



National Council for Higher Education

PUBLIC LECTURE

“HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE LABOUR MARKET”



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	iv
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. WELCOMING REMARKS	2
3. KEYNOTE PRESENTATION	3
4. PANEL DISCUSSION AND ISSUES THAT EMERGED	17
Mr. Albius Mwiya, Deputy Director: Labour Market Services – Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare	17
Prof. Tjama Tjivikua, Rector: Polytechnic of Namibia	18
Mr. David Nuuyoma, Chief Executive Officer: Development Bank of Namibia	19
Mr. Mike Hill, Member: Namibian Employers’ Federation	20
Prof. Erika Maass, Director of Academic Affairs: University of Namibia	21
Dr. Hylton Villet, Chairperson: Skills Development Committee, Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry	22
5. OPEN DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS	24
6. CLOSING REMARKS AND VOTE OF THANKS	26
APPENDICES	
a. <i>Public Lecture Programme</i>	27
b. <i>Public Lecture Participants</i>	28



ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DBN	Development Bank of Namibia
ED	Executive Director
ETSIP	Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
IoT	Institute of Technology
IUM	International University of Management
MLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
NCCI	Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry
NCHE	National Council for Higher Education
NBC	Namibian Broadcasting Corporation
NDPs	National Development Plans
NEF	Namibian Employers' Federation
PoN	Polytechnic of Namibia
R&D	Research and Development
SA	South Africa
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
S&T	Science and Technology
TV	Television
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
UNAM	University of Namibia
WIL	Work-Integrated Learning
ZAR	South African Rand

1. INTRODUCTION

On 17 October 2012, the Secretariat of the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) organized a public lecture on the theme: “Higher Education and the Labour Market”, held at the Auditorium of the Government Office Park in Windhoek. The event was acclaimed a resounding success judging from the turn out, the quality of deliberations, as well as overall organization.

The Public Lecture featured a keynote presentation by special guest, Professor Roy du Pré from the Republic of South Africa, a renowned veteran in the education sector with over 30 years of experience. It also featured a panel discussion by leading experts from the academia, industry and the labour sector. The distinguished panel comprised Mr. Albius Mwiya, Deputy Director of Labour Market Services at the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW); Prof. Tjama Tjivikua, Rector at the Polytechnic of Namibia (PoN); Mr. David Nuuyoma, Chief Executive Officer at the Development Bank of Namibia (DBN); Mr. Mike Hill representing the Namibian Employers’ Federation (NEF); Prof. Erika Maass, Director of Academic Affairs at the University of Namibia (UNAM); and Dr. Hylton Villet, Chairperson of the Industry Skills Development Committee of the Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NCCI).

The programme was skillfully steered by Mr. Lesley Tjiueza, a leading Journalist and Television (TV) Presenter at the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC).

The Public Lecture featured a keynote presentation by special guest, Professor Roy du Pré.



2. WELCOMING REMARKS

“Lecture was organized to enhance dialogue between industry and higher education institutions.”



Mr. Mocks Shivute, Executive Director, NCHE Secretariat.

Mr. Mocks Shivute, Executive Director of the NCHE Secretariat, welcomed invited guests comprising academicians, prominent figures in politics, academia, industry and students to the Public Lecture.

In his welcoming remarks, he reminded the gathering that the public lecture was organized to enhance dialogue between industry and higher education institutions (HEIs) in order to interrogate the relationship between Higher Education (HE) and the labour market, as well as the much-talked-about mismatch between industry and higher education.

He stated that the objective of the interaction was also to establish or learn how Namibia can develop the relevant skills and how the country can activate the supply of such skills to effective use.

Mr. Shivute then introduced the keynote speaker, Professor Roy du Pré, who has over 30 years of experience in education and has occupied very influential positions in the HE sector, notably as a lecturer, principal, vice chancellor and administrator. Prof. du Pré is a guest professor at universities in Germany whose degrees are tailored for students working in industry and who undergo in-service training.

3. KEYNOTE PRESENTATION



Prof. Roy du Pré, Keynote Speaker.

Developing a knowledge economy

Professor Roy du Pré's discourse was an eloquent eye-opener to the "knowledge-based society" and its impact on higher education and economic wellbeing. He pointed out that knowledge creation and the application of that knowledge is essential to the economic growth of any country but that few in the developing world are alive to the limitless possibilities that this knowledge economy presents.

He said that the progressive world had moved from a resource-based economy to a knowledge-based economy and that knowledge and not resources is the new source of wealth.

He added that although Namibia takes pride in the fact that it is endowed with vast deposits of precious minerals and other natural resources a sobering contrast to acknowledge is that majority of the world's top rich people on the Forbes richest list have all gained their wealth through selling knowledge. This he says, explain why many people are now talking about producing knowledge-workers to become part of this globalized knowledge economy.

Prof. du Pré remarked on certain inconsistencies in the Namibian economy with a strong link to the high unemployment rate and which he believes could be solved by developing a knowledge-based economy. He cited Namibia's heavy reliance on extraction of minerals and export. He said that the country is a primary source of gem diamond and is the fourth largest exporter of non-fuel minerals, with mining activities accounting for 20% of the country's GDP. Amidst all this he reflected that the mining sector employs roughly only 3% of the population.

"Knowledge creation and the application of that knowledge is essential to the economic growth of any country."



“There is need to create new industries, new enterprises as well as provide greater opportunities for employment.”

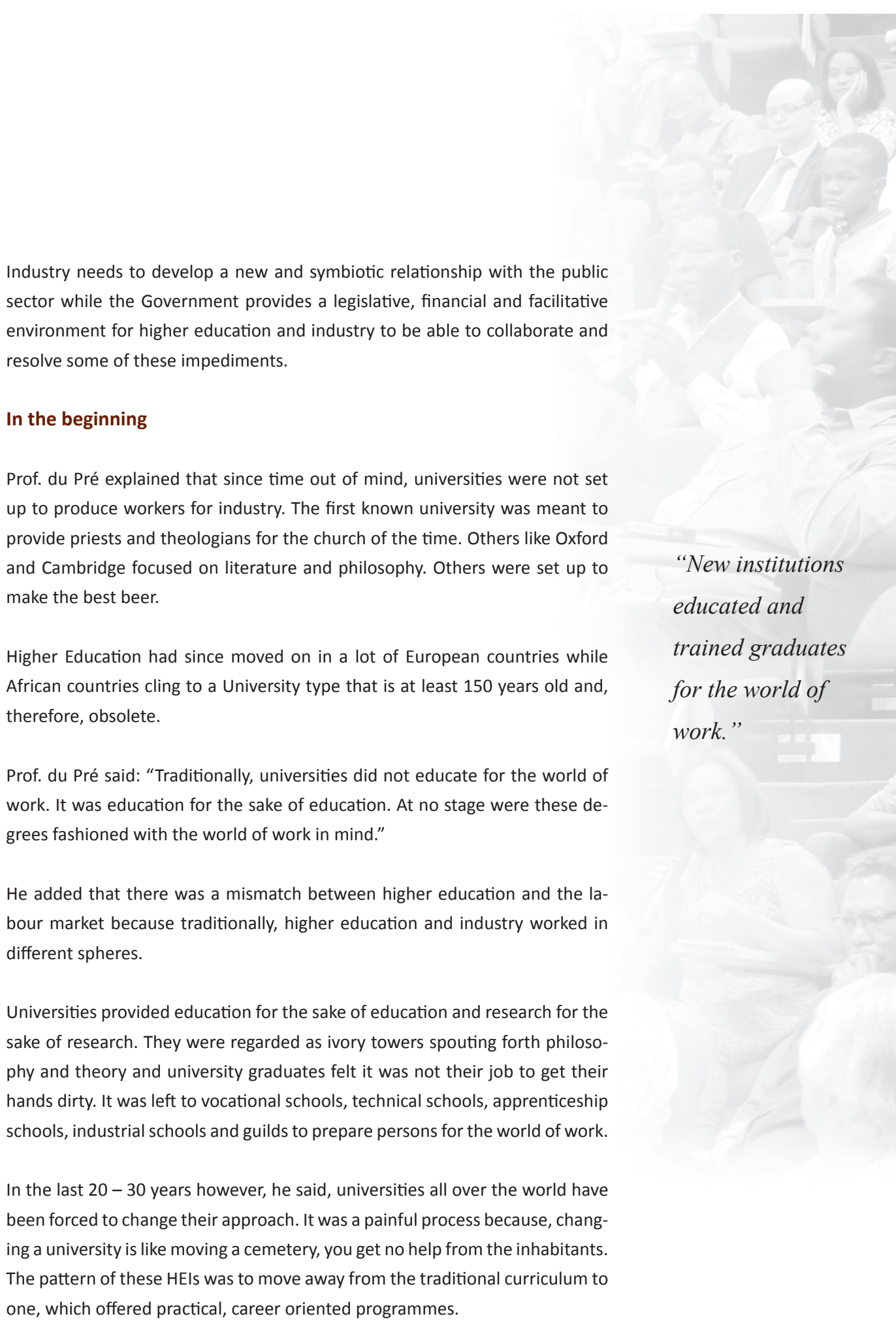
Prof. du Pré further reflected on Namibia’s labour market. He said “Although the national literacy rate is estimated at around 85%, the number of Namibians who are functionally literate and have the skills that the labour market needs is significantly fewer,” He went on to make the following observations:-

