# 2024 SARIMA CONFERENCE

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RADISSON BLU HOTEL, MAPUTO, MOZAMBIQUE

**SARIMA**

# ABSTRACT BOOK

# ABSTRACT • INFORMATION

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## ● To what extent does externally funded research need to be subsidised?

**Dr Zulfa Abrahams**[1]
[1]University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa

**Biography:**
Dr Zulfa Abrahams is the Manager of Research Development in the Faculty of Health Science's Research Office at UCT. She's held this position for the past two years. Prior to this appointment, she was employed in the Centre for Public Mental Health at UCT, as the Project Manager of a Health System Strengthening study. Her qualifications include a BSc (Dietetics), an MPH (Epidemiology) and a PhD.

The full cost of a research project includes the direct costs incurred by the project plus the Indirect Costs to be Recovered (ICR) (i.e. services and benefits provided through the university). The University of Cape Town (UCT) calculates the ICR for a project by applying a university-specific Indirect Cost Recovery Rate (ICRR) to the Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) of the project (i.e. the total direct costs less bursaries, and subcontracts and/or equipment costs greater than R250 000 per item). The ICRR is based on the approach endorsed by the Universities South Africa and approved by the National Intellectual Property Management Office (NIPMO). At UCT the ICRR is 28% for on-campus activities and 19% for off-campus activities. However, projects funded by major international schemes are priced according to the rules of the relevant funder, and not in accordance with the institutional ICRR. The ICRR offered by funders is typically less than the institutional ICRR. This series of case studies aims to highlight the extent to which research funded by international funding schemes requires subsidisation by UCT.

Case study 1: For a 60-month clinical trial funded by the National Institutes of Health (ICCR=8%), UCT subsidised the project by $282 000.
Case study 2: For an eight-year project funded by the Wellcome Trust (ICRR=20%), UCT subsidised the project by £1.4M.
Case study 3: For an 18-month project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (ICRR=15%), UCT subsidised the project by $9 350.

This presentation will detail and discuss these case studies to explore the challenges and benefits experienced by universities for projects funded by international funding schemes. The audience will acquire better awareness of the full cost of a research project, allowing for informed decision making that promotes financial sustainability across their university.

# ● Fostering a responsible and accountable "research ethics village"

**Ms Christine Aitana**[1]
[1]Namibia University of Science and Technology, Windhoek, Namibia

**Biography:**
Ms. Aitana is an Administrator and Accounting Assistant in the Directorate of Research and Innovation and Partnerships at Namibia University of Science and Technology, in Windhoek, Namibia. She holds a Master of Business Administration in Entrepreneurship and her research interests are in entrepreneurship, small and medium enterprises development as well Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI).

Expanding globalisation, an increasing need for rapid and innovative solutions to current and emerging global challenges have brought about the concern in ethics and accountability in research practices. Additionally, a surge in global markets, production and manufacturing of goods and services as a response to the increase in demands, also motivated by the desire to increase profits, have recently raised a concerns about the quality of ethical standards implemented in various research activities. To preserve human life and sustain natural resources, it is vital for Communities of Practices (CoPs) across the globe to implement globally recognised and accountable research standards. Over the years, research publicised that profit driven corporate and organisations tend to violate globally recognised ethical research practices, increasing the risk of loss of lives, health, and even faith in research.

To promote accountable efforts and practices in research, collaborative work is required from all research practitioners. This can be achieved through consultations with relevant stakeholders (universities, hospitals, schools, community groups, government offices, non-governmental organisations, etc.) through needs assessments and information sessions to identify challenges and develop solutions based on identified tangible challenges. Furthermore, to achieve the idea of research ethics village, research education, mentorship programmes and capacity development initiatives on ethical research practices should be developed and implemented in schools and tertiary institutions to train aspiring research practitioners on the significance of research ethics. This research therefore, aims to shed light on the causes of lack of accountable and responsible research practices, providing real life examples and offer recommendations for fostering responsible and accountable research ethics villages.

# How the Rhodes University Research office uses soft skills in research management

**Ms Nichole Austin**[1], **Ms Sinazo Peter**[2]
[1]Rhodes University, Grahamstown / Makhanda, South Africa

**Biography:**
Nichole Austin has over 10 years of experience in the Research Office. Starting as a graduate intern and working her way up to being Acting Manager in the Postgraduate Funding, Research Office. She is currently doing her Masters in Education and her research is around transformation and the implementation in Higher Education.

Soft skills may be simply defined as personal attributes that all professionals require to function effectively and efficiently. They play an important part in improving one's performance, drive, and passion, as well as contributing to one's professional development.

While some argue that soft skills cannot be taught, they say "You either have it or you don't," soft skills can be taught, learned, and passed from one person to another. As Research Managers, we must possess a diverse set of soft skills since the information we provide impacts not just on institutional decisions and policy development, but also on decisions and policies at the national and international levels.

These soft skills help us to successfully interact with our funders/donors, researchers, the government, industry, and postgraduate students, as well as contribute to a positive working relationship with a diverse variety of our stakeholders.

In this paper, we will highlight the soft skills that we know are critical to the profession of Research Management, as well as how these can be mentored in all staff. A lack of these soft skills may easily lead to unexpected behaviors, which can be harmful to the workplace and individual careers. The skills that will be shared are based on our own experiences within the profession of Research Management.

How the topic relates to the session theme: The presentation's content is ideally aligned with the session topic, as mentorship is one method for training a soft skill. Having a mentor implies relying on the wisdom of the community to create a better village for everyone.

Benefits for the audience: The presentation will benefit everyone in the profession of Research Management, from junior to senior level, because some people may already have a soft skill but are unsure how to share it with colleagues.

# ● Strengthening stakeholder engagement initiatives - One mistake at a time

**Mrs Kuda Brandt**[1]
[1]Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), Windhoek, Namibia

**Biography:**
Kuda Brandt is a Science and Innovation Communication Specialist in the Directorate of Research, Innovation and Partnerships at the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST). She has experience in various areas of media and communication from print to digital. One of the key elements of her work is enhancing stakeholder engagement at the University. Overall, she plays a pivotal role in effectively communicating scientific research and innovation initiatives to diverse stakeholders while strategically managing and measuring the impact of these communications.

Stakeholder engagement initiatives play a pivotal role in a university's success by fostering collaboration and building relationships, internally and externally.
Understanding stakeholders' diverse perspectives, needs, and expectations is fundamental. Furthermore, the timing and frequency of engagement activities significantly impact their success, but adhering to these fundamentals is not a straight and narrow path.
This presentation will, therefore, include an analysis of quantitative data collected from staff and various industry partners of the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST). It will focus on the challenges encountered and the mitigation efforts in stakeholder engagement initiatives. NUST is currently undergoing structural changes, thus research administrators and managers are required to seek innovative ways of doing things, specifically about stakeholder engagement. The presentation will be based on lessons learned, highlighting that acknowledging limitations or failures cultivates credibility and trust among stakeholders.

# ● Navigating the terrain of spinouts: Lessons learned and challenges faced

**Dr Ana Casanueva**[1]
[1]University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa

**Biography:**
Ana is the TTO Director at UWC, responsible for the management and commercialisation of UWC's intellectual property. Ana holds a PhD in Cell Biology from UCT and a PGDip in Management Practice and Business Administration from UCT. She worked as an Innovation Professional at UWC for 7 years, later working in a start-up, while consulting in Technology Innovation. Prior to re-joining UWC, Ana was Project Manager for Technology at the SAMRC.

Most research institutions are increasingly focusing their efforts on implementing research-linked innovations and commercializing intellectual property derived from research endeavours. Among the avenues for commercialization, the creation of spinout companies, wherein the research institutions retain equity, stands out as a prominent mechanism. It is necessary for these research institutions to establish robust internal processes facilitating the efficient establishment and management of spinouts, coupled with the requisite governance structures to mitigate potential risks.

For institutions in the nascent stages of innovation management and intellectual property commercialization, there exists a wealth of insights to be gleaned from the experiences of more established counterparts. However, the application of such learnings can present unexpected challenges, particularly for resource-constrained institutions operating within distinct contextual frameworks.

Drawing from a South African case study, this presentation will delve into the establishment of a mechanism for spinout creation within a research institution, shedding light on the unanticipated burdens encountered along the journey. Attendees will gain valuable insights into navigating the complexities of spinout formation and management, thereby informing strategic decision-making within their respective institutions.

**Dr Ana Casanueva**[1]
[1]University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa

## ● Assessing a pilot mentorship programme for professionals in research ethics and integrity management and beyond

Mr Sidney Engelbrecht[1], **Mrs Tanya Coetzee**[2], Dr Retha Visagie[2], Mrs Eleni Flack-Davison[3]
[1]King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, [2]University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa, [3]University of the Witwatersrand , Johannesburg, South Africa

**Biography:**
Sidney is a Senior Research Compliance Specialist at the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology in Saudi Arabia with 15 years of experience in research ethics and integrity. He is an accredited Research Management Professional by the International Professional Recognition Council. He is the recipient of the Award for Distinguished Contribution to the Research Management Profession. He obtained undergraduate qualification in Law and postgraduate qualifications in Philosophy (bioethics) from Stellenbosch University and Compliance Management and Copyright from the University of Cape Town. He holds Fellowships from the Center for AI & Digital Policy (US) and EDSafe AI Alliance (US).

Supports the establishment of Communities of Practice (CoP) to provide a platform for like-minded individuals to share interests, offer peer support through collaborative activities, cultivate resilience despite resource constraints, and foster meaningful engagement with research professionals. Recognising the need to build the next generation of Research Management Professionals (RMPs), a peer-led mentorship programme has been identified as an opportunity to develop transferrable research management competencies, including professional, behavioural, management and leadership skills to enhance capabilities and competencies and a chance to broaden networks and develop long-term career goals and plans. Consequently, RMPs would be proficient and applicable nationally, extending their relevance and competence to regional and international arenas.

This presentation aims to share lessons learned from piloting the mentorship programme. A call for mentors and mentees was advertised on SARIMA's social media pages, such as LinkedIn, in February 2024. In addition, the call was shared with SARIMA members, stakeholders and COPs in Research Ethics and Integrity. The call has yielded the interest of more than 80 prospective mentors and mentees across South Africa and neighbouring African countries such as Mozambique, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Kenya. Assessing and evaluating the challenges and successes experienced by the first cohort of mentors and mentees was vital for measuring the success of the mentorship framework underpinning programme implementation. To this end, appreciative inquiry was used as an assessment method by inviting selected mentors, mentees and programme facilitators to reflect on aspects of the programme that they deemed to be working, particularly those aspects facilitating RMPs personal and professional development. The presentation will conclude with recommendations to improve programme implementation and inform the way forward.

# ● When synthesis turns to slander

**Dr Robin Drennan**[1]
[1]Wits University, Johannesburg, South Africa

**Biography:**
Robin Drennan has a PhD in Chemistry from Rhodes University. He has practiced as an applied researcher in a public company, AECI, and in the CSIR. He worked at the NRF where he managed many different programs. In 2011 he joined the Wits University as Director for Research Development. His role entails leading, encouraging and supporting research. In 2010 he won a Golden Quill award for research reporting, in 2017 a SARIMA award for distinguished contribution to the Research Management and has Senior Research Manager recognition from the IPRC. He is the General Secretary for the Royal Society of SA.

Solving complex problems, be they social, economic, political, technical, or ecological, is best tackled by bringing together experts from multiple disciplines.  These experts classify, compare, contrast, combine and coalesce their knowledge, in a synergistic manner, to solve the problem.

An example of such a problem is the supply of potable water, a human right, in rural South Africa.  It requires inputs from engineers, scientist, sociologists, economists and politicians.  A prime problem begging for a synthesis-solution.

This case study considers such a synthesis research project, where the brief was to find the best compromise amongst the 'moving parts' that make up the water supply infrastructure.  The end goal was a cost effective and socially acceptable solution to reliably provide high-quality potable water.

Sounds perfect and the goal is so noble, but …

It turns out that it is far more difficult to create the space where experts, emphasis is important here, can share their diverse knowledge banks in a creative, synergistic and imaginative way.  It would seem to this observer that the further people believe they have journeyed along the path to becoming an expert, the less likely they are to accept inputs that do not fit their understanding.  They become less open to other ways of seeing problems that they have grappled with for long periods of time.  Clearly this is a generalisation, but certainly one to be aware of.

In the case at hand, the problems arose because there was no common understanding of the ground rules.  There was insufficient respect for other disciplinary approaches.  When early signs of communication break-down due to mistrust and hidden agendas were noticed, the facilitation was ineffective.

The case study focuses on how to navigate these difficult situations based on practical experience.

# ● Navigating disruption: Researcher development in a rapidly changing world - A strategic approach

**Dr Marianne Engelbrecht**[1], **Prof Lessing Labuschagne**[1]
[1]UNISA, Pretoria, South Africa

**Biography:**
Marianne Engelbrecht is the Programme Manager for the UNISA Researcher Development Academy Project within the Department of Research, Innovation and Commercialisation at UNISA. She obtained a PhD in corporate governance and futures studies and has a trans-disciplinary academic background. She has spent the last two decades in higher education and has a passion for capacity development in the sector. Her research interests include researcher development, research ethics, and the development and implementation of capacity development initiatives in the higher education sector. Marianne is a seasoned futurist practitioner, known for her innovative and holistic approach to anticipating and shaping the future.

**Prof Lessing Labuschagne**
Lessing started his career as a scholar and researcher and accidentally ended up in RMA. In 2011, he was appointed Executive Director of Research, Innovation and Commercialisation at the University of South Africa (UNISA). In 2019, he was invited onto the founding editorial board of the Journal of Research Management and Administration (JoRMA).In 2021, Lessing obtained professional recognition as Senior Research Management Professional (SRMP). In 2023, Lessing was appointed as a member of the International Professional Recognition Council for Research Management

The research landscape is evolving rapidly, influenced by technological advancements such as the digital transformation in research processes, automation and analytics, changing research norms, and a broader recognition of the impact of research. The professional development of researchers has become a priority for most Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in response to national strategic imperatives. A shift is taking place from researchers taking total ownership of their development to HEIs creating an enabling and supporting developmental environment. The responsibility for researcher development is often delegated to Research Management units, and many research managers struggle with conceptualising and creating a researcher development ecosystem. Research managers have to develop policies and strategies in response to researchers' evolving needs and requirements, linking it to capacity development initiatives and research productivity. They also play a pivotal role in creating a supportive environment, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, and enabling researchers to navigate career pathways successfully. Creating such an innovative researcher development ecosystem requires a systemic consultative approach that embraces inclusivity, challenges traditional paradigms, embraces context and is based on a robust and carefully designed researcher development framework (RDF). In 2023, the University of South Africa embarked on a journey to develop a bespoke RDF that would form the foundation for promoting and ensuring quality research at the institution. The paper starts by describing how a need in grounding researcher development within scholarship surfaced when faced with a myriad of challenges and disruption, and proceeds to sketch an overview of the processes though which a bespoke UNISA RDF emerged. It also provides a strategic overview of the tensions in conceptualising the process in a (South) African context through a contextualised and fit-for-purpose RDF and finally proposes a possible blueprint on how research managers may embark on their own process and method of enquiry in developing a researcher development ecosystem.

- # Impactful technology transfer, innovation and entrepreneurship management: A case of Namibia

**Ms Valerie Garises**[1]
[1]Namibia University of Science and Technology, Windhoek, Namibia

**Biography:**
Valerie Garises is a seasoned technology executive with 2023 years of experience, including leadership roles in public and private sector. Educated at Namibia University of Science and Technology and University of Namibia, she holds two master's degrees in Information Technology and Business Administration respectively. Valerie is also a certified blockchain expert and a Chief Information Officer. Her career includes significant positions at Telecom Namibia, Namibia Institute of Pathology, and Welwitschia Health Training Centre, currently serving as Director of Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship at NUST.

In the unique context of Namibia, managing technology transfer, innovation, and entrepreneurship presents distinctive challenges and opportunities. This presentation examines how advanced technological solutions can be pivotal in enhancing the processes and impact of technology transfer, innovation, and entrepreneurship within Namibia. We explore the critical issues faced by Namibian institutions in tracking and assessing the outcomes of such endeavours, emphasizing the importance of strategic alignment, resource optimization, and improved visibility in the local and global landscape.

We introduce a range of technology solutions, including data analytics platforms, research information management systems, and digital collaboration tools, that are particularly relevant to Namibia's context. These tools aid in the efficient collection, analysis, and sharing of impact data, addressing specific challenges faced by the country's institutions. Moreover, we delve into the potential of emerging technologies like blockchain to enhance data integrity, artificial intelligence to provide advanced analytics, and cloud-based platforms to ensure comprehensive data integration and accessibility.

Through real-world examples from Namibia, we illustrate the effectiveness of these technologies in enhancing transparency, accountability, and the overall impact of technology transfer and innovation efforts. The presentation also looks forward, identifying future technology trends that are likely to influence the Namibian landscape of technology transfer, innovation, and entrepreneurship management.

Concluding, this presentation highlights the transformative role of technology in driving impactful technology transfer, innovation, and entrepreneurship in Namibia. It offers valuable insights and strategies for Namibian administrators, researchers, and policymakers, aiming to harness technology to foster a vibrant, impactful, and successful innovation ecosystem in the country.

# ● Breaking Bad: Unveiling a few key strategies for TTO efficiency

**Mr Tyron Grant**[1]
[1]Spoor & Fisher, Pretoria, South Africa

**Biography:**

Tyron is a partner in the life sciences department at Spoor and Fisher. He has a Masters in Genetics and is a South African patent attorney.

Tyron has more than 10 years of battle wounds from drafting and prosecuting patent applications for the South African Universities and Science Councils.

The world of patenting is complex and costly, and often financial optimisation is paramount in the research environment, prior to commercialisation. This talk will delve into a few of the prevalent stumbling blocks and inefficiencies that are apparent from the view of an outsider (aka patent attorney) looking in, particularly in terms of expenditure. From erratic filing strategies to communication breakdowns, I will dissect these challenges in detail. However, within these challenges lie opportunities for collaborative improvement. By fostering a unified front between patent attorneys and TTO staff, we can implement strategic measures to curb costs, streamline processes, and effectively safeguard intellectual property. Discover how proactive collaboration can reshape TTO practices, driving efficiency and operational excellence.

# Intellectual property in the arts: Challenges, opportunities and regulatory gaps in South African higher education

**Ms Monique Heystek**[1]
[1]University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa

**Biography:**
Monique Heystek is Technology Transfer Specialist at the University of the Western Cape where her work is focused on IP & Contracts. Monique holds degrees in both Plant Biotechnology and Law and was Administrative Head of Patent Renewals at Spoor & Fisher before joining the University of the Western Cape.

This presentation will explore the nuanced intersection of intellectual property (IP) rights and the arts within the South African higher education landscape. Against the context of national legislation and institutional policies and contracts, the implications for copyright in commercialized artistic creations produced by artists in residence will be investigated. Supported by public funding, these artists were given free rein with autonomous creative practices in a dynamic laboratory setting. The result was a groundbreaking theatre production reimagining the life of an iconic struggle activist by blending puppetry arts, history, and multimedia projections.

While the South African Intellectual Property Rights from Publicly Financed Research and Development Act, 2008 delineates the ownership of IP resulting from public funds, it explicitly excludes literary, musical, and artistic works. Additionally, creative endeavours by artists during residencies do not strictly conform to the conventional definition of research and therefore inherently fall outside the scope of the University's Intellectual Property policy. On the other hand, internal policies unequivocally affirm the University's ownership of IP generated by employees and students during the course and within the scope of their employment or registration. Whether resident artists are bound by such contracts, remains open for interpretation.

The lack of an applicable regulatory framework results in numerous unregulated and contractually challenging aspects, including issues related to copyright ownership, artists' moral rights concerning artwork adaptation, and benefit sharing in the commercialization of artworks.

Collaborative interactions with other Universities and legal experts are vital in building a comprehensive understanding of the IP landscape in the Arts and Humanities. For this presentation, the UWC Technology Transfer Office will aim to contribute to raising awareness and fostering informed discussions as well as suggest practical measures to address current gaps.

# Managing change, growing strategically: WITS VIDA – A case study for the future research landscape

**Mrs Catherine Hill**[1], Ms Shaheeda Salajee, Mr Ahmed Cajee, Prof Ziyaad Dangor
[1]Wits Health Consortium (Pty) LTD, Johannesburg, South Africa, [2]Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

**Biography:**
Chief operating officer at the WITS Vaccines and Infectious Diseases Analytics Research Unit, Catherine is responsible for executive business management, strategic development and sustainability for a dynamic organisation of 500+ staff operating over 100 active research projects around the south of Johannesburg including Soweto. In addition to business direction, risk and strategic resource management, her work includes advising on translational research, impact analysis and community engagement, and providing strategy and communications expertise to health systems, implementation and behavioural science projects.

Wits VIDA's growth during the last five years through and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic illustrates the power of innovation and collaboration in a grant-funded unit, showcasing opportunities to develop the research landscape.

Founded by Professor Shabir Madhi in 1997, VIDA has experienced growth in size as well as organisational complexity. Based in Soweto, in collaboration with the third largest hospital in the world (Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic), the unit's work spans pre- and clinical development of vaccines through to long-term child health and mortality surveillance and includes an accomplished clinical trials facility as well as established research laboratory.

The following indicators are a result of applied, change-management, leadership development, streamlined compliance, accountability and financial management:

— Staff average increasing 200 to 500 stabilising since 2022
— Expansion of clinical trials (8 to 30 trials; enrolment ~200 per trial, ~5,000 visits p/m)
— Active studies and grants ~100+
— Expanded facilities include Rahima Moosa Mother and Child Hospital
— Increased funding for large-scale observational and social behavioural studies (pregnancy, paediatric and neo-natal surveillance, Group B Streptococcus, Health Demographic Surveillance)
— Expanded laboratory and basic science (eg. whole genome sequencing)
— Reduced retrenchments; reduced corrective action; increased internal transfers and promotions; increased key personnel retention
— Increased training and development aligned to individual development plans
— Targeted leadership programmes
— Employee Wellness Programme
— Improved internal communications & internal engagement
— Cross-functional academic programme

VIDA's role in promoting and leading Africa's inclusion in the Oxford AstraZenecA COVID-19 vaccine trial highlights a commitment to research equity in pandemic response. Efforts to develop an adaptive organisational design, operations and management strategy have resulted in effective resource allocation, sustainable growth, mitigation of risk and ultimately business optimisation which has enabled continued and leveraged health research outcomes.

# The implications of (mis)leading research management village practices out of context

**Dr Tania Holmes-Watts**[1]
[1]Stellenbosch University, Cape Town, South Africa

**Biography:**
Dr Tania Holmes-Watts holds a PhD in Science & Technology as well as a MPhil in Social Science Research Methodology from Stellenbosch University. She is a research management professional with 15 years of work experience at the National Research Foundation and within the public higher education sector in South Africa. She served as SARIMA Committee between 2021-2023 and in the African Engagement Portfolio. Her contributions at various international, regional and local levels are evidenced through her participation at INORMS, the many research funding facilitations and numerous research capacity development engagements locally, within the African region and beyond.

Five years ago, the state of South Africa (SA)'s research enterprise was investigated and introduced in a nationally published piece as:" Mining the numbers" …. Albeit an interesting research approach, at the time the country's research & development efforts were depicted as mirroring a metaphorical research 'giant' on the African continent, but 'dwarf-like' in comparison globally. In fact, at that stage, SA's human resource capacity, also termed person-power, particularly, those found in the higher education sector was stagnating, according to the findings.

Given the increased national concern, we as stakeholders have a responsibility to offer solutions and appropriate intervention to ensure that the future generations inherit a healthy science ecosystem. Hopefully, consisting of research management villages comprising a highly competent, experienced, and passionately future-fit, human capital base; embracing all applicable and required habitual practices in context. As such, this research aimed to establish the intricacies involved between the individual, the institutional and system-level factors that influence research and research performance among contrasting university environments. The objective was to find the conditions necessary to improve research performance despite institutional differences in historical backgrounds and contextual realities. Multi-level data collection and analysis approaches were used from both primary and secondary sources. Varied management & behavioural theories on which the research relied were supported, refuted, or extended by the findings examined through a phenomenological lense. The power-dynamic model developed not only offers new insights on how research performance can be improved in any university context but allows opportunities for qualitative and quantitative convergence within the context specificity. The research findings provide a sobering perspective on the implications of (mis)directing research management village practices out of context.

# The evolution of proposal development training activities for early- and mid-career researchers at UCT

**Dr Rob Huddy**[1], Dr Zulfa Abrahams[1]
[1]University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa

**Biography:**
Dr Rob Huddy is a Project Manager for Proposal Development within the Faculty of Health Sciences Research Office at the University of Cape Town. Rob has a basic science background, having completed a PhD in Applied Microbiology from UCT. His current role includes supporting Health Science researchers with their pre-award grants administration as well as aiding them in identifying and applying for research grants. He has successfully supported UCT researchers applying for major international grants, including those from NIH, Wellcome Trust and Wellcome LEAP. Rob is passionate about supporting the development of emerging researchers in the art of grantsmanship.

