
No Room For Inequality



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The logo for Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities (United Nations, n.d.)

Introduction




We are a group of three boys at Bishops Diocesan College, who took part in the Big Ideas course which was run during the third and fourth term of the 2019 school year.

Our group consists of Daniel Neuhoff, who is a sports-lover, a hard-working student, and incredibly fun and nice to work with. Caleb Francis is a hard worker, but he knows how and when to have fun. He is the youngest of the three and has made a noticeably significant contribution to our group. Luka van der Merwe is an only child and the only one of us who is not from Cape Town, but a boarder from Stellenbosch.

Daniel and Caleb were both raised in Cape Town and have been at Bishops Diocesan College since grade R. Luka arrived at Bishops in 2016.

The Big Ideas course revolves around the 17 Sustainable Development Goals that were formed in 2015 by the United Nations. These goals look at combating the world's biggest issues and problems. We chose SDG 10 which is *Reduced Inequalities*, because inequality is such a huge problem in South African society at every level.

This is a massive topic and thought it best to tackle Social Inequality with a focus on Bishops Diocesan College as this is the place where we spend much of our time. We



discovered that most of the inequality was in the benefits that the academic staff receive compared to the support staff such as the cleaners and the ground staff.

From an equality perspective it is important to us that all members of the Bishops community feel valued and taken care of – regardless of the position and functions they fulfil in the school. Our focus soon fell on the support staff at Bishops. It became important to us that we could help in some way to make sure that they are well looked after and also have comfortable facilities available to them during their working day. If our “final action” part of the project ends up the way we would like it to, it would mean a lot to the support staff, because they would feel like they had a respectable and welcoming space to call their own and let off some steam.

We particularly wanted to help the support staff because we feel that the school focuses a lot of attention on the well-being of students and not as much on staff. We decided to investigate and research the level of inequality between the support staff and the academic staff.

Other SDGs that are related to our project include: SDG 3 - *Good Health and Well Being* as the support staff's physical and mental well-being is important to us. SDG 8 – *Decent Work and Economic Growth* – is also a part of this investigation, as we wanted to make sure that improved working conditions could lead to a better working experience. Lastly, SDG 16 - *Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions* also play a role here, because Bishops should feel like a safe and happy place for all its staff members.

We wanted to address the issue because we were concerned that the support staff may be treated differently to the academic staff. As our investigation was underway, we wanted to help Bishops understand different perspectives, so we could help to be a part of a positive change, therefore we felt that we had to do something about it. This investigation is important to us, as we recognise that the support staff also contribute greatly to the school and the Bishops community. They work hard to ensure that our school is clean and that the grounds and sports fields are well kept. They ensure that the class rooms are fully functional, the kitchens' cleaned and their support is invaluable in ensuring that all the boys and staff find themselves in an environment that is conducive to learning.

We want to show our thanks to them by making sure that they experience the deserved respect and that their working experience at Bishops is a positive one.

Our Big Ideas Project

The Journey Begins

We kickstarted our journey off by doing research about inequality in South Africa, which we will discuss in the section called Background Research coming up. We discovered that South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world when it comes to equality in general.

Background Research

We chose the SDG 10 *Reduced Inequalities* because great inequalities are a stark reality of our nation, South Africa, that require focus in every aspect of our daily lives, because that is what we know and where we can start to make a real difference in dealing with this issue. We started researching the extent of inequality globally and with a focus on South Africa, and we found that a debate on the effects of inequality was well underway.

TEDx Talk by Michael Norton

In order to understand how the division of wealth occurs, we studied a TEDx talk by Michael Norton, presented in 2015, titled '*How Should Global Wealth be Distributed*'. According to a poll done by Norton to investigate people's awareness of wealth division in America, it was revealed that people knew that inequality was bad, but when they saw the results, they were shocked. According to the poll, the top (wealthiest) 20% of people own 80% of the wealth in America. Every diverse group that they surveyed in this census thought that their ideal distribution of wealth should be more equal than what they had estimated the actual wealth distribution to be. It was surprising that even the people who spent thousands of dollars on education had a similar result on their estimated and ideal distribution of wealth. (Norton, 2015)

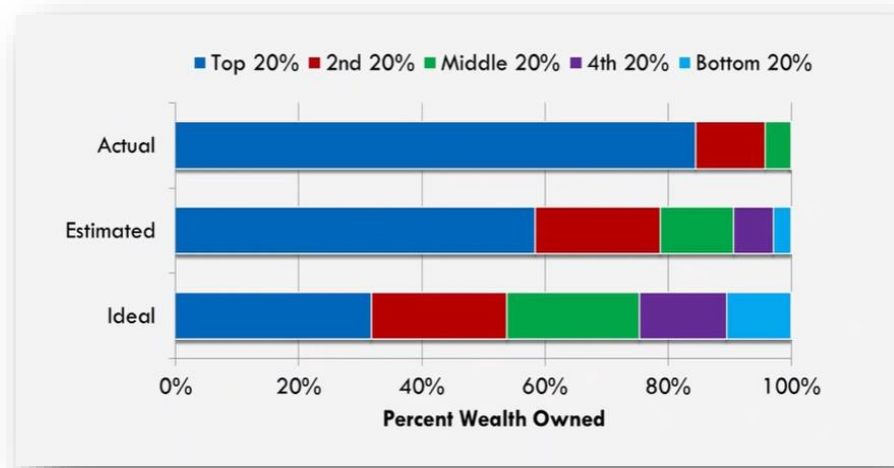


Figure 2: This is a graph of Americans' impressions of wealth inequality in America.

