



Stellenbosch

UNIVERSITY
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forward together
sonke siya phambili
saam vorentoe



Equality Unit Annual Report

Executive summary

It was a milestone year for the Equality Unit in 2022. Among many achievements, the Unit launched Stellenbosch University's first online platform for reporting incidents of unfair discrimination and harassment. This now complements the University's existing reporting mechanisms for staff and students.

Other notable highlights included our participation in the Community of Practice (COP) on Gender-based Violence (GBV) Conference that brought together GBV practitioners and student leaders from various universities in South Africa.

To raise awareness of the challenges faced by the LGBTQIA+ community on campus – another focus for the reporting year – the Unit ran social media campaigns, produced ambassador videos and a coordinated panel discussion to highlight the challenges faced by the queer community, but more importantly, to provide information to create change. Grateful to have come out of the Covid-19 pandemic, we were also able to resume our annual First Things First wellness initiative to provide students with information on the prevention of HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and encourage healthy lifestyles.

We continued to build on our partnerships both at and outside Stellenbosch University through collaborative webinars and participation in various panel discussions on social justice themes.

As the report of the independent Khampepe Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of Racism at Stellenbosch University, which was released towards the end of 2022, has certain implications for the Policy on Unfair Discrimination and Harassment, the review and amalgamation of this policy and the HIV/AIDS policy was temporarily halted. The process will resume in 2023 once suggestions flowing from the report have been properly considered and incorporated.





Foreword by the head of the Equality Unit

As we present the Equality Unit's 2022 annual report, it offers us a chance to reflect on the challenges and achievements of the past year. We are proud of our commitment to social justice and transformation in the South African higher education system but recognise that we still face a number of complex obstacles.

Our vision remains the same: to make a distinctive contribution in a VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) world through innovation, responsiveness, critical engagement, review, empathy, and humble assertiveness. We know that to achieve this vision, we need to inspire trust and credibility with our stakeholders. We must unleash the talent of our people, harness our diversity, affirm everyone's worth and potential, and be a source of helpful support. We must also align our systems and processes, clarify, and stick to our purpose, and engage in rigorous self-reflection and analysis. Team feedback, empathy, cohesion, support, skills development, involvement, and synergistic communication are essential for our success.

By embracing these principles, we can overcome the challenges that lie ahead and achieve Stellenbosch University's Vision 2040.

As I reflect on 2022, a few key developments stand out. In partnerships with internal and external stakeholders, we did a considerable amount of work to champion the fight against workplace bullying, spreading the message in-person, on social media and through online discussion sessions. Initiatives to enhance support to our LGBTQIA+ students and staff were a highlight, and our sound relationship with the University's student societies added significant value to these projects.

The release of the final report of the independent Khampepe Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of Racism at Stellenbosch University was a very important moment for both the University and the Equality Unit. The commission played a pivotal role in providing a bridge to eradicate unfair discrimination and racism embedded in the culture and practices of our institution. The Equality Unit immediately took on the responsibility to actively engage with the content of the report, considering its meaning and consequences. An independent specialist in organisational complexity was contracted to assist our team to make sense of the report and develop action items flowing from its recommendations. Among others, this led us to pause the review and amalgamation of our Unfair Discrimination and Harassment, and HIV/AIDS policies, with work set to resume in 2023.

The Equality Unit activated institutional mechanisms to combat GBV. These included developing a draft GBV Strategic Plan for the University, initiating the process of appointing an expert academic working group to assist with consultation on the draft plan, and establishing a Rectorate Committee for GBV Monitoring. We also formed part of the Community of Practice of GBV university practitioners to learn how we could improve responses to GBV at our respective institutions. In 2022, this partnership culminated in the Unit co-hosting a conference which brought together COP practitioners and students from coastal universities.

To enhance our efforts to eradicate unfair discrimination and harassment, we introduced a web-based solution where students and staff can report such incidents directly on an online case management platform. This makes for effortless, confidential, safe and, where needed, even anonymous reporting. The implementation of this integrated case management and online reporting platform enables us to better understand trends, strengthen accountability and enhance reporting to the Rectorate. This, in turn, will result in more effective control over risks in the campus environment, and the ability to address matters promptly and responsibly.

