

“Black -African Women’s Contributions in the Struggle for Justice and Liberation in Africa.”

The Office of Graduate Studies and Research in the College of Human Sciences is proud to announce the Women in Research Symposium. The symposium aims to champion the Feminist, Womanist, Bosadi Theorisations catalytic niche area as pronounced by UNISA. From the college of human sciences this is a direct response to our commitment to advance women’s contributions and participation in research. To ground Womanist, Bosadi Theorisation catalytic niche area in the college of human science; the theme for this year focuses on ***Black -African Women’s Contributions in the Struggle for Justice and Liberation in Africa***. Therefore, centre African epistemologies and decolonisation within the Feminist, Womanist, Bosadi Theorisations catalytic niche area. The College of Human Sciences prides itself of being a people-centred community grounded in the collaborative, nurturing and social justice philosophy of ubuntu. One of our long-standing ideals is the recognition and support of women as key contributors to the success of CHS, the wider university, and society at large.

Call of Papers

The theme Women’s Contributions in the Struggle for Justice and Liberation in Africa offers a vital opportunity to reflect on the enduring and transformative roles that Black African women have played in shaping the continent’s liberation narratives. Too often, their voices and actions have been sidelined in mainstream historical accounts, despite their centrality in resisting oppression, sustaining communities, and envisioning just futures. These women—whether as political leaders, spiritual guides, caregivers, or cultural custodians—have consistently challenged systems of domination with courage, resilience, and vision. Engaging with this theme invites us to listen more attentively to their stories, to honour their intellectual and emotional labour, and to

explore the liberatory frameworks they have inspired. It also calls for a commitment to methodologies rooted in African epistemologies—such as womanism, Black feminist thought, and indigenous philosophies—that can more fully capture the depth and complexity of their contributions.

Concept Note

This special call of papers focuses on Black African women’s contributions in the struggle against colonial and apartheid governments in Africa. Women have always been active participants in the struggle for justice and liberation in their respective communities on the African continent and in the diaspora. In the 1800s, women like Nontetha Nkwenkwe, Queen Nzinga of Angola and Dona Kimpa Vita from Congo, and many unnamed women were at the centre of resistance against land dispossession, colonial conquest and subjugation in Africa. In the struggle against apartheid women like Ntsiki Biko, Nokukhanya Luthuli, Lillian Ngoyi, Charlotte Maxeke and Winnie Mandela played an important role in the struggle against apartheid. At the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa (TRC), women like the Gugulethu Seven mothers played an important role in defining the concepts of ubuntu and reconciliation. Desmond Tutu himself used the Gugulethu Seven Mothers testimonies to define what reconciliation and ubuntu entails (Gade 2020). However, the Black African women’s experiences and contributions in the struggle for justice and liberation in South Africa have not been sufficiently explored, interrogated and analysed. Therefore, in this call for papers, we aim to interrogate, preserve, present, and archive the Black African women’s experiences and contributions in the struggle for justice and liberation in South (Africa). Scholars, and researchers can conceptualise and construct their own theoretical and

methodological approach on justice and liberation using the liberative paradigms emerging from womanism, Bosadi theorisation, ubuntu discourses, black theology, and Black feminist theory. They are also allowed to capture the narratives of Black women from various lived experiences, capturing various forms of liberatory contributions. The envisaged outcome of the project will hopefully be a further development of theoretical and empirical work on black-feminist, womanist studies.

This special collection builds on a growing body of work that seeks to centre the voices and experiences of Black African women in historical and contemporary struggles for justice. While important strides have been made in recovering and theorising these contributions, significant gaps remain—particularly in relation to how these narratives are archived, theorised, and taught. By contributing to this ongoing scholarly conversation, this collection not only honours past and present struggles but also helps to shape more inclusive and representative frameworks for understanding justice and liberation in Africa.

We welcome contributions that explore themes such as:

- Bosadi Theorisation
- How women's contributions are archived, evolved, and represented overtime in academia and society.
- Conceptualising and framing of Black African women as Stalwarts/Heroines.
- Music and Arts.
- A decolonial analysis of women's contributions at the TRC of South Africa.
- Bosadi theorisation in dialogue with womanist and Black feminism.
- Critical outlook on women's contributions on ubuntu.
- Women in political education and business education.
- Women's contribution in the struggle for liberation and justice.
- Women, Literary Arts and Literature.
- A theoretical and epistemological dialogue between Western Feminism, Black- African Feminism, and Womanism.
- Gender dynamics in faith communities.

- A dialogue between Black Theology and Womanism.
- The role of women in African Spirituality and Culture.

Additional Information:

15-minute presentation slots will be created throughout the days. The paper presentations may be submitted to The Journal of Asian and African Studies (JAAS) for a special collection to be published towards the end of November 2025. Every accepted abstract should have a full paper submitted before the symposium. These may be up to 10 000 words. More information on author guidelines can be found here: <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jas>

To be considered, please send an abstract of a maximum of 300 words to kobesl@unisa.ac.za and simanj@unisa.ac.za, The full papers should also be submitted to these two emails. *The Guest Editors: Prof FA Kobo, Dr SL Kobe & Dr J Simango.*

Logistical Information:

The symposium will be in person at the University of South Africa (UNISA). Virtual attendance will be considered. There is no Registration Fee for the Symposium.

Date: 02-03 October 2025

Time: 09h00 - 16h00

Venue: Function Hall, Kgorong Building, Unisa, Main campus (Muckleneuk), Pretoria

RSVP: Ms Swarts Nthabiseng: mohlon@unisa.ac.za

Submission Deadlines:

- Abstract Submissions: 30 June 2025
- Feedback: 30 July 2025
- Symposium Presentation: 02-03 October 2025
- Final Papers Submissions: 30 September 2025