TEDx Talk by Johnny Miller

We also studied a Tedx talk by Johnny Miller in Johannesburg called ['This is What Inequality Looks Like'](#). He delivered an inspiring message that really opened our eyes to the challenges South Africa faces. According to Miller (Miller, 2017), South Africa's inequality is especially visible from the bird's eye view due to the walls dividing our homes and suburbs. Our individual thoughts and reflections on these talks can be found below.



Figure 3: A photo taken by Johnny Miller showing the physical inequality in South Africa

Daniel: South Africa is full of inequality. There are so many barriers, walls, and fences that separate our society in Cape Town. Often, we are literally not able to look over these barriers and see who is on the other side or what is on the opposite side of this divide.

Historically people have been forced to live in areas with Groups of people that are of the same race. Many South Africans are still living in the same place that they were placed in many years ago. It is sad that these barriers keep people apart and prevent us from getting to know one another. Poverty also hinders people from getting out of these areas.

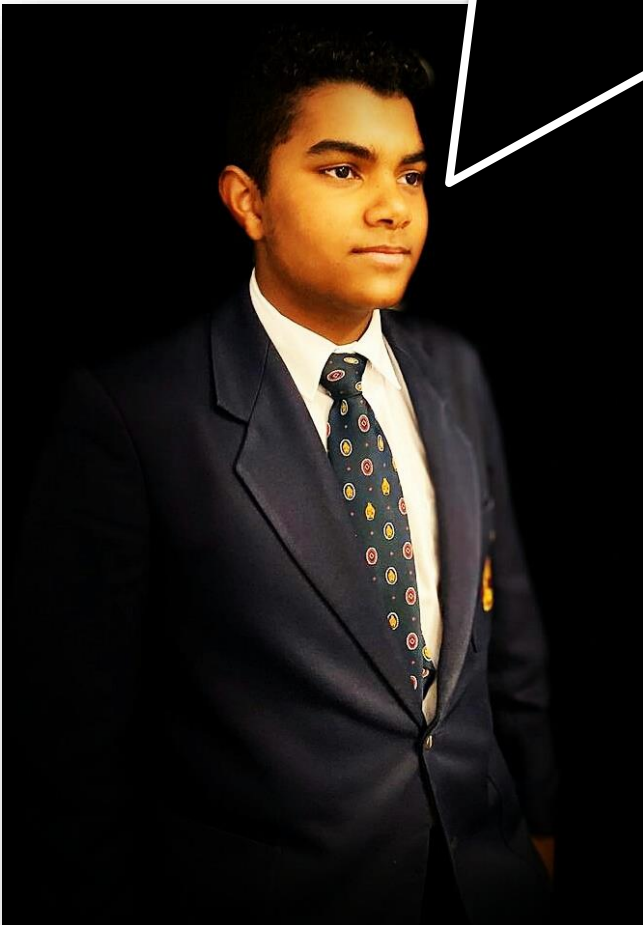
In the cities of South Africa, there is a clear split between rich and poor communities – this is particularly visible from the sky where you can see the divide and the physical barriers between communities. The reason this should matter to everyone is that the people and young people especially, living in these poverty-stricken areas, are the future of this country and their living conditions are appalling.



Caleb: The Johnny Miller video highlights that we, the “wealthy” communities, are unaware of what is happening on the other side of the wall or road, in the “poor” communities. By using something that Johnny Miller calls a toy (a drone) we have already experienced much more than without it.

Our communities are divided because we surround ourselves with people who are like us and we are, in a way, not comfortable with change. This video also shows us how many problems that the SDGs are trying to tackle, such as inequality and land distribution-in one city let alone a country.

The “poor” communities have thousands of people sharing the same amount of land as the “wealthy” communities whose numbers are fewer. Another major SDG is SDG 6 – *Clean Water and Sanitation*. The “poor” communities share ten toilets amongst themselves, many of which are either locked or broken. One way for this to end is for us to become more compassionate because we are all equal and one day that person living on the other side of the fence, road or wall will go to university like we will and get a job like we will.



SDG 10: No Room for Inequality

Luka: People saw Table Mountain differently with the help from a video done with a drone. Technology changed the way people saw Table Mountain. Johnny Miller mentions that we like to surround ourselves with people who act like us. People still live in the places they were put in, in Apartheid. He tells us that there is a clear distinction between rich and poor. We should care about the less privileged. Finding the problem is the first step to fixing it.



Our Initial Ideas

Solving the whole country's inequality would be an extremely challenging task and would take years of planning so we began looking around us to see if there was any form of inequality within the grounds of our school. This process took us on a long journey filled with many different ideas.

Some of our first ideas were putting posters on the notice boards in houses of the cleaning staff of each house with their names on, to try and build the same respect for the cleaning staff that is shown towards the teaching staff. Another idea we had was to implement a routine every Friday after school, where the boys would clean up the class for five minutes which would allow the cleaning staff to leave the school and get back to their homes and families around the same time as the rest of the school.

