



Student Leaders and Minister Butale Rally Campus to Rise Against Gender-Based Violence

Minister advises students to find innovative and creative solutions to address GBV within campus and in the community



Deputy Vice Chancellor for Teaching and Learning, Professor Richard Tabulawa with Minister of International Relations, Dr Phenyio Butale (right) and UB SRC representative listening to the presentations on Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

The Minister of International Relations (MIR), Dr Phenyio Butale, has urged University of Botswana (UB) students to stand together and take a united stand against gender-based violence (GBV).

Speaking at a GBV campaign seminar held under the theme "Rise Against Violence – Rise for Health" at the UB Library Auditorium on the 5th of March 2025, Dr

Butale lamented that GBV remained a serious and widespread crisis in the country. He observed that addressing the issue required collective action and a shared commitment from all sectors of society.

He further advised the students to find innovative and creative solutions to address GBV within campus and in the community. He assured the Students Representative

Council (SRC) his of support in the fight against GBV.

UB Deputy Vice Chancellor Teaching and Learning, Professor Richard Tabulawa, described gender-based violence (GBV) as one of the most serious human rights violations, decrying that it remained prevalent on campus.

He urged students to take a stand against GBV and encouraged them to organise more awareness campaigns to sensitise the University Community and foster a culture of zero tolerance towards violence.

Reflecting on the psychological impact of GBV survivors, Diaspora Exchange Botswana, Managing Director Dr Maude Dikobe noted that victims experienced depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, feeling worthless, self-isolation, decreased academic performance and risk of substance abuse.

Dr Dikobe further stated that forms of GBV included physical violence, sexual

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EDITOR'S NOTE – MARCH 2025

Welcome to the March edition of the University of Botswana (UB) Newsletter.

In this issue, we shine a spotlight on students, not only as learners but as leaders, advocates and changemakers within and beyond our campus. The stories reflect UB's commitment to being a truly student-centric institution where students are at the heart of academic, social and community life.

We feature an inspiring piece on student leaders who have boldly taken a stand against Gender-Based Violence (GBV), rallying the UB community to foster a culture of safety, respect and accountability. Their efforts demonstrate the type of transformative leadership we seek to nurture at UB, leadership rooted in empathy, activism and service.

Also in this issue is a heartening story about initiatives dedicated to improving the lives of students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD). The efforts reinforce the University's broader vision of inclusive education to ensure that every student has the opportunity to thrive.

Beyond our campus, we highlight a significant development in international collaboration: the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of International Relations and UB. The partnership is set to boost Botswana's diplomatic capacity by tapping into the University's academic expertise and research potential, a move that aligns with our mission to contribute meaningfully to national development.

As always, we hope these stories inform, inspire and spark continued dialogue across our UB community. Thank you for reading and for being part of a university that is constantly evolving through the power of its people.

Warm regards,

Thomas T. Nkhoma

Highlights...



Learners with Intellectual Disabilities Gain Money Management Skills Through Aone Onicah Wamakala's Initiative

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UB Radiation and Health Physics Students Explore Nuclear Science in South Africa

The students visit two of the region's most renowned nuclear research institutions - NECSA and iThemba Labs

A group of University of Botswana (UB) Radiation and Health Physics students recently embarked on an educational field trip to South Africa from the 17th to 19th March 2025, to gain hands-on experience in nuclear science applications.

The students visited two (2) of the region's most renowned nuclear research institutions - the South African Nuclear Energy Corporation (NECSA) and the iThemba Laboratories for Accelerator-Based Sciences. The trip provided them with valuable exposure to real-world

nuclear technology and research.

On the 18th of March 2025, the students toured NECSA, home to the SAFARI-1 research reactor. Scientists at the facility introduced them to nuclear reactor operations, radioisotope

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Student Leaders and Minister Butale... Continued from Page 1



Some of the participants raising their hands to contribute to the discussions on how to combat Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

violence, emotional and psychological abuse, economic and cultural practices. She added that survivors of GBV should be supported with encouraging open dialogue within families and communities to provide emotional backing. Furthermore, she said counselling services should be provided to the victims to process

their experiences and rebuild self-esteem. She said survivors should be empowered through skills- building and educational initiatives to promote independence and confidence.

