

Khanya College

1986–1996



Ten Years of Education
for Liberation



If somebody studies a lot and does not walk among the masses, if they have no practice, they remain a story-teller who can quote many passages from revolutionary works by heart, but who will not write a single new page, a single new line, throughout their life. We learn from the masses and teach them what we have learnt. We persistently apply our knowledge to productive work and make our cognition more intact.

Samora Machel

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The First Spark of an Idea that became Khanya College

In 1981, Lawrence Keller of Indiana University's School of Continuing Studies (SCS) was part of a team of senior university administrators who toured South African universities to explore ways that US educational resources could help to redress the lack of educational opportunities for black South Africans; Keller was moved by what he saw: "It really hits home that when blacks are deprived of education in the land of their birth, it is something that gets at the very heart of what education is all about" .During that visit he met John Samuel, then Executive Director of SACHED, and their discussions led to considering the possibility of adapting SCS courses to South Africa's particular needs and social/educational conditions.

Roxana Ma Newman, Indiana University, International Programmes

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In Memoriam



Rabbus Mathebula
1969 – 1990

Tsikwe Molobye
1967 – 1990

Nombuso Mthombeni
1972 – 1992

John Bongani Shingwenyana
1968 – 1994

As with all institutions
Khanya has had its
moments of sorrow. During
our ten years of operation three
students and one staff member
have died while at Khanya. We
dedicate this page of our history to
their memories.

Introduction

The publication of this book helps to mark the first ten years of Khanya College Johannesburg. We have put this volume together for a number of reasons.

First and foremost, we want to record ten years of commitment to Education for Liberation. The survival and development of Khanya is a victory staff and students can all be proud of. This book will ensure that this educational and political experience is not lost to history.

Our experiences at Khanya College will also serve as a guide to future action. As John Samuel, one of Khanya's founders and now Deputy Director-General in the National Education Department put it: "Khanya College has been a great success. Not only for students but also for staff. The people who went through that experience gained a lot. Khanya College was enormously successful in providing opportunities to people who never would have had another chance. Now is the time for Khanya College to trade on that.

"Let us use this occasion of looking backward to help strengthen Khanya into a democratic community college in the future. Let us plan carefully so that we do not abandon our historical roots. We believe, as people who have fought to transform the education system, that we should be given the resources and opportunity to reach more learners under a popularly elected government. Long live Khanya College!"

How this book came together

The idea of producing a book came to us early in 1995 as Khanya College approached the end of ten years of operation. We formed a committee to work on the book consisting of staff members Brian Wafawarowa, Rose Telela, and John Pape, 1993 alumnus Nape Nchabaleng, and 1995 student Lila Montshiwa.

Since the book was conceived as a popular history, the committee wanted to capture the voices of those who played a large role in founding and developing the college. An advert in the Weekly Mail plus direct approaches to people resulted in more than 40 interviews with present and past students and staff, members of the Board of Trustees and people involved in founding the college. Committee members interviewed at least one student from every year since the college opened its doors.

We have organised the book to highlight the material from these interviews. In addition, we have used other sources, including student poems, excerpts from papers written by Khanya staff and students, articles from the student newspaper and campaign posters of Khanya students who ran for government office. To make the material more coherent we have broken it down into a number of headings. This gives it a clear structure and will enable readers to find the information they want easily.

We would like to thank all those people who gave their time to help us put this book together, in particular those who conducted extensive interviews: Ranako Mabunda, Keke Nchoba, Sibonelo Radebe, Kgomotso Konopi, Thomas Manavhela, Ephram Mafuwane. In addition we want to commend Laura Dison, Charles Dugmore, Patrick Ngwenya and Teboho Sejane for their editorial work. Lastly we need to acknowledge the contributions by Swiss Labour Assistance (SLA) Indiana University and EZE towards covering the cost of production.

We hope you enjoy the book and find it an accurate reflection of the diversity and richness of the ten years of educational experience at Khanya College from 1986 to 1996.

Lastly we hope the book will inspire you to lend further support to the college and help bring Education for Liberation to many thousands of South Africans in the future.

THE RICKSHAW



Illustration by Shadrack Maphayi,
student, 1995

The Founding of Khanya College

Historical Background

Khanya College opened in 1986 at the height of mass resistance to apartheid. This period saw the launch of COSATU, the coming together of educational organisations to form the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC), and the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF). Through these and other structures, millions of people across the country engaged in the struggle against the racist and exploitative system. The government responded with intense repression under a national State of Emergency leading to the death, detention or banning of thousands of militants and rank and file resisters.

John Samuel, who helped to found Khanya, used these words to describe this historical period:

Despite the degree of repression there was an amazing strength of organisation development in the country... you had a tough time yet it seemed to produce strengths... you had COSATU and the (NECC) emerging and there was a lot of thinking and action about challenging the regime.

During this time, many youth followed the slogan, "Liberation first, education later". Education activists responded with the slogan, "Peoples' education for peoples' power". A key NECC figure, Father Mkatshwa, described peoples' education as:

Education which prepares people for total human liberation and for full participation in all social, political or cultural spheres of society, helps people to be creative, to develop a critical mind and analyze.

To others, alternative education stood for the total transformation of the system. This is how Neville Alexander described alternative education in 1984:

No project that is not conceived as part and parcel of the general struggle for national liberation and class emancipation can be said to be part of an alternative education ...Only those projects which are not simply geared to providing knowledge and training to students so that they can slot into the present racist, sexist and capitalist structures of South Africa, can be called alternatives.

The idea for Khanya College emerged and grew from this educational debate. Perhaps the two most important individuals in developing the concept were John Samuel, National Coordinator of SACHED and Neville Alexander, Coordinator of SACHED's Cape Town centre. The following extracts from early planning documents capture the vision behind the founding of Khanya in the mid 1980s:

The overall educational aim of Khanya College will be to establish an atmosphere where everyone will have the opportunity to experiment, within reason, with different methods of instruction and learning which will enable us to develop new teaching and learning strategies for developing South Africa. The intention is to uproot the high school habit of rote learning and replace it with a questioning approach and the ability to think critically not only about course material, but also about all aspects of life. Khanya College's goal is to create a society where formal education will not be the prerogative of a privileged few and where informal education such as the experience of workers on the factory floor will not be frowned upon. Hence we will strive towards linking the two education experiences in the hope of forging a new democratic, non exploitative South African society . The fundamental goal of the Khanya College project has been, from the outset, to start to develop a form of tertiary education that will be appropriate to the ethos and needs of a liberated South Africa. Khanya College will aim to bring the university down from Mount Olympus, and situate it firmly in the community of which the students form apart.

Khanya's Founding

A number of people were involved in the planning process that turned the concept of Khanya into a reality .In addition to Samuel and Alexander, some of the most important individuals were Ingrid Fiske, Karen Press, Ahmed Essop, and Tony Marx.

The initial view was for Khanya to pilot as a one-year bridging programme and then break away from SACHED as a fully-fledged university with around 2 000 students in Johannesburg and 2 000 in Cape Town. The key obstacle was that no local institution would provide recognition or accreditation. Because of

this, SACHED's leadership looked for assistance overseas. Fortunately,

Resolutions of the NECCO on Peoples Education

Here are some of the ten resolutions passed by the NECC in 1986 that have special relevance to Khanya College:

- ❑ People's Education for People's Power serves as both an educational and political strategy that will mobilise the people toward a common goal of creating a non racial democratic South Africa while at the same time developing a future education system.
- ❑ People's education sees the linkage between education and politics and determines the two are inseparable if the struggle wants to achieve a non-racial democratic South Africa.
- ❑ The success of people's education depends on how it manages to organize all groups students, teachers, parents need to work together with mutual understanding to build democratic organizations.
- ❑ People's education addresses people from all walks of life. It wants to educate and empower all, not just pupils.
- ❑ People's education must encourage creativity and critical thinking to prepare students for the future.

of SACHED's long standing donors. Funders like the Dutch Development Ministry, SIDA, EZE,

John Samuel met up with Larry Keller of the Continuing Studies Division at Indiana University in the United States. Indiana University had wide experience of partnerships with institutions in developing countries and several people involved in these partnerships had an active interest in the anti-apartheid struggle. The meeting between Samuel and Keller led to Indiana granting full accreditation to Khanya courses. Only after this were local institutions willing to recognize Khanya courses. Thus, the founding of Khanya was based on one of apartheid education's many contradictions: a student had to get a credit from 10 000 kilometres away in order to enter a university 5 kilometres away.

Even with the Indiana involvement, Khanya still needed local support to move ahead. Samuel summarised the process:

We wouldn't have gotten anywhere without the Indiana link... but if it weren't for the sympathetic support of individuals at the universities it wouldn't have gotten anywhere people like John File at UCT and Eddie Webster at Wits were crucial. To some extent we were trading off the conscience of the university. They had some sense that this is what they should be doing.

Raising the money

The second big obstacle was money. To overcome this Samuel asked World University Service to organise a meeting in Geneva with ten

Miserior, and the Ford Foundation rose. to the challenge of transforming tertiary education in South Africa. The meeting raised almost all the money for the project.

With accreditation and funding, Khanya College was ready to employ staff and admit its first students at the beginning of 1986. By March of that year nearly 100 students were attending classes at the Johannesburg and Cape Town campuses. In the words of the first coordinator of the Jo'burg campus, Ahmed Essop, "Khanya College worked. It created an alternative environment within which academic studies took place and it gave students confidence and ability to interact in a broader academic environment".

Problems within Khanya

Khanya faced a basic tension in achieving its goals. On the one hand, the college was working towards an alternative to existing institutions, encouraging students to think critically about transforming universities and society as a whole. But at the same time, Khanya was equipping students to succeed in the very system they wanted to transform. As Ahmed Essop put it, "Khanya always had the contradiction between trying to do alternative things and the need for university credits".

