

Nkosi Albert Luthuli Young Historians' National Competition
Adjudicators' Report

University of Free State
Free State Province
24 -25 September 2009

1. Background

Each year the Department of Education commits itself to participate in the national commemoration of the anniversaries of events of historical significance. One of the highlights of the programme is the Nkosi Albert Luthuli Young Historians' Competition. The Department of Education, in partnership with South African History Online, invited all secondary schools to participate in the competition that was inaugurated in 2005.

This competition is part of the Department's ongoing commitment to encourage all learners to develop an understanding, not only of the broad history of South Africa, but also of the richness of the histories of their local communities.

It is most appropriate that such a competition is named in memory of one of South Africa's great leaders and role models and celebrates the life and ideals of Nkosi Albert Luthuli. So many of our leaders and role models highlight the important role played by their teachers in encouraging them in the pursuit of excellence and achievement. One of the reasons why this competition is named in memory of Nkosi Albert Luthuli was that he was a dedicated educationist. Not only was he a committed student and a lifelong scholar, but was a dedicated teacher and committed to the upliftment of education of all people. Besides the importance of his role as leader of the ANC and his commitment to peaceful democratic transformation of South Africa for which he was recognized internationally as a Noble

Peace Prize winner in 1960, he was an outstanding educationist and family person. In 2007, the national adjudication took place in Durban and the award ceremony was held at the Nkosi Albert Luthuli Museum in KwaDukuza.

This competition forms part of the Department of Basic Education's annual programme as part of the national commemoration of the anniversaries of events of historical significance and as part of its social cohesion programme. This programme seeks to address through the education system the continued challenges that the South African society faces in terms of building a culture of values and human rights and tolerance and a society devoid of the prejudices and inequalities of our apartheid past.

In 2009, participants were given the following topics:

1. *The changing heritage landscape of South Africa:*

- Learners could investigate the history behind a heritage site and its significance to the history of the village/town/region. They could focus on burial sites, statues and how local people interpret these sites.
- Alternatively, learners could interrogate / investigate two heritage sites in one city/ town; one representing the period before 1994 and the other representing national unity and reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa.
- Learners could also investigate undeclared heritage sites and submit a portfolio that could in turn be sent to the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA).

2. *The history of my school:*

- The learner was expected to interview members of the community who were involved in the establishment of the school. They could also interview former students of the school and establish how the school was linked to local history.

3. *The significant places of worship:*

- Learners could interview the members/leaders of Faith Based Organisations and investigate the history behind the spiritual space of worship. This space could be an open field, a mountain, river or building.

4. *The refugees in South Africa:*

- South has attracted many people from different parts of the world, especially after the introduction of democracy in 1994. The majority of these refugees left their countries in search of a better life and others are victims of political persecution in their countries.

5. *The history of transport:*

- Transport systems are an important part of the country's social and economic development. South Africa has experienced transport change and development over a period of time. Learners were required to investigate the history of railways, introduction of local bus and taxi services.

6. *The history of sport/cultural group:*

- Learners could interview older members of the teams and research how those teams were formed and how they subsequently shaped the lives of people.

2. Adjudicators

The Department of Education selected ten adjudicators for the national adjudication process in Bloemfontein. The following adjudicators were chosen on the basis of their experience and qualifications in the field of History and Heritage:

1. Mr Jeeva Rajgopal: Mr Rajgopal works for the South African History On Line (SAHO) as a researcher and has vast experience in teaching and learning. He was part of the learners' adjudication panel at the 2009 Nkosi Albert Luthuli Oral History Competition.

