



# EASA Newsletter

## Letter from the CHAIR

Dear EASA colleagues

This year has passed so quickly – it seems like yesterday that I took over as Chair at the AGM, held at the inaugural South African Education Research Association (SAERA) conference at Bela Bela. I must admit that I was not sure what the year would bring for EASA as I was aware that our continued existence as an organisation was being questioned, given the launch of SAERA. Almost a year later, I am happy to say that EASA has not only continued to exist, but has grown in terms of membership and status. As we enter the New Year, our membership stands at over 100 and we can look forward to a very exciting conference at Golden Gate. I would like to thank the organising committee at University of the Free State, led by Dr Dipane Hlalele for hosting the annual conference and constructing an exciting programme. We have included a World Education Research Association (WERA) symposium, which raises the status of the conference to an international research event.



Another innovation this year has been the creation of an award for outstanding post-graduate students in the form of an EASA Medal of Honour for the best dissertation/thesis at both Master's and Doctoral level. We look forward to awarding the first medal at the upcoming conference in January.

As you will read in this newsletter, our journal continues to gain international recognition, thanks to the leadership of Prof Liesel Ebersöhn. EASA also enjoys increasing international status as an organisation, thanks to our membership of WERA (see report on the recent focal meeting in Mexico). The EASA executive committee, over several years, has played a leading part in the founding of SAERA and this year both myself and Prof Eldrie Gouws, EASA outgoing chair, have continued to support SAERA as members of the interim executive committee. Through our WERA membership, EASA has been instrumental in securing Prof Felice Levine, General Secretary of WERA, as a keynote speaker at the SAERA conference in August 2014. During her visit, we are planning a workshop to bring together the various education associations in South Africa to further discuss how we can collaborate for mutual benefit.

We welcomed three new members to the executive this year – Dr Ruth Mampane, Dr Dinah Magane and Dr Sithabile Ntombela and look forward to their valuable input over the coming years. I would like to thank the entire Executive Committee for 2013 for their hard work and support. The members of the committee attend meetings and perform other EASA duties at their own expense, devoting a considerable amount of their valuable time to promote the good of the organisation. I would particularly like to thank our long-time treasurer, Prof Raj Mestry, for accepting another term – Raj, your financial acumen is invaluable and has helped us keep the EASA coffers in good shape! Also, a big thank you to Prof Anne-Mari Dicker for her secretarial support – not an easy task to combine with a demanding academic career. I am excited to remain part of the executive committee as outgoing chair 2014 and WERA representative until 2015, and look forward to the ongoing development of the association under the competent leadership of our incoming chair, Prof Ronél Ferreira.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, I wish you all “Happy Holidays” – may you enjoy a well-deserved rest over the Festive Season and may you flourish, professionally and personally, in the year to come.

*Lesley*

## THANK YOU RAJ!

As stated in Lesley's cover article the EASA executive is very pleased to announce that Prof Raj Mestry agreed to stay on as treasurer of EASA for another term. EASA has been relying on Raj's financial expertise for several years and feels very comfortable with the financial matters of the organisation being in such good hands.

Professor Rajkumar Maestry joined the University of Johannesburg in February 2002. He is a C-rated researcher at the National Research Foundation. Over the years, Raj refined his research focus from an initial broad focus on various aspects of education management, to focusing on the key components of human and financial resource management in education. Currently, he is conducting NRF and institutionally funded research on the influence of state funding on learner performance and educational outcomes.

Besides serving on the EASA executive committee, Raj was an executive member of the South African Education Law Association until September 2013 and served on the project management team of the Matthew Goniwe School for Leadership and Governance, an NGO that provides training to teachers, school managers and district officials. He has delivered several invited keynote addresses on topics relating to financial management and Continuing Professional Development



for school managers at several colloquia and education conferences. In addition, he was invited to make scholarly contributions in the form of chapter contributions for various local and international publications.

Raj has published numerous articles in accredited and non-accredited reputable journals, and regularly serves as reviewer of journal articles and NRF applications. He received the EASA Research Medal in 2012 and students completing their studies under his supervision have been receiving awards over the years.

From the EASA executive committee's side, we salute you Raj! Thank you for deciding to stay on as EASA executive member – we are privileged to have you on the team!

## REPORT FROM WERA FOCAL MEETING 2013 (Lesley Wood)

The 2013 WERA focal meeting was held in conjunction with the XII National Congress for Education Research, hosted by the Mexican Society for Educational Research at Guanajuato, Mexico, 19 to 22 November 2013. Being my first attendance at a WERA focal meeting, I was not sure what to expect, and was even sceptical how much value it would be, given that the conference to which the Focal Meeting was attached, was exclusively in Spanish!

I am glad to say that it turned out to be a wonderful and valuable educational experience. The focal meeting consisted of 104 papers, 2 international symposia and a presidential address – a full conference in its own right! I was privileged to meet and network with leading international researchers, promoting EASA as an organisation and our journal as a leading international outlet for publication. As a WERA council member, I not only presented at the conference but also chaired several sessions. The WERA council meeting was held on 23 November, following the focal meeting.