The next idea came about when thinking about the future of South Africa when we came across the VUSA Academy which is an academy situated in Langa that teaches children and teenagers the skills of rugby. Along with the training programme, the children are also able to benefit from good learning facilities with technology where they get extra Mathematics and English lessons. These children also have access to a hot plate of food after the day is done if they have been a part of the programme for the day. We thought of ways to raise funds for all those different ideas and thought a civvies day was a wonderful way to do this. Sadly, we were not able to have a civvies day, which brought us back to the drawing board. You will find information on VUSA below.

[A summary on the VUSA article featured in the *Platinum Blue 2019*](#)

In 2019, 450 children in the Langa community now benefit from rugby, academic, creche and recreational programs daily. The U15A VUSA side made a great impression in Sea Point, Fish Hoek, Somerset West, and Rondebosch. Two 60-seater buses transport the children to matches every Saturday. VUSA has played against schools like Bishops, KES, Kirstenhof, Primrose RFC, RBPS, WBJs, and SACS.

UCT players offer to coach twice a week. They have been able to impart their passion, skills, and love of the game on to the children of the community. The boys attend school lessons using a computer program for English and Maths. Every day when the coaches arrive the kids are extremely excited. (VUSA, 2019)

Timeline

We began working as a group

02/09/2019



Our Idea

03/09/2019



We thought of the Idea to research the Social Inequality at Bishops. We spoke to Mrs Fiona Viotti about it, she told us to speak to Mr Gerry Noel, who referred us to Mr Warren Wallace.

Interviews (September)

11/09/2019, 17/09/2019, 18/09/2019,



11/09/2019 - We interviewed Dr Paul Murray
17/09/2019 - We Interviewed Mr Peter Westwood and Ms Diane Murray
18/09/2019 - We Interviewed Mr Chris Groom

Interviews (October)

15/10/2019, 21/10/2019, 22/10/2019



15/10/2019 - We interviewed Mr John Holtman
21/10/2019 - We interviewed Ms Deidre Mills
22/10/2019 - We interviewed Ms Carol Witbooi

17/09/2019



We Interviewed Mr Peter Westwood and Ms Diane Murray

Our "Eureka" moment

29/10/2019



We visited the ground staff's common room, which was in a really bad state and that's when we decided to take the renovation on as our project

We asked for assistance

1/11/2019



We emailed the House Directors requesting assistance with the renovation of the common room

Interviews

Since we were focusing on inequality at Bishops, specifically inequality in terms of staff, and their facilities, we decided to interview a number of staff members to get an inside perspective of the inequalities within the staff.

Interview with Dr. Paul Murray



Dr Paul Murray

On the 11th of September 2019, we visited Dr. Paul Murray who in our view is the most knowledgeable teacher, let alone history teacher to ever set foot on our campus. During our interview, Dr. Murray sent us quite a lot of information that he wrote himself and he gave us a book called *Bishops 150* written by John Gardner. Dr Murray's information can be found below.

In 1938, the Chaplain the Rev. Leslie (Agape) Irving responded to a request from Bishops staff 'to do something to help boys' education'. Some senior boys hearing this asked if they could help. Thus, the Night School was born. Arithmetic, English, History, Geography, and Chemistry were subjects taught. The Night School was closed down in 1963 as a result of Apartheid laws. In 1940, Mr John Brett introduced boys to the Silvertree Club in District Six (The Silvertree Club was a club that took part in community service in the District Six area). Bishops played a significant role in its proceedings until, in 1969, it was moved because of the Group Areas Act. The Bishops Social Welfare Society was founded in 1940, which performed a multitude of services which served as a

kind of school Community Chest. Interact was established by a former teacher, Mr Hugh Fynn, and the Chaplain, Rev. Henry Kirk, in 1981. The restructured time on 'cadets' afternoons was scheduled for Interact activities. In 1994, SMILE was initiated as a mini-teaching programme involving pupils from Khayelitsha schools. Mr and Mrs Peter and Elisabeth Anderson, formerly of Bishops Prep, ran St Mark's School at Jane Furse in the Limpopo Province (formerly Lebowa). Today Bishops has a number of different societies continuing its commitment to diversity, such as the African Relations Society, the Global Issues Network (GIN), and the OD Union Global Mentoring Programme.

Diversifying its intake so that more boys who aspire to be educated at Bishops can do so, has been a strong feature of the school in recent times. The Diocesan College Magazine of December 2002 contains a comprehensive report on Diversity at Bishops. Prior to that Mr. John Peake set up bursaries which subsequently became known as the Hamilton Mvelase Bursaries. It was, therefore, a tragic day for the school on 21 July 1992, when Grade 11 learner Hamilton Mvelase was murdered on his way home. Mr. Grant Nupen, Bishops' thirteenth Principal and the Vice-Principal, Mr Michael King, set up the 2010 Diversity Conference in September 2001. Since 2004 until the present, Bishops has a direct partnership with the LEAP school specialising in the teaching of Science and Maths. Each week students from LEAP come to Bishops for their lessons. Today, boys continue to engage around questions of diversity led by the Deputy Headmasters, Mr Peter Westwood, and Mr Warren Wallace with their teams. (Murray, 2019)

Interview with Mr. Peter Westwood



Mr Peter Westwood

On Tuesday the 17th of September 2019, Caleb interviewed Mr. Peter Westwood who is the Deputy head of Pastoral and Deputy Principal of the school. He also sits on the school's executive and on the Sustainability Committee. We hoped he would be able to shed some light on the diversity efforts of the College.

