

South African Young Academy of Science

2016 Report



Connecting science and society since 2011

The South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS) was founded in September 2011 to be the representative voice of young scientists in South Africa. SAYAS aims to contribute to the national strategic priority of strengthening the skills and human resource base of the country, with a focus on the next generation of scientists. Since its inception, SAYAS has inaugurated 59 members who were selected based on their academic excellence and service to society.

This report reflects on the progress made towards achieving those goals in 2016. More details can be found at www.sayas.org.za

Report compiled by:
Edith Shikumo
Aliza le Roux

Improving the scholarly environment: Annual Young Scientist Conference 2015

The Annual Young Scientists Conference (AYSC) was initiated by The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf), in 2010, in response to the need for human capital development, in particular the development of the next generation of highly skilled young people who can advance the growth of the economy and improve the quality of life in South Africa and the African continent at large.

Project leaders:

ASSAf & SAYAS
Secretariat

The AYSC serves as a platform for young scientists to present their research work; nurture dialogue between science, politics and society; facilitate collaboration and networks between young scientists; and, foster inter- and trans-disciplinary scientific analysis and identify future needs.

Women's empowerment and the scientific research being conducted across Africa to address gender equality challenges were addressed at the fifth ASSAf Annual Young Scientists' Conference (16 to 18 September, 2015). The theme of the conference was aligned to the African Union theme: 'Women's Empowerment' and was titled 'Inspiring change post-2015: The role of science, technology and innovation in empowering women in Africa'.

The conference was hosted in partnership with The World Academy of Sciences Regional Office for sub-Saharan Africa (TWAS-ROSSA), the Department of Science and Technology (DST), the South African National Research Foundation (NRF), OWSD South Africa National Chapter and SAYAS.

The Minister of Science and Technology, **Mrs Naledi Pandor**,

delivered the keynote address on 16 September 2015. She urged young women scientists to make use of the numerous international research and training opportunities made possible by the DST and she also called on the conference participants to ensure that their work was relevant and contributed to addressing the numerous challenges of poverty and disease facing the country and the continent.

The Minister of Women in the Presidency, **Ms Susan Shabangu**, addressed the delegates about the need for introspection on the policies and programmes that are being put in place to determine whether they are translating into appropriate interventions for socio-economic transformation. **Prof Mamokgethi Phakeng**, then Vice-Principal of Research and Innovation at the University of South Africa (now Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research and Internationalisation at the University of Cape Town),



also gave a keynote address on the first day of the conference. Her topic was centred on Leadership: the Invisibility of African Women and the Masculinity of Power. **Prof Robin Crewe**, TWAS Fellow and member of the TWAS Executive Committee, made a presentation in the opening session on the role of TWAS and its activities.

Traditionally, the conference has included capacity development components such as scientific writing and publication, communication and science engagement, and opportunities to interact with senior officials in government and science councils. More importantly, the conference provides a platform for young scientists to share their research and also sharpen their presentation skills. The networking opportunity is also a big draw card as this provides suitable grounds for seeking out inter-disciplinary collaborations.



Project leader:

Makondelele Makatu

According to the South African June 2014 labour force survey, 36.1% of young people between the ages of 15 and 35 are unemployed, which is almost double the 15.6 % of adults aged between 35 and 64 who are unemployed.

The New Growth Path stipulates the following as the main challenges hampering young people from meaningfully participating in the mainstream economy: joblessness, poverty and inequality. It is therefore imperative that disadvantaged youth be empowered through effective institutions and policies to overcome conditions that disadvantage them.

Dr Makatu's project focuses on developing responsible citizenship amongst in-school youth from the adopted school in Makhado Municipality, Limpopo Province. The main purpose of the project is to identify the known skills and resources that if adopted and utilized can build more responsible youth in our society. The voices of the in-school youth are more important in informing the programme that will be developed for their benefit. University students were identified and trained to participate positively in training in-school youth. Such university students shared amongst themselves their understanding of responsible citizenship and the skills that if employed by in-school youth will benefit them and make them responsible citizens in their schools and communities. The same instrument, used for university students was also found useful for the in-school youth whose project is intended for.