Research and innovation activities depend on the financial resources obtained through competitive, open calls from funding agencies, to enable and accelerate knowledge production. Active grant seeking and successfully securing major grants are key rate limiting steps in academic research, with the average success rate for research proposals being funded globally by international agencies being relatively low. For example, the National Institutes of Health has an average success rate of about 20% for research grants. The European Research Council has an average success rate of about 15% for grants. There are a number of factors that influence the success rate of a research proposal, including the quality of the proposal. The University of Cape Town's (UCT) Faculty of Health Sciences Research Development Team is tasked with supporting the Faculty's Research Enterprise. We have developed, and continue to evolve, a series of proposal development training initiatives that aim to support the independent grant seeking activity of early- and mid-career researchers within UCT's Faculty of Health Sciences, by providing them with the knowledge to enable the submission of competitive fellowship and research grant proposals. These development activities have evolved over the course of the last 2 years through a iterative process of trainer and participant evaluations, and incorporation of the feedback and lessons learnt to enhance the applicability of the support delivered to participants.

This presentation will detail the evolution of training activities, to support and empower early- and mid-career researchers targeting major international funding schemes. We will highlight the barriers to success faced by early- and mid-career researchers applying for major grants and fellowships, and detail how our approach to proposal development training seeks to overcome these hurdles. Through these support and development initiatives we are contributing to the development of a pipeline of successful emerging researchers within Health Sciences at UCT.

- # It takes a village: Fostering collaborative networks for postdoctoral fellow management

**Ms Mandy Jampies**[1]
[1]University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa

**Biography:**
Mandy Jampies is a Senior Officer with 19 years of experience in Higher Education Administration. Holding a B.Tech in Office Management and Technology, as well as a National Diploma in Commercial Administration, she brings a wealth of expertise to her role. With 10 years as a Postdoctoral Coordinator, Mandy has specialized in postdoctoral administration and managed DRD-funded postgraduate bursaries. Her dedication and proficiency in overseeing complex administrative tasks make her an invaluable asset in supporting academic endeavors within the institution.

Managing postdoctoral fellows within UFS necessitates a holistic approach that involves nurturing relationships not only within the institution but also with external stakeholders. This abstract explores the importance of promoting strong connections with all stakeholders to ensure the effective administrative processes of postdoctoral fellows.  In the abstract there will be highlights in the pivotal roles of host supervisors, institutional administrative staff, funding agencies and home affairs in shaping the postdoctoral experience.

Internal stakeholders are international affairs, tuition fees, student academic services, host supervisors and faculty managers that are central to providing guidance and resources for postdoctoral fellows. Host supervisors have a key role in mentoring postdocs, while administrative staff facilitate access to facilities, logistics and streamline administrative processes. Collaboration with internal departments such as Centre for Graduate support enables postdocs to access professional development opportunities.

External stakeholders, as funding agencies and research collaborators are essential for the success of postdoctoral fellows. Building relationships with funding agencies is crucial for securing research funding and navigating grant requirements. Collaborating with external researchers and institutions fosters interdisciplinary collaboration, University of the Free State and University of Johannesburg have concluded an agreement to appoint joint postdoctoral fellowship and this will expands research opportunities, and enhances the visibility of postdoctoral research projects.

An important external stakeholder is the Department of Home Affairs, by having a strong relationship with this entity  is essential for institution as it ensures smooth visa processing and immigration procedures for international postdoctoral fellows, nurturing a welcoming and supportive environment that attracts top talent, promotes diversity and enhances the institution's reputation on the global stage.

By nurturing relationships with both internal and external stakeholders, institutions can create an environment that supports the growth and development of postdoctoral fellows. The abstract emphasizes the importance of open communication and collaboration in fostering strong partnerships.

# • The impact of leadership on a research office

**Mr Kevan Johnson**[1], **Mrs Carmen van Leeve**[1]
[1]Nelson Mandela University, Port Elizabeth, South Africa

**Biography:**
Mr Kevan Johnson is a senior manager in the research office at the Nelson Mandela University. He has been working in a research office for over 25-years occupying various positions from a research officer to an acting director.

My name is Carmen van Leeve working at Nelson Mandela University in Port Elizabeth. I have been working in the Research Support Office for more than 25 years. I have a qualification in Information Technology. The main areas I manage are the NRF Evaluation and Rating, NRF rating incentives, NRF Competitive Programme for rated researchers and the DHET publication subsidy namely the article submissions. I was part of the project team involved in developing the Research Output Publication Management System to manage the DHET publications and continue to assist with developments.

Leadership is the ability of an individual or a group of people to influence and guide followers or members of an organization, society or team. Leadership often is an attribute tied to a person's title, seniority or ranking in a hierarchy. However, it's an attribute anyone can have or attain, even those without leadership positions. (Mark Barney: 22 March 2023)

This presentation is an autoethnographic presentation describing our lived experiences in a Research Support Office (RSO), as subordinates, under various leaders, over more than a 25-year period. The focus of this presentation will be on the skills set aspects of the leader in the RSO, the role the leader's skills set plays in contributing to the effectiveness and impact of the RSO. The skills that we will be highlighting are the perceived and observed research office knowledge, experience and leadership style of the leader. The views and ideas that will be shared will include our understanding of leadership, various management styles and work experience. How these aspects impact the RSO staff and organisational effectiveness. Furthermore, we will describe what we thought worked and what did not work regarding each leader type and the impact it has on the team in a research office, the research project, and of the organization. We will make recommendations of what could be the most effective leadership practice and strategies employed to make the research office effective and impactful. Lastly, we hope that our shared experience will provide insight as to how subordinates experience leaders and to alert aspiring leaders of the same. Furthermore, we hope that this presentation will contribute positively to RSO's being nurturing spaces where staff and leadership thrive.

# Collaboration in the digital age: AI's role in redefining higher education research

**Ms Doret Kruger**[1], Ms Mamodula Mafolo[2], Mrs Rose Kgantsi[2]
[1]North-West University, Vanderbijlpark, South Africa, [2]North-West University, Mahikeng, South Africa

**Biography:**
Doret Kruger, a professional, integrates nursing, business management, and academics into her career. Her educational journey spans nursing and business management, finishing in an MBA from NWU. Currently pursuing a PhD at AUTHeR, her research focuses on a model to develop survivalist entrepreneurs in a collectivistic culture, blending entrepreneurship, education, and psychology. Doret's career path includes diverse roles, from Nursing to Senior Commercialization Specialist, and she currently serves as Manager of Higher Degrees Academic Support. Externally, she's an examiner, study leader, and contributor to international conferences and accredited journal publications, showcasing her dedication to innovation and research in South Africa.

Digital transformation, driven by the transformative power of Artificial Intelligence (AI), is revolutionizing Higher Education and fundamentally reshaping research practices. A critical aspect of this transformation is the unprecedented collaborative opportunities it unlocks for researchers globally.

This paper explores the myriad ways in which digital transformation, driven by AI, is breaking down barriers and fostering collaboration in the research landscape.

This study employs a desk research methodology to investigate the impact of digital transformation on collaborative research practices. Through an extensive review of existing literature, reports, and databases, the study analyses secondary data to elucidate the multifaceted nature of collaborative research in the digital age.

Firstly, digital platforms powered by AI are dismantling geographical barriers, enabling seamless collaboration among researchers irrespective of their physical location. International teams can now collectively address complex challenges, leveraging diverse perspectives and expertise to drive innovation.

Secondly, AI is democratizing access to data and resources, revolutionizing research by empowering researchers with deeper insights and streamlining processes such as literature reviews. Moreover, digital libraries and open-source platforms facilitate knowledge-sharing and collaborative problem-solving on a global scale.

Thirdly, AI transcends disciplinary boundaries, facilitating interdisciplinary collaboration by identifying connections and encouraging teams to approach problems from multiple angles. This interdisciplinary approach leads to more holistic and innovative solutions.

Additionally, digital tools facilitate communication and dissemination, fostering continuous dialogue and knowledge exchange among researchers worldwide. Collaboration platforms, video conferencing, and online communities enable real-time sharing of findings, leading to faster dissemination and accelerated progress.

Looking ahead, researchers and institutions must proactively adapt to fully harness the potential of collaborative AI. This includes promoting AI literacy, establishing ethical guidelines, and developing robust AI-powered research infrastructures. Embracing these changes ensures that the future of research is not only transformative but also inclusive, collaborative, and driven by the collective pursuit of knowledge.

# Gestão da Investigação para a Excelência Universitária: desafios e opções da Universidade Zambeze

**Dr Constancio Machanguana**[1,3,4,7], Dr Eurides Tendaunga[1,5], Dr Jane Mutsuque[1,2,5,6], Dr Anabela Zacarias[1,2]

[1]Zambeze University, Beira, Sofala, Mozambique, [2]Instituto de Investigacao Agronomica de Mozambique, Maputo, Mozambique, [3]Centro de Estudos em Sociologia Economica e das Organizacoes, Lisboa, Portugal, [4]Observatorio da Mobilidade e Transportes de Mozambique (OMT), Maputo, Mozambique, [5]Centro de Estudos Globais, Lisboa, Portugal, [6]Grupo de Pesquisa MediAção, Minas Gerais, Brazil, [7]Instituto Mocambicano de Governacao Corporativa, Maputo, Mozambique

**Biography | Bibliografia:**
Sociólogo e Docente Universitário. Doutor em Sociologia Económica e das Organizações pela Universidade de Lisboa. Diretor científico da Universidade Zambeze. No seu percurso profissional conta com várias contribuições em trabalhos de consultoria e desenvolvimento institucional. As suas áreas de actuação na investigação incluem a responsabilidade social corporativa, Corporate Governance; mobilidade e transportes; Planificação e Desenvolvimento Institucional; Formação e Desenvolvimento de Competências. É investigador do CEPES (centro de Estudos e Pesquisas sociais da Universidade Zambeze; Investigador do SOCIUS/CSG do ISEG, Portugal.

A investigação é um dos três pilares que sustentam a missão da universidade. Aliás, as universidades são avaliadas, para além da quantidade dos graduados que entregam ao mercado, pelos impactos gerados pela sua atividade de investigação. Os "rankings" que classificam as universidades consideram a quantidade e impacto dos projetos e das publicações cientificas. Esta produção científica resulta do investimento na formação de professores, laboratórios, projetos, grupos de investigação, bolsas de investigação, intercâmbios e eventos de divulgação científica. Neste momento, Moçambique conta com 53 instituições do Ensino Superior, entre universidades, Escolas Superiores, Institutos Superiores e Academias. A Universidade Zambeze, com 7 faculdades e 2 centros de investigação, está no oitavo lugar no 'ranking' das melhores universidades em Moçambique, com uma produção científica muito inferior ao desejável, menos de 15 artigos por ano. Mundialmente, a universidade está na posição 20 222, distante da ocupada pelas universidades Eduardo Mondlane e Lúrio com 2 081 e 6 505, respetivamente. Assim, melhorar o desempenho da Universidade passa por um conjunto de reformas, desde o estabelecimento de regulamentos de incentivo à investigação, a existência de um corpo docente qualificado, a criação de grupos de investigação nas faculdades, centros e departamentos académicos, criação de linhas de investigação, formas de reconhecimento da excelência na investigação, envolvimento de estudantes na publicação científica, e na promoção de eventos científicos. Este artigo, propõe-se a discutir estas formas de incentivo à investigação e como elas podem melhorar as práticas de gestão da investigação, com consequência na melhoria do "ranking" nacional e internacional da Universidade. Para tal, pretende-se levantar e discutir a efetividade das atuais práticas e instrumentos de gestão da investigação da Universidade Zambeze. Espera-se com isso criar um espaço de diálogo, troca de experiências e fortalecimento da capacidade institucional na gestão de projetos, investigação e extensão universitária.

# The emotional labour skill

**Mrs Elizabeth Maqhubu**[1]
[1]Nelson Mandela University, Port Elizabeth, South Africa

**Biography:**
Elizabeth began her career at Wits University with Birth to Twenty, focusing on teenage pregnancy and young fatherhood. Transitioning to market research with Submarine Depth Research, she crafted concepts for major South African brands. Later, at ActionAid International, she championed social justice and poverty alleviation. Joining Mandela University in 2017, she now serves in Research Support and Management, driving creative process outputs and managing research outputs, particularly conference proceedings. Elizabeth holds a BA and Honours degrees from the University of the Witwatersrand and an MA from Mandela University in Social Anthropology.

This research contributes to the understanding of human diversity by drawing specific attention to the common cultural systems that shape the physical and social world. Filtering down and sharing knowledge and transferable skills helps build a unit and allows for the concept, "it takes a village to raise a child" to occur. Although many believe in the notion, the practical is not always true.

Transferable skills may be seen as a given in many instances, but they play a critical role in holding up the values of a research office. They contribute not only to individual success but also to the success of the team, stakeholders and/or organisation. The lesser known and acknowledged emotional labour skill is the competitive edge needed for research support offices operating in a dynamic and fast evolving world of work. This skill, with attributes that speak to the management of one's emotions in order to present oneself and interact with other people in a certain way while doing their job, highlights the commitment to showing up as a human being, even when we don't feel like it.

Utilising semi-structured interviews with 7 participants and employing participant observation as an additional data collection method. The study applies the narrative analysis theory to scrutinize the gathered information. The outcomes highlight a discernible shift in transferable skills, revealing negatives and positives of expectations that are built by younger employees who look to the older employees to help them grow. It highlights that using a blanket approach of thinking that everyone knows and applies these skills in their everyday correspondence is placing one's department at risk. It is important that systems are put in place to enable the transfer of knowledge, both tacit and explicit, between early career and established research administrators and managers to ensure sustainability of practice.

# Our journey as interns into the world of research ethics management

**Ms Thato Massinga**[1], **Ms Michelle Magagane**[1]
[1]University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

**Biography:**
Ms. Thato Massinga and Ms. Michelle Mahlatsi Magagane completed their BA honours in Psychology in 2023. They have applied for an internship offered by the President's Office as part of the 150-year celebration.
They joined the Research Integrity Office during the latter part of 2023 and are working as interns in the RIO tasked with operational and technical assistance to the RIO team. They have assisted with, amongst other things, literature searching, registers, minute-taking, report writing, and completed training programmes in research ethics and integrity. Their contracts have been renewed for an additional 12 months.

As interns in a mega-university's Research Integrity Office, our role involves supporting the promotion of research ethics and integrity within the institution. This presentation offers insights into our personal and professional journeys since joining the Research Integrity Office, marking our transition into the research ethics administration domain, from initial orientation to full integration. Using an autoethnographic approach, we explored our experiences of the role of mentors, access to learning environments, the organisational culture, and the interpersonal relationships that influence our professional development.

We used a self-reflective matrix to assess our tasks, output and lived experiences as interns. The autoethnographic approach followed a qualitative design that allowed us to address the following key questions through individual interviews and reflective diaries:

- How do we experience the learning experiences we acquired throughout the internship programme for our own career development?
- What are our experiences of the organisational culture and its influence on our internship roles?
- How does mentorship from colleagues and supervisors influence our sense of belonging and growth as interns?

The results suggest that internships are a good way for recent graduates to learn and develop. Key results of the internship programme include hands-on experiences, teamwork, goal setting, self-assurance, and awareness of one's responsibility. This study supports the assumption that internship programmes provide a positive and valuable learning experience. Mentors play a critical role in the guidance of interns by providing professional and skills development by identifying training opportunities. Mentors also play a critical role in ensuring that interns attain adequate support during their internship to ensure that they can apply critical thinking skills to their respective fields. In conclusion, the appointment of interns holds the potential to cultivate the future workforce of research management.

# A conducive entrepreneurship ecosystem as perceived by academic entrepreneurs to enhance entrepreneurship

**Mr Abe Mathopa**[1]
[1]University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

**Biography:**
Experienced manager and administrator with over 12 years in the National System of Innovation (NSI), working with national funders such as NRF, DHET and DSI, with academic background in the natural and business sciences and exceptional skill set in research management acquired while employed by the National Research Foundation (NRF), the University of Johannesburg (UJ) and the University of Pretoria (UP).
I have completed my MBA qualification at the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). In addition, I hold a MSc in Molecular and Cellular Biology from UCT. My MBA research focused on Academic Entrepreneurship.

**Objective:** The main aim of the presentation to discuss the study that explored the entrepreneurial motivations that stimulated entrepreneurial intentions amongst academics. The study applied three theoretical frameworks: the quadruple helix, organizational support and innovation-supportive theory to investigate what influences and motivates the interactions between role players in the academic entrepreneurship ecosystem.

A number of academics who are engaged in various entrepreneurial endeavors within the academic environment were interviewed employing the in-depth qualitative research approach. The study explored factors that influenced and motivated their entrepreneurship decision-making process.

**Findings:** The findings revealed both intrinsic and extrinsic factors that motivated academics to engage in academic entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs utilized various and available organizational support and innovation-supportive resources to advance their entrepreneurial research activities.

**Benefits:** The presentation will benefit the educational academic institutions especially individuals in the Technology Transfer Office (TTO), academics and the research managers and administrators. This presentation will provide insights into what influences the interactions between academic entrepreneurs, fellow faculty members and TTO staff. Intrinsic motivations, such as catering for societal needs or being money-driven, should be well-understood by TTO employees in promoting entrepreneurship. Academic institutions need a good understanding of the attitudes and behaviors of TTO staff and how these relate to their encouragement of formal or informal technological knowledge exchange. Further demonstrates three complementary and practical theories to explain what influences the interactions amongst important stakeholders within the academic entrepreneurship ecosystem.

# ● Artificial intelligence policy development: A case study of South Africa public universities

**Ms Caryn McNamara**[1], Mrs Marike Kluyts[1], Mrs Eleni Flack-Davison[1]
[1]University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

**Biography:**
Caz holds an MSc in Biochemistry (Rhodes University, 2006) and a Postgraduate Diploma in Research Management and Administration (Stellenbosch University, 2023) and has worked in the Academic Research Management sector for 15 years.
She holds IPRC Senior Research Management Professional (SRMP) accreditation and is the current SARIMA VP for the RM portfolio. She works closely with WARIMA as the Project Lead on the Science Granting Councils Initiative (SCGI) in Africa.
Caz has worked on numerous externally-funded grants and internally-funded strategic projects, and has served on numerous conference Local Organising Committees: SAARMSTE, SARIMA, INORMS and WCRI.

The Higher Education landscape has changed drastically over the last 5 years, with both covid-19 and Artificial Intelligence (AI) developments acting as catalysts. During the pandemic, institutions found increased instances of contract cheating and ghost-writing, with institutions fearing AI may make it possible for students/researchers to outsource their thinking work to non-human agents.

Institutional policies are seen as a base from which to counteract issues of misconduct, but also as a foundation on which to build local and regional communities of practice around research integrity. Our research tries to compile a comprehensive case study on the state of integrity, with a particular focus on the role of developed policies and their integration into AI-related teaching and/or research processes, in South Africa's (SA) 26 public universities. An initial desktop study maps the 26 South African public universities policies for AI linked to ethics, research and academic integrity, and misconduct, by searching their institutional websites, and thereafter distributing an online survey and/or telephonic questionnaire to the University Research Offices (UROs) for additional metrics. We aim to establish the scope of each URO's responsibilities, their perspectives on the use of AI in research, and whether they have specific policies governing AI use in research. These analysed results will identify AI policy trends and uptake across the sector.

We will share our findings, touching on (i) institutional readiness to adapt to technological advancements, (ii) how institutional AI policy has, or has not, kept up with the changing higher education landscape, and (iii) whether there is a pressing need for sector wide change and/or additional training support - from the authors' varied perspectives in research, teaching and learning, and policy development and compliance.

(Some of this research will also be presented at the World Conference on Research Integrity, in Athens in June 2024)

# ● Promoting research ethics and integrity in community access, engagement, and partnership through Ubuntu

**Ms Feziwe Mseleni**[1], Mr Siyanda Manqele[1]
[1]North- West University , Johannesburg, South Africa, [2]University of Zululand (South Africa), Richards Bay,, South Africa

**Biography:**
I am an early-career social scientist who is passionate about research ethics (RE) and research integrity (RI). I completed my undergraduate degree at Walter Sisulu University and honours degree in Psychology at UNISA. I am currently pursuing an MSc in social psychology at UNISA, focusing on social inequality, social class, and leadership within the Ubuntu framework.  I am member of COP FOR RESEARCH ETHICS & INTEGRITY NORTHERN REGION and the Eastern Region CoP for SARIMA and ARIN Member.  I am currently working as a Program Coordinator for Ethics & Integrity.

Ubuntu emphasise the importance of cooperation, prioritising the well-being of the community. Rooted in African culture, the philosophy of Ubuntu is epitomized by proverbs, such as "Umuntu ngumntu ngabantu" which means a person is a person through other people – and the conference theme emphasises commonality and collaboration for common good. In the diverse cultural landscape of Southern Africa, this proverb embodies the collaborative spirit required in research environments, where community engagement and mentorship programs can play a pivotal role in nurturing inclusive research. In the context of research ethics and technological integration, notably in Africa, the challenge is multifaceted. As the digital age progresses, there is a struggle to maintain a balance between embracing technological advancement and preserving cultural identity. The challenge is to navigate the complexities of modernisation without losing touch with traditional values, views, and customs that define African identity (notably, Ubuntu,). Integrating cultural practices into research ethics principles becomes crucial to acknowledging the rich cultural landscape of Southern Africa. Ensuring that policy and guidelines acknowledge and respect the cultural diversity when conducting research within Southern Africa should go beyond adopting technological innovations to also infusing them with the wisdom of cultural heritage. In conclusion, navigating the intersection of tradition and modernity in research ethics and technology integration is important. The African philosophy of Ubuntu underscores the importance of interconnectedness, emphasizing that researchers, research managers, research ethics committees, and funders are all interdependent in ensuring innovative, solution-oriented research outputs. As Southern Africa embraces technological progress, the challenge is to integrate cultural practices into the evolving landscape of a technologically advanced society. Through cross-sectional study targeting research ethics committees and integrity officers. We aim to do semi-structured interviews to understand the complexities of integrating cultural practices into research ethics principles but also embrace the age of AI.

# • Contractual risk mitigation in South-South collaborations: Perspectives from an early career research management office/r

**Ms Sthembiso Msisha**[1]
[1]Kamuzu University of Health Sciences, Blantyre, Malawi

**Biography:**
Sthembiso Msisha is an early career research management officer, who works as a risk and contracts management specialist. She has a dual role in the institution as in-house counsel, with a major role in contracts management for research projects. She manages a portfolio with a diverse portfolio of contract types ranging from collaborative agreements, material transfer agreements to basic MOUs. She is a lawyer with a social policy background who has worked in the research support function for 3 years and has gained knowledge through on the job training.

Kamuzu University of Health Sciences, like many Universities in Africa hosts a myriad of externally funded research projects based on South-South collaborations. These 'collaborations' have been fraught with challenges and risks for example unequal resource allocation, capacity and expertise disparities and differing regulatory environments, to mention a few. South-South collaborations in research have always been deemed necessary in the pursuit of answers to global problems, however, from an early career research management officer and small research support office these collaborations have presented peculiar risks that have at times hindered effective collaboration and posed risk to research projects. The dominant roots of some of these risks have been identified in our context to stem from the very diversity in culture, economic power, institutional positioning, and political contexts. To mitigate the challenges and ensure effective collaboration, the institution through contracts management functions, found the bargaining tool to be within the contractual provisions which can be used to mitigate risks and foster mutual beneficiation and partnership in research. Considering the foregoing, the aim of this presentation is to highlight some of the main risks associated with South-South collaborations and some of the ways we have; in a small research office with individuals who do not have formal training in research management navigated these risks. It is a case study of the Research Support Centre's Risk Management Unit – the role of contract management in the research support office in resolving some if not all the challenges. We aim to share lessons from our office and evidence presentation that the framework for successful partnership in South-South collaborations hinges on proactive risk management strategies. Central to these strategies being the role of contract management: drafting and negotiation of appropriate contractual provisions that lead to fostering mutuality, respect, equitable participation and shared benefit among 'partners'.

- # Comprehensive analysis of impact of research, innovation and technology in Malawi

**Mr Livison Levis Msonthe**[1]
[1]Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences, Blantyre, Malawi

**Biography:**
I am a Technology Transfer Manager and Lecturer in Science and Technology Education. Formerly a Secondary Education Teacher, I'm passionate about bridging academia and industry. With expertise in identifying promising technologies and designing engaging STEM curriculum, I'm committed to fostering innovation and empowering the next generation of problem-solvers. Holding a Master of Science in Technical and Vocational Education, I'm dedicated to driving positive change through collaboration and lifelong learning. Excited to contribute to the Conference on Technology and Innovation Transfer, I look forward to sharing insights and exploring new opportunities at the intersection of research, education, and entrepreneurship.

