



MALAWI UNIVERSITY OF
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NEWSLETTER

2025 1st Issue



Govt Supports MUST's Laptop Assembly Dream.

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Dear Readers

We warmly welcome you to this first issue of the MUST Newsletter in this year. As a university that thrives in technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship, it is our wish to share any developments on campus around these issues. This is why in this edition, we have an article on the generous contribution by the Malawi Government of K2 billion for the university to purchase equipment for the laptop and tablet assembly. This is a huge boost towards realisation of this dream. There are many other articles on technology, innovation and entrepreneurship.

We are also proud to share the good news that in our expansion drive to make ourselves available in all strategic places in the country, we have followed up the acquisition of land in Kamphata, Lilongwe with the opening of a City campus in Chichiri, Blantyre. There are big plans for this campus but so far, we have taken some students from Thyolo to this new campus, we have also advertised for Weekend Classes that will be running at this campus. More is coming.

Our growth trajectory as a university is also manifested in the number of projects currently running and we have documented some activities under some of these projects.

As a progressive university, we have also shared how our flagship MUST Endowment Fund scholarships have changed the lives of students on campus and how the success of some female MUST students, currently studying STEM programmes, can be an inspiration for the girl child out there.

In brief, this space is too small to describe what we have in store for you in this edition. As you enjoy the reading, remember that your feedback is critical for our improvement and tailored offering.

James Mphande
Chief Editor



Laptop Assembly Plant at JKUAT

GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS MUST'S LAPTOP ASSEMBLY DREAM

By James Mphande

The Minister of Finance on March 26, 2025 announced a K2 billion budget allocation to the Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) for initial startup funding for establishment of laptop and tablet assembling plants.

The development came in as the university through its Vice Chancellor Professor Address Malata last year announced lofty plans to establish the assembly plants and had been courting partners, including the government, to realise the dream.

In his closing budget statement, Minister of Finance Simplex Chithyola Banda said this would be additional resources to the university.

“For the first time in our history, the government of Dr Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera recognises the importance of MUST establishing a plant where they can assemble laptops and tablets. To that effect, we have allocated them a whopping K2 billion for that purpose,” he said in Parliament.

According to MUST Vice Chancellor, Professor Address Malata, the idea to locally assemble laptops and tablets came after noting challenges the university and the country faced during the Covid-19 pandemic period.

“Much as the university, just like many other teaching institutions, was ready to transfer teaching and learning to online platforms, some of our students could not

participate due to lack of gadgets and we had to support them with some gadgets, but that was not sustainable as the local costs for such gadgets are high,” she said.

“As such, assembling laptops and tablets locally will not only make them more affordable but also easily accessible to our youths, who are in school. Our main target are students from primary and secondary schools, TVET institutions and universities.”

The initiative also aligns with the technology, innovation and enterprise pillar of the MUST Strategic Plan as well as the university's ethos of doing business unusual and being a solution centred university, dubbed “MUST Solution2030”.

She said the university had been holding discussions with government through the Ministry of Education and other partners on how best the project could be rolled out.

Already, the university leadership has visited Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) in Kenya, where they are also into laptop and tablet assembly.

“Meanwhile, we are in discussions with partners and before us are different models of the assembly, each with different capacities and costs. Once we settle for one, then we will know the capacity and budget required,” said Professor Malata when asked on the total budget of the assembly plant.

She said the resources from government in this year’s budget will enable the university to roll-out the procurement processes.

Professor Malata said to make the gadgets more affordable locally, they will borrow a leaf from those who are already into the business.

“What is clear for now, from experience of those who are already into it, is that the cost is below the prevailing market prices. But for the actual pricing, that is something that is determined once you have factored in the total cost of production. We are still working out our business plan and we have been checking costs of the parts, freight and taxes etc. As such, we may not have the exact price of the laptop or tablet for now,” she said.

“These are gadgets that we will be assembling locally and based on what our colleagues are doing, the importation of raw materials, freight and taxes and the assembling itself is projected to be



Prof. Malata and Prof. Maluwa visit the Laptop Assembly Plant, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

lower than where one imports a ready-to-use laptop or tablet. So be assured that our gadgets will cost less.”

Dr Paul Makochi, who is Open and Distance e-Learning (ODEL) Coordinator at MUST, said the development will help in increasing access to education, especially through ODEL where a laptop or tablet is a critical gadget in the teaching and learning process.

To sustain the business while ensuring that the gadgets are affordable, MUST plans to run the assembly plant as a business unit within the university and operate it under a subsidiary of its investment and commercial arm, MUST Holding Company.

According to University Registrar Alfred Chinombo, the project will have a strong community social support element.

“Much as it has to be a profitable venture, we want to ensure that it benefits communities. One way of doing this is ensuring that employees at the plant comprise students from MUST and any other university. For example, we may need students from MUBAS, NACIT and UNIMA who have done courses that are also relevant to the assembly of tablets and laptops,” said Chinombo.

“We will need students who have done Engineering, hardware and software engineering, electronics and many other related areas. Some of these we do not have at MUST. Some students will also work at the assembly plant on internship thereby gaining valuable workplace experience. With plans to upscale production and expand the market, benefits in terms of revenue and jobs will also increase.”

Chinombo said the venture will also contribute to the national economic development.

“Through job creation, the workers at the assembly plant will be economically empowered. The country will also benefit through taxes in addition to saving on forex through import substitution. While we will still import parts, the cost will be lower than importing finished laptops or tablets,” he explained.

“The assembly plant also aligns well with the industrialisation pillar in the MW2063. The students that will work at the assembly will also gain skills and knowledge that can also enable them establish similar plants as part of their entrepreneurship endeavour”.



MUST's Director of Finance and Investments Mr. Macdonald Hudge Participating in a Tree-planting exercise

CONSERVE THE ENVIRONMENT FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

MUST conducts a tree planting exercise

By Mary Mwambongo

Staff, students, and community members around MUST on March 20, 2025 took a step in the fight against climate change by planting 4,000 trees around its campus in Thyolo.

This initiative is part of the university's annual tree planting exercise, which aims to reafforest the campus and surrounding areas.

Speaking during the event, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Wilson Mandala emphasized the importance of taking action against climate change.

"As a university, we recognize the urgent need to address the challenges posed by climate

change. By planting these trees, we are making a tangible contribution to mitigating its effects and leaving a lasting legacy," he said.

The exercise was made possible through the support of Mahogany Insurance Brokers, TAGDev 2.0 program at MUST and management, who provided funding for the initiative.

Staff, community members, and students all came together to participate in the tree planting, demonstrating the university's commitment to community engagement and environmental sustainability.

This initiative aligns with the

national effort to restore Malawi's forests and degraded lands.

The 2024/25 National Forestry Season, which was launched by Vice President Michael Usi in December last year, aims to plant 40,130,719 trees across the country and restore 22,420 hectares of degraded land.

By taking action against climate change, MUST is setting an example for other institutions and communities to follow.

As Professor Mandala noted, "we must work together to address the challenges posed by climate change and ensure a sustainable future for generations to come."



MUST Blantyre Campus officials with the Executive Management

MUST EXPANDS ACCESS TO EDUCATION WITH A NEW CAMPUS

By Mary Mwambongo

On August 9, 2024, the Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) took a significant step towards enhancing higher education in Malawi by signing a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Malawi Posts Corporation (MPC).

