



MZUNI AND UNAM SHARE STRATEGIC EXPERIENCES, TO SIGN AN MOU



In this picture, MZUNI Vice-Chancellor Professor Wales Singini, Professor Kenneth Matengu from UNAM and MZUNI Registrar Mr. Yonamu Ngwira. Seated, Council Chairperson Ambassador Hawa Ndilowe (left) and UNAM Registrar Professor Erika Maass

In a significant move to bolster academic collaboration, officials from Mzuzu University (MZUNI), led by the Chairperson of Council, Her Excellency Ambassador Hawa Olga Ndilowe, recently visited the University of Namibia (UNAM) from 26th to 31st March 2025 to formalise a partnership through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

This agreement aims to enhance cooperation in research, teaching, and community engagement between the two institutions.

The MoU outlines several key areas for collaboration, including joint research projects, faculty and student exchanges, and the development of joint academic programmes. Both universities have expressed enthusiasm about the potential benefits of this partnership, emphasising its role in promoting academic excellence and addressing shared challenges. This initiative aligns with MZUNI's ongoing efforts to establish strategic partnerships that enrich its academic offerings, research capabilities and support its drive towards self-reliance in terms of resource mobilisation.

The collaboration between MZUNI and UNAM is expected to create opportunities for students and staff to engage in cross-border academic activities, thereby broadening their perspectives and enhancing their professional development. By pooling resources and expertise, the two universities aim to contribute meaningfully to the advancement of higher education and research in the region.

The strategic partnership also aims at addressing shared challenges in their finance and business strategic plans. The discussions during the visit revealed that both institutions were into tourism and hotel management, mega farm and solar energy project initiatives to enhance their revenue base and had created special purpose vehicles to deliver their business operations. By leveraging each other's strengths and experiences, MZUNI and UNAM aim to develop innovative solutions to enhance their resource base and wealth creation for their nations.

Notably, in January 2025, MZUNI signed a similar MoU with the University of Malawi (UNIMA) to foster joint efforts in research, teaching, and community engagement.

EXPERTS CALL FOR INTEGRATION OF FAITH AND HEALTH

Faith and health experts have stressed the need for policy frameworks to legitimise faith-based care without undermining scientific standards.

The experts made the call during the Faith and Health Conference 2025 which was held at Chatonda Lodge in Mzuzu from March 25-26, 2025.

The conference, held under the theme 'Good Health and Well-being: The Intersection of Faith and Healing Practices,' brought together researchers who presented findings on their studies on the role of religion in healthcare services and access.

MZUNI's Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Wapulumuka Mulwafu said about 78 percent of Malawians rely on both faith-based and clinical treatments.

"Healing is deeply tied to personal conviction. We must foster co-existence between these approaches," he said.

Professor Emma Wild-Wood of the University of Edinburgh's African Religious and World Christianity programme emphasised the need for integration.

"Faith communities often fill gaps in under-resourced health systems. Their practices can complement biomedicine if understood holistically," she said. The conference highlighted case studies in different countries including traditional healers partnering with clinics in rural Uganda and Malawi's faith networks supporting HIV/Aids education.

The Conference was organised by University of Edinburgh, Mzuzu University, Kyambogo University and the University of Livingstonia to explore how spiritual beliefs shape health outcomes in East Central Africa.



The participants agreed that faith-based and clinical treatments complement each other

TWO NORHED STUDENTS DEFEND THEIR THESES



The students Joseph Chombo (2nd left) and Tikhala Chakalamba (2nd right) pose with the assessor Wilson Sawasawa (1st left) Dr. Benjamin Kondowe (centre) and Dr. Kumbukani Mzengereza (right)

Two students sponsored by Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development (NORHED) Project defended their theses on Wednesday 26th March, 2025 to mark a significant step in their academic journey.

The two students Tikhala Chakalamba and Joseph Chombo impressed the assessors with their presentations. Chakalamba presented on Perception of Fishing Communities on Climate Change, Fish Catch Fluctuations and Coping Strategies in Karonga District, Malawi while Chombo's presentation was on Spatial-temporal Variation in Water Quality and Fish Assemblages of Chiwondo and Mlare Lagoons in Karonga District, Northern Lake Malawi.

