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WELCOME TO VOLUME 3, ISSUE 2 OF THE BISCH NEWSLETTER!

BISCH is excited to share the newest edition of the *Bingu School of Culture and Heritage (BISCH) Newsletter* – a quarterly publication that not only informs you about our projects in the school and communities but also inspires and connects you to the vibrant life of our school.

In this edition, we go beyond reporting our activities, we also share the hopes, dreams, and collective vision that drive us forward. From our community engagement to research seminars, BISCH continues to be a site of critical reflection, innovation, and transformation.

At the heart of this issue is our unwavering commitment to decolonising higher education.

We showcase our belief that a good Malawian higher education must be inclusive, contextually grounded, and sensitive to the lived experiences of the Malawian body and mind.

This is not merely a classroom and pedagogical turn – it is a philosophical disruption as we call for Malawian thinkers to reimagine knowledge production and dissemination.

We draw inspiration from African intellectuals and cultural leaders such as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, whose seminal works, including ‘Decolonising the Mind’, continue to inspire us.

In this spirit, the newsletter explores the BISCH decolonial encounter, resistance, and forward thinking to put forward the ideals of the Malawian Other as a significant and critical regime of truth that must be taken seriously in academic discourse.

We will also speak about our research initiatives and commitment that speak to the broader demands for creating employable and entrepreneurship-minded graduates.

We invite you to journey with us, to imagine a decolonial future rooted in transmodernity where the voices, ideas and body of the Malawian Other are not marginal but central.

This is a future where knowledge is plural, education is liberatory and BISCH stands as a centre for intellectual renewal.

Welcome to BISCH Newsletter

BISCH EDITORIAL

DECOLONISING EDUCATION THROUGH INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES

At the Bingu School of Culture and Heritage (BISCH), we believe education should connect deeply with the lived experiences of Malawians.

As the only higher education unit in the country that explicitly mentions being dedicated to promoting culture and heritage, we see it as our responsibility to provide learning that reflects Malawi's cultural, historical, and contemporary realities.

Our goal is to offer education that honours our past, engages with our present, and prepares us for the future.

At the heart of our work is the commitment to build a curriculum that values Malawian knowledge and ways of understanding the world.

We design programs that encourage students to think critically about our history, challenge colonial ideas, and take pride in who we are. In this newsletter, we invite you to learn more about our innovative and disruptive programs—such as the Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices.

This program empowers students to explore Malawi's rich heritage while developing creative and practical skills that prepare them for today's world.

We know that challenging old ways of thinking can sometimes make people uncomfortable. But we see this as a sign of progress. Change often begins with difficult conversations, and we're proud to be part of that journey.

Recently, our BA in Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices programme faced criticism from some who questioned its relevance and job prospects. We realised that there is inadequate awareness about the hands on skills that the students have in ceramics, drawing and other creative practices and also other practical skills the graduates have in designing and delivering indigenous knowledge-based products, developing policies, organising community projects, conducting research, utilising digital tools and multimedia to document and analyse indigenous knowledge. and entrepreneurship. Graduates from the programme are relevant in areas that concern cultural policy and governance, academia and research, creative industries, community engagement and advocacy, sustainable development and conservation. This issue has many stories told by our staff, students and alumni within Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices and explore the critical role they play in our contemporary world.

In this newsletter, we also celebrate Africa Day and highlight our exciting work in research, art, and community engagement, as we continue to shape an education that truly reflects and celebrates Malawi.



Dr Atikonda Mtenje-Mkochi



MUST ENGAGES IKSP GRADUATES IN CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE

MUST on June 23, 2025 engaged graduates from the Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSP) programme who had recently raised some concerns about the programme.

The meeting brought together university management, academic staff, and alumni to discuss the graduates' concerns, particularly around employment opportunities.

During the discussion, the graduates highlighted high levels of unemployment among them and expressed concern that their current situation may be linked to the nature of their programme.

They sought clarification on key issues, including programme accreditation and whether a proper needs assessment was done before introducing the programme. However, they also acknowledged that the IKSP programme was both rich and relevant for Malawi, especially .

because of its multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach. They made proposals for strengthening the programme, including introduction of new modules that would better equip future graduates for the job market.