Malawi's 2063 Development agenda clearly earmarks dynamic advancement in Research, innovation and technology for maximum transformation of people's day to day lives. The Malawi 2063 anchor its aspiration of an inclusively wealthy and self-reliant nation. The vision is being operationalized by a series of 10-year implementation plans. In line with this, and as provided for in the Malawi 2063, the Government of Malawi, through the National Planning Commission and Ministry of Economic Planning and Development and Public Sector Reforms, has facilitated the establishment of the Pillar and Enabler Coordination Groups (PECGs) to ensure a coordinated and systematic approach to the implementation and realization of Malawi 2063. The universities and research institution have substantial PECG role in ensuring that Research, innovation and technology are properly managed for impact on the society. Contrary to the expectations and mandate instituted in these establishments, most of the institutions are new in issues of fostering impactful research management and technology transfer. Hence, they have mostly deficient systems to measure and monitor impact of (RM & I&TT). The situation may not be limited to Malawi only, but also to other SADC and, global developing countries. The need for research and innovation impact has become increasingly pronounced in many least developing countries. Therefore, the PECGs needs a reorientation towards addressing real-world challenges, heightened collaboration mandates, heightened public scrutiny, economic imperatives, and evolving expectations from funding entities and the public.

This presentation therefore seeks to discuss various ways of fostering impactful research management and technology transfer universities and research institutions in Malawi and beyond.

# Improving project management practices at the Directorate of research innovation and partnerships using lessons learned

**Ms Rufaro Musiyarira**[1]
[1]Namibia University of Science and Technology, Windhoek, Namibia

**Biography:**
Rufaro is a Research and Innovation Assistant Accountant in the Directorate of Research Innovation and Partnerships at the Namibia University of Science and Technology. She has worked in finance in the private sector and academia in Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Namibia. Her research interests include financial management, project management, governance, and leadership. She is currently studying for a Master's degree in Leadership and Change Management with NUST.

This study investigates the role of "lessons learned" in improving project management practices at Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) with a focus on European Commission (EC) funded projects.

NUST and eight other African universities received Euro 2,291,600 for the Strengthening African Higher Education through Academic Mobility (STREAM) project. NUST was the lead partner responsible for managing the grant and distributing the disbursements to all partner universities. An audit revealed that over €888,000 of expenditure was deemed ineligible costs upon project completion. The partner universities didn't pay their share of the ineligible costs, leaving NUST solely responsible for the entire debt. Consequently, this negatively impacted the relationship between NUST, the EC, and the partner universities. Other ongoing EC projects at NUST were affected, as their disbursements were diverted to offset the debt. Moreover, the debt keeps attracting interest on the balance owed, negatively impacting NUST's financial operations.

A qualitative case study approach will be used to investigate the impact of lessons learned on the STREAM project. The objective is to identify and avoid bad practices to reduce ineligible costs and enhance relationships with the EC and partner universities. A purposive sampling research approach will be used to select eight participants out of a population of 100 researchers, research managers, administrative staff at NUST, and two EC staff. Face-to-face and online in-depth interviews with the participants will be conducted using a guide to record their views. The interviews' findings will identify any recurring bad practices that can be used as a reference for future improvements and mitigation of risks associated with poor project management.

The study will provide a practical framework to the audience for improving project management practices by integrating lessons learned, thereby turning challenges and mistakes into opportunities for growth and development.

# Community investments and spillovers in the MRC/Wits Rural Public Health and Health Transitions Research Unit-(Agincourt)

**Mr Ngonidzashe Ngwarai**[1]
[1]University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

**Biography:**
My career spans over a decade at Wits University's rural research entity, I've evolved from Operations Manager in 2009 to my current role as Assistant Director, Systems and Operations. Academically I hold a BBA in Finance degree from Solusi University, Zimbabwe, followed by a postgraduate certificate in Treasury Management from the University of Zimbabwe, a Master of Management from Wits School of Governance and a postgraduate certificate in Management Advancement Program for Future Leaders from Wits Business School. Passionate about research impact on local communities, I'm currently pursuing a PhD on understanding rural research community investments and their spill-over effects.

Establishing Health and Socio-Demographic Surveillance Systems (HDSS) is crucial for understanding disease trends, population dynamics, and public health issues in South Africa and other Low to Medium Income Countries (LMICs). While the benefits of HDSS in terms of surveillance outcomes are widely acknowledged, there is a gap in exploring non-research focused systemic outcomes, especially in regions grappling with long-standing unemployment issues, notably among youth. This study aims to address this gap by holistically conceptualizing the benefits arising from rural population-based research, particularly in South Africa.

Employing a mixed-methods research methodology, this study delves into the multifaceted advantages accruing to local communities through various rural health development initiatives, focusing on the MRC/Wits Rural Public Health and Health Transitions Research Unit in Agincourt. A conceptual framework encompassing direct, indirect, and spillover benefits guides the analysis, with a novel emphasis on a community-cantered approach.

Through illustrative examples, the study highlights the positive outcomes of investing in locally resident employees, promoting local procurement, and facilitating related social activities. Challenges encountered in implementing these initiatives are also explored, providing insights into potential barriers and opportunities for improvement.

By adopting this holistic approach, the research generates new knowledge and fills a critical gap in the literature regarding investment cases in rural health research, particularly in underserved areas of South and Southern Africa.

In addition to elucidating the benefits from a community viewpoint, this study contributes to advancing new methods and approaches for building investment cases for population and public health surveillance. Its findings are relevant to funding agencies, researchers, and surveillance practitioners grappling with the challenge of establishing and communicating the utility of their efforts in rural health development.

# Envisaging a financial research administration community of practice

**Mrs Carin Niemand**[1]
[1]UNISA, Muckleneuk, South Africa

**Biography:**
Carin Niemand started working in the UNISA Finance Department in November 2011. She supports and directs researchers on how to properly submit their claims for grant funding. In February 2017, she was seconded to the Research Department as the acting manager budget and grants after becoming involved in the department's financial reporting procedure. She created the standard operating procedures for external funding in the Research Department since she is committed to support researchers. She desires to provide researchers effective support and joins the discussion on "Curating and Sharing the Wisdom of the Village" to develop the Financial Research Administration competency.

The conference motto, "It takes a village to raise a child," can also be applied to the financial research administrator's working environment. Financial Research Administration has an impact from proposal development to project closeout, whether you are a research administrator in a department or a post-award or a pre-award office. Financial research administrators have the responsibility of offering comprehensive assistance across diverse funding avenues. This includes guiding researchers on accessing funding, understanding pre-requisites for applications, preparing successful applications, and meeting financial reporting requirements. However, financial research managers often operate without the necessary documented procedures and resources to optimise service delivery. This requires the financial research manager to show initiative and courage in devising new procedures and processes. It might also create a sense of isolation. In this presentation, I am making a case for the establishment of a Community of Practice for financial research managers. A community of practice (CoP) consists of people with a shared interest, profession, or passion. A CoP for financial research managers can create a space for these individuals to engage in co-learning and knowledge sharing. A desktop survey will be conducted to determine the existence of any CoPs in this field globally. The presentation will furthermore share information concerning: (a) potential members, (b) clarity of purpose, (c) determining leadership necessary for implementation, (d) engaging in the review of successful CoPs established under the auspices of the Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association and (e) a proposed project plan for establishing the CoP. The presentation aims to share practical examples of how successful CoPs can be used as model cases to develop a CoP for Financial Research Administrators. The study concluded that achieving success as a Financial Research Manager requires cultivating knowledge before sharing the "wisdom of the village," particularly with newcomers in the profession.

# Learning from failures: Overcoming challenges in research management and technology transfer

**Ms Ntombiyenkosi Nkosi**[1]
[1]Central University of Technology (CUT), Bloemfontein, South Africa

**Biography:**
Ntombiyenkosi Angel Nkosi holds the position of Commercialization Officer at Central University of Technology (CUT), Bloemfontein. She holds a Bachelor of Science honors degree in Chemistry from the University of Zululand. Specializing in maturing and commercializing intellectual property (IP) derived from CUT's research, she brings a wealth of experience. Prior to this role, she served as a Patent Examiner at the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission, gaining extensive experience in substantive search and examination of patents, as well as international IP collaboration.

In the dynamic fields of Research Management (RM) and Innovation and Technology Transfer (I&TT), this abstract outline the key points to be addressed in the presentation. It will delve into suboptimal practices and essential lessons, emphasizing the pivotal role of transparent communication in nurturing community resilience and promoting shared knowledge for collective progress.

A significant challenge identified is the underutilization of intellectual property (IP), stemming from inadequate recognition, protection, or exploitation, leading to missed commercialization opportunities. This encompasses instances where research institutions maintain uncommercialized IP portfolios, signaling untapped monetization potential, and where premature publication of research results compromises IP novelty and protection, impeding progress in RM and I&TT.

Moreover, R&D organizations prioritize knowledge dissemination over IP protection, contrary to industry demands. Furthermore, limited Technology Transfer Office (TTO) capacity causes delays in technology transfer, exacerbated by understanding diverse technologies and tacit knowledge further complicates transfer, hindering innovation, and minimal collaboration with industry which contributes to stagnant IP portfolios. It was observed that insufficient formal links among stakeholders hindering intellectual resource flow, alongside inefficient technology transfer processes marked by delays and unclear ownership, further impedes progress in RM and I&TT.

Lessons learned from these challenges include the necessity to improve IP recognition, protection, and leveraging commercialization, alongside the crucial timing of research disclosures to TTOs for IP protection and novelty. Concrete examples of bad practices and their direct impacts on projects, partnerships, or commercialization efforts will be integrated to add depth to the presentation.

Recommendations will be outlined separately, focusing on proactive IP management strategies, enhanced academia-industry collaboration, and policy revisions to support IP protection. Emphasizing community and collaboration, the abstract reflects on strengthened partnerships and community engagement addressing challenges and promoting innovation in RM and I&TT.

## • Building Bridges: Enhancing Collaboration through the Pan African Community of Practice for Research Management

**Mr Vincent Nkundiman**[1], Ms Allen Mukhwana[1]
[1]Science for Africa Foundation, Nairobi, Kenya

**Biography:**
Vincent Nkundimana, Programme Officer, Africa Research Management Capacity Strengthening Programme (REMACS Programme Africa), Science for Africa Foundation. Vincent Nkundimana is the Programme Officer - Africa Research Management Capacity Strengthening Programme at Science for Africa Foundation (SFA Foundation), a pan-African, non-profit, and public charity organization that supports, strengthens, and promotes science and innovation in Africa. He is responsible for providing operational and research support in the implementation and delivery of the REMACS Programme Africa which aims to fill the critical gaps in the African research ecosystem to support a vibrant research culture and leadership at universities and research institutions in Africa. He previously worked in standardization and public policy and participated in the development of regional and international standards and Technical Regulations. Vincent holds a Master of Public Policy from the KDI School of Public Policy and Management (South Korea), a Master of Business Administration from Kabale University (Uganda), and a Master of International Relations from the University of East London (UK).

Allen has 20+ years of work spanning academia, industry, and the NGO sector with vast experience engaging with international partners. She is passionate about helping researchers and their institutions understand that research is an enterprise that requires joint endeavour from different actors, both implementers (researchers) and facilitators (research manager/support staff).
Allen is Co-Chair of the ESSENCE Group working group on Research Management and a member of the International Professional Recognition Committee.

Fostering collaboration, networking, and leveraging technological advancements are the key drivers for achieving impactful outcomes in the face of the ever-changing research management landscape.

This abstract will present insights from a study conducted in 2023 by the Science for Africa Foundation through the Africa Research Management Capacity Strengthening Programme, focusing on the need to establish a Pan African Community of Practice (COP) Digital Platform for Research Management.

The study, comprising 254 research management professionals, explored the potential utility and features of a Pan African COP platform. Participants highlighted the significance of such a platform as a hub for knowledge sharing, networking, and benchmarking among research managers across the continent. Key features identified for the COP platform include discussion forums, events, resource repository, mentorship and expert collaboration, individual and funding opportunities, publication platform, and capacity-building initiatives such as training, webinars, and professional certification.

More importantly, participants emphasized community-led development and active involvement to ensure the COP digital platform aligns with the diverse needs of the research and innovation management community. While rooted in the Pan-African context, the COP is envisioned to incorporate international benchmarks and practices, fostering collaboration with global research management experts. Collaboration with existing associations and networks involved in research management, such as SARIMA, ARUA, and INOMS, is proposed to enrich the platform's offerings and ensure sustainability.

This presentation will discuss these study findings with the attendees to explore the transformative potential of the Pan African COP platform in revolutionizing the research management landscape in Africa. In addition, we will explore how through embracing collaboration between research managers, leveraging technology, and fostering a community-driven approach, the Pan African COP platform endeavors to build bridges, enhance resilience, and future-proof the profession, ultimately contributing to the thriving of research management at institutions across the continent in the long run.

# • Communicating innovation impact: A Stellenbosch University case study

**Ms Mashudu Nxumalo**[1]
[1]Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa

**Biography:**
Mashudu Nxumalo is a Technology Transfer Officer at Innovus, Stellenbosch University. In her capacity, she assists the Technology Transfer Office (TTO) in managing the University's intellectual property portfolio and assessing the patentability and the commercial potential of invention disclosures. Furthermore, she assists in developing early-stage research ideas into commercially viable solutions. Mashudu has a background in microbiology and prior experience in intellectual property management within South African Science Councils. She is passionate about bridging the gap between academia and society, she thrives on unlocking the full potential of cutting-edge research for real-world impact.

In today's competitive landscape, entrepreneurial universities are crucial catalysts for societal and economic change. Supported by both public and private sectors, these academic institutions not only generate and disseminate new knowledge but also foster interdisciplinary collaborations and innovative partnerships. With expanding roles, universities are now tasked not only with internal matters but also with managing relationships with external stakeholders from both private and public sectors. It is globally recognised that effective stakeholder management requires effective communication. Stellenbosch University aspires to be Africa's premier research-intensive university, globally acknowledged for its excellence, inclusivity, innovation, and serving society through advancing knowledge. Despite its reputation for innovative research and contributions, there remains a gap in understanding how Stellenbosch University effectively communicates the impact of its innovations to stakeholders. Through the analysis of various examples, this presentation seeks to explore how Stellenbosch University, through its Technology Transfer Office (TTO), communicates innovation impact to achieve its vision. Specifically, it will (i) identify the communication strategies employed by the university TTO to convey innovation impact; (ii) discuss the perceived benefits and outcomes for the university TTO and its stakeholders resulting from these communication efforts; (iii) assess the impact of these strategies in driving innovation, and (iv) examine how the university TTO measures and evaluates the success of its communication endeavours in conveying innovation impact. The presentation will provide insights into best practices for communication of innovation impact for TTOs in African universities.

- # Financial research administration and building competence: Case study of the University of Ghana research fund

**Mrs Patience Okpoti**[1]
[1]University of Ghana, Greater Accra, Ghana

**Biography:**
I am a Research Development Officer in-charge of the University of Ghana Internal Grants Scheme in the Office of Research, Innovation and Development (ORID), University of Ghana. I have over five (5) years' experience in grants administration. I have developed my career path by attending short courses and training in research management organized by SARIMA, NIH and other research associations. I was awarded the ERAMUS Staff Mobility Exchange Program in the UK to learn their grants management activities. I am a member of SARIMA, WARIMA and SRAI to gain exposure and enhance my performance in the implementation of research administration.

The University of Ghana in 2008 set up a Research Fund scheme from its internally generated fund (IGF) to provide seed funding for research to equip Faculty members to build their capacity and efficiency to apply for external grants. To build their capacity in compliance, the University of Ghana Research Fund (UGRF) put in place Standards Operating Procedures (SOPs) that cover complying with financial regulations and or budget requirements, financial close-out processes, the handling of documentation, reporting, that awardees must adhere to ensure successful project implementation. Managing compliance in financial research administration is a critical aspect of research implementation and most donors usually take a critical look at how funds are spent and the terms and conditions under which these funds are spent. As such, the UGRF scheme has put in place processes and procedures including budget guidelines and financial close-out procedures that will ensure faculty build their capacity in compliance especially as it relates to financial compliance.
This presentation seeks to provide participants with some strategies or initiatives that the University of Ghana has instituted to improve standards, ensure financial compliance and ultimately build the capacity of researchers in financial compliance, the challenges encountered and how researchers have leveraged on these experiences to attract external funds.

# ● Applying Mintzberg's development approaches to research management

**Dr Bas Rijnen**[1]
[1]Namibia University of Science and Technology, Windhoek, Namibia

**Biography:**
Bas Rijnen has over 20 years' experience in research and grant management. He is currently working at the Namibia University of Science and Technology as a projects coordinator. Bas has presented at conferences on north-south research collaborations, Research Information Management Systems, The Challenges of International Project Collaboration, and local knowledge creation. He holds a master's in organisation anthropology at Utrecht University in the Netherlands. He just finalized his PhD in Sport Management at the University of Johannesburg with a dissertation titled: A stakeholder framework for organisations delivering on sustainable sport and sport for development outcomes within the Namibian context.

This presentation explores how research practices should be approached to have an optimal and sustainable delivery at the community level and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mintzberg (2006) provides a useful framework of approaches to development by making a distinction between three different approaches to development within this framework. The first approach is the planned development approach that is driven by the state from the top to bottom, often called the top-down approach. In the top-down approach, development programmes and activities are implemented in a uniform or standard way despite contextual differences among local communities. The second approach is the global development approach, which changes the focus from state or government-led planning (top-down) to international corporate planning and delivery. This global approach similarly imposes a set of beliefs and modus operandi on communities and projects that are frequently uniform across locations (outside-in) and are 'cosmetically' adapted to increase their local appeal. Mintzberg's third approach is the Indigenous development approach, which is based on initiation, growth, leadership, and management of development programmes coming from within the local community. This approach is called the inside-up or bottom-up approach.

The presentation first provides an overview of the existing dynamics and stakeholder configurations regarding research and innovation. It will then zoom in on 5 research projects that are/were conducted at the Namibia University of Science and Technology in Namibia. The used development approach(es) will be assessed and the extent to which they are achieving inclusive governance and community benefit / participation in research and innovation. Lessons learnt from these case studies will be shared for the development of a framework, and recommendations will be given for the role that Research manager can play in this.

- # **Exploring Ubuntu leadership and inclusive governance: Towards a conceptual framework for RM leadership development**

**Ms Takatso Semenya**[1]
[1]University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

**Biography:**
Takatso Semenya currently holds the position of Acting Head: Research Capacity Development within the Department of Research and Innovation at the University of Pretoria. She previously worked at the Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU), as the Research Office Manager; after which she joined the Southern African Research and Innovation Association (SARIMA), as a Project Specialist on various international projects including the Science Granting Councils Initiative; followed by a move to Sol Plaatje University in Kimberley as Director of Research. Takatso is passionate to see the RM practice grow into a fully recognised profession across Africa.

In a world where we are grappling with wicked problems (characterised by uncertainty, complexity and value conflict), it has been ever more glaring that leadership is a key ingredient towards addressing these global challenges. The ever-evolving landscape of leadership, has various definitions, methodologies and theories being offered as critical factors in understanding effective leadership behaviors and outcomes. It is also notable that most of these perspectives on leadership have been based on mainly Western and East Asian traditions and philosophies. The African perspective has largely been under-represented. This conceptual research aims to explore the interplay between research leadership based on the African Ubuntu philosophy and inclusive governance practices, providing a conceptual framework for leadership development in Research Management.

Ubuntu leadership, characterized by values of interconnectedness, empathy, relationality, moral excellence and community-centered decision-making, recognises the importance of fostering strong relationships, building trust, and promoting a sense of community. The SARIMA PCF highlights the importance of interpersonal skills which "accentuate the reality that research management is a people orientated profession where the development and management of relationships at many different levels are a key aspect of the job." Inclusive governance is inherently underpinned by the principles of representation, equity, transparency, participation and capacity building.

By integrating these concepts, this presentation seeks to elucidate how research leaders can leverage Ubuntu leadership to cultivate an environment that fosters inclusive governance. Drawing on existing literature and theoretical perspectives, insights into the synergistic relationship between research leadership underpinned by ubuntu values and inclusive governance will be offered. Furthermore, this presentation aims to stimulate discussions among the audience, generate new ideas, and advance thinking in the importance of fostering a culture of inclusivity within the research ecosystem. Overall the implications for leadership development programs and practices will be highlighted.

# • The crucial role of technology transfer offices in communicating research impact to diverse stakeholders

**Mr Ntiyiso Shabangu**[1]
[1]North-West University - Noordbrug, Potchefstroom, Potchefstroom, South Africa

**Biography:**
Ntiyiso Shabangu is a versatile professional, seamlessly integrating engineering and IP expertise. After graduating in Mining Engineering from the University of the Witwatersrand, Ntiyiso embarked on a career marked by diverse experiences. As a Patent Examiner at CIPC, his role included in-depth search and examination of patents. Currently serving as a Technology Transfer Specialist at North-West University, Ntiyiso is immersed in the dynamic landscape of intellectual property protection and commercialization. Simultaneously pursuing a Bachelor of Laws at UNISA, Ntiyiso embodies a holistic approach to shaping the future of intellectual property in South Africa.

Effective communication of research impact is vital for securing funding, fostering collaborations, and showcasing societal impact. Technology Transfer Offices (TTOs) are crucial in disseminating research impact to diverse stakeholders, including policymakers, industry partners, investors, and the public.

In addition to the traditional responsibilities of TTOs, they actively participate in strategically communicating research outcomes. Working in an environment akin to a multicultural village, TTOs face the challenge of conveying complex research to individuals with different backgrounds and levels of understanding. It is crucial to design tactics that clarify difficult ideas so that a wide range of stakeholders can comprehend the broader impact of cutting-edge technologies.

A forward-thinking approach and early adoption of technology position TTOs as leaders in the global landscape of research and innovation management. Leveraging tools like AI enhances the communication of impact. Tailoring communication strategies to different stakeholders' interests and backgrounds ensures the message resonates effectively.

To effectively communicate the impact of research outcomes, collaboration between TTOs and researchers is essential. This starts with building and maintaining trust, which is crucial for effective communication. TTOs must explore the use of various communication channels and tools. For instance, North-West University has adopted radio interviews to communicate the impact of research outcomes. Other approaches include news articles and digital platforms such as social media, email, and websites, which have been shown to increase outreach to different stakeholders.

In conclusion, TTOs, navigating the intricate terrain of research communication, embody the collaborative spirit needed to bridge the gap between academia and diverse stakeholders. By addressing challenges, implementing strategic recommendations, and prioritizing effective communication, TTOs significantly contribute to translating academic endeavours into tangible real-world applications, ultimately benefiting society at large.

# Left Behind: The experiences of administrators in research management

**Ms Simangele Shezi**[1]
[1]Nelson Mandela University, South Africa

**Biography:**
Ms Shezi is a Research Ethics Manager in the Research Development office at Nelson Mandela University. In this role, she oversees REC administration for the human and animal research ethics committees, supervises staff and ensures compliance with national and international standards. Ms Shezi is passionate about research ethics and has extensive knowledge of research ethics processes and legislation. She is also a member of SARIMA and REASA as well as a PhD candidate at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, studying the socioeconomic impact of the coronavirus pandemic on households and the effectiveness of government interventions in facilitating their recovery.

**Background:** The field of Research Management has grown significantly over the years. However, the growth of administrators in this field seems to be lagging. Research administrators have constantly been struggling to gain recognition and inclusion despite their expertise. They have been excluded from crucial institutional meetings, despite being responsible for communicating decisions and implementing policy changes. Resultingly, administrators are often overlooked for recognition, decision-making, and upskilling opportunities. Research administrators are rarely afforded the opportunity to participate in workshops, conferences, and networking events. This research highlights some of the challenges and concerns that administrators in different spheres of Research Management face and advocates not only for their recognition as key role players but also their intentional involvement in growth and development opportunities that will increase the value, sense of connectedness, and community in the Research Management village as whole.

**Methodology:** This paper shares the real-life experiences of five research management administrators working in research ethics, grants management, research publications, and technology transfer in a research-intensive university in South Africa, using anecdotal evidence. These experiences give insight into the challenges faced by research administrators which can contribute to the development of relevant solutions.

**Recommendations:** The paper recommends that research administrators be recognized as more than policy implementers but as capable of contributing to policy development. They should also be included and encouraged to upskill and participate in workshops, conferences, publishing, and networking events.

**Conclusion:** Research administrators are vital decision-makers in the expanding field of Research Management. They are highly skilled professionals whose expertise and contributions should be fully recognized. To ensure the field's continued advancement, they must be included in most, if not all processes, and given opportunities for upskilling and networking.

# ● The research landscape at Namibia University of Science and Technology:  Links to sustainable development goals

**Ms Victoria Shipanga**[1]
[1]Namibia University of Science and Technology, Windhoek, Namibia

**Biography:**
Victoria Shipanga is a Social Scientist specialized in Public Health and Monitoring and Evaluation. Equipped with a mix of skills, she has vast experience in managing multi-disciplinary research projects. She has managed various internationally funded research projects and has also been involved in the development of M&E Plans and Systems of various organizations.

