

A special tribute to
Women
at Umalusi

'Wathint' abafazi, wathint' imbokodo'
(You Strike a woman, You Strike a Rock)



WOMEN'S MONTH

UMALUSI



Council for Quality Assurance in
General and Further Education and Training

A special tribute

to women at Umalusi

Dear Colleagues,

August month is a special month on the South African calendar earmarked to celebrate women; to appreciate their strengths and sacrifices they make in all spheres of society. In August, the Umalusi family honours every woman in this organisation; you are special and unique! In this special tribute to women at Umalusi, we profile three Senior Managers in celebration and honour of women.

'Wathint' abafazi, wathint' imbokodo.'

(You Strike a Woman, You Strike a Rock)

The Battle Cry of South African Women

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Dr Eva Sujee

Senior Manager: Qualifications, Curriculum and Certification Unit

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Cindy Thomas

Senior Manager: Evaluation & Accreditation Unit

Dr Eva Sujee

Senior Manager

Qualifications, Curriculum and Certification Unit



1. What is your role at Umalusi?

I am the Senior Manager for the Qualifications, Curriculum and Certification unit. In this unit, we evaluate new qualifications and review existing qualifications. The qualifications are underpinned by curricula, so we appraise the intended and assessed curricula for new qualifications but also the intended and assessed curricula for new subjects in existing qualifications. Furthermore, we certify learner achievements and also verify the certificates of learner achievement. I also represent Umalusi at different Task Teams and forums with stakeholders in the National Qualifications Framework space.

2. Umalusi will be celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2022, where do you see the organisation in the next five years?

I see tremendous growth in the organisation with the addition of the General Education Certificate (GEC) qualification and the National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA) qualification. I also see the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in the adult space taking more ground with the introduction of the NASCA. Furthermore, I see the organisation increasing the use of ICT in our processes. Implementing the online certification system for replacement certificates will be the beginning of new and innovative online initiatives. COVID-19 has forced us to do things differently, and there are many lessons that we have learnt from this experience.

3. What is the one thing you know now about leadership and work that you wish you had known earlier in your career?

To live and work as if it is your last day. Be present in the moment and do your best with everything that you do.

4. As a leader, what has been the most significant barrier in your career?

Time to read more widely and attend more seminars and conferences.

5. What advice would you give to young women who are just starting to work?

Be focused and work hard. Use every opportunity that comes your way.

6. Women wear many hats: a mother, wife, grandmother, caregiver, professional etc. How do you maintain the balance?

Your family must support you and the work that you are doing. If you don't have your family's support, it will be very difficult, and you will feel guilty for the many hours you spend working. Good planning and coordination are very important. You have to set family time aside and time for hobbies or interests. Exercise is very important; I try to walk every day after working hours with my husband to spend quality time with him and switch off from work.

7. Have you drawn professional inspiration from other women? Tell us about a woman who has inspired you?

I must say, Oprah Winfrey. The success that she achieved is immeasurable. She was determined to make a success of her life despite her difficult circumstances. She also shared many lessons in life with the public and is always trying to educate the next person. Her contribution to people in need is inspiring.

8. What's the most significant factor that has helped you to be successful?

At Umalusi, it is the excellent leadership and trust from Mr Sibanda and the support and assistance from the people in my unit. I am very blessed with a competent team of people in my unit.

9. You are undoubtedly busy; how do you take care of yourself and maintain good physical, spiritual and mental health?

I try to follow a good diet, exercise and attend church and related church gatherings. I also have my three sisters and good friends that came a long way and we keep in touch via calls, messages, video calls; hopefully, we can go for coffee one of these days! Also, I try always to be thankful for what I have and stay positive, no matter the circumstances.

10. How should women support other women in their organisations?

I think just be available to assist wherever you can if you have the time to assist somebody. Also, encourage women to follow their dreams and just have a one-on-one when time permits.



Dr Mary-Antoinette Dliwayo

Senior Manager

Quality Assurance of Assessment:
Post-School Qualifications Unit



1. What is your role at Umalusi?

My role is to oversee the quality assurance of assessment processes for post-school qualifications, i.e. the Technical Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education qualifications.

2. Umalusi will be celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2022, where do you see the organisation in the next five years?

I see myself as part of the organisation executing my roles and responsibilities to ensure the credibility of the post-school assessments. I also hope to contribute to the quality assurance of new qualifications such as the GEC and the complete digitisation of quality assurance processes.