On his part, MUST Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Wilson Mandala, emphasized the importance of maintaining close relationship with alumni, as they are an essential part of the university community.

"MUST values these engagements as they offer opportunities for open dialogue and continuous improvement," he said.

It transpired that contrary to the graduates' claims, MUST records show that at least 22 graduates are currently employed in various sectors including government, non-governmental organizations, and entrepreneurship, a positive sign for a relatively new programme.

Speaking on behalf of the graduates, Ambrozo Namazemba described the meeting as fruitful and impactful.

"The open and honest discussions gave us hope and a sense of inclusion in shaping the future of the programme," he said.

Both parties agreed that unemployment is a broader national issue, affecting many graduates across disciplines. It was also acknowledged that awareness of the IKSP programme remains low in some government and non-governmental circles.

Going forward, both parties committed to working together to raise the programme's awareness and engage relevant stakeholders. They also agreed to collaborate on gathering accurate data that can support informed decision-making and contribute to IKSP's improvement.



AFRICA DAY: EMBRACING IDENTITY, CULTURE, AND UNITY AT BISCH

By Ellen Makhambera

The Bingu School of Culture and Heritage (BISCH) joined the rest of the world in celebrating Africa Day.

Africa Day is an opportunity to reflect on our identity as Africans, celebrate our heritage, and look forward to the future with hope.

At BISCH, this day carries deep meaning. Executive Dean Dr. Atikonda Mtenje-Mkochi shared her reflections on what African Day means to her and to the university community.

For Dr Mtenje-Mkochi, Africa Day is a personal celebration of identity. She described it as a reminder of Africa's beauty, warmth, and vibrancy. On this day, she takes time to enjoy African music, food, and fashion, and to pass on the importance of Africa's heritage to her children.

"Being African is part of me. I live as an African every day, but this day allows me to pause and celebrate how far we have come and where we are going," she said.

She also stressed the role of education in preserving and promoting African culture.

BISCH, as she explained, exists to teach, research, and showcase the richness of African heritage.

Through its academic programs, research projects, and innovations, BISCH showcases how African culture, history, and values can contribute to building sustainable development in Malawi and across the continent.

BISCH has unique degree programs in Musicology, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Language Communication and Culture, Cultural Economy

and Archives and Records Management

These are directly linked to the Malawi2063 vision, which calls for strong human capital and the growth of the creative and cultural industries. It also responds to the vision's urbanisation pillar.

Beyond academics, BISCH is well-known for its annual Cultural Festival, a flagship event that brings together students, staff, and the community to celebrate and share African traditions through performances, exhibitions, and dialogue.

Looking ahead, Dr. Mtenje-Mkochi offered a message of hope and responsibility to the MUST community. "Africa has come a long way. We are resilient, vibrant, proud, and rich. Our ancestors fought for this continent, and now it is our turn to build the Africa we want."



BISCH ED CONGRATULATES STUDENTS ON DEAN'S LIST

By Raymond William Kamanga

The Executive Dean of the Bingu School of Culture and Heritage (BISCH) at Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST), Dr. Atikonda Mtenje-Mkochi, has congratulated students who made it onto the Dean's List for achieving an average grade of 75 per cent and above in the January - May semester.

Students from the School excelled in various programs, including Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices, African Musicology, Language, Communication and Culture, Cultural Economy, and Archiving and Records Management.

Mtenje-Mkochi said the achievement reflects the commitment of both BISCH staff and students.

"The students were dedicated, hardworking, disciplined, and showed great understanding to achieve such grades," she explained.

The Dean's List aligns with the MUST pillar of education excellence as it resonates with the concept of producing market-ready graduates.

Since BISCH is geared towards promoting and preserving cultural heritage, the School is also looking forward to seeing these top performing students to be on the forefront to promote cultural heritage.

While she recognised the performance of the students on Deans List, she also pointed out that for those who have not made it this time around, all is not lost and they should not doubt their potential.

While there are no monetary rewards for students on the Dean's list at the moment, Dr. Mtenje-Mkochi said it comes with increased recognition.

