



A Groundbreaking Dialogue: Traditional Leaders in Vhembe District Step Forward to Shape Constitutional Reform



Group pictures of the Royal Leaders and the University of Venda staff

On 27 May 2025, the Vhembe House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders, in strategic partnership with the Institute for Rural Development (IRD) and the Department of Public Law from the School of Law, Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law (FMCL) at the University of Venda, convened a historic stakeholder engagement in the Research Conference Centre. Sixty-two people comprising 28 Senior Traditional Leaders (Chiefs), community members representing assorted structures, academic and support staff, and students participated in the workshop.

The purpose of this consultative engagement was to critically reflect on how the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa protects the institution of traditional leadership and to amplify their voices. This engagement was both a response to the national call for annual constitutional review submissions and a bold step toward ensuring the integration of heritage, customary governance and cultural identity within South Africa's evolving democratic framework. The event, which Dr Mazibuko facilitated, began with Ms Zama Mopai from the Department of Public Law, delivering an opening prayer. Thereafter, Mr Makhubele (a Protocols Officer with the Limpopo Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs) welcomed and introduced each traditional leader following Venda and Tsonga customs and traditions. This underscored the centrality of traditional authority in community life and governance.



Prof Joseph Francis, the University of Venda's Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Postgraduate Studies welcoming participants to the constitutional review workshop

Delivering the official opening, Prof Joseph Francis, the University of Venda's Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Postgraduate Studies, expressed his deep appreciation for the participation of 28 senior traditional leaders, in particular. He described this level of commitment as rare and profoundly symbolic of the powerful relationship between the University and rural communities. "The presence of so many traditional leaders in this workshop represents the voices and presence of their community members," he remarked. Prof Francis noted with pride that the Vhembe District was likely to be the only one in South Africa actively convening such a formal platform to engage in the constitutional review process, thereby setting an example for other regions to emulate.

Special gratitude was reserved for Hosi Mahumane, a retired Senior Magistrate from Greater Giyani Local Municipality in Mopani District, for agreeing to share his knowledge, experience and expertise in constitutional matters with his peers in Vhembe District. Such a commendable feat should be applauded by all.

Prof Francis went on to reiterate the workshop's theme, "Our Heritage, Our Constitution and Our Voices." Continuing with his welcome address, he introduced the academic and institutional partners present, namely the Department of Public Law in the School of Law, FMCL (together with the Director of the School of Law, Prof Lonias Ndlovu) and the Institute for Rural Development. His remarks underscored the significance of amplifying the perspectives of rural and traditional leadership in a national legal discourse often shaped without them. Prof Francis concluded by thanking the Vhembe Local House of Traditional and Khoisan Executive Committee for requesting the university to convene and host this crucial workshop on the South African constitutional democracy landscape.



Dr Agnes Mathaulula from the Institute for Rural Development (IRD)

Dr Agnes Mathaulula from the IRD took the floor to provide guidance on active participation protocols. More importantly, she reminded participants that their lived experiences and insights were critical for shaping a Constitution that reflects the values, customs, aspirations and needs of rural communities. This created an inclusive, respectful environment that enabled honest and meaningful engagement thereafter.

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Hosi G. Bungeni, Chairperson of the Vhembe House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders

Hosi G. Bungeni reflected on insights from a workshop held recently at Porche Villa. He then invited Thovhele Masia to elaborate on outcomes of that workshop and highlight how the idea of the Constitutional Review workshop arose.



Thovhele M.J. Masia

Thovhele Masia reminded attendees of the fast-approaching 31 May 2025 deadline for submitting formal constitutional review inputs to the national Parliament. He emphasised the urgency and necessity for the Vhembe House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders to speak with a united voice. "High attendance must match active participation," he pleaded, noting that constitutional renewal is not an event but a process requiring collective and consistent effort. Hosi Bungeni also extended heartfelt gratitude to Hosi Mahumane from Mopani District, whose presence, he said, "enriched the dialogue with wisdom and national perspective."



Hosi Mahumane, a retired Senior Magistrate and Senior Traditional leader in Greater Giyani Local Municipality

In a powerful keynote address, Hosi Mahumane expressed his appreciation for being invited to share his views on the Constitutional review and praised the Vhembe House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders' initiative. "One's attitude determines their altitude," he said, asserting the need for commitment despite increasing

marginalisation. He revealed that while traditional leaders are acknowledged in law, quite often they are denied meaningful authority in governance structures. "We are often referred to as 'Councils,' but a Hosi is not a Councillor. We are authorities, not mere advisors," he declared.

