

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION



PUBLIC LECTURE
FORGING RESPONSIVE HIGHER EDUCATION IN NAMIBIA

MARCH 2019

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

NCHE	National Council for Higher Education
IUM	International University of Management
UNAM	University of Namibia
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
MSC	Master of Science
MPhil	Master of Philosophy
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
NUST	Namibia University of Science and Technology
NQA	Namibia Qualifications Authority
NTA	Namibia Training Authority
NSFAF	Namibia Student Financial Assistance Fund
NDP5	Fifth National Development Plan
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

Opening and Introduction



Mr. Jonas Mbambo, Moderator

The Moderator of the event, Mr. Jonas Mbambo, initiated the proceedings by welcoming everyone to the annual event. He then provided a short introduction on the event's theme, noting that in many countries, higher education systems have been expanding and diversifying substantially and that far more people are engaging with higher education institutions. In the knowledge society, knowledge is everywhere, and this raises questions about the role of the university and its changing relationship with the rest of society.

Mbambo then provided short biographies of all the speakers at the event, starting with the keynote speaker, Professor John Brennan. Prof Brennan

is Emeritus Professor of Higher Education Research at the Open University, a Visiting Professor at the University of Bath and the London School of Economics and Political Science, as well as an Honorary Research Fellow at Oxford University. He led and participated in national and international projects related to universities and social transformation, graduate employment, and quality assurance.

Professor Kingo Mchombu is the Acting Vice-Chancellor of the International University of Management (IUM). During his more than 20 years in academia, he served in several teaching and administrative positions at the Universities of Botswana and Namibia in the areas of information management, communication for development, knowledge management, as well as library and information science.

Professor Erika Maass is the Director of Academic Affairs at the University of Namibia (UNAM). A Botanist by training, Prof Maass has 35 years of experience in higher education and is one of few academics who was part of and helped to shape UNAM's transition from an Academy of Learning to a fully-fledged university. She holds a PhD in Plant Physiology.

Dr. Daniel Nyaungwa, the Rector of Monitronic Success College served as a Lecturer and Administrator and has vast experience in higher education quality assurance. He is currently working on two higher education textbooks and has published numerous research articles. He holds two Doctorate Degrees and has spoken at several conferences.

Mr. Rajesh Subramanian is the Founding Dean of the Botho Higher Education Institution and has held various administrative and academic positions at the Botho University in Botswana, including Dean of

Internationalisation and Distance Learning, as well as Founding Dean of Academic Services. Mr. Subramanian holds an MSC and MPhil in Computer Science.

Mbambo then introduced Ms. Sylvia Demas, the NCHE's Deputy Executive Director who delivered the welcoming remarks.

Welcoming Remarks



Ms. Sylvia Demas, NCHE Deputy Executive Director

Ms. Demas extended a special welcome to Prof Brennan and the distinguished panelists. She also thanked Council members for their commitment to making the NCHE a valued leader in coordinating quality higher education.

She noted that the NCHE public lecture series has now become a permanent feature in the national discourse and public debate on the higher education landscape underscoring that this was the ninth in the series of the annual lectures, hosted by NCHE. She informed the audience that through these events, the NCHE provided a platform for public discussion and debate on topical issues pertaining to higher education.

“Quality higher education is a fundamental necessity for achieving social equity, higher levels of economic growth, social development and a vibrant democracy. Without a responsive higher education and the generation of knowledge, Namibia’s knowledge-based economy aspiration, as contained in Vision 2030, would be constrained,” she asserted.

Demas further highlighted that the developmental challenges that Namibia faced in its attempt to be globally competitive, were tremendous, with unemployment remaining one of the biggest. It was, therefore, time to consider what higher education systems and institutions could do to strengthen the links between tertiary education and the labour market.

She recommended that higher education institutions’ enrolment policies should be more focused on labour market needs while on the other hand, the labour market should create more high-skilled jobs in fast-growth sectors. Furthermore, there need to be appropriate governance, management, financing, and quality assurance systems in place in order to enable higher education institutions to fulfill their missions concerning current and future societal and labour market demands.

She said that the 2019 theme, 'Forging Responsive Higher Education in Namibia', was designed to unpack the essential elements that Namibian higher education institutions, government, as well as relevant stakeholders should consider in order to promote an effective and vibrant higher education sub-sector.

According to Demas, it was common knowledge that education was the greatest equaliser and that it was only quality and responsive higher education that could unlock a world of possibilities and opportunities. She therefore, encouraged meaningful dialogue on issues pertaining to the country's higher education system and its contribution to more productive and fulfilling lives.

