Institutional Advancement

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

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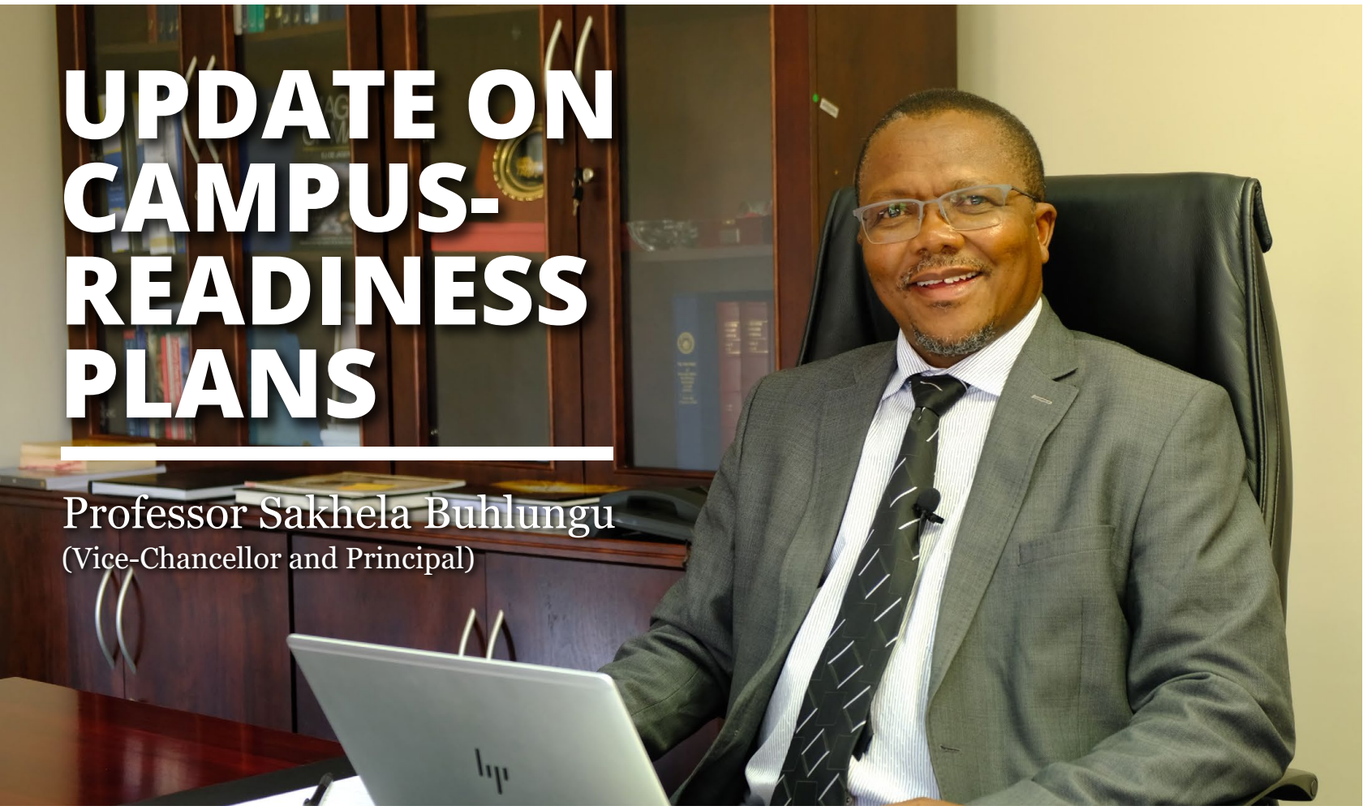
This Week @FORT HARE

East London, Nursing Science Lecture Hall

12 June 2020



12 June 2020

Dear Staff and Students

UPDATE ON CAMPUS-READINESS PLANS: 1st COHORT OF STUDENTS TO RETURN

On June 8th the 'Directions for Criteria to Return to Public University and Private Higher Education Campuses' was published in the Government Gazette. Yesterday, the Management Executive Committee (MEC) completed consultations with University stakeholders – including the Extended Management Team, the Student Representative Council and representatives from organised labour – in preparation of finalising our plans for partially re-opening the University under level 3 of the national lockdown.

We have finalised the composition of the 1st cohort of 33% of students who will be allowed to return to the campus. This cohort comprises the following categories of students:

- All final year undergraduate students in all Faculties;
- All undergraduate students in the Faculty of Health Sciences;
- Selected postgraduate students identified by their Faculties as requiring laboratories or specialised equipment;
- All students living with disabilities who self-identified as such on registration;
- Members of the SRC; and
- Staff who are also students.

However, no student should return to campus unless they receive a specific and formal communication from the University. Students who form part of the 1st cohort will return to the University in a staggered manner, to avoid large numbers of students arriving at the University at the same time. Each student that forms part of the 1st cohort will be provided with a permit from the University, indicating the date of return. Students who can work from home or have underlying conditions should continue to work from home.

We are now in the process of identifying staff beyond essential services that will return to campus in level 3 lockdown. Staff too will receive formal, individualised communication to this effect from their line managers. Staff who form part of the 1st cohort will return before the 1st cohort of students.

Given the staggered manner in which staff and students will be returning to campus, we will not be announcing a date of return. However, we will inform the University community when the process of return has commenced. The revised academic calendar restarts the 2020 academic year from 1 July 2020 and will be disseminated. A window for the finalisation of the registration process for identified categories of students, particularly those who were offered concessions, will be opened. Information in this regard will be issued by the Registrar in the coming week.

Preparations to get the physical infrastructure ready are under way and we are making good progress. We are also putting in place the various protocols linked to screening and responding to actual and potential Covid-19 cases.

