



Abridged Biography | Professor Phindile Lukhele-Olorunju



Prof P.E. Lukhele-Olorunju's career has taken her from fields to boardrooms. Her education began in Swaziland where she obtained qualifications in the Agricultural sciences. She holds a BSc Agriculture 1978 (Swaziland), MSc Plant Breeding 1982 (Nigeria) and PhD Plant Breeding/ Virology 1990 (USA). She is an internationally respected scientist, educator and manager and has vast experience through her work as a researcher in Agricultural research institutions. Prof Lukhele-Olorunju's career path has seen her in many roles, including being a Plant breeder at the Institute for Agricultural Research (IAR) at Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria; Group Executive at the

Agricultural Research Council (ARC) of South Africa; Director: Research and Innovation and Interim Chief Executive Officer at the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA); and Director: Research Management at the University of Mpumalanga, just to name a few. She has also lectured at three renowned universities: University of Botswana and Swaziland, Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria and University of the North (now University of Limpopo). As part of her research in Nigeria, she released a number of groundnut varieties for the country and West African region. As an educator, has graduated a number of international students at BSc, MSc and PhD levels. In her managerial capacity, Prof Lukhele-Olorunju was Head of Department at the University of the North; managed three Research Institutes (Grain Crops Institute, Small Grains Institute and Institute for Industrial Crops) as Group Executive in the ARC; headed up research development as Director Research and Innovation in the University of Venda. In 2011, she was a finalist in the Shoprite Checkers Women of the Year Awards for her role in mentoring and educating women farmers.

Her other experiences include international consulting (FAO), management of international agricultural projects, collaborative research projects with CGIAR Institutions (IITA, ICRISAT, and ILRI), USAID (Peanut CRSP) and the World Bank (NARP). She was a Representative of the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in the Winter Cereal Trust 2006 to 2015 and subsequently became a member of the Bursary Committee of the Winter Cereal Trust. She has lent her skills as a member of the Board of AISA 2012-2014; Board member of Bioversity International (a CGIAR Research Centre) 2006-2012 and an ASI Fellow. She is also currently a member of Senate and Council at the University of Mpumalanga.

Prof Lukhele-Olorunju is known by peers as a God-fearing woman, a mentor, straight-talker and focused on the growth of those around her and the organizations she's been involved in. Her

career speaks for itself, and is an example that women can and should thrive regardless of their environment.
