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Advocating for Change in the Community: Education and work for young women in rural South Africa

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UKZN INSPIRING GREATNESS

Context: Rural South Africa

- Legacy of **colonialism** & **apartheid**, corruption
- Second largest economy in Africa: mineral extraction, agriculture, finance & tourism
- Remains a **highly unequal** society: KwaZulu-Natal highest level of inequality of all nine provinces
- Rural areas:
 - largely populated by black South Africans
 - Desperately under-developed
 - High rates of unemployment, endemic poverty, food insecurity, migrant labour system (StatsSA 2017, 2018)
 - Among youth (15 to 24 years), **59.6 percent IN 2022**
- **Black African rural women** are one of the poorest population groups in South Africa

Context: Work & Education

- **Very high** rates of youth unemployment
- Few accessible options for post-school education and training
- Labour market = race & gender-biased: women workers earn 30% less than men workers (Statistics South Africa, 2022)
- Education outcomes for youth in rural contexts = much lower than in urban contexts: Only 34% of rural youth complete upper secondary education, as opposed to 55% of urban youth (UNESCO, 2022)
- Men in this context are far more likely than women to complete their education, find employment in the formal economy (often by migrating to cities such as Durban), and earn a decent wage (Hunter 2010).

Context: Research Sites

- Two sites in central Drakensberg region
- Stark contrast: Black African population vs. white commercial farmers and tourist destination
- Co-researcher participants (CRPs):
 - Young women 16-23, isiZulu-speaking, all unemployed, none studying full-time

**Young Stars
Fighters (12)**

**Snemfundo
Nokukhanya (6)**

Methodology, Methods, Activities

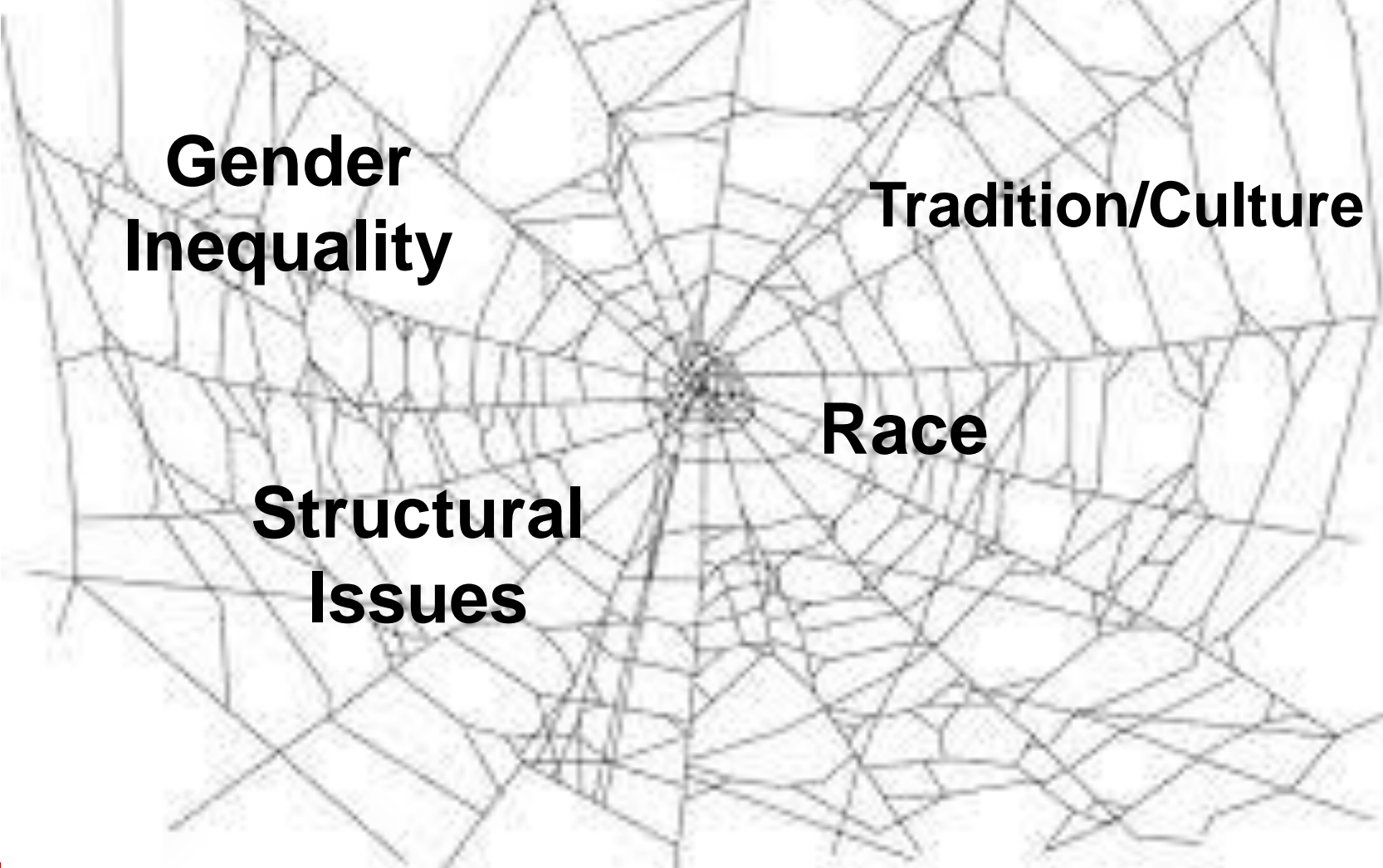
- **Participatory** approach to working **with** (rather than about) CRPs
 - Collaborative, foregrounding the voices of CRPs, co-producing knowledge
- Social Change **led by young women**
- Participatory Visual Methodology (PVM)
- 5 PVM Workshops: drawing, photovoice, participatory community asset mapping, cellfilms, action briefs & policy posters
- Community Dialogues
- Life history interviews