Internal differences

This ideological tension was expressed in frequent differences over approaches to radical pedagogy between the Johannesburg and Cape Town campuses. Neville Alexander argued that Khanya should only have a Cape Town campus: difficult to mediate and reconcile, and we therefore wanted to have the thing in one place. Secondly, we had the ideas. The Jo'burg people were extremely bureaucratic in their approach. They won't say that ever, but we say that, and we said so openly at the time and we didn't see any way that they would be able to run such an alternative, university-level educational course.

Many Johannesburg Khanya staff had similarly critical views of their Cape Town comrades. Ahmed Essop acknowledged that Khanya Cape Town saw itself as more political. However, in his opinion Khanya Cape Town was concerned with form rather than substance. He added:

At one point they put flower pots in the urinals in the name of gender equality...they had simple understanding of democracy. Everyone participated in everything.

At certain points, differences between the two campuses became quite serious. John Samuel

From the outset Khanya attempted to create an alternative in both course content and admissions process. The college offered six courses in its one-year programme: African literature; African history; sociology; economics; mathematics and physics. In the arts and social sciences, Khanya emphasised Africa in a deliberate attempt to counteract the eurocentric curriculum that had dominated South African tertiary education for decades. Course content also tried to link academic work to practical development issues. Each student had to participate in a community project for at least half a day per week. Students' performance in these projects accounted for 10% of the end of the year mark in their courses.

Over the years Khanya students worked for mass organisations like the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (NUMSA) or the South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU), did research for non government organisations (NGOs) like the Institute for Africa Alternatives (IFAA), or tutored workers in basic education. Khanya's goal was to produce students with a commitment to contribute to the community when they finished their education.

We knew from experience with other SACRED projects...that the moment you have two loci contradictions arise based on regionalism, personalities which are very

recalls a time when the two were not even talking to each other. Despite these conflicts, the two colleges succeeded, with the mediation of SACHED, in sustaining themselves under a common organisational umbrella from 1986 until 1993.

The ideological and educational differences that lay beneath the regional conflict centred on questions faced by all those with an interest in social change:

- Do you change what exists or scrap it altogether?
- Do you negotiate with people in power or do you refuse to engage with them at all?
- Do you change the status quo through negotiations or by any means necessary?

In short, are you a reformer or a revolutionary?

The admissions process reinforced efforts to produce socially conscious intellectuals.

Khanya application forms were lengthy with many questions intended to assess political awareness and experience:

- Was your education ever disrupted by strikes or boycotts?
- Were you ever involved in organisations in your community?
- What do you think are the most pressing

problems in your community and how can they be solved?

A typical year saw more than a thousand applications for the 110 or so places available at the college. Applicants were first screened for academic qualifications and general political awareness. Those who passed were interviewed on a wide range of topics by teams of students, staff, and people from other progressive educational organisations. The objective was to select candidates who were aware of problems in their community and determined to participate in solving those problems. This process remained unchanged from 1986 up until 1991.

However, the 1990s brought some changes. First, Khanya's traditional constituency of community activists began to shrink. Second, donors

and universities exerted pressure to ensure that Khanya students were fully prepared academically. Gradually, political awareness admission criteria took a back seat. An admissions test was introduced in 1992. By 1995 all interviews of candidates were dropped. The reality was that if Khanya wanted to continue producing students with a commitment to community development, the college itself had to take up more of the burden. There were no

longer thousands of ex-detainees, shop stewards or civic leaders seeking access to university.

Khanya also began to look at other ways of contributing to community development. Out of these discussions emerged the college's community division and the plan for Khanya to become a community college. These ideas are discussed in more detail later in this book.



Alternative teaching methods focused on group work and cooperative learning

Academic Life at Khanya

The Khanya academic programme presented an alternative to existing institutions in both content and methodology. To counter the eurocentric course content at most South African universities, arts and social science courses focused on Africa and South Africa in particular. Alternative teaching methods and approaches to building academic skills focused on group work and cooperative learning. Ideally, Khanya intended to produce critical thinkers who would also be able to succeed in existing institutions.

It was a difficult road to walk. While providing an alternative, the college had to equip students to cope with the more conservative institutions they were headed for. While

providing support, the college could not spoon feed students to the extent that they would fail without the Khanya life line.

My job could have been threatening but I never felt it. There was exploration of different methodologies. We could innovate.

Laura Dison, Academic Skills Coordinator, 1998-1991

The main problem and challenge was dealing with a highly politicised group of students who had incredible need for a bridging course. There were lots of problems to do with daily living, for example the need for financial support, provision

of residence given the tight budget, and the fact that Khanya was a small college. One wasn't only a maths teacher but had to deal with these problems and challenges.

*Aubrey Blecher, Maths Coordinator,
1987-1994*

Amongst other things, Khanya College made me to discover my intellectual strengths and thus choose my career path accordingly. It also sharpened and indeed inspired my interest and understanding of the social world. *Kuseni Dlamini, student, 1991*

Coming from the University of Zululand by the end of the year I had no idea how to write an essay... I was studying sociology but I had never heard of Durkheim, Weber or Marx. To me reading books meant finding something in a book and plagiarising and putting it into the essay... I even took one article from True Love for a gender essay... I got 80% for that essay ...For me I could clearly see the difference between that and Khanya... Every person belonged to a study group. Every week a meeting was compulsory. Study groups forced people to work together.

Fana Jiyane, student, 1988

Academically, Khanya College has delivered the right goods for I am proud to say that I am now a critical thinker and it's all thanks to Khanya.

Esme Molubi, student, 1995

Academically I achieved to work and handle my first year courses, maths and economics. I also learned to participate through tutorials and their desk arrangements made me to feel comforted and able to communicate with other students and the facilitator.

Cynthia Mabaso, student, 1994

Getting high marks was not my achievement and I did not seek that. My achievement was intellectual development. I learnt how one should argue or debate without necessarily having a quarrel.

Moosa Magubane, student, 1990



Khanya College helped me to realise my potential academically. After matric I never considered myself to be university material. However, after one year I declared myself to be better than most people who had spent more than three years at an institution of higher learning. *Lephophotho Mashike, student, 1993*

We were made to be parrots at DET...At Khanya College they never taught us what to think to write in our essays but how to structure our thinking.

Nume Mashinini, student, 1989

I actually learned for the first time that there is nothing that is absolute... you have to approach things openly. *Patrick Mathebane, student, 1988*

I was surprised to find out that when you write an essay from a Marxist perspective you got quite high marks. So it was our ideological home. I still have the first essay I ever wrote.

Ezrom Mofi, student, 1988

For the first time I was able to exercise my independent analysis of situations, particularly in economics class, without the fear of being victimised for my views.

Thomas Nkosi, student, 1992

Khanya suffered from the paradox of trying to establish resources and these resources were not always adequate. Yet on the other hand the more they were achieved, the more spoon fed students tended to be... at times Khanya tended to overemphasize the political status (of students): romanticised activism.

Bheki Peterson, staff member, 1986, board member, 1993-5

As important as academic skills were, there were other important skills like life skills, for example building confidence, the ability to survive in a hostile environment... some of this was based on our own experience of what was quite a hostile environment... it went way beyond the ASPs. It included the class-rooms, the relationship between staff and students... the universities have learned a lot about these issues from Khanya

College... one of my major regrets is that we did not become a university.

John Samuel

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The Khanya Approach to Tertiary Access

The Khanya Approach to Tertiary Access

Khanya tries to gear students for the universities in a number of ways. One is to encourage them to reduce dependence on their subject coordinators as the year goes on. Courses begin with intensive academic support. This is necessary given the students' academic background. This support is gradually removed as the course proceeds. In educational circles the method is known as scaffolding. Like the scaffolding around a building, academic scaffolding provides support during construction. But once construction is complete, the building stands on its own. Similarly, Khanya wants its ex-students to stand on their own in whatever academic or community environment they encounter .

In addition to providing scaffolding, Khanya introduces students to the politics of learning the notion that every institution has its own internal politics and hidden curriculum. Students need to understand them to succeed, whether at Khanya, Wits or Cambridge! In particular, Khanya contests the idea that academic institutions, and academics themselves, are neutral and objective. The harsh reality is that many tertiary students, especially in arts and social sciences, are penalised for their views, not the quality of their work. Khanya neither encourages students to hide their views nor to always disagree with authority. Rather, the college tries to prepare students for the consequences of daring to disagree with certain lecturers or university officials.

My high point at Khanya was that I got a chance to do what I wanted to do, to learn without being restricted a chance to express what I felt about being black and being a woman I got a taste of ideal education once you "get a taste of it you never forget it *Rose Telela, student, 1987*

about my teaching and this enabled me to correct my mistakes.

Charles Dugmore, staff member, 1990-6

In 1987 Khanya was still in its infant stages. It was at the peak of its learning curve. Issues like study skills were not properly addressed. Here we must remember that most students came from Bantu Education administered schools. Only one or two among us were able to write notes while the lecture was in progress; No one communicated about the importance of note taking and how it is done.

Babylon Xeketwane, student, 1987

Khanya had one other important objective in the academic programme: to produce students who

would use their skills and knowledge to serve the community .To this end, all Khanya students have had to participate in a community project. In these projects students spent at least half a day a week working in a variety of organisations such as trade unions, NGOs, and schools. Combined with the students' own previous experience of community activity, these projects are intended to increase the students' desire to plough back what they have learned into the community.

I was taught how to become a pragmatic professional, a person who is always concerned about the plight of his community That destroyed my individualistic approach to life.