Prior to 1994 (the year Apartheid ended), Bishops could allow people of colour to become students at the school as it was a private school, but government schools like Rondebosch, SACS and Westerford could not. Because of this, the number of people of colour attending Bishops was quite high. The academic staff was not diverse - there were only three female teachers and no teachers of colour

After 1994, all schools opened to people of colour. A lot of the people of colour that attended Bishops at the time moved to schools like SACS, Rondebosch, and Westerford because they could get the same education for 1/3 of the price.

The school has preferably chosen people of colour and women for the high-level jobs, so as to balance equality at Bishops. Mrs. Michelle van Schalkwyk and Mr. Warren Wallace are examples of the above as they are on executive and Mrs van Schalkwyk is a woman and Mr. Warren Wallace is a person of colour.

A prominent barrier to including more diversity is the fact that teachers can't afford to take early retirement and since the academic staff is predominately white, Bishops has to wait for those staff members to retire before Bishops can employ new staff and therefore it will take much longer for the staff to be diverse.

Statistics on race and religion of Bishops Students

RACE	AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE
Asian	13	1.7
Black	48	6.2
Coloured	101	13
Indian	25	3.2
White	587	75.8
Total	774	100

RELIGION (other than Christian)	AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE
Muslim	49	6.3
Hindu	16	2.1
Jewish	22	2.8

(Westwood, 2019)

Interview with Mr. John Holtman



Mr John Holtman


(please click on the photo to listen to the audio)

Mr. Holtman is a teacher, assistant house director of Gray House, and he sits on the sustainability committee. The transcription of the interview can be read below.

There is inequality at Bishops, in terms of numbers, and in terms of race. With boys, I think it is lower than it should be or could be, by a significant number. The common room has improved a little [in terms of race diversity], but once again, it can be greatly improved. There was a time that there were very few black teachers ... the number has grown. In terms of women, there are more women in comparison to, shall I use the term that is commonly used by the school and others, "people of colour", in the common room. And what used to be the case was that most of the white women held senior positions. In other words, many of them were either heads of department, assistant house directors, or both. That has altered slightly - we do have two out of eight house directors who are black males. There is one woman, and the rest are white males. Management in all three boarding houses - both the house directors and assistant house directors, who live on campus - are white males.

In terms of broader diversity, we have a good mix. We have women, we have males, across the religious and ethnic spectrum. We have straight staff members, we have gay staff members, so there is a sense of diversity across the spectrum.

The ground staff are generally treated as people with lower status, because they are generally, almost all, black. The academic staff are core business and have a status in the school in terms of ranking. I cannot make the judgement that Bishops as a school




treats support staff a certain way. I am quite certain that those that are employed by Bishops are treated respectfully, and I would assume that they are paid reasonably - that they are paid in excess of the minimum wage, and I would also assume (because of Bishop's moral obligation) that they would have ensured that the people they contract treat their workers fairly and pay them fairly. Bishops does financially support the education of the children of the support staff, so I think Bishops is at least making an effort to treat support staff with dignity and respect. The fact that the support staff eat lunch with everyone else is a plus - in the past they never did.

One of the biggest obstacles for more diverse students is money. Because Bishops is an independent school and it is expensive to attend the school, for the average human being to pay between 150 000 and 250 000 a year is almost unimaginable. So that is the biggest obstacle – affordability. What Bishops does have is a pool of bursaries and some types of funding for students, but that is limited, and because of the fact that the school is fee-run entirely and that we are not subsidised by the government, we do not as a school have enough money spare in bursary funds to increase the number of black students. That number is curtailed by the availability of money in the bursary fund. Raising money to increase the means of the number of bursary boys is an aim of the college, but it is difficult because it is not cheap.

Secondly, I think many people from disadvantaged backgrounds do not see the option of coming here but those from the emerging black middle class, who can afford to send their sons here, are often not willing because of the stigma attached to firstly private school education and then private school white education. There is a risk. That is how Bishops is viewed and given the history of Cape Town and the Western Cape, that stigma sticks even harder. Schools in Gauteng, like St Johns or St Stithians, can integrate or build their diversity numbers much more quickly than we can do here, despite us also being an open school, because there is bigger black middle class in Gauteng than there is here, and also Cape Town's history is much different from the north because of the alienation of black people in the city, so that makes it much more difficult.

There is certainly an issue around marketing. Bishops should be marketing much more vigorously. They are marketing up north, but what they should be doing is also marketing in Cape Town, despite all the stigma. The difficulty is they should be marketing to the black middle class in Cape Town more vigorously than they currently are. We won't necessarily always have to source from the Northern Cape. We do not always have to source, even for bursary boys out in the rural areas, but we should also try and source from the Cape Flats. There certainly are people in the Cape area who could afford but who struggle with the idea of sending their son here, so Bishops should be marketing more.



There has been an effort from the school to fill vacant positions with black teachers and to a certain measure they have had limited success. I do not think that there is a lack of will from management to fill those positions. Sometimes there's a response from a white teacher towards black teachers, that there aren't enough qualified applicants of colour who apply. I think that is an incorrect position because I do not think that they source hard enough because if you want to, most of the teachers I know, all of us have the same or similar qualifications. All of us are post-graduatedly qualified in the college and outside -it is just a matter of trusting the process. It is an incorrect thing to say that there are not enough qualified people of colour who want to work here. Maybe many of them do not want to work here, but many of them would want to. We have Mr Petersen and Mr Slamdien who are qualified, young men and there are other young teachers who have recently been recruited. On a positive note, it is more than I've seen done in the past so there is a move. I think perhaps we need to trust the process - it can be slow.

