

Striding out against oppression

By RONEL SCHEFFER

ON OUR FEET. TAKING STEPS TO CHALLENGE WOMEN'S OPPRESSION by Liz Mackenzie, Cace Publications, 1992. (171 pages)

AS I was paging through this handbook at my desk (the sun was shining, it was a beautiful day outside), I received an obscene telephone call. Yes, women in political organisations continue to receive these calls in the new South Africa.

When I put the receiver down, seething and close to tears, a particular line of text caught my eye. It referred to moments when you felt undermined as a woman and asked the question, "What else could you have done?". I wildly resented the question at that moment, for obvious reasons. How does one protect oneself against obscene telephone calls? Must the onus to act always be on women? When will we see a concerted initiative to encourage men to seriously look at how they behave towards women. Why can't there be such a course for boys at school level.

The process that gave birth to the publication of this handbook - women's organisation throughout the country participated - included several workshops, one of which was designed to include men but very few attended. One hopes that those who make use of this excellent manual will do their best to make men part of the process.

Although the book was intended for workshops on gender and women's oppression, the outline on how to prepare, plan, design and run a workshop is of a general nature, and it therefore makes for a very useful introduction to running workshops on other issues and, in fact, to the popular education methodology itself.

Cace (Centre for Adult and Continuing Education, based at UWC) hopes it will help to create a network of adult or popular educators who will actively challenge gender oppression. The book is aimed at educators and is suitable for both beginners and the initiated. It is well presented and illustrated and the content should be accessible to most. Chapters on the nuts and bolts of workshop design and raising aspects of women's oppression are augmented by background information on the concept of gender and gender oppression as experienced locally and worldwide.

A compact resource to change thinking in schools

By TERRY DE JONG

MAKING A DIFFERENCE. IDEAS FOR CHANGE IN SCHOOLS by Penny Berens, Emelia Potenza and Ruth Versfeld, Idasa and Oxford University Press, 1992. (28 pages). R15,00.

CHANGES in structures, such as "Model C" schools, do not guarantee meaningful changes in attitudes and values. There has to be a clearly conceptualised plan of action which will facilitate a process of conscientising, of raising awareness and of developing cultural literacy.

In short, we need a proactive attempt to address openly and constructively the myriad of complex issues that accompany South Africa's transition towards a democratically constituted society which upholds all those universally fundamental non-"isms". "Making a Difference" is about examining this transition, a compact resource which offers a series of workshops designed to promote positive attitudes and values in a changing educational context.

The title of this publication alone embodies the potent message it communicates unequivocally throughout.

Schools are powerful agents of socialisation and are a crucial medium for creating an educational environment for a different



acknowledging that integration without social education is at best naive and at worst irresponsible. For example, the workshop design entitled "Types of intergration" is strikingly introduced by Joanna's statement:

We talk to each other, and do home economics together, and cook in groups together, and stuff like that. But you discuss why your cake's burnt; you don't discuss why there's racism.

THE book documents 13 workshops which, as the authors put it, aim to "...highlight our prejudices and attitudes; they enable us to examine the 'hidden curricula' in our classrooms and the assumptions behind our schools' culture. They go on to investigate how school structures can be changed to accommodate the different backgrounds and lifestyles of the students. Finally, they propose ways for formulating new school policy and practice."



future which will benefit all South African children. This conviction is not only encompassed in the generally positive and encouraging style of writing and presentation, such as the introductory session on "Making sure change happens", but also evident in linking the book closely with its partner volume, "All Schools for All Children" by Julie Frederikse, giving us a valuable opportunity to learn from Zimbabwe's experience. The inclusion of interview excerpts from this publication highlights the importance of

The range of workshops is comprehensive and incremental, starting with an innovative introductory "Bingo" exercise (Getting off to a good start), then focusing on personal feelings and attitudes (eg Practices and prejudices, Where do our attitudes come from?) to examining "school culture" (eg Understanding your school), and curriculum and language issues (eg What the textbooks tell us, Multilingual classrooms), and culminating in policy formulation (Creating new policy).

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Eerlike werk oor Afrikanerkrisis

Deur **BRAAM VILJOEN**

AFRIKANERS NA APARTHEID deur **Carel IV Boshoff**, Afrikaner Vryheidsstigting, 1992. R38,70.

IN die gelede van die Afrikaner kultuurkorps is krisis deesdae, om verstaanbare redes, aan die orde van die dag. Dikwels word dit as bestaanskrisis of oorlewingskrisis identifiseer en dui dit in elk geval op 'n wyer dimensie as die politieke. Waar die ontwikkelende dialoog in hierdie verband soms herinner aan die kultuurkrisis van die dertigerjare is dit reeds duidelik dat die afmetings sowel as die intensiteit van die hedendaagse krisis 'n karakter van sy eie aanneem en van beslissende betekenis sal word vir die selfpersepsie van "die Afrikaner" in die hede en in die onsekere toekoms.