"Students on the Dean's List have an increased visibility inside and outside MUST. They are the priority when opportunities come that require academic excellence. Apart from that, organisations and institutions that support students target star performers," she said.

The Dean's List is compiled every semester and is an academic motivation for students to maintain outstanding performance.

DEAN'S LIST

FAMILY NAME	GIVEN NAME	STUDENT ID	PROGRAM
CHIKAONEKA	CAROLYN	CEC/003/22	BA in Cultural Economy, 2
CHIWAULA	JOSEPH	OLC/059/22	BA in Language, Communication and Culture, 2
MAMBERERA	BLESSINGS	LCC/013/22	BA in Language, Communication and Culture, 2
DAMIANO	BULANDAMU	BAM/008/21	BA in Language, Communication and Culture, 2
CHINKHUNDA	PATIENCE	LCC/002/22	BA in Language, Communication and Culture, 2
PHIRI	FESTON	LCC/019/22	BA in Language, Communication and Culture, 2
YOBE	LOUISA	LCC/008/22	BA in Language, Communication and Culture, 2
MLANGALI	GERALD	LCC/015/22	BA in Language, Communication and Culture, 2
WANJA	CHRISTOPHER	BAM/020/21	BA in African Musicology, 3
CHILEWANI	DEAN	SS/005/20	BA in Cultural Economy, 3
KUYERI	ISAAC	OLC/109/21	BA in Language, Communication and Culture, 3
KAMANGA	WILLIAM	LCC/014/20	BA in Language, Communication and Culture, 3
BANDA	HAPPY	LCC/010/21	BA in Language, Communication and Culture, 3
GAMA	NATASHA	LCC/004/21	BA in Language, Communication and Culture, 3
MANDALA	PROMISE	LCC/006/21	BA in Language, Communication and Culture, 3
MTAMBALIKA	CHARLIE	LCC/016/21	BA in Language, Communication and Culture, 3
MBUGHI	MBOKIRE	LCC/015/21	BA in Language, Communication and Culture, 3
YOWELI	TSIDKENU	LCC/020/21	BA in Language, Communication and Culture, 3
BANDA	GIFT	BAM/201/21	BA in African Musicology,4
KAPALAMULA	MEMORY	BAM/002/20	BA in African Musicology,4
MVALO	JOSEPH	BAM/202/20	BA in African Musicology,4
LUKHERE	ZIKANI	BME/022/19	BA in Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices, 4
KUSE	RABECCA	SES/003/18	BA in Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices,4
PONDANI	RACHEAL	KSP/009/20	BA in Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices,4
MWESO	SHADREK	LCC/015/20	BA in Language, Communication and Culture ,4
PHIRI	JONATHAN	LCC/017/20	BA in Language, Communication and Culture,4
CHIMTOLO	MONALISSAH	LCC/001/20	BA in Language, Communication and Culture ,4
JORDAN	OFTEN	LCC/013/20	BA in Language, Communication and Culture,4
CHABWERA	WRIGHT	BAM/005/19	BA in Language, Communication and Culture, 4
SHABA	GLORY	LCC/008/20	BA in Language, Communication and Culture,4
PHIRI	BLESSINGS	LCC/018/20	BA in Language, Communication and Culture ,4
WASIE	UTHMAN	LCC/020/20	BA in Language, Communication and Culture,4
GANIZANI	SYMON	LCC/011/20	BA in Language, Communication and Culture,4



BISCH BIDS FAREWELL TO DR MDOKA

By Benedicto Vickson

The Bingu School of Heritage and Culture (BISCH) held a heartfelt farewell to honor Dr. Witness Mdoka, who has left the school to pursue new personal roles.

Dr Marion Chirwa Kajombo, the HoD of the Language and Communication Studies department at BISCH, where Dr Mdoka belonged for about 5 years, described Dr Mdoka as a solid academic with unwavering commitment to scholarly excellence.

Commenting on the same, Ernest Longwe, one of the BISCH lecturers, expressed his gratitude to Dr. Mdoka for the consistent support he and other lecturers had received over the years, noting that this support played a significant role in the milestones he has achieved.

“Dr. Mdoka is one of the people you could easily go to and interact with. When talking to people with vast knowledge, some could hide the knowledge they have but Dr. Mdoka was not like that. Every time you approach him, he could share what he has.” Longwe said.