The agreement marked the beginning of an exciting journey for the university, as it transformed MPC premises at Chichiri, near Blantyre Museum, into its new City campus.

The decision to expand into Blantyre was part of MUST's broader strategy to make higher education more accessible and inclusive.

The City campus is designed to help remove geographical barriers that often make it difficult for working professionals, entrepreneurs, and other

individuals to attend classes at the main campus in Thyolo.

This initiative not only increases access to education but also ensures that students have access to modern facilities and resources, preparing them for the challenges in the workforce.

Alfred Chinombo, University Registrar, indicated that the expansion aligns with the university's 2024-2030 Strategic Plan, noting that the move was in direct response to the evolving needs of Malawi's economy, with the Blantyre campus providing a more accessible learning option for professionals who may struggle to balance work and study.

By establishing a presence in urban centres like Blantyre, MUST is better positioned to support Malawi's human capital development goals as outlined in the Malawi 2063.

In addition to providing more learning opportunities, the new campus will offer weekend degree programmes specifically designed for professionals, along with postgraduate programmes to increase academic flexibility.

MUST also plans to launch weekday undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, as well as specialized short courses for industry leaders, policymakers, and technical professionals.

These programmes will be customized to meet the needs of sectors driving Malawi's economic transformation, including technology, business, engineering, health sciences, and public policy.

The city campus is currently operational as part of MUST's academic recovery programme, ensuring that students who have been affected by disruptions can continue their studies without interruption.



MUST City Campus in pictures

By launching this new campus, MUST is making a bold statement about its commitment to fostering innovation, developing talent, and addressing the pressing needs of the country.

Last year, MUST clocked 10 years of operational and existence, and speaking about this milestone, Chinombo said the last decade has been a time of success and growth for MUST.

He said the university's approach has built a reputation for producing graduates who are not just job seekers, but job creators and problem solvers.

With a focus on innovation and solution-oriented learning, MUST has become a key player in driving positive change in Malawi's education sector.

The opening of the City campus is a powerful step towards reimagining university education in Malawi.

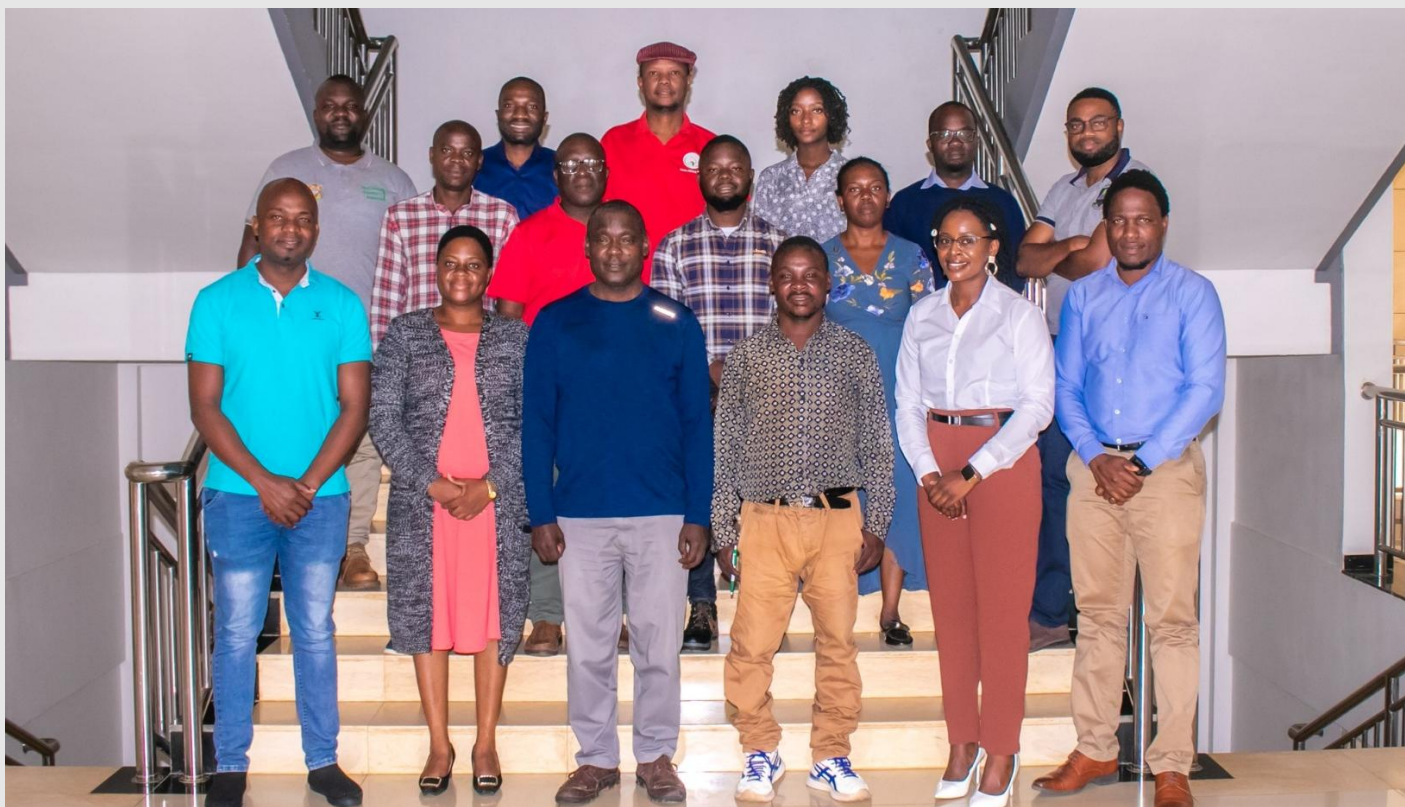
It represents a bold vision for the future of the country's educational landscape that will empower students with the skills, knowledge, and experiences they need to lead the way in Malawi's economic transformation.

By offering academic and professional training co-designed with both local and international industry experts, MUST is ensuring that its graduates are equipped to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving job market.

With the opening of the Blantyre campus, MUST is also not just expanding its physical presence, but expanding its impact on Malawi's education sector.



MUST Registrar, Mr. Alfred Chinombo



Training participants

SBAPP PROJECT EMPOWERS STAKEHOLDERS IN LAND COVER MAPPING

By Justice Nda

The Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) in partnership with the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) has embarked on an initiative to build capacity in land cover mapping among key stakeholders.

This collaborative effort is being implemented through the Spatial Biodiversity Assessments, Prioritisation and Planning (SBAPP) project.

On 12 February, 2025, MUST and EAD commenced a three-day training program in land cover mapping, targeting stakeholders in government involved in land management issues.

The training brought together officials from MUST, EAD, Malawi Environment Protection Authority (MEPA), Department of

Forestry, Department of Land Resources, Surveys Department, and Department of Physical Planning.

The training follows previous engagements between the stakeholders and SBAPP, where it was agreed that capacity building on modern methods of land mapping was essential for effective collaboration.

With this training, the hope is that the trainees will now be able to update the country's land cover/land use maps in their areas of expertise or mandate, ultimately contributing to sustainable development.

Speaking on behalf of MUST at the opening of the training, Acting Executive Dean for the Ndata School of Climate and Earth Sciences, Dr Chikondi Chisenga,

hailed the collaboration between academic and industry players.

