

Special Edition

YSWN

August 2024



Newsletter

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10 African

INFLUENTIAL WOMEN SOCIAL WORKERS

(1871 - 2022)



WOMEN'S MONTH
SPECIAL EDITION

August 2024



August Women's Month Special Edition



The Social Work



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Systems Theory:

Systems theory proposes that people are products of complex systems, rather than individuals who act in isolation. According to this theory, behavior is influenced by a variety of factors that work together as a system. These factors include family, friends, social settings, religious structure, economic class, and home environment.

Social Work

Theoretical Frameworks

MMABOPELEGO
RRABOPELEGO

MAASKPLEKWEKER

SONHLALAKAHLE

SOCIAL WORKER

OSHIWAMBO- AASHUNGI MWENYO

Nontlalo'ntle

Mosebeletsi wa Sechaba

SONHLALAKAHLE

MMABOPELEGO
RRABOPELEGO

Mosebeletsi oa Sechaba

VASHANDIRI VEM. GARIRO EVANHU

Mosebeletsi oa Sechaba

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10 *African*

INFLUENTIAL WOMEN

SOCIAL WORKERS

(1871 - 2022)

August Women's Month Special Edition





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YSWN PRESS



EDITOR'S NOTE

*Women's Month Special
Edition*

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*Women's Month
Special Edition*

Welcoming Note



As we celebrate Women's Month in South Africa, the Young Social Workers Network reflects on the extraordinary contributions of women in social work across the African continent. These trailblazing women have played pivotal roles in shaping social work practice, often under challenging socio-political conditions. This special edition is dedicated to honouring their legacies and exploring how their unique approaches to activism and social work continue to inspire us today.

Our focus extends beyond the familiar feminist movements of the West. The women we highlight operated in what were then considered "Third World" countries, navigating colonialism, apartheid, and systemic inequalities. Through their commitment to community upliftment, they practiced what we now recognize as culturally embedded and community-centric social work—concepts that challenge mainstream Western theories and call for a decolonized, context-specific approach to the profession.

In this issue, we delve into the lives of Charlotte Makgomo-Mannya Maxeke, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and Aïcha Chenna, among others, to explore the innovative theories that can be drawn from their work. These theories emphasize the need for intersectional approaches, community empowerment, and culturally sensitive interventions. They remind us that social work is not merely a profession but a calling to challenge the structural inequalities that keep communities vulnerable.

Our contributors share their personal journeys and insights into the evolving nature of social work. In particular, Eleanor Hendricks and Bongiwe Mpukwana provide inspiring accounts of perseverance and dedication in a profession that demands both personal sacrifice and resilience. From volunteering in child care centers to pursuing academic excellence, their stories remind us that the heart of social

work lies in the relentless pursuit of social justice, even in the face of adversity.

We also feature a reflective analysis of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *The River Between*, examining its relevance to social work interventions today. The novel's portrayal of cultural conflict and gender-based violence offers critical insights into how we, as social workers, can better navigate complex cultural dynamics while advocating for human rights.

As we continue to reclaim our social work footprint and recognize the contributions of powerful female leaders, let us ensure that their work shapes not only our history but also the future of social work education and practice. This Women's Month, we honour those who came before us and commit ourselves to carrying their legacy forward.

Thank you for joining us in this celebration of women in social work. 🌍

Enjoy this Women's Month Special Edition

Sincerely,

Busisiwe Madikizela-Theu
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Happy Women



Celebrating Women's Month

WOMEN'S MONTH

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Women's Month 2024

Women's Month Special Edition

BEYOND THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT

The Legacy of African Women Social Workers & **New Theories for Social Change**



Words by
Busisiwe Madikizela-Theu

As we celebrate Women's Month in South Africa, it's essential to spotlight the powerful contributions of African women who reshaped their societies through social work and activism.

These women—such as Charlotte Makgomo-Mannya Maxeke, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, and Aïcha Chenna—operated in what were once labeled "Third World" countries, and their work extended far beyond the conventional boundaries of social work or even the feminist movement as it was known in the West. Western feminism, particularly the First Wave Feminist Movement, primarily focused on securing legal rights, like women's suffrage and property ownership and was rooted in the-

-experiences of women in Europe and the U.S. By the time of the Second Wave Feminist Movement in the 1960s and 1980s, feminist discourse had expanded to include issues of sexuality, reproductive rights, and social inequalities. However, in the African context, these issues were often overshadowed by more immediate struggles—colonialism, poverty, and national liberation.

The women who made a profound impact in Africa were not necessarily feminists in the Western sense. Instead, they embodied a different form of activism and social work, one that was deeply rooted in their communities' needs. Their work offers a fresh opportunity for us to develop new social work theories that reflect their unique contributions and can guide future generations of social workers.

A Different Kind of Activism

Many of the women we honor today operated in spaces where gender equality was just one part of the larger struggle for justice. For Charlotte Maxeke, a South African pioneer of social work and women's rights, the fight for education and social reform was intertwined with her political activism.

Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, while known globally for her resistance to apartheid, began her career as a social worker, focusing on empowering the marginalized before becoming a powerful political figure. Aïcha Chenna, a Moroccan social worker, founded the Association Solidarité Féminine, helping single mothers gain economic independence in a society where their status was often stigmatized.

These women's approaches to social work were defined by the realities of their environments. Rather than focusing solely on individual clients, their work aimed at transforming entire communities and addressing the structural inequalities that kept their societies entrenched in cycles of poverty and oppression. This approach gives rise to several new theories of social work that can be derived from their legacies.

New Theories for Social Work: *Learning from African Social Workers*

1. Community-Centric Social Justice Theory:

Charlotte Maxeke's legacy inspires this theory, which argues that social work should prioritize community-led initiatives over individual-focused interventions. Her work demonstrated that empowering women collectively can lead to broader social change. This theory encourages social workers to act as facilitators of collective action, fostering leadership within communities rather than just alleviating individual suffering.

2. Intersectional Liberation Theory:

Inspired by the work of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and Mitri Widad, this theory stresses the importance of addressing multiple forms of oppression—such as race, gender, and colonialism—simultaneously. For these women, the fight for women's rights could not be separated from the broader struggles against colonial domination and racial discrimination.

This theory encourages social workers to adopt an intersectional lens, understanding that liberation from one form of oppression requires addressing others as well.

3. Transformative Resistance Theory:

This theory is a direct reflection of Victoria Fikile Chitepo and Priscilla Ingasiani Abwao's work in integrating social work with political resistance. It proposes that resistance to oppressive systems should be considered a form of social work, particularly in societies where the state itself contributes to inequality. This theory promotes the idea that social workers should engage in activism and structural change, rather than merely helping individuals navigate through oppressive systems.

4. Culturally Embedded Social Work Theory:

Inspired by Aïcha Chenna and Mame Seck Mbacké, this theory emphasizes the need for social workers to ground their practice in the local cultural and religious traditions of the communities they serve. These women adapted their work to reflect their societies' cultural realities, whether that meant working within Islamic traditions in Morocco or promoting economic development through local initiatives in Senegal. This theory suggests that social work should not impose external models but should instead engage with and respect local knowledge and customs to create culturally relevant interventions.

5. Relational Empowerment Theory:

Drawing on the work of Emily Hobhouse, this theory focuses on the power of relationships in creating social change. Hobhouse demonstrated that supporting women and children in concentration camps during the Boer War was not just about providing resources but about fostering cooperation and mutual support. This theory argues that social workers should prioritize building and strengthening relationships within families and communities, as these networks are critical to long-term empowerment and resilience.

6. Post-Colonial Healing Theory:

Regina Gelana Twala and Mitri Widad inspire this theory, which focuses on healing the psychological and social wounds left by colonialism. Post-Colonial Healing Theory advocates for social work practices that help communities reclaim their

cultural identities, promote indigenous knowledge, and- address the trauma caused by colonialism. This theory argues that social work in post-colonial societies should not just provide services but also contribute to the decolonization of minds and systems.

A Legacy of Empowerment

These new social work theories offer a way to honor the legacies of African women social workers who operated within their specific historical and social contexts. Their "brand" of social work, deeply rooted in the fight for community empowerment, national liberation, and social justice, reflects a powerful form of activism that continues to inspire. By studying and building upon their work, we can derive new frameworks that better address the needs of marginalized communities today.