3. What is the one thing you know now about leadership and work that you wish you had known earlier in your career?

Being a mentor (leader) who directs the other members of the team towards a shared vision. Continually setting out the vision as a beacon to guide team members and keep them from quitting before the dawn of fulfilment arrives.

4. As a leader, what has been the most significant barrier in your career?

Time.

5. What advice would you give to young women who are just starting to work?

Young women need not look down on themselves inside and outside the workplace; they need to strive for excellence and keep abreast with the latest developments by enriching themselves with knowledge and skills for the 21st century. Most importantly, they need to look after themselves because their jobs will not.

6. Women wear many hats: a mother, wife, grandmother, caregiver, professional etc. How do you maintain the balance?

By not comparing myself with other women as I may not know how their journey has been and trying not to let the highs and lows of life affect me too much.

7. Have you drawn professional inspiration from other women? Tell us about a woman who has inspired you?

My mother who always inspired me to carry on against all odds and always do good. She was a hard-working woman who raised five children after my father passed away. She encouraged and supported me throughout my schooling and university years. The second woman who inspired me was the principal of the last school where I worked as a teacher. She was dedicated to her job and always encouraged us to strive for the best in teaching our learners and how she allowed us to involve parents in their children's academic life.

8. What's the most significant factor that has helped you to be successful?

Knowing that 'nothing is impossible if you believe...' –made me to always learn from the situation that confronts me.

9. You are undoubtedly busy; how do you take care of yourself and maintain good physical, spiritual and mental health?

It is easy to get busy and get caught up in my work schedule; I try to read something every day to stay on track. Also, remembering that, once in a while, I need to pause and catch my breath, being conscious about what I eat, drink and going for a walk is also important.

10. How should women support other women in their organisations?

By not pulling each other down.

Cindy Thomas

Senior Manager

Evaluation & Accreditation Unit



1. What is your role at Umalusi?

Senior Manager: Evaluation and Accreditation.

2. Umalusi will be celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2022, where do you see the organisation in the next five years?

I am trusting that we will be able to move into the quality assurance of online education in addition to education in traditional face-to-face institutions.

3. What is the one thing you know now about leadership and work that you wish you had known earlier in your career?

Don't try to copy someone else's way of doing things. God has given each of us unique characters, personalities, and skills. God places each of us in situations that He has equipped us for, so we must approach situations using the unique gifts that God has blessed us with, not try to copy how someone else handled a situation.

4. As a leader, what has been the most significant barrier in your career?

By nature, I am an introvert and would prefer to stay in the background, which you can't do all the time as a leader.

5. What advice would you give to young women who are just starting to work?

Study and achieve qualifications that will stand you in good stead throughout your life. Having qualifications will help you to pursue the career that you enjoy. Pursue your studies while you are still young. It becomes complicated once you have to juggle studies with your other roles and responsibilities later in life.

6.

Women wear many hats: a mother, wife, grandmother, caregiver, professional etc. How do you maintain the balance?

My family lives in another province from where I work. It is, therefore, easier for me to separate the roles. In Gauteng, I wear my "professional" cap, and when I go home to KZN, I am mom, granny, sister, aunty, etc. – a completely different life. 😊 I am very thankful for technology such as WhatsApp, Facetime, etc. to be able to keep in contact with family in between my visits.

7.

Have you drawn professional inspiration from other women? Tell us about a woman who has inspired you?

I was widowed at a very young age. We started a small group of women who had been widowed with young children and called ourselves the "Thatcher" group after Margaret Thatcher – the "iron lady" - a strong woman. As a group, we drew inspiration from each other to keep going and strive for the best despite the tragedies that we had all experienced.

8.

What's the most significant factor that has helped you to be successful?

Striving for excellence in everything I do and practising integrity in every aspect of life. Psalm 25:21 states, "May integrity and uprightness protect me, because my hope, Lord, is in you."

9.

You are undoubtedly busy; how do you take care of yourself and maintain good physical, spiritual and mental health?

My relationship with God through Jesus Christ is very important to me. It is a relationship, not a religion. Having that relationship helps you to deal with any situation that comes your way. I like to quote Isaiah 40:31 when people ask me how I manage to cope with everything on my plate: "But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

In terms of physical health, I enjoy walking – which I don't do often enough!

10.

How should women support other women in their organisations?

By acknowledging each other and the weight of the task that they face. Just knowing that someone understands what you are going through and is prepared to listen to you makes a huge difference.