Dr Atikonda Mtenje-Mkochi, the Executive Dean of BISCH, described Dr Mdoka as a true embodiment of professionalism.

As Dr. Mdoka transitions to new endeavors, the sentiments from the BISCH community are overwhelmingly positive. Many see him as a visionary leader whose passion and dedication elevated the School’s stature.



BIGGERS SAULI PASSES MASTER'S DEGREE WITH DISTINCTION

By Margret Mbendela

The Bingu School of Culture and Heritage is thrilled to extend its warmest congratulations to Mr. Biggers Sauli, who has successfully earned his Master of Arts in Chinese Language with distinction from Huazhong University of Science and Technology in China.

Reflecting on his remarkable academic journey, Mr. Sauli shared a mix of emotions. As the sole international student among his Chinese peers, he navigated unique cultural challenges while embracing incredible opportunities for growth. His experience truly embodies the spirit of international and multicultural education.

The Master of Arts program at Huazhong University is renowned for its rigor, dedicating one year to intensive coursework and another to groundbreaking research. Despite the demanding academic landscape, Mr. Sauli consistently excelled, standing out as an exceptional student throughout his studies.

Mr. Sauli's pursuit of a master's degree was driven not only by the professional necessity of lecturing at the university level but also by a deep desire to hone his teaching skills. This transformative experience has fostered his holistic growth, enabling him to seamlessly integrate new knowledge and strategies into his classroom practice.

Looking ahead, Mr. Sauli aims to further his academic pursuits with a PhD. However, he believes in a thoughtful approach; first establishing himself in his teaching career and building upon his current achievements. When asked for advice for students and aspiring educators, his heartfelt response resonated deeply: "Pursue this major with love. There are so many opportunities. Follow your dreams and aspirations, give it your all and watch the fruits that come with it."

Mr. Sauli's dedication and achievements continue to be a profound inspiration to the entire BISCH family.



BISCH students at the function

BISCH INTENSIFIES TALENT FORTNIGHT

Bazuka Shark

The Bingu School of Culture and Heritage continues to conduct Talent Fortnight. BISCH Talent Fortnight is a special event that celebrates the artistic talents of students.

It is mainly organised for BISCH students and takes place at the Undercroft, also known as Negative 1, at MUST's main campus. The event is significant because it bridges the gap between traditional heritage and modern creativity, while also promoting the preservation of Malawi's diverse cultural identity.

During the event, BISCH students showcase various forms of art, including music, paintings, poetry, and cultural performances.

Its main goal is to help young students appreciate and preserve Malawi's culture by involving them directly in artistic expression.

The coordinator of the event, Ms Nangisha Talama, commenting on the same, said, "The BISCH Talent Fortnight aligns with the mission and values of MUST, such as excellence, professionalism, ethics, and competitiveness. It's a great opportunity for students to share their cultural talents.

The event also allows students to present their innovations to a wider audience, including through songs that highlight the importance of heritage.

She also added that participating in such events helps students grow both personally and professionally.

She argued that performing in front of a crowd builds confidence, improves public speaking, and teaches them how to effectively express their ideas. The students are also given an opportunity to build a portfolio, which they can present later in the industry.

The event features music, ceramics, paintings, drawings, and displays of traditional herbs. In a university environment where students come from different cultural backgrounds, it is important to create a space for sharing and celebrating each other's heritage.



Students showcasing their music talent



BISCH MOURNS NGUGI WA THIONG'O (1938 - 2025)

BISCH joined the rest of the world in mourning a literary icon, Ngugi wa Thiong'o.

His passing robs the world of revolutionary thought and being, but his calls for decolonisation and the reclamation of indigenous knowledge and African culture will remain alive in us.

Born James Ngugi on January 5, 1938, and passed on May 28, 2025, he changed his name to Ngugi Wa Thiong'o to live his African identity to the max.

His life work demonstrated a radical recognition of African storytelling and challenged the colonial project in African education.

At BISCH, we celebrate Ngugi not only as a giant of the Gikuyu culture into which he was born and raised in Kenya, but also as a giant of African Literature.

