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Using Ubuntu-Bulamu in research

Johnnie Wycliffe Frank MUWANGA-ZAKE

ABSTRACT

There are questions about using Ubuntu-Bulamu in research. I've been fortunate to publish a paper on bridging between Ubuntu and Western paradigms in research, and I went into that quite deeply. However, I want to advise those for students that in your research, it is not a question of choosing Ubuntu-Bulamu. I think it is a question of validity. When you do research, you must use methodologies, philosophies, and whatever, which are valid for that context. I heard this when I was at Rhodes University in South Africa, and I remember having had to actually argue with my supervisor there at Grahamstown. When I went out to investigate the adoption of ICTs in South African schools, and I discovered that the Western-based paradigms were not applicable because the people we are dealing with were Bantu people whose interrogation of what you are trying to research happens away from you. It happens in their communities. You give them questionnaires. They'll carry those questionnaires back to their communities, engage with their chiefs, with their friends, with sometimes even in pubs. So, you are absent from the actual research that you need, the responses that you need. So, you have to be part of them. I said if I am to get valid responses, I have to go to those pubs. I have to go to those communities, sit with the chiefs, get their view of what we are trying to do, and that they cannot share unless you are a part of them, unless you are Ubuntu. So, contextually, I had to use Ubuntu as a philosophy, and I've written quite a bit about it. The only thing I wanted to point out here, the choice of using Ubuntu is not just a choice. It is a requirement of validity when you are working within Bantu communities. That's the way I see it. Anyway, go onto this. As you can see, and it happens quite often, you come – you start with one idea and then you find that what you are trying to write about is not actually the title you give out. We changed titles. So, I ended up with *Salvaging African Sustainable Development through Ubuntu-Bulamu*, and of course, Ubuntu-Bulamu is the version of Ubuntu or Obuntu in my country here in Uganda [where I am] which is Ubuntu-Bulamu in South Africa. So, the idea I have here is really that our development sustainably is linked with our Indigenous Knowledge System with our environment and community, wherein I mean communities beyond human beings because it includes animals and plants and everything that is around us. And it is also linked with our ability to secure our environment and adding value to our resources using our own values, because again, what we have seen is the values added appeal to the foreigners most of the time.

KEY TERMS: Africa, indigenous knowledge systems, research, sustainability, Ubuntu Bulamu

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Dr Charlotte Tusasiirwe: Yeah, we are off, so – to a very good start. So, let's welcome Professor Muwanga-Zake. Just a brief introduction of Professor Muwanga-Zake, he's professionally a learning technologist. He's a scientist and an educator with teaching experience in Uganda, in Lesotho, South Africa, USA, Australia, and the UK, and his interests and publications are in research and African philosophy. He has taught, lectured, and written academic articles in philosophy, in science, in education, research, and learning technology. And he has been head of ICT, head of academic departments, dean, a deputy vice-chancellor, and vice-chancellor at various universities, as well as a director of a training NGO in South Africa. So, he is now a professor at the Uganda Technology and Management University, UTAMU, Kampala, Uganda. And he's going to present on Salvaging African Development and Environmental Sustainability through Ubuntu-Bulamu in contemporary education. Please welcome Professor Muwanga-Zake.