Keep track of all our Covid-19 preparations and protocols on our website at https://www.ufh.ac.za/covid19/

Teaching and learning will continue online after the campus re-opens. Given the Covid-19 protocols, which prohibits having more than 50 students in a venue at any time and places further restrictions on smaller classes relative to the venue size, our main mode of delivery for students who return to campus will remain online learning – as is the case for students who are studying remotely until they may return to campus.

Our deepest gratitude goes to our staff in all areas of the University – who are delving deep and finding ways to address the challenges and put in place provisions and systems that serve the needs of our community. Your efforts are appreciated and your concern for the welfare of our students recognised.

A special word of thanks to members of the Covid-19 Task Team, who have been working determinedly to assist the University in managing the pandemic, as well as the Covid-19 Management Response Committee, which is ensuring that we are compliant and ready for the return of the 1st cohort of staff and students.

We know that this is a time of great anxiety, for our students, as well as for staff. We are taking all steps we can to ensure that staff and students who return are protected as far as possible, and to counter isolation and anxiety for staff working from home and students studying remotely.

For additional support, students should follow the Student Counselling Unit's facebook page (Student Counselling Unit – Fort Hare University). It is managed by a psychologist on a daily basis. The platform allows for psychologists to participate in live chats and to 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.

Staff can access staff support services through our Wellness Unit in Human Resources. Please contact Ms Mandisa Tyanti (mtyanti@ufh.ac.za).

Sincerely

Professor Sakhela Buhlungu
Vice-Chancellor and Principal

In conversation with Zoology Professor - Judith Masters

Zoology Professor, Judith Masters – one of the two B-rated researchers at the University of Fort Hare, is part of a team of researchers from South Africa and France working to solve a 200-year-old problem: How did lemurs get onto Madagascar. Prof Masters has been researching the diversity, evolution, distribution and conservation of bushbabies since 1978. She joined the university 13 years ago.

This Week @FortHare Journalist, Aretha Linden (AL) asked some questions to find out more about Prof Masters (JM) and her ground-breaking research discoveries during her outstanding career.

AL: Who is Prof Masters?

JM: I was born and raised in East London, like my parents and brother. In zoological terms, one would say we are a philopatric family: we didn't move far from the nest. My mother's family were 1820 settlers, so the major migration was done by our ancestors. None of my family had been university-educated because of World War II, and I was brought up to revere the University of Fort Hare. I matriculated at Cambridge High School in East London. In Grade 11 I had to move from Clarendon High School because Physical Sciences were considered dangerous for young ladies! Going to a mixed-sex school had its challenges: I had to learn an awful lot about rugby and cricket in a very short space of time.

In 1973 I spent a year as an exchange student in Western Australia, where I learned an awful lot about herding sheep (both on and off horseback) and sorting wool. By the time I returned to South Africa, I was committed to working with animals outdoors. I was also mature enough to be deeply concerned by the inequalities around me, both in South Africa and in Australia. I undertook a BSc in Biological Sciences at Natal University (Durban), where I considered becoming a marine biologist (sharks fascinated me) – but cold water has never been my thing - so I moved to Wits, where they had a captive colony of primates, and a wonderful new professor of evolutionary biology. I became, over the years, South Africa's only indigenous specialist in tooth-combed primates (the lemurs of Madagascar, the bushbabies (or galagos) of Africa, and the lorises that span the tropics of Africa and Asia), which make up almost half of the species of primates alive today – and some of the most endangered.

But no (wo)man is an island entire on itself. While wrestling with models of species origins (since my PhD research I have been trying to get a clear picture of the relationship between the extinction of species and the emergence of new ones), it was impossible ignore the socio-economic inequalities in South Africa. In 1985, I was also a woman in a very restrictive field. Job advertisements demanded that "the successful applicant must have completed his military service" – only white males need apply. After completing my PhD, I worked as a part-time lecturer at Wits, and taught extra-curricular classes to township students. My township classes got bigger every week, and I had to keep repeating lectures for new students. The demand was enormous, and the situation was unmanageable.

In 1986, I decided to "fix" things. A couple of important South African scientists (including Professor Phillip Tobias of human evolution fame) had been denied admittance to conferences because of the boycott against South Africa. Two friends and I wrote a letter to world's major science journal, *Nature,* suggesting that white South Africans be welcomed to international meetings. This would be done on condition that they signed a statement of commitment to science as an open, international enterprise that did not discriminate in terms of race, gender or creed. Also, in accordance with the Freedom Charter, the doors of learning and culture should be opened.

I was allowed by my Head of Department to remain in my office at Wits 'so long as I had no contact with students'. My then husband (who was a co-author) was fired from his position at Wits. We were isolated in a basement room where everything became covered in soot that entered the air vents from the Braamfontein crematorium. We had no income, but we had one sign of hope: a rubber plant, which was placed under the skylight, and refused to die! A few years later, my husband and I separated.

I undertook a two-year post-doc at Harvard University, working with two of my intellectual idols: Stephen Jay Gould and Richard Lewontin. Both Steve and Dick had worked with anti-apartheid groups. They flattened the argument about racial differences in intelligence through serious science. They were also extraordinary thinkers who revolutionised my ideas about evolution.

Return to South Africa and Joining Fort Hare

I was appointed to my first permanent job in South Africa in 1998, 13 years after I received my PhD, and as a direct result of the government's recognition of the paucity of female scientist. I served as Assistant Director of the Natal Museum from 1998 to 2007. In 2006, I was approached by the incumbent professor of Zoology at UFH to replace him. I applied and was appointed. One of my first jobs when I took up my position at UFH, was to upgrade the course curricula in the Department of Zoology and established a research team to study primates.

AL: Please tell us more about the research team you established at UFH?

