

Dear Mr Trench

I just wanted to thank the Daily Dispatch for hosting the Dinokeng Dialogue today. These public conversations are such an excellent idea, and I hope you continue with them. And I expect that support for them will increase a lot as they go on.

Three things that I thought were particularly wonderful today were:

* A number of people who attended the workshop exchanged contact details and decided to meet regularly for continued discussions (they are meeting after the next Dialogue next week, for example). I think this is probably the best thing that can come out of dialogues like this - that people continue them.

* I was in a discussion group with a young lady from Duncan Village, who is repeating her matric. She was telling us how terrible conditions are where she lives, and how few people make it out of her neighbourhood. But at the end of the workshop she was so excited, she joined the group intending to continue the discussions. She told me that the event made her realise that she should be finding out more about the world, that she should be reading books. And that perhaps she could educate herself, and find a positive future for herself. It was so lovely to see. I offered her a lift home and she asked me to rather drop her in town, where she was going to have a look at the library.

* An old white lady commented at the end of the discussion that she had been feeling very increasingly disconnected from and unwanted in our country, but that this event really changed that for her. She really felt she had an opportunity to participate in this and it was very valuable for her. I thought that that was a wonderful thing. And hopefully this will be continued with further Dialogues. The workshop format was particularly useful for this, I think, because people could sit and chat about the issues with people from widely different sectors of society. (I know the group she was in, for example, was of three people, one of whom had identified himself as unemployed and speaking on behalf of unemployed people. What a fantastic opportunity for people so distant in age and race and culture and wealth to engage with one another!)

So thank you for initiating this, and I hope they continue!

Regards,
Laura