



Bingu School of Culture and Heritage

BISCH NEWSLETTER

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Editors



James Mphande



Chimwemwe Tewesa



Enerst Longwe



Saffie Chirambo

Designers



Mwaona Nyirongo



Charlie Mtambalika



Jonathan Phiri



Kenan Khawela



bischnews@must.ac.mw

BISCH Newsletter

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

This new edition of our newsletter at the Bingu School of Culture and Heritage arrives at a time when our spirits feel full—full of pride, reflection, and a renewed sense of cultural purpose. The remaining months of 2025 were more than a series of accomplishments; they have been a return to ourselves. A season of remembering who we are, reclaiming what belongs to us, and reaffirming that Malawian knowledge, identity, and creativity are powerful and indispensable.

Our Cultural Festival captured the heart of this remembering. It was not just an event—it was a homecoming. A return to the languages of our grandmothers, the rhythms shaped by our landscapes, the colours painted by our histories, the stories that refuse to fade, and the wisdom of our ancestors that continues to guide us.

Another defining moment was the launch of MUST Radio—our own space for voice, consciousness, and communication justice. More than equipment and frequency, the station is an act of decolonial attunement. It gives our students and surrounding communities a platform to speak back, speak up, and speak loudly as they craft narratives rooted in Malawian realities.

We also celebrate our staff whose expertise and leadership have been recognised nationally. The appointment of two of our academics to important boards affirms that Malawian intellectual labour is being acknowledged, trusted, and valued.

In research, our lecturers continue to produce work that challenges inherited assumptions, asks difficult questions, and foregrounds African ways of knowing. At BISCH, research is not simply academic—it is cultural healing. It allows us to say, boldly: our stories are worthy, our perspectives matter, and our intellectual traditions deserve their rightful place in global scholarship.

Our students have also stepped confidently into innovation spaces across MUST. Their work reminds the entire University that culture is not a separate domain from science and technology—it is the fertile ground from which all innovation grows.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue.

Welcome to the BISCH Newsletter.

BISCH Editorial Team

RECLAIMING OURSELVES: KNOWLEDGE AND MEMORY IN PUBLIC LIFE

It is with genuine pride that I welcome you to this edition of the BISCH Newsletter. Each issue offers us a moment to pause and acknowledge the work taking shape within our School, but this one, especially, invites us to look inward—to reconnect with the foundations that make the Bingu School of Culture and Heritage a place of intellectual courage.

When we speak of reclaiming ourselves, we mean far more than academic effort. We are speaking of memory—living memory that moves through our languages, our art, our histories, and our unique ways of knowing.

We are speaking of the courage to place Malawian knowledge at the centre of public life, not as an optional addition, but as a legitimate way of understanding the world.

Our Cultural Festival reminded us that heritage is not something preserved behind glass; it is a living, evolving practice that binds community and shapes identity.

The launch of MUST Radio marked another commitment to communication justice and a space where our students can find their voices.

These accomplishments are not isolated successes; they are part of a broader movement toward decolonising education. At BISCH, we stand by the belief that knowledge is never neutral—it comes from somewhere and it serves someone. Our responsibility is to ensure that it serves our communities, honours our ancestors, and empowers our students.

As you explore this issue, I invite you to reflect on what it truly means to reclaim ourselves in a world that often seeks to define us from the outside. Imagine a public life where Malawian memory is centred rather than marginal; where our innovations draw strength from our cultural realities; and where education opens pathways to liberation, dignity, and possibility.

Thank you for journeying with us, and for believing in our work.

Welcome to this edition of the BISCH Newsletter.



Dr Atikonda Mtenje-Mkochi



TWO BISCH SCHOLARS APPOINTED TO UNIVERSITY BOARDS

BISCH is proud to announce the appointment of its two distinguished members to the governing boards of leading universities in Malawi.

The Chief Secretary to the government, Dr Justin Saidi, announced that the Malawi Government has appointed Dr Atikonda Mtenje Mkochi, Executive Dean of MUST's Bingu School of Culture and Heritage, to the Council of Malawi University of Science and Technology.

Her leadership and knowledge of cultural and heritage studies continue to influence the institution's academic and governance environment.

Furthermore, the government has appointed Professor Jonathan Makuwira, a senior scholar from BISCH, to be a Council member for Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR).

The increasing impact of cultural and heritage studies in determining national development priorities is reflected in his nomination.

These appointments demonstrate the Bingu School of Culture and Heritage's vital role in fostering Malawi's cultural identity in academic settings and strengthening higher education governance.

BISCH congratulates Dr. Mtenje-Mkochi and Professor Makuwira on their esteemed appointments and anticipates their ongoing contributions to the expansion of higher education in Malawi.



BISCH CELEBRATES EXCELLENCE WITH RECOGNITION AWARDS AT ITS FINAL 2025 MEETING

The Bingu School of Culture and Heritage (BISCH) closed 2025 on a high note, hosting its final meeting of the year on 18 December, where outstanding members were honoured for their remarkable contributions across research, leadership, outreach, innovation and mentorship.

The School's Executive Dean, Dr Atikonda Mtenje-Mkochi, presided over the awards presentation ceremony and emphasised that the school's outstanding accomplishments this year are a result of the staff's diligence.

The nominations were led by the School's team-building and mentorship committee. The following staff members were celebrated for their exceptional work;

Key Award Categories and Honorees

• **Research and Publishing**

1. Dr Jerry Rutsate – Vimbudza research.
2. Dr Marion Chirwa Kajombo – Winning multiple research grants.
3. Dr Ignasio Jimu – Serial publisher 2025

• **Leadership**

1. Dr Atikonda Mtenje-Mkochi – Spearheading all BISCH activities.
2. Dr Noel Mweta – Spearheading the BISCH Seminar Series.
3. Mr Mwaona Nyirongo – MUST Radio management and Mibawa partnerships.
4. Mr Chimwemwe Tewesa – Leading MUST Radio launch.

• **Teaching and Learning**

1. Dr Chanunkha – Quality assurance and pedagogy leadership

• **Outreach**

1. Dr Eva Chikabadwa – Work at the Khuluvi shrine.
2. Dr Atikonda Mtenje-Mkochi – Mobilising resources for the MUST Festival.
3. Mr Longwe – Leading the 2025 MUST Festival

• **Innovations**

1. Prof Jonathan Makuwira – Research writing with Cultural Economy students.
2. Ms Lilian Wafula – Video work.
3. Ms Nangisha Talama – Enhancing BISCH Talent Fortnights

• **Mentorship**

1. Ms Lilian Wafula – Umunthucentric student follow-up.
2. Mr. Montfort Manyozo – Leading the Finale Career Talks
3. Mr Andrew Faria – Umunthucentric student follow-up

• **Work Ethic and Background Heroes**

1. BISCH Team – Entrepreneurship spirit

• **Organization**

1. Ms. Nangisha Talama - Organising BISCH events .
2. Ms. Saffie Chirambo - Organising BISCH events and projects .
3. Mrs Beatrice Buleya - Organising BISCH events.

• Mr Patrick Failosi, Ms Doreen Malimba, Mr Kimu (Ceramics), and support staff for their behind-the-scenes contributions

Dr Atikonda Mtenje-Mkochi reaffirmed BISCH's commitment to promoting creativity, cultural heritage, academic rigour, and umunthu-centric education as it looks ahead to 2026.

More than just a ceremony, the event served as a powerful reminder of the effort and shared vision that drive BISCH's mission forward.



BISCH BIDS FAREWELL TO FINAL YEAR STUDENTS

By Saffie Loncy Chirambo

For many graduates, transitioning from academic life into the professional world can be both exciting and challenging. In recognition of this important milestone, the Bingu School of Culture and Heritage (BISCH) at the Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) organised a farewell event aimed at equipping final-year students with essential skills for their next chapter.

Held on 31st October 2025 at the Ndata Campus in Thyolo, the farewell ceremony formally marked the conclusion of the students' academic journey while celebrating their achievements and growth. The event brought together government officials, industry leaders, alumni, staff, and students, creating a platform for reflection, learning, and inspiration.

The program featured presentations on topical issues such as art-prenuership, leveraging technology, scholarships and application letters, which were done by alumni and professionals. These sessions were designed to prepare students for the realities of the workplace while encouraging them to remain adaptable and purpose driven.

Speaking during the event, BISCH Executive Dean, Dr. Atikonda Mtenje-Mkochi, commended the collective effort of faculty, staff, students, and university leadership in shaping the graduates' academic journey. She encouraged the students to face the future with confidence and optimism, reminding them that their first degree is only the beginning.

"I wish you all the best for the future, knowing that this is not the end but the beginning of a new life," she said.

Mibawa Studios Executive Director, Mr John Nthakomwa, congratulated the students on their transition from academia to the professional world. He emphasised the importance of lifelong learning, resilience, integrity, and pursuing purpose beyond financial success.

"As you transition, remember and appreciate those who supported you throughout your academic journey, as they remain part of your support system," he advised.



MUST COLLABORATES WITH UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW IN DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT CONTROL

By Sauda Mwawa

Flooding and drought driven by climate change continue to pose serious challenges across sub-Saharan Africa. In Malawi, limited access to reliable and meaningful information on the scope and impact of these hazards presents governments and communities with a profound obstacle in disaster preparedness and response.

To address this challenge, the Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) partnered with the University of Glasgow in the Knowing Risk Project, a collaborative research initiative aimed at strengthening disaster risk management and early warning systems in Malawi.

The project seeks to understand how different environmental data collection methods can be combined to better identify risks and how these approaches can inform the redesign and improvement of warning systems across the country.

By integrating scientific data, policy analysis, and community knowledge, the initiative aims to support more effective, inclusive, and context-responsive disaster preparedness strategies.

Speaking in an interview, Dr. Marion Chirwa Kajombo, a MUST representative, explained that the project is implementing several key strategies to achieve its objectives.

“We are undertaking a series of interviews with key policy actors and NGOs involved in environmental monitoring and disaster management to better understand how policy works in practice. In addition, we are reviewing policy initiatives and plans that shape warning systems, conducting community environmental histories in selected locations affected by flood and drought risks, and hosting meetings in Malawi and Scotland that bring together stakeholders concerned with warning systems and environmental monitoring to discuss key issues,” she said.

The project is currently working in three research sites, each representing distinct environmental and social challenges. These include Chikwawa District in the Lower Shire Valley, an area highly prone to flooding; Dzaleka Refugee Camp, located about 8 kilometres west of Dowa Town and 41 kilometres northeast of Lilongwe City; and Blantyre City, specifically the Misesa, South Lunzu, and Chilomoni wards in the Shire Highlands of Southern Malawi.

Through these study sites, the project aims to understand how communities experience environmental risks, how they engage with existing warning systems, and how traditional knowledge helps identify both risks and local solutions. The findings will contribute to improved communication of risk information and the development of warning systems that are better aligned with community realities.



BISCH CHAMPIONS INTERDISCIPLINARY DIALOGUE ON HEALTH COMMUNICATION

By Saffie Loncy Chirambo

BISCH on December 16, 2025, hosted a Malawi Medical Humanities Symposium under the Malawi Medical Humanities Network (Med Hum).

The symposium was organized through the Medical Humanities Research Project: Collaboration, Care and Crossover, which took place at MUST’s City Campus in Blantyre.

Held under the theme “Rethinking the Language of Science: Communication, Meaning and Understanding in Malawi’s Healthcare System,” the symposium brought together MUST academic staff, healthcare practitioners, students, and researchers in communication from other public universities, including Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences (MUBAS).

The gathering provided a dynamic platform for interdisciplinary engagement on how language and communication shape healthcare delivery in Malawi.

The main objective of the symposium was to highlight the vital connection between language, communication, and effective healthcare services within Malawi.

Through research paper presentations and discussions, participants explored how clear, culturally responsive and context-sensitive communication can enhance public understanding of health information, improve patient-provider interactions, and ultimately strengthen the national healthcare system.

Speaking in an interview, Dr. Atikonda Mtenje-Mkochi, Co-Principal Investigator of the project and Executive Dean of

BISCH, emphasised the importance of integrating language and humanities into healthcare practice.

She noted that scientific knowledge alone is not sufficient if it is not communicated in ways that communities can understand and relate to.

The Guest of Honour, Professor Alfred Maluwa, Director of Research and Outreach at MUST, commended the Malawi Medical Humanities Network for organising the symposium.

The symposium was critical because such platforms equip students and professionals with critical skills to interpret and communicate scientific knowledge in ways that are meaningful and accessible to diverse audiences.



Nyirongo being recognised with a certificate after facilitation

YOUNG POLITICIANS URGED TO DECOLONISE POLITICAL GOALS AT PYPA TRAINING

Young political leaders from Malawi and Zambia on 3 November 2025 participated in a one-day goal-setting workshop at Linde Hotel in Dowa, where facilitator Mr Mwaona Nyirongo, a lecturer from BISCH, challenged participants to rethink how political goals are shaped and to adopt more locally grounded approaches to democratic practice.

The session, held under the Program for Young Politicians in Africa (PYPA), brought together 44 emerging leaders from various political parties.

While introducing tools for political planning and leadership development, Mr Nyirongo also emphasised the importance of decolonising political goals—urging young leaders to move beyond inherited models of governance and craft priorities rooted in community realities, African political histories and citizen needs.

He encouraged participants to question assumptions about what democracy should look like, noting that sustainable democratic practice must reflect local contexts rather than external templates.

In addition to the reflective discussions, the young leaders worked through practical exercises, including political priority mapping and action-planning templates designed to strengthen their work within parties and constituencies.

CYLA and Green Forum, the organisations supporting PYPA activities in Malawi and Zambia, described the session as an important step in equipping young leaders with both strategic skills and a deeper understanding of transformative, context-responsive democratic leadership.





MUST LAUNCHES A CAMPUS RADIO

By Mtisunge Nampapi

MUST officially launched its campus radio station dubbed Intellect-on-Air, marking a significant milestone in student empowerment, media training, and community engagement through broadcasting.

The station is part of a national campus radio initiative implemented in ten universities across Malawi by the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA). Launched under the theme “Creating a Platform for the Voice of the Future,” the project aims to provide students with hands-on broadcasting experience while promoting local talent, cultural content, and knowledge sharing with surrounding communities.

Speaking during the launch, the Vice-Chancellor of MUST, Professor Address Malata, commended MACRA for including MUST in the national project and appreciated the continued support of communities surrounding the University in its growth and development. MACRA’s Deputy Director of Broadcasting, Kelton Masangano, encouraged MUST to operate the station professionally and uphold broadcasting ethics to set a standard for other institutions.

With the establishment of Intellect-on-Air, MUST continues to position itself as a people-centred and innovation-driven university, providing students with platforms to express ideas, share knowledge, and connect meaningfully with society.



CAMPUS RADIO BROADCASTING AMPLIFIES VOICES IN GOLIATI

By Saffie Loncy Chirambo

MUST Campus Radio 107.8 FM continues to serve as a vital communication platform for both the university community and the surrounding areas.

Since its launch, the station has been broadcasting a variety of programmes designed to inform, educate, and entertain, while strengthening the bond between the university and the wider community.

MUST Campus Radio has become a significant stepping stone for student broadcasters, offering a practical learning space, a strong student voice, and a bridge to the community.

Through programmes such as Mwadzuka Bwanji (Greetings), Khomaliro, Zachikhalidwe Chathu, and Lecturers on Air, the station promotes collaboration among students, academic and non-academic staff, and community members.

These programmes create a shared platform where knowledge, culture, and lived experiences intersect.

Listeners have expressed appreciation for the station and continue to look forward to more entertaining, educational, and informative programmes that speak directly to campus life and surrounding community realities.

Many regard MUST Campus Radio as a fresh, relatable, and informative platform that gives students a sense of ownership and representation while effectively linking the university to its neighbouring communities.

One of the active student broadcasters, Mr. Charlie Grahams Mtambalika, a fourth-year Bachelor of Arts student in Language, Communication and Culture, describes the radio as both an academic and professional extension of his broadcasting journey.



As a communication specialist in training and content producer at MUST Campus Radio, he views the platform as a space where communication is practised as a living discipline, bringing together language, culture, ethics, and audience awareness in real-life contexts.

He encourages fellow students to get involved, not only to be heard, but to grow. He also calls upon staff members and partners to continue supporting the station, noting that their involvement strengthens the platform and empowers young communicators to shape meaningful narratives for the future.





Mr Nthakomwa and Dr Chirwa Kajombo awarding certificates

MUST AND MIBAWA CELEBRATE FIRST GRADUATES OF PHOTOGRAPHY AND GRAPHIC DESIGN SHORT COURSE

By Charlie Mtambalika

The Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST), through the Bingu School of Culture and Heritage (BISCH), in partnership with Mibawa Studios, awarded certificates to the first cohort of students in the Photography and Graphic Design Short Course Programme.

The graduation ceremony, held on 30 September 2025, marked a significant milestone in strengthening collaboration between academia and industry in Malawi's growing creative sector.

Representing BISCH, Dr. Marion Chirwa Kajombo described the event as a key step in linking academic training with industry needs. She noted that the programme reflects MUST's vision of providing alternative pathways to higher education while equipping learners with practical skills required in the real world.

Mibawa Studios Executive Director, Mr. John Nthakomwa, expressed pride in the programme's progress, emphasizing that beginning with a small cohort allowed the partners to refine the course delivery. He highlighted that the graduates are leaving with confidence, competence, and passion that will positively contribute to Malawi's creative industries.

Course Coordinator, Mr. Mwaona Nyirongo, explained that the programme was carefully designed to balance theory and hands-on practice, ensuring graduates are well prepared to meet the demands of the modern creative industry.

Speaking on behalf of the graduating class, Class President Mr. Jimmy Maloya thanked MUST and Mibawa Studios for the transformative learning experience.

"The training not only enhanced our technical skills but also ignited a deeper passion for photography and graphic design," he said.

The short course attracted participants from diverse backgrounds, including journalists and professionals from various sectors, highlighting its broad relevance and appeal.

Looking ahead, the partnership between MUST and Mibawa Studios is expected to expand, with plans for larger student intakes and the introduction of the programme in other regions of Malawi.

This inaugural graduation marks the beginning of a new chapter in creative industry training in Malawi, bringing academia and industry closer to nurturing skilled professionals ready to innovate, inspire, and contribute to the country's creative economy.

BISCH WELCOMES ITS NEWEST PHD - DR. EVA CHIKABADWA

The Bingu School of Culture and Heritage is proud to announce that Dr. Eva Chikabadwa, a lecturer in Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Knowledge, has successfully completed her PhD in Visual Studies at the University of Pretoria.

Her groundbreaking research, titled “Visualizing M'bona Beliefs and Practices: A Visual Cultural Artistic Co-production with the Custodians of Khulubvi and Associated Rain Shrines in Nsanje, Malawi,” examined the role of the visuals in research and documentation by analysing the power relations between the visual, oral, and written forms in the context of heritage preservation, drawing on theories of visual culture.

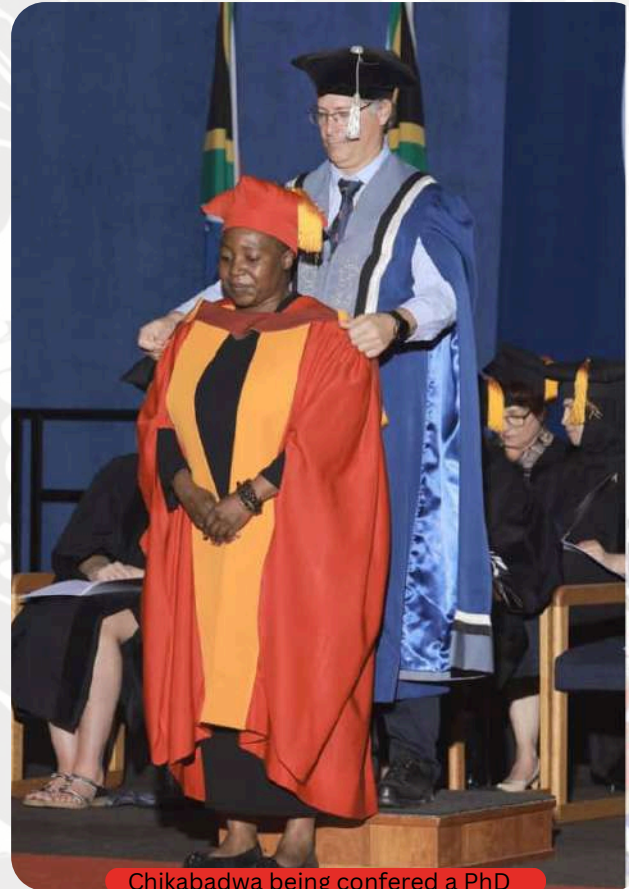
The project aimed to visualise the M'bona beliefs and practices for the adornment of a future museum in a manner that strikes a balance among the three (visual, oral, and written) for heritage sustainability.

This vision aligns with the broader concept of “decolonising heritage for development,” which emphasizes both material and non-material progress, collective empowerment, and transformative change.

Reflecting on her work, Dr. Chikabadwa emphasized that her research challenges conventional understandings of heritage.

She noted, “What we admire today in museums as tangible heritage was once intangible—created by our ancestors from their lived experiences.

We must now create heritage that reflects our current intangible realities.”



Chikabadwa being conferred a PhD

She advocates for transforming intangible heritage—such as memories and oral traditions—into visual forms as a means of preservation. In her words, “Heritage is not just what we inherit from our ancestors or what was defined by colonizers. It is ours to define, shape, and pass on.”

In congratulating Dr Chikabadwa, BISCH Executive Dean, Dr Atikonda Mtenje-Mkochi argued that Dr Chikabadwa’s work challenges us to disrupt, rethink and reframe heritage in ways that are inclusive, and sensitive to lived experiences.

MUST FESTIVAL CELEBRATES CULTURE AND RESEARCH INNOVATION

The Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) has strengthened its engagement with surrounding communities through this year's Cultural and Research Innovation Festival, which featured a pre-festival outreach programme focused on skills development in the arts, entrepreneurship, and digital technologies.

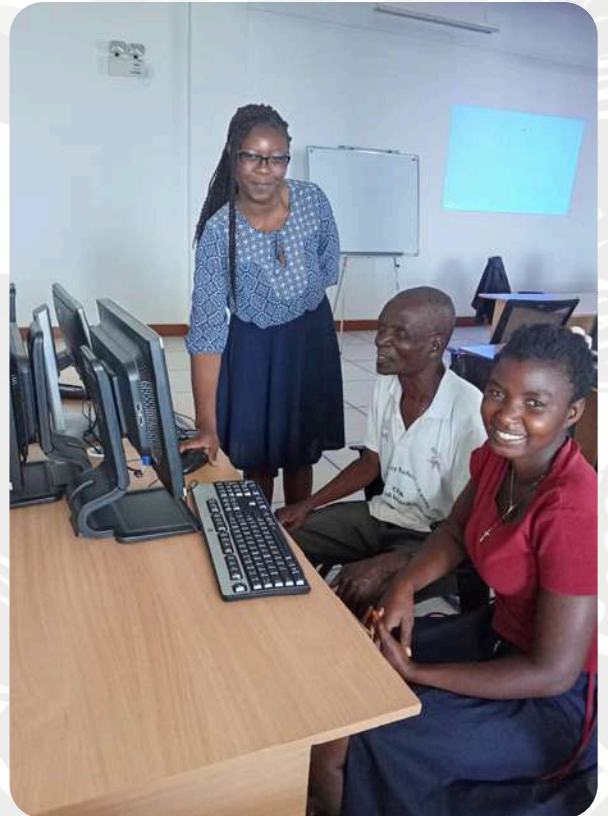
The outreach, held at the University's main campus in Thyolo, targeted communities around MUST and aimed to equip participants with practical skills relevant to the creative and cultural industries.

Training sessions covered entrepreneurship, pottery, and digital literacy.

Participants were introduced to basic computer skills to support engagement in the digital economy, while the pottery component focused on the production of energy-efficient cooking stoves.

The entrepreneurship sessions emphasised identifying and developing business opportunities to improve livelihoods.

The Cultural and Research Innovation Festival forms part of MUST's broader efforts to link research, culture, and community engagement, with a focus on locally grounded innovation and skills development.





BISCH DVC receiving the funding on behalf of MUST

STANDARD BANK POWERS MUST CULTURAL AND RESEARCH INNOVATION FESTIVAL WITH K40M

Standard Bank Plc donated K40 million towards the MUST Cultural and Research Innovation Festival.

The now annual festival was held at MUST main campus in Thyolo on August 22 and 23. Announcing the support, Standard Bank expressed its commitment to promoting arts and culture through its 'Joy of the Arts' initiative.

"We believe this is a great opportunity to preserve Malawi's culture and instill the Malawian pride in our youths whilst encouraging research and innovation in the sector," said Yolanda Buliani, Standard Bank brands and marketing officer, in her communication to MUST.

The festival, among others, featured live performances, arts and cultural displays, scientific innovations and a research dissemination conference.

Commenting on the donation, Dr Atikonda Mtenje-Mkochi, who approached the bank for the support, said that with the donation, Standard Bank was the official sponsor of the festival.

Other sponsors included the MUST Directorate of Research through Professor Alfred Maluwa.

Standard Bank continues to be a reliable partner of MUST in advancing education, as it is also one of the sponsors for the university's Endowment Fund.





Napoleon Dzombe interacting with students

DZOMBE URGES YOUTH TO EMBRACE CULTURE AND EDUCATION

By Chembekezo Kandunji and Patumal Daud

Successful businessman and cultural supporter Napoleon Dzombe emphasised the importance of culture in shaping responsible and grounded future generations.

Dzombe made the remarks on 23 August 2025 during the Cultural Festival and Innovation Day at the Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST), an event that celebrates both cultural heritage and innovation.

Born in 1958 in Dowa District, Dzombe shared his journey to success, explaining that he left school in Form Two due to financial difficulties but later built a thriving business after starting with a small loan.

In an interview with MUST lecturer Mwaona Nyirongo from the Department of Language and Communication, Dzombe described cultural festivals as important platforms for inspiring young people and strengthening identity.

“Culture is the foundation of everything,” he said. “Education is important, but without culture we risk losing our values and identity.”

Dzombe praised MUST for organising the festival, saying such initiatives help young people appreciate their heritage while developing skills for the future. He urged students to balance education with cultural awareness, noting that true success involves both knowledge and a strong sense of identity.

Participants at the event said the message highlighted the importance of preserving cultural heritage while embracing innovation and education.



Festival participants after listening to the key note speaker

KEY NOTE SPEAKER URGES STRONGER IP PROTECTION AT MUST FESTIVAL

Professor Andrew Mtewa, the key note speaker during the MUST Cultural and Research Innovation Festival, urged Malawian universities to strengthen intellectual property (IP) protection, warning that valuable innovations are being lost.

Mtewa said research outputs—ranging from drug discovery to artificial intelligence—remain vulnerable due to weak systems and limited awareness.

He noted that cultural norms, such as respect for authority and collective ownership, often prevent students from claiming ownership of their ideas. This, he said, creates a “culture of compliance” where innovations are shared or taken without protection or recognition.

Mtewa cited cases where student research is not patented, traditional knowledge is published without benefit-sharing, and local innovations are commercialised abroad without credit.

He called for clear university IP policies, mandatory training, and stronger institutional support, including technology transfer offices.

Mtewa also emphasised the need for approaches that respect cultural values while protecting innovation.





Phondo performing at the festival

THERESA PHONDO LIGHTS UP MUST CULTURAL AND INNOVATION FESTIVAL

BY Blessings Muyere

With a voice now on an international wave, Theresa Phondo's appearance at the 2025 MUST Cultural and Research Innovation Festival stage was not just a performance but also inspirational.

Taking the stage with a presence that blends grace with an undeniable voice pitch, absolutely on spot, Theresa Phondo did not just sing to the audience, she connected with them, exemplifying the very essence of cultural pride and contemporary creativity.

From opening with a popular song Daily to the energetic sounds of Testimony, Yahweh, and Yewo, Theresa held the crowd with melodic rhythms and embraces.

Her spontaneous freestyles showcased her unscripted, powerful talent and stage presence. Her soulful performance inspired the crowd and perfectly complemented the festival's message of hope, creativity, and national development.

As the dusk settled, a magical moment unfolded; the crowd held their phones high, swaying them with their flashlight beaming bright, singing along word for word the song Pray for Me.

In that moment, her voice filled the space, and the audience became part of a performance.

For many, seeing a Malawian female artist commanding the stage with such grace and global approval wasn't just entertainment; it was inspirational.

Theresa Phondo's performance added great value to the event, leaving the audience energised and inspired.

The MUST Cultural and Innovation Festival successfully showed how art, culture and science can unite in shaping the future of Malawi.



Sean Morgan performing at the festival

SEAN MORGAN INSPIRES MUST STUDENTS

BY Susan Kamphere

During the cultural festival, the audience also listened and danced to music by one of Malawi's celebrated dancehall musicians, Sean Morgan.

He did not just perform, but he inspired the audience, being an alumnus of the university where he studied BA in African Musicology.

Backed by a live band, Sean Morgan moved through originals with easy confidence. Then came a surprise that captivated the crowd; he was joined on stage by a well-known female artist, Sangie.

The audience blew up in cheers as their chemistry ignited, her smooth, lyrical flow playing perfectly off his steady reggae tone.

Sean Morgan described the 2025 MUST Cultural and Research Innovative Festival as a creative homecoming and an opportunity to give back to the people who have shaped his career.

"This has been the place that gave me the world. I recall the late-night rehearsals and songwriting in the campus halls, and the support from the lecturers and fellows really helped me." He said.

He further thanked the university for the ongoing support he is receiving, especially from the Executive Dean for the Bingu School of Culture and Heritage, Dr Atikonda Mtenje-Mkochi, and Madam Lilian Wafula, a lecturer in the Musicology Department. He also described himself as MUST's cultural ambassador, and he is proudly always putting the university on the map through his creative spirit wherever he's given a chance to perform.

"Seeing him returning to perform is a clear indication that MUST has a strong bond with its current and former students. Morgan's songs bring joy to us." He explained.

By the time Sean Morgan's final chord faded, the crowd was warmed up, connected and ready, carrying the reggae vibration into the rest of the day's festivities.

BISCH STUDENTS BRING MALAWI'S HERITAGE TO LIFE

At the MUST Cultural and Research Innovation Festival, students from the Bingu School of Culture and Heritage (BISCH) brought Malawi's vibrant heritage to life in a way that was both joyful and inspiring. Held at MUST's Ndata Campus in Thyolo, the festival is a unique celebration where science, innovation, and culture meet, giving students a stage to honour ancestral traditions while pursuing modern knowledge.

The cultural day was a feast for the senses, with energetic performances of iconic Malawian dances, including Chintali, Chitelela, and Gule Wankulu. The students, proud to be the next generation of cultural custodians, danced with skill, passion, and heart, leaving the audience in awe.

Chintali, performed by female students, was a beautiful display of rhythmic clapping, singing, and coordinated movement. The dance celebrated womanhood, community, and togetherness, reminding everyone of the strength and joy found in unity.



Chitelela, a lively communal dance, had students forming circles, moving with fluid steps, hand gestures, and call-and-response songs. The performance radiated energy and happiness, capturing the spirit of village life and the joy of being together.

The most dramatic moment came with Gule Wankulu, performed by male students wearing elaborate masks representing spirits, animals, and ancestors. Their powerful, trance-like movements, accompanied by deep, rhythmic drumming, conveyed messages about morality, fertility, and the connection between the living and the ancestors. It was a moving reminder of the spiritual depth and richness of Malawian traditions.

Through these dances, MUST students not only kept Malawi's cultural heritage alive but also showed how culture can inspire innovation, pride, and creativity, connecting the past to the future in ways that resonate with the University's mission and the vision of Malawi 2063.



students displaying their wine

MUST CREATIVE ECONOMY SOCIETY SHOWCASES CHIDEDE WINE AT MUST CULTURAL AND RESEARCH INNOVATION FESTIVAL

By Nangisha Talama

Behind the blocks and classrooms at BISCH, our students are turning tradition into innovation!

At the 2025 MUST Cultural and Research Innovation Festival, the MUST Creative Economy Society unveiled Chidede Wine, a locally crafted drink known as Vinyo.

This student-led project transforms traditional Knowledge and local ingredients into a product that is authentically Malawian, affordable and brimming with heritage.

Inspired by traditional processes and local ingredients, the wine represents a creative fusion of cultural preservation and entrepreneurial spirit.

Felister Madeya, the society's vice president and a third-year Cultural Economy student, encouraged everyone to explore cultural resources and turn them into marketable, sustainable products.

“Look at cultural resources with an open mind so we can build businesses that are both sustainable and meaningful to our Malawian culture,” she said.

The wine was a standout success at the festival, drawing curious crowds of students, staff and visitors eager to taste this innovation.

This positive reception has fueled the team's energy, with plans underway to refine the flavour profile and explore value-added variations in the innovations.

This initiative is more than a beverage; it's proof of a concept coming to life! It demonstrates that BISCH students have the possibility of shaping the culture and economy.

This innovation is a testament that business ideas can actually blossom from Malawi's own traditions and resources.

BISCH SEMINAR SERIES INTERROGATES KEY SOCIAL CHALLENGES

In the year 2025, the BISCH Seminar Series brought together scholars and practitioners from across African Universities to discuss pressing social issues spanning public health to food security, with speakers calling for collaborative, research-driven solutions.

Ms Ireen Chavula, who presented a study that she did as a student at the University of Malawi, emerged as one of the voices, presenting a paper titled “Unlocking the Puzzle of Malawi’s Food Insecurity: Uncovering the Hidden Challenges of Agricultural Inputs Subsidies.” She argued that food insecurity in Malawi persists despite the country’s farm input subsidy programme.

In an interview on the sidelines of the seminar, Chavula urged both government and beneficiaries to move away from blame and work collectively to address the crisis.



Mr Precious Lungu, Mzuzu University



Ms Chavula, Unima



Ms Bongani Khoswe, PhD student at Stellenbosch University

“The nation can learn from other countries; for instance, by adopting Zambia’s e-voucher system, we can boost the programme’s effectiveness since it can help mitigate corruption at ADMARC and among vendors,” she said.

She also called on academics to take a more active role in shaping policy through research, advocacy, and innovation.

Other presentations reflected the seminar’s interdisciplinary nature. Mr David Nyirenda who examined how culture, religion, and law influence public health outcomes, while Associate Professor Mtewa discussed intellectual property in relation to drug development and access to medicines.

Ms Bongani Khoswe, a PhD scholar at Stellenbosch University, presented on the importance of people-centred development approaches, and Precious Lungu of Mzuzu University addressed challenges in translating legal texts, particularly issues of interpretation and accessibility.

The seminars underscored the need for cross-sector collaboration, with speakers emphasizing that addressing Malawi’s development challenges requires coordinated efforts from government, academia, and communities.



Some of the participants at the games

MUST STAFF SHINE AT SAUSSA GAMES IN SOUTH AFRICA

By Yamikani Sekani

Public Universities Staff Sports Association of Malawi (PUSSAM), a body that brought together staff members from all six public universities: MUST, Mzuzu University, Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Kamuzu University of Health Sciences, Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences, and the University of Malawi, sent 43 athletes, and MUST was represented in several disciplines.

Among the outstanding performers was Mr. Ernest Longwe, a lecturer at the Bingu School of Culture and Heritage (BISCH), who was part of the tag-of-war team, which performed remarkably.

The team won its first three matches, progressed to the quarterfinals, fought through the qualifying rounds to secure third place, earning a well-deserved bronze medal.

Beyond tag-of-war, PUSSAM had other sports like football, volleyball, netball, chess, and various athletics events.

Mr. Longwe noted that the overall performance has improved compared to previous years.

“This year, many sporting disciplines have ended with better positions, which shows real progress,” he added.

He emphasized that the games are not about individual universities but about representing Malawi as one united team of public institutions.

Participation in the SAUSSA Games helps build stronger partnerships with other universities in the region while fostering unity among staff.

Mr. Longwe described their stay in South Africa as enjoyable, highlighting the warm hospitality, good weather, and opportunities to interact with colleagues from different countries.

He encouraged Malawi’s public universities to continue supporting staff sports, saying such initiatives boost motivation, health, and teamwork.

PUSSAM participates in the SAUSSA Games to promote wellness, networking, and teamwork among staff from universities across Southern Africa.



DR. SAIZI SALIM KATETE KIMU

By Saffie Loncy Chirambo

Dr. Saizi Salim Katete Kimu is one of the academics within BISCH and a scholar whose work bridges language, communication, and environmental sustainability.

Dr. Saizi recently graduated with a research-based PhD from North-West University in South Africa.

His doctoral research, titled “Assessing the Effectiveness of Indigenous Communication Systems in Upland Afforestation Campaigns in Malawi: A Grounded Model Theory,” examined how traditional communication systems can be utilized to promote environmental conservation, particularly in addressing deforestation and climate change in Malawi.

He earned his Bachelor of Education degree in 2009 from the University of Malawi, Chancellor College, and later completed a Master’s degree in Applied Linguistics in 2016 at the very same institution while serving as a lecturer at the Catholic University of Malawi.

In the same year, he joined the Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) as a Lecturer in Communication in the Department of Language and Communication Studies.

Dr. Saizi’s academic interests lie in environmental communication, a field that examines how communication strategies shape public understanding and action on environmental issues.

Over the years, he has analysed how newspapers represent political debates, blending linguistic and communication perspectives, and an academic foundation that sparked his long-standing interest in unpacking binary debates surrounding development and conservation.



In addition to his academic contributions, Dr Saizi has also held leadership positions within the University, serving as Dean of Student Affairs in the MUST University Welfare Office.

Through research, teaching, and mentorship, Dr. Saizi continues to inspire students and colleagues alike, demonstrating that language and communication are powerful tools for national development and environmental stewardship.



MS. PRINCESS MAKONYOLA

By Saffie Loncy Chirambo

Have you ever imagined Malawi nurturing voice-over as a recognised art in theatre, drama, and even filmmaking, just like singing or instrumental performance? For Princess Isha Makonyola, this is not just an idea, but a lived experience.

Princess is a final year student pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in African Musicology at the Bingu School of Culture and Heritage. Through her work, she is contributing to the preservation and reimagining of African narratives, particularly those rooted in Malawi.

When she joined MUST, Princess did not know how to play any musical instrument. She did not even consider herself a musician. However, her academic journey transformed her understanding of musicology. She discovered that it is not only about singing, but also about the power of the human voice to convey emotion, culture, and meaning across the global village.

Today, she confidently uses her voice as her primary instrument. She works as a voice-over artist with The Story Workshop Educational Trust, where she plays the role of Kankha in the Kankha Radio Drama, an educational audio series designed to inform, engage, and inspire communities.

She is also actively involved with Youth Developers Collaboration Theatre, contributing both as a voice-over artist and as a singer in their musical production, Mamuna Salira? Through these platforms, Princess has sharpened her performance skills, reached diverse audiences, and participated in storytelling that both educates and entertains.

For Princess, her creative work outside the classroom is a natural extension of her academic training. Courses in African performance traditions, oral literature, and music in society have shaped the way she approaches voice acting and musical theatre.

Whether she is voicing a character in Kankha Radio Drama or performing in Mamuna Salira? she draws on storytelling techniques deeply rooted in African cultural traditions.

Princess believes deeply in the transformative power of storytelling. "I believe storytelling can heal, educate, and empower. In the long run, I see myself developing original content that amplifies Malawian voices, especially women and girls, and collaborating with other creatives to build a sustainable arts ecosystem in our country," she says.

Her story demonstrates that voice-over is not merely a supporting craft; it is an art form capable of preserving culture, shaping narratives, and expanding Malawi's creative industries.





MR DAVID HENDRICK



By Saffie Loncy Chirambo

In line with Malawi 2063, young innovators are increasingly transforming culture into a driver of economic growth. At BISCH, this vision is taking shape through initiatives that equip youth to merge Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSP) with entrepreneurship and innovation.

Spotlighting a BISCH Alumni, David Hendrick Chingapa, an IKSP graduate and co-founder of IK-Connect Empowerment Ltd, whose work exemplifies how Indigenous Knowledge can be translated into sustainable enterprise.

David spearheaded the Indigenous Knowledge Asset to Market (IK-A2M) Masterclass 1.0, an applied innovation program designed to help innovators identify, document, and transform Indigenous Knowledge into scalable and culturally relevant business ventures.

The IK-A2M Masterclass features IKSP graduates applying Indigenous Knowledge in real-world enterprise development. The session built on earlier online training that introduced participants to the concept of Indigenous Knowledge, the stages of innovating IK into an enterprise with cultural relevance and impact, benefit sharing approaches in IK inspired businesses, sustainability through IK based value addition, and the importance of developing culturally grounded enterprises.

Through the mentorship series, BISCH seeks to inspire students and emerging innovators by presenting living models of success. David's journey demonstrates how academic training in Indigenous Knowledge can translate into a practical enterprise that generates revenue while preserving cultural heritage.

His initiative encourages participants to view traditional wisdom not as a relic of the past, but as a living repository of innovation. Modules covered mapping and documentation of Indigenous Knowledge, intellectual property considerations, business development, ethical commercialization, and sustainable enterprise creation.

By guiding young people on how to responsibly develop IK-inspired enterprises, the program promotes both cultural preservation and economic empowerment. The IK-A2M initiative ultimately inspires Malawi's youth to tap into local knowledge in building sustainable, relatable, and impactful businesses.

As BISCH continues positioning Indigenous Knowledge at the centre of innovation and entrepreneurship, alumni like David Chingapa stand as powerful examples of how culture can be transformed into enterprise, benefiting communities today while safeguarding heritage for future generations.

BISCH IN PICTURES



BISCH students at cultural and research innovation festival



BISCH students at the event



BISCH students at the event



Art training with the community



Festival conference participant



KIDS at the event

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



IBE DELEGATION STRENGTHENS PARTNERSHIP WITH MUST

By Charlie Mtambalika

The Bingu School of Culture and Heritage (BISCH) on 24 September 2025 hosted a delegation from the University of International Business and Economics (UIBE) in Beijing, China.

The aim of the visit was to deepen academic and cultural collaboration between the two institutions.

Speaking after the meeting, Dr Marion Chirwa Kajombo, Head of the Department of Language and Communication Studies, said the visit formed part of ongoing efforts to strengthen ties between the Confucius Institute Malawi and its teaching points, including the Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST), where a Chinese language course is offered.

According to Dr Kajombo, UIBE is the partner institution of the Confucius Institute Malawi, which plays a global role in

promoting Chinese language and culture.

Discussions during the visit centred on expanding cultural exchange programmes, strengthening Chinese language instruction, increasing learning resources, and creating more pathways for student success.

The delegation expressed interest in understanding how Chinese language lessons are progressing at MUST and explored opportunities to further enhance teaching and learning experiences.

Mr Biggers Sauli, a lecturer in Chinese Language at MUST, emphasized that the partnership presents valuable opportunities for students.

“Students who excel in Chinese have opportunities to pursue advanced studies at UIBE and to build careers with Chinese companies operating in Malawi. This partnership opens doors for academic growth and professional development,”

said Sauli.

Sauli, who also served as an interpreter during the visit, expressed pride in serving as a cultural and linguistic bridge between the two sides.

“It was an opportunity to stand between cultures, apply what I have learned and what I teach, and bridge the gap between people of different languages. Understanding both Chinese and Malawian culture was vital in ensuring smooth communication,” he explained.

The delegation also emphasized future prospects for BISCH and MUST students, pointing to academic pathways in China and emerging career opportunities in Chinese enterprises operating in Malawi.

As BISCH continues to expand its cultural and academic footprint, the visit reaffirms the school’s commitment to fostering international partnerships and offering students avenues to connect with the global community.



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



MBS and BISCH official appreciating BISCH ceramics

MALAWI BUREAU OF STANDARDS ENGAGES BISCH TO SHAPE NATIONAL CERAMIC STANDARDS

By Nangisha Talama

The Bingu School of Culture and Heritage welcomed a delegation from the Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS) on 15 December 2025 for a stakeholder engagement centre on the future of Malawi's ceramic industry. The meeting, held at BISCH ceramic studio, was attended by BISCH Academic Staff and technical staff, to demonstrate the school's techniques and production process.

The purpose of the visit was to better understand the studio's processes, challenges, quality considerations, and any gaps where standards could support improved design, production, safety, or market competitiveness. MBS also shared updates on their ongoing work, which includes drafting specifications for ceramic tiles, among other products and sought that BISCH could share their practical experience as part of a broader consultation with industry practitioners.

BISCH staff demonstrated various techniques and shared professional experiences related to material sourcing, manufacturing consistency, and finishing process. Importantly, dialogue highlighted critical health and safety concerns, including the use of the toxic ceramic colourants and the sale of damaged or faulty products without proper safety verification.

Mr Christopher Dzuwa, Standards Officer for Engineering & Materials MBS, commended BISCH for emphasising these vital health aspects.

"The issues raised, more especially on toxicity and unregulated products, are exactly why standards are essential. Health and Safety is at the core of what we regulate, and input from practitioners like BISCH ensures standards are both practical and protective", he said

To BISCH, this recognition and engagement are a milestone and by collaborating with MBS, BISCH continues to bridge professional practice with industry development, advocating for standards that elevate quality, ensure safety, train students in safe and standards-aware practice from the onset and enhance the competitiveness of Malawian Ceramics both locally and abroad.

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RESEARCH GRANTS

Dr **Marion Chirwa Kajombo**, Forging Urban Citizenship around Justice, Safety and Inclusion in East and Southern Africa through Youth-Driven Creative Expression, funded by Glasgow Centre for International Development and Research Services Directorate



bischnews@must.ac.mw

BISCH Newsletter