



UNIVEN is among top 100 universities in the world

According to open access research expert Professor Cameron Neylon from Curtin University (Australia) in the article published on the University World News website, African institutions are already leading on aspects of open access to research and the University of Venda (UNIVEN) is among the top 100 universities in the world. Prof Nylon said key questions remain about how this leadership could be harnessed to support a central future for African researchers.

This article further indicates that, when Prof Neylon was speaking to the theme 'Open Access to Scholarly Literature: Progress and evidence of African leadership', he said several African institutions, including Kenyatta University in Kenya and the University of Venda in South Africa, were among the top 100 universities in the world using open access research.



UNIVEN main gate



Life Sciences Building



Inside UNIVEN Library where academic journals can be easily accessed

"African countries are consistently showing very high levels of open access, and again, showing it right from 2010, from early in this process [of developing open access] through to the current play on sound leadership that has existed, over a very long time," said Prof Neylon, citing Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa as examples of countries with success in advancing open source scholarship.



UNIVEN Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni was happy to hear this good news. He said, indeed UNIVEN is striving to create future leaders. "We have realised that, for the University to achieve its targeted goals, there was a need to improve our open access to research, making important information available for researchers worldwide. We are happy now that the University has started to reap the rewards and we can only improve from here knowing that our University is heading towards the right direction."

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Metropolitan Health offers financially needy UNIVEN students bursaries worth R1 400 000



Mr Takalani Raymond Nethengwe

Metropolitan Health, part of Momentum Metropolitan Holdings has offered bursaries worth R1 400 000 to needy University of Venda (UNIVEN) students. These bursaries are targeting students who are financially needy in the Health Sciences or Commerce faculties/schools. The objective of these bursaries is to contribute to the development of the country, especially previously disadvantaged rural communities and those that do not receive much attention from corporate companies. Institute of Business Partnerships (IBP) has made it their task to mobilise funds towards such areas.

IBP Managing Director, Mr Takalani Raymond Nethengwe who is a UNIVEN alumna said that IBP facilitates development partnerships in collaboration with private companies and SETAs. "The bursaries are funded by Metropolitan Health part of Momentum Metropolitan Holdings. A lot of work goes into co-ordination of bursary programmes

and allocation of funding and we at Momentum Health Solutions and IBP are glad to have partnered with the University Alumni in this project," he said.

Mr Nethengwe further expressed that, IBP believes that the little they have contributed to the academic life of the bursary beneficiaries will lead to better prospects of employment or further studies for the funded students.

UNIVEN Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni thanked and appreciated IBP for seeing the importance of sponsoring UNIVEN students with bursaries worth that value. He also thanked Mr Nethengwe for always remembering where he comes from. "Students should study to their level best and ensure that they pass with good marks because that will assist them to even attract more sponsors, bursaries and funders."

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UNIVEN staff members trained on stress management



On Wednesday, 30 September 2020, about 40 University of Venda (UNIVEN) staff members from different Schools and Departments attended virtual Stress Management Workshop that was organised by the Department of Human Resource's Employee Health and Wellness Unit. This workshop took place through Microsoft Teams from 10:00 to 11:00am.

The purpose of this workshop was to educate and equip staff members with stress management skills. The workshop was facilitated by Ms Andiswa Lefakane from Care Ways. Ms Lefakane said stress has a negative impact on individual productivity especially for those who are experiencing personal, family and work related challenges. She further highlighted that the possible results of stress can lead

to depression, absenteeism, low morale and low productivity. Lefakane indicated that with the Coronavirus pandemic, we all have to quickly fast track implementation of the 4th Industrial Revolution as our new norm.

This stress Management Workshop focused on improving mental and emotional health of staff members to cope with the increased level of stress, more especially the changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 impacted on everyone, including those who are at top management. Care Ways, as the Employee Health and Wellness Programme service provider for UNIVEN, will provide this workshop to all employees in selected groups until all staff members are covered.

