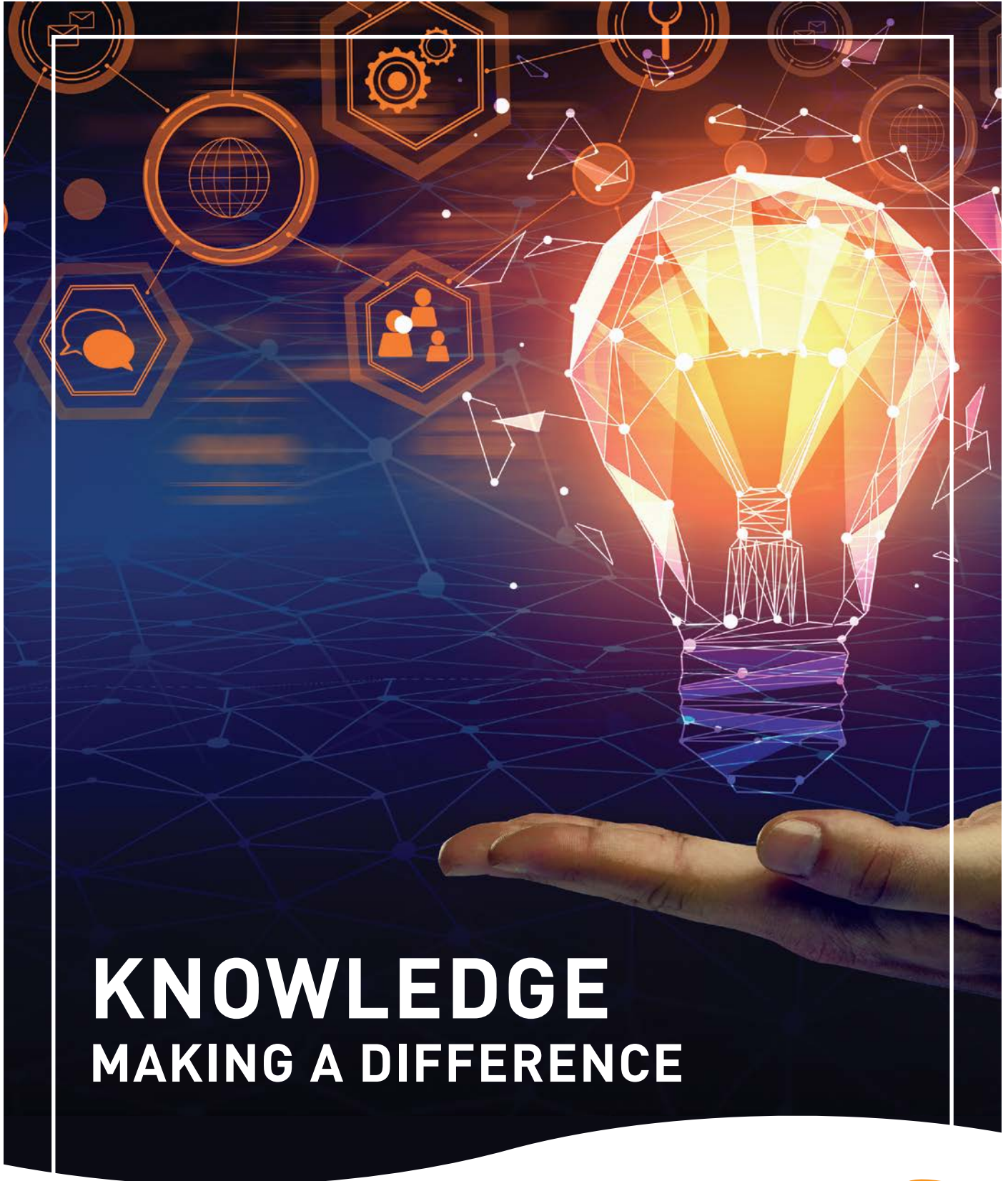


YOU NISA

Magazine for Unisa students, alumni and friends

Issue 2 | 2019



**KNOWLEDGE
MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

Define tomorrow.

UNISA | 
university
of south africa

YOUNISA is published by the Department of Institutional Advancement

EDITORIAL TEAM

Managing Editor:

Nancy-Anne Anderson

Editor: Philip van der Merwe

Journalists:

Tshimangadzo Mphaphuli (Senior)

Lesego Ravhudzulo

Contributors:

Department of Development Studies

Graduate School of Business Leadership

Thembeke Ntuli Mpapama

David Letsoalo

Natalia Molebatsi

Busisiwe Mahlangu

Edgar Rathelele

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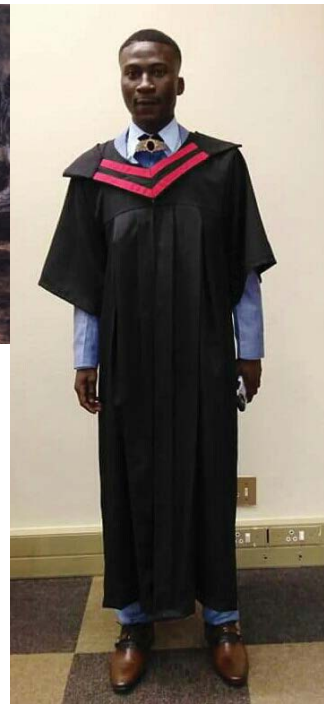


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EDITORIAL

Are our universities still exclusive clubs for the privileged few, focusing exclusively on intellectual pursuits and sparing no thought for the practical concerns of communities and society in general, nor for equipping graduates with the skills necessary to function and make a difference in the real world?

Writing in Forbes in September this year, Kim Nillson contends that universities still adhere to a model that dates back almost a thousand years. 'Despite the huge changes we have seen in almost every aspect of our society since then, the way they operate has barely altered at all,' she writes. 'I am not the first person to observe that universities seem like an archaic solution to the very modern problem of providing relevant and marketable skills and education. They are often referred to as ivory towers for a reason – because they appear out of touch with the wider society, institutions and companies they are supposed to be supporting.'

Unisa, it is clear, is a non-conformist in this regard. This issue of *YOUNISA* abounds with examples of how the institution wields academic knowledge to make a real difference. Articles on an app empowering rural farmers to make decisions on real-time data, a project to rehabilitate our all-important wetlands and a sophisticated platform to solve water quality challenges are just three of the must-reads in this issue.

Making a difference with the knowledge they gain at Unisa is also a hallmark of our students, and in the Letterbox they share the many inventive ways in which they do so.

As we say goodbye to 2019 and welcome the third decade of the 21st century, we wish our readers a safe and invigorating festive break.

The *YOUNISA* team

Ngabe amayunivesithi wethu asese ziinghema ezikhethekileko zabantu abambalwa, okuziinghema eziphokophele ikakhulu ubuhlakaniphi begodu ezinganandaba neminako yepilo yamambala yomphakathi kanye nabantu boke, nanyana iinghema ezingahlomisi amagrajuwethi ngamakghono afaneleko ukobana akwazi ukusebenza kanye nokwenza umehluko ephasini lamambala?

Emtlolweni we-Forbes ngenyanga kaKhukhulamungu umnyaka lo, u Kim Nillson uphikisana nalokho nakathi amayunivesithi asabambelele kumodeli yakade yeminyaka eyikulungwana eyadlulako. Utlola ngale ndlela, 'Despite the huge changes we have seen in almost every aspect of our society since then, the way they operate has barely altered at all.' 'I am not the first person to observe that universities seem like an archaic solution to the very modern problem of providing relevant and marketable skills and education. They are often referred to as ivory towers for a reason – because they appear out of touch with the wider society, institutions and companies they are supposed to be supporting.'

Kuyacaca ukuthi, i-Unisa ayikhambisani nalokhu. Le ndaba ye-*YOUNISA* ineembonelo ezinengi zokuthi iziko lilisebenzisa bunjani ilwazi lefundo ukwenza umehluko wamambala. Ama-athikili aku-app ahlomisa abalimi bemakhaya ukobana bakwazi ukuthatha iinqunto malungana nedatha yesikhathi samambala (real-time data), iphrojekthi yokuvuselela zoke iindawo eziqakathekileko ezimdzwela wamanzi kanye nevadla elisezingeni eliphezulu lokurarulula iintjhihilo ezimalungana nezinga lamanzi kuzizinto ezintathu okufanele zifundwe kule ndaba.

Ukwenza umehluko ngelwazi abalizuze e-Unisa nakho kulitshwayo lepumelelo yabafundi bethu, kanye neendaba ezikuma-Letterbox abacocisana ngazo, iindlela ezinengi zamaqhinga amatjha zokwenza lokho.

Njengombana silayelisa umnyaka ka 2019 begodu sizilungiselela ukungena wamasumi amathathu wesentjhuwari yama-21, sifisela abafundi bethu amalanga wokuphumula aphephileko navuselela umndandla.

Isiqhema se-*YOUNISA*

WORDWISE:

Xana tiyunivhesiti ta hina ta ha ri titlabu to siya van'wana ehandle ta vangarivangani va nkateko, leti kongomisaka eka migingiriko ya swa miehleketo ntsena ti nga kali ti ehleketa hi swilo swa ntiyiso leswi swi karhataka vaakamiti na vanhu hinkwavo va xichava hi ku angarhela, hambu ku ri ku haverisa vathwasi vuswikoti lebyi fanelaka ku kota ku tirha na ku tisa ku hambana eka misava ya ntiyiso?

Loko a tsala eka Forbes hi Ndzati lembe leri, Kim Nillson u vula leswaku tiyunivhesiti ta ha landzelela modlele wa khale ka malembe ya gidi lama nga hundza. U tsala a ku, 'Despite the huge changes we have seen in almost every aspect of our society since then, the way they operate has barely altered at all, I am not the first person to observe that universities seem like an archaic solution to the very modern problem of providing relevant and marketable skills and education. They are often referred to as ivory towers for a reason – because they appear out of touch with the wider society, institutions and companies they are supposed to be supporting.'

Swi le rivaleni leswaku Unisa a yi landzeleli swona leswi. Xibukwana lexi xa sweswi xa YOUNISA xi tele hi swikombiso swa ndlela leyi instituxini leyi yi tirhisaka hayona vutivi bya xiakademiki ku tisa ku hambana ka ntiyiso. Tiatikili leti nga eka app leti nyikaka matimba eka van'wapurasi va le tindhawini ta le makaya ku teka swiboho hi data ya sweswi hi nkarhi wolowo (real-time data), projeke yo pfuxetela mihlangasi (wetlands) ya hina ya nkoka na platifomo ya xiyimo xa le henhla yo tisa xitshunxo xa mitlhontlho ya khwaliti ya mati hi swin'wana swinharhu swa leswi swi bohaka ku swi hlaya eka xibukwana lexi.

Ku tisa ku hambana hi vutivi lebyi va byi kumaka eUnisa i mfungho wa swichudeni swa hina na Bokisi ra Mapapila (Letterbox) leri va avelanaka eka rona tindlela to tala ta vutumbuluxi leti va ti tirhisaka ku endla tano.

Loko hi ri karhi hi lela 2019 na ku lulamisela ku nghena eka lembe xikhume ra vunharhu ra lembexidzana ra vu21, hi navelela vahlayi va hina nkarhi wo wisa wo hlayiseka no nyika matimba mantshwa.

Ntlawa wSa YOUNISA



What's in a word? YOUNISA takes a look at the origins, meanings and applications of words and terms that we use every day.

Ubuntu is an oft-used South African term meaning 'humanity to others'. It originated around the middle of the 19th century, used by the isiZulu community in the phrase 'Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu', which literally means that a person is a person through other people. It also means 'I am what I am because of who we all are'.

Ubuntu has its roots in humanist African philosophy, where the idea of community is one of the building blocks of society. Ubuntu is that nebulous concept of common humanity, oneness: humanity, you and me both.

In his book *No Future Without Forgiveness*, Archbishop Desmond Tutu describes a person with ubuntu as 'open and available to others, affirming of others...has a proper self-assurance'. The ubuntu this person possesses comes from being part of a greater whole.

Sources: Quora ([quora.com](https://www.quora.com)) and The Guardian ([theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com))

LETTERBOX

We look forward to your thoughts on topics covered in *YOUNISA*.

Email your letter to younisa@unisa.ac.za, or post it to the following address: *YOUNISA*, Department of Institutional Advancement, PO Box 392, Unisa, 0003

Please note that letters may be edited to meet stylistic, grammatical and space requirements.

We asked you, our readers, to share how you would **use your qualification to bring about positive change.** Here are the best letters received.

Nourishing the planet, one person at a time

Food is a fundamental need in our lives, and I plan to make sure that people have access to food everywhere in the country. In the course of my academic research I realised that 12.9% of people in the world are undernourished, and more than 800 million people go hungry every day.