He emphasized the importance of working together to address real national concerns, urging students to focus on research projects that provide solutions to real problems.

Dr Chisenga also highlighted the need for joint supervision of research projects by academics and industry experts.

Deputy Director at EAD, Mr Ben Yasin, urged participants to be committed to the training, emphasizing its importance in ensuring that maps are current and planning is realistic.

The SBAPP project is a significant step towards sustainable land management in Malawi.

By building capacity in land cover mapping, MUST and EAD are

contributing to the development of accurate and up-to-date maps, which will inform planning and decision-making.

This initiative demonstrates the power of collaboration in driving sustainable development and addressing real national concerns



Minister of Higher Education, Honourable Dr. Jessie Kabwila poses with MUST management

HIGHER EDUCATION MINISTER VISITS MUST

By Mary Mwambongo

Minister of Higher Education, Honourable Dr. Jessie Kabwila on January 23, 2025 visited the Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) where she encouraged staff and students to go beyond laboratory experiments and try out their innovations in the fields so that they can benefit Malawians.

Among others, Dr. Kabwila visited MUST's Technology and Innovation Garage, African Drone and Data Academy (ADDA), Design Studio, University Hospital, and construction site for a purpose-built laboratory complex.

"As Malawians, we have come up with several innovations but we take time trying to perfect them in laboratories. We need to change and make sure they go out there so that people can try them and we can be perfecting them based on the people's experiences," she advised, while reiterating her commitment to source funds for universities to synergise their technology and innovation efforts.

She thanked MUST for living up to its mandate of driving science, technology, innovation and industrialisation, saying as long as a project is viable, she will be ready to carry and market it for potential funding.

On his part, MUST Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Wilson Mandala, welcomed the creation of the new ministry that focuses on higher education.

"The higher education sector has its own unique opportunities and challenges and with this development, we believe we will be getting more attention to exploit and address these issues," he said while congratulating Dr. Kabwila for assuming the ministerial position.

He also hailed the prospect of having the Higher Education Bill going to Parliament soon for passing, saying the Bill and the splitting of the ministry into two-

Basic and Secondary Education and Higher Education) demonstrates government's commitment to the sector.

Then Secretary for Education, Dr Mangani Katundu, hailed the minister for taking her time to visit higher education institutions to appreciate what they are going through and see how best she could work with them.

Dr Kabwila was appointed minister on January 1, 2025 and she has been visiting higher education institutions as part of her familiarisation drive.

Before visiting MUST, she held engagements at Domasi College of Education, University of Malawi, Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences and afterwards toured Catholic University of Malawi and Kamuzu University of Health Sciences.

SAVED BY A SCHOLARSHIP

By James Mphande

For David Nyirenda, the year 2022 will remain engraved in his memory as the saddest. This is when all dreams appeared shattered, the beauty that is Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) meant nothing. All he saw was a bleak future with so many unanswered questions.

He wished his journey back home, to mark his withdrawal from the university he worked so hard to get selected to and even harder, to remain at, was a mere dream. That within hours or a slight tap on his feet, would take him back from his slumber. But it was never to be. His was a reality and not a bad dream.



“When I enrolled at MUST in 2017 for a Bachelor of Engineering in Biomedical Engineering, I was looking forward to my graduation in 2023. Little did I know that the financial challenges I was facing in paying for both tuition fees and accommodation, will accumulate into a serious financial burden, which would lead to my withdraw from college,” said Nyirenda who was out of college for two good years and had lost all hope of returning to MUST.

All this changed when MUST started giving out scholarships under its Endowment Fund to needy students in early 2024. The scholarships targeted students who had withdrawn from the university, those who failed to report for classes and those who were financially struggling and were on the verge of withdrawing. Courtesy of the MUST Endowment Fund (MEF), Nyirenda is back on campus and now in his final year. The failed 2023 graduation is now no longer a cancellation but a mere postponement to 2025.

His case is not different from that of Elisy Meja, a third year Bachelor of Science in Earth Science student at MUST. According to Elisy, she had no sponsor when she started her studies, and as fate would have it, she was also left out of the list of loan beneficiaries from the Higher Education Students Loans and Grants Board (HESLGB).

“This was stressing me up since I had no fees to pay for tuition and accommodation and no money for my meals. My academic life was being negatively affected. I tried to put all this aside and concentrate on my studies and I was lucky to pass,” said Meja, adding that the MEF scholarship has now enabled her to concentrate more on her studies and acquire some important materials for her studies.

“My grades have improved greatly and I am now averaging 70 and above. I no longer spend sleepless nights thinking about tuition and accommodation fees or food, since everything is covered under the scholarship. I didn't have a smart phone for my studies, after funding, I managed to buy one.”



Godfrey Mphanda, a GIS final year student, also has a story to tell. As he shares his story, he is full of gratitude for the MEF scholarship currently supporting his academic journey.

Like all needy students, his most pressing needs were raising tuition and accommodation fees and accessing a meal. The challenges emanating from this affected his academic performance and by the time the scholarship was awarded to him, he was on the verge of withdrawing after exhausting all avenues for support.

“I would like to thank the university's management for the scholarship support. It has made a

significant difference in my academic pursuits. I am confident that with your continued support, I will be able to achieve my academic goals and make a positive impact in my community,” he said, apparently aware of the expectation that the MEF is a community project that requires beneficiaries to also pay back in kind to other communities.

Mphanda acknowledges that MEF awards are one of a kind as his colleagues from other public universities have no such support.

“MUST's commitment to empowering students like me is truly inspiring, and I feel fortunate to be part of this community.”

True to Mphanda's observation, the authorities at MUST were under no obligation to support needy students with internally generated scholarships. However, the constant sight of students struggling in class due to lack of funds to pay for their fees, meals or accommodation was just too much. Something had to be done, and done in such a way that it should last long.

So in 2020, the university launched the MEF at a golf tournament in Lilongwe with former Vice President, late Dr Saulos Klaus Chilima, as guest of honour. By this time, just over a K1 billion was already reserved as seed money and since then, the Fund has grown to around K6 billion, thanks to the generosity of many partners who bought into the idea and supported it.

Four years down the line, the decision by authorities at MUST to go beyond their call of duty to manage the institution and teach students, is bearing fruit. Several students have benefitted from MEF and many have different but similar stories to tell. These are

stories of optimism, of hope and gratitude. Stories that are a departure from the gloomy and pessimistic dreams they once had. All this, because of the power of the magic wand the MEF scholarships have had on student lives.

As a new concept and MUST being the first university to implement it in Malawi, the MEF was a tricky product to sell. People were used to receiving requests for once-off support to needy students and other challenges faced by education institutions. But in its novelty lied the MEF's beauty that attracted partners. Contrary to tradition, MEF promised and guaranteed sustainability, continuity and growth, leading to supporting more students and for many years.

“The concept is that any support towards the MEF will be invested and only a fraction (5 percent) of the profit, to mature after three years, will be used to support needy students. The rest of the funds will be left to grow the Fund. With this approach, the Fund's growth will always be sustained and the resources to support students will be more and forever. The Fund will outgrow and outlive all of us here,” said Professor Address Malata, MUST Vice Chancellor as she marketed the idea to potential funders in 2020. Then just a mere dream, the MEF is now able to sponsor 120 new students every year and as it grows, so too will the number of beneficiary students. The goodness of the MEF scholarships, unlike other students' support schemes, is that it is designed to sustain beneficiary students until they finish their studies.