This stress Management Workshop focused on improving mental and emotional health of staff members to cope with the increased level of stress, more especially the changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

UNIVEN successfully conducts its 2021-2025 Strategic Risk Assessment Workshop

On 22 and 23 October 2020, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) held its 2021-2025 Strategic Risk Assessment Workshop under strict lockdown measures to avoid the spread of Covid-19. This workshop took place at Tshipise Forever Resort and was attended by the University Executive and Senior Management Committee Members. Facilitators of the workshop were Mr Christopher Whittle, Dr Gerhard De Coning from Universum and Christopher Palm from Institute of Risk Management South Africa (IRMSA), assisted by Ms Mbali Mtshali.



University Executive and Senior Management Committee Members listening to the facilitator during the workshop



When welcoming attendees of the 2021-2025 Strategic Risk Assessment Workshop, Deputy Vice Chancellor Operations, Dr Robert Martin said that the University has been working on this strategic plan since last year (2019) and this shows determination as the University is planning for the upcoming five years. He said this workshop will assist staff members and students to perform even better because they will know the new direction that the University will be taking as from the beginning of the academic year 2021. "Identifying the biggest risks will assist us as the University to avoid unnecessary disruptions of the operations of the University."

"We need to always think about the University's reputation before we make any decision as staff members. We need to start working on the University's reputation, both locally and internationally"



Dr Gerhard De Coning



When recapitulating the 2021-2025 Strategy, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni said in order to excel, staff members need to be determined and dedicated to their daily duties. He highlighted to the participants that, the brand promise is very important for every organisation. "We need to always think about the University's reputation before we make any decision as staff members. We need to start working on the University's reputation, both locally and internationally"

Dr Nthambeleni concluded by encouraging the participants to fully participate in the workshop so that they become familiar with all the risks identified and mitigating factors thereof in order for the University to effectively implement the 2021-2025 strategic plan.

Concluding remarks on the last day of the workshop were expressed by the Acting University Registrar, Advocate Edward Lambani who said as one of the participants, he is now wiser than before because he has learned a lot from this workshop. He advised fellow participants to always practice what they have learned from this workshop.



Mr Christopher Whittle



On the projectors is Mr Christopher Palm answering questions asked by participants after his presentation on Microsoft Teams

Marude Grade 10 girls benefit from UNIVEN student-led Organisations' collaborative initiative

On Thursday, 01 October 2020, a total of 19 University of Venda (UNIVEN) students under three organisations, AIME (11), Youth Evolve (6) and Aphrodite Global (2) collaborated and impacted female learners from Marude Secondary School.

About 55 girls benefited from Mentorship, Gender Based Violence (GBV) awareness and sanitary pad distribution. Aphrodite Global is an organisation that advocates for women against various matters such as GBV. On this day, learners were engaged in a short session about GBV. Ms Lindokuhle Zwane who is the President and Founder of Aphrodite Global and Miss Obasa Esther Adebuseyo, Deputy Chairperson and Founder of Aphrodite Global led the sessions on GBV. During this session, the issue of consent and various ways on how victims of GBV can respond to different situations at their hands were discussed.

In addition, learners were also engaged in a session to bring awareness about menstruation. This session strived to challenge the girls to accept the biology of their creation and to be proud of who they are. Learners were also encouraged to practice sanitary hygiene. In their reflections, several learners cherished the opportunity to attend the sessions.

After all sessions, learners received sanitary pads. The purpose of this initiative was also to assist learners who cannot afford sanitary pads. Students who facilitated this collaborative initiative expressed that, from their observations, it was evident that, they still have a lot of work to do in order to bridge the gap between those who can afford and those who cannot afford within communities where we come from. "There is a need to continue donating sanitary pads for future distribution. The Sanitary Pad Distribution Drive initiative will continue supporting Marude learners every month where about 100 girls identified by the school will be beneficiaries."



