



Editorial Commentary

Thinking globally and acting locally. Can research and science help?

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"Learning is an ornament in prosperity, a refuge in adversity, and a provision in old age."
— Aristotle

This issue of the Journal starts volume 3, an occasion to pause, give thanks, and reflect on the past year or so.

Two major events in recent times have shed a true meaning to the saying "think globally, act locally". The Covid-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war underscored that we exist in a globalizing and "boundaryless" economy. There has been no escaping of the ripple-effects of these two events. The result has been heightened unemployment across all industrial sectors, particularly worsened in vulnerable sectors such as tourism and hospitality. The informal sector has also particularly been hit. Food insecurity has increased, and inflation has picked across the globe. Economic growth has stalled, and standards of living have plummeted in the past three years.

Countries have acted differently - a true realization of acting locally - to tame the effects on the economy and population. Developed countries acted much faster, while developing countries acted laggards. In laggard countries, policies have lacked evidence.

Attributed to Scots town planner and social activist [Patrick Geddes \(1915\)](#), and popularized in the 1970s ([Heaps, 2010](#)), the catch term *think global-act local* has evolved. It has been used in various contexts, including planning, environment, education, and towards business strategies. Thinking globally and acting locally, in its simplest form, is a commitment to personal change. It is a liberating journey of small, deliberate changes to dismantle inconsistencies that exist ([Barash, 2002](#); [Groom 2012](#)). This acting is not only at country level, but also applies at a community sphere. For example, geographic proximity and local networks influence diverse practices at a local level, and it not uncommon for organizations to act differently in different settings.

Having a long-term vision to offset the impacts of globalization is important for a country. But how much of these locally tailored solutions can be informed by research and science? This call for local action is increasing been made in the case of mitigating for the impacts of climate change. The emphasis has been that global warming requires local solutions. The options are many: Make buildings tighter, maximize passive solar applications, substitute higher-efficiency appliances and motors, encourage telecommunications instead of physical meeting, among others. This problem can be eradicated easily through the introduction of many county-wide regulations, such as tax breaks on households that recycle, readily-available recycling bins and trashcans among many.

Africa too needs local solutions for global challenges. One can not overemphasize the power of local solutions to address global challenges. And so, in the Namibian context, we argue that local solutions should be informed through active research and scientific inquiry. However, just like everywhere around the world, local efforts to protect our planet are too often underfunded and overlooked.

Nevertheless, we must not tire. There is need to develop a knowledge hub, we require a critical mass of experts, there is need to get others inspired by reaching out, that knowledge must be shared or disseminated through civic participation in advancing scientific and research discovery to support the country's development.

Perhaps we can start from the basics. Our education system. Effective partnership in basic education and for local solutions is necessary. Mothowanaga and Gladwin, in this issue, puts a question that we should rethink the curriculum implementation. Using a secondary school history curriculum, as a case study, they have demonstrated that a top-down approach to curriculum implementation may cause challenges, but rather they argue that preparedness of teachers and learners is equally important. Readiness assessments of school environment, teachers and learners in particular should not be missed. In another study, Amunime, Boer and Haiping explored whether Facebook has the potential to support learning and mastery of Physical Science content to improve learners' academic performance on the topic of stoichiometry at Grade 12 level. Using a quasi-experimental design, findings showed Facebook may improve student performance when used as a learning support tool.

Equally critical are local innovations. As presented by Mundia et al., in this issue, grassroots innovation provides significant opportunities to develop creative solutions to address challenges of developing economies, like Namibia, where the majority of the people live under difficult economic conditions. They emphasized that existing bottlenecks that inhibit accelerated growth of grassroots innovations would require mitigating the existing legislation governing Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) in Namibia, as well as linking grassroots innovation to techno-entrepreneurship.

References

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And there is more. Two articles, in this issue, have global themes. Markus Hitila and Sylvanus Onjefu's "Radiological Risk Assessment of Technologically Enhanced Naturally Occurring Radioactive Materials in coal wastes from Van Eck Coal-Fired thermal Power Plant, Namibia" demonstrate the need for environmental monitoring of air pollution - a thing that has come to the fore due to fossil burning. And indeed Namibian government must act locally to safeguard the lives of many within its borders. The other article by Horn, Shimwafeni, and Mulima writing on "True potato seeds (TPS) as an alternative method for potato production in Namibia", sheds light on potato food production - a major theme to support food security in a rapidly urbanizing Namibia. They present the case of how potato, which plays a great role in the human diet all over the world for the achievement of food security programmes, can be adapted to different environmental conditions, such as arid Namibia, as well as increase its yielding capacity.

The issue is complete with seven articles.

Special thanks to the editorial board members and the reviewers. Thank you for many hours invested in the review of manuscripts providing critical insight to authors and editors. You improved the published science.

Enjoy reading.