The Project Coordinator Dr. Brighton Chunga said NORHED has played a huge role in supporting the University.

"We appreciate the huge role by NORHED in promoting research and supporting students who are pursuing their postgraduate studies. We are impressed with the positive progress being made and we anticipate the addition of two more Master of Science students soon," he said.

MZUNI is one of the beneficiaries of NORHED II project, a six-year initiative funded by Norway, focusing on Climate Change and Ecosystems Management in the Lake Malawi Basin.

CHIEFS IMPRESSED BY SAVE PROJECT'S GRM



Some of the chiefs who attended the GRM meeting

Chiefs in MZUNI's catchment area are impressed by their involvement in the implementation of Skills for a Vibrant Economy (SAVE) Project.

During the meeting held at Lupaso in Mzuzu on Thursday, 27th March, 2025, the chiefs said the Grievances Redress Mechanism (GRM) at MZUNI was a significant shift in community engagement and project implementation.

Village Headman Singini said the collaboration has led to several key benefits.

" We take full responsibility in safeguarding construction materials which ensures better oversight and reduces the risk of mismanagement or exploitation, "

he said adding that the active role of the local leaders fosters a strong relationship between the university and the community.

He said due to the GRM, concerns about exploitation are being addressed more effectively.

"In the other projects, there were cases of exploitation and workers interfering with our activities in the community. This is no longer the case because of the safeguarding procedures which were put in place," he said.

Projects and Estates Manager Samba Kambalame said the GRM is an important forum which has contributed to the successful implementation of the SAVE Project so far.

"We believe in collaboration with the community as guided by the World Bank. Most importantly, we want everyone to be involved in the implementation of the project because the community is part of the university," she said.

FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES ORGANISES RESEARCH BOOTCAMP

The Faculty of Health Sciences has organised a research bootcamp for postgraduate students in the Department of Nursing and Midwifery which will run from March 25 to April 4, 2025.

The bootcamp aims at equipping students with the essential knowledge and skills to effectively manage their research projects.

"Our goal is that the students should complete their manuscripts

and research theses on time," said Dr. Ferestas Mpasa who is the Faculty's Postgraduate Coordinator.

Dr. Mpasa said the bootcamp will prepare the students to produce publishable work, which is often a requirement for graduation and essential for academic and professional advancement.

"A standard requirement in the Faculty of Health Sciences is that

postgraduate students must produce a publishable manuscript prior to graduating with a Master of Science Degree in Nursing Education (Clinical Teaching)," she said.

During the bootcamp, postgraduate students will have time for collaboration and peer support. Experienced researchers and supervisors will offer insights and direction throughout the research process.



The Postgraduate students pose for a group photograph with their mentors

WIDREM VISITS MZUNI



Dr. Ellemes Phuma

The Department of Nursing and Midwifery hosted Women in Health Research in Malawi (WIDREM) on March 24, 2025 to brief the prospective members from MZUNI on its work.

Speaking after the briefing, Dr. Tamara Phiri – who is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Nursing and Midwifery – said the briefing was an eye-opener.

"WIDREM aims at bolstering the representation and leadership of women in health research in Malawi.

There are a number of benefits for members which include development of research skills, access to grant writing workshops, mentorship support and personal development support," she said.

Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences Dr. Ellemes Phuma-Ngaiyaye said she was hopeful that more female researchers from MZUNI would join the network.

"Our colleagues from the other universities are already members of WIDREM. It is important for us to join the network to support the implementation of MZUNI's Pillar 3, Research and Innovation, whose strategic goal is to generate new knowledge and innovations needed for economic development of Malawi," she said.

WIDREM consists of members from institutions across Malawi, including Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (KUHS), Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), Pentecostal Life University (PLU), Partners in Health, University of Malawi (UNIMA), Malawi University

of Science and Technology (MUST), and the Ministry of Health, reflecting a broad commitment to inclusive research practices.

WIDREM was launched with support from UNDP, The World Bank, and WHO TDR to address the critical gaps in women's leadership within the research sphere, aspiring to foster a new wave of women leaders who can contribute significantly to both national progress and global health advancements.