Hosi Mahumane went on to offer a penetrating historical overview of the traditional leadership's role in constitutional and legislative frameworks. He outlined how the 1993 Interim Constitution offered recognition without governance authority. The 1996 final Constitution continued this symbolic inclusion. Subsequent laws, including the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act of 2003 and the Traditional and Khoisan Leadership Act of 2019, further reinforced recognition the role of traditional leadership but implementation remains paused. Hosi Mahumane went on to observe that although the Traditional Courts Act (Act 9 of 2022) was passed. He noted that "We are still waiting for its enforcement to give traditional leaders the capacity to resolve disputes and govern effectively." To give perspective and hope, he shared an example of how his Mahumani Traditional Authority's integrated local community issues into the Greater Giyani Municipality's IDP process. He said, "I compile the needs of my people with my people, then submit the document of their needs to the Municipality." This, he argued, should be the model for inclusive and responsive local developmental governance.

The plenary session surfaced several critical issues that traditional leaders believe must inform constitutional reforms. One of the most prominent concerns was the administration of communal land. Participants wanted to know whether constitutional amendments would explicitly affirm their authority to manage land under customary systems. They voiced frustrations over their inability to issue title deeds or intervene in land disputes, which placed their legitimacy at risk.

A recurring theme was the exclusion of traditional leaders from local decision-making platforms, especially in the delivery of essential services such as housing, water and sanitation. Despite being the first point of contact for rural communities, traditional leaders are often left out of integrated development planning processes, thus limiting their ability to advocate for their constituents.

The leaders also highlighted the severe financial constraints facing Traditional Councils. Once supported through local levies, many now operate with no budgetary support. "How are we expected to serve our communities when we can't even buy stationery or pay for electricity?" asked one leader, stressing the inequity in resource allocation compared to Municipalities.

Another critical concern was the erosion of customary law. The leaders stressed the need to uphold customary systems of justice and governance. They warned that state-led expropriation of land could erase centuries of indigenous systems if this is not balanced with respect for traditional governance.



Dr Crystal Mokoena, the Interim Head of the Department of Public Law in the School of Law facilitating conversations and consolidation of inputs after the keynote address by Hosi Mahumani

Dr Crystal Mokoena, the Interim Head of the Department of Public Law in the School of Law, remarked on how insightful and significant the keynote address by Hosi Mahumani was. She emphasised that the points he raised served as an excellent and comprehensive springboard to the presentations that members of the Department of Public Law prepared for the consultative workshop. She introduced the three thematic presentations by members of her Department.



Ms Zama Mopai from the Department of Public Law

Ms Zama Mopai presented on 'Understanding and Analysing Cultural Rights in Sections 30, 31 and 235 of the Constitution'. Her presentation mapped out possibilities for traditional leaders emanating from the constitutionally guaranteed rights to culture, language and self-determination.



Advocate Norman Raphulu

Adv Norman Raphulu's presentation on 'Land Rights and Traditional Leadership,' which indicated that the Constitution needs to give our traditional leaders land administration authority to be administered by valid customary laws.



Advocate Themba Skhosana

The last presentation was by Adv Themba Skhosana, who discussed 'The Constitutional Recognition of the Institution, Status and Role of Traditional Leadership.' It highlighted some challenges arising from interpreting sections 211 and 212 of the Constitution.

All three presentations shed light on the legal perspective of some of the sections of the Constitution that are most relevant to traditional leadership, culture and customary law. Consequently, the presentations by Ms Mopai, Adv Raphulu, and Adv Skhosana made the traditional leaders understand the relevant provisions to their institution and to identify issues of concern, if any, to be submitted for the constitutional review process.



Musanda Kharidzha (next to the microphone) of Ongedacht Village in the Masia Traditional area contributing to the deliberations

Out of the rich discussions emerged a set of concrete recommendations. First, constitutional reform must include explicit clauses that define and protect the governance roles of traditional leaders. Secondly, traditional leaders must be formally integrated into local government systems, particularly in IDP formulation, budget allocation and community oversight. Land rights must be affirmed through legally recognising traditional authorities' capacity to administer communal land and issue title deeds grounded in customary law.