Towards the end of 2022, we initiated a process to launch a supplementary, independently run platform to blow the whistle on unfair discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment at the University. The aim would be to instil greater confidence in individuals to report matters to the Equality Unit.

Finally, we celebrated the publication of our co-authored paper "Practitioner's perspectives on a national South African higher education institution policy framework mitigating gender-based violence at a South African university". The paper, which appeared in the International Journal of Critical Diversity Studies, reflected on the implementation of the national policy framework on GBV at Stellenbosch University and how institutional policy development, support services environments and senior leadership structures can be harnessed for this purpose.

Of course, I cannot present this annual report without acknowledging the dedicated team of staff who have worked tirelessly to make it possible. We are grateful for your commitment to the mission of Stellenbosch University and the Equality Unit and for your unwavering support for our vision of social justice. Your dedicated work has a significant impact, and we deeply appreciate your contribution. Your willingness to change and be flexible, even in the face of challenges, is inspiring. The University is fortunate to have such a committed team.

I am confident that our 2022 annual report not only reflects the work we did in the reporting year but will also inspire us with renewed energy to tackle the critical work awaiting us in the year ahead. We look forward to partnering with both internal and external stakeholders to continue delivering on our mandate.

Jaco Greeff Brink



Foreword by the manager of the HIV and Sexualities portfolio

With 2022 marking the first post-Covid 'normal' year and students and staff made a full return to campus, the HIV and Sexualities portfolio was pleased to get back into the swing of things, supporting staff and students of Stellenbosch University to make responsible and healthy sexual health choices.

We tackled the year with a strengthened portfolio thanks to the appointment of Constance Matlholwa as HIV, Gender & Sexualities programme coordinator.

In 2021, we were unable to execute our annual First Things First (FTF) mass HIV testing and wellness campaign due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. We were excited to again assist and inform students about the importance of knowing their HIV status and provide general health and wellness information at the 2022 in-person event.

Our condom distribution programme resumed, and internal and external condoms, lube and pleasure packs were distributed in high-frequency buildings, including the Neelsie student centre, SU Library, study centres and computer user areas.

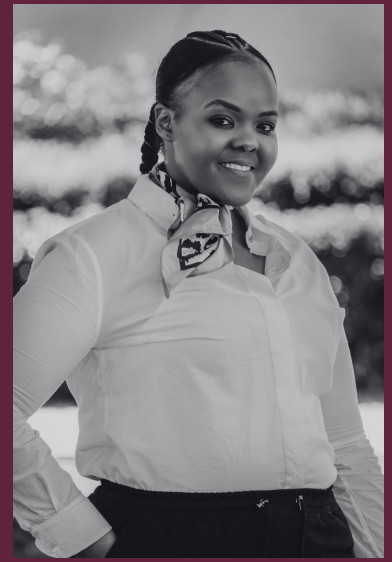
With students back on campus, training also picked up. We gladly welcomed international students back to our semester classes and summer school modules. As a result, training numbers for 2022 were more than double those of 2021.

With numerous opportunities available, we are positive about increasing our reach on all Stellenbosch University campuses. We also look forward to launching our equality agents via our peer education programme in 2023. Equality agents are trained students who will serve as sources of information and referral in their clusters, complement the HIV and Sexualities portfolio's support, and expand our condom distribution programme to all residences. These students will raise awareness of the work of the Equality Unit in general, facilitate courageous conversations, and co-facilitate cluster-based training sessions with Equality Unit staff.

Further plans for 2023 include increasing our training, with a particular focus on Stellenbosch University staff, through a blended approach, further expanding our services to LGBTQIA+ students and staff, and building positive relationships with student societies. We will also be advancing our staff's personal and professional growth through benchmarking, capacity building, and exchanging ideas with internal and external collaborators and partners.

Michelle Munro

Foreword by the senior case coordinator of the Unfair Discrimination and Harassment portfolio



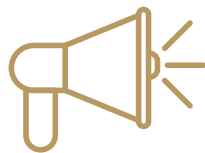
Unfair discrimination, gender-based violence (GBV) and racism in the South African higher education system persist. For many South African students, the Covid-19 pandemic merely exacerbated the situation. Various forms of structural oppression continue to pose a danger to the academic success of many.