We need to replace at least three positions this year. I assume that at least somewhere along the line, for at least one position, the school would want for a person of colour as a diversity post.

[In terms of reviewing the 2031 goals of the Future-Fitting Document]: The funding model for increased bursaries – that is ongoing, there is actually activity; all boys are to be involved in community activities; celebration of South Africa's diverse cultures done at all levels –How do we celebrate? Do people dress up on Heritage Day? That tends to be the extent to what is done here; [in terms of bursaries], Grade 8's intake of 38% of boys of colour – At this point, it is not possible, I do not think it's going to happen; The zero – tolerance of racism, homophobia, and sexism is clearly communicated and enforced; I have yet to see the final document published but, yes, the sustainability committee that I attend, we've actually endorsed. I think the final document will be published at the end of the year, but the school is on a path to a zero-tolerance of the issue (Holtman, 2019).

Interview with Mr. Chris Groom



Please click on the initials above to listen to the interview

Mr. Groom is the Academic Head of Bishops Prep. We wished to investigate how Bishops Prep approaches transformation from the starting level of primary education. His thoughts are reflected below.

Q: What is your role at Bishops?

A: I am Head of Academics at Bishops and I sit on the Sustainability Committee.

Q: What is your view on inequality at Bishops

A: There is still lots of work to go – minorities can often feel out of place. When numbers equalise it will be a much more inclusive place.

Q: Do you think that Bishops is diverse enough?

A: Not yet. We are on the right track, but things like finances are tough barriers to overcome. Diversity is at the top of the list when looking for teachers and admissions of boys wanting to join the school.

Q: How diverse do you think Bishops is, considering race, economic status, OD children versus 1st generation Bishops pupils?

A: The admissions were skewed more towards the children of OD's, but now diversity is at the top of the list.

Q: What do you see is the biggest obstacle for achieving diversity and equality at Bishops?

A: Finance is the biggest problem as Bishops is expensive. People do not know Bishops well enough to send their sons here. There should be more marketing to different communities.

Q: How many bursary boys are there?

A: There is one learner on a bursary in grade 5, but I am not sure about needs' bursaries. There are some parents of boys that are helped financially. When giving bursaries, it is not just about what they can do on the sports field, it is also about the individual that they are bringing into the school.

Q: How is Bishops planning to achieve the Future Fitting Goals?

A: There are focus groups with grade 6's and 7's that discuss sustainability and diversity and the staff have a group to discuss how to handle certain situations with boys i.e. if there are any homophobic or racial slurs.

Q: What steps have been taken to achieve these goals?

A: The targets from the Bishops' Future-Fitting Document are being taught. The boys are also being taught about different religions. There are sustainability weeks for each grade tackling or learning about a different SDG.

Q: Realistically, when do you think the goals will be achieved?

A: It is difficult to put a period on it. Hopefully, we can get close to the 2030 goals.

Q: How diverse is the staff?

A: There are 32 academic staff in total at Bishops Prep - 20 of them are male (6 are of colour), and 12 are female (1 is of colour).

Q: Is there a clear divide between support staff and academic staff?

A: The Prep school has encouraged the boys to learn the surnames of the support staff by putting photos of them up with their names below their photo. The academic and support staff sit together and converse during lunch. There is no longer "us" and "them" - the support and academic staff are one "team".

Q: What is the support staff's common room like compared to the academic staff's one?

A: I would love for the support staff to be in our common room, but the nature of their work is different from ours, and the lack of space is a challenge. The support staff's common room was upgraded and is looking much better.

Q: How well do the Prep students handle and deal with the topic of sexuality?

A: They are naive and do not fully understand the topic. Words like “gay” are thrown around sometimes, not to discriminate, but because it is part of their vernacular and this must be dealt with zero tolerance and must be unpacked with the boys. The same goes for racial or social media issues.

Q: Are the students aware of the zero-tolerance policy?

A: Yes, discrimination is always dealt with quickly and the parents of the boys involved are informed.

Q: What is the racial breakdown of learners at Bishops Prep and Pre-Prep?

A: That can be explained in a table (supplied below).

Table showing the racial breakdown of Pre-Prep and Prep student numbers by race.									
Grade	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	R	N
Black	5	6	4	4	3	2	6	8	5
Coloured/Indian	10	8	10	18	14	11	15	13	14
White	59	63	61	52	57	58	51	50	41

(Groom, 2019)

Interview with Mrs. Diane Murray



*Please click on the initials above to listen
to the interview*


Mrs. Murray is the human resource manager at Bishops. We wanted to interview her because she deals with staff at all levels of the school. A summary of her interview can be found below.

In a corporate environment, there is a big turnover of staff, but in schools, staff work for many years before leaving or retiring and are almost never fired. There are 228 staff members in total at Bishops College - half are teachers and the other half are support staff.

If you are employed on a permanent basis at Bishops, you get pension, salary, medical aid and a guaranteed 13th cheque, however, there is differentiation between academic and support staff. Academic staff with children get free education for their children if they attend Bishops and half the school fees are covered if the child is a girl. This is not the case with non-academic staff.