Researches are conducted with an aim of making a positive impact in communities. However, measuring the impact can be very challenging. Research impact is defined as the contribution that research makes to economic, social, cultural, and other aspects of the lives of citizens and society beyond contributions to academic research (Barnes, 2015). Impact measurement is an important component of research Projects. However, most Institutions have not prioritised this aspect and as such, there is lack of evidence on the societal impact of researches conducted.

Higher Education Institutions equally wish to achieve excellence in the overall impact of the institution's research efforts. However, Research Institutions tend to rather focus on their strategic goals and objectives while less efforts are done on linking the research results to the global goals such as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Hence, it is essential to develop systems that would enable Institutions to measure impact within the communities. Sustainable development calls for concerted efforts towards building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for people and planet. For sustainable development to be achieved, it is crucial to harmonize three core elements: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection (United Nations, 2024).

The research landscape at NUST is mainly centred around the following themes Water, Energy and Food nexus Energy, Health & Climate change, Green Transport & Logistics, Natural Resources & Value chain stewardship, Digital Humanities, Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Sustainability. However, the impact on Societies is not yet demonstrated.

The purpose of this abstract is to share the research landscape at NUST and how it links to the SDGs; and share ideas and challenges experienced in measuring research impact. Challenges include limited human capacity to conduct the impact assessment, the disconnect between the research focus areas and developmental goals, and lack of research data management systems.

# Exploring innovative business models for SHAPE innovations

**Mrs Nolene Singh**[1]
[1]Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa

**Biography:**
Nolene Singh is the Deputy Director: Technology Transfer at Stellenbosch University (SU).  She is responsible for the management and commercialisation of SU's IP through patenting, licensing and the formation of spin-out companies.
Nolene is a registered technology transfer professional with over seven years' experience in technology transfer and innovation. She is a director for LES South Africa and SU spin-out companies SharkSafe Barriers, Immobazyme, BanziFeet and Scientia Products.
She has a Masters Degree in Biotechnology and, prior to joining SU, worked in the plant genetics industry for 12 years starting up and commercialising laboratories.

In the innovation space, SHAPE (Social, Human, Arts, Policy, and Economics) innovations represent a paradigm shift towards holistic problem-solving, incorporating diverse perspectives and disciplines to address complex societal challenges. This presentation aims to provide various options for business models tailored to SHAPE innovations, recognizing their unique characteristics and requirements.

We investigate the intricacies of SHAPE innovations, and the role business models play in fostering their development, sustainability, and scalability. We explore the unique interplay between the different elements of SHAPE innovations, such as social impact, human-centered design, artistic expression, policy integration, and economic viability, and how these factors shape the design and implementation of business models.

Through Stellenbosch University case studies to explore the various business model frameworks and strategies suited to the multifaceted nature of SHAPE innovations considering factors such as stakeholder engagement, value proposition, revenue generation models, resource allocation, and impact measurement.   We explore how Intellectual Property can be carefully leveraged to build unique business cases for these innovations.

## • Bringing the inventors of the village in

**Mr Fredo Ströh**[1]
[1]KISCH IP, Sandton, South Africa

**Biography:**
Fredo Ströh is a Director at KISCH IP with more than 19 years' experience in intellectual property law. His practice covers the fields of patents, registered designs, plant breeders' rights and trade marks, focusing particularly on prosecution of applications in these fields both locally and abroad.
He holds BSc Medical Sciences and LLB degrees and is a qualified patent attorney. As a result of his extensive and broad range of experience and exposure to IP law, he is able to provide a holistic IP approach and assistance to his clients.

In the realm of intellectual property, an inventor stands not only as a trailblazer of innovation but also as a crucial bridge between individual creativity and communal progress. Within the context of communities, the inventor embodies the spirit of collaboration and the drive for shared advancement.

At the core of their role, an inventor is a visionary, often driven by a passion to solve pressing problems or enhance existing technologies. They are the architects of ideas, meticulously crafting solutions that have the potential to transform industries and improve lives. However, what distinguishes the inventor within a community setting is their understanding that innovation thrives on shared knowledge and collective effort.

Inventors, cognizant of the vast pool of expertise and resources within their communities, actively seek collaboration. They engage with local researchers, engineers, and entrepreneurs, recognizing that diverse perspectives fuel creativity and lead to more robust inventions. This collaborative spirit extends beyond formal partnerships to include informal networks and community-based organizations.

In this light, the inventor becomes a catalyst for community development.

Determining inventorship can however be complex, especially in collaborative environments or when contributions are not clearly defined. Challenges arise when distinguishing between mere contributors and true inventors, potentially leading to disputes over recognition and rights. Clear communication, documentation, and legal expertise are crucial to correctly identify inventors, ensuring fairness and protecting the integrity of the IP systems.

The proposed presentation will deal with a general legal overview of inventorship and challenges faced in collaborative environments. These include how inventorship may be dealt with in shared/unequal contributions; external contributors; changing roles of inventors over time; how to deal with conflict of interest; and incorrect identification of inventors and other legal implications.

# Transforming Eduardo Mondlane University into a Research University: Implications for the research delivery system

**Prof Emilio Tostao**[1]
[1]Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo, Mozambique

**Biography:**
Prof. Emílio Tostão is an Associate Professor (2013) and Scientific Director at Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM), since 2017. He is also the PEN-Plus Co-researcher and NCDI Southern Africa Hub Coordinator since 2022. Previously, he served as Director of the Research Center for Agricultural and Food Policies and Programmes (2014-2017), Dean of the Faculty of Agronomy and Forestry Engineering (2010-2014). He holds an MSc (2002) and a PhD (2006) in Agricultural Economics from Oklahoma State University (USA). His research focus on agricultural development, agricultural marketing, and quantitative methods for agriculture. He has more than 15 Journal articles in peer reviewed journals.

Recognizing the key role of the university in the discovery, sharing, and application of new knowledge and that research is key for creating knowledge and improve teaching and learning which brings about individual and societal payoffs, Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM) has embarked in a comprehensive reform to transform itself from a teaching-led university to a research-led university.

One key question that needs to be addressed during the reform process is how the research delivery system once designed to respond to demands of a teaching-led university ought to evolve to respond to the demands of a research-led university, particularly on the functions of university research offices and staff working in research management.

We address the stated question using a comparative analysis. The common approach in the literature compares key performance indicators of the universities being analyzed bilaterally.

However, our approach goes a step further. We propose to empirically construct a performance possibility frontier curve as an envelope of performance indicators of the most performing research delivery system across sampled research-led universities and use this envelope-type empirical construct to measure performance of any university of interest. Therefore, our contribution to knowledge is twofold. First, we survey the literature and propose a new approach to assess the performance of universities' research delivery system. Then, we propose to apply this framework to UEM to inform the level of effort needed to transform its delivery system to fit the demand of the required by a research-led university.

The proposed work fits the session about Curating and Sharing the wisdom of the Village, particularly providing a case study from UEM and provide insights to strengthening the role and practices of the research office and staff as part of the research delivering system.

# Transformative roles of research and innovation management practitioners: Driving policy integration

**Prof Lessing Labuschagne**[1], **Dr Retha Visagie**[1]
[1]University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

**Biography:**

Lessing started his career as a scholar and accidentally ended up in RMA.  In 2011, he was appointed Executive Director of Research, Innovation and Commercialisation at the University of South Africa. He is a founding editorial board member of the Journal of Research Management and Administration (JoRMA). Lessing is a Senior Research Management Professional (SRMP) appointed in 2023 as a member of the International Professional Recognition Council for Research Management (IPRC). He authored Chapter 5.04, The Profession of Research Management and Administration in South Africa, in the book "The Emerald Handbook of Research Management and Administration Around the World (2023)."

Retha Visagie is prominent in Africa's research ethics governance community. She established the Research Integrity Office at the University of South Africa, catalysing research ethics reform on both national and international levels in 2014. Over the past five years, she has been dedicated to indigenising research ethics governance. She has championed policy changes, conducted research, initiated capacity-building programmes and facilitated social dialogues to challenge research practices that may disadvantage Indigenous Knowledge Systems. In 2022, she obtained Senior Research Management Professional (SRMP) recognition. She received a 2022 Research Excellence Award from the University of South Africa (UNISA) for her outstanding contributions.

The Professional Competency Framework developed by the Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association highlights the role of the research and innovation management practitioner (RIMP) across three competency levels: administrative/operational, management and leadership/strategic.

Key Competency Area 2 - research planning, strategy and policy development - inherently underscores the crucial need to cultivate a research and innovation (R&I) culture that supports developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating policies and strategies across various competency areas.

A comprehensive policy framework is essential to uphold research excellence, primarily for good governance and compliance.  Research-producing organisations must assure regulators and other stakeholders of their ability to provide guidance and maintain vigilant governance of R&I endeavours, steering the organisation toward its strategic goals and effectively realising its mission. In essence, compliance means doing what has been agreed to.

The role of the RIMP is to develop policies, create awareness of the official policy requirements and advise researchers on how to comply. RIMPs often establish and manage the processes and procedures that monitor and report on compliance.

Like strategy, implementing R&I policies can falter due to various factors, including discrepancies with international or national regulations, plans and policies, ambiguity, inadequate consultation, limited support and engagement, and resistance to change, especially when the policy is seen as challenging established norms or practices.

In this session, we aim to narrow the gap between theory and practice by providing a holistic overview of the regulatory ecosystem at a South African university.  Using a case study, we will then illustrate the process of developing, implementing, and monitoring R&I-related policies. Participants will benefit by gaining a deeper understanding of how we engaged in reviewing the Policy on Academic Integrity, highlighting key stages of policy formulation, stakeholder consultation, quality assurance, approval, implementation strategies, challenges faced, and outcomes achieved.

- # Fostering equitable partnerships through international research grants: A focus on historically disadvantaged institutions as co-partners

**Ms Noluthando Zikode**[1]
[1]University of Pretoria, Johannesburg, South Africa.

**Biography:**
Noluthando Zikode is a Research Grants Manager in the Department of Research and Innovation at the University of Pretoria since 2015. Previously, she worked in stakeholder management at the Department of Higher Education and Training and later in the University Policy and Development Support Directorate. In her current role, she leads pre-award management, identifying and coordinating research funding opportunities, supporting grant applications, and screening applications for local and international funding agencies. Ms. Zikode holds an MPhil in Public Policy from UP.

Research collaborations serve as a cornerstone for establishing and nurturing partnerships across individual and institutional boundaries both at a local and global context. Pivotal to these partnerships is the need to ensure equity and mutual benefit for all involved stakeholders. In the Southern African context, the National Research Foundation (NRF) has played a pivotal role in fostering such partnerships through bilateral agreements with various countries, including China, Italy, Switzerland, Namibia, among others. These agreements, focused on cooperation in science and technology, have frequently led to the creation of joint research grant opportunities between South Africa and its partner nations.

Recognising the importance of ensuring representation from historically disadvantaged institutions (HDIs), a recent development in these joint applications required that if a South African Principal Investigator (PI) is not affiliated with an HDI, at least one co-applicant from such an institution must be included in the proposed project. This stipulation is a crucial step towards enhancing access and representation for HDIs. However, to ensure that these partnerships are beneficial, equitable, and not merely "window-dressing" symbolic gestures, it is essential to implement effective measures.

This study aims to explore strategies for maximising the benefits and equity of HDI participation as co-partners in joint international research projects funded through the NRF, with a specific focus on proper sub-award management. The aim is to explore ways in which these partnerships can be sustained, and if need be, explore initiatives within which capacity can be developed. Through a qualitative investigation incorporating interviews with key stakeholders, analysis of grant management practices, and review of relevant policies, this research seeks to identify best practices and mechanisms for enhancing the impact of such partnerships in international research projects.

Findings will aid research managers, funding agencies, and institutions in fostering inclusive, equitable partnerships through robust sub-award management.

# POSTER Abstracts:

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## ● Developing a business case for the family resilience strengthening programme: A case study

**Mr Luan Africa**[1]
[1]University of the Western Cape, Bellville, South Africa

**Biography:**
Luan Africa is a Technology Transfer Specialist: Commercialisation, at the University of the Western Cape Technology Transfer Office.

In an era marked by increasing social, economic, and environmental challenges, fostering resilience within families is paramount for sustainable community development. This abstract presents a novel Family Resilience Strengthening Programme (FRSP) designed to empower families to navigate adversities and thrive collectively.

The FRSP is built upon a robust theoretical framework integrating principles from family systems theory, positive psychology, and resilience research. By targeting families as units of intervention, the programme acknowledges the interconnectedness of family members and leverages their collective strengths to promote resilience. Through a combination of psychoeducation, skill-building exercises, and interactive workshops, the FRSP aims to enhance familial communication, problem-solving abilities, and coping strategies.

The economic rationale for investing in the FRSP is multifaceted. Firstly, research demonstrates that resilient families experience lower rates of mental health disorders, substance abuse, and interpersonal conflicts, resulting in reduced healthcare costs and societal burden. Moreover, resilient families are better equipped to withstand economic downturns, thereby mitigating the need for social welfare assistance and increasing overall productivity. Additionally, by fostering a supportive family environment, the programme indirectly contributes to the development of resilient communities, fostering social cohesion and reducing crime rates.

Furthermore, the FRSP caters to diverse demographics through potentially customizable modules and delivery formats. Leveraging advances in digital technology, the programme can be disseminated through online platforms, reducing operational costs and expanding reach. Collaboration with governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, and corporate partners presents opportunities for funding and resource mobilization, ensuring long-term viability.

In conclusion, the Family Resilience Strengthening Programme represents an impactful innovation with far-reaching societal benefits. By investing in family resilience, stakeholders stand to not only alleviate immediate socio-economic burdens but also cultivate a resilient foundation for future generations to thrive in an ever-changing world.

- # **Strengthening the role and practices of the research manager at the University of Ghana**

**Mrs Amma Appah**[1], Mrs Beatrice Sakyibea Biney-nyamekye[1]
[1]University of Ghana, Accra, Ghana

**Biography:**
Amma Appah is a Research Management Professional and an Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Administrators and Management Consultants, Ghana. She is also an IREX Fellow. Her current job as a Research Development Officer at the Office of Research, Innovation and Development (ORID), University of Ghana, situates her within a vibrant research environment.

As a research administrator she has had the opportunity to work in the areas of capacity development, research dissemination and project management. She leads the Capacity Development Team with responsibility for developing and implementing programs to build the capacity of staff and graduate students.

Research management and administration has become a growing global profession in higher education institutions. In recent times, many institutions in sub-Sahara Africa have identified the need to establish the role of research manager/administrators as part of its staff cadre and the University of Ghana is no exception. In 2012, The University of Ghana recruited its first cadre of Research Managers, many of whom had little or no experience in the field. To ensure these staff provide quality and professional research support comparable to international best practices, UG has over the years implemented various activities to strengthen the role and practices of the profession through changes in structures, practices, and capacity building. This presentation would highlight the various activities the University has employed to enhance the capacity of its research managers. The challenges facing research managers would also be touched on. It is anticipated that attendees would gain a comprehensive understanding of how to enhance the capacity of its research support staff to provide quality service and incorporate the research management and administration cadre into the University administration system.

**Keywords:** Research Management, Administration, Roles and Practices, Research Managers, Capacity Development, Career Advancement

# Unlocking potential: Establishing tailored research support for support staff in South African higher education institutions

**Ms Amisha Benode**[1]
[1]UNISA, Pretoria, South Africa

**Biography:**
I am the Programmes and Projects' Officer for the Professional Research Committee and Group since 2017, I oversee operational management and provide research support to specialist and permanent support staff. With a legal background as a qualified attorney and 12 years of experience in the legal field, I also have a history in community engagement and development. My passion lies in supporting, informing, and guiding communities toward success.

Unlocking Potential: Establishing Tailored Research Support for Support Staff in South African Higher Education Institutions

The landscape of research support for permanent support staff employees employed in South African higher education institution (HEI) remains a largely untapped realm, marked by under-exploration.

Whilst support staff employees are often overlooked in traditional research frameworks, they possess a reservoir of valuable knowledge. Recognizing the untapped resources that support staff employees represent, the author steers the development of a robust research support system tailored to the unique needs of these employees. The narrative unfolds against the backdrop of the fundamental premise that, when provided with the appropriate support structures, support staff employees can significantly contribute to knowledge production, particularly, research within a university.

Informed by literature review, the exploration begins by shedding light on the existing gap in research concerning the development of support structures in the South African higher education institution. Through a narrative lens, this paper unfolds the narrative of an established research support system tailored specifically for support staff employees.

The case study presented in this paper details the process of conceptualizing, designing, and implementing the research support system. The narrative weaves together stories of collaboration, the unwavering commitment of the support staff employees.

This paper seeks to illuminate the transformative impact of support systems on the professional growth and scholarly output of this distinct group of university employees. Thus, sharing lessons learned, and outcomes of this initiative will bestow the narrative regarding to what extent do support staff employees contribute on research work at the HEI.

In essence, this paper serves to illuminate the transformative potential of such initiatives in unlocking the latent knowledge reservoir within the frequently overlooked segment of the academic community.

**Keywords:** support staff employees; research support systems; higher education institution; capacity development; knowledge production.

# ● Defective pricing during grant application phase - AMPATH perspective

**Mr Henry Biwott**[1]
[1]Moi University College of Health Sciences/Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital, Eldoret, Kenya

**Biography:**

Henry Kiprono Biwott is the Senior Contracting and Compliance Officer at the Research and Sponsored Projects Office (RSPO) within Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital and Moi University College of Health Sciences - AMPATH Program. He is a Certified Public Accountant (Kenya).  He oversees awards and post-awards through to close-out of projects. RSPO is currently managing more than 220 grants with an annual budget of more than $76 million funded by various donors/funders such as the NIH, USAID, Grand Challenges Canada, Gates Foundation, AbbVie Foundation, AstraZeneca, EDCTP among other donors. He has over 8 year's extensive experience in grants management.

Research Managers, also referred to as grant administrators play a key role in the overall grant lifecycle from pre-award, award, post-award and closeout.  Research Managers are required to observe and adhere to grants management best practices ranging from compliance with donor regulations, reporting standards, host country laws and maintaining high levels of ethical/moral/professional standards.

Despite the regulations and standards in place during the grant application phase, the pre-award team may overquote items in the budget compared to the market rates and not disclose current, accurate and complete cost or pricing data in order to submit a high-cost budget. This is often observed in fixed-price contracts to ensure surplus funds are retained after achieving all the project deliverables. Such fraud may be unearthed during audits. As a result, institutions who engage in defective pricing may face consequences such as; blacklisting by donors, reputation damage and civic & criminal liability.

AMPATH, a partnership between Moi University, Moi Teaching and referral Hospital and a consortium of institutions in North America and Europe has had exemplary performance in grants management. During pre-award, the Research Managers prepare the budget based on the current market rates for various items/services as well as institutional approved rates for personnel salaries. This is done in line with the U.S applicable law; "The Truth in Negotiation Act" (TINA) that requires the contractor to certify that the submitted data is current, accurate and complete as of the date of the pricing.

In line with its vision, AMPATH prides itself as a "Centre of excellence in grants management that meets international standards". It has adhered with compliance to donor regulation, grants management best practices and has grown since its establishment to 60 staff from two staff in 2003 working in AMPATH's Research and Sponsored Projects Office managing annual budget of $76 million.

# Research management as a strategic implementation tool to advance Universities research agendas

**Mr Harry Maishe Bopape**[1]
[1]University of South Africa (UNISA), Tshwane, South Africa

**Biography:**
Harry Maishe Bopape Maishe Bopape is a Director Research Support at UNISA where his major role is the implementation of research strategy at UNISA. He holds degree in Physics and Mathematics. Completed postgraduate Diploma in Datametrics majoring in Information Technology and Decision Modeling. Holds a diploma in Strategy Execution from Harvard Business School and Masters in Business Leadership in Strategic Management. Has over 26 years in academia ,7 years was in middle management and 12 years in Senior Management as a director.
Non-Executive Director of EthiXPERT board of Directors responsible for pinpointing growth drivers that will help EthiXPERT to grow.

South African Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) annually submit subsidy funding claims for research and creative outputs to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). The DHET subsidy serves as the lifeblood of the higher education (HE) sector in South Africa. To secure increased subsidies from DHET, universities focus on enhancing their research capacity and expanding research initiatives that align with DHET subsidy criteria. The financial rewards for research productivity from DHET confirm research as a revenue generator for HEIs since the government uses performance-based funding for long-term sustainability and institutional survival. Maximizing subsidies that universities can attract from DHET requires universities to formulate deliberate research strategies and plans. Therefore, a research strategy is crucial for driving one of the core functions of a university: research. A robust strategy enables institutions to respond effectively to changes and develop policies and strategic guidelines that facilitate evolution and potentially revolution within the academic landscape. In this landscape, universities are committed to cutting-edge research, tackling real-world problems, and engaging in impactful inter- and multidisciplinary research. Fostering excellence in research through research management is a vital strategic contributor to this goal. Policy development and strategic guidelines are core research management functions. As such, research managers establish appropriate internal structures and policies that would adequately address and respond to the ever-changing research environment. Strategic leadership requires a clear vision and direction for the research management activities. As a result, this presentation argues that research management is an essential strategic implementation tool for promoting universities' research agendas. It is not just a luxury but a primary means through which universities can generate knowledge with significant societal impact. A case study of a mega-university will be used to illustrate the role of research management as a strategic implementation tool in real-world contexts.

## • Environmental scanning of research management landscape in West Africa: Challenges and opportunities for continental collaboration

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[1]Medical Research Council the Gambia, Kotu South Layout, Gambia

**Biography:**
Currently serving as the Programme Manager for the Nutrition and Planetary health Theme at the Medical Research Council the Gambia at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.
Pursuing a Masters in Project Management with ARDEN University, earned a Chartered Banker Qualification with Chartered Institute of Bankers Nigeria. Prior to joining MRCG at LSHTM, bagged 10 years' experience in the Gambian Financial Intermediation industry with Reliance Financial Services; served as Manager for Treasury Operations and Alternative Business Channels.

**Background:** Propagation of strongly resourced research and innovation management institutions in Africa enables the continent to be more connected and interdependent through research, innovation, technology, and knowledge transfer.
Research Managers in Western Africa face a unique set of costly and potentially derailing challenges, ranging from political and social unpredictability, currency fluctuations, infrastructure & logistics challenges, cultural differences, language barriers and different legal systems/regimes.

**Rationale:** To ultimately improve the research management capacity in West Africa, institutions such as WARIMA, the WANETAM network, MRCG at LSHTM have taken collective strides to alleviate these challenges through capacity building, forming of synergies for more efficient usage of resources and spreading of competences across the region.

**Outcome**: Overall awareness and improvement in research management delivery has been observed across the region, especially in Francophone West Africa.

**Conclusion:** The key to continental augmentation of research and innovation management capabilities is to eliminate the working in silos concept, but rather promote collaboration, creation of synergies and networking through the forming of consortia.
This presentation will particularly share the MRCG's experience and lessons learned in managing multi-institutional research projects within Sub Saharan Africa.

**Key Words:**
Multi-institutional
Sub-Saharan
Research Management
Capacity Building
Collaboration

# Enhancing Eefficiency in grants and ethics management: Customised ICT solutions at Wits University

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[1]University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

**Biography:**
Yolanda, Deputy Director of Research Development at Wits University, oversees linking researchers with funding opportunities and assists in developing quality grant proposals. Her role includes providing workshops on grantsmanship, advising on proposal writing and budgeting, and supporting collaborative research initiatives. She has conducted workshops across Africa and authored a manual on research grant management for Science Granting Councils. With 12 years of prior experience at the National Research Foundation, her expertise significantly contributes to advancing research development.

In the complex and evolving landscape of research management, the integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) is pivotal in enhancing efficiency, particularly within grants and ethics management. This paper explores the transformative potential of customised ICT solutions in streamlining administrative processes, fostering transparency, and ensuring compliance within these critical areas. Through a comprehensive analysis of current challenges in grants and ethics management, including bureaucratic bottlenecks and the need for robust governance frameworks, the study illustrates how tailored ICT tools can effectively address these issues, thereby facilitating a more seamless research management experience. By employing a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative insights from interviews with research managers and quantitative data from system deployments, the paper demonstrates the significant time and resource savings achieved through the adoption of bespoke ICT platforms. Moreover, it highlights the role of such technologies in promoting ethical integrity and accountability in research practices. The findings underscore the necessity for a synergistic approach, wherein customised ICT solutions are developed in close collaboration with stakeholders, ensuring that they are not only technically sound but also aligned with the unique needs and governance structures of research institutions. This study contributes to the discourse on research and innovation management by providing empirical evidence of the benefits of customised ICT solutions, offering a roadmap for research institutions seeking to enhance their grants and ethics management processes.

- ## **Unveiling the power of soft skills: A critical component for enhanced research management globally**

**Mrs Bagele Gaboalapswe**[1]
[1]University of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana

**Biography:**
I currently work as a research & development secretary at the University of Botswana. My interest lies in understanding that soft skills are crucial for effective research management, especially in today's globalized environment. I believe that training soft skills is essential for enhancing research outcomes, fostering global collaboration, and driving innovation.
I aim to improve my expertise in soft skills, particularly those related to research management. Participating in this conference aligns with my goals, equipping me with the knowledge and skills to confidently serve the office and contribute meaningfully to the advancement of research management at various levels.

