

# THE HISTORIC SCHOOLS AND THEIR INFLUENCE: WOMEN IN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP UPHOLDING THE LEGACY

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## Abstract

Many of the leaders in the fight against Apartheid received their education from a group of schools, which are now part of the Historical Schools Restoration Project (HSRP). This study investigated the philosophy and approach to education that these leaders received. It also explored the historical evolution of the schools, the impact of Apartheid on the schools and the current ethos and leadership philosophies that the schools subscribe to. This qualitative research drew on the tenets of an historical design research. The aim of this paper is to present the significance of the schools from an historical as well as a present day perspective. It reflects on the history of a sample of schools that form part of the HSRP. It also explored the interface between these schools historical connectness and present day experiences, and the juncture between historical connectness and the concept of the 'African Child'.

Keywords: Historical Schools Restoration Project, historical design research methodology, Apartheid, Bantu Education, Nelson Mandela, Women in educational leadership, disadvantaged contexts.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The National Party, founded in 1915 and taking political power in 1948, was responsible for the implementation of the system of Apartheid in South Africa. (Apartheid is an Afrikaans word which means "apart" or "separate" [1]. The Apartheid structures resulted in people being separated into regions according to their skin colour with an obscene degree of priority afforded to whites at all social interfaces; housing, employment, political power, health care and access to quality education. Consequently, this unjust system was characterised by legally enforceable political and economic discrimination which resulted in power and advantage being placed in the hands of a white minority.

No less than twenty laws were promulgated with the direct purpose of supporting the Apartheid philosophy. One of the earliest laws was the Group Areas Act (Act 41 of 1950) which produced racially segregated living areas. Boddy-Evans [2] records that implementation of the Act commenced in 1954 and this resulted in many communities being forcibly removed and displaced. The principles of Apartheid were further reinforced through an alignment of the Group Areas Act with the Bantu Education Act (Act 47 of 1953). Gool asserts that the Bantu Education Act was "designed with one purpose in view, namely, to deprive the most vulnerable sector of the population – the African child of obtaining a modern, free and enlightened education" [3]. Not only did Bantu Education effectively and systematically reduce opportunities and advancement for many South Africans but, rather ironically, it set the stage for the liberation struggle and the ultimate transition to a democratic dispensation in South Africa.

Desmond Makhanya (an Amanzi College alumni and descendent of the Amanzimtoti Chief, Makhuta Makhanya), laments that, "The Bantu Education Act was probably the single most horrific piece of legislation to have passed through the Apartheid parliament" [4]. However, the complete history of education in South Africa is not contained within the tragedy of Bantu Education. Prior to 1953 some fifty schools, many of which were located in rural areas and supported by missionaries and religious congregations, provided excellent education for many South Africans. The schools were subsequently either closed or taken over by the Apartheid Government resulting in them falling into a state of dilapidation and disrepair. The once proud traditions of excellence of these *Historic Schools* were neglected and forgotten. A chapter of hope and optimism in the history of South African education in South is currently being written from the tragedy of Bantu Education through the work of the Historical Schools Restoration Project (HSRP).

Established in 2008, the HSRP seeks to address the physical and educational needs of nine schools which "contributed richly to the education of Black South Africans prior to the negative impact of Bantu Education" [5]. In addition, the stated aim of the HSRP is "to revitalize the rich heritage of the historical schools and transform them into sustainable and inspirational African institutions of educational and

cultural excellence” [6]. [The] “hope for education in South Africa” as stated by Ndungane, is found in the educational renewal projects that have and are occurring in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions” [7]. The manifestation of this ‘hope’ is realised by the contribution of the HSRP to the secondary schools identified for renewal and through these endeavours to not only “abandon the colonial constraints that our history seems to have imposed on our educational thinking”, but to “lead the way for real comprehensive educational transformation in our country” [8].

## 2 RESEARCH SITES FOR THIS STUDY

The HSRP identified nine schools with historical, geographical and socio-economic similarities as pilot schools for the project. Historically, the schools were founded by missionaries during the colonial period of South Africa. Geographically, the schools are located in rural contexts, all of which are regarded as socio-economically disadvantaged. In this context disadvantaged is defined as, “something which causes one to be in an unfavourable position” and “underprivileged, especially socially” [9]. These rural school communities are disadvantaged in that they are deprived of some of the basic necessities including adequate housing and sanitation, access to adequate infrastructure, access to medical facilities and, for some, access to education. Table 1 indicates the biographical details of the schools in the study.