Although the initial Fund basket after three years was small and the impact on the beneficiaries

modest, there is only one way forward: more growth, more students and more positive impacts. With the majority of the funds injected by partners maturing in 2026, the MEF has bigger stories to tell than all what Nyirenda, Meja and Mphanda, combined, have said.

Of course, as MEF is new, there are more lessons learnt, and more to be learnt in its administration as the students testified.

“We are aware that the students would want more resources, timely disbursement and having more students reached. With time, we should be able to do all that. The most difficult thing was to roll

out MEF, the rest we can contend with as the journey continues,” said Macdonald Hudge, MUST’s Director of Finance and Investments.

Some of the major sponsors of the MEF are Illovo Sugar Malawi, FDH Bank, Standard Bank of Malawi, and National Bank of Malawi.



Orientation Participants

TAGDEV 2.0 PROGRAM ORIENTS PIC

By Mary Mwambongo

Expectations are high on improving inclusive, equitable and climate-resilient transformation of agriculture and agri-food systems in Africa.

This follows the participation of Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) in the Transforming African Agricultural Universities to Meaningfully Contribute to Africa’s Growth and Development (TAGDev) 2.0 program.

The program’s main objective is to strengthen universities and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions to drive inclusive, equitable and climate-resilient transformation of agriculture and agri-food systems in Africa.

On 25 February 2025, the Program Implementation Committee (PIC) for the TAGDev 2.0 program at MUST held a meeting in Mulanje to orient members on its scope, objectives and roles of PIC members.

The meeting provided a platform for brainstorming and discussing activities expected to be implemented under the program until 2033.

Dr Cecilia Maliwichi Nyirenda, Associate Program Coordinator for TAGDev 2.0, presented an overview of the program, highlighting its goal to create work opportunities and wealth for young people through agricultural education.

The program seeks to foster an inclusive and supportive educational environment, enabling students from diverse backgrounds to contribute to Africa's growth and development.

This includes targeting young people, refugees, internally displaced persons and differently abled people.

Dr Petros Chigwechokha, program coordinator, discussed the roles of the PIC and the program's budget.

He outlined the key responsibilities of the committee and the financial resources available to support the program's activities.

Twelve African universities, including MUST, were selected to implement the TAGDev 2.0 program. And locally, MUST is working with Lilongwe

University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), Mzuzu University (MZUNI) AND University of Livingstonia (UNILIA). It will also work with some TVET institutions.

This continental programme is being implemented in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation and Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM).

By working together, these institutions aim to drive transformative change in Africa's agriculture and agri-food systems.

Dr Mwapasa Mipando, PIC chairperson, urged members to be productive and focused to achieve the program's intended results.

He emphasized the importance of being competitive globally to gain trust and relevance from the program's partners.

The TAGDev 2.0 program presents a unique opportunity for MUST to contribute to the transformation of Africa's agriculture and agri-food systems.



**TAGDEV 2.0 IN CURRICULUM REVIEW TO ENHANCE
INDUSTRY ALIGNMENT, ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

As the world of industry and technology continues to evolve at a unique and fast pace, it is essential that education keeps pace.

The Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST), through the Transforming African Agricultural Universities to Meaningfully Contribute to Africa's Growth and Development (TAGDev) 2.0 program, is taking a proactive step in ensuring that its academic programmes remain relevant, competitive, and aligned with industry trends.

In this regard, MUST embarked on a comprehensive curriculum review in Mulanje, focusing on seven key programmes.

These programmes include MSc in Entrepreneurship (to be combined with Innovation), MEng in Applied Chemical Engineering, MSc in Biotechnology, BSc in Pharmacology, MSc in Clinical Pharmacology, Toxicology and Drug Discovery, MSc in Pharmaceutical Technology and Manufacturing, and Industrial Pharmaceutical Fellowship.

The primary objective of this exercise is to infuse entrepreneurship and job creation into these programmes, a critical aspect of TAGDev 2.0's mandate to drive skills development, industry relevance, and economic transformation.

By integrating entrepreneurial thinking into academic training, MUST aims to produce graduates who are not only

employable but also capable of creating jobs in their respective fields.

The initiative aligns perfectly with TAGDev's broader vision of fostering innovative, and industry-driven education that meets both local and global demands.

By reviewing these programmes, MUST is taking a proactive step in bridging the gap between academia and industry, ensuring that graduates are well-equipped to contribute meaningfully to Malawi's economic and scientific landscape.

During the opening session of the meeting, Dr Bonnet Kamwana, Entrepreneurship and Business Development Manager for TAGDev 2.0 program at MUST, provided valuable insights into the program's objectives, emphasizing its role in scholarship provisions and system transformation.



Dr Petros Chigwechokha, TAGDev 2.0 program coordinator, further stressed the importance of integrating entrepreneurial thinking into academic training.

The TAGDev 2.0 curriculum review is a significant step towards creating a brighter future for Malawi.

By producing graduates who are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and entrepreneurial mindset necessary to drive innovation and economic growth, MUST is contributing to the country's economic and scientific transformation.



MUST Management pose with the workshops

MUST HOSTS 2025 APN & NEXT GEN WORKSHOPS

By Mary Mwambongo

The Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) had the privilege of hosting the 2025 writing and dissemination, and national grant writing and proposal development workshops, organized by the Social Sciences Research Council (SSRC) under its African Peacebuilding Network (APN) and Next Generation Social Sciences in Africa (Next Gen) programs.

Held from February 24 to March 1, 2025, in Blantyre, the workshops brought together early career academics, researchers, and practitioners from across Africa to build their capacities in research grant writing, proposal development, and dissemination.

The writing and dissemination workshop targeted APN and NextGen fellows from eligible member countries, providing them with a unique opportunity to enhance their research skills, network with peers, and receive

mentorship from experienced academics.

According to Professor Cyril Obi, APN and NextGen program director, APN fellowships support early career academics in Africa who have earned their PhDs within the past 12 years, and practitioners/policymakers who have a master's degree with at least five years of work experience in the field of conflict and peacebuilding.

The national workshop, facilitated by highly experienced academics and mentors, aimed to sharpen the research grant writing and proposal development skills of academics in Malawi.

Dr Ignasio Jimu, chair of the local organizing committee and head of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices department at MUST, emphasized the importance of this workshop in providing participants with the skills and knowledge necessary to secure research funding and

contribute to the development of their communities.

The workshops provided a unique platform for participants to interact and work with a well-established network of African scholars, share experiences, and learn from each other.

The event also featured plenary lectures by leading academics, smaller working groups, and one-on-one sessions, ensuring that participants received comprehensive support and guidance.

By hosting these workshops, MUST demonstrated its commitment to research excellence, capacity building, and community engagement.

As MUST Vice Chancellor Professor Address Malata noted during the opening ceremony, "we are proud to partner with the SSRC and host these workshops, which align with our mission to promote research, innovation, and community development".



Participants of the MUNDA HUB launch

MEDHUM AT MUST LAUNCHES MUNDA HUB

By Saffie Chirambo

The Malawi Medical Humanities Network (MMHN) at the Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) has taken a decisive step with the launch of its "Munda Hub" session.