I believe if I can feed at least one person I will play my part and make a change. I know I might not be able to alleviate hunger completely, but I can make a change in South Africa and other African countries where some of us are dying of hunger. I aspire to be someone's champion in my life. Right now, I have started working on that and I know it will be a success. I aspire to make a change in my community, society and the world.

- *Truth Mabesere, BA in Consumer Science (Food and Nutrition)*



Heeding nature's plight

As a child I've always adored the colour of nature (green), and this heavily influenced me to choose environmental management as my career. I chose this career path so that I may find positive solutions to both the natural and the man-made environmental problems that cause the suffering of flora, fauna and man.

I have learnt about the different social behaviours of people, which are influenced by their sociocultural systems through the anthropology module, which then enhanced my comprehension and tolerance on their actions. By this skill I can hope to solve conflicts in my society such as xenophobia and also to be able to share in people's experience through ethnographic research and cultural relativism.

South Africa is rich in biodiversity with over 20 000 plant species and countless animals that I would like to save from extinction.

- Sabelo Forere, BA in Environmental Management



Sharing new skills

Through my studies at Unisa, as a visually impaired student, I have learnt valuable skills and have overcome many challenges. I feel that some of these skills that I have learnt during my studies, such as how to reference work using the correct format pertaining to that referencing style and many other skills, should have been taught to us back in school.

I am making a difference in society by making and posting YouTube videos where I teach all the valuable skills that I have learnt. To view my first video, go to YouTube and search for 'Your guide to becoming a successful Unisa student'.

I also intend going back to the school that I attended, the Open Air School, which is a school for children with disabilities. I will offer my services for free for an hour a week to present an after-school and general skills programme.

- Thea Katelynn Harman, LLB



Reading, leading and more

I am an avid reader and blogger, and the degree for which I am registered presents the perfect opportunity to merge my interests with my learning, and pass the best of both on to the community.

As a life-long learner at Unisa, I coordinate a monthly book club at Botaki ba Africa, organise weekly Afrosophical Club meetings, lead the Gauteng team at the Literacy Association of South Africa and study theatre and performance arts with the Market Theatre Laboratory.

I am confident that my contribution to broader society is measurable through the positive impact of the projects and programmes in which I am involved.

- Tumelo Motaung, BA in Theory of Literature and African Languages



Easing the journey with guidance

My parents were caterers, and growing up I watched customers cheating them. My parents would do the required work and after the job was done, their clients would make excuses as to why they couldn't pay the full price. This evoked feelings of anger within me and motivated me to become a lawyer because I truly have a heart for those who are disadvantaged and mistreated.

I have always had a desire within myself to help those who are lacking advantage in our society – be it in law representation or in education. I also would like to make an impact through education – I would like to help underprivileged children to realise their dreams by helping them through university. I hope to attain a doctorate degree and with such a resource I will make an impact by educating others and helping them along their journey to success.

- Sarita Ali Mohamed, Higher Certificate in Law

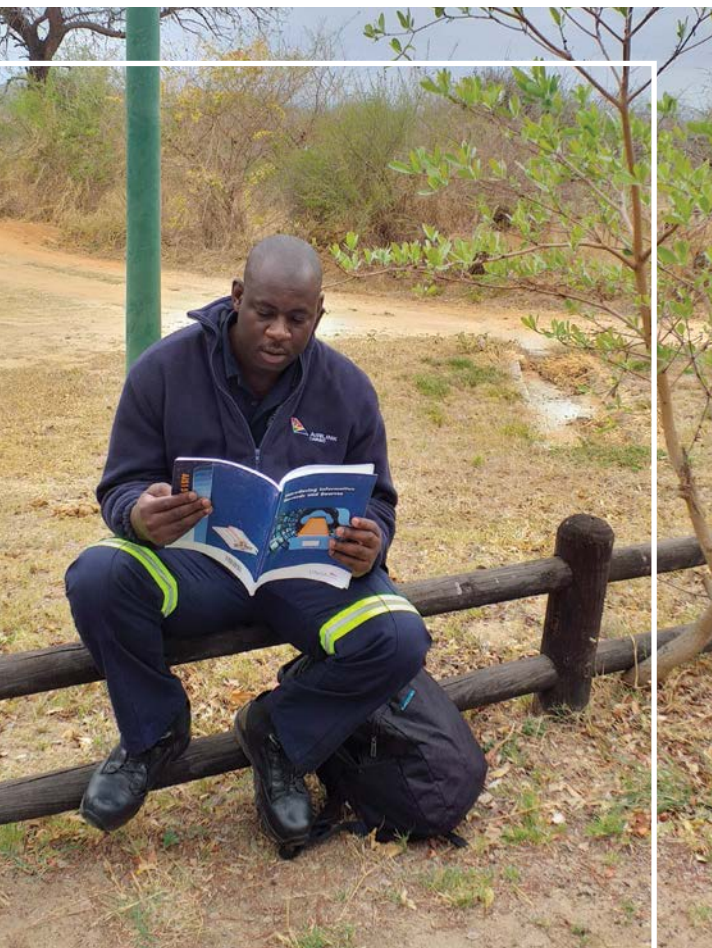
Psychological well-being for all

Why study tertiary level education, to better oneself perhaps? Why study psychology at tertiary level and earn the qualifications? The answer is not only personal gain, the answer, for me at least is to help other people who need it. I'm not talking about wealthy people who can afford to see a psychologist twice a week, no, I'm talking about the people who can't afford it.

My aim when earning my undergraduate degree is to enter a practice that focuses on helping those who need our help, who can't necessarily afford it but require the assistance. In the clinical psychology arena, that means people who suffer from substance abuse, people who suffer from depression and anxiety, to name but a few conditions.

I want to help those who need it most, the people who can't afford to pay and sometimes can't even afford to admit that they need the help.

- Matt Stenvert, BA in Psychology



Unlocking life-changing information

I will make a difference in my community through sharing the information and skills obtained from Unisa. People in my village and the surrounding areas will get to know that records need to be protected as sources of evidence. I will encourage youth to read and make use of libraries and museums. This will familiarise them with library rules and how to access information.

Nowadays youth are not interested in reading or studying. They favour short courses that do not require library research, and as a result they remain unemployed. I will address this issue by encouraging young people to know the importance of records, its life cycle of creation, its preservation and its disposal.

- Renold Mafuyeka, Certificate in Archives and Record Management

Steering life's ship

My Unisa journey started in 2015 and the first chapter will end this year when I graduate with a Bachelor's Degree in Education. Although I am physically disabled (I am a right-leg amputee) I always strive for excellence. Armed with my degree I intend motivating the youth of this country.

My message is simple. No matter what the situation, you determine the outcome, you steer your own ship and you make your dreams a reality through hard work and dedication. I have given motivational speeches at schools in Johannesburg, made many appearances at the Gauteng Department of Education and spent a few months as a volunteer at a school in Ormonde. Through all of this I have grown as a person. I intend to do much more to reach out to the children of this country.

- Anina Ami Farouk, BEd



Nurturing untapped potential

Once I have obtained an LLB qualification at Unisa, I will make a huge impact in my community by encouraging more young people to pursue a career in the field of law. I plan to do this through giving motivational talks at schools, hosting educational seminars and debates, and working with various NGOs.

I come from a very small and isolated community surrounded by farms in Limpopo named Roedtan, where the literacy level is very low. However, there is a lot of untapped potential that needs to be nurtured.

My dream is to see more professionals in future coming from my community, and this can be achieved if I set an example to them.

I always ask myself: 'If I were to die today, what is it that the world would have missed? Hence my passion about youth development and serving the nation.

- Lucas Aphane, LLB

Sharing discoveries continuously

I have studied for most of my life at Unisa while juggling a demanding career, marriage and children. I have learnt the secret of balance to keep on rolling without injuries. My studies opened an awareness to my latent strength and perseverance. I reaped success, applying everything I learn throughout my studies.

Realising the depth of my own strength compelled me to continuously share my discoveries in the field of Human Factors (HF) discoveries continuously. This positive attitude soon opened doors and many opportunities. I initiated an HF awareness programme within the aviation industry well before I finished my master's degree. By the time I graduated, I had initiated an HF awareness campaign in the field of aviation across organisations, commenced teaching HF courses and trained a group of facilitators.

This approach to share ideas and learnings influenced my personal growth and my environment, putting my discoveries into practice on a daily basis, right from the start.

- *Andrea Stipp, PhD in Industrial and Organisational Psychology (commencing in 2020)*



- *Fungayi Chigora, BA in Administration*

“

Closing the essential services gap

I am in my final year and once I've completed my qualification I will make a big difference in as far as the provisioning of public services is concerned. Some years ago I noticed a gap in the way in which public services such as health, housing, security and social services are being rendered to the majority of South African citizens. This prompted me to embark on a study programme that will assist in closing this gap.

It's a pity that the majority of citizens, especially those staying in informal settlements, battle for basics such as drinking water and housing, while the minority have everything at their disposal. As a future public manager, I will make sure that public resources are shared fairly and equitably.

”

Resources plus individual attention will equal success

Nelson Mandela said that 'education is the most powerful tool that you can use to change the world'. However, there are many learners who have reading and writing disabilities in my community. I have a passion for teaching and I believe that I can make a difference in my community by starting a reading and writing centre for learners, which will be free. I will provide free resources to learners because there are many children who are underprivileged. I will also provide individual attention to learners who find it difficult to process information at a normal level. I will also assist the community by organising campaigns, training and mentoring of prospective educators and providing leadership in order to teach individuals the values and traits that educators should possess. I will change the lives of children.

- Devanai Naidoo, BEd Intermediate and Senior Phase Education



Emancipation through development economics

In my studies I have grown to love development economics because it has allowed me to see how developing countries are lagging behind and, most importantly, what can be done to improve the economy.

The issue closest to my heart is gender equality, so I joined a non-profit organisation, Khulisa Mfazi, which aims to inspire, educate and celebrate women from different walks of life. We have been able to host projects that have inspired girls, especially in townships. In our small way we have been bridging the gender inequality gap.

As a future development economist I will not only point out issues, but also guide policies to boost and empower people who, due to their situation, no longer realise that they are vital for national economic development.

- Nompumelelo Ngomane, BA in Politics, Philosophy and Economics





Mapping solutions in the legal maze

As a second-year student, I am already giving legal advice to my friends. My studies at Unisa have enabled me to be confident enough to refer people to the relevant sections of the law that are applicable to their situations.

To date, I have helped a friend to follow the right route in helping his friend, who is a foreigner, to acquire bail. I have helped a friend who needed to find out if he will get a criminal record for paying an admission of guilt traffic fine, and I have helped a fellow church member with the right route to follow in his legal battle over the custody of his child.

I plan to continue this way as a pro bono lawyer after graduation. I have not only used my studies to make a difference in peoples' lives, but have also persuaded a number of people to study with Unisa, and they have since enrolled.

- Tsholofelo Kukuni, LLB

Inspirational volunteer

I started volunteering as a peer educator in 2018, and since then my life drastically improved as this role helped me unleash the potential to interact with students and understanding the societal challenges faced by students.

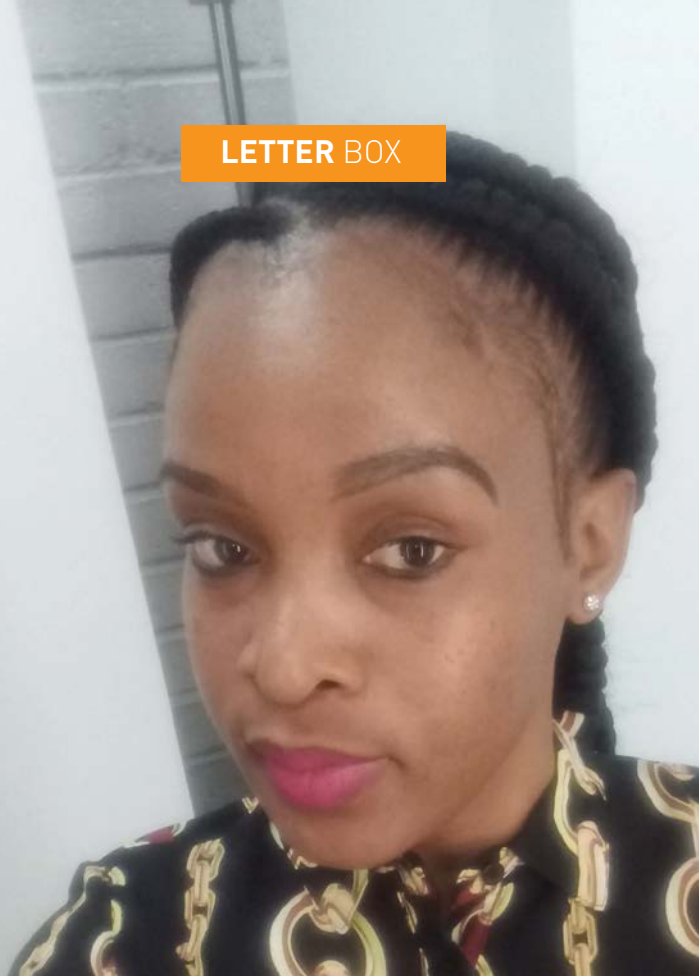
After this I volunteered as an Igniter for Enke Make Your Mark, which is a non-profit organisation focusing on the development of youth in South Africa. Enke means 'ink' in SeTswana and 'take it' in SeSotho. That's what what the organisation is about – empowering youth to be authors of their futures by taking opportunities to change their lives and communities (making their mark). I am also involved with a number of youth development organisations as a motivational and inspirational speaker for high school learners.

