



UNIVEN earns a Golden Arrow award following PMR.Africa Limpopo Provincial Survey



Dr Bernard Nthambeleni (left) and Dr Takalani Dzaga (right) displaying the Golden Arrow Award Certificate

The University of Venda (UNIVEN) won the Golden Arrow award, the highest award in the category of institutions of higher learning, during the PMR.Africa Limpopo Provincial Survey Business Excellence Awards. The awards are the culmination of a research process in which companies and institutions are rated based on respondents' perceptions. The rating has a strong focus on evaluating and measuring customer service as well as customer satisfaction. UNIVEN was competing with other Limpopo based institutions of higher learning that were doing well in their sector over the past twelve (12) months. The Excellence Awards Ceremony was held at Bradbury Estate outside Polokwane on Wednesday, 13 October 2021.

UNIVEN was rated the best institution of higher learning based on random ratings using provincial sample of 150 respondents comprising of Chief Executive Officers, Managing Directors, Company Directors and Managers including senior government

officials based in the Limpopo Province. The award was received by the Director Marketing, Branding and Communication, Dr Takalani Dzaga, on behalf of the University Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni.

"We are extremely happy to receive this award. It is nothing less than an absolute honour. We thank PMR.africa and all those who participated in the survey for this prestigious recognition. I have no doubt that UNIVEN community will live up to the level of success this award demands", Dr Dzaga said when receiving the award. "UNIVEN is honoured with this Golden Arrow award because of teamwork from all staff members whose intention is to position the university for impact and relevance. I treasure this award as a precursor to greater achievements that lie before us as the university. I attribute the university's success to the diligence of all our strategic stakeholders and their accommodating nature. I would like to thank all staff and students for their unfaltering

commitment in the future we aspire to build," The University Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni said during his interview with Nendila newsletter.

Dr Nthambeleni concluded by urging all staff members to continue working towards achieving the university's four strategic thrusts and 15 strategic objectives as outlined in the Strategic Plan 2021-2025.

"UNIVEN is honoured with this Golden Arrow award because of teamwork from all staff members whose intention is to position the university for impact and relevance."

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UNIVEN remembers staff and students who passed on during Covid-19 Pandemic



On Monday, 18 October 2021, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) held a commemoration event to remember staff, students and relatives who passed on during Covid-19 pandemic. This commemoration event was held at the University Auditorium and virtually on the University's YouTube channel.

UNIVEN could not hold memorial services in their honour due to the country's national lockdown restrictions. Twenty-nine (29) lives were lost during this pandemic period and the number is comprised of eleven (11) staff members and eighteen (18) students and many more relatives of staff members and students.



When delivering the message of condolence, UNIVEN Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni expressed that the pandemic brought about the unprecedented disruptions, anxieties and calamities that have significantly impacted our lives and livelihoods across the board. He said it is for this reason that as the leadership of the University of Venda they felt it necessary that they should set aside this day to remember and honour the memories of our fellow University of Venda staff, students and relatives who lost their lives since the outbreak of this pandemic.

"This day marks a very important dispensation in our history as the University of Venda family. The year 2020 was like no other in the history of the University of Venda. We too had to face this faceless, merciless enemy that continues to cause such distress in our neighborhoods and communities."

"Every life lost during this pandemic is a tragedy, and we have resolved that our departed colleagues are remembered now and in the future. We will never forget them. Let us continue to observe and adhere to the COVID-19 protocols." Dr Nthambeleni concluded his message of condolence by encouraging everyone to continue wearing their face masks whenever they leave their homes and in public spaces and to always keep a distance from each other. "Government has rolled up a mandatory COVID-19 vaccine and I encourage each of you to consider taking these vaccines if you have not yet done so because vaccines have virtually eliminated devastating and cruel illnesses like Polio, Smallpox, Measles, and other serious respiratory tract infections like Pneumococcal disease and proven scientifically that they do save lives," he concluded.



In his welcome address the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Corporate Services, Dr Robert Martin said, today we have gathered at the Auditorium for reasons that are not joyful in our hearts to remember our beloved ones. He said it is a good thing to remember those we love because it assists us to find peace within ourselves. "May you find God's comfort and peaceful spirit."

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UNIVEN SRC President, Smile Manganyi said death is like a thief, it takes and never gives back. "It always takes our beloved staff members and students. We can only hope that this virus could disappear so that we can go back to our normal way of living our lives." Mr Manganyi added by touching on the issue of another pandemic called gender-based violence. He encouraged attendees to work together in the fight against all these kinds of pandemics.



Representing bereaved families, Dr Thambathira Tannie Rabothata said Covid-19 did not only rob families concerned but also the institution lost very valuable staff members and students. "Our confidence has been shaken not knowing who is next but the University, through this commemoration event, gives us hope that this too shall pass." She concluded her talk by mentioning that, as bereaved families they will remain connected with the University even in the absence of their beloved ones. "Stay connected with this University because this University cares about its people. Dr Rabothata is the former school manager, Author of Tshivenda Learner Support Materials, former member

of Tshivenda Language Board, Praise Poet, Screener of different genres of Tshivenda manuscripts, Translator and Cultural Advisor for Muvhango Soapie.



The sermon was delivered by Dr Lufuluvhi Mudimeli from the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education. She said everyone is going through life threatening situations. "We are a nation that is in tears due to the loss of our loved ones. It is okay to cry, as long as at the end you will feel better." She advised attendees to always invite God to comfort them during difficult times because the strength for everything lies with God. "For nothing shall separate us from the love of God, not even death can separate us from the love of God."



In his vote of thanks message, University Registrar, Adv Edward Lambani said that this pandemic is devastating to an extent of denying us a chance to celebrate the lives of our beloved staff and students hence the University management took this opportunity when the restrictions have been eased. He said people should continue to be always careful of this virus and practice safety measures because Covid-19 is still with us.



Family members and relatives of staff and students who passed on during Covid-19 Pandemic observing a moment of silence in remembering their loved ones who passed on

UNIVEN and BANKSETA Strengthen their relationship



On Monday, 18 October 2021, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) and BANKSETA met in an endeavour to strengthen their relationship. BANKSETA delegation, led by the CEO, Mr Eubert Mashabane visited the University, and the meeting took place at the University's Council Chambers.