Held on March 4, 2025, at the university's Thyolo Campus herbal garden, the event marked the beginning of an exciting journey to foster creativity, intellectual growth, and community care.

The Munda Hub, named after the Chichewa word for "garden," is a vibrant space designed to nurture innovation, inspire growth, and promote environmental sustainability.

The initiative is built around the theme of "Eco-Conscious Living: Cultivating Green Health for a

Better Tomorrow," aiming to educate and inspire participants to adopt eco-friendly practices that synergize science and art.

The Munda Hub represents a powerful bridge between traditional knowledge, scientific innovation, and eco-conscious living.

By combining local traditions with academic consistency, this initiative is poised to inspire innovative approaches to healthcare and environmental stewardship.

This unique blend of traditional and modern knowledge will foster a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of human health, the environment, and local communities.

The launch event was a success, and included a guided tour of the

herbal garden, led by Andrew Kapombeza and Mr Chilomo.

The tour showcased a variety of medicinal plants and herbs, dismissing myths and highlighting their benefits.

Two outstanding student presentations followed, with Chimwemwe Mlauzi emphasizing the mental, physical, and environmental health benefits of caring for nature, and Dean Chilewani exploring the health-humanities approach to fostering eco-conscious practices and green health. The session also featured a herbal tea tasting part, led by Dr Atikonda Mtenje Mkochi, Executive Dean of Bingiu School of Culture and Heritage (BISCH) and Project Co-Principal Investigator.



Workshop participants

SBAPP PROJECT TO ASSESS, DIGITIZE MALAWI'S BIODIVERSITY

By Justice Ndau

The Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST), through its Spatial Biodiversity Assessment, Prioritisation and Planning (SBAPP) project, implemented in collaboration with the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD), hosted a workshop on the Red List of Ecosystem (RLE) and Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) in Blantyre.

The event brought together critical stakeholders in biodiversity and environmental management in Malawi, including members of the national coordinating group, university students, and partners from South Africa.

The workshop emphasized the significance of assessing biodiversity areas in Malawi to collect species information for digitization.

The workshop aimed to equip a national coordinating group with the knowledge and skills necessary to assess KBAs in the country.

National Coordinator for SBAPP, Dr. Tiwonge Mzumara-Gawa, who is also a senior lecturer at MUST, said they are targeting 13 KBAs for assessment.

She highlighted the importance of using new global standards to assess these areas, which will provide valuable insights into Malawi's ecosystem.

Research Scientist in the Department of Agriculture Services in the Ministry of Agriculture, Arnold Makhwira, emphasized the importance of digitizing biodiversity information.

He noted that this will enable accurate information about species, which is essential for

informing policy decisions and protecting Malawi's biodiversity.

Makhwira also highlighted the challenges posed by limited resources and the need for accurate data to track and prevent harmful activities.

The initiative is part of activities under the SBAPP project, which is being implemented in Malawi, South Africa, Namibia, and Mozambique.

The project is funded by the French Development Agency and the French Facility for Global Environment. This regional collaboration demonstrates the importance of working together to address common biodiversity challenges and promote conservation efforts.

The assessment and digitization of Malawi's biodiversity are crucial steps towards a brighter future for the country's ecosystem.

By working together, stakeholders can ensure that accurate information is available to inform conservation efforts, policy decisions, and sustainable development initiatives



Funding restructuring meeting participants

VCs APPROVE SAVE PROJECT FUNDING RESTRUCTURE

By Mary Mwambongo

In a significant move, Vice Chancellors from Malawi's public universities gave the greenlight to restructure funding allocations for their institutions under the Skills for A Vibrant Economy (SAVE) project.

The development is a testament to the collaborative efforts of the country's higher education institutions and the Ministry of Education to drive positive change in Malawi's education sector.

The SAVE project, funded by the World Bank for US\$100 million, is designed to increase equitable access to market-relevant skills in priority areas of the economy.

With a special focus on females and vulnerable youth, the project aims to bridge the skills gap and foster economic growth.

During the meeting, then Secretary for Education Dr Mangani Katundu said "the ministry will always depend on your knowledge, skills, expertise, experience, and capabilities to provide overall strategic guidance

towards achieving the project development objective (PDO)".

The decision to restructure funding allocations followed a Mid-Term Review (MTR) conducted by the World Bank from October to November 2024.

The review revealed that funding allocation per institution was under-budgeted for, a situation worsened by the economic downturn since the project's rollout in 2021.

By restructuring the funding allocations, the institutions can

better utilize the resources available and maximize the project's impact.

The SAVE project is already yielding positive results, with Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences (MUBAS) Vice Chancellor, Associate Professor Nancy Chitera, reporting growth in student population enrolment.

"We have seen growth in student population enrolment, which is very critical and important," she said.

With the project set to close in 2026, the institutions are

expected to make a significant impact on Malawi's education sector.

MUST Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Wilson Mandala, and MUST SAVE Project Coordinator, Dr Tiwonge Gawa, attended the meeting, demonstrating the university's commitment to the project's success.

As one of the beneficiary institutions, MUST is set to benefit from the restructured funding allocations, enabling it to further its mission of providing quality education and skills development.

MUST's major infrastructure project under SAVE is construction of a 500-seater lecture theatre complex.

The SAVE project is a shining example of collaboration between Malawi's higher education institutions, the Ministry of Education, and the World Bank.

This collaboration entails these stakeholders are driving positive change in the education sector and empowering Malawi's youth to contribute meaningfully to the country's development.

GIRLS CHALLENGE STEM MYTHS

By James Mphande

They did not only prove wrong the long-held belief that girls are not good at Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), they also challenged the perception that no one can pass STEM subjects with flying colours from Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs), least of all, girls. Of course, it is true that CDSSs lack both laboratories and equipment necessary for the teaching and learning of STEM subjects. In some cases, they also lack adequately trained teachers in STEM.

This is the case of Memory Paiva from Nchalo CDSS, Jacqueline Samalani from Lizulu CDSS, Isabella Chindimba from Nsipe CDSS and many others who are now studying sciences at the



Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST).

According to Memory, the challenges they faced while doing their secondary school education at Nchalo CDSS in Chikwawa, only motivated them to work harder and de-mistify some of the perceptions. They demonstrated that unavailability of a laboratory is not the end of one's dream to pursue STEM related careers in

life. They showed that inadequate and sometimes improvised STEM equipment cannot curtail one's journey towards studying STEM related programmes in universities. They proved that hard work, dedication, commitment and focus, can work wonders amidst adversities.

For Memory, now in first year of her Bachelor of Science in Sciences Education programme at the

Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST), she could have easily failed even before starting her secondary school journey.

“When I was selected to Nchalo CDSS, I was reluctant to go. I had heard many stories of doom. People claimed that one cannot make it to university from a CDSS. And for girls, the hope of making it was even glimmer. However, my parents, knowing they could not afford private school, encouraged me to still go,” said Memory during a recent visit to her former school.

She said when she started classes, she noticed that lack of resources was a big challenge, coupled with lack of role models for female students, with the latter seeing many girls not working hard in class.

Even a year after Memory left Nchalo CDSS, the school has no working STEM laboratory. Government through EQUALS project, has just built some labs but they are yet to be commissioned. The school, according to science teacher, Chikumbutso Kenson, keeps some lab equipment in a small office and collects them to an ordinary class for lessons. So tough is the teaching and learning of STEM subjects that the school gave some students to choose between Physics and Chemistry on one hand and Geography and History on the other.