Through the trade union, R200 000 was obtained for use to support the non-academic staff. If non-academic staff bring their child's report to Bishops or proof of tertiary education, then the school splits that money between the non-academic staff. On average the support staff get R3000 per person per annum for their children compared to the value of over R100 000 per annum to have their son at Bishops. This is possibly the biggest inequality depending on what job you do at Bishops.

In the past, the ground staff and cleaners would arrive with their own lunch container and food would be dished up for them in the dining hall. They would then go back to their common room and eat there. Now all staff members get hot lunch every day and can sit where they choose.



The ground staff's common room can certainly be upgraded, but the cleaner's common room has been upgraded recently.

When looking at applicants for staff, the school looks to hire with transformation in mind, however, the applicant needs to fit the role.

The biggest obstacle in achieving diversity at Bishops is dealing with 'expensive paying customers', which are the parents. On the one hand, the parents want diversity, but they are quick to criticise if their child does not have the most experienced teacher which leads them to assume that their child is not getting the level of education for which they have paid.

The only revenue at Bishops is from the customers and therefore there is a need to please the customers (Murray, 2019).

Interview with Ms. Deidre Mills

On the 21st of October 2019, we held a Skype meeting with Ms. Deidre Mills who works for an organisation called Future Fit, which is a company that deals with the future of other companies that hire them, and we wanted to speak to Ms. Deidre Mills to see if she thought that our ideas were good, and if she could help us improve them or find new, better ones. During the meeting, we discussed lots of things regarding our ideas in addressing inequality. We went over some of our ideas and she gave us feedback into what aspects of inequality our ideas were addressing.


Respect – Respect from students towards support staff can be improved by putting photos up with support staff surnames so that boys can refer to them in the same way that they refer to their teachers.

Boys supporting staff – After school on a Friday, the boys could stay a bit longer to clean the classroom in order for the cleaning staff to be able to leave at the same time as the rest of the school.

Future initiatives – Supporting the VUSA academic programme. VUSA is creating the opportunities - each day, they are able to deliver on our vision and this is credit to our coaches and partners. It is through partnerships that they are able to maximize impact and change the trajectory for the youth of South Africa [OBJ] (Mills, 2019).

Interview with Anonymous 1 (A1)

We conducted interviews with non-academic staff members and will discuss their responses below, anonymously, to protect their identities



A1's view on race inequality at Bishops is that there is still a lot of inequality when you look at the academic staff because they are still majority white. A1's view on gender inequality is that the academic staff is still majority white and male. A1 does feel that the school is trying to transform Bishops into a more diverse environment.

A1 says that it is so much better than it was before, but a lot of the issues that A1 has which is purely what A1 sees is that some boys "do not notice the cleaner". It was explained that the boys are not necessarily being rude, but they do not seem to notice or think about a cleaner. A1 feels that sometimes the cleaner could be treated with a bit more respect as in boys just acknowledging, saying hello, or even thanking them for tidying up.

A1 thinks that the biggest obstacle in achieving diversity and equality at Bishops is that this is an incredibly old institution and it is a traditionally white male, all-boys school, and A1 thinks that it is exceedingly difficult to transform an institution quickly, whether you're talking about Bishops or any other company or institution. i.e. (Absa bank).

A1 also feels that there is a lack of a sense of urgency, that the school knows that more inequality is needed, but that it is not a priority. There are 4 female teachers leaving Bishops in 2020 and A1 thinks that men may be hired for those positions.

A1 thinks that most of the inequality at Bishops is at the dining hall where the support staff, ground staff, and cleaning staff sit with each other, and there is not much interaction between all groups.


A1 thinks that the biggest change needed has to do with the mindset. If the Future-Fitting Goals are not achieved, it will be because of the bigger society not changing.

A1 thinks that the benefits that the academic staff gets compared to the rest of the staff are not as equal as they could be.

Interview with Anonymous 2

I think from a teacher's point of view, if I first start with the boys - while every boy has the same opportunity at Bishops, I think that in terms of inequality and diversity, that is not equal. In terms of the ratios of boys of colour to the white boys, if you look at pictures years gone by and compare them to now, it is basically the same. And I think in terms of that, the road to diversity and transformation is still very, very slow. It is too slow. It needs to be accelerated and it is not easy to accelerate the process, but I think much more needs to be done in terms of that.

If I look at inequalities in terms of staff, all academic staff do not experience the same payment or benefits, but you get what you are qualified for and as far as I know. There are some inequalities - maybe you'd want to be the head of maybe this school and maybe try and pitch for a higher position and actually not feel as though you could be considered,



that's the feeling, that I get, that you could not be considered. The school does know who they want and whether it is somebody of colour or whether if it is somebody different that is the school's choice. With the amount of experience, you could do a great job if you were afforded the opportunity.

When I look at the support staff and we look again at the ratios of the staff, we tick all our boxes when we want to be BEE compliant - we do seem to have people of colour on our staff, but not on the academic staff and that's a problem.

We discussed the environment in which the support staff eat and that we've done it up nicely. We would happily be with the support staff together at lunch - I think that in South Africa it generally is like that, where people do not naturally merge, that are supposedly on different scales and various levels. They feel let's all sit together because we are chatting about the same thing. So, I think that you need to intentionally put people together and say that everybody sits here and that I think is probably what needs to happen, the intentional merge.