- that whereas the Namibian government recognizes science and technology as essential components in the development of the Namibian economy, the current skills training infrastructure is weak and there is a shortage of human resources in skills training, which places a huge responsibility on higher education institutions;
- that in addition, the low spending on research and development by government and the business sector is insufficient to realize the ambitious aims and goals of the national skills training policy. And that Namibia needs graduates in critical areas but the higher education sector is unable to produce adequate post-graduate students and researchers in those areas;
- that industry on the other hand needs to be able to exploit and benefit the country’s mineral resources to make profits through innovation and smarter ways of working. And that there is need to create new industries, new enterprises, as well as provide greater opportunities for employment; and
- that industry does not have sufficient graduates of the specific type in different areas of knowledge skills and competencies to be able to do the things expected.

Paradigm Shift

Prof. du Pré noted that to be relevant, HEIs would need to take a major paradigm shift to be able to provide human resources to exploit economic possibilities. This would include working more closely with industry than has hitherto been the case.

They need to quickly disabuse themselves of the insanity of doing the same thing over and over again while expecting a different result every time.



Industry needs to develop a new and symbiotic relationship with the public sector while the Government provides a legislative, financial and facilitative environment for higher education and industry to be able to collaborate and resolve some of these impediments.

In the beginning

Prof. du Pré explained that since time out of mind, universities were not set up to produce workers for industry. The first known university was meant to provide priests and theologians for the church of the time. Others like Oxford and Cambridge focused on literature and philosophy. Others were set up to make the best beer.

Higher Education had since moved on in a lot of European countries while African countries cling to a University type that is at least 150 years old and, therefore, obsolete.

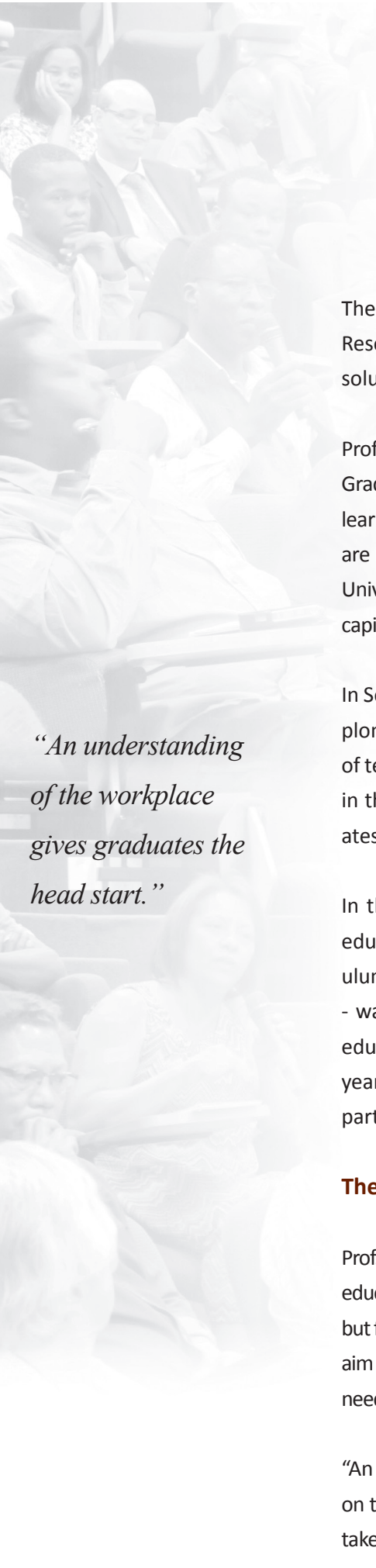
Prof. du Pré said: “Traditionally, universities did not educate for the world of work. It was education for the sake of education. At no stage were these degrees fashioned with the world of work in mind.”

He added that there was a mismatch between higher education and the labour market because traditionally, higher education and industry worked in different spheres.

Universities provided education for the sake of education and research for the sake of research. They were regarded as ivory towers spouting forth philosophy and theory and university graduates felt it was not their job to get their hands dirty. It was left to vocational schools, technical schools, apprenticeship schools, industrial schools and guilds to prepare persons for the world of work.

In the last 20 – 30 years however, he said, universities all over the world have been forced to change their approach. It was a painful process because, changing a university is like moving a cemetery, you get no help from the inhabitants. The pattern of these HEIs was to move away from the traditional curriculum to one, which offered practical, career oriented programmes.

*“New institutions
educated and
trained graduates
for the world of
work.”*



*“An understanding
of the workplace
gives graduates the
head start.”*

These new institutions educated and trained graduates for the world of work. Research was of an applied nature, it sought to identify problems and find solutions and find new and smarter ways of working.

Prof. du Pré said in many developed countries that include Switzerland, after Grade 9, ninety per cent of learners go to technical high-schools from where they learn how to do things with their hands. By the time they finish Grade 12, they are almost ready to get employed and when they do finish Grade 12, they go to Universities of applied sciences. The result is that Switzerland had the highest per capita income in the world. The richest people in the world sell knowledge.