It would have been easier for Memory to resign to fate and take the Geography and History route, which has more students, but she was born to be fighter and

challenges are what motivates her.

“I was motivated by a certain student from our area who is also at MUST who came to speak to us when we were in Form 1. And I asked myself that if she was able to make it to university, why not me? So I realised that if I worked hard, be focused and committed, I could realise my dreams and it happened,” said Memory.

This was her second visit to the school. Her first was when she was called to collect her best performing female student award.

“I cannot lie that life was easy. Imagine that most of the experiments are theoretical and you only conduct real ones during an exam where you get to see some of the equipment for the first time,” said Memory who attracted the attention of students on the day, especially girls.

One of these girls was Form 4 student Tiyanjane Masamba, who like Memory, has chosen Physics and Chemistry.

Tiyanjane comes from Sekeni Village, Traditional Authority Lundu and bemoaned lack of role models from the area. And with her good grades this far, she is motivated to be the first role model in her village. She wants to inspire and motivate girls in her village, most of who drop out of school early.

“When a girl is selected to university like Memory did, it becomes a motivation for those of us who remain at the school. Even in the villages, such role models are critical. What I have noted is that much as the school is lacking in many areas, worse still for the

teaching and learning of STEM, most girls are to blame. They play in class, they are busy with relationships with boys, they do not really know why they are in school. It appears they are in school because their parents force them. And they lack ambition, have no motivation. No wonder, they fail in class,” said Tiyanjane.

Luckily for Tiyanjane and her fellow girls at Nchalo CDSS, Memory is willing to be visiting the school to talk to the students, especially the girls, to inspire and motivate them to work harder and surmount what looks like challenges.

On the other hand, Nchalo CDSS now has a female deputy head teacher, Dorothy Mandala, who also majored in STEM and teaches sciences at the school. Her position is a huge motivation and inspiration to female students, only if they recognise her achievements.

Madam Mandala acknowledges that without proper laboratories and equipment, teaching STEM subjects is a challenge as teachers have to improvise. She hopes once the new laboratory buildings are equipped and opened, there is hope of more Memory Paivas leaving the school for university to study STEM related programmes.

For Memory, her was to prove that it was possible. She is a living example of defiance against the order of expectation. She might be far at MUST studying, but her exploits at Nchalo CDSS, have become a springboard for girls to challenge long held myths about girls and STEM.



ADDA officer, Kimberly Saka making a presentation to students at Matapwata CDSS

ADDA CONDUCTS OUTREACH PROGRAM

By Mary Mwambongo

The African Drone and Data Academy (ADDA) at the Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) recently conducted an outreach program at Matapwata Secondary School in Thyolo.

The aim of the program was to sensitize the youth on the services offered at the Academy.

During the event, instructors from ADDA made presentations on the various programs offered, including the Emergency Unit program, Junior Academy, and Incubation Unit program.

The presentations highlighted opportunities available for students to acquire skills, develop innovative ideas, and drive positive change in their communities.

Ndapile Mkuwu, ADDA's Project Manager, emphasized the importance of participating in these programs, stating that they equip young people with

the skills necessary to drive innovation and address community challenges.

The outreach program also included a critical component on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).



Ndapile Mkuwu Presenting to the students

ADDA highlighted its commitment in making sure that it includes the aspect of PSEA in its operations, emphasizing the importance of creating a safe and respectful environment for all students, and provided guidance on how to prevent and report incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse.

This initiative demonstrates ADDA's commitment to promoting a culture of respect, dignity, and safety for all.

The outreach program is part of ADDA's efforts to engage with secondary school students and promote its mission of fostering innovation, creativity, and skills development.

By providing a platform for talented young minds to explore their interests in drone and data technologies, ADDA aims to empower young people to contribute meaningfully to Malawi's development.

ADDA's commitment to empowering young people is inspired by the belief that they hold the key to driving positive change and progress nationwide.

The ADDA is an institution at MUST, dedicated to providing a platform for talented young minds to explore their interests in drone and data technologies.



MUST STUDENTS HOLD MEN'S CONFERENCE

By Shadreck Mweso

On March 7, 2025, the Students' Representative Council (SRC) at the Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) made history by hosting its first-ever men's conference, focusing on discussions around mental health.

This groundbreaking event was organized in response to the growing concern of mental health issues among students on campus.

Recent statistics from the Malawi Police Service indicate that in the first half of 2024, the country recorded 281 suicide cases, representing a 27.7 percent increase from the previous year. Males accounted for 87.5 percent

of these cases, with 246 reported incidents.

This disturbing trend is a wake-up call for Malawi, which highlights the need for urgent action to address mental health concerns, particularly among young men.

The men's conference provided a safe space for students to openly discuss their mental health challenges.

In his opening remarks, Dr Kondwani Mkandawire, Dean of Students' Affairs (DoSA) at MUST, commended the SRC for the initiative, acknowledging the increasing reports of mental health concerns among students.

The conference aimed to break the silence surrounding mental health issues and encouraged students to seek help and support. ADDA Officers

During the conference, students shared their experiences and concerns, highlighting financial hardships as a primary source of mental health issues.

"With the current socio-economic situation, it is very difficult for us to sustain ourselves on campus throughout the semester. Even those on the Loans Board, lately, the money for upkeep has proven to be inadequate with prices of commodities going up almost

every other two weeks, said Victor Kainja, one of the students.

It was also highlighted that mental health issues are particularly common among male students on campus, who currently receive less support, such as scholarships, compared to their female counterparts.

This gap in support underscores the need for targeted initiatives to address the unique challenges faced by male students.

Gift Kamangira, a renowned human rights advocate, was the

guest speaker at the event, delivering a presentation titled: "Coping with financial and academic stress."

The presentation received applause from students for its insightfulness and relevance to their experiences.

Gomezgani Msowoya, SRC Social Welfare Director, announced plans to organize a similar conference for female students, demonstrating the SRC's commitment to supporting the

mental health and well-being of all students, regardless of gender.

The inaugural men's conference marked a significant step towards creating a healthier campus community at MUST.

By providing a platform for open discussion, seeking expert guidance, and addressing the unique challenges faced by male students, MUST is taking proactive steps to promote mental health awareness and support.



Deborah Kanyenga on duty

SAVE PROJECT IMPACTS COMMUNITIES

By Mary Mwambongo

Deborah Kanyenga, a single mother from Thyolo district, exemplifies the spirit of resilience and determination. Despite facing a number of challenges, her story is a testament to the power of hope and perseverance.

Deborah's journey has not been easy. She dropped out of school to

take care for her family after her mother fell ill. With no-one else to run to for assistance, she put her family's needs before her own, sacrificing her education.

However, life took a dramatic turn when Deborah secured employment through construction works funded by the Skills for a Vibrant Economy (SAVE) project

at the Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST).

As part of the construction team that is building a 500-seater lecture theatre complex at MUST's Thyolo campus, Deborah found a new sense of purpose.

"I'm grateful for the SAVE project. It has given me a job that has and will continue to change my life. I

can now provide for my family's basic needs," said Deborah in a recent interview at the construction site of the lecture theatres.

While the lecture theatre complex construction works' main objective is to address the issue of inadequate learning facilities at MUST to enable it increase access to higher education, to the communities around the university, it is also a source of employment and business.

