



Welcome to the May Newsletter of ERNSAs Social Justice & Advocacy 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 Southern Africa, we particularly commit ourselves to Social Justice, Advocacy and Volunteerism.

We have a number of groups in Southern 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.

Social Justice & Advocacy Desk

ERNSAs Social Justice and Advocacy Desk was launched in January of 2014.

Our yearly developed Formation Programme serves to educate and skill our members around Social Justice and Advocacy issues.

The Desk coordinates Social Justice Programmes, Eco Justice Presentations, Eco-Retreats, Skills Courses for vulnerable young adults, as well as volunteer projects such as The Umoya Project in Khayelitsha.

The Desk also advocates on behalf of local and international groups that suffer infringements on their Human Rights.



Advocacy with Impact Power in Partnership

SJ&AD attend M&E workshop in Nairobi Kenya.



SJ&AD at the Salesians Institute

SJ&AD visits CBC and affiliated schools.

Let Justice Flow Down – God and Economics

The Social Justice and Advocacy Desk were invited to attend a talk hosted by WAACSA (We Are All Church South Africa) on the 20th May to explore how we can live more sustainably.

WAACSA is a Catholic organisation of individuals who are committed to dialoguing around the Church's Vision as expressed in the Second Vatican Council. The talk, delivered by Anglican Bishop Geoff Davies (fondly referred to as the "Green Bishop"), critiqued our currently neo-liberal capitalist economic model, which is rooted in unbridled resource extraction and 'growth'.

He argued that this economical model, which is fuelled by greed, is causing many of the environmental and social injustices of our day. Some of the topics which he addressed included climate change, the energy crisis, our addiction to fossil fuels, poverty and unemployment.

He went on to say that God did not want us to hoard and accumulate wealth for ourselves, but rather to share what we have between each other. This "Ubuntu" way of life, whereby communities live in harmony with each other and the environment, relates to Charles Eisenstein's concept of Sacred Economics.



He challenged us to consider a commitment to simple living where care for the earth and each other is paramount, and encouraged us to, 'Acquire well-being, not wealth'. He also challenged faith-based organisations to take a stand and become champions of this cause.

The talk spurred on fruitful discussion around nuclear power, de-investing, greener living and advocacy. The Anglican Bishop delivered most of his talk in darkness due to ESKOM load-shedding, which quite aptly emphasised our need for renewable energy!



The Illegal Wildlife Trade

Written by SJ&AD intern, Andrea Liang

What is the illegal wildlife trade?

The illegal wildlife trade is a multi-level underground economy in which protected wild fauna and flora are harvested, smuggled and sold along the black market supply chain. It is reportedly worth more than US\$ 20 billion per annum, and is the second most lucrative form of illegal trade after drug trafficking. The illegal wildlife trade proliferates because wildlife crime is a remarkably low risk, high reward enterprise. Furthermore, it operates on an international scale, making monitoring and management of wildlife all the more challenging. Combatting wildlife crime is low on political agendas, particularly for developing countries that lack the funding, infrastructure and capacity required to deal with this misconduct.

The demand for contraband wildlife products appears to be driven by culture, tradition, social norms and expectations, as well as the desire to show off one's social status. Examples of these would be the consumption of luxury food items such as whale meat or shark fin soup, the use of traditional medicine such as rhino horn, and the collection of ivory or animal skins as symbols of

material power or prestige. China supports the largest illegal trade market, but the USA and Japan are not far behind. This market is growing rapidly as a result of globalisation, urbanisation and increased wealth. Wildlife crime syndicates are taking advantage of the increased connectivity and liberality of the international trade network; and even using the internet as a platform for illicit transactions.

In attempts to protect the endangered species threatened by the illegal wildlife trade, an intergovernmental treaty known as The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was formulated. CITES assigns the conservation and trade statuses to wildlife products. The wildlife trade monitoring network (TRAFFIC) is the legal arm of trade management.

Why is the illegal wildlife trade so problematic?