Dr Makatu's project is therefore timely if we are to enable the optimal development of young people, both as individuals and as members of South African society, enhancing their capabilities to transform the economy and the country.

Dr Makatu's project focuses on developing responsible citizenship amongst in-school youth from the adopted school in Makhado Municipality, Limpopo Province.



Feeding the pipeline: 1000 Girls – 1000 Futures

The 1000 Girls - 1000 Futures Program is a world-wide effort that pairs motivated, enthusiastic mentors with smart, STEM-focused high school women and gives them access to innovative programming that will help them develop essential 21st century skills

A UNESCO [report](#) indicates that just 28% of the world's researchers are women. The percentage is pegged at 30% in Sub-Saharan Africa. While more women are enrolling in university, relatively few pursue careers in research. There are many leaks in the pipeline – from stereotypes encountered by girls to the family-caring responsibilities and bias women may face when choosing a career.

The 1000 Girls - 1000 Futures Program is a world-wide effort that pairs motivated, enthusiastic mentors with smart, STEM-focused high school women and gives them access to innovative programming that will help them develop essential 21st century skills. During the pilot phase of the 1000 Girls - 1000 Futures program, several South African mentors and mentees took part. A call for a second round of the program has been made, and a feedback survey is also underway among the first cohort of participants. **Dr Christine Tshabalala** noted that whilst the program was a noble one, one of the biggest challenges was with connectivity. She experienced challenges connecting with the recommended Big blue button technology several times until eventually they resorted to using Skype in the last months. This challenge also works both ways with the mentee experiencing connection issues.

Project leaders:

Caradee Wright,
Christine Tshabalala
Amanda Weltman



As the initiative is an international one, mentors are paired with mentees from different parts of the world. Whilst the diversity may open up one to atypical ways of thinking, it may have a drawback where one may not understand the system of education in a mentee's country and thereby advise her accordingly. Dr Tshabalala's mentee for instance was interested in attending a college in the USA. Dr Tshabalala therefore had to do some research in order to advise her mentee accordingly. She notes "Since I'm not really familiar with the USA system, I assisted her by enquiring with colleagues based in the USA on how she can apply for funding to get into college."

Dr Meghan Groome, the Senior Vice President, education from the New York Academy of Sciences (NYAS) who manages the 1000 Girls - 1000 Futures programme, visited South Africa in July 2016 to investigate better ways to connect with mentees, as well as to speak with potential funders for the program locally. The meeting explored ways of boosting the program in order to reach 100 girls in South Africa in the coming year.



Site statistics:

- >8,000 views since the inaugural blogs in April 2015.

- Viewers stem from 80 different countries.

Following the successful launch of the SAYAS blog in April 2015, SAYAS identified four skilled young scientists to contribute to the blog from January 2016 to December 2016.

The bloggers who have been contributing to the SAYAS blog for the 2016 year period are **Odilile Ayodele** (University of Johannesburg), **Sipho Mabusela** (University of Fort Hare), **Simone Richardson** (National Institute of Communicable Diseases), and **Joey Hulbert** (University of Pretoria).

In this age of growing social media attention blogs provide an opportunity to create relevant content for one's intended readership or customers. Blogs also provide a connection to global communities, which provides insights and access to networks that can accelerate one's learning process, opportunity and success.

The SAYAS blog therefore was an opportunity to connect to young scientists, especially those doing research and PhDs, many of whom feel that the research phase tends to be lonely or isolated. The SAYAS blog project Leader, **Dr Aliza le Roux**, Senior Lecturer in Zoology at the University of the Free State's Qwaqwa campus, gives an account of her experience of blogging.

"To be honest, I didn't know about the existence of SAYAS until somebody nominated me to join, in 2014.

SAYAS blog

<http://sayasblog.com>

A blog with a difference: four postgraduate students from across South Africa write every month about their experiences as postgraduate students in Africa.