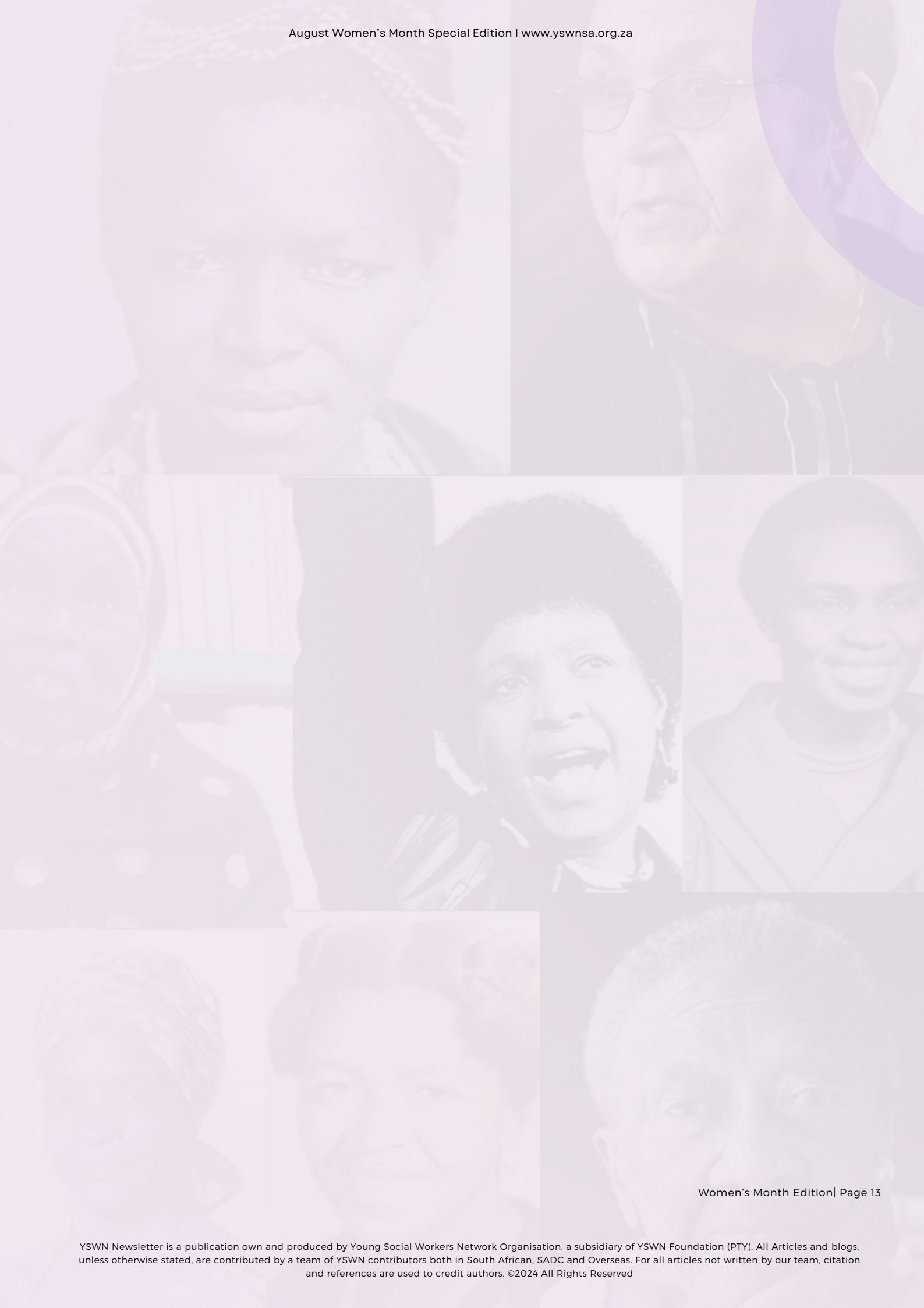
As we celebrate Women's Month, we remember that these women were more than just activists—they were innovators who reshaped the field of social work to meet the unique challenges of their societies. Their legacies call us to move beyond traditional feminist narratives and embrace a more inclusive, intersectional approach to social work that is grounded in the lived realities of those we seek to serve. Their contributions remind us that social work is not just about services—it's about creating lasting change in the world. 🌍

Enjoy

HAPPY WOMEN'S MONTH

10 Influential Women Social Workers In Africa

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01

CHARLOTTE MAKGOMO-MANNYA MAXEKE (1871-1939)

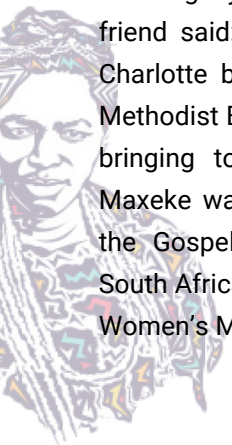
The Icon of Struggle

Charlotte Makgomo (née Mannya) Maxeke (7 April 1871 – 16 October 1939) was a South African religious leader, social and political activist; she was the first black

woman to graduate with a university degree in South Africa with a B.Sc. from Wilberforce University Ohio in 1903, as well as the first black African woman to graduate from an American university. Charlotte Makgomo (née Mannya) Maxeke was born in Ga-Ramokgopa, Limpopo on 7 April 1871 and grew up in Fort Beaufort, Eastern Cape. She was the daughter of John Kgope Mannya, the son of headman Modidima Mannya of the Batlokwa people, under Chief Mamafa Ramokgopa and Anna Mancie, a Xhosa woman from Fort Beaufort. At age 8, she began her primary school classes at a missionary school taught by the Reverend Isaac Wauchope in Uitenhage. She excelled in Dutch and English, mathematics and music. She spent long hours tutoring her less skilled classmates, often with great success. Reverend Wauchope credited Mannya with much of his teaching success particularly with regard to languages. Mannya's musical prowess was visible at a young age. Describing Charlotte's singing Rev. Henry Reed Ngcayiya, a minister of the United Church and family friend said: "She had the voice of an angel in heaven. Charlotte became politically active while in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, in which she played a part in bringing to South Africa. While in the AME Church, Maxeke was heavily involved in teaching and preaching the Gospel and advocating education for Africans of South Africa. The church later elected her president of the Women's Missionary Society.



Shortly after her return to South Africa in 1902, Maxeke began her involvement in anti-colonial politics. She, along with two other individuals from Transvaal, attended an early South African Native National Congress meeting, and was one of the few women present. She was notably the



Charlotte Makgomo-Mannya Maxeke (1871-1939)

first South African Social worker, appointed as Welfare Officer to the Johannesburg Magisterial Court and involved in juvenile work. Maxeke attended the formal launch of the South African Native National Congress in Bloemfontein in 1912. Maxeke also became active in movements against pass laws through her political activities. During the Bloemfontein anti-pass campaign, Maxeke served as an impetus towards eventual protest by organizing women against the pass laws. Many of Maxeke's concerns were related to social issues as well as ones that concerned the Church. In *Umteteli wa Bantu*, a multilingual weekly Johannesburg newspaper, Charlotte wrote in in Xhosa about women's issues.

In 1918, Maxeke founded the Bantu Women's League (BWL) which later became part of the African National Congress Women's League. This decision stemmed from her involvement in anti-pass law demonstrations. The BWL under Maxeke was a grassroots movement that served as a vehicle for taking up grievances from a largely poor and rural base. Maxeke's BWL also demanded better working conditions for women farm workers. However, the white authorities largely ignored such issues. Furthermore, Maxeke led a delegation to see Louis Botha, who was then South African Prime Minister, to discuss the issue of passes for women. These discussions led to counter-protest the following year, which was "against passes for women. Maxeke and an army of 700 women then marched to the Bloemfontein

City Council, where they burned their passes. She addressed an organisation for the voting rights of women the Women's Reform Club in Pretoria, and also joined the Council of Europeans and Bantus[clarify]. Maxeke was elected as the president of the Women's missionary society. Maxeke participated with protests related to low wages at Witwatersrand and eventually joined the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union in 1920. Maxeke's leadership skills prompted the South African Ministry of Education to call her to call her to testify before several government commissions in Johannesburg on matters concerning African education. This was a first for any African of any gender. She continued to be involved in many multiracial groups fighting against the Apartheid System and for women's rights. Maxeke's husband, Marshall Maxeke, passed away in 1928.

The same year Maxeke set up an employment agency for Africans in Johannesburg and also would begin service as a juvenile parole officer. Maxeke remained somewhat active in South African politics until her death, serving as a leader of the ANC in the 1930s. Maxeke was also instrumental in the foundation of the National Council of African Women, which served as a way of protecting the welfare of Africans inside South Africa. Maxeke died in 1939 in Johannesburg, at the age of 68. Maxeke is often honoured as the "Mother of Black Freedom in South Africa." A statue of her stands in Pretoria's Garden of Remembrance. 🌍



02

WINNIE MADIKIZELA-MANDELA 1936–2016

The Icon of Struggle

However, soon after receiving the scholarship offer, she was offered the position of medical social worker at the Baragwanath Hospital in Johannesburg, making her the first qualified, Black member of staff to fill that post. Following an agonising decision about whether to leave and further her academic career in the USA, or to stay and pursue her dream of becoming a social worker in South Africa, she decided to remain in South Africa.

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Nomzamo Winifred Zanyiwe Madikizela was born, the fifth of nine children, in the village of Mbongweni, Bizana, in the Transkei on 26 September 1936. During her infant years her father, Columbus, was a local history teacher.

In later years he was the minister of the Transkei Governments’ Forestry and Agriculture Department during Kaizer Matanzima’s rule. Her mother, Nomathamsanqa Mzaidume (Gertrude), was a science teacher. In 1953, upon her father’s advice, Winnie was admitted to the Jan Hofmeyr School of Social Work in Johannesburg, where Nelson Mandela (who was already gaining national renown), was the patron. It was the first time she left the Transkei and a formative moment in her life. It was in Johannesburg that she saw the full effects of Apartheid on a daily basis, but also where she discovered her love of fashion, dancing and the city. It was only after a few months of living in Johannesburg that Winnie first went to Soweto. She completed her degree in social work in 1955, finishing at the top of her class, and was offered a scholarship for further study in the USA.

Winnie Madikizela-Mandela

1936–2016

Indeed, Adelaide would confide in Winnie while they were in bed at night about the brilliant lawyer she would soon marry, and his legal partner, Nelson Mandela. It also transpired that Tambo happened to be from Bizana, like Winnie, making them members of the same extended family. It is worth reiterating that Winnie was already politically interested and involved in activism long before she met her future husband. She was particularly affected by the research she had carried out in Alexandra Township as a social worker to establish the rate of infantile mortality, which stood at 10 deaths for every 1,000 births. During her time at Baragwanath, Winnie's reputation began to grow, with stories and photographs about her appearing in newspapers, acknowledging the achievement of this girl from Pondoland who came to Johannesburg and looked to be making a name for herself.

Marriage to Nelson

Winnie was twenty two when she met Nelson, and he was sixteen years her senior. He was already a famous anti-apartheid figure and one of the key defendants in the Treason Trial, which had commenced the year before, in 1956. From the very beginning, Nelson was ensconced in the Liberation Struggle, and the parameters of their romance were set by his commitment to political change. On March 10 1957, Nelson asked Winnie to marry him and they celebrated their engagement together in Johannesburg on 25 May 1958. Despite government restrictions on the movements of Treason Trial defendants, Winnie and Nelson got married on 14 June 1958, in Bizana. The celebration caught the national interest and was reported in publications such as Drum Magazine and the Golden City Post. Their marriage was to prove both robust and fraught. Winnie quickly discovered that life married to one of Apartheid's most famous opponents was a lonely one. Her husband was incessantly busy with ANC meetings, legal cases and the Treason Trial. The Mandela residence was also a site for frequent police raids,

during which policemen would awaken the household with loud banging on the doors in the early morning and set to turning the whole house upside down. Added to the turbulence of their early married life, in July, Winnie found out she was pregnant with her first child.

In October 1958, Winnie took part in a mass action which mobilised women to protest against the Apartheid government's infamous pass laws.



