

Department of
Social Development Professions

Newsletter 2023 2nd Semester Issue

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.





Dear students, colleagues and practice partners,

Semester 1 of 2023 started off with much trepidation and excitement as it was the first time since the start of the COVID pandemic, to have a full return of all academic programmes to face-to-face lectures on our different campuses. It was therefore not uncommon for a third year social work student to request direction to the library or computer labs. As academics, we had to fast track our own learning on using Smart venues and reorientate ourselves and our students, that we could actually see each other during lectures and that there was no computer screen hiding the blank stares and pyjamas which have become the lecture outfits of many during online lectures.

The start of the academic year have been plagued by the ongoing inequities of student funding and all its related challenges. The inadequate number of shuttles served as a

significant barrier to students adjustment to face-to-face lectures. We are grateful for the UCDG funding from the Learning Development Unit which allows us to have a tutoring programme, specifically for students who had a delayed and interrupted start to the academic year. Nine months into the academic year, inequitable and inefficient disbursement of student funding remains one of the most serious hurdles to our students academic journey. We continue our efforts to alert students to sources of funding as we become aware of them; and to direct students to both internal and external sources to address these barriers.

Dr Gwam's Ph. D. graduation was an inspirational memorable celebration; as was our social work student and staff wellness day on 27 May 2023. Many students expressed appreciation for the opportunity to get to know their peers across the different year levels. I remain hopeful that this learning community will be deepened as a socially conscious community, which place HUMANS at the centre and help us nurture the gift of relationships. With a total of 483 social work students (including 22 postgraduates), and 9 full time academic staff members of which two are in Faculty management positions and Dr Nordien-Lagardien on sick leave since March 2023, we celebrate the commitment of our core support team. They comprise

of our Dept. administration managers Zipho 2023 Department of Social Development Professions Moyikwa and Boitumelo Matla; our contract staff members, post-doc scholar, Dr Busi Lujabe, our two research associates, Prof Blanche Pretorius and Prof Thando Nomngcoyiya our five social work interns (Mitha Njamele, Jason Pietersen; Shanay Vannies; Phindile DeBooi and Zinzi Nqaqula; our Business science intern Thabo Majola; and Education Intern, Lineze Heydenrycht. Our practice and engagement partners, we cannot have this academic programme without your firm and consistent partnership.



I am hopeful that every social work student can attest to the key focus on indigenous and de-colonial knowledge ; and our efforts to have a collaborative learning exchange in each of our lectures. We invite you to continue to critique the learning and assessment methods and to work alongside us to have socially conscious graduates that are active citizens in each of the communities you step into. My wish is for each staff member and student to take a well deserved break during the September recess and to recharge for the last term of this year. I am privileged to be in your service.

Prof Veonna Goliath
Head of Department

Short Learning Programme

We are excited and delighted to announce the department will be providing a short-learning programme in Clinical Social Work Intervention with Families.

The programme will be equipping participants with specialist knowledge and skills in the following areas:

1. Structural therapy for working with families who are dealing with blended families
2. Narrative therapy for working with families who are dealing with addictions (Substance use disorder and behavioural addictions)
3. Divorce mediation and parenting plans.

The programme will be taking place from 14 – 16 August / 19 – 20 October 2023

Learning platform:

Online learning through Microsoft Teams. The workshop will take the format of online lecturing, class discussion, role play and case analysis.

Apply online at: slp.mandela.ac.za

SHORT LEARNING PROGRAMME

Clinical Social Work Intervention with Families

Faculty of Health Sciences

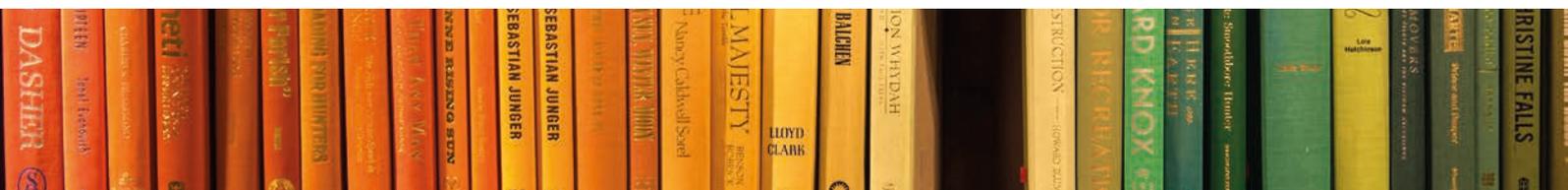
ZIHOZONKE MOYIKWA
041 504 2353
ZIHOZONKE.MOYIKWA@MANDELA.AC.ZA