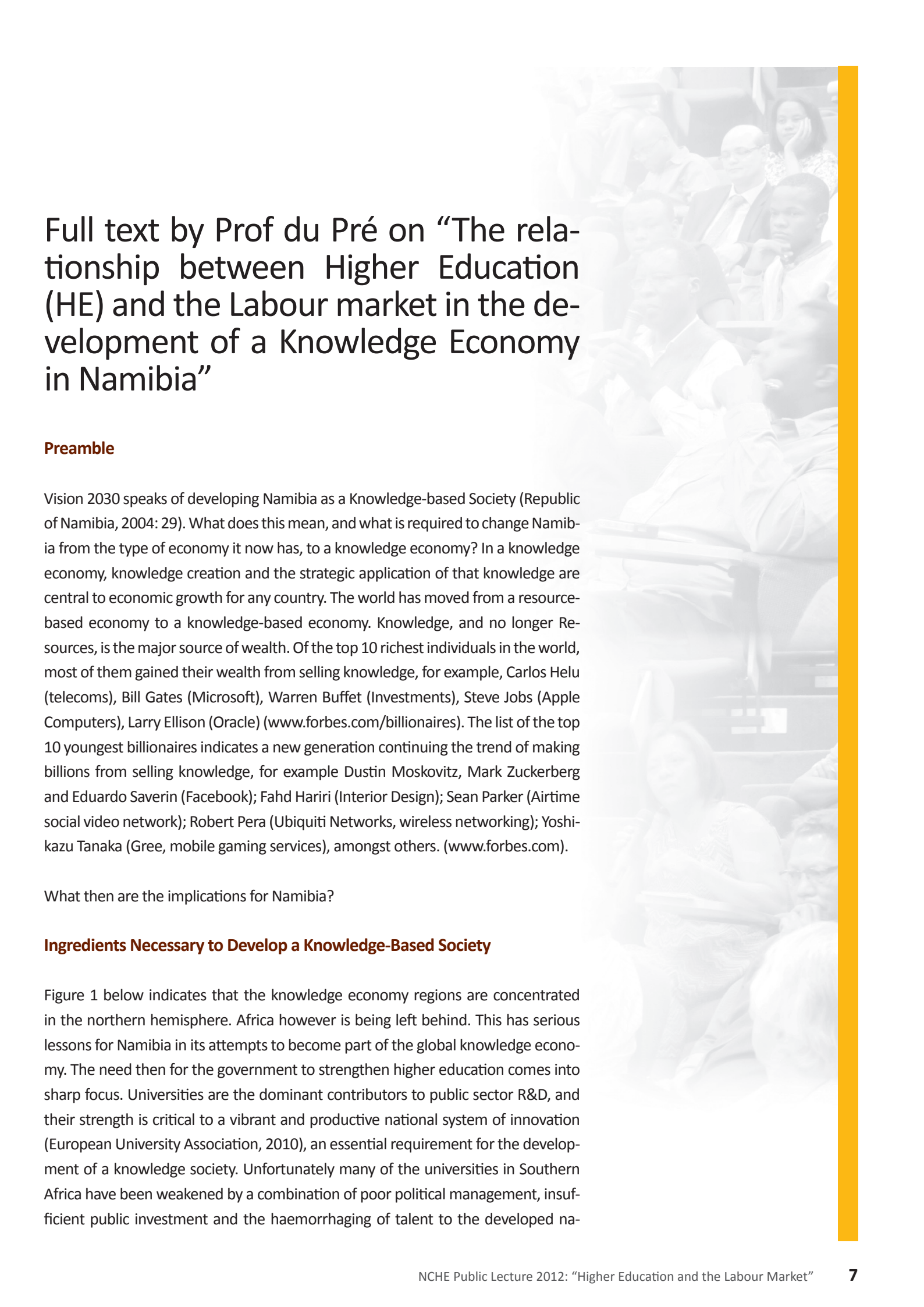
In South Africa, the technikons were established in 1979 to do post-school diplomas. They received degree-worthy status in 1993, and became universities of technology in 2004. In Australia, universities of technology were established in the 1980s and 90s and were followed by Malaysia, Iran, United Arab Emirates (UAE), etc.

In this context, Prof. du Pré called for greater collaboration between higher education and industry so that the former can make adjustments to the curriculum and remain relevant. He advocates for experiential learning and a three-way cooperation between the student, industry and the university. Higher education needs to realize that it cannot carry on with what was done 100 years ago and industry and commerce need to realize that higher education is part of their constituency.

The challenge

Prof. du Pré concluded that the major challenge for higher education was to make education relevant given that students no longer go to university just for an education, but for a career. Students now need to know how to apply what they have studied. The aim of universities now is to be able to provide young professionals with all that they need to translate their qualifications into top class performers in the world.

“An understanding of the workplace gives graduates the head start, while industry on the other hand has to provide placement opportunities for students to undertake experiential learning”.

A faded background image of a lecture hall filled with students, mostly of African descent, sitting at desks and listening. A solid yellow vertical bar is on the right side of the page.

Full text by Prof du Pré on “The relationship between Higher Education (HE) and the Labour market in the development of a Knowledge Economy in Namibia”

Preamble

Vision 2030 speaks of developing Namibia as a Knowledge-based Society (Republic of Namibia, 2004: 29). What does this mean, and what is required to change Namibia from the type of economy it now has, to a knowledge economy? In a knowledge economy, knowledge creation and the strategic application of that knowledge are central to economic growth for any country. The world has moved from a resource-based economy to a knowledge-based economy. Knowledge, and no longer Resources, is the major source of wealth. Of the top 10 richest individuals in the world, most of them gained their wealth from selling knowledge, for example, Carlos Helu (telecoms), Bill Gates (Microsoft), Warren Buffet (Investments), Steve Jobs (Apple Computers), Larry Ellison (Oracle) (www.forbes.com/billionaires). The list of the top 10 youngest billionaires indicates a new generation continuing the trend of making billions from selling knowledge, for example Dustin Moskovitz, Mark Zuckerberg and Eduardo Saverin (Facebook); Fahd Hariri (Interior Design); Sean Parker (Airtime social video network); Robert Pera (Ubiquiti Networks, wireless networking); Yoshikazu Tanaka (Gree, mobile gaming services), amongst others. (www.forbes.com).

What then are the implications for Namibia?

Ingredients Necessary to Develop a Knowledge-Based Society

Figure 1 below indicates that the knowledge economy regions are concentrated in the northern hemisphere. Africa however is being left behind. This has serious lessons for Namibia in its attempts to become part of the global knowledge economy. The need then for the government to strengthen higher education comes into sharp focus. Universities are the dominant contributors to public sector R&D, and their strength is critical to a vibrant and productive national system of innovation (European University Association, 2010), an essential requirement for the development of a knowledge society. Unfortunately many of the universities in Southern Africa have been weakened by a combination of poor political management, insufficient public investment and the haemorrhaging of talent to the developed na-

tions (Kotecha, 2008: 5). As a result, these institutions are well below their optimal performance levels in terms of both research output and human capital development. Despite the efforts of development agencies and other initiatives pioneered by the African Union (AU) and others, universities in Southern Africa continue to struggle and lag behind similar institutions in similar countries, such as Brazil, India and China, for example. African science is dominated by three countries, namely Egypt, Nigeria and South Africa, which collectively accounts for over 80% of the total output of scientific papers (Adams, 2010). Furthermore research collaboration, which is so essential to the productive research and human capital development, is restricted to three distinct clusters on the continent with relatively poor collaboration between them (Adams, 2010).

It can therefore be seen why the government of Namibia is keen to strengthen the HE sector, as therein lies the key to unlocking the door to a knowledge society.