Babylon Xeketwane, student, 1987

As an individual I have also gained a lot from Khanya College. Firstly, I have further developed my critical thinking because I had to employ a non-dogmatic approach. Although I was a strong believer in Marxism, I had to ensure that I presented non-biased lectures to the students. Moreover, I got feedback from students

We planted an orchard which is still there... we liked to initiate projects... but Khanya is still elite

in approach. I want Khanya to be known in the squatter camps.

Thomas Phoko, student, 1986

Khanya's ideal product would be a critical thinker, a pragmatic professional, able to take initiative in academic work and competent in all necessary academic skills. Moreover, former Khanya students are supposed to avoid the

Democracy at Khanya

Khanya is proud of the serious attempt to run the college democratically. This has taken many forms. For instance, students have participated in various structures of the college such as staff meetings, the Board of Trustees, staff selection panels, and student disciplinary committees. A number of former students and staff members have acknowledged these attempts:

Democracy was practised in the sense that students had a strong voice compared to other institutions in the governance of Khanya College... All staff from cleaners to project coordinators were part of the democratic process.

Aubrey Blecher, staff member, 1987-1995

I believe democracy was practised as humanly as possible. I have never met and I do not think I will ever meet the authority that is as open as the Khanya College staff was.

Lephophotho Mashike, student, 1993

temptations of individualism and monetary reward and work for the oppressed communities from which they came. Obviously not every Khanya student ends up with all those attributes. But as we will see later on in this volume, many have followed the path of education for liberation charted for them at Khanya.

Democracy was the cornerstone of the institution. We had put into place structures which ensured optimal participation of students in the decision making of the college. We addressed most problems we encountered without confrontation with the management of the college.

Thomas Nkosi, student, 1992

Everybody from cleaners, students, up to the director has a strong voice in making suggestions and resolving problems within the organisation, which to me is part of democracy... meaning that a bottom up structure is present at Khanya College.

Zozo Dhlamini, staff member, 1990-96

Democracy was practised to a larger degree. The SRC was democratically elected and accountable. Mass meetings were the supreme decision-making

A woman student takes the lead in a group discussion. At Khanya all students are encouraged to speak



The 1994 Strike

The student strike of 1994 provoked considerable discussion within the college about the rights and responsibilities of participants in a democracy. The strike began when a group known as The Top Six overthrew the existing SAC with the overwhelming support of the student body. The students occupied the college offices, demanding a monthly stipend of ASOO. When college management and staff refused the demands, the strikers trashed the campus. They piled furniture up to barricade staff inside the offices and sprayed fire extinguishers into the office area.

At that point the Board of Trustees was called in and the college was temporarily closed. A team of staff members and students met with the NECC and SASCO to resolve the situation. A final agreement was signed by all parties after

two days of discussions. As part of the agreements, students volunteered to clean the campus.

Problems continued after the college reopened. The coup makers refused to replace the old SAC. In response, the academic staff went on strike, demanding an elected SAC. The students agreed to elect a new SAC. Perhaps it is only at Khanya that teachers could go on strike demanding that students form an SAC. A first in the history of South African education!

Later, the college held a public forum on the strike giving staff and students a chance to air their frustrations and move the college back to normality. It also provided considerable food for thought about the future course of democracy in the college. One of those documents appears in the box on page 13

body. Staff members encouraged students' perspectives and permitted students to attend staff meetings. *Samuel Kula, student, 1990*

While everyone interviewed recognised the attempts made by Khanya to put democracy into practice, the college has not always been successful. Interviewees had a number of criticisms of Khanya's theory and practice of democracy.

Democracy was practised at Khanya in that students had representation at most levels in the college. The limit of this democracy was that it did not give students effective participation in crucial decision-making processes, which took place at the college. They essentially watched the decision making game without playing it. *Kuseni Dlamini, student, 1991*

I don't think staff clearly had an idea about democracy... I was not very clear about

democracy and the fact that it goes with some responsibility.

Patrick Mathebane, student, 1988

The only time staff would address us was when there was a problem. *Nume MBshinini, student, 1989*

Staff was not open in terms of finance. Staff tended to wait for a crisis before giving us

financial information. *Fana Jiyane, student, 1988*

Students must be involved in all aspects of running the college but it must be recognised that each group of students is only at the college for one year. Staff tend to abdicate responsibility in search of students' vague sense of democracy. *Babylon Xeketwane, student, 1987*

I have noted that Khanya College democracy has had some major contradictions. KC workers or staff have been subjected to undeliberate abuse

by the college in the name of democracy; for instance KC salaries have been relatively not satisfying hence the college has encountered a crisis of inconsistent workers who always depart for better opportunities... This is caused by the fact that members of staff are also members of the management structures. As a result workers cannot present their problems collectively to the management nor could they join or form trade unions... the college should have a hierarchical structure which will address labour issues; alternatively the college coordinator should play this role.

DikelediXaba, Khanya Cape Town, 1987, staff member, 1992-95

There was a mixture of democracy and authoritarianism... I was for instance elected as an SRC Treasurer but I did not have a budget. A captain without a crew. How do you like it? When I voiced my opinions on fiscal policy and problems, I was subtly told where to get off in such a way that I enjoyed the journey.
Babylon Xeketwane, student, 1987

At the beginning of each and every year, since I worked at KC it is not easy to deal with new students. There are always some problems here and there, including the understanding of the word democracy from students.
Zozo Dhlamini, staff member, 1990-96

There was irresponsible democracy from the township... even the college's democracy was very theoretical and didn't filter down to us.
Themba Shozi, student, 1992

Students and staff had an equal voice as compared to other institutions... [but] students enter the college without an understanding of democracy. They end up

misusing their rights by demanding instead of solving the problem democratically and that leads to unnecessary strikes because they think they are the only ones with rights.
Teresa Damane, staff member, 1992-1996

Democracy was practised excessively because the manner in which it was practised people tended to stretch it very far while others abused it the college should adapt or adjust their democracy.
Nontobeko Mwetyana, student, 1994

Sometimes there was a contradiction in terms of defining democracy. Some students did not want to clean and spoke of their democratic right not to clean or to throw a paper.
Nume Mashinini, student, 1989

Khanya has not always lived up to its democratic aspirations. There have even been a number of student strike actions. The most serious, in 1994, was described on page 10. Generally Khanya has handled these conflicts in a very different way to most other educational institutions. Conflicts are often seen as learning experiences for both students and staff, rather than as struggles between mortal enemies. In that sense education in democracy is part of the curriculum at Khanya, even though it is not an accredited course. As Ezrom Mofi (1988) put it: "Khanya was my first experience with an educational institution run along democratic principles... this brought a sense of consciousness of how educational institutions should be run... it was a learning curve for both staff and students."



The Khanya administration office on Kerk Street after the 1994 student strike

An excerpt from the discussion document produced by College Staff and circulated at the College Forum after the 1994 strike

Rights and Responsibilities in the Practice of Student Democracy at Khanya College

The rights and responsibilities of student democracy at Khanya are guided by four principles:

- ❑ that students have full democratic rights within the college
 - ❑ that the practice of democratic rights involves taking responsibility
 - ❑ that the key to democracy is the effective operation of mandated structures
 - ❑ that the practice of democracy should contribute to the creation of a culture of learning at the college
- a) Democracy Means An SAC
 - b) Democracy Means Free and Fair Elections
 - c) Democracy Means the Right To Recall
 - d) Democracy Means Political Rights and Responsibilities
 - e) Democracy Means Representation Within the College
 - f) Democracy Means the Use of Existing Channels
 - g) Democracy Means Respecting Meeting Time and Class Time
 - h) Democracy Means Pursuing Educational and Political Objectives, Not Personal Agendas

Disciplinary Committees at Khanya College

Over the years democracy at Khanya has often included the formation of disciplinary committees. For most of the college's history there was an unwritten rule of non engagement with the police. This even extended to theft in the residence. On one occasion when the television was stolen from the residence, students refused to call the police to file the report needed for insurance purposes. In cases of assault, a similar approach was followed. Like South Africa as a whole, Khanya has not been free of violence. On occasions there have been disciplinary committees which handled cases of stabbings, shootings, and attempted rape. All of these attacks were by Khanya students on other students. Apart from these

serious incidents there have been several minor cases of theft and destruction of property. Disciplinary committees typically include staff and students. In serious cases, an outsider is often called in as well. Disciplinary action has ranged from expulsion to small fines. The most remarkable thing about Khanya disciplinary committees is that in almost every case, students and staff have reached a consensus. Verdicts of the infamous DC have never led to mass action by students. Given the highly emotive character of the issue of disciplining students through- out Khanya's existence, the relatively smooth path it followed shows the college's legitimacy amongst students.



Life in the Khanya Residence

There was a historical irony about the Khanya residence. It was previously an exclusive white club. *John Samuel,*

The Khanya residence has been unlike any other in South Africa. By the time Khanya rented the premises, the physical structure had seriously deteriorated leaving no clue of its previous existence. No one ever confused the Khanya College residence with a five star hotel. Despite the poor physical environment, students made enormous efforts to create an empowered community. They were involved in every aspect of running the residence, They cooked, cleaned, bought food, and disciplined each other when conflicts occurred. For many former students, their experience in the residence at Khanya seemed almost as important as the academic skills they acquired. In particular, the residence was the

focus of the attempt to put gender equality into daily practice. Many men came to Khanya totally ignorant of how to cook even the most basic meal. Through a cooperative approach most learned how to perform this 'women's work'. (Although there were a few disastrous meals along the way). Students also cooperated in their academic work, incoming a wide range of study groups in the residence. In the early days activists got together in political study groups to discuss the revolutionary classics. Sometimes these study groups held together after Khanya, forming the core of a social mechanism that helped students deal with the problems presented by Wits. Residence life also brought together people of different cultures and political backgrounds from all over the country, giving students new experience in developing tolerance and understanding.

