting society in South Africa. President Ramaphosa has committed his administration to creating employment opportunities for young people who are eligible to work but are unemployed and dependent on the state social security.



*South Africa's unemployed young mothers*



*South Africa's unemployed youth*



*South Africa's unemployed graduates*

The President has been in office for just over 100 days and has done relatively well in dealing with corruption especially in the State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and removing ministers implicated in the State of Capture Public Protector report. However, the challenge of dealing decisively with chronic unemployment will require a long term strategy that includes investing in local economic development. The President has assembled a team of experts to advise him on strategies to resuscitate the economy and investor confidence with the view to create employment for the majority of people who are unemployed. The ‘new dawn’ of Thuma

Mina has reignited a sense of optimism in the public service, but how realistic is it?

The ‘new dawn’ seem unrealistic at this stage, especially with high levels of chronic unemployment, extreme poverty and huge income inequalities. However, it is important for South Africans to remain optimistic about the economic prospects for the future with a positive outlook on economic growth and Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) predicted under the leadership of President Ramaphosa.

It is also crucial for the churches to provide theological resources that engage these economic dimensions of life.

## Pastoral care for LGBTIQ+ sexualities

The Body Theology programme conducted a series of community dialogues and public lectures on the relationship between religion and human sexuality in the community and the University respectively. This process began in 2011 with consultations on sexuality and scripture organized by the Anglican Church in partnership with Chicago consultation in the USA. The Ujamaa Centre in partnership with The Other Foundation organized the inaugural Eudy Simelane workshop/lecture in 2016



and subsequent workshop/lecture in 2017 in Pietermaritzburg.

The community dialogues were organized in the regions of Zululand and UThukela respectively on sexuality, religion and culture. These workshops, lectures and community dialogues were a conduit to engage critically with the dominant narratives on sexuality, religion and culture in the community. The responses from the community, Pastors, LGBTIQ+ members and activists indicated that there was a need for pastoral care to members of LGBTIQ+ and their families, especially parents.

The working group led by the Ujamaa Centre

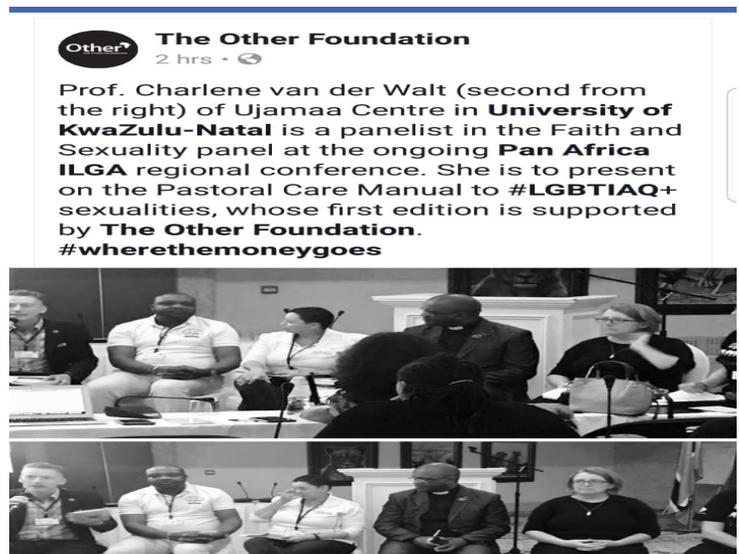
staff designing the Pastoral Care Manual began its work on the 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> May 2018 with colleagues from the Pietermaritzburg Gays and Lesbian Network (GLN), the Inclusive and Affirming Ministry (IAM) in Cape Town, and academics in the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics (SRPC) in Pietermaritzburg. The Pastoral Care Manual draft would contribute to the process before the final document by the end of May 2018.

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The pastoral care manual was presented at the conference on religion and sexuality in Botswana on the 31st May-4 June 2018. The Pastoral Care Manual will be a theological resource for churches, LGBTIQ+ members and organizations. (Sithembiso Zwane and Belinda Crawford)





## A Prophetic Public Church

The Public Theology programme is premised on the liberation theological paradigm concerned about community consciousness. The pastors in the programme are trained to be prophets of social change and transformation. In this inter-

view, we talk to **Rev Mfanafuthi Zuma** who is an organic intellectual that has been trained by the Ujamaa Centre on Contextual Bible reading and religion and governance. He is an ordained minister in the Church of England in Kwa-Machibisa, near Pietermaritzburg.