Not only does the illegal wildlife trade threaten the survival of many plant and animal species, but it also has the ability to drive them to extinction. This is because endangered species are usually the primary target for



illegal trade, as they carry more market value due to their rarity. The harvesting of wild fauna and flora in turn has a negative impact on the ecosystems from which they are taken. The illegal wildlife trade is also an avenue for other criminal activity such as drug and firearm smuggling, and results in corruption, bribery and the degradation of governance. In addition, it degrades and abuses the rights of local community members, who are usually the first agents of the supply chain.

What research is being done?

Genetics has been used as a means to trace wildlife crime in the form of DNA barcoding. DNA barcoding is a technique used to

The Illegal Wildlife Trade cont...

characterize species of organisms using a short DNA sequence from a standard position in the genome. Through a process of match-making to a DNA barcode database, this method can identify wildlife samples to the species level, and can trace them back to their place of geographical origin as well. This method surpasses morphological identification of species, because it does not require the wildlife item to be traded whole.

DNA barcoding provides the advantage of being able to test an array of plant forms; and animal by-products such as skin, hair, horn, ivory, shells, blood and flesh (fresh, processed, preserved or cooked); or even powders, potions and oils. Through the use of DNA barcoding, researchers have been able to identify whether particular wildlife items matched their market labels, whether they were legally permitted to be harvested and/or traded, and could find the geographical location of the product's source. Therefore, not only could instances of illegal trade be uncovered, but poaching hotspots could also be identified so that stricter law enforcement could be implemented, thereby cutting off trade routes from the source.

What can you do?

- Say no to illegal wildlife products. Whether purchasing goods locally or abroad, one should be knowledgeable of where the items were sourced from. This includes food, ornaments and apparel. We should encourage our friends and family to do the same.
- Be mindful of where our pets are sourced from, as many animals are sold illegally for the pet trade.
- Do not support circuses that make use of wild animals in their acts.
- Look for seafood products that are MSC certified (<https://www.msc.org/>) or that are on the SASSI Green List (<http://www.wwfsassi.co.za/?m=5&s=8>).
- Support fair trade industries.
- Donate to conservation agencies (e.g. WWF, Conservation International, TRAFFIC, EcoHealth Alliance) so that they can continue their work in protecting our wildlife.



For references, picture references and suggestions for more reading, visit our website's 'News' page.

www.ernsa.org

Judge Albie Sachs

'Race, Conflict and the Constitution'

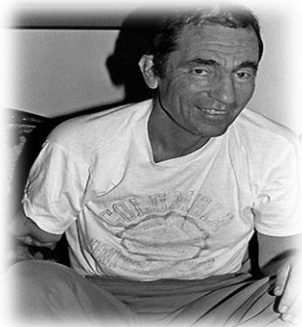
The FW De Klerk Foundation invited the Desk to attend a morning seminar at the Townhouse Hotel on 15 May. The keynote speaker was Justice Albie Sachs, a former Constitutional Court Judge who played a prominent part in the struggle for justice in South Africa. As a result of his contributions to a free and democratic society he was detained in solitary confinement, was subject to sleep deprivation, and eventually blown up by a car bomb that cost him an arm and his vision in one eye.

After the liberation of South Africa in 1994, he was asked by the ANC to play an important role in drawing up South Africa's post-apartheid Constitution, and served as a member of the Constitutional Court for fifteen years. He spoke about this interesting time in our history and the challenges faced by the Constitutional Court in introducing a new transformative legal system.

Justice Sachs spoke in particular about the Van Heerden case¹ in which the Constitutional Court had to decide whether to uphold a Cape High Court ruling that the government discriminated unfairly against National Party MPs because it contributed more to the pension funds of new MPs in the first five years of democracy. The reason for this was that the new democratic MPs had had their entry to parliament blocked previously, largely because of their race and that they were members of banned organisations.

In this judgment the court noted the difference between formal equality and substantive equality. Our Constitution recognises a conception of equality that goes beyond mere formal equality and mere non-discrimination which requires identical treatment, whatever the starting point or impact. This substantive notion of equality recognises that besides uneven race, class and gender attributes of our society, there are other levels and forms of social differentiation and systematic under-privilege, which still persist. The Constitution enjoins us to dismantle them and to prevent the creation of new patterns of disadvantage. Thus equality does not always mean treating everyone the same, but allowing everyone equal opportunity.

