22ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORT

Internationalisation of Higher Education in the Context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) – Innovation, Diversity, Inequality and Inclusivity

21 – 23 August 2019

Somerset West & Stellenbosch

Western Cape, South Africa

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IEASA, Pretoria (https://www.ieasa.studysa.org/)
Contents

INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................................................. 3
SETTLING INTO THE TOPIC ............................................................................................................. 5
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION TRENDS AROUND THE GLOBE .................................................. 7
  Global Trends Plenary ..................................................................................................................... 7
  World Café ...................................................................................................................................... 9
KEY POINTS FROM KEYNOTE ADDRESSES .................................................................................. 10
  Professor Wim Delva ..................................................................................................................... 10
  Marlon Parker ............................................................................................................................... 10
  Namhla Mniki-Mangoliso ............................................................................................................ 11
  Dr Lidia Borrell-Damian .............................................................................................................. 12
  Overarching Concerns of Keynote Speakers ................................................................................ 13
PARTICIPANTS’ FEEDBACK – SURVEY RESULTS ......................................................................... 14
FINAL REFLECTIONS PLENARY ...................................................................................................... 15
SPECIAL THANKS ............................................................................................................................. 16

Figures

Figure 1: IEASA 2019 Conference at a Glance ............................................................................... 3
Figure 2: IEASA 2019 Conference Survey Results - Overall Ratings ................................................ 14
Figure 3: IEASA 2019 Conference Survey Results - Word Cloud: "single most valuable thing
learned" ............................................................................................................................................ 15

Tables

Table 1: Panellists, Opening Plenary, IEASA 2019 Conference ......................................................... 5
Glossary

4IR  Fourth Industrial Revolution
CEO  Chief Executive Officer
CIN  National University Council (Argentina)
EAIE  European Association for International Education
EUA  European University Association
FAUBAI  Brazilian Association for International Education
HE  Higher Education
HEIs  Higher Education Institutions
IaH  Internationalisation at Home
IAU  International Association of Universities
IEAA  Association of International Education Association of Australia
IEASA  International Education Association of South Africa
IoT  Internet of Things
NAFSA  Association of International Educators
NIEA  Network of International Education Associations
SASUF  South Africa – Sweden University Forum
SGDs  Sustainable Development Goals
INTRODUCTION

The 22nd Annual Conference of the International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA) was held in South Africa’s Western Cape Province. On the first two days, all conference activities took place at the Lord Charles Hotel in Somerset West, and workshops on the third day were hosted by Stellenbosch University at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS). The Conference was themed “Internationalisation of Higher Education in the 4th Industrial Revolution: Innovation, Diversity, Inequality and Inclusivity”. In her opening address, Orla Quinlan, IEASA President, highlighted that the Association, and South Africa, remain committed to engaging with the rest of the world, 22 years after IEASA was established in 1997. She invited delegates, especially those who had travelled to the Conference from outside South Africa, to deliberate on this important topic, enjoying the intimate character of the conference and maximising opportunities to learn, share, engage and network.

Figure 1: IEASA 2019 Conference at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONFEREE AT A GLANCE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registered participants: 235, from bases in:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>15 countries:</strong> Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Botswana, Brazil, China, France, Germany, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Russia, South Africa, Sweden and the UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6 sister organisations:</strong> CIN, EAIE, FAUBAI, IAU, IEAA, and NAFSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Keynotes</td>
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<td>3 Plenaries</td>
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<td>1 World Café</td>
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<td>34 Parallel sessions</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Workshops</td>
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<td>2 Social Events</td>
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As has become customary, the Conference attracted participants and speakers representing a wide variety of national and international organisations including universities, government departments, funding organisations and the private sector. Among a strong contingent of international delegates were senior representatives of six of IEASA’s sister organisations. International networks such as the Network of International Education Associations (NIEA), the South Africa – Sweden University Forum (SASUF) as well as The University of Antwerp, Utrecht Network used the IEASA platform to host their meetings at the Conference.
Participants and speakers responded to IEASA’s call to share academic papers, thought pieces and experiences of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) in international higher education (HE). As noted in the Call for Papers, “4IR refers to the emerging environment in which many dimensions of how we live and work have been dramatically disrupted by a fusion of technological breakthroughs in a range of areas including digitisation, robotics, artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things (IoT), nanotechnology, quantum computing and biotechnology.” With this in mind, the Conference’s aim was to explore the impact of 4IR on HE and HE internationalisation from a variety of different sectoral and disciplinary perspectives, probing issues and questions such as:

- The potential impact of 4IR on international HE: will it expand it, reduce it or replace it?
- How are academics being prepared for new ways of teaching and learning?
- How are we preparing students to function in a world that demands continuous learning and adaption to new and different ways of doing things?
- What are the contentions and convergences of views between the sciences and humanities on 4IR?
- To what extent can 4IR inspire innovation internationally?
- What does 4IR mean for diversity internationally?
- What does 4IR mean for inclusivity and access to higher education internationally?
- Will 4IR improve equality in access to HE or might it exacerbate inequality?
- If 4IR implies that much of the work currently being done by humans can ultimately be done by machines, what is our response in the HE sector?
- How should we be preparing for future life and work; to what extent will future generations need to be globally engaged and internationally minded?

The above questions were tackled by speakers and delegates in a variety of plenaries, panel discussions, breakaway sessions and workshops. The aim of this report is not to provide a detailed summary of all these sessions but rather to share some insights into the discussions, highlighting overarching themes and concerns. This, it is hoped, will allow delegates to continue the conversations they started at the Conference. At the same time, it will provide those who were unable to attend with an opportunity to join the conversation.
SETTLING INTO THE TOPIC

Proceedings kicked off with the first Conference plenary, during which representatives of IEASA’s sister organisations from around the world (see Table 1) shared their “Observations on the impact of the fourth industrial revolution in higher education in different regions”.

Table 1: Panellists, Opening Plenary, IEASA 2019 Conference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Esther Brimmer</td>
<td>Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO)</td>
<td>Association of International Educators (NAFSA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Mirian Carballo</td>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>RedCIUN: International Cooperation Network of National Universities, National University Council (CIN), Argentina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Phil Honeywood</td>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Association of International Education Association of Australia (IEAA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof Maxim Khomyakov</td>
<td>Deputy Director Director</td>
<td>Higher School of Economics, St. Petersburg, Russia BRICS Studies Centre, Ural Federal University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof Maria Leonor Alves Maia</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Brazilian Association for International Education (FAUBAI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Michelle Stewart</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>European Association for International Education (EAIE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Giorgio Marinoni</td>
<td>Senior Representative</td>
<td>International Association of Universities (IAU)</td>
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The panellists’ contributions were informed by experiences with different HE systems and included reflections on how 4IR unfolds differently in their regions around the world. However, they shared a common understanding of 4IR in the context of HE and identified issues of overarching concern, including the following:

On the nature of 4IR in HE:

- The difference between 4IR and previous revolutions is that it is happening globally and fast.
- 4IR is disruptive and will, as with any revolution, bring unpredictable changes and challenges.
- 4IR is predominantly an information or communication revolution.
- 4IR impacts education institutions and the way in which we live, work and communicate.
Tech-savviness is a big part of employability but the soft skills of empathetic human interaction are also required. For all the rhetoric and reliance on technology, physical campuses and face-to-face interaction are still important.

4IR impacts HE in terms of the career paths HEIs prepare young people for, as well as the learning process. In our fast-changing world, preparing young people for jobs that do not yet exist poses a challenge for educators everywhere.

On 4IR readiness of HEIs:

- In some countries, as in Russia, the university system, which was created during the 2nd industrial revolution, is underprepared for 4IR. Furthermore, HEIs might be over occupied with other priorities such as the pursuit of places in global university rankings.
- HEIs generally do not seem to be ahead of the game.
- While 4IR is affecting the curriculum, research and physical spaces of universities, HEIs have not yet really developed strategies to deal with 4IR.