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*“I learned through Ujamaa that you can’t solve or deal with community issues without those affected in the community”*

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### How long have you been working with Ujamaa Centre?

I have been working with Ujamaa since 2011 focusing on religion and democracy and also organizing participants for the other programmes.

### What have you learned from the Ujamaa Centre?

Ujamaa offers five theological programmes using a methodology of See-Judge-Act which contributes to social critical awareness. I found the methodology to be the best formula to engage with social ills in the community. In short, I learned through Ujamaa that you can’t solve or deal with community issues without those affected in community. As a young pastor who live in an informal settlement, I have gained confidence in standing with my community in all suffering that life gives. Through the tools of analysis that I have learned at workshops and seminars of Ujamaa Centre I can say I am a better leader than before.



**How have you used the tools and skills acquired from the workshops and seminars in your church?**

In my church I formed a youth sector after Ujamaa opened my eyes about youth unemployment and injustices. The sector deals with skills development focusing primarily on developing young people for better job opportunities. I also facilitate Contextual Bible Studies with church leaders in the area of public prophetic theology. I have also organized a Worker Sunday Service campaign in my church for both pastors and unemployed youth.

**In your view, what are the results of the Ujamaa work in the community?**

First, Ujamaa creates platforms for community participation and dialogue on pertinent issues and challenges in the community. Second, Ujamaa empowers community leaders by giving relevant information to deal with challenges like Gender Based Violence through the Tamar Campaign, unemployed youth through the Worker Sunday Campaign, as well as Religion and Democracy workshops for the pastors. Third, Ujamaa encourages our community to work collaboratively to challenge social, economic, religious and political challenges that undermine their participation in development.

**Do you have any suggestion for the work of Ujamaa?**

I would like to suggest that the work of Ujamaa be presented in various wards within the UM-gungundlovu District Municipality so that it reaches a wider constituency. I also want to suggest a slot on Community Radio or UKhozi FM to discuss the work and to get listeners to participate in the discussions. This will broaden the scope of the Ujamaa work in the community.



*“I now know how to differentiate between different theologies because of the training I received from Ujamaa”*

**What do you think is the impact of the work of Ujamaa in the community?**

The impact is evident among those who have been trained by Ujamaa. As a young pastor trained on religion and governance within public theology programme, I am confident to engage in discussions and debates in the provincial legislature representing the faith sector with other pastors. I now know how to differentiate between different theologies because of the training I received at Ujamaa.



## Living a positive life

The Body Theology programme engages with a wide range of sectors from HIV and AIDS support groups, Gender Based Violence (BBV) groups, the LGBTIAQ+ community, Sex Workers, and People with Disability. The common issue among these projects is the attack on the Body, especially of the susceptible or vulnerable women. In this interview, we talk to Ms Fikile Ndlovu of the Sizakancane HIV support Group in the community of 'France' in Pietermaritzburg.



***“I have learned how to encourage ministers to preach against abuse and gender violence in our churches”***

### **How long have you known Ujamaa?**

I have been involved with Ujamaa since 2013, but have known the organization since 2000.

### **What have you learned from the Body Theology Programme?**

Since 2013 I learned about the importance of solidarity with others in our actions as support groups. Ujamaa helped us to develop resistance against stigma and discrimination in the community and to live positively with HIV. We have learned to develop aims for our campaigns and to use See-Judge-Act when we discuss and analyse our situations in the community. We have learned about the types of violence against women which makes women vul-

nerable to HIV infection. I have learned how to encourage ministers to preach against abuse and gender violence in our churches.

### **How have you used what you have learned in your church/community?**

In my church I have already organized and established different groups according to the issues they are dealing with, from youth to women. We have also organized campaigns against Sugar Daddy's in the area because of high rate of HIV infections as a result of this problem. We are also organizing dialogues in our church and community on HIV and economic justice issues.