The Traditional Courts Act (Act 9 of 2022) should be urgently implemented to formalise dispute resolution under customary frameworks. Moreover, Traditional Councils must be supported through clearly defined budgetary allocations equivalent to municipal structures. Finally, communities should be mobilised through traditional institutions to actively participate in constitutional reform processes, ensuring that the voices of the rural majority are not just heard but respected and protected.



This landmark workshop reaffirmed the Vhembe House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders as a bedrock of participatory democracy, academic collaboration and cultural integrity. It demonstrated that traditional leadership is not an outdated relic but a living, adaptive institution central to South Africa's development and governance. With the 31 May 2025 parliamentary deadline fast approaching, the workshop emphasised the urgency of consolidating and submitting the collective positions of traditional leaders.

As Prof Francis noted when delivering closing remarks, "This initiative is not just a consultation - it is a declaration. It is time we rewrite the Constitution to reflect the lived realities of our people, our heritage and our governance traditions." The workshop outcomes will be synthesised and formally submitted to Parliament, marking a powerful chapter in South Africa's journey toward a truly inclusive constitutional democracy.



Participants contributing to deliberations during plenary discussions

Accountancy students get insights into diverse career paths during the 2025 Career Exploration Day



UNIVEN accountancy students enquiring during career exploration day

The University of Venda's Internal Audit Department in partnership with the Department of Accountancy recently held the Career Exploration day at the University Auditorium, providing students with a valuable opportunity to discover various career paths, connect with industry professionals, and tap into their potential in the field of accountancy.



Prof Freddy Munzhelele, Head of Department of Accountancy giving welcome remarks

Prof Freddy Munzhelele, Head of Department of Accountancy welcomed attendees to the Career Exploration Day, underlining the department's growth and new programme, including postgraduate diplomas and degrees in accounting. The event aims to introduce accountancy students to diverse career opportunities, providing benefits such as industry insights, networking, career guidance, and job prospects. Prof Munzhelele also welcomed exhibitors, noting benefits such as talent acquisition, brand visibility, and corporate social responsibility.

This event opens doors for our students to engage with industry, explore diverse career options, and prepare for success beyond the classroom



FMCL Chairperson, Mr Tirani Mathye

The Chairperson of the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law, Mr Tirani Mathye urged his fellow students to be active during the career exploration day so that they can be identified by their potential employers (exhibitors).

Be active, ask questions, and engage—this is your chance to be seen by future employers



Ms Caroline Tshikhovhokhovh CA(SA), Senior Lecturer in the Department of Accountancy

Ms Caroline Tshikhovhokhovh CA(SA), Senior Lecturer in the Department of Accountancy discussed the importance of preparing a strong CV that reflects one's skills and experience. She advised students to be honest and specific when highlighting their skills, rather than exaggerating or claiming skills they don't possess.



When transitioning from academia to the working world, Caroline noted that students need to make the market aware of their existence. She encouraged students to research and explore different career opportunities, beyond being accountants.

Ms Tshikhovhokhovh highlighted key skills for success in the corporate world, including communication and teamwork. "You must learn to communicate. You must always be team players and put yourself out there." She concluded by wishing students the best and encouraging them to take proactive steps to market themselves to potential employers.

Don't just aim to be accountants—explore the full spectrum of career paths in the financial world

You must learn to communicate. You must always be team players and put yourself out there

This UNIVEN Career Exploration day was graced by the presence of different firms and accountancy corporate organisations such as the SAIGA (South African Institute of Government Auditors), Bonakude Consulting Pty (Ltd), IRBA (Independent Regulatory Board for Auditors), AGSA (Auditor General South Africa), IRMSA (Institute of Risk Management South Africa), Basamandla Consulting, FASSET (Finance and Accounting Services Sector Education and Training Authority), SAICA (South African Institute of Chartered Accountants), Limpopo Provincial Treasury, Pholela Business Advisory, ICFP (Institute for Commercial Forensic Practitioners), ISACA (Information Systems Audit and Control Association), CIGFARO (Chartered Institute of Government Finance, Audit & Risk Officers), CIAGOL (Chartered Institute of Audit Governance, Oversight and Leadership), IIASA (Institute of Internal Auditors South Africa), Motlanalo Chartered Accountants and Auditors Incorporated and UNIVEN GEC (Governance, Ethics and Compliance).