In today's rapidly changing global landscape, effective research management necessitates the strategic cultivation of soft skills alongside technical expertise. This study investigates how interpersonal strengths in communication, collaboration, and leadership can significantly enhance research efficiency and foster global problem-solving through collaborative efforts. The research projects face challenges beyond just technical expertise. Complexities arise due to both national regulations and international factors, requiring research managers to navigate ever-changing situations and follow intricate rules. This research focuses on how "soft skills" play a vital role in managing research effectively.
By examining the crucial role of soft skills in streamlining research processes, navigating complex global challenges, and understanding the synergy between these and technical skillsets, research management can optimize research efforts, propel international collaboration, and ignite innovation in addressing global challenges. Recognizing the importance of these skills allows research groups to maximize the potential of their staff. Therefore, integrating soft skills training into research management practices becomes crucial. This fosters a research environment that is innovative, collaborative, and adaptable. This adaptability is essential in today's rapidly evolving landscape of research and discovery, where challenges are constantly emerging.
To understand this better, the study will use the research reports, newsletters, research management magazines, etc. from the Research Support Services offices of three universities: the University of Botswana, Stellenbosch University, and Namibia University. The goal is to highlight how strong communication, collaboration, and analytical skills are crucial for successful research management. By demonstrating this link, it shows how well-developed soft skills can ultimately lead to improved research practices and better equip research managers to tackle global issues and opportunities. This research aims to illuminate strategies for research managers to develop soft skills, ultimately leading to demonstrably improved research outcomes, enhanced global cooperation, and the unleashing of transformative innovation capable of tackling intricate global issues.

- # Digital media to communicate research impact and demonstrate institutional contributions to SDGs and Agenda 2063

**Ms Aasima Gaffoor**[1], **Ms Maryke Hunter-Husselmann**[1]
[1]Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa

**Biography:**
Aasima Gaffoor, employed at Stellenbosch University's Division for Research Development since November 2013, focuses on research communication, information management, and overseeing the National Research Foundation process. In 2017, she received the SARIMA Award for Excellence in Early Career Research Management. Recently completing an MPhil in Science and Technology Studies with a focus on Science Communication, her research explored academics' use of Twitter for science communication. She served as a committee member of SARIMA from 2021 - 2023 and served on the SARIMA Western Cape Community of Practice committee since its inception in 2017.

The advent of digital media has transformed the landscape of information sharing and how we interact with each other - breaking down barriers and providing equitable access to knowledge resources. Historically, communicating science to society has posed challenges, but digital and social media have revolutionised the process, providing a platform for rapid dissemination of research to a wider audience. As the world increasingly embraces digital communication, the use of diverse media tools has made communication more holistic, precise, and engaging, with social media playing a pivotal role in facilitating targeted messages.

In light of the changing dynamics of science communication, the Division for Research Development at Stellenbosch University recognised the need to adapt its strategies to align with modern digital practices. In response to this, the digital research magazine, "Research for Impact" was launched. Departing from conventional hardcopy formats, this digital-first publication harnesses the power of web publishing to spotlight the university's research endeavours in a compelling and accessible manner. Employing innovative storytelling techniques, captivating visuals, and multimedia elements, the magazine aims to captivate a diverse array of audiences.

Furthermore, the strategic use of social media further amplifies the reach and impact of the research at Stellenbosch University. Through strategic dissemination on platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, which leverages the immediacy of social media to engage with a wider audience, and drive awareness of the University's contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Africa 2063 agenda.

In the pursuit of realising the SDGs and Africa 2063 aspirations, effective communication of the impact of research is paramount. This presentation will delve into the utilisation of digital media as a strategic tool to articulate the impact of research and its contributions to both the SDGs and the Africa 2063 agenda, using some of Stellenbosch University's initiatives as practical examples.

- # The factors that contribute the implementation of an integrated e-Learning at USTM and CUT

**Mr Vicente Halle**[1], Dr Luzaan Schlebush[2], Prof. Johan Badenhorst[2]
[1]University of Saint Thomas of Mozambique, Maputo, Mozambique, [2]Central University of Technology, South Africa

**Biography:**
I, Vicente Antonio Halle, Mozambican by nationality, having completed BA in education management with specialization in Mathematics and statistics at Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi-Kenya  (2008) and finished my Masters in Administration and Education Management at Eduardo Mondlane University (Mozambique), current doing PhD in Higher Education Management at  Central University of Technology (Welkom Campus, RSA) and having  finished several specialization courses such as project management cycle, designing , monitoring and evaluation in Vienna (Austria), incubation and agribusiness with infoDev, Innovation System leadership, Observation and electoral assistance in Vienna and research project and grant writing proposal, etc. With full knowledge

The factors that contribute to the acceptance and the success of the implementation of an integrated strategy to e-learning and teaching at USTM and CUT (2015 – 2022)
Authors L Vicente António Halle (USTM); Schlebush Luzaan (CUT) & Johan Badenhorst (CUT)
There has been a global transformation of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in response to a wave of dynamic education sector reforms; specifically, this is related to the adoption of educational technologies to enhance teaching and learning practices, education management, research and administration. This situation has placed a strain on HEIs in Mozambique, South Africa and elsewhere, due to changing societal expectations, the inevitable integration of technology, and specifically E-Learning into traditional interventions; and at the same time, the increasing pressure on practitioners to deliver quality education. Equally important, the question arises whether Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is indeed constructively impacting teaching and learning practices. Consequently, a need has arisen for E-Pedagogy training and support for academics and students within challenging, complex HEI settings. Within this context, the research will be endeavored to position the E-Learning discourse within a global perspective; as well as to explore the theoretical underpinnings which impact the application of learning, and specifically E-Learning. In particular, the merging of learning theories; different teaching and learning approaches, and technology that enables the creation of effective E-Learning models and provides a more structured approach to the implementation of eLearning, will be studied. Building on this theoretical basis, the importance and content of models within the discourse have highlighted the recent emphasis on the delivery of quality education. The principle thrust of this research will be, therefore, to understand factors that contribute to the acceptance and the success of implantation of integrated E-Learning and teaching information technology and systems...........

- # Acutely and sustainably tackling the looming challenge of EU-specific forex losses

**Dr Yolande Harley**[1]
[1]University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa

**Biography:**
Dr Yolande Harley is Director of Research of the University of Cape Town's (UCT's) Faculty of Health Sciences. Her role involves strategic advancement of research, development of partnerships, oversight of finances, and leadership of the Faculty Research Office. She oversees the portfolios of Research Intelligence (reporting, internal funding, visibility), Research Diligence (ethics, biosafety, regulatory) and Research Development (fund sourcing, sustainability). She has served on local and international committees, and has presented internationally on funding and African research capacity development. Her work over the years has spanned the NGO sector, industry and academia within and outside of Africa.

African research is heavily dependent on international funding. The EU has broad funding options for researchers in Africa, such as through the Horizon Europe Africa Initiative and EDCTP, but they bring particular challenges that research managers may be unaware of. Generally, where institutions receive funds in a foreign currency, there is financial risk due to currency fluctuation during the grant. Researchers work with finance and research management colleagues to mitigate impact. A common risk stems from the rate at which grants are budgeted vs the rate at which funds are received – this risk can be mitigated by budgeting at a conservative exchange rate. However, there is also an EU-specific foreign exchange (forex) challenge that is less appreciated, yet potentially impactful. This stems from the difference in the rate at which funds are received from the EU vs the rate at which spend is reported (with the latter set per current EU rules). If the local currency depreciates against the Euro over the reporting period, the local funds received translate to fewer Euro and there is a forex loss. Where the local currency appreciates against the Euro, any forex gains on the grant must be returned to the funder. Therefore, at grant closure the awardee is left either in deficit or cost-neutral. Unless the current system evolves, African institutions must carefully reflect on financial risk when considering participating in EU grants and plan for how potential losses will be absorbed. The issue is becoming more apparent due to changes in financial reporting systems and shifts in EU-Africa funding. This talk will present examples to demonstrate the risk and impact for African institutions, along with approaches to mitigate risk. Ongoing engagement is needed to reduce this risk more substantially and prevent significant financial losses for African institutions in the coming decade.

# • Crafting a distinctive brand for a leading research institution in vaccinology and infectious diseases

Mrs Theranne van Vuren[1], **Mrs Catherine Hill**[1], Dr Lisa Nunes[1], Prof Shabir Madhi[1]
[1]Wits Vaccines and Infectious Diseases Analytics Research Unit, Soweto, South Africa

**Biography:**
Catherine Hill, COO at Wits VIDA, leads strategic development for teams of 500+ staff across 100+ research projects. She oversees projects related to vaccine development, child health surveillance, and clinical trials in collaboration with global partners. With expertise in stakeholder engagement and organisational development, Catherine drives impactful projects, securing grants for vaccination advocacy and behavioural health research. Catherine founded social justice initiatives and expanded global youth leadership platforms. Beyond her professional endeavours, Catherine is an avid dancer and member of Rio de Janeiro's renowned samba school 'Mocidade', showcasing her passion for culture alongside her husband, Ryan, and their beloved pets.

In today's rapidly evolving landscape of scientific research, establishing a strong brand identity is crucial for research institutions to stand out and fulfill their missions effectively. This presentation delves into the journey of rebranding the Respiratory and Meningeal Pathogens Research Unit (RMPRU) into Vaccines and Infectious Diseases Analytics (VIDA), reflecting its growth and aspirations over the past two decades.

VIDA influences global vaccine policies through clinical trials, lab analysis, and community surveillance, fostering scientific integrity, innovation, and collaboration with organizations like the WHO.

Without a distinct brand position, VIDA understood the importance of defining its unique identity in the competitive landscape of research institutes. Following extensive collaborative workshops, VIDA embarked on a journey to brand itself as a pioneer in interdisciplinary research, fostering innovation and cross-disciplinary collaboration.

By showcasing commitment to cutting-edge research, community engagement, and inclusivity, VIDA aims to not only differentiate the unit but also inspire the next generation of researchers and change-makers.

An experienced brand consultant collaborated with the VIDA team to create a cohesive brand identity by researching key themes through interviews, surveys, and design workshops, focusing on innovation, diversity, and excellence.

Together, an identity was crafted that reflected VIDA's commitment to cutting-edge research and inclusivity, the logo, with its modern design and subtle nods to VIDA's core values, served as a powerful symbol of its identity and connection to the University of the Witwatersrand.

The brand identity formation at VIDA led to a shared vision, boosting unity and pride among staff. Recognition was seen internally and globally, shaping a strong sense of purpose and community.

We aim to contribute to this session by showcasing how, through collaboration within our research ecosystem, we developed a compelling brand strategy that not only communicates VIDA's mission clearly but also enhances its access to funding and strengthens stakeholder relations.

# Response to a National Crisis: Health research management programme for unemployed doctors

**Mrs Catherine Hill**[1], Mrs Linda van Rensburg[2], Mr Sagie Pillay[2], Prof Ziyaad Dangor[1]
[1]Wits Vaccines and Infectious Diseases Analytics Research Unit, Johannesburg, South Africa, [2]Wits Health Consortium (Pty) Ltd, Johannesburg, South Africa

**Biography:**
Catherine Hill, COO at Wits VIDA, leads strategic development for a team of 500+ staff across 100+ research projects. Catherine oversees projects related to vaccine development, child health surveillance, and clinical trials in collaboration with global partners. With expertise in stakeholder engagement and organisational development, Catherine drives impactful projects, securing grants for vaccination advocacy and behavioural health research. Beyond her professional endeavours, Catherine is an avid dancer and member of Rio de Janeiro's renowned samba school 'Mocidade'.

The University of the Witwatersrand Faculty of Health Sciences (WITS FHS), in collaboration with Wits VIDA Research Unit and Wits Health Consortium, addressed a pressing national issue. Despite a shortage of doctors in the public sector, over 800 qualified doctors were unemployed as of February 2024. WITS recognised an opportunity to utilise these unemployed doctors in medical research.

Health research offers alternative career paths for doctors to contribute to global health improvement efforts while advancing medical knowledge and public health outcomes.

In response, WITS developed a comprehensive week-long program within a month, targeting unemployed doctors. This program aimed to introduce them to the field of health research, covering foundational principles, methodologies, ethics, management, statistics, and funding. Participants also received training in financial and HR management, areas often neglected in medical undergraduate education. Importantly, the program provided formal accreditation, including certifications in Good Clinical Practice and Ethics, with only a nominal registration fee as it was fully sponsored.

Initial outcomes included the establishment of a Community of Practice, offering career advice, networking, internships, work experience, and employment opportunities. Moreover, the program fostered researcher collaboration and expanded the pool of candidates in clinical research. To achieve impactful research, particularly in collaboration with marginalised communities, a dynamic workforce is essential, capable of applying clinical knowledge in scientific inquiry.

This program serves as a pathway to a career as a clinician-researcher, contributing to research management development and fostering impact through collaborative efforts. Ongoing data collection will provide further insights into its effectiveness.

- # Understanding the impact of research entities in the sustainability of higher education institutions

**Ms Tilly Hlongwane**[1]
[1]University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

**Biography:**
Ms Tilly Hlongwane is a Grants officer in the Grants Management Unit, at the University of Pretoria. She is currently busy with her Masters in Business Management. Her roles include, administering the University of Pretoria Research entities project, promoting research opportunities through the RAIN platform, administering Postgraduate bursaries, as well as providing financial services (invoicing, budgeting, claiming etc.) to researchers.

Institutions recognise the significance of research entities and strive to create an environment that nurtures research and its management. The presentation will begin with a discussion of what a research entity is and it outlines the different types on entities within the University of Pretoria and indicate the total number of entities at the university of Pretoria as compared to other universities within South Africa. There will be a discussion on the main activities of the entities and whether these are in alignment with the national priority areas, and the overall impact of research entities in institutions. The presentation will also look at the student throughput and analyze the role of entities in providing students with necessary skillsets to do proper research and complete their degrees on time. Research entities thrive in collaborations, therefore there would be insight as to the impact of collaborations in the research community, such as the fact that the collaborative efforts create relationships between institutions (thus bringing them together and closing the gap in the research environment). The presentation will also cover some of the challenges that are faced by existing research entities, such as the fact that economic turbulences can affect their performance and deliverables, as well as the fact that some research entities are not able to attract students with the necessary skills since they are competing with industry companies, therefore the students end up being poached by those companies. We will look at some of the major highlights of the research entities, and analyse how they handle the issue of succession.
Lastly, we look at the funding that is brought by research entities at the University of Pretoria annually and whether the funding is from local funders or international funders.

# ● Research management and administration: Importance of specific education & training programs in West African Universities

**Mr Sheikh Omar Jallow**[1]
[1]Medical Research Council the Gambia at London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Fajara, Gambia

**Biography:**
I have three years of experience in research management, starting as a Project Officer post-award and advancing to Pre-Award Project Manager. I hold a Bachelor's degree in Accountancy and Finance and am pursuing a Master's degree in the same field. My expertise lies in financial principles and project management within research, demonstrated by my proficiency in crafting funding proposals, managing grant regulations, and building relationships with stakeholders. I am committed to excellence and continuous learning to make enduring contributions to research management.

The profession of Research Management and Administration (RMA) is developing in Africa, particularly in the West African sub-region where it has emerged over the last two decades. RMA became important because external funders required a business-like reporting system, which core faculty members found to be a distraction from research. Additionally, the university research management system became more complex due to the various types of research agreements to be processed and executed. The growth of biomedical research in the 1990s led to increased recognition of RMA because funders were interested in the research governance structures for transparency, accountability, and due process.

Managing and overseeing research has become an important way to achieve research goals. The jobs of research administrators and managers are now in high demand in universities and colleges. RMA is now a separate and acknowledged profession in the US, recognized by colleagues, experts, and organizations. It is seen as a crucial part of research.

Experts, practitioners, and researchers agree that research management and administration (RMA) is an important profession. However, research studies suggest that the job is not well-known or respected, especially by researchers and others in the same organization. RMAs often feel that their work is undervalued and they lack career paths and acknowledgment. In lots of situations, they are called "invisible workers" and people don't value their knowledge and skills. The Delphi survey, done by Cole, found that university researchers understand that RMAs are important for preparing proposals, budgeting, and completing projects. However, there is a difference in how they approach these tasks.

The purpose of this study has two goals: first, to figure out what skills and knowledge are needed to create and carry out great educational and research projects in West Africa; second, to learn about the training and education opportunities available for this profession

# ● Assessing the relationship between intellectual property rights and economic impact

**Ms Nadia Jansen**[1]
[1]Namibia University of Science and Technology, Windhoek, Namibia

**Biography:**
A junior emerging researcher

Governments make significant investments in both the public and private sectors for research and development. To quantify the impact of publicly financed research and innovation, policymakers therefore need to have access to pertinent and useful indicators. Government funding agencies continue to face challenges in evaluating the contributions made by universities and public research institutions to economic development and societal advancement, despite numerous studies acknowledging the contribution of intellectual, human, and industrial capital in the form of research and innovation. Governments neglect national innovation systems as part of their plan for economic growth when these contributions are not evaluated, overlooking the role of research in providing solutions to socio-economic challenges, and feeding negatively into policy. An article in the Nairobi Business Monthly considers the African governments' contributions and investment in research and development to be a "meagre" and "business as usual" affair.

Strong IP rights are thought to be the engine of economic development since they are thought to foster innovation, draw in capital, and support the expansion of the creative industries. In summary, intellectual property facilitates the flow of technology and knowledge, creating new opportunities for economic expansion. According to research, a nation's IP system strength and growth are generally positively correlated (Eicher and Newiak, 2013). However, the impact of IP rights isn't entirely positive, as there is a chance that they could have the opposite effect and be less effective depending on a nation's income. Although the popular wisdom acknowledges IP rights' function as a macroeconomic development engine, a rising body of research highlights the disadvantages of IPR.

- ## **Charting excellence: Decadal analysis of the University of Pretoria's NRF ratings and potential research impact**

**Mr Kwena Kgaabi**[1], **Mr Abe Mathopa**[1]
[1]University of Pretoria, Tshwane, South Africa

**Biography:**

Kwena Kgaabi is a Research Grants Coordinator at the University of Pretoria's within the Department of Research and Innovation. His previous role was at the National Research Foundation of South Africa, spanning four years as a Liaison Officer responsible for Africa Bilateral agreements. He holds a Master's degree in Communication Science from the University of South Africa. Kwena is an ardent advocate for research management, whose passion transcends the boundaries of the conventional academic realm. As a dedicated professional in the field, Kwena not only excels in his role but extends his expertise in mentoring other students with their research.

Abe Mathopa is an experienced manager and administrator with over 12 years in the National System of Innovation (NSI), working with national funders such as NRF, DHET and DSI, with academic background in the natural and business sciences and exceptional skill set in research management acquired while employed by the National Research Foundation (NRF), the University of Johannesburg (UJ) and the University of Pretoria (UP). I have completed my MBA qualification at the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). In addition, I hold a MSc in Molecular and Cellular Biology from UCT. My MBA research focused on Academic Entrepreneurship.

The University of Pretoria (UP) has established itself as a prominent institution in the South African research landscape, contributing significantly to advancements in various fields. This work provides a thorough examination of UP's National Research Foundation (NRF) rating history and its impact on the university's research pipeline spanning 2014 to 2023. The NRF rating system plays a pivotal role in recognising and supporting researchers based on the quality and impact of their contributions. The study aims to identify trends, patterns, and areas of strength within the university's research landscape. Furthermore, it explores how researchers with higher NRF ratings have influenced and shaped the university's research pipeline, as evidenced by publications, patents, and collaborative projects. The study conducted an analysis based on the available ratings data from the National Research Foundation's website, which is subsequently verified through the faculties in the university. In this case, 2014 to 2023, the rated researchers have increased throughout the years. The increase was on an average of 10% but with a drop between 2015 to 2017. The reason being, there were changes at the NRF on the incentive grant funding reduction due to financial constraints and budget. The incentive was on an annual basis wherein currently it is on a once-off basis in a period of five years. However, in 2023, UP's total number of rated researchers was 593, whereas it stood on 374 in 2014, which indicates a significant increase of about 59%. The findings contribute valuable insights into the dynamics of academic research, offering a foundation for strategic planning and continuous improvement in the pursuit of scholarly excellence at UP.

- # **Navigating the journey to certification as research management professionals: Perspectives from African research ethics managers**

**Ms Charmaine Khumalo**[1], Mr Siyanda Manqele[2]
[1]Stellenbosch University, Parow, Cape Town, South Africa, [2]University of Zululand, South Africa

**Biography:**
Charmaine Khumalo (RMP) is the Head of the Health Research Ethics Office at Stellenbosch University. She holds an MSc in Bioethics and Health Law from Wits University. She brings over five years of experience from her tenure at Wits University, where she coordinated HREC-Medical, Animal Ethics, and Institutional Biosafety Committees. She is a member of the Research Ethics Committee Association of Southern Africa (REASA), Southern Africa Research & Innovation Management Association (SARIMA) and African Research Integrity Network (ARIN). She is also an apprentice peer reviewer for the African Journal of Bioethics where she further shares her expertise to assist others.

There has been a huge increase and growth of Research Management in South African universities, where increased support for researchers has been evidenced. This is through support in funding instruments, monitoring and evaluation systems that require more detailed and comprehensive evidence, and submission of research publications to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). The global introduction of professional recognition by the International Professional Recognition Council (IPRC) has underscored the pivotal role of research management as a legitimate and rewarding career path. In this paper, we delve into the journeys of two distinguished South African Research Ethics managers who successfully attained the coveted title of certified Research Management Professionals (RMP) in July 2023. This happened through their membership of Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA) and their respective Community of Practices (COPs) which were pivotal in promoting the IPRC's international professional recognition. The COPs play an important role in assisting early career and new research managers to grow with support in the field of research ethics administration therefore speaking to the theme, 'it takes a village.' Mr. Siyanda Manqele is currently the Research Ethics & Postgraduate Studies manager at the University of Zululand, boasting an impressive decade of experience in the realm of research management. His foray into this field began as a research assistant, offering pivotal support to a research committee chair within a prominent faculty of humanities and social sciences. Miss Charmaine Khumalo serves as the Head of the Health Research Ethics Office at Stellenbosch University, wielding over five years of invaluable experience in research management. Her journey commenced as a research ethics administrative officer for HREC-Medical at Wits University. This paper serves as an illuminating guide, intended to inspire and assist prospective research management professionals in realising their aspirations and attaining certified status.

# Fostering soft skills to strengthen research management and administration operations

**Ms Zamakayise Kose**[1]
[1]North-West University, Vanderbijlpark, South Africa

**Biography:**
Zamakayise Kose is a Senior Specialist at the North-West University (NWU), South Africa, in the Research Support Department. She is the coordinator of the Quality Improvement of Research programme. Her projects include coordinating the internal and external evaluation of research entities and support for the implementation of the Higher Degrees Improvement Plan in the institution. Prior to joining the NWU, she was at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) for eight (8) years and coordinated several projects with international collaborators and partners. She co-authored several publications. Ms. Kose holds an MA in Research Psychology and plans to do her PhD.

**Background:** I manage a research program which includes the evaluation of 43 research entities across three campuses. To exacerbate this challenge, the campuses are over 100km apart. Having worked at a research council for over five years, the higher education space was different and complex. I embraced this challenge and rose to the occasion.

**Aims:** This abstract aims to illustrate that soft skills are essential to applying best practices for professional development. These skills and attitudes are crucial factors for success of any research programme. Through this abstract, I narrate my journey of self-development and attaining soft skills as a research management professional.

**Methods:** Self-development and understanding the work environment are key. Self-development is an enriching process at a professional level. I enrolled and attended SARIMA courses, conferences including presenting at SARIMA 2020. I am in pursuit of international professional recognition as a research management professional. The exposure, engagements, and networking with peers contributed to periodically reviewing my processes. Building rapport with stakeholders is a valuable skill for fruitful engagements that benefit the research programme and institution. It is evident that research managers and administrators are required to function at multiple levels.

**Results:** I have developed soft skills, which are a winning formula for success in my job. Annual planning by reflecting on what worked and needed improvement. This requires special attention to institutional processes and being open to constructive criticisms, adjustments, and improvement based on feedback from your clientele. Communication and negotiation skills are crucial to supporting the program. Self-confidence and cultural awareness, enables positive stakeholder engagement. Equally, integrity is an important skill for building relationships, demonstrating one as a trustworthy person and future collaborations.

**Conclusion:** By sharing my professional experience, I am hopeful that I contribute positively to our village to raise a child called a research ecosystem.

