

New Agenda: on the road to renewal in 2023

Milestone one: Getting help and advice from the University of the Western Cape

By the New Agenda editorial collective

“The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET accredited list on condition that the suggested improvements are implemented by the end of 2023.”

ASSAf panel review of *New Agenda*, 2022

As described in the last issue of *New Agenda: South African Journal of Social and Economic Policy* (NA 88), the publishers of the journal, the Institute for African Alternatives (IFAA), are taking active steps to ensure that *New Agenda* retains its accreditation with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

These moves follow the recommendations of academics on an expert review panel assembled by the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) that *New Agenda* – in the period 2017 to 2019 – did not meet the proper standards for research-led academic publishing. IFAA was granted one year to remedy this.

New Agenda's top priority always has been its readers. But we will have no readers without authors – and some of our most interesting authors are academics. South African university academics are able to claim financial rewards (for their institutions) from the DHET for every research article published in accredited journals, such as *New Agenda*.

We have to up our game!

Our immediate past director,

Zunaid Moolla, reached out to the Institute for Social Development (ISD) at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) almost a year ago. ISD is a research and post-graduate centre providing teaching and research work in development studies.

Zunaid knew that the ISD and its staff had recently succeeded in getting a new journal accepted onto the DHET accreditation list. It would be ideal to get help and advice from people with experience in applying ASSAf journal publication guidelines in practice.

In June 2023, UWC and IFAA signed a formal Memorandum of Understanding to partner in a number of projects on research, writing and teaching.

One specific project is to “collaborate on the publication of *New Agenda: South African Journal of Social and Economic Policy*, the flagship journal of IFAA, on matters relating to accreditation, editorial board, peer review processes and monitoring, sharing of databases, and the use of digital platforms to expand the readership and reach of the magazine.”

It has been agreed that UWC will provide academic guidance and an academic home for the journal,

while IFAA will retain its publishing independence in a partnership to publish and manage *New Agenda*.

A second project is the joint hosting of the annual Ben Turok Memorial Lecture, in honour of the founder of IFAA. There are also plans to cooperate on research and workshop projects on issues of social and economic transformation in Africa.

The next step for *New Agenda* is to make use of software, managed by the UWC library, to automate the publishing production process of each “academic” article – from considering submissions, to peer-review and possible acceptance for publication. ASSAf requires detailed monitoring of dates and numbers, which is increasingly computerised by most academic journals and which are cumbersome to extract from our present completely manual system!

We are now reporting in each issue on our progress as we tackle the need to preserve our accreditation status.

We welcome advice and feedback from readers. Send your comments to production@ifaaza.org. **NA**