Professor Muwanga-Zake: I thank the organisers for this wonderful arrangement and putting up this organisation. I didn't know that it existed, so maybe you need to advertise it more. I'm actually preparing the paper for this to submit to one of these journals that I saw on the website. There are questions about using Ubuntu-Bulamu in research. I've been fortunate to publish a paper on bridging between Ubuntu and Western paradigms in research, and I went into that quite deeply. However, I want to advise those for students that in your research, it is not a question of choosing Ubuntu-Bulamu. I think it is a question of validity. When you do research, you must use methodologies, philosophies, and whatever, which are valid for that context. I heard this when I was at Rhodes University in South Africa, and I remember having had to actually argue with my supervisor there at Grahamstown. When I went out to investigate the adoption of ICTs in South African schools, and I discovered that the Western-based paradigms were not applicable because the people we are dealing with were Bantu people whose interrogation of what you are trying to research happens away from you. It happens in their communities. You give them questionnaires. They'll carry those questionnaires back to their communities, engage with their chiefs, with their friends, with sometimes even in pubs. So, you are absent from the actual research that you need, the responses that you need. So, you have to be part of them. I said if I am to get valid responses, I have to go to those pubs. I have to go to those communities, sit with the chiefs, get their view of what we are trying to do, and that they cannot share unless you are a part of them, unless you are Ubuntu. So, contextually, I had to use Ubuntu as a philosophy, and I've written quite a bit about it. The only thing I wanted to point out here, the choice of using Ubuntu is not just a choice. It is a requirement of validity when you are working within Bantu communities. That's the way I see it. Anyway, go onto this. As you can see, and it happens quite often, you come – you start with one idea and then you find that what you are trying to write about is not actually the title you give out. We changed titles. So, I ended up with Salvaging African Sustainable Development through Ubuntu-Bulamu, and of course, Ubuntu-Bulamu is the version of Ubuntu or Obuntu in my country here in Uganda [where I am] which is Ubuntu-Bulamu in South Africa. So, the idea I have here is really that our development sustainably is linked with our Indigenous Knowledge System, IKS, with our environment and community, wherein I mean communities beyond human beings because it includes animals and plants and everything that is around us. And it is also linked with our ability to secure our environment and adding value to our resources using our own values, because again, what we have seen is the values added appeal to the foreigners most of the time. I try to look at the concept of IKS as a local – [code] of local knowledge and skills unique to us. Of course, each of us have our own. I'm sure Europe, China, Japan, and wherever you go, they have their own IKS. And here, we want to refer to African IKS, and ours, and for a reason, has been tacit second and embedded in practices and rituals and relationships. I think a lot of people thought we didn't know how to pass on knowledge or the point that it is tacit I think was deliberate because some of these practices and rituals – we are secrets. And this is not unique to us because the Western world has its own ways of protecting their intellectual rights. They protect. We did and we still do. Although right now because of money, people sell out. Once they learn of your secret, they go and sell it in public, hence the destruction of some of our practices. It is systemic. In this, we didn't know physics, chemistry, mathematics and so on. We're integrated. We did things in an integrated way. A lot of our folklore, the stories we are told, we are so much combining so many skills altogether. And until then, we were antagonised by these colonial legacies, especially through education. I forgot to add religion but also in relation to the current topic by Western development models. So, I don't need to belabour this. But the most important thing is that this suffix is the foundation of our humanness too, right? So, it is humanity itself. And because it is humanity, it is collectivist. Why? Because as human beings, we work together on a lot of things. It is Afrocentric because, of course, Bantu who are found in Africa and cover actually three quarters of Africa. But many times, it is in reference to our social conduct. It is a part of the IKS. I take it as a philosophy. Why? When you deal with philosophy, your questions are why you are doing – practising such things. And of course, unfortunately, that question why philosophically has no answer because somebody would say, "Why not?" But the why of Ubuntu in IKS is questioning our existence and how we survive as human beings in our environments. It is so much about

processes. Again, that is humanity, and it defines each of us in terms of others. And it's very, very interesting that wherever you go in Africa, often people want to find out where you come from. When I was living in South Africa and you would reach somewhere – as soon as you went to pub, we normally ask – we have clans, for example, which relate us and group us. So, there's a desire for consensus, communal agreement. So, in summary, these are different references, people. Ubuntu-Bulamu, Ubuntu – it is humanness. What does it mean to be human? It is respect and dignity, discipline, tolerance, harmony, peace, compassion. That is including listening, sympathy, open-mindedness. I mean, if you are going to be compassionate, you must be open-minded. You must be able to analyse problems with other people, must have empathy, understanding of the others, the solidarity that is working together, teamwork, moral support. As human beings, we survive as communities, as societies. So, in that survival, there must be helping each other, sustaining the environment we live in, cooperation, empowerment, communal living, responsibility. There's interconnectedness, equality, support, sharing and respect. That is Ubuntu in summary. I don't know whether we have a word for it languages.