Table 1: Biographical data of the schools.

| SCHOOL (pseudonyms)       | YEAR FOUNDED | ORIGINAL MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION | GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT        | STATUS                                 |
|---------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Amanzi College            | 1846         | American Board of Missionaries  | Amanzimtoti, Kwa-Zulu Natal | Public School                          |
| Spring Valley College     | 1869         | American Board of Missionaries  | Inanda, Kwa- Zulu Natal     | Independent (Receives a state subsidy) |
| Hope Town School          | 1855         | Methodist                       | Fort Beaufort, Eastern Cape | Public School                          |
| Rolling Hills High School | 1856         | St Matthew’s Mission (Anglican) | Keiskammahoek, Eastern Cape | Public School                          |
| Ubuntu College            | 1923         | Benedictine (Catholic)          | Vryheid Eastern Cape        | Public School                          |

[10]

## 3 RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

This paper emerges from a larger SANPAD (South African Netherlands Partnership for Alternatives in Development) project titled: *Women leading in Disadvantaged School Communities*. This study aimed to investigate how women educational leaders navigate the challenges of leading in disadvantaged school communities. It is within this context that the voices of women in school leadership positions are represented in this paper. Naidoo and Perumal remind us that “despite an increase in the number of studies conducted on women in school leadership, there is an awareness that these studies have only gained the attention of a limited audience” [11]. This paper will serve to broaden the awareness of the role that women leaders play in schools.

This was a qualitative research study that was nested within historical design research methodology. Burns contends that “historical research shares a great deal in common with qualitative methods in its use of documents, interviews, biographies and events for their interpretation” [12]. In order to describe and understand the context, namely the ‘how’ of historical research, historians rely on evidence to determine what they know about the past [13]. This evidence is provided by historical actors and the reasons behind the historical events. Data for this study were gathered by means of semi-structured

Interviews, oral history interviews, and archival material. This helped to provide a nuanced understanding of the schools in terms of their history and current day realities.

Two forms of primary evidence sources were used in this study, namely oral history interviews and archival data analysis. As defined by Bryman, oral history interviews are characterised by a specific tone where the individual is asked to “reflect upon specific event or period in the past” [14]. These are the oral testimony and the actual “spoken account of witnesses” [15]. The oral history interviews included responses from two alumni of the Historic Schools. The second primary source of evidence was documents. These included excerpts from the history of Historic Schools and documents obtained when visiting the schools for the purposes of data collection. Patton contends that the “documentation would not have made sense without the interviews” and that “taken together these diverse sources of information and data gave me a complete picture” [16]. Whereas the primary sources of evidence were designed to gather information relating to the history of the schools, semi-structured interviews, were conducted to gather data about the current experiences of the Historic Schools.

The semi structured interviews were conducted with the school principals and with members of the School Management Team (SMT). These were intended to provide insights into the approaches to educational leadership, curriculum design and implementation as well the connection with working at schools steeped richly in history. Mirroring this purpose, the focus groups comprised members of the SMT and the teaching staff. The sample aimed to achieve equity of representation based on the criteria of the participants’ gender and years of teaching experience. The questions were purposefully open ended. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identities of the participants and the schools.

#### **4 HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The schools in this study are of notable historical significance in that many of the leaders of South Africa’s liberation struggle appear on the alumni roll. These include Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, (the father of former president Thabo Mbeki), Robert Sobukwe (founder of the Pan Africanist Congress) and Rev. Seth Mokitimi (the first black president of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa). In addition Chief Albert Luthuli, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi (leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party) and Nkosana Dlamini-Zuma received their secondary education at Amanzi College. The most iconic of all is Nelson Mandela, the leader of South Africa’s struggle for political freedom, Nobel Peace Prize winner and the first democratically elected president of South Africa.

