

PERSONAL DETAILS

Name: Mpumelelo W. Phungula | **Physical Address:** KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Public policy practitioner and governance researcher with over a decade of experience working within institutions responsible for protecting and advancing human rights in South Africa. Professional experience spans refugee protection, socio-economic rights enforcement, regulatory oversight, governance analysis, and public policy implementation across national and provincial government systems. Experienced in applying legislative and constitutional frameworks within institutional decision-making environments requiring independence of judgement, procedural fairness, and accountability. Work has focused particularly on migration governance, consumer protection, public accountability, and the practical realisation of socio-economic rights. Currently pursuing postgraduate research focused on governance systems influencing refugee labour market integration and access to socio-economic rights within comparative governance contexts. Research and professional engagements have included collaboration with international institutions, policy dialogue platforms, and governance stakeholders in South Africa and abroad.

AWARDS & PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION

German Chancellor Fellow

Alexander von Humboldt Foundation | 2022

Selected for a prestigious international fellowship supporting comparative research on refugee integration and migration governance.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) Essay Competition Winner

International Organization for Migration - South Africa | 2016

Awarded for an essay examining migration, social cohesion, and responses to xenophobic tensions in South Africa.

Y20 South Africa Participant

2025

Participated in youth-focused dialogue linked to global governance engagement processes.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Human Rights Protection | Governance & Policy Analysis | Socio-Economic Rights Enforcement | Migration Governance | Legislative Interpretation | Stakeholder Engagement | Regulatory Compliance | Research & Analytical Writing | Public Policy Monitoring | Institutional Oversight | Community Engagement | Comparative Governance Research

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Political Analyst & Policy Consultant

Independent | October 2023 – Present

- Conduct research and produce analytical reports on governance, migration, and socio-economic policy developments.
- Provide political and policy analysis for national and regional media platforms (SABC, Newzroom Afrika, Izwi Lomzansi FM, News24, etc.).
- Produce written public commentary and opinion pieces on governance, migration, and institutional accountability.
- Provide analytical support on governance and political risk issues affecting public institutions and socio-economic stability.
- Facilitate stakeholder engagement and knowledge-sharing initiatives supporting informed public discourse.

Researcher: Migration & Refugee Integration

Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (German Chancellor Fellowship)
Germany | July 2022 – September 2023

- Conducted comparative research examining refugee integration and labour market participation in South Africa and Germany.
- Analysed how governance systems and institutional arrangements influence access to socio-economic rights, particularly refugee labour market inclusion.
- Participated in international dialogue sessions involving researchers, policymakers, and civil society stakeholders.
- Strengthened comparative understanding of governance approaches to human rights implementation and social integration.

Assistant Director: Consumer Advisor

KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism & Environmental Affairs
August 2015 – July 2022

- Led consumer protection and regulatory compliance initiatives promoting socio-economic rights and access to redress mechanisms.
- Investigated consumer complaints involving unfair practices, unsafe products, and regulatory non-compliance.
- Conducted public awareness initiatives supporting consumer rights education and accountability.
- Engaged municipalities, businesses, and community stakeholders to strengthen compliance with consumer protection legislation.
- Contributed to governance and policy implementation processes linked to consumer protection systems and service accountability.

Refugee Status Determination Officer

Department of Home Affairs — Durban Refugee Reception Centre
June 2014 – July 2015

- Assessed asylum applications in accordance with national and international legal frameworks.

- Applied refugee law and human rights principles to support lawful and procedurally fair adjudication processes.
- Worked directly with vulnerable populations, including women and LGBTQI+ asylum applicants requiring sensitive and principled decision-making.

Standing Committee for Refugee Affairs Official

Department of Home Affairs — Durban Refugee Reception Centre
November 2013 – May 2014

- Supported refugee appeals and review processes within South Africa's refugee protection framework.
- Assisted with legal documentation, administrative coordination, and institutional review processes.

LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE ENGAGEMENT

Trustee / Board Member

UKZN Foundation Trust | June 2022 – Present

- Participate in governance oversight relating to institutional development and education-support initiatives.
- Contribute to strategic discussions focused on accountability, governance, and institutional sustainability.

Convocation Executive Member

University of KwaZulu-Natal | November 2022 – Present

- Contribute to alumni governance and institutional engagement initiatives.

Alumni Advisory Board Member

ENACTUS UKZN | January 2012 – Present

- Support youth leadership and entrepreneurship initiatives focused on socio-economic empowerment.

INTERNATIONAL TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Equality University Programme — Erasmus+ Initiative

Training Focus: Inclusive governance and rights-based approaches relating to refugees and LGBTQI+ communities

Location: Toruń, Poland

Date: April 2023

Southern Africa Social Entrepreneurship Programme

African Union & Rudo Institute

Date: September 2021

Selected for regional leadership training focused on governance, peacebuilding, and socio-economic development.

INTERNATIONAL & POLICY ENGAGEMENT

- Participated in migration governance dialogue initiatives facilitated through collaboration with the International Organization for Migration.
- Engaged in regional and international discussions addressing migration governance and socio-economic inclusion.
- Contributed to youth engagement and governance participation platforms.

EDUCATION

MA Political Science (Research) — In Progress | University of Pretoria

Research focus: Governance systems influencing refugee labour market integration and access to socio-economic rights.

Bachelor of Social Science Honours (Political Science) | University of KwaZulu-Natal
Completed: April 2012

Bachelor of Social Science (Political Science & Law) | University of KwaZulu-Natal
Completed: April 2011

National Senior Certificate (Matric/ Grade 12) | Wentworth Secondary School

Completed: December 2007

RELEVANT LEGISLATIVE & POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Constitution of the Republic of South Africa | Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (PAJA) | Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) | Refugees Act | Immigration Act | Consumer Protection Act | Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) | International Human Rights Law Frameworks.

REFERENCES

Available upon request.