MALAWI UNIVERSITY OF
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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MSAKA CHALLENGES MUST GRADUATES ON RESILIENCE, INNOVATION

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers

The second issue of the MUST Newsletter for 2026 comes at an exciting time in the University's journey, one marked by achievement, innovation, collaboration and a growing impact on society.

At the heart of this issue is our 7th Congregation, where we celebrated another cohort of graduates equipped with knowledge, skills and the confidence to contribute to Malawi and beyond. It was also the day the university bid farewell to its first substantive Vice Chancellor, Professor Address Malata whose 10-year tenure came to an end. On the same day, MUST also welcomed the new Vice Chancellor, Associate Professor Mwapatsa Mipando.

However, graduation is more than the culmination of academic study; it is a reflection of the University's responsibility to prepare graduates who can apply science, technology, innovation and entrepreneurship to real-world challenges.

This issue also shines a light on the creativity of our students and the technologies and innovations emerging from MUST. These stories demonstrate that our students are not only learning about solving problems, they are increasingly developing solutions themselves. Equally encouraging is the participation of our faculty in symposiums, workshops and other professional platforms, where they share knowledge, build networks and contribute to conversations shaping their disciplines.

Our growing partnerships with industry further demonstrate MUST's commitment to ensuring that university knowledge translates into practical value. From collaborative initiatives to capacity-building programs with public and private sector institutions, these engagements strengthen the connection between the University and the wider economy and public service.

Perhaps most importantly, this issue highlights MUST's commitment to ensuring that the benefits of higher education, science and technology reach those who are often left at the margins. Our initiatives involving refugees and other underserved groups reaffirm our belief that education and innovation must be inclusive and responsive to society's needs.

Together, these stories tell a bigger story: MUST is not simply growing as a university; it is also growing in relevance and impact. As we continue this journey, our challenge is to turn more knowledge into solutions, more partnerships into opportunities, and more innovations into lasting change for Malawi and beyond.
Enjoy your reading.

James Mphande
Chief Editor

MSAKA CHALLENGES MUST GRADUATES ON RESILIENCE, INNOVATION

By Yamikani Kamcholoti

Minister of Education, Science and Technology, Hon. Bright Msaka, SC, on August 6, 2026 challenged graduating students at MUST to go beyond resilience and become innovative.

He spoke during MUST's 7th Congregation in Thyolo where he was a guest of honour.

Held under the theme: “Innovation for Resilience: Science and Technology for an Industrialized Malawi", the ceremony was attended by various dignitaries, including representatives from both public and private sectors, the Chinese Embassy, university staff, and parents and guardians.

During the ceremony, where 746 students graduated with undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, including two PhDs, Msaka said true impact comes from applying one's skills and knowledge to solve real-world problems, which is the core of innovation.

"Your degree gives you knowledge; innovation is what you do with it," he said.

He urged graduates to be innovative entrepreneurs who transform their communities.

Msaka challenged them to be job creators rather than job seekers, reminding them that "the future is something we build, rather than something we enter."

The minister also commended the outgoing Vice-Chancellor, Professor Address Malata, for her decade of transformative leadership.

He credited her with expanding academic programmes, fostering strategic partnerships, driving research, and developing robust campus infrastructure.

"You built the foundation, expanded access, and raised the flag of this university high," he said.

"On behalf of the government, we say thank you for your service to higher education and to the nation."

The minister also congratulated Vice Chancellor Designate, Associate Professor Mwapatsa Mipando, saying he is taking the reins at a pivotal time when government expects MUST to lead

the nation in academic quality, relevance, and impact.

"We will support you, but we will also hold this institution accountable for results. We charge you to expand research that solves Malawi's problems, strengthen industry partnerships, and ensure no qualified student is left behind," said the minister.

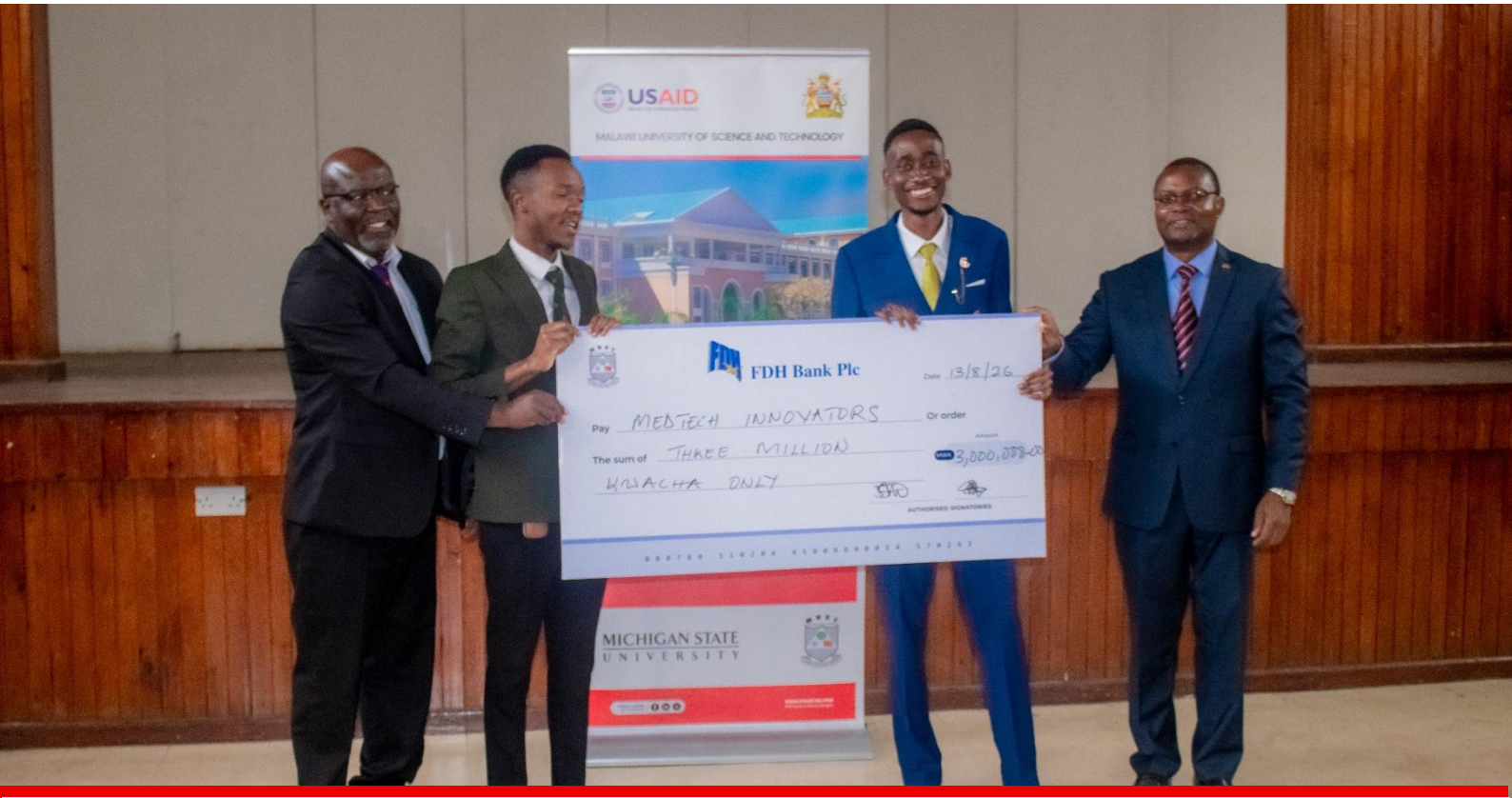
Addressing the congregation, Professor Address Malata, the outgoing Vice Chancellor, thanked the government, university council, staff, students, and her family for their unwavering confidence in her.

MUST Council Chairperson, Mr Noel Mkulichi hailed Msaka for his presence, saying it signalled three key milestones: honouring the graduates' accomplishments, transferring institutional leadership, and celebrating the university's first PhD graduates.

"We thank the government for its commitment to education," Mr Mkulichi said.

"As a Council, we remain committed to providing strategic direction and ensuring accountability so that public resources deliver tangible results for both our students and Malawi," Mr Mkulichi said.

"Congratulations to all of our graduates. The world needs your abilities, so please carry forward this university's core values of integrity, resilience, innovation, and, most importantly, being umunthu-centric. You are the transformation we have been preparing."