OVERVIEW OF THE FINDINGS

Rural Context (Rurality)

Legacies of colonialism & apartheid

Corruption



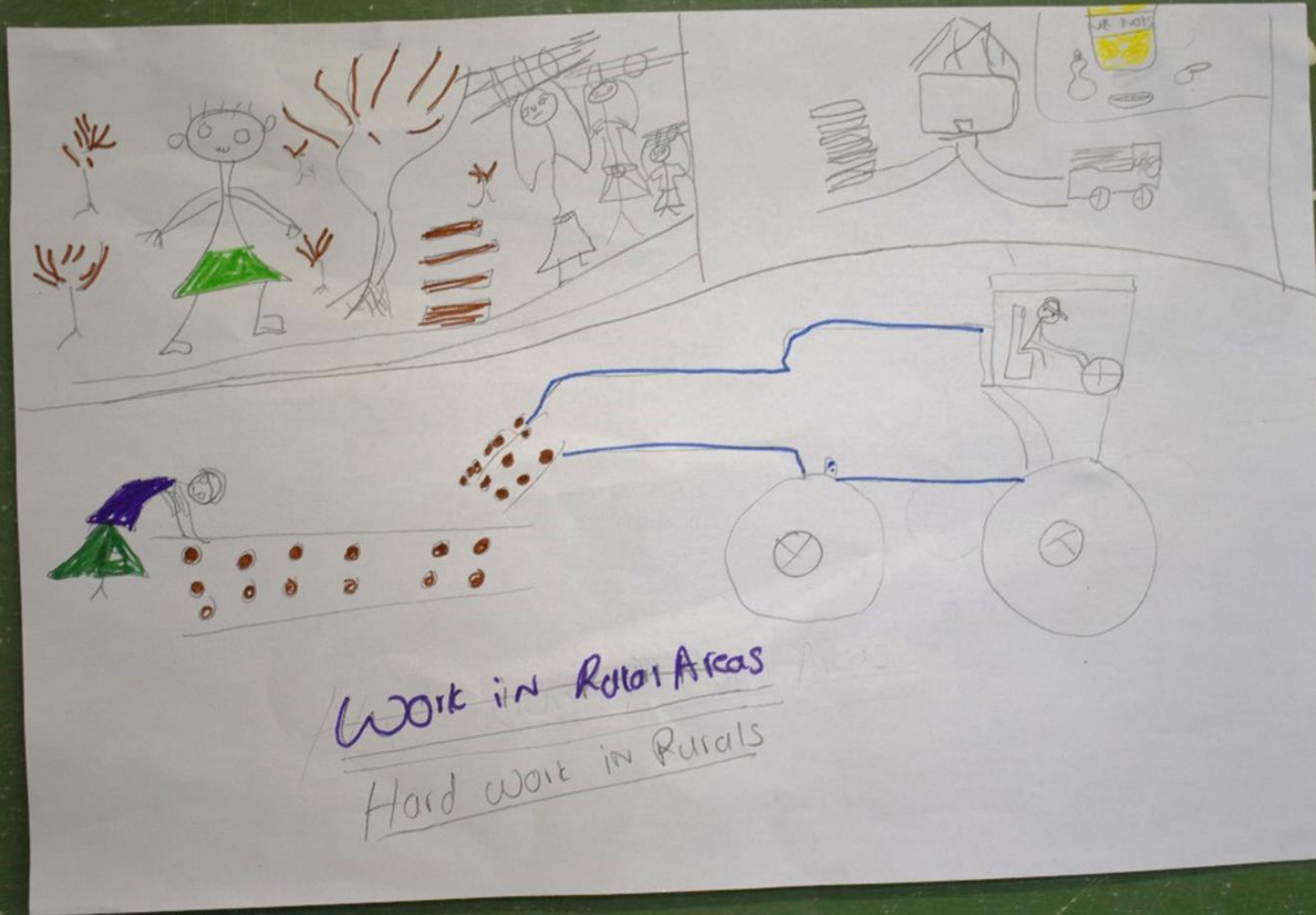
**Gender
Inequality**

Tradition/Culture

Race

**Structural
Issues**

Gender Inequality



Influence of Tradition/Culture



#shintsha Ntombo

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Left: A still image from a cellphilm