On 4IR-related challenges:

- 4IR is being experienced as an uneven event, causing fears (e.g. regarding alarming developments of people being replaced by machines) and raising hopes at the same time.
- In realising the potential promises of 4IR, we also face social challenges, for example, regarding access.
- HEIs face 4IR in the presence of internal institutional threats, such as resistance from those who do not want to change the status quo, as well as external threats, such as rising nationalism.

On the role of international education:

- In the face of rising nationalism and xenophobia around the world, the importance of international connections and benefits of internationalisation need to be defended, with a focus on multiculturalism as an asset and enrichment.
- International education has an important role to play in preparing young people for working in multicultural teams. It contributes to filling the global skills gap, particularly regarding critical thinking and problem solving skills, resilience, communication skills and adaptability.
- In equipping young people for the future, HEIs are well placed to drive economic development in their communities across the world.
On what needs to be done:

- HE is both affected by 4IR and plays an active role in it, for example, through research and training.
- Research is needed, for example, regarding the interaction of technology with ethics and politics and other drivers of social change.
- HE can play a part in developing new values and behaviours as well as new models to regulate new technologies, especially in light of phenomena such as cyber bullying, hate speech and fake news.
- HEIs also need to tackle the issue of elitism and exclusion in the context of 4IR and ask, for example, how the 4IR divide can be minimised, if and how 4IR can help reduce inequality and increase social commitment and responsibility.
- In this context, 4IR must be considered from multidisciplinary perspectives, including Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and the humanities, as educating critical thinkers and active citizens will go a long way in creating more equal, just and ethical societies.
- HEIs should be part of driving change in a positive direction.

These observations set the tone for deliberations to come, with many of the panellist’s points made during the first plenary being taken up and elaborated on by other speakers in keynote addresses and parallel sessions throughout the Conference.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION TRENDS AROUND THE GLOBE

Delegates had an opportunity to gain insights into the latest trends and developments in HE internationalisation around the world, which were particularly highlighted in a global trends plenary, followed by world café discussions in smaller groups.

Global Trends Plenary

In this Plenary, entitled “Understanding Higher Education Internationalisation: Results from the 5th IAU Global Survey and the EAIE Barometer”, Michelle Stewart (EAIE) and Giorgio Marinoni (IAU) presented an overview of findings of these two recently conducted surveys.
In summary, the following points were noted regarding the 5th IAU Global Survey:

- Internationalization is important, but there is a risk of growing inequality
- HEIs seem to be conscious of this risk and that internationalization could benefit all HEIs through collaboration and capacity building
- Actions are not following -> priority activity is still student mobility which benefits a tiny percentage of student population
- A strategic approach to internationalization is becoming more common, but it is not yet the norm, especially for what concerns support structures (budget, monitoring framework, etc.)
- Regionalization trend but intra-regionally Europe and North America are still the focus of attention
- Trends for African HEIs are overall similar to the global ones

The results of the 2nd edition of the EAIE Barometer were summarised as follows:

- HEIs increasingly internationalise to prepare students for global world
- Student & staff mobility and student recruitment key priorities
- Quality assurance of internationalisation needs more attention
- A trend towards mainstreaming internationalisation
- Main internal and external challenges relate to funding
- EU-level policy: enabler
- National & regional-level policy: enabler & hindrance
- Clear geographical differences within Europe

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1 For more information about the IAU Global Surveys, please go to [https://www.iau-aiu.net/Global-survey-on-Internationalization](https://www.iau-aiu.net/Global-survey-on-Internationalization).
2 For more information about the EAIE Barometers, please go to: [https://www.eaie.org/our-resources/barometer.html](https://www.eaie.org/our-resources/barometer.html).
World Café

In world café style discussions, participants had an opportunity to engage with representatives of IEASA’s sister organisations and each other on a variety of topics relating to global trends in international HE. From the feedback shared, the following points can be noted as overarching concerns:

- Need for recognition of professional skills of international office staff as well as interested and/or involved academics, linked to, for example:
  - Post nominals such as International Education Fellow, Senior Fellow, etc.
  - Ability to gain points/ micro credentials for attending international education conferences and other professional development activities
- Need for training for new professionals in international education
- Need for information on and guidance for international partnerships
  - Importance of developing mutually beneficial partnerships
  - Importance of increased awareness and knowledge of African countries and partnership opportunities to spark interest in studying at/ working with African institutions, e.g. in the US
- Interest in supporting efforts to internationalise curricula
- Lack of resources to attend international events, conferences and benefit from courses etc.
- Barriers to student mobility, which are mainly, but not exclusively, financial
  - Student mobility barriers can be reduced by:
    - Communicating the benefits of international students studying in South Africa as well as of South African students embarking on study abroad opportunities.
    - Ensuring students and parents know at an early stage that study abroad is an option, ideally even before studies begin.
    - Developing funded, short term mobility options to encourage more people to go abroad, rather than semester-long programmes.
    - Strengthening Internationalisation at Home (IaH).
    - Securing buy-in from senior executives, academics and administrators.
- Mental health issues are increasingly prevalent in the student body, and are equally becoming more apparent in cohorts of international students. Host country governments and institutions need to take these into account and give more attention, as they have a duty of care.
- Idea of international student employability guides – for students themselves, for education providers and for South African employers – as a positive contribution improving access to employability opportunities (internships, part-time paid work, etc.), which IEASA could embark on with support from the private sector.
KEY POINTS FROM KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

Professor Wim Delva
Acting Director, School for Data Science & Computational Thinking, Stellenbosch University

Professor Wim Delva started by noting that the School for Data Science & Computational Thinking is a new structure, a Type III entity, which does not operate like a traditional academic unit such as a school or faculty and does not offer traditional programmes. Rather, it engages in multidisciplinary teaching and research and has strong connections with all other faculties of the University, playing the role of a ‘navigator’ and ‘traffic cop’ in teaching and learning. He also reflected on how data science (DS) and computational thinking (CT) relate to the four sub-themes of the Conference by noting the following:

- **Innovation**: As contribution to science is generally rather narrowly measured by focussing on citation counts, the question arises as to whether DS and CT can be used to develop a science evaluation system that is reproducible, efficient and holistic, taking research quality into account.

- **Diversity**: DS is traditionally a non-diverse space, dominated by white males. However, what should be leveraged is that DS and CT are:
  - A priority on all continents,
  - Actively practiced in academia, industry and government and
  - A Strong attraction pole for Generation Z.

- **Equality**: Equality cannot be taken for granted regarding data and how they are created.
  - For example, when people programme machines, they have to be mindful of potentially reinforcing (subconscious) biases. Training data sets need to be carefully constructed.

- **Inclusivity**: DS and CT can contribute to greater inclusion in HE by lowering physical and financial boundaries:
  - Learning and teaching of DS & CT can happen remotely.
  - DS & CT can be used to augment, facilitate, monitor and assess learning and teaching.
  - Foundational research and applied research with societal impact can take place remotely.

Marlon Parker
Entrepreneur, Founder of the Reconstructed Living Lab (RLabs), Adjunct Lecturer, Graduate School of Business, University of Cape Town

In his address, Marlon Parker focused on deep learning, sharing personal experiences as well as insights into working with young people in the context of RLabs. These labs are a movement currently operating
in 23 countries across the globe aiming to drive social impact by leveraging the power of technology, innovation and entrepreneurship and by bringing the best of human potential and technology together. Mr Parker emphasised that if we unleash the potential of (young) people and use the best of technology, we can truly realise the fundamental benefits of 4IR. The following observations are important in this regard:

- **Learning has to be **exponential.**
  o Exponential learning is about allowing the learner to contribute value immediately and about asking how we can shift the power of learning back to the student.

- **Learning has to be **experiential.**
  o We have to create experiential learning opportunities that allow students to go onto a journey of discovery and learn by experimenting, seeing what works and what does not, testing, failing and adapting.

- Learning has to be purpose driven.