Esther Adebuseyo Obasa assisting learners to understand what they are being taught



Lindokuhle Zwane (right) teaching learners on how to respond to difficult situations



AIME team



Learners listening to the speakers



Youth Evolve team



Grade 10 Learner receiving sanitary pads

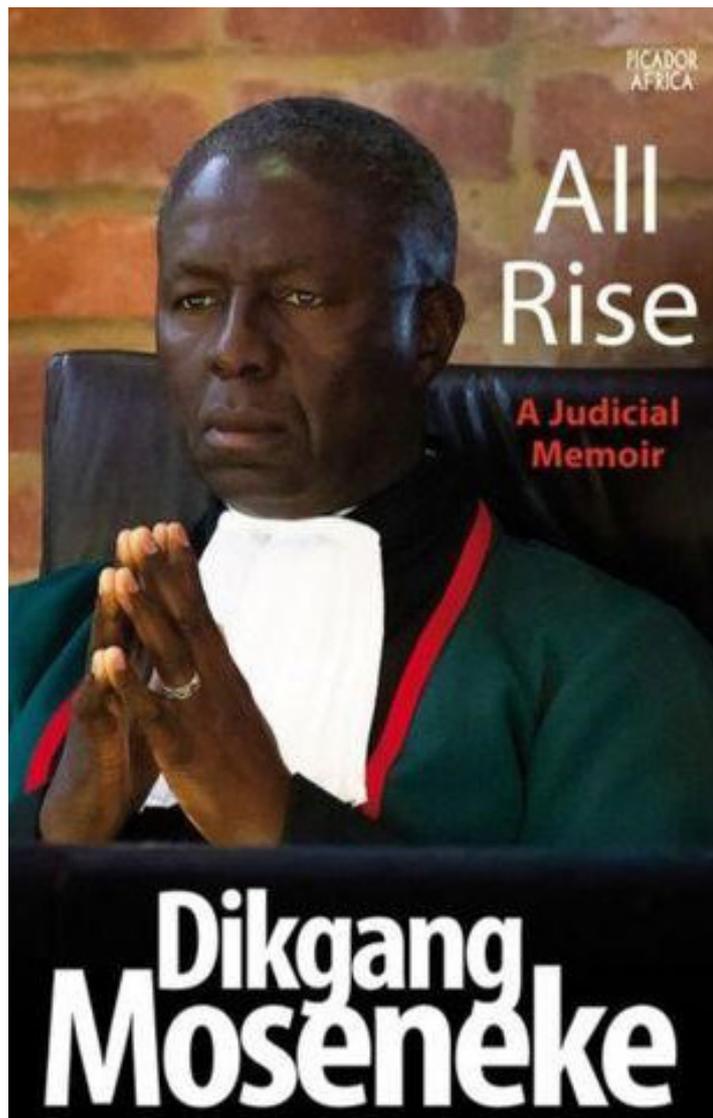
School of Law Webinar discusses South African History, Law and Justice

On Tuesday, 20 October 2020, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) School of Law held a Webinar with the former Deputy Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court of South Africa, Justice Dikgang Moseneke. This Webinar was held from 16:00 to 18:30 on Microsoft Teams under the theme 'History, Law and Justice.'

Some of the preliminary reflections that the Webinar discussed were extracted from the book 'All Rise, a Judicial Memoir,' authored by Judge Dikgang Moseneke.