BANKSETA has already invested more than R64 million on the Thuthuka -SAICA project at UNIVEN with the aim of empowering emerging South African Chartered Accountants and increasing the number of African Chartered Accountants in the country.

BANKSETA provides financial support especially for students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.



BANKSETA CEO, Mr Eubert Mashabane said they will engage with other stakeholders in order to strengthen the relationship, especially funding other relevant programmes. He said BANKSETA is committed and willing to assist financially needy and academically deserving students.



When welcoming the delegation from BANKSETA, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni indicated that the University has started with the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2021-2025. He thanked the CEO and his team for making time out of their busy schedule to visit UNIVEN. He said UNIVEN takes the issue of governance serious and will continue to obtain clean audit. Dr Nthambeleni mentioned the issue of financially needy students and said most of these indigent and missing middle students are doing well academically. "The University management is working around the clock to find sponsors and funders for the missing middle and indigent students." He said there are lot of students who are doing well academically, unfortunately they do not have money to fund their studies.



The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Corporate Services, Dr Robert Martin added that, the University management is busy exploring possible relationships with other organisations that understand the University's business. He also highlighted that the geographical location of the University of Venda disadvantages it because the majority of big organisations are in the bigger cities such as Johannesburg, Durban, and Cape Town. He said most of these organisations fund students from universities that are in urban areas, and they also provide work integrated learning opportunities to those students. Dr Martin thanked BANKSETA for seeing a need to visit UNIVEN and he hopes that other organisations could do the same.

Dr Joshua Edokpayi has been selected as a member of the South African Young Academy of Science 2021/22

The University of Venda (UNIVEN)'s Dr Joshua Edokpayi from the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture, (Department of Earth Sciences) has been selected as a member of the South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS) 2021/22. The Selection Committee was impressed by the high level of academic merit and depth of the nominations Dr Edokpayi received. This membership is critical in contributing to solutions of national and global challenges facing society; provide a platform for young scientists to influence policy decisions; contribute towards the development of scientific capacity in South Africa through mentoring and role-modeling of future scientists; and foster opportunities for interdisciplinary collaborations amongst young scientists.

Dr. Edokpayi possesses a doctoral degree in Environmental Sciences from the University of Venda, South Africa. He served as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the prestigious Water and Health Project in Limpopo, sponsored by Fogarty International (NIH, USA) and Centre for Global Health at the University of Virginia, USA. He is currently a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Earth Sciences. He has graduated over 6 Master's students and currently supervising quite a number of masters and doctoral candidates. He has published extensively



Dr Joshua Edokpayi

in accredited Journals (> 60) and has been involved in the peer review of several manuscripts in numerous journals. He is also involved in collaborative research projects with colleagues from Duquesne University, Rensselaer Polytechnic and the University of Virginia, United States of America. Dr Edokpayi has served as an external examiner to several universities in South Africa and currently holds a Y2 rating from the National Research Foundation of South Africa.

Dr Edokpayi has been involved in several projects that empower the community among which are University of Venda High School Enhancement Project, Water and Health in Limpopo Project and Warwick in Africa Projects. He is currently the academic leader of Mini-Habitable Planet Workshop (Mini-HPW) which is under the Applied Centre for Climate Change and Earth Systems Science (ACCESS) at the University of Venda.



His research interests include: Water Resource Management, Environmental Monitoring and Management, Applied Chemical Sciences, Environmental Engineering and Public Health. Dr Edokpayi has been involved in several internally and externally funded projects.

UNIVEN Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni congratulates Dr Edokpayi on his nomination.

Student Affairs Department bids farewell to the longest serving SRC in the history of the University

In the afternoon of Thursday, 21 October 2021, the Student Affairs Department of the University of Venda (UNIVEN) held a farewell function for the 2019-2021 Student Representative Council (SRC). The 2019-2021 SRC was the longest serving in the history of the University. This farewell function took place at Porche Villa Hotel.



In his Keynote Address, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni said this SRC was able to execute their duties under difficult time of COVID-19 pandemic. Dr Nthambeleni said UNIVEN, like other institutions of higher learning was caught in the middle of COVID-19 pandemic. He indicated that the University had to make ends meet with the little that it had.

"Your leadership has ensured that no student was left behind. When we decided to give student data, there was no funding from government that was meant to buy data for students. But we had a difficult, robust discussion with the SRC to try to find amicable solution on how to get funds to fund students' data project." He explained that the University had to dig down its pocket to fund this project to make sure that the University continues with its business.

Dr Nthambeleni further indicated that the University Management together with the 2019-2021 SRC managed to engage with NSFAS to discuss the issue of procuring laptops for students in a discounted price. "This is another achievement that the University, together with 2019-2021 SRC should pride themselves with. The previous SRC was able to take decisions that made sure that students continue to learn, and

they were even applauded by the President of South African Union of Students (SAUS) and the University Council members.

He advised the current SRC to engage management on challenges that they are faced with because UNIVEN believes in an open-door policy. "We need to sit and discuss challenges, engage each other to address issues." Dr Nthambeleni acknowledged staff members in the Registrar's office for working well with the previous SRC and wished the previous SRC well and encouraged them to fly the university flag high wherever they go.



The outgoing SRC President, Mr Gift Chauke opened his talk by saluting his cabinet members for serving students with pride even during difficult time of COVID-19 pandemic. He said even though the University lost some staff and students during this period, but this SRC risked their lives trying to serve students during that time, in an endeavour to save 2020 academic year. "We remained strong even though we had many challenges both internally and externally. Regardless of all these challenges, we always knew that we are here to acquire knowledge and skills that will assist us to better and shape our future. We encourage academic excellence, allowing young people to flourish without challenges that could be avoided. Now it is the time to give other students the opportunity to lead because we have served our term and we have achieved our goals. We were not the friends of management. We were intellectuals who realised that through meetings with the management to discuss issues, we could get solutions than through violent protests."

Mr Chauke explained that, during their tenure in the office, they managed to achieve a lot.