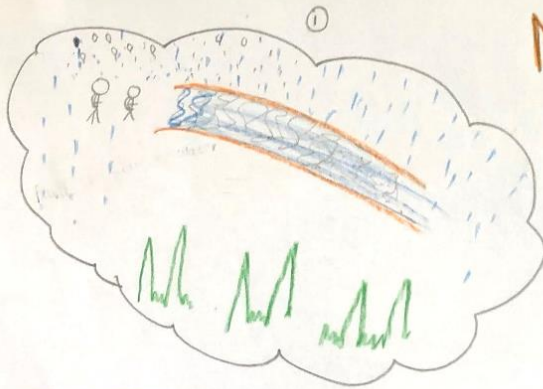
A young woman with a baby on her back bends down to tie her husband's shoes

Right: A still image from a cellphilm

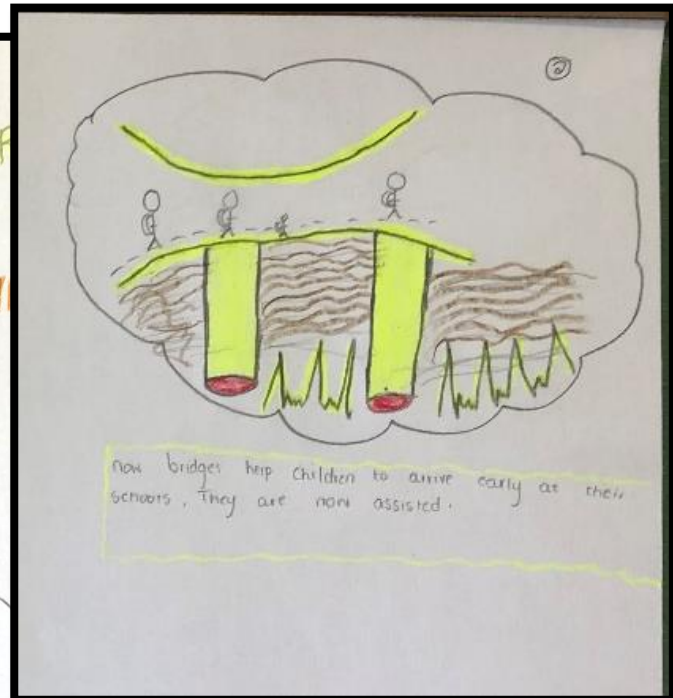
A father beats her child for being pregnant. The father blames the mother for the pregnancy and beats her.