Meanwhile, Botswana Network on Ethics, Law and HIV- AIDS (BONELA), Chairperson, Mrs Njiramanda Mbewe, said emotional

abuse was the most highly reported form of abuse in Botswana with over 92 – 94 percent in women while in man was 94 percent. She said Botswana had gender based violence laws designed to protect survivors from the abuser. ■

Department of Political and Public Administration Hosts Consultation on Draft National Decentralisation Policy

Opportunity for all to collectively review, critique the policy



Minister of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Mr Ketlhalefile Motshegwa with Acting Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Professor Tachilisa Balule, at the latter's consultative lecture on the Draft National Decentralisation Policy.

The Ministry of Local Government and Traditional Affairs recently engaged academics and students of the University of Botswana (UB) in a consultation lecture on the Draft National Decentralisation Policy for Botswana. The session, led by Minister Ketlhalefile Motshegwa, sought expert insights from the University's Department of Political and Public Administration to refine the policy before its presentation in Parliament. Acting Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Professor Tachilisa Balule, highlighted the importance of such discussions in shaping

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UB Radiation and Health Physics... Continued from Page 3

production processes and nuclear waste management techniques.

The following day, the group visited iThemba Labs which houses the largest particle accelerator in the Southern Hemisphere and Africa's only cyclotron facility. During the visit, students were guided through the operations of the 6MV Tandem accelerator and given an indepth tour of the carbon dating and environmental radioanalysis laboratories.

Beyond technical insights, both institutions provided presentations on career opportunities in nuclear science, inspiring students to consider future prospects in the field. By the end of the trip, the students expressed enthusiasm and motivation to pursue careers in nuclear research and technology ■



University of Botswana students in one of the research labs to gain hands-on experience on nuclear science.

Department of Biology Bridges Students to Industry Opportunities and Future Careers

Interactions provide valuable platform for sharing experiences, demonstrating real-world applications of biological sciences as well as expanding students' professional networks

As industries evolve at an unprecedented pace with technological advancements reshaping the professional landscape, the University of Botswana's (UB) Department of Biology is taking proactive steps to prepare students for the future. The Department recently hosted a Networking and Career Bridging Workshop designed to connect Biology students with industry professionals and expose them to diverse career opportunities.

During the workshop, Biological Sciences Lecturer, Professor Sununguko Wata Mpoloka, highlighted the importance of fostering knowledge exchange between students and experts. Professor Mpoloka noted that such interactions provided a valuable platform for sharing experiences, demonstrating real-world applications of biological sciences as well as expanding students' professional networks.

The workshop brought together seasoned professionals from various scientific institutions, each offering insights into the evolving industry landscape and the skills required to stay competitive.

Among the key speakers was Mr Kefentse Arnold Tumedi, a researcher at the Botswana Institute for Technology Research and Innovation (BITRI) and an expert in Recombinant DNA Technology and Whole Genome Sequencing. Mr Tumedi noted the increasing demand for professionals



Part of the audience listening to the presentation of the Draft National Decentralisation Policy.

governance. "Today's discussion is an opportunity for us all to collectively review, critique and strengthen the Draft National Decentralisation Policy to ensure it effectively addresses community needs," he said. Professor Balule noted that decentralisation was a cornerstone of good governance that fostered inclusive decision-making, improved service delivery and enhanced local participation in national development. He urged attendees to actively contribute their insights to strengthen the draft policy.

Minister Motshegwa reiterated the significance of decentralisation, describing it as a necessary devolution of power and resources from the Central Government to Local Authorities.

"Botswana have long called for greater decision-making powers and resource control at the local government level," he stated. The Minister highlighted the role of local government as an immediate agent of social change and development, adding that restructuring the current system was critical to improving service delivery, promoting economic development and ensuring sustainable governance.

A Political and Public Administration student, Ms Maatla Segobaetso, welcomed the engagement, calling it a crucial step in transforming Botswana's local government framework. She stressed the need to empower local authorities to efficiently and effectively serve their communities ■

with hybrid skills, urging students to diversify their expertise by integrating Biology with Computing and Programming. He noted that such a combination enhanced one's adaptability in research and technical fields, ultimately boosting employability.