There was communal cooking, R40 per month was deducted from peoples' stipend... people on a floor divided themselves according to who could cook...it was very successful... People like myself who didn't know how to cook learned in the process... there was competition between the floors about the best menus... We ran the residence Completely on our own.
Fana Jiyane, student, 1988

The good experiences in the Khanya residence had to do with the communal way of life. I always felt at home especially in the care of the Great Mama Teresa.
Lephophotho Mashike, student, 1993

We lived as a community and that's the best experience ever.
Teboho Sejane, student, 1991

The communal setting at the res was, good. The whole setting was gender sensitive. We worked as a team... I think Wits should learn from Khanya..
Themba Shozi, student, 1992

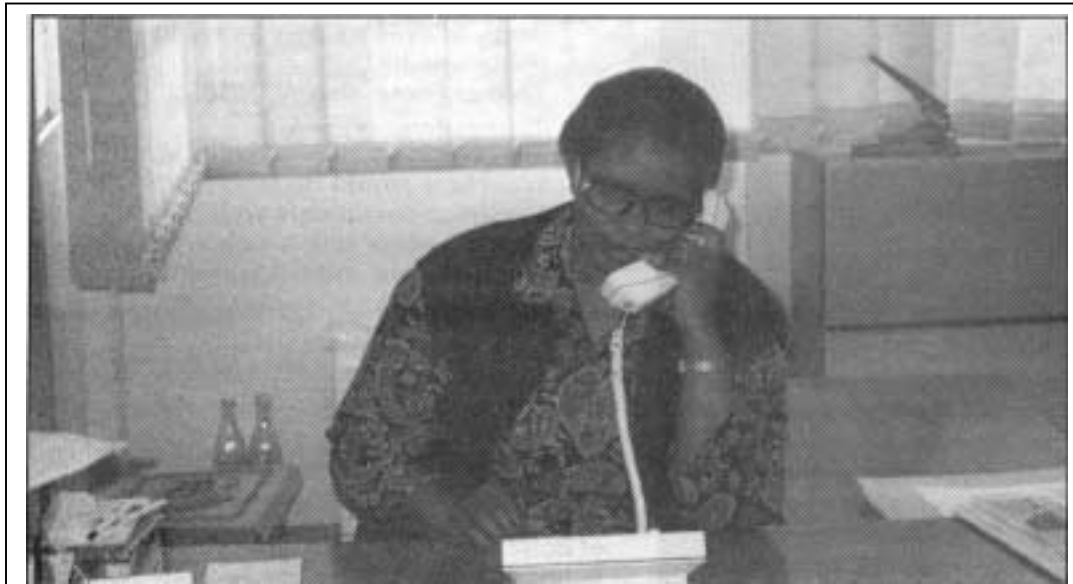
I learnt the art of responsibility. We looked after the res as if our lives depended on it. I coined the slogan, 'it has to begin with me' when it comes to the cleaning of the res.
Babylon Xeketwane, student, 1987

You would be seen as a sellout if you did not do-your work in the res.
Patrick Mathebane, student, 1988

The good experiences were the communal living that we shared... mixing with people of different cultures and understanding them... learning to tolerate others, even though their opinions were usually different and made me mad.
Nomduze Xiniwe, student, 1992

But it would be wrong to simply describe the Khanya residence as a paradise of cooperation. Anyone who has ever been there knows that in many ways it was not a nice place to live. The street noise was terrible. The lift never worked. The geyser was forever being repaired. Students There were also times when students abused each other. There were quarrels over menus. There were break-ins and serious conflicts where students broke down doors or became involved in drunken brawls. While in theory the residence was meant to run smoothly, without much interference from staff, in practice sometimes this turned out to be far from reality. A number of people interviewed talked about the serious problems they encountered at the Khanya residence:

If there was one aspect of Khanya that never worked it was the residence... we expected too much from students... staff had unrealistic expectations. We did not provide infrastructure or training... the notion that we should think critically about cleaning and who does it was not understood by students.
Ahmed Essop; Project Coordinator, 1986- 1990



**Teresa Damane,
Coordinator,
1992-6**

The dilapidated conditions of the res were found to be unbecoming for an environment of learning. At peak hours the traffic made such noise that it was almost impossible to concentrate on one's books.

Kgafela oa Magogodi, student, 1993

I didn't like communal cooking at res because our style of cooking differed. For example, people from the rural areas normally cooked a very soft porridge which couldn't eat. *Thulani Majozi, 1993*

For three months we did not have hot water. We took a decision to go to Khanya without washing... we went straight to the hall and sent a delegation to meet John Samuel and Ahmed... while the negotiations were on we were phoned and told there was hot water in the res. *Patrick Mathebane. student. 1988*



Kgomotso Konopi, a 1995 student, makes a call from the old res

The building is not habitable and there is no privacy. It is like a dungeon. *Sello Molefe, student, 1992*

There were those who were lazy to cook...the SRC would call them and speak to them individually.

Thomas Phoko, student, 1986

At Khanya there were people from AZAPO. Most of them stayed out of the res... we were somewhat intolerant... We used to call them amazimzims.

Ezrom Mofi, student, 1988

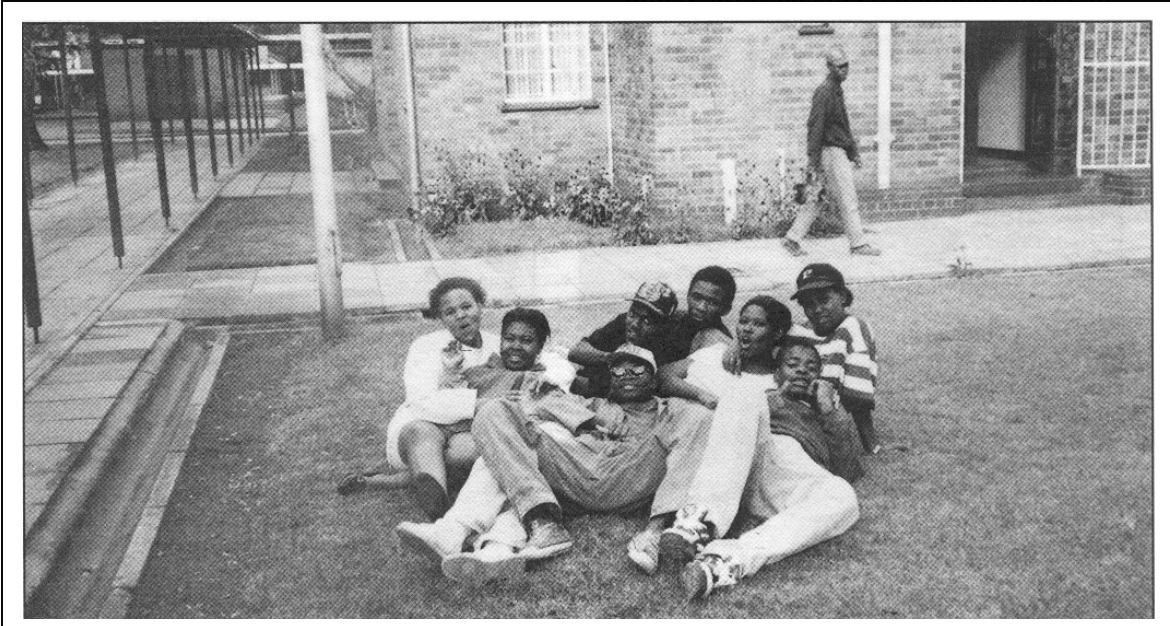
Aside from serving as accommodation for students, during much of the 1980s the Khanya res played a role as a place of refuge for people in underground structures. As Patrick Ngwenya (1988) put it: 'The res was a haven for cadres'. This political role meant that the police were frequent visitors to the residence. On one occasion a student was accused of being a police spy. Many people involved in early Khanya years recall this aspect of residence life. Khanya College was never left alone. There were constant police raids and that sort of thing... at one stage it was seen as some sort of cell of illegal activities.

John Samuel

Police were monitoring Khanya students. Some were arrested... we used to hide UDF leaders at the res... Peter Mokaba used to hide there... The police came to the res to harass students. In 1986 we were locked in while police searched. *Thomas Phoko, student, 1986*

The res was a hotbed of political activity...there would be raids from John Vorster... documents were taken... I shared a place with a police informer for six months without knowing.
Patrick Mathebane, student, 1988

So the Khanya residence has been many things: a place of teamwork and cooperation, a promoter of cultural understanding, a dungeon of noise and dilapidation, and a haven for political leaders. While it has been all of these things, above all it has been a unique place of



Students are taught about gender equality. Here students relax outside the new residence

Gender Relations at Khanya

Since its establishment in 1986, Khanya worked at promoting gender equality. The college put this into practice through an affirmative action policy that guide staff and student selection in favour of women as the disadvantaged sex.

Within the college students attend workshops on gender as part of their orientation programme. In these workshops Khanya's anti-sexist policy and desire to promote gender equality are clearly spelt out. Course content often helps to familiarise students with current dialogue on gender as in the case of the introduction to feminist literature and feminist critical theory in African literature. Sociology courses also include gender studies. The idea is to produce gender conscious students who will be agents of change wherever they maybe.

A number of people who shared in this endeavour acknowledge the efforts of the college and express its triumphs, failures and frustrations in trying to develop gender consciousness among staff, students and the community.