MAP OF FIGHTING FOR OUR EDUCATION AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN OUR COMMUNITY!!!

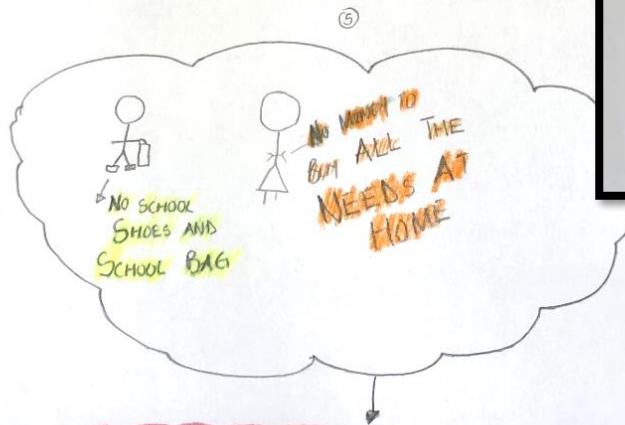


Rivers are full of water and children are no longer passing through to arrive at schools, so this affects their education

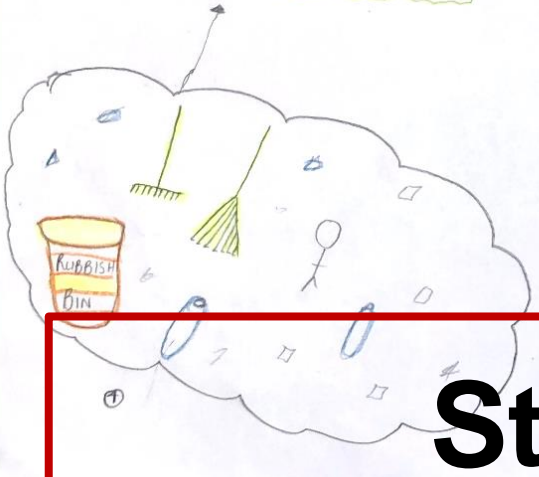


now bridges help children to arrive early at their schools, they are now assisted.

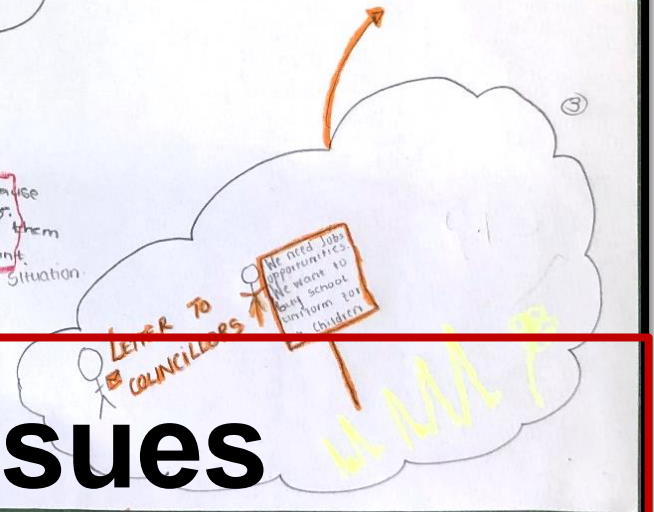
At least councillors provide some women with little jobs to pick some rubbish at towns and to clean halls. The council provide the working material like bins to throw rubbish.