Mr Elliot Fana, a Forensic Scientist and Lab Manager at the Botswana Vaccine Institute's (BVI) Foot and Mouth Disease Reference Lab,

encouraged students to align their career paths with national needs. He pointed out the critical shortage of veterinary professionals in Botswana, underscoring the need for more research and expertise in animal vaccine development. Mr Fana urged students to explore research-driven careers that could contribute to the country's scientific and

Minister Mmolotsi Calls for Stronger Stakeholder Collaboration in Tourism and Hospitality

"It is our collective responsibility as stakeholders to propel the tourism sector to greater heights"

The Minister of Tourism and Environment, Hon Wynter Mmolotsi, has called for increased stakeholder engagement and cooperation to drive Botswana's tourism and hospitality sector forward. Speaking at the second Hospitality and Tourism Education Conference in Southern Africa held at the University of Botswana (UB) on 4th of March 2025, Minister Mmolotsi underscored the importance of partnerships between policymakers, industry leaders and academics in developing the sector.

"It is our collective responsibility as stakeholders to propel the tourism sector to greater heights," he said. He observed that joint efforts in curriculum development, training and operational knowledge would ensure sustainable growth of the industry.

The conference, hosted by UB in collaboration with Michigan State University (MSU), Chinhoyi



Minister of Tourism and Environment, Hon Wynter Mmolotsi addressing the audience.

University of Technology (CUT) in Zimbabwe, and the Alliance for African Partnerships (AAP), brought together key players in the tourism and hospitality industry including academics, public sector officials, private sector representatives as well as civil society. The discussions focused on strengthening regional partnerships, addressing

climate and geopolitical uncertainties besides enhancing industry training to meet global standards.

Hospitality and Tourism Association of Botswana (HATAB) Chief Executive Officer, Ms Lilly Rakorong, underscored the significance of regional collaboration particularly within the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA). She noted that the tourism economy was a key driver for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and called for a unified approach to skill development and industry adaptation.

UB Acting Vice Chancellor, Professor Richard Tabulawa, highlighted the role of training in bridging the gap between academia, industry and public service. "For a long time, we have observed a disconnect between these three (3) critical stakeholders despite a shared goal of developing professionals who are well-equipped for the evolving workplace," he said. Professor Tabulawa added that conferences such as this provide a platform for evaluating training systems, curriculum effectiveness and industry readiness to ensure meaningful and actionable outcomes.

Director of the School of Hospitality Business at Michigan State University, Professor Karthik Namasivayam, encouraged greater collaboration among faculty, industry professionals, and policymakers within SADC and beyond. He stressed the need for real-time data access, improved resource management, and leveraging advanced technology to support the hospitality and tourism industry.



One of the guests posing a question during the conference proceedings.

ORI and Ministry Validate National Strategy to Tackle Human-Wildlife Conflict in Botswana

Human-wildlife conflict, a complex issue with ecological, socio-economic and management dimensions that necessitate collaboration among various stakeholders

The Minister of Environment and Tourism, Mr Wynter Mmolotsi, has unveiled Botswana's National Human-Wildlife Conflict Strategy and Action Plan (2025-2030) which is a critically important initiative aimed at mitigating conflicts between communities and wildlife. The strategy was officially validated at a workshop hosted by the Okavango Research Institute (ORI) in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism at Cresta Lodge, Gaborone recently. Speaking at the event, Minister Mmolotsi explained that the development of the strategy was driven by a resolution from the Human-Wildlife Conflict National Pitso held in Gaborone in October 2023. He explained that human-wildlife conflict was a complex issue with ecological, socio-economic and



Minister of Tourism and Environment, Hon Wynter Mmolotsi, addressing audience.

management dimensions which necessitated collaboration among various stakeholders. "This strategy was formulated through an inclusive, nationwide consultative process including Kgotla meetings and forums. It

requires the collective efforts of wildlife managers, academics, NGOs, communities and local leaders to develop sustainable solutions," said Mr Mmolotsi.

The workshop brought together government officials, conservationists, wildlife experts and community representatives to finalise a framework that addresses the increasing challenges posed by human encroachment on wildlife habitats.

The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Mr Boatametse Modukanele, underscored the importance of the initiative, highlighting that the strategy was designed to refine and implement mechanisms for managing human-wildlife interactions. "With factors such as population growth and habitat encroachment exacerbating conflicts, this strategy provides concrete measures to mitigate risks and promote coexistence," he emphasised.