Ever since I was there, right from the beginning, Khanya College had an Affirmative Action Policy... We never

achieved gender balance though we tried to lower admission requirement in favour of the policy. Most male students generally had sexist attitudes. As far as staff is concerned we had an unsuccessful experience... The gender issue in society needs a long-term programme. Khanya College was part of that plan.

Aubrey Blecher, staff member, 1987-94

When I registered as an SRC presidential candidate I hadn't seriously thought about what I was going for and whether I would be able to do it as a woman. I started panicking when I was elected the interim president. I was however surprised by the amount of support I received from fellow students and staff, both male and female. I realised only then that I could do it. It did not matter that I was a woman... I think this was because of the forums on gender that we attended during orientation week and the awareness that sex-ism has no place at Khanya.
Mandisa Sihlangu, first woman SRC President, Soweto Campus, 1995

Gender relations have always been a problem. Participation was always dominated by male

students. I think effort should be made to bridge the gap. *Tebogo Seiane, student, 1991*



Zozo Dhlamini, Administrator, 1990-6

There are two extremes. Strong on a number of levels, gender conscious and feminist and these have done well in the men's stream...very assertive lawyers now. On the other hand there are large numbers of those who academically did not perform well, submissive and silenced. They came through to Wits but they did not make it.

Laura Dison, Academic Skills Coordinator. 1998-1991

The gender policy of Khanya has been largely satisfactory for me as a staff member. The KC policy did try to prevent sexual abuse and sexual harassment of female students and staff. Moreover, Khanya has done good work in dealing with male chauvinist students who come to the college, especially those from rural area... They are not gender conscious when they arrive such that some of these students viewed us female staff members as potential girl friends and sometimes made sexually harassing remarks... the workshops on gender politics organised by the college helped to remove sexual prejudice in our male students. On departure these men were much better and some of them were turned into feminist activists.

Dikeledi Xaba. staff member, 1992-95

Male students were always dominant as compared to their female counter- parts. Chauvinism! For example, when activities such as gumbas were

organised the males always had a final say as to how to prepare and how much food and which alcoholic drink to buy and in what rations...

Esme Molub, student. 1995

Dikeledi Molatoli-Xaba, Sociology Coordinator , 1992-5

I don't have much experience on gender relations. It was mere rhetoric. *Bheki Peterson, staff member, 1986, board member, 1993-96*

Male staff members were very sensitive in their language. Male chauvinistic language was never used. There was no case where male lecturers took advantage of female students.

Charles Dugmore, staff member, 1990-96

While some progress has been made, Khanya still has a long way to go. Students come from various communities. As Laura Dison indicated, many of the females are already silenced by the time they come to the college. Deconstructing gender prejudice among students is long process that cannot be fully realised in the single year students spend at college. Khanya can only hope to initiate the process. The best results will come if Khanya is part of a national programme. In the meantime, Khanya will maintain its non-sexist policy and promote gender consciousness among its staff,

students and the community that it serves through its out-reach programme.

Staff – Student Relations at Khanya

Staff treated us as equals and not as empty heads. We never felt inferior before them. This helped in terms of communication. They accepted our grievances and we never had complex situations. The problem came after the strike when we had a communication breakdown between students and staff. When we left the college relations were no longer good.

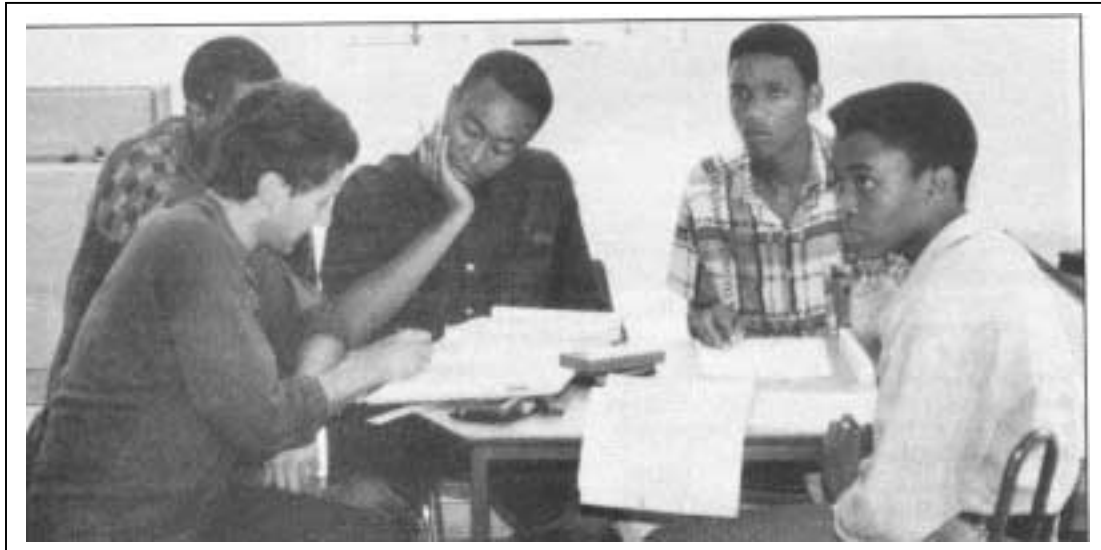
Nontobeko Mwetiyana, student, 1994

Whilst the students and staff at Khanya operated in a relaxed atmosphere, the college has generally been highly organised. Staff have a sense of their duty to deliver and students

generally take up their responsibility in preparing for tutorials and handing in assignments on time. This is echoed in a number of interviews:

The respect and confidence invested in me by James Ogude (African Literature) and Charles Dugmore (African History) helped me to gain academic confidence. While one also appreciated the relaxed atmosphere in which we could joke with the staff members we knew this did not mean that we could simply get away with work undone as this was a punishable crime.

Kgafela oa Magogodi, student, 1993



Aubrey Blecher, left, maths coordinator 1987-1994, helps some students

We saw staff as fellow comrades because they encouraged us to go to these rallies and they would also be there. They helped us be able to understand politics and be able to articulate our experience of oppression... In history at the beginning students were suspicious of the theory of evolution, whether it was a white man's theory... students had access to staff... we used the same tea cups as the lecturers... today Khanya College is more hierarchical than then...

there was not so much by way of meeting with staff because staff and students interacted on a daily basis...

Fana Jiyane, student, 1988

We had freedom of expression and I think the method is more learner centred unlike other institutions of higher learning where we were not given a chance to interact with lecturers, especially when we left Khanya... And I think our views were respected because the lecturer

always wanted to know about our opinions, that is, what are the things that we mostly needed to learn more about and he/she would change the pattern according to our interest.

Thulani Majosi, student, 1993

Through the efforts of my coordinators, especially Comrade Fana Jiyane (Economics 1994-5), I learned to be responsible and challenge critically everything I meet, see and read. I also learned the meaning and importance of comradeship.

Nonhlanhla Baloyi, student, 1995

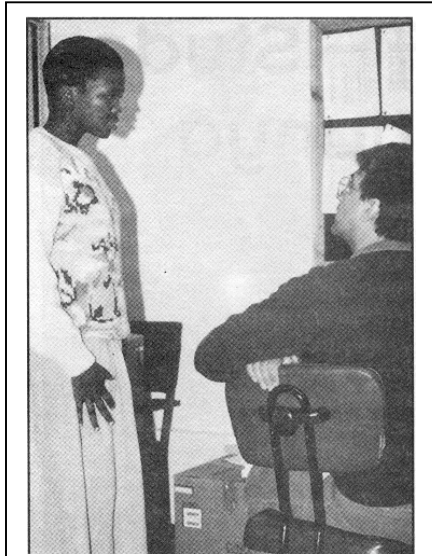
Relations between staff and students were very close. Michelle Adler used to be like a mother to us... they gave us sweets during exams... People like Keith [Peacock] made us more comfortable.

Patrick Ngwenya, student, 1988

Some of the efforts made by staff to encourage students sound like mere sloganising or cliches but they went a long way in encouraging students to participate in their learning.

The staff respected us. John used to say 'We came, we saw and we participated'. They attended all the functions that were organised by students.

Sello Molefe, student, 1992



Many's approach is seen to be met with suspicion by many institutions of higher learning.

However, in many cases this approach enabled students to take control of their learning process. Students were able to blend what they learnt with what they already knew, so as to engage critically and constructively with any idea

Generally staff respected student views but the problem is that staff has a blunt sense of democracy. Sometimes it is informed by liberal guilt and promotes a warped sense of democracy.

Bheki Peterson, African Literature Coordinator, 1986, board member. 1993-6

There were some tensions... we expected a lot. We were told that Khanya was education for liberation. We did not know the parameters between student/staff or student/management relations... for example, we would demand an allowance before the end of the month... management told us we must form an SRC... it was not easy to know how to relate to such management

Patrick Mathebane, student, 1988

Despite the problems noted, nearly all students and staff interviewed agreed that the relationships between staff and students were uniquely close and cooperative at Khanya. Perhaps the important question for current educational policy makers to ask is whether such a spirit of cooperation can be developed at the larger tertiary institutions in the country.

presented to them. As could be anticipated, this process did not always work perfectly:

Khanya Students after Khanya

Although Khanya keeps records of former students and tries to stay in touch through the Alumni, it is impossible to maintain contact with every former student. However, our research does tell us a few things:

- ❑ most of our students proceed to university after graduating at Khanya. While Khanya has agreements on course accreditation with a number of major universities in the country, the majority of our ex-students go to Wits
- ❑ our students in the Arts Faculty at Wits generally do quite well, while many students in the Faculties of Science and Commerce struggle to succeed

Students from other institutions except Khanya were not assertive in engaging themselves with organisations like SASCO, the SRC and house committees... I think we were different because Khanya developed this in us.