# ● Microsoft 365 tools, a game changer for management of research ethics and integrity processes

**Mrs Amanda Koto**[1]
[1]North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa

**Biography:**
I am a senior research support officer at North-West University, with 10 years of work experience in various disciplines. I support the department by developing and implementing database systems and spreadsheets, producing project documents and reports, and training and supervising research support assistants. Currently enrolled for BA (Hons) in Ethics at the University of Western Cape and have completed several professional courses and programmes. I have a strong background in key areas of expertise: monitoring and evaluation, project management, communication, data analysis, and problem-solving. I am passionate about research ethics and am always eager to learn new skills and technologies.

The broad range of the Microsoft 365 enterprise has presented the industry with dynamic tools to create solutions to complex and multi-organizational systems of management of processes. These tools presented us with the opportunity to address a long-standing challenge in our institution of managing the Ethics applications manually and still complying with the National Health Research Committee (NHREC) requirement as per the DoE 2014 framework.

In my presentation, I will discuss how Microsoft 365 productivity tools can be used to manage research ethics and integrity processes to comply with institutional and national regulatory policies. I will share my experience of working in the Research Support Department at North-west University (NWU), where we faced the challenge of handling 800 to 1700 ethics applications a year manually across fourteen (14) Research Ethics Committees (RECs). I will further demonstrate how we used Microsoft 365 tools such as MS Teams, Excel, OneDrive, and Power BI to create, monitor, and evaluate a consolidated database of ethics applications, Research Ethics Committee membership, as well as to report on the impact of our training and workshops. The presentation will also highlight the benefits and challenges of using Microsoft 365 tools to manage research ethics and integrity processes. Lack of capacity has been one of our biggest challenges leading to loss of data due to staff rotation or retention periods as everything is handled by Research Ethics Committee administrators manually at the faculty level. These challenges can have negative implications on the level of standard of research produced within our institution.

With this presentation, I hope to inspire young and upcoming research administrators to be innovative and to seek solutions to problems that prevent them from being productive in the workplace while waiting for a system that will cater for their individual and institutional needs.

# Budgeting for research: A guide for researchers and non-financial research professionals

**Mrs Ninette Kotzee**[1]
[1]University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

**Biography:**
Ninette Kotzee spearheads the research grant unit at the University of Pretoria, overseeing both pre-award and post-award support functions. With a keen focus on refining grant management processes, Ninette recently led the development and implementation of a comprehensive budget template and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure institutional compliance. Drawing insights from benchmarking exercises with US universities, the template accommodates various research grant and contract scenarios, aiding non-financial research managers in navigating technical considerations such as NIPMO rates, VAT, and indirect costs. Passionate about problem-solving in grant management, Ninette is dedicated to sharing her expertise and fostering collaboration among administrators

This interactive workshop offers a comprehensive exploration of budgeting principles tailored for both researchers and non-financial research management professionals alike. With a focus on practical applications within institutional settings, participants will delve into the nuances of budget preparation, institutional compliance, and funding agency requirements. Learning outcomes include the ability to prepare detailed budgets aligned with project needs, navigate budget negotiations with sub-recipients, and assess the implementation of budgeting templates and procedures within their institutions. Through case studies, discussions, and practical exercises, attendees will gain invaluable insights into optimizing budget allocations and ensuring fiscal accountability.

Learning Outcomes:
1. Prepare a complete budget tailored to project requirements.
2. Assess the type of research to apply appropriate budgeting principles.
3. Monitor compliance with institutional policies and funding agency requirements.
4. Review institutional policies to ensure alignment with best budgeting practices.

Workshop Outline:
1. Introduction to Budgeting for Research
2. Understanding the importance of budgeting in research projects.
3. Tailoring budgeting principles to different types of research activities.
   Budgeting and Institutional Governance
4. Exploring institutional policies and their impact on budgeting practices.
5. Aligning budgeting practices with institutional policies and funding agency guidelines.
6. Addressing the needs of diverse stakeholders involved in the budgeting process, such as subrecipients
7. Understanding budgeting principles within the South African context and their applicability globally.
8. Layout of Budget and Guiding Principles
9. Strategies for negotiating budgets with subcontractors and external collaborators.
10. Understanding the distinction between on-campus and off-campus research activities and their associated indirect cost rates.
11. Exploring key financial considerations in budgeting, including NIPMO rates, VAT implications, decision-making trees, and cost-sharing strategies.
12. Budget Justification and Summary of Project Plan
13. Developing clear and concise justifications for budget allocations
14. Understanding institutional governance structures related to budget approvals and indirect cost waivers.

# We Care: Digital social enterprise by domestic workers for domestic workers

**Mr Njabulo Kubheka**[1]
[1]University of the Western Cape (UWC) under Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) research and innovation, Cape Town, South Africa

**Biography:**
Mr Njabulo Makhunga Kubheka is a Technology Transfer Officer: Intellectual Property and Bioprospecting at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) Technology Transfer Office.
 Prior to joining UWC he was admitted in an internship programme under the National Intellectual Property Management Office (NIPMO)'s Regulatory and Compliance unit, a specialist service delivery unit within the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI).
His academic background includes obtaining a BCom (Law and Economics) degree with the University of South Africa (UNISA). His area of expertise includes maintaining UWC Technology Transfer Office IP portfolio, NIPMO reporting, Seed Fund Management and Bioprospecting Portfolio.

Due to the residual nature of the South African geography and the slow transformation of society to full economic inclusion, the demographics of domestic work are largely black and female. Despite being recognised and classified by law as workers, domestic workers in the sector still remain an isolated workforce as each individual is usually associated with one private home.
In the context of South Africa, the rapid transformation of technology adds to social inequality. Therefore, the University of the Western Cape undertook a project to support domestic workers to build a co-operative digital platform in the domestic services sector, called We Care. The challenges faced by domestic workers, highlight the need for innovative approaches to improve their working conditions and economic opportunities.
By leveraging technology and adopting a cooperative ownership model, We Care has the potential to create a more inclusive and equitable environment for domestic workers, by empowering workers through ownership and management of the digital platform which can help ensure that they have a voice in decision-making processes, fair compensation, and improved working conditions.
The involvement of domestic workers in the co-creation of the digital platform application is crucial, as it ensures that the platform meets their needs and preferences, ultimately leading to a more effective and user-friendly solution. By providing vetted and experienced domestic workers to customers, We Care also promotes trust and safety in the work environment.
As these initiatives continue to develop and expand, it will be important to prioritize the well-being and rights of domestic workers, ensuring that they are fairly compensated, protected from exploitation, and given opportunities for professional growth and development. By fostering worker-owned enterprises and cooperative models, these projects have the potential to drive positive change in the domestic work sector.

# • Empowering the research support office to better influence institutional strategy implementation

**Dr Ndivhuwo Luruli**[1]
[1]University of Johannesburg, JOHANNESBURG, South Africa

**Biography:**
Dr Ndivhuwo Luruli is the Executive Director: Research & Innovation at the University of Johannesburg. She joined UJ in June 2019 as Director: Strategic Research Support where she was responsible, among many things, for the implementation of general research support programmes for the university community. In her current portfolio, she oversees four Departments – Strategic Research Support, Research Administration, Research Intelligence, and the Technology Transfer Office. She is also Deputy Chairperson of the UJ Senate Research Ethics Committee. She holds a PhD in Science and Technology Studies from the Centre for Research on Evaluation, Science, and Technology (CREST), Stellenbosch University

Few would deny that the University of Johannesburg (UJ)'s growth as a research-intensive university has been beyond impressive. Classified by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) as a comprehensive university, UJ has, in just under 20 years post-merger, become South Africa's largest producer of accredited research outputs (2nd largest per capita); continues to climb the ladder in terms of various university rankings; has seen annual increases in third stream income; and has more than 300 NRF-rated researchers. In achieving these milestones, UJ has been intentional in its vision and mission, as well as in executing its strategy.

Behind these successes is a village of Research Support Office (RSO) staff whose contribution is often overlooked. Anecdotal evidence suggests that staff within RSOs in many institutions are mostly viewed as "paper pushers" and not shown the respect they deserve for their role within universities. Several factors lead to this. At UJ, for example, we find that such factors include academic staff not trusting that RSO staff understand the processes involved in various aspects of research, e.g. publishing, poor communication skills (written, verbal, and presentation skills) of RSO staff, and poor people/interpersonal skills. As we work towards interventions to improve on the identified skills gaps, we must acknowledge the critical position that RSO staff have within a university – particularly a research-intensive university. Staff within RSO have "a bird's eye view" of the entire university and have a "fuller picture" of the issues or challenges within all faculties. This makes them well suited to advise on solutions and approaches to address them.

The current UJ Strategic Plan comes to an end next year, i.e. 2025. As the University prepares to roll out the Strategic Plan 2035, RSO staff remain key role players in ensuring continued success for UJ.

# A conceptual framework for empowerment of psychiatric nurses caring for children with mental health challenges

**Mrs Rorisang Machailo**[1]
[1]North West University, Wilro Park, South Africa

**Biography:**
I am a psychiatric nurse with special interest in children's mental health. I have extensive experience in psychiatric nursing practice and education. I am senior lecturer at North West University - school of nursing. I have masters degree from University of Johannesburg and currently awaiting the Phd results

**Background:** There are scanty empirical and theoretical studies that focus specifically on the implementation of models for care of psychiatric nurses caring of children. Staff participation in the process of putting clinically relevant measures into practice contributes to effective implementation, increased uptake, and use of the developed measures. These relevant measures can be used to improve mental health care services of children at different levels. There is a need for strong nursing leadership and innovation in healthcare in a time of rising rates of childhood mental health challenges. The aim is to deepen an understanding of the perspective of care for children with mental health challenges. Psychiatric nurses have unique sets of competencies they bring to practice and provide primary mental-health care in both private and public sectors.

**Methods:** A qualitative, exploratory and descriptive design was used to allow for innovative ideas that can restructure the practice of child psychiatric nursing. The conceptual framework of this study is based on the Practice Orientated Theory of Dickoff that assisted with explaining the concepts used in developing the framework for psychiatric nurses caring for children with mental health challenges.

**Results:** A positive focus on aspects that facilitate care for children with mental health problems is informed by data collected. The study contributes a framework that focuses on aspects that can positively facilitate psychiatric nursing care of children who have mental health challenges. A suite of services that include practice environment, trainings, and practical assistance is feasible to support psychiatric nurses.

**Conclusions:** Psychiatric nurses need to move beyond engagement to demonstrate how they help children with mental health challenges lead the life defined as meaningful. To enable the development of psychiatric nursing practice in children and adolescent mental health, there should be support through international collaboration. Engagement brings positive results.

# Navigating Success: The crucial role of soft skills in modern work environments

**Ms Mamodula Mafolo**[1], Mrs Tselane Rose Kgantsi[1], Mrs Doret Maria Kruger[1]
[1]Northwest University, Mafikeng, South Africa

**Biography:**
Mamodula Mafolo, has worked in the academic space as an administrator for 19 years and holds an MBL from the University of South Africa. Her interest is in women in leadership and learning and development and currently pursuing her PhD with UNISA's School of Business Leadership focusing on women leader's experiences as executive managers in higher education institutions of South Africa. Besides her studies, Mamodula believes in empowering youth and educating them about the endless possibilities of education and entrepreneurship, and this she also does in her position as a manager higher degrees student development at the Northwest University.

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, characterized by enhanced global connectivity and technological advancements, the demand for soft skills has become increasingly pronounced. This paper explores the critical role of soft skills, including teamwork, communication, leadership, and problem-solving, in navigating success in modern work environments, with a particular focus on research management. Highlighting the importance of incorporating soft skills training into educational and professional development programs, this study underscores the value of cultivating a workforce equipped with the interpersonal competencies necessary for professional success. Soft skills not only drive individual interactions but also significantly impact job performance and career advancement prospects.

Despite the evident benefits of soft skills training, the transfer of such training poses challenges. Through a desk research methodology, this study examines factors influencing the post-training transfer of soft skills. Analysis of studies published in top academic journals between 2000 and 2020 reveals three key groups of factors: job-related factors, social support factors, and organizational facilitation of learning. Furthermore, the study identifies specific strategies and best practices for enhancing the effectiveness of soft skills training programs, such as incorporating experiential learning methods, providing ongoing coaching and feedback, and fostering a supportive organizational culture that encourages skill application and development. By shedding light on these factors and offering actionable insights, this study aims to inform organizational leaders, HR professionals, and educators about the importance of soft skills in the workplace and the critical role of effective training interventions in maximizing their impact. Understanding the dynamics of soft skills transfer can empower organizations to build resilient, high-performing teams capable of thriving in today's dynamic and competitive business environment.

# Towards strengthening the role and practices of research managers in South African higher education institutions

**Ms Pumza Makaula**[1]
[1]Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town, South Africa

**Biography:**
Pumza Makaula possesses a wealth of experience in research grants management at Cape Peninsula University of Technology. She has been serving as a Research Grants Manager and has acted in this position for four years responsible for managing external and internal grants. Pumza has also acted as a Postgraduate Manager and demonstrated her commitment to academic excellence by serving as a student tutor and part-time lecturer for a few years. Pumza is currently serving as a Host Institution Representative for internship programmes, a member of the funding decision committee, and a member of the Institution Transformation Forum.

This paper aims to highlight research managers' crucial role and practices in South African Higher Education institutions, particularly how this role contributes to the effectiveness of research managers' responsibilities and strengthens institutional practices. Institutions can integrate research management practices into their day-to-day decisions and processes to enhance the role of research managers. This approach can lead to a more effective and streamlined research management system that reinforces the role of research managers and promotes best practices that would benefit all stakeholders involved in the research process. The pivotal role and practices of research managers have become increasingly vital in higher education institutions owing to the surge in research which benefits emerging researchers and communities. With the growing emphasis on research excellence, there is a dire need to maintain a culture of high-quality research management system. By ensuring effective research management, institutions can foster an environment of knowledge advancement in diverse fields for current and future generation.
The study takes a comprehensive approach, engaging individual research managers to gather insights into their current institutional roles in the higher education sector in South Africa. The insights gained from this research will be valuable in developing strategies that can improve the effectiveness of research managers in institutions, leading to better outcomes in professionalism.

**Keywords:** higher education institutions, research managers, strengthen, role and practices

# Dynamics of financial research administration and building competences, a case for Okavango Research Institute

**Mrs Josephinah Makoba**[1]
[1]University of Botswana, Maun, Botswana

**Biography:**

Dynamics in Financial Research Administration and building this competency, a case for Okavango Research Institute, University of Botswana, a controlled study.

The role of finance and administration office in the Okavango Research Institute (ORI) is to administer multiple research funds sponsored by different agencies. The projects are positioned in a matrix organizational structure which poses a financial risk without a centralized single digital system that link various processes starting from grant selection planning, application initiation to project award, project performance to the final delivery, invoicing and reporting via automation. This study assesses the dynamics of administering research funds from diverse external funding agencies and recommend a system that suits demands of the current organizational set up. Data was sourced from contracts in the institute's projects archives. The captured data from 60 contracts was budgetary requirements for (P)ersonnel, (E)quipment, (T)ravel, (C)onsumables, (D)issemination, (O)ther costs, (CO)ontingencies, and (I)ndirect costs. Funders were grouped per continent from year 2000 to 2024. The results revealed that EU and Germany grant fund (P), (E), (T), (C), (D), (O), (CO) at maximum 7% and (I) costs at max 9% funding large equipment like vehicles, laboratory machines and student training while Africa, UK, USA and Japan fund them at small amounts excluding vehicles and large machines. Funds disbursement, reporting template and audit is per EU and Germany rates while others used ORI rates and template. Contingencies were 10%, Overheads up to 20% for other continents. A grants management system is essential to help managers administer diverse grants through the entire lifecycle tracking all activities and costs to mitigating financial risk, avoiding audit findings observing funders priorities. A grant management system will also store all the related files to avoid the common challenges of trying to track them down when we need them

- # Practices for disseminating research: Lessons from the literature

**Dr Elma Nelisiwe Maleka**[1], Ms Hlengiwe Nzama-Mqeke[1,2]
[1]Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town, South Africa, [2]University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa

**Biography:**
Elma Nelisiwe Maleka is an interdisciplinary researcher in Public Health and specialises as a monitoring and evaluation practitioner. She is a Manager Research Uptake at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. Her past work experience involves working in the field of HIV/AIDS, providing strategic research, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of various projects in higher education institutions, secondary schools, and communities. Her current research interest is around developing systems and processes to promote research uptake in higher education institutions.

Dissemination of research is considered key to maximise uptake and impact. However, transferring new knowledge and innovations as part of research into application and practice remains challenging. Therefore, a need exists to understand communication approaches and channels for disseminating research among different stakeholders and broader society. This study aims to provide an overview of stakeholder engagement and dissemination practices used by researchers worldwide. A systematic search of research publications and grey literature over a 5-year period (2019-2023) will be conducted and analysed using a narrative review. The recommendations will be developed from the findings to contribute to strengthening the dissemination of research.

# • JoRMA - The Journal of Research Management and Administration

**Mr Siyanda Mangele**[1], Prof Lessing Labuschagne[2], Dr Simon Kerridge[2]
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**Biography:**
Siyanda is a Manager - Research Ethics and Postgraduate Studies at the University of Zululand responsible for the institutional RECs in Animal Use & Human subjects and Higher Degrees Committee administration. He is also responsible for all postgraduate students' research capacity development, supervision, sense of belonging & examination processes. He has 13 years of experience in research management & administration in the institutions of Higher Education. He is the chair of the Eastern Region,CoP which covers through SARIMA on research ethics management. In 2023, he obtained professional recognition as a Research Management Professional (RMP) from the International Professional Recognition Council.

The Journal of Research Management and Administration (JoRMA) is an open access international peer-reviewed journal aimed at those interested in the management of research in any sector or organisation. We publish articles, essays, and papers covering all aspects of research management and administration (RMA). JoRMA is diamond open access, meaning that is completely free to publish and to read journal published by Coventry University.

JoRMA welcomes submissions on, but not limited to:
— research strategy and policy
— research governance and management
— research leadership
— research systems, processes and administration
— research finance and compliance
— research and researcher development
— research communication, impact, and enterprise
— responsible research and innovation
— career progression for researchers and research-related professionals
— equality, diversity and inclusion in research

Priority will be given to articles that are based on original research, and that provide high quality analysis of issues pertaining to RMA that can be used to inform RMA practice. All articles should consider the implications of their analysis and discussion in terms of how this could be applied to, or used to inform, RMA practice.

As well as standard research articles, we also accept shorter "Research in Progress" articles that describe on-going projects of interest to the profession.

# • Promoting a culture of animal research ethics through training – A SARIMA initiative

**Mr Siyanda Mangele**[1], Mr Sidney Engelbrecht[2], Dr Bert Mohr[3], Ms Maricel Van Rooyen[4]
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**Biography:**
Siyanda is a Manager - Research Ethics and Postgraduate Studies at the University of Zululand responsible for the institutional RECs in Animal Use & Human subjects and Higher Degrees Committee administration. He is also responsible for all postgraduate students' research capacity development, supervision, sense of belonging & examination processes. He has 13 years of experience in research management & administration in the institutions of Higher Education. He is the chair of the Eastern Region,CoP which covers through SARIMA on research ethics management. In 2023, he obtained professional recognition as a Research Management Professional (RMP) from the International Professional Recognition Council.

Animal research ethics protects the most vulnerable of populations – non-human sentient animals. This requires robust research management systems to enable high-quality science, safeguard animal welfare, and maintain public confidence. Research ethics training has become mandatory for Research Ethics Committee (REC) members in some SADC countries, for example, South Africa. SARIMA is professionalising research administration and management in SADC and beyond. As such, this initiative will add to the professionalization portfolio of Research managers and administrators (RMAs) in servicing RECs. Though well-defined frameworks govern the functioning of Animal Ethics Committees (AECs) in numerous constituencies globally, many institutions do not yet have effective AEC systems in place to ensure (animal) research integrity and animal welfare empowering impactful science and mitigating institutional risk.
(RMA play a vital role in ensuring compliance with various regulatory frameworks and oversight bodies. Non-compliance could be detrimental to an institution's reputation and compromise the research integrity. Achieving meaningful impact and mitigating risks requires buy-in from institutional leaders and the research community. It, therefore, takes a community to raise awareness and support endeavours to create a research culture of responsible conduct of research. Understanding the strengths, gaps, and challenges to enable RMAs to fulfill their professional role is paramount.
SARIMA will send an online survey, administrated via email to all SARIMA members and stakeholders. The purpose of this survey is to establish institutional cultures, challenges, and educational needs of these various governance systems for animal care and use, and to deliver informed and targeted educational offerings to assist the establishment of robust research management systems in these institutions. The survey will assist institutions to identify their research ethics training needs and requirements are, to enable SARIMA to develop tailor-made interventions. The authors will share the findings of the survey at a SARIMA annual conference and peer-reviewed journal publication

- # Community-centric approaches to effective research management: Collaborative effort for researcher and institutional growth

**Mrs Unarine Mathye**[1]
[1]University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

**Biography:**
Mrs Unarine Mathye is a Grants Officer in the Pre-award Office of the Research Support Directorate, Department of Research, Innovation and Commercialisation at the University of South Africa. She provides support to researchers to ensure timeous access to funding opportunities. Mrs Mathye holds a Master of Earth Sciences in Mining and Environmental Geology from the University of Venda.

Research management incorporates the planning, coordination, and execution of research activities within academic institutions, as well as collaborations with external partners. It involves various aspects including project management, grant acquisition, grant utilisation, compliance with ethical guidelines, and the dissemination of research outcomes. Effective research management is crucial for driving innovation, commercialisation, maximizing the impact of research and fostering institutional growth. Collaboration has become increasingly important in research, as complex global challenges often require multidisciplinary approaches. For effective research management, the following approaches will be explored: Understanding the ever-changing research management landscape, best practices for research management and collaboration, utilising research management systems for institutional operational excellence, leveraging technology in the digital age, and the impact of community and collaboration in research management. Collaboration within academic institutions, between academic institutions, with government entities, and private industry, as well as international collaborations, offer unique opportunities to leverage resources, expertise, and perspectives for individual and institutional growth. As the research landscape continues to evolve, embracing collaboration and effective research management is the key to addressing complex global challenges and achieving breakthrough discoveries.

**Keywords:** Effective research management, collaboration, researcher, institutional growth

- # Embracing collaboration as a cornerstone of research and post graduate development

Ms Rennie Munyayi[1], **Dr Anna Matros-Goreses**[1], **Dr Omotayo Awofolu**[1]
[1]Namibia University of Science and Technology, Windhoek, Namibia

**Biography:**
Rennie Munyayi is a Post Graduate Development Manager, in the Directorate of Research, Innovation, and Partnerships. Rennie is an experienced and dedicated professional with a strong background in research leadership and postgraduate development. She has a successful track record in driving strategic research initiatives, fostering research excellence, and enhancing the growth of postgraduate programmes. Rennie's passion for postgraduate development is reflected in her commitment to providing mentorship and guidance to emerging researchers.

Higher education institutions worldwide aim to enhance their research capacities and foster a conducive environment for postgraduate education. Strategic partnerships play a pivotal role in achieving this goal. This paper presents a case study of the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), exploring the strategies, challenges, and outcomes encountered in operationalising the Research and Post Graduate Development function, in the Directorate of Research, Innovation, and Partnerships.

The paper will begin with an overview of the contextual factors that led NUST to prioritise the establishment of the Research and Postgraduate Development Division. Highlighting the institution's dedication to promoting research excellence and fostering a dynamic postgraduate community. Subsequently, this paper will showcase the role of strategic partnerships in facilitating knowledge exchange, resource mobilisation, and capacity building.

Additionally, this paper will showcase the key takeaways from NUST and Stellenbosch University joint school for the Emerging Scholar's Initiative. Providing insights into the experiences of NUST and broader implications for the efficacy of strategic partnerships in advancing academic agendas and fostering a culture of cooperation within higher education institutions.

In conclusion, this paper underscores the transformative potential of academic partnerships in "curating knowledge and then sharing the wisdom of the village as one seeks to develop others" within the framework of research and postgraduate development. We argue, by embracing collaboration as a cornerstone of institutional ethos, universities can position themselves as engines of knowledge creation, innovation, and societal transformation on the global stage.

# Navigating professional growth in research ethics and system configuration: Insights from the SARIMA Competency Framework

**Ms Thando Mdaka**[1], **Mr Keoagile G Mosala**[1]
[1]UNISA, Pretoria, South Africa

**Biography:**

In 2022, Ms. Mdaka completed her Postgraduate Diploma in Operations Management. She coordinated the RIO research ethics training, reaching 2889 UNISA employees and students in 2023. Her dedication to research administration led to her composing an abstract for the 2023 INORMS Conference, showcasing UNISA's training impact. She mentors interns, assists in program planning, and execution. Recognized for her commitment, she was accepted for talent management in 2023 and received the departmental team player award. Ms. Mdaka's proactive approach and valuable contributions mark her as a key asset for organizational growth.