Professor Mwangi-Zake: So, what I know is that development is imposed so much that it is external, our understanding. So, through education and economic development paradigms, normally through the IMF and World Bank. It is guided by industrial revolutions and fiscal policies. Now, the challenge we have in Africa, one of the challenges is that for us, like here in Uganda, we have a cocktail of industrial revolutions. What I mean here is that in my village, you'll find people who have never touched a mobile, a smartphone, who could not understand what is written on these websites, whose culture are so far away from what we watch on tv and what goes on WhatsApp. So, there's this cocktail and I don't think our people know what to do with this cocktail. But what I know is that it is a result of importing development models and revolutions that have not evolved from within the society 'cause if you go to Britain, Japan, in China, these are developing from their own society. So, there's a clear trajectory of development. In Africa, I moved from Kampala here with my phone, a smartphone, and land in the village. The contrast is so dire. It's worrying actually. And as a result, we don't know how to design our culture in education.

Professor Mwangi-Zake: Let me see. So, I'm sorry about that. As I was saying, we are suffering from imported knowledge systems. And this is why we find that there's disastrous unequal development in our countries. We pick up things and we take them up, and we don't care whether they are compatible with the people who are intended to use them. So, we have this problem, and I think it comes as a result of just bringing in knowledge, leaving our own IKS, recently when I was attending a World Bank project, but the projects that they bring about fail because they do not recognise who we are and what we need. They don't go to the ground to look at our priorities, our levels of understanding what they want to do. Somebody goes to my village, is speaking English, no interpreter, and thinks this project will work. So, the projects struggle to survive. And indeed, even education – I don't blame our people failing those degrees and dissertations because they're planted upon them. So, this incompatibility is competing for space against our IKS. And unfortunately, a lot of the foreign knowledge was brought in to exploit us. I mean, they are teaching us how to – mining gold – thank you very much, but to make what? It is ornaments they desire. It's not for our own good – not that mining gold is bad. And we have tended to adopt these paradigms as means of survival. It is survival. And somebody, I think the previous presenter talked about funding. You write funding proposals, and they are based on those people's understanding of what we need in Africa. We need titles. Professor sounds very nice. Doctor sounds very nice. Master's degree sounds fantastic. We like foreign travel – boarding on the plane. "I'm going to Washington D.C. I'm going to –" all of these things have blinded us in so many ways. But overall, they have been destructive and hardly beneficial to us in the long term. So, our involvements have suffered. This probably requires some discussion. I know there was one town where that has gone. But the point though is we have suffered environmentally. Here in Uganda, the agrochemicals are used – reckless. People look what insects die – pests, but they cannot relate that death to the survival of the environment, the ecosystem there even. And so, we have misinterpreted the use of this. And on the backhand of that, on the other side of it, you find places where as soon as you mention you are African, or something is from Africa – the person who presented earlier actually put it very nicely. "It is satanic. It is backward." And indeed, if you look at many of the development theories, they classify us as backward, and they start from there. You see, of course, maybe we look backward, but that is in relation to what they want to see, not what we want. What has happened? These are some of the indicators – underutilisation of our resources. We are never told about this – never. You go to Zambia and ask an ordinary person how to process copper, or even here in Western Uganda. We mine these things in their raw form, and they take it, but they're very keen to sell us finished products. The people who mine are unfortunately distanced from the immediate communities where these minerals are stewarded. I looked at one guy who carried raw gold on his back for miles, for miles, endangered by the possibility of being attacked by wild animals. You look at this guy and look what the proportion

of pay he gets – this is really not sustainable. Now, we see that, therefore, we have graduates that are not employed. Why? Because our knowledge is isolated from the utilisation of our local resources. The employment comes from Western companies or companies linked to Western industries, not local, because we are never – education culture is not linked to us, to our environment. One time, as an example, I boarded a plane in Uganda Airlines, and I demanded to drink – to be served with our local brew. And the man, he just laughed at me, and I said, “Why? Why not?” The other time it was in a South African airline. And I said, The man looked at me like I’m a strange animal. And yet, if this was marketed, maybe our local people would have some employment. So, a student – someone lamented about doing research. As I said earlier, yes, when you do literature review, your professors out there, of course, will front you with their own literature. We have to publish our own stories and research findings, and indeed, unfortunately, literature about IKS and Ubuntu is – it is growing. But maybe it is a challenge to make it a peer valid in a PhD-level research. You have to find some linkages to say, “Okay, is Ubuntu – it is linked to feminism,” or something like that. Then they will listen. I had to change my supervisors actually at one stage because of that. So, when we do research and literature review, ladies and gentlemen, I’m sure you are aware, we are simply growing foreign knowledge systems. That’s what we are growing. And indeed, a lot of the graduations mean that you are admitted as knowledgeable in that knowledge system. I remember very well the citation when you are being graduated. They say, “Zake, you are admitted to the degree of so and so.” Yes, you are admitted. Indeed, they are right. It is their knowledge system. You reach a level when you are proficient, and they see you know sufficiently enough. So, let us give you a bachelor’s, master’s, or PhD. We lack that in Africa. It is a big, big battle – an uphill, if you want. Indeed, when you write academic papers, like I’ve been trying to, and I thank you for having journals to this effect, you’ll find that very few journals accept your papers based on our indigenous knowledge systems. They are arguments and wrong arguments. They are looking at IKS using Eurocentric spectacles. Of course, it cannot add up. Anyway, so we end up with research that is isolated. I’m saying, “What should be done?” Of course, we need to start with education. We need an education or curricular that appreciate and teach about IKS. Here, I’m actually up in arms at the university. I’m saying, “Yeah, I hear people talking of these other things,” like for example, in management, say that these are management theories, classical theories from long ago in Europe when industries appeared. And you want our people here to know how to handle Ugandan employees using those foreign-based managerial paradigms. And one of our own became a bank manager. He was a local South African but a friend. And all of us congratulated him. And you know what was going on, on our minds? We knew now getting loan is going to be easy. We have our own. It was inundated with applications. Everybody walked in. You need a mortgage. You need what – you need – the thing is, we don’t know how to handle our people. The people who employed that guy didn’t know that he’s going to be inundated by our request. As Bantu, we are communal. We expect support. But this guy, some of the people actually started to hate him – unnecessarily hate him. So, we need to change the research approaches if we are going to get valid data. Philosophical considerations like indigenous discourses – indigenous discourses, yes, our people knew to interpret facial expressions, for example. Without talking, somebody looks at you and you know he wants you out of the room. Some of these discourses, indigenous ones, they are not known – local realities, poverty, values, and necessarily, Ubuntu requires constructivism because we are communal people. We want to be social constructivists. We want to come up to a meaning together. We need people to interpret what they see. We don’t want to lend them our interpretations. Emancipation, postmodernism, which considers things beyond what was sold to us as modern – actually research because people get involved, and so on, case studies because these are unique situations. When I do research in my village, it won’t be the same as in Durban or in Botswana. These are necessarily case study – ethics – very, very important. Our people have got their own ethical considerations, interpretive approaches, qualitative, and discourse – as well as discourse analysis. Somebody argued somewhere – I’m sorry I haven’t given reference as I will in the paper I’ll submit, that it is a mental structure, he posed. As I said, at some point, we don’t have a translation of development, really. So, this whole concept placed us in this, which is anti-Ubuntu, because you have this hierarchy, development stage one, two, three, four, five. Those of you who have read about development – I think it is Rostow who has stages – five stages of development. And so, we are referred to as underdeveloped. So, because of these labels, we are driven to copy what they have. You go to New York, and you see those tall skyscrapers and you think you’ll change the Kampala to that. How? Do we need it? Anyway, to start with – but it’s all that mental structure this person is talking about. And in the way it is brought, it negates our own culture and the perceptions of who we are. We think of ourselves as poor. Yes. But we forget that this is relative to a culture. So, what we need to do maybe is to redefine development based on our IKS. It’s a tall order, but I think we need to do that. Otherwise, development as it stands is a foreign concept based on mainly Eurocentric value systems. Or let us find hybrids of IKS-based and international development paradigms. Now, that is I think possible as it is in research. So, some of these are development paradigms from Western viewpoints post-development. Why? Because it is

interested in local cultures and knowledge. It is critical of whatever is brought, established already. It's interested in promotion of local grassroots movements. It considers solidarity, in other words, involvement of the others, positive development. Sustainable development has been around for some time, works well with positive development. There's so much about securing the future of our generations to come. It is also mindful of the current capacity of our natural systems, such as the ecosystems and the challenges we face. It is compatible with human development theory linked through ecology, feminism, welfare, economics. It considers social capital, the value of human beings, what people can do. And this year is very important because sustainable development is not so much into monetary benefits. I know some countries don't like Marxism. But the point we are at, we are interested in restructuring power relations, obviously, as formally colonised people. We are interested in those distribution of power. It has to change, not only in terms of resources, but also in terms of knowledge. We have to listen to the people, those who are down-trodden. We have to think of their needs that we have to meet. We have to know the power of discourse. The researchers on this forum, they will tell you that discourse is very, very powerful if you are going to use qualitative research. It looks at the lenses of power. There are examples here where Ubuntu-Bulamu, Ubuntu can be applied. Hospitalisation industries – one reason we get so many tourists is the way we treat them. And if we can encourage Ubuntu, Ubuntu-Bulamu in this industry, I think we'll get more tourists. We'll get more of them coming over instead of other continents. Economic models – I think we need socialist ones. I do realise here too how the sale of land has [improvised] *0:35:48 people – people really poor around here 'cause they are encouraged to sell their land. I remember as I grew up, we had communal water resources, wells that everybody collected water from. And because of that, those resources were cared for – communal. Value addition should come from here. We should be able to make products out of raw materials, which answered our fashions. We should also be able to sell fashions. I know that it's starting a bit, but I'm talking here about the other mineral resources as well. Localised fashion, agro-economy – we need to limit agrochemicals, pesticides, insecticides, use our old biological systems to improve our productivity of food, limit genetically modified varieties. By the way, this is a serious matter. Today, Uganda, here, we have genetically modified chicken, which do not reproduce. What does that mean? It means you continuously have to go back and buy chicks from those people. Health local hubs – lately, we have realised how our forefathers and mothers survived. And if we could go into this, we could reduce on importation of drugs. We have Covidex here, which was designed and developed here in Uganda to treat COVID-19. Somebody goes to the Chinese shop, there is labelled Chinese herb that can help your blood to saturate and leaves our own herbs – fresh, very, very fresh. But the mindset that imported things are superior is still a problem. They care. By the way, when I was in Australia, one of my colleagues at staff – I was at the University of New England. I was teaching there. They were surprised at how in Uganda, relatives are allowed into hospitals to care for their sick. Taxation and so on – well, in conclusion, I'm saying our philosophies like Ubuntu-Bulamu has survived years and we should ask why. It must be useful. Just survived – it didn't start with us. It is compatible with our African environments and in us. So, it should be the foundation of all development projects. I thank you very much.

Dr Charlotte Tusasiirwe: Oh, thank you so much, professor, for this wonderful presentation. If you're able to see people's faces when you are speaking, they were actually agreeing with you. And also, you have – if you're able to see the posts in the chat, people are really agreeing with most of the arguments that you're putting across. And I think it's very important that we actually listen to fellow Africans challenging us to think about even post-development where we use our own knowledges to actually define what development is 'cause we've taken on these levels and we are feeling inferior that we are poor or we are not developed, when in actual sense, our development is being defined by someone else and we are not appreciating that the cultural assumptions behind what is being termed as development. I won't take much time. Please, if you have questions for professor, you can raise your hand and also post in the chat. Yes, Cornelius, you have your hand up. Could you ask professor, please? So, keep it short, please, so that the professor is able to answer you. Yes, Cornelius.

Cornelius Dudzai: Okay. Thank you so much. Mine is not a question as such, but I just would like to appreciate the Professor Muwanga-Zake because the submission and illustration he has just done is relevant to what I am researching in my PhD. I also think that the major problem that we have within the African education system is that our curricular is not being informed by the indigenous problems that are taking place in the villages in Hoima, Masindi, Chatondo. So, I think what we should do when coming up with the curriculum for social work or the education system in general for Africa is that we must learn from the problems that are taking place on our continent and then design an education system that address our local system because as it stands, at the end of the day, most of the social workers that are being trained in Africa are not relevant in addressing problems we have. That's why they are more employable in the United Kingdom, in Australia, Canada, or USA.

Professor Muwanga-Zake: Yeah, exactly.

Cornelius Dudzai: Thank you.

Professor Muwanga-Zake: Okay. Thank you for the comment.

Dr Charlotte Tusasiirwe: Yeah, thank you for the comment, Cornelius. I think you're touching on most of us. I'm in diaspora and I think even the training I got, my skills better fit here. So, I think if we are to talk about social workers for African communities, then we must actually train people in African values, in African methods, so that we are able to work for our communities. I'm very lucky. I have one lady who has put up her hand. So, I'll please give her the opportunity. Agness Tembo, and then we will have James Mbiru. So, Agness Tembo, can you please ask a question? Just keep it very short.

Dr Agness Tembo: Thank you very much for the opportunity to ask a question. First of all, thank you for this great lecture that I have attended, rather the session. It has been very impressive. And looking at the lecture that we have had, my question is – how do we transplant Ubuntu into the diaspora? Because we have left Africa, but we haven't left our African-ness. And being in Africa, in the diaspora, we are a minority and possibly marginalised community. And this is something which poses a challenge. How do we challenge the place where we are living to look at our needs as Africans, as Ubuntu? For instance, COVID had an impact on some of the tenants of Ubuntu – the interconnectedness, the sharing, and all those things. How does the medical system rise to this challenge to deliver holistic care for Ubuntu people.

Dr Charlotte Tusasiirwe: Professor, do you want first to respond to that?

Professor Muwanga-Zake: No, that is a tall order because those countries where you are living have their own systems and you would be arrested maybe or something. It is a challenge. But here in our own countries, there's no excuse not to practice.

Dr Agness Tembo: I ask this question because there is a push to be inclusive and the Australian statistics show that the Sub-Saharan Africa – particularly Sub-Saharan African migrants are minority, and as such, the parliament representatives recognise that these people do not receive health services as equally as the Anglo-Saxons, for instance. And I am actually – I'm also grateful for the fact that as a nurse, I've been able to join this. I wanted to join the group, but it says you must be a social worker. And the other question I have is – how multidisciplinary are we? Because from a medical point of view, when we treat a patient, we approach them from a multidisciplinary aspect, and I include a social worker to look after that patient as well. So, if you include person to deliver a lecture at this conference as well –

Dr William Abur: I'm sorry, but I think, Agness, your question is very relevant to the current situation of the African community in Australia, and therefore, there's few of us who are working on this. And I would love maybe to suggest this to [Jokof] that it is opportunity for us also to be able to have a network in Australia and be able to discuss some of these things, and especially promoting the Ubuntu in our society. Whether from the social work lens or the nursing lens, from the medical perspective, we need to be able to do this and that is our role.

Dr Charlotte Tusasiirwe: Thank you, Abur. And I think you have done a publication as well where you touch on the relevancy of Ubuntu in Australia. And we really agree with you. I think we are moving towards taking that multidisciplinary approach in our way we do things. James Mbiru, could you please ask your question?

Dr James Mbiru: Thanks so much. I appreciate Prof Zake and Prof Chilisa. I have run around. I notice we have a lot of Australians in here. And personally, I got to know about this presentation from one of our platforms – Africa-Australian Research Network. So, somebody posted and was like, "Oh, this looks an interesting session attend." I'm glad I've attended. Thank you so, so much. A few questions around Professor Zake's presentation – when he mentioned about some of the managerial concepts being delivered in the Ugandan or African context when we are teaching and they're turning obsolete, which is very true. But when you look at much of the ongoing teaching today in the modern worlds – I would say modern worlds or the developed worlds – it's turning into contemporary theories. So, they're dropping all the traditional theories of teaching, and likewise, gone are the days of using textbooks to teach content. You have to invite participants in a class and then you talk about current things, what works and what doesn't work. And in that aspect, do you think IKS indigenous knowledges, part of it is also turning obsolete and we need to drop it and we maybe all look into ways of modernising it? And I'm glad you mentioned about the hybrid method. Can we approach it from the hybrid angle? We mix it with contemporary skills. The textbooks we use to teach indigenous theories, when you look at the present teaching

today – I’m a teacher. I’m a lecturer in Australia, University of Tasmania and Business School. When you use a textbook in the previous year, today that’s obsolete. You drop it. You look for a new textbook, which is current – two years to go. How is the practice in Africa? Do we have people who are continuously publishing books such that we teach students current knowledge instead of relying on publication, which had occurred ten years ago? The last question I have is – is it possible for both Professor Zake and Professor Chilisa to clarify – is Ubuntu the same as empathy and humility in the Caucasian language? Thank you.

Professor Muwanga-Zake: Yes. Okay. I may go first. In regard to teaching methodologies, management methodologies, I think the challenge we have is probably related to the cocktail I talked about, regardless of what is contemporary, say, in Australia. And indeed, you may find that the owner of a company running in Uganda is Australian and they expect a certain level of standards of management for this company, our company here. Unfortunately, the people they’re dealing with are not at that level or that level of modernity. As I say, we have a cocktail. You can imagine, I go to my village every weekend almost when I can. And the people I’m dealing with are people who will sit you down on the ground, to explain certain things. There are people who’ll tell you that this cow should eat that particular grass and not that drug. So, we have to work at so many different levels. Attendance to the cocktail I’m talking about, the kind of management and teaching that you may want to implement in the village like I’m talking about is probably not the same as the one in Australia or some schools and universities in Kampala, the capital of Uganda. It is a challenge. It is a challenge, which unless we do research, those fundamentals of the whole thing would be lost. It is upon us to go back and lift up what has made people survive in these parts of the world. It is very clear that some of the modern theories, sciences, and ways of doing things – as much as they look modern and advanced have failed. I’ll argue that the rapid changes are sometimes a result of implementing systems that don’t work and therefore require an immediate change. You bring a theory in this year, and by next year, it is not working. It is telling you that it was inappropriate. So, maybe when we go back and look at our systems, work through them – I don’t know at what speed, but the point I’m raising here, we shouldn’t leave anybody behind. What has happened? A lot of us PhD holders, professors – we are living in a different world from the one of our people. There’s a gap, if you like, in technology, what we call a digital gap. But in real terms of living, livelihoods, there’s a gap and we cannot – that’s not sustainable because they are the majority. We can enjoy our lives in cities going to London and so on. But we’ll come back to these people and their challenges will hatch one day. These are some of the reasons you see strikes. This was very clear in South Africa. People who don’t live in South Africa may not realise that the reasons you get those extreme strikes and damage of property and so on is partly because of that gap I’m talking about. The people striking are left behind and they don’t see any value in those tall buildings and hi-fis and TVs, ‘cause after all, they cannot afford them.

Dr Charlotte Tusasiirwe: Thank you so much, professor, for the insightful presentation and for challenging us to value what we have but to put first our communities – I think is not really about rushing about what is modern, but what is very important for our communities. I will now draw this close, and I will invite Professor Janestic Twikirize to give some closing remarks, only two minutes, and then we’ll have Professor Chinwe Nwanna also to give closing remarks on behalf of ASWNet. Please keep it short, two minutes, so that we can finish at 25 past 8:00. Thank you.