Mrs Diana Makwarela, Director: Internal Audit giving a vote of thanks

Mrs Diana Makwarela: Director of Internal Audit expressed her gratitude in her vote of thanks, thanking the UNIVEN Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law for supporting the organisation of this Career Exploration Day. She also appreciated the exhibitors for their participation and the students for attending this event. Mrs Makwarela encouraged students to take advantage of the opportunity to network with the exhibitors, visit the stalls, and gain valuable knowledge from these exhibitors.

Building STEM Foundations: UNIVEN and SAIP host Science Skills Development Workshop for ECD Practitioners



To strengthen foundational science understanding in early childhood education, the University of Venda (UNIVEN), in partnership with the South African Institute of Physics (SAIP), hosted the workshop "Science Skills Development for Early Childhood Development (ECD) Practitioners." This initiative aimed to equip ECD practitioners with the scientific knowledge and practical skills necessary to foster curiosity, inquiry, and critical thinking in young learners.

The workshop was grounded in the belief that early exposure to science lays a vital foundation for lifelong learning and future participation in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). By simplifying core scientific concepts and using age-appropriate teaching methods, the programme makes science both engaging and accessible for practitioners and the children they nurture. This collaboration combines UNIVEN's expertise in early childhood education with SAIP's leadership in physics outreach, demonstrating a unified commitment to strengthening ECD capacity, particularly in under-resourced communities. It aligns with national priorities, including the ECD 2030 Strategy, and supports broader efforts to enhance science education from the earliest stages.

Hosted at the Vuwani Science Resource Centre, the workshop was a joint effort by SAIP and UNIVEN through the Green Technology Confucius Institute. While SAIP's existing teacher development programmes focus primarily on high school physical science educators, this new initiative recognises the importance of beginning science education earlier. To build a robust pipeline of future scientists, engineers, technologists, and physicists, SAIP is investing in early childhood education—a priority echoed by government strategies emphasising the enhancement of ECD learning environments.

A two-day workshop brought together approximately 80 Early Childhood Development (ECD) practitioners to explore the integration of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), including coding, robotics, and creative, holistic, and playful learning approaches. The goal was to empower young children with essential skills for a rapidly changing world. Led by Professor Shonisani Agnes Mulovhedzi, the workshop featured interactive presentations and reflective dialogues, prompting participants to consider questions such as, "What is your experience with STEM?" Practitioners were encouraged to rethink and redefine STEM education through the lens of play. Creches from various communities—including Tshisaulu, Duthuni, Itsani, Vyeboom,

Vuwani, Masia, Mashau, and Tshitungulwane (Tshimbupfe)—were invited to participate. Notably, staff from the University of Venda Creche were also in attendance, fostering a rich exchange of ideas and experiences in early childhood education.



This collaboration seeks to engage practitioners in South Africa in integrating science and climate change topics into their curricula. By doing so, young learners will gain an early understanding of environmental and scientific issues relevant to their communities. Looking ahead, we envision group activities that incorporate STEM concepts through playful and experiential learning. Additionally, we will provide training to ensure that practitioners are equipped to create and sustain effective STEM classroom environments.



In their post-survey feedback, practitioners expressed appreciation for the recognition and the highly informative presentation. They committed to applying what they had learned about the STEM curriculum in their classrooms and urged the organisers to continue empowering them. Many practitioners also conveyed their gratitude for the motivation and training provided by Professor Mulovhedzi. Additionally, as a professional body, the South African Institute of Physics (SAIP) has initiated the process of seeking accreditation for the ECD module to ensure its recognition by the South African Council for Educators (SACE). Both SAIP and the University of Venda remain dedicated to fostering an inclusive community that nurtures young talent and supports sustainable development through capacity building, policy advocacy, and a range of developmental initiatives.



The presentation was highly interactive, encouraging practitioners to engage with reflective questions such as, "What is your experience with STEM?" Participants were guided to rethink and redefine STEM through play-based learning, facilitated by group activities that demonstrated how STEM concepts can be effectively introduced in playful, hands-on ways. A variety of materials—including stones, bottles, leaves, paper, glue, and scissors—were used to explore key skills in Science, Technology/Engineering, and Mathematics. Additionally, practitioners received guidance on how to set up a STEM-friendly classroom environment. In their post-survey feedback, participants expressed appreciation for the informative and engaging session. Many committed to implementing their new understanding of the STEM curriculum in their own classrooms and encouraged the organisers to continue offering such empowering professional development opportunities.