Apply online at slp.mandela.ac.za

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Contents

Staff Achievements

Prof Keet ASASWEI Conference in
SEOUL KOREA

Dr Perumal Incubator Project Indian
Trip with Prof Veonna Goliath

Engagement News

The Hope Revolution
Mental Health Awareness Project
Mandela Day

Learning and Teaching

Students transition from online learning to face-to-face (1st ,2nd year, 3rd years)
First year orientation, stationary packs
4th year pledge
MSW candidate winning a prize
Students open letter to the DVC
SDP PG open day
Graduates

Staff News

Dr Gwam PhD accomplishment
New interns

First semester of 2023

SDP staff and student engagement day
Mentors' first semester mentoring experience

Staff Achievements

ASASWEI Colloquium

ASASWEI (Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions) together with multiple partners, will have its biennial conference in Durban from 27th to 29th of September 2023. This event that occurs every second year is as always, a good ASASWEI



Colloquium Contribution: Prof Anneline Keet opportunity to have Social Work academics, practitioners and students in South Africa, the region and global community to engage in cutting-edge, context specific knowledge creation. The conference theme for this year is, "Advancing Social Work Praxis through Strengthened Multi-Sectoral Responses to Adversity, Vulnerability and Trauma." In deciding what should be the title of a specific conference, the organisers usually engage with the pressing social issues that concerns the profession. Every alternative year, ASASWEI has a colloquium that brings together academics across the country and the focus of the 2022 event titled, "Social Work Relevance during times of Climate Change and Disasters: #KZN FLOODS" was another such event that engaged the issues at hand. Prof Keet, as representative of the ASASWEI Exco, worked together with a team that included academics from UKZN (University of KwaZulu Natal), to ensure a successful two-day engagement to interrogate the impact of the devastating floods on people's lives and what this mean

for Social Work response during these times. This online event was hosted on the Faculty of Health Sciences Zoom platform and with the support of Philipp Hoelzer and his team from the Faculty, was a seamless experience. ASASWEI also provided monetary contribution to the efforts of UKZN at the time. In September 2023, ASASWEI will also vote in its new leadership for the next two years. Prof Keet will step down as International Representative as her cycle of serving is drawing to a close. Together with the SDP team, she wishes the new leadership team well.

Contribution: Prof Anneline Keet

Incubator Project: India Edition



Ask me about the
African Knowledge
Production Incubators

For many years the academic environment has grappled with the (un)justness of the Eurocentric and Western curriculum content and knowledge systems used in higher education. We therefore thought a lot about how to give effect to a decolonised and indigenised curriculum in social work in South Africa.

The African Knowledge Production Incubators (AKPI) project was born of a desire to take action. Hence, based on the Participatory Action Learning Action Research (PALAR) approach the AKPI project is based on a collective co creation of African lived experiences from six social work academics across five South African

Universities viz. Nelson Mandela, University of the Witwatersrand (WITS) , Stellenbosch (SU), University of Fort Hare (UFH) and the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN). Based on the methodology, all of us are researchers as well as participants in this project.

This project is designed on the concept of incubating. The term incubators refers to a safe, academic space created for developing and nurturing thoughts and ideas on what constitutes African knowledge. During incubation we retreat cognitively from familiar routines, interactions and power relations to question and rethink established sources of knowledge (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). We also read, appreciate and interrogate the works of de-colonial and indigenous writers during the incubations. It is necessary to do this because critical consciousness requires a personal awareness of the political, social and economic contradictions which is most crucial for personal cognitive liberation (Freire, 1970).

The project is in its 3rd and final year. We have launched secondary incubators in all five partner universities, co generated our first academic article, jointly attended the UKVentana conference online and most recently did a knowledge exchange with India as a BRICS partner. We are busy with a creative output using photo-voice presently and also supervising postgraduate students under this

umbrella. We are convening a symposium this year with visiting scientists from Ecuador and India together with our postgraduate students across our five universities. The final output for this project is gravitating around a foundational social work module that will be co-generated for piloting in our five universities in 2024.

Incubator Project: African Knowledge Production



From L-R: Prof Veonna Goliath (NMU), Dr Motlalepule Nathane (WITS), Dr Priscalia Khosa (SU), Dr Mbongeni Sithole (UKZN), Prof Thanduxolo Nomngcoyiya (UFH), Dr Nevashnee Perumal (NMU)

The African Knowledge Production incubators is an NRF funded project which is in its third year of funding. The team consists of six academics from 5 South African universities. This year our major project activities centred around preparing a manuscript on the work we have done during our incubation in 2021.