Deputy Mayor of Gaborone, Ms Mankie Sekete, in her welcome remarks, described the validation of the strategy as a significant milestone in Botswana's conservation efforts. "This event brings together key stakeholders united in their commitment to finding sustainable solutions that balance human needs with wildlife preservation," she stated.

The strategy and action plan outline key interventions, including conflict resolution mechanisms, public awareness campaigns and policies aimed at preventing and minimising wildlife-related damages. ORI's role in hosting the validation workshop underscores its dedication to research-driven conservation strategies that ensure both biodiversity protection and the well-being of affected communities ■



Participants listening to Minister Mmolotsi delivering his speech.

Bonolo Michell Kgakole Empowers Learners with IDD Through Innovative Public Transport Training

Envisions a practical training programme that would empower learners with IDD to travel safely and independently, opening doors to a more inclusive society



Bonolo Kgakole

At just 23 years old, Bonolo Michell Kgakole, a fourth-year student at the University of Botswana (UB), is making a significant impact in the field of disability inclusion. Pursuing a Bachelor of Special Education and Biology, Bonolo transformed her academic passion into practical action by launching an innovative project aimed at teaching a learner with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) how to navigate the bustling world of public transport, specifically the ubiquitous combis. Her inspiration stemmed from a keen observation that many individuals with IDD face challenges with everyday life skills

particularly when it comes to using public transport. "I noticed how a lack of structured life skills training kept many from accessing education, healthcare and even employment," Bonolo explains. Determined to bridge this gap, she envisioned a practical training programme that would empower learners with IDD to travel safely and independently, opening doors to a more inclusive society.

The project, which addresses critical transition practices, began with a comprehensive assessment of the learner's abilities. Bonolo spent countless hours patiently teaching essential road safety, recognising transport routes and even the fundamentals of handling money. The training initially took place on familiar routes with Bonolo accompanying the learner until gradually reducing supervision to foster independence. One bright afternoon, after weeks of dedicated training, the learner confidently boarded a combi alone, a moment

Department of Biology... Continued from Page 5

industrial growth. From the agricultural sector, Mrs Boitumelo Modise-Tlotleng, a Senior Researcher at the National Agricultural Research and Development Institute (NARDI), underlined the importance of research in advancing Botswana's agricultural industry. She advised students to actively seek internships, attachments and volunteer

opportunities to gain hands-on experience and exposure to emerging industry demands. The workshop also featured insights from Ms Phatshimo Matshediso, an Associate Researcher at BITRI, Analytical Chemist and founder of Phatsima Organic. Ms Matshediso shared her entrepreneurial journey which stemmed from her Master's research on the effects of Moringa

Oleifera on the human immune system. The study, conducted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, became the foundation for a thriving business in immune-boosting products. Her success story served as an inspiration for students to think beyond traditional employment paths and explore entrepreneurial ventures based on scientific research ■



One of the speakers addressing the audience.



Participants of the workshop had the experience of their time listening to different speakers.

that encapsulated the success of the initiative and ignited hope for a future of increased independence for individuals with IDD.

However, the journey for Bonolo was not without challenges. Securing funding emerged as a significant hurdle. "I wasn't allowed to use my own money and many organisations were either unresponsive or unable to meet the strict funding needs of my project," she recalls. Even the Tlokweng District Council, while willing to provide resources, could not offer the financial support required for transport fares.

In response, Bonolo crafted a donation form and reached out to fellow students, University staff and local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Her efforts also caught the attention of local businesses including Moghul Catering Services, Executive Catering Services and Label One, the latter providing critical financial assistance.

The project's success has not only impacted the learner's ability to travel independently but has also highlighted the broader need for structured support in transition practices for individuals with IDD. Bonolo's initiative aligns with the University of Botswana's goals of raising awareness and encouraging engagement from all key stakeholders in the transition process which resonates with the Outcome-Based Education model endorsed by the Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA).

"The project has shown that even small initiatives can lead to meaningful change," Bonolo says. "It's about identifying a real problem, engaging the community and persistently advocating for inclusion."

