



This Week

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In conversation with **Professor Munacinga Simatele: Acting Dean of Research**



One of UFH's core objectives is to strive for Research Excellence. The Acting Dean of Research, Professor Munacinga Simatele is committed to attain this objective. Prof Simatele is an Economics Professor and the Nedbank Chair of Economics in the Faculty of Management and Commerce. She assumed the role of Acting Dean on 1 April 2020.

Prof Simatele has a PhD in Economics from the University of Gothenburg in Sweden and a Master's Degree in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education from the University of Hertfordshire in the UK. She obtained her MA in Economics from the University of Dar es Salaam, in Tanzania. She has been a fellow of the Higher Education Academy in the UK since 2010.

Her work focuses on poverty, financial inclusion and informality. Her commitment to excel has earned her various funded research awards including. In 2019, she was named the winner of Vice-Chancellors Award in the Experienced Teacher category.

She joined the University of Fort Hare in June 2014 as the Nedbank Chair. Between January 2016 and December 2019 she served as the Deputy Dean: Research and internationalisation in the faculty of Management and Commerce.

Prof Simatele (MS) shared some of her research development plans with *ThisWeek@FortHare* Journalist, Aretha Linden.

AL: What responsibilities come with the role of Acting Dean of Research?

MS: This is a tough one. I think primarily, it is realizing that I have to build on an existing infrastructure and processes left by the previous Dean of Research, but at the same time, bring in a fresh eye to the role no matter how short the time.

I believe in: 'whatever your hand finds to do so do it with all your might'. As a result, although this is an acting role, I take a medium and perhaps long term view to do things that need to be done, especially in light of the fact that the university is undergoing major changes. I have taken the role at a time when a lot of external stakeholder reports and audits are due. Navigating the support structures to ensure that these are delivered on time has opened my eyes to the enormous task that the position comes with.

Finally, I think management of relationships in an era when all you have in front of you is a computer is an added challenge. Therefore, I am lucky that some of the key people I have found at the Govan Mbeki Research and Development Centre (GMRDC), are highly supportive and hard working. We have had countless meetings and these have been very helpful. My eyes have also been opened to several policy gaps and therefore one of the responsibilities has been to establish good practice where these gaps exist, and also to start working on filling these policy gaps.

AL: So far, what are some of the niche areas you have identified as having potential to further advance the university's academic standing? How do you plan to achieve this?

MS: The main niche I have identified

is the potential to enhance the University's research culture. The University already has a good number of excellent researchers. However, I think we need to work firstly, to make their work visible, but also increase the number of research-active academics.

Secondly, we also want to increase the amount of research income at the University. Evidence suggests that this is directly related to publication excellence and visibility. With the support of senior and accomplished academics, we have put in place measures to support grant applicants as well as improve our delivery times with external stakeholders.

AL: UFH is largely rural with the majority of its students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. What is your plan to ensure the quality of Research is on par with students from urban universities, while it addresses issues of a rural setting?

MS: As the old adage says, "a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step". I think that we have a little bit of a journey ahead before we can claim to be at par with urban universities. However, working with academics, the first thing to do is to work towards making the research that our students conduct relevant to the rural setting. That way, we will become the go-to destination for rural solutions.

I think that someone from a largely rural background is better placed to understand the needs of the rural areas, and also more likely to engage with those communities to come up with home-grown solutions.

We have planned various workshops for postgraduate students. These are compulsory as required by the postgraduate guide. One of the focuses of these workshops is to instil a culture of relevant research and a

give-back mentality. It is a good time to start emphasising this because the national research foundation is also now requiring scholarship beneficiaries to give back in some form.

We can see how some universities came to the fore rather quickly in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. A lot of these solutions were developed by postgraduate students. The goal is to be a university that is similarly responsive to rural challenges.