Ms Demas concluded by introducing Professor Lischen Haoses-Gorases. Prof Haoses-Gorases served on the first, second and third Councils, and is now leading the fourth Council as Chairperson. Prof Haoses-Gorases' task was to introduce the keynote speaker, Prof Brennan. She introduced Prof Brennan as an Academic and Researcher of note. A Sociologist by training, he also served as the Director of the Quality Support Group at the Council for National Academic Awards and is a founder member of the International Consortium of Higher Education Researchers. He held academic posts at Lancaster University and Teesside Polytechnic and is a member of several other higher education research groups. He is a Fellow of the Society for Research into Higher Education, a member of the Peer Review College of the Economic and Social Research Council, an evaluator for the European Science Foundation, an academic auditor for the Hong Kong University Grants Committee, and a member of the Academic Committee for the Higher Education Student Information and Career Centre in the People's Republic of China. His most recent

research consultancy project was serving as a key expert for the European Commission on *Innovation in Higher Education and Universities and Research Organisations as drivers of 'smart specialisation' for regional development*. He published several books, reports, and articles on higher education and has spoken at many conferences in the UK and internationally.

Prof Haoses-Gorases then invited Prof Brennan to deliver his keynote presentation.

Keynote Presentation



Prof John Brennan, Keynote Speaker

Prof Brennan stated that he researched higher education around the world and found that research could be very helpful to answer policy questions. He outlined his presentation as asking more questions than providing answers with the initial big question as: “What is responsive higher education and how does it differ from other forms of higher education?”

He noted that in many respects, the tradition of universities has been of institutions that created, developed and transmitted knowledge in ways that led to a changing world, which prompts other questions: “Are universities autonomous or independent?” and, “Are they creative or conformist?” “Is the responsive university the one that does what it is told?”, “Are universities useful or troublesome?” or “Are universities all of these things?” Prof Brennan then quoted a well-known French Sociologist

from the middle of the 19th century, Emile Durkheim, who in his paper on *'The Evolution of Educational Thought'* observed:

“It is rare to find an institution which is at once so uniform and so diverse; it is recognisable in all the guises which it takes, but in no one place is it identical with what it is in any other. This unity and diversity constitute the final proof of the extent to which the university was the spontaneous product of medieval life; for it is only living things which can in this way, while fully retaining their identity, bend and adapt themselves to a whole variety of circumstances and environments.”

Prof Brennan found that quotation quite an interesting one to pose the questions that are important to the present time. He questioned whether those in the higher education system had the capacity to adapt and bend to a changing world, and in doing that, whether they responded to those changes or drove them? He asserted that one of the things that changed was the size and diversity of higher education. In the context of Namibia has is a relatively small system, another question could be whether a small system could create the diversity that relatively bigger systems could, and at the same time, have different institutions providing services to different parts of society.

Elaborating on the issue of responsiveness, Prof Brennan queried “Who should universities be responsive to?” In his view, this question could be answered by asking: “Where does their funding come from? Are there regulatory bodies they must be accountable to? What about the customers?”

He said that in a lot of places, there was a sense that universities have become businesses where students were referred to as customers. Also,

there was still a broader academic community that was aware of reputational risk and was concerned about their reputation and credibility. Prof Brennan, however, noted that one of the reasons why he was not so keen on the 'student as customer' notion, was because it was not only the student who was affected by the existence of higher education, but all of society was affected by the universities' actions. More so, there were local, regional, national and global effects.

The next questions were, "How should universities respond? Do they simply do what the funders and regulators tell them to, or do they maintain their independence? Do they need to be innovative and do new things, or should they be doing old things in new ways? Should institutions do different things for different users or customers? To what extent do they need to do more with other higher education institutions, businesses, and schools?"

He referred to a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) project which focused on shifting the boundaries between what was higher education and how it linked to the rest of society. He noted that there was the issue of protecting the university's tradition, as well as maintaining standards and quality. In some cases, that may involve refusing to respond or, responding in ways that protected the unique factors of higher education.

Regarding barriers to responsiveness, Prof Brennan referred to research he was involved in and highlighted factors that in his view prevented universities and colleges from engaging, changing, or responding to the needs of society.

The first factor involved communication issues. According to Prof Brennan, there were academic tribes or disciplinary groupings of academics, which consisted of members that only knew other members of their tribe. He noted that they lived in a fairly closed world and that the tribe had difficulty in communicating with other members of society. A recent research project he was involved in looked at the involvement of several universities in their communities. The head of a sociology department indicated that they had 25 people working in that department, but that only four of them could communicate with people outside of the institution. Prof Brennan emphasised that the difficulty in communication could be overcome by breaking the academic tribe barrier.

