



This Week

@FORT HARE *Vol 2, issue 7*

University of Fort Hare provides laptops and data to all students to enable remote E-learning



“To ensure no student is left behind, the University will be requiring each student to have a laptop and data”

The University of Fort Hare has embarked on a large-scale project to make available 12 000 laptops (with modems and data) to enable all students, including those who currently do not own such devices, to participate in online learning remotely. This is a necessary response to the disruption of the academic programme caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This decision has been necessitated by the daily escalation of infection rates, particularly in the Eastern Cape Province where our university is located. Management therefore foresees continued and sustained disruption to normal University functions and traditional methods of learning which involve contact sessions between students and teaching staff. The university will henceforth incorporate online and remote learning modalities as one of the delivery strategies for its programmes - applicable during this period as well as post-lockdown - in order to recover the academic year.

To ensure no student is left behind, the University will be requiring each student to have a laptop and data.

The devices will be made available to students who do not yet own a laptop on a loan-to-buy scheme and the cost of thereof will be debited to students' fee accounts. In addition, the University will provide students and staff with monthly data.

The University of Fort Hare is not in a position to switch over fully to online teaching and learning. However, learning materials continue to be uploaded on Blackboard and a moratorium has been placed on all assessments. When it is safe to bring students back to campus, the university will pursue blended delivery methods which will require our students to have all the tools necessary to recover lost time.

This is a challenging time but also an opportunity for the University and our students to make a significant shift towards technology-supported learning. We are well aware that this will not solve all the difficulties our students are encountering during this unusual time. However, this shift will equip our students with new skills and flexible working and learning practices. It will help to catapult the University into a new dispensation of fully digitised systems and processes.

Ensuring that every student has a laptop and data will significantly bolster teaching, learning, supervision and research activities that are currently underway through our online learning management system.

FAQ

Laptop and data provision to students

1. What is a loan-to-buy scheme?

This is a cost recovery model where the university buys the devices on behalf of students and recovers the cost (interest free) by debiting the amount to the student's fee account.

2. Specify the devices available to students

Students can opt to place an order for:

- A laptop only OR
- A laptop + modem (datacard)

3. Is it compulsory to participate in the scheme?

No. Students who have other means of obtaining a laptop are free to decline the university's offer.

4. Does the university offer monthly data as part of the scheme?

Yes the university will offer FREE data to students, regardless of whether they purchase the laptop or not.

5. Who is eligible to apply for a UFH laptop?

All registered students of the university who do not have a device are welcome to apply. This includes NSFAS beneficiaries, self-funded and bursary holders.

6. How much do the devices cost?

The laptop will cost R5200 while the modem is priced at R800. A student may choose to buy one or both of these items. Remember, data will be provided by the university free of charge.

NB: this is a tender process so prices can only be confirmed after conclusion.

Also, the price mentioned above is applicable for this round of applications. In future prices may increase depending on market costs.

7. What is the brand and model of the laptop?

There are two possible laptop brands:

- 1) HP 250, UMA CeleroN4000 250 G7, 15.6 HD AG SVA 220, 4GB 1D DDR4 2400, 500GB 5400, W10p64NationalAcademicEMarket, No ODD, 1 year HP warranty, Jet keyboard TP Imagepad with numeric keypad, AC 1x1+BT 4.2, Dark Ash Silver Textured with VGA Webcam no Optical Drive / DIB, Clamshell bag
- 2) ACER Extensa 215, Acer Extensa EX215-31-C5B4 Intel

Celeron, Shale Black 15 PC+ABS Texture, 3-pin 45W AC adapter, Intel® Celeron™ N4020 Processor, OB4GB Memory, 500GB 5.4KS HDD, No ODD, 15.6" HD Acer ComfyView LED LCD, Wireless+ BT, HD Camera with 2Mic, UMA | Windows 10 Home Academic, Vendor issued 1 year Acer Educare Warranty with Exchange, Clamshell bag.

8. How do I add the e-learning cellular data number on my personal details on iEnabler?

Please select the option: Student Administration -> Personal Contact Detail -> New Record -> Communication Type lookup, and choose the "DT" type, which is "E-Learning Cellular Data", and then enter the cell number onto which you chose to load your data. Save and exit.

9. Can I cancel the request for a laptop?

Yes, the method to cancel is to log a call by sending an email to ictservicemanager@ufh.ac.za stating your student number and requesting for the application to be cancelled. You will be advised by helpdesk that the application has been cancelled. You may start the process again.

10. When will the devices be available?

Due to low stock levels across the country and globe, it may take 8-10 weeks to manufacture and deliver the devices to the University.

11. How will I know that the free data package has been loaded onto the number I have submitted on iEnabler?

You will receive an SMS on the device.

12. How will students receive their computers if these arrive during lockdown?

There are various possibilities for delivery which may depend on the level of lockdown. Some students may need to travel to a central point where they can collect their laptop, ideally close to home. No decision has been taken yet regarding deliveries to neighbouring countries as this depends on the lockdown regulations of each country. The university will communicate further as soon as more details have been confirmed.

13. Are students liable for delivery costs?

No. The University will carry delivery costs.

by Tandi Mapukata

UFH Autumn 2020 Graduation *GOES VIRTUAL*

University of Fort Hare graduation ceremonies are usually characterized by live musical renditions by the two university choirs, ululations and loud applause from family and friends. However, this year, Covid-19 lockdown restrictions have compelled the university to celebrate its 97th graduation differently - through a Virtual Graduation Ceremony.

Altogether, **2711** graduands will be featured in the graduation ceremony. The following qualifications will be conferred virtually by the Chancellor, Advocate Dumisa Ntsebeza SC:

- **1945 Undergraduate Certificates Diplomas and Degrees**
- **274 Postgraduate Diplomas**
- **404 Honours Degrees**
- **64 Masters Degrees**
- **24 PhDs**

As per norm, the session will be officiated by the Chancellor, Advocate Dumisa Ntsebeza SC, and the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sakhela Buhlungu. The ceremony will be flighted on 29 May 2020 on the UFH website and official social media platforms – including Youtube, to reach as many graduates and their families as possible.

Speaking to *This Week @FortHare*, Dr Rose Masha, Deputy Registrar: Academic Affairs gave assurance that “the joint graduation team is doing its utmost to still present the celebratory air.”

“UFH always goes all out in celebration during graduation. Although the virtual space cannot capture such joviality 100%, we will still achieve this celebratory air through our wealthy archives,” she said.

According to Dr Masha there will be six clips, representing each of the university’s faculties. “The Deans will each present their faculty’s qualifications. This way, graduates and their families do not have to watch the whole presentation to get to their names. This also ensures that they do not incur too much data costs when, at a click of a button, they can just directly watch their faculty graduation or those of their peers.”

Director of Institutional Advancement, Ms Tandi Mapukata, was equally upbeat about the new step the university is embarking on.

“Yes, my team and I are very excited about being presented with yet another opportunity to break new ground. With limited or no university resources at all, for a number of months now, technical staff in Institutional Advancement have invested personal assets such as fancy computers, cameras, software, phones, wifi, airtime and transport to deliver professional high-tech UFH projects. You cannot beat that level of commitment. So, the virtual graduation project is a welcome challenge. We are constructing something big and professional from a zero-base. I know we will not fail. This is a promise we’ve made to ourselves, Dr Masha and Manco. It’s going to look great, watch this space!”, she said.