Dit is in hierdie konteks dat dié werkie van Carel IV Boshoff (seun van prof Carel Boshoff) 'n uiters belangrike bydrae maak wat die aandag verdien van elkeen wat belang het in die gesprek wat onder Afrikaners ontwikkel. Dit verskyn in die "Vryheidsreeks" wat deur die Afrikaner Vryheidsstigting bevorder word.

Wat die werk verder belangrik maak, is die feit dat dit uit die pen van die jeug kom en inderdaad poog om soveel oop gesprek te wees dat dit van belang word ook in die wyer samelewing van die "nuwe werklikheid" vir almal wat belangstel om mede-Suid Afrikaners te verstaan al sou dit gepaard gaan met meningsverskil.

Die geartikuleerde en konsekwente hantering van die probleme van ons dag op kulturele en staatkundige gebied sal meebring dat verskillende lesers verskillende voordele uit die lees van die werk sal haal maar ek verstout my om te sê dat niemand sonder voordeel daaraan sal kou nie.

Met verrassende openheid erken die skrywer dat daar geen gerusstellende abstrakte antwoorde vir die bestaansvrae van die Afrikaner meer oor is nie. 'n "Geslag politici" het probeer om met retoriek klaar te speel met deurslaggewende probleme en is daarin gesteun deur 'n "geslag kiesers". Dit laat die huidige geslag met 'n gewetensvraag wat na "meer voldoende en konkrete antwoorde" vra.

Die doel van sy studie, wat aanvanklik die tema van 'n magister verhandeling was, is

om 'n eie geldige Afrikaanse kultuurbegrip vir die huidige tyd uit te werk en dit in verhouding te sien met aspekte van die krisis in geskiedkundige, religieuse, etniese en multi-etniese verband asook in sy staatkundige relevansie.

Daarvoor gebruik hy die uitgangspunte van die bekende Afrikaanse skrywer N P van Wyk Louw, wie se kritiese (maar lojale) gesigspunte van die jare vyftig nou juis van toepassing bly en as riglyne kan dien. Immers Van Wyk Louw het juis ruimte wou maak vir die skeppende enkeling wie se kreatiwiteit die kern van die kultuur en geesteslewe van die volk bevrug (al word hy soms in 'n proses van vervreemding vasgevang). Daarom mag die kultuurgemeenskap nie skrik vir kritiek nie. Dit moet inderdaad sy waardes oopstel aan interaksie of die oop gesprek en moet mensvriendelik wees. Dit moet ook weerstand kan bied teen die skynbare tydelike voordeel van politieke diensbaarheid want daar is iets groter as die krisis wat nie deur een geslag se "keuse teen vryheid" tot niet gemaak kan word nie.

BOSHOFF kom nie met maklike antwoorde soos dikwels in die misweer van kultuurpolitiek gebeur nie. Trouens hy erken dat 'n fyn en volledig geformuleerde kultuurbegrip hom ontwyk het en dat dit as kollektiewe selfbewussyn van 'n "volk" deur 'n interaksie van baie faktore bepaal word, veral in die sogenaamde oop gesprek. Hy praat van sy werk as "kursoriese opmerkings" "érens op die weg" van 'n eie Afrikaanse kultuurbegrip.

Miskien is dit 'n vraag wat oorbly na sy werk - die van dié voortdurende dinamiek van kultuur. Die werk van Boshoff is 'n waardige poging om in moderne idioom die kulturbepaaldheid van identiteit te artikuleer. Die gevaar bly bestaan dat dit wat nie vasgevang en tot groepsieendom gemaak kan word nie, word juis tot statiese steriliteit gedoem as ons dit in 'n vorm wil giet - wat begreping impliseer en so die volgende oomblik aan irrelevantie blootgestel word.

'n Uitstekende bydrae egter - pregnant, moeilik en kompak geskryf maar die moeite werd om deur te werk.

Braam Viljoen, 'n voormalige teoloog, boer en is deelyds konsultant by Idasa.

Each workshop description outlines its aims, method, materials and possible follow-up activities and, with appropriate adaptations, can be used for students, teachers and parents. Creative worksheets, including illustrations and photographs, accompany the outlines and are designed for reproduction or photocopying. The average duration of each workshop is 40 minutes.

An attribute of the book is that the workshops have been piloted in schools by the authors. Although this feature does not in itself ensure success, it does add a level of credibility to implementation. In spite of the fairly explicit guidelines and the encouragement proffered by the authors to adapt and develop one's own workshop style, the impact of these workshops will depend largely on the sensitivity and skills of the facilitator. Some general suggestions on workshop skills would have been an additional bonus.

This is a timely publication. It is a practical resource which is essentially person-centred, creative and flexible. Its great challenge is how strategically it is used in a school community and the broadness of its target audience which ought to include parents, the management team, as well as teachers and students.

Terry de Jong is an educationist based at the University of Cape Town

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