Looking ahead, Bonolo plans to collaborate with disability organisations, transport associations and policymakers to develop a structured travel training programme for more individuals with IDD. Her long-term vision includes advocating for inclusive public transport policies across Botswana, ensuring that every citizen, regardless of ability, has the opportunity to travel freely and confidently. Through her work, Bonolo is contributing to the school initiative that has long been advocated for, realising the dream of an inclusive society that benefits all ■

Learners with Intellectual Disabilities Gain Money Management Skills Through Aone Onicah Wamakala's Initiative

Her passion lies in creating inclusive learning environments while also addressing broader societal challenges



Aone Onicah Wamakala equips learners with intellectual disabilities with vital money skills for greater independence and confidence.

There is no doubt that Aone Onicah Wamakala is on a mission to empower individuals with intellectual disabilities by equipping them with essential financial literacy skills. After observing the challenges they face in managing money and making financial decisions, she took the initiative to develop a programme that teaches budgeting, saving and other basic financial concepts.

Currently in her fourth year at the University of Botswana, Aone is pursuing a double major in Special Education, specialising in Intellectual Developmental Disabilities (IDD) and Environmental Science. Her passion lies in creating inclusive learning environments while also addressing broader societal challenges.

Through her project on money literacy, she has gained valuable insights into the intersection of education, empowerment and financial independence.

The initiative was born from her deep-seated desire to advocate for individuals with intellectual disabilities and promote their independence. Aone observed that in Botswana, limited access to specialised education, a lack of vocational training opportunities and insufficient community awareness contributed to social exclusion. These barriers hinder individuals with intellectual disabilities from achieving financial independence and full integration into society. Her programme aims to bridge this gap by providing tailored financial education that would enhance their ability to manage money and improve their employability.

Implementing the programme required careful planning, organising resources, conducting training sessions and evaluating progress. However, Aone faced significant challenges particularly limited funding and materials. As a full-time student, balancing academic commitments with running the initiative was another hurdle. To manage this, she set aside dedicated hours each week for the programme and streamlined lessons to be short yet impactful. Another challenge was engaging parents who play a crucial role in reinforcing financial literacy skills at home. To address this, Aone reached out through phone calls and meetings to ensure that families were actively involved in the learning process.

Securing funding for the programme was a key concern. To raise financial support,

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Aone developed a donation form outlining the programme's objectives and the specific resources needed. She also wrote a supporting letter explaining the programme's importance and personally approached local businesses and individuals for contributions. Such direct engagement with the community helped her secure donations, enabling the initiative to move forward.

The programme yielded significant positive outcomes. Participants demonstrated a better understanding of budgeting, saving and managing their money. Families reported increased confidence in their loved ones' ability to handle personal finances, and the learners themselves showed greater independence in daily activities such as shopping and managing small financial tasks.

Through this experience, Aone learned valuable lessons about the importance of clear communication and accessibility. She underscored the need to create a safe space where individuals feel comfortable asking questions and engaging with financial topics which can often be intimidating.

Looking ahead, Aone plans to sustain and expand the programme by forming partnerships with local organisations, government agencies and businesses to secure long-term support. She also envisions integrating the initiative into school curricula to ensure more individuals benefit from financial literacy education. Furthermore, she hopes to establish a volunteer network to support the programme's growth while keeping costs manageable.

Her advice to others looking to start similar initiatives is to understand their target audience's needs and tailor content to be both practical and engaging. She encourages collaboration with experts and other student groups to bring diverse perspectives to the table. Most importantly, she stresses the value of starting small and refining the approach over time. "Even a modest programme can have a lasting impact if executed well," she said. ■

Shirley Motshidisi Transforms Learners with Intellectual Disabilities Through Innovative CCTV Training Programme

By offering structured, practical learning, Shirley hopes to give them an opportunity to become employable and self-sufficient

Shirley Motshidisi, a passionate change-maker, has launched an innovative programme to teach learners with intellectual disabilities (IDD) the practical skill of operating CCTV systems. Born out of her observations during teaching practice at Segopotso Primary School, the initiative aims to bridge the employment gap by equipping learners with in-demand skills for settings such as schools, malls and offices.

Pursuing a Bachelor of Education in Special Education and Biology with a specialisation in intellectual development and disabilities at the University of Botswana (UB), Shirley is determined to empower such learners to achieve financial independence and lead fulfilling lives. She realised that many students with intellectual disabilities graduated without employment-related skills, leaving them dependent on their families. Determined to change this, she identified CCTV operation as a practical skill that could improve their job prospects.

The programme focuses on hands-on training, allowing learners to familiarise themselves with CCTV systems, monitor footage and understand basic security protocols. By offering structured, practical learning, Shirley hopes to give them an opportunity to become employable and self-sufficient. She also wanted to raise awareness about the importance of vocational training for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

However, implementing the programme was not without challenges. As a full-time student,



Shirley Motshidisi empowers learners with intellectual disabilities through her innovative CCTV training programme, building skills and confidence.

Shirley struggled to balance her studies and the initiative. She overcame this by conducting training sessions on weekends to ensure that she could manage both responsibilities. Financial constraints were another hurdle. Thus, purchasing equipment and materials required for training proved difficult. To address this, she reached out to potential donors, distributed donation forms and sought support from businesses and organisations. With persistence, she secured enough resources to sustain the programme.

The impact of the initiative has been significant.

Learners who participated in the training gained confidence and practical skills that increased their prospects of employment. Some were even able to demonstrate their abilities to potential employers, opening doors for internships and jobs. For families, the programme brought renewed hope, proving that their children could acquire valuable skills and become independent. Through this journey, Shirley has learned valuable lessons about perseverance, resourcefulness and the power of making a difference. She now plans to expand the programme by forming partnerships with local businesses, government agencies and non-profit organisations to provide consistent funding and resources. In addition, she hopes to introduce other vocational skills such as basic computer literacy and retail management, to create even more employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Her message to fellow students and aspiring change-makers is simple: start small but stay committed. She encourages others to use available resources, seek support when needed and not be discouraged by challenges such as limited time or funding. "Even a small initiative can make a big difference in someone's life," she said ■

UB Academic Staff Urged to Embrace Artificial Intelligence in Teaching and Learning

AI globally recognised as a means to accelerate progress towards achieving SDG4 for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities



UB Staff member in attendance.



Mr Andrew Bettany presenting to UB Academic staff on AI.

Andrew Bettany, a Microsoft Most Valuable Professional (MVP) in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Windows, has urged the University of Botswana (UB) academic staff to embrace and integrate AI skills development into their curricula. Battany shared insights during Microsoft Learn for Educators AI Bootcamp hosted by the Department of Computer Science from the 17th to 18th of March 2025.

The bootcamp, designed for educators and faculty across various fields of study, was tailored to specific AI concepts and skills. It targeted faculty members aiming to incorporate AI into their teaching practices and curricula. Acting Dean of the Faculty of Sciences, Dr Samuel Chimidza, encouraged participants to maximise the opportunity presented by the facilitator's presence, emphasising the importance of leveraging AI to harness its benefits while addressing potential risks associated with the adoption of new technological tools.

"AI is just a tool and as you probably know, technology, like any tool, has its ups and downs. It is essential to understand how to use this technology to derive maximum benefit," stressed Dr Chimidza.

Dr Chimidza further highlighted that AI had been globally recognised as a means to accelerate progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) which advocated for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities. He noted that aligning UB's objectives with the goal was a priority, with AI positioned as a critical resource for advancing inclusive education.

He advised staff members not to view AI as an undesirable innovation but rather to focus on implementing appropriate policies and strategies to ensure its effective and ethical use in education ■



School of Nursing Marks Brain Awareness Week with Public Campaign

Palliative Care – a holistic approach aimed at improving the quality of life for patients and their families facing life-threatening illnesses



UB School of Nursing Clinical Anatomist, Dr Sodiq Lawal (Right) explaining to Motswedi JSS staff members how the human brain works.

The University of Botswana (UB) School of Nursing has joined the global observance of Brain Awareness Week, aiming to increase public understanding of the progress and benefits of brain research.

The campaign, held on the 12th of March 2025 at the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE), focused on the theme "Healthy Brain, Healthy Mind – Addressing Factors that Impact Brain Development, Plasticity and Remodelling."

Welcoming participants, the Head of the School of Nursing, Dr Matula Samuel, underscored the

significance of brain awareness initiatives in fostering a deeper appreciation of the brain's adaptability and potential.