JM: Our team is called APIES: the African Primate Initiative for Ecology and Speciation. The Alice campus is just 37 km from Hogsback, where there are three species of diurnal primates, (baboons, samango and vervet monkeys) all sharing the same forests and grasslands. Unfortunately, not all of the Hogsback residents, with their exotic gardens and fruit trees, appreciate the privilege of having wild neighbours. Over ten years, my students and post-docs have monitored the primate populations on the mountain. Despite accusations that the troops are "breeding out of control", the numbers of animals are stable. Afromontane samango monkeys are severely threatened because of the continued clearance of indigenous forests, and ours comprise one of the most viable populations in the country. Much work has been done by our students to inform local residents of the importance of conserving our wild primates.

AL: Please share some information about your research field, including past and current projects

JM: My own work has continued to describe the diversity, evolution and biogeography of tooth-combed primates. More than 60% of primate species are threatened worldwide, mainly through habitat destruction and hunting. My work has involved identifying crucial aspects of the preferred habitats of species in order to take steps to prevent their local and ultimate extinction. Assessing the species diversity of small, nocturnal primates is quite a challenge. In the wild, the most one often gets to see, are two shining orange orbs way up in the trees. Like many mammals, bushbabies and lorises have a reflective layer immediately behind the retina which causes the torchlight to bounce back. Nocturnal animals communicate and identify each other chiefly by sound and calls, hence different species sometimes appear identical. This is particularly the case with long-dead museum specimens. Morphological differences can often only be detected by sophisticated multivariate statistical techniques, or DNA extracted from skins.

When I started studying bushbabies, it was generally believed that there were five species, all of which were jammed into a single genus, *Galago.* In the last 40 years, extensive work in the field, in museums and in the lab have shown that this was a gross underestimate. We now know that there are at least 14 species, and greater knowledge of their behaviour and ecology has allowed us to trace the independent evolution of six generic lineages. We also know that living bushbabies have very deep roots in time: the family began to evolve around 35 million years ago, when the world become a cold and dry place after the Antarctic ice sheets began to form.

I played a key role in putting together this story, and it is something I am proud of.

I am currently working on a 200-year-old problem: how did lemurs get onto Madagascar, when the Mozambique Channel is 420 km wide at its closest point, and the Agulhas current that courses south-westwards between Africa and Madagascar is one of the strongest in the world? I am working on this problem with colleagues in South Africa and France, and we think we may have solved it….

AL: How do you ensure your research is communicated well, internalised and acted upon?

JM: Since I was a child, I have loved reading and writing. I work hard to get my results published in internationally read journals. I participate actively and regularly in conferences, and host an annual meeting for primatology researchers in South Africa, where students are encouraged to present their work alongside professional researchers. I aim to make a bid to host the meeting of the International Primatological Society – which has thousands of members worldwide – in Durban in 2025. I am also a member of the IUCN Primate Specialist Group that carries out regular surveys of primate species.

AL: What do you think has been the greatest impact of your work?

JM: Perhaps the greatest impact of my work has been to raise the profile of primatology in South Africa. Not only do we have a dedicated primatological society in the country that has met annually for 17 years (this year is its first interruption), I have trained local students in primate research, as well as postgraduate students from Italy, France and Madagascar, who have come to work on our wild animals.

AL: What advice would you share with Young Researchers out there?

JM: Nothing comes without passion, commitment and hard work – so before you take on a research career, make sure you love what you do. There will be many times when you wonder if there isn't an easier way to make a living. You may lose your field site in a fire, or lose your animals in a drought or to a hunter, and have to start again. Just remember what Winston Churchill said: *"Never give in--never, never, never, never, in nothing great or small, large or petty, never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense."*

Prof Masters currently has three manuscripts under review in international journals. She is the Editor for an international journal (published by Wiley). She collects her own data, which she analyse, share with my students, and publish. Her h-index is 24. She held a B-rating for 17 years. She is also the guest editor for a special issue of the International Journal of Primatology, which will come out early next year. She is a world expert on the systematics of African lorisoid primates, and has a great deal of experience in those of Madagascar and Asia.

UPDATE FROM CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

DATA MODEMS AND LAPTOPS FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: UPDATE 12 JUNE 2020

Dear Students,

The number of students that have currently provided their e-learning cellular numbers on which to load the free data stands at 8500, or 54% of the student population. All of the lines registered on iEnabler are sent to all four Mobile Network Operators as only they are able to identify which lines are managed by them.

Vodacom data has been loaded on their lines earlier this week. Telkom has loaded some of their lines but have indicated that they have technical problems which they are working hard to resolve. Cell C has advised that they will load the first two batches of lines with data over the weekend 13 and 14 June. They will advise thereafter if they had any technical issues. MTN requires a credit vetting process to be complete before they commence with the loading of data. All of the Mobile Network Operators have assured us that they are doing their best to load the data, but also have indicated the scale of this project is unprecedented and thus challenging.

There are currently 6065 students that have placed an order for a laptop on iEnabler. The tender for the laptops has been concluded and an award made. The target date for delivery of the laptops at this stage is the first week in August. There may however be delays due to the impact of the Corona virus on the manufacturing process in China.

There are 5064 applications for modems. The process for acquisition of the modems will commence shortly.

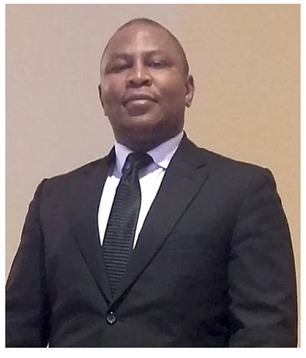
To date 78,2% of students have responded to the request to complete the iEnabler application for devices.

Students are encouraged to complete the application even if they have no requirements as this will provide an indication of the number of students that have been reached by this initiative.

If there are any queries, cancellations, or amendments to applications submitted, a call must be logged at ictservicemanager@ufh.ac.za.