Project leader:

Aliza le Roux

It was a big surprise to me that this organization existed, and even more so, that they're trying to bring science and society together! This, of course, made it clear to me that SAYAS has some shortcomings when it comes to communicating with scientists and the broader society.

Something else that struck me was that South African science and scientists do not really feature in social media – any blogs and articles you read online reflect American and European researchers' opinions and work; rarely do you hear an African voice. So my first instinct upon joining SAYAS was to start a blog. And not just a blog on science, but something that tells the stories of what it means to be a young scientist in South Africa. Are our experiences unique, or do we have the same obstacles and struggles as international scientists? This is how the SAYAS blog was born.

In this project, my role has been to find some bloggers with great potential (I do this through an annual competition), and then simply to keep them on track, writing one blog a month for a year. I've learned from my own experience as blogger for Nature

back in 2008, that a good editor makes all the difference. So, I try to give the students direction; I read the rough draft of each blog and try to see what the heart of the story is, and how we can let that shine (without ME being the actual writer). And, honestly, this is what all writing is about – cutting through the fluff and getting to the essence of the matter. I feel this is just an extension of my work as an academic: I'm helping students become better writers. But I'm very much learning on the go."

So far, it seems to be working out. The SAYAS blog has reached more than 5,000 readers – people who now know about SAYAS and its mission. Dr le Roux envisions that the blog could be used by SAYAS members and academics too, to write about their research and the challenges we face in a developing country. "But getting academics to write for social media... it's worse than herding a bunch of angry cats."

Women's day at the CSIR

SAYAS Celebrates Women's Day with an Inspiring Session at the CSIR

The month of August marks a traditional annual celebration of Women and their achievements. It also provides an opportunity to pause and reflect on gains made and challenges women are still to overcome.

SAYAS partnered with The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) to hold an Information Session for its female employees on August 2, 2016 at its Knowledge Commons Room. CSIR is one of the leading scientific and technology research, development and implementation organizations in Africa.

In attendance were SAYAS members Dr. Thobela Nkukwana a Researcher at the Agricultural Research Council and Dr. Lyndy McGaw from University of Pretoria's Phytomedicine Program. Constance Manyeli, Organisation for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD) liaison officer, shared opportunities available for female scientists.

The Information Session aimed at encouraging female scientists to stay the course and excel in their respective fields. Dr Nkukwana and Dr McGaw shared their personal journeys and experiences. Both of them have had to deal with negative sentiments and discouraging remarks not only from colleagues but also senior staff. Another challenge they both say female scientist's face is balancing family and work commitments.

Most of the young researchers and interns from CSIR appreciated the speakers' candidness in



From L-R: Edith Shikumo -SAYAS Liaison Officer, Dr Lyndy McGaw, Mrs. Nolwazi Mwabi, the Manager: Corporate Communications at CSIR, Constance Manyeli –OWSD Liaison Officer and Dr Thobela Nkukwana

sharing their personal stories, which resonated with many of them. Sharing how they managed to navigate the challenges they faced was more instructive. In addition, some of the Masters students were gratified to discover that they can continue with their studies if they so wish to and not only work in the academia.

SAYAS appreciates Mrs Nolwazi Mwabi, the Manager: Corporate Communications at CSIR for hosting us.



EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF)

Prof Karen Cloete attends ESOF 2016 in Manchester: Platform for possibilities

Prof Karen Cloete attended the 7th EuroScience Open Forum on 24 to 27 July 2016 in the United Kingdom, as a EuroScience-Bosch grantee. The forum motto was: “Science as Revolution,” centered on understanding our world and the transformational promise of science. Prof Cloete is a postdoctoral researcher at the iThemba Laboratory for Accelerator Based Sciences, NRF, where her research is focused on the biological applications of ion beam techniques.