I would really urge EASA members to attend future WERA focal meetings. They are always embedded in a large education conference, so delegates can attend both WERA and conference events – two conferences for the price of one, so to speak. The process of paper submission follows a strict peer review as with any conference. The WERA focal meetings also offer the opportunity to network with leading international scholars. The next focal meeting will be held in Edinburgh, Scotland in November 2014, embedded in the Scottish Educational Research Association (SERA) conference. EASA will provide more details in due time.



**WERA Executive Committee 2013**



**Prof L Wood & Prof S Lindblom-Ylänne,  
President Elect of WERA**

*Another WERA initiative is the International Research Networks (IRNs). Any EASA member can apply to join an existing one or develop a new one.*

## EASA CONFERENCE

12 to 15 January 2014

Keynote presenters

### PROFESSOR SARI LINDBLOM-YLÄNNE



Professor Sari Lindblom-Yläanne is currently the Director of the Centre for Research and Development of Higher Education (YTY) and the Vice Head of the Institute of Behavioural Sciences (research issues and doctoral education) at the University of Helsinki. She serves internationally as President-elect of the World Education Research Association (WERA) and is a member of the Editorial Board Educational Research Review as well as the International Advisory Board, Studies in Higher Education Journal. From 2009 to 2011, she served as President of EARLI (European Association for Research for Learning and Instruction). She has 140 publications and is involved in numerous research projects across various education disciplines focusing on improving education.

### DR NICK TAYLOR

Dr Nick Taylor is currently the Head of the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU). He previously served as Chief Executive Officer of JET and researcher in the division for Educational Evaluation and Research. He has worked extensively in the fields of assessment and the evaluation of school improvement programmes since 1993. Dr Taylor is highly regarded in the South African education sector. He has led several research projects on teacher professionalism, curriculum design, assessment and school improvement, published in various academic journals and presented numerous conference papers. In addition to being a research fellow at JET, he is a visiting researcher at the University of the Witwatersrand and a member of Umalusi's assessment standards committee.



## PROFESSOR MBULUNGENI MADIBA



Professor Mbulungeni Madiba is co-ordinator of the Multilingualism Education Project at the University of Cape Town. He obtained his MA in African languages and DLitt et Phil in Linguistics at the University of South Africa. He also studied in Germany where he spent six months at the University of Cologne and was an Oppenheimer Fellow at the University of London (SOAS). In addition, he was a visiting research fellow at the University of Birmingham and a Mandela fellow at Harvard University. He has published widely on language planning and policy. Some of his main areas of interest include language policies, language planning, politics of language, multilingual pedagogy and African languages in Education.

*“The long walk to freedom” Complexities and successes on the road to improve education in South(ern) Africa”*

## PROFESSOR ANDRÉ KEET



Professor André Keet qualified as a teacher from the University of the Western Cape in South Africa and taught at Cloetesville Secondary School for nine years. After furthering his studies at the University of the Western Cape and in Uganda and Denmark, he obtained a PhD degree from the University of Pretoria in 2007. He joined the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) in 1996 and was appointed as Director of the National Centre for Human Education and Training (NACHRET) of the SAHRC in 2000. In this position, he headed the human rights and inclusivity task teams appointed by the Minister of Education to develop the National Curriculum Statements for General Education and Training and Further Education and Training from 2001 to 2003. Since July 2011, Professor Keet is

based at the University of the Free State as the Director of the International Institute for Studies in Race, Reconciliation and Social Justice. He is regarded as a national and international expert on Human Rights Education and participates in the relevant structures and processes of the African Union and the United Nations.

## News from the South African Journal of Education



The core team of SAJE: Ms Erna Kinsey (publication editor), Prof Liesel Ebersöhn (executive editor) and Ms Estelle Botha (far right, administrative editor) with Ms Lorraine du Plessis (former administra-

The South Africa Journal of Education has continued to gain ground on both national and international level over the past year. It has been strengthened as an elite platform for publications in the field of education. Find out more about the number of submissions and publications during 2013 at the EASA annual general meeting at Golden Gate in January 2014.

### Latest Issue: Participatory Methodologies and Educational Research

#### Guest Editor: Prof. Ronél Ferreira

The recently published SAJE issue encloses a total of 12 articles - ten national and two international contributions. This special issue presents examples of how participatory methodologies can contribute to knowledge generation in the field of education, not only in terms of the role that teachers may fulfil as research partners in community development, but extending to the manner in which other community partners may take on power in addressing challenges and facilitating social change. The collection of articles represents participatory researchers' arguments, ideas and innovative ways of pursuing social change by conducting research with stakeholders in the education arena.