Depending on COVID-19 regulations and university staff resuming office, certificates will be issued to students in the following manner:

- a) Self-collection from Exams offices in UFH campuses **(This will only be possible when the travel restrictions have been lifted.)**
- b) Courier services **(students have to make their own arrangements)**
- c) Third party collection (students may send someone to collect the certificates on their behalf. Such people have to carry their own ID/Passport, a letter from the graduate authorizing collection and an ID or passport copy of the graduate)

In the meantime, graduands will be emailed congratulatory letters that inform them of their status. The Registrar, Mr Njabulo Zuma has already sent out communication to graduands to update their email addresses as some may no longer be using UFH email addresses.

Dr Masha took the opportunity to congratulate the May 2020 class. “This is the first-ever virtual graduation cohort at the University of Fort Hare. While it may seem like a stressful time filled with uncertainty, Nokholeji always pushes through boundaries that seem unfathomable. I believe this cohort will be future trailblazers, born from this very need to survive and beat the odds,” she said.

by Aretha Linden



“the joint graduation team is doing its utmost to still present the celebratory air.”



Update on Cellular Data and Modem Devices for staff

12 May 2020

Dear Colleagues,

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the need for staff to function remotely for the foreseeable future. All staff that have been issued with laptops will now be given 50 GB of daytime data and 30 GB of night-time data on their data cards.

- 1) Staff with existing data contracts will have their contracts migrated to the new package. Once the migration is completed users will receive an SMS from Vodacom advising them of the migration. Once the time frame is known for these migrations, you will be further advised.
- 2) Staff that have laptops and have not yet been issued with a data modem and SIM card will be issued with one as soon as possible. These staff members will receive an email from Dr Johl requesting details of the laptops that they have been issued with to ensure that the devices that are acquired are needed for the laptops. Some laptop models have integrated data modem cards and do not require external ones. Modems and SIM cards will then be issued after confirmation is received. Data Cards for staff that are in Alice or surrounding areas will be delivered to the Alice campus for collection or delivery, depending on what can be arranged. Similarly staff in the East London and Bhisho areas will have their devices delivered to the East London or Bhisho campuses respectively, but according to the request by return email, as to their preference for delivery, should this be the method selected. Please ensure that your address details on iEnabler are correct for your postal address as this will be the address to which data modems and SIM cards could be delivered. Please also ensure that your Cellular Telephone number is correct in the event that communication with you is required. You can connect to iEnabler by navigating to www.ufh.ac.za and selecting **Student and Personnel on-line services**, then **address detail** or **communication detail**.

Your patience during this uncertain time is appreciated.

Sincerely
Professor Nokwethemba Ndlazi
Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Institutional Support

UFH APPOINTS DIRECTOR FOR PROPERTIES AND SERVICES

"I look forward to harnessing his expertise and energy as we strengthen the service delivery capacity in P+S"
- Prof Buhlungu

The University of Fort Hare has a brand new Director for the Properties and Services Department.

Mr Philisa Mvulana assumed duties on 1 May 2020 under rather unusual circumstances. He joined the university in the middle of Stage 4 national lockdown, and as a result, has been prohibited from engaging freely with his supervisors, subordinates and fellow colleagues.

While speaking to him on the phone, it became clear in my mind that mobility challenges imposed by lockdown restrictions have not deterred him from hitting the ground running. This is because the burden of ensuring all three campuses of the university are Covid-19 ready falls on his shoulders as the leader of Property and Services. He is up to the challenge.

Mr Mvulana is an experienced asset management leader. He has implemented asset and facility management programmes in various organisations and has experience in managing large and diverse teams, from cleaning staff to engineers and managers.

He brings to the role more than 16 years' experience working in technical environments where he handled maintenance and capital projects.

He joins the university from the South African Bank Note Company where he held the position of Head of Department: Facilities Management. Before that he was Branch Operations Engineer at the South African Reserve Bank. He also served as Senior Maintenance Manager at Pioneer Foods (Sasko Bakeries) and as Asset Manager (Rolling Stock and Permanent Way Maintenance) at Bombardier Transport.



Mvulana holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Programme Management, an Advanced Diploma in Project Management and a National Diploma in Mechanical Engineering. He has completed a Management Development Programme through Unisa.

He is a member of the South African Facilities Management Association and the South African Asset Management Association.

In a message to the university community, Professor Sakhela Buhlungu welcomed Mr Mvulana.

"I look forward to harnessing his expertise and energy as we strengthen the service delivery capacity in P+S".

Prof Buhlungu also thanked Mr Langa Mbude for his contribution to the University in his role as Acting Director: Properties & Services over the last year and a half. "It is much appreciated. Mr Mbude will now return to his substantive position as Manager: Property Development", said the VC.

Adapted by Tandi Mapukata

UFH ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING DURING LOCKDOWN: Milestones & Plans

“The pandemic has forced academic staff and students to accustom themselves to remote teaching and learning offerings during the lockdown period,”



The Covid-19 pandemic is a game-changer that has compelled all sectors to adapt to a new normal. For the Higher Education sector, the new normal implies migration from traditional to remote teaching and learning. It entails the introduction of blended teaching and learning modalities which may include contact classes, online learning and in some cases, delivery of printed study materials to students, wherever they may be during lockdown.

At the University of Fort Hare, preparation for online teaching and learning started before the onset of lockdown. An Online Teaching and Learning Task Team was formed to get the ball rolling. Modules and course materials were moved online. Training and support was and still continues to be provided to ensure academic staff and students adapt to the new way of teaching and learning.

Prof Vuyisile Nkonki, Director of the Teaching and Learning Centre shared with *This Week @FortHare* some of the milestones achieved thus far as well as future plans for online teaching and learning.

According to Prof Nkonki, using the Blackboard Learning Management System has offered the university an opportunity to continue with academic activities during trying times imposed by Covid-19. “The pandemic has forced academic staff and students to accustom themselves to remote teaching and learning offerings during the lockdown period,” he said.

Milestones

There has been rapid increase in the number of active courses, course views, instructor users, page views and student users on Blackboard. This is evidence that the UFH community has heeded the call to do their utmost to ensure academic continuity through remote online learning.

Below is the Blackboard overall use statistics for the period between 29 March and 23 April 2020, as reflected in Blackboard Analytics:

Active courses	-	1 047
Student users	-	14 565
Instructor users	-	509
Course views	-	27 295
Page views	-	59 337

While acknowledging challenges with connectivity and zero-rated data, course views in particular show that a significant number of students accessed the materials uploaded on Blackboard. In addition, page views show that many students were able to log in. Online engagements and interactions are continuing on Blackboard Collaborate, Microsoft Teams, and on social media platforms such as WhatsApp.

Peer facilitators offer further support to students through the WhatsApp platform. In just 23 days, WhatsApp group statistics show that just over 2000 students attended 67 Supplemental

Instruction (SI) sessions conducted by SI leaders who are supervised by the Teaching and Learning Centre. These are remarkable and encouraging figures, given that few students have laptops and smartphones.

