

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONS

2020
issue

MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Prof Veonna Goliath

Dear Social work students and colleagues

This first year in the HOD seat has truly felt like a baptism by fire. Apart from having to transition to online learning and teaching, our Department had to function with a smaller full-time staff complement. In addition to the two staff members who were on sabbatical, we also had staff on sick leave. We wish Mrs Gwam and Mansvelt tenacity and prayers for focus as they head towards the completion of their Phd's and wish our staff on sick leave, improved health and wellbeing. I wish to pay special tribute to our contract staff and full time SDP team of mainly women (but of course also acknowledging Vuyo who provides us with a gender balance), who lead with compassionate hearts, attuned ears and sharp, critical minds. I thank you for courageously challenging injustices, pushing for equity and extending yourselves far beyond the call of duty this year. Despite spending many hours on WhatsApp, MsTeams, Zoom, Moodle, and many other virtual platforms to engage with students, our team has managed to contribute to the body of knowledge through journal publications, and book chapters, critically reviewing manuscripts and theses for local and international academic partners. The Engagement report will also provide you with a glimpse of the many platforms where colleagues' advocacy voices have been heard and where we humbly stood in service of our community as we collectively fought the brutalising effects of Covid-19 and its' unmasking of prevailing inequalities in our society.

The successful completion of the first semester by 94% of our social work students is great reason for celebration. However, when measured against the odds against which this was achieved, I cannot help but wonder about the price of this quest for academic success. Students, you trusted us by sharing how you had to type assignments on cellphones (in many cases devices borrowed from supportive neighbours); walking many kilometres to "pick up a signal"; you submitted handwritten assignments via picture messages on what's app; you "let us into your homes" where you were tending to younger siblings, crop and herd during the day; knowing that any request to be excused from "household chores" is not permissible for an African child. These are but a few of the odds that several of you endured this year. Add to this the complex trauma of personally contracting the dreaded Corona virus, losing loved ones and sources of livelihood, whilst stressing about looming assignment submission dates. I stand in awe of you and pray that the deeper meaning of these experiences serve you well. Our fourth years deserve a special mention for conducting practicum in more than 12 practice organisations and schools and ultimately serving on the frontline during one of the most challenging times in human history.

Our hearts go out to staff and students who lost parents, siblings, members of their family/clan and dear friends. May their souls rise in glory and your fond memories of your loved ones continue to inspire you to embrace life and health as treasured gifts. We salute our late Dean of Health Sciences, Prof Lungile Pepeta for recognising and validating the social work profession and for demonstrating that social standing and status do not determine a person's worth. Rest in Eternal peace.

Lastly, we congratulate the four undergraduate and three postgraduate students who will receive their degrees via the virtual graduation ceremony on 18 December 2020 (see page 17 for graduates names).

Students and staff, may you all enjoy good health and have a well-deserved rest and quality time with your loved ones.

Our vision and mission

The vision of the Department of Social Development Professions

To be a vibrant, authentic, engaged department; recognised for the training and development of well-rounded, contextually relevant social development practitioners; responsive to the diverse needs and who can facilitate meaningful change and enhance well-being of people.

The mission of the Department of Social Development Professions

To engage in student-centred teaching and generate indigenous knowledge through research that is responsive to community needs; informs social work practice; underpinned by theories of social work, social and human sciences within a social development paradigm.

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Online Pledge Ceremony

NELSON MANDELA
UNIVERSITY

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONS**

**PLEDGE CEREMONY
PROGRAMME**

23 SEPTEMBER 2020

**WELCOMING AND PURPOSE
OF THE CEREMONY**

Dr Annaline Keet

**OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE
CEREMONY AND WELCOMING OF
SPECIAL GUESTS**

**DVC: L&T
Prof Cheryl Foxcroft**

**SACCSP REGISTRAR ADDRESS
ON UPHOLDING THE CODE OF
ETHICS**

Ms Langi Malamba

READING OF THE PLEDGE IN ENGLISH

Ms Nozipho Hokonya

READING OF THE PLEDGE IN ISIXHOSA

Mr Vuyo Diko

STUDENTS RESPOND

VOTE OF THANKS AND CLOSURE

This year, our Pledge Ceremony had to take a different format than before, but there was no hesitation that our Pledge Ceremony would still take place, staff made sure that everything was perfect when our final year students took their oath.

