



Biography

Shahana Rasool is an activist, researcher, trainer and academic in the field of gender, focusing on gender-based violence. As a Rhodes Scholar she obtained her Masters and Doctorate from University of Oxford (UK). Currently she is professor at the department of social work and community development at University of Johannesburg and was HOD from 2017-2019. Since 2007 she has lectured various subjects- research, social issues, community development etc from first year to Masters and has graduated many students.

Shahana has a keen interest in social transformation, which began as an anti-Apartheid activist and continued through her work in the NGO sector both in South Africa and Australia in the fields of gender-based violence, HIV and AIDS, and immigrant women. Her research has encompassed socio-cultural influences of help-seeking and social and professional responses to domestic violence, decoloniality, and comparative research with Nigeria on adolescent gender attitudes and gender-based violence. She has published cross-disciplinary including in the Journal of Interpersonal violence, AGENDA, Gender and Religion, Critical African Studies. She is on the board of the Journal of international Women's Studies and Gender issues, chairs the International conference on Gender and Sexuality and is Vice president of the Asia-Africa Association of Women, Gender and Sexuality.

VISION

Global inequality and neo-colonialism continue to impact on the unequal access many have to resources and opportunities, as well as the nature of higher education. For me, a decolonial social work education that truly explores how power inequalities can be addressed are crucial to address global inequalities. Working together to develop an education that empowers students to address these vast inequalities and develop ways to contribute to social justice and transformative social work is core to my approach. My vision for IASSW is that we become a body of social work educators that pushes the boundaries of social work education, to enable transformation across various contexts and moves to a position of decoloniality and the centring of indigenous knowledges.

In collaboration with other international social work bodies, we can activate the organisations mandate and commitment to social justice in action through actively developing projects, research, educational material, and publications that contributes to a more meaningful, just, and equitable society. We could centre indigenous knowledges in our approach to capacity building – such that Western approaches and knowledges are not dominant and local knowledge production and approaches are facilitated. We need to dialogue across regions on decolonisation and more indigenous forms of social work.

It is also critical that our international conferences foreground alternative forms and spaces for knowledge production and creates space for indigenous knowledges and knowledges from the South as legitimate forms of knowledge that needs to be heard and centred. Online teaching and learning provide greater opportunities for teaching across contexts and sharing of these knowledges and diverse pedagogies to increase knowledge production and publications.

It would be important to collaboratively expand international research projects both for South-south collaboration and north-south dialogue to overcome these binaries and recognise how the global landscape has become more complex – with increasing numbers of refugees and migrants located in the North. Cross country comparative research which recognises the diversities of contexts is also another avenue for expanding knowledge production across contexts in the South and contexts that are dealing with similar extreme forms of repression.

Together we can be a platform that proactively highlights the role that social work can play in creating global transformation to addressing inequalities, to enable social solidarity with the oppressed. We can challenge the historical entrenchment of the status quo and raise the voices of social work educators who are suppressed or on the fringes due to language, location or other barriers that keep their voice marginalised.