ESOF is one of the largest interdisciplinary and international science conferences of its kind in the world, packed with 150+ sessions covering general science themes, business, and careers and 700 speakers from across the globe, representing multidisciplinary fields. Prof Cloete found that the formal themes were balanced with a social programme that included an opening ceremony, exhibition launch, ESOF party, and closing ceremony. In essence, the word “open” in ESOF describes it best – a platform with science and innovation at its foundation, where scientists, students, policy makers, politicians, entrepreneurs, business leaders, media representatives, and the public could debate, trade and endorse ideas, and galvanize global collaboration and partnerships for innovative and pioneering projects, to be projected from lab to market in responsible ways.

“Now that I have returned to South Africa, ESOF brings one word to mind – cocktail” says Prof Cloete. “I am still intoxicated by an event that unveiled to me a world of possibilities and the power of science as a global undertaking to affect change. What was particularly interesting for me, was the fascinating link between the hard and social sciences/humanities, highlighted in some sessions and also the science meets poetry session. Another memorable highlight included wandering through the maze of stalls in the exhibition area and being exposed to a wealth of information on funding, cutting-edge products, ideas, and

innovations. Besides the extremely interesting scientific sessions ranging from nanotechnology to microbiology, ESOF is also unique in its endeavours to assist young researchers engaging with cutting edge research. In this focus area, I found the one to one career coaching and business program extremely useful.

In the first steps through my path as an early career researcher, I will carry with me the passionate and talented people I met, the valuable lessons I learnt, and the pride I felt when the Square Kilometre Array project in South Africa was mentioned during the memorable opening ceremony.

Panel discussion on “Youth Perspectives on Science Advice to Government”

SAYAS, jointly with ASSAf, hosted a Panel Discussion on Young Academies and Science Advice on 3 March 2016 at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). The Panel Discussion was held in light of the Global Network of Science Academies Conference, which focused on ‘Science Advice’, at the Arabella Hotel in Hermanus, Western Cape, South Africa (28 February to 1 March 2016). The panel discussion marked the first event to be hosted at UWC organised by SAYAS and ASSAf.

The aim of the discussion was to provide a platform for young scientists to address the topic of ‘Science Advice’ taking into consideration the role that young academies can play in providing science advice to government. The theme of the discussion was “Youth Perspective on Science Advice to Government”. The event was officially opened by **Prof Thandi Mgwebi** (Executive head of Research, UWC), and followed by talks from **Prof Iqbal Parker** (Director, ICGEB Cape Town Component International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology) and **Dr Natasha Ross** (UWC), on the role and mandate of ASSAf and SAYAS, respectively. The panel consisted of: **Prof Sameh Soror**, Egyptian Young Academy of Science (EYAS), **Dr Tolullah Oni**, (SAYAS Co-Chair), and **Dr Orakanoke Phanraksa**, Global Young Academy (GYA).

Science policy: Standing Committees

ASSAf is mandated to provide evidence-based scientific advice on issues of public interest to government and other stakeholders. Science policy – concerned with the allocation of resources for the conduct of science towards the goal of best serving the public interest – is therefore a key ongoing activity. ASSAf's science advisory activities are guided by its Standing Committees, which provide strategic direction and guidance.

In tapping into the knowledge base provided by young scientists, ASSAf involves SAYAS members in various Standing Committees. These include:

SAYAS Member	Standing Committee	Objectives/Outcome
Dr Amanda Weltman	STEM Committee	Initiate, oversee and promote studies in STEM education. Provide advice to government to inform policies on STEM education at all levels
Prof Voster Muchenje	AET Consensus Study	The outcome of the consensus study is a high impact report which will provide evidenced-based information and clear recommendations to relevant stakeholders with an interest in an agricultural human capital development and knowledge system that drives (small) holder, farmer-led development initiatives and innovation in order to achieve commercial food production and increased productivity, food security, as well as economic growth and development
Prof Mpariseni Budeli	Humanities Committee	To promote or advance the cause of the Humanities both within ASSAf and within relevant policy-making bodies (such as the National Department of Higher Education and Training, the National Planning Commission and the Department of Science and Technology).
Dr Tolullah Oni	Steering Committee for the Joint Workshop on Multiple Morbidities	This is a collaborative initiative between ASSAf and the UK Academy of Medical Sciences
Prof Bronwyn Myers	Mental Healthcare of the Nation: Consensus Study (MNS) consensus study	The study panel aims to: 1. Provide baseline data on what is currently offered in South African training programs of the different cadres of workers in the human resource mix for the delivery of integrated MNS disorder care using a task sharing model; 2. Map these data against core competencies identified at the Ugandan IOM meeting on candidate core competencies for MNS disorders; 3. Make recommendations for core competencies required of training programs to the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), as well as other training and regulatory bodies.