Referring to the outcomes of a British study, which he suspects was not unique to Britain, Prof Brennan noted that the second barrier was that the work performed by universities was not recognised socially or politically and that they were not rewarded. The academics who participated in that study held a view that nobody seemed to take any notice of their work even though they were under increased pressure for their research and teaching.

The third barrier was higher education institutions' competition rather than collaboration. According to Prof Brennan, many things did not happen because individual institutions were competing for students and funding. He said that society would increasingly need higher education institutions to be collaborative in nature.

The last barrier was institutions having different priorities. He noted that in terms of academic and institutional cultures, in many respects, what was required was for institutions to be more outward looking, and for them to

gain experience in different aspects of society. He highlighted the usefulness of incorporating work-based learning for students, adding that some say academics need that too.

Regarding transformative agendas, Prof Brennan questioned what institutions wanted to achieve or transform. He noted that there was a reference to the economy, but that broader issues of society, culture, and people also needed to be considered, as they were gaining new values, aspirations, and attitudes. Furthermore, there were indications that attitudes towards higher education were changing.

In terms of increasing diversity in higher education systems, Prof Brennan referred to Martin Trow's *Reflections on the Transition from Elite to Mass to Universal Access: Forms and Phases of Higher Education in Modern Societies*. According to Trow, the higher education system transformed from being elitist (in that it shaped the mind and character of the ruling class and prepared them for elite roles), to mass (which was about the transmission of skills and the preparation for a broader range of technical and economic elite roles), to universal (which involved the adaptation of the whole population to rapid social and technological change). Trow also argued that the elite higher education did not disappear with the arrival of the mass, neither did the mass disappear with the arrival of the universal.

Prof Brennan noted that larger systems such as in Britain, had different types of institutions and there was a strong sense of hierarchy whereas in smaller systems, there was a need for individual institutions to cut across the elite, mass and universal approaches. Considering Button Clark's script on *The Higher Education System*, the horizontal approach was effectively about differences, while the vertical approach implies that there

was a sense of hierarchy. In regard to diversity and differentiation, he noted that it was important to ask what society needed, and what universities were capable of providing.

Zooming in on the Namibian context, Prof Brennan noted that the country's vision for the sector looked reasonable and plausible, however raised a number of questions. Such questions included lifelong education, which considered higher education as a lifetime experience. This approach subscribes to the notion that people would increasingly need different things at different times in their lives. It involved people being able to access higher education in different ways and through different platforms, such as at the workplace or online; and in different ways, such as academic or vocational, whether full-time, part-time or occasionally. To some extent, all of these things were available and happening, but questioned if people were accessing things they need the most.

An article he read recently raised three questions and suggested possible answers. The first question was: "What would the market for higher education look like in the future?" Possible answers include; it would be a more crowded and diversified space, or consolidation of players consisting of a few powerful companies alongside existing universities, or commercial companies will take over the higher education market. The second question was about how individual universities reacted to these changes. Possible answers include the commercialisation of existing activities or the expansion of core businesses. The third question was looking at what society could and should expect from universities. This question raises more questions, in particular: "What are universities offering as opposed to alternative actors in the higher education space? Also, are the current standards of quality assurance sufficient or should

universities deliver more? Will universities bend and adapt sufficiently, yet maintain unique qualities in the future?” He asserted that the consideration of higher education future needed to take into account overall market dynamics in the context of potentially ever more restrictive immigration controls, and universities’ specific coping strategies in the context of digitalised learning technologies. Referring to a project funded by the European Commission that examined the role higher education can play in national and regional contexts, he underscored seven major messages from policymakers:

- To recognise that different stakeholders may have different interests and objectives;
- To address communication gaps between them;
- To identify and engage the right kind of expertise that different stakeholders could bring to the different elements and stages of the smart specialisation process;
- To address at the outset of the process the challenge of achieving sustainability for successful innovation;
- To recognize and avoid compromising other important functions of higher education institutions and research organisations;
- To recognise and exploit the differentiation and diversity of higher education; and,
- To recognise that the knowledge base for a local smart specialisation initiative is located within a wide knowledge context in order to maximise the competitive advantage.

The project also established that funding for important or government projects was usually available, but when the funding ran out, the projects became sustainability threatened.

Prof Brennan noted that a new UNESCO project, which was aimed at encouraging countries to develop well-integrated education systems to provide flexible learning pathways for all students in the form of entry and re-entry at all ages and educational levels revealed stronger linkages between formal and non-formal structures, and recognition, validation and that accreditation of knowledge and skills acquired through non-formal and informal education, fit quite well within the Namibian context. The project identified that higher education operated in complex contexts and was often confronted with a weak policy environment, fragmented governance, lack of coordination among key stakeholders for the implementation of policies and rigid institutions with conservative cultures, inflexible educational practices, and poorly developed support and guidance structures. All these factors posed challenges to the implementation of flexible learning pathways, limiting the capacity of higher education to support equity and lifelong learning.

