



COVID-19 shows how important it is for **RESEARCHERS** to tell their **stories**

In the age of misinformation, fake news, opinions taken as facts, and the rebuff against science from the world's most powerful leaders, researchers have a moral duty to promote their science in engaging and meaningful ways.

Too often it is said that research remains within the confines of the academic ivory tower, and therefore becomes meaningless and inaccessible. The language coupled with dense theories and concepts are often the main barrier to effective engagement.

This, together with political and economic agendas of those in power, allows for the complete disregard of science, such as in matters relating to the current COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and many other socio-economic issues. This results in a significant threat to humanity's wellbeing and survival.

It is with this in mind that the University of Witwatersrand Vice Chancellor, Professor Adam Habib, has said that it is a moral and civic duty, and not a mere luxury, to effectively communicate science to the general public. Robust research, together with simple and engaging communication about said research, would help debunk information aimed to malign and intimidate people. In the era of populist politics and misinformation campaigns, scientists who communicate well will become national treasures.

Six of our CoE-HUMAN students thus participated in the Wits Famelab training and heats. **Famelab** is an international competition, designed to encourage young researchers to communicate their science to a lay audience. It is a trial-by-fire experience for young researchers in that they have to be compelling storytellers, in front of an audience, in a very short time frame. Our CoE-HUMAN cohort, made up of PhD and Masters' students in humanities, social science and health sciences, joined, botanists, geologists, climatologists and paleontologists.

The CoE-HUMAN's science communication outreach efforts are paying off. Following Famelab, students published **opinion** and **thought-leader** pieces as part of their civic duty to further communicate their science to audiences that need to hear their messages.

It's our **duty** to **SHARE** our **SCIENCE!**



6 COE-HUMAN researchers are taking part in **Famelab 2020**



CoE-HUMAN researchers' Famelab stories:

1. Leballo Tjeomolane broke down the way **masculinity** is constructed by **religion**
2. Hilton Shibambu spoke about the impact of land use activities on **water quality** and thus human and ecological health
3. Senamile Dludla painted a verbal picture of the effects of the **rising petrol price** on local economies
4. Gudani Mukoma spoke about how **nutrition and lifestyle** before one even considers pregnancy is critical for future generational health
5. Ingrid Puseletso discussed the ways **violence** can be curbed in **schools**
6. Marleine Mweji enthralled the audience with her idea of a **mobile app** to assist **migrants** in South Africa with accessing basic services



UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG



DST-NRF Centre of Excellence
in Human Development
Individual and Society
www.wits.ac.za/coe-human

1st Floor, School of Public Health,
University of the Witwatersrand
York Road, Parktown,
Johannesburg 2193,
South Africa

Director: Prof Shane Norris

www.facebook.com/CoEHuman
twitter.com/CoEHuman



science & innovation
Department:
Science and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



National
Research
Foundation