Way forward

The UFH Online Task Team is working hard to ensure that all modules are uploaded on Blackboard. Monitoring of the quality of materials uploaded and vetting of online engagements will follow to ensure standardisation.

The critical role played by online programmes has also shown the urgent need for the university to upgrade its online systems with up to date infrastructure. There are ongoing discussions to move to Blackboard Ultra to maximise the benefits of remote online teaching and learning within the institution.

A comprehensive proposal for the University Capacity Development Programme and Grant (UCDG) budget reprioritisation and adjustments for submission to DHET has been drawn up. This will enable the upscaling of technology-enhanced learning infrastructure.

Additionally, there are plans to acquire lecture/ screen capture software, curriculum mapping software and a Respondus Lockdown browser for secure online assessment. Consideration is given to Learning Information Services (LIS) for Blackboard-ITS integration and a standardised course development toolkit, to ensure that UFH online courses adhere to quality standards.

There are also plans to roll-out the formal e-Teacher training programme for academic staff. These are efforts to improve the online experience of both academic staff and students while ensuring Blackboard is running efficiently and effectively.

The UFH Online Teaching and Learning Task Team wishes to acknowledge and appreciate the work of all facilitators, academics, consultants, student assistants and administrators who are making all of the above a possibility.

Source: UFH Online Teaching and Learning Task Team.



In conversation with **SIMBONGILE GEQEZA: Acting Chief Financial Officer**

On 30 March 2020 the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) position at the university became vacant and the next-in-line, Mr Simbongile 'Sim' Geqeza, has been asked to hold the fort.

He has been serving as Acting CFO since 1 April 2020, in addition to his substantive role as Finance Director, a position he has held since joining the university in 2017.

Mr Geqeza is an experienced Chartered Accountant who has been tasked with balancing the financial books of several reputable companies during his career. He cut his teeth in the Accounting field in 2007 as a trainee at SizweNtsalubaGobodo Grant Thornton - the largest home-grown audit and advisory firm in Southern Africa. There he swiftly moved up the ranks and exited at the rank of Assistant Manager in 2011. Thereafter, he joined SARS for one year as a Consultant in the Transfer Pricing Division. In 2013 he relocated to his home province, the Eastern Cape, where he joined the Auditor General of South Africa as an Audit Manager - a position he held for four years. Before joining UFH he had a brief stint at Amatola Water Board as Projects Reporting Accountant.

Despite his demanding work schedule, Sim attaches a lot of value to education. He has a BComm Accounting degree from Nelson Mandela University and a Certificate in the Theory of Accounting (CTA) from Unisa. He qualified as a Chartered Accountant in 2011 and is currently pursuing an MBA programme.

To find out more about his plan to keep the Finance Department ship afloat until the position is filled, Aretha Linden (AL) from *This Week @FortHare* asked the Acting CFO a couple of questions.

AL: Please share with us some of the responsibilities that come with the CFO position

SG: This role requires a lot of planning, hard work and dedication. The main responsibility is to ensure and protect the financial viability of the institution. For every decision taken by management, the CFO needs to determine and advise on the financial implications. The role can be summarized into four aspects:

- 1. Strategic** - Providing financial support and recommendations to management regarding the execution of the university strategy.
- 2. Leadership** - Providing leadership, direction and management to the entire finance team to ensure smooth operations
- 3. Control** - Being in control of university finances and reporting on income, expenditure, the budgeting process and planning
- 4. Stakeholder relations** - Maintaining all stakeholder relationships (internal and external) on matters relating to university finances.

AL: So far, what are some of the areas you have identified as having potential to advance the university and which do you think still need to be polished?

SG: The first challenge is non-existence of policies as well as outdated Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) within the division. We either have outdated policies -that were approved ages ago and need adjustments - or no policies at all. It is difficult to operate and be guided in decision making without policies and SOPs. So this will be a priority area for the Finance department this year.

Also, there's an urgent need to improve communication of finance operations within the institution. Our analysis shows that the university community is not aware of what Finance does to support the university. We will embark on roadshows to address this gap.

Another priority is to embark on a full analysis of the university's expenditures in order to build reserves for rainy days. This project will be incorporated into the 2021 budget cycle.

AL: What approach are you planning to use to ensure financial decisions are aligned to the university's strategic objectives?

SG: One area of weakness is that our budget is not aligned to the strategic goals of the university. This is due to lack of a Budget Policy. Budget holders are not trained on how to do costing and alignment of the budget to strategic objectives. Therefore, Finance has to embark on discussions with faculties, departments and divisions on how to link budget requests to the strategic objectives of the university.

Everyone needs to understand that every cent requested should link up and align to the strategic objectives of the university. Workshops at both budget owners level (Extended Management Team) and at budget administrator level will be organized to guide the 2021 budget cycle.

AL: What are you most concerned about?

SG: Being appointed to act in this position is an honour and a huge responsibility. Unfortunately, the appointment came when the country is facing the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown. Most of the responsibilities and priorities are not moving according

to the anticipated pace, due to working remotely and not being able to meet all relevant stakeholder. However, with technology we've been able to keep the business running albeit under trying times in our country. The pandemic has major financial implications for the university and management has to make difficult decisions to address these. It is the responsibility of the Office of the CFO to make the necessary budgetary adjustments. Lots of tough decisions to be made there.

AL: What are you most optimistic about?

SG: The commitment of the finance staff and the willingness to go the extra mile brings me hope. The new university statute has been approved and gazette. Therefore that means soon we may have stability at Council level to provide support to management. The tremendous work being done by UFH Senior Management and support staff is encouraging. We are in the right direction and if we endure a little bit more and work harder together, we will reach the UFH Promised Land.

AL: What or who keeps you motivated?

SG: My wife, Sinalo, and our two boys are my strongest support base. They are patient with me and my long working hours, even during lockdown when I am physically at home but still not with them. I really appreciate their support. I am also encouraged by the tremendous support shown by the Finance team (from team leaders to support staff), Senior Management and the UFH community at large.

AL: Lastly, what are your aspirations for UFH as Finance Leader?

SG: To obtain a clean audit outcome (unqualified with no findings). This can, and will be achieved despite the hard work and time it will take to get there. Some may say that it's rather ambitious considering where we currently (disclaimer audit outcome). However, I believe, soon the UFH will obtain an unqualified audit outcome. It will require blood and sweat from all of us to build a UFH that is financially stable.

UFH ReVEL ONLINE TECHNOLOGY PREPARES TO PROVIDE SUPPORT DURING LOCKDOWN



“The availability of online syllabus-based experiments for all South African high schools is a huge investment for our country, hence it is imperative for this project to be completed”

A team of UFH Scientists and Technologist at the Forté School of Science and Technology (FOSST) Discovery Centre has been working around the clock to ensure physics experiments are accessible online for learners and university students during the lockdown period.

This will be achieved through the use of the Remote and Virtual Education Laboratory (ReVEL) Technology, a first of its kind virtual lab in South Africa. The technology is attached to the university's Physics Department in Alice and was launched last year. Using coding and robotics, it allows users to interact with peers on experimentations in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) field.

For more information on the ReVEL Technology [please click here](#).

Since the outbreak of Covid-19 in South Africa, schools and Higher Education institutions have been closed for almost two months. The pandemic has required educators, lecturers and researchers to devise alternative methods, such as e-Learning and online approaches, to continue research and teaching.