The Current Situation in Namibia

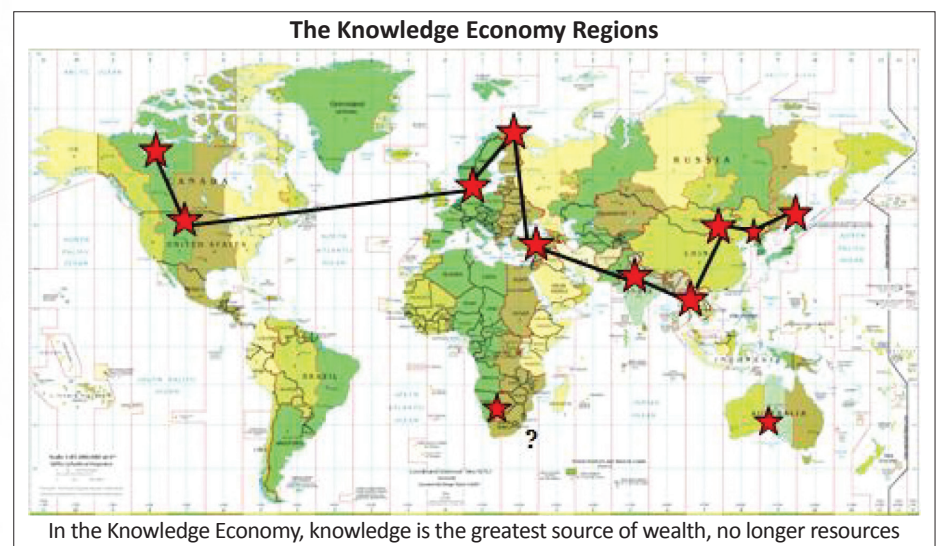
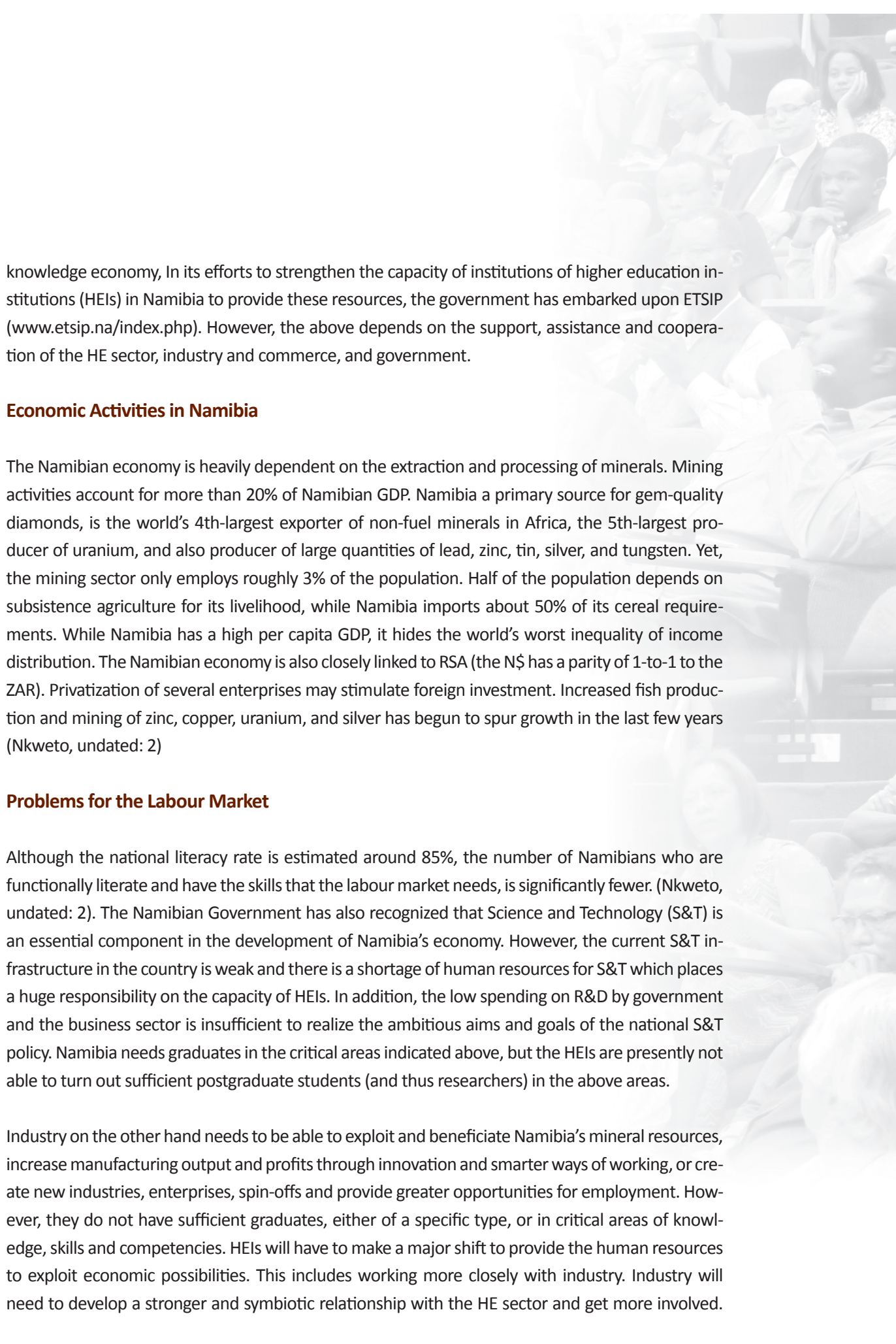


Fig. 1 - The Knowledge Economy Regions

According to the 15-year Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP) of the Government of Namibia, “the current supply of highly qualified human resources in areas critical to national development such as agriculture, fisheries, information technology, science in general, engineering, geology, medical science, accountancy and business management, does not match the demand in the local labour market.”(www.etsip.na). The Government has realized the importance of HE as a provider of these high-quality human resources if Namibia is to attain the long-term national development goals contained in Vision 2030 and develop a



knowledge economy, In its efforts to strengthen the capacity of institutions of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Namibia to provide these resources, the government has embarked upon ETSIP (www.etsip.na/index.php). However, the above depends on the support, assistance and cooperation of the HE sector, industry and commerce, and government.

Economic Activities in Namibia

The Namibian economy is heavily dependent on the extraction and processing of minerals. Mining activities account for more than 20% of Namibian GDP. Namibia a primary source for gem-quality diamonds, is the world's 4th-largest exporter of non-fuel minerals in Africa, the 5th-largest producer of uranium, and also producer of large quantities of lead, zinc, tin, silver, and tungsten. Yet, the mining sector only employs roughly 3% of the population. Half of the population depends on subsistence agriculture for its livelihood, while Namibia imports about 50% of its cereal requirements. While Namibia has a high per capita GDP, it hides the world's worst inequality of income distribution. The Namibian economy is also closely linked to RSA (the N\$ has a parity of 1-to-1 to the ZAR). Privatization of several enterprises may stimulate foreign investment. Increased fish production and mining of zinc, copper, uranium, and silver has begun to spur growth in the last few years (Nkweto, undated: 2)

Problems for the Labour Market

Although the national literacy rate is estimated around 85%, the number of Namibians who are functionally literate and have the skills that the labour market needs, is significantly fewer. (Nkweto, undated: 2). The Namibian Government has also recognized that Science and Technology (S&T) is an essential component in the development of Namibia's economy. However, the current S&T infrastructure in the country is weak and there is a shortage of human resources for S&T which places a huge responsibility on the capacity of HEIs. In addition, the low spending on R&D by government and the business sector is insufficient to realize the ambitious aims and goals of the national S&T policy. Namibia needs graduates in the critical areas indicated above, but the HEIs are presently not able to turn out sufficient postgraduate students (and thus researchers) in the above areas.

Industry on the other hand needs to be able to exploit and benefit from Namibia's mineral resources, increase manufacturing output and profits through innovation and smarter ways of working, or create new industries, enterprises, spin-offs and provide greater opportunities for employment. However, they do not have sufficient graduates, either of a specific type, or in critical areas of knowledge, skills and competencies. HEIs will have to make a major shift to provide the human resources to exploit economic possibilities. This includes working more closely with industry. Industry will need to develop a stronger and symbiotic relationship with the HE sector and get more involved.



Government's role is to provide a legislative, financial and facilitative environment.

The Government of Namibia has initiated plans for Namibia to become part of the globalised knowledge economy by producing a new generation of knowledge workers (see Vision 2030; NDP4: x). Its aims are to strengthen the country's capacity for training; postgraduates and research outputs, research infrastructure; and establish support systems of innovation. The global knowledge-economy demands continuous improvements in education for sustainable development and national competitiveness, but in many African countries, HE has generally been a low priority for public investment in the face of other seemingly more important priorities. Systematic under-funding has led to wide-spread deterioration in the quality of infrastructure, faculty and student facilities as well as curriculum development, and research and postgraduate studies. HEIs have been established without the guidance of a strategic HE system perspective, resulting in mismatches between national priorities and higher education capacity and focus (Bloom, 2006: i).