Kind Regards,

Dr. Christian Johl
Chief Information Officer



COVID-19 CAMPUS READINESS UPDATE:

Properties and Services Department

By Mr Philisa Mvulana, Director – Properties and Services

Since the announcement of the return of the first cohort (33%) of staff and students to campus by the Minister Nzimande, staff in Properties and Service have been working on getting the campuses ready for occupancy.

We are pleased to share the following milestones:

- Disinfection of lecture halls, residences, offices and common areas is in progress and should be be completed and certified by 16 June 2020.
- Reusable masks for all staff have been ordered and will be issued to staff according to the Department of Employment and Labour regulations.
- Disposable masks have been procured as the quickest option whilst reusable cloth masks are being manufactured and are expected to be delivered next week. They will be issued only to staff who are allowed to come to campus and are in possession of a valid permit signed by the relevant head of department.
- The purchase of sanitizer dispensers has proven to be a challenge. All contacted service providers do not have stock at hand and the earliest possible delivery date is envisaged for mid-July 2020. This is due to high demand, nationwide.

In the interim, we have procured hand held 70%v/v Alcohol-based hand rub disinfectants. These will be provided to all offices, lecture venues and residences, until all dispenser installations have been completed.

The department is working tirelessly to ensure that all campuses are hygienically ready, compliant to social distancing and all relevant regulations. Further update will be provided as new information becomes available.

ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT
Going the extra mile

To ensure teaching and learning continues during the Covid-19 lockdown period, the department has been utilising courier services to deliver study materials right at the door-step of Post Graduate Diploma in Accounting (PGDA) students.

Staff in the Nkuhlu Department of Accounting are going the extra-mile – literally!

To ensure teaching and learning continues during the Covid-19 lockdown period, the department has been utilising courier services to deliver study materials right at the door-step of Post Graduate Diploma in Accounting (PGDA) students.

PGDA students are being prepared to write the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) Initial Test of Competence (ITC) exam. This is traditionally written every year in January. This therefore means it is imperative for them to complete the curriculum in time for the exam.

Financial Management Lecturer, Esther Mason CA (SA), said due to the restrictive time frames, lecturers had to devise alternative means to ensure teaching and learning takes place remotely. According to her, study packs were printed and provided to students a week before lockdown regulations were imposed. However, the material was only for one month. Up-to-date study materials were uploaded onto the Blackboard online platform. However, some students were experiencing challenges in accessing the online platform.

In response to students' challenges, the Department collated and printed the information. When lockdown regulations were eased and courier services were allowed to operate, they started delivering the printed study notes. So far, 91 of the 111 PGDA students have received their study packs.

Ms Mason said after the students received their study packs the Department witnessed a significant increase in student consultation. "This is an indication that they are now engaging with the material."

The Department also uses the following means to communicate with all accounting students:

- **Blackboard - for extensive uploading of notes and videos of lecture materials, as well as discussion forums.**
- **Consultations via e-mail.**
- **WhatsApp chat groups for each subject.**

Ms Mason said the chat group allows students to ask questions and receive clarity on materials, or on how to access videos. It also allows lecturers to give guidance and advise if new material has been uploaded. "The feedback is quicker and also allows for voice note explanations," she said.

by Aretha Linden

CONSTRUCTION OF FORT HARE STUDENT ACCOMMODATION RESUMES

Source: HeraldLIVE, published on 09 June 2020 By Yolanda Palezweni. Click here to view original article

Construction work has resumed on a large-scale student village development at the University of Fort Hare. The R400m project, which is being developed by Stag African at the university's Alice campus, had to be put on hold for two months because of the coronavirus lockdown

Once completed, the development will accommodate a total of 2,047 students, Stag African director Sean Kenealy said the project was the largest student accommodation development undertaken by a university in SA and was scheduled for completion in December. "Its completion is critical to easing the housing crisis at the University of Fort Hare and giving students access to resources necessary for academic success," Kenealy said.

He said lack of accommodation was one of the biggest challenges the university faced. "Residences at its Alice campus were barely able to accommodate 50% of the student population. "With the development project, the university aims to house 65% of students on campus, as well as provide a new student centre and a dedicated postgraduate accommodation block," Kenealy said.

He said the Covid-19 lockdown has had a severe effect on SA's construction industry, including material shortages, loss of income and the delay of key infrastructure projects such as student housing. Kenealy believes the reopening of the sector will play a big role in reducing lockdown-related unemployment. "The construction and property development industries are major economic contributors — they have the potential to employ large numbers of workers very quickly."

Stag African's Fort Hare project manager Nangamso Cetywayo said after weeks of preparation and implementation of strict health and safety measures in accordance with level 3 regulations, the construction site had been declared Covid-19 protocol-compliant. "Physical distancing, the use of face masks, and continued education are among the measures being taken to prevent the spread of the virus, and ensure the safety of construction workers," Cetywayo said.

Phase one of the project, completed in 2014, resulted in 610 beds being made available to the university. A further 854 beds have been completed under phase two, which is funded by the department of higher education and training, the Development Bank of Southern Africa and the EU.

According to Stag African, completion of the project in December will bring the total number of beds handed over to 2,047, giving the university the highest ratio of students to beds in the country.

"With the development project, the university aims to house 65% of students on campus, as well as provide a new student centre and a dedicated postgraduate accommodation block,"

COVID-19 PANDEMIC: *THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT*

By Dr Modeni Mudzamba Michael Sibanda
UFH Senior Lecturer and Postgraduate Coordinator in the Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Management and Commerce.
Source: Soundcloud - https://bit.ly/2U7mOko

The Coronavirus (Covid-19) represents an unprecedented assault on global social and economic activity as we have ever known it. Since 31 December 2019 and as at 19 May 2020, **4 766 468 cases** of Covid-19 have been reported, including **318 201 deaths** around the globe. Globally, local governments are at the core of the Covid-19 crisis.

This calls for national government, provincial and regional responses to Covid-19 to be matched with equal integrated planning and disaster mitigation responses at the local government level. Crises such as the Covid-19 highlight the role of local government as the coalface of policy delivery and impact. Whether local government works to ensure that services that keep communities functioning continue to be delivered to the best standards, or join partners from the third sector, local, national or global levels - to address the impact of the outbreak of Covid-19 they remain better placed to respond innovatively to the pandemic, now and in a post-Covid-19 epoch.

As the grassroots layer of government closest to communities, local government around the globe is better placed to continuously lead and innovate in response to Covid-19. However, this pandemic brings with it local governance, economic, financial and social shocks. As Covid-19 continues to spread with devastating consequences on local communities, local government remains at the forefront of combating the outbreak. Local government's disaster preparedness, service delivery, infrastructure and human capital and resource capabilities and intergovernmental coordination, remain key to Covid-19 response and mitigation, as well as to containing the spread of the virus and to ensuring post- Covid-19 local government recovery, functionality and sustainability.

As a vital implementation vehicle of nation-wide measures, local government leverages on bottom-up, innovative and technological local governance responses and other means to sustain its unique proximity to citizens and local service delivery.

Dr Modeni Mudzamba Michael Sibanda, holds a Doctor of Administration (DAdmin) in Public Administration and Management from the University of the Free State. He specialises in local government. His research interests are in local government administration. He has published scholarly articles in several peer-reviewed Journals and is a member of the Editorial Board of the Journal of Local Government Research and Innovation (JOLGRI).

The effect of COVID-19 Virus on the Youth of 1976 aspirations to the attainment of the right to education

Unpublished opinion piece by
Prof Nomthandazo Ntlama
and **Dr Bellita Banda,**
UNESCO 'Oliver Tambo'
Chair of Human Rights

Prof Nomthandazo Ntlama *Dr Bellita Banda*

Each year June 16, traceable to 1976 in Soweto, is a historic milestone of the role played by South Africa's youth in the democratisation of the country, particularly with the provisioning of quality education for all without distinction. It was in 1976, long before the attainment of democracy in 1994 and the subsequent adoption of the Constitution in 1996, that the youth made national and international headlines by challenging the foundations of the apartheid system that entrenched segregation and discrimination in providing the decent education for all. The youth shaped the human rights discourse which was of significance in providing a bedrock for the achievement of the right to education.

Ironically, 44 years later and 26 years into the attainment of the new constitutional dispensation, history appears to have repeated itself in a totally different dimension and threatens to derail the aspirations of 1976. Due to Covid-19, youth of today find themselves under siege in protecting their right to education. Covid-19 has catapulted its way into the daily consciousness of everybody's lives in the world. One might say this is the world's greatest 'health epidemic and human disaster' worldwide with several governments calling for lockdowns to curtail its spread. Universities have not been spared from this with students being the most affected. Thus, as we celebrate youth month, universities are facing increasing pressure to identify all-inclusive strategies at all levels – in a bid to promote the realization of the right to education as entrenched in various international, regional and national instruments particularly (section 7(1) of the Constitution 1996). This has weighty inferences for South African universities during Covid-19 taking into consideration that teaching and learning has shifted to online platforms. As such, universities have been put under the spotlight to come up with concrete answers on how best to cater for their students, including those who are vulnerable (youth) to avoid an adverse impact on the right to education and human rights.

We cannot run away from the truth that Covid-19 has exposed the lingering apartheid tendencies and the stark differences towards the attainment of the right to education in South Africa, particularly, the infrastructural deficit. However, this has not deterred some universities, our very own included (UFH), in reaching out to its staff and students to deliver virtual teaching *(as well as the first ever virtual graduation)* and learning. In the process, the right to education of students has been accelerated to avoid learning deficits spiraling out of control while keeping in line the quality and veracity of assessment procedures. It is in this spirit, that as the UNESCO 'Oliver Tambo' Chair of Human Rights reflects on Youth Day, applauds the University of Fort Hare for promoting non-discrimination during Covid-19. This is in order to enhance the right to education for all students by working *Together in Excellence* to ensure no student is left behind.

The fact that the right to education is a fundamental human right means education is not a static commodity but a public good and holds its own inherent value as a human right. Thus, as we celebrate Youth Day, let us all strive as a university to turn the tide around for the youth (our students) who are the leaders of tomorrow. Let us *speak truth to power* so that the hefty price paid for in 1976 for the right to education does not remain a far-fetched dream, but becomes a reality.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE *Collectively Responsible*

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

Source: https://www.nihss.ac.za/content/what-does-it-mean-be-collectively-responsible

As the world struggles to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, the phrase 'collective responsibility' is constantly on our lips; we have heard it from politicians, opinionistas and academics. There is disagreement around the best response strategy in the face of deep uncertainty; but there is no uncertainty that this pandemic requires a collective response.

COVID-19 is forcing us to confront the reality that while, for most of us, much of what we do as individuals makes no significant difference, what we do together will be the measure of our survival. Philosophers have long reflected on the question of collective responsibility in both a forward looking (we have a collective duty reduce social contact) and a backward-looking sense (we are held collectively responsible for our failure to reduce social contact).

There are a number of vexing questions around, for example, what it means to be an agent who can be held responsible or how we think about the relationship between the individual and the responsible collective of which they are a part. There are also distinctions between different kinds of responsibility: moral responsibility that leads to praise or blame, and outcome or task responsibility that points to an obligation to act in a certain way or to rectify the situation (for example, paying one's share of reparations for a past injustice). For now, I thought it would be helpful to share two features of collective responsibility in my own research that can help us to better understand what it might mean when we say we are collectively responsible for our response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Individual actions interact to create collective outcomes

The first feature of collective responsibility is that it calls upon us to reflect not just on our own individual actions, but the result of our actions taken together. The great challenge we currently face is that it can be hard for some individuals to accept that one has a moral responsibility to socially isolate when, considering their action alone, it is likely to make little difference if they go visit a friend, this one time. Even if they are currently infectious, perhaps passing on the disease to two to three people doesn't, alone, feel that consequential.

