

# Schools can help in transformation of SA from "rainboo" to rainbow nation

 By [Edzai Conilias Zvobwo](#)

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Nelson Mandela stated during the Rivonia Trial, 1964 that, "I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons will live together in harmony with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for, and to see realised. But my Lord, if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

On his inaugural address as president of South Africa in 1994, he reiterated the need for a just society that is non-discriminatory and assures all who live within its borders the freedom to pursue happiness and thrive when he said, "We enter into a covenant that we shall build a society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall, without and fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity - a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world."



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Fast-forward to December 2013 and President Jacob Zuma was booed at the start of the memorial service to Nelson Mandela at the FNB Stadium in Soweto. This act left the world wondering whether Mandela's dream of a rainbow nation had gone down the drain and has now been turned into a rainboo nation. If South Africa is to truly move forward then it is necessary and sufficient that schools commit to an agrarian intervention whereby the promises of the idea of a rainbow nation are inculcated into the hearts of learners. Are schools doing enough to contribute to the sustainable advancement of race relations, xenophobia and other discriminatory structures that pervade our society?

## The reported cases are just the tip of the iceberg

In February 2015, Gauteng MEC for Education, Panyaza Lesufi threatened to de-register any private or independent schools that were found to be racist. This threat came as a result of the racially motivated malpractices at various schools in Gauteng with the Curro Roodeplaat Foundation School in the north of Pretoria being the most notable. The reported cases are just a tip of the iceberg of racism that is prevalent in South African schools. The discrimination cuts across the whole spectrum of the education value chain, which is a training podium for future political leaders and captains of industry. These unfortunate events do not enhance the integration of communities but propagate the demise of the implementation of the idea of a rainbow nation. The decision makers at discriminatory institutions are instilling hatred among learners who are innocent victims of socially skewed individuals within our education system.

It is paramount that schools ingrain mutual respect for the next person regardless of any tangible or intangible differences. The rainbow nation ideas can be taught in any subject offered in high school and it takes pure conviction on part of the teachers and curriculum designers to ensure that every topic speaks to the reality of the South African nation.

As the forefathers of the free nation envisaged, public reconciliation was the first step and then the educational and social systems were supposed to get the baton stick and run the race in all facets of life educating the young and old on the need for cohesive policies that entrench unity and allow for individual pursuit of success which on a collective scale amounts to progression of the nation. Unfortunately it seems that both the former oppressors and oppressed did not fully understand the idea of a rainbow nation and this has led to discord in trying to redress the inequalities caused by apartheid policies.

The government which is supposed to be at the forefront of capacitating every inhabitant of this nation with the necessary skills has not done enough to penetrate to each individual to fully appreciate the benefits of unity and how it enhances individual liberties and chance of success. Schools should not wait for centralised government directives for them to

implement strategies on birthing self-reliant beings who will not be a burden on the system.

## The theory of rainbows

An English teacher can intentionally do a vocabulary exercise with "rainbow" as a focal word and look into the etymology of the word, why the country has decided to call itself a rainbow nation.

A physics teacher can go beyond the theory of rainbows as discovered by the likes of Isaac Newton and Rene Descartes and teach about wave speed and amplitude as a basis for the formation of rainbows. The teacher can link Huygens's principle, which says that a wave can be reconstructed from a single wave front by considering each point on that wave front as an isolated infinitesimal source, all of them contributing to the propagation. This speaks directly to Individual Social Responsibility (ISR) on the part of the individual as a tributary to the national river flowing towards success. This is the superposition of aspirations and ideas for the greater good. The principle of superposition states that whenever two (or more) waves travelling through the same medium at the same time pass through each other without being disturbed. The net displacement of the medium at any point in space or time, is simply the sum of the individual wave displacements.

A mathematics teacher cannot simply teach second order differential equations for the sake of it but can incorporate Airy functions which were formulated by Sir George Bidell using Fresnel's theories on waves. When teaching sequences and series a teacher can highlight the one formulated by De Morgan for the Airy integral. The teacher can explain the local and global behaviour of the De Morgan and use perturbation theories for explaining the effect on change of boundary conditions on the overall system. This can be inked to immigration rates in and out of South Africa, the local and global village, the change in age and racial demographics as functions of economic levels and how different social classes can co-exist in harmony.

A photography or arts and design teacher can use colour texture and intensity to talk about the rainbow's configuration whilst using value-adding real life examples that truly empower the learners. Newton did elegant prism experiments and came up with comprehensive results on the dependence of colour on wavelength and refractive indices.

The geography teacher can incorporate rainbows in remote sensing and GIS when coming up with heat maps. The teacher can explain the variations in rainbows when covering meteorology. There are monochrome rainbows which are representative of individual race clusters. Variations include twinned, multiple, full-circle, supernumerary, reflected, fogbow, higher-order, under-moonlight, on Titan, circumhorizontal and circumzenithal rainbows. The onus is on the teacher to give an exposition on all types of rainbows and the learners have to decide based on the ambitions and aspirations what type of rainbow they want. What type of South Africa they want. This is a provocative and sustainable way of ingraining true Ubuntu in learners for a brighter future.

The history teacher can look at how the configuration of the South African society was formulated based on colour and how understanding how a rainbow is formed and progresses can be used as an analogy. There is so much material on these issues as philosophers like Aristotle.

The foundation for true unity and inclusiveness has already been laid and the ball is now in all the inhabitants' court to forge a real South African dream. The idea of the rainbow should permeate every aspect of life and schools are a fertile ground for crafting this national prerogative.

Recently, Rihanna an immigrant from the Caribbean sang about "The American Oxygen", on how USA has given her an opportunity to pursue her dreams without fear. She has inherited the land of the free and brave. Albert Einstein, Ayn Rand and Arnold Schwarzenegger came to America and positively contributed to its fiscus. Mario Balotelli is now representing Italy as a footballer amidst opposition from unruly racist elements in Italy. Tendai Mutawarira, Brian Mujati and other Zimbabweans have represented the Springboks with distinction on the international arena. Bafana Bafana is yet to take a cue on the power of assimilation of all inhabitants of South Africa. This just shows us that there is need for intentional assimilation of like-minded foreign-born individuals who are bent on moving South Africa forward.

A definiteness of purpose from the grassroots up is necessary for the successful realisation of a truly rainbow nation, a rainbow that goes just beyond a combination of colours side by side. A rainbow that can spur individuals to enlarge the economic cake and become true industrialists, as opposed to fighting for a bigger share on a small cake. Schools can change South Africa for the better if proactive decisions are made to educate learners on the idea of the dream, the idea that we can co-exist and be each other's keeper. Let us push for true transformation for every inhabitant of this great nation, South Africa.

## ABOUT EDZAI CONILIAS ZVOBWO

Edzai is at TEDSF. Its mission is to contribute to poverty alleviation through improving employability and entrepreneurship in Africa through research, thought leadership, news, sustainable interventions and partnership activities

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