In addition to Nelson Mandela, the Historic Schools produced three other African Presidents. These include the first two presidents of Botswana, Sir Seretse Khama and Sir Ketumile Masire as well as Dr Eduardo Mondlane (served as President of the Mozambican Liberation Front from 1962 until his assassination in 1969) of Mozambique. In this way, the Historic Schools influenced and altered the history of South Africa and indeed certain countries in the Southern African region. Notwithstanding the significant impact of the prominent leaders motioned above, we wish to problematise a certain aspect contained herein. It is peculiar that the very schools founded on colonial principles and intentions are those who developed the leaders that ultimately brought democracy to South Africa. One is thus drawn to theorise that the missionaries, although sincere in their desire to win converts, were equally determined to provide quality education and improve the lives of the people they encountered. Leon describes Mandela’s involvement in politics as the “complex and contradictory forces that shaped his life and informed his politics” [17]. Citing Richard Stengel, Leon adds that “His [Mandela] persona is a mixture of African royalty and British aristocracy. He is a Victorian gentleman in silk dashiki” [18]. Arguably, the Historic School Mandela attended contributed most profoundly in the development of this great world leader.

#### **5 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Historical research requires that attention is given to the context of study, the historical actors and the reasons behind historical events in order to interpret the past and understand the present. Hines argues that context is very important for historical research and contends that context is not just the date but that “each moment in time is unique, there are different circumstances of a particular era” [19]. In addition, “context gives meaning to past events; it helps us understand the importance of an event given the larger picture” [20]. In a similar manner the historical actors populate the historical context providing insight and meaning. Explaining historical actors Hines notes that *historical actors* are more than likely people, but sometimes they are things, such as organizations (including governments) demographic groups (such as labourers) or ideas (such as democracy)” [21]. The power

and influence of the historical actors within specific historical context are known as the agents of historical research. It is with this in mind that the Historic Schools and their influence are considered.

A considered study of the schools requires that one reflects on three distinct time periods in the history of the schools. It is within these specific eras that the context of the Historic Schools is interpreted. The first is the period from their initial founding to 1953. The second are the Apartheid years, and the final time frame is the post apartheid dispensation after 1994 to present. In the final phase there is a specific focus on the years following the establishment of the HSRP.

## 5.1 The first era: founding to 1953

Reflecting on the first era, the impressive list of alumnae from the Historic Schools provides an indication of the quality of education the schools provided in the first period, that is prior to 1953. The quality of education was not only apparent in the development of intellectual capital, but also in the developing of leaders, independent thinkers and individuals of character and integrity. The alumnae, both men and women, bear testimony to the character and ethos of the schools as well as the leadership of the schools at that time. As products of the schools, the alumnae reflect the quality of educational leadership, the learning culture within each school as well as the level of moral and social maturation present in each school.

Data collected from primary sources revealed that alumni of the Historic Schools remember their school experience with fondness and nostalgia. Govan Mbeki, spoke affectionately of his school days and made the following statement shortly before he died.

It was a place where we learned that discipline and initiative are linked, although as young people we did not always understand this. We were required to work hard and come out of school equipped to face the challenges of life. [22]

The Director of the HSRP, Archbishop Ndungane, responding to a question regarding the success of the schools prior to 1953, remarked as follows:

I think it was the teachers who had a tremendous influence on us. We had some fine teachers, but generally there were those who gave us goals and inspiration and to go on, it's like they produced status and people of calibre.

Speaking at the ground turning ceremony at the restoration of "Eagle Wing" at Hope Town School, April 2014, Jackson, alum from 1948 lamented as follows:

Standing here, ladies and gentlemen, as an old man, I feel so many emotions. I am so saddened by the broken places that were once my home, my proud home [points to the old hostel]. This is what apartheid did to us! ... I can still hear the sounds of cattle from around these parts, that has not changed. I can still hear the sounds of students at play, the laughter and chatter, I can still hear the voices of the old missionaries, we learnt and worked here. They believed that we would be great, and they were right! ...

[Turning to the Archbishop] ....this place must be changed and be brought back to the days of honour. [A lengthy silence] ... but I can still feel the soul of this place, it is still with me. Here ... there was real learning, there was discipline. We knew that we had been given a chance of education, an education that would change us for the better. Our parents made sacrifices to have us here, but it was worth it. This place taught me to respect my fellow man, my brother and my sister, to be honest and to work hard. Without these things, there is nothing.

I do remember that there was this one bad teacher ... [laughs], he was lazy and often came late from tea. I think he enjoyed the bottle and the maidens [laughs again]. He did not last long, this was a place of discipline.