Mr Phumezo Kwinana, FOSST Director and founder of the UFH ReVEL, said while e-learning pedagogies like asynchronous (pre-recorded videos, etc) can be exploited by many disciplines, practical courses like science and engineering require real

laboratories for learning and experimentation. “Also, research in these disciplines requires interactive equipment to enable sampling and manipulation,” he said.

So far, the ReVEL team has managed to transform more than 50% of experiments to online platforms. The remote laboratories can be accessed by using the UFH ReVEL web browser: <https://ufh.labsland.com/> that enables experimenting and manipulation of laboratories remotely (licensing and other conditions apply).

While the team is committed to finalizing the project, Mr Kwinana said financial support is needed to complete it. “The availability of online syllabus-based experiments for all South African high schools is a huge investment for our country, hence it is imperative for this project to be completed,” he said. The ReVEL team has also developed virtual instrumentation to assist students and learners to comprehend operations of real online experiments.

The ReVEL Technology will not only enable sharing of these advanced equipment nationally, but will also afford users an opportunity to manipulate advanced research equipment that is remotely located internationally. “We hope industries and Government will support this important venture to assist our students and learners to continue learning during this lockdown period and beyond,” said Kwinana.

UFH Student Counselling Unit offers online counselling sessions during lockdown

In a bid to promote student mental health wellness during the lockdown period, the UFH Student Counselling Unit (SCU) has moved its services to an online platform. By visiting the SCU Facebook page, students are able to engage with qualified Psychologists in a safe and confidential space.

The Facebook page: *Student Counselling Unit - Fort Hare University* is managed by a psychologist on a daily basis. The platform allows psychologists from the unit to participate in live chats and offer one-on-one assistance via private online sessions. Psychological advice on how to manage lockdown related stress and anxiety is also shared on the page.

SCU Acting HOD, Ms Thobeka Msengana says the online platform aims to ensure the service reaches students remotely during this time where self-isolation is strongly recommended to curb the spread of the Coronavirus. Msengana, who is a qualified Psychologist says being on lockdown is especially difficult for students who already struggle with mental illness.

“The lockdown period can add more stress and cause a lot of anxiety for others. It can worsen depression and cause people to feel hopeless and helpless. It is very important for someone who struggles with any form of mental illness to have a strong support system. With social distancing, it's easy for people to feel isolated and lonely,” explained Msengana.

She urged students to stay connected with their peers, share study approaches in order to feel connected with like-minded people. This, she says, can be done through online study sessions with a friend or a group.

“It is very important for someone who struggles with any form of mental illness to have a strong support system. With social distancing, it's easy for people to feel isolated and lonely,”

by Aretha Linden



Ms Thobeka Msengana

Msengana also shared the following tips:

- Try to have a routine while at home
- Plan your study sessions and breaks well ahead. This will reduce anxiety and make one feel goal directed
- Self-care is an important aspect
- Do not skip meals
- Drink water
- Listening to good music and engaging in dance once in a while can have a positive impact on your mental well-being
- Do not spend too much time on social media, especially at night, as this may lead to sleep problems and fatigue.

UFH MAKES TOP 18 URAP LIST FOR 2020

Source – indapaper.com

“the University of Fort Hare could easily be the leader in research productivity if our academics become more research active. Our 2018 rankings show that this scenario is not far-fetched. It should also be noted that Fort Hare is the biggest producer of PhDs”,

According to the latest University Ranking by Academic Performance (URAP) listing for 2020, the University of Fort Hare has been ranked seventeenth in overall South African university research outputs for 2018 – thus making the best 18 category.

Being placed 17 out of 26 public institutions may not come across as a big number. However, when one considers differences in university size and resources, Fort Hare’s real research position is better clarified by its ranking fifth in per capita output, behind UP, UKZN, SUN, and Wits. This “per capita output” ranking means Fort Hare researchers are the fifth most productive group in the system.

This is positive news for our research active population who are outperforming most of their peers at other universities. Given the small, but growing percentage of research active Fort Hare academics, these numbers should serve as further motivation.

According to Prof Buhlungu, “the University of Fort Hare could easily be the leader in research productivity if our academics become more research active. Our 2018 rankings show that this scenario is not far-fetched. It should also be noted that Fort Hare is the biggest producer of PhDs”, he said.

Adapted by Tandi Mapukata

IDAM and JINAN UNIVERSITY COLLABORATE ON COVID-19 RESEARCH

The University of Fort Hare Institute for Development Assistance Management (IDAM) has collaborated with Jinan University in China to invite research papers to address the Covid-19 pandemic. Selected papers will form part of a special edition to be published in a scholarly journal known as Africa’s Public Service Delivery and Performance Review (APSDPR).

Themed: *“The COVID-19 Pandemic: Re-Awakening the Prevailing Global System and the Emergence of the New World Order”*, the special edition is aimed at demystifying many unresolved issues on Covid-19. It seeks to provide answers and respond to challenges on the origin, spread, management, immediate, intermediate and longer-term impacts of the pandemic.

Scope of articles for publication

For better focus on the theme of the special edition, solicited articles will include:

- (a) Development Assistance Management and International Cooperation during and post Covid-19 pandemic.
- (b) A review of the management of Covid-19 global solidarity response: national, regional and continental perspectives.
- (c) The impacts of Covid-19 in the global political and economic balance of power, for example: Social-economic dynamics of people and Cooperate Management, Local government and Administration of services and priorities at the local, national, continental and international levels.



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- (d) The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and artificial intelligence (AI) e.g: systems, technology advancement, e-learning platforms, new forms of communication etc.
- (e) Restructuring the prevailing global, regional and national priorities towards the Public Health Systems, e.g: health professionals and para-medical officials, infrastructure developments: the Covid-19 experiences.
- (f) Covid-19 on poverty, unemployment and inequality at regional, national and global levels
- (g) Global and Regional investment priorities: Lessons from Covid-19 pandemic.
- (h) Any other abstract proposed social and economic sectors by potential authors.

Closing date for submission of articles is **30 May 2020**. The date for final acceptance and publication will be communicated to individual authors.

Submissions to be made on: submission@apsdr.org. Further enquiries can be directed via email to: IDAM@ufh.ac.za



Jinan University



COVID-19 AND THE NEW NORMAL IN BUSINESS: 2020 AND BEYOND

Unpublished Opinion Piece by Max K Makubalo, UFH Alumnus. He writes in his personal capacity.

“Lockdown and prohibition of all air travel changed the way we understand the world. We are not office bound so lockdown was not as traumatic as not being able to fly out of one province, let alone country!”

The current pandemic has redefined the ways of commerce and industry in ways we never thought even possible. The reality is that this is a new normal. It is evident that the world we had and methods that made us successful in our environments are no longer possible nor feasible.

To us as independent business investors outside the corporate realm, this has changed the rule book. The things we assumed to be vital to make business possible like meetings over coffee, lunches and invitations to golf are no longer possible due to lockdown restrictions. It is now becoming obvious that office space and investment in business parks will change due to fewer people needing offices and more and more companies resorting to work from home arrangements. New opportunities are manifest in virtual meetings and IT enablement of homes as workspaces.