We were profoundly moved by the story he shared of Oliver Tambo's role in the crafting of our South African constitution and in particular, the Bill of Rights. Many of us did not realise the angst and turmoil that surrounded this process. In highlighting the Van Heerden case he illustrated how inequality is a problem that will continue to persist in our country until such time as we have fully healed the wounds of our past. We came away with a deep sense of gratitude for these wise figures who self-sacrificially led us to this point in our history. We clearly have a long way to go but we do need to celebrate and build on our rich heritage of human rights awareness.



¹ *Minister of Finance and Other v Van Heerden* (CCT 63/03) [2004] ZACC 3.

Enke Trailblazer Programme

Enke is a youth development organisation which aims to connect, equip and inspire young South Africans to “make their mark” on society. In collaboration with the Catholic Schools’ Office, the Desk has been promoting this valuable youth empowerment and leadership campaign amongst the Grade 10’s and 11’s within the Catholic High Schools of Cape Town. Once selected, the candidate will attend a one-week intensive leadership training programme. The aim of the programme is to equip and motivate young people to become “agents of change” within their school and social communities. Each leader will undertake to launch a Community Action Plan (CAP) which will be monitored by the Enke mentors. We are very excited about the fruits that this project will bear.



Happy Birthday to Loyiso Mqubeni

On behalf of the entire Social Justice & Advocacy Desk team, we would like to wish our phenomenal In-Reach Student, Loyiso Mqubeni a very happy 19th birthday!

Loyiso lives with his mother, two sisters and little nephew in a shack within the township of Khayelitsha. Loyiso is a people’s person who is incredibly passionate about his country and the many things it has to offer. He co-founded an award winning drama group that performs plays based on real life stories of people living with hardships in Khayelitsha. Loyiso is incredibly passionate about his country and her people. His dream is to study Tourism Management at CPUT in Cape Town and share his love of South Africa with the world.

The Social Justice & Advocacy Desk’s “In-Reach Programme” identifies young adults within the Western Cape of South Africa, who live within poverty stricken areas, have had a rough start to life, or who due to their circumstances have been unable to complete schooling or gain employment. The programme identifies key individuals who display a passion for working hard, for gaining knowledge, and for improving the lives of their family and community. The programme includes completing accredited skills courses; one-on-one mentor meetings with SJ&AD staff members; monthly sessions on workplace behaviour, CV writing, budgeting and saving, conflict resolution, work place ethics and many others. Students who need specified assistance such as assistance in gaining a driver’s license or extra sessions in counselling are also offered.



Profile of the month: Bakani Mark Ncube

My name is Bakani Mark Ncube and I was born in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe where I still live. I am 18 years old, turning 19 this August. Being raised in this small and beautiful city, I had a very pleasant childhood mostly spent outdoors in parks and with family. I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world.

Tell us a bit about your schooling

My school journey began in 2001 when I first walked through the gates of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Primary School in Parklands, Bulawayo. It was my first day ever in a school environment and I remember having butterflies in my stomach. I saw the headmaster, Mr JP Tighe that morning and he accompanied me to my Grade 0 class. I really enjoyed learning there because it was a small

school with one class per grade which made it feel like a second home as everyone knew everyone. The eight years I spent at this school had their ups and downs but I am where I am today because of the foundation my primary school built, nurturing me in the Catholic teachings and traditions.

After completing my eight years at St Thomas, it was time to move onto high school. I attended St. Patricks Christian Brothers College in Bulawayo for the next six years. It was only in my second year at CBC that I joined the Edmund Rice Society at the school and I have never looked back since then. I learnt a lot from the Society, with all the charity visits we had to shelters, orphanages & old age homes, not forgetting the advocacy campaigns we organized such as Earth Hour, World Water Day, Mental Health Day Marches and tree planting days to mention a few.