Dr. Tamara Phiri

DEPARTMENT OF BUILT ENVIRONMENT HOLDS SEMINAR



Dr. Lucky Kabanga

The Department of Built Environment (DBE) held a seminar on Friday, 28th March, 2025 under the DBE Seminar Series.

On Friday, Dr. Lucky Kabanga, who is a Lecturer in the department, presented on Compensation Assessment Practices in Expropriation of Customary Land Rights in Malawi: Cases of Salima Sugar, communities around construction site of Mombera University and Phalombe Hospital.

During the presentation, Dr. Kabanga said Malawian expropriation and compensation laws are English imports meant for private property rights, and hence alien and deficient where non-private tenure dominates as it is in Malawi.

He argued that under appropriate compensation principle, compensation must include everything that an expropriatee had lost.

“It must include whatever it will take to put that affected person in their former position. It has to look at what that person had. It must look at their ways of earning a living and then at the end say, if they left this place, will that person need something that will restore them to their previous status? That would be called appropriate compensation,” he said.

Dr. Kabanga said Malawi’s statutory laws have not been very fair to the ordinary Malawian.

“The laws have not been very clear on how they will support

the customary kind of institution to safeguard what people have in that context. So, it has not been good and it’s something that I would recommend that it changes so that it can protect the interests of the people and the other challenge is that even where you have the legal framework in place, people don’t know it,” he said.

Coordinator and Moderator Dr. Mtafu Manda said the DBE Series address the major concerns among academics and researchers that research results do not reach the public and policy makers, and practitioners are excluded in academic curricula development and review.

“The seminar series address these challenges by providing a platform for direct interface between academics, policy makers and practitioners,” he said.

Dr. Kabanga holds a PhD in Construction Economics and Management from the University of Cape Town RSA. He joined MZUNI in 2006.

MZUNI PLANS TO DEVELOP ECO-LODGE



The plan to develop MZUNI’s Eco-Lodge at Kande in Nkhata Bay is underway following a visit to the site by members of the Faculty of Tourism, Hospitality and Management and Projects and Estates on Friday, March 28, 2025.

The members were joined by a Consultant, who has offered to work on the designs for free, to assess and map the proposed land.

“After the assessment and mapping, the Consultant is expected to produce designs marking a significant step in developing the facility based on the concept of principles of sustainability (environment, society and economy),” said Samba Kambalame who is MZUNI’s Projects and Estates Manager.

The concept focuses on providing hospitality services (accommodation, food and beverage, and related services) in undisturbed, remote natural areas where both construction and operation have the least possible impact on the environment and the society. Such facilities should be part of the local community and participate actively in conserving nature and culturally sensitive areas, while maintaining economic viability.

The proposed facilities include a restaurant and bar, guest rooms, conference rooms, camp site, and cultural centre.

'RESEARCH, INNOVATION DRIVES ECONOMY'



Some of the participants at the Conference pose for a group photograph

Mzuzu University (MZUNI) Vice-Chancellor Professor Wales Singini says there is need to equip universities, and research institutions with knowledge and tools to harness creativity, innovation and intellectual property (IP) for economic transformation.

Professor Singini made the remarks at the official opening of an IP seminar for academic and research institutions organised by the African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation and Department of the Registrar General in conjunction with MZUNI on Tuesday, 25th March, 2025.

He said a lot of research and innovation is done within the country's universities, but these do not find national space to help in the country's growth.

"Mzuzu University aims to evolve into a university 5.0 category and we are committed to aligning our services with the demands of the 21st Century and IP has proven to be a game-changer in driving progress, fostering innovation, and improving livelihoods," he said.

Head of the African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation (ARIPO) Dr. Outule Rapuleng said innovators, researchers and academia should align their services

with the demands of the 21st Century and Intellectual Property.

Many countries have embraced the knowledge economy which is a transition to an economic system where growth is primarily driven by the production, distribution, and use of knowledge and information, rather than by the traditional means of production such as land, labour, and capital.

This concept emphasises the role of intellectual capital and innovation as key factors in economic success and research institutions are at the centre of this knowledge economy.