Mismatch between HE and the Labour Market

Traditionally, HE and industry worked in different spheres. This has over time led to a mismatch between what the labour market requires and the kind of graduates HE provided. There has long been a perceived and actual disjuncture between what industry and commerce needed and the kind of graduates HE provided. For centuries, HE considered its role as providing 'education for the sake of education'. The perception was that universities and the workplace operated on different planets; that university graduates 'do not get their hands dirty'; that they sat in ivory towers spouting forth philosophy and theory. It was left to vocational schools/technical schools/industrial schools/apprenticeships/guilds to prepare and provide persons with the necessary skills to enter the workplace. With the technology revolution, something had to give – universities had to change.

With the advances in technology and the need for high-level research, advanced training, innovation and technological transfer, a new breed of HEIs has emerged in the last few decades. The pattern in each of these HE types was the move away from the curriculum and offerings of a traditional university (philosophical/theoretical, with basic/fundamental, and blue sky research), to one which offered practical, career-oriented programmes relevant to the 'world of work', and applied research which encouraged innovation and solved problems in the workplace and society (Du Pré, 2010).



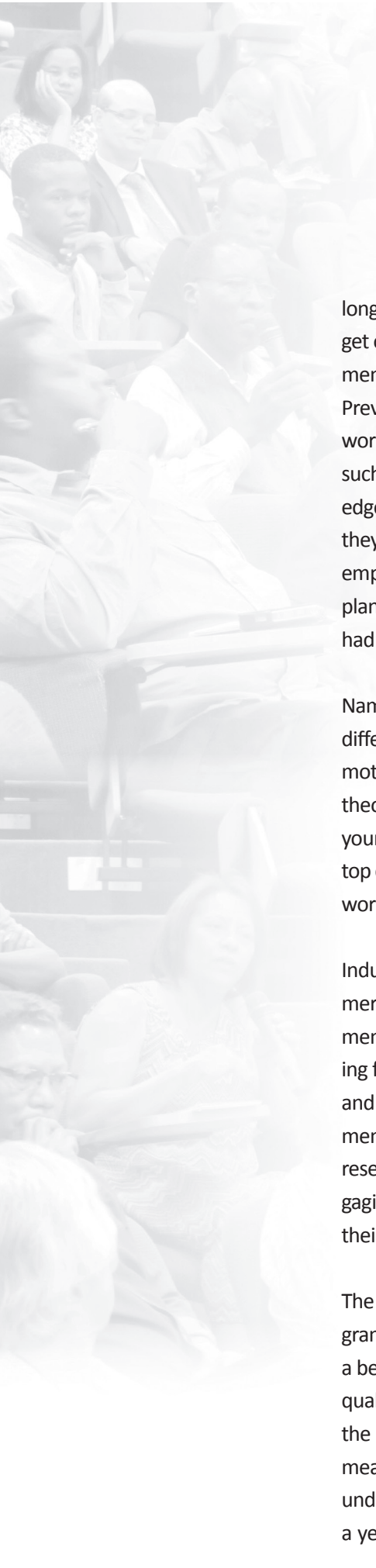
Examples of These ‘New Era’ Universities

In post-war Japan, universities changed the way they worked in order to provide a skills base for a country devastated by war. The result was the Japanese economic miracle of the late 20th century. In Germany, the Fachhochschulen concentrated on high-level technological and engineering skills required by industry. This was followed by the Berufsakademie concept which combined full-time employment with full-time study. The result? ‘German Excellence’ and ‘German Engineering’. In India the highly successful Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) are sought after by students as their first-choice higher education institution. Consequently, India now leads the world in ICT. In Switzerland, the majority of high school students go to Technical High Schools and then attend Universities of Applied Sciences which provide highly-skilled knowledge workers. The result is that that Switzerland has for years had the highest per capita income in the world, mainly as sellers of knowledge. In the UK, polytechnics for decades trained graduates on post-school level for the workplace and later became ‘new era’ universities. Some succumbed to academic drift but others lead the way in technological innovation. In South Africa, Technikons were established in 1979, received degree-awarding status in 1993 and were re-designated universities of technology in 2004. In Australia Universities of Technology were established in the 1980s and 1990s, and Malaysia, Iran, UAE soon followed suit.

HE and the ‘World of Work’

A characteristic of this institutional type is that students are trained specifically for the workplace. Industry, commerce and professional bodies work closely with them to advise on the kind of worker required and the kind of skills and competencies needed for particular jobs or careers. Advisory committees (consisting of academics and industry experts) meet on a regular basis to give feedback to institutions on the quality of their graduates, and also advise on any changes in production processes, manufacturing methods, management practices, new ways of working, etc. The institutions then make the necessary adjustments to the curriculum to ensure courses remain relevant and graduates are more employable. Combined with this is the provision of on-the-job training (‘work-integrated learning’) whereby students spend time in industry during their studies and upon graduation, are ‘work-ready’ when they take up employment.

In today’s world, it has become important to make education relevant. Students no



longer go to a university just to get an education – they want to get an education to get or create jobs. In other words, the desire is to make money, become productive members of society, and ensure a good future for themselves and their families. Previously, students came out of universities with little understanding of the real world or indeed, the workplace. They were skilled in their chosen field of study, such as engineering, chemistry, etc., but had no experience in applying their knowledge. Employers expected them to have some experience, but how could they if they had just completed a theoretical degree? Others were successful in finding employment in their chosen field but then faced doing budgets, drafting strategic plans, managing people, developing technology and applying skills for which they had never been trained.

Namibia in its present state, and the economy with its particular needs, requires a different type of graduate. HEIs need to be able to award qualifications which promote the message: ‘here is a person who understands life, and is not a backroom theoretician with little understanding of the real world.’ The aim should be to equip young professionals with all that they will need to translate their qualifications into top class performance in the workplace. An understanding of, and experience in the workplace prior to graduation, give graduates a head-start (Du Pré, 2007).

Industry and commerce on the other hand should not just consider themselves as mere employers, but as institutions engaging with higher education in the development of new and needed curricula and the provision of relevant content; providing feedback on graduates who enter their employ; advising of changes in industry and commerce which could influence changes in the curriculum; providing placement for students undertaking their experiential learning component; providing researchers with opportunities to practice technology transfer and innovation; engaging with professors/supervisors for their Masters and Doctoral students to use their organisations as subjects/sites for postgraduate research/studies.

The demands of a changing economy are forcing HEIs to refocus their degree programmes to provide students with relevant skills, the necessary competencies, and a better understanding of the real world, so that they can provide the kind of high-quality human resources needed to keep the growing economy on track, tackle the problems of poverty and unemployment, and allow the country to play a more meaningful role in Africa and the global scene. If that is to happen, HEIs will need to undertake a major paradigm shift compared to what they were doing just a month, a year or a decade ago. While traditional universities will still continue to provide

the kind of graduates that society needs in all spheres, it has become imperative for them to provide the kind of graduates highly advanced technological societies require today. The knowledge economy requires graduates who can engage with industry and communities, identify their needs and problems, and together find solutions. For that to happen, a three - way cooperation between HE, industry and government is imperative if Namibia is to realize the goals of Vision 2030 and become a major player in the globalised knowledge economy.

Experiential Learning

A distinctive characteristic of 'new era' universities is the concept of Cooperative Education which is the practice of experiential learning whereby students spend time in industry as part of their studies. Cooperative Education is a strategy of applied learning (learning integrated with work, also referred to as 'Work-Integrated Learning' [WIL]). Students are required to undertake a WIL component as part of their degree studies. The advantage of WIL for both students and employers is that students 'hit the ground running' when they enter the workplace (Du Pré, 2007). Employers do not have to waste time and resources training employees who only have theoretical knowledge. Job-ready graduates are also valuable for SMEs since the latter do not have the capacity, nor the money to invest in experiential or on-the-job training. The above requires a close relationship between the HE sector (provider of human resources), and industry/commerce, (the 'world of work' which employs those graduates).