I attended the Edmund Rice Rallies in Assisi Bloemfontein on two occasions, which I enjoyed as I really saw them as the epitome of what the Edmund Rice network is all about: meeting people who have the same goals, passions and drive as you do and feeling at home, welcomed with



open arms (even though you've only known each other for a day). It was also great to see everyone come together in order to help each other set new objectives for what we can do better.

In my last year of high school, 2014, I was appointed President of our Edmund Rice Society and I am honoured to have had this role entrusted to me. I encourage anyone to join the Edmund Rice family as most long lasting friendships are forged there and it is a worthwhile cause.

Why are you a person of Edmund Rice, and how do you plan to give back?

Having only finished high school last year, I haven't begun working but it is my heart's desire to work for Medicines Sans Frontiers (MSF) helping those in need of



emergency care in places such as Nepal which recently got hit by an earthquake and Liberia which had the Ebola outbreak (which has thankfully now been declared Ebola free by the World Health Organization).

I am passionate about humanity, helping the less privileged in society and engaging in advocacy work. A life of charity, service and advocacy is important to me because not everyone has had a privileged life like me. I am grateful to God that I can say I am someone who has been blessed and highly favoured. Not everyone has the opportunity to go to good schools and certainly not everyone can say they enjoy all their human rights. I believe that I should help those who would need my help through the Edmund Rice Network so that they may also have a dignified

and decent life. We were born into the world, with all its beauty and mysteries, and we are slowly but surely destroying it. This is the main reason why I value advocacy, especially about earth rights, to protect the earth and all its voiceless creatures great and small.

Who/what inspires you?

A myriad of acts of Edmund Rice inspire me but the main one would be his selflessness, giving up everything he had to educate the poor young children of his community even after he himself had lost his wife. He really lived up to the wise words of Brother Peter Harney from Edmund Rice International, who once told me: "let us live simply so that others may simply live".

My role model would have to be, although it may sound like a cliché, Edmund Rice. The question I ask myself is if I had all that money he had inherited from his uncle, would I have given it up for the greater good, to help the poor children enjoy their basic right of education? Would I still have passion and drive after losing my family? These are tall orders but he did it and I admire that about him.



What is up next for you?

Having completed my high school education last year, this year I will be studying to be a Pharmacist at the University of Zimbabwe starting this upcoming August. In the meantime, I have also been involved in Human Rights education within my community after having the fortune of attending an advocacy training program this past month in Geneva, Switzerland with Edmund Rice International. I hope to one day use all my skills and knowledge to become a pharmacist at MSF.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you would like to know more about Edmund Rice International, make sure to head to:

www.edmundriceinternational.org

The Umoya Project

The Umoya project began in 2013 as a collaborative project between the Edmund Rice Network of South Africa and St Michael's Catholic Church in Rondebosch. Since then, it has grown dramatically and over time has become extremely special to all those involved.

The Umoya project takes numerous volunteers to a Sisters of Charity home in Khayelitsha on a regular basis to interact with the many residents in the home. The 70+ residents at the Sisters of Charity home have various mental and physical disabilities and have little or no contact with their families. The project plans fun activities with the residents in order to provide a space for them to have fun and form positive relationships with the volunteers.

We hosted three sessions in May, all of which consisted of a record-breaking number of volunteers! The first session on the 2nd May consisted of building a vegetable garden which will assist the sisters in growing healthy food for residents.

The second session on the 9th May began with a morning routine of gentle exercise in order to assist residents in stretching and moving their often stiff muscles. This was followed by some truly creative spirits as each

resident created their own cross which had to reflect their personality. Residents who finished early also created wool hearts which they passed on to each other in love. Residents were then excited to go around to their rooms and sitting areas where they decorated their spaces with their crosses and hearts.

Our final session for the month on the 30th May began with some much needed quiet time as we opened in prayer and spent some time in meditative silence. One of our volunteers then led the residents in some breathing exercises which allowed them to 'place themselves in the moment'. Once this lovely activity was done, we then engaged in some upbeat 80's themed exercise routines which had everyone excited for the next activity. The amazing Lifeteen band with soloist Tim from St Michaels Catholic Church then performed multiple songs which had the residents up in no time, singing along and dancing.