SAYAS members in the spotlight

The 18th National Science and Technology Forum ([NSTF-South32 Awards Gala Dinner](#)) were held in Gauteng on 30 June 2016.

Dr Tolu Oni, SAYAS Co-Chair and Head of Department and Director: School of Public Health and Family Medicine, University of Cape Town won the TW Kambule-NSTF Awards for **Emerging researchers** by an individual.

Prof Louis Kotze, a SAYAS member, was nominated for the NSTF-GreenMatter Award towards achieving **Biodiversity conservation, environmental sustainability and a greener economy**, and the TW Kambule-NSTF Awards for **research and its outputs** over a period of up to 15 years after award of a PhD or equivalent by an individual. Prof Kotze is a Research Professor, Faculty of Law Director of the LLM Program in Environmental Law and Regulation at the North West University.



Congratulations to **Prof Esther Akinlabi** for winning the Distinguished Young Women Scientist –Physical and Engineering Sciences Category at the Women in Science Awards 2016 run by the Department of Science and Technology on 11 August, 2016. Prof Akinlabi is the head

of the Mechanical Engineering Science Department at the University of Johannesburg's Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment. In addition, Prof Akinlabi was promoted to the position of full Professor in May 2016.

We also celebrate new SAYAS 2016 member **Dr Naomi Nkealah** who was awarded the Distinguished Young Women Scientist –Humanities and Social Sciences Category at the DST Women in Science awards ceremony. Dr Nkealah is a senior lecturer in the Department of English studies at Unisa.

Prof Avinash Govindjee was promoted to the position of Executive Dean in the Faculty of Law at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. Prior to his appointment as Dean, he was Head of the Department of Public Law and Deputy Head of the Labour and Social Security Law Unit within the



Faculty. Prof Govindjee also delivered a lecture on 'Limiting labour law and social security protection to "employees" in South Africa' by invitation at the Hamburger Rechtsgespräche Seminar on "Atypical employment in an international perspective". (Hamburg, Germany on 21 January 2016).

Prof Jo Vearey, holder of a Wellcome Trust Investigator Award, was appointed to the International Scientific Committee for the second Global Consultation on Migration and Health that is organized by the World Health Organization and the International Organization for Migration. The consultation will take place in February 2016 in Sri Lanka. Also in 2016, Jo was recognized as one of the two most cited researchers in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand. Bibliometric citations are a proxy measure of research impact in the academic world. As impactful research is generally of a high quality the most cited researchers per faculty are celebrated each year (starting in 2014). The awards are given to two people in each Wits Faculty who have published the largest number of journal articles in 2014 that had received the most citations by Dec 2015.

Dr Makondelele Makatu, University of Venda, received the University's 2016 Vice-Chancellor Excellence in Research Award. She was also selected to the Africa Science Leadership Program (ASLP), an initiative that seeks to create an African network of scientific leaders, coming together across disciplinary borders.

Dr Aliza le Roux University of the Free State – Qwaqwa campus, also joined the ASLP: <http://globalyoungacademy.net/activities/afri-can-science-leadership-program/>

SAYAS roadshows

In order to extend the reach of SAYAS, and awareness around the academy's activities, several roadshows were held in 2016.

