

PROF TESSA HOCHFELD MEMORIAL BURSARY FUND

UPDATE NEWSLETTER



TESSA HOCHFELD

Prof Tessa Hochfeld worked at the CSDA for 14 years until her untimely death in August 2019. She was a remarkable academic, researcher, teacher and person who leaves a rich theoretical and a critical body of intellectual work on social welfare, social protection, gender, social care and social and gender justice.

This work is highly relevant to contemporary debates on distributive justice in political and social thought internationally, and most importantly, to understanding what is loosely referred to as 'Southern Welfare'. It goes further than this, it advances critical feminist scholarship in welfare and development drawing on her extensive research over the years.

In order to honour her legacy the CSDA and the family of Prof Hochfeld set up the Prof Tessa Hochfeld Memorial Bursary fund, which is intended to support the Masters level studies of students whose research interests align with and advance those that Tessa was so passionate about.

SO FAR THE BURSARY FUND HAS SUPPORTED THE STUDIES OF TWO STUDENTS – TSHEGOFATSO RAMETSETSE AND YIBANATHI MABUNDA.



TSHEGOFATSO RAMATSETSE

Tshegofatso Pearl Ramatsetse is a young researcher with a passion for tackling mental health issues among young people. She is the first Prof Tessa Hochfeld Memorial Bursary recipient and is inspired to begin a career that will focus on tackling mental health challenges at a policy level.

“During my studies I discovered that there is a lack of policy in mental health. I’m interested in mental health, due to my personal experiences and how things are in South Africa at the moment, especially among the youth population.”

She believes the best way to tackle the issue is through systemic change and she dreams of working in the Department of Social Development so she can use her skills to make a practical difference. The 25-year old student was keen to continue her studies after completing her BA in Psychology and her Honours in Communication Theory but financial concerns were holding her back. But as the recipient of the Prof Tessa Hochfeld Memorial Bursary she was able to continue her studies and she enrolled in the MPhil in Social Policy and Development through the CSDA.

“We are delighted that Tshegofatso is the first recipient of this bursary. Tessa was a gifted researcher with a commitment to creating meaningful change in society. We are very happy that her legacy will live on through young researchers like Tshegofatso,” says Associate Professor and CSDA Director, Lauren Graham.

Tshegofatso is interested in inequalities within the gender landscape and what can be done to address these inequalities. It is this interest that has influenced her research topic.

“I want to focus on how young people respond to mental health challenges and how these can be addressed through policymaking,” she explains.

Her research focuses on how young women respond to absent fathers and if there are links to depression and mental health issues for these women. “I was very excited when I heard that I had received the bursary. I didn’t believe it, I was thrilled and I had some weight lifted off my shoulders,” she says. Tshegofatso is inspired by Prof Tessa Hochfeld’s work and her interest in gender and social justice, “I noticed that she worked in social welfare and gender justice and I believe her approach will help me in structuring my research,” she says.

Tshegofatso graduated from the course last year and is now working at the Genocide and Holocaust Centre as an Operations Officer.

"WE FOUND HER LIVELY AND ARTICULATE AND CHARMING. IT WAS A HAPPY MEETING." - STEVE & PENNY HOCHFELD (TESSA'S PARENTS) AFTER MEETING TSHEGOFATSO LAST YEAR





YIBANATHI MABUNDA

Yibanathi Mabunda is the second Prof Tessa Hochfeld Memorial Bursary recipient and began the MPhil in Social Policy and Development last year. Her interest in the MPhil course aligns with her interest in children, their wellbeing and social justice.

She aims to make meaningful contributions in policy formulation and gain skills and knowledge required as a social worker to promote social change in South African societies and beyond. She says "I believe that if we help address challenges that children face at a young age, they are bound to be better functioning adults. I think addressing social injustice issues for children will help build better societies and it will enhance their chances of reaching their full potential. It will promote employability, they will lead stable lives and that will also be beneficial to the country's future, it's social and economic development."

Yibanathi is a qualified Social Worker, having completed a Bachelor of Social Work at the University of Witwatersrand. While completing her studies she completed several practical sessions offering counselling to individuals and families. She also gained experience working with groups as a facilitator and supporting community work projects. Although Yibanathi's main interest as a social worker lies in social justice, she is keenly aware of the inequalities in terms of gender which are embedded in the cultures of patriarchy and apartheid systems. Yibanathi says "I have a deep belief that gender and social injustices are connected. It is up to people like me as a social worker and other agents of social change to advocate and act as catalysts to combat issues around both gender and social justice."

Yibanathi was selected as the next bursary recipient because of her keen passion for social justice, which upholds the work and values of our late friend and colleague Prof Tessa Hochfeld. "Going into the course I learnt a lot about the importance of policy making and how they affect our daily lives. The knowledge I have received doing an MPhil will contribute to my career because it will enable me to participate in policy-making in future and make a contribution to the country's social development in order to make a positive change in people's lives." Yibanathi is currently working as a medical social worker in a hospital while completing her final year of the MPhil. Her research focuses on the need for psychosocial services in schools located in disadvantaged areas.

"AS A SOCIAL WORKER, MY MAIN INTEREST IS IN CHILDREN BECAUSE THEY ARE THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY. I BELIEVE THAT IF WE ADDRESS SOCIAL ISSUES AND CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN IN THEIR EARLY STAGES, THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO ACHIEVE MORE AND LEAD A SUCCESSFUL LIFE." - YIBANATHI MABUNDA



We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the fund contributors for making bursary funds available to these two students!

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