Before lecturers and students will have the chance to enjoy a conducive learning and teaching environment, the community members are enjoying the fruits of employment and business opportunities, in the course, earning some income to improve their livelihoods.

Before MUST can use the lecture theatres to bridge the gap in access to quality higher education that

would empower students to reach their full potential, the lecture theatres under construction are providing a reason for the workers and vendors selling various items, to look forward to the next day with hope.

According to Precious Banda, a site engineer from DEC Construction overseeing the project, the construction process is making good progress, despite some setbacks due to the rains.

However, he is hopeful of the works sticking to its timelines. This hope is shared by the community members as it means assured employment and business.

Apart from Deborah, tens of other community members from the university's surrounding villages have secured jobs as it was the project's policy to prioritize locals for works that do not require expert knowledge.

Many others have jumped on the business opportunity created by the project by selling food items to the people working on the project.

For Deborah, being part of this project is more than just a job, it's a chance to rebuild her life and create a brighter future for herself and her family.

The SAVE project's impact extends far beyond the construction of a lecture theatre. In fact, it is not a project but a lifeline. It represents a beacon of hope for students as well as community members in the areas surrounding MUST and across Malawi, ensuring equal access to quality education and life changing opportunities.

The SAVE project's initiatives are a shining example of the impact made when prioritizing education and empowerment.

Alumni Spotlight

Marc Mphatso Kampira,
a shining example of MUST
excellence

In this edition, we shine the spotlight on one of our outstanding alumni, Marc Mphatso Kampira. Marc's journey is a testament to the transformative power of education and the impact that Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) can have on its students.



Marc pursued a Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Biomedical Engineering at MUST, graduating in 2021.

During his time at the university, he actively participated in religious clubs, innovation groups, and took on various university responsibilities. This general experience contributed to the person he is today.

Despite facing financial challenges after losing his father, Marc persevered and adapted by engaging in small businesses and seeking support from the Higher Education Students' Loans and Grants Board (HESLGB). His determination and resilience paid off, and he successfully completed his studies.

Today, Marc is the Founder and CEO of Dream Code Limited, a technology company specializing in software development, ICT solutions, and digital transformation.

He also serves as Executive Director of Focus on Developing Mother Africa (FODEMA), a non-profit organization dedicated to crisis response, education and technology development.

Marc credits MUST with providing him with a strong academic foundation, critical thinking skills, and a problem-solving mindset.

He encourages current students to embrace learning beyond the classroom, engage in research and innovation, and seek mentorship.

“One needs to explore and seize any opportunity that they come across at the university instead of just focusing on class related activities. It helps to widen one’s scope and skill sets,” he says.

Kampira emphasizes the importance of time management, resilience and adaptability. He also encourages students to network with the right people, take advantage of opportunities, and be part of success-driven groups.

As MUST celebrates Marc's achievements, we are reminded of the impact that MUST can have on its students.



Meeting participants

SAVE PROJECT FOR RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT

By Mary Mwambongo

The SAVE project at the Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) recently conducted an industry engagement exercise to gather insights on a proposed research project.

The project aims to improve Macadamia production among smallholder farmers in Neno and Mwanza districts.

According to Dr Tiwonge Gawa, Project Coordinator for SAVE project and senior lecturer at MUST, the research project addresses the challenges of low Macadamia production and processing in the districts.

"We want to equip farmers with knowledge on best practices for treating Macadamia, restoring soil fertility, and exploring alternative products from Macadamia," she explained.

The project will also help farmers learn about various products that can be derived from Macadamia, such as cooking oil, butter, and charcoal.

This will improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers and contribute to Malawi's economic growth, she said.

Daniel Nyando, Agriculture Enumerator for Mwanza and Neno Smallholder Macadamia Farmers Cooperatives, highlighted the challenges faced by farmers, including lack of

access to proper markets and inadequate machinery.

However, he expressed satisfaction with the research proposal, saying it will enhance and uplift Macadamia farming in the districts and the country.

By addressing the challenges faced by farmers and exploring innovative solutions, the research project will improve the productivity and profitability of Macadamia farming in Malawi.

Macadamia farming provides income opportunities for smallholder farmers and contributes to the country's agricultural exports. The success of the project will have a positive impact on Malawi's economy.



MUST and GLASGOW representatives

**MUST, UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW JOIN FORCES TO STRENGTHEN
EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS IN MALAWI**

By Mary Mwambongo

The Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) has partnered with the University of Glasgow to conduct an innovative research study on early warning systems for natural disasters in Malawi.

The collaborative effort brings together experts from both institutions to inform policy and drive sustainable development and is being funded by the British Academy.

A team of researchers, led by Professor Deborah Dixon from the University of Glasgow and Dr Marion Chirwa Kajombo from MUST, met with the university's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Address Malata.

The research team briefed Professor Malata on the study, which combines expertise from both universities to develop effective early warning systems for natural disasters in Malawi.

Addressing the team, Professor Malata emphasized the

importance of such collaborations, highlighting the benefits of mentorship and partnership in academic research.

The team also met with the Dean for Global Engagement Sub Saharan Africa at the University of Glasgow and MUST's Associate Professor Mwapatsa Mipando to discuss the current research project and potential future collaborations.

Associate Professor Mipando expressed interest for the project's potential to protect people and the environment locally and globally.

He assured of his support to the research team, which includes students from Glasgow, MUST's Ndata School of Climate and Earth Sciences, and the Bingu School of Culture and Heritage.

This interdisciplinary study incorporates Citizen Science, GIS, Remote Sensing, and Critical Discourse Analysis to develop innovative solutions for early warning systems.

The research is crucial for Malawi, which is prone to natural disasters such as floods, droughts, and landslides.

The findings of the study will inform policy and the development of effective early warning systems, ultimately saving lives, reducing damage to infrastructure, and promoting sustainable development.

MUST's Principal Investigators, Associate Professor Wilfred Kadewa and Dr Chirwa Kajombo, are leading the research efforts.

This partnership between MUST and the University of Glasgow demonstrates the university's commitment to driving innovation, advancing knowledge, and transforming lives.

MUST looks forward to sharing the outcomes of this groundbreaking research and its impact on Malawi's resilience to natural disasters.



MUST Staff pose with MDF and UPDF officials

MUST HOSTS UGANDAN DEFENCE OFFICERS

By Mary Mwambongo

MUST on March 26, 2025 hosted students and staff from the Ugandan People's Defence Force Senior Command and Staff College (UPDFSCSC) to enhance critical thinking skills in strategic studies.

In his welcoming remarks, Dr Ignasio Jimu, Head of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices at MUST, welcomed the delegation, highlighting the significant partnership between MUST and the Malawi Defence Force (MDF), which is hosting the Ugandan delegation.

The partnership with MDF, established through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2018, has seen the university jointly offering a

Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic Studies at MDF Staff and Command College in Salima.

Professor Jonathan Makuwira, who is coordinator for the Centre of Strategic Studies, jointly established and run with MDF and former Deputy Vice Chancellor at MUST, made a presentation on behalf of the Executive Dean for the Bingu School of Culture and Heritage (BISCH), Dr Atikonda Mtenjemkochi.

Professor Makuwira's presentation emphasized the importance of technology and scientific innovation in national development and security.

He challenged the guests to prioritize public protection to achieve sustainable goals.