Influenced by the theoretical formulations of Frantz Fanon, Karl Marx, and Friedrich Engels, Ngugi was not only a political writer, but he was also a militant advocate for the rights of

Africans to govern themselves and possess their land.

Ngugi wrote extensively on the negative effects of the British colonisers and the Christian missionaries in appropriating to themselves the most fertile land in Kenya and making the native Kenyans slaves on the land of their ancestors.

As a giant of African Literature, Ngugi's novels, plays, essays, short stories, and prison memoirs have found their way into the curricula of secondary and tertiary education.

His literary contributions include *Weep Not, Child*, *The River Between*, *A Grain of Wheat*, *Petals of Blood*, *Matigari*, *Wizard of the Crow*, *Devil on the Cross*, *I Will Marry When I Want*, *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary*, *In the House of the Interpreter*, *Minutes of Glory*, and *Other Stories*, *Moving the Centre*, *The Language of Languages* and *Birth of A Dream: A Writer's Awakening*, among others.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o will be remembered as one of the greatest minds of our time.

BISCH ROLLS OUT WEEKEND DEGREE PROGRAMS

By Charlie Mtambalika

In its continued efforts to make higher education more accessible and inclusive, BISCH together with other Schools at MUST has launched weekend Degree Programs under the Departments of Language and Communication Studies and Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices.

Starting in the 2025/2026 academic year, BISCH is offering Bachelor of Arts in Language, Communication and Culture and Bachelor of Arts in Archives and Record Management. Classes have already commenced, and students are sat for their end-of-semester exams in October.

The Executive Dean of Bingu School of Culture and Heritage, Dr Atikonda Mtenje-Mkochi, says by introducing the weekend programs, BISCH is providing an alternative route to academic and professional growth without forcing people to choose between learning and their livelihoods.

Although the programmes are being delivered during the weekends, the content and quality remain the same during the weekend offerings. The program is ideal for those interested in media, creative industries, communication, and cultural work.

To be eligible for enrollment in these programs, applicants must have a minimum of six MSCE credit passes, including English.

The programs are not just about academics; they also prepare students for the real world.

Depending on one's specialisation, graduates of a BA in Language, Communication and Culture can pursue careers in Public Relations, Publishing, Graphic Design, Translation, Creative Writing, Media and Consultancy.

Graduates from the BA in Archives Management can pursue careers such as Digital Archivist, Collections Assistant, Project Archivist, Information and Culture Officer, and Records and Archive Manager.



The introduction of weekend programs is more than just a scheduling shift. It's a strategic move toward educational equity.

It will create room for growth for archive and communication enthusiasts who want to deepen their craft, and anyone eager to earn a degree while balancing life outside the classroom.

In an increasingly dynamic and critical Malawian academic landscape that fosters social change, BISCH ensures that no one is left behind.

MR PATRICK JUMA LEAVES FOR DOCTORAL STUDIES

A lecturer in Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices at BISCH, Mr Patrick Juma, left for South Africa to pursue a PhD in Philosophy at the University of Johannesburg.

He is reading towards the PhD under the supervision of Professor Harris Chad and Dr Tonny Shabangu.

Mr Juma was scheduled to start his studies on 11 February 2025, but due to delays in processing his study permit, he left for South Africa on 10 April 2025.

Mr Juma's research title is: *"Rethinking the Ubuntu Concept of Personal Autonomy as a Moral Principle for Service Provision."*

The topic falls under the field of Applied Business Ethics and seeks to contribute to discourses in African Moral Philosophy.

When asked why he decided to study towards a PhD in Philosophy, Mr Juma explained 'I do not think that I chose to study what I am studying now; having studied Philosophy as an undergrad and at MA level, this is who I am and what I am, a student of Philosophy, and I am confident that the research skills and academic rigour at the PhD level will enhance my career as a lecturer and researcher.'



Even though Mr Juma is on a study leave, he is not completely detached from the BISCH and IKSP departments.

Mr Juma is still involved in the supervision of Post Graduate Diploma in Strategic Studies as well as undergraduate students. He also frequently attends BISCH hybrid Research Seminars.

