

FAITH MKWANANZI
Project List

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Primary Investigator

Funder: National Research Foundation – Thuthuka Project (2022-2025)

Funded Value: R201 621

Topic: Mapping higher education beyond Agenda 2030: International students and digital learning in South Africa.

The three-year project used two universities as case studies, one urban and one rural, emphasising empirical, methodological, and theoretical dimensions. By focusing on African international students, the study extends current research on student migration within Africa and the internationalization of higher education in Africa. The capability approach was used to analyse the intersections between migration, higher education, technology, and sustainability. The project sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the eLearning experiences of undergraduate and postgraduate international students? (*capabilities and conversion factors*)
2. What are the challenges and experiences of universities in delivering ELearning to international students? (*capabilities and conversion factors*)

Co-Investigator

Funder: Arts and Humanities Research Council (2022-2024)

Funded Value: £503,327

Primary Investigator: Alison Buckler, Ph.D. (Open University, United Kingdom)

Co-Investigators: Joanna Wheeler (TransformativeStory), Faith Mkwanaenzi (University of the Free State)

Research Associate and Project Manager: Dr Jennifer Agbaire (The Open University)

Ethnographers: Yusra Price (South Africa), Jane Nebe (Nigeria), Katherine Collins (UK)

Topic: Ibali: Storying new discourses of educational inclusion/exclusion in the UK, Nigeria, and South Africa.

The project was conceptualised around three key concerns relevant to education, development, and how these are researched. First, an empirical concern related to the under-conceptualised buzzword of ‘inclusion’ and the often inadequate consideration of whether research processes that generate knowledge about inclusion are, in themselves, inclusive. Second, a methodological concern addressing the frequently under-theorised and uncritical use of storytelling in education and development research and practice. Third, an ethical concern highlighting the privileging of students in high-income contexts in relation to creative, arts-based approaches, and the positioning of storytelling as an ‘appropriate’ or ‘traditional’ method for research in Africa.

The project sought to answer the following questions:

- How are narratives of educational inclusion and exclusion framed by young people, teachers, teacher educators, and policymakers?
- How can general principles of storytelling research be adapted to specific contexts in appropriate ways?

Primary Investigator

Funder: Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, University of the Free State (2022 – 2023)

Funded Value: R50, 000

Co-investigators: Patience Mukwambo, Ph.D. (University of Pretoria) and Winter Seshoka, Mr. (University of Limpopo)

Topic: African International students in South African Higher Education: A multi-university study on e-learning experiences.

The one-year project examined the access (capabilities) and readiness (conversion factors) of African international students for digital international higher education. The project focused on digital (in)equalities based on students' unique contextual factors. Two interrelated aims drove the study:

- To identify ways in which African international students adjusted and responded to the e-learning requirements between 2020-2022
- To investigate how learning experiences for African international students have been affected between 2020-2022

Find the project's latest publication [here](#).

Primary Investigator

Funder: Arts and Humanities Research Council – Changing the Story Network Plus (2022)

Funded Value: £23,846

Co-Investigators: Glen Ncube, Ph.D. (University of Pretoria), Tendayi Marovah, Ph.D. (Midlands State University, Zimbabwe)

Community Partnering Organizations: Pala Forerunners (Mpumalanga, South Africa), Basilwizi Youth Trust (Binga, Zimbabwe), Binga Arts and Craft Centre (Binga, Zimbabwe)

Topic: Transnational and intergenerational exploration of ecological heritage with youth in Southern Africa – gathering data for the commercialization of moringa.

The project built upon the outcomes of the Consolidated Learning Southern Africa (2021) strand and the prior projects it had scaffolded. It sought to create a pathway for realising the potential impact of invigorating ecological heritage and embedding it into community life through a pilot grassroots process of exploring the viable commercial aspects of a common regional ecological heritage with young people. Specifically, the project galvanized the interest of rural youths in the ecological heritage of Moringa oleifera through intensive workshop engagement with both elderly community experts and research and farming specialists. This was achieved by documenting the workshop learning process and ultimately through policy engagement.

