

Sacap head of faculty, Dr Poppy Masinga appointed as new Asaswei president

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Never one to shy away from a challenge, Dr Poppy Masinga, [head of the Social Work and Community Development faculty at The South African College of Applied Psychology \(Sacap\)](#) has been appointed as the incoming president of the Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions (Asaswei). Members of the non-profit organisation include social work schools or departments of the country's public and private universities.

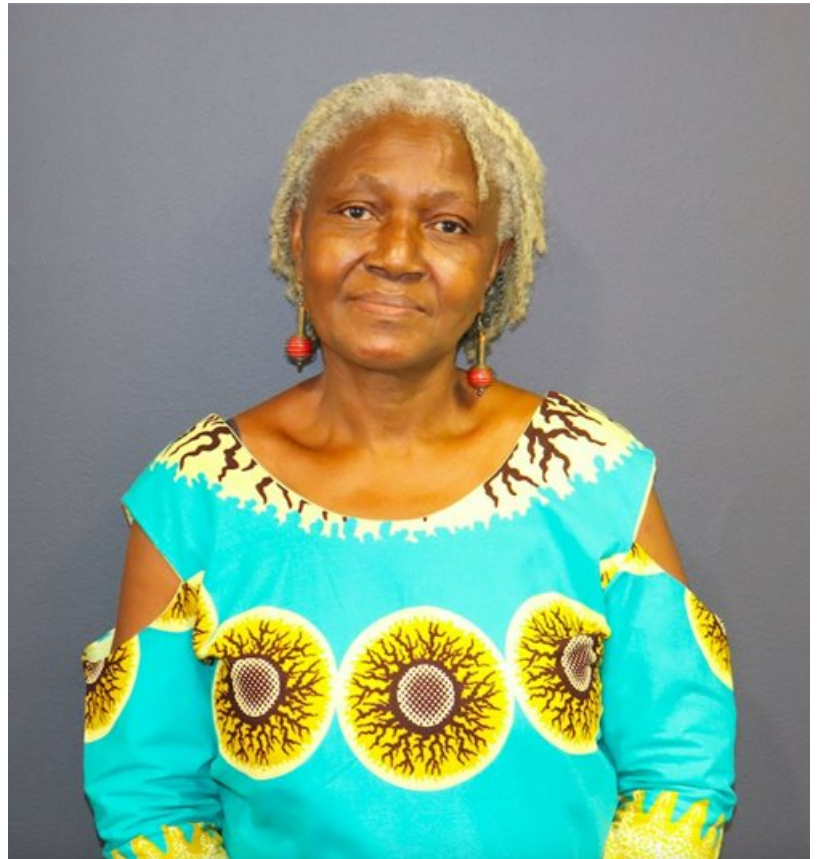
This is the first-time Asaswei has elected a president from a private higher education institution. As she anticipates taking the reins from outgoing president, Dr Varoshini Nedesan of the University of Johannesburg, Dr Masinga says, "I recognise a jewel of an opportunity here to contribute more widely and more intensely to a profession I believe is completely essential to communities, countries and the global society. It's a chance to not only advocate for social work education from my position in my own institution, but to stand for the country's schools and departments in social work education. Together with members of the executive committee, we are dynamically guiding and shaping future change-makers and social innovators."

Asaswei supports a community of social work educators who are committed to the continuing improvement of social work education, training, research and practice in South Africa. The association reaches out to the international community of social work training, to engage around enhancing teaching social work and the training of

social work practitioners. Indirectly, Asaswei aspires to promote social development and help improve the psychosocial functioning of individuals, families, groups, organisations and communities. A profession historically rooted in social security, child protection and family strengthening, Social work today has a keen focus also on advocacy for human rights, social, economic and environmental justice. It is a career path offering younger generations a compelling way to make a social impact. Dr Masinga says, "Right now, we had our first cohort of Sacap Bachelor of Social Work students attending the Asaswei 2021 international conference on *Pandemics, poverty and inequality: Social work in the 21st century*."

Dr Masinga, who experienced the life-changing benefits of engaging with a social worker when she was a vulnerable child in a single-parent home in Mpumalanga, has had a deeply personal, transformative journey in social work education. She qualified as a social worker with a BA (Hons) in Psychology from the University of Limpopo. Dr Masinga achieved two Masters degrees, the first in Child and Family Welfare from the State University of New York at Buffalo, New York, and a second in Social Work Management from the University of Pretoria. She won a Canon Collins scholarship and achieved her PhD focused on school-based violence prevention from the University of Pretoria in 2017.

"As Asaswei President, I want to see South Africa being recognised as a strong competitor by our international counterparts within the higher education space," she says. "I also want to see our South African social work training



institutions prioritise social work research and focus more on incorporating indigenous theories and models of intervention. I want to place on the global stage, all South African Schools of Social Work, both public and private, to be counted amongst the best providers of a social work qualification. I believe that South African social work schools and departments can be a first choice for international students who want to study in our dynamic country.”

Dr Masinga’s unopposed nomination and subsequent appointment as the Asaswei president, is a point of pride in the Sacap family. Sacap Academic dean, Dr Jaclyn Lotter, says: “This is an acknowledgement of Poppy’s life’s work and commitment to the education and training of social workers, as well to her ongoing advocacy for the profession of social work. As a valued member of our leadership team, Poppy is an inspiration to us all at Sacap. We are so incredibly proud of her and feel privileged to have her lead our faculty in this essential area of work that it is so critical to the future of South Africa.”

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