For the Equality Unit, and particularly the Unfair Discrimination and Harassment portfolio, 2022 became an unprecedented year following a shocking racism-related incident at Stellenbosch University. The case caused a national outcry, with even South African president Cyril Ramaphosa taking note. Shortly after the incident, Rector and Vice Chancellor Wim de Villiers announced the appointment of Justice Sisi Khampepe to chair an independent commission of inquiry into allegations of racism at the University. The commission completed its work in October 2022. One of the findings in the commission's report was that "a thorough review of the Equality Unit's processes, capacity and presence at the University ought to be conducted".

Over the years, we have seen our function as going beyond mere case management to also include restoring the dignity and honour of the party who suffered harm. We remain committed to strengthening our policies and implementing initiatives to combat unfair discrimination, GBV and racism, and providing more resources to support students and staff. By taking these steps, we hope to contribute to a safe and inclusive environment where all students and staff can thrive.

Qaqamba Mdaka

Our highlights in numbers



Social media reach: 69 788



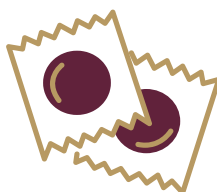
Training reach: 2 941



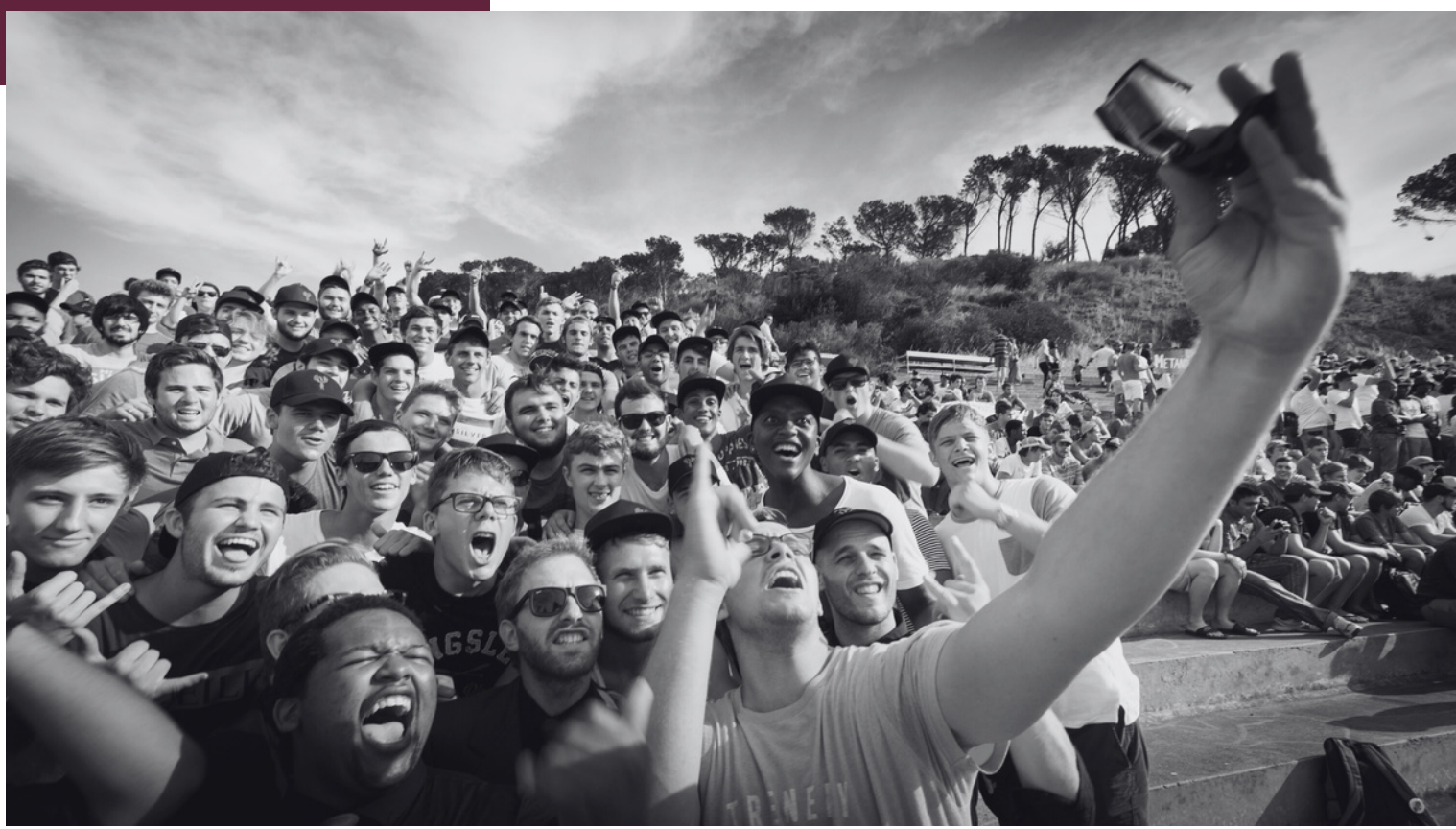
**Resolved unfair
discrimination and
harassment cases:** 47



HIV tests conducted: 738



Condoms distributed:
52 700



About us

The Equality Unit draws its inspiration from the Bill of Rights, which states that no person may be unfairly discriminated against. We assist students who have been victimised, sexually harassed, unfairly discriminated against, or have fallen victim to gender-based violence (GBV). We also focus on HIV, the LGBTQIA+ community, gender identity and sexualities.

The Unit comprises the following team members:

Jaco Greeff Brink, Equality Unit head | **Michelle Munro**, HIV and Sexualities portfolio manager | **Constance Matlholwa**, HIV, Gender and Sexualities programme coordinator | **Nadine Christians**, Communications and Marketing coordinator | **Adrian Paulse**, administrator | **Dr Jill Ryan**, Gender Non-Violence coordinator | **Werner van Kerwel**, legal advisor and investigator | **Larona Matee**, Unfair Discrimination and Harassment case officer | **Qaqamba Mdaka**, Unfair Discrimination and Harassment case coordinator | **Greg Smith** (medical incapacity)

Team members represent the Unit on the following structures:

Management committee of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Learning and Teaching · Institutional Committee on Staff Health and Wellbeing · Institutional Transformation Committee · GBV Monitoring Committee · Community Safety Forum of Stellenbosch Municipality · Dean's Advisory Committee on Transformation, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences · Stellenbosch University Medicine and Health Sciences Advisory Committee · GBV Community of Practice · National Transformation Managers Forum · Transformation Monitoring and Evaluation Group · Advisory committee for the Division of Student Affairs on Tygerberg campus · Institutional Communications Forum

In 2022, the Equality Unit filled the vacancy of HIV, Gender & Sexualities programme coordinator by welcoming Constance Matlholwa to the team. Constance comes with a wealth of experience in the field of health and academia.

The job title and description of Werner van Kerwel was changed from case investigations officer to legal advisor and investigator. This allows the Unit to tap into Werner's legal training and expertise to provide us with legal guidance.



Gender Non-Violence portfolio

The Gender Non-Violence portfolio directs the institutional response to combat GBV. This includes overseeing student and staff-led initiatives and providing comprehensive support, monitoring, and interventions. In addition, through a dedicated Gender Non-Violence coordinator, the Equality Unit and Stellenbosch University are represented on a number of GBV-related forums and committees, including the Western Cape Violence Prevention Forum and its steering committee, and the expert advisory committee for the Western Cape Safety Plan.

In the reporting year, some of the initiatives the portfolio either spearheaded or took part in were as follows:

Anti-GBV Monitoring Committee

The core functions of the Anti-GBV Monitoring Committee include monitoring, evaluation, and reporting. The intention is for the committee to expand on the work carried out by the now dissolved Rape Culture Monitoring Committee.

The Anti-GBV Monitoring Committee members represent the University's student community, support services staff and academic environments. They are:

- Dr Zethu Mkhize, head of the Transformation Office;
- Jaco Greeff Brink, head of the Equality Unit;
- Dr Jill Ryan, Gender Non-Violence coordinator;
- Ebrahiem Abrahams, director of Employee Relations;
- Nicolette van den Eijkel, chief director of Facilities Management;
- Dr Choice Makhetha, senior director of the Division: Student Affairs;
- Lizzie Witbooi, social worker at the Centre for Student Counselling and Development;
- Monica du Toit, ResEd group coordinator at the Centre for Student Communities;
- Alex Vink, 2021/22 Womxn and Queer Empowerment manager for the Students' Representative Council;
- Yaadien Padiachy, 2022/23 Womxn and Queer Empowerment manager for the Students' Representative Council;
- Catherine Bern, Tygerberg Students' Representative Council member for Student Wellness;
- Felicia van Rooi, head of Student Discipline;
- Jacolette Kloppers, specialist project manager of Strategic Initiatives; and
- Prof Taryn Young, head of the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics.

The committee will map a way forward for monitoring and evaluating the status of GBV on campus and will establish an interim academic advisory group to provide input on the draft GBV Strategic Plan.



Research highlights campus gender-based violence

The Equality Unit was proud when an article co-authored by Jaco Greeff Brink (head of the Unit), Larona Matee (case officer), Qaqamba Mdaka (case coordinator) and Kaylon Weppelman (former HIV and Sexualities programme coordinator) was published in the International Journal of Critical Diversity Studies. Titled "Practitioner's perspectives on a national South African higher education institution policy framework mitigating gender-based violence at a South African university: Governance, implementation challenges and opportunities", the article reflects on the implementation of the Department of Higher Education and Teaching's policy framework on GBV from the perspective of Stellenbosch University.

Drawing on their experience as practitioners in the field, the authors explore the integration of recommendations from the national framework, identify constraints that hamper GBV interventions, and assess how institutional policy development, professional support services and senior leadership structures can be leveraged to address GBV at higher learning institutions.

Discussions highlight GBV and other social justice challenges

Several prominent social justice issues, including GBV, same-sex violence and the role of men in addressing GBV were highlighted during two events on Stellenbosch campus. Both used creative products to start the conversation.

At Monica residence, the book *Ougat* served as inspiration for a panel discussion featuring author Shana Fife who shared her journey of survival and social conditioning. Over 40 students and staff attended the event hosted by Senior Living Spaces. Major focuses were abuse, GBV, and same-sex violence. The Equality Unit shared insights on topics such as sex and society's gendered conditioning, the intersectionality of rape culture, violent and toxic relationships, and healing.

The second event took the form of a discussion of the theatre production *Vloeibare Moed*, which is based on the death of Uyinene Mrwetyana, a former student of the University of Cape Town, and explores GBV and the role of men in addressing it. Guests also had the opportunity to engage with members of the Equality Unit on pressing social justice challenges and possible solutions.



Unfair Discrimination and Harassment portfolio

The Unfair Discrimination and Harassment portfolio is staffed by a case officer, a case coordinator and a legal advisor and investigator. The portfolio provides assistance to staff and students who report incidents of unfair discrimination and harassment, and offers training on GBV, support services and how to report complaints. An overview of key portfolio activities in the reporting year is presented below:

Review and integration of policies on Unfair Discrimination and Harassment and HIV/AIDS

The process to review and amalgamate the policies on Unfair Discrimination and Harassment as well as HIV/AIDS was initiated in 2021. A task team was established to integrate the two documents and to include GBV as a key focal point. When the report of the Khampepe Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of Racism at Stellenbosch University was released towards the end of 2022, it soon became clear that some of the commission's findings might need to be incorporated into the policy review. Therefore, the process was temporarily halted to allow the Equality Unit to consider the commission's recommendations. The policy review will resume and be concluded in 2023.

Launch of online reporting platform

The reporting year saw the launch of an online platform for students and staff to report incidents of unfair discrimination, harassment, GBV and victimisation. It is the first of its kind for Stellenbosch University. Accessible at www.sun.ac.za/thetha, the platform supplements existing reporting infrastructure such as the dedicated email address unfair@sun.ac.za and the Equality Unit's walk-in service at Simon Nkoli House, 39 Victoria Street, Stellenbosch.





Community of Practice practitioners working together

On the initiative of the University of the Witwatersrand, likeminded university practitioners established a Community of Practice to discuss challenges and share solutions to combat GBV at their respective institutions. Having met online during the Covid-19 lockdown, practitioners were able to have their first in-person conference in Durban in 2022.

The conference focused on building stronger working relationships and finding ways to streamline processes to ensure the best possible response to incidents of GBV on campus. The practitioners also discussed the Makhanda high court's controversial judgment in the matter *Coko v The State* (where a rape conviction was overturned based on the so-called "absence of threats or coercion"), the Department of Employment and Labour's new Code of Good Practice on the Prevention and Elimination of Harassment in the Workplace, and the challenges surrounding consent.

A second COP gathering, this time co-hosted by the Equality Unit, saw our practitioners and their peers from the University of Cape Town, the University of the Western Cape, Rhodes University and Nelson Mandela University convene in Cape Town. The five-day conference explored response and non-response to incidents, the law and gender-based violence, accountability, and understanding men and masculinity. Other topics included governance, forensics, strategic planning, the LGBTQIA+ community, and case law.

Strengthening case investigations

To support the management of unfair discrimination and harassment cases reported to the Equality Unit, staff attended a three-day course on workplace investigations offered by the Oppenheimer Investigations Group. The hybrid training, presented both online and at the University of Cape Town's Faculty of Law, focused on improving investigations, report writing and case analysis in the workplace. It also emphasised the role of the investigator, complainant, respondent, and witnesses and highlighted the importance of impartiality, confidentiality, and transparency.



HIV and Sexualities portfolio

The HIV and Sexualities portfolio provides institutional awareness, training and support to students and staff on HIV and STIs, gender and sexualities, and also supports the LGBTQIA+ community. Free materials promoting sexual health and safe sex are disseminated, and the portfolio works closely with Higher Health to promote student wellbeing.





Investigating a new co-curriculum

The Equality Unit represented Stellenbosch University at a Higher Health regional workshop that shared information on research aimed at establishing the feasibility of introducing an accredited, non-compulsory co-curriculum. The intention is for the co-curriculum to be based on Higher Health's peer education manual and to include topics such as gender, GBV, mental and sexual health, self-care, HIV, gender diversity, substance abuse, and civic education. If successfully developed, the co-curriculum will be implemented at all higher education institutions in South Africa.