Cooperative Education: a 3-way Cooperation

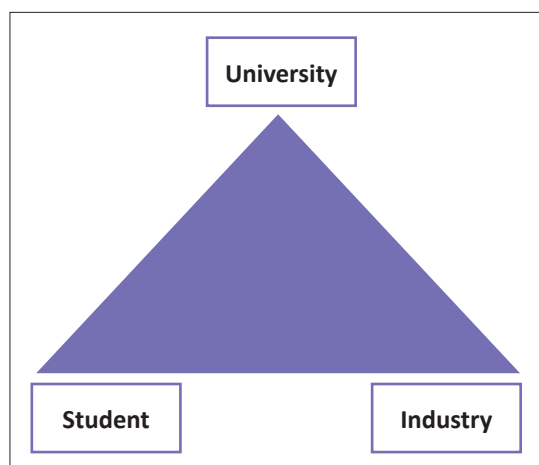
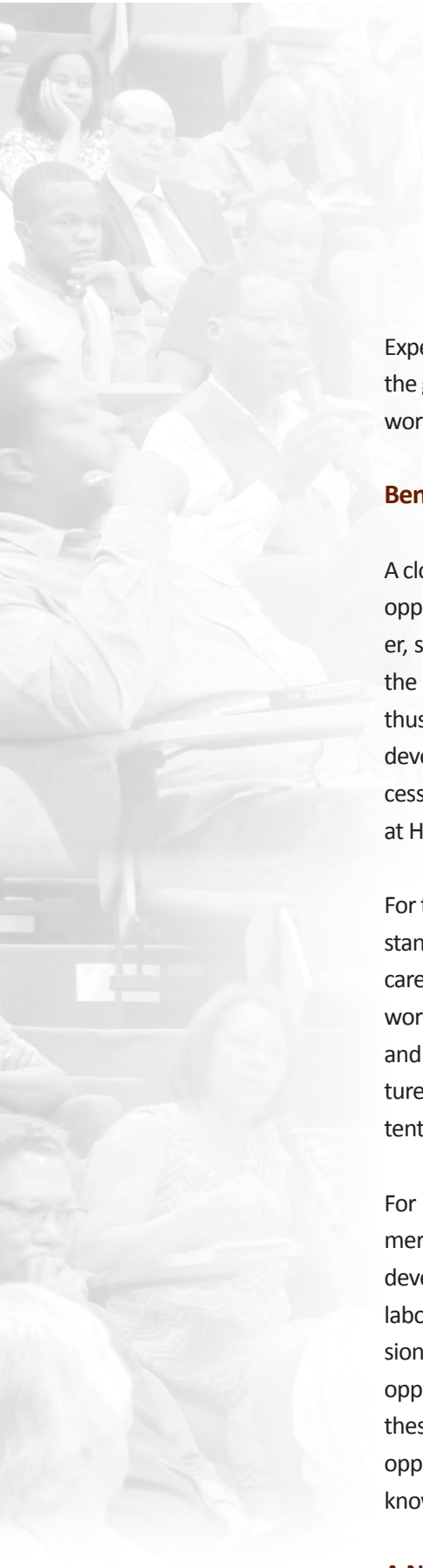


Fig. 2. 3-Way Cooperation



Experiential Learning will become even more important in the future because of the growing trend to employ graduates who are already familiar with the “world of work” before entering employment.

Benefits of closer HE/Industry Cooperation


A closer relationship between industry and HE (industry input, experiential learning opportunities, joint research and innovation) has massive benefits for the employer, student and institution and ultimately for Namibia. For the employer, it means the completion of work of value that may not have otherwise been done; the enthusiasm of a keen student; a good human resource strategy for identifying and developing future employees; additional assistance at busy times of the year; access to personnel/facilities at the HEIs, and a ready pool of researchers/innovators at HEIs to assist them in identifying problems and finding solutions thereto.

For the student, it means gaining ‘real life’ experience during formal studies; understanding the relationship between theory and practice; an opportunity to sample career options; enhancing career prospects through relevant experience and networking; growth in maturity, self-awareness and confidence; gains experience in and begins working life with and knowledge of marketplace, organizational structures and employer’s expectations; provides practical and creative scope, and potential for advancement and personal growth in the chosen field.

For HE, the institution develops and maintains close links with industry and commerce; has a greater understanding of industry needs which assists in planning and development of relevant curricula; provides opportunities for involvement in collaborative and relevant research of benefit to industry and academics; aids professional development through coaching and mentoring students in industry; provides opportunities for Master and Doctoral students to undertake research and prepare theses and dissertations in areas of interest to industry and the country; opens opportunities for academics to consult with and advise industry, bring back new knowledge to enhance curriculum.

A New Role for Industry/Commerce

The industry should not consider itself as mere employers, but institutions engaging with higher education in the development of new curricula and providing relevant



content, feedback on graduates who enter their employ, advising of changes (in production, processes and practices) which could influence changes in the curriculum, providing placement for students undertaking their experiential learning component, providing researchers with opportunities to experiment/ practice technology transfer and innovation, engaging with professors for postgraduate students to use their organisations as subjects or sites for Masters and Doctoral studies. A stellar example of a close higher education/industry relationship is that between industry and the Fachhochschulen in Germany. Besides the usual academic Senate, the institutions have a Dual Senate consisting of professors and industry experts.

Conclusion

In Namibia, HE, industry and commerce have a long road ahead if the goals of Vision 2030 and the various NDPs (Republic of Namibia, 2012) are to be realized and achieved. Many may be tired before they can even start, because it has been a long road just to get thus far. Many may think the task is heavy and impossible because most of the issues have been ‘talked to death’ with no action and implementation. Others may be so over-loaded and burdened by the present situation that they cannot see any way to go forward. However, we need to start small, utilize what we have now, and work slowly and steadily towards what we wish to become.

While HE and industry do their part to improve and increase the current supply of highly-qualified human resources in areas critical to national development, it is imperative that government provides a conducive legislative, financial and policy environment to support these efforts, otherwise, the goals of Vision 2030 will fade into oblivion, and Namibia will face a future ‘too ghastly to contemplate.’

Each of the above parties (HE, Industry and Government) has a particular role to play. HE needs to prepare students for the world of work with the relevant skills and competencies; industry and commerce need to provide opportunities for work, experiential training, innovation and technological development in order to grow and remain competitive; and government needs to ensure the necessary legislative, financial and facilitative environment for the above to flourish.



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4. PANEL DISCUSSION AND ISSUES THAT EMERGED



Mr. Albius Mwiya, Deputy Director: Labour Market Services, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare

Following the keynote presentation by Professor du Pré, a panel of experts held a discussion based on the issues raised by Prof. du Pré.

Mr. Albius Mwiya conceded that the relationship between higher education and the labour market was very important. However, he stressed that education starts with early childhood development before a learner progresses to secondary education and university.

“If the foundation is not good, then we have a problem,” he said. He continued that it was widely posited that Namibia’s unemployment stood at a staggering 51.2%.

He said he was a member of the Immigration Selection Board and that every Tuesday between 100 and 150 work permits are issued to foreign nationals to work in Namibia.

In May this year, a government official went to neighboring countries to recruit engineers, social scientists, and other skilled people, a “worrying situation for a country which gained political independence 22 years ago”. He attributed this situation to the mismatch between higher education and the labour market.

Mr. Mwiya said he left college long before experiential learning but even then there was pressure on graduates to know what their paper qualifications proclaimed. He charged that Namibia’s education system was “killing our economy,” due to the fact that many of the people who constitute the unemployed were Grade 10 and 12 failures. He said there must be stints in which learners spend some time in the industry so that they gain experience.

He further alleged that Namibian HEIs like PoN, UNAM and IUM were produc-

“If the foundation is not good, then we have a problem.”

“We need 1 million Namibians employed, but we have only about 300 000 employed.”

ing “unfinished products” which were often rejected by industry. He was, however, unable to provide any statistics when challenged to do so by the Rector of PoN. He held the view that Namibia had a serious shortage of skills.



Prof. Tjama Tjivikua, Rector: Polytechnic of Namibia

On his part, **Prof. Tjama Tjivikua** noted that Namibia has 60% of its population between the ages of 15 and 60, which is working age. He said this could work wonders for the country if the skills were developed. He also agreed that the country faced a shortage of skills. He found it interesting that the presentation of Prof du Pré had touched also on what kind of economy Namibia envisaged in the long term as the country moves to realize vision 2030. He said there was a lot of talk about three sectors namely: primary, secondary and tertiary, but little is said about the high sectors.

If today's economy is 40% primary sector, 20% or even 15 % secondary sector and the rest is tertiary, there was need to think about what was required to attain Vision 2030, he said.

Prof. Tjivikua advanced his argument by stating that in some countries employed people make up about half of the population. “If you look at Britain, out of 60 million inhabitants, 30 million are employed, so half of the population is working. If you look at Singapore, they are even bigger. If you look at South Korea it is probably the same. So if you look at 2.2 million Namibians roughly, we need 1 million Namibians employed, but we have only about 300 000 employed,” he said as a case in point.



Mr. David Nuuyoma, CEO : Development Bank of Namibia

Mr. David Nuuyoma expressed the opinion that there seems to be a disconnect between what was being offered by HEIs and what the labour market wanted.

He said he had read the Vision 2030 policy document and noted that. “It highlighted the key areas or sectors that need to be pursued, and gaps that exist”.

He added that the fact that many people were graduating from higher education institutions and unemployment was rising prompted the question: what is wrong?

“There seems to be a dis-connect between what was being offered by HEIs and what the labour market wanted.”

He said the Namibia Business and Investment Climate Survey, confirmed a scarcity of skills in the country.

“But yet we do have thousands of youngsters coming out of institutions of higher learning. So there is a gap to be plugged. Therefore, we need to find a dynamic way of responding to this reality,” he argued.

Mr. Nuuyoma supported the idea of experiential learning and concurred that there was need for closer collaboration among stakeholders.

“One of the essentials of leadership is to know where you want to go.”



Mr. Mike Hill, Namibian Employers' Federation

Mr. Mike Hill on his part, stressed the need for total quality management. This means giving the customer what he/she wants and the new university moving in the direction of giving customers what they want, rather than producing what they want to produce.

He said there was an impending time wave, which Namibia could only ignore at her own peril. “It’s a tidal wave that is going to time swamp us very quickly. In the age groups below the working population we are producing people at the rate of about 50,000 per year now coming through

into the labour market. Half of them have failed Grade 10 while the remainder has failed Grade 12. They are unemployable. They are damaged by our education system to the point where their chances of employment are less than if they hadn’t been to school,” he charged emotionally.

Mr. Hill said HE was meant to produce creative, analytical, evaluative, judgmental people who can solve problems. So far, it has failed. Higher education, he said, does not mean university but taking what one learns in school and putting it into the equivalent of some form of vocational education and training.

His view is that we keep talking while issues keep growing, thus there is need for action backed by strong leadership. “One of the essentials of leadership is to know where you want to go. The second part is being uncomfortable with where you are. I suggest that we are not uncomfortable enough with where we are at to lead the way forward.”

Mr. Hill said employers needed people as they made money out of people. The other point of leadership is a passion for people.

“Namibia has a passion for uranium, gold, diamonds, etc”. They are not the resources we need to develop. We have to develop our people so that they exploit the diamonds. We say Namibia is rich; we are rich in the wrong things,” noted Mr. Hill.

Mr. Hill stressed that Namibia was the fifth biggest spender on education per capita in the world. A knowledge economy is, therefore, not an impossible dream. “In some countries, education is free, access to health is free, even transport to go to school is free. We can learn a lot from these countries.”



Prof. Erika Maass, Director of Academic Affairs: University of Namibia

Professor Erica Maass opined that the model that Prof. du Pré presented was relevant and very applicable to Namibia. However, she was skeptical as to whether there could ever be “a one size fits all model”.

On the issue of mismatch, Prof. Maass said: “Maybe this country needs a varied higher education system that can respond to the various needs of the labour market because I don’t think the labour market requires one type of person.”

“Can we equate higher education with universities? I hope the answer

is no because higher education is far more than just university. Maybe time has come to change the university and I can tell you that they do change, perhaps not at the same time/scale. I believe we need to change the attitude, status and importance of other forms of higher education so that they can attract people.”

“Maybe this country needs a varied higher education system that can respond to the various needs of the labour market.”

“What I am not sure about is how much of this sentiment that universities or higher education does not produce enough people is informed by perception.”




Dr. Hylton Villet, Chairperson: Skills Development Committee, Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Finally, **Dr. Hylton Villet**, also agreed that the supply of human resources did not match the demand of the labour market.

“What I am not sure about is how much of this sentiment that universities or higher education does not produce enough people is informed by perception. I have constantly been told that Namibians do not have skills and I wonder sometimes if it is not just a question of placement. For example, you get a trained economist employed as a marketing expert. Are we not putting square pegs in round holes?”

He accepted the view that HEIs did not necessarily prepare students for the world of work. However, it seemed to him that there was an obsession with the degree education at the expense of technical skills that are also required by an industrialized economy.

While agreeing that there was need for collaboration between HE and industry, Dr. Villet stressed the need to ensure that that relationship does not take the form of a one-way street, which would give commerce an opportunity to infuse its agenda onto the academe at the end of the day.



“As such, the terms of that sort of collaboration need to be clearly defined. We need to debate whether academe is compelled to incorporate what commerce wants. It is all very well to call for a paradigm shift in higher education, but that paradigm shift should also happen in industry with respect to the views that industry has about the Namibian graduate.”

His view was that commerce could do a lot more to facilitate, accommodate and nurture future employees but was not doing enough in that respect at the moment. “In the past, we educated for the sake of educating and now we have to educate for commerce. When are we going to start education for our community? We should look at a critical mass of Namibians, who apart from being educated, also cares deeply for serving their community,” he noted.

Dr. Villet suggested the need for a relook at the quality of students that are produced by the secondary education sector, which end up entering the HE sector. He said it was mind boggling that industry kept saying higher education students were unemployable yet they were trained by intellectually renowned Professors with internationally recognized curricula. He opined that the problem could very well lie in the feeder system, in other words with secondary schools.

5. OPEN DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS

At the end of the well-articulated and powerful presentation by Prof du Pré, as well as the thought provoking debate among the panelists, the audience was also given the floor for questions and comments.

A first member from the audience called for a serious re-look at inclusive education in Namibia to ensure that all schools had the capacity to offer it.

A second member from the audience called for the inclusion of entrepreneurial education in schools and tertiary institutions and higher learning. He encouraged industry to provide the opportunities for internship for HE students so that they could gain skills that are needed in the market.

A third member from the audience called for the strengthening of basic education in the country, arguing that a house whose foundation has been messed up can never stand, whatever amount of money is spent on other structures of that building like the ceiling, wall, roof, etc.



A fourth member from the audience reiterated the need for industry to provide experiential learning opportunities for HE, saying it was not easy to find internship places for students in industry. On the few occasions that the students were accepted, they were relegated to meaningless and menial tasks like sweeping, preparing tea and by the time they left, they had not learnt anything from their internship.

A fifth member from the audience called for the diversification of Namibia's industrial base, arguing that as things stand, Namibia is a retail economy and unless there was diversification, opportunities for experiential learning for higher education students, would remain limited.



A sixth member from the audience called on Namibian employers to value non-degreed people who may be very highly skilled. She said a lot of highly skilled people remained unemployed because there was an over insistence of degree qualifications. She gave an example of a woman who is the only person in Namibia capable of preparing a record for the appeal board in labour issues/matters. She cannot get a job because she doesn't have a degree, but lawyers consult her privately to do the job for them she argued.