The statements above provide the primary evidence of the school experiences of three respected South Africans. In each account, the participants reminisce about their school experiences. Hines reminds us that when considering oral historical interviews the memories of the past "may be influenced by any of their experiences since that event or even by how the person collecting the oral history poses the question to them" [23].

Whilst the contribution of the Historic Schools cannot be denied or underestimated, the findings indicate elements of the *Theory of Temporal Adjustments of the Evaluation of Events*. This theory, proposed by Mitchell and Thompson, explicates the notion of 'Rosy Retrospection' i.e. "The tendency for one to remember and recollect events they experience more fondly and positively than they

evaluated them at the time of their occurrence” [24]. Although a certain degree of ‘Rosy Retrospection’ is acknowledged, the archival data that follows supports the sentiments expressed by the three alumnus participants.

Furthermore, whilst the primary evidence strongly supports the quality of education provided by the historic schools, it would be incorrect to assume that there was equality in education provision for all children prior to 1948. Couper notes that “pre-apartheid education for Blacks was undoubtedly characterized by inadequate funding levels (prior to 1945, dependent on African taxation revenues) and inferiority when compared with education provided for Whites” [25], [26]. Concurring with Couper, Thomas notes that “anyone familiar with the theory and practice of Apartheid will recognise that all the essential elements were but in place [in the early 1890’s] fifty-four years before the nationalist party came to power” [27]. However, it was in the second era of this study, namely the Apartheid era, where racism became institutionalised and legally enforced.

## **5.2 Apartheid: a threat to the Historic Schools**

An acknowledgment of the proud history of the schools in the first era of the study is also acknowledgement of the tragedy of Bantu Education. Bantu Education forms part of the second historical era, the period of Apartheid, 1948-1994. The very notion of centres of educational excellence for non-white children was, at its core, an intolerable notion for the Apartheid government. Substantiating the separate development philosophy of the apartheid ideology, then Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoed stated, “There is no place for him (the African) in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour” [28]. It was this extreme view that gave rise to Bantu Education which resulted in all but one the Historic Schools either being closed or taken over by the respective ‘Bantu Education’ Department.

Characterised by struggle, threats of closure, courage and determination, optimism and hope, the history of Spring Valley College during this era provides a telling account of the defiance of, and survival during the oppressive years of Apartheid. In a virtually impossible manner and against almost insurmountable odds, this mission school survived while others did not. Whilst the school survived Bantu Education it was most certainly affected by it. It is for this reason that the story of Spring Valley College is significant when considering the Historic Schools during the Apartheid era in South Africa.

The advent of the Bantu Education Act presented a time of great uncertainty for the Historic Schools. Despite strong opposition by the American Board of Missionaries to a system of education which systematically “facilitated the regression of black education, social and political achievement” [29], Amanzi College was ultimately closed by the Apartheid Government on 31 December 1956, [30]. Adopting a different survival strategy, however, Spring Valley College survived closure in the mid 1950s by applying for private school status, without a subsidy. Following a protracted battle, Spring Valley College received notification (Ref. 24/302/1769/1) from the Regional Director of Bantu Education in Pietermaritzburg dated 23 November 1957, which permitted it to exist as a private unaided school [31]. This unexpected outcome altered the mission school landscape and by March 1959, Spring Valley College was the only private Protestant mission high school for African girls in South Africa [32].

Although Spring Valley College had essentially survived Bantu Education the school experienced varying forms of pressure from the Apartheid government. The first, being financial sustainability, was the most prominent form of pressure. Couper contends that there is no doubt that “by removing the subsidy and not allowing the school to charge tuition, the government hoped that the school would collapse in just a few years” [33]. The second pressure related to the level of independence as the private status of the school did not secure its full independence from government restrictions. With reference to language, “hash conditions prohibited the use of English as a medium of religious instruction (had to be isiZulu)” [34]. The irony of a complete lack of state financial support and yet the imposing of restrictions illustrates the manner in which the Apartheid government effectively and indirectly imposed the principles of Apartheid on the school.

