

## Dialogue Program

### RUCE Student Leaders – Strake Jesuit College Preparatory – Black Power Station

- **Venue:** *Black Power Station*, Rautenbach Road, Industrial Area, Makhanda, 6139
- **Date:** *09 March 2026*
- **Time:** *16:30 – 18:30*

### “Community Engagement, Consciousness, and Education: Learning Across Contexts”

This dialogue brings together Student Leaders from Rhodes University Community Engagement (RUCE), Strake Jesuit College Preparatory, and Black Power Station to critically explore how students engage with communities.

The conversation will examine **different traditions of service, solidarity, and community activism**, while reflecting on how education can contribute to **social justice, dignity, and community self-determination**.

- ❖ Historical references from Makhanda are used only as starting points to reflect on present-day responsibilities and the ethics of engagement.

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## Program

**16:30 – 16:40**

### **Welcome, Introductions, & Framing the Space**

- Welcoming
- Individual Introductions & what we are about [everyone]
- Setting expectations & rules of engagement for dialogue [Enver & Keshav]

### **Framing question**

- ❖ What does it mean for students to engage communities with *consciousness* rather than *charity*?

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**16:40 – 17:00**

### **Dialogue 1: What Do We Mean by Community Engagement?**

## Facilitated by RUCS Student Leaders & Open Discussion

Short framing:

Universities and schools often speak about *service*, *community engagement*, or *social justice*. However, these terms can mean very different things depending on the institutional or regional context.

### Critical dialogue themes

- What is the difference between service, outreach, and community engagement?
- What responsibilities do students have when entering community spaces?

### Comparative reflection

- **Rhodes University:** community engagement integrated with teaching and research
- **Jesuit education tradition:** [*what are your community engagement practices based on?*]

### Key prompt

- ❖ How do our institutions shape the way we understand our responsibility toward communities?

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17:00 – 17:20

## Dialogue 2: Consciousness, Power, and Community Knowledge

### Facilitated by Black Power Station

Short framing:

The Black Consciousness tradition emphasizes **psychological liberation, dignity, and the agency of Black communities** in defining their own futures.

### Dialogue themes

- Who defines what “development” or “community improvement” looks like?
- How do students avoid reproducing **power hierarchies** when engaging communities?
- Why is **community knowledge** often undervalued compared to academic knowledge?

## Guiding reflection

- ❖ How can students shift from *helping communities* to *working with communities in solidarity*?
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17:20 – 17:40

## Dialogue 3: Education, Access, and Institutional Responsibility

Facilitated by RUCES & Strake Jesuit Students

Short contextual note:

Institutions of education have historically shaped who has access to knowledge, leadership opportunities, and social mobility.

### Dialogue themes

- Barriers to **access in education**
- What it means for universities and schools to be **accountable to surrounding communities**
- Student-led initiatives that build **bridges between institutions and communities**

### Prompt

- ❖ What responsibilities do students have in transforming educational institutions so they serve broader society?
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17:40 – 18:00

## Dialogue 4: Symbols, Memory, and Transformation

Facilitated by Black Power Station

Short framing:

Debates around historical symbols in South African institutions have raised deeper questions about **whose histories are recognised and whose voices shape the future**.

### Dialogue themes

- Why symbols and narratives matter in shaping identity
- Moving from symbolic debates to **material change in communities**
- The role of young people in shaping **more inclusive institutions**

### Guiding question

- ❖ How do we move from remembering history to **actively transforming society?**
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**18:00 – 18:30**

### Collaborative Reflection: Learning Across Contexts

#### Joint facilitation

Participants reflect on **differences and similarities** between their approaches to engagement.  
[everyone]

Possible discussion prompts:

- What surprised you about how the other institution approaches community engagement?
- What can **Rhodes students learn from Jesuit service traditions & vice-versa?**
- How can student leaders collaborate **without reproducing unequal power relationships?**
- One insight gained
- One commitment for future **engaged citizenship**

Closing reflection:

Community engagement is not only about projects — it is about **relationships, consciousness, and responsibility to the communities we learn from.**

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*“The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed.”*

- Steve Biko

*“If you have come here to help me you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”*

- Lilla Watson

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