**In your view, what are the results of the Ujamaa work in the community?**

Ujamaa programmes create an awareness in the community on critical issues that undermine development. The programmes also encourage dialogue, participation and campaigns to bring about change in the community. The results are that we now know about God who is not against us because of our HIV status or class. We are now interested in doing Contextual Bible study because of the Ujamaa.

**What changes have you seen in the community as a result of Ujamaa work?**

I have observed increased resistance of HIV positive members towards stigmatization and discrimination. The people know the work of Ujamaa because of the campaigns we have organized on HIV and Sugar Daddy's which involved the community.

**What are your suggestions for Ujamaa work?**

We need more Bible studies to open our minds and more support for our community.

## Building Social Movements through participatory community development



The Ujamaa Centre organized and facilitated a strategic planning workshop on the 30 May with its community leaders across all the programmes at Emaphethelweni Dominican Centre in Pietermaritzburg. The purpose of the strategic planning workshop was to introduce Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) instruments to community leaders so that they are able to monitor the work in the community and provide reports on outcomes and impact. Second, the strategic planning workshop was designed to identify baselines

for each of the five programmes to enable Ujamaa to build social movements that enable participatory community development.

The Body Theology group raised pertinent issues about the HIV and AIDS, Gender Based Violence and Disability in the workshop that require urgent attention. The challenge of Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) remain the critical challenge that exposes susceptible women to HIV infection. The phe-

nomenon of Sugar Daddy's also was raised as a challenge .

The Bread Theology group raised critical issues on chronic unemployment, drug abuse and alcohol as consequences of unemployment as a problem in their sector. The issue of education was also raised as a contributing factor to young people's inability to access employment in the job market. The issues of human dignity and economic justice were raised by Abahlali Basemjondole in the previous meetings with Ujamaa indicating the need to engage with this issue.

The Public Theology group raised the issue of church and state relations as ambiguous, and they argued that it undermined the prophetic role of the church in addressing social ills in the community.

The People's Theology group was concerned with the role of African Initiated Churches (AICs) in social, economic, political and religious debates and forums. The AICs are a religious movement that has been marginalized in the social, economic, political and religious public realm.

The Earth Theology practitioners raised the issue of land and environment as critical issues that relates to the social, cultural, economic, political and religious life of communities. They argued that the land belongs to God and everything that is in it, but has been abused by greedy individuals for their selfish interests.

Ujamaa observed that central to all these programmes is the issue of justice for humanity. As an organization our Theory of Change (TOC) is that if we challenge the dominant and oppressive religio-cultural



narrative we will bring about social change in our communities.



#### **UJAMAA CENTRE**

The Ujamaa Centre was initiated in 1989 as part of the School of Theology at the then University of Natal (currently known as UKZN).

The Ujamaa Centre is the ideological-theological product of various strands of liberation theology, particularly South African Black Theology and South African Contextual Theology. More specifically, the Ujamaa Centre is committed to working with communities of the poor, the working-class, and the marginalized, using the biblical and theological resources for social and individual transformation.

At the heart of the Ujamaa Centre is the concept and practice of praxis. Praxis involves an ongoing commitment to the cycle-spiral of action-and-reflection. This is central to our work. It is praxis that has enabled the Ujamaa Centre to respond to the ongoing and changing realities of South African and Southern African context. We try to respond faithfully to our context, using biblical and theological resources, and then we carefully (and formally) reflect on what we have done and how we have done

## The upcoming events in 2018

### **Body Theology:**

- ⇒ Eudy Simelane Public lecture on LGBTIQ+ parents and community
- ⇒ Arcus foundation conference in Ghana (October)
- ⇒ International PhD conference on religion and Gender (October)
- ⇒ HIV and AIDS, Gender/ Tamar, Sex work, and disability community engagement (June-December)

### **Bread Theology:**

- ⇒ East Africa CBS project (June)
- ⇒ Job readiness and economy literacy training (June-December)
- ⇒ Worker Sunday campaign ( June—December)
- ⇒ Mzwandile R Nunes lecture (November)

### **Public Theology**

- ⇒ Religion and governance ( July– August)
- ⇒ JL Dube lecture ( October)

### **People Theology**

- ⇒ Social movements consultation ( July-August)



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