Cynthia Mabaso, student, 1994

We had confidence as compared to other students and we adapted easily when reaching Wits.) would say that we did not have to make adjustments because the standard at which courses are conducted are equivalent to Wits... We also had an advantage because we supported each other and could identify each other easily. So that made the academic work very easy.

Thulani Majozi, student., 1993

These views were shared by ex-Khanya staff members who have moved on to Wits:



- ❑ a number of our former students go on to post graduate study
- ❑ a number of our former students go on to do community-oriented work, either in NGOs, mass organisations, local structures, or government.

The vast majority of former students interviewed commented that Khanya helped to prepare them

Khanya assisted them in being more assertive and adapting to tertiary institutions: Khanya students are more assertive and prepared to knock on doors but there is a tremendous barrier. They prefer to come to ex-Khanya staff. They are ready to take advantage of facilities such as academic support programmes. Staff

have complained about Khanya students because of some of their attitudes but I think its great for them to be assertive. Even at Khanya they started as dependent and then became autonomous. They cope well at university because of this.

Laura Dison, Study Skill Coordinator, 1988-91

Although Khanya is far smaller and more supportive than Wits, most people interviewed concluded that Khanya helped them make the transition. This applied to both the psychological adaptation to university and to academic work.

The best of Khanya's students take a shorter time to excel... at Wits. The poorer ones tend always to assume that there is some conspiracy behind their lack of success. Wits is not the most consumer friendly place but if you suffer from self pity you don't get far either.

Bheki Peterson, African Literature Coordinator, 1986, board member 1993-96

In my African Literature classes at Wits former Khanya students, myself included, occupied the top positions all the way. Even in my drama classes, I found myself sailing above the rest. While this may be a fact of my own ingenuity I strongly suspect that Khanya contributed substantially to this desired end.

Kgafela oa Mogogodi, student, 1993

The academic achievements at Khanya were of help to African students, especially those of us from DET. I am able to cope with work pressure at Wits. I also have a critical understanding which is a great advantage to a first year student.

Teboho Mpondo, student, 1994

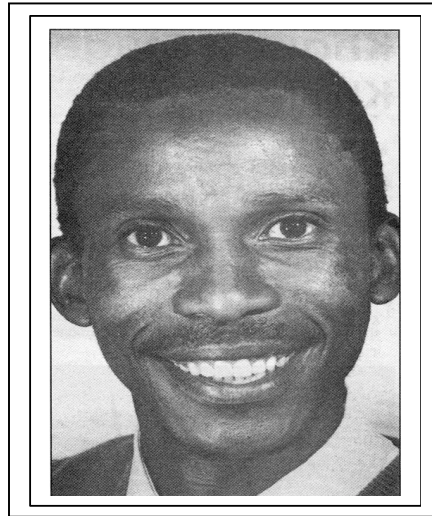
Academically we are far better off than most first year students in terms of taking notes and writing essays. There is less work here (Wits). Tutorials are easy at Wits.

Silone Musapelo, student, 1994

I compared favourably to other students regardless of the schools they came from, multiracial or VET. The kind of tutorials we had were more rigorous than the ones at Wits.

Moosa Magubane, student, 1990

A number of students complained that at Wits they were not free to advance the radical views which they often supported at Khanya:



Phillip Seate, student, 1995, is an ANC councillor, who won his seat in the 1995 municipal elections

At Wits the culture of openness and debate was not there. Arguments like the Marxism we had at Khanya were not tolerated. They would use their power to punish you... we devised a survival strategy... you study a lecturer and see what view he supports and then you give them what they want...

Fana Jiyane, student, 1988

“The Moment of Truth”

Perhaps one needs to give credit to the nature of the college itself; the college happens to be an educational institution ideal for South Africa. I hope we will agree that our college is a different one. Without overlooking the problems, it has demonstrated that it is a home for most of us. It is one institution that has allowed us to exercise a taste of what it means to be involved in our own education, it has also acted as a catalyst in allowing us to explore the nature of the so-called democratic institution ...I believe therefore that as Khanya students we should live above the water. Our experience at Khanya should prompt us to champion the change of culture in these (Wits and other liberal) institutions... Comrades it is our responsibility to make sure that the fruits of our toil are seen and successful.

Lungile Dick, SRC President,

Address to staff and student body of Khanya College,

9 November 1993

At Wits they would crush you... we felt that Wits took away what Khanya gave us rather than add to it... you wouldn't mention ANC there or Marx... you only write what Marx says and then crush it hard.

Patrick Ngwenya, student, 1988

If I advance a Marxist perspective, I can never go above 60. , *Sibonelo Radebe, student, 1994*

Despite these comments, most students in the Arts Faculty reported few major problems. However, in the Faculty of Science in particular, many Khanya students have not found the going so smooth.

Colin Purkey, Maths Coordinator at Khanya College (1986 and 1994-96), undertook a study of ex-Khanya students doing undergraduate mathematics at Wits.

His results indicate that most Khanya students battle with their studies. A number are forced to drop out. He attributed this to a number of factors. Perhaps most important was the conscio4s neglect of maths and science in DET high schools. Disempowering black students in the fields of science and technology was an integral part of Bantu Education.

In most cases, one year at Khanya is not enough to compensate for this weak foundation. Furthermore, while students' life experience and community involvement may be of use to them when debating sociology or history, there is little from the political struggle that can be transferred to calculus or physics.

Although a number of Khanya students have succeeded in obtaining degrees in the fields of science or technology, the road has been far

more difficult for them than for their counterparts in arts.

A number of writers who have researched Khanya College have also observed the problems in maths and science. Nicola Swainson, who evaluated Khanya in 1990, noted the difficulties that ex-Khanya students faced in the Wits Faculty of Science.

She even recommended that the college stop offering physics. Marie Baker, an American student who completed a PhD on Khanya in 1995, proposed that the college drop both maths and physics. Given the national priority placed on science and technology , perhaps Khanya cannot afford to run away from these areas. Nonetheless, serious changes are necessary to improve past results.

Community Involvement Apart from academic 'work, Khanya also tries to give its students a sense of community responsi- bility .A number of students remarked that the Khanya programme had a positive impact on their orientation and contributions to community development:

The project I was involved in at Khanya was the Africa Cultural Centre. It is worth mentioning that the relationship with those people at the ACC still continues after Khanya.

Kgafela oa Magogodi, student, 1993

Since I was already involved in community development, Khanya has developed my skill,

I was participating in community development before I came to Khanya. However, Khanya College magnified my community involvement. What I did at Khanya as a history project, helped me in many important debates in the democratic movement. The research skills I learnt have continued to help me in my daily duties and I am making significant inputs to the strategic planning and policy making processes of the organisations I am involved in.

Thomas Nkosi, student, 1992

I'm involved as a tutor and coordinator at STEP. When I left Khanya my first responsibility was to tutor workers at the Wits Workers School. I'm involved in student structures and leadership positions... I owe these skills to the Community Project Programme.

Moosa Magubane, student, 1990

Not everyone agreed that the community development aspect of Khanya's programme worked effectively.

My community project meant filing documents for seven months in the Department of Arts and Culture. This was monotonous and did not carry any meaning... Most of these projects were a waste of time since on some days it meant being a messenger.

Lephophotho Mashike, student, 1993

Khanya College must not take education alone. They must also include more community projects. Khanya College should have taught us how to start, monitor, and fundraise for a project because we couldn't start our *own* project after Khariya.

Themba Shoji, student, 1992

Generally, students' community development involvement is the exception rather than the rule. Most remain in the periphery. Community is the buzz word to show political correctness. Most are arrogant towards the communities they lead and they assume leadership roles. At times they have undermined democracy in these instances.

Bheki Peterson, African Literature Coordinator, 1986 and Board Member 1993-96

because I am now writing discussion papers for the organisations I belong to.

Pule Thulo, student, 1995

Despite some dissenting views, most students interviewed agreed that Khanya's approach has developed both their academic skills and their

community consciousness. Nonetheless, the problems faced by maths and science students in tertiary institutions indicate the need for serious consideration as to how Khanya can better prepare students in these fields.

Khanya Alumni

In 1992, a number of ex-Khanya students formed an Alumni Association (AA). Though the AA has had difficulty sustaining membership, it has assisted the college and students in a number of ways, including the production of this history. The preamble to their constitution quoted below puts the organisation in context:

"We ex-Khanya College students believe that Khanya College (KC) is a product of our struggle waged by our people, particularly students,

Hence,

- 1.1 *We (ex-Khanya students) believe that we should have formal involvement in KC decision-making structures.*
- 1.2 *We further believe that ex-students together with the current students may make important contributions with regard to the future direction of KC.*
- 1.3 *Ex-Khanya College students have a moral obligation to plant what they have acquired back to the community".*



Some of the Community Division staff of 1995: Zico Tamelo, facilitator; Rose Telela, gender facilitator; Themba Nobatana, facilitator; Gigi Boldavino, gender coordinator

The Community Division

By 1992 there were a number of contradictions at Khanya. One of the most crucial concerned the college's relationship to the community and the democratic movement as a whole. While community service benefited individual students through exposure to community development, in many cases the organisations where the students were placed gained little. Also, this occasional contact with organisations through students did little to solidify ties between Khanya and unions, civics and other structures of the democratic movement.

From 1989 to 1991, the college ran a Labour Studies course for union shopstewards over several days during the winter, break. The course provided an introduction to political economy and covered current issues. While interest was high in the first year, attendance became more inconsistent in later years. Evaluation indicated that the course was too academic and did not relate to the problems directly confronting the unions. The course's failure to take off prompted the college to consider other ways of establishing links with key mass and community organisations.

Aside from this problem, Khanya was also looking at its future place in the education system.

