

MAASAI MARA UNIVERSITY

»» NEWSLETTER ««

THE VOICE OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE



The Vice-Chancellor Prof. Peninah Aloo-Obudho addressing students during the cultural week accompanied a cross section of University management and University partners from China.

TOP NEWS OF THE MONTH

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VICE-CHANCELLOR ATTENDED THE THE 5 TH ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERS TRAINING PROGRAMME: INDIA BOOTCAMP

Between 14 th and 18 th October 2022, the Vice-Chancellor Prof. Peninah Aloo-Obudho attended the above training in India. The Vice-Chancellor was among the fourteen university leaders who attended the training. The team visited two high ranking Institutes of Technology at IIT-Hydrabad and IIT- Madras in Chennai. The objective of the visit was to benchmark with entrepreneurial universities that have succeeded in commercializing innovations. The programme was supported by the British Council and the Kenya National Innovation Agency (KENIA).



Vice-Chancellor Maasai Mara University(Center) Dr. Tony Omwansa, CEO KENIA (Left) and the President of the Indian Institute of Technology at Hydrebad(Right) after the signing of the MOU

The experience from visiting the two institutes of Technology demonstrated to the team the key features of an entrepreneurial university. Some of the key things that we observed included but not limited to the following:

- A culture of innovation among staff and student (Both under- and postgraduate students
- Well equipped Innovation Hubs
- Professors carry out research that develop technologies which have impact on the society
- Strong Technology Transfer Offices
- Close working relationship between the university and the industry
- Common course on Entrepreneurship for all undergraduate students
- Strong support for regular student start-ups
- Establishment of Innovation Clubs among students
- Strong alumni support towards innovation

At the end of the visit, the two institutions agreed to work with a consortium of the interested Kenyan universities. At both institutions, memoranda of understanding were signed between the Kenyan Universities and the technology institutions. It was also agreed that KENIA will coordinate the formation of groups of universities with common interests towards the implementation of the two MOUs. The Vice-Chancellors are expected to use the knowledge gathered to propel their universities to become reputable entrepreneurial universities.



Vice-Chancellor, Prof. P. Aloo-Obudho signing the MOU with the Indian Institute of Technology at Hydrebad. Looking on are Dr. Tony Omwansa, CEO KENIA and the President of the Institute



The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. P. Aloo-Obudho listening to a student explaining their start-up project at IIT-Madras.

BRINGING MAASAI MARA GAME RESERVE TO THE UNIVERSITY



The recent installation of wildlife sculptures, featuring the Elephant, Buffalo, Lion, Crocodile, Giraffe, Rhino, Hippo, Wildebeest, Warthog, and Leopard, marks a significant achievement for Maasai Mara University. The sculptures were strategically installed within the University's premises to foster an appreciation for biodiversity and contribute to a unique and engaging environment for the University community. The sculpture installation event, attended by key stakeholders and staff, was a celebration of wildlife conservation and artistic innovation.

The event showcased these remarkable representations, each crafted with meticulous attention to detail to capture the essence and character of the animals. These sculptures now serve as daily reminders of the beauty and diversity of Kenya's wildlife, creating an interactive and educational atmosphere that aligns with Maasai Mara University's niche area and promotes environmental awareness. They are already serving as outdoor laboratory for students undertaking Tourism and Wildlife courses.

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The primary objectives of the wildlife sculpture were:

1. **Enhance Environmental Awareness:** By showcasing iconic African wildlife, the sculptures aim to promote awareness and understanding of local biodiversity among students, staff, partners, and visitors.
2. **Inspire Conservation Efforts:** The sculptures symbolize our commitment to wildlife conservation and seek to inspire everyone within the university to support and participate in conservation initiatives.
3. **Create a Unique and Engaging Workplace:** The sculptures have enhanced the University's aesthetic appeal and provide a visually stimulating environment, fostering a sense of pride and connection to Kenya's natural heritage.

Key Highlights

- **Authentic Wildlife Representation:** Each sculpture captures the unique characteristics of its respective species, combining realism with artistic interpretation. Special attention was given to iconic traits like the elephant's tusks, the lion's mane, and the leopard's spots, making each sculpture easily recognizable and life-like.
- **Innovative Use of Eco-Friendly Materials:** In line with our commitment to sustainability, the sculptures were constructed using eco-friendly materials, ensuring minimal environmental impact. This choice of materials highlights our dedication to eco-conscious practices.
- **Strategic Placement for Maximum Impact:** The sculptures were installed at key points within the premises, such as entryways, courtyards, and high-traffic areas, maximizing their visibility and ensuring that each piece contributes to the overall aesthetic and ambiance of the university.