2. Mr Derek Du Bruyn: Mr Du Bruyn is a part-time History lecturer at the University of the Free State Main Campus and also works as a History researcher at the National Museum, Bloemfontein. He holds a Master of Arts degree in History and has presented his oral history research on the history of Umkhonto WeSizwe and Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) veterans in the Free State at the 2007 Oral History of South Africa (OHASA) conferences. He is a member of OHASA. He was part of the learners' adjudication panel.
3. Dr Marietjie Oelofse: Dr Marietjie Oelofse is a History lecturer at the University of the Free State. She holds a Masters degree in History. She headed the teachers' adjudication panel at the 2009 Nkosi Albert Luthuli Oral History Competition.
4. Mr TC Mohlomi: Mr TC Mohlomi holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree and Certificate in Oral History from the Sinomlando Oral History Project, University of KwaZulu-Natal. He currently works as a Provincial Archivist at the Free State Department of Sport, Arts and Culture. He was part of the learners' adjudication panel.
5. Ms Sue Valentine: Ms Sue Valentine is a qualified radio journalist and has a prominent background in History. She is the Director of the Radio Workshop Programme and presents on Safm. Her programme also focuses on the importance of History in schools. She was part of the learners' adjudication panel.
6. Ms Mathla Mothlabane: Ms Mathla Mothlabane is a qualified History teacher. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Education degree, Post-Graduate Diploma in Archival Studies and Certificate in Oral History Methodology from Sinomlando Oral History Project, University of KwaZulu-Natal. She currently works for Lesedi fm as an archivist. Ms Mothlabane is a member of OHASA. Ms Mothlabane served on the teachers' panel.

7. Ms Ntando Mbatha: Ms Ntando Mbatha is a History Honours student at the University of Free State. She was part of the learners' adjudication panel.
8. Mr Patrick Letsatsi: Mr Patrick Letsatsi is a MA in History student at the University of the Free State. He was part of the learners' adjudication panel.
9. Mr Amos Mulaudzi: Mr Amos Mulaudzi is a Heritage Education Manager at the National Heritage Council. He holds a Master of Arts degree in Heritage Studies. He was part of the teachers' panel.
10. Mr Wonga Tabata: Mr Wonga Tabata is a Deputy Director: Race and Values. He holds a MA degree in History and has served as a national adjudicator for the Nkosi Albert Luthuli Oral History Competition for the past three years. He was part of the learners' adjudication panel.

2. Credentials

All the names of the participants, chaperones and provincial officials were forwarded to the Department of Education and were verified on arrival in Bloemfontein. Each province was represented by one teacher and three learners. These representatives were the winners of the provincial rounds of the competition.

3. The National Competition process

The adjudication process took place over two days, from 24 September to 25 September 2009.

Learners were divided into two groups with three adjudicators for each group. Mr Du Bruyn was team leader for Group 1 and Mr Tabata was team leader for Group 2. Teachers adjudication was led by three adjudicators headed by Dr Marietjie Oelofse. The following processes were followed:

- Learners and teachers submitted their portfolios before the commencement of each session.
- Adjudicators dedicated 10 minutes to discuss the teacher and learner portfolios after each presentation.
- Fifteen minutes was allocated to oral presentation.
- Adjudicators listened to both audio-visual and oral presentations.
- Adjudicators allocated time to ask participants questions on the research process, values learnt and other related questions.
- Adjudicators convened as a group after the last day of adjudication and discussed the results.

4. General overview of the Competition

The following comments were made:

4.1 Originality of work

Learners presented work that was based on oral history research backed by primary sources such as diaries, old photographs and newspaper articles. There was a clear analysis of oral interviews and learners presented logical reconstructions of the past. Adjudicators also noted the ability of both teachers and learners to reference their work correctly.

4.2 Evidence of teacher support

Learners' presentations indicated that they enjoyed rapport with their interviewees. They were encouraged by the response they received from members of the community who devoted time and resources in support of history projects. It was noted that learners from schools in rural areas submitted comprehensive research projects supported by processed

photographs. This was encouraging given the scarcity of resources in these schools. It was evident that learners engaged in analytical and higher order thinking in completing their projects.

4.3 Relevance to the curriculum

Learners had a sound understanding of social justice and they infused the Constitutional values of human dignity and respect in their research work. They demonstrated advanced planning skills that could be used in other Learning Areas.

4.4 Personal Development

All adjudicators were encouraged by the high level of confidence and enthusiasm displayed by teachers and learners. The experience enhanced their social skills and raised their consciousness in relation to social justice.