MUST STUDENTS DEVELOP DIGITAL HEALTH SOLUTIONS

By Mary Mwambongo

MUST continues to reaffirm its commitment to nurturing innovations that can improve lives and benefit communities.

The commitment was highlighted on August 13, 2026, during the Electronic Medical Record System

Innovation Challenge held in Blantyre, where MUST students were given an opportunity to use their knowledge and creativity to address a real challenge in Malawi's health sector.

The challenge brought together 11 student teams from different programmes who were tasked with designing and prototyping a practical, safe, user-friendly and scalable Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system that can support efficient healthcare delivery in Malawi, including the MUST Teaching Hospital.

After presenting their ideas and prototypes, MEDTech Innovators emerged as the winners, walking away with K3 million.

Speaking at the end of the challenge, Executive Dean of the Academy of Medical Sciences (AMS) at MUST, Dr Mwayiwawo Madanitsa, said the university remains committed to supporting innovations that can have a wider impact on society.

The challenge also highlighted the growing need for digital solutions in Malawi's health sector.

Director of Quality Management and Digital Health in the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Dr Andrew Gonani, said the world is moving towards digitalisation and that the health sector cannot be left behind.

He said the continued use of paper-based records creates challenges in managing patient information.

"For example, health passports are kept in hard copy. When they are lost, it becomes difficult for health workers to trace a patient's previous medical records," he said.

MUST organised the challenge in partnership with Global Solutions Limited, whose Managing Director, Michael Chikwana, said the hackathon was both exciting and challenging, as all the participating teams brought forward strong ideas.

He commended MUST for maintaining its relationship with his company, saying the partnership is contributing to the development of solutions that can benefit not only the two institutions but Malawi as a whole.

For the winning team, the achievement was a proud moment and a reward for their hard work.

Arthur Kapatuka and Precious Kaipa, both fresh Bachelor of Science in Business Information Technology from MUST, said they were excited to emerge as winners.

They described the challenge as demanding but said they remained focused throughout the process.

"We believe that the effort we put in and keeping God at the centre of our work helped us to move from the application stage to the final hackathon and eventually emerge victorious," said Arthur.

The two also credited MUST for equipping them with the skills and knowledge that enabled them to turn their ideas into a practical solution.

Meanwhile, VAC Innovations finished in second place and received K2 million while Grand Gaze came third and received K1 million.

The challenge demonstrated how young innovators can use the skills gained at university to respond to real-life challenges.

For MUST, this was not only a competition but an opportunity for students to turn knowledge into solutions that could help shape the future of healthcare in Malawi.

MUST 2026 GIRLS STEAM CAMP CLOSES

By Yamikani Kamcholoti

The MUST 2026 Girls STEAM Camp closed on August 7, following a successful two-week program.

The closing ceremony, held at Ndata campus in Thyolo, was held under the theme of "Girls in digital: Smart digital skills for empowered girls."

Guest of Honour and new MUST Vice Chancellor, Associate Professor Mwapatsa Mipando, celebrated the event as a milestone where curiosity transformed into code, questions turned into prototypes, and quiet ideas became powerful presentations.

The Vice Chancellor expressed gratitude to the organizers, parents, facilitators and partners for their dedicated efforts to ensure the camp's success.

He said Malawi's greatest resource is its young people.

"Communities thrive when girls lead in STEAM. I advise the girls to base their academic and scientific success on self-respect, integrity and strong values," he said while challenging them to have a clear vision, stay driven, network with like-minded peers and reject negative peer pressure.

Newly unveiled STEAM ambassador, Chrissie Moloseni, urged the young innovators to prepare themselves for leadership and provide solutions to community challenges.

“In ten years’ time, I see a doctor who finds a cure and an engineer who brings electricity to a village, and that vision starts today. Do not shrink to fit into what people expect of you,” she said.

Tryness Kazembe, a participant, thanked organizers, parents, sponsors and facilitators for an enriching and life changing time.

"I now see myself as an engineer. Before the camp, I felt nervous and curious about STEAM, but I am now comfortable to pursue it," said Tryness.

“We have learned to focus, dream big and realize that we belong in every lab, technology space and boardroom. Now STEAM has a girl’s face.”

Camp chairperson, Dr Priscilla Maliwichi, said the event has been a success with a profound impact.

She thanked university management, facilitators and sponsors for their invaluable contributions.

During the camp, participating girls engaged in hands-on STEAM activities, including collaborative tech projects, laboratory experiments, and a visit to Nkula

hydro power station, among others.

This year's partners included UNDP, EGENCO, FCB Bank, Plan International Malawi, ICTAM and Smile Life Insurance.

MUST TRAINS POLICE DETECTIVES IN PRACTICAL DIGITAL FORENCICS

By James Mphande

In an increasingly connected Malawi, text messages, emails, phone calls, or photographs stored on a mobile phone are no longer just tools of communication.

They can become crucial pieces of evidence in a criminal investigation.

It is against this changing reality that MUST on August 10, 2026 started a weeklong training for Malawi Police Service (MPS) detectives in practical digital forensics, equipping them with skills to identify, preserve, analyse and present digital evidence in criminal cases.

The training, taking place at Limbe Police Training School in Blantyre, was opened by MPS Deputy Director of Human Resources, Dr Joseph Mutupha.

Executive Dean for Malawi Institute of Technology at MUST, Associate Professor Michael Zimba, said the training represents the university's commitment to going beyond the classroom and using science, technology and innovation to solve real problems facing society.

He said the course was deliberately designed around the practical needs of police investigators, recognising that the nature of crime is changing as technology becomes increasingly embedded in everyday life.

"Technology is creating enormous opportunities for society, but it is also creating new risks," Dr Zimba observed.

"As a university, we have a responsibility to ensure that the knowledge and skills we develop respond to these realities."

The course outline was developed by MUST in consultation with MPS, ensuring that the training is not simply academic but grounded in the experiences and challenges investigators encounter in the field.

Police officers have also contributed practical case studies, helping to bridge the gap between theory and actual criminal investigations.

Dr Zimba said this kind of collaboration reflects the role MUST wants to play in national development, bringing together scientific and technological expertise with the practical knowledge of institutions working on the front line.

On his part, Dr Mutupha noted that investigators today increasingly encounter evidence in emails, telephone records, text messages and other digital platforms hence the need for them to know how to handle such evidence properly, warning that poor handling can compromise investigations and even contribute to miscarriages of justice.

UNDP representative, Phyllis Chibisa, commended MUST for taking the lead in designing the programme in collaboration with the MPS, noting that crime today increasingly goes beyond physical evidence, making digital forensics an essential capability for law enforcement in a technologically connected world.

She urged the participating officers to use the skills they acquire diligently and ethically, reaffirming UNDP's commitment to initiatives that strengthen technological capacity within public institutions.

Limbe Police Training School Commandant John Nkhoma described the training as timely, noting that technology has changed both the nature of crime and the way crimes are investigated and prosecuted.

He encouraged the officers to take the programme seriously and, after completing it, share their knowledge with colleagues across the police service.

MUST ADVANCES EVIDENCE-BASED ENERGY PLANNING ON GLOBAL PLATFORM

By Mary Mwambongo

MUST continues to strengthen its contribution to evidence-based energy planning after its alumnus and part-time lecturer, Alfred Levison Kampira, who is attached to the Department of Engineering at MUST, participated in the 2026 Global Energy Modeling Platform (EMP-G).

Kampira served as an Assistant Trainer for the Open Source Energy Modeling System (OSeMOSYS) during the three-week international training held at International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP).

According to Kampira, the training demonstrated how energy modeling can transform energy planning and policymaking in Malawi by providing reliable data to support informed decision-making.

"For a long time, energy planning and energy-related policies in Malawi have often been developed in isolation. This has resulted in implementation

challenges and less efficient energy systems," he said.

Kampira added that the knowledge and experience gained from the platform will benefit MUST, which is already integrating OSeMOSYS into its curriculum through Flatpack Bootcamp under Climate Compatible Growth program.

The initiative supports universities in adopting and embedding open-source energy modeling tools into teaching and research.

The EMP-G is an annual program that equips participants with practical skills in open-source energy modeling to support sustainable energy planning across the world.

The 2026 program was supported by Climate Compatible Growth, ICTP, the World Bank, Sustainable Energy for All, and other partners.

Kampira's participation highlights MUST's commitment to producing graduates who contribute to solving national and global challenges through research, innovation, and evidence-based solutions.