Read the Zim policy brief here:



Policy Brief II_Binga
Zimbabwe March 202

Read the SA policy brief here :



Policy Brief I_South
Africa Feb 2022.pdf

Primary Investigator

Funder: Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE) (2022)

Funded Value: £5,000

Co-Investigator: Mikateko Mathebula, Ph.D. (University of the Free State)

Topic: Pursuing higher education in contexts of socio-spatial exclusion: a scoping study of the educational trajectories of youth from informal settlements.

The project examined education trajectories in contexts of social and spatial exclusion by documenting how youth living in informal settlements in South Africa access and participate in higher education through participatory processes. Two overarching and interrelated objectives were:

1. To explore the meanings of higher education in informal spaces
2. Document and share, through life histories and photovoice, how youth in informal settlements access higher education

Co-Investigator

Funder: Economic and Social Research Council Network Funding of the Transforming Education for Sustainable Futures (TESF) Scheme (2022)

Funded Value: £30,000

Primary Investigator: Mikateko Mathebula, Ph.D. (University of the Free State)

Topic: Universities as Sustainable Communities.

The project aimed to co-develop a conceptualisation of a sustainable university community that will inform an action plan for an African/Indigenous/locally centered conception of Higher Education for Sustainable Development at the University of the Free State. The following was the principal research question:

- How can we co-create and promote an African/Indigenous/locally centred conceptualisation of a sustainable educational community at the UFS, drawing primarily from (but not restricted to) university student activists' valued ontologies and ways of living that they have reason to pursue?

Project's latest publication [here](#)

Primary Investigator

Funder: Arts and Humanities Research Council – Changing the Story Network Plus (2020 - 2021)

Funded Value: £22,237.77

Co-Investigators: Glen Ncube, Ph.D. (University of Pretoria), Tendayi Marovah, Ph.D. (Midlands State University, Zimbabwe), Melis Cin, Ph.D. (Lancaster University, UK), Seth Mehl, Ph.D. (University of Sheffield, UK)

Community Partnering Organisations: Pala Forerunners (Mpumalanga, South Africa), Basilwizi Youth Trust (Binga, Zimbabwe), Binga Arts and Craft Centre (Binga, Zimbabwe),

BaTonga Community Museum (Binga, Zimbabwe)

Topic: Youth agency, civic engagement, and sustainable development: Ideas for Southern Africa.

This project shared, reflected on, and embedded findings from Changing the Story (CTS) projects in Zimbabwe and South Africa (2019). It sought to establish and strengthen regional channels of engagement between youth, CSOs, NGOs, and other stakeholders, connecting and consolidating lessons learned. The key aim was to provide evidence on the effects of such collaborations, forward examples of best practice, and argue for youth-led engagement and partnerships that extend beyond these organisations, including policymakers, society, and others.

Co-Investigator

Funder: Arts and Humanities Research Council – Changing the Story Network Plus (2019)

Funded Value: £29,875

Primary Investigator: Firdevs Melis Cin, Ph.D. (Lancaster University)

Community Partnering Organizations: Basilwizi Youth Trust (Binga, Zimbabwe), BaTonga Community Museum (Binga, Zimbabwe)

Topic: Street art to promote representation and epistemic justice among marginalized rural Zimbabwean youth.

The project aimed to promote social cohesion and address epistemic injustices by providing a platform for young people to express their aspirations and values through an arts-based approach. The research team, in partnership with local artists and a community museum, collaborated with youth who utilized the Graffiti-on-Board method to promote representation and epistemic justice among marginalized rural Zimbabwean youth. The project answered the following research questions:

- What are the social, political, and economic experiences of Tonga Youth?
- How can participatory art-based methodology contribute to social cohesion and epistemic justice among disadvantaged populations and inform youth and development policies?
- How can NGOs and art-based organisations collaborate with the youth afflicted by conflict to i) reduce inequalities, ii) strengthen local and national partnerships for bottom-up initiatives, and iii) promote peaceful relations?

More about the project here: https://www.changingthestory.leeds.ac.uk/street_art_zimbabwe/.