I think that the fees are the biggest obstacle to achieving diversity and equality at Bishops. It is not that people of colour cannot inherently afford the school - there are a few people that are in that position and a lot of people are working hard to have their kids at Bishops. Bishops is white-dominated. In a way, parents of colour appear to want to stay away from it. Parents of colour may feel that Bishops is not reflective of the outside world. If they send their son to Rondebosch there'll be more kids of colour there. Maybe the parents of colour would rather put their child in a similar environment to home rather than put their children at a school where there is a complete difference between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. I'm not only referring to children of colour, you know, generally, but I think that the fees are a big thing. I think that if we could bring in non-fee-paying children, and especially in grade R, that would be good. What comes with that though is that there is a child who comes from a background that's much less affluent than the rest of the children and there is more support that is needed in terms of how to merge the two worlds for him because they might be getting the same education, but a six-year-old doesn't understand why he doesn't have the same Lego as the other guy or doesn't have a single thing that the other guy has. There's this constant need to want to be where someone else is. And in terms of that, I think that is where the school needs help to merge the two. If a child came into grade 8 and was a child of colour that came in from maybe a less affluent area or family, it would be very difficult for that child to feel like he belongs, and I think that is one of our biggest things - it's what we want to give. I think we would like to give more, and we would want to provide more for a child that comes in, who wouldn't necessarily be able to afford the fees here - afford him the opportunity of having a school that is so well-resourced.



The Start of Our Final Action

The interviews that we did formed a massive part of our project and our background research. These interviews are what set us on our mission of reducing inequality within Bishops. Many important facts and interesting ideas came from our interviews. We believe that interviewing people is a great way to gain knowledge about a topic and this process worked well for us as a group. From each interview we were able to take away something different, whether it was in the form of facts or advice for our project going forward. Without this information we might not have even been aware of or noticed that there may be inequality at Bishops and among the staff. We would also not have been aware of the state of the ground staff's common room.

The enormity of this subject also had our group quite conflicted with so many ideas and facts that we did not really know where we could start to make an impact.

While the process we followed in doing the background research, having multiple meetings, discussions, and interviews with many different people was extremely valuable for each member of this group, in terms of being mindful – we still wanted to produce a final 'action', to add to the research findings we will present and make a contribution to the reduction of inequality. We concluded that some of the largest inequality at Bishops was between the support staff's and the academic staff's physical spaces.

When investigating the various staff common rooms on the college campus, we found that they did not all meet the same general standard. The ground staff's common room, in particular, looked as though it could do with an update, as can be seen in the photographs below.

There were a few issues we noted in the support staff common room that require attention. These include: rusting metal entrance, old and worn couches, worn sink, water damage in ceiling, some lights not working, cramped changing room, and possibly out of date fire extinguisher. We were pleased to see that the bathrooms were of a decent standard, however, we did uncover that hot water is not available for showers. Please see the photos below, which our group took on the 29th of October 2019.

Photos of the ground staff common room:



Figure 3.1: Daniel standing near the entrance (Which is to the right) and the common room is behind him



Figure 3.2: Caleb and Daniel standing in the Kitchen/Eating/Rec Room



Figure 3.3: The common room's sink



Figure 3.4: Entrance to the common room




Figure 3.5: The changing room



Figure 3.6: fire extinguisher



Figure 3.7: Water damaged roof inside the common room and fused light to the left



We decided that it would be our goal to help renovate the ground staff's common room and make it a much more welcoming and relaxing working space. We started by creating a 'wish list' of things we would need to help renovate the space. We emailed all the House Directors with the wish list to see if they were willing to contribute anything on the list.

We have received a number of donations from the House Directors and the teachers who were willing to donate on their own behalf. We have received funds and we have been offered paint and furniture including a fridge, couch and an urn.

12th of November 2019

We are currently in the second stage of our project. We asked Mrs Van Schalkwyk to speak to and email the academic staff about our project. So far it has been successful, and we have received multiple responses from staff who are willing to contribute towards our project.


Our Reflections

During this course, we have had lots of time to reflect on ourselves, our group members, and the work that we have done. Every week we had the chance to reflect on what we did during that week, as well as a chance to say how we felt about the week and the content we covered. Examples of the reflections we did are below:

Caleb Francis
Week 5

This week has been enjoyable and demanding at the same time. We interviewed Mrs. Witbooi, but while I was recording her interview, my microphone was muted so that was very annoying once I wanted to listen to it. Thankfully, I was focused and remembered most of our conversation. I was honestly disappointed with our results as I hoped there could be something "negative" that we could fix, but I was also happy that in her opinion she was being treated as equally as the academic staff. She gave us a tour of the cleaning staff common room which was nice, but I found it a bit claustrophobic.

I thought of the idea to have a portrait of the resident cleaner in each building i.e. the houses, the library, etc. up on the wall with the cleaners' full name, so that we would not necessarily have to call them by their first name, but by their surname, and I find that this is a step, to respect for the cleaning staff and by doing this it is also reducing inequality.



Mrs Freund came up with a brilliant, foolproof idea which was that we have a civvies day, where the prep, college and the parents would wear white clothing and donate R10 to the school which could then use the funds for renovating the ground staff's common room, but unfortunately Mr. Westwood told me that the school can only have a number of civvies days a year.