Mr. Mosala is instrumental in establishing and maintaining integrated research information management solutions at UNISA's Directorate of Research Support. His expertise ensures the success of online research grant and ethics systems, vital for UNISA's functioning. With a National Diploma in Information Technology, he continuously upgrades his skills to stay abreast of emerging technologies. As an AI Task team member, Mr. Mosala contributes significantly to Research Management Systems and other online programs, enhancing operational efficiency and fostering innovation in the university's research ecosystem.

In 2022, a university acquired the Infonetica Research Management Software. This presentation examines the professional development journey of a Research Integrity Officer and an Information Officer, both members of the project team tasked with configuring, supporting, and managing the system. It emphasises the crucial role of adaptation and growth necessary in navigating the complexities inherent in system design and maintenance. Central to this narrative is the exploration of skills honed within the research ethics eco-system to ensure project success.

Research Administrators must promote, foster, and support research ethics and compliance. Proficiency in data gathering and analysis, programme administration, and follow-up mechanisms ensures effective oversight and implementation of research management software. Leveraging upon the SARIMA professional competency framework, this presentation aims to offer a comprehensive roadmap for identifying and cultivating requisite skills of system administrators. Micro-level competencies underscore technical proficiency, interpersonal skills, and collaboration, while macro-level competencies address strategic decision-making and leadership.

As system administrators, we learned many lessons that we hope to share in this reflective narrative on navigating professional growth amongst research ethics and system configuration complexities. We departed from a space of limited understanding of research ethics and system configuration. Being part of the system administration team accelerates our understanding of processes, procedures and guidelines necessary in developing and maintaining an effective research management system. Collaborative efforts with colleges, researchers, and the ICT Department underscore the importance of integration and adaptability in responding to evolving demands.

Key competency area 6, focusing on research ethics and integrity, emphasises a holistic understanding of the research cycle, administration of research ethics processes and systems, support for ethics committees, and operation of electronic databases and information systems. We can attest that we gained vital competencies essential for configuring and maintaining the Infonetica software, but we shall persist in our pursuit of learning.

# Steering the Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme at NWU is indeed sharing the wisdom of the village

**Mrs MPE Meintjes**[1]
[1]North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa

**Biography:**
Mpe Meintjes is a Research Support Coordinator at the North-West University, with more than 13 years of experience in research administration and management.  In her current position, she mainly focuses on research development and has been managing the Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Programme since 2014. She is also a member of the Research Output, Outcomes & Impact Community of Practice (CoP-ROOI) and is currently enrolled in MPhil in Science and Technology at Stellenbosch University.

This presentation deals with an important group of emerging scholars namely Post-doctoral Research Fellows and focuses on the Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Programme at a South African University and how it is managed – the processes involved, and tools incorporated to ensure compliance with institutional rules and national policy, throughout the lifecycle of a postdoc.

Included in the presentation are the criteria implemented to distribute 188 institutional-funded postdoc positions across the institution's three campuses and eight faculties as well as tools implemented to monitor the activity and progress of more than two hundred postdocs on a quarterly basis.

Essential to ensuring a positive postdoc experience and providing quality research support is not only proper planning, coordination and administration but also effective collaboration and communication between all the role players which in this case includes stakeholders in various entities and departments such as the Research Support Office, Research Entities, Faculties, the Global Engagement Offices, Higher Degree Administration, the Bursary Office, and institutional management.

The importance of the Wisdom of the Village is illustrated in how relevant stakeholders across the institution each play a part in contributing towards the augmentation of the Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Programme.

# ● The way of the research manager: Growing your village as you grow

**Ms Dominique Meyer**[1]
[1]Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa

**Biography:**
Dominique Meyer is a mid-career research manager at Stellenbosch University. Her focus is on research funding, career development and the development of women in research.
She holds a BA in International Studies, and a BA Honours in History and is currently doing her MPhil qualification in Science and Technology with a focus on gender studies.
She believes in taking every opportunity presented to you, to further your career in research management.

The main component of a village is the community, and this can differ with each phase of a research manager's career. A village grows and it is important to recognise how to grow said village in each phase of your career.

Phase 1 would be postgraduate studies as a student gets first-hand experience in the fundamentals of research and a broader insight into research. The community in this phase is usually smaller and mainly consists of fellow student researchers and supervisors. Phase 2 is the early-career phase which usually starts with an internship or introduction into research management. Prospective research managers learn the basics of the field, and this is where one's community becomes more defined within the field. The community now includes colleagues within research management and mentors who offer support and career development in-house training.

Phase 3 is important to establish your place in research management. This is where one should actively build your community outside of your organisation and country. These networks can be built through field-related events outside of your organisation. You should use your expanded community to continue growing beyond your position because you can easily get comfortable and then stagnate in this phase.

Phase 4 is the senior/established stage and should be an active part of Phase 2's community. Senior managers need to note that sharing their work with the younger generation of research managers does not mean that they must give it up. Established managers should invite younger managers into a larger community and create a cycle of communal support within research management.

This poster/presentation will look at how different communities of support grow within each phase of a research manager's career as well as how you can participate and contribute to the communities around you.

- # Poor research management and innovation and technology transfer in Malawi: A policy issue

**Mr Livison Levis Msonthe**[1]
[1]Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences, Blantyre, Malawi

**Biography:**
I am a Technology Transfer Manager and Lecturer in Science and Technology Education. Formerly a Secondary Education Teacher, I'm passionate about bridging academia and industry. With expertise in identifying promising technologies and designing engaging STEM curriculum, I'm committed to fostering innovation and empowering the next generation of problem-solvers. Holding a Master of Science in Technical and Vocational Education, I'm dedicated to driving positive change through collaboration and lifelong learning. Excited to contribute to the Conference on Technology and Innovation Transfer, I look forward to sharing insights and exploring new opportunities at the intersection of research, education, and entrepreneurship.

Malawi has maintained an intellectual property system since its independence in 1964. However, in reality, Research Management and Innovation and Technology Transfer (RM &I&TT) have not resulted in the much anticipated realization of the economic benefits associated with the intellectual property. Malawi's National IP Policy (2019) was developed in as a tool for creating an enabling and conducive environment for stimulating creativity and innovation that will in turn accelerate industrialization and economic growth and development. However, there are evident gaps between the National IP policy and Research Institutions' IP policies (most of which are in Draft form/and lacking depth on issues of IP management). Meanwhile, evidence suggests that success of RM&I and TT in any country is dependent on a country's IP and related policies. As such it is not surprising that systems for managing research and innovation in Malawi have experienced huge failure for the past decades. This trend appears to be observed across many African countries.
This presentation therefore, seeks to draw learning points from a couple of bad practices that have facilitated stagnation in RM&I and TT across Malawi and perhaps SADC region countries. This could help in developing an efficient RM & I&TT across African countries and to avoid falling into similar traps.

# ● Causes and solutions to eroding ethical values in peer reviewing processes

**Prof Jethro Zuwarimwe**[1], **Prof Marizvikuru Mwale-Manjoro**[1], Prof Michael Chimonyo[1]
[1]University of Venda, Thohoyandou, South Africa

**Biography:**
Marizvikuru Mwale-Manjoro is an Associate Professor at University of Venda (UNIVEN). She serves in UNIVEN Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, for which she is the Deputy Chairperson and is also UNIVEN research ethics oversight committee Deputy Chairperson. Her research interests are ethnoveterinary medicine, livestock science for rural development, water and food security for improved rural livelihoods. She contributes to human capacity in many ways. Mari is SARIMA member, an executive committee member of Northern Region Research Ethics and Integrity Community of Practice in Southern Africa and SARIMA Research Management Portfolio Committee co-opted member. Mari is National Research Foundation C-Rated Researcher.

Peer review process for journal manuscripts, research grants, ethics applications, and research appraisals is increasingly being eroded. Evolution of research and higher education institutions through changing strategic goals which tend to use business models and performance management systems (PMS), cause unwillingness and unavailability of academics for peer review. The strategic goals do not recognize peer reviewing, and academics fail to infuse it into the PMS. The study aims to determine the causes and solutions to eroding ethical values in the peer-reviewing process. The target population is public universities in South Africa and selected international institutions. Facilitators will stratify universities by province and benchmark them with selected international universities. Formerly white universities will be compared with Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (HDIs). Data will also be collected from the National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa, Water Research Commission (WRC), and Human Sciences Research Council. Respondents will be purposively selected based on their expertise, willingness, and availability. An ethical clearance and permission to conduct will be secured before data collection. Facilitators intend to use Delphi method to gather information from reviewers and experts. Consolidated data and informed consent will be anonymously shared with respondents until a consensus is reached. It is emerging that limited reviewers avail themselves for the review process. Some take a long to complete the task, while others fail to deliver after accepting the role. It emerges that reviewers from HDIs are not keen to be involved in the review process. Research Ethics Committees, WRC and NRF find it difficult to secure reviewers for grant proposal applications. This impacts on timeframes to publish outcomes. Also, the review quality could be better to reduce appeals. Researchers will devise solutions using the gathered information. The study outcomes will enable research managers to effectively manage eroding ethical values in the peer review process.

# ● Professionalization of research management: A must in a highly competitive global economy

**Mr Kouassi Jean Pierre N'guessan**[1]
[1]IRESSEF, DAKAR, Sénégal

**Biography:**
Jean Pierre K. N'Guessan is the Deputy Director of the Department of International Cooperation at the Institute of Health Research, Epidemiological Surveillance and Training (IRESSEF) in Dakar, Senegal. He is the project manager of the West African Network for TB, AIDS and Malaria (WANETAM), which is a research consortium headquartered at IRESSEF. WANETAM brings together 25 institutions from 12 West African countries and 5 European partners. Mr. N'Guessan is also the Public Relations Officer of the West African Research and Innovation Management Association (WARIMA) since 2021. His is a passionate research manager with 23 years of experience in research support.

**Background:** In today's global economy where funds dedicated to research is scarce, donors are more and more demanding when it comes to governance and research impact. As a result, grantees are compelled to increase their governance standards to maintain donors' trust and secure more funding for their sustainability.

**Methodology:** This is a bench study based on 12 years observation of grant management in 25 member institutions within the West African Network for TB, AIDS and Malaria (WANATAM). Incorporating evidence from Monitoring and Evaluation reports, this study highlights governance challenges due to weak or non-existing research management systems in West Africa.

**Results:** Our observations revealed that in more than 70% of member institutions, research administrators are relegated to the rank of day-to-day clerks just good to collect and file invoices for financial reporting. Decision-making, even those relating to grant management are at the discretion of top management, very often with less knowledge of protocol guidelines. Moreover, conflicts often oppose Principal Investigators and Financial administration because the latter can be dull when it comes to releasing project funds to implement specific tasks in a timely manner. As a result, there is a weak compliance to donors' procedures, which can impact the qualitative delivery of project work plan.

**Conclusion:** The above observations suggest the official establishment of Grant Management Offices in research institutions and universities. These should be composed of talented research administrators with full authority to set standards and SOPs for a proper management of research from pre to post award. On the other hand, donors should consider incorporating the existence of sound research management systems in place as part of the criteria to benefit from consistent grants in the future. This will certainly set the stage for sound governance systems in universities and research institutions.

**Keywords:** Professionalization, research management, Governance

# Frameworks for professional growth in academic research management: A multiple case study

**Dr Cebisa Nkhumeleni**[1]
[1]University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

**Biography:**
Dr Nkhumeleni has Phd from the University of Bath with an International degree in Higher Education Management.
I have been Research Manager within different Research Institutions. My job entails a mandate to advance the frontiers of knowledge through focused research in identified fields or problem areas, and create new research career pathways for researchers, as well as stimulate strategic research initiatives across the knowledge spectrum.
I am familiar with South African regulatory statutes on Higher Education Sector and the challenges facing South Africa in its attempt to play a key role in the National System of Innovation.

As researchers and professionals in academic research management, it is crucial to develop frameworks that promote professional growth and success. Yet, little is known about the influence of well-developed frameworks for enhancing the professional growth and development of university staff. This paper reviews different frameworks utilized in higher education research management field to enhance professional growth. This multiple case study wherein academic research management practices of two other Open Distance e-Learning (ODeL) institutions are reviewed and juxtaposed with those of the University of South Africa, aims to recommend best professional growth practices.
The study therefore analyses relevant higher education legislation and reports guiding research management, institutional policies and procedures, as well as literature on the topic, to gain understanding of the phenomenon under study. Using cross-case synthesis to analyse the case studies, the study found that the research management frameworks followed in the University of South Africa are effective especially from a decoloniality perspective, as they are deeply embedded on social justice. This is particularly important in the context of transforming the higher education sector and redressing the effects of apartheid. The South African policy framework governing higher education appears to be instrumental towards the implementation of effective academic research management for professional growth. The implication of this study to practice thus lies in that, the findings for this study may be used to standardise frameworks for managing and governing academic research management.

**Keywords:** Research management; professional growth; decoloniality; higher education policy; transformation

- ## Enhancing ethics and regulatory accountability in a multifaceted research institution with over 100 active projects

Mrs Theranne van Vuren[1], Mrs Catherine Hill[1], Mr Gabriel Ncube[1], **Dr Lisa Nunes**[1]
[1]Wits Vaccines and Infectious Diseases Analytics Research Unit, Soweto, South Africa

**Biography:**

As Wits VIDA's Research Administration Manager, Theranne efficiently coordinates research activities. Her responsibilities include overseeing contracts, liaising with the Wits Health Consortium, managing ethics and regulations, and enhancing communication. With diverse administrative experience, she's committed to organisational success. Theranne prioritises effective communication, evident in her pursuit of a communication science degree and completion of SARIMA courses. Passionate about research impact, she fosters collaboration and compliance. Dedicated to Wits VIDA's mission of fighting infectious diseases, she upholds high standards in research administration, regulatory compliance, and communication.

Lisa Nunes serves as the Ethics & Regulatory Manager of the clinical trials unit at the Wits Vaccines & Infectious Diseases Analytics (VIDA) Research Unit, a role she undertook less than a year ago. Holding a medical degree with distinction from the University of the Witwatersrand in 2019, she also acts as an investigator across all clinical trials conducted at the unit. Before joining Wits VIDA, Lisa completed a two-year medical internship at Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital and local clinics, followed by a year of community service at Thelle Mogoerane Regional Hospital in Vosloorus. Transitioning into clinical trials research has offered her new avenues for growth and personal development.

In her role as Ethics & Regulatory Manager, Lisa oversees more than 40 upcoming, ongoing, and finishing clinical trials, ensuring strict adherence to processes, protocols, and policies in compliance with relevant laws and regulations, prioritizing participant safety. Despite being early in her career, Lisa has demonstrated leadership qualities, evidenced by being the top matriculant in the City of Ekurhuleni in 2013, receiving the Vice Chancellor's Scholarship yearly, maintaining her position on the Dean's List annually, and being a member of the Golden Key Honour Society.

Beyond her professional endeavors, Lisa finds fulfillment in baking as a hobby and teaching Mathematics in her spare time, where she seeks to innovate and uplift those around her while serving humanity.

In the dynamic research management landscape, ethics and regulatory compliance is crucial for credibility. To enhance regulatory accountability during a time of significant growth and change management moving through and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, Wits VIDA focused on accuracy, awareness, planning, adaptability, teamwork, and excellence in project administration. The unit actively runs over 100 medical research projects spanning clinical trials, observational, social behavioural sciences and basic science studies, over two research sites.

Our approach included:

- Clearly defining roles and responsibilities within the ethics and regulatory function and across departments
- Growing research ethics expertise by training ethics and regulatory officers and administrators
- Improving standard filing indices, comprehensive site files and trackers for streamlined data management
- Encouragement and facilitation of cross-functional awareness and responsibilities in efficient site file management
- Streamlining the management of all research streams to improve regulatory compliance and efficiencies
- Building on relationships through collaboration with the Wits ethics secretariat for expertise and support
- Focusing on administrative excellence through internal audits and process optimisation
- Development of clear process flows and communication channels for stakeholder interaction
- Establishment of an efficient internal ethics and regulatory database with essential staff documents that facilitates easy retrieval of both current and expired documents
- Facilitation of regular training and communications to ensure adherence to processes and timelines.

Through strategic intervention and internal auditing, improvements in ethics and regulatory adherence were achieved. Streamlined processes and communication have promoted accountability. Supporting research teams with practical strategies for research ethics, integrity, and regulatory compliance in a diverse research setting, highlights collaboration and the importance of a proactive approach. WITS VIDA's journey underscores the transformative power of community and collaboration in fostering individual and institutional growth in research management, and we hope to share our lessons learned with the audience.

## ● Breaking down silos: Enhancing interdepartmental communication and collaboration in research administration

**Mr Katleho Nyaile**[1], **Mr Mpho Mashamba**[1]
[1]University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa

**Biography:**
Mr. Katleho Nyaile serves as a Senior Officer at the Center for Graduate Support at the University of the Free State. He possesses a master's degree by research in Psychology. His responsibilities include overseeing the postgraduate student tracking portfolio and actively contributing to the development and management of the Graduate Research Management (GRM) system from its initiation to the present day. The GRM system was introduced as an online tool to monitor the progress of postgraduate students from enrollment through to graduation. Mr. Nyaile overseas all aspects related to GRM, its development, and collaborates with all seven faculties at UFS.

Mr Mpho Mashamba serves as an officer at the Directorate for Research Development (DRD) at the University of the Free State (UFS), bringing more than six years of experience in the creation of research management systems. This expertise encompasses the design of electronic forms, routing, and workflow configurations for various research-related modules, including Research Outputs, Disclosures, Agreements, and, most recently, the funding applications module. Mpho has a demonstrated track record in systems development and stakeholder engagement, as evidenced by his instrumental role in creating numerous systems, not only within academia but also during his previous employment at one of Africa's largest beef distributors. He holds an Honours degree in Criminology, and a Master's degree in Human Rights from the University of the Free State.

Effective research administration within large organizations relies heavily on seamless communication and collaboration across departments, yet often faces challenges due to entrenched silo mentalities. This paper explores the complexities of interdepartmental communication within the context of research management, focusing specifically on the University of the Free State's (UFS) utilization of the Research Information Management System (RIMS) and Graduate Research Management (GRM) online platform. While both systems are individually optimized for efficiency in managing research activities and doctoral student progress respectively, their isolated implementation has led to missed opportunities for synergy and integration.

Drawing on lessons learned, challenges encountered, and mistakes made in the development, implementation, and maintenance of these systems, this paper highlights the need for institutional research integration points. It proposes strategies, frameworks, and solutions for fostering collaboration and connectivity between RIMS and GRM, as well as other research administration areas, to align with the institution's broader research agenda. By addressing communication silos and promoting cross-departmental dialogue, this paper aims to enhance the effectiveness and impact of research management practices at UFS and beyond.

# • Navigating research management in Nigerian Universities: Successes, challenges, failures and future directions

**Dr Abdulkarim Oloyede**[1]
[1]Univeristy of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

**Biography:**
Dr. Abdulkarim Oloyede is a leading African researcher, an Associate Professor (Teaching and Research) in the Department of Telecommunication Science, University of Ilorin, Nigeria and Ag, Director of Centre for Research Development and In-House Training. and was a post-doctoral researcher at the University of York, UK. He teaches and supervises research at the undergraduate and Postgraduate levels at the University. He received his first degree in Electrical Engineering in 2008. He obtained his Masters and Ph.D. degrees in Telecommunications Engineering at University of York, UK in 2010 and 2015 respectively. He is a Rutherford commonwealth scholar

Research management in Nigerian universities is fundamental for fostering innovation, knowledge creation, and societal development. This paper provides a comprehensive examination of the successes, challenges, failures, and future directions associated with research management practices in Nigerian higher education institutions. Drawing on existing literature, institutional experiences, and stakeholder perspectives, the paper identifies key factors influencing research management outcomes and proposes strategies for addressing existing gaps and enhancing research productivity. Through desk research and informant interviews, the evidence presented offers insights into the state of research management in Nigerian universities. Successes in research management, including achievements in governance structures, funding mechanisms, and institutional support systems, are highlighted alongside discussions on notable research outcomes and their impact on national development. However, challenges such as inadequate funding, infrastructure deficits, bureaucratic hurdles, and a lack of research culture pose significant obstacles to effective research management. Failures and lessons learned from instances of research mismanagement, misconduct, and inefficiency are explored, providing valuable insights for future improvements. The paper concludes with strategies for improvement, including policy interventions, institutional reforms, and capacity-building initiatives, emphasizing the importance of stakeholder collaboration, resource mobilization, and accountability mechanisms. Additionally, future directions for research management in African universities are discussed, exploring emerging trends, opportunities, and challenges shaping the research landscape. This paper contributes to the discourse on research governance and informs policy and practice for fostering a culture of research excellence and innovation in higher education institutions.

- # The importance of soft skills in the workplace and how they can be trained

**Mr Kgotatso Pudule**[1]
[1]North West University, Potchestroom, South Africa

**Biography:**
Pabalelo Kgotatso Pudule is currently as a Research Support Assistant at North West University. A proud graduate of North West University, he was inspired to pursue a career in Statistics. Worked as Projects intern, Data & Administration intern, and Research Support intern. Chosen this career because he enjoys analysing and making a difference.

Soft skills refer to a group of personal attributes that increase an individual's job performance and enhance their career chances. A workplace without soft skills shows a lack of motivation, subordination, teamwork, agreement, and honesty. Soft skills are learned attributes that require training in specific applications in that field. Soft skills give managers a strong conceptual and practical framework to build, develop, lead, and manage teams at work. Furthermore, soft skills are transferable, and they can be applied to different types of jobs.

Most public and private institutions are looking for applicants with a diverse set of soft skills, including communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and time management. Communication is the most desired soft skill in the workplace. Communication improves employee engagement, stimulates teamwork, increases productivity, fosters a healthy workplace culture, and avoids unneeded conflict. Problem-solving enhances critical thinking and aids in the discovery of new opportunities. Time management boosts productivity while reducing stress.

Soft skills supplement technical expertise and contribute to a pleasant workplace culture. Training soft skills in the workplace includes, developing a learning mindset, hiring people who are willing to learn, conducting a skills assessment after hiring, encouraging self-reflection, using the right training tools, providing practice opportunities, offering (and asking for) feedback, often.

Developing transferable skills can improve an individual's employability, market worth, and career flexibility. These abilities allow an individual to adapt to change, communicate effectively, collaborate in teams, and solve complicated challenges. Accepting transferable skills promotes lifelong learning, preparing individuals for a changing world.

# Community engagement to facilitate longitudinal research and impact in Soweto

**Ms Ripfumelo Risimati**[1], Mrs Catherine Hill[1], Prof Ziyaad Dangor[1], Prof Janan Dietrich[2], Dr Nellie Myburgh[1]
[1]Wits Vaccines and Infectious Diseases Analytics Research Unit, Johannesburg, South Africa, [2]Perinatal HIV Research Unit, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

**Biography:**
Ripfumelo Risimati is the impact and engagement project manager at the Vaccines and Infectious Diseases Analytics Research Unit, University of the Witwatersrand. Her unique combination of strategic planning, problem solving, and analytical skills has enabled her to excel in her role as a project manager. Her expertise lies in collaborating with cross-functional teams to deliver project objectives on time and within budget. Ripfumelo is currently pursuing her PhD in Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Witwatersrand. Her research interests include reproductive health, gender and women's rights issues and the pervasiveness of socioeconomic inequality particularly in South Africa.

Community engagement is critical to fostering relationships between research organisations and the communities they serve. Wits VIDA has worked within Soweto and Thembelihle for over 27 years with successful community engagement.

VIDA invests in community engagement as a key strategy to achieving social license-to-operate in hard-to-reach, underdeveloped areas. The Soweto community is an interesting case study because of its rich history and the concentration of research activity across multiple and complex health outcomes. Our approach to inclusive governance involves culturally sensitive communications. Ongoing, effective community engagement requires building and maintaining relationships with community leaders (ward councilors, block leaders), community-based organisations, non-profits, undertakers, community influencers, traditional healers and healthcare workers. VIDA has developed, trained and maintained three Community Advisory Boards (CABs) supporting Soweto, Freedom Park and Thembelihle (Health Demographic Surveillance: pregnancy and infant mortality outcomes) and Diepkloof (clinical vaccine development and paediatric and neo-natal observational studies).

VIDA's community engagement team collaborates closely with CABs while providing holistic counseling to study participants and their families and advisory on services (a bridge to public health systems and positive health behaviour outcomes). Interactive community feedback (roadshows, campaigns, community events, open-days) is crucial in creating and sustaining long-term community interest in our work. Community engagement also informs ongoing and future research priorities and delivery, supports successful participant enrolment, and promotes proactive community involvement a locally relevant research agenda. This social license to operate is continuously renegotiated as stakeholders' experiences, perceptions and opinions change.

Through dedicated and interdependent community engagement work, VIDA applies local insight and multi-lateral engagement to drive positive global social impact (e.g. reducing under five mortality) and contributes to the local economy (prioritising local suppliers, working with community volunteers to support safety and community access, investing in community development initiatives, and employment strategy prioritising fieldworkers from and living in Soweto).