Prof Brennan concluded his presentation by sharing some of his own thoughts on what a responsive university would need to do, including:

- Communicate effectively with a wide variety of external stakeholders;
- Work in partnership with other universities and stakeholders;
- Recognise knowledge and skills acquired from a variety of sources;
- Remove boundaries between disciplines, institutions and external knowledge sources;
- Recognise and respect diversity as not everyone wants the same thing, and not every institution is capable of providing the same things;
- Institutions have to operate as efficient businesses but also remain excellent institutions of higher education. They should not allow

themselves to be taken over by mindsets, but rather use its responsiveness for the benefit of society.

Panel Speaker Presentations

Mr Mbambo took to the podium and thanked Prof Brennan for his interesting presentation. He then invited each panelist to deliver their responses to the keynote presentation.



Panelists for the panel discussion



Prof Kingo Mchombu, Panelist (IUM)

Prof Mchombu in his address entirely agreed that we lived in a knowledge society and that the university had to be part of it. There was, however, a need to ask whose knowledge was referred to. It was always assumed that knowledge was positive and that it would take us forward. There was, still, a need to realise that there were many pieces of knowledge and there was always a danger that universities may, in their enthusiasm, not guide the students to that knowledge that was helpful in building society. He noted that he was always disturbed by the boatloads of African youths trying to cross the Mediterranean with the belief that there was happiness, and success in Europe and the USA. That reflected the belief that one's only chance was to go to those who dominate.

Namibia's Vision 2030 identified industrialisation, social services, social harmony and education as very important in building a knowledge society. In that sense, universities are very important because they build human capital and capacity. Also the African Union's Agenda 2063 aims at guiding economic transformation with a strong youth focus. This is contrary to the fact that Africa is still a recipient of aid, ideas, and knowledge. He further highlighted that while there were very rich people within Africa, the majority were very poor.

When talking to students, they often indicate that they were the first in their family to attend university and there was a need to go beyond that as it was not ideal for that member to go back to the village totally unprepared. When considering tradition versus transformation, it is important to note that tradition is dominated by lectures, notes and in the end, students have to regurgitate what they learned. Prof Mchombu asserted that the problem with this model is that it does not prepare students to become agents of change. Therefore, the challenges to the higher education institutions is how to transform students to become agents of change. One way of achieving this is by converting students from being job seekers to job creators. He noted that this was a serious challenge in Namibia and Africa as a whole. He referenced the late Professor Calestous Juma, who talked about the entrepreneurial student, and asked how they could read the environment and create meaningful products in response to that environment.

Prof Mchombu emphasised that universities must change and respond to the needs of the prevailing problems. He encouraged research, not for its own sake, but to address the problems of society such as water scarcity, gender inequality. Experiential research allows close work between

higher education institutions and the industry and develop dual programmes and qualifications that are rooted in practicalities and meet the needs of industry and society. He called for a shift from theory to practice, complaining that there was a lot of theory, but little practice.

He asserted that universities were not only interested in the students' brains, but also their hands, noting that the power of experiential knowledge is important. He stated that universities were training the students for the future, while they did not know that future. It has, however, become apparent that the future would be dominated by Artificial Intelligence and it would take some of the jobs citing the example of Standard Bank's retrenchment in South Africa due to online banking. He further stated that students must be prepared for the future through learning creativity, resilience, the capability to change, soft skills, critical thinking, and Afrocentric thinking.

Prof Mchombu concluded, by reiterating that there was a need to be entrepreneurial, innovative and adaptable if the universities were to meet the future challenges.



Dr. Daniel Nyaungwa, Panelist (Monitronic Success College)

The next panelist to respond was Dr. Nyaungwa, who indicated that he would focus on the practical experience from his college. On the question of who the higher education should respond to, Dr. Nyaungwa noted that based on the unemployment statistics of graduates in Namibia, what was on everybody's mind, was that higher education should be responsive to the labour market. He noted that politicians (from the political point of view), were saying that it would appear that higher education institutions were not collaborating with the labour market, but the truth was that all the institutions of higher education were demand-driven and only respond to their clients' needs. By clients, he meant prospective students whose demand must be met. He, however, clarified that the demands of the students were normally not in line with the labour market, and that this was the big gap. Furthermore, he reiterated that higher education institutions in Namibia also respond to their owners and regulatory bodies'

needs. Institutions such as the University of Namibia (UNAM) and the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) is accountable to the government. Monitronic Success College responds to its owners and the regulatory bodies, namely NCHE, the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA) and the Namibia Training Authority (NTA).