Yet, as the many infographics circulating on social media seek to convey, now, more than ever, we have to consider not just what our action alone might do, but how our individual actions interact with others' individual actions to create a collective outcome.

My research considers these collective outcomes with regards to our consumer actions and our influence on our governments. It highlights how, as citizens of a particular state, we share a geographical space and shared institutional structures, and as such, we have a responsibility to pay attention to how our sometimes innocent individual actions interact to create morally troubling collective outcomes, even when we do not jointly intend them to do so. Consider environmental problems such as overfishing: while individuals choosing to fish in a particular lake is morally neutral in most cases, the combination of a large number of people making that same individual choice can lead to the collective outcome of an overfished lake.

As citizens of a particular state, we have the institutional resources to co-ordinate in cases where a lack of co-ordination leads to morally bad outcomes. The question citizens need to ask themselves in the face of a global pandemic is not then 'what difference will my individual action make?' but 'how will my action interact with others' actions?' and, 'what can we do together?'.

The question citizens need to ask themselves in the face of a global pandemic is not then 'what difference will my individual action make?' but 'how will my action interact with others' actions?' and, 'what can we do together?'

Distribute actions according to ability, skill or resources

The second helpful feature of collective responsibility in my view is how it can account for the unifying call to action, while also allowing for the required actions to be distributed according to ability, skill or resources. When we are considering our forward-looking collective responsibility, the question of what we can do together, we need to think about what that means in terms of actions for each of us as citizens. In my view, the collective responsibility belongs to us as a collective, not as individuals (none of us alone can stop the spread of COVID-19), but we all individually have an obligation to do our bit of the collective responsibility.

These layers of responsibility might sound unnecessarily complicated, but they highlight that while we are all equally members of a responsible collective, 'our bit' of this collective responsibility might differ.

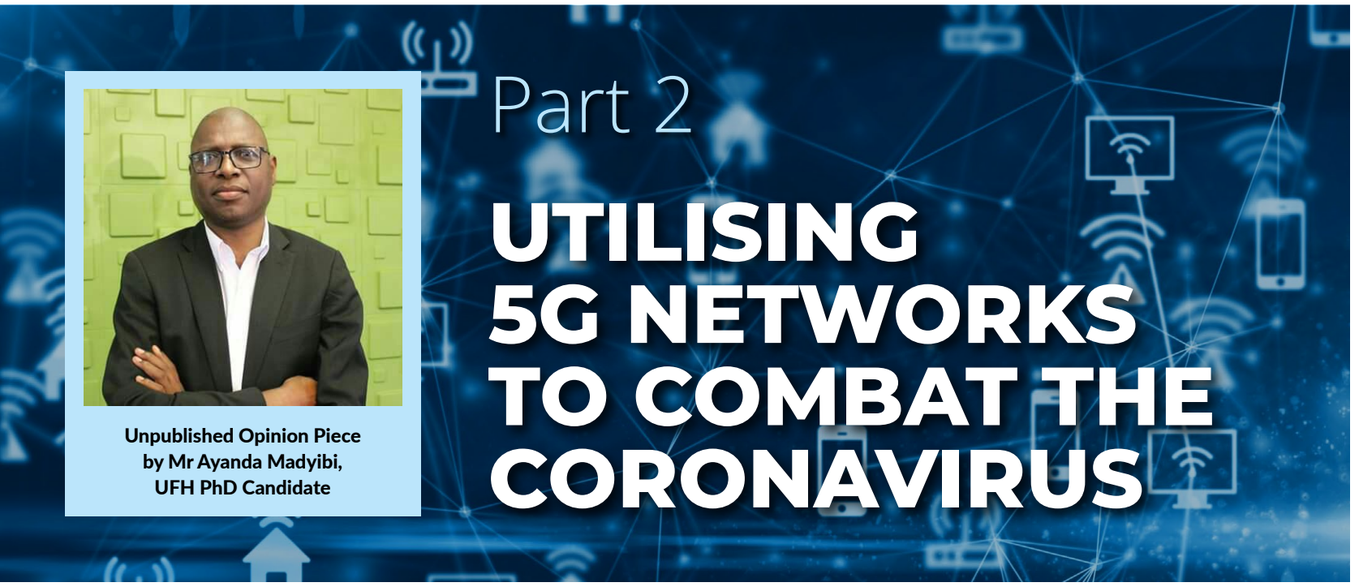
This is important because talk of collective responsibility can tend to obscure deep inequality within the collective.

We know that the burden of this pandemic, and the measures to overcome it, fall unevenly. To start, while some of us continue to work remotely from our homes, others have to venture out to perform essential services, and others find themselves unemployed and unable to seek new work. What it means to stay at home also vastly differs between households, both in terms of the physical environment of our homes, should we have them, and in terms of how safe we feel trapped with those in our household.

It is essential then to note that we can be collectively responsible, but our share of the actions required to meet that responsibility might look different. For some, it is the call to serve long hours at the hospital and for others it is to do one's best to find a safe place to shelter for the duration.

It invites us to consider: what is my bit of this collective responsibility? To be sure, for all of us, it is to follow the government-mandated instructions during lockdown. But in a deeply divided society, collective responsibility asks us to also consider whether our position in society warrants a larger share of this collective responsibility: it may be as simple as regularly calling to check in on those at risk, donating your resources or expertise, or speaking up for 'at home' working or studying conditions that respond to the realities of different kinds of homes. Others may have a responsibility to struggle to keep paying company employees in the face of a personal loss of income, or to turn one's company's production toward required medical goods, and so on.