Some people argued there was little Khanya could do, as a small scale-tertiary access programme, that a transformed university system could not achieve. On the other hand, because of the college's political legitimacy and experience, many staff members and ex-students believed Khanya had the potential to operate in many areas of education. In six years of operation, Khanya had never diversified or experimented with new courses, let alone new programmes or projects.

The desire to build stronger links to mass organisations coupled with the need to develop a diversified educational programme led to the founding of the community division. After employing staff in July 1992 the division embarked on its first project, an ambitious 65-day training course for activists from affiliates of the Civic Associations of Johannesburg (CAJ). It was the most extensive civics course ever delivered in South Africa up

to that time. Course content included development theory, town planning, negotiating techniques, report writing, community finance and local government. Khanya worked with PLANACT to plan the course. A number of other NGOs contributed their expertise. Unlike many similar courses, the Khanya/CAJ course maintained consistent attendance. As a result the course not only empowered individual participants, but helped build ties between affiliates of CAJ which later became the Johannesburg branch of the South African National' Civics Organisation (SANCO). A number of participants in the course have remained with the Civics while others have been elected to government positions. The CAJ course launched Khanya College into education and training for building organisations, 'capacity building in the jargon of the day. While the college gained a solid core of experience, 1993 was a difficult time for training civics SANCO was consolidating as a national organisation and the leadership of many civics spent much of their time negotiating the new total government dispensation. This created some difficulties for Khanya in organising follow up courses for CAJ as a whole or its affiliates.

Quotes from CAJ course participants:

This is most relevant to our work, as we deal mainly with the councillors and the TPA. The workshop on local government opened our eyes. We were surprised to find that the town clerk is the main guy: he has so much power.
Amin Wagner, Klipspruit West Interim Democratic Civic Association (KEKIDCA)

Now I am able to understand how local government works and how to deal with the problems our community has with local authorities.
Philemon Machitela, Alexandra Civic Organisation

I like the way that the course is building participation. We have been arrogant towards government structures without looking for solutions. We must try to find structures that work. The course has made me feel I must carry on learning, I have now applied for bursaries and want to keep on studying.
Phillip Mjacu, ACTSTOP

Source. Reconstruct.3

Trade Union Focus

In looking for new directions; Khanya also drew on the experience of a number of staff members in trade union education work. Although the unions were also in a transition period, they had more stable funding and educational structures than civics. As a result, the focus of the Community Division gradually moved to working primarily with unions rather than civics.

During 1994-95 Khanya designed and delivered a wide range of courses to COSA TU and affiliates such as the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (NUMSA), the Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU), the South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (SACCAWU), the Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers Union (PPWAWU), the South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU), the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU), the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU), the South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union (SACTWU), and the Police and Prison Civil Rights Unions (POPCRU). While the focus was on the unions, Khanya also worked with community organisations such as the Moutse Civic Association, the Congress of South African students (COSAS), the South African Students Congress (SASCO), and the Umdeni Community Project .

The division also specialized in gender training with work falling into two major areas:

- ❑ Training for the Gender and Development Programme of Oxfam Canada, a network of NGOs involved in gender work, and
- ❑ training for gender in structures of organisations, especially trade unions.

During its four years of operation the Khanya Community Division has gained a reputation for making difficult issues accessible to people on the ground. The division has tackled complex documents and issues such as the constitution, the RDP, the Labour -Relations Act, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, and economic models and made them accessible to the rank and file of mass organisations. This has been done through dozens of workshop presentations

and the preparation of popular booklets and posters;

Khanya's educational work on these key policy documents has not been simply to summarise.

In keeping with the college's policy of producing critical thinkers, the Khanya Community Division has asked workshop participants to deal with complex implications of new laws and policies such as:

- ❑ how will the RDP impact upon women?
- ❑ what are the gains and losses for trade unions under the new LRA?
- ❑ which sectors of the workforce will benefit most and least under the new Basic Conditions of Employment Act?
- ❑ how will privatisation affect workers and working class communities?

As well as encouraging critical analysis of the changes taking place in South Africa, the Community Division also looks at actions that organisations can take to advance democracy and grassroots development. In this way the Community Division attempts to empower organisations not only with the tools of critical thinking but also with the skills to plan a programme of action.

The Community Division has not always achieved these objectives. There are many variables that limit its capacity such as:

- ❑ the move of many key organisation leaders into government or industry
- ❑ the low priority many organisations place on education
- ❑ the shortage of funding
- ❑ the Community Division's limited staffing and resources
- ❑ the difficulty in anticipating key issues for organisations.

Despite these limitations, the division has added an important dimension to Khanya's educational work. Its close link with the ever changing terrain of democratic organisations has also breathed fresh air into the academic programme. After following much the same course for ten years, the academic programme sometimes merely ticks over rather than consistently reviewing objectives, performance, and changes in the educational environment. The new blood of the Community Division has helped to keep the entire college on its toes and informed of the latest twists and turns in mass struggles. As

Oupa Lehulere, coordinator of the division from 1994-96 put it: "The presence of the Community Division has given a different angle in the college to thinking and approaching issues when compared to the period when the college was only academic. Community Division members' contributions to the community college debate have helped advance the concept and the debate as a whole".



John Appolis, Education Officer , Chemical Workers' Industrial Union

Comments on the Community

Division

On a limited scale we have managed to persuade some of the unions to shift their education work into a more structured and long-term basis. This gives coherence to our own planning but more importantly allows the unions to build a cadre of well-rounded activists, which is the biggest challenge facing the union movement.

Ighsaan Schroeder, Facilitator, Community Division, 1994-6

Many workshops give you a lot of information but don't provide you with the means to analyse. Khanya College has a strong empowerment component besides information... the union movement is faced with the task of policy formulation but lacks capacity to research. NGOs like Khanya are needed to help build the capacity not to formulate policy for them but assist in equipping them.

When someone was talking about social-ism we thought he was talking about a lion, a very bad animal. That was the opinion we had before we attended courses at Khanya... If the courses offered by Khanya can be known by each and every worker we can succeed in this struggle.
Advocate Matomane, Shop Steward, Chemical Workers' Industrial Union

When we used to attend workshops given by the union, we only heard the views of the working class... In the Khanya workshops we learned to understand terms like fiscal discipline and monetary policy. Now we are in a position of linking these in our workplace forums and so forth... Khanya gives you the difference between the capitalist ideas and working class ideas. It is up to the delegate to decide... Khanya is not dictating terms... However, Khanya gives people a lot of material. They must know they are dealing with workers. They need to shorten and summarise what is in the file.
Moss Manganyi, Regional Vice-Chair, National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa

- ❑ universities were beginning to expand Academic Support Programmes (ASPs). ASPs might compete with Khanya.

The Future: Khanya Community College

The start of the 1990s found Khanya College engaged in a process of internal evaluation and planning for the future. As part of this exercise, an independent researcher, Nicola Swainson, carried out an extensive evaluation of both campuses in 1990. She presented five possible options for Khanya:

- ❑ close down
- ❑ establish independent campuses at Jo'burg and Cape Town
- ❑ become part of a university such as Wits or UCT
- ❑ become an alternative University
- ❑ become a '-workers college'

Debating alternatives

The Swainson Report, combined with the political changes initiated by De Klerk's historic second of February 1990 declarations, prompted a number of debates within SACHED and Khanya about the college's future. Most discussion began from the common assumptions that:

- ❑ Khanya had been very effective in preparing students for arts and social science degrees but had little success in the fields of science and commerce.
- ❑ Khanya had paid lip service to community service, but had made few serious connections to trade unions, civics and other components of the mass democratic movement.

- ❑ the conflict between Khanya Johannesburg and Khanya Cape Town was seriously hindering the progress of the college as a national entity .

A number of different positions emerged. Some of those who saw universities superceding Khanya's academic programme argued for a shift toward a more technical/vocational curriculum. An extreme position proposed a college of some 25 000 students all enrolled in vocational training within five years. Other Khanya staff members believed that the emphasis must be on strengthening ties with community-based organisations and other structures.

In mid-1992, the latter group initiated the setting up of the Community Division tasked with providing education and training to civics and other CBOs. The Community Division's first project in July 1992 was the counselor civic activists detailed in the section on the Community Division.

The success of the CAJ course made the Khanya Community Division an established part of the college. Khanya learnt two important lessons from the experience. First, that the college had the capacity to deliver other types of programmes. Second, that there was a need for non-formal education to help build the strength of mass organisations.

Two other important developments affected Khanya's direction around the time the Community Division was founded. First, the college became independent of SACHED and Khanya Cape Town. On 4 May 1993 the Khanya College Trust was registered. Dennis Davis of Wits University, the first chairperson was subsequently succeeded by Thami Mali. Second, a number of educationists around the country began to discuss the relevance of community colleges for South Africa. By late 1993, Khanya College was an important player in the

community college movement. In March 1994 Khanya College became one of the founding organisations of the Community Colleges Association of South Africa (CCASA).

For Khanya, transformation into a community college was a way to resolve some of the tensions that had been part of the college from the beginning. Khanya saw a community college as a comprehensive institution offering a wide variety of courses at venues and times accessible to learners. Moreover, Khanya argued that community colleges should be engines of community development, promoting community cooperation rather than individual advancement.

Such a college would embody many elements of the people's education and alternative education of the 1980s: democratic governance, learner centred teaching, courses to empower learners and the community as a whole.