Members of the audience calls for:

- *a serious re-look at inclusive education in Namibia*
- *the inclusion of entrepreneurial education in schools and tertiary institutions and higher learning.*
- *the strengthening of basic education in the country*
- *the need for industry to provide experiential learning opportunities for HE*
- *the diversification of Namibia's industrial base*
- *Namibian employers to value non-degreed people who may be very highly skilled*

6. CLOSING AND VOTE OF THANKS



Mr. Mocks Shivute, Executive Director, NCHE Secretariat.

There being no further comments from the audience, Mr. Shivute took the floor and thanked the guest keynote presenter, Prof. Roy du Pré, for making time available off his busy schedule and for delivering a very informative and engaging presentation on the subject matter. He further expressed a special word of gratitude to the distinguished panelists, the moderator, as well as the audience for making the lecture lively and bade them all a good night.

Appendix 1

Public Lecture Programme

Director of Programme

Mr. Mocks Shivute, Executive Director, NCHE Secretariat

17h30 – 18h00 **Registration**

18h00 **Welcoming Remarks:** Mr. Mocks Shivute
 Keynote Presentation: Prof. Roy du Pré

Discussions

Moderator: Mr. Lesley Tjiueza, journalist and TV Presenter

Panelist 1: Mr. Mike Hill, Member, NEF

Panelist 2: Mr. David Nuuyoma, CEO, DBN

Panelist 3: Prof. Tjama Tjivikua, Rector, PoN

Panelist 4: Mr. Albius Mwiya, Deputy Director, Labour
Market Services, MOLSW

Panelist 5: Prof. Erika Maass, Director of Academic Affairs,
UNAM

Panelist 6: Dr. Hylton Villet, Chairperson, Skills
Development Committee, NCCI

Open discussions

Vote of thanks: Mr. Mocks Shivute, Director of Programme

Appendix 2

Public Lecture Participants

Name	Institution or Organisation
1. Hon. Dr. A. Iyambo	Ministry of Education
2. Dr. F. Chung	Ministry of Education
3. Mr. M. Aiff	Namibia Training Authority
4. Ms. H. Amadhila	Namibia Training Authority
5. Mr. K. Amesho	De Beers
6. Mr. J. Ashipala	United Nations Development Programme
7. Mr. J. Beukes	PoN
8. Mr. D. Boois	Cyber Communications CC
9. Mr. O. Capelao	First National Bank
10. Dr. M. Chottepanda	Ministry of Education
11. Mr. J. David	Trustco Group Holdings Ltd.
12. Prof. R. du Pré	South African Technology & Training Platform
13. Mr. L. Eiseb	PoN
14. Mr. J. Ellis	Turning Points Consultancy CC
15. Mr. A. Erastus	Namibia Careers Expo
16. Ms. E. Rusberg	Namibia Press Agency
17. Ms. V. Ferris	Soho Consultancy
18. Mr. K. Frank	UNAM
19. Mr. G.L. Gariseb	Cyber Communications CC
20. Mr. F. Haufiku	Namibian Standards Institution
21. Mr. K. Haraseb	Stakeholder in HE
22. Ms. H. Hashange	Namibia Economist
23. Mr. L. Hedimbi	NAMDEB
24. Mr. M. Hill	Namibian Employers' Federation
25. Mr. U. Hiskia	Namibian Broadcasting Corporation
26. Mr. T. Iileka	UNAM
27. Mr. S. Ilovu	NCHE Secretariat
28. Mr. W. January	Namibia Training Authority
29. Ms. L. Jordan-Aiff	Stakeholder in HE
30. Mr. K. Kapelwa	PoN
31. Mr. F. Katire	Namibia National Commission for UNESCO
32. Ms. H. Kaze	Prime Focus Magazine
33. Mr. M. Kazombaue	Kazo Investments
34. Mr. J. Kazonga	NCHE Secretariat
35. Prof. G. Kiangi	Triumphant College
36. Mr. I. Kinzambi	Stakeholder in HE
37. Dr. R. Kandando	Stakeholder in HE
38. Mr. M. Kaura	UNAM
39. Ms. V. Kauaria	Ministry of Education
40. Ms. V. Kauaria	NCHE Secretariat
41. Mr. V. Kaulinge	National Planning Commission
42. Mr. M.S. Kavetu	Namibia National Students' Organisation
43. Mr. J. Kooper	Stakeholder in HE

44.	Ms. C. Koopman	NCHE Secretariat
45.	Mr. L. Shigwedha	UNAM
46.	Mr. M. Limbo	National Disability Council
47.	Prof. E. Maass	UNAM
48.	Mr. R. Maasdorp	Stakeholder in HE
49.	Mr. E. Martin	PoN
50.	Mr. A. Millward	Windhoek International School
51.	Ms. D. Muhimba	Stakeholder in HE
52.	Ms. L. Mukoya	Cyber Communications CC
53.	Mr. B. Mukuahima	Ohlthaver & List
54.	Mr. O. Musilika	German Agency for International Cooperation
55.	Mr. A. Mwiya	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
56.	Dr. R. Naanda	Telecom Namibia
57.	Mr. N. Namutuwa	PoN
58.	Mr. D. Nauyoma	Namibia National Students' Organisation
59.	Mr. E.L. Ndala	Ministry of Lands and Resettlement
60.	Mr. L. Ndamanomhata	UNAM
61.	Mr. T. Ndisiro	First National Bank
62.	Mr. H. Ndjaba	Namibia National Students' Organisation
63.	Mr. T. Ndjiva	Namibia National Students' Organisation
64.	Mr. M. Ndjoze-Siririka	Ministry of Education
65.	Ms. S. Negongo	Namibian Broadcasting Corporation
66.	Rev. C. Nel	Council of Churches Namibia
67.	Mr. G. Nelondo	UNAM
68.	Dr. A. Niikondo	PoN
69.	Ms. I. Nevonga	NCHE Secretariat
70.	Mr. M. Otto	Office of the Auditor-General
71.	Mr. M. Otsub	Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry
72.	Mr. O. Matengu	Namibia National Students' Organisation
73.	Mr. L. Pringle	Stakeholder in HE
74.	Mr. T. Rieth	NCHE Secretariat
75.	Mr. H. Rutz	Namibia National Students' Organisation
76.	Mr. H. Shemuketa	Millennium Challenge Account- Namibia
77.	Ms. A. Shigwedha	Stakeholder in HE
78.	Mr. H. Shipale	Stakeholder in HE
79.	Mr. M. Shivute	NCHE Secretariat
80.	Mr. G. Shuuya	Stakeholder in HE
81.	Mr. D. Sibangani	Prime Focus Magazine
82.	Mr. J. Siloisi	Namibia Tourism Board
83.	Ms. S. Strauss	United States Agency for International Development
84.	Mr. C. Sworn	The University Centre for Studies in Namibia
85.	Mr. N. Tjambiru	Ministry of Education
86.	Mr. V. Tjiharuka	UNAM
87.	Mr. K. Tjituri	UNAM
88.	Mr. L. Tjiueza	Namibian Broadcasting Corporation
89.	Prof. T. Tjivikua	PoN



90.	Mr. C. Tuaundu	Namibia Qualifications Authority
91.	Prof. E. Tyobeka	PoN
92.	Ms. J. van Lingen	Haven Walvis Bay
93.	Dr. H. Villet	Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry
94.	Ms. M. van Wyk	First National Bank
95.	Ms. S. van Zyl	Ministry of Education
96.	Dr. A. Wienecke	Habitat Research Development Centre
97.	Ms. K. Wentworth	Ministry of Education
98.	Mr. W. Wilhelm	Namibia National Students' Organisation
99.	Dr. D. Wolfaardt	UNAM
100.	Adv. V. ya Toivo	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare