

UNIMA Bulletin



Inside this issue:



Arabic Language Programmes: Expanding UNIMA's reach
• Integrity *page 03*
• Professionalism



SACD hosts conference on Art, Development, and Funding Sustainability *page 7*



UNIMA Social Work experts train practice educators *page 12*



The revolution will be televised, streamed, Zoomed, TikToked, WhatsApped...

When one thinks of the university, the image that comes up is that of bustling students laden with books, files and folders, trooping from class to library.

At least this is the image that we have had for many decades.

In today's world, immersed as we are in the Fourth Digital Revolution, the university has not been spared. Now, instead of simply imagining students running in and out of libraries, we instead imagine the youth brandishing tablets on which they access volumes of books. The university library is no longer characterised by steel and wooden dusty bookshelves that reach to the ceiling. Instead, the library texts are increasingly accessible with the click of a mouse button. At the modern campus, we witness students with their ears plugged with AirPods, listening to lectures, attending seminars, writing tests. At the quadrangle, instead of students aimlessly chatting about the latest fashion trends, we find them with eyes glued to their laptops, following a Zoom lecture being delivered by an academic who is, at that moment,

out of Malawi. Academics have harnessed conventional online learning platforms like Moodle, as well as unexpected ones like WhatsApp, to complement the face-to-face learning methods. It is therefore quite rare to hear of lecturers missing classes.

That is the university of today.

That is the University of Malawi.

Unsurprisingly, the university has become one of the central hubs for showcasing modern technologies used in the education sector. This is the essence of the EdTech conference, whose second iteration witnessed the exhibition of various technologies – from UNIMA and beyond – used for teaching and learning in the modern day.

It doesn't require that much reflection to realize it is only natural that UNIMA is one of the hubs for celebrating the use of technology for teaching. For a long time, the university has spearheaded teaching technologies in Malawi, in an effort to keep up with contemporary teaching trends. This is also deliberately the case as a way of meeting the institution's objective

of providing opportunities for higher education to many. On almost a daily basis, new online programmes are being offered at UNIMA, at various levels and open to all across the globe.

There is change happening in the higher education sector. At UNIMA, we are not only witnesses to this revolution. We are leading it.

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Prof. Amjad Alhalaweh and Prof. Samson Sajidu, signing the memorandum of understanding.

Arabic Language Programmes: Expanding UNIMA's reach

The University of Malawi, in a landmark move, is set to introduce Arabic language programmes, becoming the first public university in Malawi to do so. This development follows the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the university and the Darussunnah Foundation, in collaboration with Medelvagen. This initiative is part of UNIMA's broader plan to establish a foreign language department within the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, which will offer programmes in Spanish, French, and other languages.

The memorandum was signed on 18th June, 2024, at the university's boardroom by UNIMA's Vice Chancellor, Prof. Samson Sajidu, and Prof. Amjad Alhalaweh from Medelvagen. Present at the signing ceremony were the Deputy Vice Chancellor Dr. Sunduzwayo Madise, the Executive Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Dr. Emmanuel Ngwira, other representatives from Darussunnah Foundation, and other staff members from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Under this partnership, UNIMA plans

to launch Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD programmes in Arabic Language and Culture. These programmes aim to enhance opportunities for Malawians in the global market, given Arabic's status as one of the world's most widely spoken languages. Furthermore, they will promote deeper understanding of the Arab world.

The Darussunnah Foundation will provide financial support for various aspects of the programmes, including curriculum development, recruitment and training of qualified lecturers, and the establishment and equipping of a dedicated Language Studies Centre, with a language laboratory.

During the signing ceremony, Professor Sajidu extended gratitude to the officials from Darussunnah for this great collaboration and he also commended Dr. Ngwira and School of Humanities and Social Sciences for the initiative. He further shared a presentation about the University of Malawi, detailing the history of the old UNIMA and explaining the vision and mission of the new UNIMA. He continued by elaborating on the schools within UNIMA and the programmes offered at the university. He also described some of

the current developments including the new facilities UNIMA has constructed and others that are still under construction, including learning and teaching facilities.

Professor Alhalaweh expressed his gratitude to the University of Malawi for the exceptional hospitality and warm welcome. "We are here to celebrate the signing of the MOU, which will pave the way for establishing a new language department at this prestigious institution. This department will also contribute to the cultural enrichment of the entire community. Language is a bridge that connects people, cultures, and ideas," he said. "We are committed to providing the necessary resources and support to ensure the success of this initiative."

He concluded by appreciating the leadership of UNIMA for their vision and commitment to expanding educational opportunities and fostering an inclusive educational environment, perfectly aligning with their organization's values and mission. The meeting ended with participants taking a group photo.



Dr. Brent Abrahams, making his presentation.

UNIMA and Stellenbosch University collaborate on postgraduate supervision training

The University of Malawi, in collaboration with Stellenbosch University, has launched extensive short courses titled “Enhancing Postgraduate Supervision and Grounding for Postgraduate Studies,” aimed at early-career academic staff expected to supervise postgraduate students, as well as postgraduate students themselves. These courses fall under the Emerging Scholars Initiative, a multi-million Rand project within the Joint Schools Programme, comprising 12 Joint Schools at selected partner universities of Stellenbosch University, including UNIMA.

Dr. Mufunanji Magalasi, the Executive Dean of the School of Arts, Communication, and Design, officially inaugurated the courses on 27th May, 2024, at the Wadonda Lecture Theatre on behalf of the Deputy Vice Chancellor of UNIMA. Dr. Magalasi took a moment to reflect on the enduring partnership between UNIMA and the South African university, a relationship that has spanned over a decade. He acknowledged the benefits that have arisen from the relationship, noting the number of staff members who have pursued academic endeavours at Stellenbosch University under different scholarships.

Notable attendees at the opening ceremony included Prof. Cosmo Ngongondo, the Executive Dean of the School of Natural and Applied Sciences, Dr. Maurice Monjerezi, Head of Research, and Dr. Brent Abrahams from Stellenbosch University.

The short courses, scheduled to run from 27th May to 31st May, 2024, have attracted an impressive number of academics and postgraduate students from various schools and departments at UNIMA. This robust response reflects the relevance and importance of the training. Upon completion, participants will receive certificates acknowledging their dedication

to advancing their skills and knowledge in postgraduate supervision and research.

Dr. Abrahams, who is also the coordinator of the Emerging Scholars Initiative, expressed optimism about the courses, believing that participants will emerge with enhanced competencies and insights, enabling them to excel as supervisors and researchers. He also hinted at the potential for additional future collaborative endeavours between UNIMA and Stellenbosch University, emphasizing this initiative as the first step towards broader academic engagement and mutual growth.



A section of participants at the function.



Dr. Chifundo Kachale addresses UNIMA students.

MEC Chairperson inspires youth political leadership at UNIMA

In Malawi, the community of university students is recognized for the role they play in influencing voting patterns, and for the fact that they comprise the emerging generation of the country's leadership. For this reason, political parties and other players in the country often try to establish footholds on university campuses. Recognizing the role of the students as voters and budding leaders, the Chairperson of the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC), Honorable Dr. Chifundo Kachale, travelled to the University of Malawi in Zomba on 11th May, 2024, where he delivered an insightful public lecture themed "Unlocking the Power Within: Youth for Future Leadership."

During the function, which was held in the Great Hall, the Executive Dean of the School of Law, Economics, and Government, Professor Happy Kayuni, on behalf of the Vice Chancellor, welcomed the speaker. He observed the significance of the topic and reminded the audience that UNIMA is an institution with a rich legacy of political activism that has spurred critical chapters of the nation's history, and individuals cannot discuss youth and politics in Malawi without acknowledging UNIMA's pivotal role.

In his talk, Dr. Chifundo Kachale mentioned that across the globe, there

is a growing recognition of the vital role of young people in shaping the political destiny of their societies. He continued by highlighting the attributes of the youth that make them a rich pool of resources for effective political and social transformation, including youthful idealism, technological savviness, and physical and intellectual energy.

"By being innovative, the youth can approach today's problems with the minds of today," Kachale said. "The solutions of yesterday, devised by our forefathers, have brought us this far. It is rather naive to continue looking to the same sources to solve today's problems. We need different remedies to move to the next level, and those remedies reside in the innovation capacity within our youth. Considering their population, the youth comprise around 52 percent of people in Malawi. Therefore, reaching the youth with the right messages means reaching almost half of the population of Malawi."

Kachale highlighted the social vulnerabilities of the youth, such as their propensity to be naive and gullible due to a lack of exposure. Additionally, he noted that youth often exhibit impatience, leading to rushed decisions that may sabotage their future leadership potential. He urged the youth to conduct themselves productively during their youthful years

and advised them that beyond technical proficiency, the quality of their leadership lies in their ethical values.

Commenting on the public lecture, Ms. Jane Kanyangale, a fourth-year public administration student, said "We are stakeholders in the political processes of the country, and the role we should be playing should not be one-sided. Instead, we should take a leading role and be able to demand change and bring it about. Nobody will take the required action unless we stand up and take action ourselves, so we should also be mindful of the activities we engage in as youth." She observed that youths are agents of change, and that their focus should lie in their communities, being at the forefront of bringing solutions.

The discussion was interactive, with students seen asking various questions concerning the election process and what MEC is doing to encourage youth engagement in the voting process. Hon. Kachale addressed all questions asked by students, providing additional knowledge on topics students were previously unaware of. The function concluded with Hon. Kachale presenting gifts to Professor Happy Kayuni and Ms. Maureen Kapanga, who served as coordinator during the public lecture.



Mr. Benedicto Kondowe and Dr. Limbani Nsapato, handing the books to Mrs Naomi Kachoka.

CSEC donates to Law library

On 11th June 2024, the legal fraternity at the University of Malawi received a donation of 198 books from the Civil Society Education Coalition (CSEC). The books are worth MK50,000,000. The handover ceremony was attended by the Executive Dean of the School of Law, Economics, and Government, Professor Happy Kayuni, the Executive Director of CSEC, Mr. Benedicto Kondowe, the Board Chairperson, Dr. Limbani Nsapato, the Senior Assistant Librarian, Mrs. Naomi Kachoka, Head of Department of Private Law, Head of Department of Public Law and Clinical Legal Education, other staff members, and law students.

In his remarks, Professor Happy Kayuni expressed gratitude to CSEC for their generous donation of books. He noted that the books are of high quality, useful, and relevant to most of the modules and programmes offered within the University of Malawi's law section. He further mentioned that with the increase in students at the university and within the department, the books have significantly narrowed the existing gap between available reading materials and number of students. He also highlighted that the donation is timely, as high-quality books are essential for a fully-functional university.

Dr. Limbani Nsapato, the Board Chairperson of CSEC, stated that they

found it their responsibility to contribute to resolving some of the challenges the university is facing, which include a shortage of books that, in turn, affects the quality of education. As part of the community, they thought of supporting the department and the community so that they have sufficient books for students to study. "Hard copy books are easier for students to access anytime. Once they are purchased, you can continue to use them without using data," Nsapato said.

Among the donated books were those on land law, business law, company law, and other areas of legal study. Students present during the handover ceremony were delighted with the large number of books donated, as they will assist them with their research and assignments. Mrs. Kachoka urged the students to take good care of the books and make use of them. The ceremony ended with the signing of a donation agreement between the university and CSEC.



Attendees at the book donation ceremony.



Conference participants pose for a photo.

SACD hosts conference on Art, Development, and Funding Sustainability

The School of Arts, Communication and Design (SACD) recently organized a conference themed “They Call It Sustainability: Financing, Localization, and Other Alternative Futures for Communication for Development.” The event brought together over 40 specialists from various fields. This conference is part of the Un/Making CSC research project, which involves the University of Malawi, Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO), Creative Center for Community Mobilization (CRECCOM), and IT4 Change in India.

Hosted by the University of Malawi in the Little Theatre on 15th May, 2024, the conference featured presentations from different participants, including Dr. Jessica Noske-Turner from Loughborough University London, who spoke on the topic of Communication, Development, and Social Change in a Capitalist World.

In her remarks, Dr. Jessica Noske-Turner mentioned that despite claims that this is the age of choice, the current era of development funding is more accurately characterized by scarcity rather than abundance, and by competition and conformity to market demands rather than autonomy and choice.

She further explained how she is exploring the changing funding landscape for development with organizations and communities on the ground. “Arts-based methods are very unique and provide insights into the truth in a very special way,” she stated. Revisiting a play from 1988, “They Call it Africa”, showcased during the conference by two drama students and two experts from the department of Drama was one way of demonstrating the power of art to convey truths through fiction.

“Examining various time periods reveals consistent patterns of power inequality and injustice, highlighting a strong connection between capitalism and development. This highlights the influence of external power through financing and funding on development and the resulting power imbalance,” she said.

The Dean of the School of Arts, Communication and Design, Dr. Mufunanji Magalasi, mentioned that “They Call it Africa” was ahead of its time, as it portrayed the behavior of donors upon coming to Malawi.

“The conference is linked to the arts, focusing on communication and the struggles Non-Governmental

Organizations (NGOs) face in sustaining their development work,” he said. Magalasi continued by mentioning that these organizations often struggle to secure the necessary funding to continue their activities because donor agendas change every 3 to 5 years due to emerging issues. As a result, organizations established for specific purposes find themselves stranded when funding priorities shift.

He further emphasized that issues of sustainability in terms of development are crucial and noted that development communication today is heavily art-based, whether through radio or television. He praised the artists for their creativity, community engagement, and use of metaphors to understand and communicate sustainability. By using art to gather and tell the stories of the people, they convey the narratives of development more effectively, which is the essence of theatre for development.

The conference was engaging, with discussions and question-and-answer sessions involving both presenters and participants.



The UNIMA Deputy Vice Chancellor appreciates some of the innovations at the EdTech conference.

UNIMA hosts its second EdTech annual conference

The University of Malawi, as one of the top universities in Malawi, plays a significant role in the country's education sector not only by graduating candidates but also by spearheading the introduction of innovations to address challenges in the education sector. One of the notable initiatives is the Education Technology (EdTech) annual conference, which brings together different experts and organizations to collaborate and share knowledge on the use of modern technology to improve and offer solutions for education in Malawi.

This year's conference took place on the 16th and 17th of May, 2024 under the theme: "Scaling Impacts of EdTech Innovations in Malawi: Adaptation, Feasibility, and Sustainability." At the launch of the event, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of UNIMA, Dr. Sunduzwayo Madise, highlighted the need to reflect on both the positive and negative impacts of technology in education.

Dr. Anthony Chigeda, the Executive Director of Imagine Worldwide, delivered the keynote speech at the event. Also present were representatives from various public and private institutions, including higher learning institutions.

The conference also featured a workshop on Open Distance e-Learning (ODEL) aimed at developing ODeL curriculum and materials, as well as ways of supporting ODeL learners. Participants included academics from UNIMA, LUANAR, KUHES, and UNILIA.

Commenting on the event, Dr. Foster Gondwe, a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education at UNIMA said, "The possible impact of the event is long-term. We envision that this annual event will be a platform for developing innovations that can solve some of the pressing education challenges in Malawi."

There were many exhibitions featured during the two-day event. One of those was an innovation from Justice Gawani, a fourth-year computer science student at UNIMA who has developed EduShare, a web-based platform designed to provide equitable access to study materials for students across Malawi. Commenting on his innovation, Gawani pointed out the potential that it holds.

"EduShare aims to bridge educational disparities by offering a centralized repository of examination resources,

books, and other learning materials, fostering collaborative learning and enhancing academic performance," he said.

He further added that the platform is bound to have a positive impact on education as it includes fairness, improving exam preparation and empowering educators with data-driven insights.

The role that UNIMA plays in education technology cannot be overemphasized. The university continues to research the relationship between technology and education, as well as teach courses in education technology, which significantly improves the standards of education in Malawi. Under the School of Education, UNIMA offers two Master's programs in educational technology: Master of Education in Instructional Technology (offered in partnership with Astria Learning) and a Master of Science in Educational Technologies (offered in partnership with the University of Mauritius). The University also has a module in educational technology offered to undergraduate students pursuing education programmes.



The check-in meeting underway.

UNIMA hosts WCNREG MA check-in meeting

On Friday, 10th May 2024, the Public Law and Clinical Education Department in the School of Law, Economics, and Government held a check-in meeting for the Women's, Children's, and Nature's Rights in Environment Governance (WCNREG) Regional Master's students from Malawi. The WCNREG is a regional Master's program jointly taught by the University of Oslo, the University of Nairobi, the University of Zimbabwe, and the University of Malawi. The University of Nairobi is the program's host and the degree awarding institution. The WCNREG Master's programme has 41 students from the three countries - Malawi, Kenya, and Zimbabwe - with 13 Malawian students. The Regional Master's is part of a Research Project funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)'s NORHED II program.

The program is based on grounded theory and is set to disrupt dominant understanding focusing on engendering, greening, and decolonization. It takes a cross-cutting, multilevel, multidisciplinary, and socio-legal approach, exploring how the rights of women, children, and nature are protected and put into practice in environmental governance processes.

The in-country check-in meeting is a requirement for the programme, which is offered 100% online. The purpose of the check-in meeting is for staff and students to interact, sharing updates on academic

progress, challenges, upcoming events, and support services.

During the meeting, students and staff interacted with their counterparts from the University of Maryland on their exchange visit to Malawi. The University of Malawi and the University of Maryland, Baltimore (USA) have a partnership in a collaborative

course on Environmental Justice, Human Rights, and Public Health. It is a legal theory and practice course. In the course of this partnership, two institutions have jointly worked on the deforestation around Zomba, the Lake Chirwa Climate Change Project, and the Mudi River in collaboration with the UNIMA Environmental Justice Clinic.



Some of the participants at the meeting.



Researchers pose for a photo in Oslo.

UNIMA researchers visit Norway for NORAD NORHED II Project Meeting

The annual meeting of the project titled “Climate Change and Ecosystems Management in Malawi and Tanzania” was held from 17th to 21st June 2024 in Drøbak and Oslo, Norway. The meeting was hosted by the University of Oslo (UiO) and was attended by postgraduate students and research staff from the partner universities: the University of Malawi, Mzuzu University (MZUNI), the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), and the University of Oslo. The UNIMA team was led by Professor Cosmo Ngongondo (ED NAS and Project PI), and also included Dr. Ngcime Mbano (Researcher), Mr. Christopher Mfuno and Ms. Christina Kalima (MSc students), and Mr. James Kushe (PhD student).

In addition to progress report presentations on milestone achievements from all partner universities, students from various

universities, including UNIMA, presented their research work. Mr. Mfuno, who is enrolled in the Master’s programme in Water Science and Management, shared his experience during the meeting. He stated that he presented his research work titled “Assessment of Groundwater Availability in Bua River Basin” and received feedback for supervision purposes. He appreciated the opportunity to engage with fellow students who are also researching water and climate change. Their presentations helped him identify gaps in his research, and he sought advice from PhD students on the analytical methods they used.

“During my paper presentation, almost all of the attending lecturers provided feedback on my achievements. I also received constructive criticism on ways to further improve my work,” Mfuno said. “I was particularly encouraged when Prof.

Chong Yu and Prof. Lena Tallaksen, both from University of Oslo, offered to assist me with alternative software tools to analyze my data, which was truly incredible.”

The meeting concluded with an excursion to various water and environment-related facilities, such as hydropower plants along the Gloma River, the largest river in Norway. Prof. Ngongondo mentioned that the project aims to support a total of 20 Master’s and 8 PhD students from UNIMA, UIO, MZUNI, and UDSM with full scholarships, while some students are also receiving partial support. He further stated that the project (NORHED II grant number #63826) is being funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) for the period 2021 to 2026.



A captive audience at the SHSS workshop.

Preparing for the Future: SHSS Exit Workshop offers key industry skills

The School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS) organized an exit workshop for all final-year students enrolled in various programmes within the School to equip them with valuable skills needed in the industry. The event was held at the Mwambo Lecture Theatre on 14th May, 2024, and some of the topics discussed included industry orientation, transition to the workplace, ethics and professionalism, financial management, and entrepreneurship.

The workshop was attended by experts from different departments within the university, including those in academia and administration. Notable attendees included Mr. Enock Njiwa, Director of Finance and Investments, and academics including Dr. Edister Jamu (Head of Department of Psychology and Medical Humanities), Dr. S. Kankuzi (Department of Media and Communication), Dr. Tiyesere Mercy Chikapa (Head of Department of Management and Leadership Studies), and Mr. Lawrence Mpekansambo (Department of Philosophy), who shared invaluable insights with the final-year students.

In his remarks, Dr. Emmanuel Ngwira, the Executive Dean of the School

of Humanities and Social Sciences, emphasized the necessity of the workshop to hone the skills, confidence, and knowledge of the final-year students as they prepare to leave the university as graduates.

One of the participants, Mr. Japheth Abel, a Bachelor of Arts (Humanities) student and organizer of the event, mentioned that the workshop was perfectly timed and highly insightful. "As final-year students, we needed this. The presentations delivered by the experts equipped us with skills we

were previously unaware of. We now know what to expect and how to navigate the industry," he said.

Students who attended the event expressed gratitude to the Executive Dean for the wonderful exit workshop. They further stated that the workshop was well-rounded, incorporating almost all aspects of life. Students gained various insights, including those on employment, entrepreneurship, postgraduate opportunities, and more.

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Proud SHSS students.



Trainees and facilitators celebrate the completion of training.

UNIMA Social Work experts train practice educators

Students in the Department of Sociology and Population Studies who are enrolled in the Social Work programme always participate in mandatory field placements and observations during their first, second, and fourth years of study at the University of Malawi. During these field placements, the department relies on field supervisors to guide and assist the students with their learning. With sponsorship from a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) project called Strengthening Social Welfare Workforce Through In-Service Training, UNIMA recently organized Social Work Practice Educators (PE) Training for participants from across the country.

From 20th to 24th May 2024, over 25 trainees from partner institutions across the country attended the workshop at the Liwonde Community Development Training Centre, where they were equipped with various skills by social work experts, both local and international. The workshop was facilitated by Professor Janet Walker from Lincoln University, Dr. Simon Cauvain from Nottingham Trent University, and staff members from the University of Malawi, including Mr. Austin Ndala, the Social Work programme

coordinator; Ms. Tiwonge Munthali, the Placement Coordinator; Ms. Agnes Kambala, a lecturer in the department; and Ms. Esnart Nkhoma from Magomero Community Development College.

During the training, presenters delivered presentations that tackled various issues, including practice reflection, power relations during field supervision, and handling difficult situations during placements. Mr. Austin Ndala extended gratitude to USAID for their support and mentioned that these trainings have been conducted annually since 2015. He emphasized that field supervisors are trained to deliver supportive learning tasks to UNIMA students, highlighting the importance of such trainings.

He commended the training as a success, saying, “We indeed reached the target number of trainees we planned for this year. We also used the forum to get feedback from our partners on how we can improve the program and even made research collaborations”.

Since the inception of the Social Work program at the University of Malawi, the institution has maintained a strong collaborative relationship with Midland

State University, Lincoln University, and Nottingham Trent University. This collaboration involves research, practice, and education at various levels.

Ms. Larah Mbewe, a field officer at Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO), expressed satisfaction with the training. She stated, “During the four-day training on practice educators, I learned how we can prepare for students during the placement period, how we can orient them once they arrive at our organization, and how best we can work with them.” She continued by saying that the training will assist her in providing essential skills to students placed at her organization. She is now aware of what the students expect and how the university wants them to be supported.

“In the past, I was supervising students without knowing all the expectations of me as a practice educator. I’m now trained and fully aware of what happens and what’s expected of me. I will be able to train the students in the right way,” she concluded.

The training concluded with a certificate presentation to all the trainees and facilitators who participated throughout the workshop.



Discussing the effectiveness of radio drama to sensitive people on disability.

Raising awareness through radio drama: *Zimachitika* mini-series

The University of Malawi is advancing its national development outreach focus by offering social development communication initiatives to include people with disabilities in the society. Through awareness campaigns, such as radio drama series, the university demonstrates that disability is not inability. Parasport Against Stigma (on people with disabilities) - PSAS - a collaborative research project between Loughborough University and UNIMA's School of Arts, Communication and Design, held an edutainment drama mini-series production script reading with various beneficiaries in Blantyre on 15th June, 2024. The meeting was led by the Executive Dean of the School, Dr. Mufunanji Magalasi. Among the attendees were the President of the Malawi Paralympic Committee, Mr. James Chiutsi, as well as scriptwriters, artists, and producers from Story Workshop, and other participants.

Dr. Magalasi mentioned that he identified high levels of stigma against people with disabilities in Malawi, and the idea behind

the *Zimachitika* mini-series was to create awareness about issues of disabilities, parasport, and disability sport, aiming to increase participation in the Paris 2024 games. The University of Malawi will produce a play addressing the stigma faced by people with disabilities and demonstrating that people with disabilities can participate in sports, both locally and internationally, at high levels, such as the Paralympic Games. The meeting aimed to appreciate the script of the mini-series and to discuss how best to deliver the drama on radio. "Before presenting it to the audience, it was important for everyone involved, including those with disabilities, to read the script and listen to the episodes," Dr. Magalasi said.

During the meeting, participants provided input and feedback on language use and content, ensuring that the series is both accurate and respectful. Chiutsi commended the Dean for using drama and radio as a means to deliver the message.

"We believe that drama is capable of making people understand regardless of

their education level, as it is a language that can easily be understood by a cross-section of people" Chiutsi said. "Radio has a wider reach and is a traditional means of communication followed by many people. We believe that the reach through this platform will be broader."

The University of Malawi, Loughborough University, the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), and the Malawi Paralympic Committee have been implementing the Parasport Against Stigma programme for people with disabilities from 2020 to 2024. This initiative is funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO) through the Global Disability Innovation Hub (GDIH) at University College London.

The meeting concluded with remarks from Dr. Magalasi, who expressed appreciation to all the participants for their feedback and mentioned that the mini-series is expected to be aired on Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) Radio 1 and other community radio stations before the start of the 2024 games.



Lectures under the open sky: Students at Mulunguzi Dam

Geology and geography students' educational adventure on Zomba mountain

Zomba Mountain, a majestic landmark within Malawi's Southern Region, became a classroom under the open sky for a group of enthusiastic Geology and Geography students from the University of Malawi on 4th May, 2024. This was thanks to a collaborative effort by the Geology and Geography student societies, which led to a captivating hiking adventure, immersing the students in the wonders of the mountain's diverse geological and geographical features.

The hike provided a unique opportunity for students to witness firsthand the impressive waterfalls cascading down the mountain slopes, each one a testament to the erosive power of water over millennia. Students also encountered dams, marvels of human engineering, contrasting with the natural wonders around them. The varying heights of the mountain offered a chance to observe the distinct vegetation zones, with each level showcasing a unique array of plant life.

Beyond the visual spectacle, the hike provided a treasure trove for the Geology students. Examining the exposed rock formations allowed them to identify different mineral compositions and understand the geological processes

that shaped the mountain. This hands-on learning experience solidified the theoretical understanding gained in classrooms.

The diverse ecosystems encountered throughout the hike were a delight for the Geography students. Observing the various plant and animal species thriving in different habitats provided valuable insight into the intricate relationships within the mountain's ecosystem.

"This trip was an invaluable learning experience for our students," remarked Cosmas Sheha, the student coordinator. "Being able to observe geological

formations, waterfalls, and diverse ecosystems firsthand significantly enhances their understanding of the concepts learned in class. It was truly a remarkable opportunity for them to connect with the natural world and appreciate its wonders." The Zomba Mountain, with its breathtaking beauty and rich geological and geographical tapestry, served as the perfect platform for this educational adventure.

CONTRIBUTOR:
Cosmas Alhaji Sheha
(3rd year Geography student)



Students wade in the cool waters on Zomba mountain.



Dr. Moya Malamusi explains the history behind African musical instruments

Shaking hands with folklore giants

Travelling to Chileka to engage with renowned Austria-based Malawian anthropologist and ethnomusicologist Dr. Moya Malamusi was at the heart of an educational trip undertaken by the third-year Malawian Oral Literature class from the University of Malawi on 4th May, 2024. The students wanted to see and hear from a man they had heard so much about.

In the company of their class lecturer, Prof. Ken Lipenga, the students travelled to Singano village in Chileka, to the host's residence. Upon arrival, the students were amazed to witness the efforts that he has made over the years in researching on Malawian music and folklore. Dr. Malamusi took the group on a tour of the Jacaranda Museum of Ethnographic Objects, which bears the researcher's unique personal collection of traditional musical instruments, each having its own story. Over the years, he has collected drums, ulimba, zisekese, flutes, and many other instruments from different parts of Africa. He also talked about the process of undertaking research in oral literature, and displayed his archives of research notes and recordings.

As part of the tour, Dr. Malamusi also played a video of the Kachamba Brothers (with whom he was acquainted in the second half of the 1900s) songs and a documentary recorded by his associate,

Prof. Gerhard Kubik, an academic at the University of Vienna.

On their return, the students had the opportunity to engage with two Malawian writers who have used folklore in their works. The first was with Catherine Howse-Chisale, a poet and writer of children's books. She recited two stories, taking the students through the memories of sitting with their grandmothers, listening to the tales. At the end, they engaged in a discussion of oral narratives in Malawi, while feasting on roasted sweet potatoes.

The last stop on the trip was at the residence of Dr. Ken Lipenga, an esteemed Malawian writer. Welcoming the students to his home, he narrated to them various myths involving Namasempwani, a spirit on Mulanje Mountain. In his imagination,

he resurrects this benevolent spirit famous around Mulanje, Phalombe, and Thyolo. Through mythopoeia, he imagines the spirit as a benevolent being, responsible for all the rivers emanating from Mulanje Mountain, as well as the mysterious occurrences associated with the mountain. He also responded to students' queries regarding Mulanje Mountain as an inspiration for his most famous short story, "Waiting for a turn". After an inspiring talk, Dr. Lipenga gifted each one of the students with a copy of *Old Kongo's Kalabash Tales*, and oranges grown from his orchard.

CONTRIBUTOR:

Success Masauli
(3rd year Literary studies student)



Dr. Lipenga discusses the role of myth in African literature



Participants at the farewell ceremony.

Kwera SCC celebrates final-year students

The Kwera University of Malawi Student Climbers Community (SCC) organized a farewell party for their final-year members, blended with a get-together for all the Student Climbers, on 11th May 2024, at the Mwambo Lecture Theatre. The function was graced by Mr. Martin Matululu, the Registrar of the University of Malawi, Mr. Emmanuel W. Banda, the Learning and Development Manager at Kwera and Mr. Thanks Elia Mwalwanda, President of the Students' Representative Council (SRC). The event incorporated a motivational talk titled "Goal Setting and Achievements," delivered by Mr. Matululu. The event's principal purpose was to provide practical tips on setting and achieving academic goals, emphasizing the importance of perseverance for both continuing and final-year students.

The president of Kwera-UNIMA SCC, Mr. Lloyd Laudan, a fourth-year student enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (Physics) programme, joined Kwera in October 2021. He explained that Kwera is an education fund established in Malawi in 2017, owned by a Danish social enterprise. It finances education for African students studying at local universities while simultaneously developing their personal and entrepreneurial skills, helping them achieve their dreams. Laudan further stated that he has been pursuing his

education without any financial stress due to the Kwera programme, which has been supporting him ever since he joined UNIMA.

"Kwera provides assistance to its beneficiaries in various ways, including tuition fees, a laptop computer, and monthly data bundles, and it finances your education until the very end of your studies, eliminating the need to reapply time and again," he said. "Presently, Kwera is financing over one thousand students across all the public universities in Malawi, two hundred and twenty (220) of whom are studying at the University of Malawi. Kwera has also established university-based communities, which aim to enhance the welfare of students in their respective universities within their academic and social lives, as well as promote mental health and women's empowerment."

Ms Catherine Matope, a third-year student enrolled in the Bachelor of Social Science in Social Work programme, also expressed her gratitude to Kwera for the financial aid provided for her studies. "I never had hope the day I heard that I had been selected at the University of Malawi to pursue my Bachelor's degree in Social Work, since my parents couldn't afford to pay for my tuition fees. By the grace of God, I was enrolled by Kwera, an organization that is now

covering my tuition fees. This has made my life at university much easier, knowing that Kwera is supporting me financially." She further urged fellow students who are financially disadvantaged to apply for Kwera so they can continue their academic journey without stress.

As a guest speaker at the event, Mr. Matululu shared his life experiences with the students. He also highlighted several key points in his speech, including providing practical tips to continuing students on how to cope with university life and maintain their academic goals amidst the dynamic community with numerous social demands. He emphasized the importance of perseverance to the final-year students and encouraged them to maintain a positive mindset towards their pursuits, whether related to their study fields, business endeavors, or work.

"As students, have a vision and mission, and also be clear: define your objectives and learn more about goal setting," he said, continuing to advise them to network wisely and strategically, and to manage their time well by limiting their use of social media.

The event was spiced with various activities, including interactive games, drama performances, and songs.



The future of actuarial science: UNIMA students with finance and insurance experts at the symposium.

Actuarial Science honours students date finance and insurance business gurus

On 31st May 2024, final year BSc in Actuarial Science (Honours) students held a 1-day symposium at Amaryllis Hotel in Blantyre. The symposium, organized under the theme “Cultivating Local Expertise: Unlocking Malawi’s Actuarial Potential”, drew key players and potential employers from the finance and banking industry such as the Reserve Bank of Malawi (RBM), Smile Life Insurance, Vanguard Insurance, Zamara, National Insurance Company of Malawi (NICO), Old Mutual as well as the Insurance Institute of Malawi and Insurance Association of Malawi.

The students showcased their final year research results in areas such as digital currencies, climate extremes, agricultural insurance and life expectancy. Speaking during the symposium as Guest of Honor, Director of Pensions and Insurance at RBM, Paul Nyirenda, commended the students for such high-quality research work. He urged the graduating class to pursue professional courses so that Malawi can increase its population of qualified actuaries. On her part, Dr Lilian Moyo, Managing Director of Vanguard Insurance, challenged the graduating class to explore how best Malawi as a nation can

optimise benefits from their rare skills and competencies.

On behalf of the University of Malawi, the Executive Dean of Natural and Applied Sciences, Professor Cosmo Ngongondo, thanked all stakeholders for supporting the Actuarial Science programme in many ways, including providing internships.

Managing Director of Smile Life Insurance, Stain Singo, commended UNIMA for the excellent interns his firm gets from the programme.

The event ended with a gift presentation from the graduating class to the stakeholders.



Prof. Cosmo Ngongondo introduces UNIMA Actuarial Science students.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



As is always the case, in this Bulletin, we do not miss the opportunity to celebrate strides taken by various individuals at the University. Such individual achievements contribute to the profile of UNIMA, which continues to be the envy of many.

In this regard, we celebrate the promotions of two individuals, Professor Michael Chasukwa and Professor Wisdom Changadeya. Prof. Chasukwa is from the Department of Politics and Government, whereas Prof. Changadeya is from the Department of Biological Sciences and Biomedical Health Standards. Congratulations to both academics as they continue to raise UNIMA's flag.

Another area of celebration comes from the recognition of individuals who have complete their postgraduate studies. This is a crucial part of human capacity development at UNIMA, and the institution remains proud of those who attain additional academic credentials.

For that reason, we congratulate Dr. Wezi Chisiza upon successfully defending her thesis at the University of Sussex in the UK. It is a remarkable triumph for the Department of Psychology and Medical Humanities.

Congratulations also go to Mrs. Naomi Msiska of the Department of Music and Dance, for successfully defending her Master's thesis in Musical Arts (with distinction) at the Technical University of Kenya.

During this same period, the university has also faced a number of tragic events.

On 4th May, 2024, the University lost Ms. Judith Penyani, a Library Assistant at the University Library. Her loss is still felt by many, and we pray that her soul rests in peace.

It is always heartbreaking when the institution loses its students to the cruel hand of death. On 1st June, 2024, we lost Mr Austine Patrick Ambali, a student enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts in Social Economic History programme, at Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in Blantyre. May his soul rest in peace.

We offer our condolences to Mr. Christopher Chingwa of the Publications Section, on the passing of his mother. May she rest in peace.

We also offer prayers to Ms. Maureen Kapanga of the Department of Politics and Government, on the loss of her father. May the Lord bring comfort to her family.

To Mrs Mary Wasiri of the Administration Department, we offer condolences on the passing of her mother. May she rest in peace.

We grieve with Mr Kenneth Mdala of the Physics Dept, on the passing of his mother. Only the Lord can bring some comfort to his family.



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