Proud Khanya students on cultural day, 1993

Khanya has argued that such colleges can only emerge out of the organisations that made up the NECC and other democratic forces of the past. Without the presence of people experienced in democratic practice and collective struggle, community colleges in South Africa will hardly differ from the vocational and educational institutions that have existed for years. In 1995, to strengthen its profile as a community college, Khanya formed a coalition with Wits Workers' School and other NGOs. The coalition has been involved in two main areas of work. One is the setting up of community-learning centres in a number of township venues. The centres are

intended as models for delivery under a transformed system of adult and further education. The other focus of the coalition has been participation in the structures of the Johannesburg Inner City. Khanya and Wits Workers' School have actively worked with the Johannesburg Inner City Community forum and government to develop an educational plan for the Inner City. Khanya envisages that outreach into communities and the building of partnerships with NGOs, CBOs and government will play an important role in community college development at the provincial level and provide a niche for Khanya in the years ahead

Khanya College Academic Programme: The Dilemma of the 1990s

After Khanya was depoliticised we lacked understanding;.. We were mixed. The majority were not political activists but they became political activists. *Teboho Mpondo, student, 1994*

Students who came after us were not the same. They were much younger. *Patrick Mathebane, student, 1988*

The problems we had last year (1994) reflected where we came from. People misuse democracy. *Keke Nchoba, student, 1994*

The depoliticisation Teboho Mpondo speaks of is part of the dilemma Khanya faces in the 1990s. During the 1980s Khanya drew its students from the thousands of seasoned activists produced by the mass struggle against apartheid. The politics of the 1990s was different; in many areas grassroots structures collapsed, leadership was drawn into lengthy negotiation processes and eventually government posts. Some became passengers on the so-called gravy train. In other areas, political violence produced community-based militias whose politics grew out of the barrel of a gun, not from participating in democratic structures.

Therefore, most students in the 1990s do not enter the college with a basic understanding of democracy and social change. Those with an activist background may form a minority isolated by their more conservative fellow students. The

1994 student uprising was one manifestation of this problem.

This dilemma led Khanya to consider three options:

- ❑ abandon the political tradition of the college and become a normal academic programme
- ❑ engage students in an intensive political education programme as part of the curriculum of the college
- ❑ maintain the political tradition of the college by abandoning the academic programme and working full-time with politicised structures in the community.

To date the college has ruled out the first option and tried to implement the second. But the third option remains a possibility especially with the increasing profile of the Community Division and the possible introduction of Foundation courses in the Arts Faculty at Wits.

Khanya and the Politics of the New South Africa

Part of Khanya's problem is interpreting the politics of the 1990s. Some said the college should abandon the slogan Education for Liberation, but the general consensus was to maintain it. The reasons were explained in a 1995 brochure put out by the college:

We view liberation as a .complex process which includes not only an elected government but the transformation of the economic, political and social institutions of the country through a people- driven process. We will continue to, educate our students to participate in that transformation process.

A number of our ex-students have echoed this view:

The demise of apartheid is not an event, it is a process. The effects of Bantu Education are going to be felt by generations to generations. As long as this is still a problem, Khanya's work will be paramount.
Babylon Xeketwane, student, 1987

People think that since we have Mandela everything is alright but the problems which led to Khanya's existence are still here... Our education system is still poor. Things are changing slowly.

Lillian Letele, student, 1992

Should Khanya Continue?

Former Students and Staff Respond: I wish Khanya would operate as other colleges up to a third year level.

Nomduze Xiniwe, student, 1992

Please, I plead with everyone concerned that it should continue...it should be the same work it has done ever since it opened and more if possible.

Montobeko Mwetyana, student, 1994

I think Khanya should be turned into a community college that can issue out degrees. I bet the product will revolutionise the industry and society at large.

Japan Moagi, student, 1995

In the past during the apartheid era Khanya played an important role in the lives of many African people. Even today Khanya is still playing that significant role.

Nathaniel Ndala, student, 1994

KC should continue... If the budget allows they must expand and do some research. KC must market itself. Our expansion should include our matriculants, adult basic education and a consultancy.

Themba Shozi, student, 1992

Khanya is an important project. I am always worried by the tendency to assume that since there is a democratically-elected government, the problems that caused the need for institutions like Khanya were somehow magically resolved. *Bheki Peterson, board member, 1993-96*

Khanya's programme of diversification should continue... move away from the notion of university education as the only education.
Laura Dison,

Khanya College must continue. It is like a fountain. Let those who are thirsty come and drink here.

Sello Molefe, student, 1992

The method of critical pedagogy is unique to Khanya and should go on.

Lillian Letele, student, 1992

Khanya should close due to its failure to redefine its role post April 1994. The admission of students who are irresponsible to the extent of shooting each other over a bottle of liquor (such an incident occurred in 1995 -editor) shows that Khanya has lost direction.

Lephophotho Mashike, student, 1993

It must continue and must target the people who are living in the location...it should be located in the location (i.e. different branches) to avoid the thing of transport and be accessible...assign a PRO to organise public workshops and seminars for awareness.

Cynthia Mabaso, student, 1994

Apartheid is still with us. Khanya can interlink its functions with the RDP.

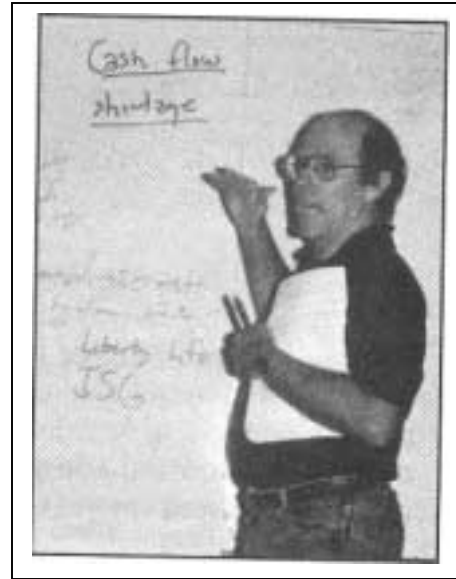
Samuel Kula, student, 1990

As needs are not adequately responded to by universities and these are not school needs, there is a need for these types of institutions (community colleges)... the unique contribution Khanya College can make is that they have done it...

John Samuel

Khanya should call a big indaba...and must popularize itself in the squatter camps. Khanya should start organizing workshops in the squatter camps to let people know what Khanya is.

Thomas Phoko, student, 1986



John Pape, present Project Coordinator

Special thanks to all those organisations that provided funding and resources to Khanya over the years. They include (in alphabetical order):

ABSA	Kellogg Foundation
Australian Embassy	Nedcor
British Council	Netherlands Embassy (Development Ministry)
British Petroleum (SA)	NOVIB
Canadian Embassy	Oxfam-Canada
European Union	Overseas Development Agency (ODA)
EZE Rhodes Trust Ford Foundation	SACHED
Frederich Ebert Foundation	South African Institute of Race Relations
French Embassy	Soweto Careers Centre
Gauteng Youth College	Standard Bank Foundation
Honeywell Corporation	Swiss Labour Assistance
Independent Development Trust	USAID
Interfund	Usizo Technical College
JCI	Wits University
Kagiso Trust	WUS

List of interviewees

John Appolis	Education Officer, Chemical Workers' Industrial Union	Ezrom.Briggs Mofi	student, 1988
		Sello Molefe	student, 1992
Nonhlanhla Baloyi	student, 1995	Tebogo Mpondo	student, 1994
Aubrey Blecher	Maths Coordinator, 1987-94	Silone Musapelo	student, 1994
		Nontobeko	
Laura Dison	Study Skills Coordinator, 1988-91	Mwetyana	student, 1994
		Keke Nchoba	student, 1994
Kuseni Dlamini	student, 1991	Patric Ngwenya	student, 1988
Charles Dugmore	African History Coordinator, 1991-96	Thomas Nkosi	student, 1992
		Bheki Peterson	African Literature Coordinator, 1987, board member 1993-96
Ahmed Essop	Coordinator, 1986-90		
Eric Gxubane	student, 1994	Thomas Phoko	student, 1986
Fana Jiyane	student, 1988, staff, 1994,5	Sibonelo Radebe	student, 1994
Samuel Kula	student, 1990	Albert Rathaba	student, 1994
Oupa Lehulere	Coordinator, Facilitator in Community Division, 1993-96	Gregory Ruiters	Community Projects Coordinator 1990-91, board member, 1993-present
Lillian Letele	student, 1993		
Cynthia Mabaso	student, 1994		
Kgafela oa Magogodi	student, 1993	John Samuel	co-founder
Moosa Magubane	student, 1990	Ighsaan Schroeder	Facilitator, Community Division, 1994-96
Thulani Majozi	student, 1993		
Molapo Maleko	student, 1994	Tebogo Sejane	student, 1991, staff, 1996

Moss Manganyi	Regional Vice-Chair, National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa	Themba Shozi Mandisa Sihlangu	student, 1992 student, 1995
Lephophotho		Rose Telela Dikeledi Xaba	student, 1987, staff, 1995 student, Khanya Cape T. 1987, Khanya College
Mashike	student, 1993		Johannesburg, Sociology Coordinator 1992-95
Nume Mashinini	student, 1989		student, 1987
Advocate Matomane	Shop Steward, Chemical Workers' Industrial Union,	Babylon Xeketwane	
Japan Moagi	student, 1995	Nomduze Xiniwe	student, 1992

For You Khanya

must i write a poem
for you Khanya
my love my sweat
when all around me
books are staring
demanding to be read
assignments show their teeth
crying to be born
on naked sheet

must i sing praises
to you Khanya
my love my sweat
when custodians
of education for liberation
teach until these walls
beat life in the drum
of my needing skull
and there I lie
bemoaning sweetly

perhaps someday
beyond this sweet sweat
sweat so sweet will rise
to steel down
the marrow of my pen
to dance pride on paper
for a rhythm found
in you Khanya
my love my sweat

Kgafela oa Mogogodi