Collective responsibility is a call to unity; to notice that we have to act together. In many ways this is a simple call for us to all follow the same, government-mandated instructions; a responsibility to stay at home. But this account of collective responsibility can allow us to also notice that over and beyond this main responsibility, our bit of the collective responsibility is shaped by our resources, skills and capacity. Those who are able are called to take up a greater share of the collective burden of facing this pandemic in a deeply unequal world.



Unpublished Opinion Piece
by Mr Ayanda Madyibi,
UFH PhD Candidate

Part 2

UTILISING 5G NETWORKS TO COMBAT THE CORONAVIRUS

Opportunities to Combat COVID-19

COVID-19 has put tremendous pressure on public healthcare systems and epidemic response mechanisms across the world. In China, due to its vast landscape, large, highly mobile population and their complicated demand for resources, the effectiveness of communication and data exchange have been essential in screening for infected individuals, providing on-ground support to front line staff and controlling the outbreak.

Thus, telecommunications operators collaborated with telco companies to rapidly set up a specific 5G network dedicated to COVID-19 treatment hospitals. In tandem with innovative applications, 5G is driving the transformation of emergency response mechanisms to become digital, accurate and smart. The following 5G initiatives can be effective in South Africa's condition:

- ***5G thermal imaging supports contagion monitoring -*** It can accurately monitor a moving object's temperatures in real-time without contact and, issue abnormal temperature alerts.
- 5G enables ***continuous remote monitoring and diagnosis*** during patient transfer
- ***5G remote platforms to improve consultation effectiveness and efficiency*** - The ideal technology to meet teleconferencing requirements to enable medical experts to treat patients without constraints on their physical location, and substantially improve the accuracy and efficiency of consultations.
- ***Pandemic monitoring platform*** - 5Gs high-speed data transmission and advanced data analytics can consolidate large amounts of fragmented information and can improve monitoring accuracy and efficiency, and reduce heavy manual work.
- ***The Natural Disaster Command Centre*** - Natural disaster response can be equipped with 5G and Internet of Things (IoT) networks, enabling deep analysis of supply chains and providing real-time information on front-line supply consumption, resource inventory levels, production capability, supply capability, and logistics support decisions to balance supply and demand.
- ***Remote medical consultation*** - 5G networks can extend medical consultation into the community and even to individual households, enabling interaction between patients and doctors

5G and COVID-19 Conspiracy

The main claim around this conspiracy is that the 5G radio frequency communications have a harmful health impact to the society and either these are openly making people sick or the radiation is weakening peoples' immune systems and therefore susceptible to coronavirus. The fear is probably based on the fact that 5G and other radiofrequency communications involve radiation, which for many is a scary word reminiscent of Chernobyl, the atomic bomb and cancer. However, only the upper part of the electromagnetic spectrum, with the shortest-wavelength frequencies (from the edge of Ultraviolet (UV), through X-rays and gamma radiation) is "ionizing" meaning they can break apart molecular bonds and therefore damage DNA as shown in the electromagnetic diagram above.

5G uses frequencies in the 30–300 gigahertz range. In the 30-300 gigahertz range, there's not enough energy to break chemical bonds or remove electrons when in contact with human tissue. Thus, this range is referred to as "non-ionising" electromagnetic radiation. Non-ionizing radiation, which includes the rest of the spectrum, from UV (Ultraviolet) through visible light, to infrared, microwave and radio waves, has wavelengths that are too long to be able to strip electrons from atoms. Therefore, they cannot damage living organisms in the same way as X-rays or gamma radiation. In other words, it's physically impossible for microwaves to cause cancer in the same way that gamma rays do.

Microwave radiation can, of course, heat things up - that's how microwave ovens work (the mechanism is called **dielectric heating**). Cell phones (and WIFI) also use microwaves in the same part of the spectrum, though at vastly lower power. The absolute worst that can likely happen is that cell phones could cause a small amount of increased temperature, which is why international regulations exist about how much cell phone radiation people should be exposed to.

So, scientifically given that radiofrequency emissions operate at the non-ionizing end of the electromagnetic spectrum, there is "no known mechanism" by which emissions at these frequencies could damage DNA and cause decease like cancer as confirmed by the US National Cancer Institute (NCI). Bear in mind that we also have a lot of real-world data: billions of people have been using cell phones and WIFI for many years now with no increase in cancer rates. Therefore, there is no credible scientific evidence of health problems caused by the exposure to radiofrequency energy emitted by cell phones. 5G will use frequencies that are already covered in the current international guidelines, so it does not raise any new safety concerns, in the opinion of regulatory agencies across the international world.

Conspiracy theories that gain widespread credibility can be very dangerous. Most obviously, if enough people start to believe that COVID-19 is not a real virus, they will stop trusting scientific authorities and governments trying to curb the pandemic. They may even contribute to its spread if they cease obeying social distancing and quarantine measures.

As an example, in the United Kingdom, cell phone towers have been set on fire, possibly by people believing the 5G conspiracy theory. Not only has this criminal damage taken up valuable time of law enforcement, but the resulting cell phone outages could hamper the work of health services and police during the pandemic. Any failure of communications technologies is especially damaging for people isolated at home who need virtual communications now more than ever before.

5G Status in South Africa

In September 2019, mobile data-only network operator Rain activated Africa's first commercial 5G network. Vodacom was recently assigned temporary spectrum by ICASA for the duration of the national state of disaster, including 1 x 50MHz in the 3.5GHz band, which has been used to fast-track its 5G launch. Vodacom has targeted Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town with further rollouts planned to other parts of the country.

The deployment of 5G is set to help Vodacom manage the 40% increase in mobile network traffic and the 250% increase in fixed traffic. The lockdown has resulted in a spike in online activity, from video conferencing to streaming movies. 5G spectrum is largely unassigned in the country and regulator, ICASA, said it will auction additional spectrum by the end of the year.