He concluded his talk by encouraging the current SRC cabinet to research before they raise concerns and to engage in a discussion with full information on the matter that would be discussed at that time. "I therefore encourage all students to go and cast their votes on Monday, 01 November 2021." He wished the current SRC cabinet well during their tenure in the office.



The Acting Director Student Affairs, Mr Azwidowi Mukheli said this event was organised to bid farewell to the previous SRC cabinet which served during an abnormal time of COVID-19 pandemic. Mr Mukheli expressed that this SRC always made sure that students are taken care of. "Now it is the time to let you go and serve the country and the world with the experience that you have accumulated during your tenure as SRC members and as UNIVEN students."



As the Programme Director, Director Marketing, Branding and Communication, Dr Takalani Dzaga indicated that it is rare to

witness this kind of event where you find the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of a university attending the SRC Farewell Function. Sometimes in other institutions of higher learning, members of SRC leave the office unceremoniously. Farewell functions of this nature send a message that this SRC leaves the office while they are still in good terms with the University.



As the former Speaker of Parliament, Ms Fulufhelo Matshaya said this outgoing SRC has always made her job easy. "We have fought this journey together and we have conquered." She advised the upcoming SRC cabinet to always strive to serve students with pride.



In his vote of thanks, DVC Teaching and Learning, Prof Jan Crafford wished the previous SRC well. He applauded them for their excellent job when serving students. He welcomed the incoming SRC and wished them well in their tenure.



Outgoing Student Representative Council posing for a photo with Dr Bernard Nthambeleni, Vice Chancellor and Principal (front row: seated fifth from left), Mr Azwidowi Mukheli, Acting Director Student Affairs (middle row: far left) and Prof Jan Crafford, DVC Teaching and Learning (back row: far left)

Risk Champions embark on a Fraud and Whistleblowing campaign to encourage the fight against possible fraud and corruption

On Friday, 01 October 2021, the University of Venda (UNIVEN)'s Risk Champions embarked on a Fraud and Whistleblowing Campaign organised by the Internal Audit and Risk Directorate. The purpose was to educate and encourage staff and students to be whistleblowers who participate in the fight against possible fraud and corruption happening within the University. Several Risk Champions were at the entry and exit points of the University, educating staff and students about the importance of reporting misconduct and corruption. Risk Champions said because of fear of victimisation, people can report these activities anonymously. During this Fraud and Whistleblowing Campaign, flyers and rulers were distributed. These flyers contain information and tollfree number where fraud and corruption activities could be reported.

A whistleblower is a person who exposes any kind of information or activity that is deemed illegal, unethical, or not correct within an

organisation. The information of alleged wrongdoing includes violation of University policy/rules, regulation, law, or threat to public interest or national security, as well as fraud and corruption.

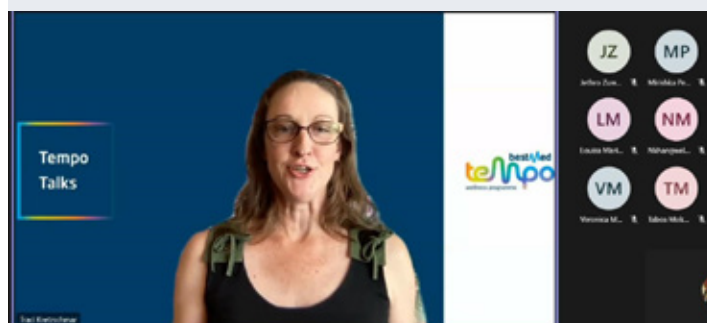
Concerns must be raised without malice, in good faith and not for personal gain and the individual must reasonably believe that the information disclosed, and any allegations contained in the disclosure deserves investigation.

Any employee, student or external party of the University who has reasonable belief that there is fraud and corruption, or misconduct may raise a concern under the procedure detailed on the flyer that was also distributed to the University community through an email.

Members of the University community should report fraud, corruption or misconduct on 0800 212 75 or send an email to univenhotline@tip-offs.com.



Cancer diagnosis is not a death sentence



As part of BestMed Medical Aid Scheme's commitment to partnering with the University of Venda (UNIVEN) on its journey to optimal health this year, BestMed Medical Aid delivered Tempo Breast Friends Informational Talk on Wednesday, 06 October 2021. The health talk took place on Microsoft Teams organised by the Employee Health and Wellness Unit under UNIVEN's Human Resources Department.

The guest speaker, Ms Traci Kretzschmar on behalf of BestMed Medical Aid, gave a brief overview of Health Talk titled 'Breast Friends'. This was part of Breast Cancer awareness month (October).

The purpose of this talk was to combat fear of self-checks and empowering men and women in coping with breast related matters. Ms Kretzschmar emphasised the importance of self-checks for men and women. She highlighted the issue of managing a diagnosis and treatment in the event of cancer. Traci indicated that there is a need to support ourselves

and others through the cancer journey. She further brought the element of researching about the conditions that people find themselves in and finding their purpose in life. "The fact that this condition can be diagnosed and treated, shows that you are not the only person who has been through this experience."

In terms of overcoming adversity, participants were advised to live life to the fullest and not feel guilty as if they are dying tomorrow. She said the condition that they are faced with, should not be seen as a burden to other people. "Most people become stressed when they find out that they have cancer forgetting that they can still live quality of life.

Ms Kretzschmar advised participants to eat balanced diet and take their treatment the right way.

In conclusion, Ms Traci Kretzschmar thanked the University for affording them the opportunity to share with the employees about breast cancer which is an enemy of both men and women.



"The fact that this condition can be diagnosed and treated, shows that you are not the only person who has been through this experience."

UNETHICAL BEHAVIOURS

When in doubt about a decision that involves workplace ethics, **ask yourself the following questions:**

- Is my action in line with the Univen Code of Conduct?
- Is my action legal?
- Is my action honest and fair?
- How would my family, friends and neighbours react if they knew about my action?
- Would customers or stakeholders approve of my action?

If the answer makes you feel uncomfortable, the action may not be appropriate.



