NEW VOICES ON THE ROAD

*New Voices* played a key role during the first Southern African Students’ Psychology Conference held in Gaborone in June 2009. More than 200 students from 23 universities and 14 countries attended the conference. The 80-plus presentations covered all aspects of the discipline, with many presentations interrogating issues of race, gender, class and culture. Several presentations also focused on controversial issues in the learning and teaching of psychology, with some heated debates between students and lecturers. We are currently in the process of reviewing more than 30 manuscripts for the Conference Proceedings to be published under the *New Voices* imprint.

In August 2009 the Unisa Department of Psychology hosted a symposium to explore the integration of liberatory psychology principles into Open and Distance Learning practices. Professor Isaac Prilleltensky, a leading critical community psychologist and Dean of the University of Miami’s School of Education, not only delivered a presentation at the symposium – he also participated actively in a discussion with a group of students and academics – and *New Voices* was there.

Professor Prilleltensky, who is also a member of the international editorial board of *New Voices*, had this to say about his visit to Unisa:

> What a wonderful experience I had! Spending time with students, faculty, and staff at Unisa was memorable. I particularly enjoy occasions when the content of a conversation is congruent with the values and behaviours of the people involved in it. Such was my experience at Unisa. I felt that people genuinely cared for each other and for the future of their communities. I could feel the sense of community around the room, and I could
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detect commitment to the cause of social justice and well-being. Frankly, I could have stayed talking to all of you for hours. Dialogue is one of the things I enjoyed most with friends, family, and relatives. Good outcomes begin with good processes, and at Unisa we began a healthy process of debate and conversation. All of you asked very pointed questions, and I did not have answers to them all. I hope that during my next visit to South Africa we get to spend more time together and I get to ask and not just answer questions. I found in South Africa, among my colleagues at least, a vibrancy that I rarely find elsewhere. Upon my return from your country I couldn't stop sharing stories with my family and colleagues. I was very moved and impressed by the people. I hope to be able to reciprocate in some fashion. You have all been very generous and gracious with your time and hospitality. As I noted in my remarks, I see the job of psychologists as bridge makers between personal and collective well-being. For far too long, psychology focused on the former and neglected the latter. The two are symbiotic and linked by relational well-being. Some people asked me what I am doing in my practice to further the cause of personal, relational, and collective well-being. One of my current projects can be viewed at www.specway.org. The website hosts our projects based on Strengths, Prevention, Empowerment and Community Change (hence the acronym SPEC). You will find in the website opportunities to blog and offer your comments and experiences related to promoting community well-being. I look forward to your comments in our website. If you wish to contact me, my email is isaac@miami.edu. All the best, and thanks again for the warm hospitality.

In September 2009, the Department of Psychology hosted Professor Elias Mpofu, Head of the Rehabilitation Centre in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Sydney and Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Psychology in Africa during a two-day visit. In his keynote address during a symposium ‘Contributing to knowledge generation in African Psychology’, Professor Mpofu observed that psychological constructs are culturally influenced by the contexts in which they are enacted. He differentiated between traditionalist Africa, its orientation towards collectivist values and subsistence economies, modern Africa, in which neo-colonial traditions and individualistic values are more pronounced, and transitional Africa, which interfaces
traditionalist and modern Africa. Transitional Africa is characterised by emergent cultures and non-formal economies. Psychological concepts in African communities intersect those from the local and global communities. African and Africanist scholars are increasingly platforming, through publications, psychological constructs responsive to the local context and that also speak to global discourses. Professor Mpofu’s textbook, *Counselling people of African ancestry* (in press, Cambridge University Press), provides a timely digest on critical issues to advancing psychology in African contexts. In conversation with the *New Voices* editorial team, Professor Mpofu highlighted the importance of maintaining the journal’s focus on the development of emergent scholars, while simultaneously enlisting the support of well-known international scholars. He also shared a wide variety of useful tips from his experience as editor and editorial board member of a range of academic journals. Prof Mpofu is a member of the international editorial board of *New Voices*.

**CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

As mentioned in our previous issue, we will be publishing a special issue in 2010/11 on ‘Self and society in a networked world’. Globalisation and the rise of the internet have resulted in a rapid increase in scholarly work on technological, conceptual and social networks. The prominence of networks in the 21st century poses a challenge to psychology, which traditionally focuses mainly on intra-psychic or, at best, family and community processes. How are networks different from communities? In what ways is subjectivity differently constructed in networked *versus* traditional environments? What are the socio-political dangers and opportunities inherent in the new world of networks? We invite contributions on these themes and related topics. Both empirical and conceptual contributions are welcome. The deadline for the submission of abstracts is 15 June 2010. For enquiries, please contact the guest editor Angelo Fynn (angelofynn@gmail.com).

**THANK YOU**

2009 was a good year for *New Voices*. Thank you to everybody who submitted articles, book reviews and conference reports. Thank you also to the reviewers, editors as well as those who continued to believe in our dream.

**Eduard Fourie (Editor)**

September 2009