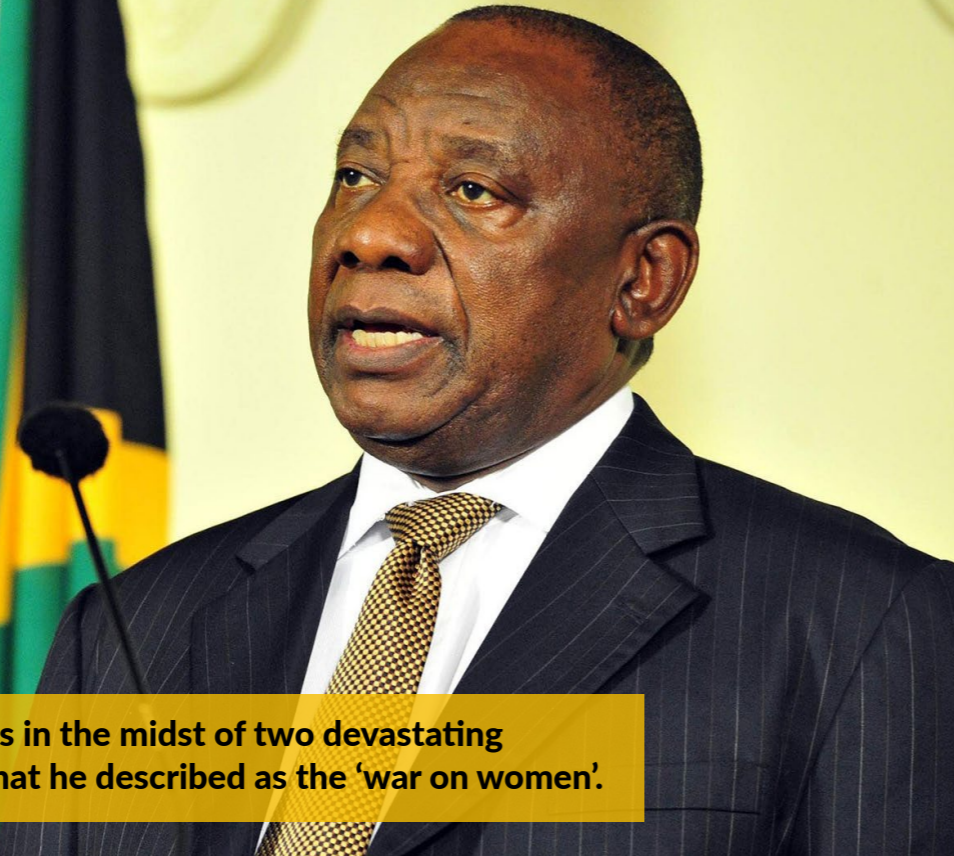
AL: There has been concern that postgraduates are only capable of publishing papers and fail to commercialize or implement their services, products or findings. What is your view on this matter?

MS: I think there might be some truth to that argument. However, sometimes these things happen due to lack of knowledge. Together with the innovations manager in the GMRDC, we have put in place a plan to screen postgraduate theses and dissertations for potential intellectual property material as a starting point, and use that to commercialize and also create pre-emptive training programmes. Moreover, commercialization sometimes comes in the form of commissioned work. One of the priority areas in the GMRDC's innovations office for 2020/21 is to engage industry to commission funded research for our students.

AL: Lastly, what are your aspirations for the UFH Research Department?

MS: For it to become a vibrant research management office that efficiently manages research processes and creates an enabling environment for academics to produce world-class, but locally relevant research output.

'WE WILL SPEAK FOR THEM': RAMAPHOSA SLAMS 'WAR ON WOMEN' IN SA



The president said the country was in the midst of two devastating epidemics, the coronavirus and what he described as the 'war on women'.

Source: Eyewitness News, published on 18 June 2020 by Thapelo Lekabe.

[Click here to view original article](#)

President Cyril Ramaphosa on Wednesday evening strongly condemned the recent spate of gender-based violence (GBV) cases in South Africa.

In a televised address from Pretoria, the president said the country was in the midst of two devastating epidemics, the coronavirus and what he described as the "war on women".