The following selected examples of behaviours are considered unethical at Univen:

- Harassment, bullying and victimisation in the workplace
- Discrimination or uninvited verbal or physical conduct
- Theft or misuse of Univen time
- Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information and intellectual property
- Stealing, taking and removing any Univen's or third-party's property
- Altering, falsifying or forging all or any part of a document, contract, record or financial transaction
- Working under the influence of any substance that could impair judgment or interfere with the effective and responsible performance of duties
- Use of unethical or illegal practices to collect any competitive information
- Offering or taking any form of illegal payment
- Lack of compliance with any legal or contractual obligations
- Fraudulent misuse of property (for example improper expense accounts)

If you have experienced any of these, or other, unethical behaviours at Univen, Report it anonymously to your independent fraud and ethics hotline, Tip-offs Anonymous

UNIVEN and SANSA collaborate with Capricorn District Municipality on Space and Disaster Risk Reduction Management

The South African National Space Agency (SANSA) collaborated with the University of Venda (UNIVEN) and the Capricorn District Municipality to engage learners in and around Vlakkfontein, Cooperspark, Ga-Kibi, Seshego, Ga-Matlala and Avon villages as part of the national celebration for the World Space Week. The celebration took place under the theme 'Women in Space'.

The exhibition and career guidance engagements were aimed at providing information regarding different career and study opportunities in Disaster Management and Space industry to grade 12 learners from different high schools.

The World Space Week is an annual global event that was globally celebrated from 04-10 October 2021 to commemorate the launch of the 81kg Russian Satellite Sputnik-1 that happened on 04 October 1957. The 10th of October marks the signing of the treaty at the United Nations for peaceful use of outer space.

Similarly, the Capricorn District Municipality Disaster Management Unit, collaborated with the University of Venda and SANSA in commemorating the International Day for Disaster Reduction which is hosted under Target F on the Sendai Framework "Substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of the present Framework by 2030".

The event started with build-up activities towards the main event on 12 October 2021. The date of the 5th October 2021 hosted an IDDR Awareness and Career Exhibition for surrounding schools in Cooperspark village, Blouberg Local Municipality; and the district 2021 theme focused on "Substantially enhance District Development Model through adequate and sustainable support to complement District Disaster Management Programmes".

The overriding purpose of the commemoration was to promote the knowledge of Disaster Risk Management and related career paths. In terms of Section 6.3.3 of the National Disaster Management Framework, it is required that DRR education be integrated into primary and secondary curricula with a consideration that "schools should be regarded as focal points for raising awareness about disaster risk management to be linked to broader education programmes on development and the environment".

The project was aimed at assisting learners to understand the rationale for careers in Disaster Management and Emergency Management fraternity. It was also aimed at providing learners with information on available institutions in the District that offer Higher Education in the related fields.

The team also visited Mholabi Primary School where ten (10) local Secondary Schools held a bootcamp for 400 grade 12 learners. These learners were addressed in six (6) groups.



Mr Dan Matsapola explaining to Makgatho Secondary School learners about the way satellites operate



UNIVEN Schools Liaison Officer, Mr Takalani Nyelisani addressing learners at Mottishi Secondary School in Vlakkfontein village.



Mr Morwapula Mashalane, Remote Sensing Scientist from SANSA encouraging Mabotha Secondary School learners to consider a career in Space Science



UNIVEN Schools Liaison Officer, Mr Takalani Nyelisani explaining to learners about opportunities and various qualifications/programmes available for study at UNIVEN, including the new programme in Disaster Risk Reduction Management.



Learners from local schools visiting UNIVEN stall during the IDDR Awareness and Career Exhibition held at Cooperspark, Blouberg

UNIVEN, Department of Science and Innovation and International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology organise a workshop to benefit UNIVEN Postgraduate students and Researchers

On Monday, 25 October 2021, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) hosted delegations from the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) and the South African Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) to engage on the possible collaborations and funding of research projects. This workshop took place at the University's Research Conference Centre.



In his opening and welcome address, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni said even though majority of our students are undergraduates, there are lot of areas of possible collaborations, especially on research and entrepreneurship. He mentioned that the University is moving towards the direction being an entrepreneurial University. Dr Nthambeleni highlighted that UNIVEN strives to provide relevant solutions to the surrounding communities and the country at large with the research that we conduct as a University. "This University has number of NRF rated researchers and we are pleased with that achievement. Our postdoctoral fellowship also continues to make us proud. Even though we are a historically disadvantaged University, we always produce a lot of PhD graduates".

When wrapping up the workshop, Dr Nthambeleni said this institution has the capacity to collaborate and has energetic staff and students who are active researchers. "We are ready to collaborate on the identified fields of possible collaboration and we will do what needs to be done to ensure that our students and staff could benefit from this collaboration."



When setting the scene, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Postgraduate Studies, Prof Nosisi Feza gave a brief background of the area and possible areas where further research could be conducted. Prof Feza also mentioned that UNIVEN is an engaged scholarship University that works with communities for their benefit. "Our scholars who lead in engaged scholarships are very hands-on and that is what we pride ourselves with. Our assets are: leading scholars in engaged scholarship, biosphere, active communities, and entrepreneurship. We also have other projects where we have collaborated with international organisations."



Deputy Director General at the Department of Science and Innovation, Dr Mmboneni Muofhe explained that the IDP is anchored on very critical aspects of our lives. Those aspects being health, food security, entrepreneurship, and technology transfer. He said a University like UNIVEN has proved that it is ready for partnerships, especially on research projects and entrepreneurship. "This is supported by the evidence by lot of graduates that it has produced that are immensely contributing towards the development of our country. This is the reason why I want to see this partnership happening. We take this partnership serious. In terms of food security, a lot has been done so far and it's important to appreciate that we are doing well."

He said Limpopo is a province that produces most food in the country. "It produces quality food. Postgraduate students from Limpopo shouldn't go to other universities before they could be regarded as quality graduates."



Dr Segun Obadire presented about internationalisation at UNIVEN. He further presented some of the University achievements where he highlighted the qualities of students that this University is producing every year. Among other things, Dr Obadire presented about niche/ research focus area; available laboratories at UNIVEN; collaborative projects; international linkages and partnerships; support for core business; Academic leadership programmes and other research activities that are currently underway at UNIVEN.



Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture, Prof Ntebogeng Mokgalaka-Fleischmann gave a brief background of the newly established Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture. Among other things Prof Mokgalaka presented the academic programmes, staff membership capacity in the faculty where she highlighted that most staff members hold doctoral qualifications and are NRF rated. The faculty has four (4) young researchers who are also NRF rated. She highlighted the number of research projects that the University is involved in. Prof Mokgalaka-Fleischmann further spoke about some of research groups and research professors who are currently conducting research within the Faculty of Science Engineering and Agriculture.



The Acting Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Prof Tshilidzi Mulaudzi gave the brief background of the departments within the faculty where she indicated programmes and nine undergraduate programmes. Prof Mulaudzi also indicated the number of staff members holding PhDs within the Faculty of Health Sciences. She further indicated areas of research focus in the Faculty of Health Sciences. She said there are new programmes to be introduced in the Faculty of Health Sciences, which are BSc in Health Promotion (Public Health) three (3)

years degree; Pharmacy (4 years), Bachelor of Occupational Therapy and Master's in Clinical Psychology (2 years).

Prof Mulaudzi concluded her presentation by speaking about the faculty collaborations; faculty's interdisciplinary research projects which include research on epilepsy; covid 19; HIV /AIDS and TB; Ubuntu; maternal and child health; indigenous knowledge and health; nutrition including indigenous foods; Mental health; genderbased violence; sexual and reproductive health.



ICGEB Director General, Dr Lawrence Banks said he is happy to be associated with UNIVEN in a collaborative way. He said UNIVEN is conducting a lot of interesting research and they (ICGEB) are interested in these kind of research projects. He presented about the vision of the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology where he highlighted that they advocate for science development. Dr Banks continued to highlight activities that ICGEB is involved in and research that they are currently conducting.

"I was pleased by the presentations from UNIVEN Executive Deans, and I have identified several research interests that I am ready for possible collaborations. Agriculture is part of what we do on daily basis, and we are also ready for collaborations in this field. We provide research grants globally. The organisation has collaborative research grant programme where we support research laboratories in ICGEB member countries, this includes provision for additional training anywhere in the world."

Dr Banks concluded his talk by speaking about Biotechnology Development Group which supports local biopharmaceutical manufacturing in member countries, improving the drug availability at a more affordable price. He highlighted some of the outreach programmes that they are currently busy with including the annual South African National Science Week.



A group photo of delegates from ICGEB and DSI posing for a photo with Dr Bernard Nthambeleni, Prof Nosisi Feza, Prof Ntebogeng Mokgalaka-Fleischmann, Prof Tshilidzi Mulaudzi, Prof Bongani Bantwini, Dr Segun Obadire, and Senior Prof Georges Ekosse

UNIVEN Hosts Fulbright Scholarships Information Session



Some of the participants at the Fulbright Scholarship Information session

On Wednesday, 06 October 2021, the Directorate of International Relations of the University of Venda (UNIVEN) hosted the Fulbright Scholarship Programme to encourage and discuss the programme and application process with interested staff and students. This information session was held at the University's Council Chambers. The attendees were honours, masters and PhD students including some of UNIVEN staff members.

The Fulbright Foreign Student Scholarship is an opportunity for South African university graduates to pursue a master's or doctoral degree at any American universities. The grant is a two-year award towards a master's and four-year for a doctorate.

The session was officially opened by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Postgraduate Studies, Prof Nosisi Feza who welcomed the delegates and attendees. She further gave an overview of UNIVEN's current cooperation in place with U.S. universities/colleges/community colleges and encouraged staff and students not to miss the opportunity that can develop and advance their educational careers. She also highlighted that she is an alumnus of the Fulbright Scholarship Programme.

Fulbright Scholarship Programme Coordinators, Charmain Botha and Melissa Barkhuizen from the United States (US) Embassy in Pretoria gave a presentation to all interested academics and scholars



Prof Nosisi Feza, DVC – Research and Postgraduate Studies

across disciplines on all available Fulbright Scholarships. Their Presentation also touched on enhancing International opportunities through fellowships and grants.

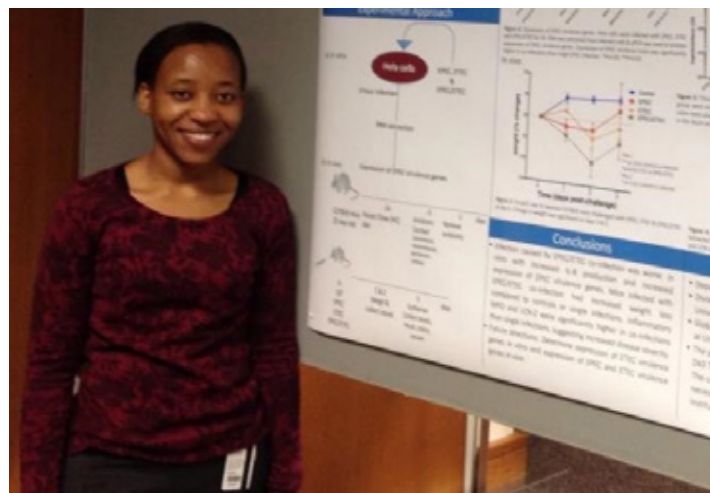
In their presentation, they highlighted the Fulbright Student programme which targets candidates who want to pursue an MA or a PhD in the United States and an option to apply for a non-degree one-year research fellowship. South African PhD candidates would be eligible for the non-degree option. They could go to the U.S. for a year of research toward their PhD in South Africa.

Students will be selected through a rigorous online application and interview process. Fulbright South Africa is pleased to offer a high level of support to applicants throughout. For application information, please visit za.usembassy.gov/fulbright.



Dr Segun Obadire, Charmain Botha, Prof Nosisi Feza and Ms Melissa Barkhuizen from the office of Public Diplomacy at the U.S Embassy, Pretoria.

UNIVEN Produces Excellent Female Scientists



Dr Ellen Ledwaba posing for a photo next to one of her posters she presented on her PhD study

Dr Ellen Ledwaba, is a student who has done her Hons, Masters and Doctoral studies in the Department of Microbiology in the former School of Mathematical and Natural Science, Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture. Her doctoral studies were funded through a collaboration of Universities of Venda (UNIVEN) and Virginia (UVA). Dr Ledwaba has been appointed in 2020 as a post-doctoral researcher at UNIVEN under supervision of Prof Natasha Potgieter and co-supervision of Prof Afsatou Traore in the Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology, Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture.