Priscalia Khosa and Motlalepule Nathane were keen to travel to York in the UK to attend a decolonial conference hosted by Ventana, UK from 4-7 October. Unfortunately, this was rendered impossible due to the cost and visa delays. We quickly decided to all convene in Gqeberha and join the conference online. We hosted an imbizo at this conference where we presented our project and engaged the audience in critical self reflection within their contexts. The engagement was thought provoking and well received. Our main takeaway from this was

the relationships we developed with colleagues such as Adriana Moreno Cely from Belgium who researches and promotes humble togetherness. This tenets of this lie alongside those of Ubuntu philosophy.

At the Ventana conference in Gqeberha

We launched the extended incubators within four our departments in the different institutions. Here, we presented our project with the intention of inviting our colleagues to join the conversations on indigenizing the curriculum, africanising practice and challenging own thinking. There is some work that must still be done for all departments to realise the prospective benefits of this project although in some departments the project and participation was well received.

Engagement News

The Hope Revolution



The Hope Revolution programme held an informative training at the Missionvale Campus from the 2nd to the 3rd June 2023.

The Hope Revolution Vision programme within the Nelson Mandela Bay is centred at creating circles of hope, through carefronting and a community-based substance abuse approach. The Hope Revolution programme held an informative training at the Missionvale Campus from the 2nd to the 3rd June 2023, where it was facilitated by the founder of the Hope Revolution Rev. Dr. Jacobus Nomdoe and Dr Bruce Damons, Director of Engagement. The training covered in depth detail on the various drugs found in our communities, their effects and the stages

of addiction. From the training programme, there were 18 sites identified that will form part of the circles of hope within the metro including the pilot site, in Gelvandale.

The URC church in Gelvandale is the pilot site where the vision of the Hope Revolution will be pivoted from. There are currently four interns from the SDP department that will be responsible for running the site. The education intern has Lineze Heydenrycht already been actively involved in the community reading programme run by the church.

Mental Health Awareness Project

Our newly appointed social work interns Mr Phindile De Booie and Miss Zinzi Nqakula held an interview with one of the successful teenagers in Gqeberha who has been diagnosed with intellectual disability, Mr SK Gibson Sefuba. Mr Gibson is well-known for his successful modelling career and he is one of the learners at Lonwabo High school in KwaZakhele. The interview highlighted on the transition he had to go through after a tragic accident that led to him being diagnosed with intellectual disability. During the interview, Mr Gibson, informed us about his journey to accepting that he now has to live with the intellectual disability, how his family coped with this transition and what others can learn from his interview with our staff.

“A sudden accident on a normal day happened when SK was sent to the shops by his single mother. When he crossed the street, it was too late for him when he noticed a car coming rushing towards him, then he was hit by the car. After regaining his consciousness, in Dora Nginza Hospital, he realised that he was in intensive care with a lot of machinery and other related equipment and that is exactly the time the doctors were doing a brain CT scan and he was put on medication to modulate pain and treatment towards his physical condition at the time. According to SK, the doctors suggested MRI test, new spectacles as his vision sight was affected by the accident and suggested that he must be issued with a hearing aid as he also lost his full hearing capacity. A sudden change in a young person’s life, according to SK the process was unpleasant, filled with lot of physical pain and emotionally was prevalent towards him. He was not happy with the process and felt uncomfortable and confused as he was in pain. A lots of tests were done,



he was diagnosed even in the process that the accident has caused the brain injury. It was very difficult to cope with the situation because he was confronted by double trauma between the effects of the accident and the fact that he was diagnosed with intellectual challenges after multiple tests were done.

SK had to deal with stigma within the community where people attached names and label him as mentally ill or retarded person with names in isiXhosa like, “uyaphambana, uligeza or ufunda emagezeni” meaning that he is a mad person and belongs with other mad people. With their limited knowledge they misunderstood that the school that he went to Department

of Social Development Professions was not for mentally - ill people, but for children with special needs and learning difficulties. That made him hate the school he went to, but most of his peer learners were supportive to one another because of the culture that was instilled in that school. That alone according to his words "made me angry and I lost self-confidence and I curse the day the accident happened." Although he, on the hand still felt as a normal child and believed that one day things will change for the better. That has kept hope alive in him and that has contributed as a confrontational coping mechanism of being aware of self and accepting his condition.

