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Friday Feel-Good News
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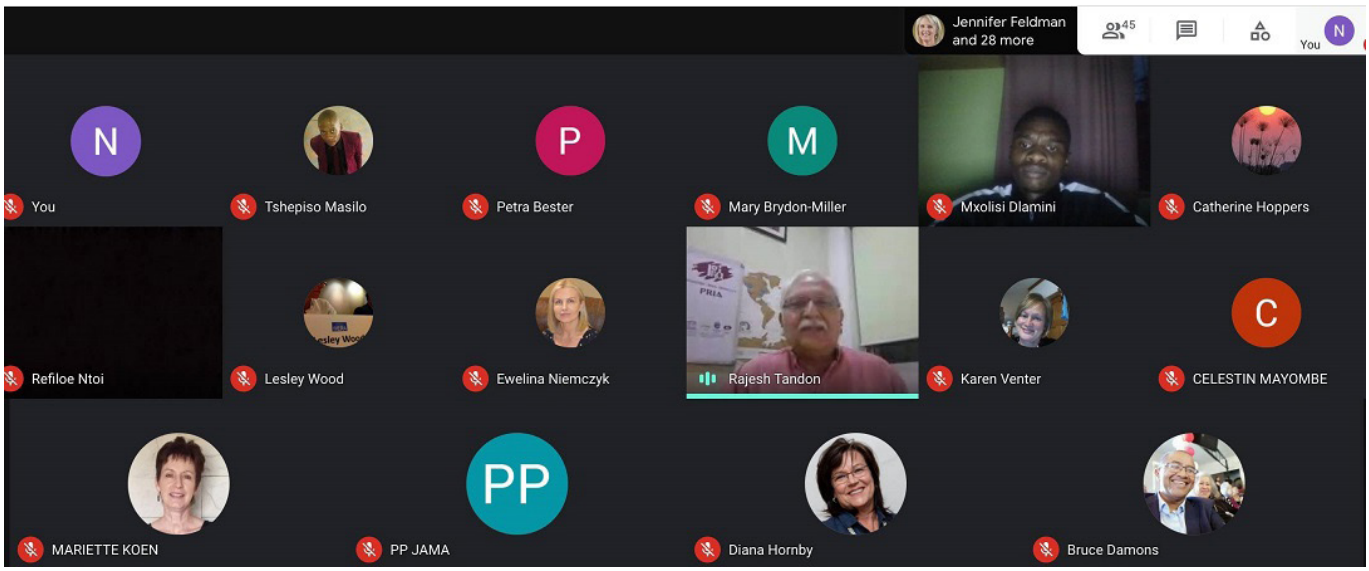
K4C - How to make higher education more responsive to the SDGs



COMBER recently hosted a webinar on behalf of the Knowledge for Change (K4C) Hub, run from the Sustainability and Community Impact office. K4C refers to the generation of knowledge by the university in partnership with communities to address the sustainable development goals (SDGs) in different countries around the world. The global K4C hubs aim to build capacity among researchers to bridge knowledge cultures by conducting ethically engaged research.

The panel included national and international leaders in this field:

- Prof Mary Brydon-Miller, College of Education and Human Development, University of Louisville
- Prof Petra Bester, African Unit for Transdisciplinary Health Research, North-West University
- Prof Catherine Odora-Hoppers, Global Institute of Applied Governance in Science Knowledge Systems and Innovations, Gulu University, Uganda.
- Dr Bruce Damons, Hubs of Convergence, Nelson Mandela University
- Diana Hornby, Director of Community Engagement, Rhodes University

Dr Rajesh Tandon, the UNESCO Co-Chair for Community-based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education, acted as discussant. The lively debate centred on the question posed by Prof Odora-Hoppers as to whether universities could in fact respond to the SDGs when the system itself prevented real development. Several ideas were presented in response, including a suggestion that the DHET should recompense universities based on their community impact, similar to how they rewarded them for research output. Dr Tandon argued that we need to find safe spaces, not just in the academy, but also to leverage societal support for change, and for that we have to listen to the concerns and opinions of communities. “A new definition of what is sustainable is emerging from the practice of vulnerable communities. This is an opportunity for HEIs to find acceptance in society and to ask on what terms society would like to be engaged.”

K4C – Hoe hoër onderwys beter op die kan SDG's reageer

COMBER het onlangs namens die Knowledge for Change (K4C) Hub 'n webinaar aangebied wat deur die Sustainability and Community Impact-kantoor bestuur is. K4C verwys na die generering van kennis deur die universiteit in vennootskap met gemeenskappe om die doelwitte vir volhoubare ontwikkeling (SDG's) in verskillende lande regoor die wêreld te hanteer. Die wêreldwye K4C Hubs poog om die vermoë van navorsers te bou om kenniskulture te oorbrug deur eties betrokke te wees.

Die paneel het nasionale en internasionale leiers op hierdie gebied ingesluit:

- Prof Mary Brydon-Miller, Kollege vir Onderwys en Menslike Ontwikkeling, Universiteit van Louisville
- Prof Petra Bester, Afrika-eenheid vir Transdissiplinêre Gesondheidsnavorsing, Noordwes-Universiteit
- Prof Catherine Odora-Hoppers, Global Institute of Applied Governance in Science Knowledge Systems and Innovations, Gulu Universiteit, Uganda.
- Dr Bruce Damons, Hubs of Convergence, Nelson Mandela Universiteit
- Diana Hornby, direkteur van gemeenskapsbetrokkenheid, Rhodes Universiteit

Dr Rajesh Tandon, die UNESCO-medevoorsitter vir gemeenskapsgebaseerde navorsing en maatskaplike verantwoordelikheid in hoër onderwys, het as gespreksleier opgetree. 'n Lewendige debat het gefokus op die vraag wat prof Odora-Hoppers gestel het of universiteite in werklikheid op die SDG's kon reageer wanneer die stelsel self werklike ontwikkeling verhinder. Verskeie idees is in reaksie hierop aangebied, waaronder 'n voorstel dat DHOO universiteite op grond van hul gemeenskapsimpak moet vergoed, soortgelyk aan hoe hulle die universiteite vir navorsingsuitsette beloon. Dr Tandon het aangevoer dat ons nie net veilige ruimtes in die akademie moet vind nie, maar ook maatskaplike ondersteuning vir verandering moet benut, en daarvoor moet ons na die kwellings en menings van gemeenskappe luister. "'n Nuwe definisie van wat volhoubaar is, is besig om uit die praktyk van kwesbare gemeenskappe na vore te kom. Dit skep die geleentheid vir hoëronderwysinstellings om aanvaarding in die samelewing te verkry en om te vra op watter manier die samelewing betrokke wil wees."