It also reflects the University's continued efforts to embrace digital tools and global best practices in addressing sustainable development challenges.

FROM HOSPITAL CORRIDORS TO GRADUATION STAGE

By Mary Mwambongo

"There were days I wanted to quit, but God carried me through."

For Flonny Tambwali, the road to graduation was not an easy one.

While pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Language, Communication and Culture through Open, Distance and e-Learning (ODeL) at MUST, Flonny was also caring for her child who has cerebral palsy.

Her days were often divided between caring for her child, hospital visits and her studies.

There were nights when she had to study after taking care of her family, and moments when the pressure became too much.

"There were times I wanted to quit," she recalls. The good thing is that she kept going.

The flexibility of MUST ODeL gave her an opportunity to continue with her education while managing her responsibilities at home.

Even on difficult days, she found a way to keep up with her studies.

Today, Flonny stands among fresh MUST graduates, holding a degree that represents far more than academic achievement.

It represents the hospital visits, sleepless nights, sacrifices, tears and countless moments when she chose to keep going.

Looking back, she gives credit to her faith and the opportunity provided by the ODeL.

"Through it all, God carried me," she says.

Her message to other women is simple, do not give up on your dreams.

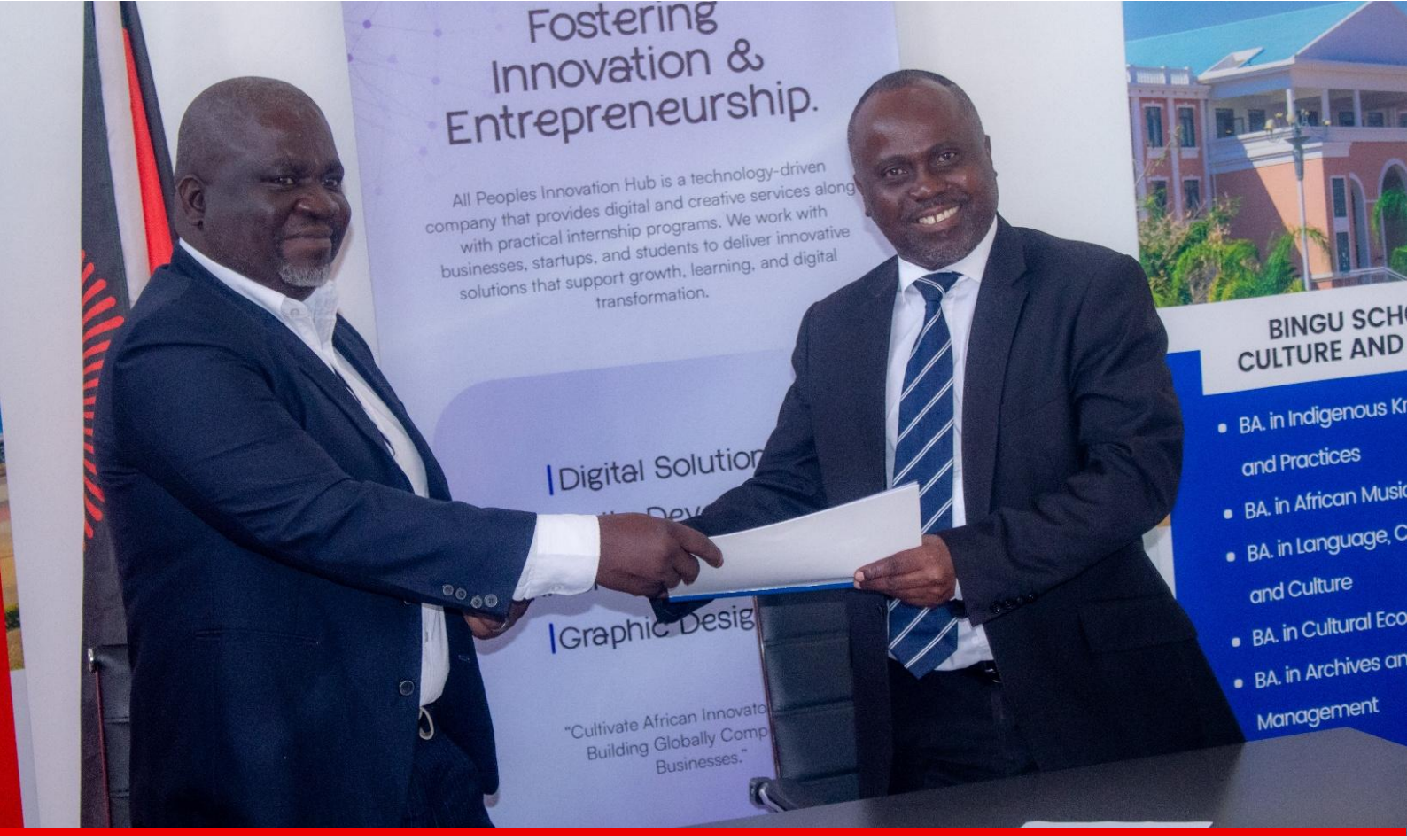
"Your responsibilities may slow you down, but they do not have to stop you. Keep going. Delay is not denial," she says.

From caring for her child in hospital corridors to walking across the graduation stage,

Flonny's journey is a powerful reminder that sometimes, success is not about having an easy journey.

It is about refusing to stop.

Flonny made it and her story is proof that no dream is too difficult to pursue.



MUST, APIH SIGN MOU

By Yamikani Kamcholoti

On August 12, 2026, the All-People Innovation Hub (APIH), a division of All People Financial Limited, and MUST officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The official signing ceremony took place at the MUST City campus in Blantyre and was attended by staff members from both institutions.

The MOU builds on a partnership that started in 2024 by creating a structured framework for long-term collaboration in innovation and research, professional short courses and Work-Integrated Learning.

Associate Professor Michael Zimba, Executive Dean of Malawi Institute of Technology, who represented the Vice Chancellor, described the strategic partnership as a transformative step forward.

He said the joint venture is a critical milestone for aligning higher education with industry needs.

"This is not just a signing ceremony but a start of good activities and projects with measurable outcomes. With this partnership, Malawi is in safe hands," Dr Zimba said.

All-People Innovation Hub Managing Director William Nchembe said modern industries require practical skills that traditional classrooms cannot exclusively provide.

He noted that this partnership directly opens critical doors for MUST students to engage in high-impact, practical industry experiences.

"Our students need real projects, real mentors and real feedback in areas of software development, data analytics, cybersecurity and digital product-design," Nchembe said.

The MoU will remain in force for three years, subject to regular strategic review.

Moving forward, both organizations have firmly reaffirmed their shared commitment to operational transparency, mutual respect and achieving measurable results for the socio-economic betterment of both institutions and the nation at large.

PYTHAGORUS KAOMBE: A JOURNEY OF DETERMINATION, DISCIPLINE AND RESILIENCE

By Mary Mwambongo

Following MUST's 7th Graduation Ceremony, the story of Pythagorus Kaombe stood out as a powerful reminder that determination, discipline, and resilience can turn dreams into reality.

Pythagorus graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Mathematical Sciences, majoring in Insurance and Financial Mathematics, and achieved a distinction.

His journey was not straightforward. He began his university studies in June 2022 as an engineering student. However, driven by his passion for finance, he transferred to the Mathematical Sciences programme when the opportunity arose.

The transition was challenging, but he remained focused.

"Mathematics demanded discipline, perseverance, and consistent effort. I knew I had to work harder than ever before if I wanted to succeed," he said.

His commitment paid off as he earned distinctions from his first year and maintained excellent academic performance throughout his studies.

Beyond academics, Pythagorus was also committed to serving others. He was elected Director of Social Welfare in the MUST Students Representative Council (MSRC), despite being warned that leadership responsibilities could negatively affect his studies.

Instead, he proved that with discipline, effective time management, and faith in God, it was possible to excel in both leadership and academics.

Like many students, Pythagorus faced academic pressure and moments of self-doubt. Rather than giving up, he sought help from lecturers and classmates, practised past examination papers, and remained determined to understand every difficult concept.

"No matter how difficult a concept may seem, I would find a way to understand it," he said.

Reflecting on his journey, Pythagorus encouraged current and aspiring MUST students never to let temporary setbacks define their future.

“Stay disciplined, believe in yourself, prepare well, and trust God throughout your journey,” he advised.

Pythagorus’s journey shows that success is not determined by how many challenges one faces, but by the courage to keep moving forward.