Family has been a strong support system, especially his mother that still treats him as her last born child and always guide him, advocate for him to get better support, better education and better treatment. The Church has played a special role as a social support enforcing and practising the value of Ubuntu and were able to help with emotional stability and even helped with extra support including food packages and family visitations. His psychologist has helped in rationalising matters and helped him to be able to reason, make informed decisions and make sense of what he went through. His speech therapist strategies have been responsive towards his special needs as he is at least an average learner at the school and still improving on processing and communicating information. The accident trauma and experiences with stigma and being

uncomfortable with the doctor processes, made him lose self-confidence, but the fact that he kept seeing himself as normal and his perception towards life changed and he realised his special ambitions, like wishing to be a tennis player and compete on the international level.

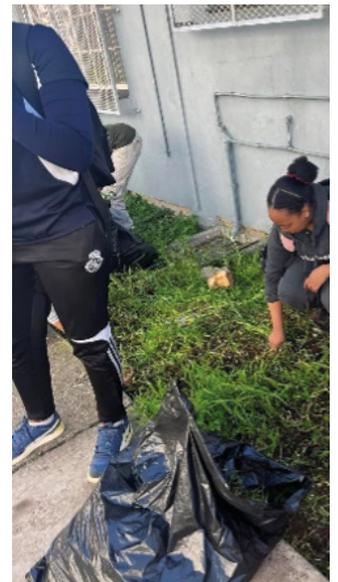
After he was introduced by his mother to modelling he realised other special attributes he was not aware of. His commitment, discipline and ambitions kept him focused and he became a winner in modelling, through a strong support and guidance from his coach within the modelling agency, that has been a mentor, encourager and more of an enabler. In his words "I appreciate the support of my coach. He always motivates me, made me realised my potential and helped me to develop independence and always think like a winner." His school slogan ("Impossible is Nothing") has kept him inspired and always wanted to fulfil the dream of the school and be an ambassador he is, which made him feel he can achieve anything in life and reach for the sky. His mission is to be a successful model and even move beyond borders where he can compete internationally, while influencing other young people with special needs to realise that they can also be successful in life. According to SK "as someone with intellectual disabilities, know that you still have all the organs of your body. Remember that nothing is impossible to all disabled humans, let us fight the stigma of disability, because we are all able and we are all the same".





Mandela Day

Our department received an invitation to be a part of the 2023 Mandela Day at a placement in Gelvandale High School alongside with the Engagement Director Dr Bruce Damons, and their great team. The day was such a success, our students joined and we were able to establish a food garden by the hostel, scrub, polish and revamp the hostel and make it a better and safer space for the learners. We continue to work with the Gelvandale project and also have our third year students placed there for practicum.



Learning and Teaching

1st Year Students Transition Experience from High School to University



Khanyisile Ntimane

Being a 1st year student at NMU is more of a dream come true for me. I've never had the dream university I wanted to enrol to like everyone else, but I've always wanted to enrol in a university that was far from home. Getting acceptance letter from NMU made me the most happiest person ever. From then I started doing my research about this institution, searched for buildings photos and watched a lot of videos on YouTube. Which explains why I never really struggled to find my way around campus, but that doesn't mean I never got lost. I did get lost 1st day of orientation, that's only because I thought orientation was at the sports centre hahaha funny I know.

University was not as hard as what people always say it is, but I think what made things easy for me was the fact that our lecturers showed care and love for us. They always checked up on how we were doing way before we even got to the institution, that alone made life so much easier. They even prepared stationary for us which was the nicest gesture. I've come to learn

Port Elizabeth is the most beautiful city. There are a lot of fun activities one can do just to distract from academics. But most importantly choosing to study in an institution that is far from home was because I've always wanted to be away from parents and be independent.

Ever since I came to the Eastern Cape I've faced a lot of challenges academically and socially but I've managed to deal with the stress with the help of my mentors and tutors. I've found a home far away from home and now I know how life is without parents and that makes me proud and happy because it shows growth. So, if you're also accepted at an institution that is far from home and you're afraid to leave home and your friends I understand how that feels it's never easy letting go of your friendships and memories you have with your friends. But if you want to grow and change as a person you gotta be ready to let go of what you are so you can become what you want to be. Grab any opportunities that come your way with both hands. Being far from home is going to teach you how to be independent and it helps one to grow. Ooh and another thing it also needs you to be disciplined. There's a lot of freedom here, so one needs to be disciplined and know what they want so they can be able to achieve their goals.



