
Yaser S. Robles

Cultural Frameworks: *Shaping the Ways People See, Understand, and Act in the World*

Project Goals

- ◆ Teach youth life skills that increase their self-esteem, better their lives, and help them become more productive members of society
- ◆ Encourage youth to become active participants in their communities and to pass along their newly gained knowledge

Personal Goals

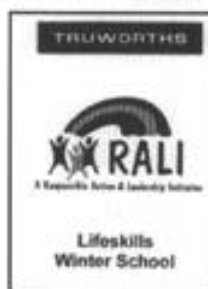
- ◆ Become an active participant in the communities
- ◆ Better understand the new educational reforms
- ◆ Put into practice what I have learned in class about coexistence

Activities

- ◆ Served as assistant coordinator for the second annual Youth Winter Program “Forward 2 Your Destiny” at Oscar Mpetha High School, Nyanga Township. Program included visual arts, theater, African and Western dances, music, and workshops about the importance of school education
- ◆ Researched the new educational reform of South Africa: Curriculum 2005 & Outcome-Based Education to facilitate workshops to parents and high school students in Nyanga Township
- ◆ Led an English program at a shelter in Langa Township for refugees from Congo and Angola and for South Africans living at the shelter. Planned class curriculum and obtained class materials

Key Dilemmas

- ◆ The apartheid era is over at a governmental level, but not at a grassroots level. Segregation still is very much in evidence, with blacks and people of color remaining at the bottom of the ladder. Coexistence still is an unknown concept for the majority of the people.
- ◆ South Africa’s new constitution is exceptional but people still do not know their rights. Governmental strategies to teach them are inefficient.
- ◆ The increasing number of refugees coming into the country has become another major problem to South Africa as it struggles to accommodate the new immigrants. The unemployment rate is high and food and shelter are limited. In addition, refugees also have to deal with the reluctance of the South Africans as they struggle to adjust to a new society.



Yaser and three student participants in front of the banner they helped create for the second annual Winter Program, Forward 2 Your Destiny, coordinated by the Lifeskills Experiential Learning Project. This winter program was held at Oscar Mpetha High School in Nyanga Township.

Important Learnings

- ◆ People from the townships do not want to move out. There is a great sentimental attachment to the towns and moving out is like leaving behind a big part of their lives.
- ◆ The Xhosa culture has maintained the status quo when it comes to gender roles. Men still believe that women belong in the house.
- ◆ Refugees in South Africa face challenges similar to those encountered by illegal immigrants in the United States.
- ◆ Education is the key to social change in South Africa, but the educational reforms are failing due to lack of resources and unprepared teachers.



Top Left: Yaser and student participants polishing an African dance for the main performance of the Winter Program.
Lower Left: Bob Skepe on the left, a visual arts facilitator for the Winter Program, practicing the drum skills together with two student participants. **Above:** Hat from Robbin Island Museum, former prison of Nelson Mandela.