

"Bring down the barriers between education and the real world," says award-winning SA educationist

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Africa's leading educationist and academic trailblazer, Professor Yusuf Karodia, has cautioned that to sustainably address the challenges posed by the fourth industrial revolution (4IR), policymakers and education advocates on the continent lack to embrace new, digitally-immersive methods to higher education.

Speaking after receiving the African Leadership Person of the Year Award for Education and Development in Sandton, Johannesburg, Professor Karodia, who founded the distance learning institutions Regent Business School and Mancosa, both members of Honoris United Universities, said that traditional approaches to higher education are fast becoming irrelevant amidst rapid global digitisation.

Professor Karodia, 70, has spent the past four decades pursuing new avenues to make quality education accessible to more people in sub-Saharan Africa. He believes that a sustainable, long-term solution to the continent's education crunch lies in empowerment through *relevant* education by tapping into the demands made by an increasingly digitised workplace and society.

"It is critical to acknowledge that the higher education sector, in its current form, will soon be of less relevance in the rapidly-changing global workspace," he explains. "As more companies adopt artificial intelligence, disruptive and exponential technologies, rendering some tasks and positions obsolete, it is imperative that higher education institutions modify their knowledge-exchange systems to empower students with the expertise and skills that are needed in a digitally-transformed workplace. Step-changing *how* we impart skills and knowledge to a digital-savvy generation is equally crucial to driving success in higher education."

Professor Karodia further cautions that there will be no 'quick-fix' solutions as new skills needs and acquisitions will evolve as new technology is developed and adopted. "The learning will be life-long. Therefore, we need an education system that is forward-looking, agile and responsive to rapidly changing labour market needs. This means upskilling and re-skilling lecturers, as well as redesigning education systems and curricula to allow for agility and adaptability. We must tear down the barriers that exist between education and the real world. Bring the working world into education a lot earlier and take education into the working world."

Professor Karodia has worn many notable hats during his illustrious career in education including teacher, lecturer, visionary, author, mentor and philanthropist. Spurred by the socio-political injustices he witnessed and experienced in his early years during the apartheid regime, particularly the denial of tertiary education to black students, Professor Karodia established two private higher education institutions to empower promising, young minds with affordable, quality, supported distance learning education for those who were previously marginalised. Regent Business School and Mancosa continue his legacy of distinctive excellence by mobilising education to drive significant, impactful socio-economic change in Africa.

While South Africa's higher education fraternity has reaped the rewards of Professor Karodia's passion and vision, the educationist has done equally laudable work to boost SA's literacy rate within schools. His Million Books Project seeks to



Prof Karodia receiving the International African Leadership Person of the Year Award – Educational Development

donate a million books via mobile libraries to schools where children have no access to a diverse collection of books.

Dr Ken Giami, publisher of the *African Leadership Magazine* that celebrates African excellence through its annual awards, acknowledged Professor Karodia's enduring legacy and visionary contributions that led to the African Person of the Year in Education Development accolade. "At a time of deepening rot in the education system of several African states, we see in Professor Karodia a man on a mission to salvage our educational system. We are very pleased with his contributions as he continues to set the pace in transforming higher education across the continent."



Prof. Karodia receiving the International African Leadership Person of the Year Award – Educational Development

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Professor Yusuf Karodia, the founder of distance learning institutions Mancosa and Regent Business School (fifth from left) with his entourage

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The African Person of the Year Award in Education Development is one of many acknowledgements over the past four decades of Professor Karodia's work in education. He has been awarded the British Council, Fulbright and Educational Opportunities Council scholarships, among others.

Humbled by the acknowledgement, Professor Karodia accepted the award on behalf of students, staff and graduates of Honoris United Universities, as well as all educators committed to moulding the minds of Africa's future leaders.

About Regent Business School

Since 1998, Regent Business School (RBS) has been at the forefront of premium management education across the continent. Headquartered in South Africa, RBS's acclaimed business, finance and management programmes have helped individuals and organisations build and sustain competitive advantages in a rapidly-changing, complex business environment. With campuses in all major hubs of South Africa, including Durban, Johannesburg, Cape Town and Pretoria, as well as in SADC countries, Swaziland and Namibia, the institution's alumni base of 10,000 is rapidly expanding. RBS's leading centres for excellence – The Institute of Entrepreneurship, The Centre for Islamic Finance and Banking and The Centre for Public Sector Administration Management and Innovation – are popular with high performers who are serious about making positive, impactful change within the global finance and management sectors. It's latest 4IR innovation hub and academic maker-space, the iLeadLAB, is at the forefront of the institution's strategy to empower students and stakeholders with in-demand skills as well as the hard and soft digital skills for the fourth industrial revolution.

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About Honoris United Universities

Honoris United Universities is the first pan-African network of higher education institutions that is committed to enhancing the employability of its undergraduates. It focuses on educating for impact – preparing students for professional success in

a highly-competitive digital global economy. Through academic excellence and a range of practical programmes built around a unique concept of collaborative intelligence, Honoris equips its students with cultural agility, a mobile mind-set and the ability to meet the needs of today's economies and communities.

Honoris United Universities gathers a community of **45,000** students on **60** campuses, learning centres and via on-line, in **10** countries and **32** cities across Africa. The network counts **11** institutions: multidisciplinary universities, specialised schools, technical and vocational institutes, contact, distance and online institutions. Students have an opportunity to experience exclusive partnerships and exchange programs in more than **60** universities across Europe and the United States. Over **280** degrees are offered in Health Science, Engineering, IT, Business, Law, Architecture, Arts and Design, Media, Education and Political Science.

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