4.5. Quality of Educators' Entries

Educators showed an excellent understanding of oral history methodology and creatively applied it in the context of the curriculum. The teachers displayed knowledge of oral history methodology and managed to link it to classroom practice.

5. Evaluation by Adjudication Panel

5.1. Learners

- a) The 2009 participants demonstrated an improved understanding of the topic, "My unsung hero/ heroine". They had been guided by the recommendations of the 2008 adjudicators' report resulting in a significant improvement in the creative approach to topics.
- b) The topic "The history of my school" was popular among learners and they produced high quality research portfolios. Learners conducted extensive oral history research, interviewing many people connected to the history of their schools. These interviews were not confined to school principals and teachers. There was a fundamental shift from the practice of relying too heavily on teachers and principals' perspectives. They

also interviewed the broader community, thus providing rich textured data. Learners were also able to contextualise the histories of their schools and linked them to the historical evolution of the school community from the role of missionaries on education, to impact of apartheid on education and its challenges in the new democracy.

- c) Learners also made use of primary sources for their projects like school registers, school annual reports, and old photographs to reconstruct the histories of their schools. Of great significance was the lessons learnt through dialogue. Robust dialogue between young learners and the parent community created the space for parents to share their history of struggle for education during apartheid. They were also able to identify and appreciate local Heroes as role models in their communities.
- d) The topics clearly displayed the dynamism of communities as they evolved over time. The research data demonstrated the role of ordinary people in social change.
- e) The competition also attracted non-history students. It was interesting to note that the learner who came second, Neo Panane of North West province (History of Tlokwe Senior Secondary School) is a Commercial Subjects student. She stated that the competition had taught her the value of history in influencing the future trajectory of her community.
- f) Learners also grappled with the complex topic on Xenophobia in South Africa. Most learners successfully framed their response within a human rights perspective. The quality of their analysis indicated that they had conducted comprehensive literature reviews. They were knowledgeable of the Bill of Rights as enshrined in the South African Constitution and the International Protocols that govern the rights of displaced people all over the world. Once again, the values of non-racism and human dignity came through the research projects.

- g) A Western Cape learner, Ideline Akimana, presented outstanding oral history research on Xenophobia. Akimana is herself a Burundian refugee in South Africa and was emotionally affected by the 2008 xenophobic attacks in the Western Cape. She selected the topic because she wanted to understand the root cause of her rejection as a foreign national in South Africa. The research process changed her way of thinking as she interviewed both South African and foreign nationals. Her work could be viewed as both an academic exercise and a personal journey. She showed maturity in handling an emotional topic and particularly showed good understanding of African history and challenges that faced by displaced Africans in the Diaspora. She displayed a high level of analysis and was clearly working in a healthy school environment, supported by her History teacher.
- h) “The history of a local sport/ cultural club” also opened up many areas of undocumented history of sports in communities. Learners chose cricket, rugby, soccer and cultural groups. This topic promoted the development of social history using oral history methodology. Fairoz West, the overall winner, produced the history of Spenston AFC, a “Coloured club” which played under the Cape District Football Club. Her key question was “How has Spenston AFC developed over the past 105 years?” The key question led to the formulation of other research questions that led to her linking the history of the football club to that of the application of racial laws in sport, the Group Areas Act and other discriminatory laws. What was equally significant was that the history of Spenston Club is a story of hope because that soccer club is now part of sports development in South Africa. She also interviewed many people linked to the club, professionally analysed the interviews, club reports, newspaper cuttings, produced transcripts and had a comprehensive portfolio with the primary sources. She also had consent forms signed by interviewees who had shared their different perspectives. The presentation showed the history of community resilience against the hardships of apartheid. The club is now part of the community development programme in post-apartheid South Africa. She has weaved her story with great skill- showing evidence of planning, logical writing and the ability to organise information.