His story is an inspiration that with hard work, resilience, and purpose, every dream can become a reality.

MUST GIVES REFUGEE STUDENT CHANCE TO REALISE DREAM

By Mary Mwambongo

When 24-year-old Niyonkuru Samuel arrived at MUST four weeks ago, he was carrying more than just books.

He was carrying a dream he once thought he had lost.

A refugee from Rwanda living at Dzaleka Refugee Camp in Dowa, Samuel had almost given up on his dream of higher education after financial challenges prevented him from taking up a place at the University of Malawi, where he had been selected after passing Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) examinations in 2024.

With no other option, Samuel started teaching at one of the schools in the camp to earn a living while hoping that one day another opportunity would come.

That opportunity came through the Forum for African Women Educationalists in Malawi (FAWEMA) Bridging Scholarship Program.

The program equips academically deserving but financially disadvantaged students with knowledge and skills they need to transition successfully into university education.

Over the past four weeks, Samuel and his fellow students have been taking part in intensive academic lessons as they prepare for their examinations on August 24, 2026.

Samuel was selected to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Mathematical Sciences under the scholarship program after passing some exams.

"Being at MUST has given me another chance to achieve my dream. I am learning every day, and I am working hard because I

want to pass my examinations and secure my place at the university," he said.

He added that opportunities like the FAWEMA Bridging Scholarship Program are rare for young people living in refugee camps.

As the examinations draw closer, Samuel remains focused on his studies, determined to turn this second chance into a lifelong achievement.

His story reflects the great role MUST continues to play by hosting programs that expand access to higher education and create opportunities for talented young people, regardless of their background.

FAWEMA is implementing the scholarship with public universities in Malawi with support from Mastercard Foundation.

SEEDING LABS BOOSTS MUST RESEARCH CAPACITY WITH EQUIPMENT DONATION

By Justice Ndau

The Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) has received a major boost to its research capacity following a US$260,000 (MK451 million) equipment donation from long-time partner, Seeding Labs.

The consignment, which arrived at MUST's Ndata campus on July 23, 2026, will strengthen work at the Centre for Clinical and Biological Sciences Research (CCBSR) in the Academy of Medical Sciences.

The equipment includes an Illumina iSeq100 DNA sequencer, automated DNA extractor, centrifuges, laboratory safety equipment and over 40 refrigerators and freezers, among other items.

The donation is expected to enhance MUST's ability to conduct cutting-edge research across key areas such as clinical research, biomedical sciences, biotechnology, sports science and ecological sciences.

Associate Professor Gama Bandawe, Coordinator for CCBSR, described the support as timely and transformative.

"This donation comes at the right time for us. It strengthens our laboratory systems and gives MUST the tools we need to carry out high-quality research that responds to real health challenges," he said.

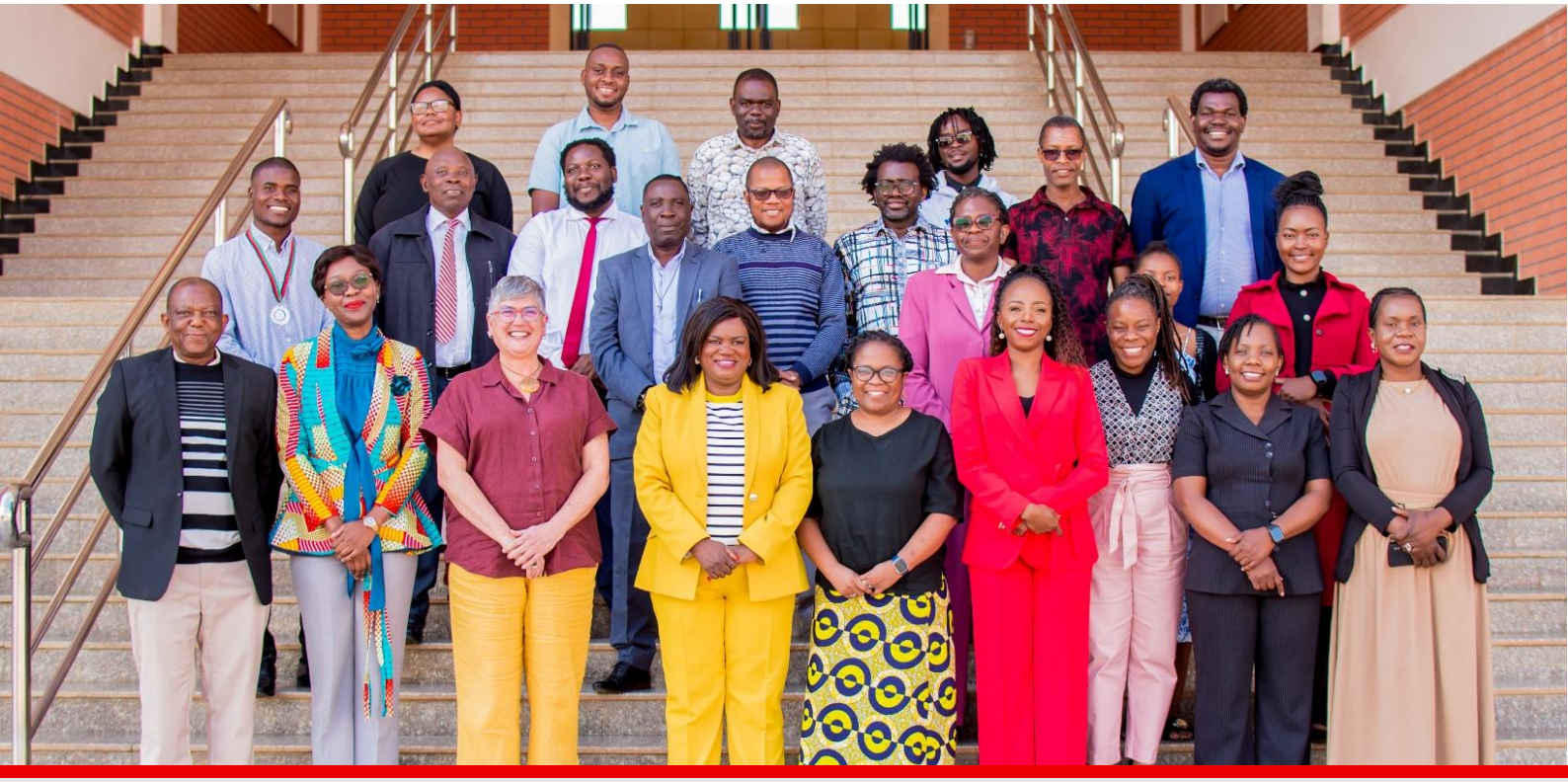
Part of the equipment, including refrigerators, will support Blantyre District Health Office through the Global Action in Nursing initiative to improve storage of oxytocin and promote safer childbirth in health facilities.

Additional support from Build Health International includes

laboratory furniture and a mobile X-ray shield for the MUST Teaching Hospital, further strengthening healthcare training and service delivery.

This latest contribution builds on an eight-year partnership between MUST and Seeding Labs, which previously supported the University's response to COVID-19 and helped establish key academic programmes in medical microbiology and immunology.

With this continued support, MUST is further positioning itself as a leading hub for scientific research and innovation in Malawi.



MUST HOSTS MEDICAL HUMANITIES SYMPOSIUM

By Yamikani Kamcholoti

On July 29, 2026, Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST), in collaboration with the University of Pretoria through the Bingu School of Culture and Heritage, organized a symposium at the Ndata Campus in Thyolo.

Funded by the Wellcome Trust through the University of Edinburgh, the event centred around the theme of sustenance, and was aimed at bridging the gap between medicine, arts and culture by investigating how humanities-based approaches can improve common understanding of health and welfare.

Scholars from different academic fields attended, including representatives from Catholic University of Malawi, University of Malawi, MUST and Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Research Programme.

Speaking at the event, MUST Vice Chancellor, Professor Address Malata, said medical concerns are not exclusive to medical experts.

Professor Malata encouraged participants to discuss medical humanities in relation to climate change and integrate these issues into academic discourse.

"As we open this symposium, we must recognize that the separation between the health of our bodies and the health of our planet is an illusion," Professor Malata said.

She challenged participants to make a tangible difference following the event, noting that what truly matters is the difference made to the world rather than the number of papers presented.

Dr Atikonda Mtenje Mkochi, Executive Dean of Bingu School of Culture and Heritage at MUST and co-Principal Investigator for

Medical Humanities Network at MUST, emphasized the critical need for culturally informed care and multidisciplinary cooperation between health and the humanities.

Dr Mkochi highlighted the interdisciplinary growth at the institution, pointing to upcoming milestones such as introduction of Science Communication programmes at both masters and PhD levels, that will start next semester.

She expressed optimism about integrating arts and health sciences, highlighting how cultural norms, societal values and local languages influence medical practice, patient care and health communication.

Professor Nolwazi Mkhwanazi of University of Pretoria and Associate Professor Carla Tsampiras introduced international perspectives on the interdisciplinary relationship between medical humanities and medicine.

Professor Mkhwanazi and Tsampiras outlined four key rationales bridging medicine and humanities i.e. instrumental application, critical independent analysis, epistemological fusion, and the shift toward health humanities.

The symposium also covered some subthemes such as language and linguistics; migration and diaspora movement; gender and sexuality; mental health and wellbeing; and disability studies.

It also featured diverse academic and creative presentations, including papers, performances, poetry and displays.

Principal Investigator, Dr Chisomo Kalinga, said the active participation demonstrated by attendees made the event a success.

She urged participants to stay updated on emerging challenges and trends shaping scholarly discourse.

MUST WINS K78M INNOVATION FUND TO SCALE UP FERTILIZER PROJECT

By Mary Mwambongo

MUST has emerged as overall winner of the 2026 NCA-DCA Innovation Fund Pitching Competition, earning K78 million to scale up its innovative granulated urine fertilizer project.

The university secured first place after competing against five other finalists shortlisted from 123 innovations submitted from across Malawi.

The award was presented on July 28, 2026 during an event held in Lilongwe.

The competition, organised by the Norwegian Church Aid and Dan Church Aid (NCA-DCA) Innovation Fund, recognises innovative solutions that address Malawi's development challenges through science, technology and entrepreneurship.

Receiving the award on behalf of MUST, the project's lead researcher and Postgraduate Coordinator, Dr Jabulani Nyengere, described it as a strong recognition of research that responds to the country's real needs.

"This achievement demonstrates that research-based solutions developed in Malawi have potential to compete at the highest level while creating meaningful impact in our communities," said Dr Nyengere.

He said the recognition also reflects MUST's commitment to developing practical innovations that improve people's lives.

The granulated urine fertilizer project transforms safely collected urine into a high-quality granulated organic fertilizer using locally available mineral resources.

The innovation provides affordable and sustainable alternative to conventional fertilizers while promoting nutrient recycling and climate-smart agriculture.

Dr Nyengere said the project stood out because it combines scientific innovation with practical solutions to some of Malawi's biggest agricultural challenges.

The K78 million funding will enable the research team to move the innovation from its current stage to large-scale production and commercialisation.

"The funds will be used to acquire granulation equipment, strengthen production systems, improve quality assurance, conduct farmer demonstrations and field trials, and train women and youth groups in fertilizer production and use," he said.

The NCA-DCA Innovation Fund was launched in 2025 to support innovative ideas with potential to create sustainable social and economic impact in Malawi.

MUST, OTHAKARHAKA FOUNDATION FORGE PARTNERSHIP

By Mary Mwambongo

MUST on July 23, 2026, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Othakarhaka Foundation to strengthen collaboration in education, research, innovation and community development.

The partnership will focus on promoting digital skills, entrepreneurship, youth empowerment and sustainable development in Mulanje, Thyolo and surrounding communities.

Speaking during the signing ceremony, Othakarhaka Foundation Executive Director Ida Puliwa said they operates in Thyolo and Mulanje and have so far supported about 3,000 students with education assistance and continue to improve lives through their health, sustainable agriculture and community livelihood programs.

Outgoing MUST Vice Chancellor, Professor Address Malata, described the partnership as a valuable opportunity that will benefit both the university and its students.

She emphasized the importance of partnerships in transforming lives, adding that every student deserves support and that the greatest achievement is seeing students make a positive difference in society.

Then incoming Vice Chancellor, Associate Professor Mwapasa Mipando, welcomed the collaboration and pledged MUST's commitment to ensuring the partnership achieves its intended goals.

Othakarhaka Foundation Board Chairperson Ted London commended the Foundation for the impact it continues to make in the districts where it operates and expressed confidence that the partnership with MUST will further expand that impact.

Under the five-year agreement, MUST and Othakarhaka Foundation will jointly implement programs in education and skills development, research and innovation, student internships and mentorship, community outreach, sustainable agriculture, health initiatives, digital transformation, and empowerment of girls, women and other marginalized groups.

The partnership will also support joint fundraising, technology-driven community solutions and establishment of innovation hubs to address local challenges.

The partnership reflects MUST's continued commitment to building strategic collaborations that enhance teaching, research and innovation while contributing to national development and improving the well-being of communities across Malawi.

MUST STUDENT TAKES MALAWI TO THE MISS WORLD STAGE

By Mary Mwambongo

Final-year Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices student at MUST, Ireen Navicha, has represented Malawi at the 75th Miss World Festival held in Vietnam.

Navicha earned the opportunity to represent the country after emerging as First Princess in the Miss Malawi beauty pageant. Her participation placed a MUST student on one of the world's biggest beauty and cultural platforms, where she had the opportunity to showcase Malawi's beauty, culture and identity to an international audience.

Beyond the pageant, Navicha used the global platform to champion issues affecting girls and young women, particularly access to education. Through her Beauty With a Purpose project, "When a Mother Is a Child," she has been advocating for teenage mothers who have dropped out of school due to pregnancy and early marriage, encouraging them to return to education and pursue their dreams.

Speaking ahead of the competition, Navicha said her journey represented the many girls whose education had been interrupted by difficult circumstances.

"When you see me, don't just see a queen but thousands of girls rising. See second chances. See courage. See hope and see a Malawi that believes every girl deserves an education, a voice and freedom to choose her own future," she said.

Navicha's participation at Miss World adds to her experience on international beauty pageant platforms, having previously represented Malawi at a cultural pageant in South Africa as Miss Culture.

Her journey at Miss World has brought pride to the MUST community and provided an opportunity for the University to celebrate the achievements of its students beyond the classroom.

As she returns from the international stage, Navicha's story stands as an inspiration to young people at MUST and across Malawi, demonstrating that education, confidence, culture and social impact can come together to create opportunities on the global stage.

The MUST community congratulates Ireen Navicha on representing Malawi and celebrates her contribution to showcasing the talent, culture and aspirations of Malawian young people to the world.

MUST STUDENTS EARN AIRTEL NZERU TECH SCHOLARSHIP

By Mary Mwambongo

Twenty-five students from MUST have received full scholarships to pursue undergraduate studies in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) through the Airtel Nzeru Tech Scholarship program.

The scholarship program aims to remove financial barriers that prevent talented students from accessing higher education, giving them an opportunity to pursue their academic goals and contribute to Malawi's technological and economic development.

Speaking on the development, Airtel Malawi Managing Director Aashish Dutt said the program is an investment in the country's future.

"These young people represent the future of Malawi's digital economy. Through the support of the Airtel Africa Foundation, this scholarship is investing not only in their academic success but also in the next generation of innovators, problem-solvers and technology leaders who will help shape Malawi's future," he said.

MUST Vice Chancellor Professor Address Malata welcomed the continued partnership between the university, Airtel Malawi and the Airtel Africa Foundation, describing the initiative as a life-changing opportunity for deserving students.

"We congratulate the successful students and thank the Airtel Africa Foundation, Airtel Malawi and MUST for creating opportunities for talented young people who might otherwise struggle to access higher education," she said.

For the 25 beneficiaries, the scholarship represents more than financial support.

It offers the opportunity to focus on their studies, develop their potential and prepare for careers that will contribute to solving challenges and advancing the country's digital transformation.

As MUST continues to strengthen partnerships that support student success, the Airtel Nzeru Tech Scholarship program stands as a testament to the power of collaboration in creating opportunities and empowering the next generation of scientists, engineers and technology leaders.

MUST, RICE UNIVERSITY CONCLUDE FACULTY TRAINING

By Yamikani Kamcholoti

The week-long faculty development workshop, jointly organized by MUST Design Studio and Rice University, successfully concluded on Friday, July 17, 2026.

Funded by the Lemelson Foundation, the training brought together faculty members from both MUST and Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences (MUBAS) to equip them with advanced teaching methodologies and communication.

Speaking during the closing ceremony, MUST Vice-Chancellor, Professor Address Malata, commended Rice University and its programme coordinators for introducing international best practices to Malawian higher education.

She said traditional lecturing is no longer sufficient in a rapidly changing academic landscape.

"Higher education is changing quickly," Professor Malata noted.

"Traditional lecturing is insufficient to prepare students for an automated and innovative world, hence the need to bridge theory with practical societal solutions."

She challenged participants to immediately implement their new skills, urging them to redesign at least one course module using active learning frameworks covered during the workshop.

Echoing these sentiments, MUBAS Representative and NEST360 Principal Investigator, Professor Theresa Mkandawire, reminded participants of the broader economic impact of their teaching strategies.

"I therefore challenge you to use your classrooms as conduits of transformative learning," Professor Mkandawire said.

MUST Biological Sciences lecturer, Dr David Mzinza, speaking on behalf of participants, described the training as transformative.

He highlighted techniques such as the "think-pair-share" strategy, as powerful tools to foster critical thinking and student collaboration.

"Moving forward, I plan to integrate these practical strategies into my classroom to create a more interactive and meaningful learning environment," Dr Mzinza said.

On her part, workshop facilitators, Ann Saterbak, described the event as a huge success, noting that all planned objectives were fully met.

She congratulated participants for their high level of responsiveness, engagement and attentiveness throughout the five days.

FDH SUPPORTS MUST ENDOWMENT FUND WITH K100M MORE

By Yamikani Kamcholoti

On July 20, 2026, FDH Bank made its second contribution to the MUST Endowment Fund (MEF) with a K100 million donation.

The bank's initial contribution to the MEF, which seeks to raise resources to support needy students and teaching and learning materials, was K106 million in December 2023.

Officials from both institutions attended the official cheque presentation ceremony held at FDH Bank head office in Blantyre.

The new contribution brings FDH Bank's total MEF support to K206 million.

Speaking during the handover ceremony, FDH Bank Deputy Managing Director, George Chitera, said they do not look the contribution merely as a transaction, but a generational investment.

"FDH Bank is proud to contribute K100 million to the MUST Endowment Fund because we believe that investing in education is fundamentally investing in our nation's future," he said emphasizing that education is a necessity rather than a luxury.

Chitera further noted that higher education institutions need a paradigm shift from purely academic focus by promoting entrepreneurship.

He urged universities to become entrepreneurial engines that produce job creators rather than job seekers.

Receiving the support, MUST Vice Chancellor, Professor Address Malata, thanked FDH Bank for investing in the future of young people.

She said the initial K106 million contribution from FDH Bank has now grown through investment yields by an additional K183 million.

With the K100 million top-up, the FDH Bank Fund within MEF is now approaching K400 million.

Professor Malata praised FDH Bank for its enduring support, highlighting that true friendship is the anchoring consistency in the collaboration between the two institutions.

"The FDH Endowment Fund will be there, even after all of us are gone. From now onwards, when MUST shines, FDH Bank will shine too, and it will have a special place in the history of our university," she said.

This support from FDH Bank is part of a broader, ongoing relationship between the two institutions.

FDH Bank recently also donated K18 million to MUST athletes who participated at the Confederation of Universities and Colleges Sports Associations (CUSCA) in Gaborone, Botswana.

STUDENT TRANSFORMS CREATIVITY INTO BUSINESS

By Mary Mwambongo

While many students are busy preparing for life after graduation, MUST student Banda Chembekezo Kandunji from Dowa district has already taken a bold step into entrepreneurship by designing and building his own popcorn machine.

Kandunji, who is awaiting graduation with a Bachelor of Arts in Language, Communication and Culture, has shown that innovation is not limited to science or engineering students.

By combining creativity, determination and practical problem-solving, he has built a fully functional popcorn machine that is already helping him earn an income.

To bring his idea to life, Kandunji worked with Mr Chimimba, a welder based at Mdika trading centre, who fabricated the machine's cabinet based on Kandunji's design.

Kandunji then designed and assembled the popcorn kettle and other key components, producing a machine that delivers consistent, high-quality popcorn suitable for commercial use.

"I have always believed that your programme of study should never limit your

potential," said Kandunji.

"I drew inspiration from existing commercial machines and adapted the ideas using locally available materials. With creativity, determination and knowledge we gain through education, it is possible to build solutions that create opportunities."

The machine has already attracted interest from customers even before its final finishing and painting.

Encouraged by the positive response, Kandunji has started using it as a source of income while planning to manufacture more machines for aspiring entrepreneurs.

For Kandunji, the project is about more than building a machine.

It is about proving that young people can create opportunities for themselves instead of waiting for employment.

His story is one of the testimonies to MUST's commitment to producing graduates who think creatively, embrace innovation and apply their knowledge to solve real-world challenges.

His achievement also demonstrates that valuable innovations can emerge from any academic discipline when curiosity, resilience and an entrepreneurial mindset come together.

As he prepares to graduate, Kandunji hopes to grow his popcorn machine business and inspire more young people to transform their ideas into sustainable enterprises, showing that with vision and determination, education can become a foundation for creating jobs rather than simply seeking them.

DRIVEN TO SERVE, DETERMINED TO SUCCEED

By Mary Mwambongo

Balancing academic studies with student leadership is no easy task, but for Charity Khoviwa, it is an opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of fellow students.

Khoviwa is a third-year Bachelor of Arts in Language, Communication and Culture at MUST and serves as Vice President for the Open and Distance e-Learning (ODeL) students.

In her leadership position, she is committed to ensuring that students receive the support they need to succeed in their studies.

One of her key responsibilities is assisting students who are sponsored through the MUST Endowment Fund and Higher Education Students' Loans and Grants Board.

"I primarily support students sponsored under the Endowment Fund and the Loans Board by liaising with relevant university offices to help resolve challenges related to upkeep allowances and tuition fees," she says.

Through this role, Khoviwa has become a trusted link between students and the university, helping to ensure that concerns affecting students' academic progress are addressed promptly.

Despite the demands of leadership, she remains committed to her studies. She attributes her ability to balance both responsibilities to effective planning and discipline.

"I balance my responsibilities as Vice President and a full-time student through strong time management," she explains.

Khoviwa's story reflects the leadership, commitment and resilience that define many

MUST students. Her dedication to serving others while pursuing her academic goals demonstrates that leadership is about creating positive change and supporting those around you.

As MUST continues to strengthen its ODeL programme, students like Khoviwa are helping build a supportive learning community where academic success and student leadership go hand in hand.

MUST IN AI-BASED FERTIGATION SYSTEM TO ADVANCE CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURE

By Mary Mwambongo

MUST, through the Transforming African Agricultural Universities to Meaningfully Contribute to Africa's Growth and Development (TagDev 2.0) program, is implementing an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based fertigation system to improve production of high-value crops and promote climate-smart agriculture.

The project is being led by Dr Jabulani Nyengere and reflects MUST's commitment to using research, innovation and technology to address food security, climate change and sustainable agricultural development.

Implementation of the project has already commenced at MUST's main campus in Thyolo, where a greenhouse has been installed.

The project team is now preparing to start planting high-value crops early next month, marking an important milestone in the university's efforts to demonstrate use of AI in modern agriculture.

Speaking about the initiative, Dr Nyengere said the project combines innovation and practical learning to improve agricultural productivity while preparing farmers and communities to adapt to climate change.

"We are using AI to make farming more efficient, productive and climate-resilient while providing students and communities with practical skills that can transform agriculture," said Dr Nyengere.

The AI-based fertigation system combines irrigation and fertilizer application into one smart system.

Using real-time data, the technology automatically adjusts the amount of water and nutrients supplied to crops according to their stage of growth.

This ensures that crops receive the right amount of nutrients at the right time, reducing waste while improving productivity, crop quality and efficient use of resources.

The greenhouse will support the production of high-value crops, including tomatoes, bell peppers and cucumbers.

These crops require careful nutrient management throughout their growth cycle and are expected to benefit significantly from AI-driven precision farming.

As part of the initiative, the project will also establish a smart tree nursery to produce climate-resilient seedlings capable of withstanding drought, floods and changing weather patterns.

Unlike conventional nurseries, the AI-assisted system will regulate watering and nutrient application to strengthen seedlings during their early stages of growth.

This approach helps prepare young trees to survive under challenging environmental conditions once transplanted to farms or restoration sites.