Mukundi Makhita

It has been quite a long journey since the beginning of the year. The first moment I saw an email last year when I was still at home, there at right there I knew that this is where I belong. Regardless of distance high cost in

transport money and stuff I fought tirelessly in order to make it to NMU. When I firstly arrived in NMU it was nice and good, and to be exact it was a dream come true because I got my NSFAS allowances after 3 days, a week later the real struggle began when I had to submit assignment after another, every day was a due date. Yoh I couldn't and on the other side I was

suffering from depression of missing home. I didn't know anything about rugby but when I heard that there is a rugby team in NMU I just wanted to join, remember am from Limpopo the is no such thing as rugby in Limpopo. After joining rugby it started to become a little bit better and I was voted to become the team manager and few weeks later I became class representative and started becoming busy and thinking less about home. I got the best and most supportive girlfriend I could have ever asked for, and for the record I got here in NMU and we have been dating for 4 months now. If you are a student and want to further your studies in Nelson Mandela university my advise to is go for it. But all in all don't forget the golden words "never give up" and "the is still a chance to fight if you are still breathing" from me your future social worker thank you.

2nd Year Experience to Transition from Online Learning to In-Contact Classes

Kamogelo Bahedile

For me, the transition from online classes to being on campus was a very interesting and exciting one, although it brought so many challenges with. I had always wanted to be on campus because I believed that being a University student is being on campus that's all it is, because you get to be exposed to the environment with a lot of things, including different cultures, the diversity of energies and etc. Furthermore, for me it really was helpful in terms of the course that I'm doing, which involves working with people full time. It helped me escape my antisocial era to being used to communicate effectively with people and learn different types of energies. It also

helped in terms of being culturally sensitive. It really was an overwhelming milestone. It taught me so much about change, on how unpredictable and effective change may be at times. I love the fact that it taught me how to prepare myself for change and adapt to it. The challenges I faced mostly had to be punctuality, I was either unreasonably late or early at times. I was also struggling with attending all my classes because it really took a lot from me. At the beginning, I felt mentally drained most of the time and I became extremely lazy. I also



struggled with studying, I did not study much because I was always tired, but eventually I got used to everything and started being consistent in attendance and strategized my studying. The most challenging part about the whole transition was the exams, I really undermined the setting of university sit down exams until my first exam, right there and then I knew for sure that I was a University student.

I really did not do good on my exams because I still had the high school exam mentality. I wish I was told earlier that University exams really expects you to be ponder, it requires your everything basically. Here it also taught me to never underestimate anything again. It taught me to accept my downfalls and I learnt not to dwell on spilled milk.



Imivuyo Malahla

The transition from online to on campus classes was very interesting to say the least, I enjoyed school more, learnt more about myself in terms of studying, taking notes and the importance participating more in

class. Last year I was very lazy and always in my room because where else would I go I was attending online and always being my room took a toll on my mental health, I never had a proper schedule as I would study anytime I wanted and could listen to lecturer recordings sometimes I didn't even attend classes instead I listened to lecturer recordings. On campus classes made me come out of my shell and socialise with people doing my course and get to have discussions about certain topics and learn more about how others think or see things, I like to think since on campus classes I manage my time better and attend classes as I know if I don't attend I won't understand the work and there no lecture recordings. The challenges I faced with on campus are waking up early for classes, sometimes being late to

classes or having no motivation to even attend classes. The transition definitely taught me a lot of things like appreciating the time lectures put in preparing for their classes and teaching us, understanding other peoples perspectives as we all come from different backgrounds, knowing that I'm not the only one struggling mentally, but the most important thing is adapting to situation and make the most out of it. The exams I wouldn't say they were challenging , but instead a learning curve because this is the time were I understood my learning style, what worked for me and how I grasp information and apply it to questions asked in exam, it also opened my mind on how it's important to listen attentively when lecturer is teaching something especially when they keep repeating something it's important to note it down because 70% of time that will come up in the exam. I think for first time university exams I did good enough, but I could have done better, but lost importantly I learnt that in university you don't have to have it all figured out, you don't have to be perfect , you will not always get the marks to hope for, but if you put in the work and take the positive and negatives as they come and learn to improve on the negatives you will be just fine.

3rd Years' Transition from Online Learning to In-Contact Learning

Aashiqah Ford

I found the transition from online learning to being on campus quite difficult, as after doing online for the last 3 years (high school included) it was a very different situation, you had more time to work and study and didn't really have other distractions during the classes as you do now. Whilst being on campus it's a matter of going to and from campus both of which take up time, as well as the time spent between classes where one can't really go home since the petrol is expensive but there's no place in the library to sit and get work down.