- i) Fairoz West effectively demonstrated how she initially visualised her project and progressed to a stage where she would produce a book on the history of Spenton AFC Sports Club. She also put the club in a historical context- linking it to the South African navy in Cape Town during the 19th century.
- j) Another interesting presentation was that of the history of cultural clubs. The stories documented by learners show a spirit of community solidarity and the power of human agency (taking charge of your own future- be the master of your destiny).
- k) The Competition also allowed the space to engage with the sensitive issue of identity and race. A learner presented the history of the Zanzibari community in Kwa Zulu Natal. The research indicated that they still wanted to be classified as Zanzibari although they no longer have ties with Zanzibar. The Adjudicators felt that this was an important topic of Identity and Change. It was therefore important for History teachers to start debates on national identity and teach learners about identities and their dynamic nature. This is important to promote diverse communities.
- l) The two learners selected for outstanding heritage projects are from the North West province and KwaZulu-Natal respectively. This was a challenging topic as there was an absence of documentary evidence linked to some sites. Learners had to rely exclusively on oral history sources. They showed analytical skills and the ability to put the sites in a historical context.

5.2. Teachers

The Nkosi Albert Luthuli Oral History Competition has created the platform for educators to deal with local histories and to link these local histories to national histories. The Competition has the potential to address historical gaps and distortions at local level. The Competition demonstrates how programmes can support the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement in schools.

Teachers were able to use oral history effectively to support the Knowledge Focus Framework of Social Sciences (History) by focusing on local histories, and the development of provincial histories and heritage sites.

The competition affords both the General Education and Training and the Further Education and Training Band learners the opportunity to acquire research skills that could be applied across all Learning Areas.

Teachers used local Research Centres attached to universities to enhance their portfolios. This has prompted universities interest in nurturing and further developing oral history projects on their campuses. The UCT Centre for Popular Memory supports Western Cape schools in both the provincial competition and in preparing learners for the national competition.

6. Recommendations

The following recommendations emerged from the competition:

1. Greater advocacy is required. More collaboration and knowledge sharing should be encouraged between schools that were successful in the Competition and those that have not yet entered. This would increase the number of entrants, particularly among the teacher category.
2. Topics should remain valid for two years in order to give schools a chance to prepare learners. There is a general agreement that the topics are linked to the National Curriculum Statement and hence increases teacher and learner quality.
3. Schools should promote visibility of oral history research projects by showcasing best portfolios.
4. Projects presented by learners could feature in local newspapers and school magazines. The writing skills of learners will be further developed for careers in publishing industry. Provinces should support their learners in all the stages of the

Competition. Subject specialists and teachers could use the research produced by learners as best practices (particularly the winning learners and teachers). Their work will be available online (South African History Archives (SAHA) and the South African History on Line (SAHO)).

5. The department must produce an oral history manual for schools. The manual will cover all aspects of oral history methodology, including interviewing techniques, editing and analysis of transcripts in the reconstruction of historical narratives.
6. More work is needed in preparing learners in the practical use of technical equipment for interviews. Most of the audio material was not very clear (because of background noise). This led to a lot of frustration and anxiety on the part of participants.
7. Audiovisuals should also be linked to the research and be original. Adjudicators are mindful of the grade level of the learners. A video showing the interviewer and the interviewee in session is enough.
8. Availability of resources (oral sources, geographical position/distance and context) should influence the selection of topics. Learners should not select topics that would later challenge them in the identification of oral sources.
9. Learners also need to document the emotions of interviewees as oral history is also about human emotions.
10. Schools should include excursions to heritage sites in their year plans. This would assist learners in the handling of local oral history topics.

11. The Competition has also received extensive coverage from the South African History on Line and the South African History Archives. This generated great public interest.

7. Winners

7.1 Learners

Third place: Topic on Xenophobia

Ideline Akimana: (Western Cape). The learner showed great skill in organising and analysing sources based on the Great Lakes conflict and the 2008 xenophobic attacks in the Western Cape.

Ideline Akimana started the research with assumptions about South Africa and the research process improved her understanding of the complexity of the country, it showed how multiple identities manifest themselves in conflict situations, how prejudices emerge and how the continent could move away from negative stereotypes.

She advocated for strong spaces for communication to promote respect for human rights. She argued that this was key to peace on the African continent. She also displayed an excellent grasp of oral history methodology. The prize was a R500, 00 book voucher.