Dr Samuel described the human brain as the most complex structure and the foundation of all characteristics that define humanity. He emphasised that the brain enabled individuals to envision, imagine, speak, plan, solve problems and make decisions. Furthermore, he highlighted its vast potential in clinical practice, education and research, underscoring the importance of continuous exploration and understanding of brain function.

Presenting on palliative care for patients with neurological conditions, Dr Norman Carl Swart, an Oncology and Palliative Care Nurse Practitioner at the School of Nursing, said palliative care was a holistic approach aimed at improving the quality of life for patients and their families facing life-threatening illnesses. He explained that it focused on the prevention, assessment and management of pain, along with addressing physical, psychosocial and spiritual challenges associated with serious health conditions.

Dr Swart stated that the primary goal of palliative care was to enhance the quality of life by promoting comfort, providing comprehensive care and minimising unnecessary suffering. He added that palliative care also focused on empowering patients and their families to navigate the challenges of serious illness, offering relief and support to help them cope with unavoidable suffering.

He said patients that received palliative care included patients with AIDS, cancer, heart failure, liver failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, congenital heart disease (Children) and multiple sclerosis and others. Furthermore, Dr Swart said palliative care components comprised symptom management, communication and advance care planning, psychological and spiritual support as well as inter-professional team approach.

Meanwhile, delivering a presentation on the management of patients from the accident and emergency unit to the intensive care unit, Senior Lecturer and Emergency Nurse Specialist at the School of Nursing, Dr Mamalelela Tebogo, highlighted the severity of skull fractures, noting that a significant amount of force was required to break the human skull.

She underlined the importance of examining the cervical spine in patients with skull injuries to prevent paralysis. Dr Tebogo further outlined common types of head injuries, including epidural hematoma, subdural hematoma, focal brain injury and diffuse axonal injury, stressing the need for prompt assessment and specialised care to improve patient outcomes.

School of Nursing Clinical Anatomist, Dr Sodiq Lawal, encouraged participants to apply for neuroscience research grants from international organisations such as the International Brain Research Organisation (IBRO), International Society for Neurochemistry (ISN) and International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) ■



Oncology and Palliative Care Nurse Practitioner, Dr Norman Swart, presenting on the objectives of the Brain Awareness Week.

UB Hosts Second JICA Chair Lecture on Japan's Industrialisation and Skills Development

UB becomes the second institution in Africa to host the JICA Chair

The University of Botswana (UB) continued to strengthen its international academic partnerships by hosting the Second UB JICA Chair Lecture Series, reaffirming its commitment to global collaboration and knowledge exchange. Held on the 10th of March 2025 at the UB Conference Centre, the event brought together scholars, policymakers and industry leaders to engage in thought-provoking discussions on industrialisation and economic development. Under the theme "Importance of Skills Spirit for Industrialisation," the lecture was delivered by Professor Motoki Takahashi from the Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies at Kyoto University. The session provided valuable insights into Japan's modernisation journey and its relevance for Botswana's industrial growth. Acting Vice Chancellor, Professor Richard Tabulawa, highlighted the significance of UB's partnership with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), noting that UB was the second institution in Africa to host the JICA



Professor Motoki Takahashi (left) with Professor Richard Tabulawa (right) and one of the guests engaged in discussions during the lecture series.

Chair. He explained that UB's swift commitment to the initiative aligned with the University's 2020-2029 Strategic Plan which envisioned UB as a "Distinctive Centre of Academic Excellence" in Botswana, Africa and beyond.

"This partnership underscores UB's dedication to internationalisation, collaboration and networking with like-minded institutions

of higher learning, industries, and key stakeholders," said Professor Tabulawa. He further expressed confidence that the UB JICA Chair initiative would enhance academic diversity and contribute to the University's global reputation.

Japanese Ambassador to Botswana, His Excellency Yusuke Shido, reiterated Japan's commitment to supporting the development of its partner countries. He noted that the JICA Chair served as a platform for sharing Japan's expertise and lessons learned from overcoming industrial challenges.

"Japan's experience in navigating adversities in technology, innovation and sustainable development could provide valuable insights for Botswana's continued economic progress," said Ambassador Shido.

