



UNIVERSITY
of the Third Age

2023-2024

NETWORK FOR RETIRED ACADEMICS (NeRA)

Mind never retires: Blissfully Engaged.



Professional~Prolific~Proliferation



CONCEPT PAPER

A NETWORK FOR RETIRED ACADEMICS 55YEARS AND OVER

INTRODUCTION

Experience has shown that wisdom comes with age and experience, yet this seems to be forgotten when it comes to the retired academic of Botswana. Many find themselves shifting from their areas of expertise and competence and plunging into some alien and new grounds of engagements which many a time frustrate them when they fail to succeed in these new endeavours. This leads to loss of self-esteem, isolation, loneliness, and loss of quality of good living. In particular, the frustrations emanate from inactivity in the areas they have specialised in as these professionals are relegated to the obsolete status.

WHY THIS NETWORK?

This Network promotes positive mindset change by combating stereotypes, stigma and discrimination against older adults (55years and above) by building a network that recognizes their talents, experiences, skills, knowledge and competences as key to the social and economic advancement of our country, Botswana. Retired academics possess the value add in many sectors. As is the case elsewhere, Retired Professors, Scholars/Lecturers, Researchers in Botswana can use their specialties in

- Contributing to the Silver Economy and the Digitized Society
- Contributing to Botswana's knowledge based economy
- Contributing to the research rooted policies and strategies
- Contributing empirical evidence on performance and impact of the socio-economic activities
- Contributing to the scholarship for economic empowerment (education, learning empowerment and life skills)
- Promoting cross sectorial collaboration
- Promoting cross-border e-collaboration

RATIONALE FOR ENGAGING RETIRED ACADEMICS

Retired academics in many countries contribute to their countries' economic and social growth in their specialised areas through organized networks like the University of Third Age (U3A movements) and Professor Emeritus or Retired Academic Networks. Examples where such professors are put to good use are retired academics in Slovenia, Australia, USA, UK, China and Malaysia just to mention a few. The networks recognise the immense knowledge that retired academics possess and the value add such knowledge can make to their respective economies and the social fabrics. A lot can be gained from the experiences of the people of the 3rd age, that is, older adults 55 years and above. Our own Setswana adage, "Letlhaku le leshe le agelwa mo go le legologolo" buttresses the concept of leveraging on the knowledge, experiences, skills and competencies of the people of the 3rd age.

Botswana economy can tap from action, not inaction of the third agers, 55years and above. Engaging these people would not only benefit the economy and its social complexion, but can also improve on their livelihoods. As clearly pointed out by His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Botswana Dr. Eric Keabetswe Masisi,

we cannot remain locked in the thinking of the unproductive eras and expect to escape the middle income trap. This comes with developing capacity for entrepreneurship, eliminating our inferiority complex and implementing government strategic reforms that put citizen economic inclusion at the centre of our economic development activities.

The above quotation is key to the reset agenda priorities. It is prudent to change our mind sets and tag along this third age citizenry's valuable brains, developed by this very country's resources, and put to good use through networks like Network of Retired Academics Botswana (NeRA Botswana), which in Botswana will be a wing of the University of the Third Age (U3A), a university with three main wings of

- Network of Retired Academics, Botswana (NeRA Botswana),
- Age with Rights with a proposed Gerontechnology Centre
- Training, lifelong learning, life skills and empowerment

● WHAT DO WE INTEND TO DO?

We are interested in building interest and motivation of, and fruitfully engaging retired academics in order for them to see themselves as blocks for empowerment (personal, community and national) with the skills and competencies they already possess so as to be part of an innovative and coordinated network of retired academics.

● WHO CAN JOIN?

Any retired university/college professor, lecturer, researcher, scholar matters. We believe in and recognize as well as respect the potential that joining hands with others can give as a way of reciprocal empowerment, that is, to be empowered by, as well as to empower others. It is therefore, crucial to tag along this third age citizenry's valuable brains, developed by the resources of this very country, Botswana to good use through the proposed Network.