Dr. Nyaungwa noted that there were barriers to access higher education for students. For example, secondary school graduates were not ready for higher education, therefore, the institutions had to introduce courses to improve numeracy, language, and computer literacy. On the question of how the labour market helps the higher education sector, he noted that during the development of their qualification, NQA required of Monitronic Success College to conduct stakeholder consultation. However, the labour market is supply-driven, they wait for the product to see if it fits their need. He further emphasised that one could not register a qualification unless you received comments or support from stakeholders.

To the question of why there was a mismatch between what the students require and how the labour market responded, Dr. Nyaungwa alluded that there was no information available on labour market needs. He also indicated that the issue of incentives played a role, noting that the NTA has priority areas which could be funded, while the Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF) could only fund certain courses hence students study courses where funding is available.

Dr. Nyaungwa noted that while institutions were required to respond to regulators, there are barriers to their responsiveness. For example, one of the barriers that prevented institutions from responding to regulators in a timely manner was accreditation that takes too long. He also noted that

there was no linkage between secondary schools and higher education institutions, adding that although there were career fairs, there was a need for more initiatives.

Competition among higher education institutions, including the duplication of qualifications, also remained a challenge. He said that everybody was providing a qualification for example in tourism leading to an oversupply of graduates. In terms of deciding on the kind of courses to offer, Monitronic Success College is guided by stakeholder queries about a course not being offered at that stage. According to Dr. Nyaungwa, higher education institutions are disconnected from the labour market even though there is a perception of collaboration or consultation. He suggested that that scenario needs to change and called for more engagement with the labour market.

Dr. Nyaungwa concluded that institutions can introduce a course related to the labour market needs, but there is a chance that nobody would be interested because the market does not demand that course. He, however, noted that some courses, such as computer science, are more responsive.



Prof Erika Maass, Panelist (UNAM)

Prof Maass was the third panelist to share her views on the theme. She asserted that independence and academic freedom allow universities to search for the truth. She emphasised that without independence and autonomy, critical thinking is not possible, and without critical thinking, knowledge cannot be created. Furthermore, academics tend to forget about the importance of academic freedom for the broader society, who can remind them that universities should not compromise on their function and role. Very importantly, higher education institutions need to be reminded of their responsibility in regard to research as the production of knowledge and teaching as the distribution of knowledge.

Prof Maass noted that there is pressure for universities to respond and conform to the economy rather than social problems. She stated that universities' responsiveness should be towards society rather than the economy.

Prof Maass stressed that the function of the university should not be reduced to the production of clients and that they should not serve the interest of donors, but that of society by being responsive to their problems. The university's responsiveness should be to develop the abilities and skills of students to meet the needs of society. She motivated a paradigm shift and the rethinking of approaches, rather than conforming to pressures from certain sections. Prof Maass further said that teaching staff need to acknowledge their changing role and asked why curriculums are loaded with content that may not be relevant by the time students graduate. In addition to subject knowledge, students needed to acquire soft skills. There is a need to establish what is the level of essential knowledge, and then make time and space to develop the student's soft skills and teach them how to learn.

She said that UNAM was embarking on a radical curriculum transformation process. The aim is to train for jobs that do not even exist, teach adaptability and critical thinking. They will measure their success on the impact their graduates will make in society. According to Prof Maass, there was a dire need for organisational change in the broader educational landscape. There were huge gaps, and those who were leaving the school system, required a diverse spectrum of institutions to meet their needs. She asserted that there was no virtue in homogeneity and that the lack of a differentiated and diverse higher education sector was probably the biggest challenge the country was facing. She cautioned against the dilution of higher education and the specific purpose it needed to serve and therefore challenged all role-players to actively work towards attaining this vision by not acting as individual institutions, but through collaboration. In conclusion, she encouraged institutions to continuously

contemplate on different systems that students would need at different times in their careers.



Mr. Rajesh Subramanian, Panelist (Botho Higher Education Institution)

The last panelist, Mr. Subramanian noted that the usage of the term *responsiveness* refers to being able to react quickly and that higher education institutions were expected to speedily respond to national and international needs. Higher education's response should be multifaceted and include technological, research and cultural aspects, among other issues. He asserted that tertiary education was an essential driver for economic growth. Responsiveness should also include the appreciation of long-term demands on higher education. Referring to the Fifth National Development Plan (NDP5), he noted that it focused more on human capital development. He quoted the Minister of Higher Education, Training

and Innovation Honourable Dr. Itah Kandjii-Murangi, who said that for Namibia to meet the Fourth Industrial Revolution, human resources must be conversant with emergent technologies in a number of fields. He underlined the fact that academics lived in a different world when they were schooling, but yet they were being responsive to the needs of today. He recommended that higher education's response should be two-fold, the short-term approach should be to meet national needs, while the long-term approach should address regional and international needs.