It feels like only yesterday when we learnt from US business partners that a 'Chinese virus' may cause some fears in world markets. Naturally, business executives, consultants and private investors are always on the lookout on what we call events that shake tectonic plates of world finance. I am personally involved in pan African projects that involve a fair amount of travel as technological reach is still not as advanced on our continent.

Lockdown and prohibition of all air travel changed the way we understand the world. We are not office bound so lockdown was not as traumatic as not being able to fly out of one province, let alone country!

The new normal is about virtual meetings on Skype, telegram etc. We are now debating the legal enforceability of electronic agreements etc. The two industries that will have to start de novo is energy eg Sasol share price was R600 last year and is now R50. This is a catastrophic shareholder value destruction and with that are thousands of jobs. The same goes for the tourism sector.

Now, we have to write new textbooks on organizational development and performance management. The reason being that the majority of staff will not be on site. We need to redefine legal documents and rules of signatures and witnesses for documents and agreements to be valid and legally enforceable.

Personally, I am challenged to review my own business model to achieve the same, if not better outcomes in the New Normal. I believe this is a matter of consideration to most strategic thinkers.

We challenge business schools to review what and how we equip graduates to a world that has imposed itself on us.

Mr Max Khuboni Makhubalo studied at UFH between 1976-1979. He graduated with a Bachelor of Management and Commerce Honours Degree in 1979. He served as the UFH President of Convocation from 2012-2017. As a member of the UFH Council, he was part of the Audit committee, Human Resource committee and the Institutional Forum. He is a former CEO of Bankseta of Free State Development Corporation and former HR Executive for Sasol Synthetic Fuels and served as a Commercial Executive of SAB.

He is currently in private property development business and chairman of Antelope Investment Group and Saltlake Minerals.



THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON COVID-19

Unpublished Opinion Piece
By Prof Rueben Rashe, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities.
He is an African Theologian and writes in his own capacity.

Covid-19 is not only posing health, psychological, economic challenges as well as academic delay on the development of students. It is also a challenge to religious practices such as funerals. There is general argument that most people in African communities are being infected when they attend funeral services because they are public services. The most recent argument was on the case of people who die of Covid-19 should not have a full send-off funeral service to avoid further infections.

The government and the House of Traditional Leaders in the Eastern Cape in their attempt to strengthen the regulations by limiting the number of people attending funerals proposed inter alia: 'that as African people we should go back to the practice of "ukuqhusheka" instead of having a large funeral ceremony.'

As an African Theologian, I do support the idea *ukuqhusheka* under the present circumstances and given the implications of large gathering. This idea of *ukuqhusheka* is not something new in the African philosophy and in the process of religious funerals, it has always been there, it is the last part that concludes the liturgy of a traditional funeral service. In fact most of the time Xhosa speaking people when they attend the funeral they say "ndiya esifihlweni," the burial, derived from the word *ukufihla* meaning to bury. To bury is *ukuqhusheka*, *amajita ekasi* they call it *isibhero*.

“that as African people we should go back to the practice of 'ukuqhusheka' instead of having a large funeral ceremony”

Funerals are a method of paying the last respect to the departed; it is the way of celebrating one's life and acknowledging ones contribution to life experiences. A funeral is an experience.

Funerals are also liturgical by nature and they can consume a lot of time when people pay their tributes. Rituals always accompany African funerals whether they are religious rituals or cultural rituals. Sometimes the observance of these rituals is before the actual service starts (some of these rituals could be *ukwamkelwa komzimba*- meaning receiving of the body, *ukubonwa komzimba* meaning viewing of the body and *coceka*- a service usually conducted by women of the community comforting and give words of exhortation. These rituals normally start as early as 7:00am followed by the main service, which is likely to end at 3pm. At such times like this, a funeral is not and can never be the best option.

I agree that *ukuqhusheka* burial is an old ritual within the African context in which the body is placed under the ground; I argue that it is the best option because the family can control it and decide on a selected number of people to participate. If the deceased was a believer, a minister of a religion can do the committal, which is less than 5 minutes liturgy and there is no sermon required in *ukuqhusheka*. In this case, as proposed *ukuqhusheka*, the burial is done prior to the service of the traditional funeral.

Members of the community can have a memorial services and these can always be done at a later stage, because it is an act of remembrance, celebration and mourning the loss of the beloved. The only difference is that the body will not be present during the memorial service. Most important thing at such a time as this that safety, saving of time, less expenses and observing the regulations, my contention is that *ukuqhusheka* be the common practice.

PANDEMIC MUST PUSH SA TOWARDS TRANSFORMATIVE CONSTITUTIONALISM

Source: Daily Dispatch, published on 18 April 2020.
By Vuyo Booyesen, Senior Law Lecturer and Social Activist.
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Ratings agencies Fitch and Moody's recently downgraded SA's sovereign credit and undoubtedly this will have far reaching negative consequences for our economy.

The downgrades come in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic which has forced the government to impose a national lockdown.

The lockdown has exposed the level of inequalities in our country as the poor are disproportionately affected.

The contemporary situation gives us an opportunity to fundamentally change the status quo and to advance towards transformative constitutionalism.

Sony Renee Taylor earlier in April told the world: "We will not go back to normal. Normal never was. Our pre-corona existence was not normal other than we normalised greed, inequality, exhaustion, depletion, extraction, disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate and lack ... We are being given the opportunity to stitch a new garment. One that fits all of humanity and nature."

The past is now in the process of being erased and we cannot be tragically bound to it, while history is being rewritten.

As we go back to the drawing board in reconstructing (rebuilding) and restructuring (reforming) our future, as Dr Martin Luther King says, we must do so with "audacious faith", determination and a "powerful moral force".

We must never again allow an antithetical view that if we change the course of our future in harmony with this nation's constitutional imperatives and tenets, investors will leave or that our economy will suffer.

For now we are drowning and we have nothing to lose, a scenario that presents us with an opportunity to make radical decisions which will benefit us all on the other side.

President Cyril Ramaphosa and his team must use every instrument in their toolbox as they tackle the complex and difficult task at hand.

We, however, must be inspired by the spirit and resilience of our late statesman Nelson Mandela, who in one of his famous quotes said: **"I learnt that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it."**

The basis for reforms and rebuilding our economy must be based on the theme of transformative constitutionalism.

The latter is firmly rooted in social justice and fundamental human rights as enshrined in our constitution.

In an effort to address the challenges outlined above, I propose the following fundamental changes that will advance our constitutional values:

- There must be a deliberate move to have a state-led economy that will drive and influence an economic agenda on an unprecedented bigger scale that must extend even outside SA's borders;
- At microeconomic level, the government must invest in micro-industries that will manufacture products consumed in state institutions such as correctional centres and hospitals;
- At macroeconomic level, the government must be involved in mega-industries that have the potential to increase its revenue. China has showed us the way with its Huawei products;
- There must be no political influence over all public entities with effective oversight by the cabinet on quarterly basis. It can't be business as usual;
- The country must have a robust state machinery and an aggressive approach with consequence management embedded in the system, in fighting the rampant corruption that has engulfed our country, to sustain our democracy and build trust and confidence in our society;
- All public institutions must have proactive and effective risk management systems, rather than reactive strategies as done after the release of the auditor-general's reports;
- SA must come to grips with the realities of economic meltdown and that it can no longer share its resources with the outside world for free. The informal economy must be protected and be reserved for SA citizens.
- Our journey is going to be long and painful, but we must be determined to build a brighter future for all.

SMART DECISIONS NEEDED TO UNMASK WHAT AWAITS US

Source: Daily Dispatch, published on 13 May 2020 by Vuyo Booyesen, Senior Law Lecturer and Social Activist.
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"The decisions to relax regulations must not be driven by politics and economics, but by science and data."

Our future is rooted in the past and our past is being unsettled by the future. "The virus is rewriting our imaginations. What felt impossible has become thinkable. We seem to be learning our way into a new structure of feeling," says Kim Stanley Robinson.

The triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality in SA have been exacerbated by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Data on Covid-19 changes frequently as infection and death figures continue to rise, hence the need for smart futuristic decision-making processes.

Decisions on relaxing regulations and moving from one level of lockdown to another should be based on the forecast and not on the past data. The new normal - virtual reality, electronic transactions, online learning and teaching, social distancing, wearing of masks, disinfection of public areas, automation of doors and gates, - should be central in our planning.

The new normal requires re-engineering of businesses to comply and to fit into the new world order. SA is fortunate that it could learn from the experience that other countries have gone through in terms of planning for the anticipated surge in infections. The decisions to relax regulations must not be driven by politics or economics, but by science and data. As New York Governor Andrew Cuomo puts it: "Truth is truth, facts are facts, this virus doesn't play politics, doesn't comply to any political principles or theories". We cannot afford to downplay this fact as the costs are too dire to contemplate.

It appears that coronavirus fatigue is starting to set in among most South Africans, as illustrated in the non-compliance of regulations and applicable health protocols. A number of interested groups are flooding the presidency with letters demanding that the economy must be opened more while others are challenging the legitimacy of the lockdown itself.

Self-centred economic interests must not be allowed to tower over our lives. These interests are still rooted in the past as most of the workplaces are not yet ready to cater for the new normal. The government must not concede to individuals who



LOCKDOWN LAWS: Police and SANDF members raided the East London CBD on Friday and closed down a number of shops.
Image: SINO MAJANGAZA

are blindly pushing for the opening of the economy. I submit that it is the duty of the government to protect the poor and the vulnerable from the economic vultures.

Without a doubt, lockdown is painful to the poor and in some cases may not be practical, but its intended outcomes outweigh the excruciating alternative. To ease the pain, the government has come up with a number of mitigating interventions including food vouchers, a special Covid-19 grant for the unemployed and various packages for companies.

Generally, the lockdown has gone a long way in reducing the rate of Covid-19 infections and deaths. A comparison of statistics with other countries when they were at a similar position attests to this point. However, we are not out of the woods yet and the clamour to further relax regulations to meet the economic interests will inflict damage to the population and will negate the noble objectives of the lockdown. While we may not agree with other propositions, we must give government enough space to do its job. The overarching principle is to prepare for the worst in order to save lives.

It appears that we do not only have to change how we physically do things in the new normal, but also change and align our cognitive abilities for futuristic decisions.

Vuyo Booyesen is an advocate and senior lecturer at the University of Fort Hare. He writes in his personal capacity.



Covid-19: Spatial Plan and Human Settlement Enterprise in South Africa

Source: UnCensored, published on 1 May 2020
By Dr Luvuyo Mthimkhulu Dondolo, PhD

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The urban and rural apartheid spatial plan in South Africa has a peculiar history. For the purpose of this piece, I focus only on the urban spatial plan. The latter was complemented by pieces of legislation that were meant to control the standard of living and manage the movement of Africans in spaces which were deemed to be the exclusive domain for whites and relegated Africans to the fringes and denied them permanent residence.

Townships, which are areas that were reserved to accommodate 'Non-Europeans', were formally established from the beginning of the 20th century and were for people who did not belong to the racial classification of 'whites/Europeans'.

Initially, the purpose was to control Black people, who were mainly workers. Planning was based on the management and control of "natives" and was strongly influenced by racist policies and the notion of what constituted a 'Non-European' lifestyle.

Growing up in Queenstown, also known as Komani, in Mlungisi Township in the 1980s, our location was separated from the Coloured community by a road [1], with a buffer zone of an open piece of land on one end. Equally, we were separated from the town by another buffer zone in the form of a large vacant land, known by Africans as *eMabaleni*, a part of which was at one point a residential area for Africans, *eSidikidini* and from which Blacks were later forcefully removed as a result of the Group Areas Act of 1950.

Just like many South African townships, ours was poorly designed and had limited entrances to it. When I moved to Cape Town in the early 1990s for post matric studies, I observed the same spatial design. This enterprise continues to date, except that the vacant pieces of land are now flooded with informal settlements.

With the outbreak of Covid-19 in South Africa, in particular, and the Covid-19 Regulations which include social distancing, regular washing of hands, restricted movement of people, and the national lockdown, I could not stop thinking about the contradictions between public health and the colonial and apartheid spatial planning in South Africa.

With the increasing Covid-19 infections and the increase in deaths, the question is how lockdown restrictions will be managed. How practical is social distancing and regular washing of hands in townships when they are poorly designed and have small houses occupied by more than six family members, in most cases, and are in small yards.

The gravity of the challenges of combating the disease becomes even more glaring in informal settlements where there's overcrowding, houses erected close to each other with no yards, and lack of basic needs such as running water and sanitation. The practicality of social distancing and other lockdown restrictions become unrealistic and impossible.

The development of modern South Africa has been based on racialised and ethnic planning. The planning enterprise in urban areas was linked to public health issues, racialised modernity and a theory of nativism. The juxtaposing of the 'civilised' West/Europeans and the 'primitive natives' was palpable.

There are a number of elements that epitomise the colonial and spatial planning in South Africa but I will focus only on four canons.

1. The urban management and the control of African migrant workers. Drawing on the experience of mining and compounds, commercial companies and the non-mining sector run their own private hostels. These were viewed as a convenient form of accommodation for workers at their work places or in the hostels that are owned by their employers or municipalities. This form of housing facilitated control over workers, and was strictly for male.

For instance, the first hostel for dock workers was built in 1878 where the stands today the popular Victoria and Alfred Waterfront in Cape Town. The plan of the hostels was the same – whether closed or open compounds – the 'native docks' or 'native yards', or railways locations, or Mary and Robert hostels in Cape Town were all the same.

The control of Africans was intensified by pass laws that were meant to control the influx of Africans in urban areas and their movement in general.

2. The spatial plan and public health. This has its own history and sociology. In the 20th century, spatial planning was influenced by public health issues – public health laws and outbreaks, the 1914 Tuberculosis and 1918 Influenza Commission Reports. When diseases broke out in the cities, the public health commissions reported that Africans were a health hazard and were accused of carrying disease to cities as a result of their 'poor' living conditions (Dondolo, 2018). "The first removal of Africans from District Six in 1901 after the area was hit by the bubonic plague paved the way for the establishment of the first formal African township, Uitvugt/Ndabeni" (Dondolo, 2002:40). The inadequate housing infrastructure, resulting in the poor living conditions, had a direct influence on the belief by whites that Africans brought diseases into the inner city. This view later influenced the public health commission reports.