This protest in Johannesburg followed a similar action that had taken place in Pretoria in August 1956. The Johannesburg protest was organised by the president of the ANC Women's League, Lilian Ngoyi and Albertina Sisulu, amongst others.

WINNIE MADIKIZELA-MANDELA 1936–2016

In fact, Winnie travelled with Albertina from Phefeni station in Orlando to the city centre where the protest was taking place. During the protest, the police arrested 1000 women. A decision was taken by the arrested women not to apply for immediate bail, but to rather spend two weeks in prison as a sign of further protest. During these weeks, the pregnant Winnie saw first hand the squalid conditions of South African prisons, and her commitment to the struggle only intensified. Eventually, Nelson and Oliver Tambo were called to arrange their bail, and the ANC raised money to pay the convicted women's fines. It was an event which took Winnie out of her husband's considerable shadow in eyes of the public, but also one which alerted national security to her potency as a voice of political dissent – independent of her famous husband. Shortly afterwards she was sacked from her post at Baragwanath hospital. Following the trauma of incarceration, on February 4 1959 Winnie gave birth to a daughter she named Zenani.

Winnie's Influences

Winnie had a few influential presences in her life: chief amongst them were Lillian Ngoyi, who, along with Helen Joseph, were the only two women accused in the Treason Trial; Albertina Sisulu; Florence Matomela; Frances Baard; Kate Molale; Ruth Mompati; Hilda Bernstein (who was the first Communist Party member to serve on the Johannesburg Council in the 1940s); and Ruth First. These were people who Winnie was able to consider not only as sources of inspiration, but as trusted confidantes. This is significant, because as Winnie's struggle against government continued, her inner circle became consistently infiltrated by people who would gain her trust as allies, only to reveal themselves later as spies. As Nelson spent increasing amounts of time in police custody or underground, the number of unsettling relationships Winnie established with people who would turn out to be police informants also seemed to increase. As Bezdrob has written about Johannesburg at the time, it was "a cesspool of informers" and unfortunately for Winnie, she appeared to be surrounded by spies.

Winnie Madikizela-Mandela remains an enigmatic figure in South African society and history. It has been speculated that like so many South Africans traumatised by the brutality of life under Apartheid, Winnie may have long suffered from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and her actions ought to be understood in light of this. Despite her occasionally "morally ambiguous" behaviour, Winnie is someone whose commitment to justice and the downtrodden has seldom been in doubt, though her means of achieving her goals have drawn justifiable scrutiny. 🌐



WINNIE MADIKIZELA-MANDELA 1936–2016

— Reflection

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RECALIMING

OUR SOCIAL WORK FOOTPRINT THROUGH THOSE THAT CAME BEFORE US.

RECLAIMING OUR SOCIAL WORK FOOTPRINT THROUGH THOSE THAT CAME BEFORE US.



Words by
Prof. Annaline Keet

The trajectory of social work, like many other professions, are influenced by the people who historically played their parts in shaping them.

The trajectory of Social Work in South Africa seems to be different as the social work footprint of many of the influential social work figures in the country and continent, usually females and often black, are not well documented. Eze (2008) reminds us that historical events like colonialism and the years of apartheid in South Africa, squeezed many people out of the mainstream social and political discourse.

For social work, this means that the discipline has not been shaped by the type of social work that many of our powerful female leaders practiced and we yet must ensure that our social work text at academic institutions is shaped by their contributions. In the August 3, 2024 publication, the YSWN Editorial Team decided to reflect on 10 influential women social workers on the continent spreading from 1871 to 2022. This reflection is of historical significance as it helps us to engage with the consciousness of these women about the socio-political realities of their time and how these influenced people's life experiences. Through their life histories, we can see the importance of activism in social work, where we work with individuals and communities to challenge the structural inequalities that renders large groups of people's lives more vulnerable than others.

It also helps us to work against what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) refers to as the mental dislocation in the social work sphere. It is the very act of bringing these historical social work figures into our present-day discourse that help us claiming social work back from its colonial shackles. The danger of a social work theory-base and practice imported mainly from outside the social context it is being practiced in, result in an alienating process (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018).

Using the example of the impact the anthropologists during the Smithsonian period had on the life trajectory of the Zuni people in the Southeastern part of the United States, Crampton (2015) makes a compelling argument for social work that is developed and responsive to its local environment. During the Smithsonian period, many valuable artefacts of the Zuni people were removed from their natural environment and placed in museums to ensure a form of permanency,

completely alienated them from their natural environment and from its original purpose. Crampton (2015) thus argues that for social work, the success of interventions depends upon active engagement with those in the social environment such that the intervention itself may change over time. A social work intervention that looks the same outside of and inside local contexts is probably not a natural fit with the environment.

Providing a central place for our historical social work figures in our social work education and practice will help us reclaim our history and strengthen the social work voice within our various contexts. 🌍

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The Art of the two-pot system

NAVIGATING THE NOT-SO-UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Opinion Piece



Words by
Thuto Maduenyane

The two-pot retirement system, set to take effect on September 1, 2024, has sparked considerable curiosity and concern among unions, retirement fund members, and other stakeholders.

Many are eager to understand the intricacies of this system. Even fund administrators need detailed technical information to ensure their systems are fully prepared for this change. This article explores the rationale behind the two-pot system and provides an overview of its key components.

Background: A Response to Financial Strain and Decades of Debate

In South Africa, both employees and independent contractors typically contribute a portion of their monthly income to retirement funds. When individuals leave their jobs, or in cases of unemployment,

their retirement savings are often distributed after tax deductions. Unfortunately, rather than being preserved for retirement, these funds are often used to meet immediate financial needs.

This issue became particularly acute during the Covid-19 pandemic, when widespread job losses led many people to rely heavily on their retirement savings. In some instances, individuals even resigned from their jobs just to access their funds. For over 30 years, there has been an ongoing debate about how to protect retirement savings while still allowing access to a portion of the funds in times of financial hardship.

Introducing the Two-Pot System

To address these concerns, the new two-pot system will come into effect on 1 September 2024. Under this system, retirement fund members will have two separate "pots" for their contributions: a savings pot and a retirement pot.

- **Savings Pot:** One-third of future contributions will be allocated to this pot. Members can make withdrawals from the savings pot once per year, with a minimum withdrawal of R2,000. There are no other restrictions, except that withdrawals are limited by the amount available in the pot.



- **Retirement Pot:** The remaining two-thirds of contributions will go into the retirement pot. Members will only be able to access this pot when they retire, at which point they can withdraw a lump sum.

For example, if a member contributes R3,000 per month to their retirement fund, R1,000 will go into the savings pot, while R2,000 will be allocated to the retirement pot.

Seed Capital: Immediate Access to Funds

On 1 September 2024, 10% of a member's existing savings, up to a maximum of R30,000, will be transferred into their savings pot as seed capital. This allows members immediate access to a portion of their funds. However, initial withdrawals are limited to the balance of the savings pot, with a maximum of R30,000. After this initial withdrawal, future withdrawals are uncapped, although members are not required to withdraw funds annually.

It is important to note that the remainder of a member's vested savings will remain untouched and will not form part of the two-pot system. Should a member leave their employer, these vested funds will be paid out after taxes or rolled over into their retirement payout.

Tax Implications

Withdrawals from the savings pot will be taxed at the member's marginal tax rate. This is in line with South Africa's approach to retirement contributions, where contributions are tax-exempt when earned, but the withdrawals upon retirement are subject to taxation. As such, withdrawals from the savings pot will trigger immediate tax liabilities.

The Importance of Communication and Planning

Clear and effective communication from fund administrators will be vital in helping members understand the new system and plan their withdrawals wisely. Members must keep their contact information up to date to ensure they receive timely updates.

While the availability of funds from 1 September 2024 may be tempting, members should carefully weigh the long-term consequences. The savings pot is designed as a safeguard for emergencies, not for routine or discretionary spending. Overuse of the savings pot could erode the very savings that members will rely on in retirement. Fund administrators should also prepare for a potential surge in withdrawal requests once the system is implemented, which could lead to processing delays. 🌐

The Art of the two-pot system

NAVIGATING THE NOT-SO-UNCERTAIN FUTURE

About The Author

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03

MITRI WIDAD (1927-2007)

Egyptian Feminist

Icon



Mitri Widad (1927-2007)

WIDAD MITRY ANTOUN: FEMINIST ACTIVIST

Mitri Widad was born on October 9th, 1927 in Shubra, Cairo. She graduated with a BA in philosophy from the University of Cairo in 1952 and worked as a teacher for 7 years.

She was among the pioneer leaders of the Egyptian National Women's Movement, and the first woman elected to the Student Union at the University of Cairo in 1952. In the same year, she joined the Women's Committee for the National Resistance, founded by feminist Siza Nabarawy, and took it upon herself to fight for the women's right to vote and to run for elections.

Mitri Widad was an Egyptian nationalist, leftist, social worker, teacher, and activist for women's rights. She became a prominent figure in the nationalist leftist movement and the women's peace movement to end the British occupation.

In her later years, she continued to be a member of the Women's Committee of the Arab Lawyers Federation, the Afro-Asian Solidarity Organisation, and the Association of Cairo University Women Graduates. She represented Egyptian women during the 1986 Nairobi Conference on Women and visited Palestinian camps under siege in solidarity with the Palestinian people.

On winning the Student Union Elections in 1952, Widad Mitri said, *"In my final year in college, I nominated myself for the Student Union elections. That was a very daring move, and I won. During the elections, a battle went on between us and the Muslim Brotherhood, who objected to any leadership of women. I was extremely happy when I won because the fact that I was elected came as a culmination to women's struggle over many generations."* 🌍

She founded a women's NGO in the Baragil village in Fayoum.

04

VICTORIA FIKILE CHITEPO (MARCH 27, 1928 – APRIL 8, 2016)

The Icon of Zimbabwean Transformation

Democratic Party, a nationalist movement that campaigned for political rights for Rhodesia's disenfranchised black majority.

A year later, she went with her husband to Tanganyika (now Tanzania) and worked as a social worker aiding black Rhodesian refugees in Dar es Salaam for three years, between 1966 and 1968. In 1975, Herbert Chitepo was assassinated in Lusaka, Zambia by agents of the Rhodesian government. She remained in Tanzania until Rhodesia – renamed Zimbabwe – gained its independence and black majority rule was established in 1980.

On returning to Zimbabwe, Victoria Chitepo stood for election in the constituency of Mutasa and Buhara West in the country's first multiracial elections. She won a seat for ZANU-PF in the lower chamber, the House of Assembly. She was appointed as Deputy Minister of Education and Culture and subsequently as Minister of Information and Education by the then Prime Minister, Robert Mugabe. In 1982 she was appointed Minister of National Resources and Tourism. She stood again for election in the 1985 election and was both re-elected and re-appointed to her ministerial position, which she retained until 1990.

She then took on the role of Minister of Information, Posts and Telecommunications before retiring in 1992.

Victoria Fikile Chitepo (27 March 1928 – 8 April 2016) was a South African – Zimbabwean politician, activist and educator. She was the wife of Herbert Chitepo, a leading figure in the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU).

Mama Victoria Fikile Chitepo was a major political figure in her own right and served as a minister in the government of independent Zimbabwe between 1980–1992.

She was born as Victoria Mahamba-Sithole in the South African coal-mining town of Dundee in KwaZulu-Natal. She was educated in South Africa and attended the University of Natal, where she was awarded a B.A. degree, and took a postgraduate degree in education at the University of Birmingham in the UK. She met her future husband, Herbert, at Adams College near Durban in South Africa. Between 1946 and 1953 she taught in Natal, but moved to what was at the time the British colony of Southern Rhodesia in 1955 after she married her Zimbabwean husband, who was working as a social worker in the capital Salisbury (now Harare). In 1960, Chitepo became involved with the National

Victoria Fikile Chitepo (March 27, 1928 – April 8, 2016)

Throughout 1990 and 1992 she was very fond of working with the government of John Major, saying that meetings with British officials were always pleasant and constructive. She said British officials were “always polite and always on time” and adding that French officials were “generally neither.”

Chitepo came out of retirement in 2005 when she stood again on the ZANU-PF ticket for the parliamentary seat of Glen Norah in Harare. Although she lost the election, she remained a senior member of ZANU-PF's ruling body, the politburo, and was targeted by United States sanctions against persons “undermining the democratic processes in Zimbabwe”. She was also sanctioned by Portugal, Spain, France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland and the Republic of Ireland. Notably she was not sanctioned by the United Kingdom. In 2014, she was removed from the United States sanctions list. 🌐

She later worked in government until her death on April 8, 2016.



Reflection

Ms. Bongive Mpukwana, from Cofimvaba-Ncora village, holds qualifications in Office Administration (2001) and Social Work (2019). She began her career in the Komani Health and Transport Department before moving to Port Elizabeth in 2015, where she continues to work for the Health Department.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Heart for Social Justice and Social Work Unemployment in South Africa



**Words by
Ms. Bongive Mpukwana**

Coming from humble beginnings in Cofimvaba, former Transkei, I grew up with a deep-seated desire to contribute to building our communities and breaking negative cycles within our families and neighborhoods. Despite lacking a clear career path in my youth, I understood that education and acquired skills would enable me to positively impact younger generations and foster stronger communities for the future. As a qualified and registered social worker who did not benefit from social services during my upbringing,

my passion for social justice has always been my guiding light. Unemployment in the social work sector did not deter me from pursuing my calling. I recognized that my social work skills were instrumental in making our communities better. I firmly believe in a person-centered and developmental approach, viewing social work as a crucial resource in addressing societal challenges, particularly the high dropout rates among orphaned children and the lack of support and mentorship in communities and care centers.

The need for social workers is evident due to prevailing social issues, yet recruitment into the profession and retention within the public sector pose significant challenges. Observing these issues firsthand, I proactively utilized my social work skills across various platforms, seeking mentorship from experienced professionals in different fields.

The need for social workers is evident due to prevailing social issues, yet recruitment into the profession and retention within the public sector pose significant challenges. Observing these issues firsthand, I proactively utilized my social work skills across various platforms, seeking mentorship from experienced professionals in different fields. This exposure not only enriched my understanding but also motivated me to take action when opportunities arose.

My journey led me to volunteer at a child and youth care center, where I dedicated years of service, eventually becoming the deputy chairperson of the management committee. Additionally, my involvement in a non-profit organization aimed at supporting children from child-headed families resonated deeply with my values. Here, I collaborated closely with schools, providing holistic support to empower these children and restore their hope. My role involved project management, utilizing skills such as active listening, relationship-building, and monitoring academic progress to ensure each child's development plans were nurtured.

Despite the lack of financial compensation, these roles have been immensely fulfilling. However, navigating unemployment in social work required balancing personal growth with family responsibilities. Self-care became paramount, involving active engagement in my healing journey, maintaining healthy connections, and setting clear boundaries to manage time effectively.

Staying updated with best practices in an evolving profession often comes with a financial burden, as continuing professional development courses can be prohibitively expensive. Volunteering provided invaluable benefits such as free supervision, guidance, and training opportunities, alongside networking with like-minded individuals and social groups.

Although the costs associated with travel and other expenses presented challenges, the rewards of gaining field experience far outweighed these obstacles.

To fellow unemployed social workers, I encourage you not to lose sight of your passion. Seek opportunities where your skills can create meaningful impact, and consider what you gain personally and professionally in return. Despite my employment status, I have contributed to employee wellness, child protection, facilitated workshops, and organized successful school events, all while upholding the standards of a qualified and registered social worker.

Reflecting on my journey, I often ponder whether formal qualifications alone suffice for catalyzing community change and breaking cycles of adversity. Practical experience has underscored the evolving nature of our profession, where hands-on engagement amplifies the significance of our certificates. Beyond formal education, cultivating oneself as an agent of change involves continuous learning, community engagement, and personal growth, ultimately paving the way for professional opportunities to unfold.

In conclusion, despite not holding a paid social work position, my five-year tenure as a qualified and registered social worker has been immensely rewarding. The growth, experiences, and fulfillment derived from positively impacting lives through social work skills are irreplaceable. I have witnessed numerous success stories and achievements firsthand, reinforcing my conviction in the transformative power of social work. 🌍

About Ms. Bongiwe Mpukwana

Ms. Bongiwe Mpukwana, from Cofimvaba-Ncora village, holds qualifications in Office Administration (2001) and Social Work (2019). She began her career in the Komani Health and Transport Department before moving to Port Elizabeth in 2015, where she continues to work for the Health Department. Ms. Mpukwana is deeply passionate about community development, child protection, and employee health and wellness, dedicating her career to enhancing these areas through her professional and community-focused efforts.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

*Heart for Social Justice and Social Work
Unemployment in South Africa*

MS. BONGIWE MPUKWANA

Reflection

Prof. EA Hendricks holds a Doctorate in Philosophy (Social Work) and a Master of Social Work from Fort Hare University, along with a Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Pretoria.

SOCIAL WORK JOURNEY

My Journey to Becoming a Social Worker



**Words by
Prof Eleanor Hendricks**

I was just 11 years old and in Grade 4 when I first decided I wanted to become a social worker. That year, we were given diaries at school, and one of the sections posed the question, "What would you like to become one day?" Without hesitation, I wrote: *a professional social worker*. At the time, I had no real understanding of what the profession entailed, but I instinctively knew that I wanted to help people navigate their challenges. I vividly remember taking that diary home and showing my mother, Elsebie Hendricks, who carefully tucked it away for safekeeping.

As the years passed, I progressed through secondary school and university, never losing sight of my goal. In my third year of university, my mother returned the diary to me, and I was filled with pride. I had pursued my childhood dream. Growing up in a small town, conventional wisdom held that the pinnacle of success for a coloured girl was securing a job at the bank. "Once you're in the bank," they would say, "you've made it in life." But I knew from a young age that this wasn't my path. The eldest of three children, I wasn't from a wealthy family, yet I was determined to break the mold.

My mother was my biggest supporter. She instilled a strong work ethic in me and freed me from house chores so that I could focus solely on my studies. Thanks to her guidance, I was a top student throughout my school years, consistently achieving academic excellence from Grade 3 through Grade 12.

When the time came to apply to university, I drew upon resources like the *Vuka Zenzela* magazine, which my mom had brought home for me. As fate would have it, I applied to one of South Africa's top institutions, the University of Pretoria, and was accepted. In 2007, I began my studies as a first-year student, unsure of how my family would afford the tuition but confident that I would find a way.

One random March day, I received an unexpected phone call that changed my life. A woman from the Department of Social Development asked if I was Eleanor Hendricks, a Grade 12 graduate from 2006 studying social work at UP. When I confirmed, she congratulated me, explaining that I had been awarded a scholarship by the Gauteng Department of Social Development based on my academic performance. I was overwhelmed. This scholarship, awarded without my having even applied for it, covered my tuition, erasing one of my biggest worries.

My undergraduate years were a mix of hard work and determination. I was an average student in many respects, often scraping by with a 50% pass, but I never questioned my decision to pursue social work. I found fulfillment in my practicum placements and embraced every challenge that arose. When I graduated in 2011, the experience ignited a newfound motivation in me—I knew I wanted to pursue my Master's degree.

After graduation, I began working for the Department of Social Development at the Graaff-Reinet service office in June 2011. Most of my caseload involved foster care cases, and while the work was demanding, I found joy in supporting foster children, even when their behavioral challenges kept me awake at night. During this time, I honed my skills in problem-solving and solution-focused interventions.

After four months, I transitioned to a start-up welfare office at the Old Apostolic Church (OAC), where I worked for six years. I was the first social worker employed at the OAC Welfare Department, which presented both unique opportunities and significant challenges. I managed everything—from administration to intervention and evaluation—entirely on my own. I traveled across the Eastern Cape, wrote reports, appeared in court, and fought tirelessly for my clients.

In my third year with the OAC, I began receiving referrals from Dora Nginza Hospital for clients diagnosed with mental health issues. Despite the heavy workload and the sometimes harsh environment, including facing racist slurs, I never hesitated to accept and support these clients. My commitment to thorough evaluation and effective intervention paid off in the hundreds of cases I handled.

During those six years, my passion for research began to take shape. What started as a tool to better serve my clients evolved into an academic pursuit that led to my completing a Master's degree at age 24 and a Doctorate at age 27.

In 2018, I transitioned to academia, accepting a position as a lecturer at the University of Fort Hare. The shift was challenging, but I quickly adapted and found joy in connecting with my students, who constantly amazed me with their brilliance. My teaching philosophy centers on social exchange, where learning is reciprocal—I teach, and I learn from my students.

I also began contributing to the academic discourse, writing articles on topics ranging from school violence and gender-based violence to adolescent pregnancy and the impact of social media on social work. In 2022, I applied for and received a promotion to Senior Lecturer. That same year, I was honored with the Vice Chancellor's Award for Emerging Researcher and

awarded a prestigious Senior British Fellowship.

As of 2024, I hold the title of Associate Professor. I have successfully supervised six Master's students and one Doctoral student, with many more to come. My research interests have expanded to include indigenous social work, and I am currently collaborating with colleagues on a governance policy for an Ubuntu Centre at Michigan State University.

Reflecting on my journey, I realize that social work was never just a career for me—it was a calling. From the moment I wrote those words in my diary at age 11, I never looked back. My path has been challenging, but it has also been incredibly rewarding. I am deeply proud of the work I have done and remain excited about the work yet to come. 🌍

About Professor Eleanor Alvira Hendricks

Prof. EA Hendricks holds a Doctorate in Philosophy (Social Work) and a Master of Social Work from Fort Hare University, along with a Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Pretoria. Specializing in trauma debriefing, counselling, and motivational speaking, Dr. Hendricks has conducted numerous short courses on Effective Communication, Ethics, and Appropriate Emotional Expressivity throughout the Eastern Cape. With experience in the Trauma Unit at Social Development and as Head of the Welfare Department at the Old Apostolic, Dr. Hendricks focuses on research interests including adolescent pregnancy, conflict management, school violence, child rights, sexual education, and gender equality.

SOCIAL WORK JOURNEY

My Journey to Becoming a Social Worker

PROF. EA HENDRICKS

05

AÏCHA CHENNA (AUGUST 14, 1941 – SEPTEMBER 25, 2022)

The Icon of Women Activism

Aïcha Chenna, the iconic women's rights advocate and activist passed away on September 25 aged 81, leaving behind a strong women's rights legacy in the Kingdom. Chenna was first known for her work in areas subject to social and religious taboos as an employee of the Ministry of Health.

She then took over advocating for single mothers and made it a life battle to grant these ladies the rights they do not dispose of. Chenna fought for the status of illegitimate and abandoned children and of incest victims. This ambassador of the feminist cause in Morocco has dedicated more than half of her life to supporting single mothers and abandoned children. Born in Casablanca in 1941, Aïcha Chenna left to live in Marrakech before returning to Casablanca in 1953. Fatherless, she studied nursing and then worked as a health and social education animator. In 1985, she founded the Association Solidarité féminine (ASF) for the defense of women's rights and abandoned children. It was the first association in Morocco to offer training and literacy courses to give financial and professional independence to single mothers rejected by their families and by society.

Aïcha Chenna's activism, recognized at the national and international level, has been supported by King Mohammed VI. She said: "The King has shown me his blessing and has given me the key to the success of my mission. His encouragement, his high concern and his magnanimous gestures strengthen my conviction and give me every day the strength and courage to continue." Conservatives did not agree with what she promoted, and she received constant criticism due to her pro-choice convictions.

The advocate and emblematic Moroccan figure helped hundreds of women, single mothers and "illegitimate" children lead a normal life, in a society that rejects and belittles them. She was awarded for her remarkable work of activism back in 2009, when she won the USD 1 million Opus Prize, which she said would be used to ensure that her foundation, The Social Solidarity Foundation, carries on its work even after her death. Initially run out of a basement in Casablanca, her foundation helps women that are victims of abuse and single mothers. Chenna trained them to reintegrate society so that they would secure their financial and professional independence. She will always be remembered for her work and will remain an icon of feminism and activism in Morocco and beyond. 🌍

Moroccan women's rights advocate Aïcha Chenna passes away, age 81.

AÏCHA CHENNA (AUGUST 14, 1941 – SEPTEMBER 25, 2022)

06

REGINA GELANA TWALA (1908-1968)

The Icon of Political & Social Activism

Regina Twala was born in 1908. The Natives Land Act was passed in 1913, dispossessing black South Africans of their land and forcing an exodus to towns and cities. She herself followed a similar pattern, moving from rural Natal to Johannesburg in her 30s to work as a teacher.

She moved in the highest circles of Johannesburg's intelligentsia, mingling with politicians, academics, philanthropists and social workers. She was part of the pioneering class of the Jan Hofmeyr School of Social Work (political leader Winnie Madikizela-Mandela would graduate from there too). She established her reputation as one of Johannesburg's most popular columnists. Among her topics were racial disparities and the misogyny of her society. Twala's life exemplifies the fortunes of an elite black class in South Africa whose aspirations were squashed as the century wore on. For a brief period, unable to find employment, she worked as a domestic servant in a white household. When the racist apartheid government was voted into power in 1948, Twala became involved in anti-apartheid politics. She joined the African National Congress and was arrested in 1952 for her part in the Defiance Campaign, a non-violent resistance movement.

Two years later she exiled herself to neighbouring Eswatini (her husband, Dan Twala, was from there).

Regina Gelana Twala was a writer, anthropologist, social worker and political activist who lived in both South Africa and Eswatini (then Swaziland). She died in 1968 at the age of 60. Twala broke the mould of what black women were meant to represent. She was just the second black woman to graduate from Johannesburg's University of the Witwatersrand (in 1948) and the first to graduate in social science in South Africa. In a period dominated by male intellectuals, she was a formidable writer and thinker. One of few female contributors to southern African newspapers, she wrote hundreds of articles. Her prolific output includes as many as five book manuscripts, almost all lost as Twala struggled to be published due to the racist gatekeeping mechanisms of apartheid-era South Africa.

Twala stood at the forefront of politics in both South Africa and Eswatini. She spoke out loudly, braving the censure of men who preferred women to be quiet and in the home. Her personal life was as noteworthy as her public persona. Twice married, she bucked the shaming conventions of the day that stigmatised divorced women. She rejected her unfaithful first husband and sought a love union with sporting figure Dan Twala. Disillusioned after 20 years of marriage,

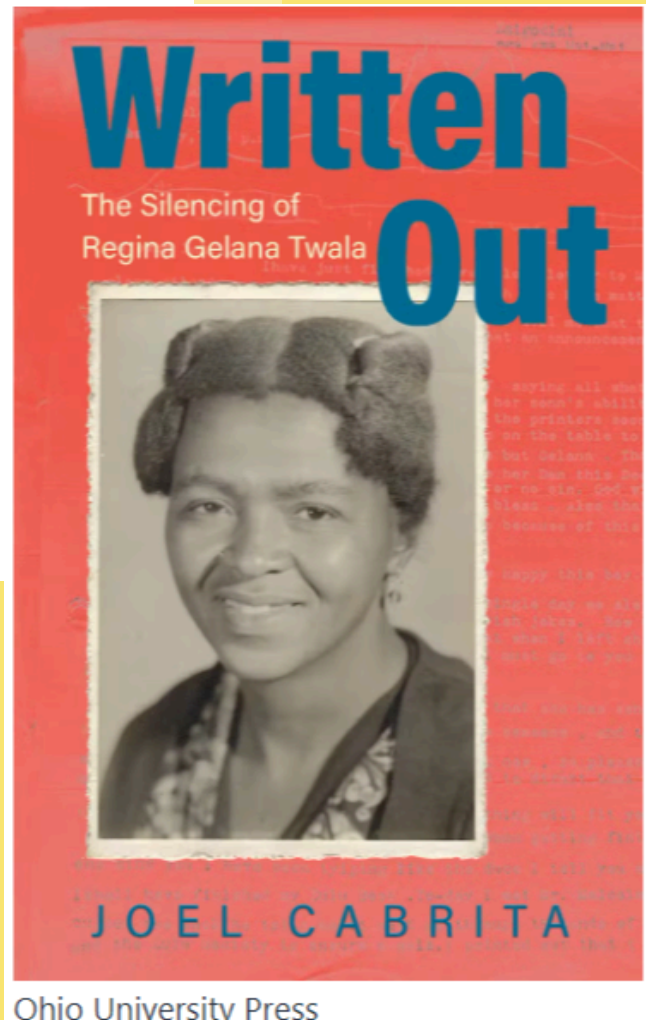
Regina Gelana Twala (1908-1968)

she chose to live separately as an independent woman until her death from cancer. Twala, moreover, left a uniquely intimate record of her life. She exchanged hundreds of love letters with Dan over 30 years, one of the most remarkable collections of letters in African history. They are filled not only with personal details but also political commentary. She was close to figures like former South African president Nelson Mandela, who represented her in her divorce.

What impact did she have in Eswatini?

Twala moved to Eswatini at a key moment in the country's life. She had received a prestigious Nuffield Fellowship that allowed her to pursue anthropological research into how women were responding to the country's massive cultural shifts. The monarch Sobhuza II was increasing pressure on Britain for independence. Swaziland's middle class (in whose company Twala found herself) allied with Sobhuza. The country's first political party, the Swaziland Progressive Party, was formed by them in 1960. Twala was a founding member and its first women's secretary. She attended pan-African gatherings in Ghana with then-president Kwame Nkrumah. Her career reminds us that women were also key players in early anti-colonial politics.

Beyond formal politics, she advocated for women's education and self-help, starting a crafts organisation and founding the first library for black readers in her home town. Eswatini has one of the largest gender disparities in the world and Twala's vision remains as sadly relevant today as in the 1950s. As an anthropologist, she was critical of those who weaponised African culture to keep women in their place. Her relationship with Sobhuza soured in the 1960s as she became disillusioned with his suppression of the democratic process. She used her pen for scathing critiques of the powerful and wealthy in Eswatini, mobilising the press to advocate for ordinary people – most of all women.



Why has history forgotten her?

Twala's radical politics undoubtedly contributed to her erasure. Her criticism of the Swati monarchy meant she was steadily sidelined from politics. On her deathbed, she pushed hard to have her final work – a study of Swati women – published to coincide with Eswatini's 1968 independence. Figures close to the king blocked it. Eswatini became – if anything – even more repressive and outspoken anti-royalist women weren't going to be celebrated as pioneering anti-colonial figures. She's also been forgotten due to the gatekeeping exercises of territorial white academics.

Regina Gelana Twala (1908-1968)

The Icon of Political & Social Activism

Prominent anthropologists and historians taught and mentored her but were less supportive once she outgrew their patronage.

A case in point is renowned anthropologist Hilda Kuper. Their close relationship soured as Twala became increasingly critical of white liberal academics and their pretensions to "own" their research sites and subjects. After Twala's death, Kuper effectively squashed the publication of Twala's final manuscript, declaring it of little intellectual value. It gathered dust in Kuper's archives in the US until I discovered it 60 years later. Swedish historian Bengt Sundkler paid Twala to research African religion. Her work on indigenous Zionist churches was diligently sent. Two decades later, Sundkler would publish these notes as his own in an act of plagiarism. He is remembered as a leading scholar; her contribution was erased.

Why is it important that we remember her?

Twala reminds us that we should not take the seeming absence of women from the historical record at face value. Silences have their own story to tell. The story as to why women are not numbered among the luminaries of their times is complex and deserves careful unpacking. 🌍

REGINA GELANA TWALA (1908-1968)

07

MAME SECK MBACKÉ (OCTOBER 1947 – DECEMBER 24, 2018)

The Diplomatic Icon of Change

Mame Seck Mbacké (October 1947 – December 24, 2018) was a Senegalese writer. She wrote in French and in Wolof. Mame Seck Mbacké was born in Gossas.

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Mame Seck Mbacké was born in Gossas.

Mbacké studied Social and Economic Development at the Institute of Higher International Studies in Paris. She worked as a diplomat in France and Morocco, then as a social worker at the Senegalese consulate in Paris. In Paris, she completed an International Relations degree at the Sorbonne and post-graduate studies in public health and nutrition at the Pantheon-Sorbonne University. She later worked for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Dakar. Her short story "Mame Touba" was included in the anthology *Anthologie de la Nouvelle Sénégalaise (1970–1977)*. Mbacké established the publishing house *Éditions Sembene* in 2006. In 1999, she received the Premier Prix de Poésie from the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Senegal. 🌍

Selected works

- *Le chant des Séanes*, poetry (1987)
- *Poèmes en Etincelles*, poetry (1999)
- *Pluie – Poésie Les Pieds Sur La Mer*, poetry (2000)
- *Le Froid et le Piment*, novel (2000)
- *Qui est ma Femme?*, play (2000)
- *Les Alizés de la Souffrance: Poèmes*, poetry (2001)
- *Lions de la Teranga: L'Envol Sacré*, poetry (2006)

MAME SECK MBACKÉ (OCTOBER 1947 – DECEMBER 24, 2018)

08

MAI MUSODZI CHIBHAGA AYEMA (1885-1952)

The Icon of Women Activism

Elizabeth Maria “Mai” Musodzi Ayema was born around 1885 near Salisbury (now Harare) in the upper Mazowe valley to parents Chibhaga and Mazviwana. Her aunt was Shona spiritual leader Nehanda Nyakasikana.

She and her siblings were orphaned following the 1896–1897 anti-colonial rebellions against the British South Africa Company. They then lived with their uncle at the Jesuit mission Chishawasha. Musodzi was baptised Elizabeth Maria in 1907. She married Zambian BSA police sergeant Frank Kashimbo Ayema in 1908. Musodzi helped found the Harare African Women’s Club in 1938. She led the organisation, which provided mutual aid, offered services and classes for women, and lobbied for a maternity clinic staffed by Red Cross-trained women. Musodzi also supported women’s rights in her roles on the Native Advisory Board and the National Welfare Society’s African committee. She worked against the eviction and arbitrary arrests of women as well as humiliating examinations for sexually transmitted infections. In the 1940s she formed the sodality group Chita chaMaria Hosi yeDenga (The sodality of Mary Queen of Heaven) with Berita Charlie and Sabina Maponga.

She was the leader of the group and earned the appellation Mai (Mother).

In April 1947 Musodzi was awarded an MBE (Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) and was among select guests invited to dine at the Government House with Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother and the royal family. During the royal dinner, she refused to sit at the table reserved for African notables, instead finding her seat on the floor. Musodzi died on 21 July 1952. Salisbury Location’s Recreation Hall in Mbare was renamed Mai Musodzi Hall in her honour. Historian Tsuneo Yoshikuni published the book *Elizabeth Musodzi and the Birth of African Feminism in Early Colonial Africa* in 2008. 🌐

MAI MUSODZI CHIBHAGA AYEMA (1885-1952)

09

EMILY HOBHOUSE (1899–1902)

The Icon of Women Activism

Emily Hobhouse arrived in Cape Town on 27th December 1900. When she had left England, she only knew about the concentration camp at Port Elizabeth, but learnt that there were 34 camps in operation.

Hobhouse had a letter of introduction to Alfred Milner from her aunt, the widow of the Permanent Under Secretary at the Home Office. From Milner she obtained the use of two railway trucks, but their use was subject to Lord Kitchener's approval. She received Kitchener's permission two weeks later but was restricted to visiting Bloemfontein and she could take only one truck of supplies for the camps, about 12 tons. She left Cape Town on 22nd January 1901 and arrived at Bloemfontein within two days. The camp there housed some 1,800 people. Emily reported "that there was a scarcity of essential provision and that the accommodation was wholly inadequate." At that time soap was listed by the authorities as a luxury but she succeeded in having it reclassified as a necessity.

Extending her visit beyond Bloemfontein, she visited camps to the south of Bloemfontein, including Norvalspont, Aliwal North, Springfontein, Kimberley and Orange River. She also visited Mafikeng. Her tour brought her back to Bloemfontein in March 1901.

Within the two months since her first visit, the camp population had grown and she was shocked by what she found. She later wrote *"The population had redoubled and had swallowed up the results of improvements that had been effected. Disease was on the increase and the sight of the people made the impression of utter misery. Illness and death had left their marks on the faces of the inhabitants. Many that I had left hale and hearty, of good appearance and physically fit, had undergone such a change that I could hardly recognize them."*

Emily returned to England to raise the issues with the Marquess of Salisbury and his government but there was little support from either. She wrote "The picture of apathy and impatience displayed here, which refused to lend an ear to undeserved misery, contrasted sadly with the scenes of misery in South Africa, still fresh in my mind. No barbarity in South Africa was as severe as the bleak cruelty of an apathetic parliament." Her book on the Boer War was written in France. Emily did receive more popular support and this forced the government to set up a committee of women headed by Millicent Fawcett. Emily believed the committee was biased in favour of the government's position and she herself was not invited to be a member. The members of the committee visited the camps for themselves between August and December 1901, concluded that they agreed with Hobhouse's original report and recommended improvements.

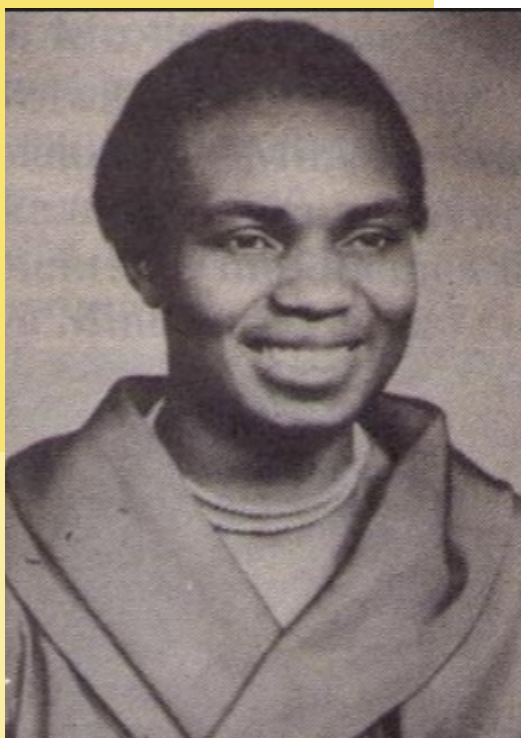
Emily Hobhouse (1899–1902)

With action being taken at home, Hobhouse returned to South Africa. The authorities were fearful of her visit and she was refused permission to visit the camps. Her ship docked in Cape Town on Sunday 27th October 1901 but she was not allowed to disembark. Her own health deteriorating, she recuperates in the mountains of Savoy and heard from there that the war had ended. During post-war visits, Hobhouse set up schools to help young people learn practical skills. In 1921 the people of South Africa raised £2,300 in recognition of the work she had done for their people. The money was sent to her with a request that she had to buy a small house for herself in Cornwall. On 18th May 1921, she replied saying "I find it impossible to give expression to the feelings that overpowered me when I heard of the surprise you had prepared for me. My first impulse was not to accept any gift, or otherwise to devote it to some or other public end. But after having read and reread your letter, I have decided to accept your gift in the same simple and loving spirit in which it was sent to me." She purchased a house at St. Ives in Cornwall. 🌍

She died in London on 8th June 1926. Her ashes were placed in the Women's Memorial at Bloemfontein and a town in Eastern Free State was named Hobhouse.

10

PRISCILLA INGASIANI ABWAO (1924 – NOVEMBER 13, 2009)

The Icon of Women Activism

Priscilla Ingasiani Abwao (1924 – November 13, 2009) was a Kenyan advocate for women's rights, freedom fighter, and the first African woman to serve on the Legislative Council in 1961 in Kenya.

The Kenya African Women's League forwarded names of two African women – Margaret Kenyatta, daughter of founding President Jomo Kenyatta, and Priscilla Ingasiani Abwao, a social worker and gender rights activist – to the colonial governor for nomination to the Legislative Council. The governor picked Priscilla Abwao, making her the first African woman to sit in the Legco. Literature around Abwao projects her as remarkable woman; a principled advocate for women's rights, freedom fighter and trail-blazer with an indomitable spirit to succeed.

Even before independence, Priscilla Abwao was instrumental on the fight for equal rights between women and men.

That is why she would be involved in the organisation of Kenya African women seminar in 1962 at Limuru. Coming at a time when the colonial government was implementing a scheme to "Africanise" government jobs, the major aim of the conference, the first of its kind, was to help women "catch up" to enable them benefit from the programme.

Other organisers of the Limuru seminar were, Ms Margaret Kariuki Gecau, Mrs Jemina Gecaga and Mrs Ernestine Kiano and Mrs Ruth Njiri, the American-born wives of politicians Gikonyo Kiano and Kariuki Njiri.

Phoebe Asiyo, then a superintendent with Kenya Prisons, Mrs Muthoni Likimani, Ms Judith Ayako and Ms Hilda Otieno were also involved in the organisation. At the conference, Priscilla Abwao advised women to rise up and earn their space.

"It is not time to sit and gossip. We have to work and build," she said. A British journalist with the Daily Nation described the mother of five as Kenya's suffragette of the 1960s. A suffragette is a woman seeking the right to vote through organised protest.

Abwao died on November 13, 2009 at her Lavington home in Nairobi at the age of 85. 🌍

Abwao died on November 13, 2009, at the age of 85.

PRISCILLA INGASIANI ABWAO (1924 – NOVEMBER 13, 2009)

Special Addition to The List

Mama Ellen

khuzwayo

NNOSENK ELLEN KATE KUZWAYO (29 JUNE 1914 – 19 APRIL 2006)

Additional Article

NNOSENK ELLEN KATE KUZWAYO (29 JUNE 1914 – 19 APRIL 2006)



Nnoseng Ellen Kate Kuzwayo (29 June 1914 – 19 April 2006) was a South African women's rights activist and politician, who was a teacher from 1938 to 1952. She was president of the African National Congress Youth League in the 1960s.

In 1994, she was elected to the first post-apartheid South African Parliament. Her autobiography, *Call Me Woman* (1985), won the CNA Literary Award. Born Nnoseng Ellen Serasengwe, in Thaba 'Nchu, Orange Free State, Kuzwayo came from an educated, politically active family. Her maternal grandfather, Jeremaiah Makgothi, was taken by his mother from the Orange Free State to the Cape to attend the Lovedale Institute, circa 1875. He qualified as a teacher and also worked as a court interpreter and a Methodist lay preacher. Makgothi was the only layman to work with Robert Moffat on the translation of the Bible into Setswana.

Both Makgothi and Kuzwayo's father, Philip S. Mefare, were active in politics. Makgothi was secretary of the Orange Free State branch of the South African Native National Congress, Mefare a member of its successor, the African National Congress.

Education and career

Kuzwayo began her schooling at the school built by Makgothi on his farm in Thabapatchoa, about 12 miles from Tweespruit, Orange Free State. She attended **Adams College**, Amanzimtoti, and then undertook a teacher training course at Lovedale College in Fort Hare, graduating at the age of 22 and beginning a teaching career. She married Ernest Moloto when in her late twenties, and the couple had two sons, but the marriage was not a happy one, and after suffering abuse from her husband she fled to Johannesburg.[4] She had a part as a shebeen queen, alongside Sidney Poitier in the 1951 film *Cry, the Beloved Country*. After her first marriage was dissolved, she married Godfrey Kuzwayo in 1950.

Nnoseng Ellen Kate Kuzwayo (29 June 1914 – 19 April 2006)

She worked as a teacher in the Transvaal until 1952, giving up teaching on the introduction of the Bantu Education Act, 1953, which cut back opportunities for black education. She then trained as a social worker (1953–55).

In the 1940s, she served as secretary of the ANC Youth League. After the 1976 Soweto uprising, she was the only woman on the committee of 10 set up to organise civic affairs in Soweto, and her activities led to her detention for five months in 1977–78 under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. She would recount her arrest in her 1996 testimony to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Her other community activism included serving as the president of the Black Consumer Union of South Africa and the Maggie Magaba Trust.

On the 1985 publication of her autobiography, *Call Me Woman*, in which she described being beaten by her husband, Kuzwayo became the first black writer to win South Africa's leading literary prize, the CNA Award.

After Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as South African president in 1994, Kuzwayo became a member of the country's first multiracial Parliament, aged 79, and served for five years until June 1999, when she was South Africa's longest-serving parliamentarian.

With director Betty Wolpert, Kuzwayo was involved in making the documentary films *Awake from Mourning* (1982) and *Tsiamelo -- A Place of Goodness* (1983), which drew on the story of the dispossession of her family's farmland.

Kuzwayo died in Johannesburg, aged 91, of complications from diabetes, survived by her sons, Bobo and Justice Moloto, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Awards and recognition

In 1979, Ellen Kuzwayo was named Woman of the Year by the Johannesburg newspaper *The Star*, and was nominated again in 1984. In 1987, she was awarded an honorary doctorate of Laws from the University of the Witwatersrand, the first black woman to receive an honorary degree from the university. She also awarded honorary doctorates by the University of Natal and the University of Port Elizabeth. She was awarded the Order of Meritorious Service by Nelson Mandela in 1999.

A South African marine research ship was named after her, the *Ellen Khuzwayo*, launched in 2007.

Works

- *Call Me Woman*. London: *The Women's Press* (1985). ISBN 1-879960-09-5, reprinted *Aunt Lute Books*, 1992
- *Sit Down and Listen: Stories from South Africa*, London: *The Women's Press*, 1990. ISBN 978-0704342309

Nnoseng Ellen Kate Kuzwayo (29 June 1914 – 19 April 2006)

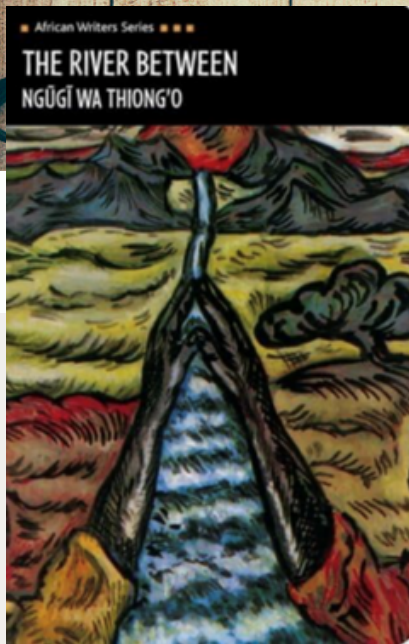


SOCIAL WORK BOOK

CLUB

BOOK REVIEW

Book Review



"Reading is essential for those who seek to rise above the ordinary"

- Jim Rohn



The River Between* by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, focusing on its themes in relation to social work interventions and gender-based violence (GBV) issues.



The River Between*



The River Between*



The River Between*

BOOK REVIEW

By Busisiwe Madikizela-Theu

Want us to review your Book?

Send us an email;
busisiwe@yswnsa.org.za
editorial@yswnsa.org.za





Book Review

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's **The River Between** is a powerful narrative that explores the clash of cultures, colonialism, and the struggles of identity in a rural Kenyan community. The novel is set in the early 20th century during the British colonial rule in Kenya and highlights the tensions between traditional African practices and the encroaching influence of Christianity and Western values.

Plot Overview

The story revolves around two neighboring villages, Kameno and Makuyu, divided not only by the physical river but also by ideological and cultural differences. The central character, Waiyaki, is the son of Chege, a respected elder in Kameno. Waiyaki is sent to a missionary school, where he becomes educated in Western ways while remaining deeply connected to his Kikuyu heritage. He is positioned as a potential leader who could unite the warring communities and bridge the cultural divide.

As the narrative unfolds, Waiyaki grapples with the expectations placed on him by his people and the pressures of the new Christian influence, embodied by the figure of Joshua, a fervent convert and leader in Makuyu. The conflict is further complicated by the practice of female circumcision (FGM), a significant cultural tradition for the Kikuyu people but one that the missionaries vehemently oppose. This issue becomes a focal point of the community's resistance against colonial influence, leading to a deepening rift within and between the villages.

Social Work Interventions

From a social work perspective, **The River Between** can be examined through the lens of community development, cultural sensitivity, and conflict resolution. The novel provides a rich context for exploring how social workers might intervene in similar situations of cultural conflict and identity crisis.

1. Community Engagement and Empowerment:

- Waiyaki's role as a leader highlights the importance of community empowerment. Social workers can draw parallels to how they might work to empower communities by respecting and understanding their cultural practices while also advocating for change that promotes the well-being of all members. Waiyaki's struggle to balance traditional values with the need for education and progress mirrors the challenges social workers face when introducing new ideas in resistant communities.

2. Cultural Sensitivity:

- The novel underscores the need for cultural sensitivity in social work practice. The missionaries' failure to understand the deep cultural significance of FGM leads to increased tension and resistance. Social workers can learn from this by recognizing the importance of cultural traditions and working with communities to find culturally appropriate alternatives to harmful practices.



Book Review

3. Conflict Resolution:

- The escalating conflict between the traditionalists and the converts in the novel serves as a case study for conflict resolution strategies in social work. Waiyaki's attempts to mediate and unite the two sides illustrate the role of a social worker as a mediator. However, his failure also shows the complexities involved in resolving deeply entrenched conflicts, emphasizing the need for patience, understanding, and strategic planning in intervention efforts.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Issues

The novel also provides a critical lens through which to examine GBV, particularly in the context of FGM, which is portrayed as a deeply rooted cultural practice. While not explicitly framed as GBV within the narrative, FGM is a form of violence that social workers must address within the broader context of gender inequality and human rights.

a). Advocacy Against Harmful Practices:

- Waiyaki's internal conflict and the broader community debate over FGM reflect the tension between cultural preservation and human rights. Social workers engaged in GBV interventions must navigate these tensions by advocating against harmful practices like FGM while respecting the community's need for cultural identity. This requires a delicate balance of advocacy, education, and the promotion of alternative rites of passage.

b). Gender Equality and Empowerment:

- The novel highlights the gendered power dynamics within the Kikuyu community, where women's bodies become a battleground for cultural and religious ideologies. Social workers can use this narrative to discuss the importance of gender equality and the need to empower women and girls as a critical component of GBV interventions. Empowerment initiatives might include education, economic support, and the promotion of women's rights within the community.

c). Trauma-Informed Care:

- The emotional and psychological impact of FGM on girls and women in the novel suggests the need for trauma-informed care in GBV interventions. Social workers must be equipped to provide support that acknowledges the trauma associated with such practices and offers pathways to healing and recovery for survivors.

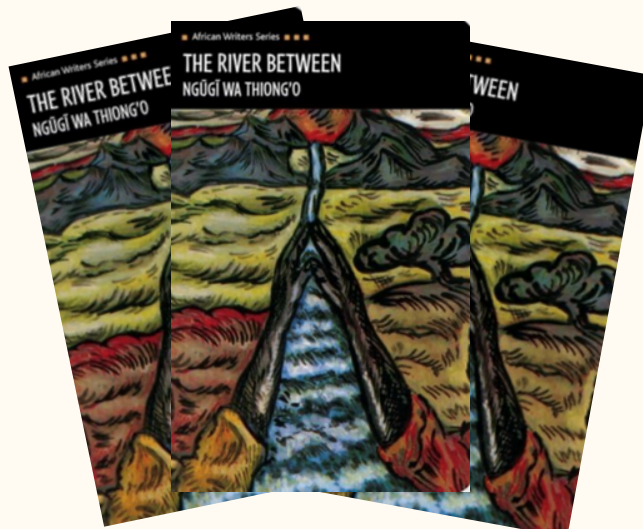
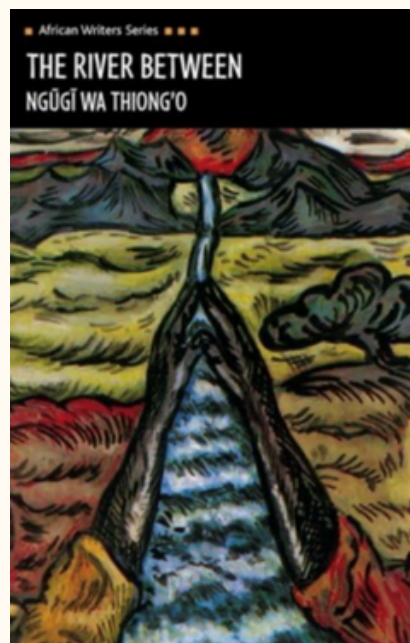
Conclusion

The River Between offers valuable insights for social work practice, particularly in the areas of community intervention, cultural sensitivity, and GBV. Through Waiyaki's journey, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o challenges readers to consider the complexities of cultural conflict, the importance of leadership, and the difficult but necessary task of advocating for human rights within the framework of cultural respect. For social workers, the novel serves as a reminder of the importance of holistic, culturally-informed approaches to intervention, especially when addressing sensitive issues like gender-based violence. 🌍

Book Review

By Busisiwe Madikizela-Theu

THIS EDITION'S REVIEW





YOUNG SOCIAL WORKERS Network Int

Network for Change Growth & Impact



Social Workers are World Changers!

yswn®



Young Social Workers Network SA, your premier Academic and Professional Network for Social Workers in South Africa. We are a voluntary professional network committed to inclusivity and progress, we are a non-racial, non-discriminatory, non-ageist organization dedicated to fostering Change, Growth, and Impact within the field of Social Work. Join us in shaping a brighter future for our communities.

Our History

The Young Social Workers Network (YSWN) originated as an idea in 2018 and came to fruition with its official launch on May 5th, 2023, in Bloemfontein, Free State, South Africa. This milestone was achieved in collaboration with the Social Work Department at the University of the Free State (SA), marking the beginning of our journey to empower and unite social workers across the nation.



The network is currently on an expansion phase, launching chapters nationwide as well as within the southern African SADC Communities.

The South African Chapter, YSWN SA, is the foundational launching pad for all YSWN Chapters in SADC.

We pride ourselves in facilitating platforms where social workers in Africa can participate in international social work, transforming African communities through social work theoretical frameworks, more specifically, afro-centric social work theoretical practices.

Finally, our Network is taking new members both in South Africa and within SADC, interested professionals can contact us via email expressing their desire to join the network.

www.yswnsa.org.za

The South African Advisory Board Members are;

Mrs. Makgosto Mbuyisa (*Chief Director, DSD*), Ms. Nkhensani Shibambu (*DSD National, Policy Development*), Professor Roelf Reyneke (*Professor, University of Free State*), Ms. Bukelwa Qwelane (*Senior Director at Education FS*), Mr. Gustav Wilson, Chief Director DSD), Mrs Busisiwe Madikizela-Theu a Phd Candidate, & Editor. Professor Annelise Keet (*HOD at Nelson Mandela University*).



THE NETWORK'S TEN (10) PILLARS ARE

- We are an interest group for Social Service Professionals within the SADC.
- We are a professional and academic body that exists to help facilitate growth platforms for Social Workers in SADC.
- The Creation & Facilitation of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) training for Social Workers. SADC
- Facilitating platforms where senior social workers can serve as mentors for younger Social Workers in the field within the network.
- Creating multidisciplinary partnerships with professionals from other fields in SADC.
- Conducting and facilitating our own Organizational Research Projects in our sphere of practice.
- Creating stakeholder partnerships with all Universities that offer Social Work as a major in Africa.
- Engagement in SADC large-scale Psychosocial Community Development programs to empower our communities.
- Supporting Student Social workers by incorporating them within the structures of the Network.
- Provide a platform where we support professional Social Work Authors, Researchers, as well as Entrepreneurial Social Workers in their respective fields of practice.

If you want to join a chapter in your province or country;
Log in to our Website download the membership form, fill it and email it back to us;
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YOUNG SOCIAL WORKERS NETWORK HAS A PRESENCE & FOOTPRINT ALL OVER SADC.

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- EXPERIENCED SOCIAL WORKERS WITH LONG SERVICE IN PRACTICE.
- STUDENT SOCIAL WORKERS (FROM 1ST YEAR - FINAL YEARS)
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10 *African*

INFLUENTIAL WOMEN

SOCIAL WORKERS

(1871 - 2022)

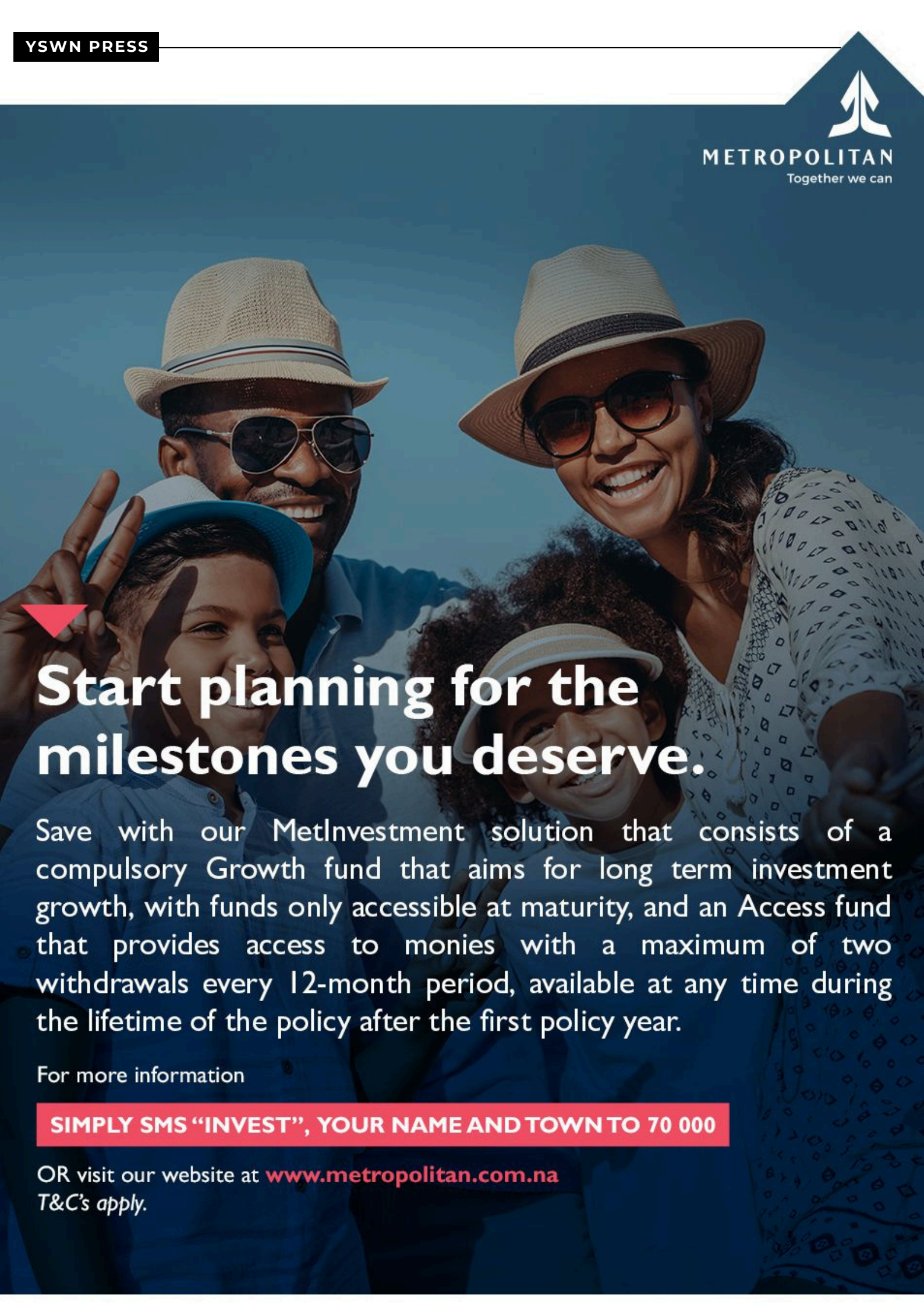
August Women's Month Special Edition

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2. Keet, A. (2024, June). Reclaiming our social work footprint through those that came before us. August Women's Month Special Edition.
3. Madikizela, B. M. (2024, June). Beyond the feminist movement: The legacy of African women social workers. August Women's Month Special Edition.
4. Mpukwana, B. (2024, June). Unemployment in South Africa: Social justice and community development. August Women's Month Special Edition.

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- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellen_Kuzwayo



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