The three sessions were phenomenal successes, filled with much laughter and fun.

We would like to say a special welcome all our new volunteers who attended the sessions this month. The next Umoya session will be on the 20th June 2015.

Why don't you come and join us?



FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you would like to volunteer, and live in the Cape Town area, contact the Social Justice and Advocacy Desk here:

jessica@ernsa.org





Attending the Edmund Rice International training in Geneva – by Bakani Mark Ncube

Close your eyes. Imagine it is a bright, spring morning. Imagine that you decide to go outside and take a walk. Imagine hearing the birds chirping in the trees, the wind blows gently caressing your face. Imagine walking up a road, and along a roaring river. You hear a sound, a cry, it's a child in the river, and he is drowning. Instinctively you run down to the river and pull him out. You check him for cuts and bruises, but he seems to be alright. You got him just in time.

But wait – you hear another cry. And another. You look down and see multiple children floating down the river. Imagine running back down to the river, and trying to pull out as many children as you can. There are so many children that you realise that you cannot handle them alone, so you call for help. More people join you in pulling the children out of the river, but again there are too many children for your group to handle.

You try to think about what else you can do – and eventually decide to leave the group and walk up stream in an attempt to see where these children are

coming from in the first place. You notice a broken fence over a bridge where the children are slipping in. You rush over and fix the fence, ensuring that no child will ever fall in the river again.

This is the direction in which we as the Edmund Rice Network are endeavouring to move in. From the role of being a charitable society that works on a needs basis, providing and seeing to the immediate needs of the marginalised, poor and social outcasts; to dealing with the root causes of the problems - asking the question "Why?".

Why are these people poor? Why are these people discriminated against? Why are mothers dumping their infant children? Why are our vultures going extinct at an exponential rate? We need to move up the stream and address the problem at the source and not merely pull the children out of the water indefinitely.

The advocacy training workshop that I recently attended with Edmund Rice International was held in the magical city of Geneva, with its marvellous lake and fountain, and mountains in

the horizon. Training took place from the 27th of April to the 8th of May and we were welcomed warmly by the Christian Brothers at their community with a pre-test, which most of us failed to answer. The first session was about the difference between justice and charity responses. Although these two words are often understood to be the same, they have distinctions and the main one is that charity deals with immediate needs of people whereas justice is a long term solution to the problems.

Br Brian Bond then took us through an Introduction to Human Rights; these are rights inherent to all human beings regardless of race, nationality, religion or gender. Dealing with Human Rights, we needed a brief introduction to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) which is a mechanism of the United Nations that reviews the state of human rights in all the 193 Member states of the United Nations, periodically after every four and a half years.

We also had the pleasure of meeting other like-minded organisations such as Caritas International who explained to us their work; CCIG took us

through the engagement of NGO's in various United Nations conventions and Treaty Body systems; the Franciscans International who gave us a stimulating presentation on drafting a UPR submission and strategies for UPR follow-up; UPR-info, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Irish Permanent Mission.

Apart from obviously learning about all these topics from the various civil society organisations, we learnt that in advocacy work, you cannot tackle it alone as seen with Edmund Rice International's engagement with other organizations. When you feel like giving up remember that a butterfly flapping its wings in a rainforest in India can cause a storm in New York. Your efforts somewhere can have a monumental impact elsewhere.

Did you know the Earth has rights? This was one of the interesting things I learnt through the training. There have been some interesting documents published on the subject by people such as Thomas Berry in 2000 who argued that the earth has the right to be, the right to habitat, the right to fulfil its role in the ever-renewing processes of the Earth community. We need to protect the earth by lowering our carbon footprint, recycling

and composting and living sustainably so that many other generations that follow can also enjoy this magnificent planet.

We learnt of the need to look at things from a rights based perspective, the rights based approach. This approach is all about evaluating a situation by seeing if any human rights are being violated, and if they are, responding by either providing immediate assistance or contacting local duty bearers and alerting them to the situation. Lobbying so that duty bearers take up their responsibility is a major part of human rights work.