Second place: A history of my school

Neo Panane: (North West Province). Her research was based on the history of Tlokwe Secondary School. The Adjudicators were very impressed with her extensive list of interviewees that yielded rich nuanced data.

She exceeded the minimum number of four oral interviews but managed to analyse and synthesize the information. Her writing and presentation styles were logical and highly professional. Great care was taken in the presentation of her research.

She also contextualised the history of the school and clearly highlighted the importance of Constitutional values in her work. The prize was a R750, 00 book voucher.

First place: A history of sport

Fairouz West: (Western Cape). Fairouz West chose the history of Spenton Soccer Club (AFC), in Wynberg in the Western Cape. The learner displayed a clear understanding of her topic, and was highly articulate. She also displayed advanced analytical skills and applied oral history methodology to effectively gather her data. Her interviewing skills were excellent and she was skilled in handling complex questions. The prize was a R1 000, 00 book voucher.

The adjudicators created a **special category** for learners who could not be selected but had good research projects based on the adjudication criteria. They were:

- Tregina Mokoena on “The history of Mzinoni High School, Mpumalanga”
- Daphney Berries on “The history of the Kroonstad concentration camp”
- Rose Mohlala on “The history of refugees in South Africa”

These learners each received a R200, 00 book vouchers.

Mapungubwe Award

The National Heritage Council presented the Mapungubwe Award to learners who most effectively promoted South African heritage. The award is named after the national heritage site of the Mapungubwe pre-colonial kingdom and its civilization in Limpopo. The purpose of the Award is to promote heritage studies in South Africa.

Patricia Vangile Simon presented on the history of the heritage site of the Bakgatla Bakgafela. The Bakgatla used the site to pray for rain during times of drought. The learner interviewed a cross-section of the Bakgatla, including the traditional leadership. She showed intimate knowledge of the clan and its customs. Photographs and well-analysed oral interviews accompanied her research.

Natalie Naidoo presented on a history of the Hindu Temple in KwaZulu-Natal. The Hindu Temple is more than 100 years and its history is linked to the history of the Hindus in the country. The two learners will attend a youth camp organised by the NHC in early December 2009.

7.2 Educators

Third Position was awarded to **Mr SJ Baloyi** from Limpopo. Mr Baloyi showed a great skill in linking oral sources to primary sources and preparing interesting lessons. He assisted his learners in the selection of topics and steps to follow in conducting oral history interviews. The prize was a R500, 00 book voucher.

Second Position was awarded to **Ms Mokoatala Nthebe** from the Free State. Ms Nthebe introduced her learners to oral history by interrogating oral data on a local heritage sites. The prize was a R750, 00 book voucher.

First Position was awarded to **Yvonne Kube** from the North West. The educator focused on the introduction of oral history in the classroom. Her presentation was largely based on the use of indigenous songs and oral sources as the foundation for introducing the meaning of oral history in the classroom. The prize was a R1 000, 00 book voucher.

8. Conclusion

The 2009 Nkosi Albert Luthuli Oral History Competition was a success. The quality of the presentation was better than the previous year. Participants demonstrated sound knowledge of oral history methodology and were able to produce portfolios of a high standard.

The Adjudicators and the Deputy Director-General, Ms Ndebele agreed that the competition continues to add value to the teaching and learning process in our schools. The competition also promotes the values of the constitution, human rights and raises awareness of social injustices in society.

The Nkosi Albert Luthuli Oral History Competition continues to produce outstanding work from both teachers and learners. It was successful in raising one of the challenges that we face as a society and that is to confront the harsh realities of our past and to instill in our young people the curiosity and urge to investigate the past as they enjoy the fruits of our democracy. This Competition encouraged young people with the guidance of their teachers to ask questions of the past and to then find answers through their research and in the process to uncover the wealth of history in their own communities. For our educators, this Competition also acted as a springboard for them to continue their interest in history and heritage.

The competition was also a successful collaborative project with the National Heritage Council, the South African History Online and the South African History Archives. SAHA has also shown its commitment to the Competition by agreeing to post the winning entries from previous years on their website and to archive the rest of the portfolios for safe keeping and public access.