Mr. Subramanian was of the opinion that students should be trained to discover problems and explore solutions. Since technology has a strong impact on society, training should also be technology-based. He noted that in today's world, information is broadly available and that higher education institutions should enable students to handle it responsibly. Teaching should be quality-centric, and higher education institutions must work in collaboration with each other, industries, and various stakeholders as partnerships will yield multiple benefits to the institutions. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) must form the core of each higher education institution's curriculum and be incorporated in other curricula such as the arts and languages.

He concluded that higher education institutions cannot not do everything, therefore the entire education system needs to be responsive in order for higher education to build a knowledge-based society for the future world.

Plenary Discussion

Prof Miti from IUM noted that higher education in Africa has actually been responding to the environment. He said that those higher education institutions built before independence were intended to be for the elite. But universities have grown so much because they are responding to the needs of society. He added that there was a time when every graduate got a job, but it is no longer so. However, the elite element at universities remains, people still want to be a president or prime minister.



Professor Katamboro Miti

Trade Unionist, Mr. Mahongora Kavihuha rhetorically asked as to who should forge a responsive higher education system. He was of the opinion that the more people became educated, the more they were captured by politicians. He asserted that passive students obtain their Master's Degrees easier, but that the critically thinking ones took long to do so. According to Kavihuha, many youths were dying at sea because the education system was failing and was not responsive to the labour market. He was not sure if higher education institutions knew how many graduates they produced. He lamented the influence of politics and politicians on higher education and further observed that professors were prohibited from joining unions, which was a violation of a basic human right. He also stressed the importance of ethics and academic freedom.



Mr. Mahongora Kavihuha

A Business Management student from NUST, Mr Daniel Nyaungwa Junior asked why investors were investing in shopping malls and not factories.



Mr. Daniel Nyaungwa Junior

Dr. Armas Shikongo, a lecturer at UNAM, asked whose knowledge was being referred to, noting that this was an important question especially in the context of Africa. He noted that a major concern was a lack of a transformative element. He blamed the colonial education system for undermining the cultural element and wondered how the decontextualized education provided can produce indigenisation and contextualisation of knowledge. He also wanted to know how culture was being addressed by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and most importantly how the nation was responding to the current context.



Dr. Armas Shikongo

Ms. Victoria Mamvura-Gava asked why Prof Maass felt that university education should not be diluted, and also noted that it appeared universities were not ready for the recognition of prior learning, while vocational institutions were doing that.



Ms. Victoria Mamvura-Gava

Concluding Remarks by the Panelists

Prof Maass expressed satisfaction in observing students actively participating in platforms such as this. She responded that Namibians still had a dependency syndrome, instead of driving the economy. She reiterated the importance of cultivating an entrepreneurial mind that would lead to people starting their own enterprises, rather than waiting to be employed. “We should look to ourselves for the answers rather than outside,” she responded. She concluded that when cautioning against dilution, the emphasis is on diverse educational institutions that support each other and provide flexible learning pathways. The universities should not become vocational training institutions but work with them to provide flexible pathways, she asserted.

Dr. Nyaungwa noted that if higher education responded to the needs of society, there would be more institutions. In his view, the main issue was

how the institutions were responding without proper market information and as a result produced graduates which the labour market accused of being sub-standard.

Prof Mchombu assured Ms. Mamvura-Gava that prior learning was being recognised throughout universities, noting that it was as valid as learning obtained in a classroom. He underscored the importance of vocational education, adding that the problem in the past was that it was equated to an inferior education. This trend is changing as institutions merge vocational training with other forms of education.

In his concluding remarks, Prof Brennan said he was interested in and delighted by the comments from panelists and participants. He supported the emphasis on practicality as a defining feature of what higher education institutions' functions should be.

The Moderator, Mr Mbambo concluded the discussion by challenging the audience to find a way of making higher education a fundamental human right, and not a privilege, same as basic education is a human right.

Vote of Thanks



Dr. Rachel Ndinelao Shanyanana-Amaambo

The vote of thanks was delivered by Dr. Rachel Ndinelao Shanyanana-Amaambo, a member of the NCHE Council. Dr. Amaambo thanked the keynote speaker, Prof Brennan, and the panelists Prof Mchombu, Prof Maass, Dr. Nyaungwa and Mr. Subramanian for their enlightening thoughts on 'Forging Responsive Higher Education in Namibia'. She further thanked the NCHE for creating platforms to ponder how to make higher education relevant, noting that this was needed for the realisation of transformation of higher education to be responsive and relevant.