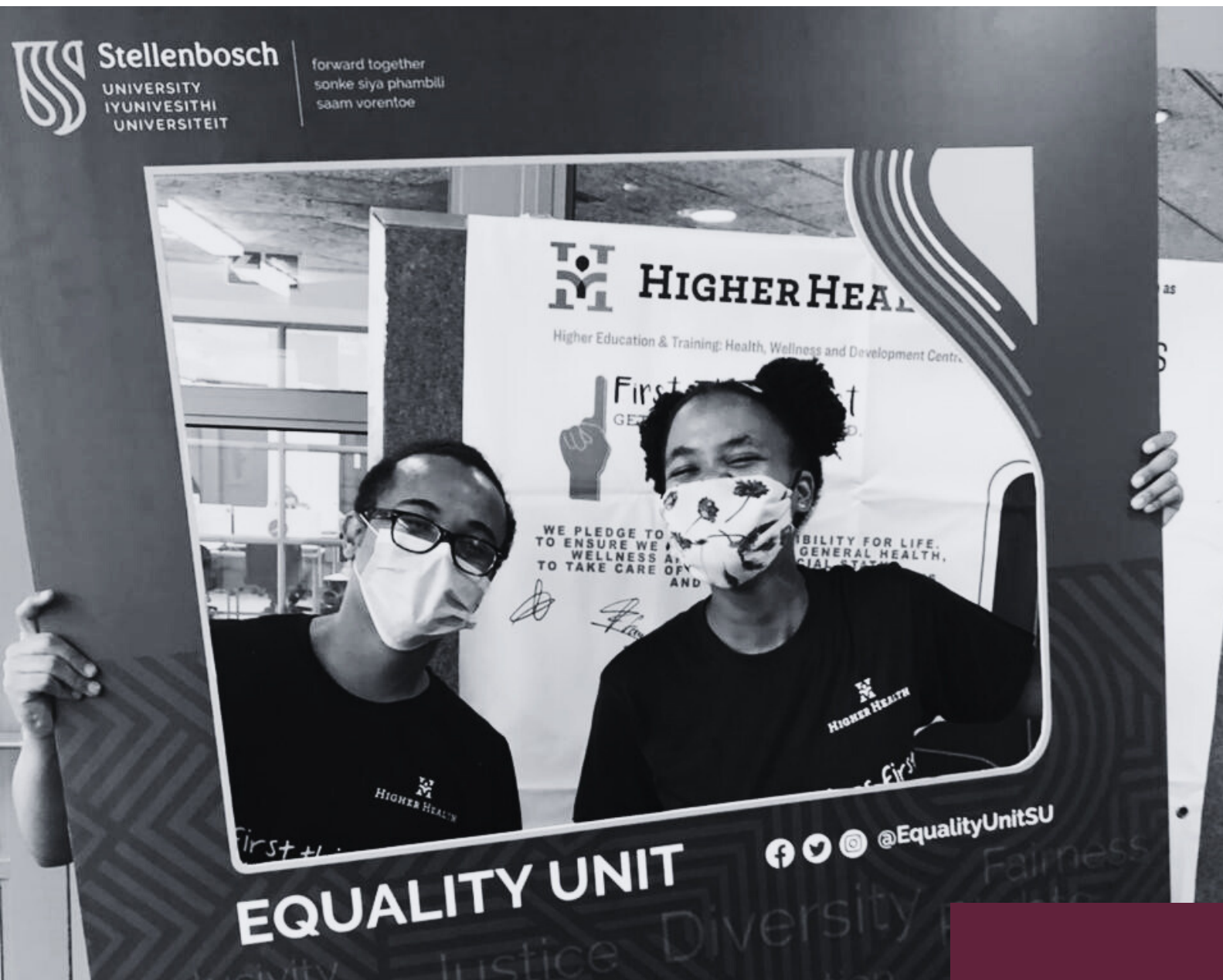
Summer school course on HIV

The HIV and Sexualities portfolio facilitated the health social justice course "Understanding HIV in the South African context" as part of the African Doctoral Academy summer school hosted by SU International. Nineteen international students attended. The five-day course included a range of presentations, activities and excursions including a visit to the Be Part Yoluntu Centre, a non-profit organisation in Mbekweni, Paarl, where students gained first-hand insights into antiretroviral therapy (ART) and interacted with clients. Students also attended a lecture on ART by Dr Lize Hellstrom, one of the founding members of Be Part, which doubles up as a clinical research and HIV community awareness centre.

Tygerberg campus wellness day

The Equality Unit partnered with the Tygerberg Students' Representative Council and Sonke Gender Justice to offer wellness screenings at the Tygerberg campus health and wellness day. Two testing booths were set up at the Tygerberg student centre where students could access free HIV testing, STI and tuberculosis screenings, mental health and substance use assessments, as well as blood pressure and glucose testing. More than 130 students benefited from these wellness services.





First Things First highlights wellness and HIV testing

The Equality Unit's annual First Things First wellness initiative returned after its Covid-induced break. The event focuses on the importance of knowing your HIV status and leading a healthier lifestyle. For the 2022 edition, the Unit collaborated with organisations such as Higher Health, Sonke Gender Justice, Marie Stopes, Gender Dynamix and the Triangle Project. The Stellenbosch-based medical clinic atHeart provided free HIV testing, STI and tuberculosis screenings, blood pressure testing, body mass index calculations, information on breast examinations, and PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis to lower the risk of contracting HIV). Free internal and external condoms and lube were distributed among students attending the initiative.

Communications and Marketing portfolio



The Communications and Marketing portfolio markets and raises awareness of the support services offered by the Equality Unit. To this end, the portfolio ran a number of campaigns in 2022 to highlight social justice topics such as HIV and STI myths and facts, bullying, microaggressions directed at LGBTQIA+ persons, the Equality Unit's training offering, allyship between women, covert and overt GBV, and the role of men in combating GBV. Some portfolio highlights follow:



@Work webinar series

In collaboration with Human Resources' Employee Wellness Office and the Siyakhula programme of the Transformation Office, the portfolio hosted a series of @Work webinars for staff.

Bullying in the workplace

The webinar featured Shamima Gabie, an employment law specialist and director at Cheadle Thompson & Haysom Inc Attorneys, and our own legal advisor and investigator Werner van Kerwel. The conversation highlighted employees' right to a safe, supportive and harassment-free work environment.