Amongst our guests were our DVC Academic, Prof Cheryl Foxcroft and the SACCSP registrar, Ms Langi Malamba. They highlighted that this was the very first Online Pledge Ceremony to take place.

The Pledge was read in isiXhosa and English. All students switched on their cameras when they took their Pledge in English. Once all the students took the Pledge, attendees switched on their cameras and microphones as well since this was a celebratory moment for everyone present!

We wish our 4th year students well as they step out as professional social workers soon.

4th year students at their Pledge Ceremony



How COVID-19 impacted my 2020 academic year

By Siwaphiwe Bebe

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When I started this year, never in my wildest dreams did I think that I would be forced to complete my third year at home. I knew that this year was not going to be easy, I knew that I would have to push myself, but I did not realise how much I would be challenged. I am the type of person who works well under pressure (so I believe), but this year's pressure is pressure that I have never experienced in my life before, in fact, I would not want to experience it again.

When the president announced a nationwide lockdown in South Africa for three weeks, like many, I did not think that come December, we would still be in lockdown. When it came to my studies, I thought it would be "easier" because I am at home and would be able to do my work in my time, but I quickly came to the realisation that that was not the case! Online learning is a challenge even for those who deem themselves "tech savvy"; There were moments where I

became so frustrated! There is a BIG difference between face-to-face lectures and online learning. With online learning, the work becomes overwhelming and it does not help that you are confined to one space; if I am not in the dining room, I was in my room, there is no separation from home life to university as the two were merged as they took place in the same environment.

I know that many of my fellow classmates prefer second semester to the first semester, but for me, it's quite the opposite. Yes, we were introduced to online learning and we experienced many difficulties, but the workload was not as much, and we did not have as many lectures in first semester, most of the times, yes, we would have standard lecture times, but we also had the option to schedule lectures when we did not understand the work at hand. Even though we as students are overwhelmed, one can easily see that

the lecturers are also exhausted, this year is difficult on everyone.

As much as online learning is challenging, for me, the one advantage to it is that lecturers are somewhat more lenient. I feel that lecturers know that we are under a lot of pressure and are very overwhelmed as students, so they are more understanding. The disadvantage to online learning is that people (family) think that you will be accessible to them and you are expected to do many things, sometimes you are forced to neglect your work.

2020 has been a challenging year for many, it has pushed many people to their limits. There have been many tears that have been shed, I would not have gotten to where I am today without the support of my family, friends, lecturers and the people in my life. We don't know what 2021 has in store for us, but we can only pray that it is better than 2020.

2020 Social Work Student Society exec



**Chairperson
Zenande Jack**



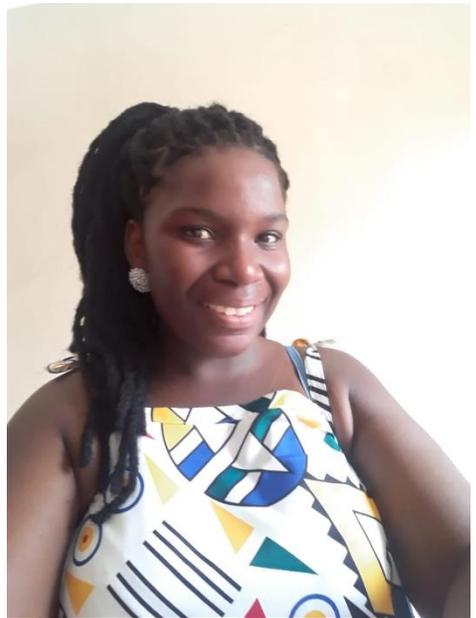
**Vice-chairperson
Nelson Mohale**



**Secretary
Zinzi Nqakula**



**PRO
Lungelo Madlala**



**Treasurer
Phiwokuhle Dakela**

Social Work Society student dialogue

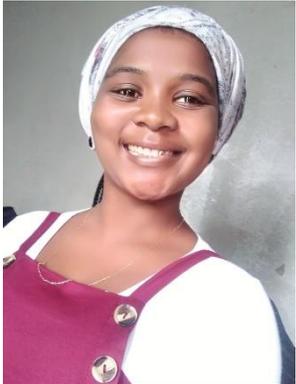
The Social Work Society exec, along with the assistance of Dr Perumal and Mr Diko organized dialogues for both the Social Work staff as well as the students. The dialogues took place over four days; they were centred on the learning experiences during COVID-19.