Global science awareness for sustainable development: GTCI led the Mandela-UNIVEN Science Outreach and Awareness Initiative



The issue of the representation of scientists and women in science needs to be critically examined to promote South Africa's progress towards its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the implementation of district development models. The Green Technology Confucius Institute (GTCI) led the Nelson Mandela University and the University of Venda on the 4th annual Science Outreach and Awareness Initiative in the Vhembe East and West Education districts of the Vhembe District Municipality. The engagement was based on the Science, Technology, Engineering, Artificial Intelligence, Coding and Robotics, Career guidance, and Mathematical sciences. From May 12 to May 16, 2025, the engagement benefited over 3000 learners and educators in the FET band from 31 schools, namely Silemale Secondary School, Luvuvhi Secondary School, Mbilwi Secondary School, Thengwe Secondary School, and Mphephu Secondary School, which were the venues for the 2025 global scientific awareness programme.

The Vhembe district includes many rural schools and annually produces a high percentage of top matric learners in mathematics and science. On average, several scientists in South Africa are from the district, as it's well known nationally for its annual performance in science and mathematics in the grade 12 results. The event is expected to cover the last schools and circuits in the border area of South Africa and Zimbabwe. It is encouraging to note that among the 31 schools involved in the outreach activities, female learners surpassed their male counterparts, reflecting a strong initiative to motivate girls to pursue studies in science and mathematics. Approximately 45 educators in the district have gained exposure to coding and robotics through three institutions: the University of Venda, the University of South Africa, and Nelson Mandela University.



The two university teams were accompanied by many exhibitors, including the Robotics team from the University of South Africa (UNISA) Science Centre mobile lab and the Penreach's Shalamuka Science Centre, an NGO dedicated to educational excellence in rural communities, among others.



The Vuwani Science Resource Centre conducted various Science experiments and demonstrations for Grades 10 to 12. The facilitators, including staff members from various institutes and postgraduate students, successfully engaged the learners through interactive discussions and presentations designed to spark an interest in science and educate them about 'science for society' as part of the outreach activities throughout the week.



Professor Maluta, Director of Green Technology Confucius Institute at the University of Venda, and Professor Tshentu, Zenixole, the Acting Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science at Nelson Mandela University, have reached an agreement to continue the global science awareness initiative. It is imperative that these engagements take place in schools throughout the country, as the country is deeply concerned about the decreasing number of students studying mathematics and science at South African universities.



The majority of students abandon these subjects due to the widespread belief that mathematics and science are challenging. This is a hurdle that we need to overcome together as a nation, just as we have to overcome the problem in many of South Africa's rural areas where learners trying to study science do not have laboratories.

From Fish Farming to a PhD - How Dr Tshikukuvhe Livhuwani Daphney is Preserving Indigenous Knowledge and Inspiring Women Entrepreneurs



"Kholomo ya murahu i fhedza yo dzhena dangani, kha vhutshilo a huna u lenga."

(A cow that lags behind ends up in the kraal last - in life, there is no room for hesitation)

This Vhavenda proverb perfectly captures the life journey of Dr Tshikukuvhe Livhuwani Daphney who is an academic, entrepreneur, and enthusiastic advocate for women's empowerment and Indigenous knowledge systems. Her life and career are a testament to perseverance, vision, and the transformative power of education and entrepreneurship.

Dr Tshikukuvhe, who is a Lecturer in the Department of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Heritage. Her academic path began in 2006 when she enrolled for diploma in Women's Development and Microfinance. She completed this programme in 2008 and went on to earn a bachelor's degree in development studies in 2010. Her passion for continuous learning led her to an Honours degree in Applied Anthropology, followed by a master's and a PhD in African Studies, despite the significant challenges she encountered along the way.

"It took me five years to complete my PhD studies, but I never gave up," she says with pride. Her story is not just about academic achievements, but also about resilience, courage, and the ability to adapt and thrive.

When she was still a student, Dr Tshikukuvhe recognised the value of financial independence. She began selling snacks to fellow students near the University of Venda Auditorium. At home, she ventured into fish farming, an endeavour that earned her accolades from local to national levels, including the Women Entrepreneur of the Year award in 2011.

Her entrepreneurial spirit did not stop there. She began cooking and selling traditional

Vhavenda dishes like tshidzimba and indigenous vegetables, sharing her love for culture through food. Later, she established a poultry farming business that continues to operate successfully.

These ventures not only helped sustain her financially through her academic journey but also taught her vital lessons in multitasking, time management, and innovation.