● BENEFITS OF JOINING

The following are some of the potential benefits of joining the network:

Benchmarking and exchange of ideas.

The proposed network will have connections with similar and international networks for purposes of benchmarking and exchange of ideas. For instance, Professors Emeriti Network of Slovenia is welcoming new organization.

Professors Emeriti Network of Slovenia was created on October 5, 2020.

This network plays a crucial role in the digital era by supporting collaboration, knowledge sharing, innovation, employee engagement, data management, customer engagement, and cybersecurity. Participants in the network include Professors Emeriti in Slovenia. Networks also exist in other countries such as Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Norway, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, and the United States of America. The Professors Emeriti of these other countries are open to new networks. With this proposal, Botswana wants to be part of this expansion. <http://eregion.eu/slovenia-professors-emeriti/>.

Achievement of coordinated and interdisciplinary efforts.

The NeRA Botswana will ensure that real life challenges are addressed through informed decisions as action, applied and impactful research will be conducted as appropriate to ensure that expertise from various disciplines is harnessed to complement and supplement one another. That is expertise from the varied disciplines experiences and competencies are put together to provide strong and gainfully engaged teams.

Keeping Third Agers actively engaged and utilizing their otherwise normally neglected expertise.

It is common knowledge that, in Botswana, once the third agers retire, there is very little that is recognized and appreciated about them. They find themselves getting into alien fields, especially agriculture, for which they have little or no knowledge of. This has been found to lead to their frustrations, their loneliness and giving up in life. This scenario has been found to lead to compromised identities and livelihoods of these professionals.

Giving back to the community It is prudent to give back especially to a community which has brought you up and made you what you are. This can broaden one's sense of purpose; it helps in bridging both the social and economic gaps experienced at the individual, community and national level. Above all, giving back to the community promotes one's sense of purpose and lead to a healthier mental and physical being. These are pertinent for our old agers who all of a sudden see themselves as being relegated to obsolesce once they retire, hence see no reason to continue in life.

HIGHLIGHTS OF FORTHCOMING ENGAGEMENTS BY PROFESSORS EMERITI NETWORK OF SLOVENIA

Below are some of the benefits that the NeRA Botswana stands to gain;

1. Invitation to publish a link to an action

The network members are invited to propose a link to a website of a recent action, or an action in progress in which the professor emeriti are involved. The links will be published at Professors Emeriti Network. Of particular interest are the links to the websites on the actions which are open to the cross-border e-Collaboration.

2. Invitation to organize an online network's meeting

- The network's members are kindly invited to organize one of the network's online meetings in 2024. Based on the experience in 2021, 2022 and 2023, the meeting is planned in February, April, June, September, and November. The timing is usually on Wednesday from 17:00 to 19:00 Central European Time – CET.
- The network's meeting is focused on a chosen topic proposed by the meeting's organizer. Welcome are the topics which are problem based and action focused. The meeting may initiate a formation of a working group in which some of the network members are sharing interest and may want to develop an action plan, or write a paper, or a position paper.
- The organizer of the meeting invites 3-4 discussants who contribute to the topic. The organizer of the meeting and the discussants submit the text and/or PowerPoint presentation of their contribution before the meeting. The text is published as an attachment next to the author's name on the network's website. In the text, provision of the links to the related websites is welcome. The meeting's organizer provides the technology and submits the link to the meeting.
- After the meeting, the organizer submits a record of the meeting to be published along with the Participants List.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Network proposes fields of activities to engage with depending on their scientific fields and requirements. Members collaborate by using Internet according to problems observed and will focus on actions needed and desired.

Content may include

- Active Aging: Opportunities for Joint Research and Actions
- Celebrating the International Day of Older Persons
- eMeetings
- Links to members in other countries
- eInclusion in Active Aging & Silver Economy
- Cultural Heritage ePromotion
- eLearning & eEducation
- Heathy Food and silver economy
- eProcurement
- Cross-border and eCollaboration

● INTERESTED IN JOINING

Send WhatsApp to 72280881 with a subject NeRA. Feedback will be given.