Latest project publication [here](#)

Co-Investigator

Funder: SARChI Chair in Higher Education and Human Development, University of the Free State (2018-2019)

Funded Value: R180, 000

Primary Investigator: Melanie Walker, Ph.D. (University of the Free State)

Topic: Access to Higher Education: Aspirations, Choices, and Opportunities [Photovoice Strand]

The project consisted of two interlinked smaller projects: the first was a qualitative interview and survey project, and the second was a participatory action research project. It aimed to understand, through diverse lived experiences and voices, the underlying complexities of higher education decision-making, choices,

and admissions processes. The following were the research questions:

- What are the intersecting - personal/biographical, socio-economic, and educational factors, together with government policy, university admissions policies and practices which shape individual aspirations, decision-making, and choices of diverse students (township and suburban) prior to entry into HE?
- Having chosen university, how do diverse students win a place and gain access and to which programme of study? What are the barriers and enablers to actually getting in?
- How do diverse students experience their first six months of university study in the light of their biographies?
- What 'access' capabilities that students have reason to value emerge empirically?
- What are the practical policy implications for universities?

Latest project publication [here](#)

Co-Investigator

Funder: DIRAP, University of the Free State (2018-2019)

Funded Value: R50,000

Primary Investigator: Mikateko Mathebula, Ph.D. (University of the Free State)

Topic: Ubuntu Chain

The Ubuntu Chain initiative aimed to facilitate a student-led information and resource network to improve students' experiences and transitions into and through UFS, as well as into employment. We wanted to support the development of a strong and sustainable network of relationships among students at different levels of study and across academic disciplines to enhance their agency and aid them to empower each other in the areas they identify a need.

Co-Investigator

Funder: Institute of International Education (IIE) (2018-2019)

Funded Value: US\$30,000

Primary Investigator: Vanessa Agbedahin, Ph.D. (Sol Plaatje University)

Topic: South African Alumni Tracking Qualitative Study.

The tracking study aimed to measure the personal and professional impact of the International Fellowship Program (funded by the Ford Foundation) on alumni in South Africa. We tracked alumni across the nine South African provinces and were guided by the following questions:

- What have been the long-term impacts of the IFP experience on its alumni?
- How has the Program enabled alumni to contribute to long-term effects at the organizational, community, and societal levels?
- What contributions to social justice have IFP alumni made as leaders in their communities because of their fellowship opportunity?
- What is the link between higher education and social justice?
- How can higher education fellowship programs provide opportunities to address social inequalities?

Researcher

2020/2021

Funder: Arts and Humanities Research Council - UK

Primary Investigator: Tendayi Marovah, Ph.D. (Midlands State University, Zimbabwe)

Topic: Decolonising Education for Peace in Africa (DEPA): A case study in rural Zimbabwe.

The project was part of a multi-country consortium whose aim was to create teaching materials based on local knowledge and values, especially regarding peace, to support those most affected by conflict. The Zimbabwe (Binga Strand) collaborated with the Binga Craft Centre, Batonga Community Museum, Lusaka Museum, Choma Crafts Centre, teachers, and intergenerational community participants to understand local peace practices through crafts and intergenerational interviews among the Tonga people.

More about the project here: <http://decolonising-education-for-peace-africa.org/projects/zimbabwe>

Researcher

2019

Funder: Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), Lancaster University, UK

Primary Investigator: Murait Oztok, Ph.D. (Lancaster University)

Topic: Use of Mobile Technologies as an informal learning tool among Refugee Youth in South Africa.

The project aimed to explore the potential of ubiquitous mobile technologies (such as mobile phones, tablets, and other handheld devices with internet connectivity) for informal education, seeking to deliver rapid, sustainable, and emergent solutions for refugees in contexts with limited resources and infrastructure. We worked with refugee teachers and senior students at Albert Street School in Johannesburg.

CURRENT PROJECTS

Researcher

2019-present

Lead Researcher: Alison Buckler, Ph.D. (Open University, UK)

Topic: Supporting Adolescent Girls' Education- Mapping the Aspirations and educational needs of 'out-of-school' girls in Zimbabwe [research strand].

SAGE (Supporting Adolescent Girls' Education) is a UK Aid-funded programme through the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's Girls' Education Challenge initiative, led by Plan International and involving a consortium of six partners and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Zimbabwe (MoPSE). The Research strand is longitudinal and run by the Open University. The focus of this strand is to engage the girls in aspirations for their education and futures

Project's latest publication [here](#).