

Open seminar series on Critical Conversations in Sustainability

By [Sandra Dunn](#), issued by [Regent Business School](#) 10 May 2017

‘Critical Conversations’ is a series of transdisciplinary seminars in sustainability hosted by Regent Business School, *The Mercury*, and other private and public sector stakeholders. The year-long series aims to creatively engage in critical discussions, provocative dialogue and idea-sharing around sustainable questions that delve into novel and innovative ideas that may assist in mobilising change necessary for our planet to become a better place for all who live in it.

Managing director of the business school, Ahmed Shaikh is of the opinion that the cross-disciplinary character offered by the critical conversations seminar series is a rare opportunity to learn how to talk to others in the spirit of the intrinsic value captured in a quotation by Bertrand Piccard, when he said “In the 21st century, I think the heroes will be the people who improve the quality of life, fight poverty and introduce more sustainability.” Everyone who is concerned about the status of mother earth and the future of humankind has a role to play in these critical conversations.

The joint coordinators of the seminar series, Professors Dhiru Soni and Anis Karodia couldn’t agree more with the sentiments expressed by Shaikh.

Shaikh made a special appeal to senior representatives of the business community and especially those interested in implementing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to attend.

The official opening of the series held on Friday, 29 March 2017, was attended by more than a 150 guests and dealt with ‘Responsive and Responsible Leadership in Sustainability’. The occasion also hosted a stellar line-up of speakers representing the partnering organisations, including the Deputy Mayor of eThekweni Municipality, Councilor Fawzia Peer.

This was followed by a seminar moderated by freelance journalist, Lysse Commins, titled “Business beyond Usual – The SDGs and Inclusive Business”.

Leonardo Di Caprio’s award-winning documentary – *Before the Flood* was shown on 20 April 2017. According to Fred Kockott, a Roving Rovers reporter, the film categorically informed the viewer that Climate Change is happening. He said, “no coincidence that we’re seeing more news reports of horrible tornadoes at odd times of the year. So yes, climate change is happening and it’s terrifying. But what is there to be done about it?”

Before the Flood is very much an education and advocacy documentary. It’s a cliff’s notes version of what’s happening to the world we live in, what’s going to happen to the world we live in and what we can do to prevent the worst possible outcome.

Viewers were really taken aback by what they saw. More discussions ensued after the film showing and Dr. Youssef Bake, the CEO of Iqraa Trust, a sponsoring partner of the series when asked to comment, said, “I am shocked, I didn’t realise that we have damaged our planet to such an extent. I believe we still have a chance to make reparations.”

On Wednesday, 17 May 2017, the series features Bobby Peek and Desmond D’Sa and one other speaker yet to be named. Peek and D’Sa are two national environmental activists, well-known in local circles and recipients of the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize in a session titled ‘Raising Awareness, Engaging the Public through Activism and Changing Public Policy’.

When asked to comment, Professor Marvin Kambuwa, a staunch supporter of sustainability and principal of Regent Business School declared, “Environmental activism is important because our clean air, water, and earth can’t advocate for its own protection. But without a healthy environment, we can’t survive. So it is up to all of us to advocate for a better, more sustainable lifestyle. By bringing awareness of a better alternative, each of us can effect a much-needed change.”

World famous local artist and environmentalist, Andre Botha and his up-and-coming assistant, Jessica Bothma, an urban environmentalist in her own right will provide for an entertaining Colloquium evening (26 May 2017) when they present their work, 'Rhino Burning'. Their session 'Artists as Catalysts for Change and Sustainability' will also feature a sustainability plenary by local artists from the Sagiya Foundation.

If you're interested in learning more about sustainability and the global sustainable development goals and how it concerns you, here is your opportunity to link-up with like-minded people and networks. The seminar series on Critical Conversations in Sustainability offers plenty of opportunities to get involved in the 'sustainability debate'. The business community is especially encouraged to attend.

The seminars are free and public. For entry, please send an e-mail to Ms Portia Ntetha sustainability@regent.ac.za or call 031-304 4626. Seats are limited, so book early.



Sandra Dunn is the social media and digital marketing coordinator at Regent Business School

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