Commenting on the same, the Executive Dean of Bingu School of Culture and Heritage, Dr Atikonda Mtenje-Mkochi, congratulated Mr Juma for taking such a huge and important step in academic life.

She encouraged other lecturers who have not attained a PhD to secure the much-needed education.

BISCH is increasingly having PhDs, with other PhD scholars expected to complete their studies soon. The School is poised to become one of the few schools in Malawi with the largest number of PhD academics.

IKSP STUDENTS VISIT LAKE MALAWI NATIONAL PARK

By Mervis Nyanda

On April 12, 2025, first-year students from the Indigenous Knowledge, Systems and Practices department embarked on an enriching field trip to Lake Malawi National Park.

This excursion was not only a chance to explore one of Malawi's UNESCO World Heritage sites but also an opportunity for students pursuing their Bachelor's degrees in Cultural Economy and Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices to gain firsthand experience in their field.

The primary aim of the trip was to immerse students in the practical aspects of cultural heritage, allowing them to experience the intersection of culture, economy, and nature.

The excursion was structured to help students understand the significance of Lake Malawi National Park as a cultural and ecological treasure.

Upon arriving at Lake Malawi National Park, students were greeted by the breathtaking views of the clear blue waters and the surrounding landscapes.



IKSP students being briefed at Lake Malawi National Park

They participated in guided tours led by park rangers who shared invaluable insights into the local flora, fauna, and the historical significance of the area.

Students observed the local fishing practices and traditional customs of the communities living around the lake, offering them a tangible connection to their studies in indigenous knowledge systems.

The visit also included hands-on activities such as traditional fishing techniques, which highlighted the sustainable practices that have been passed down through generations.

These experiences emphasized the importance of respecting and preserving indigenous knowledge while being aware of the impacts of contemporary culture on natural resources.



IKSP students at the park



Participants pose with Lungu after the presentation

MR PRECIOUS LUNGU EXAMINES LEGAL TEXTS AT BISCH SEMINAR SERIES

Mr Precious Lungu, a lecturer in the Department of Language, Cultural and Creative Studies at Mzuzu University, on 26th June, 2025, presented a paper at the BISCH Seminar Series titled “Challenges of Translating Legal Texts into Malawian Languages.”

His study explored the difficulties translators face when rendering legal texts and discourses into Malawian languages. Lungu highlighted that Chichewa is the only local language with translated legal texts, and that many minority languages in Malawi remain excluded from legal discourse due to the lack of translated materials. This gap limits access to justice for speakers of these languages.

Lungu emphasised that all Malawian languages have the right to be used in legal contexts—both spoken and written. The study, therefore, aimed to examine the challenges of translating legal texts into these languages, assess the impact on language rights, and propose practical solutions.

Findings revealed that translators encounter numerous obstacles when working with legal texts in local languages, which significantly affects language rights.

Many citizens are unable to access legal information in their mother tongue, particularly speakers of minority languages. This situation violates their linguistic rights.

Lungu concluded by recommending legal training for translators and advocating for the translation of legal texts into a broader range of Malawian languages to promote inclusivity and justice.



Lungu making a presentation

BISCH IN PICTURES



IKSP Students at Lake Malawi National Park



IKSP alumnus



BISCH students at a Chinese language competition



BISCH Talent fortnight



MUST lecturer during his graduation ceremony



MUST _ IKSP graduate interface

We are glad to celebrate some of our critical moments in the quarterly through pictures



Some of the MUST academic at the defence

MUST REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING POSTGRADUATE RESEARCHERS

In June, MUST marked a significant academic achievement with the successful completion of thesis defences by its postgraduate students.

The event, which brought together students, supervisors, examiners, and peers, was a powerful reflection of the university's commitment to academic excellence and research that responds to real-world challenges.

Dr Jabulani Nyengere, the University's Postgraduate Coordinator, described the milestone as a profound indicator of institutional health and academic maturity, emphasizing that these defences are not merely academic rituals, but proof that MUST is steadily growing into a centre of advanced research and knowledge creation.

The postgraduate research projects covered a wide range of pressing national issues ranging from climate-resilient agriculture, renewable energy, and biomedical innovations to data science and industrial technology, demonstrating the university's focus on relevance and impact.