Professor Takahashi's lecture explored the concept of Skills Spirit and its role in Japan's



In Picture (Left to right) Japanese Embassy Members and (far right) JICA Programme Student, attending the JICA Chair Lecture.

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University of Botswana and Ministry of International Relations Forge Partnership to Boost Botswana's Diplomatic Strength

Partnership underscores shared commitment to advancing diplomacy and international relations by equipping professionals with knowledge and skills



Acting Vice Chancellor, Professor Richard Tabulawa (right) and Acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of International relations, Ms Lorato Plaatje, exchanging MoU's.



Group Picture of the Ministry of International Relations officials and University of Botswana Deputy Vice Chancellor Prof Richard Tabulawa.

The University of Botswana (UB) and the Ministry of International Relations (MIR) have entered into a five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen their collaboration in research, training and capacity building. The partnership underscores a shared commitment to advancing diplomacy and international relations by equipping professionals with the knowledge and skills required to navigate the complexities of global engagement.

Acting Vice Chancellor, Professor Richard Tabulawa signed on behalf of UB while Ministry of International Relations Acting Permanent Secretary, Ms Lorato Plaatje, signed on behalf of the Ministry.

The MoU aims at establishing a formal framework for collaboration in diplomacy and international relations. The agreement sets out clear modalities of cooperation to foster a dynamic partnership that enhances policy development, research capacity and diplomatic training. Furthermore, it aims to formalise collaboration in sharing expertise and experiences in diplomacy and international relations, exploring the establishment of a diplomatic institute and identifying other areas of mutual interest that align with the strategic priorities of both parties.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Professor Tabulawa stated that formalising the relationship would be mutually beneficial besides enhancing collaboration between the two (2) institutions. He noted that while UB possessed extensive academic expertise in areas relevant to the Ministry's daily operations, the Ministry brought valuable practical experience to the partnership.

Professor Tabulawa further stated that the MoU solidified the longstanding collaboration between UB and the Ministry in the field of

diplomacy. He reaffirmed UB's commitment to strengthening partnerships with industry and the community to drive the development of a knowledge-based economy. He observed that through impactful and strategic networking, collaborations and partnerships, UB aimed to contribute to Botswana's transformation into a thriving knowledge society.

Professor Tabulawa noted that the MoU represented a deliberate effort to bridge the gap between the University and the society it served. He further highlighted that while institutions of higher learning often prioritised theoretical knowledge, practical experience resided within the community. By strengthening partnerships, UB aimed to provide students with a well-rounded education that integrated both theory and hands-on learning to equip them with real-world skills.

Meanwhile, Ms Plaatjie highlighted that 21st-Century diplomacy was undergoing a fundamental transformation driven by the rise of digitalisation. She noted the increasing use of public diplomacy through social media platforms as a key tool for communication between domestic and foreign policy stakeholders. The shift, she explained, was reshaping how nations promoted their culture, advanced economic interests and navigated evolving geopolitical landscapes.

Ms Plaatjie further underscored the need for UB's academic programmes to align with the evolving demands of modern diplomacy to equip Botswana diplomats with the confidence and skills to engage effectively with their international counterparts. She also urged both parties to actively collaborate in implementing the MoU to drive meaningful change and strengthen Botswana's diplomatic capacity ■

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industrial transformation. He pointed out that Africa, including Botswana, faces a 'missing middle' in its economic structure, an underdeveloped manufacturing sector. By contrast, Japan's success story was largely built on sustained investment in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) particularly those led by skilled craftsmen.

Japan's industrialisation, according to Professor Takahashi, was not an overnight achievement but a result of deliberate efforts in education and skills development. He highlighted Japan's strategy of sending students abroad for advanced education which ultimately strengthened the country's human capital and

fuelled its economic expansion.

"It was through continuous support for SMEs and the modernisation of craftsmanship with technological advancements that Japan saw rapid industrial growth, particularly in sectors like automotive manufacturing," he explained. Drawing parallels with Botswana, Professor Takahashi suggested that the country could leverage its untapped pool of skilled artisans to build a robust industrial sector. He noted that Botswana's informal sector is filled with micro-inventors whose potential remains largely unrecognized, much like Japan's industrial pioneers in earlier decades ■

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