they end up giving up on their education because of different issues they are facing at home. Eg Parents do not have money to provide them with uniforms. That why they also want to find some small jobs to change their situation.



what do they need in their community-



Structural Issues

Race

Young Stars Fighters

Working for white people on their fields for money to survive



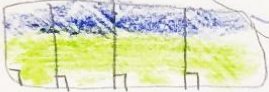
Fetching wood to sell and earn some money



INTERSECTIONS: work, social & cultural beliefs, gender equality & education

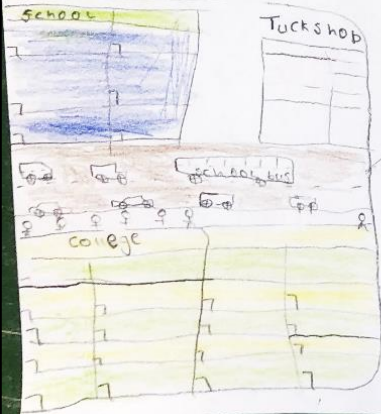


5 Lack of Higher education
eg colleges
& universities



There is no job opportunities without education.

4 After striking we got what we were fighting for.



1. uma singa qhubeka
nokuthwala kanzima
sibange amandani hanye nezizwana
singafunda ukuzi

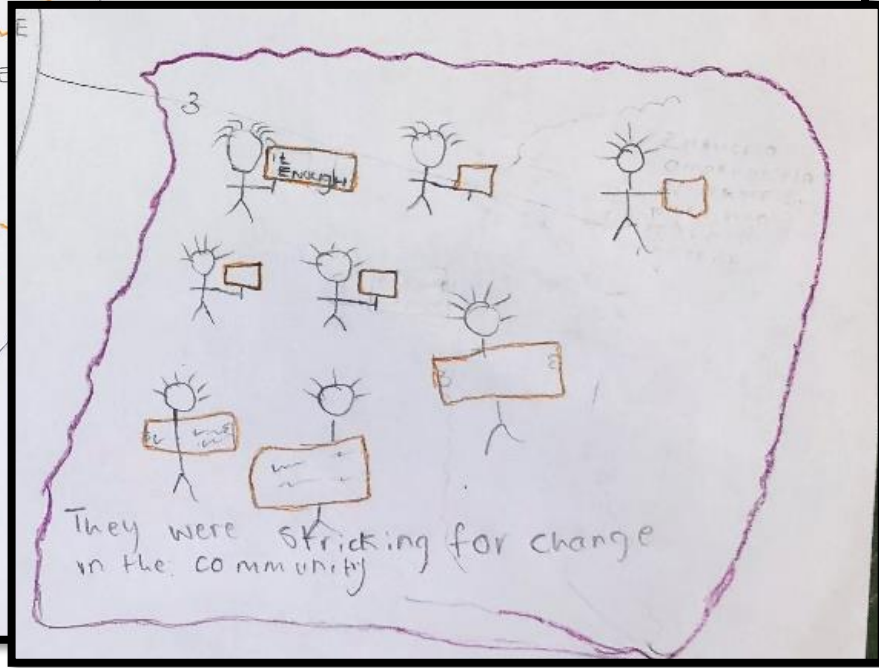
uma kungadingeka isitifuba;
sikama tikule tshen: singatwazi
ukufunda sithole misebenzi esijidingayo



we have a meeting with community councillor

VISION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

USHINTSHO OKUMELE LE
EMPHAKATHINI



Engaging the Community: Community Dialogues



Left: Young women present their action briefs at a community dialogue

Right: The local ward councillor making a statement of support at a community dialogue



Agency and hope: *“Its in our hands!”*



UKZN INSPIRING GREATNESS

Special thanks to:

Xoli Msimanga

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Snemfundo Nokukhanya

Communities of Emangweni and Emampevini