On the 1st of May, we attended our first Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) review of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Palais Wilson. This was a great experience and we learnt a lot from seeing the process in action, getting to be in this environment where all these delegates were speaking. On Monday the 4th of May we had the privilege of attending a UPR session at the Human Rights Council (HRC) of Liberia held at the Palais des Nations. I personally learnt from this session the true value and effectiveness of the UPR mechanism. The entire session was conducted in an orderly and productive manner with no one country being hostile to another.

Each member state made sure to acknowledge the good work being done in around the world, as well as made recommendations for improvement.

Another thing we noticed was that there is no discrimination at the Human Rights Council as two delegates were blind and still represented their country, which reminds me of a quote that says, "We are not disabled, the system is disabled, we have impairments".

Overall, this was a once in a lifetime, life changing opportunity that taught me a lot and I will treasure the experience for the rest of my life. The friendships made with all the laughter will also be something I hold dear. We had a post-course test and I am glad to say this time around we managed to answer all the questions and even jot down extra answers that weren't even asked on the sheet. We ended with a traditional Swiss raclette which was a great end to our training. To end off, I would like to remind you keep in your heart the challenge of living simply, so that others may simply live.

I am incredibly grateful to everyone who made this experience possible, especially the Christian Brothers and the Edmund Rice Network. Thank you!

Advocacy with Impact - Power in Partnership workshop

Two members of the Social Justice and Advocacy Desk, Jessica Dewhurst and Shari-Ann Kennedy recently attended a four day Advocacy with Impact - Power in Partnership workshop held from 17 May - 20 May 2015 in Nairobi, Kenya.

The workshop was the brain child of Br Peter Harney from the Edmund Rice International team working in Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland and Megan Seneque representing Roehampton University, in the United States of America. The main focus of the workshop was how to apply Project Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) throughout Advocacy Programmes and Campaigns. The advocacy / change environment is a very difficult area to monitor and evaluate as change can most often not been seen at face value and therefore the intense focus on PME in the workshop held.



Nine different religious and lay communities representing 7 countries were invited to participate. In total 29 participants were hosted by the Edmund Rice Advocacy Network (ERAN) at the Dimesse Centre in Karen, Nairobi (in the vicinity where the movie "Out of Africa" was filmed).

The programme kicked off with the theme of the Weaver Bird Nest. The theme explained how all our input and ideas would build into a beautiful learning nest which others could draw on. A formal welcome and introduction session was given by Peter and Joash Diemo of the ERAN. The concept of the U-Theory as a Project Monitoring and Evaluation Tool which was included in the pre-reading material was unpacked as

each day unfolded. Different concepts relating thereto specifically how to Monitor and Evaluate Advocacy Programmes and Campaigns throughout it's time span was explored.

The five steps to the U-Theory were explained but the one most referred to was Precensing. Precensing required constant retreats within an Advocacy / Programme and Campaign to regroup and focus as well as taking a step back with a weaver bird's view point to plan for the road ahead. Two techniques to monitor change were shared with the participants. The concepts of a "Mug of Tea" and Most Significant Change were branded into our hearts as very practical examples and





Choosing a story of most significant change was not as easy as the name sounds. It required a learned approach which the facilitators did a tremendous job in teaching us.

The workshop participants established a learning community to support and provide feedback on the various programmes run by the newly established community.

applications were given. Numerous precensing opportunities were created in order to put a practical element to the two techniques. There were various sessions where we as participants were grouped (differently every time) to share our Most Significant Change stories in our own contexts. This gave us insight to the amazing work and the different type of campaigns and programmes that were driven in the various countries.

We also experienced some special moments. One such a moment was when the Misesan Cara funder representative from Kenya, Mr Paul Gichuki visited the group and gave feedback on the work being done in the local contexts. He also spoke about constantly remembering that the funding donated to Misesan Cara are from the hard working people of Ireland and we should therefore always use it as best we can to advocate and

amplify the voices of the marginalised in our contexts. He also commended ERI and ERAN for having such a diverse and large amount of participants from various communities. We also had a visit from the District Leaders of East Africa and we could hear from their perspective how advocacy has played a role in shaping their context. They also joined us for the evening meal.

The workshop was a phenomenal success and will definitely give the Social Justice and Advocacy Desk an additional way to apply Project Monitoring and Evaluation to all its Programmes and Campaigns. We thank ERI and ERAN for hosting us and for all the work that went into such a remarkable workshop.



Founders Day at CBC St Johns Parklands

Written by Des Duplooy

Despite the cold and rainy winter days of this month, we were blessed with a beautiful morning for our Edmund Rice celebrations on the 5th of May.

Three priests joined us for the special day, namely our Vicar of Education Fr Hugh O'Connor, (a "CBC Old Boy" himself), Fr David Anderson who is no stranger to our community and Fr Carlo Adams, the assisting priest to the Table View parish.



Fr Hugh shared an inspiring homily with our College reminding us of the vision of our founder Blessed Edmund Rice. The mass unfolded smoothly with each school playing a significant part thus fully partaking in this wonderful celebration.

Throughout the homily, students were able to reflect on Edmund Rice's vision which was based on three simple elements:

- A unique faith vision: for Edmund Rice, this was presence.
- A unique form of living: the call to wholeness that is attractive and dynamic. For Edmund Rice, this was compassion.
- And a unique response: for Edmund Rice, this was liberation.

Bearing this in mind the Edmund Rice Society then proceeded to deliver a moving and insightful assembly based on creating awareness to xenophobia within South Africa. After a phenomenal musical performance by students, Jake Marais, our Head of ERS and Taydren van Vuuren, the societies secretary, both handed out ERS badges to the societies newest members. Finally, before the whole Senior School, 43 members of the Edmund Rice Society proudly and loudly took their pledge.

"We, the members of the Edmund Rice Society, pledge our loyalty to our society for the year of 2015. We commit ourselves to following in the footsteps of our founder, Edmund Rice, by spending more time in prayer and through acts of charity and service. We promise to nurture the spirit of Edmund Rice, on which our school is built. May we prove to be worthy disciples of Our Lord Jesus Christ through building the kingdom of God here at CBC St John's, Parklands. As we celebrate the feast day of Edmund Rice, we pray that soon he may publicly be declared a saint of the church. We ask all this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen"

The entire school then formed the figure 80 on our College playground for a group photo, and celebrated the rest of the day enjoying some homemade CBC St Johns biscuits. I would also like to mention that our College staff and students will be featured in both the Table Talk and Southern Cross; for their amazing work in continuing the legacy of our blessed founder, Edmund Ignatius Rice; by standing up against xenophobia.

Edmund Rice Camps: The Year 2015 so far!

Written by Odwa Mqomboti

ERC responds to the various needs of young people within South Africa by running recreational and life skills camps for children 7-16 years old. ERC offers experiences of mutual friendship, fun and sharing. The positive role models in the volunteer leaders, opportunities to build self-esteem and confidence in relating and socialising better with others; has all played a huge role in our children's lives. ERC also offers opportunities for the growth and development of young adults through camp leadership training. All in all, ERC offers opportunities for marginalized children, youth and young adults to experience meaningful relationships and to facilitate life coping skills, thus empowering them to become agents of change in their communities.



As we look back on the events of the first half of the year 2015, there is no denying that Edmund Rice Camps, Western Cape continues to provide a vital outlet for Children and young people in the Western Cape. We went through many changes during the year 2014/5; changes that added value to our organisation, and changes that were necessary and vital for ERC to grow.

So far, we have increased the amount of youth camps for girls and boys between the ages of 13-16 years old. We also welcomed Pebbles Project, a new agency that will join Sakha Isizwe, Malawi Camps and Durbanville Children's Home in our Edmund Rice Family. Our agencies are growing and the request by various other NGOs for our services has clearly indicated that there is still a big need for building meaningful relationships in our society.

ERC has been incredibly busy over the last few months. In January, our staff were able to attend a facilitated recollection session which was conducted by Mary Ryan. Staff were also able to meet up with all our agencies. In February we had our first buddy camp and board meeting for the year, as well as welcomed the Pebbles Project as one of our newest agencies. In March we hosted not only one but two workshops on the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. We also hosted various screening and training sessions for different youth from all walks of life all over Cape Town. April was filled with many activities which included our first Holiday Camp for buddies, meetings with agencies, offering first aid training to volunteers, as well as our second board meeting. And finally, during this month of May, we had our first Teen Camp, followed by more agency visits to Deft Symphony. We also had a phenomenal annual general meeting which was well attended!

Within the context of camps themselves, we saw the need to continue to break through the cycle of indifferences whether based on gender, race, sexual preference or demographics. There has been a bigger response by ERC, to the social economic conditions of the communities whom the camps provide a service to and there are continuous discussions on how to improve our approach to address the various injustices that we are faced with. We have seen the value in the statement that points out the fact that children have the right to play and just be children. This is for ERC a very important part of a child's mental and physical development. Children are deprived of this vital aspect of their growth in the South African context at the moment.

Upcoming events:

June

- 5-7th Family Camp
- 19-21st Second First Aid Training

July

- 6-10th Buddy Camp
- 18th Leader's Dialogue
- 25th ERC Volunteer Awards

August

- 7-9th Buddy Camp

How can you get involved?

- Donate your time by being a Volunteer or Intern
- Promote ERC in your work or communities
- Donate your skills or Offer your services to us
- Train our staff and volunteers
- Donate your resources
- Become a donor or funder
- Offer your location for camps and conferences.

For more information on how to contact Edmund Rice Camps:

Call (O): 021 418 0757, (C): 0731251710, (e) coordinator@yahoo.com / odwamate@yahoo.com.



SJ&AD and EREBB Schools Trip

During April and May our Social Justice & Advocacy Desk coordinator Jessica Dewhurst and Brian Garrone of Edmund Rice Education Beyond Borders (EREBB) embarked on a collaborative South African schools trip which was organised by the Christian Brothers.

Schools from across South Africa gathered in Springs and Bloemfontein to explore what it means to be a member of a new international educational network called Edmund Rice Education Beyond Borders (EREBB); as well as how they could fully engage with the work of The Social Justice & Advocacy Desk.

Responding to the call of Pope Francis to “Never tire of working for a more just world marked by greater solidarity”, EREBB was founded a year ago in Nairobi and brings together schools from across the world which were founded by the Christian Brothers. This network of Catholic schools educate young people from many different faiths and cultures in over 20 countries. The network is inspired by the teachings of Jesus, Gospel values and the spirit of Edmund Rice; and endeavors to promote global solidarity and offer a transformational education for justice and liberation.

The Social Justice & Advocacy was also promoted as a resource that schools could use in order to engage fully with EREBB and other justice campaigns around the world. Representatives from each school were given the opportunity to express how the Desk could be of use to them in their own particular contexts. Schools were also invited to select a representative to attend the Social Justice & Advocacy Desks justice training which will take place in September.

In October, leaders from the Lead Schools of EREBB will gather at the Good Shepard Retreat Centre in Hartbeespoort Dam, focussing on the theme “Educating with Ubuntu”. For more information about EREBB visit www.erebb.org





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Contact Us!



<https://www.facebook.com/EdmundRiceNetworkSA>



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Edmund Rice Development & Miseen Cara

A huge thank you to our funders Edmund Rice Development (www.edmundricedevelopment.org) and Miseen Cara (www.miseenara.ie) who have assisted us in making sure that The Edmund Rice Network of South Central Africa is able to continue the great work being done in our areas. The establishment of The Social Justice Desk in South Africa is a direct result of Edmund Rice Development and Miseen Cara's support, and for that we are truly grateful.

Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to read our Newsletter.

Should you have any suggestions of improvement for future editions, or if you would like to contribute an article, please feel free to contact Jessica@ernsa.org

