

Neglect of Higher Education in the Sustainable Development Goals: Implications and Possibilities for Low-Income Countries

Monday 3rd December 2018 13.30- 15.00 followed by light refreshments

Nelson Mandela University, Room 0201 NMU Business School, Second Avenue,
Port Elizabeth, South Africa

When properly funded and accessible, higher education can play a crucial role in planning for and achieving lasting and sustainable development and progress. Apart from developing capacity for the functioning and advancement of any society, universities are institutions tasked with the production, advancement and dissemination of knowledge about the social and natural worlds and the ways humans can improve their socio-economic and other forms of being. Higher education is also crucial if societies are to develop globally competent individuals capable of functioning in the complex, ever changing, unequal and unjust world.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to address the root causes of many of the pressing global problems and to make sure that no one is left behind when it comes to sustainable development and progress. However, the lack of ideas, approaches and targets aimed at (re)building, strengthening and/or reforming higher education systems and institutions in the developing world and particularly low-income, fragile and conflict-ridden countries is a failure that will have lasting negative effects in many parts of the world. The neglect of higher education will impact the implementation of the SDGs, socio-economic recovery and development, as well as the efforts to empower and develop societies in need and ensure the sustainability of any potential improvements brought forward by the SDGs.

Despite the neglect of higher education in the SDGs, universities and higher education networks from around the world need to find ways to engage with low-income countries and their institutions in order for them not to be left too far behind by 2030. In this talk, we will unpack the implications of the neglect of higher education on low-income countries and discuss how to look beyond the SDGs and find creative ways to (re)build, reform and strengthen their institutional and academic capacity and quality and improve their infrastructure.



Dr Savo Heleta is a researcher at Nelson Mandela University's Office for International Education. His research and teaching interests range from post-war reconstruction, development and peace-building; conflict transformation; international migration; higher education in post-war settings; social justice advocacy and activism; decolonisation of knowledge; to higher education internationalisation. Savo has presented his research at numerous international conferences and published in academic journals and edited books as well as newspapers, magazines and online publications.

Ms Tohiera Moodien is a Deputy Director at the Office for International Education (OIE) at Nelson Mandela University in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. She has worked in the higher education sector since 1997 and in internationalisation of higher education since 2002. Tohiera holds an MBA from Nelson Mandela University Business School. She is currently enrolled in the DBA in Higher Education at the University of Bath. Tohiera's research interests are higher education policy, internationalisation of higher education and the role of deans in internationalisation of curriculum, teaching, learning and research.

