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The Recession – sink or swim: an opportunity for Young Earth Scientists to innovate

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After years of global down turn, the global commodity prices have reached the lowest point [1] leading to mine operators shutting down projects and shedding staff to cut costs [2]. In Namibia, the global commodity price slump has led to a mismatch between the number of geoscience graduates and job opportunities in the extractive industry. The situation is further compounded by the limited awareness amongst decision makers of the critical role earth sciences play in daily lives of society. Thus young Namibian geoscientists need to exponentially change their career strategies as a degree is no longer enough to guarantee an entry into the industry. Unlike their predecessors, there is no easy the entry to the workforce. Early career geoscientists and graduates are the most affected by the commodity slump which has drastically reduced the demand for geoscientists [3].

The present economic situation not only challenges but opportunities for young geoscientists to prepare for the next upturn. It is the time for capacity building and research development, as there is time to reflect. For instance studying further to postgraduate (MSc or PhD) level, doing a specialized course in trending/new extractive technologies or volunteering to gain experience and build relations is a good investment. YES Network Namibia (YNN) provides young earth scientists with a platform to network with each other as well as established scientists. YNN also provides information on opportunities in earth sciences, both employment and study related, to its members. In these challenging times innovation is required as the means of survival. We aim to develop better strategies on how can we facilitate this change. To improve YNN services and to gauge the concerns of young scientists' two surveys were conducted. University lecturers, industry geoscientists, recent graduates and students were surveyed. Most of the students indicated the need for more information on job opportunities while the professional geoscientists expressed a need for the Namibian students to change their mindsets and apply their geoscience knowledge.

References:

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