Unisa taught me that it takes the entire society to raise children, which is why I recently founded #MosepediAlumniDevelopment, a forum that helps rural unemployed youth and learners from my community and nearby villages.

- Thabang Bogopa, MA in Criminal Justice



#MosepediAlumniDevelopment



Viewing life through different spectacles

I was born in a disadvantaged rural area. It had no water, but three leaders. There's a tavern on every street. Needless to say dropping out of school, even at primary level, is par for the course. This is why I decided to change my career from marketing management to teaching.

The kids in my community lack support at home. As a future teacher, I will be able to fill this void by presenting a positive example. Learners will be able to compare my upbringing to theirs and realise that being born in a poor family doesn't stop you from progressing in life.

I have found that viewing life through the spectacles of poverty creates a clear vision of life. Poverty helps you to set goals and prioritise them.

- Petunia Ndala, BEd Intermediate Phase

Igniting imaginations

I hail from rural Gingindlovu, and intend making a difference in my community by teaching adults who have not had an opportunity to study and learn.

Teaching is a very noble profession that shapes the characters and the futures of individuals. If people remember me as a good teacher, that will be the biggest honour for me. A good teacher can inspire hope, ignite the imagination, and instill a love of learning.

I wasn't born to 'just teach'. I was born to inspire others, to change people, and to never give up, even when faced with challenges that seem impossible.

- Nonduduzo Mthethwa, BEd



Early crime prevention

As a Warrant Officer in the South African Police Service I was moved to study law as I was seeing innocent people from a poor background, with little or no knowledge of law, being prosecuted and jailed, sometimes for things they did not do or for minor crimes.

My aim is to go back home and educate young kids at the high schools in my home town of Siyabuswa on how to behave in order not to fall into criminals activities. When you educate the young ones you prevent future crimes. Young people at home do not have positive role models, because after we matriculate we go to the cities and no longer groom the next generation to be like us. I intend to change this.

- Daniel Madiseng, LLB



Caring with counselling

To understand my story, you would need to first understand where I come from. I am from QwaQwa in the Free State. QwaQwa is neither a small village nor a big city. Having done my practicals here in my home town at Mofumahali Manapo Hospital, I realised how much our state hospital psychologist are overworked.

If you go to the hospital today to make an appointment, you would have to wait for consultation a month from now as there is backlog of appointments. Sadly, there are not a lot of psychologists here in QwaQwa, even if you wanted to go to a private practice. For the one year of coursework that I will be doing after completing my master's degree, I would like to bridge the gap by volunteering my time in Mofumahali Manapo Hospital as a counsellor.

- Lerato Komako, BA Honors in Psychological Counselling



“ Ensuring second chances ”

I was addicted to nyaope and Mandrax for seven years of my life, and have been clean for the past six. Because of my addiction I served prison sentences on several occasions and joined a criminal gang called the 26s.

I recovered and was rehabilitated for my drug addiction in 2013. After recovering I went back to school and studied hard and even made it to university. Therefore, my goal is to use the knowledge that I'm obtaining from my criminology degree to start an organisation called A Second Chance.

This organisation will help the drug addicts who are serious about changing their lives and run drug awareness programmes at schools and in the community. We will also teach parents about the symptoms of drug use. Most importantly, the organisation will concentrate in reintegrating rehabilitated addicts into the community.

- Sibusiso Mbelu, BA Criminology





Empowering rural weather

Thanks to the research of a Unisa Department of Physics postgraduate student and two team members, rural farmers in South Africa will soon have instant access to localised meteorological and market information. And that's not all: the MiWeather app will empower smallholder farmers to be not just weather intelligence receivers, but also weather intelligence contributors by using the built-in sensors on their smartphones to sample, relay, quality assess, analyse and share weather observations.

Unisa postgraduate student, Brighton Mabasa recently showcased his team's MiWeather app at the United Nations (UN) Youth Climate Summit and the UN Private Sector Forum in New York, eliciting keen interest among attendees and the media alike. The inaugural UN Youth Climate Summit was a platform for young leaders who are driving climate action to showcase their solutions at the UN, and to meaningfully engage with decision-makers on the defining issue of our time. It was the largest gathering of young climate leaders at the UN in history.

In addition to Mabasa, an early-career meteorologist at the South African Weather Service (SAWS), the team responsible for the app comprises Dr Meena Lysko, Mabasa's academic supervisor at Unisa, and Mpho Mofokeng, a colleague at the SAWS.



farmers to make sense of the

Unisa heeding a global call to action

Providing background to the demonstration of the app at the United Nations, Mabasa explains that the Office of the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth issued calls for a 'Summer of Solutions' in partnership with the UN Technology and Innovation Labs (UNTIL), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT) and Unite Ideas. 'This global call to action was an open invitation for teams with young people to imagine and build open-source technology solutions for tackling global challenges,' says Mabasa.

The 'Summer of Solutions' challenge was to develop an information systems solution that could serve as a platform to enhance access to localised climate and market information. 'The requirement was for the platform to bridge the last mile and the existing information gap to vulnerable rural communities and protect rural agricultural livelihoods while enabling partnerships with existing information providers in the public and private sector to develop localised climate information services,' says Mabasa. 'This requirement followed from the observation that highly valuable localised information is usually unavailable to small rural communities. While weather and climate reports are developed by national hydro-meteorological services, the information available in them is usually at a national scale and hence of limited use to vulnerable farmers.'

What the app does

Mabasa explains that the app allows users to collect weather information (temperature, humidity, pressure and illuminance) at any location in the world, and then upload the data in the database. 'The MiWeather solution not only addresses the provision of information to rural communities,' says Mabasa, 'but also addresses the question of sustainability of knowledge from weather information for farming applications – by proposing that learners and staff at agricultural schools, such as at the Laezonia Primary School, where the team taught learners to use the app, use the MiWeather Mobile Application as a tool to learn about meteorology and become data scientists. The learners in turn can take the knowledge to their homes and communities.'

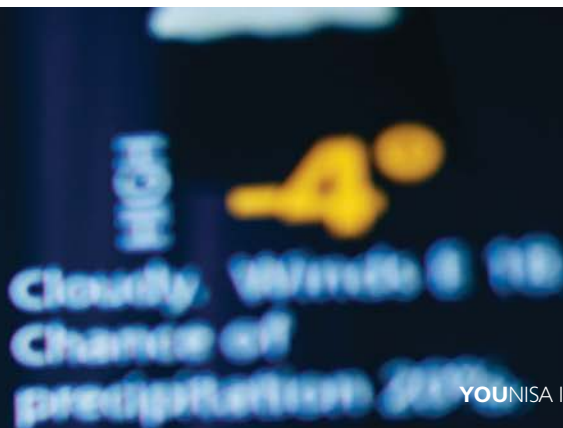
A further feature of the app is that it will empower smallholder farmers to be not just weather intelligence receivers, but also weather intelligence contributors by using the built-in sensors on their smartphones and with the use of the proposed MiWeather system to sample, relay, quality assess, analyse and share weather observations. 'The system can be available to any smartphone and the resulting crowd sourcing of data can increase sensor density per location,' says Mabasa. 'The density of observations will support data quality analysis and greater reliability. Just in South Africa alone, crowd sourcing with MiWeather will transform the country into having multi-million weather 'stations' and data 'scientists'. In essence, there will be a well-distributed network of sensors across the vast expanse of the country.'

This is just the beginning

Mabasa is pursuing an MSc in Atmospheric Physics at Unisa. 'My studies are all about weather and climate information, solar radiation sensors to be specific, and developing a quality control platform of the data, so developing this app was a logical progression,' he says. Mabasa's research outputs will support an advanced operation of the SAWS solar radiation network. The work falls within the ambit of the collaboration between the SAWS and Unisa. Professor Manitle Lekala, from Unisa's College of Science, Engineering and Technology, and Mnikeli Ndabambi, from the SAWS, co-steer the collaboration. The collaboration is formalised with a memorandum of understanding and facilitated through Unisa's Department of Physics.

Looking ahead, Mabasa says that he intends studying further to PhD level, publishing high-impact articles along the way. 'I have already published a few peer-reviewed articles,' he says. 'I also want to be involved in the development of platforms that will make a difference and produce academic outputs to make a difference, especially in vulnerable communities.'

Mabasa's advice to fellow-students at Unisa is simple. 'Keep on working hard and look at what other young people are doing around the world. This will inspire you to hang in there regardless of the challenges, and you will also have the potential to develop something big that can be received all over the world.'





Enthusiastic young Tourism Ambassadors and workshop facilitators.

Unisa trains young tourism ambassadors

- Submitted by the Department of Development Studies

Unisa has added academic muscle to the City of Johannesburg's Tourism Ambassador Programme, launched earlier this year to support tourism growth in Johannesburg. The aim of this programme is to improve the tourism experience at sites and attractions in the city, rendering them safe, pleasant, informative and memorable.

The Tourism Ambassador Programme envisages making Johannesburg a safer destination, leading to an increased number of tourists visiting the city for both leisure and business. This initiative has created 60 job opportunities. The nation is dealing with an excessively high unemployment rate, and therefore such an initiative aims to make a difference.

Ensuring a sound tourism experience

The tourism sector is of global significance and is essential for the country's economic growth. For South Africa to develop rapidly, it needs to increase its GDP. One of the ways to do

this is by making the country attractive to tourists, with the aim that they invest increasing amounts in South Africa. Therefore, the tourism ambassadors have a crucial part to play as South African citizens. Since this is a first time working experience for these 60 candidates, they require as much training and information as possible.

The tourism ambassadors have a minimum of a matric qualification and are between the ages of 18 and 35. They were selected from the Department of Public Safety's unemployed youth database. The tourism ambassadors are trained by the City of Johannesburg and its relevant partners. These ambassadors will be trained to assist with tourism safety, to reduce the number of security incidents affecting tourists and residents, as well as provide tourism information to tourists and visitors. This programme will continue for three years.

Suvania Naidoo, Lecturer in Development Studies in the College of Human Sciences, became aware of this initiative through her involvement as an Executive Committee member for the Klipriver Nature Reserve Sustainability Association (KLIPSA). She liaised with Xolile Maswanganyi, Operational Manager: Joburg Tourism at the City of Johannesburg to identify the training needs that were lacking for the 60 candidates, and collaborated with Unisa's Chance to Advance Programme to find suitable facilitators.

Vital skills

The workshops were held at a lecture hall at the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Centre in Braamfontein. The facilitators played a major role in supporting the Tourism Ambassador Programme by empowering the 60 ambassadors with vital skills and knowledge through their workshops.