The State entered the housing space using the Public Health Act of 1919 and the Housing Act of 1920. These were followed by several legislations including the Native Urban Act of 1923, the Slum Act of 1934, the Prohibition of Illegal Squatting Act of 1951 and the Group Areas Act of 1950. The latter contributed significantly to the destruction of areas like Sophiatown, District Six, *eSidikidini* and many others. The Public Health Act of 1919 made provision for the State to regulate land subdivision, use and zoning, both inside and outside the municipal areas. In major cities, the latter formed part of the modern plan – the Garden City Model. Ethnic and racial zoning

formed part of this racialised modernity (Dondolo, 2018:97).

3. The apartheid spatial plan enterprise and the race issue. The Garden City Model, which strongly influenced the colonial and apartheid spatial plan project, was advocated by Ebenezer Howard from London and was first implemented in Britain against the increasing number of the working class. Richard Stuttaford, who was a merchant and a member of the Union of South Africa cabinet, and others were strongly influenced by this plan in so much that he donated his own money in order for it to see the light in South Africa. The notion of the Garden City Model later degenerated into the concept of the Garden City Suburbs. It was also interwoven with racist policies. The Garden City Model was first established in Pineland in 1919 and in Lang Township in 1923, with the latter later becoming the model for developed townships (See Dondolo, 2004).

The second key plan was the Foreshore Plan that was initiated by Railways and it was drawn up by recognised individuals such as Leslie Thornton-White, a professor of architecture at University of Cape Town, Longstreth Thomson from London and E.E. Beaudoun, a chief architect of the French Government who was appointed by the City of Cape Town Council. The Foreshore plan was about the redevelopment of the inner city to modern standards that were promoted by Le Corbusier, a French planner who had a major influence across continents. This plan is related to the history of townships because residents of areas such as the District Six in Cape Town, which was excluded from this plan, were forcibly removed and relocated to townships like Langa and Nyanga West, which later became known as Gugulethu.

From the 1920s until the last days of apartheid, planning of townships was predominantly based on race and class as the broader spatial planning project was about separate development. Race is a way a group of people is differentiated from other groups on grounds of perceived differences, such as colour. From 1923, when Langa Township in Cape Town was established, the planning of townships had been based on discriminatory laws and the Garden City Model. The Monumental approach that was based on Le Corbusier's ideas was applied in Cape Town. From the 1950s, Modernist planning became the norm but in South Africa, it was intertwined with the racialised spatial plan. For Instance, the Foreshore Plan, which was implemented in Cape Town, was based on ideas of modern planning and efficiency as well as racist planning, resulting in the relocation of people who were living in the areas that were excluded from the Plan. This form of spatial planning demonstrate that town planners were influenced and shaped by the ideological constraints of their class and dominant political ideas at a given time.

This kind of spatial planning is best demonstrated by juxtaposing the two worlds of the apartheid spatial planning projects in the context of affluent suburbs on one side and sprawling townships on another, separated by a piece of road. Examples include Gonubie and *eSantini* township; Beacon Bay and *Nompumelelo/Gqobhasi* location in East London; Pineland and Langa township in Cape Town; and Sandton and Alexandria in Johannesburg. Apartheid spatial plan also reinforced ethnicity as it formed part of this racialised modernity.

4. Spatial plan and the notion of 'nativism'. This spatial planning project model was also founded on colonial and apartheid notions of a 'native' and 'settler' society; a 'tribalised' and racialised historiography that classified the indigenous Africans – I use the term being aware of the politics of indigeneity in South Africa- as 'natives'/'bantus'. This historical tale of African societies is presented using the notion of 'traditional society'. This tradition-driven account is trapped in native politics and settler versus native discourse. The latter, however, was

used to rationalise the colonial rule. This historiography is observed in the depiction of the two worlds that did not meet: 'modern white society' compared to 'primitive' and 'traditional' locals.

These representations were in line with Sir Henry Maine's theory of nativism. The settler-native discourse and apartheid hegemony defined the category 'native' but 'native' did not designate a condition that was original and authentic. Rather, as in Maine, the native was the creation of the colonial state; colonised, the native is pinned down, localised, thrown out of civilisation as an outcast, confined to custom and defined as its product" (Mamdani, 2013: 2). Mamdani's concept of native as the colonial state construct and as a political identity is demonstrated by the apartheid spatial plan as it reinforced 'nativism' by creating residential areas that were deemed for a group of people who spoke the same language and the concept of 'non-European' inferior living standard by the racist minority under the separate development project. Whites were defined by history, law and modernity while the indigenous people were defined by geography, tradition and culture.

By the early 1950s ethnic zoning in black people townships was implemented unobtrusively, with little monitoring. For instance, in the South Western Townships (Soweto) and other townships in Johannesburg there is a Zulu section, Xhosa section and Sotho section. But in Cape Town, the IsiXhosa speaking people and Coloured communities dominated the Cape Flats. Africans were perceived to be different from Coloureds and as such were located separately.

The apartheid spatial plan enterprise, particularly with regard to townships, created places of manipulation, white domination, and control of Africans. Furthermore, it had underpinnings of ethnicity, nativism, superiority and inferiority complex and racism. It was also used to perpetuate racial and ethnic stereotypes as was the case with the human zoo in the late 19th century and early 20th century.

The isolated post-apartheid spatial plan framework and human settlement project are not framed by any ideology nor do they make any material transformation in terms of the rooted colonial and apartheid spatial plan geography. Instead, they are sustaining it.

In conclusion, the colonial and apartheid spatial plan project and human settlement design enterprise continues to live with us in the present, and so is the hangover with the African heritage deficit. In South Africa, the Covid-19 is not merely a (public) health matter, but, also a social, economic and spatial plan enterprise and human settlement design challenge.

While the national lockdown with its restrictions, regular washing of hands and social distancing are welcomed, the structural inequality with its negative effects cannot be overlooked. Similarly, it has reminded us about the post-1994 spatial planning and human settlement shortfalls by the present government in its failure to disrupt the colonial and apartheid spatial plan project. In other words, township residents are 'permanent outsider' and 'not members of the national family' (Du Bois, 1920/1999).

Dr Luvuyo Mthimkhulu Dondolo, is a historian, heritage studies specialist, museologist, a former Fulbright Scholar at Cheyney University (US) and a former Rockefeller Scholarship holder to Emory University (US). He is the Director of the Centre for Transdisciplinary Studies at the University of Fort Hare. He writes in his personal capacity.

[1] Racial classifications in South Africa have a peculiar history and sociology. For the sake of common use and simple understanding, I employed the term 'Coloured'.



Covid-19 is redefining our social fabric exposing the good and bad

Source: Daily Dispatch, published on 5 May 2020 By Prof Philani Moyo, Director at Fort Hare Institute of Social and Economic Research.

[Click here to view original article](#)

The national lockdown has transformed our society through redefining human interaction, reshaping our everyday existence and realigning social institutions.

While the effects of the lockdown on public health, economic and political systems have been widely debated, there has been a dearth of public intellectual engagement of how the Covid-19 pandemic is leading to social ruptures and ructions.

We all have families, in one way, shape or form.

So let us begin by dissecting how the family institution, that is the most basic structure of our social organisation and socialisation, has been affected by the lockdown.

For many who don't work in essential services or those sectors that have reopened under level 4 of the lockdown, adherence to the lockdown guidelines largely means confinement at home either with family, relatives, a partner or alone.

This has resulted in numerous heartwarming, sometimes hilarious, positive human life stories.

Some marriages have been reinvigorated and singleton love relationships blossomed as partners spend unlimited time in each other's lovely company.

However, not everything is rosy behind those closed doors. There are gut-wrenching incidents of gender-based violence that continue to scourge SA society.

Further, many other individuals are under social distress and face various psychosocial challenges directly emanating from isolation at home.

Within the extended family institution, our associational freedoms have also changed. Traditional ceremonies have been cancelled or postponed, as have weddings, birthdays and graduation parties.

While the postponements may seem a minor inconvenience in the pandemic prism, these familial gatherings define our rites of passage, celebrate our lives and express our social harmony.

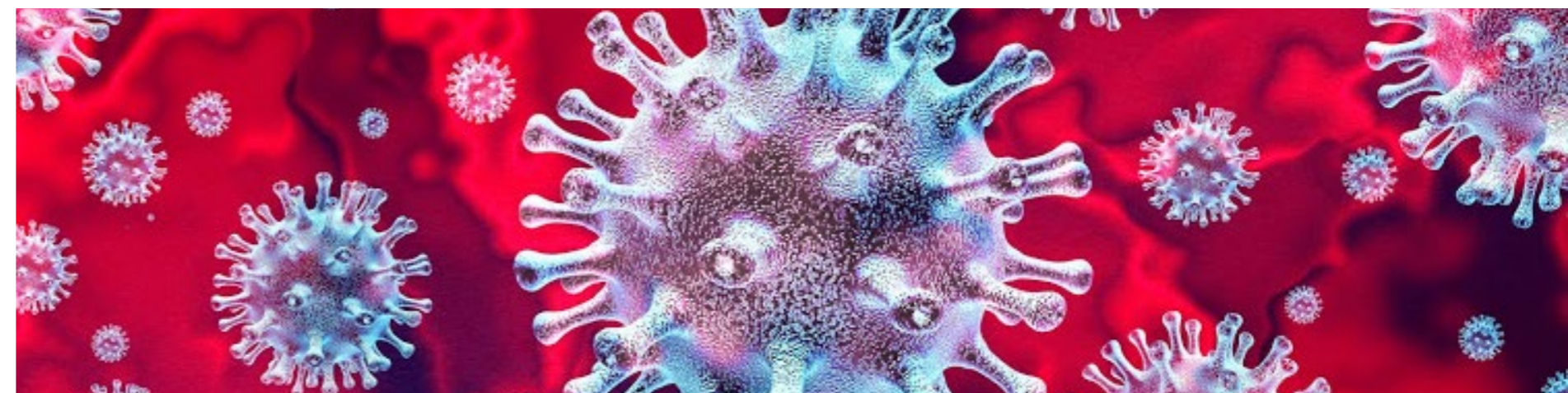
Our freedom of movement and association has also been limited by the lockdown.

The genesis of this is the World Health Organisation-recommended social or physical distancing, which is essentially maintaining prescribed space between people outside the home environment.

This physical distance between people in public spaces is a scientifically proven method for reducing the probability of exposure to infection, slowing and sometimes preventing the spread of the highly contagious Covid-19 virus.

Due to its scientific effectiveness, the national government has been aggressive in promoting its implementation across the country.

“There are gut-wrenching incidents of gender-based violence that continue to scourge SA society”



Socially, it has caused necessary but sometimes controversial changes.

For example, religious organisations have had to abandon traditional mass congregations. Many people of faith who used to congregate to worship now do so from home either as families, alone or through online platforms.

Religious observances such as Easter adapted to social distancing guidelines, with the likes of Pope Francis delivering Easter Mass in a near-empty St Peter's Basilica square. The same happened in cathedrals and mosques across SA.

While this adaptation has ensured continuity of religious routines, one wonders whether the religious devotions of many will be sustainable in the long term as brethren gradually lose the concept of the Sunday church service as traditionally defined and practised.

Relatedly, there is also emerging genuine concern among religious leaders like pastors, bishops and church elders who are pondering the financial effect of this new virtual church on their operational recurrent expenditure.

Not all congregants will be persuaded to contribute monetary offerings outside the confines of the physical church, with its associated pressures and expectations.

The form and functions of technology-based social networks have also not escaped Covid-19 influences.

While the evolution of technology has generally enhanced our means of communication, its benefits have become clearer under lockdown.

The versatility of communication apps like Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams and our "old buddy" WhatsApp have allowed many virtual social engagements to proceed without the need for physical gatherings.

In a way, it took this pandemic for these technological advances of the Fourth Industrial Revolution to find full expression and utilisation in our everyday social interactions.

However, poverty and inequality, especially among the urban and rural poor, means they have not enjoyed the benefits of virtual social connectivity.

This digital divide, a product of historical circumstances and current human development omissions, is an issue that requires urgent intervention and resolution in the "new economy" post lockdown.

As South African society adapts under level 4 of the lockdown, it seems highly unlikely that our social norms and habits will return to the normal we previously knew any time soon.

Instead, a more pragmatic mindset is to see the present as the new normal for the foreseeable future.

This new sober reality is about staying home, social distancing in public spaces, and owning and wearing the new life accessory in town, the mask.

Prof Philani Moyo is director at Fort Hare Institute of Social and Economic Research. He writes in his personal capacity.



Lala Ngoxolo Qhawe
UFH PAYS TRIBUTE TO MR DENIS GOLDBERG

The University of Fort Hare joins the nation and the international community in mourning the passing of Mr Denis Goldberg, former Rivonia Trialist and a staunch member of the anti-apartheid movement and a Keynote Speaker during the university's 2017 Autumn Graduation ceremony.

Goldberg passed away in Hout Bay, Cape Town on 29 April 2020, less than a year after he was diagnosed with lung cancer. He was 87 years-old.

He was a South African social campaigner, who was highly committed to the fight against apartheid. In 1963 he was accused No.3 in the Rivonia Trial, alongside Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Ahmed Kathrada and others. Goldberg was found guilty of sabotage and spent more than two decades of his life behind bars.

After his release in 1985 he continued to campaign against apartheid from his base in London with his family, until the apartheid system was fully abolished in 1994. He returned to South Africa in 2002. In 2015 he established the Denis Goldberg Legacy Foundation Trust, a non-profit organisation that contributes to the development and upliftment of the disadvantaged communities within the Cape Peninsula Region.

The University of Fort Hare will remember Mr Goldberg for his profound delivery as a Keynote Speaker during the university's 94th graduation ceremony held on the Alice campus on 12 May 2017. His address was a moving tribute to Mr Raymond Mhlaba, who during the ceremony, was bestowed posthumously, an honorary Doctorate of Philosophy in Social Sciences.

At the end of his speech, Mr Goldberg called upon South Africans to restore the values of the Freedom Charter - one of the most important documents on equality and justice to have emerged out of South African history.



Denis Golberg with Nelson Mandela

Message from
 Accounting Department





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