Judge Dikgang Moseneke

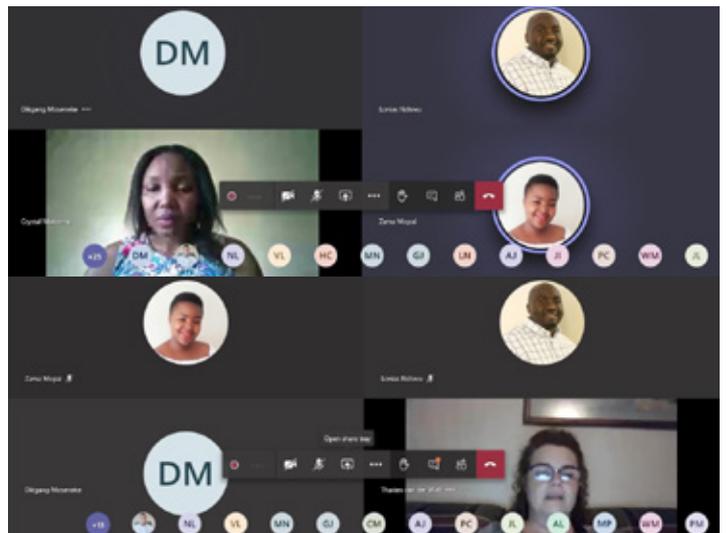


Thematic discussions and reactions to Justice Mosekene's initial thoughts discussed included Language, Culture and Access to Education; Environmental, Extractive, and Related Justice; Transformative Constitutionalism; Land and Agrarian Reform and the Constitution and Commercial Regulation.

The Webinar was graced by the attendance of Judge Frans Legodi, who is the Judge President of the Mpumalanga High Court, Mbombela; Prof Moses Phooko from the Department of Public Law, University of Johannesburg; Mr. Dumisani Nxumalo, who is a Magistrate at Piet Retief Magistrates Court, Mpumalanga; Mr. Wandisile Mandlana, partner at Bowmans, Johannesburg; Mr. Tholinhlahlhla Gcabashe partner at Bowmans; Mr. Sam Phakula, Head of Judiciary in Linyenye and Chair of JOASA in Limpopo; Mrs. Munzhelele from the Magistrates Court in

Tohoyandou; Judge Legodi Phathudi, Deputy Judge President of the Limpopo Provincial Division of the High Court based in Polokwane; Prof John-Mark Iyi, Director, African Centre for Transnational Criminal Justice, University of the Western Cape and others from various South African institutions including academics and students from UNIVEN.

When opening and welcoming attendees of the Webinar, Dean of School of Law, Prof Lonias Ndlovu said that the School is continually positioning itself to transform legal education in the context of UNIVEN's new 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. He said one way of transforming legal education involves using stakeholders drawn from alumni, the judiciary, the magistracy, and the organised profession. "The Webinar was, therefore, appropriated for transforming legal education at UNIVEN."



South African History, Law and Justice

Ms Crystal Mokoena and Ms Zama Mopai were the Programme Directors of this Webinar, while Judge Legodi introduced Justice Moseneke. The thematic discussants from the School of Law were Advocate Choma, Advocate Raphulu, and Dr Dhlwayo. The vote of thanks of this interactive Webinar was rendered by Prof Tharien van der Walt.

United Mexican States Ambassador to South Africa, Ana Luisa Fajer visits UNIVEN

On Thursday, 29 October 2020 the United Mexican States Ambassador to South Africa, Her Excellency Ana Luisa Fajer visited the University of Venda (UNIVEN) to explore possible areas of research collaboration between UNIVEN and institutions in Mexico including the twinning of tulle and baobab trees which are also found in Mexico. Her Excellency, Ana Luisa Fajer was accompanied by Limpopo MEC for Sports, Arts and Culture, Thandi Moraka.



When stating some of the reasons why she visited Limpopo Province out of all South African Provinces, her Excellency, Ana Luisa Fajer said Mexico is a country of multiple belongings. She further said that, Mexican economy is today valued at 1.1 Trillion dollars. She continued to express that, although Mexico and South Africa have a lot of similarities on matters such as high number of unemployed citizens, there is a lot that we can achieve together through collaborations. "A lot of people can find employment through initiatives that we need to discuss for possible collaborations because Mexico has a potential of becoming a country with the best economy in the world by 2050." Among other things, she spoke about possible collaborations and research on gender equality (specifically women empowerment), Agriculture and Indigenous Knowledge systems.