Students had many learning experiences/challenges to share. One student said “My biggest expectation from this dialogue was to create a safe space for us as students to discuss and deal with whatever issues we are having, so that we can all find a way forward and show unity, to engage with our lecturers and also voice out how we have been coping throughout this ordeal”. These dialogues were aimed at exactly that, creating a safe space for students to share their experiences of their learning during COVID-19. Having said this, lecturers also expressed the reasoning for them attending the dialogues, lecturers wanted to learn from the student experiences in turn, knowing how exactly to assist students with any challenges experienced.

These challenges included: challenges with online learning as a whole, network issues, non-conducive work environment, etc. All these played a major factor in students’ learning experiences.

The dialogues were a success as they created a safe space for students to express themselves freely and for the lecturers to listen and hear what they can do to better assist students with their learning experiences and challenges during COVID-19.

2020 First-year Academic Mentors



Alicia Daniels



Londiwe Mkhwanazi



Madelynn Diesel



Shari McGear



Zenande Jack



Debaneigh Jordaan



Thato Tsalong



Siwaphiwe Bebe



Jamonique Smith



Alizwa September



2020 BSW Academic Mentors with Dr Razia Lagardien

2021 First-year academic Mentors:

Basetsane Selela

Jaimie Boucher

Khanyisa Zibe

Nikita Gelandt

Roseanne Richardson

Buhle Yali

Malibongwe Ntshuntshe

Hluma Myingwa

Nobuhle Charles

Reimagining Schools in our Communities



The development of a child's mathematical ability, language and literacy, self-concept and self-confidence, profoundly influences the rest of their life

Reimagining Schools in Our Communities

Centre for the Community School (CCS) in the Faculty of Education at Nelson Mandela University.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the structural inequalities in our society and further exposed the country's two-tier education system. Even before the pandemic, 75% of our schools, predominantly those in socio-economically marginalised communities, did not deliver the same quality education as those in middle-class communities.

"We need to use this time of unprecedented disruption to move away from the notion of getting schools back to the way they were pre-pandemic, and to reimagine them as forming part of the broader social justice discourse and the critical need for redress in society," says Dr Bruce Damons, Director of the Centre for the Community School (CCS).

Over the past ten years, the CCS has been deeply engaged in understanding the key elements of a contextually responsive education system, and has been collaborating with a number of schools in the greater Nelson Mandela Bay and rural Eastern Cape to reconceptualise themselves as "community schools".

The community school is a school that is deeply part of its community in a community that is deeply part of the school. It is a space that is 'of' the community rather than 'in' the community. This approach to schooling requires engaging with schools, teachers, parents, community members, NGOs, CBOs, government departments and universities, to co-create solutions to current and future schooling challenges.

In 2019 the CCS was awarded a National Research Foundation grant to develop theoretical and practice-based models of school improvements that are relevant and responsive to the realities and socioeconomic issues of schools and the communities they serve. In 2019/2020 the centre produced and published *Reimagining our schools, strengthening our communities*, its first publication on the community school.

Dr Damons explains, "We need to foreground the knowledge of our communities and stakeholders in re-constructing the schooling space. Certain schools have triumphed over many years in spite of the severe socio-economic and other adversities they face. Their success relates to the strengths of the communities in which they are situated. These schools present an important opportunity

for us to understand the agency of the community school, which engenders a sense of ownership of the schools by the communities in which they are situated."

Rural school experiences

Since 2017, the CCS and the Ikamvelo Development Trust (IKDT) in Cala in the rural Eastern Cape have been piloting co-constructed school improvement plans with four schools, two high schools and two primary schools.

Numerous engagements have been held with principals, educators, parents and learners at the pilot schools, leading to the establishment of Sakhingomso (building a better tomorrow), a programme guided by five themes of collaboration, namely: teaching and learning support; psycho-social support; infrastructure; capacity building and community and stakeholder support. The participating groups identified contextually relevant school improvement projects under these themes for "scaffolded" implementation from 2018, based on priorities and available resources.