When asked about the background of her research and the impact that she hopes her research will achieve, Dr Ledwaba said that her research project was inspired by the previous project that she conducted during her Masters degree in Microbiology (infectious disease). She mentioned that the research was focused on detecting diarrheal causing pathogens in children under the age of 5 years in clinics located in the rural communities of Venda. She further explained that, during the analysis of the results, she noticed a pattern of infection with the diarrheal causing pathogens, in which most of the children were infected with more than one pathogen at the same time (co-infection), and that caught her attention and warranted for further investigations. "I was very fascinated by these results, and I felt the need to further my PhD studies to learn more about the interaction of diarrheal co-infections and do research on the disease outcome as a result of infection in an infected host/patient." Dr Ledwaba continued to explain that her training at UNIVEN included molecular training, field work (data and specimen collection in clinical settings), identification of bacterial species using biochemical tests and interpretation of results. She said when she went to UVA, her skills and knowledge were empowered with more training including research ethics, manuscript preparation techniques, working with animal models, tissue cultures and immunofluorescence microscopy. "The training that I received at UVA really shaped my work and turned my ideas into reality."

She highlighted that, through her UVA advisors/mentors that she truly appreciates, she received extensive training and got introduced to a whole new different field (of animal models and tissue cultures) which allowed her to dive deeper into learning more about the disease models and outcome of infection by learning the pathogenesis

mechanisms of pathogens of interest. "This enabled me to study interaction of diarrheal pathogens (diarrheagenic *Escherichia coli* pathotypes) and in the process had the opportunity to develop an Enteropathogenic *E. coli* (EPEC) infection animal model which highlighted outcomes of diarrhoea, growth decrements as observed in children, and inflammatory biomarkers which are similar to humans."

She said that the training that she received from UVA played a crucial role in shaping her research because she now has experience in working with animal models and tissue cultures. "Both institutions are all about producing good quality research and the collaboration between institutions including my research really complemented each other. This field is very broad as the research plays an important role in understanding the pathogenesis mechanism of pathogens, vaccine development and in clinical trial studies."

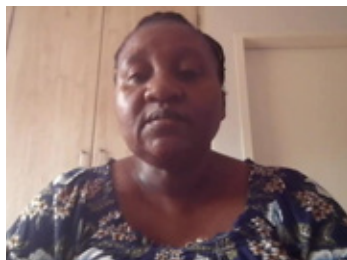
Dr Ledwaba is launching a promising research career to address critical global issues, particularly relevant in surrounding communities of Venda, South Africa. Her collaborative training under the Global Infectious Diseases Research Training Programme (funded by National Institutes of Health Fogarty International Centre) supported by the partnership between UVA and UNIVEN deeply informs her work and perspective.

Dr Ledwaba is becoming an expert in her field of study and her research output and impact shows the high quality of her research work. She is currently an active researcher in the One Health Research group led by Prof Potgieter, she has 9 published articles in accredited journals and have submitted another 3 manuscripts for publication in accredited journals in this year. Prof Potgieter and Prof Traore are both very proud to be part of the academic journey of Dr Ledwaba and to see how she has grown from a very shy, soft spoken student to a confident and accomplished researcher who is not afraid to stand in front of an audience and speak about her research.

"The training that I received at UVA really shaped my work and turned my ideas into reality."

UNIVEN's Institute for Rural Development hosts a workshop to cement a partnership focusing on citizen-centred rural development within Traditional Authority areas

The University of Venda (UNIVEN)'s Institute for Rural Development (IRD) hosted a "citizen-centred rural development" workshop seeking to connect the University with the Madonsi, Manenzhe, Masia, Njhakanjhaka, Sinthumule and Tshivhase Traditional Authorities. The workshop was held at Muofhe Graceland Lodge in Thohoyandou from 29-30 September 2021.



The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Postgraduate Studies, Prof Nosisi Nellie Feza, officially opened the workshop. She explained that the participants, that included senior traditional leaders, "came together to teach us on how we should work together, within our context, with our own people, in our own spaces and make sure that we develop our economy where we stay rather than moving around chasing urban life that doesn't give us any quality in terms of life". Turning her attention to rural development, she said "we tend to think that it is inferior, yet rural areas feed us. Rural development creates quality cultural ways of living, inclined towards developing people and especially young people to become citizens who are more responsible". Prof Feza went on to talk about integrity, highlighting the importance of respect for each other and what we do. She said that "through embracing Ubuntu and working together, we can achieve wonderful things". She highlighted that the two-day workshop should be seen as a critical milestone and significant legacy that cannot be ignored because it would discuss issues faced in rural areas and the country at large because of the dominance of rural areas. ".....what you are doing there ...the whole nation will learn from us..." Prof Feza noted that there are some parts of the country where people survive on harnessing natural resources mainly. Continuing with her address, she appreciated the abundant resources that Vhembe District is blessed with and can be used to uplift the standards of living of people. In this regard, participation of Senior traditional leaders and South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) representatives must be applauded because of their importance in shaping development agendas and implementation processes.



After the DVC's official opening address, Dr Agnes Mathaulula and Ms Amukelani Hlaiseka who are respectively a Senior Lecturer and Innovation Champion for Local Economic Development in the IRD, facilitated discussions and demonstrations on some key norms and protocols of the Tsonga and Venda people. The essence of cultural diversity of different people, languages and how they are practiced in engaged scholarship and daily lives was emphasised.



The Director of the Institute for Rural Development, Prof Francis, presented an overview of the core business of the IRD. He explained the vision of the IRD as follows, "we strive to be a leading university-based player in engaged scholarship for combating rural underdevelopment". Through establishing platforms for engaging a wide range of stakeholders as was the case with the workshop at hand to yield solutions to problems that rural areas face, the IRD continues to shape itself into a relevant, dynamic and gender-sensitive institution.



With regards to operational integrity, Prof Francis mentioned that the IRD values, respects and facilitates the involvement of children, youth, adults, and community-based institutions in development programming. All this is done to produce positive change agents both from its postgraduate studies programmes and rural community-based work.

Commenting on the criticism that universities spend too much time conducting research in rural areas, Prof Francis pointed out that ".... Thus, we should never apologise on such matters of principle". He clarified this position, clarifying that universities exist to carry out research, teach and engage communities to find solutions to societal challenges. In addition, Prof Francis argued that all people conduct research virtually every day. Aiming to simplify his argument further, he opined that when one asks questions on things not clear to him or her, he/she is conducting research. Given this situation, he questioned why university staff are criticised for doing what they are established to do. Continuing with his presentation, Prof Francis revealed that, "....The need for placing culture at the centre of our development enterprise is not negotiable". Thus, when facilitating development in grassroots communities, cultural practices and traditions of local people are paramount. In this respect, development work should be packaged and communicated through innovative ways such as music, poems and drama. In this way, society is educated whilst being entertained at the same time.



The Director of Community Engagement, Prof Vhonani Netshandama added that since the University exists to demonstrate its relevance and responsiveness to societal issues, postgraduate students and researchers should be encouraged to identify potential areas for community-based research.

The first day of the workshop was extremely rich in sharing knowledge about the cultural practices that community-based workers should know and appreciate. Participants pointed out that the emerging partnership was promising in many respects. This made Dr J.G. Tshifularo, who led the Tshivhase Traditional Authority delegation, to say, ".....the results of this partnership must be visible and measurable". To set a powerful pace to make this real, the participants proceeded to work in their respective interest groups to cogenerate the criteria to use to assess the relevance of a university to grassroots community development, engaged scholarship and impact in society. The interest groups comprised youth, postgraduate students, civic associations, Traditional leaders, women, academic staff, and representatives of Executive Deans of the Faculties of the University.



UNIVEN's Institute for Rural Development hosts a workshop to cement a partnership focusing on citizen-centred rural development continued...



Engagements involving the various interest groups during the workshop confirmed that indeed it was a unique milestone in rural development practice. This was the first time in the history of the University that delegations of Traditional Authorities and University campus community came together to negotiate, reimagine, and interrogate issues as equal partners and co-design a rural development agenda to be jointly implemented. By so doing, UNIVEN clearly showed its commitment to the practice of engaged scholarship in line with its vision, namely "A University leading in engaged scholarship". For the IRD, the workshop was ample proof to society it was living up to its slogan, "Taking the University to its rightful owners".

The workshop laid a foundation for building viable partnerships for improved livelihoods of grassroots communities. A key outcome of the workshop was that the foundation for a process of building a shared understanding of relevance, engaged scholarship and positive societal impact was laid, including the initiation of active involvement of children, youth, adults and community leaders in the six Traditional Authorities. On day two of the workshop, the participants reviewed a draft Memorandum of Understanding to be signed with UNIVEN.



The Acting Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Prof Lizzy Netshikweta, delivered a note of thanks. She implored Prof Francis and Prof Netshandama to continue organising workshops of this nature. They help gather ideas from multiple stakeholders on how engaged scholarship as outlined in the UNIVEN strategic plan, 2021-2025 can be attained. "This workshop has helped us as a University because we now know what to do to remain relevant and this will enable us to achieve our strategic objectives", Prof Netshikweta concluded.



Hosi Njhakanjhaka, Advocate Samuel Mukhari speaking on behalf of the Chiefs, thanked the University for seeing the need to engage with them as community members, and most importantly demonstrating the desire to improve the lives of people. He summarised the essence of the workshop, clarifying that this was a critical step in rural development which starts with empowerment proceeds through leadership and achieve change. He said through the workshop, participants learned a lot from each other and from the University itself. "It is now our responsibility as community members who participated in

this workshop to take what we learned here to our people who we were representing. Our community members who couldn't attend this workshop with us will also assist us to implement what we have learned here. We drafted our Memorandum of Understanding to be signed between the six represented communities and the University." He went on to say the Memorandum of Understanding will among other things help deal with issues that communities face. "We are ready for implementation", he declared the Traditional Councils' commitment to the success of the partnership. His remarks marked the end of the two days of vibrant and fruitful interaction between UNIVEN and the representatives of the six Traditional Authorities.

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Leaders representing the six Traditional Authorities posing for a group photo on the last day of the workshop

“We began with an easy hello but finished with a difficult goodbye”

On Friday, 22 October 2021, the Department of Marketing, Branding and Communication of the University of Venda (UNIVEN) held an event to bid farewell to Mr Justice Shipalana who was the Assistant Media and Sound Broadcasting Officer at UNIVEN FM. Mr Shipalana joined the University on 01 September 2016, and thus has served the University for a period of five years. This farewell function took place at the University Council Chambers.



Mr Shipalana said he has learned and contributed a lot at UNIVEN FM. “I have always made sure that everywhere I go, I put the name of the University of Venda before me.” He said his love for UNIVEN is what drove him to choose to study at UNIVEN than at any other University. Shipalana obtained his Media Studies degree at UNIVEN. “I am a product of this University. UNIVEN is my home, and I am not leaving for good.” Mr Shipalana continued to say that he is going to acquire more skills that he will bring to the University upon his return.

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UNIVEN FM Station Manager, Ms Tshilidzi Shirinda said it is sad to say good-bye to one of your colleagues, but every man's journey is guided by God, and we shouldn't stand in the way of God's plan. She congratulated Mr Shipalana on his new job and wished him well in his new position.



UNIVEN FM's Marketing and Sales Officer, Ms Portia Mugwedi explained Mr Shipalana as a hardworking, professional team player. She said Mr Shipalana has always brought creativity to the station. She further wished him success and excellence in his new job.



In his farewell message, Director Marketing, Branding and Communication, Dr Takalani Dzaga said it is not easy for one to talk when they are losing one of their own. He said when he received a call from Mr Shipalana

informing him about his resignation, he could not believe it. “Even today I haven't accepted that Mr Shipalana is leaving the University.” Dr Dzaga continued to say that Mr Shipalana has made a very huge contribution in the success of UNIVEN FM. He explained him as a good team player who has contributed towards the achievement of the University's goal. These five years that you have spent at the University has made you the person you are today. “It is difficult to bid farewell to a person of your calibre. We began with an easy hello but finished with a difficult goodbye”.