Dr Tshikukuvhe's mission extends beyond personal success. She is deeply committed to uplifting other women by encouraging self-reliance and resilience. "Women should empower themselves instead of relying solely on grants or waiting for others to act on their behalf," she says.

Her academic research exemplifies this commitment to empowerment, particularly through cultural preservation. Her doctoral research explored how social media can be used as a tool to enculturate Vhavenda youth in the Vhembe District of Limpopo, as traditional methods of passing down Indigenous Knowledge (IK) have declined.

Her study discovered that while oral transmission through storytelling around the fire was once the foundation of cultural education, today's youth are increasingly disconnected from such traditions. The rise

of social media offers a potential bridge, but it is not enough on its own.

Participants in her study recommended the development of a resolute Vhavenda Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) website. This platform would house cultural practices, values, language, and folklore and thus preserving them in digital formats accessible to the youth and anyone interested in the Vhavenda culture. This content could then be shared across social media platforms to ensure broader reach and engagement.

As she notes, "The survival of Indigenous Knowledge Systems depends on how well we adapt to modern modes of communication. We must meet the youth where they are which is online."

Dr Tshikukuvhe exemplifies what it means to lead with purpose. Her journey from a snack-selling student to a PhD holder, lecturer, and businesswoman is deeply inspiring. She is not only safeguarding cultural heritage through education and research but also paving the way for young women to see themselves as agents of change that are capable, independent, and proud of their roots.

Dr Tshikukuvhe's message is clear, "With hard work, focus, and a deep belief in yourself, anything is possible."

A meeting that brings hope to UNIVEN students and the South African Military Health Service staff members

The University of Venda's Faculty of Health Sciences recently visited the South African Military Health Service to discuss the improvement and the already existing Memorandum of Agreement (MoA). This MoA has already benefited several students who are from a poor background, and these students have secured permanent jobs within the South African Military Health Service. This meeting recently took place at the South African Military Health Service Headquarters, Pretoria.

Some of the preamble of this MoA is that the South African Military Health Service provides professional experience to UNIVEN Biokinetics students in their Biokinetics practical training.

A proposal was made by SAMHS to various universities in South Africa to admit and train their members in Nursing. UNIVEN is the first university to accept the proposal of this nature from the South African Military Health Service with 4 students being admitted in Advanced Nursing Science during the 2025 intake.



In her opening and welcome remarks, Director: Military Health Nursing, Brig General AE Makumbane gave the delegates the background of the South African Military Health Service, where she highlighted the responsibilities of the South African Military Health Service on local, international,



Attendees of the meeting

regional, national, and departmental levels. Brig General Makumbane highlighted that "we are all placed by God in the positions that we have occupied, and we need to serve our people by making an impact in other people's lives". She said, for them it is not only about being in military uniform but about making an impact in other people's lives. This envisaged MoU will change the lives of people who need this change to improve their lives.



UNIVEN's Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Prof MT Mulaudzi, expressed that UNIVEN believes in collaborations, and like many other collaborations that this University has, the project will bear the fruits that we all wish for and will benefit this country. Prof Mulaudzi thanked the South African Military Health Service for providing



this Integrated Learning opportunity to UNIVEN students. "We thank you for giving hope to UNIVEN students. We take pride in what we do while training students who are in both private and public spaces, serving South Africans and beyond the borders." She told the meeting that UNIVEN produces graduates that are employable both locally and internationally. Prof Mulaudzi appreciated the opportunity to partner with SAMHS to improve the lives of South Africans. "Our expectations have been met, and we are happy about the finalisation of this MoU," she said.

Prof Lindelani Mushaphi highlighted the programmes that UNIVEN offers whilst highlighting areas of possible collaboration.

The meeting was chaired by Col, MA Mapukata, who mentioned that both UNIVEN and the South African Military Health Service have similarities in terms of their visions, missions, and values.

The delegates agreed on the time frames for the finalisation of the MoU. The MoU will be signed physically during the signing ceremony on the date that will be agreed upon by both parties.

This MoU will benefit both UNIVEN and the South African Military Health Service; it is not based on only giving, but on the exchange of benefits. It will include student and staff exchange agreement. The MoU will be based on teaching and learning, community engagement, research and development.