In his welcome address, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni said that, science has no boundaries and collaborations have no boundaries. Dr Nthambeleni further expressed that the University is open for collaborations, as long as those collaborations will benefit both parties. He briefed the visitors about tourist attraction places around Vhembe district, such as Phiphidi waterfalls, Dzata ruins and others. He said, "Our new Strategic plan for 2021-2025 focusing on student centricity, entrepreneurship, academic research and internationalization will be operational from next year to make more impact and international collaborations will add more value to it."

"A lot of people can find employment through initiatives that we need to discuss for possible collaborations because Mexico has a potential of becoming a country with the best economy in the world by 2050."



Limpopo MEC for Sports, Arts and Culture, Hon. Thandi Moraka, had in her message of support fully supported the idea of this possible international collaboration. Standing on behalf of the Premier of Limpopo, Hon Stanley Mathabatha, Hon. Moraka welcomed visitors to Limpopo Province, specifically in the Vhembe District. She highlighted that the GDP of Limpopo Province is supported by three (3) pillars and those pillars are Mining, Tourism and Agriculture. She advised the Vice-Chancellor and Principal to take advantage of this visit by the Mexican Ambassador to South Africa by making sure that both UNIVEN and Mexico start research projects that will in future benefit many people. "Indigenous knowledge system available in this University can be useful to the people of Mexico and there is obviously something that UNIVEN and South Africa can benefit from Mexico." She said Limpopo provincial government is looking forward to strategic projects that will emanate from this meeting.



The Acting Director International Relations, Dr Segun Obadire highlighted that, Vhembe district is a unique area of Limpopo Province and through research collaborations, there is a lot that communities of both South Africa and Mexico can benefit. He said that students and staff in the departments of botany and indigenous knowledge systems at the University could take advantage of various collaborative research and exchange programmes around the indigenous trees of tulle and baobab found in South Africa and Mexico which have health and medicinal values. "This will increase the potential of the two countries to improve their economic development."



When expressing closing remarks, Ambassador Victor Rambau from the International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), said Limpopo Provincial government is committed to deepening this partnership. "Let us continue to strengthen the relationship with Mexico. We wish to see this relationship being one of the best and we will continue to nurture it at level of academia and communities will be as the beneficiaries of the end results. We will further work tirelessly to intensify this relationship."

Also present during the visit were Prof Tshilidzi Mulaudzi, Dean of School of Health Sciences, representatives of the Office of the Premier, representatives of the Limpopo Tourism Agency and other UNIVEN staff members. The programme was directed by Dr Takalani Dzaga, Director Communications and Marketing.



Mexican Ambassador to South Africa speaking

UNIVEN FM is now operating from newly refurbished studios



On Tuesday, 13 October 2020, UNIVEN FM presenters moved into the newly refurbished studios after a long year of renovations. This is after the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) funded UNIVEN FM to renovate its studios and purchase new broadcasting equipment.

When officially handing over the newly refurbished studios, the Director Communications and Marketing, Dr Takalani Dzaga said he is extremely happy that the renovations of UNIVEN FM studios are now completed. He thanked MDDA for showing much valued generosity to UNIVEN FM. "As the station celebrates its 23 years of existence, it continues to value its key stakeholders, the listeners, without whose support the station would cease to exist. So, the quality of sound that gets to the listener's ear should be equal to that of 23 years of existence. Therefore, there was a need for improvement throughout these 23 years of existence."

Dr Dzaga further thanked all presenters, volunteers and all UNIVEN FM staff who made sure that they educate, inform and entertain listeners, making positive impact within the surrounding communities. He told them to keep up the good work.

UNIVEN FM Station Manager Ms Tshilidzi Shirinda, thanked MDDA for assisting the station to look new and fresh. Ms Shirinda further said the advancement of technology will ensure relevance to the market and appeal to its various stakeholders.



Dr Takalani Dzaga during his visit and official handing over of the newly refurbished UNIVEN FM Studios

"As the station celebrates its 23 years of existence, it continues to value its key stakeholders, the listeners, without whose support the station would cease to exist."