Professor Janestic Twikirize: Yeah, thank you so much, Charlotte and Jacob, for organising this. Thank you, ASSWA. Thank you, ASWNet. And thank you, our speakers, Professor Chilisa and Professor Muwanga. Thank you very much for this. For the many decades as social workers in Africa, we’ve concentrated so much on lamenting and mourning the fact that the social work we teach, our education system and practice is not relevant, etcetera. So, it is very, very refreshing that we are going beyond lamenting and mourning to actually do something. So, I’m extremely excited about the launch of these annual lectures and the launch of the forum that brings us together. And it’s also very refreshing to see that we are not just Africans in Africa but the diaspora and all that. And that, again, brings so many heads together, and just like African proverbs says, it’s the joint efforts actually that achieve what we want to achieve. So, I wish you all the best as we move this forward, and I pray that we can spread the word because this has been extremely enriching. We can spread the word so that next time, more and more people are brought on board. Again, thanks to the organisers and thank you so much to our esteemed speakers. God bless you.

Professor Chinwe Nwanna: Chinwe Nwanna, from University of Lagos. In fact, I must confess that I appreciate the speakers, the professor – Professor Chilisa and Professor Muwanga-Zake. It has been very, very exciting, very, very educative. But I want to say something just like Professor Muwanga-Zake said, the lecturers, the educators – we need a lot of education about Ubuntu. Particularly, we need to look at our curriculum. I mean,

the different countries need to look at the curricular and adopt Ubuntu so that everybody will be on the same page. Recently, we were having a debate in Nigeria here whether to continue with family care for our elderly persons or to adopt the old people's home, the nursing home, and whatever. So, these are the issues. So, for contributors, I appreciate you're sharing your experiences, particularly the doctoral candidates from different places. And I want thank the organisers, I gained a lot. And I want to promise you here that whatever I have learned here, I will take it down to the curriculum in social work education in Nigeria because I was one of those who harmonised the curricular of universities in Nigeria. And we need to review to bring in Ubuntu into our curriculum so that everybody, even our students, we do that. And I want to appreciate as ASWNet for – I mean, bringing me on board and all the other members of the team for the great job you are doing. Thank you very much and I'm looking forward for the next lecture. Thank you.

Bagele Chilisa: Thank you very much for this opportunity. It was a great opportunity. I look forward to enjoying other lectures on Ubuntu, on indigenous methodologies. I look forward to seeing ASWNet joining hands with a AfrEA, especially on issues of research methodologies and evaluation and evaluation guiding principles for Africa that can address some of the problems that we have, pedagogical colonialism, capacity building, and so on and so on. Thank you.

Dr Charlotte Tusasiirwe: Thank you so much, everyone. We'll have this recording shared on the websites of ASWNet and also ASSWA, so you can look out and relisten if you're interested.

Biography

Professor JWF Muwanga-Zake (B.Sc. (Hons) (Makerere); B.Ed., M.Sc., M.Ed. (Rhodes); PhD (Digital Media in Education) (Natal University and University of Georgia)); P.G.C.E. (NUL); P.G.D.E (ICT in Ed.) (Rhodes). Partly done Graduate Certificate in Higher Education at the University of New England, Australia. Prof. Zake is professionally a Learning Technologist, Scientist and Educator with teaching experiences in Uganda, Lesotho, South Africa, USA, Australia and the UK. His interests and publications are in research and African philosophy. He has taught and lectured, and written academic articles, in philosophy, science, science education, research and learning technology. The following are some the titles Zake published relating to the conference theme:

- Towards Validating Research Discourses among Bantu in Africa: Obuntubulamu as a Possible Transforming Agent
- Renegotiating Public Confidence in Higher Education? Challenges and Possible Innovations of the 21st Century.
- Whose Education Is It? The Exclusion of African Values from Higher Education
- Whose Education Is It? Developing Communities Left Out in Framing Higher Education.
- Narrative Research across Cultures: Dimensions of Concern in Africa.
- Building bridges across knowledge systems: Ubuntu and participative research paradigms in Bantu communities.
- Inclusiveness, Development and Ubuntu. Re-thinking Educational Research processes for Development in Bantu Communities.
- Experiences of the Power of Discourse in Educational Research: A Need for Transformation in Research.

He has been a Head of ICT, Head of Academic Departments, Dean, Deputy Vice Chancellor and Vice Chancellor at various universities, as well as a Director of a training NGO in South Africa. He earlier headed research units in government and parastatal organisations in Uganda.