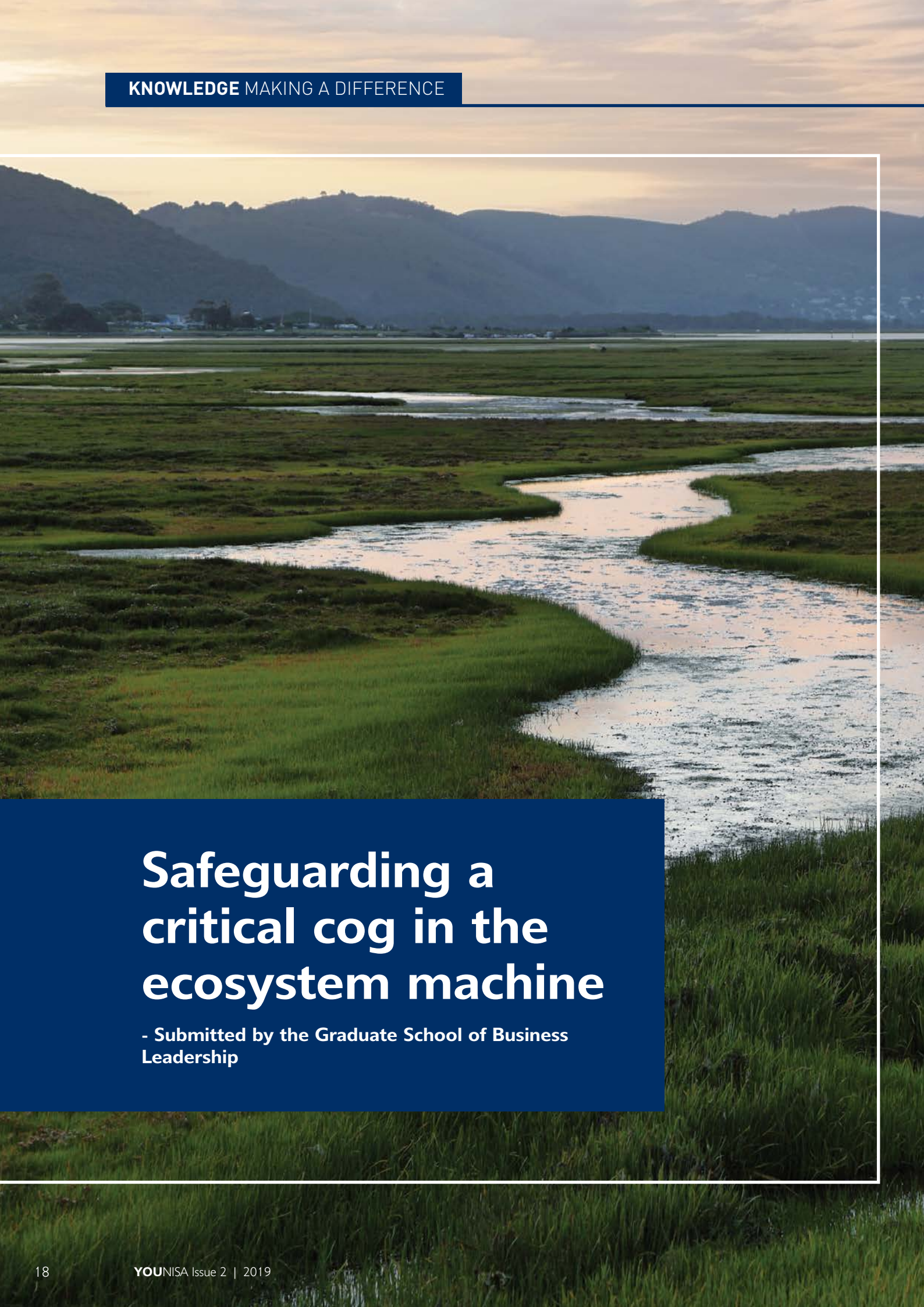
The facilitators structured the content of their presentations to fit the needs of the ambassadors. The 60 ambassadors are placed at the different tourist attractions around the Johannesburg area. They are directly assisting the Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department with safety and security in the City of Johannesburg, and are directly involved with tourists. The workshops aimed to equip them not only with workplace skills, but also to strengthen and contribute to their personal development.

The newly minted tourism ambassadors showed enormous commitment and appreciation for Unisa's initiative. They said that they believe these workshops have brought a change to their mindset and will encourage team spirit among themselves and they look forward to more sessions. They further commented that the workshops were really informative, because they were made aware of so many aspects that they had turned a blind eye to, they felt that they became aware of their great capabilities, and what they have learned they can positively use to their best interest.



Suvania Naidoo (Lecturer: Development Studies) and Xolile Maswanganyi (Operational Manager: Jo'burg Tourism).





Safeguarding a critical cog in the ecosystem machine

- Submitted by the Graduate School of Business
Leadership

All of us, directly or indirectly, rely on the ecological benefits of wetlands. Yet, most of us are unaware of what exactly wetlands are or the critical role that they play in the world's ecosystems. Far more than tourist attractions, wetlands function to reduce the impacts of floods, absorb pollutants and improve water quality. Without them, our ground water tables would become severely compromised, and we'd lose that most valuable of resources upon which life depends.

In September this year, the Unisa Graduate School of Business Leadership (SBL) launched an exciting initiative to rehabilitate a wetland that runs through its campus in Midrand. As part of a wider, integrated sustainability plan to conserve and manage water resources efficiently, Unisa will use the learnings from the pilot on the SBL to roll out the plan to a number of Unisa-owned land parcels and campuses in South Africa that lie similarly adjacent to wetland areas.

Civilisation is destroying critical components

In opening the launch event, Unisa SBL's acting Executive Dean, Professor Raphael Mpofu, said the graduate business school was joining its voice to the clarion call for the preservation of the world's endangered resources by actively developing and embarking on its own programme to bring about change. 'The wetlands initiative is an official recognition of the urgency for ecological preservation. All over the world there is a cry about how civilisation has destroyed the critical components of our ecosystem. Close to home, in Pretoria and Johannesburg, we can see the challenges that later emerge when wetlands are drained or taken over by urban sprawl, such as flooding and the immense economic and social upheaval that this can bring. Yet we fail to join the dots between this and our comprised ecosystems.'

Professor Mandla Makhanya, Unisa's Principal and Vice-Chancellor, provided the welcome message at the launch, contextualising the urgency for sustainable practices. 'The SBL's wetland rehabilitation project is coming at the right time. As of today there are fires that have been burning in the Amazon rainforests for weeks, yet an offer of UN assistance is seemingly dependent on one world leader's apology to another. Elsewhere a teenage climate change activist has been ridiculed by many for her views as she sailed into New York Harbour on an emission-free vessel to speak at the UN Climate Action Summit.

Ethical stewardship of the planet

'This is the way the world is responding to global environmental threats. In South Africa, we should use this time to reflect on matters of sustainability in a focused and calculated manner so that we can reach a national consensus about how to approach eco-challenges. We need to respond to the voices that deny or sabotage those who are taking the ethical stewardship of our planet's ecospheres.' Commenting on the parties involved in the wetlands initiative, which includes the Department of Environmental Affairs and the Unisa College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences led by Professor of Environmental Sciences, Lesley Brown, Makhanya said it would be hard to find a worthier collaboration.

Dr Farai Tererai, Deputy Director of the Working for Wetlands project (a joint initiative of the Departments of Environmental Affairs, Water and Sanitation, and Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries) and Unisa Professor of Environmental Sciences Lesley Brown were invited to speak at the launch, providing important context into the state of wetlands both in South Africa and in the rest of Africa, and the importance of their preservation.

Brown illustrated the scarcity of water by stating that although as much as 70% of the earth's surface is covered by water, only 3.5% of this is fresh water, of which a mere 0.01% is available for consumption. Yet, he says, it is one of the world's most abused resources, including in South Africa despite the fact that we are the 30th most arid country in the world.

Ignorance will be fatal

Wetlands take up 131 million hectares of land in Africa. 'In South Africa,' said Tererai, 'wetlands occupy about 2 to 6% of the land area. Today, as much as 48% has already been lost while the remaining wetlands are critically endangered, requiring protection, rehabilitation and waterwise practices. Without protection and education, misuse and poor understanding will continue to threaten the existence of wetlands.'

Tererai added that given the general lack of understanding about their ecological function, it was important to define wetlands. 'They consist of land where the water table is usually at or near the surface, or are periodically covered in shallow water. Wetlands offer important hydrobiological benefits from water purification, flow reduction and sustained streamflow, groundwater discharge and erosion control. This is apart from the enormous biodiversity that flourishes in wetlands.'

An abundance of biodiversity in these areas has given rise to the preservation of more than 2 000 different indigenous fish species. The Zaire basin has 650 endemic fish species and high plant diversity. In KwaZulu-Natal's St Lucia wetlands there are 350 different bird species, and in the Chad Basin and Saloum Delta, more than one million waterfowl.

'Yet wetlands remain the most threatened of all our ecosystems,' said Tererai, 'but enjoy the least amount of protection.'

Awareness is key

Brown described the practical function of wetlands. 'Wetlands slow down the force of water, giving it time to seep into our underground water surfaces. If wetlands disappear or are diminished, the result is that there is no more time for these underground water tables to be replenished. Water tables can supply water to areas more than 30 kilometres away.'

Brown said that the protection of South Africa's wetlands was not high on the policy agenda. 'What is required is for us to development knowledge around wetlands. There must be a greater awareness about the way in which we make use of water, the way that we view this resource and the way we utilise wetlands.'



Kagiso Molokane, a lab technician from iNanoWS, doing a demonstration for Professor Makhanya and delegates.

Major boost for water purification research

- By Thembeke Ntuli Mpapama

Membranes are used more and more often for the creation of process water from groundwater, surface water or wastewater, and Unisa is now offering training on this technology with its state-of-the-art Hollow Fibre Membrane Spinning System housed at the institution's Nanotechnology and Water Sustainability (iNanoWS) Research Unit.

Launched in August at the university's College of Science, Engineering and Technology (CSET), the system adds to Unisa's inventory of such sophisticated platforms to ensure that researchers are best equipped to address problems associated with water quality in a more sustainable way.

What it does

Hollow fibre membranes are tubular devices used as filters to purify water and wastewater. A variety of other water and water treatment technologies are currently used by water treatment companies, but few offer the advantages of hollow fibre membranes. This is because inside a hollow fibre membrane water filter, hundreds or even thousands of tubes, which look like minute straws, are bundled together in a matrix fashion. The walls of these hollow fibres contain numerous tiny micropores. When water or wastewater passes through these tiny micropores, any pollutant, whether chemical or microbiological, is trapped inside the tubes because it is too big to pass through the pores. The water on the other side is clean.

These devices are attractive for use in water and wastewater purification and treatment because they sieve out contaminants efficiently and more effectively using physical rather than chemical means. They are capable of purifying water at all pH, salinity, turbidity and temperature levels. Other technologies such as those that use ultraviolet light and chemical treatments are highly dependent on physical properties and water chemistry, adsorption or chemical

degradative principles. These tamper to a certain degree with water quality, or their performance is affected by the state of water chemistry.

Technology to better serve communities

Professor Bhekie Mamba, Executive Dean of CSET, said that obtaining these machines to make hollow fibre membranes will enable Unisa to offer advanced training on membrane technology relevant to water and wastewater treatment and thus generate highly skilled graduates who will serve the communities better. 'Moreover,' he said, 'it will enable Unisa to embark on offering solutions to water quality challenges. This is because Unisa will be able to produce these devices locally on a large scale and supply them to water and wastewater treatment plants.'

Research in the development of water purification technologies has been among the areas where Unisa is investing its resources and priorities. 'For this reason, Unisa has been in the forefront among its peers globally in developing appropriate and relevant technologies that are affordable and relevant to our communities in our country and in the region,' said Professor Mandla Makhanya, Unisa Principal and Vice-Chancellor (VC). 'As we speak, laboratories at Unisa's Science Campus are well equipped with state-of-the-art, top-of-the-range research facilities that enable researchers to engage in high-quality research in almost all fields, including the area of water quality. Unisa will be in a position to offer training in advanced water treatment training and also work closely with relevant water sectors in the country such as water and wastewater treatment authorities, municipalities and other stakeholders in the water sector with a view to addressing problems associated with water quality in a more holistic and sustainable way.'

New knowledge centre to serve the San community

- By David Letsoalo

Earlier this year, the Unisa Institute for Dispute Resolution in Africa (IDRA) officially opened and handed over a newly upgraded community knowledge centre, which includes a Military Veteran Entrepreneurship Centre, in the San village of Platfontein on the outskirts of Kimberley.

This event was the culmination of five years of commitment, tireless work, and engagement with the community under the leadership of Professor Dries Velthuisen, current Head of the Institute for African Renaissance Studies (IARS), and former Senior Researcher and Acting Head of IDRA, as part of bringing engaged scholarly work into community dispute resolution involving the !Xun and Kwe people of Platfontein.

The project was made possible by the generous grant from the Sage Foundation's Charities Aid Fund, facilitated by the Unisa Foundation and the Unisa Department of Estates. In giving background to the project, Velthuisen maintained that the community were treated as equal partners in the project and he learned more from the community than from other academics.

The centre comprises a Military Veterans Centre, the Community Knowledge Centre, and a container donated by the Department of Arts and Culture that will be used for

entrepreneurship training. The Knowledge Centre will be used as a multi-purpose centre by the community.

The Military Veterans Centre will be used by the veterans and community leaders to solve community problems and conflicts as they arise. It will also be a space where military veterans and their families will get support to start small businesses. The big container will be used by the community to conduct entrepreneurial training.

Handing over the centre to the community, David Letsoalo, Head of IDRA, encouraged and challenged it to jealously guard the facilities and use them efficiently. He echoed Velthuisen's words that the place should be used to develop intervention towards challenges facing the community.

Among the guests was Scholtz van Wyk, who also has history with the San community of Platfontein. He shared with community members the challenges of entrepreneurship and advised the community to adopt a 'do' attitude and not to entertain conflict. It was also a great moment when about 20 learners from the community received certificates of attendance in computer literacy from The Hilltop Institute, a San training centre. The training was funded by IDRA.