Appendices

Appendix A: Advertisement

Appendix B: Programme

Appendix C: List of Participants



9TH PUBLIC LECTURE

FORGING RESPONSIVE HIGHER EDUCATION IN NAMIBIA

WHEN

**27 March 2019
18h00**

WHERE

**Gateway Conference Centre
Corner of Florence Nightingale
and Hans Dietrich Genscher Street**

INQUIRIES:

Ms Rosina Herman

TEL: 061 307012

EMAIL: rherman@nche.org.na

www.nche.org.na

Keynote Speaker



John Brennan

**Emeritus Professor of Higher Education
Research**

OPEN UNIVERSITY

A Sociologist by background, Prof Brennan's interests lie broadly in the area of higher education and social change. For nearly 20 years, he directed the Centre for Higher Education Research and Information and participated in many projects on graduate employment, quality assurance, the academic profession, and universities and social transformation. He has published several books and many reports and articles on higher education and its changing relationship with society. He has been a key expert for the European Commission on projects on 'Innovation in Higher Education' and 'Universities and Research Organisations as drivers of 'smart specialisation' for regional development'.

PANELISTS



Prof Kingo Mchombu

**INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF
MANAGEMENT**



Dr Daniel Nyaungwa

MONITRONIC SUCCESS COLLEGE



Mr Rajesh Subramanian

**BOTHO HIGHER
EDUCATION INSTITUTION**



PUBLIC LECTURE

Forging Responsive Higher Education in Namibia

Date: Wednesday, 27 March 2019

Venue: Gateway Conference Centre

Time: 18h00

Keynote Presenter

Prof John L. Brennan

Prof John Brennan is Emeritus Professor of Higher Education Research at the Open University and a Visiting Professor at the University of Bath and at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He is also an Honorary Research Fellow at Oxford University. His interests lie broadly in the area of higher education and social change. For nearly 20 years, he directed the Centre for Higher Education Research and Information at the Open University where he led and participated in many national and international projects on topics such as graduate employment, quality assurance, universities and social transformation. He has published several books and many reports and articles on higher education and its changing relationship with society and has spoken at countless conferences on higher education in the UK and many other parts of the world. He also engages in research consultancy projects for policy bodies and has recently undertaken work for the European Commission, UNESCO, the UK Government's Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, the UK Quality Assurance Agency and the UK Higher Education Academy.

Panelists

Prof. Kingo Mchombu

He has held various teaching and administrative positions at the Universities of Namibia and University of Botswana. First as lecture at the University of Botswana before moving to University of Namibia as head of Information and Communication Studies at and eventually Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. In 2016, he moved to the International University of Management (IUM) where he currently hold the position of Acting Vice Chancellor.

Dr Daniel Nyaungwa

Dr Daniel F Nyaungwa has been a lecturer, administrator and is the outgoing Rector of Monitronic Success College. He has vast experience in higher education quality assurance. He has published a number of research articles and is finalizing two higher education textbooks to be published soon. He is a holder of several undergraduate qualifications, an MBA, Mphil , PhD, DBA -Doctorate in Business Administration from Netherlands. He has spoken in several conferences.

Mr Rajesh Subramanian

Mr Rajesh Subramanian a well-qualified (M.Sc., M.Phil., in Computer Science, DRDBMS, PGCHE, (PhD) (IT)) proficient educator and an administrator. He is passionate about education and have progressive career in academic and administration in India and abroad with over 25 years. He started his career as a school teacher in 1993 and move into higher education sector in 1995 as Lecturer and currently working as a Dean.

Programme

Moderator: Mr. Jonas Mbambo

18:00 - 18:15 Registration

18:15 - 18:30 Welcoming Remarks,
Ms Sylvia Demas,
NCHE Deputy
Executive Director

18:30 - 19:00 Keynote Presentation
Prof John L. Brennan

19:00—19:45 Moderator:
Panelist 1: Prof. Kingo
Mchombu

Panelist 2: Dr Daniel
Nyaungwa

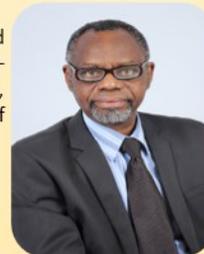
Panelist 3: Mr Rajesh
Subramanian

19:45 - 20:00 Open Discussion and
Comments

20:00 - 20:10 Conclusion

Moderator:

20:10 - 20:20 Vote of thanks
Refreshments and Networking



No	Name and Surname	Institution	Email Address
1	Prof Katambaro Miti	IUM	k.miti@ium.edu.na
2	Dr John Nyambe	UNAM	jnyambe@inam.na
3	Elva Gomiela Pibande	NUST	egomez@nust.na
4	Eben Makari	NCHE	emakari@nche.org.na
5	Ellen Ndapanda	MoEAC	endeipanda@gmail.com
6	Josephine Kadhila	NTA	Jkadhila@na.com
7	Lahja N Benjamin	LaRRI	lbenjamen95@gmail.com
8	Monica M Nyaungwa	Monitronic Success College	danny@mweb.com.na
9	Taiji Thaliath	St Charles Lwanga Major Seminary	frtaijvthaliath@gmail.com
10	Ajish T James	St Charles Lwanga Major Seminary	antoaji007@gmail.com
11	David Tjiharuka	UNAM	dtjiharuka@unam.na
12	Chiku Mechomdu	UNAM	emchomdu@unam.na
13	Neville U Uandara	WVTC	mateza@webmail.co.za
14	Ngaruka Zabaldt	NAMPA	zngaruka@yahoo.com
15	Himesoora Kaimu	NUST	hkaimu@nust.na
16	Polli Andima	NQA	Polli.Andima@namqwa.org
17	Nghitende Shimwafeni	Petrofund	eshimwafeni@namcor.com.na
18	Jerry Beukes	NTA	JBeukes@nta.com.na
19	Ngepathimo Kadhila	UNAM	nkadhila@unam.na
20	Emma Theofelus	NANSO	emmay7@gmail.com
21	Ndamonako Anna lita	IUM	niiamona@gmail.com
22	Hedi Zaiem	NCHE	hedizaiem@gmail.com
23	Yvonne You	NPDI	Info@npdi.edu.na
24	Jonas Kamakela	NTA	skamakela@gmail.com
25	Nyaungwa Daniel T	Monitronic Success College	ntakonda@gmail.com
26	Hilaria Namoloh	Ministry of Fisheries	Hilaria.Namoloh@mfmr.gov.na
27	Chuma Mayumbelo	UNAM	cmayumbelo@imam.na
28	Rachel N Amaambo	UNAM	rshanyanana@unam.na
29	Fatima I Kahiriri	UNAM	fatimakahiriri@yahoo.com
30	Emily Brown	NUST	ebrown@nust.na

31	Venessa Tjjenda	NUST	vftjjenda@just.na
32	Niita Shituula	HPCNA	njshituula@hpcna.com.na
33	Charlene Kaereho	UNAM	ckaereho@unam.na
34	Elrico Namundjebo-Nakusera	UNAM	enakusera@unam.na
35	Tuaunda Keeja	MHETI	Tuaunda.Keeja@met.gov.na
36	Robert N Dishena	Mandume PS	dishenarobert@yahoo.com
37	Augustine U N Ugwoke	OHP pharmacy	Augustineodo@yahoo.co.uk
38	Haitembu Helvi NW	MoHSS	helvihaitembu@gmail.com
39	Friedrich Kauatjitotje	Zaarua Investments cc	zaarua@gmail.com
40	Mitiri Uwe Tjazamo	Ondjou Investments cc	ondjougrou@gmail.com
41	Munyabadzi Mukesi	NUST	mmukesi@nust.na
42	Elias Kaurianga	IUM	hereros1@gmail.com
43	Kaitira Kandjii	NUST	kekandjii@nust.na
44	Isolda Kandjavera	UNAM	kandjaverai@gmail.com
45	Anicia Peters	NUST	apeters@nust.na
46	Abisai Nghimwenavali	Private	absaivalie@yahoo.com
47	Leonard N. Amadhila	IUM	ndavulwa@yahoo.com
48	Mitchell Mubuyaera	MGECW	nsala.meshach@gmail.com
49	Muhongo Kavihahi	TUN	tun@mweb.com.na
50	Victor Ndaumbira	IUM	V.ndaumbira@ium.edu.na
51	Armas Shikongo	UNAM	aeshikongo@unam.na
52	Victoria Mamvoa-Gava	ALCHEMY	vikki@africaonline.com.na
53	Prof Kingo Mchombu	IUM	k.mchombu@ium.edu.na
54	Rajesh Subramanian	Botho HEI	Rajesh.subramanian@bothouniversity.ac.bw
55	Dino Rajah	Botho HEI	Dino.rajah@bothouniversity@ac.bw
56	Sylvia Demas	NCHE Secretariat	sdemas@nche.org.na
57	Lucia Oarum	NCHE Secretariat	loarum@nche.org.na
58	Evelina Shinana	NCHE Secretariat	eshinana@nche.org.na
59	Victoria Verner	NCHE Secretariat	vverner@nche.org.na
60	Rosina Herman	NCHE Secretariat	rherman@nche.org.na



CONTACTS

National Council for Higher Education

P. O. Box 90890
Klein Windhoek
NAMIBIA

TEL: +264 61 307012
FAX: +264 61 307014/16
info@nche.org.na
www.nche.org.na