The University of Venda

Dr Makondelele Makatu and Dr Mpho Tshitangoni from the University of Venda participated in a SAYAS roadshow that was held at the University in March 2016.

The University of Fort Hare

Prof Voster Muchenje held a one-week SAYAS/Elsevier Roadshow for postgraduate students and academic staff at the University of Fort Hare (UFH) in April 2016. It was attended by close to 100 participants.

Additional facilitators included: Prof Julian May, the DST/NRF CoE in Food Security Director at the University of Western Cape and also an ASSAf member; Miss Rupal Malde, the Elsevier Food Science Publisher; Prof Matseliso Mokhele, SAYAS member (UFH); Prof Kanshukan Rajara Tnam, SAYAS Member (UCT); Prof Joseph Francis, Director of the Centre for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation at UNIVEN, and Dr Siyavuya Bulani, ASSAf Senior Liaison Manager.

North West University's Potchefstroom Campus

Under the OWSD/ British Council Newton Fund (UK) banner, SAYAS attended a Presentation by one of the students (who is a beneficiary of the Newton Fund Professional Development and Engagement project) at the North West University's Potchefstroom Campus on 24 June, 2016 with Constance Manyeli.

Edith Shikumo from the SAYAS Secretariat made a

presentation on SAYAS and opportunities available for young scientists with a focus on the upcoming Annual Young Scientist Conference and the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting. Ms. Shikumo also, paid a Courtesy Call to the university's Research Support Office and met with Me Mpe Meintjes, Cluster Coordinator: General Research Support and Me Buyi Ntaka, Cluster Coordinator: Funding. Ms. Shikumo gave a brief explanation of ASSAf and SAYAS and the benefits for the university's post-doctorate students and early researchers.



Networking: TWAS-ROSSA Young Scientists' Conference, Lagos (Nigeria)

The theme of the conference, held from 24 to 25 August 2016, was: "Inclusive growth and sustainable development in Africa: the role of Young Academies."

SAYAS was represented at the TWAS-ROSSA Young Scientists' Conference and 6th General Assembly of the Nigerian Young Academy (NYA) by **Dr John Ataguba** (from UCT). The conference's main objectives were:

- To provide a platform for young scientists and professionals to network and forge collaborative research initiatives towards "Inclusive growth and sustainable development" of the African continent
- To set practical road maps towards an action plan aimed at delivering "inclusive growth and sustainable development" to Africa within the framework of the African Union Agenda 2063.

Five sub-themes explored were:

- Science, technology, innovation and sustainable development in Africa
- Building sustainable and resilient health systems
- Africa's contribution to global research and technology transfer
- Water and sanitation - water resources management
- Multi-disciplinary collaboration/cross sector engagement in inclusive growth and sustainable development

Representatives of other African Young Academies inclusive of Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, and Zimbabwe attended the conference. The conference featured presentations from leading Nigerian scientists and discussions around the issues of sustainable development and the role of young scientists in Africa. Apart from chairing a session, Dr Ataguba

was involved in a panel discussion around building sustainable and resilient health systems in Africa. The key issue that emerged in that session was the need for political will and for governments of African countries to play a leading role in the health sector.

Highlights of the conference included the induction of nine new members of the NYA. The founding members of the NYA were celebrated and were all named as fellows of the NYA. Several prizes were awarded, ranging from best poster/oral presentation to national young scientists' prize for various disciplines.

The representatives of the young academies had a brief meeting and discussed several issues including forming a regional (African) network of young academics with a long-term goal of having an **African Young Academy of Science**. This can be done by consulting and learning from the already existing African Academy of Sciences.

Further discussions included:

1. Using the network of young academies in Africa as a critical voice for advocacy relating to critical issues that pertain to Africa
2. Creating social media accounts for this new network of African Young Academies.
3. A need for some sort of a database of all

members including what each member does. This is to facilitate collaboration and research.

4. A need for some sort of regional collaboration on projects relating to science and sustainable development in Africa.
5. Assisting in setting up Young Academies in countries without any Young Academy
6. A need to build leadership skills among young scientists in African countries.

Weak health systems make it impossible to attain national health goals and are a threat to global health security. African nations need to have a strong political will to increase spending in health, to engender a formidable health system. The long-run impact of an epidemic will most likely exceed the financial cost of any investment to strengthen the health system.

-Some thoughts from the Conference

SAYAS new members 2016

Dr Cletos Mapiye is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Animal Science at Stellenbosch University. Dr Mapiye obtained his BSc Agriculture (Hons) (2002) and MSc Animal Science (2004) degrees with merit from the University of Zimbabwe and a PhD degree in Animal Science (2010) from the University of Fort Hare. He is a National Research Foundation Y2 (Young Promising) rated scientist.



Prof Puleng Segalo is a Fulbright scholar currently holding the position of Head of Research and Graduate Studies in the College of Human Sciences at the University of South Africa. Her research work analyses South African women's narratives of survival and resistance pre, during and post-apartheid, contrasting testimonies offered by women to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), narratives spoken in interviews and focus groups, and embroidered stories that women stitch onto fabric to tell another tale of survival and resistance. She currently holds an NRF rating in the category of Y2.



Dr Eugene Lee Davids is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry's Adolescent Health Research Unit at the University of Cape Town. His overall interest is in understanding the role that parents play in adolescent development.



Dr Nomusa Makhubu is an Y1 NRF-rated art historian and artist. Her current research focuses on African popular culture, photography, interventionism, performance art and socially engaged art. She is the recipient of the ABSA L'Atelier Gerard Sekoto Award (2006) and the Prix du Studio National des Arts Contemporain, Le Fresnoy (2014). She lectures Art History and Visual Culture at the University of Cape Town, South Africa.



Dr Alisa Phulukdaree is a Lecturer in the Department of Physiology at the University of Pretoria. She obtained her PhD in Medical Biochemistry at the Faculty of Health Science at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and immediately followed with a postdoctoral research fellowship at the same institution. Her Specialisation is in: 'Molecular mechanisms of chronic inflammatory diseases in the South African population'. She currently holds an NRF rating in the category of Y2.



Dr Naomi Nkealah is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of English Studies at Unisa. Specialising in feminist theory and African women's writing, Dr Nkealah explores the intersections of gender and sexuality in African Literature. Her Y1 NRF-rating positions her as a leading, emerging researcher in her field. Dr Nkealah was awarded the 2016 Distinguished Young Women Scientist –Humanities and Social Sciences Category at the Women in Science 2016 Department of Science and Technology Awards.



Dr Marizvikuru Mwale is a Senior Lecturer, Institute for Rural Development (IRD), University of Venda. Her Specialisation is in: Animal Science, Ethno-veterinary medicine, Animal Production, Animal Health, Food security. She currently holds an NRF rating in the category of Y2.

Dr Lungiswa Nkonki is a Senior Lecturer at Stellenbosch University. She convenes and teaches Economic Evaluation in Healthcare to post graduate students. She is a NRF Y-rated scientist.



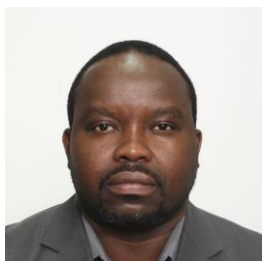
Final note:



The official SAYAS twitter handle is **@SAYAS_SA** and has attracted >800 followers (834 on 3 Oct 2016). SAYAS has tweeted **969** times.

The academy has also launched a new look for its website in 2016:

<http://www.sayas.org.za/>



Prof Philani Moyo is an Associate Professor of Development Sociology, Department of Sociology & Anthropology Department: University of Fort Hare. His Specialisation is in: climate change, food security, urban and rural livelihoods, migration and development.

Dr Shazrene Mohamed is a Research Career Advancement Fellow at the African Astronomical Observatory, Cape Town. Her Specialisation is in: Computational Stellar Astrophysics She is an NRF P-rated researcher.



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