The newly-established Platfontein Military Veterans Office and the Entrepreneurship Centre



Iconic South African women honoured at Unisa

Back: Max Maxeke (Deputy chair and spokesperson: Charlotte Manny-Maxeke Institute), Thulasizwe Makhanya (CEO: Charlotte Manny-Maxeke Institute), Nonkululeko Gobodo (chartered accountant and pioneering entrepreneur), Daphne Mashile-Nkosi (Business Award recipient), Prof. Mandla Makhanya (Unisa Principal and Vice-Chancellor), Advocate Sonwabile Mancotywa (CEO: National Heritage Council of South Africa). Front: Dr Anna Mokgokong (Chancellor: North-West University), Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma (Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs), Bathabile Dlamini (President: ANC Womens League), Dr Bongzi Ngema-Zuma (Businesswoman).

Unisa, in collaboration with the Charlotte Manny-Maxeke Institute, hosted the Bring Her Up: Women of Firsts Awards to celebrate women icons in different spheres and promote and preserve excellence in the country.

'I believe the Bring Her Up: Women of Firsts Awards ethos will continue to subvert and uproot the destructive spirit of suppressing others as we all empower our country's people to attain their best in life,' said Unisa Principal and Vice-Chancellor (VC), Professor Mandla Makhanya in his welcome address at the ceremony on 27 August 2019.

This project recognises and honours women who have played a role in creating innovative solutions to move the country forward, towards a progressive democracy. In his speech, Makhanya shared his joy with the audience regarding the philosophy of this award ceremony in honour of women of stature, playing magnificent roles in community upliftment, and bridging gaps existing between the multitudes of binaries, which divide the society. 'These esteemed honourable award recipients have shown strides of growing home-based skills and talent that will have an impact on many future generations,' he said.

Congratulating the recipients, the VC assured them that they are on the right path. However, he emphasised that it does not mean that one should not enjoy the fruits of one's labours, although he cautioned that enjoying the fruits and the 'game' of making money should never overtake the reason why people are doing it in the first place. 'It is when we forget who we are and where we came from, that we tend to lose our humanity, and with it, little pieces of our souls,' he said.

Development of women in industries

The first black woman to qualify as a chartered accountant in 1987, Nonkululeko Gobodo, who is also a recipient, shared some powerful nuggets in her keynote address entitled 'Economic transformation designed by women for women'. Gobodo spoke on equal pay in the workplace, and she said that the pay gap should not be tolerated as it is robbery.

Penny Lebyane, radio and TV personality, presented the Business and Entertainment Awards and spoke on the importance of language preservation in South Africa, saying that when one language arises, it does not mean that another must fall. The CEO of Newzroom Afrika, Thabile Ngwato said that women are changing the narrative of what South African media looks like. 'Part of the vision is to change the face of ownership,' she said.

All the speakers echoed Charlotte Maxeke's words: 'The work is not for ourselves, kill that spirit of self and do not live above your people but live with them and if you can rise, bring someone with you'.

Of importance on the day was a tribute paid to Dr Thandi Ndlovu, the business tycoon who died recently. The award ceremony was graced by dignitaries, political figures, business moguls and celebrities. The event, brought Charlotte Manny-Maxeke's spirit alive and was a truly phenomenal gathering of remarkable women.

Women making a difference



Agriculture and Farming: Anna Phosa, first black female commercial farmer in South Africa



Ambassador's Award: Major Mandisa Mfeka, South Africa's first black female combat fighter pilot



Ambassador's Award: Margaret Tyobo, founder and CEO of Ayanda Junior Academy, the first private junior academy in a township



Arts, Culture and Heritage: Dr Gcina Mhlophe, master storyteller



Arts, Culture and Heritage: Princess Magogo ka Dinuzulu, composer of Zulu classical music



Astounding in STEM: Linda Mabhena-Olagunju, founder and director of the DLO Energy Resources Group



Astounding in STEM: Nka'Thuto Edu Propeller Co-Founders Thulile Khanyile and Thandeka Mhlanga



Aviation: Lt Col Phetogo Molawa, first black person to command a South African Air Force (SAAF) installation



Business: Daphne Mashile-Nkosi, Executive Chairman and founder of Kalagadi Manganese



Chairman's Award: Dr Anna Mokgokong, founder of Community Investment Holdings



Chairman's Award: Dr Thozama April, author on women and feminist historiography



Chairman's Award: Nozala Investments, Women Investment and Empowerment Group



Chairman's Award: Stefanutti Stocks Holdings Limited, a construction company that gives back to the community



Construction and Engineering: Dr Thandi Ndlovu, founder and CEO of Motheo Construction



Distinctive Youth Leadership: Dr Sithembile Mbete, political analyst and lecturer, Dept of Political Sciences, University of Pretoria



Entertainment: Bonang Matheba founder of the House of BNG and broadcaster extraordinaire



Entertainment: Sho Madjozi, first South African female to win BET Best New International Act



Groundbreaking Globalist: Minister Bogolo Kenewendo, economist, politician and Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry, Botswana



Leadership: Dr Brigalia Bam, former chairperson of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC)



Media: Thabile Ngwato, co-founder of Newzroom Afrika



Medical: Dr Keorapetse Tabane, first black oncologist in South Africa



Sport: Kass Naidoo, South Africa's first female cricket commentator



Sport: Penny Heyns, the only woman in the history of the Olympic Games to win both the 100m and 200 m breaststroke events

CELEBRATING WOMEN



From left: Prof. Nokuthula Mazibuko, Tereska Muishond, Myesha Jenkins, Dr Daisy Selematsela, Makhosazana Xaba and Phillippa Yaa de Villiers

Unisa Library celebrates black women poets: 'Our Words, Our Worlds' - By Natalia Molebatsi

In celebration of Women's Month, August 2019, and in commemoration of the women's march to the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956 to protest the pass laws, the Unisa Library and the Unisa Institute for Gender Studies collaborated with the University of KwaZulu-Natal Press (UKZN Press), in the launch of the highly anticipated book – *Our Words, Our Worlds: Writing on Black South African Women Poets: 2000-2018* – edited by poet, essayist, short-story writer and activist, Makhosazana Xaba.

The event took place in Pretoria on Monday, 15 August 2019. It was not only a celebration, but a discussion on the solid contributions that women, and black women in particular, have made and continue to make to the South African literary landscape. Xaba wanted not only to acknowledge the effect of these prolific black women poets on the fabric of our society, but also to quantify their work. The project is part of documenting black women's cultural products as a measure against loss through forgetting or erasure, and the contributors to the book number over twenty women.

'I wanted to fill the gap and contribute to an accurate archive of our publications and other acts of literature,' said Xaba. On the panel, Xaba was joined by Professor Nokuthula Mazibuko, Head of the Institute for Gender Studies at Unisa, as well as three contributors to the book, namely: Myesha Jenkins, poet and radio host, Phillipa Yaa de Villiers, poet and lecturer, and Tereska Muishond, performance poet.

When asked about the relations between women today and those of the 1956 march, the panellists all highlighted the importance of remembering the torch bearers who made it possible for many more women to use their own voices against oppression.

'Does anyone here know of a book that details the process that led to the 1956 march?' Xaba posed this rhetorical question to the audience of students and academics to highlight the necessary work of documenting women's lives and experiences, to have more facts and less speculation and to ensure that while illuminating some names, others are not forgotten. In the book Xaba is intentional about tabling the correct dates, names and number of publications from black women poets as well as the process and intentions of their work – through personal interviews and other essays. In some years, like 2005, there was an unprecedented number of poetry publications by black women, a total of seven publications, which drove Xaba to conduct further research as to what was taking place in South Africa at that time for such an unprecedented increase in publication.

In her address, Dr Daisy Selematsela, Executive Director of Unisa Library and Information Services, congratulated Xaba and the other contributors on the book and affirmed that the Unisa Library is committed to the decolonisation of its collections and that this agenda will ensure that enough attention is paid to women's books, especially those whose works were previously banned or marginalised – such as the likes of Noni Jabavu and Miriam Tlali.

This ground-breaking, multi-genre anthology documents a slice of the country's literary history by bringing together the writings of over twenty contributors through literary critique, personal essays and interviews. The book positions and moves through disciplines: literary theory, feminism, language, history and politics.

The book boasts the intellectual prowess of the likes of Gabeba Baderoon, Diana Ferrus, Vangile Gantsho, Makgano Mamabolo, Mandi Vundla, VM Sisi Maqagi, Bandile Gumbi and Barbara Boswell, among others.

Women's creations take centre stage at the Unisa Art Gallery

The Unisa Art Gallery celebrated Women's Month through an exhibition featuring the permanent collection of selected artworks by women artists titled 'Wathint' Umfazi, Wathint' Imboko', curated by Jacob Lebeko.

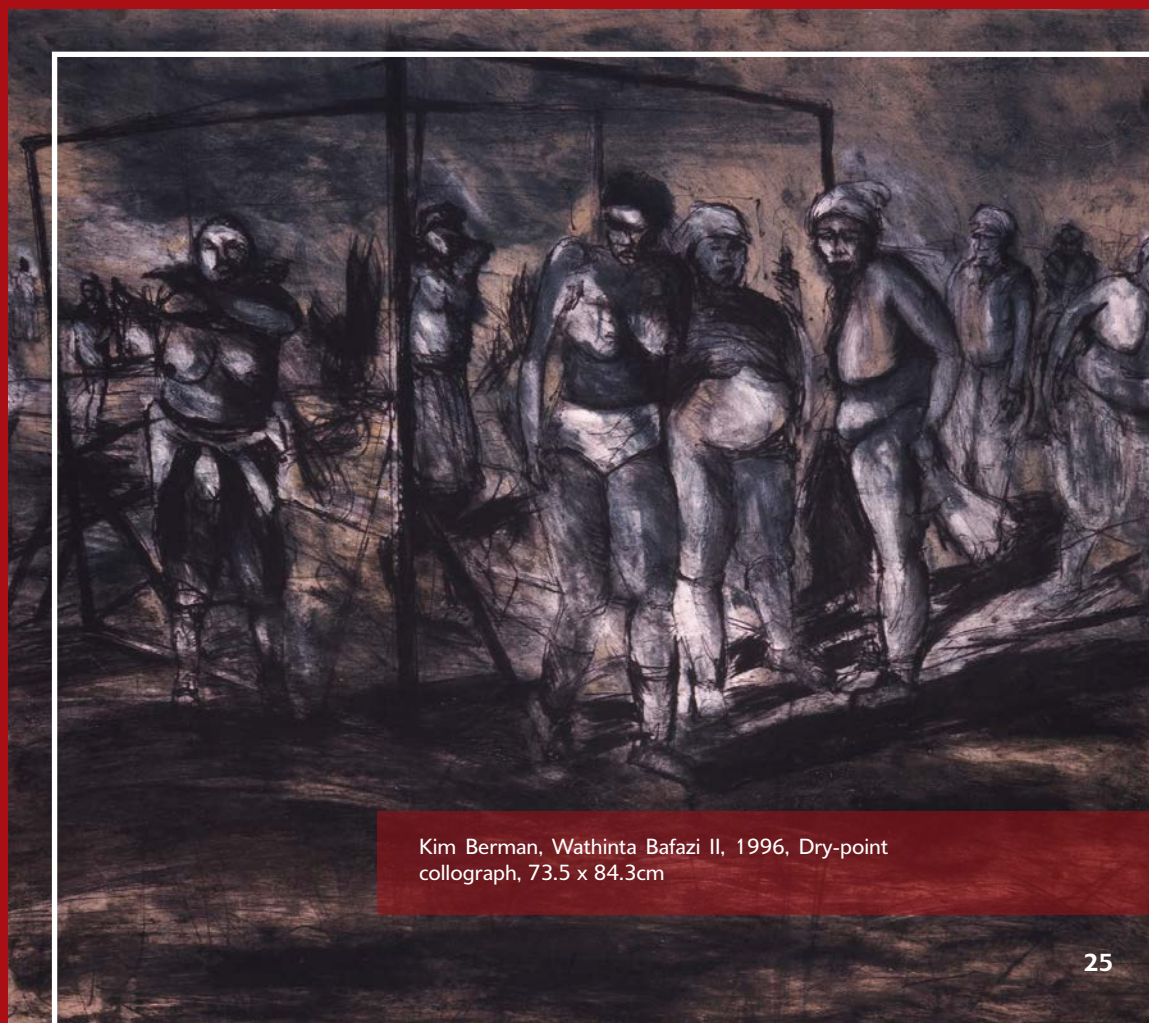
This exhibition acknowledged women artists for their contributions to the South African art world over many years and it gave viewers an opportunity to connect to artefacts and paintings.

Through this exhibition, the Art Gallery's materials and displays signified South African women artists in the context of social upliftment and gender politics, where the audience connected with and critiqued their work.

Opening the exhibition, Kutlwano Mokgojwa, Curatorial Assistant and Logistics Manager from the University of Pretoria, said that the language people use to talk about women such as Mma ngwana o tshwarathipa ka bogaleng and Wathint' umfazi, wathint' imbokodo

is rooted in pain, struggle and imposed hardship that dominates talks about women. 'One of the cop-out ways in which many people compliment women is by saying that they are strong, superwomen, or a rock,' she said. 'This gives women a sub-human quality that makes it okay for them to endure hardships. The same can be said about gendering an artist's work. We must be cautious of how we speak of artists' works without limiting it.'