A further irony of the Apartheid era is described in the number of school going children during this time. During apartheid school attendance for black children increased fivefold. The National Party used this data to motivate Bantu Education and to convince followers of the merits of the system. It was, however, the severe inadequacies in quality and resources imposed by Bantu Education that most tragically affected black children. This truth was borne out in the 1970s when Spring Valley College once again faced closure. Couper posits that by the 1970s Bantu Education had sapped the strength of Spring Valley College. He attributes this to the fact that “most of the school’s incoming staff

and students were products of Apartheid's inferior education system" [35]; [36]. He contends further that by the mid 1980s, "the pedagogical structures imposed by Bantu education osmotically seeped into the school as all the students and most of the staff were products of an inferior education system" [37]. The number of black secondary school teachers with university degrees had dropped from 40 percent in 1949 to a mere 22.7 percent in 1964 [38]. It appeared as if the negative impact of Bantu Education coupled with internal problems once again placed the continued existence of Spring Valley College in jeopardy.

External factors contributed to the sustainability crisis for Spring Valley College in the 1980s. Politically, economically and socially, South Africa faced an extremely tumultuous period in this decade and the internal functioning of Spring Valley College was not spared the external unrest of that time. Couper [39] reports that internal dysfunction, external political unrest, multiple sources of income and thus multiple interests, increasingly poor student discipline, high staff turnover and poor relations with the school's leadership placed the school in an uncertain position. Summarising this period in the school's history, Couper states:

Rather than an institution solely focused on the welfare and education of students (particularly under-privileged black females) Spring Valley College became in the 1980s an institution distracted by diverse constituencies contesting various agendas. The school resembled a secular public school where antagonisms caused divided loyalties. Principals defended their actions. Faculty were primarily concerned with their terms of service, long leave and timetables. Students demanded their food, movies and unlimited visiting rights. The Governing Body consisted of a hodgepodge collection of church (lay and clergy) members and businessmen who attended one emergency meeting after another, putting out one fire while another was being set [40].

Despite the turmoil of the 1980s, the spirit and soul of the school remained. This sentiment is most appropriately articulated in an essay by one of the students. She wrote:

Education is what comes to mind about the purpose of being at Spring Valley College. But it is not education alone but our very future that lies ahead. Women who are famous and well educated were mostly educated at Spring Valley College. Spring Valley College members and ex-members have always followed their motto to "Shine where you are". [They] have always shown their good name. Spring Valley College members are different from other people. Caring, sharing, loving, kindness and intelligence is what is written on their faces. This is the purpose of being at Spring Valley College [41].

### **5.3 An interface with the past: 1994 to 2014 the decade of resurrection**

Twenty years have passed since the first democratic elections in South Africa. The year 1994 marked the ANC (African National Congress) coming into power and Nelson Mandela, a alum of one of the Historic Schools taking office as the first democratically elected president. This event, a significant historical actor serves as a milestone signifying the end of Apartheid. In the years after democracy many of the Historic Schools were re-opened. It was only in 2000, however, that many of the Historic Schools started attracting attention and the important role that they played in South Africa's history started being acknowledged. Although Apartheid had ended, the evidence and legacy of Apartheid was overtly present in the schools. [42] Narrowing the focus the period 2000 to 2010, is referred to by Couper as "the decade of resurrection" [42]. It is during this era that the interface between the historical values and traditions of the schools confronts the present day reality of an education system attempting to find meaning and traction in an ever changing and highly demanding educational environment.

The historical interface is manifested through the need to acknowledge the historical significance of the schools and the demands of a modern curriculum. The need to acknowledge the historical significance is articulated and accepted by the leaders of the Historic Schools in the study. By way of example and referring to the alumnae of Amanzi College, the current principal stated:

[Amanzi College] as you know, it has a very rich history and a very rich legacy. It's a school that is known for producing leaders uh, from the world of politics uh, social and business people, people who have gone out to shape the landscape of our society. So really to be here and lead this association, it is a privilege on its own. It is a privilege on its own and yeah, it has a lot of challenges uh, but then again, my main responsibility here is to ensure that the legacy of the school lives on.

Corroborating this view, the principal of Ubuntu College made the following statement in her interview:

I do believe that a principal has a big role to play in his school and that you are really the custodian of the values that the school stands for, and the ethos and everything that the school stand for. These are the core values that existed when in 1923, I am the custodian, nobody else.

The following statement from the principal of Ubuntu College illustrates in more practical terms the interface between the first and last historical era. She firmly states, “... *we don't want a new [Ubuntu College]. We would like this what was created here to continue and with continuous improvement...*”.

The past is valued, but the participant realises the importance of development and improvement, which when interpreted educationally means curriculum development, improvements and change.