Brigadier General Silver Changa Muhwezi, Head of Delegation from the UPDFSCSC, expressed gratitude to MUST for their warm welcome.

He emphasized the significance of such sessions in equipping them with the skills to effectively address complex human issues.

The visit showcased MUST's commitment to addressing national challenges, aligning with its strategic intent of "Solution MUST 2030."

The delegation also toured the campus, exploring projects like the African Drone and Data Academy (ADDA).



MUST and Norwegian institutions representatives

MUST FORGES PARTNERSHIP WITH NORWEGIAN INSTITUTIONS

By Justice Nda

The Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) hosted a high-level meeting with representatives from the Norwegian Research Centre (NORCE), the Development Fund of Norway (DF), and NORCAP.

This landmark meeting marked the beginning of a long-term collaboration between MUST and these esteemed Norwegian institutions.

The primary objective of the meeting was to explore opportunities for collaboration and identify shared research interests, with a particular focus on climate sciences.

The meeting commenced with a courtesy call to the offices of Vice Chancellor, Professor Address Malata and Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Wilson Mandala.

Professor Malata warmly welcomed the team and highlighted MUST's commitment to international collaboration, while Professor Mandala emphasized the importance of expanding the partnership beyond existing areas.

Dr Isaac Tchuwa, Senior Lecturer in Climate Sciences at MUST, provided valuable context for the ongoing collaboration.

Dr Rondrotian Barimalala, Senior Researcher at NORCE, expressed passion for expanding joint efforts beyond the Agriculture Resilience through Climate Information Services (ARCS) project.

And Phillip Tegha, Country Director of the Development Fund of Norway, underscored the partnership's significance in transforming the lives of vulnerable rural farmers through the ARCS initiative.

The meeting concluded in a technical session, where representatives from NORCE, DF, NORCAP, and MUST engaged in in-depth discussions on areas of mutual interest.

The teams collectively agreed to formalize the collaboration through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

This MoU aims to strengthen research, enhance capacity building, and drive impactful solutions for Malawi and beyond.

This strategic partnership is expected to unlock new opportunities for collaborative research, knowledge sharing, and capacity building.

As MUST continues to forge alliances with international institutions, it remains committed to driving innovation, advancing knowledge, and transforming lives.



Graduands

MUST, SAMSUNG EMPOWER YOUTHS WITH DIGITAL SKILLS

By Mary Mwambongo

The Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) in partnership with Samsung, recently successfully graduated its first cohort of students from the Samsung Innovation Campus program.

The three-week training, that was being conducted at MUST's Thyolo campus, focused on computer programming and coding, with an inspiring 31 out of 34 students completing the program.

The graduation ceremony, held at MUST's campus in Thyolo on February 6, 2025 was attended by Principal Secretary for Ministry of

Youth and Sports, Isaac Katopola, who emphasized the initiative's alignment with Malawi 2063.

This MW/2063 vision aims to empower the youth and equip them with digital skills and innovative thinking.

During the ceremony, Samsung awarded the three best-performing students with Samsung S24 series smartphones.

The initiative is a result of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between MUST and Samsung in 2023, with the aim of training youth in IT skills, including coding and programming.

Samsung's Corporate Social Responsibility Manager, Lefa

Makgato, highlighted the program's goal of supporting unemployed youths by providing them with necessary technological skills.

'This will enable them to excel and contribute to the development of their communities and the nation', she said.

MUST's Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Wilson Mandala, commended the partnership and appealed to Samsung to consider providing starter pack gadgets to students as this would enable them to put their new skills into practice and ensure a seamless transition into the tech world.



MUST DESIGN STUDIO HOSTS ARDUINO DAY

By Our Correspondent

On March 22, 2025, the MUST Design Studio hosted the 20th World Arduino Day commemoration, bringing together the group's enthusiasts, students, and innovators.

The event was sponsored by TME Education Africa, Qubix Robotics and the Mastercard Foundation, and attracted participants from various institutions and backgrounds, with a notable presence of students and graduates from MUST and Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences (MUBAS) as well as some industry players.

Several Arduino-based projects were exhibited, with some gaining notable recognition.

For example, Maverick's Ultraviolet Sterilisation (MUV) Bot by Bernard Mhango, Mwanasha Mphonda, and Hildah Kalino, all third-year MUST Biomedical Engineering students and Hope Matemba, a MUST Disaster and Risk Management student.

Another highlight was the CNC Pen Plotter, designed by Cedrick Mmangisa, a third-year MUST Biomedical Engineering student.

Beyond the exhibitions and presentations, the event served as a valuable networking platform, allowing students, engineers, and innovators to exchange ideas, build professional connections, and explore potential collaborations.

The engagement between participants and industry experts fostered an environment that encourages continuous learning and innovation.

According to MUST Design Studio coordinator, Nelson Mwenifumbo, the event was a success.

"Not only did it highlight the creative potential of Arduino-based projects but also reinforced MUST Design Studio's role as a hub for innovation and technological advancement. The presence of industry leaders underscored the growing impact of Arduino, automation, and problem-solving in shaping Malawi's future," he said.

Mwenifumbo said the collaboration with MUBAS was also critical.

"The event featured a keynote address from Chikumbutso Walani, a lecturer and Design Studio Engineer at MUBAS, and

the CEO of SmartFarms. He emphasized the potential of IoT, AI, and Machine Learning in driving technological advancement and challenged young innovators to focus on developing solutions to Malawi's pressing challenges rather than merely working on interesting projects," said Mwenifumbo.

"Also in attendance was Joshua Ngalande, a renowned innovator and engineer at Malawi Telecommunications Limited (MTL), who not only showcased his Digital Hotplate and Driving Simulator but also delivered an inspiring message. He urged young innovators to focus on making Malawi a better place instead of aspiring to move abroad for a better lifestyle. He encouraged them to develop groundbreaking innovations that could elevate Malawi to the same level as the countries they admire."

Arduino is an open-source electronics platform based on easy-to-use hardware and software. It makes microcontroller boards and software applications that are mostly use in building electronic based projects.

VICE CHANCELLOR'S TROPHY 2025 ENDS IN STYLE

By Charlie Mtambalika (LCC 3)

Over the March 21-23, 2025 weekend, the Malawi University of Science and Technology Thyolo campus was abuzz with excitement and competitive spirit as students participated in the 2025 Vice Chancellor's Trophy.



Then SRC president, Alexander Kude, presenting the trophy

The event, among others, featured various sporting activities, including volleyball, basketball, netball, weightlifting, athletics and cricket.

The closing and award ceremony was held on the final day, with Henry Chipfaka, University Warden, serving as the Guest of Honour on behalf of the Vice Chancellor.

University leaders, including University Registrar Alfred

Chinombo and Dean of Students' Affairs Dr Kondwani Mkandawire, showed their support by attending the event.

The 2025 VC Trophy was made possible through the generous support of sponsors, including FCB Bank, Smile Life Insurance, and Reunion Insurance.

During the competition, Hall 6 got the first position in Netball, Hall 1 and 2 came first in Basketball, and in football, Hall 1

got the first position among the games that were played.

The VC Trophy is more than just a sporting event, it is a celebration of the MUST community's spirit of unity and sportsmanship.

The event brings together students from different disciplines, thereby fostering a sense of friendship and friendly competition.



One of the participating football teams



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