Dr Nyengere said this success is made possible through a vibrant support system that includes expert supervision, access to modern laboratories, research grants, and academic writing workshops. He further noted that what makes MUST's postgraduate programmes unique is their strong orientation towards innovation and entrepreneurship, as well as the deliberate effort to craft home-grown solutions to Malawi's challenges.

"We don't just train students to write theses, but we prepare them to transform their knowledge into practical solutions and policy recommendations," he said.

MUST also supports students in publishing their findings, engaging with communities, and translating their work into innovations through its innovation hub, MUST Institute of Industrial Research and Innovation (MIIRI).

As for students preparing for their own defences, Dr Nyengere advises them to know their work inside and out, practise their presentations, anticipate questions, and embrace the defence as a scholarly conversation.



The competition offers a unique opportunity for students to interact

MUST STUDENTS PARTICIPATE AT A CHINESE COMPETITION

In June, three students studying BA in Language, Communication and Culture participated in the Chinese Bridge competition in Lilongwe.

Commenting on the trip, MUST Chinese lecturer who accompanied them, Mr Biggers Sauli, explained one of the students who had represented MUST, Clever Chipembere, had won position three while the other two finished in fourth position.

The Chinese Bridge Competition is an international contest that promotes Chinese language and cultural exchange among non-native speakers worldwide.

It includes categories for university and high school students, where participants showcase their Chinese language skills, knowledge of Chinese culture, and talents like singing, dancing, or calligraphy.

The competition aims to build connections between China and other countries, offering scholarships, cultural exposure, and opportunities for international engagement.

In Malawi, the competition is organized by the Confucius Institute at the University of Malawi in partnership with the Chinese Embassy. Students compete at a national level through speeches, cultural performances, and quizzes. Winners are selected to represent Malawi in the global finals, often held in China. The event plays a key role in strengthening educational and cultural ties between Malawi and China, while also encouraging youth to pursue further studies and opportunities related to Chinese language and culture.



MUST Chinese Lecturer, Mr Sauli, with some of his students at the competition



PRODUCTS ON THE MARKET

Contact Persons : Mr Patrick Fayilosi and Ms Doreen Malimba
Contact Numbers : +265888511458; +265888594834



Soup bowl: K8800



Plate: K10,300



Tea Cup: K2400



Vase: K 10000



Figurine: K5000



Figurine: K5,800



Some of the work done by the first year students

IKSP FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS EXPRESS EXCITEMENT ABOUT THEIR EDUCATION

First-year students in the BA in Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSP) program have expressed excitement about their academic journey, describing it as both empowering and practical.

Omar Master, a first-year class representative, explained that students are currently being introduced to courses such as Indigenous Knowledge, Ethics and Morality, Critical Thinking and Reasoning, Academic Writing, Computer Skills, and Ceramics.

In ceramics, students are learning the art and science of pottery.

“We are covering topics such as wedging, which is the process of preparing clay for use. We are also studying the materials involved in ceramics like clay, feldspar, and silica, and learning how to prepare them for different projects,” Master explained.

He emphasized that the hands-on nature of the program provides students with entrepreneurial opportunities.

“This education is important in business because it gives us practical experience.

When I complete my degree, I will be able to start a ceramic business that can empower me socially and economically.

I also look forward to employing others,” he said.

The IKSP program at BISCH aims to blend indigenous knowledge with modern skills, equipping students to create livelihoods rooted in cultural heritage while contributing to sustainable development.



First year students in the ceramics studio



DR EVA CHIKABADWA

Eva Chikabadwa holds a PhD in Visual Studies from the University of Pretoria. Her area of interest is Visual literacy.

She is a lecturer under the Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices Department within the Bingu School of Culture and Heritage. She joined BISCH in 2019 and teaches the Arts, including Ceramics, Drawing and Painting.

Dr Chikabadwa is also a graduate of the University of Malawi (UNIMA). She first graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Social Sciences in 2003 and later earned a Bachelor of Arts in Humanities in 2009.

From 2003 to 2004, she worked as a manager for a stone sculpting project under the main project, *Utilisation of Stones and Mineral Resources*, by the Geological Survey Department.

