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Young Women in Science: Aspirations, Challenges and Representation

Dimakatso Maheso
North-West University

Anneke Erasmus
Stellenbosch University

Mamonamane Mphahlele
University of Limpopo

Host: Tebogo Ledwaba, WiPiSA

26 JUNE 2025

11:00-12:30

ZOOM

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About our speakers

Dimakatso Maheso

Dimakatso "DJ" is a PhD candidate in high-energy physics and a lecturer at the North-West University. Her current research focuses on modelling pulsars. She previously received the Dean's Award for her MSc work, which involved distinguishing gamma-ray bursts from magnetar giant flares using spectral and temporal analysis. Passionate about science communication and education, she has taught at NITheCS Software Carpentry workshops, mentored in the MentHer programme, and served as a judge for the Eskom Expo. Outside of academia, she enjoys going to the gym and playing netball, and draws strength from her faith, family, and close friendships.

Anneke Erasmus

Anneke is a final-year PhD student in physics at Stellenbosch University, who lives with her head in the clouds (literally, as she studies cloud droplets). Anneke completed her undergraduate studies in Physics, BSc Honours, and MSc (Physics) all at Stellenbosch University. In her current research, she optically traps aerosol droplets, made from NaCl-water, with tightly focused laser beams. By analysing the scattering of light from microscopic droplets, she measures precise changes in the droplet's size and optical properties as it evaporates. Being able to study atmospheric droplets, which are relevant to climate studies, gives her great fulfilment. Anneke loves working in an optics lab, building setups, and exploring how light can be used to study the world around us.

Mamonamane Mphahlele

Mamonamane is an aspiring researcher and PhD student at the University of Limpopo, working within the Materials Modelling Centre. Her work focuses on lithium-ion batteries, with a particular interest in improving manganese- and nickel-based cathode materials through atomic-level computer simulations. She is passionate about developing more efficient, longer-lasting, and environmentally friendly energy storage solutions. Through her research, she aims to contribute to the advancement of clean energy technologies and the broader field of materials science.