Namhla Mniki-Mangoliso  
Director, African Monitor

Speaking as an African and as an optimist, Namhla Mniki-Mangoliso pointed out that 4IR brings about great opportunities for the African continent, opportunities that might be different from those that exist globally. She noted further that 4IR requires criticality and that the 4IR project must be grounded in our political and economic context, as its very essence is about power dynamics and politics.

Ms Mniki-Mangoliso highlighted that the internationalisation project in Africa has to be seen as an opportunity to think through what makes Africans unique and attractive to others. Solving African problems should be the value proposition for engagement with others – locally, regionally and globally. She emphasised that Africans must shape the agenda, as otherwise it will be done for us, and invited delegates to particularly focus their thinking on the following four spaces:

- **Sacredness of human life**
  o This includes thinking around what human life means for us today, taking issues such as singularity, i.e. the merging of the physical, digital and biological, into account.
  o Could African HEIs position themselves to lead this debate, as Africa is where life began?

- Reorganisation of the social, political and economic
  o Will we talk about the rights of AI? Will machines have more rights than humans?

- Development challenges
  o We need to leverage 4IR to solve our challenges on the continent, which means that for 4IR to bring us value, it has to be driven by the masses or utilise the energy of the masses.
Can this be a unique contribution to discussions on AI informed by an African position?

- Development of wholesome, capable human beings
  - We need to engage with AI as a tool, not just be consumers of it.
  - Can we use AI to help the rest of the world learn about Ubuntu?

Dr Lidia Borrell-Damian
Director for Research and Innovation, European University Association (EUA)

Dr Lidia Borrell-Damian shared a European perspective on the transformation of learning, teaching and research in universities. She noted the following challenges:

- New technologies and ways of working require new skills.
- Curricula, learning and teaching need to adapt.
- Research-based learning, entrepreneurship and innovation skills need to be expanded.
- Students and graduates need to be able to work with inter-/multidisciplinary challenges and teams.
- More attention needs to be paid to holistic and systemic perspectives, especially for complex societal challenges such as energy.
- The interface between technical solutions and society needs careful consideration.
- There is a need for specialised experts and scientists – universities play a critical role in the training and supply of a skilled workforce.

In light of these challenges, the role of universities is changing. HEIs need to:

- Upgrade and innovate their programmes;
- Listen to societal and industry needs and to collaborate;
- Modernise learning and teaching;
- Break down disciplinary barriers and
- Have more flexibility, especially regarding short courses and lifelong learning.

Referring to the above, Dr Borrell-Damian noted the following cross-cutting issues for the transformation of HE:

- Active learning methodologies – use of ‘blended’ learning and teaching materials and activities – presence and digital;
- Exposure to university-business collaboration;
- Methodologies for knowledge management;
- Development of up-to-date short modules or courses and
• Consideration towards citizens and society – investment in multidisciplinary approaches, using global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Overarching Concerns of Keynote Speakers
While all keynote speakers brought different perspectives to the discussions, some issues can be identified as overarching concerns in the context of 4IR and HE internationalisation. These include:

• **Human Attributes:**
  o The core function of (higher) education institutions is to develop human beings that are curious, problem solvers, communicators and agile thinkers.

• **Human-Machine Relationship:**
  o Data integrity and data ethics are important considerations, as are concerns regarding the rights of humans in relation to machines.
  o Humans should not be led by technology but need to be at the centre of technological design.

• **Interdisciplinarity:**
  o Institutions need to break down disciplinary barriers.
  o Social sciences and humanities need to be better integrated with science, technology and engineering disciplines.

• **Internationalisation**
  o Internationalisation is key to leveraging networks and connections and to access expertise globally, regardless of its geographical location.
  o Collaborations and partnerships are required to achieve greater societal impact
PARTICIPANTS’ FEEDBACK – SURVEY RESULTS

After the conference, 215 delegates were invited to share their feedback by participating in a survey. Based on 64 completed surveys, which equals a response rate of 30%, the feedback on the Conference overall was overwhelmingly positive, with 84% of respondents indicating that they rated the conference as Excellent, Very Good or Good, as shown in Figure 2:

Furthermore:

- 64% rated the CONTENT as Extremely Helpful or Very Helpful,
- 78% considered the LENGTH of the conference About Right,
- 65% indicated they are Extremely Likely or Very Likely to ATTEND an IEASA conference AGAIN and
- 57% found the NETWORKING opportunities were Extremely Valuable or Very Valuable for their careers.
Figure 3 illustrates the responses to the question “What was the single most valuable thing you learned at the conference?” as a word cloud.