The work of established artists such as Stuart Constance Larrabee (Holy communion at Bronkhorstspuit, 1947); Irma Stern (Head of a woman, 1959); Maud Sumner (Oasis, 1960); Judith Mason (Bird, 1971 and Stigmata c. 1972); Debra Bell (Overture: marriage a la mode, 1987); Penny Siopis (Table three, c.1988) were displayed together with newer artists such as Fiona Pole (New memories, 1994); Dineo Bopape (Love letter, 2005); Nomusa Mkhumbu (Inquietude I-III, 2008); Mary Sibande (They don't make them like they used to, 2009) and Nandipha Mntambo (Marquette for minotaurus, 2017).



Kim Berman, Wathinta Bafazi II, 1996, Dry-point collograph, 73.5 x 84.3cm

‘I wish she could have been here tonight’ - By Edgar Rathelele

In what has become a proud tradition, Unisa once again conferred honorary doctorates on nation builders, thus recognising their selfless contributions and their vision and values, which resonate with those of the university.

Receiving an honorary doctorate bestowed posthumously on the iconic Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, her grandson, Zondwa Mandela, said that hers was a life lived far too short.

Unisa conferred the degree of Doctor of Social Work (*honoris causa*) posthumously on one of South Africa’s foremost struggle stalwarts, the late Mrs Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, at a graduation ceremony held at the Unisa Main Campus in Pretoria on Tuesday, 29 October 2019.

The historic event took place in the former Theo Van Wijk Building, which was recently renamed the Winnie Madikizela-Mandela Building in honour of this great African icon.

The honorary degree was conferred on the late Mrs Madikizela-Mandela in recognition of her revolutionary social work that had an impact on individuals, groups and communities, her radical challenge to the apartheid system from the early stages of her life as a professional social worker, and the role she played in bringing social change as an activist and community developer to empower women.

Her grandson Zondwa Mandela, representing the Madikizela-Mandela family, received the honorary degree on behalf of the family. In his speech, Mandela highlighted the importance of family, and spoke of the role and purpose of the African family within society. Fondly remembering his grandmother, he told the audience that it was her support that saw him through in the completion of his first degree during tough times.

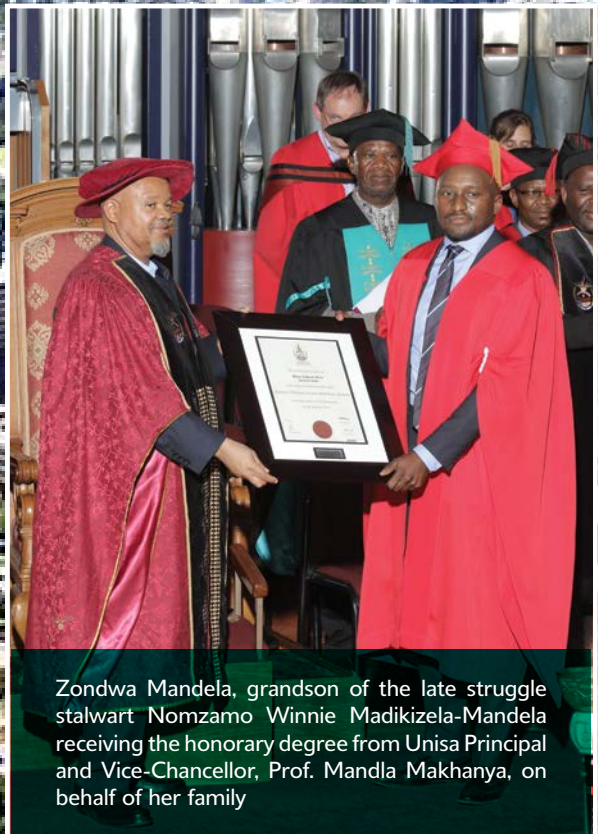
Mandela stressed that a university must be a neutral space and a place where everyone is welcome. ‘A university must recognise that it represents a diverse set of cultures, backgrounds and experiences,’ he said. ‘It must also be a place that acknowledges fallen soldiers in respect of the blood and tears that many sacrificed to build this great nation of ours. It is clear that Unisa is committed to alleviating the stigma of systematic injustices by creating an environment that is inclusive of all members of society as representatives of the community it seeks to serve.’

Professor Mandla Makhanya, Unisa’s principal and Vice-Chancellor, said that it is appropriate to honour Mama Winnie Madikizela-Mandela by bestowing on her an honorary doctorate posthumously. ‘Moreover,’ he said, ‘we are delighted to do so in the building that now carries her name. We are truly humbled to take this moment to remember, honour, and pay tribute to the mother of the nation, Mama Nomzamo Winnie Madikizela-Mandela.’

‘I must declare that it is quite difficult to receive this honour on her behalf, because hers was a life lived too short,’ said Mandela. ‘Collectively, the family would all have all loved hearing my grandmother speaking here tonight. She would have cherished this moment and we are saddened that we cannot experience it with her.’



Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and Unisa Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Mandla Makhanya, at the graduation of her granddaughter Zoleka Mandela in March 2018. This was one of Mama Winnie’s very last public appearances.



Zondwa Mandela, grandson of the late struggle stalwart Nomzamo Winnie Madikizela-Mandela receiving the honorary degree from Unisa Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Mandla Makhanya, on behalf of her family



“

We are truly humbled to take this moment to remember, honour, and pay tribute to the mother of the nation, Mama Nomzamo Winnie Madikizela-Mandela.

”

Unisa honours Kgosana

In November Unisa conferred the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (honoris causa) posthumously on political activist and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) stalwart, the late Mr Philip Ata Kgosana.

Kgosana is known for leading a protest demonstration at the age of 23 on 30 March 1960, where 30 000 protestors opposing the country's pass laws marched from Langa to Cape Town. This peaceful march subsequently led to his arrest, following which he fled into exile. During his 30 years in exile, Kgosana demonstrated outstanding servant leadership qualities. He served at the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) from 1976 until his retirement in 1996 as a programme officer in Uganda, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Botswana.

Delivering the acceptance address, Mr Bani Kgosana, the son of the late PAC struggle hero, reminisced about the conditions that his father experienced when he was studying towards his honours degree through Unisa during the apartheid years.

He recalled how his father would open packages received from Unisa by throwing them down on the grass as a safety strategy. He said the anecdote demonstrated his father's willingness to risk his life for his education. 'In 1976, after writing his final exams in the German Embassy in Lusaka, he received his BA honours degree in Economics from Unisa. For that, we, as a family, are very grateful. Seeing the futility of continuing to pursue an education in the midst of the naked injustice that surrounded him, my father opted to join the struggle for the liberation of South Africa, or Azania as they called it.'

Kgosana said that his father's story was not his alone. 'Almost his entire journey in exile was shared by my mother, Alice Kgosana. As a young nurse who had just completed her training at Baragwanath hospital in 1967, she took the brave decision to leave her home and join him in Ethiopia – a country that might just as well have been on another planet for this farm girl from Matatiel.' Fifty years later she was still by his side when he passed away on 19 April 2017. 'This honour being conferred on my father today, therefore, belongs as much to her as it does to him. The fact that among the last acts of his life was to complete a degree in theology at the age of 79, bears testament to her ongoing support.'

'As was the case with my father, this institution maintained the integrity of its mandate to provide quality distance education to anyone who qualified for it; whether they were on Robben Island, in exile or in Pollsmoor prison. So, long may this rich tradition continue and long may Unisa represent the ability of education to transcend any boundaries that political or economic or social systems may try to put in its way.'

Kgosana said what was most special about the day, was the fact that the same university whose study material his father threw on the grass, was the one conferring an honorary doctorate on him. 'As an alumnus of this institution, it is with great pride that I receive this degree on his behalf.'

In conclusion Kgosana appealed to the institution to continue bringing light to the hundreds of thousands of students who depend on the administrative and academic staff for their dream of getting a tertiary education.'

Professor Mandla Makhanya, Unisa Principal and Vice-Chancellor, said that the university conferred the honorary degree on the late Kgosana in recognition of his outstanding performance and political service over the years. 'Unisa applauds his contribution to the campaign march he led in Cape Town towards the liberation of South Africa from colonial dominance and his dedication to the causes of social justice, liberation and equality,' he concluded.



Bani Kgosana, son of the late PAC struggle hero Philip Ata Kgosana, receiving the honorary doctorate from Prof. Mandla Makhanya on behalf of the Kgosana family



Celebrating Baloyi's marathon from domestic worker to assistant director

- By Edgar Rathelele

When the iconic Nelson Mandela said that education is the key to eliminating gender inequality, reducing poverty, creating a sustainable planet, preventing needless deaths and illness, and fostering peace, he may as well have been summarising Johannah Baloyi's autobiography.

In 2003 Baloyi, employed at the time as a domestic worker, turned over a new leaf in life when she graduated with a bachelor's degree in Political Science and Communication at Unisa. The then 41-year-old single mother to 14-year-old daughter Marcie was heeding Madiba's call for young people to return to school. It was in 1998 that she first registered for a degree, a journey that started with a Certificate in Adult Basic Education and Training.

Completing her degree set her on a completely different course in her life. She successfully applied for an internship at the then Department of Minerals and Energy in 2003. In 2004 the department offered her a permanent job as a secretary and in 2008 she was promoted to a more senior administrative position. She later joined the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries as a vetting officer. In 2014 she joined the Department of Labour as an assistant director and proceeded to established a vetting unit at the department.

Sixteen years later, on 26 September 2019, Baloyi returned to Unisa to graduate with a bachelors degree in Health Science and Social Services.

Baloyi, who used to stay in a shack at an informal settlement in Soshanguve outside of Pretoria, says she chose not to move out of the residential area but rather improved her home because she wanted to inspire others who stay in Extension 8C, Soshanguve South.

Baloyi believes that education will take you places that you never thought you would reach. 'After the exams, I called my friend reminiscing about how after exams we would be rushing to catch a train,' she says. 'Sometimes we did not have train tickets, and we borrowed them from our neighbours. Now I commute in my own car. This is evidence that education is the key to success.'

Baloyi adds that fear is the reason most people have not achieved their dreams, and it seems there is no stopping her as she just registered for an honours degree in Counselling Psychology at Unisa.

Bittersweet graduation

- By Edgar Rathelele

Graduation days often come with jubilations and tears of joy for many as they reminisce on the journey culminating in their graduation ceremony. Yet it was a bittersweet day for Hantie Steyn, mother of a deceased student, who was supposed to be among the 251 graduates to receive their qualifications on 1 October 2019 at Unisa.

Hantie accepted a posthumous degree in Financial Accounting from the College of Accounting Sciences on behalf of Lize-Marie during the spring graduations. According to her mother, Lize-Marie received her results on Saturday, 27 July 2019, and passed away on 29 July 2019. The 25-year-old suffered from angiosarcoma, a rare form of cancer.

Despite chemotherapy treatment, she still worked at an auditing firm, Middel & Partners, in Pretoria East. 'I am glad that she knew before she died that she had completed her degree,' said Hantie, 'and as a mother I am proud of her – at the age of 25 she achieved a lot. She dedicated her degree to her father who passed away 16 years ago.'



The late Lize-Marie Steyn

“

Lize-Marie showed us that there is no reason to stop your life because you have an illness or are living with a disability.'

”

At 91, inquisitive Conradie has become the oldest man to obtain a doctorate at Unisa

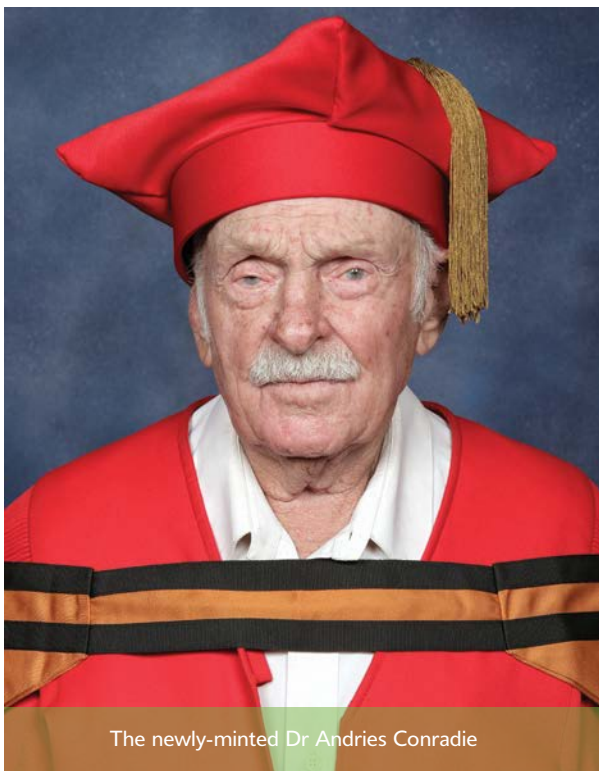
- By Zelda Venter. This article originally appeared in the *Pretoria News*, and is republished here with the permission of the editor.

'Don't take everything at face value; you have to question things,' said 91-year-old Andries Conradie, who has become the oldest man to obtain his doctorate at Unisa.

Conradie may have stood out among his counterparts on the stage on Friday as he accepted his doctoral degree in literature and philosophy in the College of Human Sciences, but he has two things very few possess – perseverance and the wisdom of Solomon.

He completed his doctoral thesis this year with the title 'The Bible as a problematic text – a critical analysis based on controversies in the Dutch Reformed Church'.

A very controversial subject and one for which he may be criticised, the grey-headed great-grandfather said. 'But I cannot simply believe like a child. I have to question some things.'



The newly-minted Dr Andries Conradie

Conradie said during his career as a historian and teacher, he had encountered biblical questions, which simply called for answers.

After years of evasive answers from ministers of religion, Conradie decided to study the subject intensively, to analyse it and write his thesis on it.

An academic in the true sense, Conradie matriculated in 1945 at the Lichtenburg High School in the North West. He started his studies at Potchefstroom University in 1948 where he obtained a BA degree in English and history and later obtained his Master's degree in history.

He worked as a teacher over the years and later moved on to become a school principal in the then Transkei.

After his wife died in 2009, Conradie moved in with his only living child, Dr Alet Harmse, who is an academic and worked at Unisa for 30 years.

Harmse said that after her retirement, she mentored many postgraduate students at her home in Wierdapark. Her father, who had always questioned the literal meaning of the words in the Bible, decided to also pursue his academic aspirations. He enrolled with Unisa six years ago to pursue his theological studies and eventually work towards his thesis.

'My father may be of an advanced age, but he does not stand back for anyone when it comes to the electronic age.'

Harmse said her father wrote his entire script on his own computer. 'It all went very well, with very few struggles. The only small obstacle was transport as he no longer drives. But buses and the Gautrain got him where he wanted to be.'

Apart from a slight hearing problem, Conradie is still in excellent health. Yesterday when the Pretoria News spoke to him, he had just returned from his walk to the store to buy newspapers, about 1km away.

'I am proud of what I have achieved. One is never too old to reach your dreams,' he said.

But there is no time to rest; he is now writing his first article for an online publication, emanating from his thesis. 'Watch out, there are many to follow,' he promised.

Unisa's Students' Representative Council (SRC) represents and champions the interests of Unisa students. This includes interests in decision-making governance structures and committees of the University such as the Council, college boards and the Student Funding Committee, among others.

The SRC is also responsible for contributing effectively to the policy making discourse of the university to enhance teaching and learning, research and community engagement.

Leading by example: recent SRC graduates

One does not become a champion in one day. It takes time and what you do within that time is equally important. Know and understand that your background has nothing to do with what you want to become. What determines your future is what you are doing now, how focused you are and knowing what you aim for. Someone once said, 'There are no limits to what you can accomplish, except for the limit you place on your own thinking'.



You can make it; all it takes is hard work, patience, discipline and determination.



Never let your current situation determine your destination, instead, let it motivate you to pursue your dreams. Don't stop reaching for your goals – where there's ambition and hard work there's accomplishment.



LUNGHILE MABUNDA

**Deputy Chairperson:
Limpopo Regional Students'
Representative Council**

**Qualification: Bachelor of
Social Work**



TIYISELANI BALOYI

Speaker: Tshwane Regional Student Parliament

Qualification: Diploma in Policing

Education is critical to escape chronic poverty and to prevent the transmission of poverty to further generations, particularly for students who come from poor backgrounds. Education is also crucial for the liberation of the people of South Africa and has paved a way to the full realisation of our rights and freedom.

As student leaders, one of our primary roles is to propel academic excellence and lead our constituencies by example, and with the highest level of loyalty and integrity.

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I would like to remind students of what Steve Biko said: 'It is better to die for an idea that will live than to live for an idea that will die'.

”

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Look at your goals, everything else will follow. If you at all times look at your goals, you will find within you the energy to study hard to accomplish your goals. Even if you may fall (fail) at times, get up and push yourself towards your goals. Secondly, stick to the resolution of the conference that sat within you and decided to take your qualification.”

”



SILIMELA RICKY NYIKISA

Secretary: Western Cape Regional Students' Representative Council

Qualification: LLB

Meet Unisa SRC members

- Xola Nyirenda, Deputy President of the National Students' Representative Council (NSRC)

My responsibilities

Among other tasks, I am deployed to the College of Law board to represent students and I have been tasked to establish and head a student disciplinary advisory committee. I drive the development of and consultations on policy matters for the student governance structures in general. I advise the SRC on matters in respect of international students. Lastly, together with the education and training officer, I represent students on the Institutional Forum of the university.

My background

I was born and raised in KaBokweni, Mpumalanga, where I lived with my mother and three brothers. I come from a Christian family and I am a born-again Christian. I can say that I am a principled person and my values are mainly rooted in my Christian background. As a born-free I benefited from the non-fee schools project and pre-tertiary feeding scheme programmes. My experience motivated me to be a student activist and among other things to fight for National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) allowances for Unisa students. Although I come from humble beginnings my background does not determine my future.

How I juggle my academic and leadership responsibilities

My secret is preparedness. Therefore, I start early and formulate my own strategic plan, which consists of tasks with deadlines, and just stick to my plan like a postal stamp. As a result, it has become my habit to always do my best and to put first things first. Sometimes it just takes one word – NO – if what is requested will greatly compromise my plan. Strategy, preparedness and taking advantage of opportunities are the keys to achieving success as a student leader.

How I will add value to the Unisa student community

My office is already implementing one project. I have established the Student Disciplinary Committee (SDC) and Student Disciplinary Appeals Committee (SDAC) hearings, representatives and advisory committee. For this project I have organised final-year law students around Gauteng to represent students who have been charged and are to appear before the SDC and SDAC. This project has been a great success so far. To prevent further misconduct by students I will run awareness campaigns in all regions about plagiarism

and other common misconducts, the student code, and the role of the student disciplinary office and the committees.

Among the 400 000 Unisa students we represent are students who are in prison. I am in the process of establishing a project in partnership with the Unisa Library and other stakeholders to support these students. Among other things, we will visit them, and I plan to identify the prisons with most Unisa students with a view to donating old Unisa computers.

I will visit special schools with learners living with disabilities to motivate them to further their studies and to inform them about available opportunities. In the case of international students it is my plan to advocate for Unisa's international students to get study permits like any other foreign students studying in South Africa.

How to contact me

Students are welcome to email me at:
nyirexg@unisa.ac.za.



Nkgabiseng Dube, Deputy Secretary-General of the NSRC



My responsibilities

As Deputy Secretary-General, I execute all NSRC plans and programmes. I consolidate reports of SRC representatives on the university committees and keep records of meetings. I also represent the SRC at selected institutional committees as determined by the President and the NSRC.

My background

I was born and raised in Rustenburg, North West Province, where I lived with my grandmother and mother. Being raised in a female-dominated household taught me to believe that there is absolutely nothing that I wanted to become, which is unattainable.

Coming from such a fortunate background and good support system taught me to appreciate life and the opportunities I had. I realised at an early age that neither my peers nor other people around me had the same opportunities I had. My background motivated me to be a student activist at Unisa.

Through student structures within the university, I gained knowledge on my school of thought on how to be disciplined and conduct myself as a student leader. Being a member of SASCO, the Black Management Forum Student Chapter and Regional Speaker of the Midlands Region contributed to my leadership skills.

How I juggle my academic and leadership responsibilities

I take pride in my school work and tackle most of the important tasks in the morning. I diarise my day-to-day activities every morning.

How I will add value to the Unisa student community

I am currently working closely with the regional SRC and student structures to ensure that the needs of the students are noted and resolved. Students are the university's primary stakeholders and I am ready to be the voice, which will provide optimum solutions to the issues faced by Unisa's student community.

How to contact me

Students are welcome to email me at:
dubenn@unisa.ac.za.

I take pride in my school work and tackle most of the important tasks in the morning. I diarise my day-to-day activities every morning.

UNISA FOUNDATION & INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS PROFILES

This Unisa directorate is responsible for prospecting, cultivating and nurturing strategic funding opportunities, partnerships and relationships that assist to support the vision and mission of Unisa.

Alumni Relations forms part of this unit.

The main event on the directorate's calendar is arranging and hosting the annual Unisa Chancellor's awards



Back, from left, Unisa Chancellor Thabo Mbeki and Unisa Principal and Vice-Chancellor Prof. Mandla Makhanya. Front, from left, Prof. Firoz Cachalia (who received the Unisa Robben Island Award on behalf of Kgalema Motlanthe), Prof. Helen Mavhandu-Mudzusi (who received the Outstanding Educator Award), Lerato Khumalo (who received the Public Servant Award on behalf of Judge Edwin Cameron), and Sizwe Nxasana (who received the Outstanding Alumnus Award)

Chancellor Mbeki fetes South African greats - By Busisiwe Mahlangu

To date, 25 extraordinary and iconic South Africans have been recipients of the Unisa Chancellor's Awards and are all people who have made deliberate efforts to have a positive impact on the lives of others.

A jovial mood prevailed at the 2019 Unisa Chancellor's Calabash Awards ceremony held in Johannesburg on Friday, 1 November 2019. Dubbed the most prestigious event on the Unisa calendar, the coveted awards were presented to four outstanding South Africans who have contributed to society, its transformation and the development of South Africa.

Unisa Principal and Vice-Chancellor (VC), Professor Mandla Makhanya alluded to the fact that the awards were about celebrating and encouraging excellence and to rededicating ourselves to education. 'The future is bright, he said, 'even during all the challenges the society faces.'

The VC commended the corporate sector present at the ceremony, which he believes is a sector that can be pulled together to help build a strong foundation for the continuing reconstruction of our country. 'This,' he said, 'is further demonstrated by Unisa's choice of awardees. These are the people who build society. They recognise the potential among women and men, youth, and girls and boys that can be harnessed to build a prosperous and peaceful society.'

UNISA FOUNDATION & INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS PROFILES

They have set the bar high in their service to humanity in the fields of educations, law and governance, and politics. Their lives and achievements have also demonstrated dedication, focus and determination on improving not only their lives, but to better those of others.

Unisa Chancellor, Thabo Mbeki, saluted the awardees for the invaluable contributions they have made towards the continuing reconstruction and development of society. He also accorded this appreciation to the people and institutions that have contributed resources to Unisa to enable it to discharge its responsibilities.

The Chancellor indicated related developments taking place at the university, including the establishment of the Presidential Library, the first of its kind in South Africa. Unisa is cooperating with the Thabo Mbeki Foundation to establish the library.

'The collection of archival material is continuing at a great pace,' he said. 'The historical material belonging to the late Kwame Nkrumah, President of Ghana, and the late Sékou Touré, the first President of Guinea, has already arrived at the university. Unisa is also considering ways to rescue the Lovedale Press in the Eastern Cape, a missionary press, which has specialised since the 1930s in African historical documentation.'

Chancellor Mbeki said that in matters of importance of education, in 2015 the UN General Assembly adopted the 2030 agenda for the achievement of sustainable development goals, which made the roles of universities more distinctive in discharging education. 'Overall, Unisa must live up to its responsibility in achieving the goals as stipulated and we hope to have you walk side by side with the university as it continues to work to achieve these objectives,' he said.

The Outstanding Educator Award was presented to Professor Azwihangwisi Helen Mavhandu-Mudzusi, who is attached to Unisa's Department of Health Studies. The award acknowledges the contribution of outstanding educators who have excelled in or advanced teaching, learning, skills development and/or research in their area of expertise.

The Outstanding Alumnus Award was bestowed on Sizwe Nxasana, founder of the Sifiso Learning Group. The award acknowledges outstanding alumni who have excelled in their area of expertise and have made a significant contribution to our society.

The Public Servant Award was presented to Judge Edwin Cameron, former Constitutional Court judge and well-known HIV/AIDS and gay-rights activist. The award recognises South Africans who have made exceptional contributions in government structures and in consolidating constitutional democracy. The award was received on his behalf by Lerato Khumalo.

The Unisa Robben Island Award was presented to Kgalema Petrus Motlanthe, former President of South Africa. The award is named after Robben Island, given the significant role of the island in South Africa's political history. The award recognises the role of political prisoners/activists (both men and women) who sacrificed immensely during the liberation of South Africa. The award was received on his behalf by Professor Firoz Cachalia.



Chancellor Mbeki, Prof. Helen Mavhandu-Mudzusi and Prof. Mandla Makhanya



Chancellor Mbeki, Sizwe Nxasana and Prof. Mandla Makhanya



Chancellor Mbeki, Prof. Firoz Cachalia and Prof. Mandla Makhanya

Bite-sized snippets from *your* university

Gender economic transformation takes centre stage at Unisa



In August, stokvels, the plight of working moms and emancipation were some of the topics under discussion as women from all walks of life recently made their voices heard at the annual dialogue organised by Unisa in partnership with South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID) and United Nations Women (UN Women) in celebration of Women's Month.

Major ESD boost as Unisa and Absa sign MoA



Unisa and Absa Bank entered into a memorandum of agreement on 30 July to unlock funding for Unisa's enterprise and supplier development (ESD) companies amounting to R200 million.

Exciting collaboration with China to focus on new energy



In-depth collaboration between Unisa and some of the foremost Chinese energy researchers is set to change the lives of the less privileged through new technologies. The College of Science, Engineering and Technology hosted the opening of the Unisa Institute for the Development of Energy for African Sustainability (IDEAS) China Research Collaboration Centre and the Unisa-Hebei University of Science and Technology International Joint Laboratory of New Energy (South African office) at a prestigious event on Sunday, 18 August 2019.

Unisa women bridge gender divide



On 16 August the annual Feroza Adams Memorial Lecture, organised by the Unisa Women's Forum and Department of Institutional Advancement, dealt with 4IR, issues of poverty, unemployment and the lack of support for women entrepreneurs.

Bite-sized snippets from *your* university

Struggle stalwart launches riveting book at Unisa

Hailed by President Ramaphosa as a compelling and thoughtful collection of short stories that flows imperceptibly into a strong tale of a stalwart of our long struggle for freedom, Enver Surty's *In Pursuit of Dignity* was launched at Unisa on 28 August. Surty served as a member of parliament, was a negotiator of the Bill of Rights and a Former Minister of Justice and Deputy Minister of Education and Basic Education.



Unisa law student named top essayist



Gilbert Phindile Kato, an LLM student at Unisa and a candidate attorney at Webber Wentzel Attorneys, was recently announced as the winner of the LLM category at the Annual Legal Essay Writing Competition Awards ceremony. The South African Law Reform Commission (SALRC) in conjunction with prize sponsors Juta Law hosted the ceremony.

Bite-sized snippets from *your* university

Two Unisa women honoured as education game-changers



Two Unisans, Professor Nombeka Mpako (Director of the School of Arts) and Dr Edith Phaswana (Acting Head of the Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute), were recognised as *Mail & Guardian (M&G) Top 100 Women Changing South Africa* under the category of Education. Every year for Women’s Month, the *M&G* profiles the transformative work done by women. The project is a celebration of excellence and a testimony to the tireless work done by South African women.

International recognition for Vice-Chancellor’s innovation in distance education

Professor Mandla Makhanya was one of only two Africans honoured on 11 September 2019 with the prestigious Honorary Fellowship of the Commonwealth of Learning, the world’s only intergovernmental organisation solely concerned with the promotion and development of distance education and open learning.



Africa's elusive quest for peace



Speaking at the sixth lecture for 2019 of the Principal and Vice-Chancellor's African Intellectuals Project themed 'Africa and her perennial, elusive quest for peace – a critical examination', Advocate Mojanku Gumbi emphasised the importance of conflict resolution.

Women students laud Unisa's safety initiative



As part of a broader initiative to ensure that women students are safe, Unisa distributed the first of its self-defence kits at the Sunnyside Campus in October, and the response from women students has been positive. The initiative will continue at other Unisa regional hubs such as Durban, Cape Town, Polokwane, Rustenburg, East London, Nelspruit and Gauteng. The project is part of the university's multi-pronged response to the scourge of gender-based violence.

Bite-sized snippets from *your* university

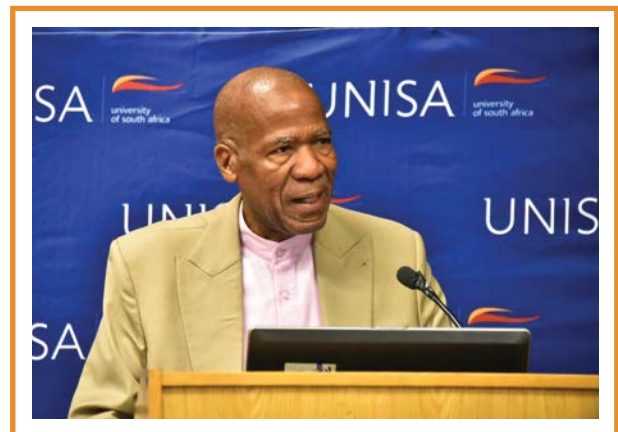
Remembering Es'kia



Delivering the 10th Annual Es'kia Mphahlele Memorial Lecture, Dr Reuel Khoza, Chairperson of Dzana Investment, the Assupol Group and the Public Investment Corporation, described Mphahlele as a symbol of South African resilience and a custodian of time-tested wisdom.

Rekindling African histories and reclaiming dignity

The 5th African Intellectuals Lecture held on 2 September 2019, delivered by Professor Malegapuru Makgoba, the former University of KwaZulu-Natal Vice-Chancellor and South African Health Ombud, deliberated on pertinent issues with which Africa grapples to attain African Renaissance 21 years onwards.



Bite-sized snippets from *your* university

Finding the truth amid media clutter

Delivering the 9th Annual Percy Qoboza Memorial Lecture, Dr Somadoda Fikeni, Director for Special Projects and the advisor to the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Unisa, said that when examining the current issue of digital revolution, mass communication and disinformation within the context of democratic systems with constitutionally enshrined freedom of expression and press freedom, it is difficult to identify the fault lines.



Examining 4IR's future impact on higher education



Speaking at the Unisa Teaching and Learning Festival, Professor Narend Bajjnath, CEO of the Council on Higher Education, urged universities to stay relevant and equip students with necessary skills in the era of the fourth industrial revolution.

Chancellor pronounces on femicide, xenophobia, lingering racial tensions and more



Unisa staff and students, media representatives and members of the public attended the bi-annual interactive session between the Chancellor of Unisa, former President Thabo Mbeki, and students of the Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute (TMALI) on 15 August.

Unisa brings the Water World Cup to Africa

Unisa's College of Science, Engineering and Technology has officially been given the opportunity to host the eight International Water Association Natural Organic Matter Conference in 2021.



Unisa leads transformation agenda by renaming historic buildings



The atmosphere was electric as Unisa held its renaming ceremony on Wednesday, 21 August 2019. The renamed buildings are: the Theo van Wijk Building renamed for Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, the AJH Van der Walt Building renamed for Professor Nkoana Simon Radipere and the Samuel Pauw Building renamed for Anton Lembede. The initiative is one of many projects that supports the institution's concerted Africanisation and decolonisation efforts.



A prime example of how Unisa wields knowledge to make a difference, Unisa Press, the largest university press in Africa, supports Unisa's Research and Innovation Strategy

through the development and dissemination of knowledge and research outputs thus promoting accessibility as well as playing a role in supporting lifelong learning.

New from Unisa Press: *Queer Kinship*

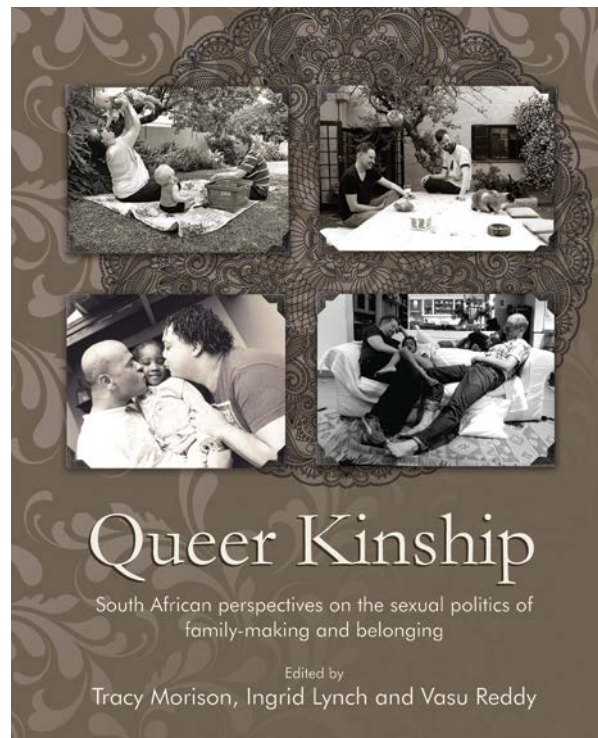
Edited by Tracy Morison, Ingrid Lynch and Vasu Reddy and sub-titled 'South African perspectives on the sexual politics of family-making and belonging', this collection from leading and emerging thinkers in gender and sexualities interrogates the politics of belonging, shining a light on the outcasts, rebels, and pioneers.

Queer Kinship brings together an array of thought-provoking perspectives on what it means to love and be loved, to 'do family' and to belong in the South African context. The collection includes a number of different topic areas, disciplinary approaches and theoretical lenses on familial relations, reproduction and citizenship. The text amplifies the voices of those who are bending, breaking and remaking the rules of being and belonging. Photo-essays and artworks offer moving glimpses into the new life worlds being created in and among the 'normal' and the mundane.

Taken as a whole, this text offers a critical and intersectional perspective that addresses some important gaps in the scholarship on kinship and families. *Queer Kinship* makes an innovative contribution to international studies in kinship, gender, and sexualities. It will be a valuable resource to scholars, students and activists working in these areas.

Said Professor Kopano Ratele of Unisa's Institute for Social and Health Sciences: 'At its heart, *Queer Kinship* poses a question with which no one can live fully and without fear: what is it to love and be loved without obstruction. Few questions are as politically, culturally and personally significant for our human need to belong with others. The book is at once critical, questioning, queering, enabling and generative, surfacing the different possibilities and challenges of doing kin and family differently.'

For more information on this book and other titles on offer by Unisa Press, visit unisa.ac.za/press



“*Queer Kinship* brings together an array of thought-provoking perspectives on what it means to love and be loved, to 'do family' and to belong in the South African context.”



The SRU team (from left): Dr Mzikayise Binzar, Prof. Jacobus Pauw, Zuzeka Prudence Mkra, Vuyokazi Maliwa-Skosana, Dr Rochelle Wessels (Manager) and Kyle Bester

New Unisa MOOC set to enhance first-year student experience

Earlier this year, the Unisa Student Retention Unit (SRU) launched its First-Year Experience (FYE) Massive Open Online Course (MOOC). The course seeks to enhance readiness for open, distance and e-learning (ODEL) among students entering Unisa for the first time.

'Successful transitions to a university environment can be challenging to students and also to universities in terms of how they (universities) manage the transition and offer quality tuition experiences to students,' said Dr Rochelle Wessels, Manager: SRU, speaking at the launch. 'Taking cognisance of our unique Unisa student profile, the FYE MOOC aims to provide extended support for students entering open and distance learning for the first time for the duration of their first year at Unisa. We also support collaboration efforts between Unisa departments and directorates to ensure effective service delivery within the programme as well as consistent monitoring and evaluation throughout the programme's duration.'

Wessels further explained that the MOOC seeks to develop key skills that are identified as critical for a successful transition into Unisa as an ODeL university. 'Thus, the FYE MOOC serves to prepare, orientate and familiarise students with the Unisa environment,' she said.

Lucas Mamabolo, Postgraduate Office of Unisa's National Student Representative Council (NSRC), said that the NSRC appreciates and is grateful for the SRU team's willingness and commitment to facilitate the necessary support for students at risk academically. 'We had several meetings with the team to take us through some of their programmes, including the

MOOC,' he said. 'Since Unisa also attracts learners straight from matric, most of whom from areas, which were and are still disadvantaged, this programme is useful for students who would otherwise find it difficult to transit into such an environment.'

Mamabolo emphasised that the success of Unisa's students is at the centre of this project. It helps bridge the gap between lecturers and students,' he said. 'It also contributes to student-centeredness as one of the guiding values of this institution. Within their spaces, students must be able to acclimatise to the learning environment without experiencing technical difficulties that come with the teaching and learning methods. The academic environment needs to be conducive and enabling to their success.'

To access the course, visit <https://tinyurl.com/fyemooc>



NSRC Postgraduate Officer Lucas Mamabolo



““

Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family. ””

- Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations

““

Vutivi i matimba. Vuxokoxoko bya ntshunxa. Dyondzo i tshaku ra nhluvuko eka rixaka rin'wana na rin'wana, eka ndyangu wun'wana na wun'wana. ””

- Kofi Annan, loyi a a ri Matsalana-Nkulu wa United Nations

““

Ilwazi limamandla. Ilwazi linamandla wokuletha ikululeko. Ifundo isisekelo setuthuko, kinanyana ngiwuphi umphakathi, kinanyana ngiwuphi umndeni. ””

- uKofi Anan, uNobhala-jikelele weHlangano yeenTjhaba eziBumbeneko