Math in Motion: Vuwani Science Resource Centre Sparks Creativity in Grade 3 Teaching Techniques



Educators holding Teachers' manuals

In collaboration with the University of Free State, the University of Venda's Faculty of Science, Engineering, and Agriculture hosted an exciting two-day workshop at the Vuwani Science Resource Centre, bringing together passionate Grade 3 Mathematics teachers from the Vhuronga 1 circuit. This event was designed to equip educators with innovative teaching strategies and practical tools to enhance the learning experience for their learners.

Throughout the workshop, participants delved into a range of engaging topics, including geometric patterns, measurements, fractions, counting money, data handling, and the resolution of word problems. Utilising simple materials provided by the University of Free State (UFS), teachers discovered how to transform everyday items into effective teaching aids. This hands-on approach made learning fun and emphasised that Mathematics can be explored beyond textbooks.

The workshop fostered an interactive atmosphere, encouraging teachers to

collaborate and share ideas. This workshop builds a community of educators dedicated to stimulating minds and nurturing a love for mathematics. Almost 24 participants left the workshop equipped with new insights into creating dynamic Maths lessons that capture their learners' interests.

With generous support from the South African National Roads Agency (SANRAL), this initiative has significantly impacted local teachers and their teaching methodologies. This cohort of dedicated teachers commenced their training for this project in 2024 and proudly received their certificates of participation during this workshop. The Circuit Manager, Mr. Naphtal Ramawa formally delegated responsibilities to Mr Thomas Maluleke, Malindini Primary School Principal.

In response, educators expressed a heightened sense of motivation due to the support and professional development opportunities provided by the University of Venda, Faculty of Science, Engineering, and Agriculture. As these dedicated educators

implement the strategies learned, we anticipate a positive ripple effect on the learners, who will benefit from enhanced and engaging Maths instruction.

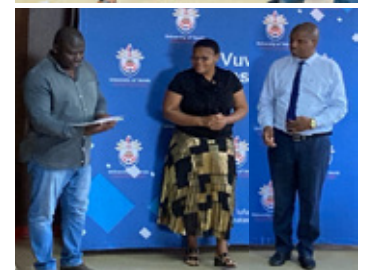
The Faculty of Science, Engineering, and Agriculture is committed to supporting educators in their pursuit of excellence in teaching. We look forward to more collaborative efforts and workshops that inspire both teachers and students alike.



Educators explaining some concepts



Teachers engaging in Mathematics activities



Mr Takalani Lufuno (VSRC)- Left, Dr Mulaudzi Sophy (UNIVEN) - Middle and Mr Thomas Maluleke - Right



Grade 3 Mathematics Teachers receiving Family Math Certificates

“One Res, One Garden”: Entrepreneurial Initiative fostering Sustainable Living and students’ empowerment

The Experimental Farm, under the leadership of Ms. Thifheli Kutama, collaborated with the Student Housing Unit to successfully launch the “One Res, One Garden” initiative as part of an entrepreneurship project. The Experimental Farm is an integral part of the Faculty of Science, Engineering, and Agriculture, which is managed by Prof. Potgieter, the Executive Dean. Meanwhile, the Student Housing Unit is led by Mr. Azwidowi Mukheli, the Dean of Students.

The “One Res, One Garden” initiative is an entrepreneurial project designed for students living in university residences. This programme promotes entrepreneurship, encourages self-sufficiency, enhances the aesthetics of student living spaces, and raises awareness about agriculture as a field of study.

In this project, the Experimental Farm provides vital resources for establishing the gardens, including seedlings, organic manure, and skilled labour for planting sessions with students. Student Housing staff work alongside students to maintain the gardens, ensuring consistent upkeep and efficient operations.



The primary objectives of the “One Res, One Garden” Initiative are to:

- Instil an entrepreneurial mindset in students, equipping them with valuable skills for their future endeavours.
- Educate students on growing their own food, promoting self-sufficiency, and sustainable living practices.
- Improve the overall aesthetic appeal of student residences through the creation of vibrant green spaces.
- Attract more students to the field of agriculture by demonstrating its practical applications and the joys of growing one’s own food.



- Contribute to food security, enabling students to harvest and consume fresh vegetables from their gardens.

The project has been going on for three years. In 2025, the project reached a new milestone when students decided to share their abundant vegetable harvest with underprivileged community members. Reflecting the spirit of Ubuntu, the students donated a portion of their produce to the ThohoyaNzie Charity Organisation, showcasing kindness, compassion, and a genuine commitment to helping those in need.