"Working with the rural schools in Willowvale, Mvezo and Qumbu is a fantastic learning experience as it challenges our notions of rurality. In these areas there is huge agency and willingness to engage and think through the challenges; the engagements are so enriching, and the CCS brings so much knowledge back to share with all our other communities of practice," says Dr Damons.

Success in the Metro

In Nelson Mandela Bay, the Manyano Network of Community Schools, which has supported education in working class areas for many years, is one of the CCS's key partners. Charles Duna Primary in New Brighton is one of these partner Manyano schools. Led by Principal Numbulelo Sume since 1998, the school has 1 063 learners from Grade R to Grade 7.

Sume explains that many of the learners come from informal settlements where their lives are unspeakably hard, unemployment is rife, as are gangs, violence, single parent homes, orphans and HIV/AIDS.



The CCS in the Faculty of Education is committed to all children receiving a first-class educational start in life



"The power of dealing with our circumstances is in our hands, with education as the pinnacle." – Principal Nombulelo Sume, Charles Duna Primary, New Brighton

Despite this, over the past 15 years they have turned the school into a place of optimism, with 27 parent volunteers on site. It epitomises what the community school should be. The school has a well-managed library and reading clubs; they are also setting up two science labs for Grade 5 to 7 with funding they applied for from the Mosepe Foundation, as well as a computer lab for IT skills training and where community members can learn computer skills.

Community and NGOs

Community volunteers have supported the learners and their families throughout the pandemic and are an inspiration. Koleka Ndzuta, for example, started volunteering at Charles Duna in 2003 when her child was at the school. Ndzuta was unemployed at the time and received R500 from the government's Expanded Public Works Programme for her volunteering. She rose through the system and in 2011 was appointed as a Grade R teacher at Charles Duna and completed her ECD Level 4 and 5. She has since graduated with a BEd from Nelson Mandela University and is currently studying for her master's in educational psychology.

Community agency is complemented by external stakeholders and the important role they perform in the school and after-school space. One of these stakeholders is Masifunde, an NGO whose initiative, *quaranTV* – a self-produced TV show – brings content from core learning programmes to social media and to the local TV station, Bay TV. Episodes feature literacy, drama, music, visual arts, cooking, health and fitness, COVID awareness and prevention of domestic and gender-based violence.

Dr Damons concludes, "Responding to the pandemic presents us with an ideal opportunity to engage with all stakeholders around a model of school that can form part of a community response to other grand societal challenges. Our overall aim as the Faculty of Education and CCS is to participate in clarifying and defining what a quality public education system in South Africa should look like in service to society, and more specifically how we reimagine schools as beacons of hope and opportunity."



Dr Bruce Damons

(Article found in the University's Research & Innovation Report. Pg 14-16)

Link: <https://publications.mandela.ac.za/publications/flip/RR2020/index.html>



Parents with Children in Trouble with the Law

A new model and process has been developed to provide support to parents with children in trouble with the law.

The parents of children in conflict with the law are an essential part of the child justice system, and their needs have to be addressed.

"We understand the court is the upper guardian of children but their parents or carers must be central to the system. We need to hear their voices and engage with their issues," says Dr Zurina Abdulla from the Department of Social Development Professions.

Under the guidance of her promoters, Professor Blanche Pretorius and Professor Veonna Goliath, Dr Abdulla has published a number



Dr Zurina Abdulla

of papers on the model and process she developed in response to this area of legal and social engagement, based on research for her doctoral thesis: *A Co-constructed Practice Model for Supporting Parents of Children in Conflict with the Law*. She received the Engagement Excellence Award from the University in 2018 and graduated with her PhD in April 2019.

The model has been endorsed at the district, provincial and national level. As part of her postdoctoral research, to be completed in 2022, she will be developing a training programme for child justice stakeholders to facilitate the meaningful participation of parents in the system.

"Within the model we have categories of parents, as some parents need assistance for a number of different reasons," says Dr Abdulla. "Their children might be involved with drugs or they don't care or they are not coping in managing their children's behaviour.

The new model makes provision for why the parent isn't coping or doesn't recognise their responsibilities. Once we know what is happening in the home environment we can help to support the parent/carer in assuming responsibility for their child."