Mental health in the workplace

In the webinar on mental health in the workplace, Katlego Letlonkane, Stellenbosch University's Diversity Capacity Development programme manager, and Tracy Feinstein, a senior counsellor at the South African Depression and Anxiety Group, shared practical strategies to navigate mental health challenges in the workplace. The panellists also shared their personal mental health experiences.

Racism @Work

The webinar featured Shamima Gabie, an employment law specialist and director at Cheadle Thompson & Haysom Inc Attorneys, and our own legal advisor and investigator Werner van Kerwel. The conversation highlighted employees' right to a safe, supportive and harassment-free work environment.

Other webinars and panel discussions hosted in the course of the reporting year explored religious freedom, freedom of identity and expression, and human rights. A Women's Month panel discussion was also hosted in collaboration with the Division of Student Affairs at Tygerberg campus and the Transformation Office.

LGBTQIA+ campaign

In collaboration with the Division: Student Affairs at Tygerberg campus and the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, we launched a campaign to shine the spotlight on the challenges faced by the LGBTQIA+ community.

Both online and in-person events were hosted, including a panel discussion featuring three experts, namely psychologist and researcher Elliott Kotze, Pride Shelter Trust director Nicole Joy Alexander, and Leon Coetzee, Stellenbosch University student and chair of SPECTRUM!. The panellists discussed health care and safe spaces for the LGBTQIA+ community, allyship, and the mental health challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals.

The campaign also included a series of videos featuring six LGBTQIA+ ambassadors from the University. In the videos, SU Chancellor Justice Edwin Cameron (former justice of the Constitutional Court of South Africa), Prof Elmi Muller (Medicine and Health Sciences dean), Jaco Greeff Brink (Equality Unit head), Dr Choice Makhetha (Student Affairs senior director), Alex Vink (former Students' Representative Council member) and Fenele Ndebele (Shared Humanity module coordinator) discussed their personal experiences with allyship and diversity.

Launch of equalityunit@sun.ac.za

As part of our commitment to equal opportunities, the Equality Unit introduced a dedicated email address where staff and students can contact us for specialised training and support services. The email account – equalityunit@sun.ac.za – is monitored by dedicated team members, who refer matters as needed.





Statistics

Harnessing social media

The Equality Unit makes full use of social media to market and communicate about its services and initiatives. In the reporting year, this earned the Unit a reach of nearly 70 000, as shown by month below:

Month	Reach
January	907
February	9 717
March	3 167
April	22 512
May	1 882
June	12 363
July	6 055
August	6 396
September	8 461
October	6 215
November	3 598
December	3 031
TOTAL	69 788

Training

In 2022, the Equality Unit's suite of training reached 2 941 staff and students.

Month	Reach
January	0
February	870
March	350
April	268
May	167
June	288
July	277
August	274
September	180
October	68
November	171
December	28
TOTAL	2 941

Training sessions covered a wide range of topics

Equality Unit support services

Understanding conflict

Trauma-informed responses

Unfair discrimination

Gender

HIV

Bias

Unconscious bias

Mediation

Safe sex

Social identities

Reporting complaints

Gender-based violence

GBV sensitisation

STIs

Gender in the workplace

Microaggressions

Sexualities

Analysing conflict

Understanding unfair discrimination





Safe sex materials distribution

Month	External condoms	Internal condoms	Lube
January	0	0	0
February	3 000	0	0
March	2 400	50	50
April	4 880	380	180
May	2 200	100	250
June	3 100	100	250
July	2 600	0	100
August	9 800	500	1 300
September	8 180	60	1 100
October	10 400	150	1 300
November	4 800	0	600
December	0	0	0
TOTAL	51 360	1 340	5 130



HIV testing

Month	Reach
January	0
February	25
March	131
April	484
May	0
June	2
July	0
August	46
September	0
October	49
November	1
December	0
TOTAL	738

Unfair Discrimination and Harassment
case management

Complaints received	Number
Official complaints	50
Unofficial complaints	52

Types of complaint	Number
Sexual harassment	15
Harassment	16
Racial discrimination	2
Cyberbullying	4
Sexual assault	3
Advice	5





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