

EVENT REPORT

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

SOUTH AFRICA

TALENT HWATI

August 2015

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WHERE CAN YOUR HUMANITIES DEGREE TAKE YOU?

KAS-SAIIA ANNUAL CAREERS EVENING 2015, UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERS-RAND

About 300 students attended the annual careers evening hosted by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) in partnership with the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA). A very successful occasion during which the students got the opportunity to meet and engage with very prominent speakers such as Leslie Maasdorp, Vice President of the BRICS New Development Bank, in a panel discussion.

"Where can my degree take me?" was the central question most students were concerned about at the careers evening. This event was mainly targeting students of politics, law, economics, international relations and journalism. It was indeed a great success with more than 300 students from the universities of the Witwatersrand and Johannesburg joining the third KAS / SAIIA career evening.

It was a personal exchange between students and potential employers. The event is in its 3rd year and it serves the purpose of enlightening and informing students, particularly those in the humanities field, of what career opportunities are available once they have completed their degrees. It proved once again to be a great success with a new record attendance of 317 students. This year a total of 11 exhibitors took part, namely: SAIIA, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), the Embassy of France, KAS, the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC), The British High Commission, Media 24, The Norton Rose Fulbright, World Bank Group, The In-

stitute for Global Dialogue (IGD) and Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR). They all gave a diverse overview of internships, scholarships and employment opportunities for students in the humanities field.

KAS plays an active role in aiding students. Events such as this, funding authors, hosting discussions and debates, and presenting platforms for think-tanks in order to broaden knowledge are a few activities that KAS engage in. At the KAS stand an array of publications were presented and handed out to interested students. These publications ranged in subject matter from addressing environmental issues, to law, economics, politics and international relations. The main aim this year was to promote the KAS-SAIIA Scholarship Program for Masters Students. The program offers financial aid which covers university tuition and a monthly stipend. It is combined with an internship at SAIIA. Students gain work experience while studying. The aim is to empower students with opportunities and knowledge of something that they can look forward to.

During the panel discussion, four guest speakers spoke about their professional careers and motivated the young students about exceptional career paths to take for an efficacious career.

One of the main speakers was Leslie Maasdorp, the newly elected South African Representative as the Vice President of the BRICS New Development Bank. Growing up in Port Elizabeth, during the apartheid era

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of ripe social injustices, he defined his success as a result of hard work, persistence and perseverance. After a tough childhood and youth years of captivity and incarcerations, he managed to study and finish his first BA Economics and Psychology degree in prison and later, he did his masters degree in Public Finance, Money and Banking at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Ending off the discussion, his main encouragement to students was one of perseverance.

Another speaker was Busiso Moyo who spoke about how his appreciation for South African lawyers, who fought for freedom, his admiration for civil society and the broader spectrum of it, including the socio-economic deus of the country, led him into a career in human rights. He advised students to be flexible and to change with the world; he further elaborated that there isn't anything a humanities student cannot do; it's just about finding your passion in the field.

Angela Mdukuti is an International Criminal Justice Lawyer at the Southern Africa Litigation Centre (SALC). She reported that she is where she is because she believed in Law as a tool for social change. She elaborated that a humanities degree gives one the freedom to express the values that are important to you and the satisfaction that comes with making the change that one wants to make.

Sarah Robinson, Director at the Bean There Coffee Company. Sarah explained her diverse background as a half Canadian and half South African, having spent half of her life in Canada and then moving back to SA. She is passionate about doing something for people. She also achieved a BA degree in Political Science however when she moved back to SA, she and her brother started coffee production and trading, with the aim of making a sustainable development in coffee production. She further elaborated how her life changed when she went to Palestine to work under a cooperative on women's empowerment in fair trading and farming. She became hopeful after staying in Palestine and experiencing the injustices at face value and now her wish is to put her degree in political science in use and go and stay in

Palestine in her eagerness to correct the injustices in Palestine. Her last encouragement was that "You should not give up, rather define what you want to do".

Finally, for the Resident Representative of KAS in South Africa, Dr. Holger Dix, "The Careers evening has become a phenomenal event. It is a great success for the hosts, students and other exhibiting organizations. Besides all the information for promising students we always have support from South African companies who are also interested to engage and recruit students. To students, use your talent not only for your own career, but in shaping the future of the country itself".

The KAS Team.