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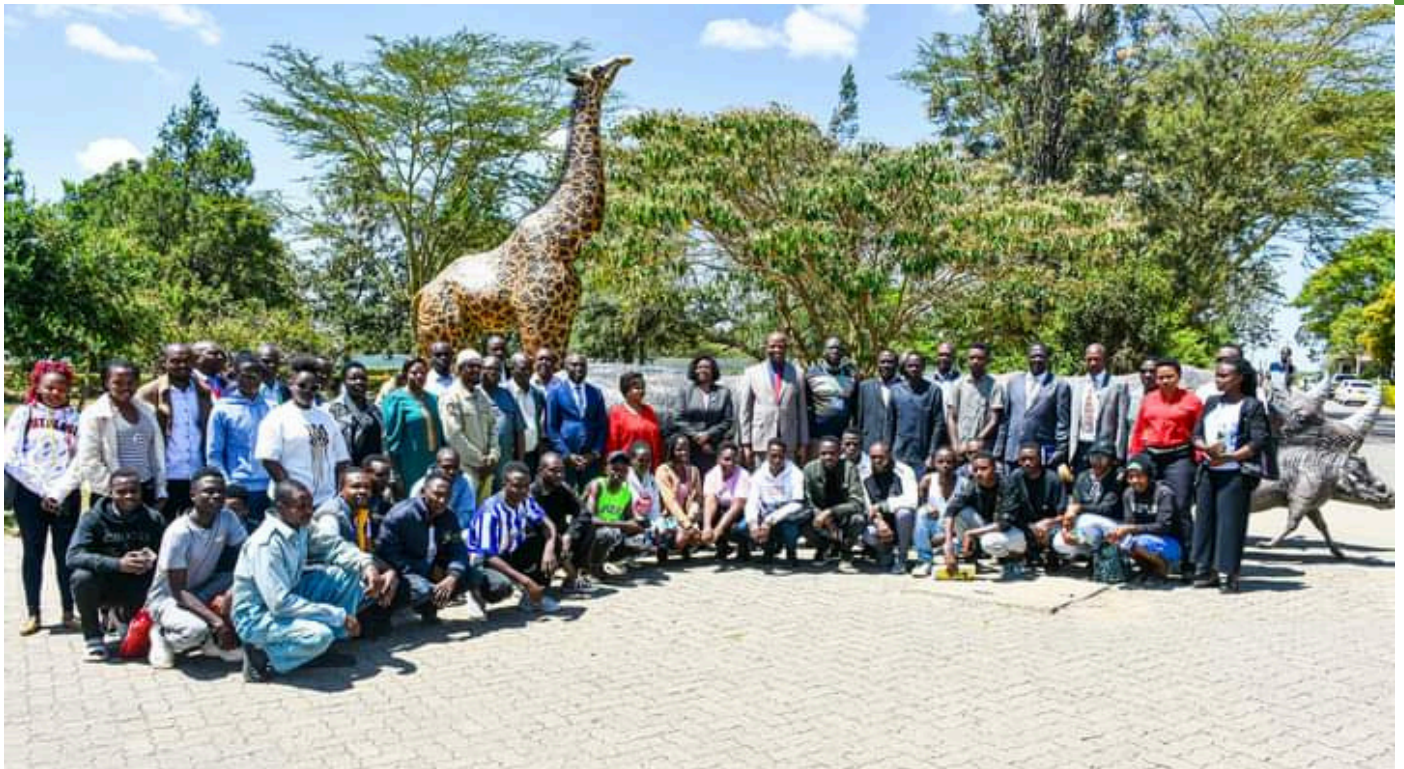
Outcomes and Achievements

- **Increased Environmental Awareness:** Since the installation, internal assessment indicates an increase in engagement with wildlife and environmental issues. The sculptures have sparked conversations around conservation, with the University community expressing interest in participating in upcoming environmental initiatives.
- **Enhanced University Image:** Feedback from students, staff, and visitors has been overwhelmingly positive. The sculptures have become a talking point, enhancing the University's image as a leader in innovative environmental initiatives and community engagement.
- **Promoted Employee Well-being and Creativity:** The sculptures provide an inspiring and refreshing work environment that positively impacts employee morale. Many staff members have reported that the art installations make the premises feel more vibrant, which contributes to a positive work culture.

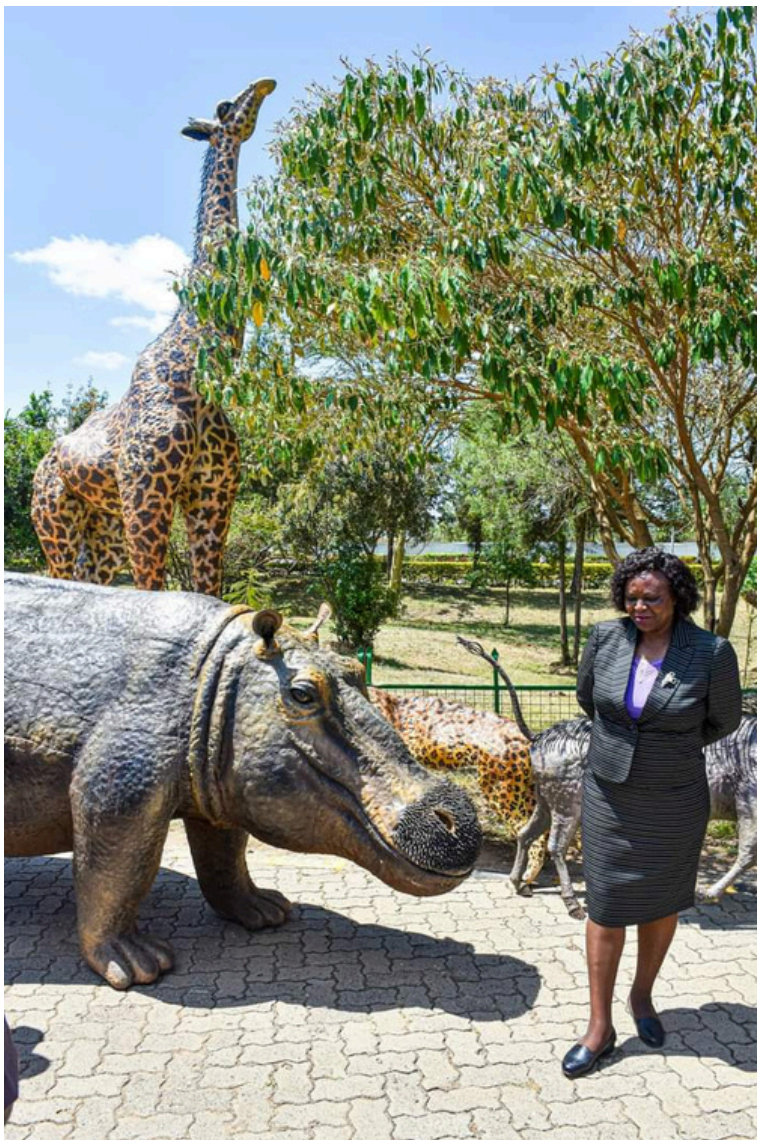
The successful installation of the wildlife sculptures has not only enhanced the visual appeal of the University premises but also reinforced our commitment to environmental conservation and community engagement. Through the project, we have strengthened our role as advocates for Kenya's rich biodiversity and created a lasting impact on the staff, students, and visitors. The University plans to create a Mara River Ecosystem in the same spot.



Vice-Chancellor, Prof. P. Aloo- Obudho (middle) with Management during the launch of the animal sculptures.



Students and staff joined the Vice-chancellor during the launch of the sculptures.



Vice-chancellor, Prof. P. Aloo-Obudho admiring the sculpture of a hippo.

MAASAI MARA UNIVERSITY CELEBRATED THE 2024 CULTURAL WEEK



Maasai mara University students from Maa Community performing traditional dance during the Cultural Week.

Maasai Mara University, Directorate of Gender Equity and Culture, in Collaboration with the office of the Dean of students held an annual Cultural Week at Maasai Mara University which began on 22nd -25th October 2024, celebrating a diverse range of cultures from across Kenya and beyond. The theme of the event was Cohesion and Integration for a peaceful co-existence in the Universities.

The event showcased vibrant traditional attire, music, dance, cuisine and cultural expressions from different communities. This colorful celebration emphasizes the university's dedication to promoting cultural diversity, unity, and pride within the academic community. The event was coordinated by the Directorate of Gender, Culture and equity lead by the Director Dr. Jane Ombati and officers from the office of the Dean of Students.



Maasai Mara University LUO community students performing traditional dance during Cultural dance



Maasai Mara University students Islam Community during Religious performances



The Vice-Chancellor Prof. Peninah Aloo-Obudho, inspecting different traditional cuisines displayed by the students during the cultural week accompanied by guests from China.

The chief guest Mr. Hosea Wangeri from the National Museums of Kenya, talked about cultural diversity and its place in contemporary society. The guest urged students not to forget their cultures to promote the diverse and rich culture of the Kenyan communities. He was accompanied by Ms. Jennifer Koikai, Asst.Registar at Maasai Mara University. The students showcased: popular cultures from different regions in Kenya, folk songs, traditional dances, traditional food festivals and preparations, modern dances, sports, religion performances which ended up in a beauty pageantry. The show stopper was performance by Arbantone artist, Topsy Gee of the famous Finish “Kumalo” who performed to the jubilation of hundreds of culture lovers in attendance.

The 2024 Annual Maasai Mara University Cultural Week came to a close with pomp and glamour. The Vice-Chancellor Prof. Peninah Aloo-Obudho graced the event with a cross section of University management and guests from China led by Prof. Yan. The Vice-Chancellor stressed the importance of cultural activities as showcased by students. She appreciated the diverse cuisines prepared by students as well as the beautiful traditional attires. The Vice-Chancellor informed the participants that this was the first time a few cultural groups were invited from across Kenyan communities to show case their rich culture.



Maasai Mara University students during the cultural week accompanied by guests from China.



Maasai Mara University students Islam Community during Religious performances



The Vice-Chancellor Prof. Peninah Aloo-Obudho, inspecting different traditional cuisines displayed by the students during the cultural week accompanied by guests from China.



A jig from the Coastal Community

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THE 13TH MARA DAY CELEBRATIONS SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE, 2024 HELD AT MAASAI MARA UNIVERSITY



Participants in the conference Hall with the Chief Guest, Prof. PLO Lumumba (seated front row 3rd from left), Vice-Chancellor, Prof. P. Aloo-Obudho (next to Prof. Lumumba), the Deputy Governor of Narok County Government, Mr. L. Koech , Dr. A. Bwire, the Executive Secretary of LVBC and the EALA member H. Ole Sankok (extreme right).

The 13th Mara Day Celebrations Scientific Conference, 2024 took place in Maasai Mara University on 14th September, 2024. The conference was co-organized by Maasai Mara University, the East Africa Commission through the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) and County Government of Narok. The theme of the conference was “Flowing Forward Together: Conserving the Mara Basin Ecosystem for Sustainable Biodiversity & Climate Resilience”. The guest speaker of the conference was Prof. PLO Lumumba, a Pan-Africanist and the Director, Kenya School of Law. The conference attracted at least 500 attendees with four (4) thematic keynote speakers from Kenya and Tanzania (two each), 28 oral presenters, 22 poster presenters and 10 innovation exhibitors. The breakout rooms during the conference were manned by a session chair, a session moderator and a rapporteur drawn from the University, LVBC and from Tanzania who jointly worked together to document resolutions from each of these rooms.



The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. P. Aloo-Obudho contributing in one of the break-away sessions. Looking on are Dr. Susan Chebet (Council Member, seated right) and the session Chair, Dr. Kamundia (standing in front).

The resolutions were then cascaded to a declarations team composed of Dr. Peter Kariuki (LVBC) and Dr. Jane Ombati (MMARAU) who made the recommendations which were further declared and countersigned during the climax of the celebrations at Sekenani, Narok. The Conference was thus instrumental in originating key policy briefs which are expected to shape the trajectory of the East Africa Commission towards conservation of the Mara Basin. This agenda aligns well to the University 5 M's where conservation of the Mara Basin has a role.



The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. P. Aloo-Obudho waving at the crowd at Sekenani during the Climax of Mara Day Celebrations. Seated on her left is Mrs. Agnes Ntutu, the First Lady of Narok County and on the left is the EALA Member Hon. Ole Sankok. Extreme right is the Deputy Governor of Narok County , Hon. L. Koech.

MAASAI MARA UNIVERSITY HOLDS THE FIRST GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) TOWN HALL SESSION ON EXPLORING THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

On 27th September 2024, Maasai Mara University successfully hosted an online Town Hall session titled "Exploring the Role of Technology in Higher Education", with a specific focus on generative AI. The session, organized by the Director ICT & E-Learning, Mr. Anil Kumar and the Registrar Academic Affairs, Dr. Fredrick Otieno. The meeting was held via Google Meet and saw active participation from 180 students and staff members. The keynote speaker was Prof. Chris Odindo, from the United States of America who expertly guided the participants through the session. The primary objective was to foster an understanding of the impact of generative AI on higher education (HE), and to provide a platform for an open, interactive discussion around its potential benefits and challenges.

Session Outline

Part 1: Introduction to Generative AI

The session commenced with a brief introduction to generative AI, highlighting its evolving role and relevance in higher education. I emphasized the goal of the session: to explore both the opportunities and risks associated with the technology, particularly in teaching, learning, and administrative functions. Participants were encouraged to engage in an open and frank dialogue, contributing their views freely to the discussion, as generative AI is still a developing field.

Part 2: Oxford-Union Style Debate

The core of the event featured an Oxford-Union style debate with the motion: "Generative AI poses a greater threat than benefit to higher education for both students and faculty." The debate aimed to critically assess the potential risks and rewards that generative AI brings to academic environments. Four student debaters, two speaking in favor of the motion and two against, presented their arguments in 2-minute speeches, followed by 1-minute rebuttals.

Their roles were intended to stimulate discussion and did not necessarily reflect their personal views. The debate was followed by a Q&A session, during which audience members posed clarifying questions to the debaters.



Prof. Chris Odindo, from the United States of America who expertly guided the participants through the session.



Poster online Town Hall session

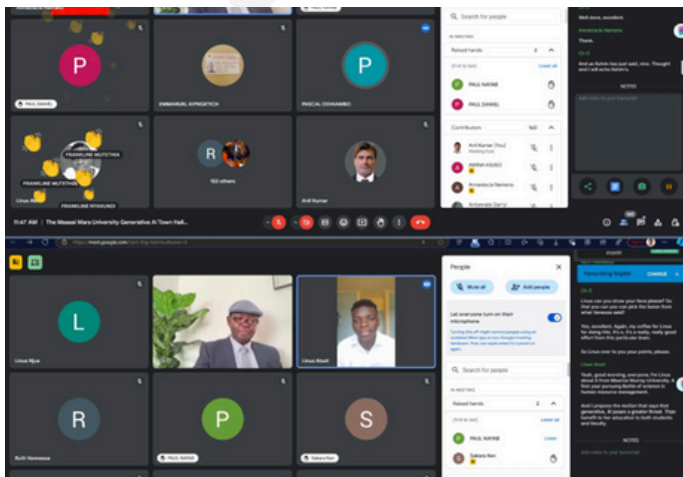
Part 3: Discussion on the Potential and Challenges of Generative AI

After the debate, Prof. Odindo delivered a presentation titled "Pygmalion Smiled: Innovating, Succeeding, and Thriving in this Age of Generative AI." This talk addressed the ways in which both students and faculty can harness the potential of generative AI, while also remaining mindful of the ethical concerns and practical challenges it presents.

Key themes from the debate and discussions were summarized, with the clear message that this session should mark the beginning of a longer, more in-depth conversation about generative AI's role at Maasai Mara University. The importance of continuous dialogue between students, faculty, and university leadership was strongly emphasized.

Part 4: FAQ and Closing Remarks

The session concluded with a FAQ segment, during which Prof. Odindo addressed several pressing questions from the participants. The discussion covered important issues such as the ethical use of AI in education, the future of AI-integrated learning, and how faculty can adapt to the new technology. Prof. Odindo closed the session by advocating for more debates and discussions on AI, stressing the importance of using the technology ethically to maximize its benefits for education. He highlighted the need for faculty development in this area, suggesting that similar sessions be organized specifically for staff members in the near future.



Session Outcome

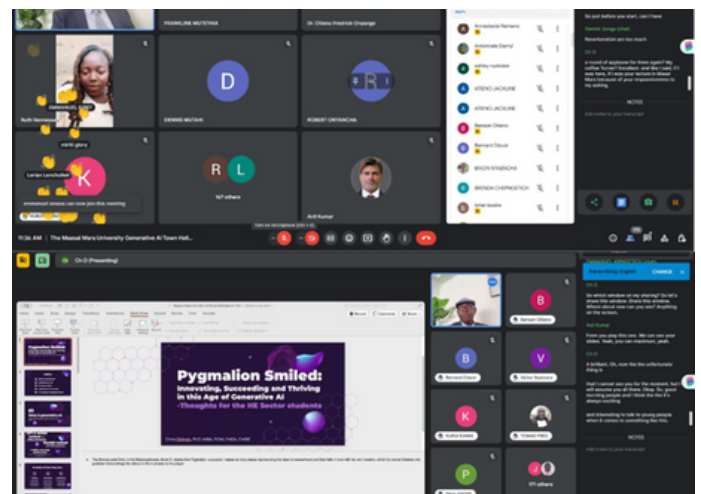
The event was a significant success, achieving the following outcomes:

- Increased Awareness: Participants gained a deeper understanding of generative AI and its potential to transform higher education.
- Engaged Participation: Both students and staff members actively participated in the debate and discussions, leading to a productive exchange of ideas.
- Commitment to Future Discussions: There was strong agreement among attendees and organizers that further debates, particularly focused on faculty perspectives, would be valuable.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the Generative AI Town Hall session provided a much-needed platform for discourse on the role of emerging technologies in higher education. The positive feedback from participants underscores the value of continuing these conversations.

As recommended by Prof. Odindo, the university should organize future sessions tailored to faculty members, to further explore the implementation and ethical implications of AI in higher education. It is essential that Maasai Mara University remains at the forefront of these discussions, ensuring our institution leverages these technologies for the benefit of both students and staff.



SENSITIZATION OF COUNCIL ON ENTREPRENEURIAL UNIVERSITY AND INNOVATION



Members of the University Council in standing position after the sensitization on Entrepreneurial University

As part of the journey towards becoming an Entrepreneurial university, Maasai Mara University Council was taken through the highlights of the Entrepreneurial University and Innovation by Prof. Justus Simiyu, Director (University – Industry, Linkages & Consultancies) and Dr. Aloys Osano, Director (Research, Innovation & Outreach) on Friday 27th September, 2024. The presentation captured the teams journey from inception, its successes and challenges.

The Entrepreneurial University and Innovation team comprises of five (5) members under the leadership and guidance of the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. P. Aloo - Obudho, who initiated the process through the Kenya National Innovation Agency (KeNIA). The team was introduced to Kenya KeNIA in October 2023 and the University progressively engaged with the agency until it was registered in January 2024 with thirteen (13) other universities.

An Entrepreneurial University (EPU) refers to a university which is able to survive and adapt in highly complex and uncertain conditions of the environment in which it operates. Further, a university becomes entrepreneurial in order to address the needs of its own environment and contribute to regional and national economic development and it aims to improve its own financial situation and the position of its employees.

University council members pose for a group photo after Sensitization on Entrepreneurial University and Innovation. Seated (L to R): Dr. Susan Chebet, Dr. Kennedy Ole Kerei, Chair of the Council, Prof. Peninah Aloo-Obudho, the Vice-Chancellor and, Amb. Peter Ole Nkuraiyia. Standing (L to R): CPA Dickson Malanga (left), Ms. Agnes Busienei and Ms. Elizabeth Ayoo. All members are branded in Maa attire because the meeting was on Friday.

Some of the key successes and achievements to the University comprise the following among others:

- Peer Learning through benchmarking exercise;
- Training of the Vice-Chancellor;
- Training of the University Institutional Working Group;
- Sensitization of Senate Members on Entrepreneurial, Institutional, Maturity Frame work in January, 2024;
- Appointment of the Technology Transfer Officer (TTO);
- Operationalization of Innovation & Entrepreneurship Incubation Hub and;
- Participation in the Research to Commercialization program (Coaching of innovators on commercialization) as well as Research to Commercialization (R2C) Trainer of Trainers.

Although the university is making steady progress, a major challenge is budgetary constraints to fully meet the Entrepreneurial University and Innovation objectives.



BRIDGING THE INDUSTRY-ACADEMIA GAP: MAASAI MARA UNIVERSITY AND KNCCI ESTABLISH COLLABORATION



Maasai Mara University Vice Chacellor Prof. P.Aloo-Obudho welcoming KNCCI delegates to the Seneate. R: Mr. Ken Onditi, Chamber National Director, Nyanza Region addressing university senate. Looking on is Mr. David Mpatiany, the National Chamber Director, Rift Valley Region

Maasai Mara University and the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KNCCI) have joined forces to address the longstanding gap between industry and academia. This collaboration aims to align university curricula with industry needs and enhance the relevance of research outputs. The partnership was initiated by the Vice Chancellor, Prof. P. Aloo-Obudho, who invited the KNCCI to address the university Senate. During the meeting, the KNCCI team, led by Mr. Ken Onditi, emphasized the importance of joint consultancies and research collaborations.

Mr. Onditi and his team took the Senate through the operations of the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The university also highlighted its initiatives in cultural preservation, environmental sustainability, and renewable energy. These initiatives include the establishment of a Cultural Centre, documentation of Maa culture, and projects on brickette and biogas production. Both teams agreed that the key areas of focus for the partnership include student attachments/internships, joint research for policy information, curriculum development, community capacity building, agriculture value chain development, scholarship opportunities, resource mobilization, and cross-cutting consultancy.



An officer from the KNCCI addressing Senate members

To facilitate the collaboration, a joint steering committee was formed made of members from KNCCI and MMARAU to develop a roadmap and prepare a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) within a month. Additionally, networking opportunities between the university and KNCCI members will be organized through trade missions and advocacy functions.

This partnership marks a significant step towards bridging the industry-academia divide and ensuring that university education is relevant to the needs of the Kenyan market.



Vice Chancellor Prof. P. Aloo-Obudho receiving a gift hamper from Mr. Ken Onditi, Chamber National Director, Nyanza Region. Looking on is Prof. Francis Mburu, Acting DVC, RIO and Dr. Edward Kateiya, Director, PRM%L and other Chamber Directors.



A group photo of the university management and the team from KNCCI

MR. MARJAN KHAMIS ABDALLA, A MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTIONAL INNOVATION WORKING GROUP PARTICIPATED IN THE PRESTIGIOUS WIPO-KENIA EXECUTIVE TRAINING PROGRAMME.



Mr. Victor Owade (L), Councillor, Academic Institutions and Executive Program, WIPO Academy, and Dr. Tony Omwansa (R), CEO KeNIA congratulating Mr. Marjan Khamis for achievement during the closing ceremony

The WIPO Academy, in collaboration with the Kenya National Innovation Agency (KeNIA), hosted an Executive Training Program in Nairobi from September 16th -20th, 2024. It aimed to enhance IP management skills for 40 participants, focusing on integrating intellectual property into business models, innovation processes, and commercialization strategies.

Mr. Marjan Khamis attended the WIPO-KeNIA Executive Training Program in Nairobi, Kenya, as a scholarship recipient. The program, aimed at enhancing intellectual property (IP) management skills, included 40 participants from various innovation sectors.

Through interactive sessions, Mr. Khamis gained insights into integrating IP into business models, innovation audits, and commercialization strategies. A visit to Anza Village provided him with hands-on experience in IP application within startups, further broadening his understanding of IP monetization and sustainable innovation practices. This training, supported by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the Kenya National Innovation Agency (KeNIA), focused on promoting sustainable innovation ecosystems and IP management across Africa. The program's content included innovation cost management, IP commercialization techniques, and strategies for enhancing the role of IP in driving economic growth. Mr. Khamis' participation in the training has provided him with valuable skills and knowledge to apply IP strategies effectively within his professional context, contributing to his career development and to broader innovation initiatives within the institution and the region. The scholarship has also enabled him to establish networks with key stakeholders in Africa's innovation ecosystem, further supporting his efforts in advancing research, technology, and business integration.



The Vice Chancellor, Prof. P. Aloo-Obudho congratulating Mr. Marjan Khamis for the great achievement while Ms. Elizabeth Ayoo, Council Member looks on.



Group photo of the innovation academy participants

MAASAI MARA UNIVERSITY RECEIVED BOOKS DONATIONS FROM RATTANSI FOUNDATION



Dr. Nancy Kimile (L) pauses for a photo with her team after receiving the books.

Maasai Mara University through Rattansi foundation received an assortment of books worth KESH 1.3 million from Michael Blundell foundation. This was the fifth donation of its kind in a series of such yearly practice. The books are of diverse disciplines: health, sciences, agriculture, animal sciences and CBC related. The Books donation exercise was aimed at enhancing reading culture, building strong collaborations and partnerships. The books were received by Dr. Nancy Kimile, the University Librarian on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. P. Aloo-Obudho.

Libraries are crucial and ingrained pillar in learning Institutions and harbor the foundation of knowledge. These books as temples of reading will provoke creative ideas and thoughtful innovations. The books will go a long way in playing a critical role in fulfilling needs of the society and reforming the world. In appreciating the organization, the Vice-Chancellor lauded the relationship between Maasai Mara University and Rattansi Foundation. She pleaded for more such donations from the organization to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in the University.

INNOVATIONS SENSITIZATION TRAINING TO UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT, SENATE AND FACULTY



A group photo of participants and Victoria Ventures CEO, (seated at the center with blue suit) and Programs Manager (in yellow)

A sensitization training session on Research to Commercialization was organized for the University Management, Senate representatives and Faculty on Wednesday, 16th October, 2024 in the University Conference Hall. The training was facilitated by Victoria Ventures – one of the leading innovations incubation accelerator ventures in Africa. At least 80 people attended the training which was very interactive. From the training, there was emphasis on research-to-commercialization (R2C) initiatives to be established at the University. It was agreed that all disciplines in the University have viable innovation propositions emanating from the research done. Participants resolved that faculty should focus on their research areas to come up with innovations. This will ensure that diversification in the sources of funding for the university to reduce overreliance on government capitation.

DONATIONS TO LESHUTA SECONDARY FOR CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



The Vice-Chancellor Prof. Peninah Aloo-Obudho (Centre in Maa attire), handing over the donations to the Leshuta Secondary School Principal Mr James Yialle (2nd right). Looking on are two Council members Ms. Elizabeth Ayoo and Ms. Agnes Busienei. Extreme right is the Chairman of the school Board, Mr. David Kediye (Red Coat).

Maasai Mara University donated 162 steel double decker beds with an occupancy of 324, 300 mattresses, 100 bed sheets, 100 blankets, 700 sanitary towels, 1500 tree seedlings and 4 solar batteries to Leshuta Secondary school. The successful ceremony was held at Leshuta secondary grounds through the Centre for Community Outreach as a Corporate Social Responsibility exercise. The drizzles could not wash away the joy of the students, parents, teachers and the local community. "I am too happy to talk, I might cry and spoil my speech, yet it's a taboo for a Maasai Man to cry," Mr. Mayole Leshuta Primary head teacher summed it all.

The Vice-Chancellor Prof. Peninah Aloo-Obudho narrated how she was moved to tears during her earlier visit to the school where she found the girls sleeping in deplorable conditions. "I don't know what the people of Leshuta did to me that touched my heart but God uses one person to impact many. This is a fulfillment of a series of promises I made to you. It cements our relationship and partnership and I promise the University will keep on helping this school", said the Vice-Chancellor. The Vice-chancellor was accompanied by a section of the University council members: Dr. Susan Chebet, Ms. Elizabeth Ayoo and Ms. Agnes Busienei, University management: Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Administration, Finance and Strategy, Prof. James Nampushi, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research Innovation and Outreach, Prof. Francis Mburu, Director, TVET Institute Prof. Stella Kirui, Director, Post graduate studies, Prof. Beatrice Manyasi, Coordinator, Centre for Community Outreach, Mr. Morompi Ole Masago, Dean of Students Mr. Mohamed Adan, member of staff of the University, green concept team led by Mr. Galfen Omuse and university students.



A section of jubilant Leshuta Secondary Students in front of the donated beds.



An assortment of donations from the University to Leshuta Secondary: Books, blankets, bed sheets and sanitary towels.

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The Vice-Chancellor Prof. Peninah Aloo-Obudho planting a tree at Leshuta Secondary School compound to commemorate the event and towards the greening concept.



Maasai Mara University table for pitching in discussion with interested partners

Council member Ms. Agnes Busienei planting a tree.



Council members and Management led by the Vice- Chancellor donating solar panels.



Maasai Mara University table for pitching in discussions with interested partners

Council member Ms. Elizabeth Ayoo planting a tree



Council member Dr. Susan Chebet planting a tree assisted by the Vice-Chancellor

CAREER CORPORATE ACADEMY: THE JOURNEY HAS BEGAN



Alex Ogak (standing), was the chief guest during the official launch of the Career Ambassador Program. Dr. Patrick Gudda, Co-ordinator of the Centre for Career Placement and Services, (left) and a section of staff and mentees follow the proceedings.

Centre for Career Placement and Services official launched the Career Ambassador Program at Maasai Mara University in October 2024. Led by Dr. Gudda Patrick, Co-ordinator of the Centre the event featured insightful discussions guided by Mr. Alex Ogake, who shared vital knowledge on the Roles of Career Ambassadors, the Future of Work, and how technology is shaping career landscapes.

With a focus on the employability crisis, the event explored on what it takes to truly stand out in today's competitive job market. Students also delved into career guidance and real-world case studies, while learning the importance of adhering to ethical guidelines in career counseling.

The event was the start of a transformative journey of empowering students to become ambassadors of their own career paths. Since the university aims to produce job creators and not job seekers, this programme has been launched at the right time to assist students with skills they require to succeed in the job market.



A group photo of students and the guest speaker (seated second from left) and the Coordinator, Dr. P. Gudda (seated middle).

MAASAI MARA UNIVERSITY SENIOR MANAGEMENT ATTEND CONFERENCES IN BEIJING AND SHANGHAI, CHINA



From far left to right: Prof. Godrick Mathews Bulitia, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic and Student Affairs, Maasai Mara University, Kenya, Dr. Beatrice Muganda Inyangala, Principal Secretary, the State Department of Higher Education and Research, Ministry of Education, Kenya, Prof. Jinpeng Huai, Minister of Education

Maasai Mara University through the Directorate of Endowment Fund has been working on a collaboration with Tongji University, Shanghai China. The University received different teams in January, 2024 and July, 2024 led by Prof. Fengting LI, Director IESD. The relationship with Tongji University has seen the university receive a donation of 200 solar panels worth 1.8M from Tongji University partners BLUETTI Solar Company. Tongji University extended an invitation to Prof. Godrick Mathews Bulitia the Deputy Vice Chancellor, (Academic and Students Affairs) and Mr. Lankeu Reson the Director Endowment Fund to attend the conferences in Beijing and Shanghai.

Conferences in Beijing

As a supporting event of the 2024 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Beijing Summit, the conference's theme was "China-Africa Higher Education Cooperation and Development in the Digital Age." It aimed at fostering a high-level China-Africa community with a shared future through collaboration in higher education, sending a powerful message of progress from the Global-South. Representatives from Thirty-Five (35) universities across Nineteen (19) African countries, including Tanzania, Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia, Tunisia, Ghana, Uganda, Rwanda, Cameroon, Malawi, Benin, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, and Somalia, along with delegates from over Fifty (50) Chinese universities attended the event. The conference was organized by Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU), with support from the Chinese Secretariat and Chinese Institute co-organized by Beijing Waiyan Online Digital Technology Co., Ltd.

The event received academic guidance from the China Association of Higher Education and the Association of African Universities. The opening ceremony was attended by Wu Yan, Vice Minister of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China; Semme Edith Delphine Emmanuel Adouki, Minister of Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Technological Innovation of the Republic of the Congo; Zhou Yu, Vice President of the China Association of Higher Education, China Director of China-Africa Consortium of Universities Exchange Mechanism, and Academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering; Haja Ramatulai Wurie, Minister of Technical and Higher Education of the Republic of Sierra Leone; and Yusupha Touray, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology of the Republic of Gambia. The ceremony was chaired by Lin Huiqing, Vice President of the China Association of Higher Education, Prof. Jinpeng Huai, Minister of Education and Vice Minister of the Ministry of Education of People's Republic of China.



(From far left to right: Prof. Li Fengting, Tongji University, Director, UN Habitat and Prof. of African Academy of Sciences, Prof. Jie Chen, Vice Minister of Education of People's Republic of China, Prof. Godrick Mathews Bulitia, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic and Student Affairs, Maasai Mara University, Kenya, Dr. Beatrice Muganda Inyangala, Principal Secretary, the State Department of Higher Education and Research, Ministry of Education, Kenya, Prof. Jinpeng Huai, Minister of Education of People's Republic of China, Mr. Lankeu Reson, the Director, Endowment Fund, Maasai Mara University, Kenya.)

Consultative meeting with Hon Minister of Education and Vice Minister of Education China The team held a consultative meeting and gifted the Minister and Vice minister of Education. A brief of Maasai Mara University, the Niche Area, the University Strategic Plan was shared with the Minister who indicated to visit Kenya and Maasai Mara University.

The Conference organized and supported by United Nations Human Settlements Programme, Key Laboratory of Cities' Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change in Shanghai, China Meteorological Administration, Tongji University and the Shanghai Environment Group Co., Ltd.

The conference aimed at discussing the establishment of predictive models for climate change and the future evolution of water resources, methods to increase the efficiency of water use for both domestic and industrial purposes, as well as measures for river restoration applicable to Africa.

Tongji University has traditional engineering advantages, in the field of urban water supply, sewage treatment, waste resource utilization, has repeatedly undertaken major national projects, won the National Science and Technology Progress Award and other awards, has a good academic echelon related to water resources management and management and leading equipment and technical strength. In 2023, Tongji University and UN-Habitat jointly set up the African Climate and Environment Research Institute. The Institute has established close ties and carried out extensive cooperation with UN-Habitat, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Zambia, Kenya, Botswana, Ethiopia, etc., providing a scientific platform for global environmental and sustainable development through scientific research and talent training. It is currently the secretariat of the Global Alliance of Universities for Environment and Sustainable Development.

MAASAI MARA UNIVERSITY HOLDS AN AI INNOVATIONS HACKATHON



A speaker explaining a point during the hackathon

As part of the university journey towards an Entrepreneurial University and in the spirit of promoting innovation competitiveness in the University, a mini-hackathon was organized on Tuesday, 22nd October, 2024 by the Directorate of Research, Innovation and Outreach. The Hackathon was geared towards Artificial Intelligence related innovations in line with the National Innovation Week in November, 2024 (Kenya Innovation Week, 2024). The main objective of the hackathon was to screen the most viable AI-related innovations in the University community which will be exhibited during the KIW, 2024. At least 26 AI related innovations were submitted with 24 of them participating in the competition. The innovations were from the University (20), Kabarak University (1), Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, MMUST (1), University of Kabianga (3) and African Cultural Conservation, Education, Creativity, Innovation and Research, ACCECIR Foundation (1). The hackathon was graced by representatives from CBaas, Netherlands (Dr. Andre Verma), and Nakuru Box who promised to incubate the best innovations from the hackathon. The innovations addressed how to use AI to tackle various societal challenges – most notably being, Maa culture conservation, environment conservation, disaster preparedness, nursing and caregiving services, agriculture, medicine, medical wastes management and business management.



One of the teams presenting their innovation during the hackathon

After a very stiff competition, adjudicated by a pool of seven judges, the following teams emerged winners (first six only);

- Maa Tamshi app on Maa language development by ACCECIR Foundation
- "AeroGuard: AI-Driven Drone Deployment for Eco-Friendly Insect Control in Wildlife Habitats by University of Kabianga
- INanny – a system for caregivers by MMARAU
- TechBin Medical Wastes Management System by MMARAU
- Kidato.AI – a system for Junior Secondary School learning by MMARAU
- BMS Solutions – a system for marketing via language translation by MMARAU

It was agreed that the Directorate of Research and Innovation will help to protect all the IPs (priority being those from MMARAU) and help fund prototypes for each of them as well as incubate them at the Innovations Incubation Center.

UNIVERSITY DONS PARTICIPATES IN ERASMUS+ NETWORKING FORUM - EU-HIGHER EDUCATION COOPERATION BETWEEN GERMANY AND EASTERN AFRICA



Dr. Paul Wanjala giving a Pitch during Erasmus+Networking Forum

Maasai Mara University was among the East Africans institutions of higher learning that participated in the Erasmus+ Networking Forum - EU-Higher Education Cooperation between Germany and Eastern Africa on 12th -13th September, 2024 at Safari Park Hotel, Nairobi

The Networking forum brought together experts from different select universities in Germany with their East African counterparts.

The forum's main aim was to catalyze collaborations and build research consortium to respond to calls from Erasmus+ and European Union at large for supporting research and capacity building in global North-South and South-South dimensions. The summit included participants from universities in East Africa and Germany who shared their research interests as well as priority areas in capacity building and looked forward to getting partners from the East African partners.

Out of the over 300 applicants, Maasai Mara university put in a strong pitch that saw it have 4 participants selected competitively based on the research ideas presented. The delegation from Maasai Mara University was led by the Prof. Justus Simiyu Acting Director, University-Industry Linkages and Consultancy who is also researcher in Energy-Food & Water nexus. Others were Dr. Ing. Jared Ombiro, the Coordinator Innovation, Entrepreneurial and Incubation Center (InnovEnt), Dr. Edmund Gathuru -Lecturer in School of Business, and Dr Paul Wanjala COD Biological Sciences who is also a seasoned researcher in conservation biology.

Key issues tackled in the forum were funding opportunities and collaborations, strategies for responding to the Horizon Europe calls and Erasmus+. Further opportunities which were discussed were on mobility grants targeting both students and academic staff from the East African region with their Germany counterparts as well as DAAD scholarship opportunities for the East African applicants which included opportunities for EA universities to host Masters and PhD programmes supported by DAAD. To cap it all, participants were privileged to give a 3 minutes pitch on their research areas and the possible collaborators they are looking for. Maasai Mara University got the privileged through the opportunity given to Dr Wanjala COD Biological who highlighted the niche of the University and its strategic position in the heart of the Mara Ecosystem with rich research potential for collaborations in climate change mitigation, Environmental conservation, tourism, nursing, renewable energy, education among others.



Prof. Simiyu in engagement with Prof. Mirko Barz (Center) from Berlin and Dr Solomon Adam from Ethiopia

Maasai Mara University table for pitching in discussion with interested partners

The University representatives who participated in the event have already started engagements with their German counterparts with two research consortia already formed, one with Prof. Mirko Barz from HT-Berlin and another with Ruger Winnegg both on multi-disciplinary research that touch on MMARAU niche areas. The Summit was a success having convened key stakeholders from East Africa and German to discuss and promote collaboration and networking between Higher education in German and the East African Institutions. The event reinforced DAAD commitment in linking East African Institutions with their German counterparts to support common and mutual research collaborations and partnerships. The office of Directorate of University-Industry Linkages and Consultancy has laid out a plan to have a series of activities to sensitize the university community on the existing opportunities and support those who express interest in linking them to the European partners.



Networking proceedings in progress

Prof J. Simiyu (Extreme right) in one of the group discussions for networking.



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