

The Association of Southern African Professional Archaeologists' Transformation Charter for Archaeology in South Africa

"It should now be our intention to try to retrieve what we can of our past. We should write our own history books to prove that we did have a past, and that it was a past that was just as worth writing and learning about as any other. We must do this for the simple reason that a nation without a past is a lost nation, and a people without a past is a people without a soul." Seretse Khama. 1970.

"We can neither heal nor build, if such healing and building are perceived as one-way processes, with the victims of past injustices forgiving and the beneficiaries merely content in gratitude. Together we must set out to correct the defects of the past.... The message I am trying to convey is that all of us must take the national project of accelerated and fundamental transformation of our country very seriously indeed. The achievement of the objectives of equity, non-racialism and non-sexism constitute the very essence of the new society we seek to build." Nelson Mandela. 1996.

1 Preamble

Recognising that the Association of Southern African Professional Archaeologists is a professional association established to represent the interests of archaeology and archaeologists in southern Africa, ASAPA hereby adopts this Transformation Charter.

The primary aim of this Charter is to guide the implementation of transformation strategies by ASAPA and to provide guidance to our members and related stakeholders as we seek to create a South African archaeology that is truly reflective of the united but diverse society in which South African archaeology is embedded.

In the spirit of the South African and ASAPA constitutions, in which discrimination is unconstitutional, and recognising that archaeologists have striven for many years to drive transformation within the profession, the members of ASAPA hereby adopt a Transformation Charter for Archaeology in South Africa. ASAPA members recognise that the pace of transformation has not occurred as quickly in archaeology as in other sectors of society. For example, in 2008, of more than one hundred and fifty South African ASAPA members, fewer than ten are of African descent. It is in this context, and seeking to facilitate and accelerate the pace of transformation, that we adopt this Charter and commit ourselves to its effective implementation.

This Charter is written for South Africa. It draws strength from the broader SADC ASAPA membership and their experiences of successful archaeological transformation. Whilst its implementation is the primary responsibility of South African-based ASAPA members we ask other SADC and International ASAPA members to support the implementation of this Charter and to apply its principles to their own practice wherever appropriate.

We encourage our members to implement this Charter in our places of work and we commit to support them in this process.

2 Mission and Vision

Building from the mission statement of ASAPA, this Charter sets out a series of specific goals aimed at furthering the transformation of archaeology in South Africa. Our vision is to maintain an attractive, productive, progressive, interesting and diverse professional environment for archaeologists from all backgrounds. This initiative is aimed initially at transforming South African archaeology primarily in terms of creating and sustaining more archaeologists from underrepresented groups. A fully transformed archaeology will be one that is defined by equal access, equal opportunity and where achievement is on the basis of merit, not on the basis of one or more of the factors race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language, birth or any other factor that may lead to unfair discrimination.

3 Definition of Terms

Under-represented: those people and groups who have not yet attained equal access and opportunity within archaeology

Transformation: the process of change by which we collectively work towards a situation of equal access to all levels of archaeology for all people with archaeological training

Acronyms

ASAPA: Association of Southern African Professional Archaeologists

SADC: Southern African Development Community

4 General Transformation Goals

4.1 Transformation of training opportunities

- Strive to ensure that all learners are introduced to the practice of archaeology at an early age and that they are well resourced with archaeological materials and accurately informed
- Strive to attract, retain and develop students from all backgrounds within tertiary education in the field of archaeology

4.2 Transformation of employment opportunities

- Strive to ensure equal opportunity of employment for all professional archaeologists in all sectors of archaeology. To redress past inequities this will require significant interventive action by ASAPA members.

4.3 Transformation of archaeological practice (e.g. funding, publication, professional bodies)

- Strive to ensure equal access and participation in all levels of professional archaeology. To redress past inequities this will require significant interventive action by ASAPA members.

- 4.4 Transformation of public information, marketing and publicity concerning archaeology
- Strive to provide accurate information about the archaeological past and to market and publicise archaeology to all sectors of South African society

5 Transformation of Archaeological Structures

Acknowledging the value and success of existing institutional transformation policies and strategies, ASAPA undertakes to accelerate the pace of transformation within universities, museums, contract archaeological companies and government bodies, by harnessing the collective power of action of its members. We will not cease in this struggle until we have forged structures that embrace the importance of archaeology within South African society and that embody the qualities of equal access and equal opportunity in all aspects of archaeology. Our structures will be socially dedicated and will be driven by the archaeological interests and aspirations of all sections of South African society.

6 Transformation of Archaeological Practice

ASAPA and its members undertake to develop collective strategies to strive to ensure that archaeological practice is driven by the interests and aspirations of all sections of South African society. We will endeavour to write an archaeological past that does not privilege any section of our society, whether past or present, above another. Our practice will be rooted in social awareness and social engagement and our aim is to be socially responsible. We will adopt and implement common archaeological training systems and common archaeological unit standards.

7. Implementation

This Transformation Charter lays out the goals for archaeological transformation in South Africa.

Matters concerning implementation, including detailed strategies, milestones and time frameworks, are set out in the ASAPA Transformation Action Plan that lays out the significant interventive actions that we will implement to achieve the goals set out in this Charter.

As formally ratified and adopted by ASAPA
at the BGM on 27th March 2008