He said ‘Creating future leaders’ does not only apply to students but also to staff members. Therefore, the University is releasing a leader who will contribute towards building the country. “Indeed, we are creating future leaders.” Dr Dzaga encouraged staff members to set themselves goals that they will be looking forward to achieving. He concluded his talk by mentioning that this event was not intended to mark the end of the relationship between Mr Shipalana and the University, but a ceremony to celebrate his contributions and achievements. He advised him to hoist the University flag high wherever he is going.

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Convocation and Alumni Officer, Mr Mashudu Ramaleba said, as the Alumni Officer, he is not happy with Mr Shipalana's departure because Mr Shipalana is a product of this University. He said he feels happy when the University hires its own products because this is a clear indication that the University believes in its own products. However, Mr Ramaleba said that he is happy that Mr Shipalana's career is improving because this new job will assist him to acquire new skills.



Functions and Visitors Officer, Mrs Grace Cibi wishing Mr Shipalana well in his new endeavour.



Dr Takalani Dzaga (right) and Ms Tshilidzi Shirinda (left) handing over a gift to Mr Justice Shipalana (Middle)



Department of Marketing, Branding and Communication staff members posing for a group photo with Mr Shipalana after the event

Wellness is a way of life

On Tuesday, 28 September 2021, the Employee Health and Wellness Unit under Human Resources Department of the University of Venda (UNIVEN) held an Employee Health and Wellness Day event. This health and wellness event took place at the University's Sports Hall under the theme 'Health is your priority; prevention is better than cure'.



In her welcoming address, Director Human Resources, Mrs Uanda Ndou indicated that, last year (2020) was a difficult year for most people if not for everyone. She said even though we had a tough year, we are grateful that we are still alive and that deserves to be celebrated. "We need to be healthy and happy if we want to perform at our level best. There is a need to serve our students and the surrounding communities with smiles and we can only smile when we are happy and healthy." She advised staff members who attended the event to regularly exercise even when they are at home because wellness is a way of life.



When speaking about the Importance of Wellness Screening, Mr Lawrence Machete from Bonitas Medical AID advised attendees to go for regular checkups.



Ms Matilda De Villiers from BestMed Medical AID spoke about the importance and advantages of having a medical AID.



Ms Rhlulani Rikhotso from Thohoyandou GYM 4U spoke about the Importance and Benefits of Exercising. She said, amongst other things, exercising improves body strength, helps to maintain body weight and a person who exercises regularly has a chance of increased life span.



Mr Vhangweni Muramba from Old Mutual spoke about Financial Wellness. There were financial advisors available to advise those who need help on how to manage their finances. He advised attendees to make sure that by the time they retire they are well equipped and ready to be home without any stress of financial struggles.



Ms Takalani Tshamba, a Dietician from Limpopo Department of Health spoke about the importance of certain food such as fruits and vegetables. She said it is important to eat vegetables and fruits on daily basis.



Ms Caroline Boikhutso and Mr Dakalo Munyai from MEDIZCNE Health Care spoke about the importance of Oxygen Therapy. They said that they have saved a lot of people with oxygen therapy. They further advised attendees to visit every service tent that they think will assist them to improve their lives.



Ms Bernice Dowelani spoke about reflexology. She said, reflexology, also known as zone therapy, is an alternative medical practice involving the application of pressure to specific points on the feet and hands. "This is done using thumb, finger, and hand massage techniques without the use of oil or lotion. It is based on a pseudoscientific system of zones and reflex areas that purportedly reflect an image of the body on the feet and hands, with the premise that such work on the feet and hands causes a physical change to the supposedly related areas of the body. The aim is to stimulate the nerves and blood stream to function properly," she said.



Above are the pictures of some of the activities captured during the Health and Wellness Day

UNIVEN Provides Training of 2nd Cohort of the Leadership and Managerial Development Programme



The University of Venda (UNIVEN) provided training of 2nd Cohort for the Leadership and Managerial Development Programme to the Middle Management (both Academic HoDs and Non-Academic heads of Sections/Units). This was the final Block of training that took place at the University's Research Conference Centre on 11, 13 and 15 October 2021.



The training that was facilitated by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Corporate Services, Dr Robert Martin was all about Postgraduate Certificate in Entrepreneurial Management and Leadership within Higher Education developed by UNIVEN.

The objective of this training is to provide middle managers with a firm grounding in the practice of management within higher education by focusing on skills and competence development which is not usually focused on other courses. The training seeks to infuse entrepreneurial thinking in the practice of management within Higher Education Institutions

and seeks to synergise Collegialism and Managerialism. Whilst being aware of the modern emphasis on increased compliance, reporting and accountability within the Higher Education space, this course aims to ensure that such requirements are met by academic managers without harming the academic project. Academic managers are also equipped to become innovative problem solvers and solution seekers, that continuously challenge policies, processes, and procedures, to positively impact and promote the academic project.

This was part of the Strategic Plan 2016-2020 where the University embarked on leadership development. The University needs to equip managers in all categories with leadership and managerial skills.



One of the participants, Mr Maropene Ramabina from UNIVEN Law Library, said "this Leadership and Managerial training was very helpful to me personally and professionally. I learnt that before I can manage others, I must manage myself first. I learned the importance of reflecting while doing a certain project

(both personal and professional) because it helps us to improve. The training exposed me to the skills on how to draw and manage my office activities using a working plan or diary. The training made me to understand a lot on how the University operates (business of the University) and its relationship with DHET. I now understand the link between my performance contract, my Department's Operational Plan and how these relate to the University's Annual Performance Plan and Strategic Objectives. Most of the departments or staff fail to understand the University's strategic objectives and how they are contributing towards their effective implementation. This course helped me to be a solution finder and not problem identifier. Lastly, I learnt the importance of using a framework to solve challenges facing my section or department".

The training is a one-year programme and the first group attended in 2020, this was the second group.

"This Leadership and Managerial training was very helpful to me personally and professionally. I learnt that before I can manage others, I must manage myself first. I learned the importance of reflecting while doing a certain project (both personal and professional) because it helps us to improve."

We would like to hear from you!

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