



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

# RETHINK@NAS

BULLETIN: November 2023

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Make today matter



## SPEAK UP AGAINST Gender-Based Violence

### RETHINK@NAS – a holistic focus on transformation

RETHINK@NAS is an initiative in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (NAS) and a holistic approach to transformation in NAS.

It reminds all staff and students to stop and assess their actions and words, the potential effect on others, perceptions, and norms that impede change in NAS.

The Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (NAS) unequivocally supports the different activities of the UP Transformation Office, which is, among others, to protect students and staff against discrimination, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and other related issues.

#### Why RETHINK?

R	Respect
E	Empowerment
T	Thought leadership
H	Humanity
I	Inclusivity
N	Next Generation
K	Knowledge



#### What is GBV?

Gender-based violence is defined as any harm done to a person or group of people based on their actual or perceived sex, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

#### Naa GBV ke eng?

Tlhořišo yeo e theilwego go bong e hlalošwa bjalo ka kotsi ye nngwe le ye nngwe yeo e hlolwago go motho goba sehlopha sa batho go lebeletšwe thobalano, bong, kgahlego ya tša thobalano, goba boitsebo bja bong.

#### Wat is GGG?

Geslagsgebaseerde geweld (GGG) word omskryf as enige vorm van besering van 'n persoon of groep mense gebaseer op hul werklike of waargenome geslag, gender, seksuele oriëntasie, of geslagsidentiteit.

#### NAS GBV Awareness workshop

**RETHINK@NAS conducted a GBV awareness workshop on 28 September 2023 as part of NAS's contribution to the Transformation Office's Anti-discrimination and Social Justice focus week activities.**

The workshop was facilitated by Dr Hanlé Kirkcaldy, Head of the Student Counselling Unit (SCU). Opening remarks were provided by Prof Barend Erasmus, NAS Dean and Chair of RETHINK@NAS. Ms Vuyis Mamanzi from the Centre for Sexualities, AIDS and Gender presented on GBV matters in general, while Ms Sibongile Sibanyoni, a UP clinical psychologist, launched the GBV icon and presented on the SCU services. Mr Phathu Tshisevhe of the Transformation Office presented on the Anti-discrimination reporting system and the statistics of GBV cases at UP. A further aim of this workshop was to emphasise how RETHINK@NAS aims to be the formal structure in the Faculty to alleviate the GBV scourge at the University.

## First responder training

RETHINK@NAS hosted a first responder training session on 3 October to assist staff in helping our students to help themselves. Our students' mental health and wellness is everybody's business - a well-rounded student can respond to academic challenges, solve problems, manage time optimally and plan to succeed. Dr Hanlé Kirkcaldy, the head of the Student Counselling Unit (SCU), shared advice on how we can play a role in identifying, containing and referring a student in distress.

### Feedback from staff attending the training included:

*"The challenges of South Africa's socio-economic climate have a serious impact on our students' mental health. Thank you for allowing us to gain knowledge so we can support our students."*

Other comments were, "This taught me to give hope to stressed-out students" and "The SCU does a lot to help our students."



## Women's Day/month at NAS

How did NAS celebrate Women's Day/month in 2023?

The women of NAS did not disappoint, as we had ten volunteers for Women's Day activities. A survey asked the women in NAS how they would like to celebrate Women's Day - see some of the responses below.

The Faculty also recognised women in NAS by giving all the women a small gift, which volunteers distributed. NAS's female trailblazers and our support staff were showcased in the September edition of the Faculty newsletter. In 2024, a silent march is planned in honour of all women. Thank you to all women in the Faculty for the contributions and sacrifices you make every day.

### Survey feedback

Responses from female staff on **how to celebrate Women's Day/Month** included suggestions to have a luncheon with women in the Faculty with speakers sharing advice on how to improve women's mental health and uplift women in the workplace, and a celebratory match around campus that ends at the Piazza raising awareness around women's issues.

When asked **what is the best part of being a woman in NAS**, feedback included:

*"Being able to inspire young women to study and enjoy science", "The large number of powerful female role models and mentors in NAS", as well as "The power and beauty of diversity in the broad sense of the concept."*

Responses on **challenges for women in NAS** included, "Being a mother and a working woman" and sentiments that they are not sure how much UP prioritises supporting women - for example, not allowing children on campus and no option for child care on campus, highlights a worrying trend in not providing women and families with the structures needed to support women." Other comments were: "There are still structural and unconscious biases that remind women we are only guests here. More male engagement is required to help our male counterparts become good allies."

Feedback on the last question, **"What is the most challenging about being a woman in science"**, left some food for thought. "I am not a scientist but a departmental administrator (therefore not always appreciated); and "Women are regarded as emotional beings, and can be overlooked", concluding with "Science is a male-dominated field and being a woman requires one to go the extra mile."

## Volunteers for the RETHINK@NAS Subcommittees

### Anti-discrimination and Gender-based Violence

- Ansie Smit

### Culture

- Peter le Roux

### Outreach

- Nigel Barker
- Valisoa Rakotonarivo
- Mohlamatsane Mokhatla
- Rocco Duvenhage

### Transformation and Employment Equity

- Jessika Samuels
- Adedayo Adeleke

### Teaching and Learning

- Ntombenhle Gama
- Natalie Hausmann
- Belinda Stapelberg
- Barend van der Merwe
- Belinda Stapelberg

### Research

- David Livingstone Nsibo
- Patricia Forbes
- Selma Karuaihe
- Rebecca Garland
- Gregory Breetzke
- Michelle Greve

### Volunteers

- Johan Janse van Rensburg
- Kaera Coetzer
- Dikeledi Moche
- Phindile Nene

We would like to hear your ideas and thoughts regarding a transformed NAS.

**Please send your thoughts to [jessika.samuels@up.ac.za](mailto:jessika.samuels@up.ac.za)**