At some point, she was offered a permanent post to work as an artist. Unfortunately, she didn't have the right papers since she graduated as a social scientist. This prompted her to re-register for another four years to earn the right papers.

After joining UNIMA as an assistant lecturer in Fine Arts in 2011, she decided to further her studies at the University of Cape Town, where she earned her master's degree in Fine Arts.

Dr Chikabadwa is a practising Artist in Sculpture, Ceramics, Drawing and Painting. She has exhibited locally and internationally in countries like USA, Germany, China, Egypt, Austria, South Africa and Nigeria.

She confesses that she has failed to satisfy a high demand for her artistic products due to her teaching responsibilities. She has also failed to play many roles and missed many opportunities as an artist for the same reasons.

Dr Chikabadwa says that Art education is crucial and should never be underrated. She explains that Malawi has failed to progress in the craft industry due to a lack of Art education.

Art education helps develop spatial intelligence, which is crucial for achieving quality in all manufactured products that require precise alignment and proportion in aesthetic value.

She illustrates that a very good example is furniture and clothing. Local tailors often fail to understand the importance of creating a perfect straight line when sewing our clothes, which is something we appreciate in imported jeans trousers.

Dr Chikabadwa's trajectory in the arts demonstrates that the arts, and IKSP in particular, offer numerous opportunities that IKSP specialists can leverage.



Dr. Eva Chikabadwa during her graduation

VICTOR KAMWENDO

When Victor Kamwendo first discovered the BA in Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices program in form 4 through the NCHE application forms, he knew he had found his calling.

Now in his final year, this dedicated student has become a passionate advocate for a field that many misunderstand but which he believes holds the key to meaningful community impact.

Victor's path to Indigenous Knowledge Systems wasn't accidental. "It was my first choice when applying," he explains. "I noticed it was something that would incorporate my interest in interacting with people, especially vulnerable groups in society, and make an impact to improve their lives." This desire to create positive change has remained at the heart of Victor's academic journey, driving him through challenges and inspiring his vision for the future.

One of Victor's biggest challenges has been addressing misconceptions about his field of study. "People think it's an inferior program, which hurt my feelings at first in my first year," he admits. "But I accepted my program for what it is and remained resilient to the negative perceptions."

So what exactly does Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practice involve? Victor is quick to clarify: "It covers all aspects of indigenous people. Yes, one aspect is witchcraft that people talk about outside the program, but we study it to define and understand it, and to protect people called witches, who often times here in Malawi are the elderly. But that's not all we study."

His commitment extends beyond the classroom. He serves as the Leader of the Chewa Heritage Foundation and is an active member of the registered Indigenous Society. These roles allow him to put his learning into practice and advocate for indigenous communities.

He also explains that BISCH is internationalising the program. "Fellow students have presented research papers in America and Singapore related to their field of study," Victor proudly shares.

His journey from a first-year student facing misconceptions to a confident final-year leader shows that passion and perseverance can overcome initial challenges and societal prejudices.



Victor Kamwendo



GLORIA KIMANA JOSEPH

In this issue, we spotlight our alumna, Gloria Kimana, who serves as a social worker at Shepherds of Good Hope in Canada. She is dedicated to supporting indigenous people and new immigrants.

Her work involves helping indigenous people access essential services, overcome trauma, and preserve their cultural heritage.

Gloria's research background in indigenous knowledge and medicine has been instrumental in shaping her interdisciplinary approach.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, she explored the use of traditional medicine in Indigenous communities, highlighting the importance of indigenous knowledge in healthcare.

Her research experience has given her a deep understanding of history and cultural context that shape indigenous experiences.



Gloria Joseph in Canada

As a social worker, Gloria uses her experience to create a safe and supportive environment for indigenous people.

She recognises the importance of cultural practices and ways of knowing, as well as the healing process. She is committed to preserving indigenous knowledge.

'I advise the current students at BISCH to be open to new opportunities and to approach work with humility.

Allow yourself to learn from indigenous communities and share knowledge in return, Said Gloria.

BISCH news joins the rest of the BISCH family in applauding Gloria's remarkable work and dedication to empowering indigenous communities



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BISCH Newsletter