The discussions commences with three articles focusing on the manner in which participatory methodology may facilitate community development and social change, by Van Laren, Mudaly, Pithouse-Morgan and Singh; Wood and Zuber-Skerrit; and Theron. After focusing on the role of higher institutions and participatory researchers in supporting social change, the next four articles in the issue foreground the role of pre-service teachers and teachers as potential agents of change in the education sphere. These contributions are made by Du Toit; Esau; Meyiwa, Letsekha and Wiebesiek; and Ferreira, Ebersöhn and Botha. Besides these examples focusing on how schools and teachers may be involved as participants in developing and researching specific school-related material and addressing relevant needs, an example of how other role-players may be involved in research and add to current debates in the field of participatory research for the sake of social change are included, authored by Pitt, Luger, Bullen, Phillips and Geiger. The issue concludes with examples of specialised approaches and techniques that have been used in participatory research, captured in the contributions by Mitchell and De Lange; Francis; Romm, Nel and Tlale; and Beyers.

**Call for Papers: Special Issue of SAJE**  
**Volume 34(4), November 2014**

**Safe schools in an emerging economy country: In pursuit of quality education provision**

**Guest Editors: Mahlapahlapana J Themane (University of Limpopo) & David Osher (American Institutes for Research)**

For the past ten years South African schools, as in other parts of especially the emerging economy world, have been criticized for not creating educational settings that are safe and provide quality education to children (van Jaarsveld, Minnaar & Morrison, 2012). Criticism pertaining to unsafe and unsupportive schools that are not conducive to teaching and learning include: *infrastructure issues* (lack of water, sanitation, safety and security [Prinsloo, 2005]); *rights issues* (violation of children's, and especially girl children's, rights (Masitsa, 2011)); *teaching and learning issues* (underprepared teachers, teacher absenteeism, language of teaching and poor conditions for learning (Vogel, Seaberry, Barnes & Kelley, 2003)); *health and well-being issues* (including poor health conditions in schools, disconnects with parents/caregivers, lack of hope and optimism amongst teachers and children, a lack of social and emotional safety and gender based violence in schools, and failure to address unsafe/at-risk health practices that contribute to illness, teenage pregnancy and early drop-out (Vermeer & Tempelman, 2006)); *school-community issues* (lack of connectedness between schools and communities in which they function (Palmer, 2005)); and *governance and policy issues*.

However, within the same context of transformation, scarce resources and high needs others have found instances of high performance even in the presence of high need (Department of Education, 2008; Irvine, 2000). For example, different community organizations, NGOs, and government agencies have taken concerted efforts to address quality education in their countries: UNICEF and the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) have introduced the principles of child-friendly schooling (CFS) into pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes to improve quality education (Irvine & Harvey, 2010). Since 2005, CFS has been implemented by South Africa's National Department of Education in partnership with UNICEF as Safe and Caring Schools. A number of South African higher education institutions participate in Child Schools programmes. This call for papers aims to (1) extend our understanding regarding how to create safe and supportive schools (Unicef) that have strong conditions for learning and provide high quality education and (2), initiate a debate on the manner in which higher education institutions contribute to knowledge generation and incorporate principles of schools as safe and enabling contexts in their research, teaching and community engagement. This debate embraces Nelson Mandela's legacy regarding quality education: "It is not beyond our power to create a world in which all children have access to a quality education. Those who do not believe this have small imaginations" (Mandela, 2007).

**Closing date for submissions: 30 April 2014** (submit to [estelle.botha@up.ac.za](mailto:estelle.botha@up.ac.za))

Education Department, Republic of South Africa. (2008). Implementation Guidelines: Safe and Caring Child-Friendly Schools in South Africa.

South Africa: Department of Education and UNICEF.

Irvine, J. (2000). South Asia and basic education: Changing UNICEF's strategic perspectives on educational development and partnerships. *Prospects*, 30 (3), 297-311.

Irvine, J. & Harvey, J. (2010). *Child Friendly Schools Standards and Indicators for Teacher Education: Mainstreaming Child Friendly Schools: Models and Approaches in National Pre-service and In-service*. Canada: Commonwealth of Learning (COL).

Mandela, R N (2007). Speech at the founding of the Nelson Mandela Institute, Johannesburg: Support the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign.

Masitsa, M.G. (2011). Exploring safety in township secondary schools in the Free State Province, *South African Journal of Education*, (31), 163-174.

Palmer, E. (2005). Service learning: relevance and meaning (2005) *Journal for New Generation Sciences*, 3 (1), 103-114.

Prinsloo, I.J. (2005). How safe are South African schools? *South African Journal of Education*, 25(1), 5-10.



**Happy holidays!**

From Liesel, Dinah, Raj, Ronél, Anne-Mari, Lesley, Eldrie, Dipane and Ruth, as well as Linda and Sithabile (absent when the photograph was taken)

*Final note....*



*Best wishes from the 2013 EASA Executive committee. May you find time to rest and do the things that energise you during the coming holidays. May this time be blessed and allow for quality time with loved ones. We look forward to seeing you all in January at Golden Gate!*

**Our own 'Alice in Wonderland' - taking up the huge task of EASA and WERA, and managing it as if it was nothing! Thank you for everything in 2013, Lesley, alias Alice!**