UNIVEN students and Dzomo la Mupo collaborate to distribute facemasks and seedling bags to community nature ecologists



UNIVEN students in partnership with Dzomo la Mupo (DLM), a community organisation that seeks to enhance indigenous skills of traditional agriculture, support agroecology, healthy soil management and healthy food sovereignty have recently distributed facemasks and seedling bags to community nature ecologists. The initiative was supported by the African Centre for Biodiversity (ACBIO) through donations. ACBIO is a research based organisation that focuses on biosafety, seed safety and agricultural biodiversity in Africa.



Mrs Annah Mphigalale displaying her indigenous baobab juice

Mrs Annah Mphigalale, one of the beneficiaries of facemasks and seedling-bags at Tshirolve village commended this collaboration because she received seedling-bags which she can plant her trees, and that she will no longer use old tins to plant her trees. Speaking on behalf of Tshirolve beneficiaries, Mrs Mphigalale expressed that it is encouraging to receive facemasks and seedlingbags that will assist them to do even better and achieve more.

She condemned deforestation and soil erosion and encouraged other beneficiaries to be resilient, patient and to look out for opportunities available around them. Mrs Mphigalale showcased her products for human consumption out of baobab fruits such as powder and juice. She said that the products are a good medication for pain relief. She concluded by thanking UNIVEN and Dzomo La Mupo delegates for supporting Tshirolve village with the tools to use during this Covid-19 era.



Mphatheleni Makaulule Founder of Dzomo la Mupo

Ms Mphatheleni Makaulule, an ecologist who is the founder of Dzomo la Mupo, also a Masters' degree in African Studies student encouraged beneficiaries to continue to plant the seeds. She told them to protect indigenous trees during this difficult time of Covid-19 pandemic. She further encouraged community members to always wear face masks to protect themselves from being infected by the virus. "Collaborating with other students was an opportunity to raise awareness of and promote ecological importance during Covid-19 pandemic," she said.

Beneficiaries were happy to receive seedling bags as it makes it easier for them to plant seeds without having to improvise with cut-plastic bottles. They indicated that although it is difficult for them like everyone else, they never missed an opportunity to plant their indigenous trees during this Covid-19 pandemic era, of course obeying lockdown regulations.



156 face masks and 3,964 Seedling bags were distributed amongst 10 communities. The communities that benefitted are Tshidzivhe, Vhutalu, Tshilungwi, Vuvha, Malale, Magoro, Mutale, Tshirolve, Vhuronga and Mapate.

Distribution of materials in question was coupled with the check-ups on how the beneficiaries have been impacted by Covid-19 in terms of planting as well as the feasibility of observing Covid-19 rules.



Mrs Netshiavha representing Tshilungwi Village and Vho-Jocye Mmbengeni Netshidzivhe of Tshidzivhe Village extending their words of gratitude



UNIVEN students and Dzomo la Mupo collaborate to distribute facemasks and seedling bags to community nature ecologists continued...



Beneficiaries from Vhutalu Village



Traditional Leader, Chief Patrick Nevhutanda of Vhutanda village expressing words of appreciation



Beneficiaries from Tshidzivhe Community



Tshirlove Beneficiaries with Ms Mphatheleni Makaulule who is the founder of Dzomo la Mupo and UNIVEN students who are part of Social Entrepreneurship Development Project

When extending words of gratitude towards facemasks and seedling bags, Chief Patrick Nevhutanda expressed that it is important to preserve indigenous fruits and nature.

He shared insights about the role that forest birds play in plants since they assist in pollination.

Chief Nevhutanda encouraged students to start more projects in agriculture and ecology to protect and multiply indigenous plants as they serve many livelihood purposes from food to preventative and curative medicine. He concluded by appreciating the gesture from DLM and the University where he indicated that he was glad that the University is still encouraging collaborations during this difficult time.

We would like to hear from you!

Nendila is your communication channel.

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