# Empower the village with an effective research management system

**Ms Boemo Segoje**[1], **Mrs Maricél Van Rooyen**[1]
[1]University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa

**Biography:**
Boemo Segoje is a research ethics officer in the Research Development department at the University of the Free State (UFS). She graduated from the University of the Witwatersrand with an honours degree in Sociology. In her current role as the officer, she is responsible for all ethical clearance and creative output queries. Core responsibility includes providing training on ethics and ethical principles that should be adhered to when conducting research. Boemo has completed the training for research ethics members. The training is accredited on Level 1 for 11 Ethics CEUs. Boemo has an insatiable drive to grow and learn.

Maricél van Rooyen is the Project Manager for RIMS (Research Information Management System) and the Ethics Adviser, at the University of the Free State, with ten years of experience in research ethics, research management and online system-management. Maricél completed the PGD in Applied Ethics (cum laude) at Stellenbosh University in 2018. She completed a MPhil in Environmental Ethics in 2021 (cum laude). Her thesis topic cover, 'Guidelines and Principles for Environmental and Biosafety Research Ethics in the South African Context'. Maricél successfully implemented and coordinated the online ethics processes on RIMS for Human-, Animal- and the Environment and Biosafety Committees. She has also been involved in Ethics and System training, nationally and internationally. She completed various online international training courses in Research Ethics. In 2019 she was selected by SAALAS as a South African representative in Tunisia, as part of an Africa-team, chaired by Dr Bert Mohr to complete 'Guidelines for the Establishment and Functioning of Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees in Africa'. Maricél serves on the UFS Senate Research Ethics Committee, since its establishment in 2012.

Research and Innovation Management in higher education institutions has evolved significantly, necessitating efficient systems to manage the increasingly complex activities on all levels of the research process, bringing these activities together for an effective streamlined environment (village) that can develop and flourish – institutionally, nationally, and globally.

The Research Information Management System (RIMS) implemented at the University of the Free State (UFS) is a pivotal tool in enhancing research activities and streamlining administrative processes to ensure impact and address real-world challenges. This technological solution in research/innovation management is a tool for strategic planning making it easy to track impact and is utilised to manage research activities efficiently within the institution (or our village) by generating comprehensive reports, facilitating applications and decision-making processes and managing grants and contracts efficiently for better research funding utilisation. The system contributes to streamlined business processes within the research development fraternity. RIMS is a user-friendly system that integrates with other online systems such as PeopleSoft.

The system captures and manages various research activities throughout the researcher's lifecycle, including ethical clearance applications, funding management, grant monitoring, research output tracking, and contract and agreement management. It also caters for innovation and technology transfer processes. It supports multiple ethics committees, ensuring compliance with ethical standards across domains. The system incorporates SPIN the world's biggest platform for funding opportunities. RIMS is integrated with ORCiD, allowing researchers to create a unique identifier for increased discoverability and cross-disciplinary collaboration, making our village more visible.

The success and efficiency of RIMS is a collaborative effort from different stakeholders and it demonstrates how an effective management system can significantly enhance research administration as a comprehensive solution for managing diverse research activities, facilitating day-to-day operations, and enhancing the overall productivity and impact of research endeavors to support a healthy environment for our village.

- # Dimensões Críticas Do Desenvolvimento Regional Provido Pelas Infraestruturas De Estrada, Energia, Água E Saneamento

**Senhor Sultane Júlio Setimane**[1], Senhora Anastácia da Graça salvador Machaieie Chale[2], Doutor Domingos Augusto Macucule[3]
[1]Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Maputo, Cidade de Maputo, Mozambique

**Biography | Bibliografia:**
Sultane Júlio Setimane, 43 anos de idade, filho de Carlos Setimane e Domingas Júlio, natural de Namacurra, Distrito de Namacurra, Província da Zambézia, Docente Integral da Universidade Lúrio, sediada na província de Nampula. Em 2018 terminou o Mestrado em Planeamento e Gestão de Assentamentos Informais pela Universidade Eduardo Mondlane - Faculdade de Arquitetura e Planeamento Físico, em 2012 terminou o curso de Licenciado em Ensino de Matemática pela Universidade Pedagógica Delegação de Nampula, atualmente encontra-se a frequentar o curso de Doutoramento em Arquitetura e Urbanismo na Faculdade de Arquitetura e Planeamento Físico da Universidade Eduardo Mondlane.

A infra-estrutura é o conjunto de serviços primordiais para o desenvolvimento socioeconómico de uma região, contribuindo para equilibrar as condições de igualdade de oportunidade nas parcelas por ela servida. O presente artigo objetiva-se em avaliar as dimensões críticas do desenvolvimento da região norte de Moçambique provido pelas infraestruturas de estrada, energia, Água e Saneamento, ao se falar da região Norte de Moçambique os autores se referem concretamente a Província de Nampula, Cabo Delgado e Niassa, e a região em estudo localiza-se no centro da província de Nampula, com destaque para os distritos: Cidade de Nampula, Murrupula, Mogovolas, Meconta, Muecate, Mecuburi e Ribaué. Salienta IPIA (2010), que desenvolvimento económico e social de uma região é diferenciado da outra por conta das infraestruturas que cada uma dispõe. Os serviços das infraestruturas acima referenciados numa região, atendem as necessidades dos habitantes nele inserido, do contrário compromete o desenvolvimento da região. Para a realização do artigo recorreu-se a estudo de campo ao nível da região, consulta bibliográfica, entrevista dirigida à especialistas de estradas (ANE), Energia (EDM), Água e saneamento (AIAS, DPOP, CMCN, SDPIs) e fotos satélites. Do estudo conclui-se o fraco cobrimento das infraestruturas de água e energia nas zonas periurbanas e rurais, e a má condição das estradas, o que contribui no fraco desenvolvimento económico e social da região. O desenvolvimento económico e social da região em estudo é denotado como autónomo, com monopólio do estado em prover as infraestruturas mencionadas anteriormente, o sector privado prove o abastecimento de água numa escala menor o que de certa forma também não satisfaz a procura da região em estudo.

**Palavras –** chaves: Infraestrutura, desenvolvimento regional, região norte de Moçambique

# Exploration of postgraduate students' understanding of research ethics through an A-Z research ethics activity

**Dr Tukiso Sewapa**[1], Ms Moore Hutamo[1], Mr Evans Khalo[1], Mr Nyiko Machavi[1]
[1]University of Limpopo, Polokwane, South Africa

**Biography:**
Dr Tukiso Sewapa is a Research Ethics Officer at the University of Limpopo, Research Administration and Development. She holds PhD in Psychology, and her research interest lies in ethics, Afrocentricity and student development. She is selected as an early career researcher for 2-year mentored writing programme funded by The British Academy. Dr Tukiso also serves as Marketing and Communication representative under the Provincial Chapter of Executive Committee of the Humanities and Social Sciences Alumni Association (HSSA).

Background: Research ethics are fundamental principles guiding the planning and execution of scientific investigations. Understanding these principles is crucial for postgraduate students in their research endeavours.
Aim: This paper explores postgraduate students' understanding of research ethics through an A-Z Research Ethics activity conducted as an informal baseline assessment prior to formal presentations on the subject.

Method: Participants were divided into two equal groups and engaged in a competitive A-Z of Research Ethics activity focused on research ethics concepts. Each group was tasked with associating concepts with letters of alphabets (A-Z), followed by a presentation and group assessment of the concepts' correctness. The winning group was determined by the highest score.

Findings: The A-Z Research Ethics activity provided insights into postgraduate students' understanding of research ethics. It demonstrated the level of comprehension among students, emphasising the importance of ongoing support and training in research ethics. Additionally, the activity embraced student engagement, diversity, and enjoyment in formal presentations on research matters.

Conclusion and Recommendations: Postgraduate students exhibit a level of understanding of research ethics, as evidenced by their participation in the A-Z Research Ethics activity. However, continuous support and training are essential to deepen their understanding and application of research ethics principles. The activity serves as a valuable tool for assessing and enhancing students' comprehension of research ethics in an interactive and engaging manner.

# ● Research management ethics: Balancing integrity and innovation.

**Mr Seedy Sey**[1]
[1]Mrcg at Lshtm, Brikama Town, Gambia

**Biography:**
Seedy Sey has more than seventeen years work experience in The Gambia public service. Currently, he serves as a Project Manager at the Medical Research Council Gambia (MRCG) at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM). He is committed to public service excellence, access to finance, research development and management, and community development advancement. His research interests are development financing, microfinance and community development

**Background:** The landscape of research management ethics has garnered increasing attention as advancements in technology and globalization pose new ethical challenges. With the proliferation of research collaborators and funding sources, maintaining ethical integrity in research management has become paramount. This abstract explores the complexities and distinctions inherent in ethical research management practices.

**Rationale:** Ethical research management serves as the cornerstone of maintaining trust, integrity, and credibility within the research management field and beyond. However, the evolving nature of research environment, including interdisciplinary collaborations and industry partnerships, necessitates a critical examination of ethical frameworks and practices. These abstract aims to elucidate the importance of ethical considerations in research management and to provide insights into navigating ethical dilemmas effectively.

**Design:** Drawing upon interdisciplinary literature and case studies, these abstract analyses various ethical dimensions inherent in research management, including conflict of interest, data management, authorship guidelines, and responsible conduct of research.
Through a systematic review of existing literature and theoretical frameworks, this study synthesizes key principles and best practices to inform ethical decision-making in research management.

**Evaluation:** The evaluation component of this abstract involves assessing the effectiveness of current ethical guidelines and practices in addressing the complex ethical challenges encountered in research management. By critically examining case studies and empirical evidence, this study aims to identify gaps in existing frameworks and propose recommendations for enhancing ethical standards in research management.

**Conclusion:** This abstract underscore the critical importance of integrating ethical considerations into all aspects of research management. By adopting a proactive approach to addressing ethical dilemmas, research organizations can uphold the principles of integrity, transparency, and accountability. Ultimately, fostering a culture of ethical research management is essential for maintaining public trust, advancing knowledge, and ensuring the responsible conduct of research in the 21st century.

- # Facilitating project success: The importance of a well-executed kick-off meeting

**Mr Daniel Shadow**[1]
[1]University of Ghana, Legon, Accra, Ghana

**Biography:**
Mr. Daniel K. Shadow is a Research Development at the University of Ghana, Legon, assigned to the College of Humanities Grants Management Office in the Pre-& Post Award Services Team responsible for conducting due diligence checks for outgoing subawards, review and negotiation of research grant agreements/contracts, working with researchers and funders as well as collaborating institutions to ensure funder and institutional compliance, Identify and disseminate funding opportunities to researchers and staff, drafting of subcontract agreements, as well as organizing /facilitating project kick-off meetings for new projects.
I hold an MPhil/BSc in Marketing from the University of Ghana Business School, Legon.

'Curating and sharing the wisdom of the village (RM)', in the realm of project management, the inception of a project sets the tone for its entire lifecycle. The kick-off meeting stands as a pivotal moment, where stakeholders converge, objectives are clarified, and momentum is ignited. This presentation delves into the critical role of a well-executed kick-off meeting in steering projects towards success under the following subheadings:
1. Project goals and objectives: A kick-off meeting ensures that all team members are aligned on the project's goals, objectives, and deliverables
2. Creating a Project Plan: Outlining the project timeline, milestones, and dependencies, providing a roadmap for project
3. Establishes Roles and Responsibilities
4. Communication and Collaboration
5. Risk identification and Mitigation Strategies: Are key components of a kick-off meeting. Discussing this in the session educates attendees about the importance of proactively addressing potential risks, thereby minimizing their impact on the project's timeline, budget, and quality.

The session will explore the multifaceted benefits of a comprehensive kick-off meeting, ranging from fostering clear communication channels to aligning stakeholder expectations. Through real-world examples and practical insights, attendees will gain a deeper understanding of how an effective kick-off meeting serves as the cornerstone for project success.

Furthermore, the presentation will highlight key components, including agenda setting, stakeholder engagement strategies, and a shared vision. Attendees will learn actionable techniques to harness the full potential of this foundational gathering, ensuring projects are launched on solid footing and equipped for triumph.

Ultimately, this presentation aims to equip project managers and stakeholders alike with the knowledge and tools necessary to orchestrate kick-off meetings that propel projects towards achievement, it will also help participants/attendees recognize its role as a critical success factor in project management, empowering them with knowledge and strategies to effectively initiate and manage projects in their respective roles.

# • Research output information management – it takes a village – North-West University DHET subsidy submission

**Ms Teresa Smit**[1]
[1]North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa.

**Biography:**
Teresa Smit (BA, BA (Hons) (PU for CHE), MA (NWU)) is a Research Support Coordinator at the North-West University, with more than 15 years of experience in research administration. In her current position she focuses on research output information management. She is also a member of the Research Output, Outcomes & Impact Community of Practice (CoP-ROOI).

This contribution focuses on the collaborative process and effort involved in managing research publications at a South African University for subsidy submission to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). This process involves various stakeholders, including researchers, administrators, and research managers in and outside the university. All play crucial roles in ensuring the efficient, accurate, and timely management of research information.

Effective communication and coordination are at the core of this process. Apart from the researcher producing the research publications, administrators and research managers are an integral part of the subsidy submission process. Through their Research Outputs Policy, the DHET requires accurate and comprehensive information and documentation for the measurement and evaluation of research outputs at South African public higher education institutions. Therefore, it is important for all involved stakeholders to work together to ensure that the necessary documentation and data are provided in a timely and organised manner according to the requirements and reporting procedures of the DHET.

By recognizing the collaborative nature of research output management, institutions can implement strategies and tools to streamline the process, improve data accuracy, and enhance the success of the subsidy submission process, the subsidy income, and the quality of the research outputs of the institution.

# • Comparing the biosafety regulations, policies and guidelines for research at universities in the SADC Countries

**Ms Biosha Thompson**[1], **Mr Winston Beukes**[1]
[1]Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa

**Biography:**
I am an early career Research Ethics Officer with a background in biotechnology, ecotoxicology and zoology research. Additionally, I am completing my PhD in microbiology at Stellenbosch University. My responsibilities include assisting the Research Ethics Manager in overseeing the Research Ethics Committees for the Animal Care and Use and Biosafety programmes at Stellenbosch University. I have an immense passion for nature and conserving the environment. And as a researcher turned research ethics officer, this passion has expanded to include the safety of communities within those environments.

Winston Beukes - I have a background in Science and Theology that positions me well within research integrity and ethics. My responsibility areas include the management of the animal care and use, and biosafety ethics application processes through the Research Ethics Committee for Animal Care and Use, and the Research Ethics Committee for Biological and Environmental Safety at Stellenbosch University. Furthermore, I also oversee laboratory biosafety and permit compliance at the institution.

The influence of COVID can still be felt globally in many facets of life, including research involving biohazardous organisms. In Africa, the spread of Ebola and COVID has rapidly increased international collaboration and multiorganizational participation in epidemiology research. However, in low- and middle-income countries, a number of difficulties have been observed which may hinder such partnerships. These include limited expert capacity, non-standardization of biosafety policies, a lack of health system readiness and high population densities in areas afflicted with disease-causing biohazardous organisms. I will argue that research ethics managers possess the skills and knowledge necessary to bridge the gap between disciplines (human health, biosafety and humanities) through African research management collaborations. As such, this poster presentation will aim to address the differences in biosafety regulations, policies and guidelines for research at universities in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries by making use of relevant case studies. Further to this, it will aim to address how the collective efforts of research ethics managers across varying disciplines may bridge that gap to ensure standardized biosafety standards for all research involving the use of biohazardous organisms, by fostering a responsible research ethics village.

# The importance of communicating the whole story: Research, technology transfer and impact

**Ms Litha Tywakadi**[1]
[1]Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa

**Biography:**
Litha has 4 years of experience in IP and innovation management. Her prior experience was focused on patent examination and strategic use of IP for small businesses.
Litha holds a BSc (Eng) in chemical engineering from the University of Cape Town and is currently pursuing her LLB with UNISA. She has a keen interest in innovation and African development. As part of Stellenbosch University's Technology Transfer team and focusing on the engineering portfolio of inventions, she looks forward to contributing to the journey of commercialising innovative research for positive impact to society.

The responsibility towards research that translates to addressing real-world challenges is now more than ever important as we seek to bridge the gap between scientific advancement and real-world implications. This abstract delves into the significance of effectively communicating the impact of bridging the gap between scientific advancements and their real-world implications.

Communicating the impact of research and innovation to different stakeholders is crucial for fostering collaboration, driving decision-making, and maximizing societal benefits. What is meaningful work to a researcher may be different to what is meaningful to a technology transfer professional or to industry or society but what is common amongst all stakeholders is the pressing need to see real-world implications from the work we do.

Clearly communicating the story ensures that stakeholders grasp the significance of research findings and technological break-throughs. By translating technologies into practical implications we have an opportunity to builds trust and credibility in research and innovation endeavors. We foster collaboration and co-creation and enable researchers to tailor their work to address real-world challenges. By soliciting feedback and incorporating diverse perspectives, researchers can ensure that their innovations align with the needs and priorities of end-users, thereby enhancing the relevance and impact of their endeavors. This also enhances partnerships and sustains the momentum of innovation efforts.

Additionally, communicating the stories of research and innovation with real-world impact serves as a catalyst for driving more research outputs and commercial opportunities. This may provide more positive societal impacts. By highlighting the tangible benefits of scientific advancements, such as improved healthcare outcomes, environmental sustainability, and economic growth, researchers can inspire action and mobilize resources towards addressing pressing global challenges.

In conclusion, effective communication of research and innovation impact in addressing real-world challenges is indispensable for maximizing the growth of commercial opportunities for research outputs.

# Empowering the next generation of research managers: Lessons from AMPATH Kenya

**Mr Daniel Wahome**[1]
[1]Moi University College of Health Sciences/Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital, Eldoret, Kenya

**Biography:**
A trained and qualified project manager with more than five years of experience in grants. Working with and assisting several Principal Investigators in the Pre-award section within the Grants Management Cycle. I have a yearly success rate of increasing numbers as a Grants Management Officer. Committed to maintaining excellence in execution as well as excellence in being. Currently pursuing an MBA with a focus on project management, having previously earned a Bachelor of Science in Project Planning and Management.

The Pre-Award Office domiciled within the Grants Office is crucial in identifying funding sources, advising faculty during proposal preparation, coordinating proposal submission processes, developing budgets, interpreting sponsor guidelines, maintaining sponsor databases, preparing pitch decks, and providing reports. This abstract shares lessons from the Academic Model Providing Access to Healthcare (AMPATH) on empowering research managers. Research managers in this docket rely on mentorship, in-house and external training, and on-the-job learning. This is crucial for skills and knowledge transfer. This model is inspired by the rare yet expensive research management programs from learning institutions and the growing need for the perpetuity and sustainability of research institutions. Leveraging on the experienced senior research managers, AMPATH has revitalized the proposal development and submission by assigning a Pre-award Officer to an Investigator. This process allows best practice and knowledge exchange amongst research managers and investigators, thereby equipping the team with the skills needed to develop winning proposals. Senior research administrators work closely with junior officers in supporting investigators, and through this process, the Officer is mentored through supportive supervision that enables skills gaining and confidence to perform the duties. This has seen the Grants Office grow from 2 Officers in 2017 to currently 10 Officers raising proposal submissions from 43 in 2019 to 116 in 2023. To develop excellent proposals, AMPATH has developed procedures, systems and templates that support this thrilling yet demanding exercise for each grant to be submitted on time and in quality. The AMPATH Pre-award Office is therefore a vital research infrastructure in research management, which bolsters best grantsmanship practices. Further, efforts to continue mentorship and training to staff are underway for succession management which will contribute to both job enlargement and enrichment. By embracing mentorship and support supervision, the next generation of research managers are empowered, enhancing research continuity and sustainability.

- # **One form, many voices, understanding collaboration breakdown in research ethics exemption**

**Mr Aden Williams**[1]
[1]Stellenbosch University, Cape Town, South Africa

**Biography:**
My journey started as an NRF Intern and transitioned into a permanent staff member as the Humanities Research Ethics Administrative Officer at Stellenbosch University. I have gained several years of experience working with confidential and personal information as well as working with an array of different personalities when providing applicants with advice and assisting them with navigating the online ethics application process. In 2020 I was awarded the DSI/SARIMA Joint Award for Early Career Excellence in
Research Management. In 2023 I completed the Stellenbosch Business School Executive Development Project Management Course.

What does it take for a project to be successful, it takes a takes a village doesn't it: A team, a group of individuals working towards a common goal? In this presentation, I will be discussing how the project I was tasked with was beset with challenges emerging from a lack of constructive consultation and input.

Without consultation with the Research Ethics Committees (REC's), a funding agency stipulated that proof of ethics exemption must be presented for funds to be released. Therefore, I was tasked with creating a Research Ethics Exempt Form that includes the exemption criteria of all four REC's. The master form would confirm exemption from all four committees at Stellenbosch University. At the time though, each REC already had had their own research ethics exemption process.

My presentation will highlight the challenges and opportunities of facilitating a collaborative partnership between four distinct research ethics committees, speaking to matters of form ownership, resource constraints and review management. I will also share my insights on how the project could've been done differently in line with project management principles.

I hope my presentation will highlight the possible benefits of having one form vs. multiple forms, how to implement the project from start to finish and what lessons I have learned from not including all collaborators from the beginning.

# Integrity through engagement: Ethical decision-making in collaborative research

**Mrs Ludo Wilson**[1]
[1]University of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana

**Biography:**

The presenting author is a Research Ethics Administrator at the University of Botswana's Research Ethics Unit, with nearly six years of experience. They oversee ethics review and research permit applications, ensuring compliance with regulations and also administer the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and other Research Ethics Committees Their background includes a Master of Research and Public Policy, complementing their Bachelor's in Sociology. They advocate for ethical oversight in research, particularly in emerging fields. Their commitment to advancing ethical practices in academia is evident through their work and education, contributing to safeguarding human research participants' rights and welfare in Botswana.

In the evolving landscape of research and innovation, ethical considerations stand as foundational pillars guiding researchers. This paper explores the intricate relationship between research ethics and integrity management within the framework of community access, engagement, and collaborative research

Through the lens of a human-centric approach to research ethics, this paper advocates for a holistic and interdisciplinary approach to research ethics, wherein the rights and dignity of all stakeholders are upheld with utmost regard. By integrating ethical considerations into every facet of the research endeavor, researchers can uphold the highest standards of integrity while contributing meaningfully to the collective pursuit of knowledge and societal betterment.

Central to this exploration is the recognition of research as a social endeavor, deeply intertwined with the welfare and interests of diverse communities. By adopting a human-centric approach to research ethics, researchers can navigate the complexities of ethical decision-making while prioritizing the rights and dignity of all stakeholders involved.

Through a comprehensive analysis of case studies and ethical frameworks, this paper elucidates the transformative potential of community engagement in shaping ethical research practices. By actively involving communities in the research process, researchers can ensure that their work is not only ethically rigorous but also responsive to the needs and values of those directly affected by the research. Moreover, this paper examines the role of collaborative research partnerships in promoting ethical conduct and integrity.

By integrating ethical considerations into every stage of the research process, researchers can uphold the highest standards of integrity within the research ecosystem. Ultimately, this paper calls upon researchers, policymakers, and stakeholders to prioritize human-centric research ethics and integrity management as fundamental pillars of the research enterprise. By embracing principles of inclusivity, empathy, and respect, researchers can uphold the highest standards of ethical conduct while advancing knowledge, innovation, and societal well-being.

# Impact of ineffective communication on effective strategy implementation in research support

**Ms Patricia Jacob**[1]
[1]Nelson Mandela University, Gqeberha (port Elizabeth), South Africa

**Biography:**
Research Management Experience since 1985
Department of Paediatrics, Med School University of Natal
Research Office UKZN
Research Office UCT
Research Office Rhodes University
Current position Senior Manager: NMU
Graduated with an MBA - UKZN
Professional recognition with IPRC
Current position: Nelson Mandela University
KPA's
Handle queries, from originating funding proposals and associated budgets, within the guidelines of the institution and the prospective funder, to successful reporting.
Create exception reports so that problems can be dealt with swiftly.
Sound data management practices that safeguard confidentially
Work closely with system developers to improve and overhaul internal systems to integrate with external ones.

A poor understanding of the strategy among the workforce and ineffective communication of the strategy to the workforce are the most important barriers to effective strategy implementation in organizations. This is more amplified in university research support environments who are tasked with implementation of institutional research, innovation, and internationalisation strategies. To ensure successful implementation of strategy, effective communication is essential. Effective Communication makes it easier to manage teams, set goals, track progress, and encourage innovation. The communication skills of everyone within the organization matters, from senior management through to individual team members.
"When we hear the word 'communication' we usually think about what's being said or the way the message is delivered, but the act of listening is equally important". (Matthew O'Neil: Jan 24, 2020)

The presentation will focus on successes and failures experienced in a research support environment at Nelson Mandela University. This presentation will highlight the lessons learned due to ineffective communication and showcase success stories from the lessons learned. Lastly, the presentation with emphasis on the role of strategic leadership and how it positively contributes to effective strategy implementation when communication is effective.

**Keywords:** Strategy Implementation, Strategic Leadership, Effective Communication.