Why is 5G a Game-changer?

5G technologies have the potential to help resolve our socio-economic challenges. 5G, the fifth generation of cellular wireless technology, will offer massive connection power and fast speeds that can help transform how healthcare is delivered. For people in rural areas, with doctors located several miles away, travelling while ill can be challenging and time-consuming. With the advent of telehealth and remote home monitoring systems, though, we could receive care from the comfort of our homes. Doctors could make recommendations after a short video call and even submit prescription requests.

By enabling all these technologies through 5G networks, healthcare systems can improve the quality of care and patient experience, reduce the cost of care, and more. Instead of only reacting to patients' conditions, 5G networks can give providers the ability to provide more personalized and preventive care – which is the reason many healthcare employees became providers in the first place.

Endnote: Mr Ayanda Madyibi is currently a PhD (Information Systems) candidate with the University of Fort Hare focusing on e-government and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) Emerging Technologies.

JOURNAL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESEARCH AND INNOVATION: CALL FOR PAPERS

The Journal of Local Government Research and Innovation (JOLGRI) is calling for manuscript submissions. Themed: *Local government responses to COVID -19 and its socio-economic impact,* the special issue looks at the socio-economic impact of the spreading of Covid-19 and the response of local government to the devastating pandemic.

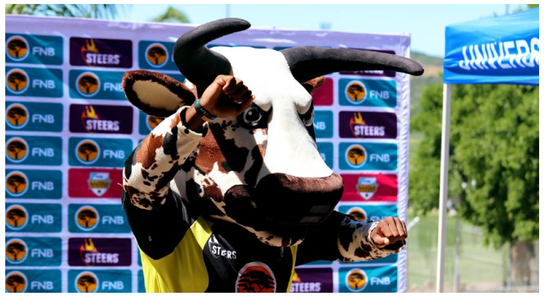
Scholars are encouraged to conduct timely research, with the intention of capturing findings and delivering insight during this period of unprecedented uncertainty and challenges. Manuscripts can address any of the following suggested themes:

- What services and infrastructure delivery approaches would best suit local government response to COVID-19 in different contexts?
- How is local government currently working to protect residents, halt the spread of the virus, protect local economies and mitigate the impact of COVID-19?
- What capacity do local governments have to respond to the COVID-19 crisis?
- COVID-19 provides a unique opportunity for local government to upscale innovation, what innovations have been or can be used in response to COVID-19?
- Local governments are looking beyond the COVID-19 crisis, and the "new normal". How are Intergovernmental relations enabling implementation of nation-wide measures, or development of place-based responses in line with national frameworks and initiatives?
- What innovative ways are being employed by local government administrations to address social equity and social cohesion?
- What measures are being taken to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable groups and fragile members of the community and society?
- How will the COVID-19 crisis impact on the continuity of local public services and how can local governments appropriately respond to the crisis?
- Local governments are uniquely positioned to shape, adapt and deliver holistic responses to the COVID-19 epidemic, how is this being done in different contexts?
- What innovative local government financing models can impact post-COVID-19 recovery, so as to address exclusion and inequalities in resource limited contexts?

Scholars are encouraged to undertake timely research, with the intention of capturing findings and delivering insights during this period of unprecedented uncertainty and challenges. The following are a list of suggested possible themes:

- Increasing the capacity of the local government system
- Community awareness and mobilisation
- Social protection measures
- Enforcement of public order and safety regulations
- Continued provision of essential services
- Relief measures for local economies
- Managing migrants and homelessness
- Supporting and protecting vulnerable communities and members of society affected by the COVID-19 crisis
- Disaster preparedness and mitigation
- Sustainability performance in local government
- Inequalities, social cohesion and stability in local government
- Water and sanitation, social equity, ecological integrity resources, justice and human rights.
- Disaster management, preparedness and mitigation

Closing date for submission of manuscripts is **31 July 2020,** final acceptance will be made in October. The publication forecast is December 2020. Further inquiries can be directed via: special-issues@aosis.co.za or visiting https://jolgri.org/index.php/jolgri



UFH SPORTS TURNS TO DIGITAL PLATFORM TO ENGAGE PLAYERS

"As per the national regulations, we are on a semi shut-down in the office. All of the plans we had this year are on an abrupt halt which is devastating for the entire sporting fraternity,"

The Covid-19 situation we found ourselves in is a telling blow to sports activities globally, and UFH is no exception. This is according to the University of Fort Hare Head of Sports, Mr Loyiso Lange. He is also the National Chairperson of University Sports South Africa (USSA) Cricket.

To navigate around the challenges presented by the pandemic, Mr Lange said the plan is to continue engaging players using a digital platform.

"Our plans will, in the main, be influenced by the academic calendar. However, we are working on providing a digital platform which will enable coaches to engage players as and when they return." He said a bigger part of the plan will be directly influenced by the return of students back to campus. Therefore, the final plan may only be finalized then.

"As per the national regulations, we are on a semi shut-down in the office. All of the plans we had this year are on an abrupt halt which is devastating for the entire sporting fraternity," he said.

Mr Lange said the pandemic has brought about cancellation of plans to upgrade facilities, updating of policies and withdrawal of sponsorship engagement including cancelling participation in tournaments.

In the midst of this pandemic and the amount of pressure that will be applied to students' academic catch-up plan, Mr Lange agrees with USSA's decision to call-off tournaments for the year.

"Our institution will have to channel part of the budget from sports towards Covid-19 compliance. National regulations stipulate that only professional sports may return to playing fields. Unfortunately, universities feature only in semi-pro, amateur and academy level.

Effectively, that means we may not be able to participate in any sport until at least January 2021," he lamented.

by Mawande Mrashula

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