

Note from the editor

“We will either find a way or make one.”

--Hannibal (247-182 BC), Carthaginian General”

In the editorial of the first edition of 2020, I referred to the Spanish Flu, and the fact that we were in the first phases of a national lock-down. Never did we realise that it would be such an extended disruption! And it seems that the negative effect due to the economic downturn is in many ways more severe than the impact on population health due to COVID-19.

Academics in universities have all become experts in online teaching, and while research activities had been negatively impacted in the process, new opportunities are being created. Universities in South Africa had all mostly adapted to the new way of doing business, but it seems that we will feel the effect also in 2021, with the academic year starting later than usual.

However, the sectors where Industrial Engineers work, have all been affected. I have heard estimates that a third of middle-class families will end up in poverty. Small companies have been severely affected and many had to close their doors. A few large retail companies were also forced into bankruptcy. Yet, one also hears positive stories on how the affected are creating new businesses, providing much needed services in the newly created economy with its unique challenges.

Who better than the Industrial Engineering discipline to tackle the new opportunities and challenges of the time!

Despite the uncertain times, this edition contains 12 articles, of which 4 are from international authors outside South Africa.

If you have suggestions on how we can take this journal forward, please let me know.

Corne Schutte
Editor