Dr Abdulla's research was based on parents' experiences of monitoring compliance with what are known as diversion orders. "Prior to joining the University in 2015, I worked in the child justice system at NICRO [the National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders]. When children go through the local child justice court because they have clashed with the law, a diversion order is made for the child to attend programmes with NICRO, and the parents have to make sure they comply. Most of the offences are schedule 1 or 2 offences, including possession of drugs, shoplifting, breaking and entering, or assault."

Research on this process indicated that parents often struggle to get the child to the venue for the programme and to manage the child's behaviour, which might be causing financial issues or marital conflict, for example. Many parents find it very difficult to cope with the fact that their child has clashed with the law. There is also the initial shock when the child does not return home because they are in a police cell, or the police arrive at their home to inform them about their child.

While at NICRO, Dr Abdulla recommended that something had to be done to support parents while their child goes through the child justice system and to make sure they comply with the orders issued by the courts.

"That is how the practice model for my PhD evolved," she explains. "Parents from the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro were recruited to co-develop the model together with child justice officials, including probation officers, the police, magistrates, prosecutors, social workers and legal aid attorneys. It was a collective and collaborative model developed over two years."

The Nelson Mandela Bay Metro opened one of the few child justice centres in the country in 2007. "There should be far more child justice centres," says Dr Abdulla, who has been focusing on the transformation of the child justice system in South Africa ever since she started her career as a social worker in 1998.

"We saw how children were treated in prison. Many of these children are from home circumstances that contribute to them landing up in prison. By including their parents or carers in the process, we hope to better manage children in trouble with the law and at the same time work on addressing issues in the home environment."

(Article found in the University's Research & Innovation Report. Pg 42)

Link: <https://publications.mandela.ac.za/publications/flip/RR2020/index.html>

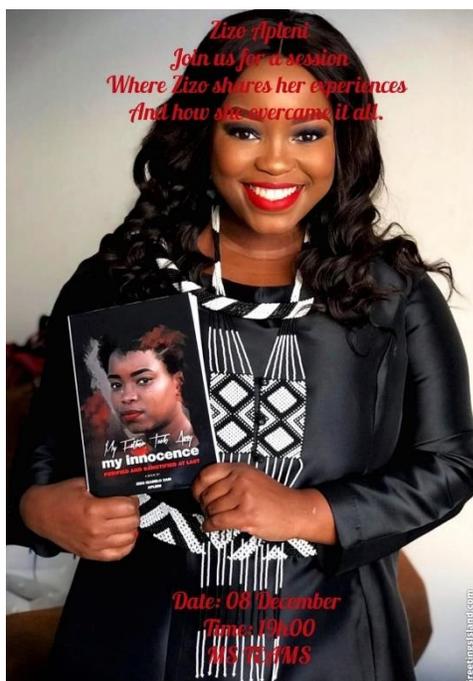
Departmental Community News/Events



Our department led a toy and boardgame drive in March-April 2020 to keep children occupied during lockdown. Helenvale Centre of Hope dispatched the donations to children in the neighbourhood.



Dr Razia Lagardien secured masks for Protea Child and Youth Care Centre via a radio talkshow drive.



As part of the SOCW302 module (child protection), Dr Razia Lagardien arranged a session on MS Teams for the students with the author of "My Father Took Away my Innocence", Zizo Apleni. The invitation was extended to all staff.



Our 3rd year student and also first-year academic mentor, Alicia Daniels created a soup kitchen to feed 60 children in Uitenhage.

Dr Razia Lagardien

Brief Summary of Engagement Activities: Probono mediation services at the New Law courts on Fridays under the NMU Law Clinic

Partner: NMU Law Clinic

Institutional Partners Involved: NMU Law Clinic

Brief Summary of Engagement Activities: The program is called the “Social Justice” show and we present topics and social issues from a social perspective as well as a legal perspective. Topics thus far have included: mediation, domestic violence, marriage preparation, divorce

Partner: Local community radio station (IFM)

Brief Summary of Engagement Activities: Presenting monthly workshops to Muslim Religious leaders on counselling skills

Partner: Council of Ulemah

Prof Annaline Keet

Brief Summary of Engagement Activities: Supportive and advisory services to the community based organization and during the COVID-19 period supporting their activities of establishing a soup kitchen in Walmer Township

Partner: Bumba Ikamva/ Early Childhood

Brief Summary of Engagement Activities: Prof Keet serves on exco as International Representative for IASSW (International Association of Schools of Social Work)

Partner: ASASWEI (Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions)

Brief Summary of Engagement Activities: Student exchange (German student exchange 2017 & 2018). Research engagement (2020 onwards jointly with NMU, Coburg University and University of Madras in Chennai)

Partner: Coburg University, Germany and University of Madras

Prof Veonna Goliath

Brief Summary of Engagement Activities: Trauma support sessions with primary schools

Partner: SADRAT NGO Board of directors

Brief Summary of Engagement Activities: Presentation at the online webinar held on 10 June 2020 on acholism and working with the alcoholic

Partner: South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP)

Institutional Partners Involved: University of Johannesburg

Brief Summary of Engagement Activities: Education C19 Community of Practice: Conversation. There were different themes every week by different facilitators. Biopscho/emotional socio support was the theme presented by Prof Goliath

Partner: Nelson Mandela University

Brief Summary of Engagement Activities: Consultation with 17 community health care workers; health counsellors to co-construct community health course

Partner: Social Development Professions and CIPSET

Institutional Partners Involved: CIPSET

Dr Nevashnee Perumal

Brief Summary of Engagement Activities: Presented a webinar with postgrads from NMU (Vuyo Diko and Aphiwe Ntloko) to universities across SA and Africa regarding emergency remote online learning

Partner: ASASWEI and ASSWA

Brief Summary of Engagement Activities: Founding member of the South African radical social work network of social workers, academics and students.

Hosted 3 webinars viz. launch of the network, violent racism and critical conversations with SACSSP on the state of social work during COVID-19.

Produced 2 statements to the South African public:

1. COVID-19 and the management by government
2. The Basic Income grant

Published one article in the Daily Maverick

Webinars attract an audience of social workers from all over the country.

Partner: Social Work Action Network- South Africa (SWAN-SA)

Brief Summary of Engagement Activities: Prepared a statement on the academic position regarding Emergency Remote Online Learning at HEIs for circulation to Usaf, SACSSP, Ministry of HE, CHE and ASASWEI

Partner: Loose formation of 11 social work academics from 9 universities

Presented paper entitled: *Social work academics voices during COVID 19: Turning up the volume* at ASASWEI colloquium, July 2020 with 10 other academics from various universities

Keynote speaker at International Virtual Symposium, August 2020 hosted by Gandhigram Rural Institute (India). Presentation entitled: *Social Work in South Africa and Pandemics: Lessons from African Wisdom*

Member of SWAN campaign group towards activism for unemployed social workers in South Africa

Leading SDP departmental research project with social work academics in the EC on wellbeing during COVID 19

Obtained NRF Competitive Support for Unrated Researchers grant. Project entitled: Decolonising the social work curriculum (Theory, skills and practice) partnering with UFH, USB, UKZN and WITS

Prof Veonna Goliath is the newly appointed HOD of the Department of Social Development Professions. We wish you well in your term of office!

Prof Zoleka Soji, previous HOD of the Department of Social Development Professions, is the newly appointed Director of School of Behavioural & Lifestyle Sciences. Congratulations, Prof Soji!

Ms Nozipho Hokonya joins the department as a contract lecturer who plays a pivotal role in the 4th year practicum. Welcome to the team, Ms Hokonya!

Annaline Keet has been promoted to Associate Professor. Congratulations, Prof Keet on this well deserved promotion!

We wish Mrs Gwam and Mansvelt all the best as they finish off their PhD's!

Congratulations to Prof Keet on a publication in the Nordic Social Work Research Journal. Title: "Personally, I like it. Professionally, it does not make sense" –social work students in South Africa and Sweden making sense of internationalization, with co-authors from Sweden Monika Willinska; Pia Helena Bülöw and colleague from UFS Merlene Esau
Congrats, Prof!

Dr Perumal's application for an NRF grant was successful! The grant funding is for a period of three years for the project - Decolonising the South African Social Work curriculum, which is undertaken in collaboration with colleagues from 3 partner universities. Congratulations, Dr Perumal!

Jovan Mostert

Thobelani Guqulo

Thando Mpande

Mpho Ratefane

Tankiso Phakane

Vimbayi Sithole

Lungile Ngwenya