I interviewed a grade R teacher and she gave us the contact details of two professors who are in the field of education and inequality. One of the ladies' that clean Mallett House had been fired and we weren't informed about it so I spoke to Mrs Gardner and told her that I feel that if she was a teacher we would've been notified immediately that she had left and I was in a way glad that this has happened because that is what we, or at least I am, focusing on regarding our Big Ideas topic and it proves my point completely.

Daniel Neuhoff Week 6

I am feeling much better about our project this week as we have finally come up with an idea that I think will make a difference and is also needed. We spent quite a lot of time 'in the cloud' being stressed about what our project would be so that is why I'm happy that we have a set objective which is fixing up the ground staff's common room and reducing inequality in a tangible way. We have had many different ideas over the past few weeks and I feel that this is definitely the best one.


During the week we all went as a team to look at the common room and we were all quite shocked at the state of it, but I'm glad that we finally got to see it with our own eyes. We spoke to a gentleman from Turfworks who was in the room opposite from the common room and he showed us inside. I think that we should try to get an opinion about the room and what it needs from one of the ground staff members.

I think we were all quite worried and stressed about the feedback we got from our first narrative draft, but once we actually went through the issues, we realised that it was mostly small spelling errors and things like that. We got quite a lot of work done on our narrative and tried to add to the wow factor a bit.

There has also been a bit of conflict in our group this week, but I feel like we will get over it quickly so that we can be on track for our project. The conflict didn't really phase me too much. I think by Wednesday next week we should have spoken to most of the House Directors about what they are willing to contribute towards the common room. I also hope we are able to raise enough funds, but not too sure how we will get this done.

Luka van der Merwe Week 7

We are finally catching up with the other groups and finalising our Big Idea. We have spoken to all of the House Directors about donating to the ground staff common room.



Some of the House Masters have agreed to donate some things and some, 1 in particular, has shut us down. They don't want to help us because they say that they are already helping another group, but I don't understand why they can't help us too. Kidd House said that they would donate some money. School House said that they would donate some paint and help in the renovation. Birt House said that they would donate an urn, Mallett House has agreed to donate a small fridge. The music school said that they would be happy to support our project in any way possible. We were happy with all the donations that the houses have offered, and we are eternally grateful to the House Directors of the houses.

I have also been working harder than the past few weeks, but I wish I had more time to try even harder to make it a little easier for the rest of the group. I have enjoyed working with my fellow partners this term and hope we will stay friends.

Group Reflection:

We have really enjoyed the Big Ideas course and these past two terms have been a great experience. We have learned to work as a team and successfully overcome the inevitable challenges and conflict that working in teams can bring. We thought of multiple projects but once we finally thought of the “perfect” project, everything began to run smoothly. We have also had the opportunity to engage meaningfully with many members of staff about an important sustainable development goal and hope that this is just the beginning of an important conversation, both for our Bishops community and South Africa. We spoke to the House Directors and many of them were very generous and supportive. We are extremely grateful to Mrs van Schalkwyk who has also helped us a lot in her own capacity to spread the word to the Academic staff. We have had many positive responses from the academic staff regarding our “Big Idea”, and we really appreciate the donations that have already been made. Lastly, we could not have done this without our amazing coach, Ms. Casey Anley, who has stuck with us through thick and thin and who has always been very positive about our narrative and helping us refine our many ideas. So, we would like to say a very big thank you to her and we hope that she enjoys her time abroad. Bishops and our team will really miss her.

Conclusion

Our group enjoyed the Big Ideas course very much. It broadened our horizons and taught us new ways of thinking. We had some difficulties as a group and had moments of frustration while ‘sitting in the cloud’. Overall, the positive lessons we have learned about ourselves, from each other and from the Big Ideas course massively outweigh the negative experiences.

We wanted to investigate equality at Bishops, and our in-depth research helped to paint a picture of equality and transformation at Bishops, as well as staff perceptions of how this has been achieved. We hope that this is helpful to Bishops so the school can kickstart change and continue the conversation around reducing inequality. We also wanted to create specific action, and so focused on the physical space occupied by the support staff at Bishops. We decided to do this project as we believe that the support staff may not have the same experience of a Bishops working environment as some of the other staff. We also realised that the conditions of their common room, compared to the common room of the academic staff, is not to the same standard. As a group, we believe that both the support staff and the academic staff play a vital and equally important role in the success of the school, and thus should have access to similar facilities.

We believe that improving the conditions of the ground staff’s common room will make a positive impact and will reduce inequality within Bishops. Once we have renovated the common room, we would have successfully addressed our initial SDG, *Reduced Inequalities*. We recognise that the problem will still not have been fully resolved and we think that the concern for equality of all the staff needs to be an ongoing priority.

Our next steps regarding the project will be collecting the donations and finding a date and time to complete our project and successfully renovate the common room with the involvement of the Bishops community.

Hopefully, in the future we will see a change in the mindset towards the support staff as well as an equal level of respect shown towards all members of staff at Bishops. Our Group has realised that reducing inequality starts with each and every one of us and that we can each make a positive and significant impact in the communities we find ourselves in, when we take the time to notice and start having the important conversations with each other.

Our Group would also like to propose that our “Big Idea” narrative is shared with the Bishop’s Sustainability Committee to continue this important conversation at Bishops and engagement around the reduction of inequality, within our Bishops community.

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