"Over the last few weeks, no fewer than 21 women and children have been killed in South Africa. These women are not just statistics. They have names, and they have families," Ramaphosa said. "Their killers thought they could silence them. But we will not forget them, and we will speak for them where they cannot."

Ramaphosa said South Africans needed to ask themselves tough questions over the scourge of gender-based violence against women and children.

He also noted that violent crimes had increased since government lifted restrictions on alcohol sales on 1 June under level 3 lockdown, saying the link between alcohol abuse and GBV had to be interrogated.

The president said crimes like rape and murder were not committed by alcohol, but rather these crimes were committed by men.

"The women of our country are being raped, they are being killed by men," he said.

Ramaphosa also commended the police for arresting most of the perpetrators in these cases, saying the perpetrators of GBV should be handed sentences that were suitable.

He mentioned the women who were recently killed in the country as a result of GBV and femicide like Tshegofatso Pule. The 28-year-old's body was found hanging from a tree with multiple stab wounds in Durban Deep, Roodepoort, last week. She was eight-months pregnant.

Her alleged killer, Muzikayise Malephane (31) appeared before the Roodepoort Magistrates Court in connection with her murder.

Malephane refused to apply for bail but requested legal aid representation. The case was postponed to Wednesday.

At the same time, Ramaphosa said he believed that the country could overcome the scourge of GBV.

"We can overcome gender-based violence and we can overcome this pandemic," he said.

In Memoriam: Mr Senzo Sydney Nyembe (UFH Alumnus)

15 June 2020

Dear Nyembe Family and Friends

MESSAGE OF CONDOLENCE

The passing of Mr. Senzo Sydney Nyembe, a dedicated alumnus, who was committed to his alma mater until the end saddens the University of Fort Hare.

The university would like to convey a message of support to the Nyembe family in its entirety.

Mr Nyembe joined the University of Fort Hare in 1991 when he enrolled for a Bachelor of Science degree (BSc) graduating in 1995. His residence at UFH was Jolobe 2, Block B. He was an active member of the University of Fort Hare Gauteng Alumni Chapter.

Dr Jongi Klaas, leader of the UFH Gauteng Alumni Chapter has described Mr Nyembe as a true embodiment of the noble virtues of selflessness and courage. "He was the rock behind the scenes in which we built this group."

We sincerely appreciate his vigorous efforts and commitment to the UFH Gauteng Alumni Chapter. May his dear soul rest in peace.

Sincerely,

Ms Tandi Mapukata

Director: Institutional Advancement
Email: tmapukata@ufh.ac.za



May his soul Rest in Peace



OPINION: Government's food relief response full of contradictions

Source: Times LIVE, published on 18 June 2020. By Prof Philani Moyo, Director of the Fort Hare Institute of Social & Economic Research at the University of Fort Hare. [Click here to view original article](#)

The ongoing lockdown, now under risk-adjusted alert level three, has brought to the "public eye" the gravity of urban food insecurity ravaging millions of the urban poor and working class in South African townships and informal settlements.

While some of the primary causes of this ubiquitous food insecurity that include chronic poverty, under-employment, unemployment, inequities in the urban food system and exorbitant food prices precede this pandemic; the lockdown and its associated impacts, is a new factor that has deepened food poverty.

This, however, does not mean there is food availability decline or a shortage of food in SA. Far from it, this country has abundant food, enough to feed almost everyone daily. In fact, as much as "a third of all edible food in South Africa is never consumed and ends up in landfill" (WWF South Africa, 2020).

From a distributive justice perspective, this wastage is immoral and unethical since this food could be made available, through different formal and informal channels, to the millions who need it most. However, in the unjust and unequal society we live in, this excess food is not distributed to the needy but is thrown away to rot.

This reminds us that the current urban food system and supply chain is inequitable and lacks the basic principles of humanity.

It is worth remembering that the roots of this urban food crisis are not only historical but also partly a product of neoliberal macroeconomic policies pursued since 1994. Some of these are the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (Gear) programme and its surrogates the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (Asgisa) and New Growth Path (NGP) etc. These economic structural adjustment programmes, in their "Washington Consensus robes", lowered, and in some cases, removed state subsidies on a variety of public goods and basic commodities. Their anti-poor, anti-working class, neoliberal approach promoted the "invisible hand" of the market in determining prices, including those of food.

Since then, many on low incomes and urban poor have sunk into food poverty because they don't have adequate disposable income to buy a dietary diverse food basket. Their hunger and dire existential conditions have worsened under the current prohibitive operational guidelines of the lockdown.

Take, for example, informal economy traders who have been unable to generate income for more than two months, the many low-skilled workers in the tourism and hospitality sector and those on low-paying precarious contracts with little or no savings. Also, imagine the income deprivation of young men and women who, before the lockdown, survived on daily casual so-called "piece jobs". Their sources of livelihood have virtually collapsed, pushing them to the brink of poverty and starvation.

We have to ask: what has the government, non-governmental organisations, corporates and individuals with means done to alleviate this urban food crisis?

In all fairness, all four stakeholders have implemented various social-relief interventions that have, to some extent, assisted many vulnerable people in townships and informal settlements. For example, the Solidarity Fund's (2020) "humanitarian disbursement took the form of a R120m donation to provide emergency food relief to over 250,000 distressed households across South Africa".

Working in partnership with more than 400 community-based organisations, the Solidarity Fund identified, co-ordinated and distributed food parcels and cash vouchers to vulnerable households on a short-term relief basis. Despite some limitations in their programme implementation, their emergency intervention has provided food relief in communities where government social safety nets are non-existent or inefficient.

Similarly, Gift of the Givers Foundation partnered with Woolworths to provide food parcels to many families in dire straits.

However, a question that has been raised in relation to all donations from non-state actors is: to what extent are these food parcels composed of dietary diverse and dignified food items? Though difficult to answer now, this important question speaks to issues of respect of people and human dignity even in emergency-relief situations.

The government's food relief response has been full of contradictions. In an attempt to fulfil its responsibility to protect and fulfil the right to food as enshrined in the bill of rights, different government departments are implementing various emergency social and food-relief measures.

This constitutional obligation, while omnipresent, became urgent at the onset of the lockdown.

For example, by end of May 2020, the department of employment & labour had disbursed more than R55,572,870 Unemployment Insurance Funds (UIF) to low-income working class who met eligibility criteria. However, millions more deserving people had been unable to benefit from the UIF because, for whatever reason, some employers had either not lodged claims while others had supplied unverifiable bank details. This unnecessary procedural bungling means millions of deserving beneficiaries remain in limbo and hungry.

Similarly, although the department of social development, through the South African Social Security Agency, currently provides a welcome R350 social distress relief grant for unemployed citizens and some foreign citizens, this money is simply inadequate to buy a dignified and dietary diverse food basket for a nuclear family. Further, disbursement of this R350 grant was not only delayed but has been bedevilled by systemic and bureaucratic bundling, leaving millions of qualifying unemployed citizens in hunger and distress.

To be clear, the problem here is not lack of state funds but their management and timely distribution within the public finance management regulations.

As a result, despite their best efforts, the government's social protection system has largely fallen short of meeting its primary objectives in the ongoing emergency response to ensure urban food security.

What next?

While the ongoing emergency social and food relief measures are providing welcome relief, they are not a permanent solution to the urban food crisis.

Even though we must welcome progressive proposals by social justice movements that the sunset provision of the R350 Covid-19 social distress relief grant be revised to make it permanent, this must not blind us from questioning whether the state has the financial capacity for expanding its social safety nets.

Can the state afford to maintain this new grant under current depressed economic conditions? Alternatively, should the state redirect funds from elsewhere in the "public purse" to cater for this new social assistance obligation?

What is not in question though is that long-term solutions that will address the root causes of the urban food crisis are required. These include, but are not limited to, addressing the macroeconomic fundamentals that will be the basis for creating business opportunities in the "new economy", employment creation, taming food price inflation and reconstructing the urban food system.

In all probability, once this macroeconomic policy foundation is fixed and "fit for purpose", only then can we begin to see urban food poverty diminish.



Despite its best efforts, the government's social protection system has largely fallen short of meeting its primary objectives in the ongoing emergency response to ensure urban food security, says the author. File image, Sassa queue during lockdown. Image: Sandile Ndlovu



PROF NZEWI PARTICIPATES IN CONTINENTAL COVID-19 DISCUSSION

Title of Presentation: Coronavirus Pandemic and Implications for Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development

Prof Ogo Nzewi, Associate Professor and Head of the Department Public Administration, is among a group of academics from Africa who recently participated in a digital seminar on the Covid-19 pandemic. The session was hosted by the University of Cape Coast in Ghana

Below, are excerpts from her presentation:

The Corona Virus (Covid-19) outbreak represents a perfect storm to test both the economic and health disaster management apparatus of government. Indeed, the virus presents both economic and human life contradictions. This is the sense that the virus compels social distances, which in effect renders much of the economic activities grounded.

The complex debate globally on opening the economy versus protecting the most vulnerable in society is no different in South Africa. Groups with vested interests continue to lobby for one approach or the other. Both the economy and public health safety are huge responsibilities of government. The debates vary and many of them have valid points. However, the information and evidence feed supporting some of these views range from fact-based to the hysterical. There should be no doubt as to the total damage this virus has impacted so far on entrepreneurship and the economy in general.

This presentation must be taken within the context of the broad inequalities in South Africa. This is because, the well-known expression that 'the poor die first', is clearly displayed when there is a fight for survival. For instance, in the United States, more than 245 public companies applied for at least \$905 million from the government programme that was billed as emergency funding for small businesses without access to other sources of capital, according to data analytics firm Fact Squared. When public companies use their clout and power of access to trample on the opportunities for SMEs, it becomes something of a concern. This is the nature of society in emergencies and war. The responsibility of government is to provide as much fairness and equity as possible, through its interventions during such times.

Government plans and current impact on entrepreneurship

In addition to short term measures of poverty alleviation, entrepreneurship represents one of the biggest long term plans of the South African government in addressing unemployment among the youth. These efforts range from broader based

government invention in championing entrepreneurship ventures like the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act (BBBEE 2004) to more focused interventions through programmes by government departments like the Department of Small Business Development.

However, the issue is that these inputs have not yielded commensurate outcomes. For instance, a 2018 study by the Small Business Institute (SBI), shows that South Africa has about 250,000 thousand formal small, medium and micro-sized enterprises (SMMEs) delivering only 28% of all jobs. 56% of jobs in South Africa are created by the 1,000 largest employers, including the government. Then you have the informal economy which is largely neglected in these formal statistics and measures.

For purposes of Covid-19, this is an important sector to note. This is because research into the informal economy has shown us that many populations we usually see as lacking in entrepreneurial spirit, are quite enterprising as informal entrepreneurs. The informal economy is huge in Africa and must not be underestimated.

According to the International Labour Organisation, its percentage of the GDP ranges from under 30% in South Africa and up to 60% in Nigeria. The informal economy is thus a vibrant and impactful employer of labour. However, it is also controversial due to the difficulty of regulating this sector.

In this case, reports abound of child labour, low wages (especially for women) and low job security. Some scholars like Fantu Cheru, have argued that despite this chasm against this sector, it represents great opportunity. In the seeming lack of structure is a community-based structure of hierarchies, adaptation, learning, rewards and sanctions which have defied state encroachment. I will argue that this sector will be the most impacted by the pandemic. It is also this group that will most likely fall through the cracks of government interventions and programmes targeted to support the economy.

Be that as it may, on a grand scale, the South African government has provided both economic and social relief measures during this pandemic. The Disaster Management Act of 2002, was enforced with the enactment of regulations attached to the Act. Then there is the Disaster Management Tax Relief Bill (draft), Covid-19 temporary Employee/Employer Relief Schemes and the Social Relief and Economic Support Package announced by President Ramaphosa of R500 billion (10% of the GDP).

Attached to these interventions, some with direct implications for entrepreneurs are:

1. The Industrial Development Corporation which together with the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, compiled more than R3billion for industrial funding bailouts to vulnerable businesses. It is funding that also provides support for what are called essential suppliers to be able to procure Covid-19 related supplies for effectively dealing with the virus. However, in my view, these are more tied to businesses that have capacity to meet the criteria for funding, such as having plans to make a case for 18 to 24 months potential recovery.
2. The National Endowment Fund which focused on black entrepreneurs with about R200,000,000 in loans available for manufacture and supply a range of medical products, including medical masks, sanitisers, dispensers and related healthcare products to support the healthcare sector during the Covid-19 crisis.
3. The Department of Small Business Development introduced a "SME Support Intervention" which is a Debt Relief Fund and a Business Growth/Resilience Facility to mitigate the impact of the expected economic slowdown on SMMEs in South Africa. Over 500million rands is available to SMMEs for 6 months. However again, the Business Growth/Resilience Facility of this loan is focused on businesses which supply in-demand medical supplies. The question is how many SMMEs were able to quickly adapt to make use of this opportunity?
4. One of the biggest industries in South Africa that will be most impacted by Covid-19 is the Tourism industry, and it represents a big percentage of the SMMEs in South Africa. The Department of Tourism has made R200 000 000 available to assist SMMEs in the hospitality and tourism sector. For these businesses there are also "formal" requirement for support such as business registration with the Companies and Intellectual Properties Commission (CIPC)
5. There are also various Public Private Institutional (PPI) partnership support such as the private sector support from South African Future Trust ("SAFT") made up of banks and the Oppenheimer group; and the Guaranteed Loan Scheme for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises ("SMEs") from SA National Treasure partnership with Banks

These measures were instituted as survival mechanisms for business and entrepreneurs to survive during and after the pandemic, and to drive economic activity through the crisis. In terms of implementation, taking stock of government's effort on Covid-19 will continue long after the pandemic. Some of the noticed challenges of these interventions are:

1. **Slowness in interventions** (Recently in the news SANTACO the taxi industry in South Africa revealed it was planning a 172% taxi fare hike)
2. **Covering the needs of all businesses** (The Tobacco industry is in court over the ban of cigarettes in government emergency plans and some of the BBBEE requirements in some of the bailout is being contested also by businesses that do not fall into that category).
3. **The potential size of the missing 'informal entrepreneur'** in terms of benefiting from these support and the impact there of. Additionally the role of the support services from government agencies through the Department of Small Business will make for interesting study post Covid-19.
4. **The loss for SMMEs is huge**, a million jobs lost in the tourism industry alone, with 60% of businesses unable to make debt repayments. Applications for May in the tourism industry for employees were over 100,000 in May alone and perhaps 600,000 jobs lost in tourism alone.

The future of entrepreneurship post Covid-19:

Be that as it may, entrepreneurs are facing some of the most daunting times in their usually fragile life histories. What is clear is that government incentives and access to these will be limited and highly contested. It is thus the resilience of entrepreneurs that will determine their future survival and growth. To this end I envision four types of entrepreneurs that will emerge from this pandemic:

1. **The Failsafers:** These are the infallible and dependable (big business with scope and capacity to easily adapt)
2. **The Folders:** This is where the SMME battle in the era of Covid-19 lies and the determination of success is mostly structural, where the system will tend to reach those with capacity to access government support.
3. **The Opportunists** (immediate gratification): For instance many may seek immediate available opportunities to manufacture and supply relevant Covid-19 related services and goods. However, no learning takes place through this process as it is seen as an opportunity for survival and not growth.
4. **The Innovators:** Long term survivors, who use creativity, collaborations and partnerships, keen awareness of their environment and learning for substantive growth. They are imbued with the potential to project into the future through the development of new adaptive patterns that will sustain them not only through this period, but more specifically after Covid-19.

I wish that this is a period where we see potential folders take up the challenge to survive, adapt and grow. It will be the role of government as it monitors entrepreneurship and economic activities during Covid-19 and take stock thereafter, to consider how it will accommodate entrepreneurs that fall within this scope.

[To watch the webinar broadcast, click here](#)

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE MIDST OF CRISIS

By Dr Christine Hobden
Department of Philosophy,
University of Fort Hare;
Iso Lomso Fellow,
Stellenbosch Institute of Advanced Study

Source: <https://nihss.ac.za/content/political-philosophy-midst-crisis>



I often begin teaching my Social and Political Philosophy course with a discussion of Rick Turner's argument, "The Necessity of Utopian Thinking". This is the title of the first chapter of his book, *The Eye of the Needle*, which is a political theory reflection on democracy, published in 1972 by the anti-Apartheid activist and (then) University of Natal academic.

The word "utopian" is rightly, by definition, associated with the unachievable, but mistakenly then often further associated with something being useless or without worth. Rick Turner's assassination, widely believed to be at the hands of the Apartheid state, is evidence of just how much utopian thought can threaten established power.

His argument about the value of utopian thinking in the midst of oppression and struggle has come to mind a number of times over the last weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic, leaving me wondering what specific insight it can bring to this political and social moment.

The thought is not that the political or social context of 1970s South Africa is comparable to our current moment, but rather a sense that Turner's work may speak afresh to the politics of our time.

We are suddenly experiencing a moment where many of our "essential workers" are those traditionally undervalued and exploited, such as cleaners, grocery store employees, delivery drivers, and perhaps most importantly in this patriarchal world, the myriad roles of care-giving for the vulnerable in our society.

The argument

Turner invites us to notice that we all too often fail to distinguish between absolute impossibility and other-things-being-equal impossibility. It is absolutely impossible for a lion to become a vegetarian, but, he argued in 1972, it is not absolutely impossible for a black person to become the Prime Minister of South Africa; it is other-things-being-equal impossible.

But do other things *have* to remain equal? We treat our social and political institutions as if they are naturally occurring mountains that we have to manoeuvre around rather than a set of behaviour patterns that we (at least potentially) have the power to change. Turner argues that while institutions might have some material features like written-down rules or buildings that house them, ultimately, our institutions are formed and maintained in the way we collectively behave toward one another.

The value of utopian (or ideal philosophy) thinking then, is that it provides space to consider what about our society is truly unchangeable and what is, upon closer examination, possible to change. It allows us to examine our institutions in comparison to other possible versions and so begin to truly evaluate our social and political arrangements.

While we may not be able to reach the ideal now, or even ever, having it in mind enables us to better understand and evaluate our current situation, and more strategically plan for the future. In its time, Turner's argument was a call, especially to white liberals, to allow space to conceptualise a truly equal South Africa and to fight for this, rather than only focusing on small shifts that felt more immediately possible within the seemingly unchangeable political system of the Apartheid State.

So why think of this now?

It strikes me that our current moment is a perfect illustration of Turner's claim that our social and political institutions are not naturally occurring mountains but features of our (or perhaps more accurately, the elite's) creation. Across the world people are realising, in different ways, that this capitalist consumerist society is not unchangeable.

We are suddenly experiencing a moment where many of our "essential workers" are those traditionally undervalued and exploited, such as cleaners, grocery store employees, delivery drivers, and perhaps most importantly in this patriarchal world, the myriad roles of care-giving for the vulnerable in our society.

To be sure, such workers remain, for the most part, underpaid and exploited, but we are being confronted with the hypocrisy of this reality in new and particularly stark terms.

There is a sense, at least in some quarters, that it might actually be possible to re-assess and re-shape our current labour market to ensure human labour is properly valued and treated with dignity.

The crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic has thrust us into the first step of Turner's argument: we are in a moment where most (but of course not all) of society is realising that things do not have to be as they have been.

Exceptional circumstances have revealed, among other things, that, if priorities are shifted, accommodation can be found for the homeless, society can do without endless supplies of endless products, and governments can supply basic grants to support the unemployed. To be sure, we should not confuse short-term emergency relief with sustainable long-term measures. Yet the actions of states and citizens around the world have revealed that both are capable of a lot more than we normally allow in our policy-making and advocacy.

As we face up to the pandemic, we are rightly focusing very clearly on what is possible, as guided by scientists, economists and political scientists. But reflecting on Rick Turner has reminded me that, even in the direst of times, we should not shy away from also engaging in what he calls "utopian thinking" and what we might today label ideal political philosophy.

There is theorising to be done around what the ideal democratic and ethical responses to the pandemic ought to be, even as we acknowledge that our pre-existing failings will mean we are likely to fail at fully realising these ends. We can nevertheless aim toward them, and better evaluate our government's and society's behaviour in light of these ideal theories.

Perhaps even more importantly, in this moment that has revealed even more clearly the inequality and injustice of our world, and the world's capability of being something different, we need to work hard to theorise what that different world might look like.

It is unlikely we will agree, or fully realise our ideal accounts. But that is not, in the end, theorising's point or main value; political philosophy can help to orient us, to highlight the values we want to keep before us in each complex and compromised policy decision we have to make, and to bear the standard against which we can evaluate our progress and pin our hopes.

TLC WHATSAPP ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAMME REACHES THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS

So far, the platform has serviced 2405 students on East London Campus and 2913 students in Alice.

In a bid to provide academic support during the Covid-19 lockdown period, the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) is offering students Online Supplemental Instruction (SI) support.

Using WhatsApp as a communication platform, the TLC SI Team has converted online learning materials, study techniques and tips into voice notes, Power Point slides and videos that are shared on the platform.

So far, the platform has serviced **2405** students on East London Campus and **2913** students in Alice.

TLC coordinator, Ms Thandie Mayaphi said due to lockdown regulations, the Alice and East London campus SI programmes had to shift from a face-to-face (F2F) delivery mode to an online platform to support students who are enrolled in 'high-risk' modules.

"The implementation of online support came with a myriad of challenges. Amongst others, was poor connectivity, thus preventing students from accessing online learning through Blackboard. The SI team had several engagements with relevant stakeholders to look at other online options that were cost effective and would allow student access anywhere and anytime. Ultimately, the SI team resolved to use the WhatsApp Application to promote student learning remotely," she explained.

Mayaphi said the SI team conceptualised the WhatsApp application remote learning support in order to align with Minister Nzimande's notion of 'Leaving No Student Behind'.

Campus coordinators Mayaphi (East London) and Ms Khanyisa Mabece (Alice), supported by senior student assistants, Mr Lindani Dyonase, Ms Bridget Billion, Mr Athenkosi Ngqandu, Ms Silindokuhle Hlophekazi, and Ms Bridget Nxazonke - have been working tirelessly since the onset of lockdown to make sure the Whatsapp intervention launches successfully.



Thandie Mayaphi, East London Campus TLC Coordinator












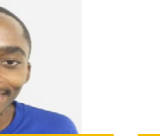








Khanyisa Mabece, Alice Campus TLC Coordinator



ATTENTION STUDENTS
2020 COVID-19 REMOTE LEARNING
TLC is offering Online Supplemental Instruction Support



Below are SI supported modules and their designated capable SI Leaders
Please take full advantage of the Free Covid-19 Online Academic Support and contact them for your academic needs.
See each SI Leader's contact details below.

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**We are here to offer support to you during these trying times of Covid-19
Please do not hesitate, book an Online One-on-One/ Group Consultation Now!**

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