Meeting the historical values and deep institutional significance of the school, the interface is aligned by the demands of the present day curriculum. It is noteworthy that despite the ravages of Apartheid, many of the schools in this study are producing increasingly good academic results. It is as if at this interface where the most recent historical era of the study and a point of common purpose and mirroring of the past are realized. This realisation is revealed both in the stated intentions of the school leaders as well as in the results of the National Senior Certificate.

Considering the approach to education and academic standards, the principal of Amanzi College asserted:

It's a school that has, that is known for producing quality results from its inception. We are like an oasis in the desert. If you look, the area around us is very rural and, but [Amanzi College] has been there as a background of hope to the people of this area. So mine is to continue to do more in terms of the quality results and dispensing quality education to the people of this area and the people of the province of Kwa-Zulu Natal generally.

In her interview the principal of Ubuntu College argued:

... it must be the foundation to study at any university in the world. We want to produce students who can make a difference in society and that's part of what we say who we are. This is not about training people academically, this is about training people to go into nowadays world society, and be able to make a positive difference.

Table 2 represents the National Senior Certificate results of the schools from 1995 to 2013, expressed as a percentage.

Table 2: The NSC results (Source: Historical Schools Restoration Project).

| SCHOOL NAME<br>(pseudonyms) | 1995 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2011<br>Bachelor<br>pass as a<br>% | 2013 | 2013<br>Bachelor<br>pass as<br>a % |
|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------------------------------------|------|------------------------------------|
| Amanzi College              | 98   | 93.8 | 100  | 85.8 | 92   | 97.5 | 67                                 | 97.9 | 98                                 |
| Hope Town School            |      |      |      | 36   | 70   | 73   | 13                                 | 81.8 | 0                                  |
| Spring Valley College       |      | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 94.7                               | 100  | 97                                 |
| Rolling Hills High School   |      |      |      | 72   | 83.3 | 63.1 | 11                                 | 89.6 | 35.7                               |
| Ubuntu College              | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100                                | 100  | 100                                |

Whilst it is acknowledged that some data is unavailable, Table 2 indicates the maintenance of good results or at least the steady increase in academic achievement during this era. In addition, it is clear that there are two extremely high performing schools while two of the schools have pass rates that do not meet university entrance for Bachelor studies.

The era, 1994 to 2014, in the history of the Historic Schools in this study reveals an interface with the first pre 1953 era in two broad ways. The first is a conceptualisation of the values that existed during that time and an attempt to resurrect these in post apartheid South Africa. The second is a clearer

determination to attend to academic matters and to provide quality education that will produce excellent academic results; and to also produce students who will make a positive difference in the world – perhaps to emulate the early alumae who assumed prominent leadership positions both nationally, regionally and internationally.

## 6 HISTORICAL CONNECTEDNESS AND THE ‘AFRICAN CHILD’

Within the parameters of this paper, the historical connectedness is revealed through the third era contextual conceptualisation of the fundamental purpose of each school. It is the approach to education for the ‘African Child’ that connects the historical actors on the educational stage in the theatrical production of the Historic Schools.

In the interview with the Deputy Principal of Amanzi College, she empathetically stated:

They [the teachers] put every effort in order to make sure that this African child is being served and they go out there to serve the community. It is this sense of serving more than just working, I would say we have that.

The principal of Spring Valley College presented a somewhat different interpretation to historical connectedness. She said:

We’ve got a mono-culture school and I think there would be some refreshment if we could get other cultures into this school. We embrace our Africanness and celebrate it whenever we can, but it would be lovely to be able to have children of other cultures coming into this school.

## 7 CONCLUSION

The study was undertaken with due consideration to three historical eras. These eras contextualised the study by being aligned with some of most significant historical events and historical actors in South African history. The era of Apartheid education not only imposed extensive damage and decay on the Historic Schools and indeed education for ‘non-whites’ in general, but stands out as the era that is most misaligned with the values, traditions and educational excellence of the Historic Schools. Despite almost half a century which separates the beginning and end of Apartheid, coupled with the negative impact of Bantu Education, there exists a notable congruency between the first and third eras. Whilst there remains a great deal of restoration work to be completed, the values and determined effort to provide quality education appear to have stood the test of time. The Historic Schools as well as the many women leaders who contributed in the past, are poised to uphold the legacy and continue to positively influence South African education.

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