I personally struggled to cope with this change especially at the start but it got better as the year is progressing. Advice I have to other students is to stay determined and make sure to keep focus during classes and try your best not to procrastinate. And most importantly don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it!



Sinenjongo Mcinga

The transition from online learning to on campus was stressful for me. I'm a person who suffers from migraines a lot especially when I'm stressed and

during exams and classes I had a lot of those because classes started very early and ended late. I could only eat breakfast in the morning throughout classes I'd be hungry. I almost fainted once waiting at shuttle stop like my body was giving up and I still went to class. So honestly it was really hard. And on top of all that having to add practicals stresses me out.



First Year Orientation

We welcomed our first years with such great excitement and warm arms. Our first years were fortunate to meet all the staff members, be taught about all the resources on campus such as the transformation office, library, campus clinic as well as labs they can utilize for their ITVL prac. The first years were later sent off for their first week of classes with a pack of stationery and a customized lecture timetable. We hope and wish that their journey thus far has been nothing but wonderful and they are growing, evolving and learning along the way.



Learning and Teaching

4th Year Pledge Ceremony

The department held a face-to-face pledge ceremony for our 4th year students on the 4th of March 2023 at South Campus at the Auditorium. The event was very successful with the help of our staff who planned the whole event including the catering. The pledge ceremony included esteemed guests such as the Director of School Prof Zoleka Soji, Executive Dean of Health Sciences Prof Zingela and guest speakers who are prac supervisors and partners. The pledge was read in different languages which were Isixhosa, English and Afrikaans. This was celebratory moment for the students. We wish our 4th year students well as they step out as professional social workers soon.



MSW Candidate Winning A Prize

Makaita Madzimbamuto, a MSW clinical student won the second position for best conference paper at the Faculty of Health Sciences Postgraduate research conference. Her study entitled *Psychological Capital And Coping Mechanisms Of Frontline Social Workers In The NPO Sector In The Eastern Cape Province Of South* shone the spotlight on how challenging it was for frontline social workers from the NPO sector to serve the marginalised communities during one of the most trying times for humanity. The findings of the study concluded that:

- The NPOs providing social welfare services have staff shortages, high and unrealistic workloads, underpaid, inadequate resources and lack of support.

- Working as a frontline social worker in the NPO sector during COVID-19 was particularly difficult. Most frontline social workers risked getting infected, experienced professional and familial bereavements; lacked protective clothing, lacked support to do their work, and felt limited in providing their professional services.
- Frontline social workers in the NPO sector used hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy to deal with both personal and work demands during COVID-19.
- Self-efficacy positively correlated with positive coping mechanisms used by frontline social workers during COVID-19.

- Psychological Capital alone did not contribute significantly to Coping Mechanisms used by frontline social workers during COVID-19. Other sources of coping that would need to be further explored, included organisational and family support.

This study not only highlighted the plight of the NPO sector, but also the areas that can be strengthened to ensure optimal functioning and well-being of social workers in the NPO sector.



Learning and Teaching

Students' Open Letter to the DVC

Contribution: BSW student – Maxwell Mgwenya

One of our first year student, Maxwell Mgwenya wrote a letter to the DVC on behalf of all the BSW students raising concerns, sufferings and what they as students have been going through. The issues were around funding – MMS, the injustice students are experiencing by the university catering cafeterias and shuttle services depriving students from attending classes. We are proud of the leadership and example Maxwell is setting for his peers, for advocating for them, standing with them to fight injustices and also being the voice of the voiceless.

Concerns and Motivation of Bsw Statement to the VC

Nelson Mandela University is the ideal university for one to consider studying at, interestingly its key values are diversity, excellence, buntu, Environmental stewardship, social justice, and equality however some of these values have contradicted a lot with the university systems that are available for students and its policies. Talk about the injustices evidenced at the beginning of the 2023 academic year. Poor planning for the academic year by the university resulted in the transport department not having the capacity to transport students from their residences to campus and back to their residences, such resulted in our fellow students queueing for long shuttle lines early in the morning and late evening. This issue alone disadvantaged students academically, socially, mentally and physically. Students were unable to get into class on time hence missing class content,

their safety was compromised because they had to queue in the dark morning hours and come back late evening, not getting enough sleep deteriorated student participation socially and academically. It was unjust to continue with classes whilst other students were falling behind.

The MMS system has neglected the health of students and has messed with their daily academic schedule, students are compelled to eat expensive cafeteria food, and queue in long lines for every meal, food runs out while students are in queue, and there is a limited variety of food. Having observed the challenges that come with this system it is very clear that the Catering Department has no capacity to cater to students.

The university ignores the fact that students come from different geographic regions and therefore practice different cultures, have different health-related challenges, and consume different types of food. And again, there is a clash between the values and systems of the university and the MMS system conflicts with the diversity value.

It was an issue again when the university moved like a snail in attending to students' concerns but being proactive to shut students down when they try to raise their concerns. It felt irrational for the university to hire bouncers to come and pepper spray students who try to practice their right to protest. The money used to hire bouncers could have been redirected into helping students with financial challenges.

The new NSFAS 60 credit rule affected a number of our fellow students who were left without a place to stay and food to eat. This was an issue in which the university and students had to be one big team and

challenge NSFAS. However. The university that is supposed to be a parent and fight for academic inclusion for its children turned a blind eye to this serious matter.

As social work students in training, we could not stand and watch our brothers and sisters being bullied by the system and management of both NSFAS and the University. It was then that we knew that we do not need to put everything on the shoulders of the student representative council, all students must take a proactive role in raising their concerns as it is their right to protest and bring about justice to our societies, be it in community or university setting. We first created a petition that circulated all over the Nelson Mandela University official Facebook group and student WhatsApp groups, it was amazing seeing all students taking part in signing the petition both affect and non-affect with the mentioned concerns. However, the petition got ignored by the university and student leaders who lacked support for the approach.

I am glad we never stopped there. I, and other social work students, felt the need to take another shot to write a statement to the Vice-Chancellor and other heads of departments. The statement aimed to explicitly demonstrate what students are going through and seek the attention of the Vice-Chancellor and her team to attend to students concerns and serve the social justice and equality the institution aims to uphold.

Yes. The Vice-Chancellor did not respond to our statement however that was not discouraging because the mandate was to make sure that our concerns reach the highest structures of the institution and change to be done.



SDP PG OPEN DAY

The department held a PG open day for candidates interested in Master and PhD in Social Work. The PG open day was an orientation-like setting where applicants get informed of the application process, funding options, the themes and focus areas of research and introduced to staff and their research focus areas. Furthermore applicants were taken through the application process on which documents are needed for the application, the requirements, fees and guidelines of the proposal.

Why Postgraduate Studies in Social Work

- At Nelson Mandela University we advocate for the importance of life-long learning - an education for life. As a leading institution recognised nationally and internationally, and with partners in the private as well as in the public sectors, the institution has distinguished itself as an institution that will not only put you in touch with the latest trends and developments in your career but will help you reach your full potential and assist in making your dreams and aspirations become a reality.
- Whether you are pursuing an academic or professional career, aiming for success in the private or public sector, or just want to add value to your personal development, postgraduate studies offer the opportunity to deepen your understanding and sharpen your skills, to specialise and to focus on what interests you.
- A relevant postgraduate qualification is becoming increasingly valuable in the employment market. International trends indicate that more graduates are competing for fewer jobs. Job opportunities in many sectors of the economy have become highly competitive, and a postgraduate qualification sets you apart from the rest. Supported by career experience, a relevant postgraduate qualification gives you a competitive edge and will surely contribute to promotional opportunities in your career. Distinguish yourself by not only pushing the boundaries of your current body of knowledge, but also by refining your intellectual capacity. Enrol for a postgraduate programme and become part of the intellectual stronghold that contributes to the global accumulation and application of knowledge

Research Focus and Area of Expertise

Nelson Mandela University have identified six Institutional Research Themes after an extensive process of consultation across the various faculties within the institution.

These six themes are:

- Ocean and Coastal Sciences
- Social Justice and Democracy
- Environmental Stewardship and Sustainable

Livelihoods

- Innovation and Digital Economy
- Origins, Culture, Heritage and Memory
- Humanising Pedagogies.

The Department of Social Development Professions has selected the following four themes from the Institutional themes which are most relevant to social work practice and our department.

Please note that PG applications are still open and should you wish to apply you can do so online and for enquiries:

Email: zurina.abdulla@mandela.ac.za or boitumelo.matla@mandela.ac.za
Call: 041 504 4239

Graduations

We would like to congratulate the *class of 2022* on their graduation and wish them well on their future endeavours.



Staff News



We are delighted to announce and congratulate Dr Zukiswa Gwam on her PhD accomplishment. After all the sweat, tears and hard work we are proud and happy to be celebrating big milestone with Zuki. Halala Mama halala !!

It is with great honour to welcome seven of the newly appointed interns from the SETA programme. Five of them are our BSW graduates, one being a Bed graduate and the other one from Business Mgt. We wish them a good learning journey here in our department and hope they will grow.



SDP Staff And Student Engagement Day



The 27th of May 2023 marked the ‘Social Work Wellness Day with students and staff’; this was the day that we all became one. Together with the Social Work Society, it was identified that students in their respective year levels don’t know each other, even more so, across the different year levels. The day started with some of the Social Work Society exec members at Prof Goliath’s home making the salads for the day; what’s a get together without potato salad and chakalaka? On the other side of things, the other exec members were preparing the tea and coffee for the day.

Once the students arrived, Prof Goliath led the big group of students and staff to the open grass area by the ‘Madiba shirt’ where the activities would be held. Prof Goliath welcomed everyone and as a first activity, she challenged students to speak to someone that they don’t know. This started off slow as many students were apprehensive in the beginning but as time went by, one could see that everyone was loosening up. When the introductions were finished, the Social Work Society broke the group up into smaller groups, making sure that each group had at least one student in each year level, and introduced the games that would be played, this is when all the FUN began.

The games varied from Potato Race, Charades and SDP's rendition of 30 Seconds. These games were thoroughly enjoyed by the students, we were able to see their competitive spirit. It was beautiful to witness students who didn't know each other a few hours ago come together as if they have known each other for years.

After each group had a chance to play each game, the refreshments were served. Each student and staff member received a KFC bucket For One and a packet of goodies, these were enjoyed in a picnic setting. The day ended off with many pictures being taken – selfies included of course, and our students knowing one another.

Vincent Van Gogh once said, "Great things are done by a series of small things brought together". This day brought about unity amongst our students and new bonds were built which encourage human well-being and interaction.

Thank you to everyone involved. We hope that we can have more of these Wellness Days.



First Semester of 2023

Mentors First Semester Experience

Sinayo Dlembula

As a first-time mentor at first it was very challenging, trying to balance my personal life, mentoring and also my academic life has been one of the most challenges. Building relationships and trust between me and my mentees has also been a bit exacting. Also, because of my physical appearance, I faced

challenges in navigating power dynamics within the group. They sometimes did not take me seriously and they did not take mentoring seriously, they treated it as if it was optional and I saw that by judging from their attendance, it was not good. Even if I messaged them the day before and reminded them about the session some of them would still not attend.

Jabu Mabangwa

Mentoring gives you an extraordinary opportunity to facilitate a mentee's personal and academic growth by sharing knowledge you learned through years of experience. While the primary intent of the mentoring role is to challenge the Mentee to think in new and different ways, the Mentee is not the only one who gains from the relationship that is what I have realized after the first semester of mentoring. Working with Mentees from a different background and with a different personality type allowed me to strengthen my leadership skills and communication skills. The

ability to manage people different from me it was an amazing experience, and which has improved my performance in the mentoring. Knowing that I am responsible for providing appropriate and accurate guidance to my mentees motivated me to work harder. The meetings I had with other mentors and staff gave me the opportunity to introspect and align with their goals which in turn gave me a sense of motivation that resulted in positive changes in my work. I have also learned that if the mentees are wanting to focus on another subject other than the one on the programme for that scheduled mentoring session, I have to also focus on that and put the programme for that day aside.

First Semester of 2023

Mentors First Semester Experience

Aashiqah Ford

My experience as a mentor in first semester was one I really enjoyed. I felt like I was able to get along with my mentees quite well and I alongside co-mentor was able to form a great bond with them. Originally I was quite sceptical about doing mentoring as I was concerned it would cut into my time for academics but after this past semester I'm glad I'm doing it,

as even though it takes time for the sessions, the meetings and the prep there's always a great outcome. It was a bit tough at the start, getting the hang of things whilst being a bit disorganized but at time progressed we got into the hang of everything. To join the peer mentors was really a good decision for me as even though I'm the mentor, my mentees are also helping me whilst I'm helping them.

Robin Billet

My mentoring experience has been an exciting journey thus far. I have learnt a lot from the mentees about the university through working with them. Being a mentor has had

its challenges but through that it taught me how to time manage. I have enjoyed the experience so far and look forward to ending the second semester well with my mentees and fellow mentors.





*in service to
society*