Beyond crop production and tree propagation, the facility will serve as a practical learning centre where MUST students, the youths, farmers and surrounding communities will receive hands-on training in advanced agricultural technologies.

Participants will learn about AI-powered fertigation, precision irrigation, climate-smart farming practices and sustainable tree nursery management.

The project is also expected to improve access to clean, high-quality planting materials, contributing to increased agricultural productivity, improved food security and enhanced household incomes.

Through the TagDev 2.0 program, MUST continues to strengthen its role in agricultural research and innovation by developing practical solutions that respond to climate change while equipping future generations with knowledge and skills needed to transform agriculture in Malawi and beyond.

MUST GRADUATES FIRST PhDs

By Yamikani Kamcholoti

MUST graduated its first PhD graduates during the 7th Congregation slated for August 6, 2026.

This was confirmed on July 14, when two candidates, Mayamiko Nkoloma and Wongani Langa, successfully defended their theses before a panel of examiners and other participants at the university's City campus in Chichiri, Blantyre.

Examination panel chairperson, Professor James Kamwachale Khomba, described the event as unique and historic.

"We are here to assess the candidates, so this is not a public debate but an academic and scholarly exercise and as such, the candidates, exam panelists and participants need to avoid emotions by being fair, impartial and professional in line with the university's postgraduate regulations," he said before introducing his panel that also had Associate Professor Bernet Kankuzi, Associate Professor Andrew Mtewa, Dr Joyce Chivunga, Professor Alfred Maluwa, Associate Professor Chikondi Chisenga and Dr Bonnet Kamwana.

In addition, the public thesis defence was also attended by the outgoing Vice Chancellor, Professor Address Malata, incoming Vice Chancellor Associate Professor Mwapatsa Mipando, Deputy Vice Chancellor Professor Wilson Mandala, executive deans of schools, directors and senior academics and the candidates' supervisors.

Nkoloma, who is Director General of Malawi Communications Authority (Macra) and was studying a PhD in Innovation and Development, presented a thesis titled

"Developing an Innovation Adoption Framework for Digital Health Systems in Low-Income Developing Countries" with a focus on Malawi.

He said as an innovator himself, he was keen to establish what makes most of the country's innovations fail.

On his part, Langa, a research fellow under MUST's Institute of Industrial Research and Innovation (MIIRI), presented a thesis titled "Developing an Open Innovation Partnership Model for Industrialisation in Developing Countries".

He too looked at various aspects of spurring industrialization through the innovation pathway.

After gruelling sessions with the candidates, the panel passed both candidates and will be graduating with PhDs during the university's 7th Congregation, making history as the first PhD graduates from MUST.

The development comes 12 years after MUST's establishment, when it started with three undergraduate programmes and two masters programmes. Today, the university has 27 undergraduate programmes and 29 postgraduate programmes, including seven PhD programmes.

HOW MUST ODeL IS HELPING STUDENTS TURN DREAMS INTO REALITY

By Mary Mwambongo

For Chimwemwe Masakasa, pursuing a university education did not mean putting the rest of her life on hold.

As a second-year Bachelor of Arts in Language, Communication and Culture student at MUST, she has found a learning experience that allows her to grow academically while managing her other responsibilities.

Chimwemwe describes her journey as a MUST Open and Distance e-Learning (ODeL) student as rewarding and enriching.

She says the programme has given her flexibility to continue her

education and gain valuable knowledge and practical skills.

"The programme has allowed me to balance my studies with other responsibilities while gaining valuable knowledge and skills. Although it has been challenging at times, it has helped me become more disciplined, independent and confident in my learning," she said.

Like many ODeL students, Chimwemwe has faced challenges, especially balancing her studies with work and meeting assignment deadlines.

However, she has overcome these obstacles by planning her time well, staying organised and remaining committed to her studies.

She says the experience has not only strengthened her academic knowledge but has also helped her develop important life skills, including discipline, independence and confidence.

Encouraging others who are considering to further their education, Chimwemwe says MUST's ODeL programmes are an excellent choice for anyone looking for quality education with flexibility to balance other commitments.

Through its Open and Distance e-Learning platform, MUST continues to make higher education more accessible by providing flexible learning opportunities that empower students to achieve their academic and career goals, regardless of their circumstances.

MUST STUDENTS SHINE AT WORLD ACCREDITATION DAY

By Nelson Mwenifumbo

Innovation took centre stage on 8th July, 2026 as Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS) commemorated World Accreditation Day under the theme of "Innovation, Trust and Sustainability through Accreditation."

Held at MBS Auditorium in Blantyre, the event brought together leaders from government, industry, healthcare institutions, academia and the private sector to celebrate the role of accreditation in promoting quality and sustainable development.

Representing MUST, Hope Matemba and Cedric Mmangisa, attracted attention with their projects.

Hope exhibited Mavericks Ultraviolet Sterilizing Robot, an innovative system developed to enhance infection prevention through automated ultraviolet disinfection.

On his part, Cedric presented Smart Kangaroo Mother Care System, a solution aimed at supporting neonatal care through smart monitoring technologies.

Exhibitions were followed by official remarks and presentations, emphasizing importance of accreditation in ensuring quality, safety and trust across various sectors.

MUST's contribution to the event extended beyond the exhibition floor as Nelson Mwenifumbo, from MUST Design Studio, delivered a presentation on "Innovations supporting Malawi's development."

He emphasized the critical role of innovation hubs such as the Design Studio in transforming ideas into impactful technologies while maintaining quality through standards and accreditation.

A major highlight of the day was the student innovation pitch session, where MUST students presented their projects to a wider audience.

Alinane Kalemba, a MUST student, presented NoeHearScreen, a low-cost Automated Auditory Brainstem Response (AABR) newborn hearing screening device developed to address challenges of early hearing loss detection in low-resource healthcare settings.

On his part, Syton Mphaka, another student, presented a Flood Monitoring System designed to improve disaster preparedness through real-time flood detection and monitoring.

The climax of the event was through awards of excellence in quality management and innovation.

MUST student innovators received Certificates of Recognition and K500,000 cheques each for outstanding contributions.

Participation of MUST at World Accreditation Day reflected its growing reputation as a hub for innovation, research and technological advancement.

MUST, MLW SIGN MOU

By Mary Mwambongo

MUST on 9th July, 2026, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Research Programme (MLW), marking the beginning of a strategic partnership aimed at strengthening academic and research collaboration for national development.

The partnership will promote joint academic and research initiatives

while creating opportunities for knowledge sharing, innovation, capacity building and skills development between the two institutions.

Speaking during the signing ceremony, MUST Vice Chancellor, Professor Address Malata, described the partnership as a long-awaited and significant milestone for the university.

"This is a very critical partnership," she said.

"Communicable and non-communicable diseases are changing, and addressing these challenges requires collaboration across different disciplines."

Professor Malata highlighted that all four schools at MUST have expertise that can make meaningful contributions to health research.

She expressed confidence that the collaboration would produce impactful research and help build a new generation of researchers capable of responding to Malawi's health and development needs.

"We are hoping to see this partnership bear fruit and make a real impact. MUST is committed to building a generation of good researchers," she said.

MLW Director, Professor Henry Mwandumba, welcomed the partnership, describing it as an important step towards achieving the institution's strategic goals.

"As we prepare to launch our new strategic plan, we recognise that we can achieve much more by collaborating with organisations and universities," he said.

Professor Mwandumba commended MUST for producing talented students, noting that many are already making valuable contributions at MLW.

He added that the partnership will support students working on innovations that benefit the nation while also strengthening the capacity of MLW staff through collaborative learning and research.

MLW Chief Operating Officer, Aubrey Chalira Phiri, said the partnership has the potential to make a significant difference to Malawi.

"This collaboration will make a huge difference depending on how we work together. We are also looking forward to learning from one another," he said.

On his part, Executive Dean of MUST's Academy of Medical Sciences, Dr Mwayiwawo Madanitsa, described the agreement as a landmark moment that marks the beginning of a promising journey for both institutions.

The MoU seeks to strengthen cooperation in research, academic programmes, innovation, staff and student development and other areas of mutual interest.

Through this partnership, MUST and MLW aim to generate knowledge and innovations that will improve health outcomes and contribute to Malawi's socio-economic development.

MUST STUDENT BUILDS DIGITAL SOLUTIONS FOR MALAWI

By Mary Mwambongo

A passion for learning and desire to tackle real-life problems are helping one MUST student turn classroom knowledge into digital innovation.

At just 23 years old, fourth-year Bachelor of Science in Business Information Technology student Mayamiko Mcford is showing that university education, combined with ongoing learning and determination, can lead to solutions that enhance people's lives.

While studying at MUST, Mayamiko has completed an impressive 71 professional courses on Nzeru Hub, a free digital learning platform that gives young people industry-relevant ICT skills they need.

For Mayamiko, the journey has always been about learning beyond the classroom.

"The skills I have acquired are helping me think differently about how technology can be used to address challenges in our communities," he says.

Mayamiko is the founder of G-Solutions, an innovative digital platform set to launch later this year.

He developed it together with fellow young innovators from different technical institutions.

The platform will connect customers with skilled artisans, such as plumbers, electricians, and construction professionals, through a website and mobile application.

This will help users quickly find nearby service providers for home maintenance and renovation needs.

His passion for innovation does not stop there as Mayamiko is also working on other digital solutions, including FORDORA Payroll and Employee Management System, a Debtors Management System and a Home Inventory Management System.

As technology continues to shape the future, stories like Mayamiko's inspire fellow students to realize that learning does not end in the classroom.

THE DECISION THAT CHANGED LIFE

By Mary Mwambongo

There was a time when Autice Mdzuma believed that making money was more important than earning a university degree.

After completing his Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE), Autice trained as a teacher and later combined teaching with running a business.

As his income grew, he began to think that university education was no longer necessary.

"I thought money was all that mattered and believed that I did not need a degree," he says.

Everything changed after a conversation with a friend who was already financially successful but was still pursuing a university education.

"That was the moment I realised that education is more valuable than money," added Autice.

Inspired by that realization, Autice applied to MUST, where he is now pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Language, Communication and Culture (LCC) as an ODEL student.

At MUST, Autice says he has found the quality education he hoped for. Although challenges such as power outages and poor internet connectivity sometimes affect his studies, they have not stopped him from pursuing his goals.

One of his favourite experiences has been learning Chinese, while

dedicated lecturers continue to inspire him through their commitment and hard work.

Looking back, Autice says choosing education over comfort was one of the best decisions he has ever made.

His advice to other young people is simple; never underestimate the value of education.

FROM STRUGGLES TO TRANSFORMING MALAWI'S HEALTHCARE

By Mary Mwambongo

Growing up in Amonitsute Village in Balaka, Charles Kapalamula lost his father at a young age. At just 14, he took on the responsibility of helping raise his younger siblings.

While many children his age were focused on school alone, Charles was balancing family responsibilities and finding ways to keep hope alive.

Financial challenges distracted his education, but they did not stop his dream. He became a primary school teacher to support his family while continuing his own secondary education at St. Charles Lwanga Community Day Secondary School.

It was a difficult journey, but one that shaped the resilience he carries today.

That determination earned him a place at MUST, where he studied Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Biomedical Engineering.

While at MUST, Charles found more than an education. He found purpose.

Graduating in 2019, he entered a field that was still developing in Malawi.

Today, he serves as Head of Biomedical Engineering Department at Kamuzu Central Hospital, leading management of critical medical technologies that support patient care and providing technical leadership for biomedical engineering services across the Central Region.

Beyond the hospital, Charles works with the Ministry of Health and international partners to strengthen Malawi's healthcare system.

He is also founder of Vintage Tech Hub, a consultancy that helps health facilities improve safety and reliability of medical equipment.

Reflecting on his journey, Charles says MUST taught him to see every challenge as an opportunity.

"MUST taught me to think critically, solve problems systematically and believe that every engineering challenge has a solution."

From a young boy carrying family responsibilities in rural Balaka to becoming a leader in biomedical engineering, his story is a powerful reminder that resilience, education and determination can transform lives.

He is truly one of MUST's Fruits of Excellence.

MASM CONCLUDES FIRST AID TRAINING FOR MUST STAFF

By Yamikani Kamcholoti

Medical Aid Society of Malawi (MASM) has successfully concluded its First Aid training sessions for staff members at the Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST).

To accommodate a large number of participants, staff members were divided into cohorts for consecutive three-day training sessions at the university's City Campus in Blantyre.

The initiative aimed to lessen the impact of workplace injuries and foster a proactive culture of safety through immediate, life-saving care.

During the closing ceremony, Dr Linda Chokhotho, Head of Clinical Services Department at MUST, commended the participants for their active involvement and praised the facilitators for delivering an engaging and practical program.

"As we leave this room today, I want to remind you that first aid skills save lives, confidence comes with practice and everyone benefits from a safer workplace," she said.

Representing university management, Administration Manager, Emanuel Chizinga, congratulated the staff.

He reiterated that employee well-being remains a top priority, noting that after the training, management expects the trained staff to act as frontline safety ambassadors.

"Moving forward, please familiarize yourselves with our written incident procedures and report any supply depletion immediately to the HR department," Chizinga said.

Allan Chongwe, an ICT lecturer but speaking on behalf of the participants, expressed gratitude to MUST management and the MASM training team for equipping them with vital competencies.

"As a lecturer responsible for hundreds of students, this training has transformed my mindset from being a mere bystander to a confident, capable first aid responder," Chongwe said.

"Emergencies do not wait for experts, so we are ready."

The comprehensive training sessions were led by Lusungu Chirambo from MASM, who guided the university staff through both theoretical instruction and hands-on practical drills, covering CPR, wound care, severe bleeding, fainting and poisoning, among other medical crises.

MUST STUDENTS DESIGN, DEVELOP TOMATO PASTE CONCENTRATOR

By Fanuel Msiska

As MUST continues to equip students with innovative ideas, four final year Manufacturing Engineering students have developed a tomato paste concentrator using locally available materials.

The team consists of Victor Mtanga, Timothy Kaunda, Emmanuel Mkili and Felix Nabwenje.

Their innovation responds directly to one of Malawi's most persistent agricultural challenges. The country produces approximately 600,000 metric tonnes of tomatoes annually, a figure projected to rise to 900,000 metric tonnes by 2026.

Yet more than 40% of the tomato harvest is lost to spoilage, largely due to the crop's high-water content of 94-96% and absence of affordable preservation technology.

The machine by the students tackles this problem head-on by heating the tomatoes and drawing out the water, leaving behind a thick paste that can be stored for months.

By tackling this gap, the concentrator offers small and medium-scale farmers a practical and low-cost route into agro-processing.

Speaking about the project, Mtanga said the innovation was designed with ordinary farmers in mind.

"Our innovation provides an affordable solution for preserving tomatoes, allowing farmers to reduce losses during peak seasons," he said.

"By converting raw tomatoes into paste, we enable them to have a product that can be used as a substitute in cooking throughout the year."

The project gained recognition and won multiple awards during the MUST 2026 Engineering Symposium, such as Best in Manufacturing Engineering, third place in Most Innovative Project and second runner-up on the MI Technology and Innovation award list.

Beyond reducing waste, the innovation aligns closely with Malawi 2063, which prioritises agricultural commercialisation, food security and industrialisation.

The students are working to transition their prototype into finished product suitable for farming communities.

To this end, they are actively pursuing partnerships to facilitate the next stages of their project.

MUST STUDENTS TURN WASTE TO BUILDING MATERIALS

By Mary Mwambongo

Final year Polymer and Textile Engineering students at MUST are turning waste materials into innovative construction blocks that could transform the future of building in Malawi.

The team, comprising David Jere, John Magaleta, Madalitso Chitawo and William Silungwe, developed composite construction blocks that are stronger, more durable and more water-resistant than ordinary bricks.

Their innovation provides an environmentally friendly solution to waste management while creating opportunities for community-based production and youth employment.

The project was recognised at the MUST Engineering Symposium, where it received the Best Project Award for Polymer and Textile Engineering for its creativity and potential impact.

Speaking about the project, Silungwe said the innovation supports Malawi Vision

2063 by promoting local solutions, sustainable industries, resilient infrastructure and community empowerment.

"Our innovation shows that solutions to some of our biggest challenges can come from within our communities. By using waste materials, we are protecting the environment while creating opportunities for economic growth," said Silungwe.

The team has also developed a formula that can support road maintenance by helping extend road lifespan and reduce costs linked to pothole repairs.

The students are now working towards scaling up the project for commercial production and are seeking partnerships and support to bring this innovation from the laboratory to communities.

At MUST, innovation continues to turn ideas into solutions that create real impact.

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