Thank you to all delegates who took the time to participate in the survey. IEASA values the feedback provided and appreciates all suggestions made to improve future conferences.

**FINAL REFLECTIONS PLENARY**

Speakers in the closing panel chaired by Wiseman Jack, IEASA’s Deputy President, included Prof Rene Pellissier, Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), and Mahlubi Mabizela, Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). They shared, among others, the following points regarding “Reflection and Direction on the possibilities of the 4IR for Higher Education Institutions”:

- HE has an important mandate, which is to grow people, the environment and the economy.
- Graduates need to be wholesome ethical, empathetic human beings who can stay relevant in the future.
- Educating young people for an environment we do not know brings challenges, particularly around inequality and access.
- To effectively tackle such challenges, they need to be diagnosed and prioritised.
• 4IR has the potential to improve university offerings, for example, by using data to better understand students’ needs and interests and to tailor-make services for them before they even arrive.
• Universities should consider internationalisation as a core function – in addition to teaching & learning, research and community engagement – to increase the importance given to internationalisation and how it is implemented and measured across the institution.
• We need visionary and transformative leadership – leaders who are able to lead us now as well as into the future.

It was noted that, when dealing with global phenomena such as 4IR and HE internationalisation, adaptation challenges are significant, contextually specific and therefore, different in each country.

The Chair of NIEA, Phil Honeywood, was invited to give feedback on the conference. He applauded IEASA for doing very well on the nexus between the international and the local, specifically regarding translating global 4IR issues into national and local ones. He noted that the conference had opened his eyes to the potential impact of 4IR in developing contexts and that the visiting associations had learned a lot.

Orla Quinlan, IEASA’s President, closed out the event with a special vote of thanks to everyone involved in making the conference a success, including participants, speakers, presenters, facilitators, session chairs, organisers, service providers and sponsors.

**SPECIAL THANKS**

In the global context, IEASA is the smallest international education association. It is also, for the most part, a volunteer organisation. Organising an event such as the Annual Conference is therefore always a collective effort and not possible without the dedication and hard work of committed international educators in IEASA structures and at South African HEIs. Special thanks go to:

**The Conference Committee:** A special thank you to all the members of the hardworking conference committee as well as to their organisations and institutions for releasing them for this service: Lara Dunwell (Committee Chair, CIEE), Carol Wilson (CPUT), Huba Boshoff (NUFFIC Neso South Africa), Debra Lamson (UWC), Carol Ojwang (UCT), Nicola Latchiah (UCT), Charlton Esterhuizen (UCT), Alecia Erasmus Viljoen (SUN), Norma Derby (SUN), Normah Zondo (UKZN), Wiseman Jack (Deputy President: IEASA, VUT), Dr Lavern Samuels, (Treasurer: IEASA, DUT). We would also like to extend our gratitude to Prof Nonceba Mbambo-Kekana (UL) and Dr Tasmeera Singh (UKZN).
The IEASA team: The ‘invisible’ engine room of the conference was indeed the IEASA secretariat! A special thank you to Vinay Rajah and Thilor Manikam (both IEASA office) and Orla Quinlan (President: IEASA, RU) and for their invaluable work behind the scenes. Furthermore, we would like to thank Ines Cigola (VUT) for working in the IEASA office for a few days, Dingaan Booi (RU) for stepping in during the final phase of conference organisation, following Vinay Rajah’s departure from the team, Divinia Jithoo (NMU) for her contribution in preparing the conference programme and Dr Samia Chasi (IEASA office) for taking notes throughout the conference.

The sponsors: IEASA would also like to acknowledge the support of the following sponsors, without which the 22nd edition of the IEASA Annual Conference would not have been possible: