



South Africa  
Sweden  
University Forum

**THEME: Social transformation through change: *the effect of COVID-19 on smallholder farming***

*The first dialogue episode, towards improving Smallholder Farming Food Systems post COVID-19*

Approximately, five years ago, the global focus started to be on how we could achieve the Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs) by 2030. One of the focus areas given topical priority is Goal 1: Zero hunger, because of various reasons, in this case there are three mentioned. Firstly, hunger in all its forms (*undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and obesity*) has become a multifaceted challenge with a significant negative impact on the social and economic development of many countries. Secondly, the widening gap between the poor and rich aggravates the socio-economic inequities manifested by extreme opulence on one hand and poverty on the other. Thirdly, agri-food systems have been focusing on the quantity of nutrient-poor foods with a continued overuse of scarce natural resources.

Just a decade away towards reaching the targeted year, the catastrophic pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus has resulted in a distraction of focus. This is not only a challenge to public health but also how we can as a matter of urgency reframe and transform our food systems for the betterment of the health and wellbeing of society. According to the world reports on hunger, if a *business-as-usual* scenario continues, one in two could be malnourished by 2030. In the face of the COVID-19, we need a drastic and swift change in how we deal with food and nutrition security. We need rigorous debates that will give an outlook on how to transform our future food systems.

In Southern Africa, hunger is no stranger, disasters resulting in famine are becoming regular and dependency on food aid has become a way of life. Within this difficult time of COVID-19 challenging the world, it could be a golden opportunity for Africa to change its face of being fed and be the world feeders. Southern Africa has to think about how it produces food, the accessibility (economically and physically) of the food produced, the value of the food to the consumer and how the consumer utilises it. It has now become even more urgent for us to engage in dialogues that could bear results that could effectively combat food and nutrition insecurity. Thus, in Southern Africa, there is a need to transform food systems such that the focus is not on a knee-jerk response of feeding the hungry through just filling up their stomachs (food quantity and short-term focus), but rather ensure that there is quality and adequate food, preferred and socially acceptable *“to all”, “for all” and “at all times”*.

*Compiled by Unathi Kolanisi*

## PROGRAMME OF THE DAY TO UNPACK THE THEME

### Keynote Speaker Biography

*Prof Maxwell Mudhara holds a PhD in Food and Research Economics, with specialisation in agricultural development. He has extensive experience conducting research around agricultural development and analysing research results and making policy recommendations. Maxwell has conducted both formal and informal research. The experience he has accumulated equipped him with planning, research, monitoring and evaluation skills. He has interacted with local and provincial government departments in South Africa and in the SADC region. Maxwell has interacted with smallholder farmers, with whom he has worked to strengthen their organisations with a view to improving access to services and for them to effectively participate in agricultural value chains that allow them to realise higher incomes and better livelihoods. He has supervised students, i.e., undergraduate and post-graduate, including at PhD level. Also Maxwell has fundraised for research and led both research and consultancy teams successfully. Prof Mudhara seeks to contribute to a better understanding of how agricultural policies and other rural interventions affect and can be used for enhancing rural development in South Africa.*

**DATE: 05 MAY 2020**

**Time: 12:00 to 13:30**

**PLARTFOM: ZOOM**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Person delivering the message</b>
<b>12:00-12:05</b>	Purpose of the Day	Prof U Kolanisi ( <i>HOD in Consumer Science</i> )
<b>12:05-12:10</b>	Welcoming	Prof W Kunene ( <i>Dean of Faculty of Science and Agriculture</i> )
<b>12:10-12:30</b>	<b>Harnessing Science for rural development and food security: What are the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic?</b>	Prof M Mudhara ( <i>University of KwaZulu-Natal</i> )
<b>12:30-12:45</b>	Sustainable innovation in small-scale farming to improve food security and local economy	Dr V Ndou ( <i>Mangosuthu University of Technology</i> )
<b>12:45-13:00</b>	<b>An NGO's response:</b> Mitigating short to medium term impact of the Covid-19 on rural food security and livelihoods	Mr J Bend ( <i>The Siyazisiza Trust</i> )
<b>13:00-13:15</b>	Questions & Answers	
<b>13:15-13:20</b>	Vote of Thanks	Prof U Kolanisi

## Organiser information

Prof Unathi Kolanisi, she heads the department of Consumer Science in the Faculty of Science and Agriculture, at the University of Zululand. The department leads three academic qualifications streams Extension and Rural Development; Hospitality & Tourism; Hospitality Management. The research niche areas of the Department include Food and Nutrition Security, Optimizing livelihoods, Agro-processing and value adding, Food Innovation, Indigenous Knowledge Systems. As part of research based Community Engagement Unathi also champions the South Africa Sweden University Forum theme 3: Social transformation through change, at the university of Zululand. The Department pioneers in developing modernised indigenous foods which are highly nutritious using climate smart indigenous vegetables & crops.

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## Information about panellist

**Prof Mudhara** is a Director of the Farmers Support Group (FSG) which is a community development and outreach unit at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. It addresses the needs of resource-poor farmers, other land users and development practitioners in sustainable agriculture, natural resource management, institutional development and entrepreneurship in areas around KwaZulu-Natal province. FSG's projects focus on food security, innovation, natural resource, sustainable agriculture and entrepreneurial development (business and marketing). Ultimately, FSG's goal is to engage and empower smallholder farmers through participatory approaches and local activism to manage natural resources sustainably for improved livelihoods. In line with its vision, FSG programmes are:

- Sustainable agriculture for food and nutritional security and income generation
- Development of Value-chains (Agro and non-Agro)
- Community-based natural resource management
- Information dissemination and advocacy
- Community mobilization and building local voices

The long working relationship between FSG and rural communities in KZN has resulted in the creation of multifaceted platforms, such as local farmer leadership structures, which allow local communities to interact with governmental and non-government stakeholders. FSG has employed a Participatory Action Research approach and places its effort to ensuring that farmers assume greater agency for their own activities. This will entail developing farmer leadership to be more assertive in their quest for services from stakeholders.

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**Dr Ndou** is a crop scientist lecturing in the Department of Community extension at Mangosuthu University of Technology. His research and community engagement focus is on Production and yield improvement; Food Security; smallholder farmers' food systems.

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**Mr Justin Bend** works with The Siyazisiza Trust which is a non-profit rural development organisation that works with smallholder community farmers and agricultural enterprises to improve their livelihoods, food security and environment. We partner with government and the private sector to find effective ways to fight poverty, food insecurity and opportunities to diversify rural household livelihood strategies. The vision is of resilient, healthy and self-sustaining rural farmer communities existing within localized economies, in stewardship with the environment. **Focus area are**

- Livelihoods development, Value chain development, Climate resilience building, COVID-19 recovery strategy
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