Before handing over the vegetables to the students, they were received by Prof Lindiwe Mulaudzi, the Director: CHETL, along with staff members who expressed their gratitude and appreciation for the project’s success. “May God bless all the students who participated. As the saying goes, whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and He will reward them for what they have done.” This initiative serves as a shining example of entrepreneurship, of how collaboration, compassion, and sustainability can create positive change in the lives of students and the broader community.



Records and Archives Management Section organises an educational Information Sharing Session

The Records and Archives Management Section recently hosted a highly intuitive Records Management Information Sharing Session aiming to emphasise the critical role of proper records management within the institution. The event brought together key university leaders who explored the principles, best practices, and the transformative impact of digital solutions in managing institutional records and fostering the need for compliance with the Protection of Personal Information Act.

Distinguished speakers shed light on the importance of maintaining accurate, accessible, and secure records to enhance accountability, support governance, and drive operational efficiency, especially in the age of digital transformation.

In his welcome remarks, Dr Joel Baloyi, University Registrar articulated that the session's primary objectives were to educate and raise awareness about the significance of records management and the value of records within our institution. He further emphasised on having a very robust framework in terms of how you deal with Records and data information.



Mrs Phemy Manganyi, Head of the Records and Archives Management Section, delivered a compelling presentation outlining the core functions of the Section. She emphasised the strategic importance of effective records management in supporting institutional governance, accountability, and long-term information preservation.

Her presentation covered key areas including the benefits of structured records management, existing governance framework, and records management policy; appraisal and disposal processes of records; preservation of records with archival value which form a vital part of the university's institutional memory.

Mrs Manganyi stressed that adherence to proper records retention and disposal policies is essential to ensuring compliance with regulatory standards and promoting institutional accountability. She further emphasised the urgent need for a systematic and structured approach to managing university records, especially as the institution navigates digital transformation and increased demand for transparency.



Mr Fhatuwani Ndou, Head of Ethics, Governance, and Compliance, presented on the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA). Mr Ndou emphasised the university's responsibility in managing personal data. He said POPIA is a South African law that protects personal information, and the university must ensure that data is handled securely and lawfully. Mr Ndou further emphasised that the university, as a "responsible party," must ensure all personal information is processed in line with the regulatory framework's requirements. The act was also enacted to establish conditions of lawful processing of personal information by placing obligations on entities that process personal information.

EDRMS and Transitioning to Electronic Records

Mrs Khathutshelo Ramoba and Ms Rofhiwa Mutoti shared the university's remarkable journey in transitioning from traditional paper-based records to a fully functional Electronic Documents and Records Management System (EDRMS).



They explained that this digital shift began in 2021 as part of a broader initiative to modernise records management practices and align with evolving technological standards.

A key milestone in this journey was the digitisation of 38 years' worth of student records, dating back to 1987, a significant achievement completed in under five years. These records are now securely preserved within the EDRMS, which serves as a centralised and secure online repository for storing, managing, and retrieving institutional records.

The system not only enhances operational efficiency and supports business activities such as auditing, but it also ensures regulatory compliance, including adherence to the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA). The team emphasised that training for faculty and staff is underway to ensure consistent usage of the system when it is rolled out to other departments.



During the session, Ms Mashudu Maligudu delivered an engaging and informative presentation on SharePoint and its wide-ranging benefits and capabilities. She emphasised that SharePoint is a robust, cloud-based collaboration platform integrated with Microsoft 365, making it an essential tool for modern digital workplaces.

Ms Maligudu emphasised that SharePoint serves as a centralised hub for storing, organising, and sharing documents and resources securely. Its scalable and secure architecture allows for team collaboration, protects sensitive information, and ensures access from any location, fostering productivity and seamless communication.

She further explained that SharePoint is particularly valuable for document management, enabling users to install, organise, and manage documents within a secure environment, ultimately streamlining workflows and enhancing operational efficiency across departments.

Ms. Renelwe Muthambi, Head of Project Management, together with Ms. Tshisevhe Nesengani, Head of Infrastructure Maintenance, extended a generous offer of support by making space available for use by the Records and Archives Management Section for archival purposes. This gesture reflects the spirit of collaboration across university departments and reinforces the institution's commitment to preserving its historical records in an organised and secure environment.

Mrs Uanda Ndou, Director of Human Resources, provided valuable input by emphasising the importance of health and safety measures for staff members involved in the appraisal of historical records. She highlighted that working with archived materials often stored in less accessible or older facilities can pose potential health risks if proper protocols are not followed.

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